

## Analysis Of The Leadership Concept Of Maximus In The Movie Gladiator (2000) Using The Swot Theory Approach

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**Abstract** Through the application of the SWOT theory, this study examines the leadership concept that Maximus portrays in the movie *Gladiator* (2000). The objective of this study is to determine the factors that influence the leadership of the primary protagonist, specifically focusing on their strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats. The research methodology used in this study is a comprehensive examination of Maximus' behaviors and attributes as depicted in the film. The findings of the analysis indicate that Maximus possesses notable attributes in the realm of moral leadership and courage, which significantly contribute to his achievements within the film. Nevertheless, it is important to acknowledge that he possesses certain limitations, including a tendency for uncertainty and vulnerability. Moreover, Maximus draws on the chances presented by the establishment of friendships and the provision of support from other characters, ultimately enabling him to accomplish his objectives. The principal sources of danger arise from the protagonist's antagonists within the narrative. In summary, the leadership philosophy shown by Maximus in the film *Gladiator* can be seen as embodying the fundamental elements of the SWOT analysis framework. The findings of this analysis contribute to our comprehension of leadership dynamics within the framework of a cinematic story and offer valuable perspectives on the use of SWOT theory in the examination of fictional personas. The results mentioned above hold significance for comprehending leadership principles within the realm of popular culture and in the context of ordinary society.

**Keywords:** *Gladiator*; Maximus; leadership; SWOT; character analysis.

### INTRODUCTION

The concept of leadership has garnered significant attention and generated much scholarly discourse across several domains in recent decades. Leaders play a pivotal role in the achievement of organizational or group objectives in several instances, hence becoming leadership development a subject of considerable scholarly inquiry (Fickry et al., 2020; Waedoloh et al., 2022). In the context of popular culture, films are frequently used to comprehend, analyze, and reflect upon leadership concepts (Biehl, 2021; Provitera, 2022; Yu et al., 2022). An exemplary film in this context is "*Gladiator*" (2000), which showcases the figure Maximus Decimus Meridius, a Roman general entrusted with the responsibility of guiding and revitalizing Rome during a period of chaos.

The cinematic context of the film "*Gladiator*" presents a captivating backdrop for comprehending the concept of leadership. Maximus's character development encompasses several elements, including confrontations with enemies, critical choices, exertion of authority over subordinates, and significant ethical growth. The objective of this study is to examine the leadership construct represented by the character Maximus in the mentioned movie through the use of the SWOT approach, which encompasses an analysis of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats.

In the initial stages of leadership development, some study has identified the critical attributes that distinguish good leaders (Gilmore, 2017). Nevertheless, previous research has not explicitly concentrated on the examination of fictional characters within the realm of leadership, and there is lack of studies that have employed the SWOT framework to analyze the character traits of Maximus (Cufurovic, 2018; Garraffoni & Bonadio, 2023). Hence, this study contributes to the field by examining the fundamental aspects of Maximus's leadership and establishing their connection to the SWOT framework. This approach enables us to evaluate the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats inherent in the character's leadership.

The main aim of this study is to determine the many factors, including strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats that impact Maximus's leadership in the film "Gladiator." The primary objective of this study is to get a more comprehensive understanding of leadership dynamics within the realm of fictitious characters. Additionally, it seeks to examine how the film in concern portrays the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (SWOT) associated with leadership growth. The anticipated outcomes of this study have the potential to enhance comprehension of leadership within the realm of practical application and within the context of prevalent social dynamics.

This research involves a character analysis of Maximus using the SWOT theory, and explores into the fundamental factors that shape leadership within the context of this film. Therefore, this study has the capacity to provide fresh viewpoints on leadership within the framework of a cinematic story, hence uncovering substantial scholarly value.

## **HISTORICAL CONTEXT OF "GLADIATOR" (2000)**

"Gladiator," an epic film directed by Ridley Scott and released in the year 2000, was an instant hit upon its debut and went on to win several honors, including the Academy Award for Best Picture and the Golden Globe Award for Best Actor (Russell Crowe). The movie is an incredible piece of art that blends excellent cinematic quality with a compelling story and compelling characters to create a powerful whole.

The film "Gladiator" portrays the story of Maximus Decimus Meridius, an honorable Roman commander who becomes involved in a power struggle and sets out on an epic adventure to restore Rome while also seeking vengeance for the deception he suffered. The movie depicts the splendor of ancient Rome, depicts dramatic gladiator conflicts, and has characters with a lot of depth.

"Gladiator" (2000), which was released in 2000, is recognized in the cinema industry not just as a commercial success but also as an artistically exciting and profoundly moving piece of work. Because of its exceptional production value, breathtaking cinematography, and masterful directing, it is widely considered to be one of the most important works in the whole canon of film.

As a consequence of this, "Gladiator" (2000) is an excellent option for the examination of several leadership-related ideas. Not only does the movie include a compelling protagonist in the form of Maximus, but it also functions as a cultural mirror in which our conceptions of leadership, morality, and bravery are reflected. As a result, the film provides a fascinating and relevant source of research material for comprehending leadership themes within the context of popular culture.

### **THE IMPORTANCE OF LEADERSHIP ANALYSIS**

The concept of leadership holds significant relevance and depth across a range of life circumstances, encompassing artistic domains such as the visual arts, particularly film. The portrayal of characters in films frequently assumes the role of models for the viewers, potentially having an impact on their understanding and perception of leadership within the actual social context (Bartlett et al., 2020; Fernández, 2019).

Film has come to be as an effective tool in popular culture for portraying various aspects of leadership, covering moral leadership as well as leadership in unusual situations. The portrayal of characters in cinematic works, represented by the character Maximus Decimus Meridius in the film "Gladiator," holds considerable influence in influencing social views of leadership. Frequently, individuals are confronted with intricate obstacles and conflicts, which serve as a catalyst for the audience to engage in contemplation over moral, ethical, and leadership attributes.

The examination of leadership within the framework of cinema maintains relevance not just within the academic community but also carries substantial practical consequences. Real-life leaders frequently seek inspiration and acquire knowledge from fictional figures portrayed in films. Insights on strategies for overcoming difficulties, fostering motivation among individuals, and navigating complex decision-making processes can be derived from the activities mentioned above. Hence, doing an analysis of leadership traits shown in films might yield significant insights applicable to leaders in real-world contexts.

Within the framework of the film "Gladiator" (2000), the character Maximus presents a fascinating case study for analysis from a leadership viewpoint. Through a comprehensive

examination of the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats (SWOT) inherent in this character, a deeper comprehension may be attained regarding the film's portrayal of several dimensions of leadership and morality. The film "Gladiator" possesses the ability to offer important ideas concerning leadership throughout the spectrum of popular culture and everyday life.

The depiction of leadership in cinema extends beyond the portrayal of heroic figures, encompassing an exploration of the many dimensions of human nature and leadership qualities that may not necessarily align with traditional views of heroism. Hence, the examination of leadership in cinema serves as a significant addition to our comprehension of these elements within a wider framework.

## **METHOD**

The methodology used in this study is qualitative descriptive, since it aligns with the subject matter of the qualitative data used. The author uses a strategy which the discussion is presented through the use of words that are structured into coherent phrases.

Furthermore, this study presents a comprehensive examination of the leadership construct exhibited by Maximus in the cinematic classic "Gladiator" (2000), utilizing the model of SWOT (Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, Threats) as the analytical tool. The purpose of this methodology is to examine the fundamental components of leadership displayed by a fictional character who holds a key position within the plot of the film. This enables the author to get an understanding of the way in which the character Maximus moves through the many obstacles and prospects that arise during his development as a leader.

## **THE REASONING FOR THE SWOT ANALYSIS:**

The decision to make use of the SWOT approach as the analytical framework to evaluate the leadership qualities of the character Maximus was based on its widespread usage and recognized effectiveness in evaluating strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats across different circumstances. The SWOT analysis framework, first developed for business purposes, has found extensive use across multiple fields, which include character analysis in the world of cinema.

The term "SWOT" is a well-recognized acronym that stands for Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats. The SWOT analysis framework, first developed for business purposes (Puyt et al., 2023), has found extensive use across multiple fields, which include

character analysis in the world of cinema (Prabowo & Sulistyorini, 2019). Below is a comprehensive explanation of each component of the SWOT analysis framework:

1. One of the notable aspects to consider are the strengths. This refers to intrinsic favorable elements that confer an advantage or power in a certain circumstance or entity. In the context of SWOT analysis, strengths encompass several factors that provide a strategic advantage, such as plenty of resources, competitive advantages, distinctive talents or assets, and other favorable attributes.
2. Weaknesses refer to internal variables that serve as obstacles or limitations to a certain circumstance or entity. This comprises several factors that might negatively impact performance or outcomes, including shortcomings in resources, shortages of skills or capabilities, internal difficulties, and other unfavorable elements.
3. Opportunities refer to external circumstances or conditions that can be strategically utilized to attain desired objectives or attainments. Opportunities within the context of SWOT analysis encompass favorable market trends, alterations in the company environment, prospects for development, and various external occurrences that may be utilized to gain a competitive edge.
4. Threats refer to external variables that have the potential to obstruct or cause harm to a certain situation or institution. Threats refer to adverse shifts in the market, intense rivalry, alterations in regulations, and many external circumstances that have the potential to undermine the performance or sustainability of a certain entity.

Within the framework of this study, the utilization of the SWOT analysis facilitates the identification of pivotal aspects that have influence on Maximus's leadership, therefore offering deep understanding into the complexity of his character. The SWOT analysis framework facilitates an examination of the factors that either help or hinder the leadership capabilities of the hypothetical individual in question. The framework in question is a methodical and organized methodology that assists in conducting a thorough examination of characters. Its widespread use also promotes effective communication and comprehension of research outcomes across diverse groups involved.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

### **Result**

The author did a SWOT analysis on the character Maximus in the film "Gladiator" (2000) and discovered some relevant information. Firstly, within the category of Strengths, Maximus distinguishes himself through his exemplary moral leadership as portrayed in the film. The individual in question earned recognition for his strong commitment to moral ideals and his talent for inspiring his military personnel by displaying examples of ethical conduct, as evidenced in the initial stages of the narrative. In the opening sequences of the film, Maximus,

playing the role of a military leader, effectively inspires his troops to actively participate in combat against the barbarian foes. The speech prowess of Maximus possesses the capacity to instill fearlessness within his troops, so motivating them to advance in the midst of combat. The manifestation of resolute determination is also apparent when he assumes the role of a gladiator. Despite being faced with opponents that are physically larger than him, Maximus demonstrates his astuteness by skillfully overcoming them. Maximus's leadership is notably influenced by his possession of considerable qualities in the form of courage and leadership skills in warfare.

Furthermore, within the Weaknesses category, it is noteworthy to mention that Maximus has several unfavorable attributes, such as uncertainty and emotional weakness, which become evident during certain situations shown in the film. Although his firm determination, these limitations affect upon his efficiency as a leader under particular circumstances. The individual's emotional sensitivity can be attributed to the loss of his spouse and kids. In the specific case of Maximus seeing Commodus within the Gladiator arena, his motivations are mostly rooted in a potent combination of anger and an intense want for vengeance for the death of his wife. As a result, Maximus consciously chooses to meet Commodus.

Within the Opportunities category, Maximus strategically utilizes opportunities through the cultivation of interpersonal relationships, such as his friendships with Juba and his fellow gladiators. These relationships serve as a valuable support system, enabling Maximus to effectively achieve his objectives. Maximus recognizes that these interpersonal relationships afford him the prospect of collecting a fresh group of individuals who have a tendency to engage in combat against Commodus. In addition, he has the ability to strategically capitalize on particular circumstances in order to enhance his leadership, as shown by his recognition of Senator Gracchus as one of the senators who opposes Commodus.

In the last category, Maximus encounters several threats, both from opponents situated within and beyond the walls of the gladiatorial arena. Those dangers represent major obstacles to the leadership abilities of the character. Undoubtedly, the foremost threat comes from Commodus, who attempts to eliminate Maximus due to the fact that he was designation as the chosen heir to the throne by Aurelius. In addition to Commodus, Maximus faces other formidable enemies within the Gladiator arena.

## **Discussion**

The author's SWOT analysis reveals significant insights about the leadership portrayal of Maximus in the film "Gladiator." Initially, the author acknowledges the presence of strong leadership attributes inside this character, namely regarding moral resilience, bravery, and

adeptness in navigating difficult situations. This perspective embodies a favorable concept of leadership that may be regarded as a practical model in real-world scenarios. Nevertheless, the inclusion of Maximus's faults, namely uncertainty and vulnerability serves to enhance the authenticity of his character. This serves as a reminder that leaders, regardless of their strength, are vulnerable to shortcomings and uncertainty.

The importance of interpersonal relationships in leadership is further emphasized by the presence of opportunities in the form of friendships and social support. Maximus strategically utilizes these possibilities in order to accomplish his objectives.

In general, the findings of this SWOT analysis illustrate the varied aspects of Maximus's character in the film "Gladiator." The essay offers deep perspectives on the elements that impact leadership within the framework of a cinematic story, while also demonstrating the significance of employing the SWOT framework to analyze fictional characters. The present approach furthermore provides a novel lens through which to examine leadership within the realm of popular culture, and its discoveries may be effectively employed to enhance comprehension of leadership within the context of daily existence.

## **CONCLUSION**

The objective of this study is to examine the leadership concept displayed by the character Maximus in the film "Gladiator" (2000) through the utilization of the SWOT framework, which includes the evaluation of Strengths, Weaknesses, Opportunities, and Threats. The results of this SWOT analysis provided a deeper understanding of leadership dynamics within the world of fictional characters, as well as essential views on how to make use of the SWOT framework in character analysis within the field of popular culture.

The research findings show that Maximus has notable attributes in the area of moral leadership, representing courage and displaying adeptness in leading military operations. These characteristics represent a constructive concept of leadership that could be used as a real-life model. Nevertheless, it is important to acknowledge that he possesses certain weaknesses, including uncertainty and emotional vulnerability which serves as an important reminder that even the most powerful leaders are not resistant to vulnerabilities.

The character development of Maximus in his leadership ability is also influenced by the utilization of opportunities presented through friendships and special events. He creates solid partnerships, efficiently uses the available assets, and implements strategic measures to achieve his objectives.

Threats in the form of his enemies and the obstacles he faces demonstrate how leadership is frequently tested by resistance and challenges. This illustrates how important it is for leaders to possess the ability to deal with difficulties with courage and determination.

The research concludes that the use of the SWOT analysis offers significant insights into the leadership displayed by Maximus in the film "Gladiator," providing light on the complex relationships of character leadership within the narrative framework of a film. Furthermore, these findings provide a new perspective on the portrayal of leadership in popular culture and its significance in daily existence.

It is essential to acknowledge that the results of this study not only enhance the understanding of the concept of leadership in everyday life but also offer a basis for future studies. Later research might perhaps involve more comprehensive examinations of fictional figures within the field of leadership or the implementation of the SWOT framework for the evaluation of alternative films. This study establishes a solid foundation for further research in this area and enhances understanding of leadership within various contexts.

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