

A Futuristic Commentary: Coach-Like Leadership

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Abstract

In this conceptual article, a new definition of the leader-manager; Coach-Like Leadership concept is introduced and discussed within the framework of leadership styles and coaching approach. Based on literature review and by using some secondary data to a certain extent, the current situation in the Turkish business organizations is also mentioned. This study exploratory and descriptive in nature, aims to draw attention to the emerging change in the definition of the new leader-manager.

Keywords: Leader-manager, Coaching, Coach-Like leadership

Introduction

Effectiveness of leadership styles has long been a point of interest for the scholars. Although most studies on this issue have come out with a conclusion that effectiveness of leadership is highly dependent on how suitable the situation is for the said style of leadership, it leaves many questions unanswered for a specific individual in a leadership role (Hersey, Blanchard and Johnson, 1996).

It is worth mentioning the difference between management and leadership. In management the accomplishment of organizational goals is the main issue whereas in leadership, it is the attempt of influencing people. In an environment of globalization, what is emphasized by the organizations is, and will be the “leader-managers”, who combine these two concepts in a way that the organization benefits.

Coach-Like Leadership being a brand new booming concept, finds its place in the working environment of 21st century for various reasons. First of all, it is like a combination of different leadership styles, integrated with a high degree of emotional intelligence (EQ). Daniel Goleman’s EQ definition covers five basic skills; Self-Awareness, Self-Regulation, Motivation, Social Skills and Empathy (Goleman, 1998).

Empathy, being gradually a more important concept in 21st century’s business life, is valued as one of the most important dimensions of Emotional Intelligence (EI) (Goleman, 1998). Whichever leadership style is being executed, putting empathy – a quality that each and every human being naturally possesses (Marques, 2010)- in it, results in both greater organization development accompanied with the fulfillment of personal goals (Garner, 2009). Even, empathy is said to be a pre-requisite to determine which leadership style would be appropriate for which organization, work field and/or a specific situation (Geller, 2000).

Besides emphasizing on EQ skills, a Coach-Like Leader should also be aware of the coaching skills (as stated by International Coach Federation-ICF) like active listening, asking powerful questions, direct communication and providing feedback, creating trust and awareness, designing actions, planning and goal setting and the last but not the least leaving the accountability of the process to the staff.

In this context, as Peter Drucker (2001) said, “efficiency is concerned with doing things right, while effectiveness is doing the right things.” Then it is obvious that effectiveness of an organization in terms of “doing the right thing” is often intangible thus difficult to determine (Mescon, Albert and Khedouri, 1985). That’s why in discussing effectiveness, concentration is generally on evaluating the outcome of individual leader’s or manager’s performance, not directly on the quantitative results (Hersey, et al., 1996).

Management plays a key role on making an organization effective and making that effectiveness sustainable. In terms of being attentive to others’ needs, the leader becomes a follower and a seeker, being alert to new possibilities, open, listening and ready for developments. This leads us to a result that true leadership is nothing but an inner quality as well as being an exercise of authority (Greenleaf, 2002). Coaching in this terms seem as a valuable tool that can both develop the inner qualities of the leading people as well as how they exercise their authorities on their subordinates, again resulting to an organizational effectiveness overall.

The purpose of this conceptual study is to explore and describe what Coach-Like Leadership is and thus aims to draw attention to the changing nature of the definition of managers and leaders as the Coach-Like leaders today and in the near future.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Leadership

Leadership has been studied for years both in terms of its needed characteristics – whether intrinsic or could be learned - and its outcome on the effectiveness of the organizations that are led by those leaders. What is expected from a leader is effectiveness, which brings the question “how?” together. No doubt Intelligence Quotient (IQ), technical formation, background, knowledge and experience are sine qua non qualities of a leader, yet are not enough to succeed. An alternative focus has been on the importance of employee involvement, and consequently motivation and human relations (Tannenbaum and Schmidt, 1973).

From profit organizations to government agencies, organizations spend both extraordinary effort and their resources to identify, encourage and develop leadership potential among members and prospective members (Fiedler, 1996). Concurrently, contemporary leadership literature increasingly recites proof of a strong, positive correlation between competencies related to emotional intelligence and leadership effectiveness (Everding, 1998; Goleman 1998) so the new management styles should be endowed with “empathic sensibility”, an intrinsic human behavior (Rifkin, 2009). Because in the coming years, it is going to be a requirement rather than “it would be better if ” status. Actually, leadership in its wide meaning, is the act of influencing people and a process (or set of skills) that almost anyone can exhibit.

Coming to the organizational leadership together with effective leadership, targeted points in this study are defined respectively by Hitt M.A., Black J.S. and Porter L.W. (2009) as “*an interpersonal process that involves attempts to influence other people to attain a goal*” and “*the influence that assists a group or an organization to meet its goals and objectives and perform successfully*”(p.264).

It is easily observed that different from sole management concept, leadership is highly related with interpersonal factors and attaining goals, whereas in management administrative goals and organizational factors are more emphasized. Nevertheless, one important point to remark is that leader-managers cover both concepts’ requirements making their job harder but without doubt, more effective. The main determinant of leadership, making it different from sole management, is the leader’s ability to influence. When influencing people to attain some preset goals in order to achieve organizational effectiveness, empathy is a major attitude that the leader should possess. Additional to technical skills, educational background, sound experience and a visionary perspective successful leaders that are able to make changes are the ones who deeply influenced their followers causing an eager want arousing in them. Inspiring a shared vision would follow the act of influencing and if a vision is shared by all the team members – from top to bottom – at the end of the day success will come. (Kouzes and Posner, 2007). Csikszentmihalyi (2003), who was described as the world’s leading researcher on positive psychology by American Psychological Association, examined the leader-follower relationship in depth as below:

Any group of people working towards a common goal is held together by a combination of two motives:

self-interest and common interest. The former can be bought by external incentives: pay, promotion, prestige. The latter motive, common interest, must be earned through a demonstration of respect for the value of the members of the team. Workers will not place themselves at the service of a leader's vision unless they think that the rules of the organization are fairly applied, that their contribution is recognized, and that their integrity is respected (Csikszentmihalyi, 2003, p.200).

Thus, we may easily suggest that the leader's success in terms of organizational effectiveness is not a single-person business, but an outcome of a whole team's performance.

In Daniel Goleman's (2000) article about leadership, six types of leadership are defined: The coercive leadership which may bring results during unforeseen natural events, a turnaround situation and/or dealing with troubled staff; the authoritarian leadership that could be used in loose situations keeping in mind that if the team is more experienced than the leader problems may occur; the affiliation leadership that should be preferred in order to create collaboration within the team; the democratic leadership that creates space for the working people's ideas however from time to time the existence of the leader is not felt strongly by the followers; the pacesetter leadership that is leading with example and putting so high standards that may lead to perfectionism; and the coaching leadership that focuses on awareness and personal progress that will lead to organizational results starting from the individual (Goleman, 2000). Again in the same article, Goleman's main point is that leaders are expected to create results by using a combination of various leadership styles according to the situations (Goleman, 2000).

Management plays a key role on making an organization effective and making that effectiveness sustainable. Founder of "servant leadership" concept, Robert K. Greenleaf (2002) brought out a completely different point of view regarding the leadership. In terms of being attentive to others' needs, the leader becomes a follower and a seeker, being alert to new possibilities, open, listening and ready for developments. This leads us to a result that true leadership is nothing but an inner quality as well as being an exercise of authority (Greenleaf, 2002).

Like most of the scholars did, Fiedler (1967) also argued that if there exists or will ever exist a single all-purpose leadership style suitable for a broad range of situations;

While one can never say that something is impossible, and while someone may well discover the all purpose leadership style or behavior at some future time, our own data and those which have come out of sound research by other investigators do not promise such miraculous cures (Fiedler, 1967, p.247).

However complex it is to find a single type of leadership that fits into any type of business, exercising and practicing empathy, an intrinsic human skill that exists in every culture (Rifkin, 2009), can be added into the leadership style, whichever is being executed. Successful organizations are the ones that are led by the leaders capable of adapting their style to fit the requirements of the situation (Hersey et al., 1996). Leadership - far more beyond being a profession by itself - is a passion of changing things that could easily be found and awakened in anyone (Kouzes & Posner, 2010).

Many distinctions regarding the leadership styles have been made throughout years by scholars however it is not within the scope of this study to go over each and every distinction. Having said that previous research done on the subject show that leadership has a two-sided effect. One being the organization's performance and the second one being the emotional and business-wise needs of the working people. Effectiveness could be achieved by the leader, as long as both dimensions are taken into consideration concurrently.

One of the closest arguments to the main topic of this study, Coach-Like Leadership, is The Situational Leadership Theory by Paul Hersey and Ken Blanchard(1969), that was born from Life-Cycle Theory, mentioned in an article again written by Hersey P. & Blanchard K.H. (1969). In Situational Leadership theory, main point is that there is no single type of leadership that fits all situations. What is needed is to modify the style in line with the organizational needs, the maturity of the people and details of the task . According to this theory, leaders should be able to place more or less emphasis on the task, and more or less emphasis on the relationships with the people they're leading, depending on what's needed to get the job done successfully. The theory has four types of leaders; telling, selling, participating and delegating each one matching with the maturity (readiness) level of the employees (Hersey, Blanchard and Johnson, 2001).

Telling leader type is matched with low maturity level, selling leader type is matched with low to moderate maturity level, participating type is matched with medium to high maturity and the last but not the least is the delegation type of leadership which is matched with high level of maturity. Especially participating and delegating leadership types require coach-like attitude, since the maturity of the staff is relatively high resulting in a high level of awareness and learner's mindset, that prerequisites of coaching environment. When it comes to selling type, partially the situation may need coach-like approach, however in telling type of leadership of Situational Leadership theory, in which circumstance needs a more task orientation and low relationship focus, coaching environment would be difficult to create. The theory's one of the main principles is, as stated in "The One Minute Manager" (Blanchard and Johnson, 1982), "*people who feel good about themselves produce results*". And people feel satisfied and feel good when their needs were satisfied (Hersey et.al., 2001). In the following sections *coaching* and the proposed *Coach-Like Leadership* concept are discussed in more detail.

2.2. Coaching

Global Coaching Survey (2009) indicates that Coaching, itself, has only reached the maturity phase in terms of the product life cycle in only two of the 162 countries that have been surveyed, while in 83 countries it is in the introduction or growth phase. If coaching to be defined as, as an intensive and systematic facilitation of individuals or groups by using a wide variety of behavioral techniques and methods to help them attain self-congruent goals or conscious self-change and self-development in order to improve their professional performance, personal wellbeing and, consequently, to improve the effectiveness of their organization, then it makes great sense to look for coaching skills in the leaders that would make them Coach-Like Leaders in the demanding work environment of 21st century.

Above all, to make a definition of what coaching is, would be useful to distinguish what is needed, what is executed and what are the outcomes. The best reference for the definition of coaching is, International Coach Federation (ICF)'s definition. It is defined as "*A professional partnership between a qualified coach and an individual or team that support the achievement of extra-ordinary results, based on goals set by the individual or team*" (ICF, 2005). This definition is mainly based on the "coaching" as a profession but it has more than one usage in the working environment. One is personal development, second one is using "coaching" as a tool in exercising management.

Apart from ICF's coaching definition, a lot more definition could be found in different resources nonetheless it is not surprising to see that nearly all are showing the same direction. Whitmore (2003) revealed coaching as a learning process rather than a teaching one, together with its power to unlock the potential. Association for Coaching put it as a self-directed and systematic learning, not ignoring to cover its solution base, result orientation and collaboration side. Downey (2003), expressed coaching as an art of facilitation in terms of learning, development and performance. Parsloe (1995) said that "*Coaching is directly concerned with the immediate improvement of performance and development of skills by a form of tutoring or instruction*". Peltier (2010) focused on the benefit of coaching regarding the process of helping leader-managers to become more efficient and effective leaders in the workplace. In his definition, a remarkable point is that he mentions the process' ability to make the leader-manager's execution of authority repertoire incorporated with what s/he learned.

As seen above, coaching as a discipline (and/or profession) is highly integrated with leadership, both personally and in the organizational context. Eye-catching details are coaching's nature of self-learning, its effects on both business and personal lives, the process' future-orientation, creation of better results and facilitation of change towards positive. The most important side to emphasize is that, coaching gives the individuals the opportunity to see who they are, what and how they can do and what needs to be changed/adapted. The last but not the least, all these happen by the "free will" of the individual. The coaching process leverages the maintained power within that individual in a way that s/he could make the necessary changes with an intrinsic motivation.

Coming to the motivation to make things better or make a change, in the organizational development concept it is priceless. When the outer factors are continuously in a change, then the individuals taking part in the process should make the necessary changes so simultaneously the change itself creates parallel results. When personal motivation arises from the inborn resources it is continuous and infinite. However, if the motivation comes from the outside, sooner or later it inevitably ends.

2.3. Coach-Like Leadership

It is unfortunate that even in the developed economies Coach-Like Leaders are not so common. However, leaders who pass upon the coaching tool, miss a great opportunity on the performance and the effect on the general climate of the work environment. As Daniel Goleman (2009) says;

Coaching leaders help employees identify their unique strengths and weaknesses and tie them to their personal and career aspirations.....These leaders are willing to put up with short-term failure if it furthers long-term learning (Goleman, 2013).

One main reasons of Coach-Like Leadership's not being so common might be that, its main focus is on personal development. Nonetheless, since it fosters the personality of the *coachee* (assuming the coachee is the leader), it inevitably created positive results though indirectly.

Discipline based, leadership is accomplishment oriented, while coaching is insight oriented. Although each one seems distinct from the other, each also enhances the other.

Effective coaching reveals unseen mental and organizational barriers to higher performance. Efficient leadership then organizes the operation into new efforts to work from the new insights.

Since it is not yet an academic approach or terminology, Coach-Like Leadership in this study is mentioned as the style of the leaders that execute coach-like skills and attitudes in their work environments towards their teams in order to get results. In other words, leaders that use coaching skills (whether via taking coaching training or not) and embrace both coaching and leadership in the same pot is this study's point of interest.

The most important point to emphasize is that coaching reinforces self-leadership therefore Coach-Like Leaders develop leaders (Cohen and Tichy, 1997). When it comes to effectiveness in leadership, it is about sensitivity that the leader achieves via distinguishing skills, empathy and understanding of others (Tannenbaum and Massarik, 1957). Leadership effectiveness is a function of the leader's characteristics, the followers' characteristics and the situation's characteristics.

Another remarkable point is that the level of Emotional Intelligence (EI) within the teams which is also subject to Jordan, Ashkanasy, Hartel, and Hooper (2002)'s study, is directly linked with the leadership performance. They stated that coaching leaders have an improving effect on the team's Emotional Intelligence (EI) level let alone the other effects. By the help of coach-like attitude a leader can make a performance of low level EI team to that of high level EI.

Coming to how this high level of EI performance is realized, it is clearly expressed by Bennis (2003) that coaching function of the leader bring the best out of the others as well as reinforcing their ability to communicate. When someone's best is out there, mutual goals are easily achieved. Tim Gallwey (2000) was the first to mention performance and potential relationship, while defining the coaching. Performance is closer to the potential, when the interference is lower. He formulized this as; " $P=p-i$ ", where "P" is performance, "p" is potential and "i" is the interference (Gallwey, 2000). Coaching as a tool, helps to decrease the interference resulting into performance increase. The lower the interference, the higher the performance. Gallwey(2000) expressed that coach deals with the interference part in order to get the possible highest out of the *coachee*. When the leader becomes a Coach-Like one, than according to this $P=p-i$ formula, s/he is going to concentrate on the interference of the team members. Even a single member's well-being is going to affect the team's and the leader's performance concurrently.

The Coach-Like Leader acts as a counselor, exploring the employees' goals and values in order to help them expand their own scale of abilities. No need to mention that all the counselling is done under the main umbrella of the organization's vision and mission. Best counselors work with; emotional self-awareness and empathy. A good coach communicates a positive belief in people's potentials and that people can do their best. In times, coaching may take the active mentoring program according to the needs of that specific situation. A very direct and influential effect of coaching is that "*..the coaching style may not scream "bottom-line results" but in a surprisingly indirect way, it delivers them.*"(Goleman, Boyatzis and McKee, 2002).

Today's organizations are very-well aware that a long-term and sustainable success is highly dependent on the quality, ability, potential and the commitment of the employees. Cohen and Tichy (1997) expressed that "*the scarcest resource in the world today is leadership talent capable of continuously transforming organizations to win in tomorrow's world.*"

Hence, if coaching skills are added to the leadership traits of managers, it would create winning situations for the organizations in order for them to take their place among their rivals. This is valid for both near and distant future.

3. Coaching in Turkey

In practice, coaching as a discipline does not have a long history both in the world and in Turkey. However, day by day, together with the changing working environments the need for Coach-Like Leaders emerge in the market. As eligible Coaching Schools began to exist in Turkey as well, big and reputable companies began to start a coaching culture within their organizations. The first step of this culture is, generally, training the top executives to be Coach-Like Leaders. Then the following steps will go down till the middle-level managers and the last but not the least, the working staff.

Coaching as a positioning, both as a service and as a training program, remains relatively expensive in today's Turkish business environment. That is because, generally the starting point is the top executives, believing that the coaching culture starts with the leaders that lead and manage companies. The effects of the top executives' change in attitude toward Coach-Like Leadership, inevitably effects all the staff like a pebble in the pond.

In Turkey, as of May 2014, Coaching trainings are provided by various schools, accredited by International Coach Federation (ICF), are listed in Table 1 below.

Table 1: ICF Accredited Coaching Schools in Turkey as of May 2014

1	Academy of Executive Coaching
2	Adler International Learning
3	Avatar Training Consulting Coaching
4	CRR Global
5	Dale Carnegie Training Turkey
6	CTI
7	Erickson Coaching International
8	FLOW Coaching
9	Institute for Life Coach Training
10	Gelişim Gezinleri Group
11	Gestalt Coaching Works
12	Intituut voor Transformatie Psychologie
13	House of Human Coaching
14	ID Coaching International
15	IZ Coaching
16	LeaderImpact
17	MareFidelis Coaching
18	MB Akademi
19	Motiva International Coaching
20	Navitas Coaching
21	Posi-Trak Coaching
22	Sola Unitas Coach Academy
23	Success Motivation
24	FA Coach Academy
25	Way of Life Coaching

According to the research report, prepared by Research Committee of ICF in association with IPSOS Research Company in December 2013, interviews with different companies from various sectors (banking/finance, health, energy, tourism, R&D, food, etc.) have been carried out, regarding "Coaching" both as a service and as a tool itself to be used in the organizations.

The perception of "coaching" in the interviewed companies was summarized as follows:

- "Coaching" mostly connotes a professional companion that supports and helps developing the people in their lives
- In addition to its positive effects on the organizational commitment, coaching also improves the people's business and private lives
- The most important obstacle for external coaching is its high level of costs.
- Huge company's form various sectors in Turkey prefer to take external coaching whereas some of them still prefer internal coaching. External coaching and internal coaching are defined as complimentary services by the decision makers in the companies.

- Positive references from other companies regarding the benefits of coaching and the belief of executive level management encourage to take this service.
- International Coach Federation (ICF) is regarded as strong and credible in terms of providing the necessary information about coaching.

When it comes to evaluating the “coaching” as a service and expectations, below are the findings of the mentioned study:

- Coaching is provided to the top executives and the staff who are in the “talent pool” of the companies.
- Corporates selectively choose the related coaching and training companies that are accredited by International Coach Federation (ICF).
- The most effective feedback can be obtained from the staff.
- It is stated by the decision makers that both during the process of coaching and after the coaching process, positive changes in the staff’s behaviors are observed. These positive changes are reflected in their business and private lives synchronously.

4. Discussion and Conclusions

The coaching as a profession is quite new in Turkey, which has been accepted as an official job in Turkey only as of June 2013. Carrying its challenges and opportunities at the same time, it reveals a mixed environment for the coaching professionals.

On the organizational side, coaching implications are continuously increasing, again facing its own challenges. In the organizational context creating a coaching culture is the main issue to be focused on however generally corporate companies do not know where to begin. Actually there are two ways to go; either hiring an external coach for the managers or training the managers to gain coaching skills. Of course, both actions could take place at the same time as well however it is a matter of budget decision for the company. In case one of the ways is to be decided, training the managers in order to make them gain coaching skills create a longer-lasting effect in terms of the organization’s productivity, employee commitment, result-creating and performance. Either way creates Coach-Like Leaders.

Coaching style of leadership mainly has a basis on respect, EQ (Emotional Intelligence) and developing people however it is obvious that in some kinds of situations other types of leadership are also needed. But good news is that, coaching style leadership sets such a unique framework that it lets any kind of leadership to be executed within.

In Turkey, there are a few reputable companies that have implemented coaching in the organizational context. In the coming years, the seeds of coaching attempts in the business world of Turkey will create a broader coaching culture. This broadening will bring more standardized and familiar structure, and the coaching will come to a point that is well-deserved.

While having internal coaches, two factors are to be ready and handy for the company. First one is a high level of trust in between the manager and the employee, second one is the level of awareness of the employee who is being coached. Since the process needs to be extremely confidential and also highly dependent on the employee’s vision, trust and awareness are two main must-haves.

Methodologies used in coaching vary and this also might result a challenge in the organizational context for the time being. Normally, organizations look for structured and clear-cut disciplines to collaborate with, while coaching as a nature could differ according to situations. Ethics, guidelines and regulation side of coaching is also required to be guaranteed by the companies who will apply it. That is why mostly big and reputable companies prefer to co-operate with coaches or coaching companies accredited by ICF (International Coach Federation), EMCC (European Mentoring and Coaching Council) or AC (The Association for Coaching) in order to bring a standard in the service they take. All three associations are internationally recognized in the field of coaching. This is also valid in terms of coaching trainings provided by these associations to the managers. In addition to that, credentialing gives an additional degree of credibility and eligibility to coaches in the business context.

As a conclusion to all the knowledge, application and so on that are mentioned previously, Coach-Like Leadership is a brand new yet a futuristic concept in Turkey.

Although list of challenges stands over there, it, of course, has a lot of opportunities that will directly and/or indirectly effect the leaders, companies and the economy of the country overall. Human focus that has already started to conquer the business life make the companies look for different ways to support their current human resources and to pull the talented people in order to create difference among the competitors. These trends are not in vain, because at the end of the day, happy people create results.

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