

Personality Characteristics of Pakistani Business Leaders: A Phenomenological Approach

Hafiz Haseeb Nisar, Dr. Rubina Hanif & Hamid Bilal

Abstract

Background: The objective of the present study is to understand the key personality characteristics that contribute to the success of a business leader. In Pakistani context, doing business with all social and environmental challenges is not an easy job. Many theoretical paradigms have tried to capture and explain this phenomenon ranging from trait perspective to behavioral motivation perspective; all have tried to explain its significance. In such scenario business leaders plays key role in overall economic growth of the country. The purpose is to investigate such characteristics of personality needed to excel in difficult times to reach at successful level.

Methods: The phenomenological qualitative approach was used to investigate personality characteristics of Pakistan successful business leaders. Convenient purposive sampling technique was applied and sample n= 5 of successful business leader were taken from Lahore and Faisalabad. Semi-structured interview technique was used to understand their experiences, attitudes, styles of management and key factors about in their business success.

Results: Thematic Analysis technique was employed to analyze data. The following themes emerged through descriptive and interpretative thematic technique as personality characteristics of business leaders: optimism, assertiveness, professionalism, effective management style, business knowledge/ excellence, supportive family and strong faith in God.

Conclusions: It was noted that all themes were interlinked and connected with each other which produce positive results in terms of success in Pakistan based business culture. The importance of this study rests in its eastern contribution to the theoretical framework of psychology of business leaders and Industrial organizational Psychology and further these findings will help to realize the basic key factors of success behind a business leader in Pakistan.

Keywords: Business Psychology, Leadership, Key Personality factors, Characteristics.

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Background

This study is about the leadership of Pakistan's top business leaders. Leadership, particularly related to corporate sector, is different from other kind of leaderships since it deals only with economy of the country and plays a vital role in development and growth of the country (Matsa & Miller, 2013). This is leadership that brings success to people and the country at national and international levels. This article highlights the key factors, styles, attitudes and characteristics behind the success of business tycoons of this country.

The word "leader" is derived from the old English word "laedan", it implies the meaning of showing the way (Smircich & Morgan, 1982). It's like a shepherd who walks in front of his flock in order to show them way and leading them to a particular destination (Jiao et al., 2011). And this meaning also implies on the sheep that willingly follow the shepherd; called followership. This meaning is different from the idea of moving and rear by using force. This word leader suggests the action of showing way and moving them toward an objective willingly (Juntrasook, 2014).

Leadership is essentially from organizational sciences, which means how leader behaves in the organization, how to inspire their employees and their method of cooperation with conditions in the organization and how they can make major changes in organization (Bass & Stogdill, 1990). Some researchers comprise that sometimes leadership may not be important and sometimes leadership experts anticipate that leadership make a new design in the minds of supporters who try to occupy leadership roles. Founders of new business enterprise have established and supported a new business enterprise, which not only builds vision and finance but also converts that vision and finance into successful and compatible business. Most researchers argued that organizational leaders play essential role. The founders of business are accountable for the availability of goods and services and for creation of new opportunities (Chandler & Hanks, 1994).

The concept of leadership can be started in the historical instructive literature (Henderson and Brookhart, 1996) but in the present scenario this theory is presented by Avolio and Luthans (Luthans et al., 2007). In the present era motivated and skilled work force for necessary in global competition for growth and survival (Abid et al., 2012) and it also determines that actual and sustainable competitive advantage in the organization comes from the human side (Jensen & Luthans, 2006). Further the environment in which entrepreneur of this era operates is very dynamic filled with economical changes and going concern for the business ethic make this concept of authentic leadership more critical. An authentic leader must be capable of making achievements authentically by self acceptance, authentic actions and relationships and it goes beyond the leader's authenticity as a person and his/her relationships with his followers. Here the attention is concentrated towards self regulation and self awareness components of authentic leadership, instead of perspectives of positive moral and positive psychological states that are enhanced by authentic leadership. As self awareness contributes a lot in authentic leadership linked with self reflection, authentic leaders confront with more clarity with

the help of their emotions, values, motives, identity and goals. As self awareness is represented as a state where individual is concerned and employees have full and conscious attention towards themselves (Duval & Wicklund, 1972).

Many articles have been written for many issues regarding business founders, which also includes differences between management and leaders (Robbins et al., 2002) cultivation trust of employees (Iqbal et al., 2013) and growing business leadership (Mandel et al., 2006). In the same sense, little attention has started to be given to entrepreneur and small business owners as leaders. Here the concern is to highlight the ability of founder of the business as in communicating the clarified vision to his employees. Ardichvili presented many theories in entrepreneurial context in leadership style examination of Russian entrepreneurs (Ardichvili et al., 1998). Furthermore, an emphasize was made by Berson for exploring more about leadership, entrepreneurship and behavior of organization (Berson et al., 2001). A number of studies demonstrated impact of founder in the supply of financial and human capital (Daily et al., 2002).

There are different styles of leadership, which leaders performed in their organizations. But every organization or business setup is based on different environment so all leadership styles may not apply to one situation, any of these leadership styles might be right for the one setup and can be wrong in the other (Aronson, 2001). Leadership style involves providing direction to someone, implementing all the plans, and most importantly motivating them (Adair, 1973).

Pakistan Business Leadership

In search of living leaders of Pakistan, different organization and university took this step to highlight Pakistan living legends and leaders in every perspective of life like, social, politics, business, sports, arts, media and spirituality (Hyder et al., 2011). In the category of corporate or business leaders of Pakistan, two very renowned people were taken to highlight by this research they are: Mian Muhammad Mansha (Chairman Nishat group and MCB) (Suleman and Ali). The specialists identify this person as a great leader, who leads through transformational style, but they also put him in the category of centurion leader; a person who also needs the experience in addition to the style (Bass & Avolio, 1993). His success depends upon his influence on people and the power of decision making. The other business tycoon is Rafiq Rangoonwala (CEO Cupola group of companies, KFC) who also found to have transformational style of leadership and considered to be very successful business man by his clear vision, mission and objective and he has charismatic influence on his people (Khan & Shahed, 2018).

A study was conducted to examine the effect of leadership development on employee performance in Pakistan. Sample was selected from the organizations of Rawalpindi and Islamabad, with convenient sampling technique. This study focused and considers the five factors of leadership development, coaching, training and development, empowerment, participation and development. Results revealed that 50% performance of the employees influenced by these factors. But rest of the 50% revealed that leadership skills such as, motivation, trust in employees,

attitude, commitment, rewards and bonuses etc positively affects the performance of the employees (Abbas and Yaqoob, 2009).

Another important study was conducted to investigate that whether corporate values actually effects ethical leadership and performance of the employees. This sample of the study is taken from different organizations of Pakistan. Convenient sampling method was used in this study and data gathered from 190 middle and top level management on the basis of their knowledge and experience. The results significantly proved that corporate ethical value do have an impact on ethical leadership and performance of the employees and this factor is very important Results also revealed that any leadership must have ethical values and manners, without them it can be harmful for the team and organization (Sabir et al., 2012).

Another important study was conducted on decision making impacts, that how it effects Organization effectiveness. Data was taken from 302 senior faculty members and administrators from 24 institutes of Khyber Pakhtun khwa. The outcome of this study indicated that rational/collegial style of decision making positively influences organizational effectiveness. But on the other hand autocratic/political style negatively influences organizational effectiveness (Hassan et al., 2011)

Rationale of the study

A lot of work has been done on the topic of leadership but, unfortunately, no serious and solid work is available on the leadership of Pakistan's business people. Due to this reason, I decided to take this subject so that a minute but comprehensive study could be done to bring forth idiosyncrasies and leadership qualities of business tycoons of this country. It is important to know particular traits of these business leaders to determine the causes of their success.

The purpose of this study is to identify such personality characteristics which can help metamorphosing an ordinary businessman into a successful entrepreneur of this country while, on the other hand, such characteristics would be best guidelines for the starts-up for running their business on successful lines. Some people believe the real cause of their success are owing of a strike of fate while some are of the views that some mysterious forces are behind their business triumph but, in reality, there are concrete factors constantly working behind their success. To study this approach I consider to do work on it and trying to find out indigenous knowledge and definition of success in business particularly in context of Pakistan.

Method

Objectives

Much research has been done on the topic leadership but not specifically has been done on business leadership of Pakistan. Therefore, the researcher decided to conduct a research on this topic. The present study focuses only on the following objectives:

1. To explore the experiences of the entrepreneurs.
2. To understand the psychological, sociological, cognitive factors contributing to successful entrepreneurs.

3. To explore knowledge, skills and leadership qualities that possessed by successful entrepreneurs of Pakistan.
4. To identify the sources of success among successful entrepreneurs.
5. To identify the challenges faced by entrepreneurs in Pakistan to establish business and to reach at successful level.

Design

The phenomenological exploratory/qualitative approach was used to investigate the personality characteristics of Pakistani successful entrepreneurs. Purposive sampling technique was applied and Semi structured Interviews were used to explore the experiences of Pakistani successful entrepreneurs.

Participants

A sample of 10 successful male entrepreneurs age ranges from 45 to 60 years were purposely selected for interviews. The inclusion criterion for considering successful entrepreneurs was; those entrepreneurs who are running the enterprise from minimum last 2 to 5 years. They had registered enterprises and member of Pakistan Business Council and respective Chamber of Commerce. All enterprises were ISO certified by adopting international recognized management system. This criteria of successful business organization was also shared in previous management studies (Saqib et al., 2008). Exclusion criterion includes those high executive officers working on top most position owned by someone else.

Measures

Interview guide. Semi-structured interview was used as reliable instrument in order to inquire the sources, skills which are actively contribute to their success in personal and professional life. The interviewer in a semi-structured interview generally has a framework of themes to be explored (Rabionet, 2011). By keeping in mind the basic purpose of interview, interview guidelines were developed through extensive literature review of entrepreneurship studies and opinions of expert in business field were also sought in order to ensure the appropriateness of interview protocol. Simple open ended questions were formed and use of jargons was avoided throughout interview protocol (Rabionet, 2011). The Interview Guideline questions included like what are key challenges confronting business leaders today? What are the competencies required for successful leader/entrepreneur?

Procedure

The entrepreneurs from different business setups listed in Pakistan Stock Exchange and Pakistan Business Council was contacted through Lahore Chamber of Commerce, Rawalpindi Chamber of Commerce and CEO Club Pakistan respectively. Business setups were included real estate, manufacturing, food, chemical and hospitality industry that they were running successfully in Pakistan. They were contacted and informed about what the interview is about and their consent was taken. The participants were selected from Islamabad, Lahore and Karachi independently. The time, date, and venue were decided according to permission received from entrepreneurs directly or from their resource person. The interviewer/researcher created a

Results

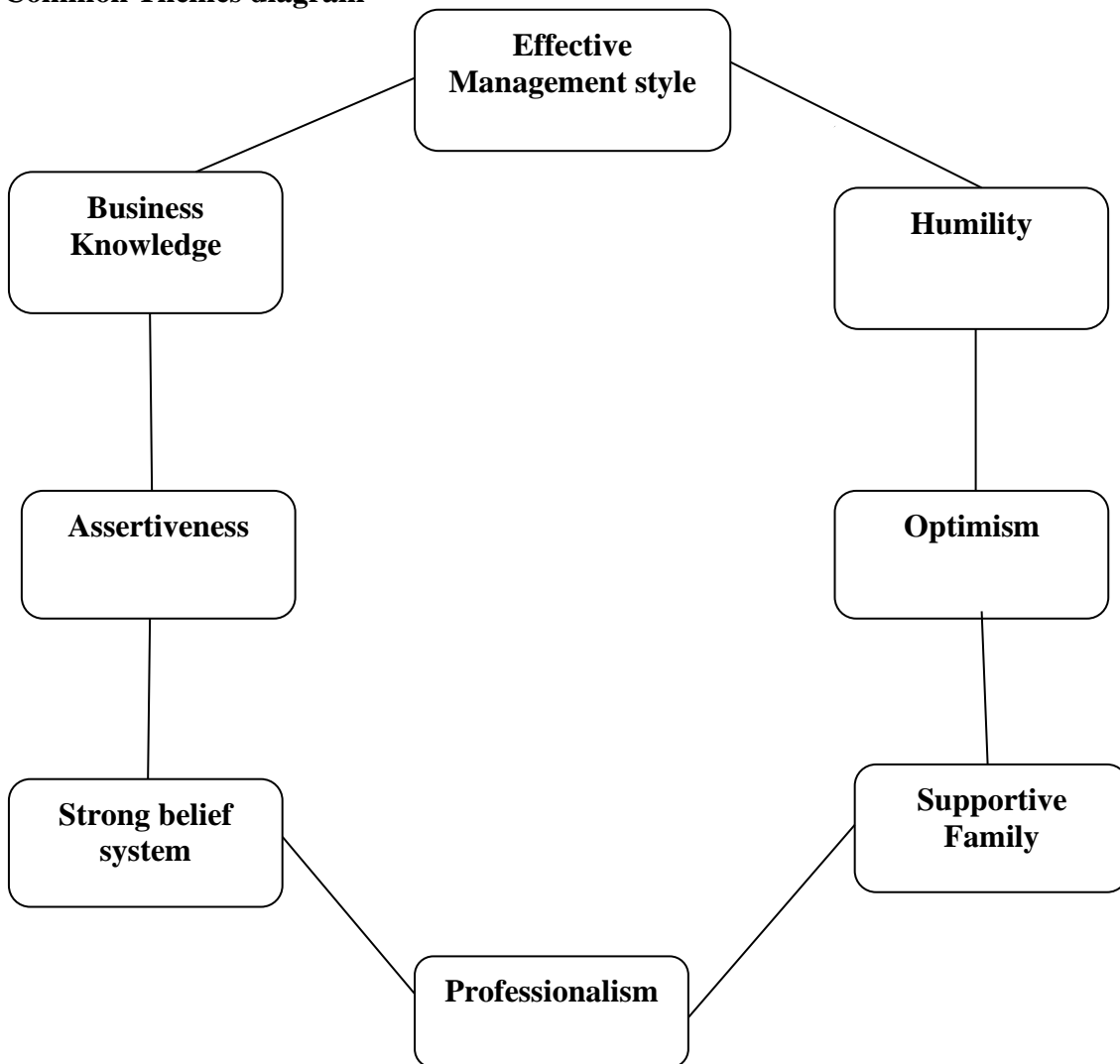
This investigation was conducted to study the characteristics of business leaders of Pakistan. After interviews, the data which was gathered from them transcribed, and different themes extracted from the interview

Table 1

Themes extracted from the coding of the interviews

Excellence	Assertiveness	Optimism	Humility
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Skills • Human skills • Quality of education • Knowledge of work • Business knowledge • Sense of directions • Habit of studying 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tough decision • Willingness • Be efficient • Be strong • Taking risks • Take actions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hope • Clear intention • Global mindset • Global vision • See things differently • Positive thinking 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sensible • Empathy
Professionalism	Effective Management style	Supportive parents	Faith in Allah
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rules • Purpose • Objectives • Management • Human resource • Continuous development • Transforming culture • Professional environment • New technology • Clear destiny • Career development 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ability to lead • Show new directions • Ability to motivate • Retain key employees • Team work • Encourage strong point of employees • Strategic planning • Empowering employees. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supportive role of family • Father as inspiration 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Belief in Allah • Be a good Muslim

Common Themes diagram



Common Themes of 5 interviews

Characteristics of Pakistan Business leaders

permissive and nurturing environment that encouraged the participant to share true experience of their life, share hardships and difficulties in the process of establishing successful business (Marczak and Sewell, 1998, Betts et al., 1998). One to one discussion was conducted to locate trends and themes. Questions were asked regarding their career as entrepreneur. Their journey was probed via different questions regarding what factors do facilitate them to be a successful person and what were the hardships that create a barrier in their journey. They were asked about their characteristics that help them to be an entrepreneur. The participants were allowed to freely give their opinions. The duration of interviews was about 30-50 minutes. The interviews were recorded on a portable hand-held audio device and note taking during interviews. Audio recorded

interviews were transcribed for thematic analysis.

Ethical Consideration

Ethical codes established by APA were followed. Participants were approached in the time best suitable for them and after having their informed consent (See Appendix), study was conducted.

Data analysis

The method used for analyzing of data for this purpose was thematic analysis. Thematic Analysis (TA) is an accessible, flexible, and increasingly popular method of qualitative data analysis. Learning to do it provides the

qualitative researcher with a foundation in the basic skills needed to engage with other approaches to qualitative data analysis (Joffe, 2012). Thematic analysis has multiple forms to analyze the data and it depends upon researcher which approach he or she is using for analysis. In this study descriptive and interpretative form of thematic

analysis and inductive approach was used to describe and interpret the underlying pattern meaning through summarizing and describing basic themes from

participants interview data into organizing themes which ultimately explain global themes (Clarke et al., 2015). Results demonstrated that there are eight global themes emerged from thematic analysis of data. The global themes included Excellence, Assertiveness, Optimism, Humility, Professionalism, Effective Management Style, Supportive Parents and Faith in Allah.

Discussion

Leadership is not a term but a dynamic process that makes any person successful. As far as a business person is concerned, he does not take this term for granted, rather, he gets success by passing through this process and the volume of success depends on how effectively they sharpen their acumen during this period (Zaleznik, 2004). Business community, all over the world, is considered to be very successful, affluent, satisfied, and role models for the upcoming generation (Den Hartog & Verburg, 1997). Everyone wants to know secrets of their successful business. On these grounds, this research has been conducted so that these secrets should be revealed to ordinary people too with precise way. The following are those factors frequently recognized by most of the business leaders: Optimism, Assertiveness, Business knowledge/excellence, Professionalism, Effective Management style, Family's support and Faith in ALLAH.

This research totally focuses on the Pakistani business leaders in context of their respective local environment and circumstances. Their business models and successes could be compared with their international peers. Business takes time to establish itself and under the great leadership it grows and develops through the time, business leaders do follow some rules, models, ways and knowledge to cover journey of their success (Albaum & Peterson, 2006).

Analysis, drawn from the given data, reveals seven major factors although they are different but closely correlated with each other. The first factor they use for their success is 'optimism' and this is their optimistic approach towards life that helped them to compose their success in this world. The 1st subject reported very clearly that "We should not lose hope or think that we cannot get out of difficult situation, all the leading people and countries were able to achieve glory only after braving hard times". This is what he sees positive side of the future. In this regard other two subjects reported the importance of clarity of vision and global mindset. This shows the leader's positive approach towards future and hope for the better results in terms of success. The 4th subject reported "leadership is the ability to see things differently, bring about change in the people showing them new directions, raising hopes and transforming culture". 5th subject said: "Leaders are those

who raise hopes amongst people. Visionary leaders are those who can convey their message to people in an effective manner and then inspire them. They are who can articulate the vision". These findings also supported by previous studies on optimism related to business leaders (Nawi, 2012).

The other important theme extracted from their interviews is assertive attitude of leaders that provokes confidence in their abilities and themselves. All the subjects narrated in different ways only one uniformed opinion and that is how to be efficient, be strong and take risks in business regardless how difficult the situation is. As 1st subject in interview said, "A leader should possess the

willingness to lead people upfront and take risks. Leadership is having the courage to stand up, bring about change and be counted for your actions". The 2nd subject reported in this regard as "your independence and your own decisions lead you towards great success". As assertive attitude considered as great personality characteristics which is also supported by previous researches (Esen, 2016).

Implications of the study

The findings of the study will be helpful in understanding the key factors of their successes. It will be helpful to comprehend their strategies and plans that lead them to the zenith of their success. A common man tries to conceal their success in fogs of mystery, but reality, the success of these people are owing of their innovation, hard work, assertive attitude and positive outlook. But the results of this study revealed the personal characteristics with some other key factors behind their ambivalent success. We should adopt optimistic approach in our lives so that we can see the things more clearly and vividly. As the business leaders said global vision and global mindset of a person and positive thinking can unleash the secrets of life as well. Professionalism and effective management style can make you different from others besides above all, the role of your family and belief system will really help you to go ahead.

This study could be very helpful in business studies especially for the starts-up. It is also important to understand the structural psychology of every business and by implementing it you could enhance your perception about things and sharpen your business skill. Students of business studies should adopt this as practical findings of business leaders rather than studying from books or notes.

Limitations and Suggestions

The sample size was small so the results may not be generalized. Sample was taken from only five different sectors of business and ignores other sectors. All the 5 business leaders are highly successful at present time. People should be made aware of their success through their case studies. The government of Pakistan should take some steps to promote their success through media. Business studies department of different universities should publish their success stories in their newsletters. Their practical knowledge must be share and teach in business studies. The sample should be large so the results can be generalized.

Conclusion

It is concluded that, in addition to business knowledge/ excellence, six other factors also significantly

contribute success in business; 1) optimism, 2) assertiveness, 3) professionalism, 4) effective management or leadership style, 5) family's role, 6) faith in God. These all are considered the secrets of their success.

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Author Information

Contributions

Dr Rubina Hanif was part of this study as professional advisor and mentor. Hamid Bilal helped in regard for data collection, transcription and expert opinion.

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Ethics declarations

Ethics approval and consent to participate

This study was approved by the Institutional Review Board (National Institute of Psychology, Islamabad). A written informed consent was obtained from all participants.

Consent for publication

Not applicable.

Competing interests

The authors declare to have no competing interests.

Additional Information

Not applicable.

Disclaimer

Note: This Article has been driven from my research work deposited in HEC Depository ID: 257524990 Detail Letter attach with the article.

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