

SELF DISRUPTIVE LEADERSHIP IN THE ERA OF MBKM

Gianti Gunawan

Psychology, Maranatha Christian University, gianti.gunawan@psy.maranatha.edu

Introduction

Disruption is a strong word. By definition, it means “disturbance or problems that interrupt an event, activity, or process.” Typically, disturbances are associated with the negative—bad classroom behavior, unruly customers, protestors, riots. But this is not how disruption is used here. Disruption here is taken to mean a force for good—a force for change that makes things better, either by displacing or overthrowing the old, or by creating new ways, things, thinking, or methods (Kao, 2018).

The combined impact of disruptive global megatrends has forced organizations to evolve rapidly—sometimes frantically to dealing with disruption. This has made leadership crucial to their continued success: not only are competent leaders even more vital in a complex and continually evolving ecosystem, but companies that fail to satisfy the market that they have the right people at the top risk dwindling investment.

Disruptive forces are driving the future of work. Following the seismic shifts caused by globalization, innovations in technology have revolutionized the idea of a competitor landscape, while digitalization has transformed how industries operate. To ensure organizations succeed in a rapidly changing business world in the years ahead, a new kind of future-ready leader must take priority. Current models of leadership go some way to answering this, research by the Korn Ferry Institute (2019) reveals the ideal leader for tomorrow’s disruptive business environment is The Self-Disruptive Leader. This new model of high-performing leader incorporates and builds on existing concepts of agile, digital, and inclusive leadership, but also highlights the importance of leaders who are experts in the creation of opportunity and the capitalization of the flow of knowledge.

Dynamic changes in the field of industry ultimately trigger competition in the world of this industry so that in the future will be tighter, especially the development of technology and research from other companies that do business in the same domain. To be able to survive in a dynamic environment, the company must be able to follow the pattern of change, otherwise the company will not survive. That means companies are required to make changes that can keep up with increasingly dynamic market changes.

Related to change in organization, Minister of education, culture, research and technology, Nadiem Anwar Makarim launched the Merdeka Belajar Kampus Merdeka (MBKM) in 2021, program that one of the government's flagship programs in addressing the problems of higher education today, namely the absorption of labor and relevance of graduates to the industrial world. With the MBKM program, students can take courses outside the study program for three semesters, and off campus for two semesters. Student exchanges, internships, research and humanitarian projects are some of the activities that can be participated in the MBKM program. Students are expected to experience firsthand the ecosystem of the world of work so that it becomes a provision of their ability to live the world of work in the future. This is the form of education transformation that the government wants, namely the quality of graduates who are relevant to the world of work and high competence.

In the other hand, this MBKM program can be a challenge in its application in universities, the new source of competitive advantage is a leader who can connect resources and people adeptly to build an innovation ecosystem. This enables them to bring robust ideas to market at a rapid pace and, crucially, to adapt quickly to change by disrupting themselves again and again. Self-Disruptive Leaders were strongly linked with high performance.

Discussion

Companies have to combined new and old world, only based on the advantages (which increases the range of different interests and opinions of the key stakeholders of an enterprise tremendously). For leaders, this means to continuously travelling with their teams through multi-polar fields of tensions and having to make decisions, step by step, milestone by milestone. This must not be arbitrary but needs fast management and decision making processes and rules that are intertwined with the company’s purpose. (Wolman et. Al, 2020)

Korn Ferry’s new leadership paradigm (2019) —the Self-Disruptive Leader—incorporates what we already know about agile, digital, and inclusive leaders. But in addition to these existing concepts, there are extra, invaluable qualities needed in tomorrow’s effective leaders, which show a clear link with high performance. By analyzing more than 150,000 business leaders, there are five dimensions of high performers that allow them to move quickly, self-disrupt, and—importantly—bring organizations with them. For leaders to succeed in the future of work, they must ADAPT:

1. **Anticipate:** Demonstrate contextual intelligence to make quick judgments and create opportunities; focus on the societal needs that the organization wants to serve; provide a direction to unify collective efforts even among disoriented environments. Leaders who anticipate are at the cutting edge of—and even create—new trends. Rather than reacting to the future, they help shape it. When others panic about ambiguity, they turn it into opportunities. These leaders listen rather than dictate, which helps them identify possibilities ahead of others and secure “first-mover” advantage. Their instinct is to create, while integrating differing views and making quick judgments to help others reach unified decisions. In ambiguous environments, people crave clarity, and these leaders provide direction so others can focus their efforts. They are clear about where to go but are flexible with how to get there.
2. **Drive:** Energize people by fostering a sense of purpose; manage the mental and physical energy of themselves and others; nurture a positive environment to keep people hopeful, optimistic, and intrinsically motivated. Those who drive organizations through disruption help others manage anxiety and stress, while bolstering motivation. They are fueled by purpose, articulating compelling messages to inspire others. These leaders are empathetic and can relate to the thoughts, emotions, and experiences of others, but they also know that emotions can be contentious, so they watch for and manage their own. Knowing colleagues often are exhausted and working at the edge of their comfort zone, and that employees’ intrinsic motivation is essential to innovation, these leaders focus on helping colleagues replenish what they need to sustain performance.
3. **Accelerate:** Manage the flow of knowledge to produce constant innovation and desired business outcomes; use agile processes, quick prototyping, and iterative approaches to rapidly implement and commercialize ideas. When they accelerate the energies of others and themselves, these leaders grasp how businesses can be gripped by the fear of missing out. They know innovators may not originate ideas but are the first to execute them successfully, so they act rapidly and courageously to secure this advantage. That means leaders must possess the perspective and business acumen to recognize true innovation and when it is ready to launch, even when it is not welcomed. These leaders often avoid waterfall approaches, instead acting with agility to move ideas forward quickly. By earning early support through quick prototyping, these leaders give others the autonomy and flexibility to achieve, while holding them accountable. Accelerate is the most traditional leadership skill.
4. **Partner:** Connect and form partnerships across increasingly permeable functional and organizational boundaries; enable the exchange of ideas; combine complementary capabilities to enable high performance. Leaders with the ability to partner effectively understand that innovation is created collectively, not alone. Acutely aware that technological advancement has dissolved boundaries between industries, they are resourceful in creating networks and partnerships that combine and amplify different strengths and capabilities, allowing their companies to succeed in new markets. By avoiding restrictive hierarchy and the “command-and-control” leadership models of the past, these leaders facilitate empowered and original thinking. Its best practitioners also grasp that collaboration doesn’t always create team harmony: productive confrontation can spark original ideas and sometimes needs to be encouraged.
5. **Trust:** Form a new relationship between the organization and the individual that centers on mutual growth; integrate diverse perspectives and values; help individuals to uncover their sense of purpose and facilitate them in providing their maximum contribution. Those who inspire trust recognize that diversity is crucial, also it requires more than welcoming differences in race, gender, orientation, and social background. It encompasses a mindset of inclusivity, sharing goals, sharing responsibility, and sharing power. It involves leveraging new ideas about the meaning of work and its place in our lives: embracing the “gig economy” by partnering permanent staff with contractors on short- and longer-term projects; valuing independence and helping staff achieve authentic self expression; and coaching others to find how their work has purpose and adds meaning to their lives. Disruption by definition allows for differences, individuality, and defiance of norms. These leaders know that rising generations care about fulfilling their personal dreams, and that by helping individuals to achieve these, organizations can maximize their disruptive capability.

The ideal future leader embodies all five ADAPT dimensions at a very high level. They combine future-focused strengths (allowing them to drive with purpose and anticipate changing realities); the core “traditional” strengths (enabling them to accelerate their strategy); and collaborative skills (being able to partner with others to build strong symbiotic relationships, and building trust by bringing people together and helping them contribute to what gives them a sense of purpose).

To navigate change in organization, many companies need to overhaul not only their leadership development programs but the very structure and culture of their businesses. This

organizational step change will enable them to equip their leaders-in-waiting with the opportunities they need to become a new generation of Self-Disruptive Leaders. To beat disruption, they literally need to “disrupt” themselves—their thoughts, their values, their actions. The disruption of markets can only be met with the disruption of the leadership approach. In short, the self-disruptive leader is what companies now need.

Models of good leadership are often based on replicating the characteristics and capabilities that have succeeded in the past. But while many of these qualities are important, this approach neglects the importance of the future. In a world characterized by rapid change, yesterday's paradigms risk becoming redundant, or even harmful. Predicting exactly what the future will require is an impossible task, so leaders instead must equip themselves with a strong portfolio of future-oriented and change-ready skills in order to keep responding to fluctuating market demands with dynamism and insight.

Today's business environment is characterized by rapidly changing strategies, business model innovation, and operational transformation. While leaders trapped in yesterday's mindset often struggle to find their place and voice in this new business world, Self-Disruptive Leaders are highly learning agile, self-aware, emotionally and socially intelligent, purpose-driven, and assured but humble. They proactively modify their own methods and attitudes, enabling them to keep pace with the rapidly transforming environments that threaten slower-moving peers. Flexible mindsets at the top permeate throughout these businesses and enable every individual to navigate change and succeed in a shifting landscape. Leaders who make their teams dependent on them block growth, but those who can get organizations behind their vision and then empower others to execute on it are well-positioned to achieve.

Although there is global demand for all aspects of self disruptive behavior in leaders, each market has different strengths and weaknesses in its current stock. What's more, investors in different markets have distinctive priorities when it comes to what they want most from leaders. For example, leaders at Amazon are right—not always, but a lot. They have strong business judgment, and they spread that strong judgment to others through the utter clarity with which they define their goals and the metrics they use to measure success. (John Rossman, 2014)

According to Korn Ferry (2019), Indonesian leaders' skills are relatively balanced. More encouragingly, the skills of Indonesia's leaders broadly mirror the skills investors in the market are looking for. Indonesian leaders can take this as a call to action to shore up their general leadership skills without needing to focus in one area above all else.

In the MBKM program, there will be several matrices that will be used to help universities achieve their targets (<https://www.kalderanews.com>):

1. Autonomy for State Universities and Private to open or establish a new study program. This autonomy is granted if the universities have accreditation A and B, and have cooperated with organizations and /or universities that are included in the QS Top 100 World Universities. Exceptions apply to health and education programs. Added by the Minister of Education, "All new courses will automatically get accreditation C".
2. The re-accreditation program is automatic for all ranks and is voluntary for universities and courses that are ready to move up the ranks. In the future, accreditation that has been determined by the National Accreditation Board of Higher Education (BAN-PT) remains valid for 5 years but will be renewed automatically. Applications for re-accreditation are limited to at least 2 years after obtaining the last accreditation. For universities accredited B and C can apply for an increase in accreditation at any time.
3. Give the right to students to take courses outside the study program and make changes to the definition of Semester Credit Unit. Universities are obliged to provide the right for students to volunteer, so students can take or not semester credit unit outside their campus as much as two semesters or the equivalent of 40 credits. In addition, students can also take credits in other courses in their campus as much as one semester of the total semester to be taken. Minister of Education explained that there is a change in understanding about credits. Each credits is defined as 'activity hours', not 'hours of study'. Activities here mean learning in the classroom, internships or work practices in industries or organizations, student exchange, community service, entrepreneurship, research, independent studies, or teaching activities in remote areas. Each activity chosen by the student must be guided by a lecturer determined by the campus. The list of activities that can be taken by students can be selected from government-determined programs and/or programs approved by the rector.

As a result, the greatest skill shortfall varies in different places, and leaders in each economy need to focus on a different ADAPT dimension to satisfy market demand. Each of the five dimensions qualify as the biggest priority for leadership development in at least one economy, according to the gaps between the ADAPT qualities that leaders have and the ones that the markets demand.

Conclusion

What makes leaders who ADAPT so valuable, is the transferability of these particular skills. Not only do self-disruptive leaders render positive personal impact, but they also have business transformation impact. In the process of disrupting themselves, these leaders guarantee they will bring the rest of the organization with them. Self-disruptive leaders embrace and recognize potential, rather than look down from above and think they know best. Those leaders that excel strongly in all five ADAPT qualities stand to make the biggest progress in their organizations.

To create opportunities in an ever-fluctuating world, organizations need Self Disruptive Leaders—people who are engines of change and generate change from within, at the pace of their business. Traditional training routes aren't equipped to solve the leadership crisis, often producing outmoded mindsets that can't keep up with the rate of change. Instead, a revolution in how companies develop leaders is vital for closing the leadership gap. To capitalize on an increasingly disruptive world, companies must accelerate their identification, recruitment, retention, development, and promotion of leaders with self disruptive potential at all levels of the business. Organizations must develop a culture that empowers everyone within them to challenge their own thinking and disrupt themselves. This final point underpins the solution to the leadership crisis. Leadership can no longer be isolated and inscrutable; by cascading ADAPT qualities throughout the organization, companies will develop a self-perpetuating ecosystem of leaders, ready for whatever the future of work brings.

To tackle this rapid changes, organizations need to think about talent as a system—including recruitment, compensation, training, development, and succession planning. These functions and programs may need a full revamp to ensure that organizations widen and maintain a flow of diverse talent, especially of hard-to-find Self-Disruptive Leaders. In beginning to develop this system, businesses should focus on three key points (Ferry,2019):

1. Develop new mindsets. Traditional leadership development focuses on skills and behaviors, but this needs to be supplemented with mindset development to successfully advance new Self-Disruptive Leaders.
2. Open up leadership development opportunities. Leadership development must become available to more people. In the past, it often has been elitist and focused on certain individuals; it needs to move toward a collective model that empowers everyone in a company to develop their leadership capabilities.
3. Foster “always-on” development. Organizations need to facilitate always-on development not only by providing learning opportunities but by helping busy employees navigate training easily and rewarding them for learning. Simultaneously, individuals at all levels need to take ownership of their own development.

Together, this will build an employment contract built on mutual growth. Although these changes may seem daunting to current executives and directors, companies must act with urgency to put these structures in place. To avoid further serious talent deficits, organizations must move with alacrity and evolve their approach to develop new leaders.

References

1. <https://www.antaranews.com/berita/2188898/nadiem-mbkm-salah-satu-program-atasi-masalah-pendidikan-tinggi>
2. <https://www.kalderanews.com/2020/01/inilah-arti-kampus-merdeka-dalam-kebijakan-merdeka-belajar-ala-mendikbud-nadiem/>
3. <http://www.kornferry.com/insights/featured-topics/leadership/self-disruptive-leader>
4. Kao, Rich. (2018). *Disruptive Leadership. Apple and the Technology of Caring Deeply—Nine Keys to Organizational Excellence and Global Impact*. Colorado : Taylor & Francis Group.
5. Rossman, John. (2014). *The Amazon Way. 14 Leadership Principles Behind The World's Most Disruptive Company*. USA : Publishing Platform, North Charleston, S.C.
6. Wollman, P., Kuhn, F., Kempf, M. (2020). *Three Pillars of Organization and Leadership in Disruptive Times. Navigating Your Company Successfully Through the 21st Century Bussiness World*. Switzerland : Springer.