

Perspective

Organisational and Emotional Psychology Views on Yozan Uesugi's Leadership

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Abstract

Yozan Uesugi was a Daimyo (feudal lord) who governed an area called Yonezawa in Yamagata Prefecture, Japan from 1767 to 1823. Yonezawa was originally an impoverished provincial government which under his leadership regained a healthy financial status. His leadership style was unique among Daimyos, yet respected and regarded as an ideal by many including President John F. Kennedy. One of the characteristics of Yozan's leadership was he demonstrated what he expected his people to do, instead of just telling them what to do. Despite the power and status as a Daimyo, he lived a thrifty life as he expected his people to do. In this perspective paper, we discuss Yozan's leadership from Organisational and Emotional Psychological perspectives. More specifically, we introduce servant leadership, intrinsically motivated leadership, the Emotional Regulatory Systems of Compassion-Focused Therapy, and Zen philosophy. Lastly, we discuss his leadership from a beyond WEIRD perspective, relating to a Japanese well-being concept, ikigai, roughly translated as reason for living. By discussing Yozan's leadership through those lenses, we offer possible relationships among those seemingly different theoretical domains.



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Keywords

Leadership; Yozan Uesugi; compassion; Zen; Japanese leadership

1. Yozan Uesugi

Yozan Uesugi was the 9th lord of the Yonezawa Domain in Yamagata Prefecture, who saved the economy of the domain through his compassionate leadership. He is one of the five notable figures and most famous leaders in Japanese history as featured in the book *Representative Men of Japan: Essays* by Kanzo Uchimura, originally written in 1908 [1]. The 35th President of the United States, John F. Kennedy respected Yozan's leadership style, which was a key reason for his daughter Caroline's visit to Yonezawa in 2014 [2].

Yozan was born in 1751 as the second son of Tanemi Akizuki, the lord of Takanabe in Hyuga [3]. At the age of 10, he was adopted by Yukihiime, a daughter of Shigesada, the 8th lord of Yonezawa Domain. Yukihiime lived with paralysis and was unable to communicate well, however historians posit this captures Yozan's attitude towards people, looking at their hearts instead of external manifestations [3]. Also, from the age of 14, Yozan started to study under Hosoi Heishu, a Confucian scholar who emphasised the importance of courage. At the age of 17, Yozan succeeded to the governorship of Yonezawa, which at that time was very financially challenged [3]. Yozan visited Kasuga Shrine to wish luck on his government, and noted four principles [4]:

1. People first.
2. Never stop training martial arts and studying
3. Simple and frugal living
4. Reward and punish in the right manner.

Simplicity and frugality of life were repeatedly mentioned by Yozan, who practiced this in his own life thoroughly (e.g., unlike other Daimyos, he wore worn-out clothing until they were practically threadbare, or used the same tea leaves multiple times to make tea [3]).

1.1 Great Frugality Order

In 1767, Yozan implemented the Great Frugality Order, which included all citizens and also top officials [3]. Some officials strongly opposed the order, claiming frugal living would damage the pride of officials, and therefore damage the reputation of Yonezawa. However, Yozan did not change the order. People and officials ate simply and dressed simply. Living costs reduced more than half. Additionally, the number of staff who lived at Yozan's house to help chores was reduced from 50 to 9 [3].

Along with this order, agriculture started to be actively developed [3]. Many technologies and rituals were learned from China, including a prayer to a rice field in which the Daimyo himself plowed the rice field. This influenced Yozan to help in plowing the soil, and convince the samurais in Yonezawa to exchange their swords to hoes, and contribute to improving agriculture in the area. Sometimes these cultivated fields were destroyed by opposing officials, however, Yozan persisted in cultivating the fields and producing new plants [3].

Furthermore, Yozan endorsed the development of other industries in Yonezawa, such as salt manufacturing, paper manufacturing, pottery manufacturing, and in particular weaving [5]. Yonezawa was rich in ramie, a type of grass, and women from samurai families were trained in ramie weaving. Following this, the cultivation of mulberry trees and sericulture were encouraged, leading to silk weaving. Together, these created the foundation for today's Yonezawa weaving reputation.

1.2 Establishment of the School 'Kojokan'

Yozan believed that learning was the foundation of good governance [1]. His belief was embodied in 1776 by the establishment of what eventually became the oldest public school in Japan, the Kojokan in Motogomachi. When Yozan launched the school he sought his teacher, Hosoi Heishu's, opinions, who advised Yozan that learning not be mere thinking or literacy. Rather, it should also be practical, also known as Jitsugaku [実学]. This emphasised education to build students' political and economic skills. The first cohort of Kojokan was 20 students, and many great people have studied at this school to this day [2].

1.3 Great Temmei Famine

From 1782 to 1788, Japan suffered the deadliest famine in its modern history, the Great Temmei Famine [1]. A combination of unusually cold weather, domestic and international volcano eruptions, and the government's new tax policy to rely heavily on rice were thought to be causes for this famine, which killed approximately 900,000 people. However, there was no deaths in Yonezawa during this famine, despite the price of rice increasing five times the normal price. Yozan bought 10,000 bales of rice from the North and shared them with his people, ensuring the poor also received food. Moreover, Yozan circulated a brochure about what grasses were edible and how to prepare them. This practice was known as 'Katemono [かてもの]', which educated individuals from consuming poisonous plants. Lastly, the agricultural and industrial technologies that Yozan actively developed helped his people successfully survive the famine [5].

The practice of Katemono was further developed post-famine [6]. Yozan ordered Yonezawa's doctor in chief, Eietsu Yaoita, to study plants and animals that could be eaten daily. The Katemono became a book of valuable lessons for hunger relief. The book contained detailed descriptions of the characteristics and cooking methods of 80 species of plants, trees, and fruits, along with methods of preserving food, making miso, and cooking fish and meat. Over 1500 copies were published and distributed in Yonezawa within a year [6].

1.4 Retirement at the Age of 35

Yozan retired in 1785 at the age of 35, and handed over the responsibility of the estate to Haruhiro Uesugi, the son of Yozan's predecessor Shigesada Uesugi [3]. Yozan left the 'Denkoku no ji', translated as the Message to the Kingdom to Haruhiro summarising his thoughts on leadership, such as what a leader should do for his people, and what people should do for their leader.

Yozan returned as a consultant to the government after his retirement due to Haruhiro's insistence [3]. Yozan continued to support Yonezawa's financial and societal development, while continuing to live frugally. On March 12, 1822, Yozan passed away at the age of 72 due to poor health. In 2007, Yozan was ranked first in a Japanese worker survey of ideal leaders in Japanese

history. One of the most popular quotes attributed to him was ‘Naseba naru,’ meaning ‘Where there is a will, there is a way’, and people today, including Caroline Kennedy, still use it [7].

1.5 Organisational and Emotional Psychology

This paper offers perspectives to Yozan’s leadership from Organisational and Emotional Psychology lenses. Organisational Psychology is the scientific study of human behaviour in the workplace and organisations [8]. This branch of psychology focuses on understanding and addressing issues regarding many areas of organisational settings such as organisational culture, leadership, and overall employee well-being. Organisational Psychology aims to improve productivity, efficiency and the quality of work life by using psychological principles and research methods [8].

Emotional Psychology refers to the study of human emotions and how the emotions influence thoughts, behaviour, and overall mental well-being of an individual [9]. Emotional Psychology explores topics such as the nature of emotions, their regulation, and the impact they have on relationships, and mental health. Emotional Psychology aims to understand emotions including how they develop, their components, and their role in mental disorders and therapeutic alliance [9].

In this perspective paper, we discuss Yozan’s leadership relating to servant leadership and intrinsic motivation from the Organisational Psychology perspective (Table 1). From the Emotional Psychology perspective, we discuss his leadership relating to the Emotional Regulatory Systems of Compassion-Focused Therapy, Zen and Ikigai. Each perspective is explored through the lens of established theories pertinent to the respective concept.

Table 1 Concepts discussed and corresponding examples of Yozan’s leadership.

Concept	Example
Servant Leadership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Yozan’s philosophy of people first • Careful and attentive listening to people • Creating a supportive environment, promoted by the opinion box
Intrinsic Motivation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transparency of the financial status of Yonezawa • Abolishment of head positions to reduce corruption • Enhanced education about morals, ceremonies, farming, house-repairing and other daily matters in each district • Increased sense of belongingness
Emotional Regulatory Systems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Being able to stay in the soothing system in a financial crisis • Not motivated by extrinsic means • Demonstrated an example of a frugal life to significantly reduce the expenses • Compassion for people’s welfare
Zen	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discernment of one’s actions from a state of stillness, which is free from anxiety and stress (a goal of Zen) • This discernment contributed to addressing the root causes of Yonezawa’s fiscal hardships and the series of famines by giving him clarity and confidence
Ikigai	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Helping people in his estate break out of poverty

- Reorganisation of his estate and the enactment of social and economic reforms within the area
-

1.6 Servant Leadership

In the modern organisational psychology concepts, Yozan's leadership style is aligned to Servant Leadership (SL). SL as a philosophy was first coined by Greenleaf [10] who noted Servant Leaders put the interests of their subordinates ahead of their own. As leaders their goal is to serve [11]. Researchers argue Jesus Christ was most probably the first leader to combine serving and leading [12] citing this quote from the New Testament in the Bible, 'Being a Servant Is the Distinguishing Mark of Greatness in Christ's Kingdom' (Matthew, 20:25-28). Other potential Servant Leaders include King Frederick II of Prussia (r.1740-1786), who in pursuing a policy of tolerance notoriously represented himself as the 'first servant of state' and depicted himself as righteous and a father of people [13]. SL considers serving others as the highest priority and its characteristics include listening, empathy, healing, awareness, persuasion, conceptualisation, foresight, stewardship, and commitment [14]. While conventional autocratic leadership uses power, SL is the opposite using a supportive approach based on collaborative decision-making and teamwork to develop the organisation and improve an individual's performance [14]. This approach creates a supportive environment which helps improve organisational quality. It does this by disregarding the leader's egotism and focusing on the employee's development and performance through the sharing of power and status, and by enhancing a genuine concept of shared value [15].

SL is centred on leadership for the people instead of a leader's egoism and self-aggrandisement [16], and helps leaders gain followers and influence with trust and confidence based on a genuine vision [17]. SL motivates with a desire to serve and act rather than showing individual or positional power [18]. This includes exhibiting qualities that imply status, including respect for remaining moral and being benevolent [19]. The SL approach also shares power, putting the need of the people at the forefront. Many top-ranking performing companies in America, such as Southwest Airlines, TD Industries, and The Synovus Financial Corporation are practicing this style of leadership [20]. This style also enables people to become healthier, wiser, freer, and more likely to become servant leaders themselves within their own structure [21].

While SL means servant first [11], this style also demonstrates accomplishments within their followers, which include engagement, contribution, and commitment [20]. Furthermore, SL requires skills such as listening, caring, helping, and respecting people. This also includes teamwork and participation in decision-making processes to boost organisational dedication and appreciation [22]. The level of support with a SL style enhances a supportive environment where leaders with compassion and empathy support positive emotional health and well-being of employees [23].

The SL style includes interpersonal skills and empathy competencies which are considered critical factors [24]. Successful SL also requires authenticity and a genuine interest to help individuals using a democratic approach [22]. A SL democratic approach within a working environment and organisation with consistent constructs is an efficient mode which helps foster desirable employee mindsets, behaviours and performance outcomes [25].

Yozan's leadership style overlaps with many characteristics of SL. Yozan prioritised people first using compassion, empathy, and humility. He listened to people and created a supportive environment, which included the use of an opinion box. This was relatively unusual practice at the

time. This showed engagement, contribution, and commitment. Yozan's dedication to the province with simplistic living was in line with SL principles [26]. Yozan has been described as an authentic, enlightened, and ethical leader with great influence both locally and globally [26]. Yozan's leadership approach was respected by leaders like JFK, who was inspired to overcome eccentricity and egocentric traits in favour of service, community, and sacrifice [27].

In conclusion, Yozan's leadership style overlaps with an SL style in many ways. This approach has recently been popularised, which has demonstrated long-term growth within top-placed businesses [20]. Further, SL provides a supportive environment based on empathy and compassion, which supports positive emotional health and well-being [23].

2. Intrinsically Motivated Leadership

Another Organisational Psychology perspective to Yozan's leadership is his focus on intrinsic motivation. While many Daimyos were distracted by extrinsic rewards such as status, money, or fame, Yozan maintained a high level of intrinsic motivation, focusing on making his people happier. Self-Determination Theory as a framework helps explain how Yozan wove intrinsic motivation into his leadership. Self-Determination Theory posits that once autonomy, competence, and relatedness are fulfilled, individuals can self-perform, motivated by their own nature [28]. These three needs are further explained as follows. Autonomy is the sense of self-regulating, which is the initiative of one's own action; competence is the sense of success and growth, which is the mastering of new skills; relatedness is the sense of belonging, which is the feeling of connectedness with others [29, 30]. When these three needs are satisfied, it fosters peoples' intrinsic motivation to pursue their tasks [31, 32]. Intrinsic motivation is not based on external drives, such as rewards and punishments [28]. It is derived from within the individual, for example, engaging in a fulfilling hobby. A contemporary example is Google. Often Google's success is presented as attributable to its focus on intrinsic motivators such as autonomy, creativity and innovation [33]. One example is the side project time: Google employees can allocate 20% of their worktime on side project [34]. These autonomy-based activities can foster an organisational culture highlighting intrinsic motivation [35].

2.1 Reformation to Promote Intrinsic Motivation

Yozan made significant reformations to tackle the financial crisis in his domain [36]. First, he made financial information transparent to his people so they all would know the current situation. His people were surprised by the financial deficit [36]. This awareness, whilst important, was not enough to trigger the autonomy of action required for change. Strict rules were enforced to motivate his people, such as merciless punishment for detected crimes [1]. Furthermore, Yozan abolished head positions in his domain to reduce corruption. He divided his territory into twelve districts, which were overseen by officials to teach residents morals, ceremonies, farming, house-repairing, and other daily matters in each district [36]. This promoted better and closer relationships among the officials and residents. Locals also developed a sense of belonging in their areas. Hence, Yozan emphasized mutual support and collaboration [26]. Over time, relatedness was facilitated by care, love and trust [29, 37]. Under these reformations residents and officials mastered new skills that satisfied their competence through positive feedback and optimal challenges [29]. They were required to report to their chief in mutual conferences [1]. Self-determination helps achieve basic psychological needs, and so it facilitates individual's intrinsic motivation as shown by Yozan's

governors, police, captains, sergeants, and his people in supporting his administration and developing hope for a better future [1].

2.2 Yozan's Personal Intrinsic Motivation

Yozan's reformation of Yonezawa was driven by his personal principles and ideas, based on his early-life teacher, Heishu Hosoi. Yozan realised it was necessary to take measures to improve his financially challenged province, so he called upon his own intrinsic motivation to think, learn and act [36]. He learnt to self-regulate by cutting costs, and increased revenue by finding more suitable and profitable crops to cultivate on his land. Lastly, he connected his people by establishing the Kojokan school. Not only did he raise awareness among his people, but he also encouraged them to master practical skills, corresponding to intrinsic rewards. He successfully applied these personal self-determination techniques at a societal level, supporting the growth of an intrinsic motivation process for all his people.

3. Emotional Regulatory Systems

Compassion-Focused Therapy, developed by Paul Gilbert, includes interventions to develop an individual's compassion. Gilbert suggested humans have three emotion regulation systems, namely (a) threat and self-protection system, (b) incentive and resource-seeking system, and (c) soothing-contentment system [38]. The threat and self-protection system picks up threats, and generates anger, anxiety or disgust for self-protection. The incentive and resource-seeking regulation system motivates a person to seek external resources. Finally, the soothing-contentment system is activated when a person feels safe and content. If the soothing system is under-developed, an individual may have a higher chance to experience distress, hence, causing mental illness. Individuals with high shame and self-criticism are more likely to have an unbalanced soothing system and it is difficult for them to be self-compassionate [39]. For example, internal self-berating and fear of rejection draw them into depression and anxiety [38]. Only if threats are resolved and resources are sufficient, will they become content [40]. Contentment is also linked to peacefulness and well-being. Compassion-Focused Therapy explores internal compassion to replace self-criticism [41].

3.1 Contentment in Yozan

Throughout Yozan's leadership, he maintained a balanced regulatory system, especially a strong sense of contentment [3]. In Compassion-Focused Therapy, this is presented as the soothing system. When Yozan became a lord, he was facing a financial crisis in the Yonezawa Domain. His threat and self-protection regulatory system should typically activate fear and anxiety, but instead, he made administrative reforms. He was not driven by power and wealth at the expense of others. He reduced his family expenses and housemaids by 80 percent. To set an example to his people, he also kept his lifestyle simple by consuming only one dish and soup for meals. He believed changes started with him before influencing others. His people's happiness brought him contentment, as he said, 'People's happiness is the ruler's wealth' [1]. Yozan exhibited strong compassion by placing other individuals' happiness first [42]. Yozan had a well-regulated soothing system that led to successful leadership. This may be partly due to his experiences in caring for his disabled wife,

Yoshihime. Despite being an arranged marriage, Yozan never showed dissatisfaction. He took care of her and comforted her by making toys and dolls [1]. Since caring behaviours can better develop the soothing system, the personal experience of these behaviours within his own family can be an explanation for his positive calmness [40, 43]. Furthermore, most Daimyos usually had many concubines but Yozan only had one despite his personal circumstances. Yozan's choice of personal life demonstrates his control by keeping his desires to a minimum. Even though the soothing system relates to interpersonal relationships and social safeness, it is possible that drive and threat regulation can result in higher contentment [38]. This is further reflected by Yozan's other life choices, such as using old tatami mats until they were fully worn [1]. He practised these behaviours as part of his daily life, with his family and with his nation. He believed governors should be 'fathers and mothers' of the people, with the officers acting as sincere role models to help educate the children and the people. Yonezawa was able to overcome its financial crisis under his leadership, due to his self-awareness and compassionate behaviours. An example of contemporary applications of compassionate management is present in the organisational philosophy of KYOCERA Corporation. Their philosophy focuses on having a compassionate mind to others and the society [44].

4. Zen Philosophies

4.1 Zen Influences of Higher Meaning and Compassion

Zen seeks the perfection or realisation of one's true self. Through the meditational experience known as "satori," practitioners embody non-discriminatory wisdom. This process of discovering wisdom leads to the experiential realisation of the equality of all events without discrimination [45]. Yozan paved the way for the Yonezawa state revival during the 18th Century by leading with principles comparable to many aspects of Japanese Zen philosophy. When he became the lord of Yonezawa, Yozan made a vow to commit to his training, to act as a father to the people of Yonezawa by rebuilding the state and administering justice within his leadership [46]. In the Zen tradition, discernment of one's actions from a state of stillness is a goal that Zen practitioners aim to cultivate. This involves making judgements based on psychological states free from anxiety and stress [45]. Yozan addressed the root causes of Yonezawa's fiscal hardships and the series of famines with clarity and confidence [47] by being in alignment with his moral goal to serve the people [48]. This was demonstrated by his leadership actions and his personal life. Yozan purposely placed the financial welfare of the estate above overindulgences and drastically reduced his personal expenses by adopting a minimal way of living [49]. In an epistle to his descendant, Yozan wrote, "The lord exists for the sake of the state and the people; the state and the people do not exist for the sake of the lord" [50]. Using Zen-like approaches to make decisions, Yozan acted and led with certainty and precision in alignment with his values to serve the people. This inspired the people of Yonezawa to work with their neighbours to build up the estate and support one another.

4.2 Three Help Spirits

Three Help Spirits comprised self-help, mutual help among neighbours, and public-help [51]. Cultivating a Zen mentality requires the acceptance of various traditions without threatening core belief systems [52]. Yozan ruled to serve the people, and this included making civil administration a central task of the lord [49]. He honoured his Confucian roots and promoted fulfilling familial

obligations before that of the shogunate [49]. Yozan understood the interconnected relationship between himself, his retainers, and the Yonezawa commoners. He viewed them as the 100,000 people united to serve the Uesugi house, with himself as a fellow servant of the state [53]. Under this leadership approach, Yozan implemented social reform by establishing a social welfare system among residents, which he described as the “Three Help Spirits” [51]. This consisted of self-help, mutual-help demonstrated as helping one’s neighbour, and public-help depicted as administrative relief [51]. This approach aimed to support those in need and to address community disasters [46]. In Zen philosophy, the promotion to perfect personhood consists of non-discriminatory wisdom accompanied by compassion in everyday life when interacting with the self, other people, and the environment [45]. Yozan encouraged people to value supporting each other by providing teachers to teach filial piety and caring for the needy [46]. He also provided schools to teach Confucian values and medicine [46]. Yozan organised agricultural associations to organize farmers to support one another to fulfil various tasks, such as tilling soil, raising silk, and supporting families [46]. By implementing various social reforms, Yozan encouraged people of Yonezawa to base their decisions on, and to act for, the greater good for themselves and for those around them. This helped them build a greater sense of purpose and community that generated economic growth in the area.

4.3 Compassion

Compassion was cultivated within these communities as farmers came to see each other as extended family members, sharing in the joys and sorrows of daily life [46]. One of the main practices of Zen involves meditation to cultivate the mind, to see reality as it actually exists and to develop understanding for others’ experiences [54]. This requires practitioners to directly observe, and experience phenomena as opposed to simply rationalizing it [55]. Yozan worked directly with the people, and in doing so, understood what industrial reforms were necessary to build up the community. By implementing these he inspired them to work with sincerity and with greater effort [46]. He diversified industries within Yonezawa to include silk, paper manufacturing, and mining [46]. His direct involvement with the people and the voicing of a common goal helped build understanding and common interests among Yozan and his subjects, which ultimately worked to rebuild industries in Yonezawa and bring the estate out of debt.

Yozan governed Yonezawa and its people with integrity and diligence, guided by principles aligned with Zen traditions, contributing to the development of one of the most prosperous states in Japan [53]. Yozan’s leadership style mirrored Zen principles, which consisted of decision-making based on a higher purpose rather than what the immediate situation called for [48]. He also led with compassion, and encouraged the people to do the same by implementing the “Three Help Spirits” welfare system [51]. This inspired the people to work together and contribute to new economic initiatives that Yozan launched in the region. By leading with integrity and benevolence Yozan achieved an incredible degree of success for his estate and for the people.

5. Ikigai

Ikigai is a Japanese concept that describes an experientially-based phenomena involving an individual’s reason for, or meaning in living [56, 57]. Much of Yozan’s approach to leadership is reminiscent to the principles surrounding ikigai. Ikigai is described as the values held by an individual that make life worth living [58]. It is multidimensional and eudaimonic [59], based on an individual’s

intrinsic natural motivation to achieve meaning in their life [59]. At the onset of his ruling, Yozan made a vow to himself to lead Yonezawa based on integrity and for the welfare of the people first [46]. This influenced many of his actions that laid the groundwork for his leadership, including living a life of simplicity and free from dishonesty [46]. *Ikigai* is often described as a state of balance and psychological well-being, which lays the foundation for one to seek out challenges, and in turn enhance the experience of their daily life [60, 61]. Yozan's motivation to lead the people of Yonezawa was largely driven by his desire to rebuild his estate and help them break out of poverty [46]. This led to the reorganisation of his estate and the enactment of social and economic reforms within the area [46].

Yozan took many risks to improve the estate's economic situation, by recruiting textile labourers from neighbouring prefectures, building new textile factories, and encouraging the wives and daughters of samurai to take up weaving [47]. He also supplied farmers with funds and exempted taxes for reclaimers or wastelands to increase the productivity of old farms [62]. His motivation to serve the people with integrity, centred around *ikigai*, was the driving force for his leadership and enhanced the lives of those he served [48]. The residents of Yonezawa were often addressed as *kokumin*, which is described as people of the country [49]. They were seen as people of the estate, who shared a common interest to serve their fellow countrymen, despite their socioeconomic differences. This mentality led to successful endeavours to support the estate and its people, such as rallying residents to reduce their expenditures and eliminate the estate's longstanding debt [49].

The cultivation of goodness within the people was also demonstrated in their open markets, where residents would leave unattended priced goods on display, and buyers were free to take the goods and leave money in full trust [46]. Those with *ikigai* are generally free to act without the need of approval from others [63], due to a sense of a deeper meaning for their life's mission [56]. Yozan held a view of his leadership for his estate that was larger than the common practice of serving the shogunate. This broader view placed his values of serving family and his subjects higher than fulfilling the obligations of the shogunate, who were the central authority of the time [53]. This included supporting his wife who suffered from paralysis and finding meaning in their relationship [1].

Yozan was largely influenced by Confucian principles, which saw him honouring his ancestors, providing for his descendants, and caring for his subjects [53]. This included the implementation of social welfare systems within the estate to ensure residents were educated on Confucian principles and medicine [46]. He taught residents to monitor their spending, promoted temperance, and encouraged them to prioritise their mission to support the community [46]. To reinforce these values, Yozan made sure to reward those who excelled and disciplined those who did not fulfil their duties to the estate [46]. Hasegawa et al. [64] states those who possess *ikigai* are associated with positive relationships and carry out fulfilling social roles within communities. Kamiya [59] also states individuals with *ikigai* are more likely to share their interests and sense of duty with others, which create stronger social bonds. Yozan made great efforts to educate the people of Yonezawa, so they could support each other and rebuild the estate together. Due to his focus on the people, Yozan was seen as an exemplary leader [48]. By continually striving to support his people with practicality and benevolence, Yozan achieved a great degree of success in building new industries, improving agricultural conditions, reforming rural customs, and making once-impooverished residents loyal subjects [48]. Yozan's sense of duty to the people, his *ikigai*, propelled him to tackle the unrelenting

challenges of overseeing his estate in a different way, and through his achievements, he was venerated as a great leader by his people and subsequent administrators [48].

6. Implications for Today's Leaders

The insights discussed above have several implications for today's leaders, particularly in four key areas: meaning, harmony, experiential learning, and intrinsic leadership.

6.1 Discovering a Greater Meaning in Work

Yozan was greatly venerated for his leadership by the people he served in Yonezawa, and aspects of his leadership has influenced contemporary and subsequent administrators to this day [48]. Yozan led with conviction and alignment to his values. He embodied a sense of *ikigai*, which was to act with a higher purpose, rather than to live in indulgence and fulfil the duties of the military power of that time [53]. This inspired those he led to do the same, and so they were willing to contribute to new endeavours that he set forth to improve the welfare of his estate. It is necessary for leaders to understand the overarching vision and mission of their initiatives, to motivate and inspire people to rally together and contribute towards a common goal. The concept of *ikigai* describes a sense of connectedness to a deeper meaning when performing tasks and when overcoming challenges. Those with *ikigai* seek out to discover a greater purpose in the obstacles they face, rather than avoid them [65]. Finding *ikigai* in a career can make working in undesirable conditions even feel worthwhile and satisfying [58].

6.2 Working in Harmony with Staff

Leaders practicing Zen philosophy value working within community and maintaining person-centred relationships without compromising their values or their goals [52]. They understand that every individual possesses their own set of skills and consequently can contribute in their own unique and valuable way of various initiatives set out by the leader or the group. Zen philosophies also require leaders to maintain a balance of power as leaders in themselves [52]. This requires them to rise above emotions and make better decisions to manage this balance of power and duties. Yozan saw himself as a fellow servant of the state and his priority was to make decisions to ultimately serve the people and to build his estate [53]. He understood the importance of every individual's duty to contribute to the state, and this contributed to bringing the estate out of debt [66].

In the modern leadership context, Nidec Corporation, a multi-faceted global motor manufacturer, exemplifies the implementation of Yozan's leadership [67]. Through their mergers and acquisition model, Nidec grew substantially in the past decade from 31 companies in 2011 to 67 companies in 2021 by utilising a knowledge creation initiative for staff [68]. The knowledge creation initiative strived to transfer key pieces of information, such as core values, expectations, and procedures, to allow for consistency of current practices and innovation to address current issues [68]. This required leaders to acknowledge the value of their staff members. This led to the cultivation of a supportive corporate culture by prioritising appreciation to employees and encouraging teamwork [68]. By valuing the role and duties of each individual, leaders are able to build passion and motivation within their team and to maintain harmony within the workplace.

6.3 Experiential Learning on the Frontlines

In the Zen tradition, wisdom through experiential learning is valued over theoretical knowledge [45], and adopting this belief may allow leaders to address issues on the frontlines more effectively and build greater connections with their employees. In the context of Zen, the perfection of personhood requires the use of non-discriminatory decision-making, which is free from the stress and anxiety of an ego-centric perspective [45]. This requires practical and experiential knowledge that involves the mind and body to experience situations and make decisions regarding the appropriate course of action [45]. Yozan was greatly involved in the livelihoods of the individuals he served, which allowed him to make fundamental industrial reforms in Yonezawa [46]. Leaders can benefit from practicing this in the workplace because it prevents possible remote decision-making that is based solely on employee feedback. Toyota adopted the concept called Genchi Genbutsu, which means to go to the source [54]. This involves a higher level of engagement between the leader and employees, which has helped leadership within Toyota to address root causes of issues they find in their work procedures [54]. By properly engaging with frontline employees and addressing core issues, leaders can continuously improve their operations and drive business growth [54].

6.4 Intrinsic Leadership

Yozan's leadership style relates to intrinsic motivation [69]. There are many leaders who are controlled, or often addicted, by extrinsic rewards including the title and positional power of being a leader. Such extrinsically motivated leaders tend to abuse their power and exploit their staff by implementing strategies to satisfy their extrinsic desires. Indeed, given the addictiveness of extrinsic rewards, these individuals might not have been originally extrinsic-focused, however, their extrinsic addiction might have been developed as they received more extrinsic rewards. From an Organisational perspective, organisations may benefit from assessing different types of motivation within individuals upon recruitment [70].

For those who are in a position to lead, internal reflection is important. As discussed above, cultivating the soothing system of the mind in the emotion regulatory model or careful self-reflection may be helpful to manage their motivational climate [71]. Research on motivation shows that it is common for people to be compelled towards extrinsic rewards. Having adequate self-awareness to stay connected to intrinsic motivation is essential for the well-being and ethical judgement of leaders [72].

As seen in Yozan's practice, Servant Leadership may be helpful to inspire staff and help leaders to stay intrinsically motivated. A strong relationship between Servant Leadership and intrinsic motivation has been reported in both WEIRD and non-WEIRD countries [73], suggesting the impact of Servant Leadership on organisational motivation cross-culturally. As the importance of mental health is actively discussed in organisational psychology, these healthy leadership practices observed in Yozan may be beneficial in many organisations today.

7. Limitations

Though this perspective paper offers unique understanding about Yozan's leadership, limitations need to be noted. First, as with many perspective papers, the unique perspectives offered in this paper have not been evaluated. Second, these perspectives were identified from authors'

knowledge. There may be other Organisational or Emotional Psychology concepts that can explain Yozan's leadership. Third, as Yozan is a historical figure, the quality of records about his behaviours and impacts is not necessarily high. Lastly, the authors are mental health and management researchers. There might have been biases interpreting the information.

8. Conclusion

Yozan Uesugi's leadership was unique and attracted attention from many leaders including John F. Kennedy, however a comprehensive analysis of his leadership from an organisational psychology perspective had not previously been observed. This psychobiography appraised Yozan's leadership from intrinsic motivation, Servant Leadership, emotion regulatory systems, Zen philosophies, and ikigai, and discussed implications for today's leaders. We hope that the insights offered in this chapter will help today's leaders refine their leadership practices and inspire them to cultivate healthy organisations that benefit the well-being of staff.

Author Contributions

Conceptualisation: YK. Software: All authors. Writing-draft: All authors. Writing-editing: All authors. Supervision: YK. Management: YK.

Competing Interests

The authors have declared that no competing interests exist.

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