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**WHEN A LEADER BECOME ANALIEN: AN ANALYSIS OF BAD LEADER CHARACTERISTICS**

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**ABSTRACT**

The objective of this study was to analyze key characteristics of bad leaders from famous and trusted related-business websites. Key words such as bad leaders, bad leadership, toxic leaders, terrible leaders, poor leaders, characteristics of bad leaders, and traits of bad leaders were used for data collection. A total of six websites were selected for data analysis. Results indicated that the minimum number of bad leaders' qualities found on these websites were five whereas fifteen qualities were found as the maximum number of traits among these websites. All these characteristics were compiled for data synthesis and analysis to identify key qualities of bad leaders. The consistency index of bad leaders' traits at least three sources was applied for the analysis. Results indicated five key characteristics of bad leader, which was further utilized to develop a model called Aliens in an organization: 5 characteristics of bad leaders." Key characteristics of bad leaders proposed by this study were poor integrity, lack of empathy, self-centered, poor communication, and inconsistency.

**Key Words:** Leadership, Leaders, Bad Leaders, Bad Leadership, Characteristics of Bad Leaders.

**INTRODUCTION**

One of key factors that leads organizations to success is a leader. Numerous books, articles, and features on leadership has extensively provided information about attributes that make a great leader, but a few have pointed out what makes a bad leader (Marr, 2019). Barbara (2004) wrote the book entitled "Bad Leadership: What It is, How It Happens", which is seen as the only book in this area that places its emphasis on bad leadership. Bad leadership can have various impacts on both individuals and organizations such as employees' motivation and engagement, job satisfaction, productivity, and organizational performance (Schilling & Schyns, 2014; Zenger & Folkman, 2016; Gregory, 2018). Past studies demonstrated the effects of bad leaders on organizations in many forms such as low morale, physical effects, resources mismanagement, poor financial results, lack of motivation, and high turnover rate. (Kokemuller, 2018; Vossos, 2018). Effective and great leaders learn how to avoid engaging in key qualities of bad leaders in order to successfully run organizations to accomplish the goals. Ineffective or poor leaders still never learn how to overcome these behaviors and improve themselves to become a better leader (Zenger, 2013).

Prior research disclosed several characteristics of bad leaders, but those are apparently trickle for leaders and managers in today's organizations to determine the priority of those qualities and what needs to be avoided. This study attempted to organize existing findings of what make bad leaders and analyze the overlap of those characteristics to identify the set of bad leaders' traits. Hence, the purpose of this present study was to analyze key qualities of bad leaders and propose the new model of what makes a bad leader (a leader who becomes an alien in this study's topic).

## LITERATURE REVIEWS

Past research revealed the effects of bad leaders on both employees and organizations. Various forms of impacts that destructive leaders can do for their followers and organizations include decrease of job satisfaction, high turnover rate, low morale, increase of stress, lack of motivation, poor financial performance (Kokemuller, 2018; Vossos, 2018).

Schilling and Schyns (2014 as cited in Riggio, 2018) conducted a meta-analysis to examine the negative impacts of bad leaders' behaviors, and reported key findings as follows:

- Followers did not trust bad leaders and refused or resisted to their request.
- Bad leaders' subordinates were less committed to their jobs and organizations. They might have engaged in deviant behaviors.
- Followers felt demotivated and had dissatisfaction working with bad leaders.
- Bad leaders made followers feel stressed and could have negative impacts on their health and well-being.

Many studies, research articles, and business-related features have examined the qualities of bad leaders. Based on literature reviews, this present study analyzed data provided on famous websites written on characteristics of bad leaders/ leadership topics. Included websites used for data analysis consisted of forbes.com, fronetics.com, success.com, crewapp.com, inc.com, and bernardmarr.com.

Tracy (2017) noted that poor leaders often displayed these following key characteristics: poor integrity, lack of adaptability, little vision for the future, lack of accountability, and poor communication skills. Tracy suggested that prior to hiring a new leader or joining a new team, organizations and employees needed to take these key qualities of bad leaders into consideration. In addition, these key traits of bad leaders, in turns, could be used and applied to those who wanted to improve their leadership skills.

In addition, based on the interview of Young Entrepreneur Council (2017) on what made for a terrible leader, the conclusion of this interview revealed 15 traits of bad leaders encompassing lack of transparency, not listening, dismissing ideas other than your own, valuing experience over potential, ego, working 24/7, forgetting about leadership development, being overly conservative, permitting negative gossip, poor communication of strategy, closed-mindedness, assigning blame, inconsistency, and being too slow to adapt. These findings based on YEC interviews are seemingly repetitive and needed to be reorganized. For example, not listening, dismissing ideas of others, ego, and closed mindedness might have been perceived as similar qualities. Some characteristics can be adapted to be more formal like assigning blame or permitting negative gossip should change to "accountability" instead while being too slow to adapt should alter to lack of adaptability.

Hines (2017) pointed out six ways to be a bad leader on fronetics.com, which incorporated lack of transparency, insulting employees in front of their coworkers, micromanagement, lack of empathy, inconsistency, and close-mindedness. Thomas (2017) proposed 15 traits of bad leaders, which great leaders needed to avoid including self-centered, lack of self-development, close-mindedness, micromanagement, inconsistency, lack of conflict management skills, tiny focuses, no creation for corporate culture, poor communication, money-oriented, ego, overly optimistic, never ask for help when needed, and never learned from their mistakes. Similarly, Chen (2018) described eight qualities that deteriorate a great leader including lack of flexibility, too-self-centered, unable to empathize, not forward-thinking, lack of enthusiasm, trust absence, no integrity, and poor communication. Additionally, Marr (2019) outlined key characteristics of bad leaders, which included lack of empathy, fear of change, too willing to compromise, too bossy, indecisive, poor judge of character, out of balance, and lack of humility.

**METHODOLOGY**

This study used a documentary analysis approach to determine key characteristics of bad leaders. The secondary data were utilized based on the search on the Internet using Google search engine as the primary tool for gathering data. Key words such as bad leaders, bad leadership, toxic leaders, terrible leaders, poor leaders, characteristics of bad leaders, and traits of bad leaders were incorporated in the search. All information relating characteristics of bad leaders were synthesized and analyzed to identify the key components that nurtures bad leaders. The model of bad leaders’ qualities was developed based on an analysis.

**FINDINGS**

Based on the Internet search, six websites relating to qualities of bad leaders were utilized for data analysis in accordance with the quality and trustworthiness of websites. These websites provided key characteristics of bad leaders in different numbers, which displayed in Table 1. The minimum number of bad leaders’ characteristics was five while 15 qualities of bad leaders was reported as the maximum number. However, these qualities were repetitive and needed to be synthesized to see what traits were identified in common.

**Table 1: Summary of Information about Qualities of Bad Leaders on the Internet Search**

Website	Article	Author(S)	Numbers of Bad Leaders’ Qualities
forbes.com	Leadership weaknesses: how to spot the qualities of a bad leader	Tracy, B. (2017)	5
fronetics.com	How to be a bad leader: 6 common characteristics of poor leadership.	Hines, E. (2017)	6
success.com	15 traits of a terrible	Young Entrepreneur	15

	leader.	Council. (2017)	
crewapp.com	8 qualities of a bad leader & how to become a better one.	Chen, E. (2018)	8
inc.com	5 traits of the worst leaders (avoid at all costs).	Thomas, A. (2017)	5
bernardmarr.com	The 8 signs of a bad leader.	Marr, B. (2019)	8

Table 2 demonstrated the key characteristics of these websites, according to the authors’ suggestions. The consistency of bad leaders’ qualities at least three sources was to be employed for developing final model of what makes bad leaders. In other words, this study attempted to propose the model based on this analysis to identify what makes a leader to become an alien. The word “alien” used in this study reflects an individual who has something differently rather than a typical person does. To be more specific, this analogy tends to describe a bad leader as an alien.

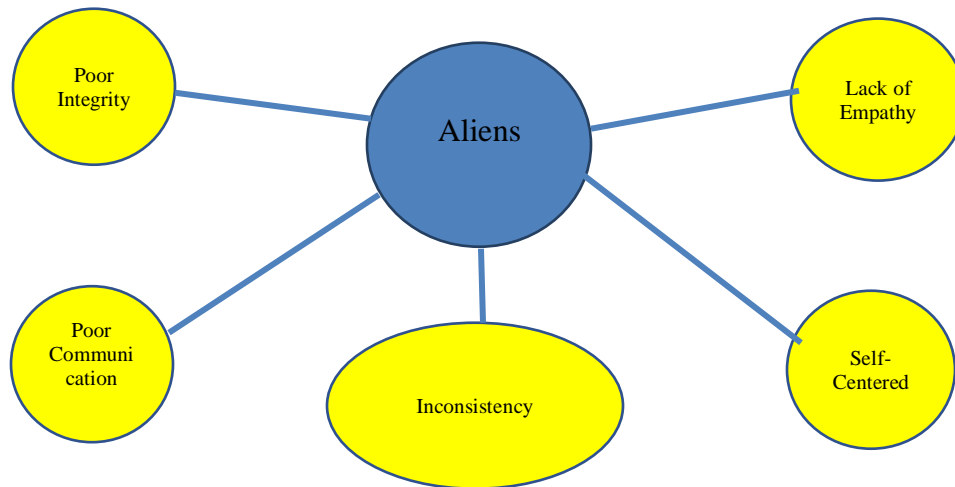
Results showed that five key characteristics of bad leaders, according to this study’s approach of analysis, which were developed based on the consistency index of at least three sources, included poor integrity or transparency, lack of empathy, self-centered, poor communication, and inconsistency of leaders’ words and actions.

**Table 2: Synthesis and Analysis of Bad Leader Qualities**

Author(S)	Tracy (2017)	Hines (2017)	YEC (2017)	Chen (2018)	Thomas (2017)	Marr (2019)	Total
<b>Qualities</b>							
Poor Integrity	√	√	√	√			4
Lack of Adaptability/ Change	√		√			√	2
Lack of Empathy		√		√		√	3
Ego/ Self-Centered			√	√	√		3
Poor Communication	√		√	√	√		4
Lack of Accountability	√						1
Micro Management		√			√		2
Closed Mindedness		√			√		2

Lack of Self-Development			√		√		2
Reprimand others in a public area		√					1
Financial Oriented					√		1
No or Little Vision	√			√			2
Inconsistency		√	√		√		3
Indecisive						√	1
Out of Balance			√			√	2
Lack of Humility						√	1
Lack of Enthusiasm				√			1
Never learned from mistakes					√		1

According to findings, characteristics of bad leaders’ model, namely “Aliens in an organization: 5 characteristics of bad leaders” (as shown in Figure 1).



**Figure 1:** Aliens in an organization: 5 characteristics of bad leaders Model

**CONCLUSIONS, DISCUSSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

This study was a documentary analysis study that analyzed the key characteristics of bad leaders from famous and trusted related-business websites. Six websites were incorporated for

data analysis. Findings demonstrated that, according to information on these websites, the minimum numbers of qualities found on these websites were five while the maximum number of traits discovered on one of these websites were fifteen. All these characteristics were pooled together for synthesis and analysis to identify key qualities of bad leaders. This study determined the consistency index of bad leaders' traits at least three sources. Results indicated five key characteristics of bad leader, which was further utilized to develop a model called Aliens in an organization: 5 characteristics of bad leaders." Key characteristics of bad leaders proposed by this study based on its analysis consisted of poor integrity, lack of empathy, self-centered, poor communication, and inconsistency.

This study has some limitations. The major limitation of this study was to place its emphasis on the search via Google in which academic articles relating to bad leadership were excluded. Those qualities of bad leaders were from different sources such as past research, interview, authors' experience and opinions, which may have some biases. Thus, the further study should place more focus on the academic articles to find out key traits of bad leaders, which were identified based on the findings of research.

For research implications, this study provides various benefits and advantages for leaders and managers to take into consideration for improving their leadership. Leadership development program in organizations can use the proposed model of this study to create leadership course that help managers and leaders avoid engaging with these characteristics. In addition, characteristics of bad leaders presented in this study can be used for developing factor analysis with a quantitative method in the further study.

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