

LEADERSHIP : THROUGH THE LENSES OF CHINESE PHILOSOPHY OF YIN-YANG**Vaishali Joshi****&****Vaishali Narolia, Assistant Professor, Satyawati College, University of Delhi****ABSTRACT**

Yin yang theory is the core principle of chinese philosophy and metaphysics. In Chinese philosophy yin yang metaphorically describes two opposite yet complimentary forces which are interconnected and interrelated and together form the whole. It is the concept of duality like day and night, hot and cold. It is the essence of many fields from martial arts to medical science .Yin suggests female, submissive, nurturing, yielding, receiving in approach while yang is masculine, aggressive, action oriented, giving in nature.

Good leadership is need of humankind of all times. It is still a matter of wide interest despite of much research being done on it already. A vast literature has been derived from western perspective. While extensive research has been done in management and psychology, much remains to be explored in other fields like philosophy, social science, anthropology etc. The concern is that it has always been looked from a western perspective where it is treated as an object and noun and can be explained through words and definition. It is believed to be linear in function and easily separable into parts. It follows the logic of right and wrong. The leader has to take a stand on what is right and what is wrong. There are no two rights.

In this paper, the concept of yin yang is applied to leadership. Qualities like commanding, action oriented are yang while listening and empowering others are yin. A good leader does not overplay and maintains balance between the two. He finds oneness with his followers.

Introduction: What is yin and yang

In Chinese philosophy yin and yang are opposite forces which are actually complimentary, interconnected and interdependent. Yin is the soft, feminine, subtle, yielding, nurturing, passive energy while yang is hard, masculine, active, controlling and thrusting part of the force. These forces are opposite yet complimentary. They exist in pairs like day and night, hot and cold, light and darkness. One cannot exist without other.

In the diagram, black part is yin and white part is yang and outer circle represents everything. There is black seed in yang and vice versa which suggests that nothing is completely yin or yang. Both contain a part of each other. Both the forces should be in balance to create a state of harmony. However, these forces are not static but are in dynamic equilibrium.



Yin yang

Day night

Hot cold

Summer winter

Male female

Heaven earth

Everything in the universe can be divided in yin and yang. From forces of nature to human body parts, to work life balance, to strategy and culture, or nations.

.There is no hierarchy between them .Yin can't be said to be superior to yang or vice versa. They just wait for the right time to show up.

The nature of yin-yang is as follows:-

Opposite yet complimentary yin and yang have opposite qualities but they are complimentary. Together they form one reality by completing each other.

Yin and yang only in relativity: The concept of relativity applies to yin and yang also. According to it, the nature of object is not absolute; it depends on the object with which it is compared. For example a woman is yin when compared to man but yang when compared to a child. Water is yin to steam but yang to ice. Strategy is yang when compared to culture of the organisation but yin when compared to operations.

Circular and dynamic: Growth is a part of yin and yang philosophy. They are not in a stagnant state. They continuously evolve and grow and are in a state of dynamic equilibrium.

Part of one reality: Yin and yang are not divided in two parts. The essence lies in their existence as a pair which is more meaningful than parts seen separately. They are not linear to each other and hence cannot be seen in two different parts.

Harmony in balanced state: A state of balance between the two forces is necessary to create harmony.

Applying Yin-Yang to leadership

Leadership is widely associated with actions taken by the leader. This is the narrowest form of leadership where it is seen as what the leader does. It is generally seen from the yang perspective where leader uses aggression to command and control others in order to get things done by them.

But a good leader should have yin qualities too. Yin leader inculcates qualities of yielding and listening to others. He knows the art of giving power to others and does not hesitate in learning from his subordinate team members. He senses when the time is to go with the flow. Going with the flow

does not mean not doing anything. It means channelizing the resources to make the best of what circumstances has to offer instead of wasting energy in fighting against it.

Some of the examples of leaders inculcating yin yang qualities are:

Empowers others: He believes in empowering others. He does not take the credit for work done and lets people take the spotlight by disappearing in the background.

Handling conflict: Regarding conflict, the leader does not take stand in what is right and wrong. He moves away from the western perspective where you are either right or wrong and adopts yin yang way where there is no right or wrong instead either and/or way of resolving conflict. This approach equips him to deal with tough situations more efficiently. So yin leader moves away from rock logic to water logic.

Focuses on EQ: A good leader balances both IQ (intelligence quotient) and EQ (emotional quotient). YY style of leadership enhances the emotional intelligence

Balances his strength: Regarding strengths of a leader, many leaders use them excessively to the point where it backfires. A yin yang leader knows how to maintain the balance and use it more selectively.

Balances relationships and work: While many leaders today understand the importance of building good relationships, but in the times of uncertainty, they unconsciously give priority to results only. While a yin yang leader does not treat it as a trade off and sees both as part of one.

Conclusion

“A mind that is pure masculine cannot create anymore than a mind that is purely feminine. The androgynous mind is resonant and porous, it transmits emotion without impediment, and it is naturally creative, incandescent and undivided. “

Virginia Woolf

The essence of yin yang function lies in striving balance between two opposite forces and seeing duality as two sides of the same coin. The concept of yin and yang can be applied in every business function, for instance budget vs. Innovation. Learning, training, organisational development are yin whereas compensation, benefit analysis are yang in nature. There must be balance as none of the part is dominant. If you doing well on customer satisfaction front and don't see any movement in sales growth, then your business needs more yang force in it whereas if you have burgeoning sales growth but no customer loyalty then you need to pump in more of yin. So we need a balance to achieve harmony.

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