



The Father Leadership Way

With Special Reference
to Negara Brunei Darussalam

Patrick Low Kim Cheng
Ph.D. & Chartered Marketer

Department of Business and Management
FBEPS
Universiti Brunei Darussalam



Selected Publications

* 'Father Leadership – The Malaysian Perspective',
Journal of Leadership & Organizational Management,
Vol. 2008 Issue 1, Franklin Publishing.
(<http://www.franklinpublishing.net/leadership.html>) p. 75 -
95.



Selected Publications

- * 'Father Leadership And Small Business Management: The Kazakhstan Perspective', *Journal of Management Development*, ISSN: 0262-1711, 2007 Vol. 26 Issue 8, p. 723 - 736.

- * 'Father Leadership and Project Management in Kazakhstan', *The Icfaiian Journal of Organization Behavior*, ICFAI, July 2006, p. 17 - 24.

- * 'Father Leadership – The Singapore Case Study', *Management Decision*, Emerald Insight (www.emeraldinsight.com/0262-1711.htm), Vol. 44 Issue 2, March 2006, p. 89 - 104.

- * 'Towards a Framework & Typologies of Singapore Corporate Cultures' *Management Development Journal of Singapore*, Vol. 13, No. 1, May 2005, p. 46 - 75.

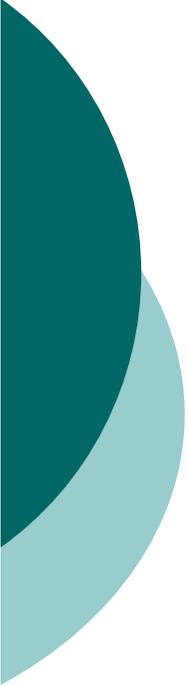


Introduction

In Asia, several countries such as India (Brislin, 1993:275; Kumar and Saxena, 1983; Sinha, 1980), Indonesia (Low, 2005), Kazakhstan (Low & Tabyldy, 2007; Low, 2006; Low & Tabyldy, 2005), Japan (Hanada & Yoshikawa, 1991), Malaysia (Low, 2008) and Singapore (Low, 2005), **their leaders and governments practise a benevolent type of leadership, the father leadership style.**

It seems that **critics and/ or European and North American readers would probably find the actual term and the explanation of organisational practice of father leadership to be gender-biased.**

Paternal or maternal authority captures the expectations of concern and nurtures the belief that people or staff should be treated like the leader's family members (Low and Mohd Zain, 2008).



The author puts forth the argument that **leading, the father leadership way, can create a competitive advantage for growing transitional economies.** In Brunei, His Majesty Sultan Haji Hassanal Bolkiah Mu'izzaddin Waddaulah's leadership based on the national philosophy of Melayu Islam Beraja (Malay, Muslim and Monarchy) can, in some ways, be perceived as father leadership in action. Father leadership examples are then shown and illustrated in the Bruneian context.



MIB: *Melayu Islam Beraja*

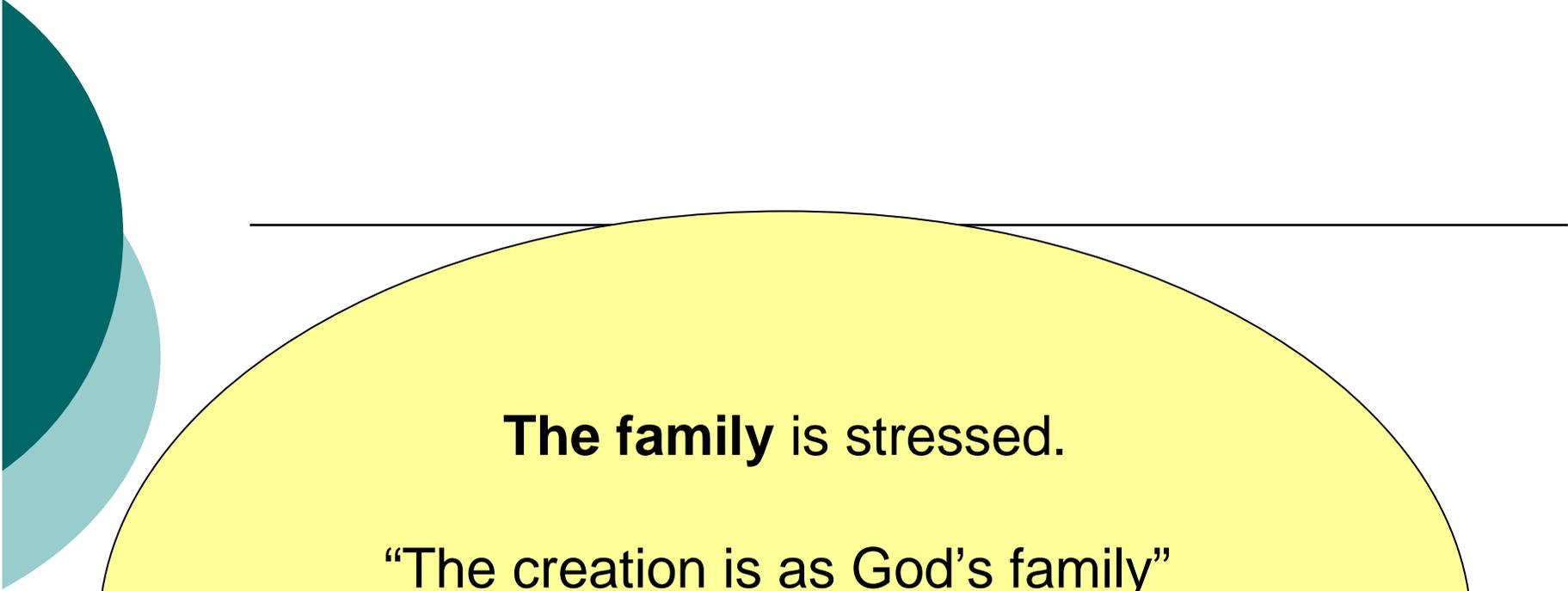
Much unity exists, with many Bruneians seeing the Sultan as the provider, caring and showing concern for their welfare and wellbeing. Bruneians also enjoyed many benefits and these, among other things, include no income tax, free education and health services.

In *Islam*, the followers are asked:
“what actions are most excellent?”

To gladden the heart of a human being,
to feed the hungry... to remove the wrongs of the
injured” (Al-Mamun Al-Suhrawardy, 1992: 89).

They are then told: “God’s pleasure is a father’s pleasure;
and God’s displeasure is a father’s displeasure”
(Al-Mamun Al-Suhrawardy, 1992: 103).

The leader can be seen as a father
– after all, “the best of your leaders are
those whom you love and they love you;
you pray for them and they pray for you”
(Low, 2007: 38; Philips, 2002).



The family is stressed.

“The creation is as God’s family”
(Al-Mamun Al-Suhrawardy, 1992: 75).



People & Culture

“Father leadership is indeed practised in Brunei, and it’s also reinforced by **the people and culture** in Brunei Darussalam” [as expressed by one of the several people whom this researcher spoke to]. The Bruneian Malays are also well known for their values such as **respecting one’s elders, obedience to one’s parents, being loyal and obeying one’s leaders**, as well as **showing empathy and being considerate to others**. (Haji Abdul Aziz 1992). Such cultural values, along with the national MIB national philosophy, thus reinforce the practice of Father Leadership in the country.



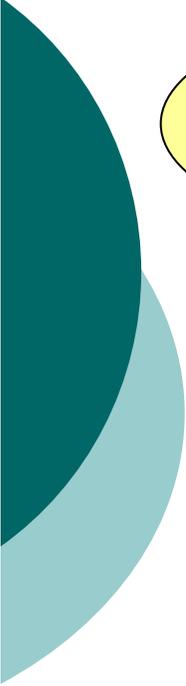
Planning & Directing

Under the reign of the Sultan, the nation has “enjoyed uninterrupted peace and much prosperity for almost four decades” (Asia, Inc.; 2006: 60). The people are happy. Oil and gas export revenues and government income has also made possible for Bruneians to enjoy a standard of living that is among the highest in the world (Asia, Inc, 2006).



Providing Fatherly Care and Concern

A parent of the father leader is ordinarily gentle, and nurturing. In Islam, it is said: “Whoever hath been given gentleness hath been given a good portion, in this world and the next”. “God is gentle and loveth gentleness” (Al-Mamun Al-Suhrawardy, 1992: 81).



Examples

Providing Fatherly Care and Concern (continued)

Concerned, when several houses in Kampong Ayer were affected by the storms in July 2007, His Majesty made visits to give a sense of presence while ensuring that repair works and relief to the residents were duly made. “The second visit surprised most villagers, even though some had expected the return of His Majesty to see the progress made.” (The Brunei Times, 2007: 1).



Giving Presence

His Majesty, Sultan Haji Hassanal Bolkiah Mu'izzaddin Waddaulah and the Yang di Pertuan of Brunei Darussalam and in fact, members of the royal family serve as role models. Even His Royal Highness Haji Al-Muhtadee Billah, the Crown Prince and Senior Minister at the Prime Minister's Office, gives his presence to the citizens. And among the many examples of his working and industry visits include that of the Water Works Department under the Public Works Department, and the Town and Country, Land Planning Department, the Housing Development Department and several other departments at the Ministry of Development (Abu Bakar, 2007; Ona, 2007).



Giving Presence

The key benefits here include:
the leader is indeed there for the people
the leader, humble, serves the people.

Akin to servant leadership, the father leaders also “focus on helping people to develop... The humanistic approach... ..also helps build community or a sense of togetherness among the stakeholders” (DuBrin, 2007: 243). Moreover, as in the Fish! Philosophy, the presence of the leader – “be there” can be very motivating for the followers (*stakeholders*) (Pike Place Fish Market, 2007, *italics mine*).



Role Modeling, Guiding and Growing

The leaders set the example, advise and guide; and the followers learn and grow.

Apart from His Majesty Sultan Haji Hassanal Bolkiah Mu'izzaddin Waddaulah, Her Majesty Raja Isteri Pengiran Anak Hajah Saleha, through officiating ceremonies, also guides the people of Brunei Darussalam. For example, she has stressed the need for a clean and healthy environment (Abu Bakar, 2007a: 1). Here, she speaks of the environment influencing and designing the level of human life and simultaneously, the human lifestyle needs to influence and take care of its surroundings. If an area is clean and beautiful, then ultimately, the entire surrounding area, *kampung* or *mukim* as well as nation will also be organised, clean and beautiful.



Q & A Session