Humanistic Leadership Practices

Exemplary Cases from Different Cultures

Edited by Pingping Fu

Humanism in Business Series

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Furthermore the volumes in the series are an open invitation to join our efforts to make impact towards a more equitable and a more sustainable planet.

Pingping Fu
Editor

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Praise for *Humanistic Leadership Practices*

"'Humanistic Leadership Practices Across Cultures' is a refreshing read about an important topic that deserves renewed and urgent attention in both research and practice. In this fractured world where self-interest ideology dominates in both political and economic spheres, humanistic leadership can bring back the dignity, respect, and caring of both the human and the natural world. This book offers insights into humanistic leadership practices in different cultures, identifying common attributes across cultures and discover unique practices within cultures. The book offers both inspiration for future research and concrete suggestions for leaders who are looking for ways to lead with purpose, dignity, and respect – the most promising road toward a better world where harmony, integrity, and shared prosperity reign."

—Anne S. Tsui, *Professor Emerita of International Management, Arizona State University, the 67 th President of the Academy of Management, 14th Editor the* Academy of Management Journal, *Founding President of the International Association for Chinese Management Research and Founding Editor-in-Chief of* Management and Organization Review*; and co-founder of the Community for Responsible Research in Business and Management* (www.rrbm.network)

Contents

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Pingping Fu is Professor of Organizational Behavior at Nottingham University Business School Ningbo China at the University of Nottingham. She has held leadership roles and researched leadership

areas since studying for her doctoral degree at SUNY Albany with Gary Yukl. Before she graduated, she joined the Global Leadership and Organizational Behavioral Effectiveness (GLOBE) research project team and remained a member until 2017. Fu has also led cross-cultural studies in leadership areas. A decade ago, Fu and her research collaborator noticed a unique Chinese leadership behavior. They labeled it "humanistic leadership" because the company referred to its activities as humanistic. However, in the literature, most of the relevant work was labeled humanistic management. They carefully compared the two concepts and found that they were highly comparable but determined that humanistic leadership better reflected the cultural context. They also realized that leaders and managers are regarded differently in China. Since then, Fu and her team have been studying humanistic leadership in the Chinese context. Although the characteristics are deeply rooted in the local culture, they have explored and stressed the global implications. In 2020, Fu and her colleagues published a special issue in the *Cross-cultural and Strategic Management Journal*. The papers show that for humanistic leadership to be effective, it must be connected to the local culture. They also examined the effects of the Chinese cultural context on humanistic leadership. The current book reflects their strong interest in strengthening scholars' and leaders' understanding of humanistic leadership across cultures.

Christopher Gohl is a researcher and teacher at Weltethos Institute at the University of Tuebingen. He has studied Political Science, American Studies and Jewish Studies at the University of Tübingen, Georgetown University, and Potsdam University, and holds a Ph.D. in Political Theory. As a political theorist participating in democratic practices, he has pioneered organized stakeholder dialogues both in business and politics before entering academia, notably as project leader of the political mediation for the expansion of Frankfurt Airport 2005–2008, as head of the political strategy unit of Germany's Liberals, and as a Member of the German Parliament. His research focuses on a pragmatist reconstruction of different modes of ethos as valued associational practices in business and politics.

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List of Figures

Humanistic Leadership: A UAE Perspective

Caring for Employees and Society: Exemplifications of Humanistic Leadership Values in Japan

Organizational Flourishing Through the Lens of Three Top Executives in Colombia: How They Relate to the Inner Development Goals-IDGs

Engaging Employees Through Cultivating Habitual Behaviours: Humanistic Leadership Practices at Fotile Group

List of Tables

Introduction

Pingping Fu

1 Introduction: Humanistic Leadership Practices Across Cultures

People's understanding of leadership has become more nuanced focusing on new styles of leadership around the world. Therefore, scholars worldwide have been trying to conduct leadership studies at a deeper level. In particular, studies have focused on the heart and mind of the leader to understand leaders' motives and purposes. This new focus has led to a deeper understanding of humanistic leadership.

This book exemplifies the characteristics and behaviors of humanistic leaders and their impact on their employees and companies, as well as societies, using examples from ten different societies on four continents (Africa, Asia, Europe, and North America). The leaders are mostly from business contexts, but a couple are from educational institutions. The

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chapters include individual leaders or multiple leaders from the same society. The authors, particularly those from Africa, US, and UAE, offer detailed accounts of humanistic leaders in their own cultures to help readers understand the cultural background of humanistic leadership in a global context. These examples illustrate that despite the differences in the forms and content of specific behaviors, the general principles and characteristics of humanistic leaders are largely comparable across cultures.

We published our first special issue (SI) in late 2020 titled: "Humanistic leadership in different cultures: Defining the field by pushing boundaries" in Cross-Cultural and Strategic Management Journal. In the SI, we proposed a working definition of humanistic leadership based on the limited resources in the literature at the time and based on our own exposure to humanistic leadership practices in the interviews we conducted. We described humanistic leaders as having the following characteristics: (1) **holistic:** respect people as holistic human beings by taking care of their own needs as well as their followers' multiple needs and motives; (2) **developmental**: continuously improve themselves while developing the followers to unleash their full potential, (3) **common good:** recognize and try to consider all stakeholders' interests while striving to pursue the common good. The **common good** mirrors the three pillars of humanistic management: **dignity, ethical** and **stakeholders** (Fu et al., 2020; Melé 2016; Pirson and von Kimakowitz 2014). Some of the chapters in the previous SI treated both humanistic leadership and managers interchangeably. However, we realized that in the East, there is a higher power distance, so people tend to differentiate leaders from managers, and believe leaders make the decisions and managers implement the decisions.

Although the SI included relatively fewer papers, it reinforced our assumptions about the common features of humanistic leaders and their connection with the local culture. As a result, the SI viewed humanistic leadership from a truly global perspective. It included eight stories introducing humanistic leadership practices in business organizations and educational institutions in China, India, Japan, Korea, Taiwan, Thailand, UAE, and Amish communities in the US. Most of the papers told stories

of the leader(s), except the Thai paper that viewed expatriates as a mirror to reflect the characteristics of humanistic leaders in Thailand.

For the past two years since the SI, we have continued this line of research and have gained a deeper understanding of the connotation of humanistic leadership. In particular, we have identified behavioral patterns for humanistic leadership in Confucian China. Unlike most leadership styles that focus on leadership behaviors and examine how leaders' behaviors influence followers, we focus on how humanistic leaders **continuously cultivate themselves while also developing their followers**. They learn, reflect and strive to be the best role models for others. Humanistic leaders also **offer humanistic care** to their employees by taking care of their multiple needs, including respecting their personalities and looking after both the employees and their family members. These leaders also focus on **providing humanistic education** for their employees. They offer classes and learning programs that focus on Chinese classics and indigenous materials so employees can become more conscientious people. Finally, these leaders have purposes that go beyond making a profit. They encourage their employees to **engage in humanistic services** so they can learn to appreciate life and promote happiness while helping people and protecting the environment. Our plan is to theorize these characteristics and to build a theory for leadership research and practices.

Humanistic leadership is based on humanistic principles. We argue that humanistic leadership principles are applicable universally, but specific practices and educational content vary by culture. Although people may have different interpretations of humanism, humanistic leadership (management) follows identical principles and exhibits similar characteristics across cultures because they treat people as holistic human beings. However, the specific forms of caring behavior and the content of the education are deeply influenced by the local culture and normative societal values. For example, humanistic care in China provides care for employees and their children, but also extends care to their parents and parents-in-laws. In addition, when offering humanistic education, employees read Chinese classics. Nevertheless, the principles are similar across cultures.

Some of the authors who contributed to the SI also wrote papers that included examples about the same leaders for this book. Other authors focused on different leaders in the same culture. This book also includes new authors who have contributed stories on humanistic leaders in their cultures. We looked for more examples and general understanding of humanistic leadership from different cultures with chapters representing four continents. The chapters are organized into three parts according to the focus of the studies: Part I: Individual Humanistic Leaders—Chapters "Faith, Family, and Firm: A Case Study of Bob Chapman"–"Humanistic Leadership in the Amish Community: Leading from the Edge"–"Confucian Humanistic Leadership: Social Influence Processes and Trickle Effects" (US, Amish, and Taiwan); Part II: Multiple Humanistic Leaders in Different Cultures —Chapters "Humanistic Leadership in Africa: A Relational Ideal of Maat"– "Are Hidden Champions Humanistic?—A Reflection on Humanistic Leadership in Germany"–"Humanistic Leadership: A UAE Perspective"– "Caring for Employees and Society: Exemplifications of Humanistic Leadership Values in Japan"–"Organizational Flourishing Through the Lens of Three Top Executives in Colombia: How They Relate to the Inner Development Goals-IDGs"–"Humanistic Leadership and the Paradoxical Pursuit of Sustainability and Profitability: A Case Study of the Tata Group in India" (Africa, Germany, UAE, Japan, Colombia, and India); and Part III: Humanistic Practices—Chapters "Engaging Employees Through Cultivating Habitual Behaviours: Humanistic Leadership Practices at the Fotile Group" and "Achieving UNSDG Goals Through Humanistic Practices: The Case of Good-Ark Electronics Corp. Ltd. in China". The last two chapters on Chinese companies describe practices humanistic leaders have initiated to instill company values in the employees and how one company's humanistic practices can help fulfill the 17 United Nations' Sustainable and Developmental Goals, which are intended to show the big impact humanistic leadership practices in individual companies could make at the global level.

2   Overview of the Chapters

Part I: Individual Humanistic Leaders

Chapter "Faith, Family, and Firm*: A Case Study of Bob Chapman*": The first chapter introduces Bob Chapman, CEO of Barry-Wehmiller companies, who has made outstanding changes in the organization and ensured that the changes can be sustained for future generations. Since taking over as CEO from his father, Chapman has transformed the organizational culture into one that "cares for its people like family." **Monds and Liu** review how Chapman was inspired to adopt a humanistic style of leadership, how these changes were received in his organization, and how the organization has evolved since implementing the changes. Chapman accredits his faith as his main source of inspiration to transform the working environment in Barry-Wehmiller. This theoretically challenging intersection of faith and leadership has not been deeply explored in previous research. Thus, the authors explore how a person's faith can serve as a catalyst to adopt humanistic attributes. The authors also discuss Chapman's Guiding Principles of Leadership, which act as a "lighthouse" for his vision. The chapter ends with a brief discussion about how humanistic leadership can address current problems surrounding diversity, equity, and inclusion along with implications for other leaders and managers.

Chapter "Humanistic leadership in the Amish Community: Leading from the Edge": **Keim and Shadnam** consider humanistic leadership in the context of organizational change. To ground their study in a "real world" example, they present an Old Order Amish bishop, Eli Yoder. Although the Amish are a quaint community from a bygone era, they are undergoing a massive transformation. Economic, social, and cultural forces are exerting enormous pressure on what it means to be Amish and how they can preserve their way of life in the pressure cooker of modernity. How Amish leaders are responding to these forces while ensuring the integrity and vitality of their congregations has much to teach us about how secular leaders can manage change within their organizations. A key implication of their study is the need to focus on real human

beings in organizations, following the principles of humanistic leadership to treat each member with dignity and respect.

Chapter "Confucian Humanistic Leadership: Social Influence Processes and Trickle Effects": **Chou** introduces the founder of a Taiwanese company to illustrate how a Confucian humanistic leader promotes humanist virtues through both direct (e.g., the bypass effect) and indirect (i.e., trickle effects) actions. **Chou** also explores the potential contingent factors to fulfill a humanistic cycle. A Confucian humanistic leader who internalizes Junzi virtues can have greater social influence. The virtues are not limited to the workplace but spill over to the environment outside of the organization and to society. Implementing Confucian humanistic leadership throughout the organization builds social respect, boosts the company's reputation, and promotes a harmonious relationship with internal and external stakeholders. Finally, **Chou** explains how an ideal humanistic cycle is fulfilled and presents specific ways to follow the principles.

Part II: Multiple Humanistic Leaders in Different Cultures

Chapter "Humanistic Leadership in Africa: A Relational Ideal of Maat": In this chapter on African leaders, **Zoogah** uses Maat (or ubuntu), a traditional African philosophy, to illustrate how the principles fit with humanistic leadership. The chapter integrates historical, anthropological, and philosophical accounts of leadership in Africa to situate humanistic leadership in modern Africa. They describe three leaders who epitomize Maat principles: Nelson Mandela, Desmond Tutu, and James Mwangi of Equity Bank of Kenya. **Zoogah** argues that leadership according to Maat principles is meaningful for African leaders as they correspond to the Africa Union's Agenda 2063, which views good leadership as vital for the transformation of Africa.

Chapter "Are Hidden Champions Humanistic?—A Reflection on Humanistic Leadership in Germany": In this chapter, **Gohl, Keir, and Moosmayer** explore the extent to which leaders of hidden champions in Germany, which are little-known companies that lead the world in their

specific areas, should be regarded as humanistic leaders. They talk about the German institutional context and try to address a very interesting question: Can business leaders be regarded humanistic if they engage in humanistic practices for performance purposes? They use examples of leaders of a few different-sized German companies in various industries, including Allsafe, Putzmeister, Faber-Castell, dm, and Einhorn to explore for answers. At the same time, the authors also point out that the historical homogeneity of knowledge infrastructure, the relatively even geographical distribution of hidden champion companies, should be taken into consideration when answering the question.

Chapter "Humanistic Leadership: A UAE Perspective": In this chapter, **Anadol** addresses various dimensions and sources of humanistic leadership in the **UAE**. The author shows how humanistic leadership is implemented in one of the youngest, yet most popular and fastest-growing countries in the world. As an Arab county, where moderate Islamic principles are followed, UAE is famous for its sophisticated, high-rise buildings, luxurious hotels, man-made islands, shopping malls, advanced digitalization initiatives, and its mission to Mars. It is also known for having the first Ministry of Happiness and its human-centric initiatives in UAE's National Agenda including social initiatives to implement humanistic values, including tolerance, generosity, and well-being. As an extension of the author's previous study, **Anadol** helps readers understand what human-centric values are applicable in the UAE context. The values the author discusses include respect, dignity protection, tolerance, fairness, generosity, humility, responsibility, and leadership development. The source of these values is rooted in the country's well-preserved Arabic traditions and its moderate Islamic values embedded in the UAE National Agenda.

Chapter "Caring for Employees and Society: Exemplifications of Humanistic Leadership Values in Japan": This chapter examines a Japanese humanistic leadership style that is deeply ingrained in Japanese culture. It explores how two leaders, Konosuke Matsushita and Kazuo Inamori, achieved financial success by adopting a people-centric approach. The study highlights the need to consider societal contributions and employee well-being as well as economic profit when making business decisions. **Ono and Ikegami** consider the leaders' values and

beliefs underlying their assumptions and emphasize the importance of these factors in cultivating humanistic leaders. The chapter presents a model that describes how humanistic leadership can be effective in the Japanese context and serves as a model for future leadership research. The chapter also examines common attributes from the extant literature of humanistic leaders in various contexts and presents propositions of humanistic leadership for future empirical research. The findings have significant implications for leadership development in the future as they offer valuable insights for practitioners seeking to become a humanistic leader.

Chapter "Organizational Flourishing Through the Lens of Three Top Executives in Colombia: How They Relate to the Inner Development Goals-IDGs": This chapter introduces three humanistic leaders in Columbia. **Largacha-Martinez** is the head of the Columbia Chapter of the Humanistic Management Network. Like many humanistic management scholars in the West, **Largacha-Martinez** does not differentiate between humanistic leaders and humanistic managers. For example, he argues that developing soft skills is very relevant for humanistic managers and inspirational leadership. However, MBAs around the world have not adequately incorporated soft skills into their leadership courses, which somewhat explains the global management crisis. He interviewed three top executives from two awarded companies to identify what skills they used to obtain excellent results and outperform companies with traditional management. The author used the Inner Development Goals (IDGs), designed for managers/leaders who are committed to helping their companies fulfill the United Nations' Sustainable and Development Goals, in a novel global initiative working toward advancing IDGs in management and society. The results indicate how leaders can reflect IDGs to improve their management style.

Chapter "Humanistic Leadership and the Paradoxical Pursuit of Sustainability and Profitability: A Case Study of the Tata Group in India": In this chapter **Tripathi and Karumathil** show how the Tata group, founded in 1868 in pre-independent India, has grown into one of the largest global business enterprises by staying committed to the founder Jamsetji Tata's (1839–1904) conviction that the "community is not just another stakeholder in business but the very purpose of

its existence." The company has continued its commitment to organized philanthropy and humanitarian goals, which closely reflect UN's 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development announced in 2016 with 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The author shows how the Tata group's achievements in the paradoxical goals of sustainability and profitability can be theoretically reconciled by adopting Tata's uniquely humanistic approach to leading and governing the enterprise. **Tripathi and Karumathil** focus on three values in the Tata group: (1) wealth and profits are not a goal but an outcome, (2) virtuous circle of giving many times over, and (3) ongoing momentum of the founder's vision. They use the example of Tata Steel to highlight how in a high-stakes mining industry, indigenous initiatives are critical to industrialization to ensure sustainability. The key takeaway of this chapter for business leaders and industry owners is that adopting humanistic values and subsequently adhering and upholding them in all organizational activities leads to long-term growth and success. They argue that businesses derived from such values are integral to both shareholders and all stakeholders.

Part III: Humanistic Practices

Chapter "Engaging Employees Through Cultivating Habitual Behaviors: Humanistic Leadership Practices at the Fotile Group": In this chapter, **Lin, Fu, and Yang** introduce how MAO Zhongqun, founder and chairman of the Board of Directors of Chinese Fotile Group Ltd., cultivates desirable behaviors among employees by creating a high-engagement organizational culture. Mao was trained as an electrical engineer and had to learn how to build a company culture after he successfully introduced several new products to the market. It took him almost ten years to build a strong culture, but then a new challenge was to get employees to accept the culture and internalize the company's core values. Mao eventually discovered the practice of the "Five Ones": (1) to set a goal to do something meaningful, (2) to read a classic book over a period of time, (3) to correct bad habits, (4) to show filial piety, and (5) to do a kind deed every day. **Lin, Fu, and Yang** show how Fotile encourages employees to reflect on the practices of the "Five Ones." They also

explain the specific actions of the "Five Ones," the effects of practicing the "Five Ones," and the conditions for implementing the practices with thousands of employees. However, these practices were a small part of their efforts to build the organizational culture with high engagement. The key is to have a humanistic leader at the top because the "Five Ones" are only effective with the support of humanistic leadership and a people-oriented organizational culture.

Chapter "Achieving UNSDG Goals Through Humanistic Practices: The Case of Good-Ark Electronics Corp. Ltd. in China": This last chapter introduces the eight practices Good-Ark developed in 2009. This company and its leader illustrate how an individual company can help contribute to the fulfilment of the 17 United Nations' Sustainable and Development Goals (UNSDGs). Many companies have responded to these goals since they were announced in 2016. However, most studies have only discussed the principles and theories, and few studies have presented specific practices to fulfill these goals. Since organizations are the backbone of society, it is important to deeply understand these practices. The "eight modules" (educational units) in Good-Ark include humanistic care, humanistic education, green practices, health promotion, philanthropic actions, voluntary services, recording/publicizing humanistic practices, and Dun Lun Jin Fen (fulfilling role responsibilities). The company has widely implemented the eight modules starting with leaders organizing the eight modules and eventually being organized and promoted by the employees. The eight modules have produced many positive changes in the employees, but most importantly, the training has made the employees happy. The founder, Wu, realized that the eight modules could directly help fulfill the UNSDGs when introducing Good-Ark to UNESCO. **Han, Fu, and Qu** introduce these connections and the critical role the company's family-like culture plays in designing and carrying out humanistic practices. The authors also emphasize specific ways to implement the eight modules. This chapter offers inspirations for sustainability research and insights for business leaders who aim to implement the UNSDGs.

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Individual Humanistic Leaders