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Has reading Harry Potter affected the Millennial Generation as Leaders?

Amanda Giampetro MA
Univeristy of Southern Maine

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Has reading Harry Potter affected the Millennial Generation as Leaders?

A thesis

Submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the

Masters of Leadership Studies

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By

Amanda Giampetro

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Table of Contents

Chapter 1: Introduction.....4

Chapter 2: Literature Review.....6

Chapter 3: Research.....13

Chapter 4: Findings.....17

Chapter 5: Discussion.....30

References.....38

Appendix A: Signature Page.....41

Appendix B: IRB Approval.....42

Appendix C: Consent Form.....43

Abstract

This research looks at how Harry Potter affected millennials. The research sought to learn if reading the series growing up influenced millennials as leaders and how they view leaders. Through personal interviews, the researcher was able to gain insight into the impact of the Harry Potter phenomenon on millennials. The series, through both books and films, created an entertaining environment for readers to learn the concept of leadership. This is because the story is presented in an easy to follow sequence of events which allows the reader to observe leadership theory and moral development. So, without realizing, the interviewees had learned aspects of leadership from the series which impacted how they view leaders and how they themselves lead.

Keywords: Leader, Harry Potter, Impact, Literature, Values, Millennials

Chapter 1: Introduction

The first book in the Harry Potter series was released in the United Kingdom in 1997 and the United States in 1998. The books quickly gained success, not only in the United Kingdom and the United States but around the world. The story of the boy wizard went on to become a worldwide phenomenon that dominated bestselling book lists for years. The *Times* created the category of bestselling children's books when the fourth Harry Potter book was released, and the top four spots on the list were occupied by Harry Potter books (Anatol, 2003, p. x). Not only did Harry Potter take over the book world, but it was also made into movies and merchandise. The series inspired fanfictions and conventions, and became the basis of podcasts and blogs, and even caught the eye of academics, who would study the effects these stories had on those that read them. Harry Potter, in the truest sense of the word, is a "trans-media" phenomenon (Das, 2016, p. 342).

Millennials were the first generation to read Harry Potter. This generation is defined as those born between 1981 and 1996 (Fry, 2018) and is grouped together because of their shared experiences with technology and events. Millennials are the first generation that readily had access to computers and the internet. They also shared the experience of 9/11 at a crucial time in their development and this helped to shape how they interacted with the world. With the oldest millennials born in 1981 and the youngest in 1996, a large portion of millennials were the same age as the characters in Harry Potter when the books came out. As millennials read the books, they were able to form a special bond with stories that allowed them to vicariously learn the same lesson as Harry and his friends as they embarked on different adventures.

Not only were millennials the first to read Harry Potter, but they are also now the largest demographic in the American workforce, according to Pew Research (2018). As the youngest of millennials are coming to the end of their college careers, the oldest are soon to be entering their 40s and are filling legitimate leadership roles. Since millennials have entered the workforce, they have

shown that they are markedly different than previous generations; compared to the baby boomer generation, millennials like to give and receive feedback (Chou, 2012), which has caused friction with their predecessors. This is part of a shift in values (Chou, 2012).

It was the influence of an article and a podcast that led the researcher to want to understand how Harry Potter has affected millennials as leaders. The researcher was listening to a podcast by Jocko Wilkins (2015) when the sentiment was shared that some books become a part of us. This struck a chord. A few days later, when reading an article for a leadership class, one particular sentence stuck out, “The engaging storyteller will weave a myth that allows the audience to tap into known stories and examine how it might use these stories as the basis for good decisions and effective actions” (Coste & Nemeroff, 2017, p. 145). These two things combined made the researcher think of growing up and reading Harry Potter, how much it was a part of her life, and the lives of many people she knows. If books, as Jocko had so eloquently stated, become a part of who we are, how had Harry Potter affected those that had read them when they became leaders? With millennials now the largest generational group in the American workforce as well as having been overwhelmingly engrossed in the world of Harry Potter, it is vital to figure out just how the story of the boy wizard affected them.

Questions

In this paper, the researcher will attempt to answer the following questions:

- Has reading Harry Potter affected millennials as leaders?
- Has reading Harry Potter affected how millennials view leaders?
- What did millennials take away as the major themes of the stories?
- Did those themes have an impact on how millennials lead and view leaders?

Chapter 2: Literature Review

“It is commonly believed that young people are victims of popular culture. Popular culture is not imposed on youth, however: they’re in a complex and interactive dialogue with the texts” (Scheeler, 2017, p. 28). In the last 20 years, one of the greatest pieces of popular culture has been the story of Harry Potter. “This phenomenon called Harry Potter clearly demonstrates the impact these seven books have had on the world and on individuals” (Apel, 2007, p. 295). The phenomenon of Harry Potter consists of seven books and eight movies in the main story, which does not count the numerous side stories by the author and fanfiction that encompasses the entirety of the world of Harry Potter.

Harry Potter has become so prolific in popular culture, that with only a quick internet search using key terms such as Harry Potter, child*, and lead*, the search produced a plethora of articles. Of the materials initially found is an article about how classes on Harry Potter can be found in course catalogs at various colleges (Das, 2016). Further implications of how ubiquitous the series has become is the fact that a study was done using Hogwarts houses and the sorting process to help identify the personality types drawn to particular areas of specialties in medicine (Biamas-George & Vrochides, 2020). This shows that the Harry Potter series has had an undeniable impact with further-reaching implications than just how it affected the literary world. This is because author J. K. Rowling has an incredible ability to cast spells on readers through her use of language (Apel, 2007).

Learning

There are many aspects of books that draw people in: adventure, romance, fantasy, exciting characters, and much more. Harry Potter draws readers into a world of fantasy; the books are filled with magic and a whole world that is not wholly separate from our own everyday lives. The fact that Rowling created a world that exists within our own helps readers to identify with the story and the characters by mediating the reader’s understanding of the world they live in (Das, 2016). The reader’s ability to

identify with the story opens the reader to learning because “reading educates us without us knowing or forecasting its full learning or impact” (Nambiar, 2012, p. 1).

Harry Potter was written, not as a teaching tool, but as pleasure reading for children and adolescents. This type of reading is done voluntarily for pleasure (Cullinan, 2000), so the reader is not always aware that they are learning from the readings because they are not looking for something. Readers who engage in recreational reading build background knowledge. When reading a series, such as Harry Potter, they gain knowledge of the world and skills that will help to keep them informed (Cullinan, 2000). “Thomas Jefferson believed that informed citizens are the best safeguard against tyranny” (Cullinan, 2000, p. 1). Fighting tyranny is a noteworthy theme in the Harry Potter series.

Harry Potter encompasses more than just standard fairy tale elements, such as dragons and demons (Das, 2016); it also has “strong sub-texts of anti-racist, anti-class, and anti-minority themes [that] run throughout the text” (Das, 2016, p. 343). Das (2016) found in her study that these themes helped to lead the readers of Harry Potter to have a deeper connection to the books because they were able to identify elements from their own lives in the story. The reader is able to learn from the text without looking for knowledge because “they encounter material that helps them in the context of their lives” (Ross, 1999, p. 785).

The idea of “the book that changed my life” (Ross, 1999, p. 791) is a romantic notion that is hard to live up to; sometimes, it is the books that we read over and over that connect to our lives in a significant way. These are the books that the reader will “read themselves into the story and then read the story into their lives, which then becomes a part of them” (Ross, 1999, p. 793). Sometimes these books change the reader’s “beliefs, attitudes, or pictures of the world” (Ross, 1999, p. 792), other times, those books “provide reassurance, confirmation of the self, or inner strength” (Ross, 1999, p. 792).

Reading for pleasure also plays a role in preparing younger demographics for adulthood (Howard, 2011). Reading not only teaches the reader moral lessons but helps to “facilitate a continuous

development of the ability to think” (Howard, 2011, p. 46). According to Thunnissen (2010), the story of Harry Potter can be analyzed using the script theory from Berne and Yalom. Throughout the series, Harry continually must find meaning using his script, or “the plan a person comes up with in early childhood” (Thunnissen, 2010, p. 34). The stories children read play a role in the development of their script because they “help children to resolve psychological problems, as well as encourage the development of their self-esteem and ideas of morality” (Thunnissen, 2010, p. 33).

Morals

Books can educate us without our knowledge because when readers identify with the characters, they desire to be like them. Popular culture is filled with books and other media that contain characters that learn lessons and values that affect how the consumer sees the world (Gierzynski & Eddy, 2013). Through this process, readers can internalize the different lessons that the characters learn during their journey. According to Cain (2005), certain external influences, like reading, help youths learn that some acts are virtuous. Referencing the works of Nussbaum, Cain (2005) put forth an argument that reading “great works of tragedy” (p. 175) helps to provide lessons of ethics and morals. “Literary thinkers have been especially confident in documenting an Aristotelian process of self-possessed moral development as it occurs in the act of reading” (Cain, 2005, p. 176). Cain (2005) asserts when readers live the lives of the characters, it allows the reader to “try out each new pattern of desire” (p. 179). In the end, this allows the reader to cultivate moral judgment (Cain, 2005).

In the case of Harry Potter, young readers “meet characters who feel, think and act as we would like to be able to; our imaginative identification with the moral hero enables us to simultaneously imagine our own virtuous development” (Seroczynski, Johnson, Lamb, & Gustman, 2011, p. 2). Harry Potter is part of a long history of storytelling, both oral and written, that has been used to nurture moral development (Seroczynski et al., 2011). In the Harry Potter books, there are many examples of morality. The characters in the story must decide when it is morally right to follow rules or break them, or when

to use reason or emotion to deal with the issues they are facing (Seroczynski et al., 2011). The characters also deal with moral issues such as equality, violence, revenge, and forgiveness, among a multitude of others (Gierzynski & Eddy, 2013).

In the Harry Potter books, Rowling follows in the footsteps of other great authors like Lewis Carroll, and others that came after (McGavock, 2007). The stories that these authors put forth for children and adolescents freed the imagination and allowed the reader to reflect, unlike the works that came before, which repressed children (McGavock, 2007). The freedom the readers were able to find in the stories was “achieved through revealing rather than withholding information about the world” (McGavock, 2007, p. 133). The characters in the Harry Potter series must find solutions to the problems they face, not through the use of magic, but with traditional virtues and morals (McGavock, 2007). Dumbledore said it best, “it is our choices, Harry, that show what we truly are, far more than our abilities” (Rowling, 1998, p. 245).

While some may argue that the Harry Potter books promote moral relativism, it is what Harry does consistently that makes him a moral character (Baggett, 2004). “Moral complexities don’t entail that everything ethical is colored gray and up for grabs. That a character like Harry may have flaws doesn’t mean he’s not a hero or virtuous” (Baggett, 2004, p. 164). In fact, Harry having flaws makes him that much more relatable to the reader. Sometimes a character must violate rules and law because there is a higher, more moral purpose that they must answer, and at other times they must make the choice between the lesser of two evils (Baggett, 2004). Making these choices does not make the character any less moral; it means that the character is able to think for themselves and make the best decision they can. These are the decisions that Harry and other characters have to make throughout the series. Deciding between two evils is not an easy task; the decision requires a strong moral foundation and character.

Character

Morals and values make up a strong character. There are three phases to character development: moral knowing, moral feeling, and moral action (Sarros & Cooper, 2006). In transitioning through these phases, a person starts off with knowing what is moral, then progresses to being concerned with performing a moral act, and lastly, does what is moral. However, there is sometimes a gap between knowing what is moral and doing what is moral. A person may know what the moral action is and be able to tell others what is moral, but unless the person is able to align their words with their actions, they lack integrity (Sarros & Cooper, 2006). Not only is integrity the most important characteristic, people must also “be prepared to demonstrate [their integrity] again and again” (Bennis, 2003, p. xviii). If a person has integrity, their past actions could predict future behavior (Sarros & Cooper, 2006).

The path to integrity, however, is dependent on the second step of character development, moral feeling. Moral feeling can best be described as moral potency (Hannah & Avolio, 2010). Moral potency is a person’s motivation to address moral dilemmas (Hannah & Avolio, 2010). A person’s motivation to act morally is comprised of moral ownership, moral efficacy, and moral courage (Hannah & Avolio, 2010). Moral ownership is knowing that it is in the leader’s place to act, moral efficacy is knowing that the actions can be successful, and moral courage is the resolution to act (Hannah & Avolio, 2010). Leaders that have high moral potency will be viewed as authentic because they have integrity. The integrity comes from “taking ownership” (Hannah & Avolio, 2010, p. 293) and having “the courage and confidence ... to take action they deem appropriate to pursue based on their moral values and judgments” (Hannah & Avolio, 2010, p. 293).

Leadership

When it comes to leadership, character matters, and integrity is the most important character trait a leader can possess (Bennis, 2003). “Leaders with character have been identified as authentic

leaders” (Sarros & Cooper, 2006, p. 2); they “know who they are and what they believe in” (Sarros & Cooper, 2006, p. 2). Many of the characters in Harry Potter know both who they are and what they believe in. Knowing who they are and what they believe in, allows them to inspire others with their emotions (Cuilla, Price, & Murphy, 2005). As a leader, a person must have “the *right* emotions” (Cuilla et al., 2005, p. 30). The right emotions are grounded in “love and compassion, but also a keen sense of justice and, where appropriate, moral indignation” (Cuilla et al., 2005, p. 30). Harry, specifically, has the right emotions and possesses “character, perseverance, and imagination [which] are the sine qua non of leadership” (Bennis, 2003, p. 134).

“In the world of Harry Potter, just as in our own world, heroism comes from standing up for one’s beliefs, even if that means going against the group or breaking the rules” (Green, 2006, p. 299). The most poignant example is at the end of the first book when Neville stands up to Harry, Ron, and Hermione. In that moment, Neville standing his ground was the most courageous thing any of the characters do throughout the series. This is because Neville is resisting social influence. As Dumbledore said during the end of year feast, “it takes a great deal of bravery to stand up to our enemies, but a great deal more to stand up to our friends” (Columbus, 2001). According to Green (2006), this is because “what is going on around us can be as powerful an influence on our behavior as our own internal beliefs” (p. 300).

During the seven-year journey Harry takes, he has incredible support from Ron and Hermione (Green, 2006). Their support is a source of Harry’s ability to stand up for what he believes in. Throughout the story, it is shown time and again the importance of teamwork. “In the *Order of the Phoenix*, the Sorting Hat reminds the students that they must stick together” (Green, 2006, p. 306). This is because it is easier to resist social pressure with the aid of friends and allies (Green, 2006). The natural urge to fit in is strong, so strong that we see that the “Dursley’s behavior is motivated by what the neighbors might

think of them” (Green, 2006, p 305). While courage and morals are important to leadership, support plays an integral part as well.

The story of Harry Potter, in either books or films, helps to “create a fun and beneficial way for learners to grasp the concepts of leadership” (Rosser, 2007, p. 237). The story presents an easy to follow sequence of events where the viewer can easily observe leadership theory (Rosser, 2007) and moral development. “Timeless leadership is always about character, and it is always about authenticity” (Bennis, 2003, p. xxviii). The Harry Potter stories are filled with characters that strive to be authentic.

Chapter 3: Research

Since Harry Potter is a recent phenomenon, the first book came out 22 years ago, the research on the subject is still in the early stages. After database searches, this researcher was not able to find much on how the world of Harry Potter influenced perceptions of leadership in those that immersed themselves in the stories as children and teenagers. This research attempts to gain insight into the effect that Harry Potter has had on millennials and add to the conversation that has been started with studies such as *Harry Potter and the Millennials* (Graff & Birkenstein, 2018, p. 20).

Methods

The research presented is a qualitative study. The reason for choosing to conduct a qualitative study is an “attempt to understand the whole picture” (Janesick, 2016, p. 11) of what millennials took away from the story of the boy wizard and how it impacted their concept of leadership. Specifically, this is a phenomenology study. “*Phenomenology* entails collection and analysis of people’s perceptions related to a specific, definable phenomenon” (Burkholder, Cox, Crawford, & Hitchcock, p. 217). The purpose of a phenomenological study is to help understand how people experience a phenomenon and is meant to help get a deeper understanding of the phenomenon. This type of research usually consists of 3 to 15 participants (Creswell, 2018).

To achieve a deep understanding of how the series affects the interaction between millennials and leadership, face-to-face interviews were conducted. All of the millennials that were interviewed spent their formative years living in New England. New England consists of six states in the northeastern United States; the states that makeup New England are: Connecticut, Massachusetts, Rhode Island, New Hampshire, Vermont, and Maine. By focusing the study on millennials in New England, this study is specifically a phenomenological case study. What makes a study a case study is that the researcher sets boundaries on the study of an event or phenomenon (Creswell, 2018, p. 39). In this study, the researcher set the boundaries that the participants must be a millennial (1981-1996), having read

and/or watched Harry Potter as a child or teenager, and have lived in New England during the time frame when they first encountered Harry Potter.

Participants

The researcher identified four individuals who are millennials that grew up reading and watching Harry Potter. All of the interviewees are individuals known to the researcher in varying degrees. Each of the individuals grew up in New England; one participant is from Massachusetts, and three are from Maine. Each participant lived in New England at the time of the study as well.

Data Collection

Each participant interviewed was asked at least six questions. All interviews were conducted live; however, if they could not be conducted in person, arrangements were made for the interviews to be done using Zoom. Zoom is a cloud-based internet conferencing program that allows users to hold online meetings via video, call, or chat. The questions the participants were asked focused on their relationship with the series and what their perception of how leadership was portrayed in the stories. The researcher based the questions on arguments presented in the literature review. Specifically, the researcher asked pointed questions about characters the interviewees identified with, and how that character embodied leadership and values. Most interviews took around a half-hour. In the event that an interviewee was more expansive, and the interview was going to be more than an hour long, the researcher would make plans with the interviewee to meet up again at a later date to finish the discussion.

Interviews were conducted the last week of February and the first three weeks of March. Each interview was recorded using the record application on the researcher's cell phone or tablet. Then each interview was transcribed before the next interview took place. The interviews were scheduled at least three days apart. The researcher used Temi to transcribe each interview. Temi is a web-based program that allows you to record and transcribe audio. After Temi completed the transcription, the researcher

listened to the recordings of the interviews. This was done to make necessary adjustments to the transcription produced by Temi.

Interviews

The interviews were semi-structured interviews (Merriam, 1998). The research had six questions written ahead of time that each interviewee was asked. The researcher occasionally asked follow-up questions based on the information provided by the interviewee. During the first interview, the researcher asked the participant what her Hogwarts house was and decided to make that the seventh question all four participants were asked.

1. How many times have you read Harry Potter, if you know, and what do you think are some of the major themes in the series?
2. Of the major themes you identified, do you think they relate to leadership, and how so?
3. Which character do you identify with the most, and why?
4. What values did you learn from the series that you think most impact your perception of leaders and how you lead?
5. How would you define good and bad leadership, and do you think the series has examples of both? If so, what are they?
6. If you had to pick one character in the series that embodies what you think is a good leader, who would it be and why?

Data Analysis

Coding

After the last interview was transcribed, they were coded. "Coding is the process of applying topical names to pieces of data and using these topics to recognize and name larger conceptual patterns across data" (Buckholder et al., 2020, p. 99). The researcher coded the transcripts from the interviews by hand. The coding was done using a method called Structured Coding; this is a process where the

researcher starts coding, looking for specific data but stays open to other codes that may emerge (Saldana, 2016). The researcher focused on the major themes that emerge from the coding done of the interviews.

Researcher's Role

Harry Potter is a personal topic to the researcher because the researcher is an avid fan of the series. The researcher has read each of the Harry Potter books at least four times, seen all of the movies multiple times, and participates in the fan community. The researcher is also a millennial that grew up in New England. Three of the interviewees are close friends of the researcher; one of the interviewees is a casual acquaintance. Due to the fact of having an affinity for the Harry Potter series, the researcher had to stay cognizant of perceptions and biases held prior to the study. This researcher submitted plans for the research to the institutional review board (IRB) for approval.

Verification

There are many ways to help combat researcher bias in data analysis. This researcher used two different methods of verification to make sure that the data was represented in as unbiased a manner as possible. First, the researcher sent a copy of a completed draft of the research and interview transcripts to each of the participants. Each interviewee was asked to read over the findings along with their transcript to verify that the research had properly represented the responses given during the interview. Second, the researcher had a second reader to go over the research. The second reader for this study is a professor in the leadership studies program who is familiar with the effects of magic and myth in many forms on leadership.

Chapter 4: Findings

The interview process highlighted the various ways text can be interpreted. The researcher started the interview process with a person that had read the books alongside the researcher growing up. Although the two individuals had read the books together and talked about the series numerous times, the researcher was still shocked by some of the insights the interviewee gave during the interview. In fact, each participant had vastly different interpretations of the story of Harry Potter, and each person was able to articulate their connection to the series and provide examples of the various themes and characters as they relate to leadership. In the discussion below, the researcher will show first that the individuals interviewed had a connection to the story of Harry Potter, which opened them to learn from the series without their knowledge; then that the series had different morals and values woven into the story that relates to their lives and leadership, and finally that they were able to identify different leaders and the characteristics that made them either a good or bad leader within the story.

Chart 1: List of Interviewees

Participant	House	Identification	Overall Tone	Good Leader
Denae	Hufflepuff	Neville	Compassion	Lupin
Laura	Ravenclaw	Hermione	Fun	Hermione
Bex	Slytherin	Harry/Draco	Skeptical	McGonagall
Dan	Slytherin	Ron	Team Work	Hagrid

Connection

There are many ways a reader makes a connection with what they are reading. Making a connection to what one is reading is crucial in being able to take away lessons from the story. While learning lessons is not the object of reading books like Harry Potter, it is a byproduct. There are three different ways that the participants were able to indicate that they had made a connection to the Harry Potter series.

Houses

The question that became standard in all of the interviews in addition to the original six was, “what is your Hogwarts’ house?” Each participant knew which house they belonged in; some had taken the official quiz on Pottermore (official Harry Potter website), but everyone had chosen their house. Of the interviewees, there were two Slytherins, one Ravenclaw, and one Hufflepuff. In true Slytherin fashion, there was no hesitation or question about the house that Dan and Bex belonged too. Laura felt she could belong to two different houses, which is not uncommon, but in the end, her chosen house is Ravenclaw. She feels she fits in best with those that love learning. And the one Hufflepuff, Denae, took her time in answering, discussing all of the answers she had gotten from various quizzes, official and non-official.

Reading

The houses the participants belong in was just the beginning of the ways they had connected to the story. Each person had read the books multiple times. Bex, Denae, and Laura continue to participate in the Harry Potter fandom through podcasts and fanfiction as well. When asked how many time she had read the story, Denae responded with,

Oh my god. So I’ve definitely read Harry Potter, like I would say at least ten times, probably more. Um, I’m actually like rereading technically, like I’m listening to it on audiobook. I’m listening to the whole series all over again. And I’ve done that probably five or six times in the last like three or four years, just because like it’s a comforting story. Um, so yeah, and then like through podcasts and stuff, I’ve probably re-read them again through the eyes of other people, like another, like two or three times. So definitely a lot of times

Bex, on the other hand, has not read all of the books multiple times. The seventh book she only read once because “I didn’t want it to end.” She did say though that “one through five, I read minimum five times,” and she “only read the sixth one twice.” Laura read the series “like seven times,” but the seventh

book is the one she read the fewest as well. One of the reasons Laura reread the series is because it was the only way she could get her daughter to stop crying as a baby. She and Dan both reread the previous books each time a new book came out.

Identification

The researcher also asked each of the participants which character they identified with most and why as a way to show a deeper connection between the reader and the series. Each of the participants was able to articulate a character they identified with in the series, although it took some contemplation. Unfortunately, one of the reasons it was hard for the interviewees to think of characters they identify with is because the majority of the main characters are from Gryffindor House, and none of the participants belong to that house. With very few characters from their respective houses, they had to see themselves in characters that they do not necessarily share a lot in common with.

Denae had trouble coming up with a character that she was able to identify with because “we don’t have a lot of, there’s not a lot of, um, examples of Hufflepuffs.” In the end, the character Denae said she identified with the most was Neville. For Denae, the character of Neville resonated with who she was growing up and who she became. Like Neville, Denae had “never been the popular kid.” Denae said she “definitely can identify with like not always being the popular one and like being forgetful and clumsy.” But like Neville, Denae goes from “being the outcast kind of kid and, but also then like proving everyone wrong and being like, actually I’m kind of a badass.”

Bex expressed that over time who she identifies with has changed. Initially, she said she identified with Harry because “when Harry was nine, I was nine, and I grew up with him literally like every time he aged, so did I.” Bex talked about how people complained that Harry was “so whiny,” but realized that when she was the same age, she was whiny, “like that’s just real life.” She expressed that she thinks Rowling “hit that nail on the fucking head” and that it “was very accurate to the time period and his age demographic.” Bex did acknowledge that the goal of the story was to identify with Harry.

She also talked about how while she did not identify with Hermione, she “was always a really cool role model” because “she was never ashamed to be smart.” While Bex “never felt like her,” she did “identify with that thought process.” However, she did mention that if she were to read the series now, she thinks she “might identify more with Draco.”

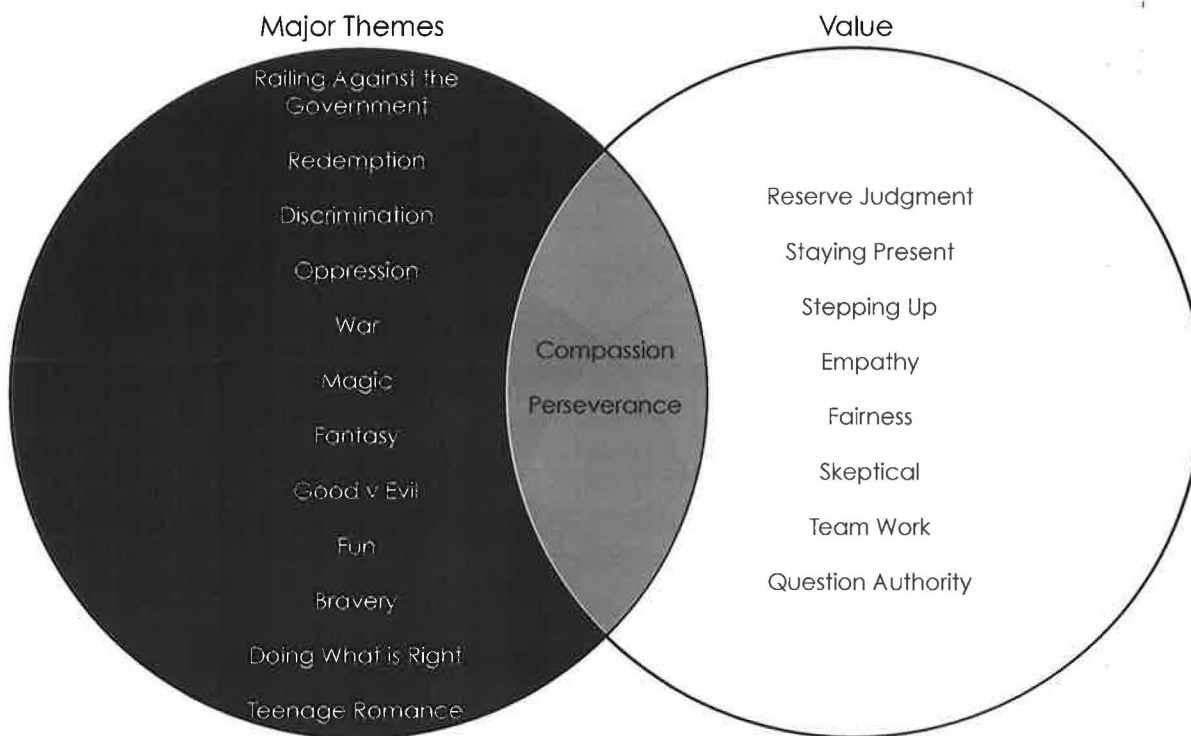
Laura, though, was lucky. According to Laura, “ooh, I’m a nerd, so of course, Hermione” was the character she identified with. Even though Hermione is in Gryffindor house, she possesses a lot of Ravenclaw traits, which is Laura’s house. Laura identified with the fact that “people got irritated with her for being smart” and the fact that “she was like the know it all.” When Hermione is right, “she knows she’s right.” While Laura has developed a filter, as Hermione did throughout the series, Laura identified with the fact that Hermione would stand up for what she knew was right.

The most surprising answer to this question was from Dan. Dan, a Slytherin, said, “I don’t like to admit this, but I’m, I’m probably a fucking Ron.” The reason the answer was so surprising is that Slytherins like to lead, but in the traditional sense of being in charge and as Dan put it, “Ron’s a great follower.” Dan also described Ron as “part of the solution, but not the driving force for the solution. He makes mistakes. He makes an ass of himself. He even gives up at one point,” but “he is able to admit that he, he’s made a mistake when he makes mistakes” and “Ron does the right thing when he’s under pressure.” However, Ron does “make a lot of mistakes before he gets to the right one.”

Themes

The deep connection to the world of Harry Potter is important in showing that lessons were learned in the process of pleasure reading. The themes and values within the series are the lessons that the reader takes away from the story. During the process of reading, the fact that the themes and values presented are internalized is not always apparent. It is only upon reflection and contemplation that the reader is able to identify the message imparted by the story. All four interviewees talked about what they perceived to be the major themes and values within the story of the boy wizard.

Chart 2: List of Major Themes and Values mentioned by interviewees



Major themes

Each of the four participants answered the researcher’s question about what they believed to be the major themes in Harry Potter from very different standpoints. However, in their discussion of the series, other themes became apparent. When asked about major themes, Dan identified redemption as a theme throughout the story. Laura, though, identified redemption when talking about villains in the series. The researcher and Laura discussed favorite villains. During this discussion, Laura mentioned Snape but quickly said, “he wasn’t really a villain. That’s the funny thing.” Throughout the series, Snape is portrayed as a villain, but in the battle, it is revealed to Harry that Snape had been working as a double agent the whole time. Dan points out, though, that redemption is not possible “if you don’t own the problem.” Some would argue that Snape never owned the problem; however, as Dan also points out, “if

you do the same thing again, you didn't learn anything." Fortunately for Snape, he did learn from his mistake, which set in motion him becoming a double agent.

Another major theme that became apparent from the interviewee's discussion of Harry Potter was discrimination. All four participants discussed discrimination in various ways. Bex is the one that truly called out discrimination during her interview. She talked about the glaring ageism within the wizarding world. Throughout the series, Harry is not listened to, "he's not believable. He's not a trusted source." At the same time, Dumbledore is "not always believed. He's not always trusted." One of the characters in the story that persecutes Harry and Dumbledore the most and tries to discredit them as unbelievable sources is Deloris Umbridge. Dan and Laura both mentioned Umbridge and her discrimination as well; however, they both mention her using other forms of discrimination. Dan said, "she singles out individuals for punishment." In the story, the majority of the individuals that she singles out are people that support Harry and believe his story. Laura brought up the point that Umbridge "did not like the, uh, half-horse people."

These three examples of discrimination play into the overarching theme of discrimination as Voldemort trying to oppress non-purebloods. Denae talked about Voldemort's oppression in comparison to today's political climate within the United States. She points out that in the story, "Lord Voldemort fell eventually." The reason that Voldemort was able to be defeated has to do with other major themes that were identified by the interviewees. Among those themes are perseverance, bravery, compassion, railing against the government, doing what is right, and war. And the most important of the themes, as Laura mentions, is fun. Even though there are a lot of dark themes in the books, they are still fun and engaging. The reason the books are so much fun is that they have themes of magic, fantasy, good versus evil, friendship, and teenage romance. These are the themes that draw the reader in and help to create a connection to the story, so the other themes can be absorbed.

Values

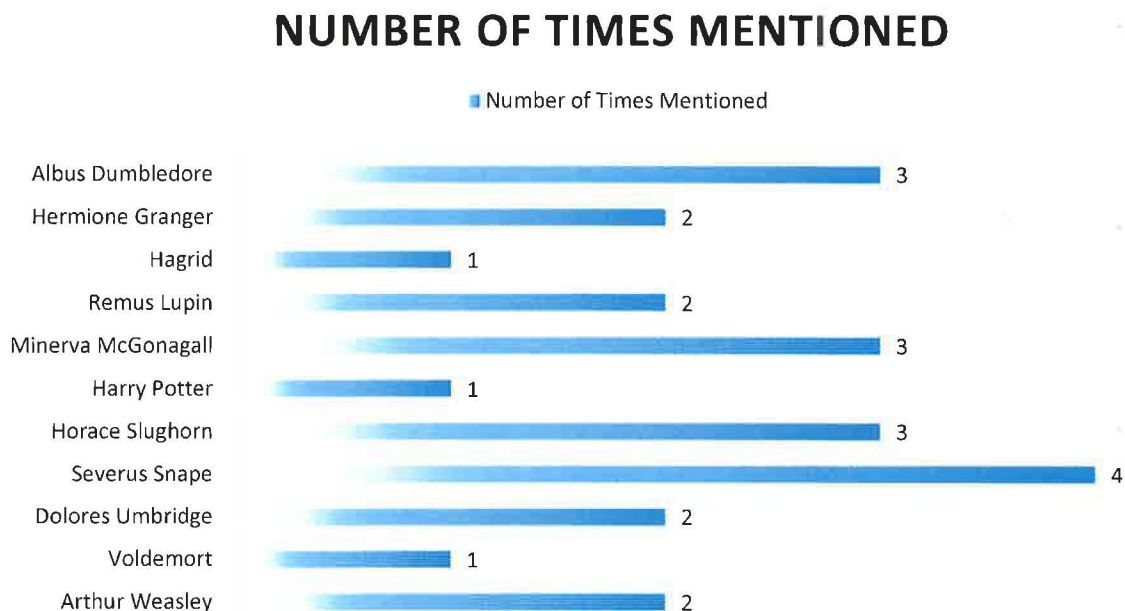
Of the major themes in the Harry Potter stories the interviewees identified, perseverance and compassion were highlighted as values in the books. Denae mentioned both as values she learned from Harry Potter. Although Dan explicitly mentioned perseverance as a major theme. Denae never used the word perseverance. Her exact words for perseverance were “not giving up in the face of like oppression” and “not giving into, you know, the people who are trying to oppress you.” Compassion, though, is something Denae had mentioned both as a theme and a value within the series. This is something the researcher found to be an overarching theme in Denae’s interview.

The majority of values expressed in the interviews evoke positivity. Along with compassion, Denae discussed empathy and staying present as values she learned from the story. Dan, on the other hand, discussed values that were reinforced throughout the books. The importance of teamwork and stepping up as values he had previously been taught but identified within the books. And Laura talked about how one of the values she picked up on within Harry Potter was fairness. However, not all of the values that were garnered evoke positivity; some come from the darker aspects of the series. The values that Bex took away from the books were to be skeptical and reserve judgment until she can go digging further into the information she was presented. Dan also expressed a similar value discerned from Harry Potter; that is to question authority.

Leadership

Leading is not for everyone, but leadership is a process that requires followers as well as leaders. The simple act of questioning authority involves people in leadership. In that instance, they are not blind followers, but active participants in the process. The importance of this process is why the researcher asked the participants in this study not only how Harry Potter affected them as leaders, but also how it affected their view of leaders. The major themes, the values, the characters, and the qualities they possess are all part of effect that Harry Potter had on its readers.

Chart 3: How many of the interviewees mentioned a character in relationship to leadership



Positive Leaders

Many of the major themes and values, particularly in relation to leadership, are showcased within the characters. Out of all the characters mentioned in the interviews, the one that was brought up as a positive leader most was McGonagall. Laura discussed McGonagall when asked, “what values did you learn from the series that you think most impacted your perception of leaders and how you lead.” According to Laura, McGonagall “was the best” because “she was fair.” For Laura, fairness was an important value that McGonagall brought to the story; she didn’t care which house someone was from; she treated them equitably. The last question everyone was asked was: if you had to pick one character in the series that embodies what you think is a good leader, who would it be and why. Bex chose McGonagall as her one character. The reason for the choice is because “she was willing to like work on people’s strengths” and “she did her best in a shitty situation.” The researcher interpreted these qualities as coinciding with the values of staying present and perseverance. Denae was going to answer the final question with McGonagall but changed her mind. However, toward the beginning of the

interview, Denae said that McGonagall was “too much of a hard ass” and needed to be more compassionate.

Laura called Harry Potter an “unwilling leader;” he is the hero of the story after all, but Dan said it best, “Hermione is the secret hero of the whole series.” While she was just a kid, Hermione had a lot of natural instincts that are characteristic of an effective leader. Not only was Hermione smart, but she was a “good person,” according to Laura. Being a good person is the reason that “she seems to be on the right side of the social issues most of the time,” as Dan pointed out. Another observation from Dan was that within her friend group, she was able to help “resolve fights” and “promote, um, working with new people.” These are contributing factors to how Hermione was able to make teenagers follow her, as Laura said. Hermione had “the *right* emotions” (Cuilla et al., 2005, p. 30). Not only did Hermione have the right emotions, she was able to back them up with facts. She also understood the stakes and was not above making sacrifices. As Laura pointed out, “she wiped her parents’ memories of her clean.” This both protected them but also made sure that they could not be used against her, which would jeopardize the mission she was on with Harry and Ron. Hermione’s actions throughout the series demonstrate the values of compassion, teamwork, stepping up, and fairness that the participants mentioned.

Another character that was discussed in a very positive way was Arthur Weasley. Arthur, as Laura said, was a “high spirit person,” which helped him be a “good leader in ... the Order of the Phoenix.” Along with being a leader within the Order of the Phoenix, Arthur was a father, so he led his family. While many people overlook parents as leaders, it is a point that Denae discussed during her interview. Both Arthur and Molly set amazing examples within their household. The Weasley’s provided a home where the children were “incredibly loved and cared for.” This is not to say that their children were perfect; “the twins were troublemakers,” but they were still good people. They also opened their home to a young boy, not because he was famous, but because he needed a loving home. In doing so,

they taught Harry about the wizarding world but allowed him to “do things for himself.” This is another example of compassion being an important theme and value in the books.

Flawed Leaders

All of the characters in the world of Harry Potter are multi-dimensional. The characters previously mentioned, even with their flaws, were spoken of almost entirely positively. This was not the case for all of the characters.

Lupin, for example, was referenced mainly in a positive light, but his flaws were pointed out. These flaws, however, did not dissuade Denae from choosing Lupin as the one character she would pick from the series as a good leader. One of the reasons that Denae chose Lupin, though, was because of his flaws. “Lupin is almost afraid of himself cause he’s a werewolf.” This led to controversy in the seventh book because he runs away when he learns that he is going to be a father. Denae discussed how, when Lupin saw Harry, Ron, and Hermione at Grimmauld Place, “Harry tells him off, and he’s like, I can’t believe you’d do this. You would abandon your child.” Lupin is able to take the criticism from Harry and grow. Growth was a major theme in the series that Denae discussed, so it makes sense that she would identify growth within the character she chose to be her one good leader in the books. Bex believes that Lupin is the best teacher at Hogwarts because “he knew how these kids learned and then gave them the ability to do that.” The students had many different Defense Against the Dark Arts (DADA) teachers, and Bex thinks “he taught them the most out of all.” Denae also mentioned that Lupin was a great teacher, particularly in teaching Harry to defend himself. The most notable quality Denae mentioned was that “he didn’t take Harry as like Harry is the chosen one. It was just Harry.”

There are two characters in the series that are the subject of fierce debate within the Harry Potter fandom. They are Dumbledore and Snape. The same held true for the participants and their takes on the characters, both as individuals and as leaders. Growing up reading the story, most people see Dumbledore as an amazing leader; he had knowledge and power, he allowed people to have autonomy,

and he accepted that people could change. As Bex said, "I think it's funny because I think when I was reading the Harry Potter books, I felt like Dumbledore was a good leader." This was in part because "he constantly is fighting for the greater good," as Denae mentioned. So, when he died, Laura felt "this is the worst death ever." But as millennials have grown and matured, his flaws have started to take center stage. Bex questions his judgment because of his decision to hire Lockhart in the second books at the DADA teacher. "Who hires Lockhart?" Bex exclaimed. Denae questioned Dumbledore as a leader because while he was fighting for the greater good, he didn't always do what was best for Harry. Denae described the relationship between them by stating, Dumbledore "neglected his relations with him because he doesn't want to hurt him when, in reality, it just hurt him more." Dumbledore was also "very stubborn and set in his ways," as Denae said. Unlike many of the characters in the series that were spineless, Dumbledore was not. As Laura pointed out; "Dumbledore has spine in spades."

Snape, on the other hand, is a character that most people love to hate. While Dumbledore was a character that was loved at first but then questioned, Snape is a character whose flaws were front and center. Snape is the one character that all four interviewees discussed at one point or another while talking with the researcher. Laura really liked Snape, but she acknowledges "he was like a craptastic" headmaster. As Denae points out, "Snape is not a very good leader. He's not a good teacher." She further argued that part of the reason he is not a good leader or teacher is "he's basically a bully, and he's putting his misery out on other people." Although, Denae does acknowledge that "Snape is a very complex character." Although he changed, Bex observed that "he also never grew though." While he was not a good guy, "he wasn't really a villain," as Laura said. Snape was a Death Eater, but then "was secretly a double agent for the rest of his life. Um, fighting against it," as Dan mentions. Although most people do not know it, he is "Harry's advocate even though it didn't seem like he was." Denae and Bex both called into question Snape being a double agent because it was only motivated by his love for Lily. However, for all of Snape's flaws and questionable choices, there are those that are worse.

Negative Leader

Although only having an active role in one book, Professor Slughorn did not fare well as a character or as a leader. In the sixth book, Slughorn comes back to Hogwarts to reprise his role teaching potions. Slughorn focused too much “on the people that were automatically good,” as Bex pointed out. Dan discussed this point and how he used his position in a way that “promotes favoritism for interesting individuals.” Slughorn “was way too self-oriented to be really a good teacher” Bex said. This is shown in the way he “basically trades privilege and position” according to Dan; “basically he, he’s setting up a, um, a nepotism on like network so that he can get benefits from people that he helps promote.” Not only is this “definitely unacceptable, it’s specifically called out in ethics” Dan said. Of all the people that Slughorn tries to collect, Harry, the Chosen One, the Boy who Lived, is the one he wants most of all. Unlike Lupin, who treats Harry as a normal kid, Slughorn treats him like he is somebody special as Denae discussed. While Harry was special, he just wanted to be treated like any normal kid.

Of all the characters throughout the story, the one character who is almost universally hated, and who was called out during the interviews as a bad leader, was Umbridge. While “we don’t know if she’s a full on Death Eater, it never actually explicitly says, but she’s okay with their, um, their views and their exclusion of muggle borns and persecution of, uh, nonhuman magical creatures” as Dan puts it. Laura mentions that Umbridge may be doing what she believes to be the greater good, but she sacrifices the “welfare of students” when she is at Hogwarts. She tows the Ministry’s line to such an extent that she tortures students with “that punishment with a hand” as Laura described it; it was a quill that was spelled to use the writer’s own blood as ink by scratching the words into the back of the person’s hand. The few things that the participants mentioned barely scratches the surface of the horrible things Umbridge inflicts on others throughout her time in the story.

Surprising Leaders

The fact that Voldemort was mentioned as a leader during the interviews was not surprising. The surprising part was that only Dan mentioned him as a leader. Dan said, "Voldemort, I guess you could say is a, a good leader. Cause you know, he gets lots of people following and stuff." A leader cannot be a leader without followers, so Voldemort is a good leader in that sense. However, "he's an evil dude," which is showcased in his leadership style. Voldemort's style is usually "fear and pain" or a "tit for tat," which is known as transactional leadership. As Dan argues "That's not good." The research found the lack of mention of Voldemort unusual because his poor leadership is one of the things that sparked this research.

The most surprising answer about characters with leadership characteristic was Hagrid. The case that Dan made for Hagrid as a leader, though, was a strong argument. Hagrid is "enthusiastic," particularly "about what he is teaching." As a teacher, he encourages his students "to get their hands into it and get right to work." Unlike other professors, like Snape, "he does not, um, ridicule people." Hagrid is a character that "thinks for himself" but knows when to ask for help. "When he does have a problem that he can't figure out on his own, he does talk to people that he needs." Whether it is Dumbledore, Ron, Harry, and Hermione, or other professors at Hogwarts, he "gets help." Hagrid is also a character that knows when to follow. And "part of being a leader is being able to follow when you have to." The researcher found Hagrid not only to be a surprising choice but a great example of someone that is a leader, although not necessarily a legitimate leader.

Chapter 5: Discussion

Harry Potter may not have changed the lives of all readers (Ross, 1999), but for the millennial generation, the story of the boy who lived has become a part of who they are. This is because readers met characters who feel, think, and act similarly to the way the reader does (Seroczynski et al., 2011). The characters learned lessons and values that changed how a generation saw the world (Gierzynski & Eddy, 2013). This is because the characters in Harry Potter demonstrated how to find solutions to problems using traditional virtues and morals (McGavock, 2007). The reader is able to vicariously live through the characters in the story. This allows them to learn the morals and values that make up a strong character because as Bennis (2003) argues, when it comes to leadership, character matters. All of these pieces add up to a story that not only inadvertently teaches the reader but is a story the readers come back to time and again.

A story that is so loved that readers go back to it over and over is a story that becomes a part of the reader (Ross, 1999). Such an intimate knowledge of the series allowed the interviewees to discuss what they took away as the major themes and values from the series. Each one of the four participants were able to point to different examples of leadership with the books. All of the characters that were mentioned in connection to leadership in the interviews were discussed in terms of their actions. The discussions highlighted whether the characters were a good or bad person, along with whether they were an effective leader or not. Many of the qualities of the characters mentioned by the participants displayed a connection to the themes and values of the story, as expressed by the interviewee.

Learning

The interviewees were able to learn from the Harry Potter series without having looked for lessons as a result of the connection they were able to make to the books. Many factors played a role in the participants being able to make a connection to the books. First, as they read the story, they had to be drawn in. The themes of magic, the hero cycle, friendship, and romance made the story of the boy

wizard fun and exciting. Once individuals are drawn into the story, they can make a connection to what they are reading.

Part of the reason that the participants were able to make such strong connections to the books is that Rowling created a world that exists within our own (Das, 2016) and filled it with characters that were relatable. Each person interviewed was able to identify at least one character with whom they identified; Denae identified with Neville, Laura was drawn to Hermione, Bex discussed two characters, Harry and Draco, who she identified with, and Dan identified with Ron. Being able to identify with characters allowed the four readers to “read themselves into the story and then read the story into their lives” (Ross, 1999, p. 793).

The interviewees were not only able to identify with the characters, but they were also able to draw parallels from the world of Harry Potter to our own world, which deepened their connection. Das (2016) discussed how Harry Potter has a “strong sub-text of anti-racist, anti-class, and anti-minority themes” (p. 343). Each of the participants recognized these themes within the books and the fact that they mirror issues within our world. Denae made a comparison between the oppression in our world with the oppression that takes place within the books.

The connections that the participants were able to make to Harry Potter have brought them back time and again to read the story of the boy wizard. Each person interviewed has read the entire series all the way through at least once; however, the majority of the books have been read multiple times. Denae, with her use of audiobooks and podcasts on Harry Potter, has gone through the series the most. Each time they read the books, they were drawn in again. This allows them to encounter material and experience it in a new way that will help them in their lives (Ross, 1999). Each time the participants reread the books, they were able to connect with them in a new way and were able to gain knowledge of the world and skills (Cullinan, 2000). Bex was a great example of this when she discussed how the character she identified with most changed over time. The ways that the interviewees connected with

the series opened them up to finding lessons without seeking them. The lessons they learned affected the way they interact with the world around them.

Morals

Books like Harry Potter are read voluntarily and for pleasure (Cullinan, 2000). Because of this, the reader is not always conscious of the fact that they are learning. The four individuals interviewed for this study discussed how they were able to make a connection to Harry Potter that opened them up to learning without their knowledge. Some of the things that the participants took away from the books were new lessons that changed them (Ross, 1999), while other lessons that were taken away from the Harry Potter confirmed what they already knew (Ross, 1999). Denaë discussed perseverance and compassion as values that she learned from Harry Potter. Dan, on the other hand, talked about how the values of teamwork and stepping up were reinforced by reading the story.

Each of the characters the participants met in the story allowed them to try out a new approach to issues (Cain, 2005). Not only did the interviewees meet characters they were able to identify with, but they also met characters they wanted to emulate. Bex wished that she could have identified with Hermione because, like Hermione, Bex is smart. However, unlike Hermione, Bex did not have the courage to stand up and show people she was smart the way Hermione did. Denaë had a similar experience in her identification with Neville. At the beginning of the stories, Neville was a shy outcast, but by the end of the story, he proved everyone wrong. Denaë saw this and was able to imagine her own transformation that came to fruition. Both of these examples show how readers met moral heroes that helped them to imagine their own development (Seroczynski et al., 2011).

Harry Potter may not be considered a great work of tragedy, but it is a story that has a lot of tragedy in it. The reader having to vicariously live through the tragedy by way of the characters helps to provide lessons of ethics and morals (Cain, 2005). Tragedy has many forms in the Harry Potter series: war, discrimination, oppression, good versus evil, and death are ones mentioned in the interviews. From

these tragic themes in the story, the interviewees learned the values of reserving judgment, stepping up, empathy, compassion, perseverance, questioning authority, being skeptical, and teamwork. The moral lessons within Harry Potter are part of a long history of storytelling that has been used to nurture moral development (Seroczynski et al., 2011).

Leadership

Moral development is the basis for a strong character, and when it comes to leadership, character matters. The core of character is integrity, which a leader must be prepared to show time and again (Bennis, 2003). In the interviews, the participants did not use terms such as character and integrity, but they did discuss the importance of such things in leadership. The interviewees did not break leadership down into good and bad leaders; they discussed leadership on a continual scale that was ever-changing based on the actions of the characters. The researcher interpreted their responses as positive leaders, flawed leaders, and negative leaders. The distinctions were made based on the overall tone of the character descriptions given by the participants.

Out of all the characters talked about during the interviews, three were identified as positive leaders. McGonagall was the one character discussed whose integrity was pointed out. Her integrity came in the form of fairness; it was demonstrated in the fact that she did not care what house a student came from; she treated them all the same. However, McGonagall's actions can be misconstrued as being not compassionate enough, but how McGonagall would react was never questioned. Like McGonagall, Hermione was a character discussed as a leader with a strong character. She knew who she was and what she believed in (Sarros & Cooper, 2006). Hermione wanted all creatures to be treated with dignity and respect, which is why, as Dan mentioned, she was usually on the right side of social issues. Her creation of S.P.E.W. (Society for the Promotion of Elfish Welfare) demonstrated her commitment to ending oppression. Hermione also had a strong sense of integrity. She understood that others would have to make sacrifices during the war and that without having to ask, people were making those

sacrifices to help her, Harry, and Ron accomplish their tasks. Hermione did not expect others to make a sacrifice without making one herself (i.e. wiping her parents' memories). She took ownership of the situation and had the courage and confidence to take the appropriate actions based on her morals (Hannah & Avolio, 2010). Last of the positive leaders was Arthur Weasley. Arthur was a character recognized as a leader that had the right emotions. He, and Mrs. Weasley, provided a home filled with love, compassion, and a sense of right and wrong. As a parent and a leader, Arthur was able to inspire others with his emotions (Cilla et al., 2005).

The flawed leaders that were mentioned had the qualities of knowing who they are and what they believe in (Sarros & Cooper, 2006) but would fall flat on the execution of actions. There were three characters that were placed in the category of flawed leader: Lupin, Dumbledore, and Snape. Lupin was a character that looked for the best in others but failed to find the best in himself. He was afraid of himself because he was a werewolf, as Denae pointed out. His fear of himself caused him to momentarily abandon his wife and child. However, Lupin was able to listen to the advice from Harry and grow. Dumbledore was a flawed leader because while he was fighting for the greater good, he would neglect his relationships. He was also very stubborn and set in his ways; throughout the books, Dumbledore did not grow as a person. However, as Laura said, Dumbledore was a very talented wizard, though, and had the backbone to do what needed to be done. Snape was another character that did not have a lot of growth. All of the participants talked about Snape in varying degrees. He changed but he did not grow. Snape is a bully that took his misery out on those around him. Although, at the end of the seventh book, the reader learns that through the entire series Snape had been a double agent which changed how many viewed him. This made him a hero because he was going against the group (Green, 2006).

Of all the characters in the Harry Potter universe, there were two that were identified as negative leaders. Slughorn and Umbridge were the two that no one said a nice thing about as characters

or leaders. Slughorn only had compassion for people he could get something from. He treated everyone differently and based his favoritism on talent. Umbridge is the opposite of McGonagall. She had no integrity. The other characters in the books never knew how she was going to treat someone or why. While Hermione tried her best to make sure everyone worked together and was treated with dignity and respect, Umbridge wanted there to be division. She worked to exclude witches and wizards that were born to muggles and nonhuman magical creatures.

Of all the characters mentioned in connection to leadership there were two whose mention, or lack thereof, was surprising. Voldemort was a character in the series the researcher expected mention of by the participants, but only one person mentioned him. Based on the discussion of Voldemort, he would be listed as a good leader because he could get people to follow him and he knew what he believed in. However, he was a negative leader because he led with fear (Sarros & Cooper, 2006). Hagrid on the other hand was a character that was mentioned both as a good leader and a positive leader. Hagrid knew who he was and what he believed (Sarros & Cooper, 2006), and he knew when to be a follower. Hagrid, in giving his support to Dumbledore, McGonagall, Harry, and all the other characters, helped them to stay the course. It is easier to resist social pressure with the aid of friends (Green, 2006) and there was no better support than Hagrid.

Conclusion

Each interview had an overarching tone to it. Dena's interview centered on compassion, Laura's on having fun, Bex's on being skeptical, and Dan's on teamwork. The fact that so many different perspectives can so easily be found in one series shows why it has captivated people from around the world. It is for that reason that the study of the impact of Harry Potter is so important. Studies such as Gierzynski and Eddy (2013) "Harry Potter and Millennials" and Scheeler (2017) "The Impact of Popular Culture on the Social Identity of Young Adults" have just barely scratched the surface of the impact Harry Potter has had. With this study, the research has added to an ongoing discussion of the effects of

Harry Potter. In the discussion portion of Scheeler's dissertation, she discusses how one area for future studies of Harry Potter is leadership. Her study just barely touched on the idea of Harry Potter and its effects on readers. With the current study, this researcher has added to an ongoing discussion of the effects of Harry Potter.

Based on the literature reviewed and the responses given by the participants, it can be inferred that unbeknownst to readers, lessons have been learned from reading Harry Potter. All four participants were able to show a connection to Harry Potter. They each have read the majority of the series multiple times. They all knew which of the four houses from the story to which they belonged. Finally, each one was able to articulate the character which they identified with most and why. These are a few of the reasons readers of Harry Potter have been able to make such a deep connection to the series. While Rowling was able to create a magical world filled with action and adventure, the story does not entirely depart from the world known to the reader (Das, 2016). The fact that readers can easily identify with the story opens the reader to learning without knowing that the text is imparting knowledge (Nambiar, 2012). Therefore, it is the conclusion of the researcher that Harry Potter has clearly affected millennials. The themes and values in the story of the boy who lived impacted the morals and values of millennials and, therefore, how they lead and view leaders.

Future Research

From the limited interviews this researcher was able to conduct, it appears that there is a relationship between leadership and Harry Potter. A broader study of Harry Potter and leadership needs to be conducted to ascertain the true impact the series has had on millennials and their leadership behavior. Not only does a more extensive study need to be conducted to ascertain the depth of the impact Harry Potter has had on leadership, but other areas can be researched as well. Scheeler studied the impact of Harry Potter on identity, this study focused on leadership, but Harry Potter has the ability

to impact so much more. A study could be done on how the books have impacted the imagination and creativity of its readers.

Harry Potter is not the only beloved series of books that have become so much more. Other series have touched the lives of readers and transcended other areas of pop culture as well. Series such as *Lord of the Rings*, *Game of Thrones*, *The Hunger Games*, *Outlander*, *Divergent*, and *The Chronicles of Narnia*, have all had an impact on readers. These stories, which made the transition from page to film in the wake of their popularity, deserve to be studied for their impact on leadership and other areas of influence.

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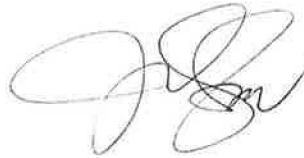
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The University of Southern Maine
Master of Leadership Studies

May 13, 2020

We hereby recommend that the thesis of Amanda Giampetro entitled Has reading Harry Potter affected the Millennial Generations as Leaders be accepted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for Master of Arts in Leadership Studies.



_____ Thesis Advisor (signature)



_____ Second Reader (signature)

Accepted



_____ (signature)

Leadership and Organizational Studies Department Chair



December 23, 2019
Giampetro, Amanda, Leadership Studies
Gibson, Joyce, Leadership Studies
Webster, Casey, Social Behavioral IRB
How Harry Potter affected the Millennial Generation as Leaders

19-11-1387
Approval Date: December 23, 2019

The Office of Research Integrity and Outreach (ORIO) has evaluated the project named above. This study has been granted an exemption from USM IRB review per Title 45 CFR Part 46 and/or Title 21 CFR 56. This designation is based on the assumption that the materials that you submitted to the IRB contain a complete and accurate description of all the ways in which human subjects are involved in your research.

1. You will conduct the project according to the plans and protocol you submitted;
2. No further contact with the ORIO is necessary unless you make changes to your project or adverse events or injuries to subjects occur;
3. If you propose to make any changes to the project, you must submit the changes to the ORIO for review; you will not initiate any changes until they have been reviewed and approved by the ORIO;
4. If any adverse events or injuries to subjects occur, you will report these immediately to the ORIO;
5. As applicable, you will comply with the University of Maine Information Security Policy and Standards and/or the Muskie School of Public Service Securing Protected Information Policies and Procedures and any other applicable USM policies or procedures; and
6. You will close the project upon completion (or discontinuation).

The University appreciates your efforts to conduct research in compliance with the federal regulations that have been established to ensure the protection of human subjects in research.

Sincerely,
Casey E. Webster

University of Southern Maine
CONSENT FOR PARTICIPATION IN RESEARCH

Project Title: Has Reading Harry Potter Affected the Millennial Generation as Leaders

Principal Investigator(s):

- Amanda Giampetro, University of Southern Maine, 207-441-9091, amanda.giampetro@maine.edu
- Joyce Gibson, Ph.D., University of Southern Maine, 978-501-6194, jgibson@maine.edu

Introduction:

- Please read this form, you may also request that the form is read to you. The purpose of this form is to provide you with information about this research study, and if you choose to participate, document your decision.
- You are encouraged to ask any questions that you may have about this study, now, during or after the project is complete. You can take as much time as you need to decide whether or not you want to participate. Your participation is voluntary.

Why is this study being done?

- The research being done is in fulfillment of my thesis for my master's degree thesis. The researcher hopes to determine if there is a correlation between Millennials as leaders and having read the Harry Potter series while growing up.

Who will be in this study?

- This study is personal interviews with five to ten individuals that are part of the millennial generation (1981-1996) and read Harry Potter either as a child or a teenager.

What will I be asked to do?

- This process will be a series of questions relating to your interpretations and experience reading Harry Potter. The questions will try to discover if Harry Potter affected you as a leader or how you view leadership. The process should not take more than an hour or two (depending on the flow of the conversation).

What are the possible risks of taking part in this study?

- There are no reasonably foreseeable risks associated with participation in this study.

What are the possible benefits of taking part in this study?

- There are no direct benefits to you for participating in this study. There may be a benefit to others.

What will it cost me?

- The only cost to the participant is possibly travel. The researcher is able to travel but in cases where neither party can, arrangements will be made for the interview to be done via video chat. If we meet at a public place, cost of refreshments will be taken care of by the researcher.

How will my privacy be protected?

- All participants will be identifiable. Names will be changed at the request of participants but ages will be used.

How will my data be kept confidential?

- Research records will be kept in a locked file in the locked office of the Principal Investigator.
- Please note that sponsors, regulatory agencies, and the Institutional Review Board may review the research records.
- A copy of your signed consent form will be maintained by the principal investigator for at least 3 years after the project is complete before it is destroyed. The consent forms will be stored in a secure location that only members of the research team will have access to and will not be affiliated with any data obtained during the project.

What are my rights as a research participant?

- Your participation is voluntary. Your decision to participate will have no impact on your current or future relations with the University of Southern Maine.
- You may skip or refuse to answer any question for any reason.
- If you choose not to participate, there is no penalty to you and you will not lose any benefits that you are otherwise entitled to receive. You are free to withdraw from this research study at any time, for any reason. If you choose to withdraw from the research there will be no penalty to you and you will not lose any benefits that you are otherwise entitled to receive.

What other options do I have?

- You may choose not to participate.

Whom may I contact with questions?

- The researchers conducting this study are Amanda Giampetro. For questions or more information concerning this research you may contact her at 207-441-9091, and/or amanda.giampetro@maine.edu. Or you may contact her faculty advisor Joyce Gibson Ph.D., at 978-501-6194 and/or jgibson@maien.edu.
- If you choose to participate in this research study and believe you may have suffered a research related injury, please contact Joyce Gibson Ph.D. at 978-501-6194 and/or jgibson@maien.edu.

NOTE: Student researchers are required to have the faculty advisor listed. The faculty advisor is expected to take an active role in students' research activities and provide supervision throughout the duration of their research study. The faculty advisor is legally responsible for all research activities.

- If you have any questions or concerns about your rights as a research subject, you may call the USM Research Compliance Administrator at (207) 228-8434 and/or email usmorio@maine.edu.

Will I receive a copy of this consent form?

- You will be given a copy of this consent form.

Participant's Statement

I understand the above description of this research and the risks and benefits associated with my participation as a research subject. I agree to take part in the research and do so voluntarily.

Participant's signature

Date

Printed name

Researcher's Statement

The participant named above had sufficient time to consider the information, had an opportunity to ask questions, and voluntarily agreed to be in this study.

Researcher's signature

Date

Printed name