



RESEARCH PAPER

Leadership Traits in the Door of Opportunity and Teachers' Perception of a Leader

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ABSTRACT

The paper analyzes the attributes of a colonist or a leader in "The Door of Opportunity" aiming to investigate contemporary teachers' perception of leadership characteristics: courage, intelligence, valuing oneself, knowledge, aesthetics sense and stereotype gender roles which are portrayed in "The Door of Opportunity". It also focuses to evaluate the extent teachers are in line with the perception of leadership of the society presented in the story, and shown in Alban's personality, the protagonist of the story. The study uses mixed method; quantitative and content analysis. Based on the results of the content analysis, a questionnaire is designed without referring to the story for the sake of objectivity. The results of the content analysis point out courage and masculinity as an important characteristic of a leader or colonist. The quantitative analysis through a questionnaire shows that a vast majority of the participants consider courage, intelligence, protecting people and good literary taste as positive leadership traits; while, feminine characteristics in male leaders and masculine features in female leaders are viewed negatively. The paper concludes that the participants' views about stereotype roles of gender in a leader are somewhat compatible with Ann and the society's perceptions in the text but incompatible with Alban's stance on leadership qualities.

Keywords: Gender, Leadership Traits, Maugham, The Door of Opportunity

Introduction

The Door of Opportunity is taken as an exemplary piece that portrays colonial mind. Much has been written about Maugham's unusual way to present the protagonist of this colonial adventure as a fiasco. Alban, the protagonist of the story, is viewed by the society as a bad administrator for some shortcomings as a leader or a colonist. The society in general and even his wife sees him as a man who does not deserve to be a leader. But, at the same time, the author, through Alban as a protagonist, puts up some challenging questions which interrogate the mind-set of the society about leadership and its idiosyncrasies. The question is whether Pakistani teachers' perception of the attributes presented in the novel varies from the society portrayed in the Door of Opportunity or is somewhat different being humans of the 21st century.

Literature Review

Leadership is a culmination of leaders, followers and the situation- all three elements that result from a cyclical process. Back in the nineteenth century, the concept of leadership began in the Western countries which later heavily influenced of how the leaders should be; and the expectations from them. Leadership itself undergoes change and the history reflects and ponders upon the leaders with their leadership skills that help the current and future generation to understand the leadership today. The complex change that leadership holds is through the transformation of the organizational, social and cultural evolutions.

A leader who can do justice with the duties entrusted to them is defined as a leader with qualities; one who influences others as individuals or in groups to achieve the set goals by the organization and to guide and direct them to be effective. According to researchers, leadership is an important part of a group process, (Krech and Crutchfield, 1948). Moreover, others perceive leadership as the beginning of a structure (Bass et al., 1950).

Leadership as seen by majority of people is the way of influencing followers through their interpersonal and persuasion tactics; building on their influence, they further guide their groups to help achieve the course of action that are set vividly by the organization. Allowing space for the followers and enriching them with their leadership qualities by a formal or informal defined hierarchy helps the followers to be effective; it further motivates them to achieve the organizational goals, thus, making the leader and its organization a success.

An effective leader according to Fiedler is defined in terms of a contingency model that shows leadership in terms of group performance; when the followers perform effectively, function well together, and be flexible to the changing demands from external forces, the leader succeeds in the objectives laid by the organization. Another view of being an effective leader is explained in House Path's goal theory which clearly states that the satisfaction of followers help implement the organizational goals on a large scale. Achieving the visionary objectives of the organization through the followers is the biggest achievement of being an effective leader.

Leadership is also defined in multiple ways; Luthan (1988) proposes a different meaning to effective leadership and successful managers. According to Luthan's beliefs, an effective leader is the one where his followers are satisfied and productive, whereas, a successful manager has an effective team who are promoted quickly and are successful in different types of activities; internal or external. A study carried out by Luthan clearly shows that only 10 percent of the managers were both effective and successful. The results of his study gave implications for how to measure the success of leaders. If an organization fails to choose a competent leader, it quickly finds the followers going astray affecting the overall objectives of the organization.

Although, there are various studies conducted on the effectiveness of leadership but most of them focus on the productivity of followers. Overall, a leader is effective when he or she can meet the changing demands from external forces.

Leadership is also a social and cultural phenomenon. Getting to know the norms of leadership requires understanding of the cultural context in which it takes place. Having the common values within the same work group adds uniqueness and strongly influences what and who we value, what we pay attention to and how we behave through numerous teachings and informal observations. One of the cultural aspects in the communication style of leadership is one of high context, while the other of low context. This refers to the environment and the information given to the background for interaction and communication. The high context group is dealt differently through the context; personal relationships and non-verbal cues are established to cater the needs of the groups, whereas, explicit, specific verbal and written messages are communicated for the low-context group (Munter, 1993). The key to becoming an effective leader takes time and practice. The challenges faced by the leader are manifolds; it involves learning from one's mistakes and trying out new skills to bring about improvement in them. The organization pays a heavy price for selecting an ineffective leader who may not bring any valuable change in the organization (Armenakis, 1998).

Adding to gender and leadership traits, researchers are of the view that the development of a leader is closely related to the identity of a leader. Taking up this role means to undergo a certain process of identity through feedback and experiences (Ely et al.,

2011). Thus, leaders (both men and women) need technical competencies along with emotional and cultural intelligence. Moreover, leaders are most effective when they embrace their purpose, aligning it with those company's needs (Quinn, 2004).

Pakistan is a third world country and there has been a dearth of a good leadership since the loss of some of the key national leaders. Pakistani culture though possesses the notions like love, sharing and kindness; it does not allow feminism and even sees leadership in terms of gender stereotype roles. In Maugham's story 'The Door of Opportunity' the society is portrayed as narrow-minded and trapped in the gender stereotyping. The protagonist raises several questions pertaining to self-valuing to loving music as a leader. He thinks differently from the society and meets a terrible end. A parallel line can be drawn between "The Door of Opportunity" and Pakistani society in terms of gender stereotyping. The question is whether the teachers, who are not only supposed to play a leadership role themselves but also build future leaders, think on similar lines with the society in the chosen text or they, being the part of 21st century, are flexible and open minded at least in terms of stereotypical gender roles as leaders. Moreover, the study would also determine whether Pakistani society is at par with the eighteenth century society, as portrayed in the text in respect of key leadership traits, or has progressed philosophically being the part of 21st century. The study would fill out the literature gap as not many researches have been done on Pakistani population for gender stereotypical roles and leadership.

Material and Methods

The study uses mixed method; quantitative and content analysis. The content analysis is the research method usually carried out on a text to determine variables or themes. As one of the aims of the study is to find out the key variables related to leadership which run in "The Door of Opportunity" the content analysis was inevitable. Another aim of the study was to determine whether teachers' perceptions on the variable, taken from the chosen text through content or text analysis, are similar or different from the views of the Society in The Door of Opportunity. Therefore, a survey was carried out to gather participants' views about the variables drawn from the text. To analyze the results, descriptive statistics was carried out on the collected data using SPSS.

Participants

The text analysis of the Door of Opportunity was carried out to identify the leaderships traits presented in the story. Then a survey was conducted of hundred teachers at the undergraduate level. All participants had at least a Master Degree in their field. The participants were adult males and females.

Instruments

A questionnaire was designed containing eleven variables. (See Appendix A). The methodology used acknowledges that all experiences are selective (Shaw & Gould, 2001) and open to change (Polkinghorne, 1998). Hundred participants, who were teachers at the undergraduate level in universities, were asked to fill out the questionnaire. The questionnaire was explained to them but the objectives of the study were kept hidden to obtain the objectivity in the research. The questionnaire was also piloted in a small group of undergraduate teachers. It was found that if variables were highlighted in the questionnaire then the participant may display a fraction of objectivity, therefore the questionnaire was redesigned with no hint of variables, and at least two questions for most of variables were included.

Analysis of Traits of a Colonist/ Leader in the Text

Alban's love and longing for London is evident in the opening paragraphs from his buying all available English Magazines like "The *New Statesman* and *The Nation*", and "The *Tatler* and "The *Sketch*", and "*London Mercury*". "He bought the *New Statesman* and the *Nation*, and the *Tatler* and the *Sketch*, and the last number of the *London Mercury*...." (Mauham, 1976, P. 650). Readers learn about love and loyalty towards one's own state as one of the peculiarity sought in a leader or a colonist. "I know.... Tomorrow's *Express* and *Mail*." (Mauham, 1976, P. 650)

Alban's passion for London is displayed in many ways. Sometime through what he says other times by way of his gestures, which portray his love for the country "We're due in London at six-tenWe ought to get to Jermyn Street by seven, He gave a chuckle." ((Mauham, 1976, P. 661) "He looked out of the window, too,London," he said. "He took her hand and gently pressed it. His smile was so sweet that she had to say something. She tried to be facetious...." ((Mauham, 1976, P. 661) Alban is clearly thrilled to see London. And his excitement for London proves his loyalty towards his country.

Another important trait emerges in the opening paragraphs is the way Ann, Alban's wife, sees him as a distinct man in respect of his appearance and dressing. "But Alban had already a London look. not a speck of dust on his smart greatcoat, and his black Homburg hat looked brand-new. and his foulard tie neatly tied. As Anne looked ... good-looking he was. just under six feet tall, and slim, ... wore his clothes well, clothes were well cut. fair hair, still thick, and blue eyes and pink-and-white freshness of early youth..... prominent Adam's apple; but you were more impressed. refinement in his face and a spirituality that was oddly moving." In Ann's eyes Alban is handsome and too excited to have a London look. He is neat and has a great sense of what to wear. Moreover, his looks and intelligence are enviable. He clearly has an edge over others. But we see that later that his good looks and intelligence do not support him to be acknowledged as a colonist. Alban so far possesses love for his country and good looks which may be taken as too features a protagonist of a story in the role of a colonist may have. Later it is learned that Alban has two more attributes which prove him a distinct human being. He is an avid reader and loves to play music. He is skilful at playing piano. "Alban would sit down to it ..., his fingers itching to feel the keys, and in what he played... pools." ((Mauham, 1976, P. 664)

Next, the reader learns that Alan is not only good at playing piano but he is also pretty oblivious of the fact that as a colonist he must learn Chinese to communicate well with the Chinese of the country. "Then Alban.... Chinese was learning it communicate with the Chinese of the country", Here, readers find him a proactive leader who believes in the significance of a communication skills. ((Mauham, 1976, P. 664)

Ann thinks Alban is despised for being intelligent and better than others. He is thought to be self-conceited. Here the readers learn about intelligence as a trait which can, sometimes, compel people to think you are proud and subsequently draws their resentment. "They said he was conceited they resented his cordiality they said he was putting on airs at their expense." ((Mauham, 1976, P. 664)

It is not that Alban's intelligence puts off only middle class or ordinary people. Later in the novel when Ann meets governor's wife, she learns about governor's reservation about Alban's behaviour which is actually nothing but his displaying better knowledge and possessing competence that others envy. "You know, my dear ... come-hither with people ... very intelligent; don't you think it would be better it quite so clearly? My husband said to me ... is the cleverest young man in the Service..... I am the Governor, but when he talks to me he always gives me the impression that he looks upon me as a damned fool." ((Mauham, 1976, P. 665)

How society views Alban and what it expects him to be are the most interesting aspects the reader comes across as the story progresses. Later Ann uncovers that Alan is called "Powder-Puff Percy" at the club. It is painful for her to know that what people think of Alban and this brings tears in Ann's eyes. "You know They call him Powder-Puff Percy." ((Mauham, 1976, P. 665) An important debate arises from Mrs Hannay's comments about Alban is whether a colonist with feminine traits can be considered a good administrator or if feminine nature is an acceptable leadership trait. To Mrs Hannay, Alban needs to play football to be more human. "Mrs Hannay took her..... hand ... My dear to hurt your feelings. Your husband can't help rising very high in the Service. He'd make things so much easier.... human. Why does not.... play football? He's always only too glad to play tennis." (665). She suggests that Alban needs to be "little human" which means he must play football rather than playing piano. The story at this point shares how critical the society is about the masculinity of a man especially if he holds a leading position. The door of opportunity raises an important question regarding one of the important traits that is masculinity, at least viewed by the society around Alban. Later the reader comes across another attribute which is not considered manly by the society and that is his love for art and literature. "They disliked Alban because he had such an air of distinction was interested in art and literature; they did not understand these things thought them unmanly; and they disliked him capacity was greater than theirs. They not in the sense they meant."

Alban is disliked for being 'better bred' and greater 'capacity', so he is viewed as unpopular. Though Alan is friendly, kind and caring, his people still dislike him in fact his friendliness is considered as a flaw rather than strength.

It is true that Ann rejects their opinion about Alban and thinks it to be the outcome of jealousies they possess, but it upsets her. She thinks of some positive attributes he has and the readers through her thoughts learn about them. Like, he is organized, responsible and a good communicator. "He had been successful occupied had a gift for languages He was not afraid of responsibility....." ((Mauham, 1976, P. 666-667). Ann is pretty much aware of the rivalries and how government sets culture. "Then, thought Anne, his air of superiority, of which they complained, would be in place Government House was the seat of culture they would soon fall into line. When the best way to the Governor's favour was to be intelligent, intelligence would become the fashion. She and Alban would cherish the native arts and collect carefully the memorials of a vanished past...would create beauty." (Mauham, 1976, P. 667)

As *The Door of Opportunity* progresses, it takes us to the central theme. Mauham posits a question to the reader by weaving a situation which demands to choose either a leader or ordinary people. In other words, it compels readers to ponder over the question of valuing a leader's life over the people he rules. When it comes to Ann, the governor or even the society in general, it is observed that Alban's courage is questioned and his lacking it is taken to be the most negative characteristics of a leader. Alban's decision not to help natives, when Chinese attack them, is reprimanded by everybody but him. He loses his and finally his wife. His other attributes are undermined by two aspects of his personality that are his feminine nature and not risking his life for people. Ann does not accept Alban's decision of not helping the natives. "Could I come too? That would make ten of us. I'm sure I shall be all right now I'm not going,' said Alban. Alban, you must,' cried Anne. She could not believe her ears" ((Mauham, 1976, P. 670). Alban is rejected as leader or a colonist by Ann and the governor on his decision of not battling with the rebellions for he values himself over natives. "If the officers of this Government had hesitated to take unjustifiable risks it would never have become a province of the British Empire." (Mauham, 1976, P. 675) The governor argues that not taking a risk is a sign of cowardice. He even thinks that Alban's decision of not helping natives has brought them embarrassment. "Do you realize that by leaving a Dutch planter to do what you should have done yourself, you have covered the Government with ridicule?You've made yourself a laughing-stock in the whole colony." (675). Though Alban makes use of logic and raises some important question about the value of a leader's

life, he loses his job and his wife leaves him. His arguments are strong like 'Of course I believe you, sir. But perhaps you will allow me to say that if you had been killed the colony would have suffered an irreparable loss.' ((Mauham, 1976, P. 676)

It appears Alban's all positive traits are buried under his feminine sensitivity, and cowardice as viewed by the key characters in the story. Ann's loathness in the end clearly tells the reader about how negatively he is seen for lacking courage. "I loathe your complacency and Perhaps I could have forgiven it if it had been just a moment's weakness and if afterwards you'd been ashamed. I should have been miserable, but I think my..... the common human virtues of a man than the wife of a fake like you."

Result of the Content Analysis

Based on the analysis of the short story, following are the attributes that were viewed negatively (See Table 1) and positively by the society around Alban in "The Door of Opportunity." It may be noted that intelligence, knowledge, and capacity to understand art or literature are viewed critically by Alban's rivals because they envied his these traits. Therefore, such traits have been considered favorable rather than negative.

Table 1
Negative Traits of a Colonist / Leader

Lack of courage
Valuing himself or herself over people
Feminine nature or lack of masculinity
Love of music

Table 2
Positive Traits of a Colonist / Leader

Intelligence and knowledge
Responsibility
Organisation
Communication skills
Physical appearance
Loyalty
Capacity to understand art and literature

Though it is difficult to distinguish between adverse and advantageous features of a leader as viewed by the key characters in the story as most of them are jealous of Alban for his abilities, through Ann, Maugham clearly marks the boundaries of how and why Alban is being evaluated in a particular way. The analysis of Alban as a colonist is carried out keeping such perimeters in mind. For example, Ann learns that people are jealous of Alban's ability to have the capacity to grasp art and literature. This means, art and literature is not a weakness of a leader it is considered adverse solely on the basis of envy. In short, Ann's judgment of people's perception of a particular trait has been taken into account before putting it in table of adverse or favorable feature. It is pretty clear from the analysis (see Table 1) that lacking courage, valuing oneself over people, and feminine nature, and even love for music are thought to be negative attributes of a leader.in a man. On the other hand, intelligence, responsibility, organization, loyalty, communication skills, physical appearance, and understanding literature and art are considered to be positive leadership traits.

Validity and Reliability

The content analysis presented to 5 experts in Literature and the deductions drawn from the story based on textual evidence were cross checked with other published work. A pilot study was run on a small group to check its reliability and validity.

Results and Discussion

After analyzing the story based on textual evidence the attributes presented in the story were taken out and a questionnaire was designed containing items based on leadership attributes discovered through textual analysis. Then the survey was carried out through the questionnaire to see the compatibility between teachers' perception about the leadership traits in men and the attributes presented in story in this regard. (See Table 4 and 5)

Table 3
Snap Short of Attributes

Positive Attributes	Negative Attributes
Courage	Men with feminine nature
Intelligence	Females with masculine nature
Knowledge	
Good Aesthetics sense	
Good art and literary taste	

Table 4
Descriptive Statistics

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation
A leader should be intelligent	100	5.5300	.61060
A leader should save people's life	100	5.2100	.75605
A leader should be daring	100	5.1700	.86521
A leader should have a good literary taste	100	5.0200	.71038
A leader should be knowledgeable	100	4.8100	.93954
A leader should have a good aesthetics sense	100	4.5300	1.22643
A man with feminine nature cannot be a good leader	100	5.5300	.61060
A woman with masculine nature cannot be a good leader	100	4.8100	.93954
A leader should love music and art	100	3.5600	1.41650
Only men can be good leaders	100	2.6700	2.03532
Only females can be good leaders	100	2.3900	1.21352

The results show that most of the participants are of the view that a leader should be courageous, protector, intelligent and should possess good art and literary taste. Whereas, knowledge, reading habits, good aesthetics sense, and valuing oneself are viewed as second most important attributes. The mean scores for man with feminine nature and women with masculine nature show that most of the participants consider these attributes negatively. (see table 5) Moreover, the means scores for variables used to gauge gender discrimination were low implying that the participants do not associate opposite genders as important feature of leadership. The leadership attributes which are considered positively by both the society presented in the story and participants of the study are: intelligence, courage, knowledge, good art and literary taste, good aesthetics sense. Whereas the attributes considered negative in a leaders by both participants and the society in the story are: Men with feminine nature and female with masculine nature. The participants of the study to some extent agree that a leader should value himself as well which is somehow different from the general view of the society presented in the story. Whereas this view is to some extent in line with the perspective of the protagonist 'Alban' who defends his stance of valuing his life as a leader.

Conclusion

Based on the results of content and quantitative analysis, it can be concluded that the participants are in line with the argument raised by the key characters in 'The Door of Opportunity' like a leader should be courageous and protect his or her people. But they also

agree to certain extent that a leader should value himself or herself which is the argument presented by Alban, the protagonist of the story. A clear cut answer to whether a leader should value oneself; over protecting people, compromising his or her courage could not be discovered through the study, but it can direct others to further contribute in this direction. The change in this transformative leadership is critical to the fact that it should help in identifying the need for leaders to further address beliefs, practices and assumptions that oppress or exclude some groups (Shields, 2010). Moreover, possessing opposite gender's features is also viewed negatively. This means that the participants of the study, Ann and the society in the text hold the same perception of stereotype roles of genders and consider them as key attributes in a leader. Despite other research studies showing that men may have better leadership qualities and are more effective leaders than women (e.g., Carroll, 2006; Eagly, Makhijani, & Klonsky, 1992), some press publications have reported the opposite: that there may be a female gender advantage in modern organizations that require a "feminine" type of leadership (e.g., Conlin, 2003; R. Williams, 2012). It may also be concluded that Pakistani society still has not been able to be open minded when it comes to gender specific attributes and leadership. A woman with masculine nature is not acceptable as leader and a man with feminism is not considered a good leader. The gender stereotyping can impact ones image of being a good leader.

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