

# LEADERSHIP INSIGHTS FOR WIZARDS AND WITCHES

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# LEADERSHIP INSIGHTS FOR WIZARDS AND WITCHES

by

**ADITYA SIMHA**

*University of Wisconsin, USA*



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I dedicate this book, which is my first book, to my beloved parents, Anand and Bhramara, and my beloved sister, Aparna. You have always encouraged me to read and write, and always got me all of the comics and fiction books I have ever wanted. You three have always been a constant source of support throughout my life. I love you all loads.

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## ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Dr Aditya Simha is an Associate Professor of Management at the University of Wisconsin – Whitewater. He obtained his PhD in Business Administration at Washington State University. He also has a Master's degree in Electrical and Computer Engineering from the University of Nevada Las Vegas, while his Bachelor's degree is in Electrical and Electronics Engineering from Visvesvaraya Technological University. His research is primarily in business ethics (e.g., ethical leadership, ethical climates, and unethical behavior), healthcare ethics (e.g., moral distress, mental health, and COVID anxiety), and organizational behavior (e.g., burnout, stress, and personality). He has published articles in business journals such as the *Academy of Management Perspectives*, *Journal of Business Ethics*, *Management Decision*, *Nursing Ethics*, and the *Journal of Business Economics & Management*. Additionally, he has published articles on healthcare ethics topics in medical journals like *Family Medicine*, and *Journal of the American Board of Family Medicine*. He currently serves on the editorial boards of *Management Decision* and the *Journal of Business Ethics Education*, and is a regular reviewer for other journals like *Studies in Higher Education*, *International Journal of Human Resources Management*, and *Journal of Business Ethics*.

He teaches Leadership and Organizational Behavior at the MBA and Undergraduate levels, and teaches Micro Issues in Business, and Contemporary Research Methods at the Doctoral level. At the postgraduate level, he is an Active Doctoral Dissertation Chair. He also regularly presents at international conferences such as the Academy of Management, International Leadership Association, British Academy of Management, Western Academy of Management, Midwest Academy of Management, Society for Teachers of Family Medicine, and the International Society of Business Economics and Ethics World Congress.

He is a passionate consumer of fiction books and comic book series, both in book form as well as in movie/television form. This includes the Harry Potter series, the LOTR series, anything by P.G. Wodehouse, Tintin series, Hellboy Series, the Batman, John Constantine, Superman, and Spider-Man series among others. Additionally, he loves films of all genres and languages (spanning the gamut from Bollywood to Wakaliwood, with everything in between), and enjoys music (Oasis, The Beatles, Lady Gaga, AC/DC, Alisha Chinai, etc.). He is also a huge professional wrestling fan, and often looks to integrate examples from pro-wrestling into his work. He lives in Waunakee (the only Waunakee in the Whole Wide World), Wisconsin, along with his wife, two young sons (ages 7 and 5), and pet Otterhound.

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# INTRODUCTION

## THE IMPORTANCE OF LEADERSHIP

I remember the time I was captain of my high school's Cricket team, and led the team to a resounding loss. Personally, I played well in that match, but that did not alter the outcome of the game. When I look back at that match, I made several mistakes as a leader. The primary mistake was that I allowed our outspoken and overbearing wicket keeper to change and tamper with the field placements, which I had judiciously selected in the first place. That led to our opponent opening-batsman to take apart our bowling attack, like a Proboscis Monkey cracking open a ripe coconut.

This was very much reminiscent of the time Cormac McLaggen spent more time advising other Gryffindor Quidditch players to play, than in saving goals. Although I should be grateful, that I did not have to suffer a cracked skull like Harry Potter, thanks to my McLaggen-like wicket keeper. Anyway, had I been more decisive and prevented that from happening, the game would have perhaps gone differently. Regardless of the outcome of that match, I learned a valuable life lesson that day. Leading effectively is important, and that day, I did not lead effectively. I knew that my original field placement was the best one, but I did nothing to prevent someone else running slipshod over my plans. The importance of effective leadership really cannot be overstated. It simply is that important.

A cursory internet search of the word "leadership" reveals over 2 billion results on any search engine worth its salt. This of course is not wholly indicative of the importance of leadership, as doubtless, other words exist, that would have similar numbers, but it is somewhat indicative of its prominence.

There is a plethora of reading material on leadership as well, many of which we have all personally read with much interest. There are academic and practitioner journals focusing on leadership (e.g., *Leadership Quarterly*, *Journal of Leadership Studies*, etc.), in which scholars focus a great deal of attention on studying the various antecedents and consequences of leadership (e.g., Bommer, Rubin, & Baldwin, 2004; Dulebohn, Bommer, Liden, Brouer, & Ferris, 2012). Similarly, there are myriad blogs and podcasts dedicated to the art and science of leadership. In addition, there are leadership degree programs at the undergraduate, graduate, and doctoral levels, across various countries. In the United States alone, there are over 1,558 academic leadership programs across levels (Guthrie, Teig, & Hu, 2018).

All of this speaks to the importance that people give to studying and understanding leadership. That suggests that it is of paramount importance for people to learn how to be effective leaders, and to be able to put leadership theories into practice. Many scholars (e.g., Ciulla, 1999; Soriano & Martinez, 2007) have also propounded that leadership and leaders are incredibly important for organizations as well as societies. To put it succinctly, it is important for individuals to know how to be effective leaders, and as Urick (2021) puts it, illustrating leadership theories through the lens of popular culture can be phenomenally effective and successful. I teach and have taught several leadership courses at undergrad and master's levels, and I personally always use lots of pop culture references and examples. I have certainly found my students to be very receptive to these pop culture examples, and it definitely aids in learning complex theories.

This book is a volume in the *Exploring Effective Leadership Practices through Popular Culture*, edited by Dr Michael J. Urick. The popular culture context, I will be focusing on in this book, involves a globally beloved bespectacled Wizard. This of course is none other than Harry Potter, and the world of magic in which he resides. I will be using examples of characters (both protagonists and antagonists) as well as the various situations involving them, from the books written by J. K. Rowling, in order to provide concrete examples of good and bad leadership, and to link with these examples. My hope is that a discerning reader can then read these descriptions, and begin to understand his or her own leadership style and philosophy, and learn what extant theories say about effective leadership practices and styles. The goal is for folks to be able to understand leadership theories and be able to implement them in their own lives.

## THE HARRY POTTER CONTEXT

Prior to embarking on this journey, I must offer some detail as to why I chose to focus on the magical world of Harry Potter. I first read *Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone* when I was 16 years old, which was back in 1997. The book grabbed my attention from the very start, and of course, I was hooked and continued to keep abreast of the following books, and avidly followed the series all the way to *Harry Potter and the Deathly Hallows*. I have since reread each book at least 50 or 60 times each. Doubtless, this rereading of the various Harry Potter books may have reduced the chances of me discovering newer books or authors; however, I do not regret it at all. The Harry Potter books to me are simply brilliant, and each time I reread them, I discover or rediscover a snippet of information, which proves to be delightful. This delight is akin to that of a young hound rediscovering a long-forgotten bone buried in the garden. In a Potterian context, it is similar to retrieving a pleasant memory, which was long confined to a pensieve.

I have also watched all of the movies around the Harry Potter world, as well as read the other books (i.e., *The Tales of Beedle the Bard*, *Quidditch Through the Ages*, etc.). In this book though, I will be mostly focusing on the seven Harry Potter books, as I believe they offer the best detail and the best elucidation of various characters and situations. The movies while fun to watch take far too many liberties with the canonical material, as per me. One such example of a creative liberty taken in the movies was when they depicted Cho Chang as being the one who discloses the secret of Dumbledore's Army to the repugnant Dolores Umbridge – as any reader of the books will know, it was actually Marietta Edgecombe, who was the one who betrayed them all. Another example of the discrepancy between the books and the movies is in the portrayal of Albus Dumbledore in the movies, especially by Michael Gambon. This was completely at odds with Dumbledore's persona in the books. The book version of Albus Dumbledore would have never ever screamed at Harry, as the movie version did in *Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire*. The movie version did away with Dumbledore's legendary equanimity and replaced it with an intense scolding Dumbledore.

There are other examples similar to these two, but these particular ones are the ones I found most displeasing. I will be using examples chiefly from the seven Harry Potter books – I think this will make it easy for readers to be able to understand the explanation, and of course, they can always easily

go back to the primary source for those examples. This would not be as easy to do with the movies, as it is a lot easier to flip to a certain page than to fast forward to a certain movie scene, to look up more detail.

## STRUCTURE OF THE BOOK

This book sets to provide information on the various theories and styles of leadership, and illustrating them with context from the Harry Potter books. I will now elucidate the way in which I will lay out and structure this book.

Following this introduction chapter, in the second chapter, I will next discuss personality and culture and relate them to leadership. I will introduce several projective and objective personality assessments that are applicable to leadership; this includes personality assessments such as the Big 5 Personality Index, the MBTI, and a few lesser-known dubious assessments of personality, such as the blood-group typology personality test. I will illustrate these concepts by using characters and incidents from the various Harry Potter books. For instance, the dubious blood-group typology index is functionally the same as the entire death-eater focus on purity of wizarding blood that Voldermort and his followers espouse.

The third chapter presents information about cognitive and emotional intelligence, and relate it to how leaders need both in order to be truly effective. In addition, I will also present some of the newer developments in emotional intelligence such as social intelligence and cultural intelligence. I will also discuss ways by which a person could improve his or her own intelligence levels. For illustrative purposes, I will discuss characters from the Harry Potter books that are highly or poorly intelligent in these various aspects of intelligence. Albus Dumbledore for instance, would be an example of a person who embodies high levels of both emotional and cognitive intelligence, while Severus Snape has high levels of cognitive intelligence, while his emotional intelligence level is not what anyone would strive to obtain.

The fourth chapter will present some of the historical and early theories of leadership, such as the Michigan Leadership Studies and the Ohio State Studies. In particular, I will focus on the difference between structure and consideration, and show how that often determines leader efficacy. I will demonstrate through examples from the Harry Potter books, that both structure and consideration are equally important for ensuring success. Rubeus Hagrid, for instance, is a very considerate teacher; however, his lack

of structure in his classes ends up jeopardizing his position and frequently puts his charges at risk.

The fifth chapter will describe and discuss situational and contingency theories of leadership. This includes theories such as the Hersey-Blanchard Situational Model and the Fiedler's Contingency Theory. I will illustrate these theories by using examples such as how Remus Lupin was a wonderful Defense against the Dark Arts professor, whose coaching style helped his students blossom.

The sixth chapter will discuss organizational politics and power, two concepts intricately woven in with leadership. I will discuss the bases of power, and illustrate those concepts with various characters from the Harry Potter books. For instance, I will illustrate the concept of coercive power by describing how Lord Voldemort exclusively seems to use coercive power.

The seventh chapter will focus on the topics of influence and persuasion; both of which are qualities that leaders need to possess. Both concepts are somewhat linked with the bases of power, and influence and persuasion too can be coerced out of people. I will illustrate these concepts by discussing examples like how Albus Dumbledore was able to coax Horace Slughorn out of retirement and hiding, and back to Hogwarts to teach potions.

The eighth chapter will discuss and describe authentic leadership, both practical and theoretical approaches. I will use examples from the Harry Potter series that illustrate authentic leadership. For instance, I will discuss how Harry Potter, Albus Dumbledore, and Dobby the house elf, are characters that exemplify authentic leadership.

The ninth chapter will discuss and describe ethical leadership, and also discuss antecedents and consequences of ethical leadership. I will also discuss how one can become an ethical leader. I will illustrate these concepts by using examples like how Hermione Granger embodies ethical leadership by showing her sincere care for house-elves.

The tenth chapter will discuss and describe servant leadership, and in particular discuss the 10 characteristics of servant leaders. I will illustrate these concepts by using examples of people that do not embody servant leadership. One such example is how Draco Malfoy does not in any shape or form embody any of the characteristics of a servant leader.

The eleventh chapter will focus on charisma – the good, the bad, and the ungainly side of it. I will discuss the benefits and drawbacks of charisma from a leadership point of view. To illustrate the bad part of charisma, I will focus on two of the dark lords, Voldemort and Grindelwald, who were both very charismatic and yet misused their charisma in egregiously bad ways.

The twelfth chapter will focus on transactional and transformational leadership, and goal-setting theory. I will discuss the strengths and weaknesses of the two kinds of leadership. To illustrate goal-setting, I will discuss how one overarching goal in the series was to discover and eliminate Lord Voldemort's various Horcruxes.

The thirteenth chapter will focus on self and shared leadership, and in particular all of the ways by which individuals can enhance their self-leadership skills. I will illustrate these concepts by discussing examples such as how Ron Weasley's performance usually suffered when he had self-doubt, but his performance was stellar when he believed in himself.

The fourteenth chapter will focus on leadership development and succession. It is integral for leaders to be building up a pipeline of leaders from within their followers, and I will illustrate how Albus Dumbledore and Harry Potter himself incorporated leadership succession, in their joint quest to defeat Voldemort.

The fifteenth chapter is a concluding chapter that ties the book together, and presents the reader with tangible takeaways. In it, I will present insights gleaned from the Harry Potter world, and have readers consider how they could use those insights in developing themselves into better leaders.

So, that is the layout of the book – I certainly do hope that the book will be interesting for readers, and my primary hope is that readers will learn that there is something tangible that everyone can learn from pop culture, even if they are reading a fictional series about a young boy wizard and his adventures. I believe this book will be useful for individuals who would like to learn more about leadership, and be better leaders themselves. While, the book does seem like it would be more enjoyable for folks well versed with Harry Potter, I think even individuals who have a passing familiarity with Harry Potter will be able to understand and follow along with the book.

## SUMMARY

This chapter is the start of this book, presents information about why leadership is essential to learn about, and presents the structure of the book. I essentially aim to have the reader to gain understanding of some widely recognized academic theories of leadership, and recognize how the Harry Potter book series context aids in increasing that comprehension. The next chapter will introduce various personality and cultural theories and assessments pertinent to leadership.

## 2

# PERSONALITY, CULTURE, AND LEADERSHIP

Personality is one of the most popular fields of research in the social sciences, as evidenced by the sheer volume of research articles and books on the topic, and it happens to be one of my favorite areas of study and research. Personality research and assessments have always intrigued me. The topic has fascinated me ever since I was 12 years old or so, and I recall taking ever so many tests and assessments over the years. I still cannot resist taking a personality quiz even if the quiz itself is not what one would call psychometrically sound. You can probably find more than a dozen personality tests based on a variety of pop culture contexts – this includes tests like, “Which 80s Hollywood action star are you?” and “Which 90s Cartoon character are you most like?” These tests while fun are not exactly the gold standard in personality assessments, but they do serve their purpose, which is quick entertainment. However, there is more to personality than just entertainment – personality and traits offer incredible insight into leadership and offers keen insights into followership.

A strong link exists between personality concepts and leadership antecedents and outcomes (Holmes, Hitt, Perrewé, Palmer, & Molina-Sieiro, 2021; Judge, Bono, Ilies, & Gerhardt, 2002; Zaccaro, Gulick, & Khare, 2008). After all, one of the tenets of good leadership is that leaders need to be aware of their own strengths and weaknesses, and knowing one’s own personality type is a big step in the right direction toward optimal self-awareness. Many of my own academic research projects involve personality variables – for example, one article of mine (Simha & Parboteeah, 2020) examined how personality influenced justification of unethical behavior in a cross-national context. In a leadership context, the trait-based approach

or personality-based approach is one of the earliest and most intuitive ways to study leadership. In this chapter, I will describe details on some personality assessments and dimensions, and relate it back to how they fit into the kaleidoscope of leadership. In particular, I will spend quite some time in discussing some dubious theories and assessments of personalities that should technically have no place at the table while discussing leadership.

## EARLY BEGINNINGS

The great man or great person theory was one of the earliest theories used to study leadership (Gemmill & Oakley, 1992; Hollenbeck, McCall, & Silzer, 2006), in the early parts of the twentieth century. Although, it does seem a bit of a stretch to call it a theory today, since it is essentially untestable. However, the prevailing view for a long time was that great leaders were born with certain innate qualities and characteristics, and those qualities were what made them great leaders. If a person did not possess similar traits that leaders like Mahatma Gandhi, Napoleon Bonaparte, Alexander the Great, Queen Victoria, Genghis Khan, etc. did, then that person would not be equipped to become a leader.

This view is thankfully outdated now, but still, there is no denying that individual traits do have some influence on one's leadership ability. It is just that they alone do not determine leadership success. Having said that though, personality still is a very important piece of the puzzle that determines leadership effectiveness, and helps us make sense of how and why individuals behave the way they do. It may not be a complete way to do so, but it does have usefulness.

I suppose, in a way, determining personality is similar to how the sorting hat sorted students into the different houses at Hogwarts upon their arrival to that hallowed place. The hat essentially took stock of each person's traits by asking questions to the person, and then sorted them into the houses based on their traits. As most Harry Potter aficionados know, the courageous and valiant ones tended to place in Gryffindor, while the cunning and ambitious tended to place in Slytherin. The intellectual ones tended to place in Ravenclaw, while the kind and diligent placed in Hufflepuff.

However, again, just because a person has traits which lead that person to be sorted into a particular house, does not mean that that person is going to be a leader. After all, not every single Gryffindor ends up becoming the