

## Durham Research Online

---

### Deposited in DRO:

01 June 2012

### Version of attached file:

Accepted Version

### Peer-review status of attached file:

Peer-reviewed

### Citation for published item:

Schyns, B. and Schilling, J. (2011) 'Implicit leadership theories : think leader, think effective?', *Journal of management inquiry*, 20 (2). pp. 141-150.

### Further information on publisher's website:

<http://dx.doi.org/10.1177/1056492610375989>

### Publisher's copyright statement:

The final definitive version of this article has been published in the *Journal of management inquiry* 20/2 2011  
© Author(s) 2011 by SAGE Publications Ltd at the *Journal of management inquiry* page: <http://jmi.sagepub.com/> on  
SAGE Journals Online: <http://online.sagepub.com/>

### Additional information:

## Use policy

---

The full-text may be used and/or reproduced, and given to third parties in any format or medium, without prior permission or charge, for personal research or study, educational, or not-for-profit purposes provided that:

- a full bibliographic reference is made to the original source
- a [link](#) is made to the metadata record in DRO
- the full-text is not changed in any way

The full-text must not be sold in any format or medium without the formal permission of the copyright holders.

Please consult the [full DRO policy](#) for further details.

### Implicit leadership theories: Think leader, think effective?

|                  |   |
|------------------|---|
| Journal:         | <i>Journal of Management Inquiry: A Forum for Scholarly Research, Discussion, and Debate</i>  |
| Manuscript ID:   | JMI-09-0076-NT.R2   |
| Manuscript Type: | Non-Traditional Research  |
| Keyword:         | implicit leadership theories, prototypes , Leadership, Qualitative Research   |
| Abstract:        | <p>While research into leadership in general acknowledges negative aspects of leadership, research into implicit leadership theories lags behind in this respect. Most implicit leadership theories research implies that the image of a leader in general reflects an effective leader. However, recent results in leadership research as well as headlines and reports in the popular press cast doubt on this assumption. This paper reports a qualitative study, focusing on general implicit leadership theories rather than effective images of leaders. The analysis of 349 statements results in fifteen categories that describe leaders in general. The results imply that implicit leadership theories are composed of both effective and ineffective attributes. The study challenges prior assumptions on the effectiveness implied in implicit leadership theories.</p> |

1  
2  
3  
4  
5  
6  
7  
8  
9  
10  
11  
12  
13  
14  
15  
16  
17  
18  
19  
20  
21  
22  
23  
24  
25  
26  
27  
28  
29  
30  
31  
32  
33  
34  
35  
36  
37  
38  
39  
40  
41  
42  
43  
44  
45  
46  
47  
48  
49  
50  
51  
52  
53  
54  
55  
56  
57  
58  
59  
60

Running head: IMPLICIT LEADERSHIP THEORIES

Implicit leadership theories: Think leader, think effective?

For Peer Review

## Abstract

While research into leadership in general acknowledges negative aspects of leadership, research into implicit leadership theories lags behind in this respect. Most implicit leadership theories research implies that the image of a leader in general reflects an effective leader. However, recent results in leadership research as well as headlines and reports in the popular press cast doubt on this assumption. This paper reports a qualitative study, focusing on general implicit leadership theories rather than effective images of leaders. The analysis of 349 statements results in fifteen categories that describe leaders in general. The results imply that implicit leadership theories are composed of both effective and ineffective attributes. The study challenges prior assumptions on the effectiveness implied in implicit leadership theories.

Keywords: implicit leadership theories, prototypes

## Implicit leadership theories: Think leader, think effective?

## Introduction

Many recent headlines such as the Siemens scandal around bribery or the question whether Sir Fred Goodwin deserves to receive a generous pension after being considered responsible for the slump in RBS profits imply that the public opinion of leadership is often not very positive. Vance (2009) summarizes this sarcastically in his “foundations of a sound economy” where he defines essential traits of contemporary leadership as “arrogant, greedy, over-controlling, out of touch, and clueless” (p. 179). The speed with which the public blamed leaders for the current economic crisis indicates that ineffectiveness in leaders is just as much part of the general image of leaders as is hailing them for success (cf. the Romance of Leadership approach; Meindl, Ehrlich & Dukerich, 1985). However, research into people’s everyday images of leaders or implicit leadership theories (Eden & Leviatan, 1975, 2000) mainly focuses on images of effective or ideal leaders. Some researchers even assume that implicit leadership theories equal everyday beliefs regarding *effective* leadership (e.g., House, Hanges, Javidan, Dorfman, & Gupta, 2004).

However, theoretical assumptions of the Romance of Leadership approach and the empirical evidence based on the concept shows that leaders are regarded as responsible for success *and* failure of organizations (e.g., Meindl, 1990). Consequently, leaders are not exclusively considered effective but also at times considered ineffective. The present paper aims at contributing to a fuller picture of leader images by investigating whether implicit leadership theories include of both effective and ineffective leader traits.

### Need for this study

Research into cynicism implies that a negative view of leadership can lead to problems with leadership influence. Kouzes and Posner (2005) claim that a large proportion of the workforce is cynical and that cynics are “less inclined to be influenced”. Thus, leaders may find it difficult to influence followers who hold negative views about leaders. For research into everyday images of leadership, so-called implicit leadership theories, this means that knowing about negative views towards leadership is important to prevent a lack of influence of leaders on their followers. We already know that implicit leadership theories influence the perceptions of actual leaders (e.g., Schyns, Felfe & Blank, 2007; Shamir, 1992). However, the prior focus of research into implicit leadership theories is mainly around effective or ideal leaders. Therefore, it is not surprising that such leader images do not include notions of ineffectiveness. While looking into images of effective leader is an important area of research, we will argue that this limited focus on ideal leadership leaves a blind spot concerning the notion of effectiveness or ineffectiveness comprised in leadership beliefs. The main question of our study is, therefore, to investigate which effective *and* ineffective characteristics are ascribed to leaders in general. More specifically, we are aiming to add to the knowledge about implicit leadership theories by, first, examining which dimensions people use to describe leaders in general, not (only) ideal leaders. Second, we look into these dimensions to examine to what extent they are seen as effective or ineffective by the individuals themselves, thereby challenging the common assumption that images of leaders in general equal images of effective leaders.

### Implicit leadership theories - Definition and prior research

1  
2  
3  
4  
5 Implicit theories represent a special form of cognitive schemata which – in analogy to  
6  
7 scientific theories – are seen as a cognitive network of everyday concepts. With the help of such  
8  
9 naive models people try to explain and predict their own and the behavior of others as well as derive  
10  
11 their action strategies. General definitions of implicit *leadership* theories imply that they are  
12  
13 cognitive structures containing the traits and behaviors of leaders (Kenney, Schwartz-Kenney, &  
14  
15 Blascovich, 1996).  
16  
17

18  
19 Thus, people in general but specifically followers use their implicit leadership theories to  
20  
21 explain their leader's behavior. Consequently, the same behavior maybe interpreted in a different  
22  
23 way by different people based on their implicit leadership theories. For example, a leader giving  
24  
25 his/her opinion in a meeting might be seen as dominant by one follower (possibly leading to no  
26  
27 further involvement in the discussion) or consultative by another (possibly leading to an  
28  
29 involvement in a discussion around the issue in question).  
30  
31  
32

33  
34 Certainly the most extensive groundwork in this area has been undertaken by Robert Lord and  
35  
36 his associates (e.g. Lord, Foti, & De Vader, 1984; Lord & Maher, 1991; Phillips & Lord, 1986).  
37  
38 Lord and colleagues developed the theoretical foundation of implicit leadership theories based on  
39  
40 Rosch's (1978) cognitive categorization theory. The basic idea of leadership categorization theory is  
41  
42 that perceivers (e.g., followers) classify stimulus persons (e.g., their supervisors) by comparing them  
43  
44 to prototypes of a category (e.g., effective leader).  
45  
46

47  
48 Examples for studies into implicit leadership theories include research focusing on the  
49  
50 influence of performance information on the perception of leadership, thereby examining the social  
51  
52 construction of leadership (see Lord & Maher, 1991, for an overview); the content of implicit  
53  
54 leadership theories (e.g., Offermann, Kennedy, & Wirtz, 1994); the effect of implicit leadership  
55  
56 theories on the perception of a specific leader (e.g., Ensaria & Murphy, 2003; Shamir, 1992); and  
57  
58  
59  
60

1  
2  
3  
4  
5 the effect of a fit between implicit leadership theories and actual leader behavior (Nye, 2005; Nye &  
6  
7 Forsyth, 1991; Epitropaki & Martin, 2005). For the pupose of this paper, research into the content of  
8  
9 implicit leadership theories is of special importance.  
10  
11

### 12 13 14 Implicit leadership theories as theories of effective leaders 15

16  
17 What we are interested in our study is the question of whether or not implicit leadership  
18  
19 theories of individuals comprise of effective as well as ineffective characteristics. Effectiveness and  
20  
21 ineffectiveness respectively are usually defined as (not) being successful with regard to the  
22  
23 achievement of goals. As we focus here on everyday images of leaders in general, effectiveness is  
24  
25 not meant in any objective way but purely as a mental model about whether or not characteristics  
26  
27 named by participants are felt by them to be successful or not. An example may illustrate this point:  
28  
29 Prior research into implicit leadership theories has found “tyranny” as one characteristic that is used  
30  
31 to describe leaders in general (Offermann et al., 1994). Whereas clearly several participants of that  
32  
33 research have mentioned characteristics that can be subsumed under tyranny, we do not know  
34  
35 whether or not they thought is was an effective or an ineffective leadership characteristic. People  
36  
37 may indeed differ in their judgment, with some thinking that effective leaders need to be tyrannical  
38  
39 and others disagreeing. We argue here that without asking the people who name characteristics  
40  
41 relevant to tyranny to rate these characteristics on effectiveness, researchers have no way to tell in  
42  
43 how far aspects of people’s implicit leadership theories include effectiveness or ineffectiveness. It  
44  
45 has to be noted that effectiveness may mean different things for different people: Some people may  
46  
47 think of “hard” criteria for effectiveness (such as company performance), others of “soft” criteria  
48  
49 (e.g., job satisfaction).  
50  
51  
52  
53  
54  
55  
56  
57  
58  
59  
60



1  
2  
3  
4  
5 In some lines of research, this focus on effective leaders is explicitly chosen. For instance,  
6  
7 Kenney and his colleagues (Kenney et al., 1996) examined the leader category “leaders worthy of  
8  
9 influence”. Gardner and Avolio (1998) introduce the “charismatic leader” as a subtype of the  
10  
11 general leader prototype that is reserved for those leaders who engage in visionary behavior.  
12  
13 Another example is Keller (1999) who assesses ideal images under the heading of implicit  
14  
15 leadership theories. Similarly, research on the think-manager-think-male phenomenon (Schein,  
16  
17 1973, 1975; Sczesny, 2003) and research on match between implicit leadership theories and actual  
18  
19 leader behavior (Nye & Forsyth, 1991; Nye, 2002, 2005) focused on ideal or effective leaders.  
20  
21  
22  
23

24 Other research seems to more or less tacitly concentrate on effective leader traits. One of the  
25  
26 biggest endeavors to capture implicit leadership theories across different cultures has been the  
27  
28 GLOBE project (Global Leadership and Organizational Behavior Effectiveness: Den Hartog, House,  
29  
30 Hanges, Ruiz-Quantanilla, & Dorfman, 1999). As the main result the authors show that managers  
31  
32 from different countries had in part very similar ideas about leader attributes (contributing or  
33  
34 inhibiting outstanding leadership). While the researchers in this project assert to assess implicit  
35  
36 leadership theories and define them as ideas about how leaders are and the expectations others have  
37  
38 of them (House et al., 2004), their assessment of implicit leadership theories is limited to attributes  
39  
40 that facilitate or inhibit *effective* leadership (indeed the wording of the answer scale refers to  
41  
42 inhibition of outstanding leadership; House et al., 2004). We think that it is not enough to say that  
43  
44 something inhibits *effective* leadership when drawing conclusions about ineffective leadership.  
45  
46 Inhibition of effective leadership could simply mean that this characteristic does not contribute to  
47  
48 effectiveness. It could be meaningless or its absence may lead to less effectiveness. In our opinion,  
49  
50 this does not mean the same as ineffective leadership.  
51  
52  
53  
54  
55  
56  
57  
58  
59  
60

## Differentiating leaders and effective leaders

A study that explicitly differentiates between the categories “leaders” and “effective leaders” was conducted by Offermann et al. (1994). Their extensive investigation focused on characteristics comprised in implicit leadership theories. Their starting point was to ask their participants to list characteristics of leaders / supervisors. They extracted 160 characteristics which were then rated by a different set of participants as characteristic or not characteristic for either (1) leaders, (2) effective leaders, or (3) supervisors. Using parallel analysis, they found that the factor solutions for all targets were comparable and yielded six factors describing leaders (sensitivity, tyranny, intelligence, devotion, charisma, and attractiveness). Additional analysis separated by gender showed an additional factor (‘strength’) and that ‘attractiveness’ could be further differentiated into ‘attractiveness’ and ‘masculinity’. Ultimately, Offermann et al. derived a list of forty-one characteristics that can be used to assess implicit leadership theories quantitatively. Sample characteristics comprise: intelligent, knowledgeable, educated, clever (intelligence dimension) and domineering, pushy, manipulative, loud, conceited, selfish (tyranny dimension).

Two main results of the study are especially noteworthy for our purpose. First, the factor structure did not differ across the different targets of leader, effective leader and supervisor. Second, the largest difference in the level of rating was found between the category supervisor and the two other targets of leader and effective leader. These latter two significantly differed only on two of the eight dimensions (i.e., tyranny and strength).

Based on this work of Offermann et al., Epitropaki and Martin (2004) set out to cross-validate the findings and develop a shorter implicit leadership theories scale. They come to a reduced set of items (i.e., 21) and factors (i.e., sensitivity, intelligence, dedication, dynamism, tyranny, and masculinity) which form higher order factors, which the authors called the leadership

1  
2  
3  
4  
5 prototype (including sensitivity, intelligence, dedication, and dynamism) and the leadership  
6  
7 antiprototype (tyranny and masculinity).  
8

9  
10 Based on these results, it seems that there is (1) no important difference between implicit  
11 theories of leaders and effective leaders with regard to structure and level of rating, and (2) that  
12 attributes usually regarded as favorable (i.e., sensitivity; intelligence; dedication;  
13 dynamism/charisma and strength) receive higher prototypicality ratings than those commonly  
14 regarded as unfavorable (tyranny, masculinity). It seems evident to conclude that leaders in general  
15 are seen as effective with prototypical attributes that are all favorable. Accordingly, the unfavorable  
16 attributes such as tyranny and masculinity compose an antiprototype and are an expression of  
17 ineffectiveness. But can we really draw these conclusions?  
18  
19  
20  
21  
22  
23  
24  
25  
26  
27

28  
29 First, the terms ‘prototype’ and ‘antiprototype’ are probably misleading in this context. In  
30 Offermann et al.’s study, all attributes were named when asking the subjects to list traits and  
31 characteristics of a leader. Hence, also the attributes comprised in the dimensions ‘tyranny’ and  
32 ‘strength’ were connected to this category. The mean prototypicality ratings for these dimensions  
33 were lower than those for the more favorable aspects, implying that these aspects were regarded as  
34 not very characteristic for a leader. Using the term ‘antiprototype’ to describe these attributes,  
35 however, implies that they are absolutely uncharacteristic of a leader or, better, characteristic of a  
36 non-leader. In our opinion, Offermann et al.’s study does not support this view as all attributes were  
37 named as characteristic for a leader.  
38  
39  
40  
41  
42  
43  
44  
45  
46  
47  
48

49  
50 Second, the study by Offermann et al. (1994) does not allow concluding that the images of  
51 leader in general and effective leader do not differ substantially. The authors themselves are rather  
52 cautious in this respect and state “it is possible that the cue ‘leader’ naturally calls forth the image of  
53 an effective leader” (Offerman et al., 1994, p. 55). Interestingly, a study of implicit leadership  
54  
55  
56  
57  
58  
59  
60

1  
2  
3  
4  
5 theories in the political context (Foti, Fraser & Lord, 1982) found considerable differences between  
6  
7 the prototypes of political leaders and effective political leaders (though on the same dimensions).  
8  
9 This is interesting as political leaders may not trigger the same notion of effectiveness as the label  
10  
11 “leaders” and, thus, participants are more likely to mention ineffectiveness as part of their implicit  
12  
13 leadership theories in this context.  
14  
15

16  
17 Third, if the respondents really thought of effective leaders when giving their answers, then  
18  
19 the low mean ratings for tyranny and masculinity would actually mean that these traits are not very  
20  
21 characteristic for effective leaders. This is not the same as to say that they are traits of ineffective  
22  
23 leaders. Consequently, negative attributes need not per se to be an expression of ineffective  
24  
25 leadership.  
26  
27  
28  
29  
30

### 31 Implicit leadership theories - Conclusion

32  
33 To summarize, most research on implicit leadership theories is concerned with the attributes of  
34  
35 effective or ideal leaders and or does not question the effectiveness of dimensions used to describe  
36  
37 leaders in general. There is a lack in prior research concerning the question whether leaders in  
38  
39 general are considered effective. We therefore investigate the attributes people use to describe  
40  
41 leaders in general more closely. It seems promising to compare the views on leaders in general with  
42  
43 prior findings to see to what extent they overlap. It seems that researchers into implicit theories  
44  
45 assume the term “leader” only has a positive connotation, and therefore do not acknowledge or  
46  
47 explore where negative or ineffective leadership qualities may fit into one’s general leadership  
48  
49 schema. The question we want to answer here is: Does the term “leader” only have positive  
50  
51 connotations, as most implicit leadership theorists seem to assume, or does it also invoke have  
52  
53 associations of ineffectiveness?<sup>1</sup>  
54  
55  
56  
57  
58  
59  
60

## Method

### *Design, procedure and instrument*

Conger (1998) stresses the importance of qualitative research as the concept of leadership involves “multiple levels of phenomena, possesses a dynamic character, and has a symbolic component” (Conger, 1998: 109). Given the focus of the present study on implicit leadership theories, the symbolic and subjective character of leadership is particularly emphasized. As Offermann et al. (1994) probably provide the most extensive example of a qualitative research in the area of characteristics included in implicit leadership theories, we take their work as a starting point for our analysis and therefore concentrate on traits comprised in implicit leadership theories rather than behaviors. The attributes named should be evaluated concerning their effectiveness to examine if our participants’ image of leaders in general is that of an effective leader or an ineffective leader.

In order to assess implicit leadership theories, the participants were asked to name six attributes of a leader in general and to rate these characteristics and the leader in general on effectiveness. Participants were presented the following request: “Imagine a leader in general. This refers to your image of a leader, based on your experience with different leaders on different levels in the organization during your work life. Describe this ‘leader in general’ using at least six attributes. These can be positive/effective but also negative/ineffective.”<sup>2</sup> Participants were asked to rate the leader in general on a scale from 1 = *very ineffective* to 5 = *very effective*. The participants were also asked to indicate for each attributes if they found this to be an effective or an ineffective characteristic.

### *Participants*

Our study was conducted in the Netherlands in 2005 and 2006, thus prior to the current economic crisis. Indeed, at the time, the labor market in the Netherlands showed very low unemployment rates. 76 participants took part in our study. 20 of these worked in a clothes shop (15% men, 85% female), 22 in a grocery shop (50% male, 50% female) and 34 came from various backgrounds (61.8% male, 35.3% female). The average age was 29 years ( $SD = 6.36$ ), 29 ( $SD = 10.78$ ), and 41 ( $SD = 11.66$ ), in the grocery shop, the clothes shop and the heterogeneous sample, respectively. The average of work experience was 9.28 years ( $SD = 6.74$ ) in the clothes job, 9.94 ( $SD = 11.32$ ) in the grocery shop and 17.13 years ( $SD = 12.85$ ) in the heterogeneous sample.

#### *Content analysis procedures*

In qualitative studies, the data analysis procedures are often only described vaguely if at all (Conger, 1998). But if qualitative research wants to break free from the stigma of being “not scientific”, “arbitrary”, or “subjective”, it has to follow systematic and transparent ways for data collection, analysis, and reporting (Bachiochi & Weiner, 2002; Creswell, 1998). To achieve this, qualitative content analysis (Mayring, 2000) was chosen as an approach that combines the strengths of the grounded theory approach in the discovery of “natural” categories (Glaser & Strauss, 1967; Strauss & Corbin, 1998) with strategies from traditional content analysis (Krippendorff, 1980). It is characterized by the aim to achieve a systematic qualitative text interpretation which is characterized by the following principles (Mayring, 2000; Schilling, 2006):

- Fitting the material into a model of communication: Based on the aims of the assessment, it has to be determined what parts of the communication are in the focus of analysis (e.g. the topic, the communicator himself, the text itself or the effect of the message).
- Rules of analysis: The material is analysed step by step in a rule-based procedure, devising the material into content analytical units.

- Categories in the centre of analysis: The different text units are categorized. The categories can be developed inductively or applied deductively, but should be carefully founded and revised within the process of analysis.
- Criteria of reliability and validity: The procedure should be comprehensible in order to compare the results to other studies and carry out checks for reliability.

As the questions concerning the ideal and the actual leader mainly served the purpose of focusing the participants and preventing intrusions from other leader images (see above), the following steps of qualitative content analysis were applied only to the answers concerning the leader in general:

1. Structuring the material into different dimensions (i.e., attributes and behaviors). As we were only interested in the statements concerning traits of leaders in general, all statements referring to leader behavior were deleted (as proposed by Offermann et al., 1994). We asked participants specifically in our instructions to indicate attributes of leaders. Therefore, participants indicating behaviors violated the instructions. Therefore, not all participants may have used both attributes and behaviors, leading to a bias in the analyses if we had included behaviors that some participants named but not including those of participants that followed instructions. All the material was controlled by a second researcher for the appropriateness of the reduction (i.e., checking if the deleted statements really addressed behavior and the remaining statements were focused on attributes).
2. Step by step formulation of categories based on a preliminary category system. This included the basic processes of naming and comparing the data fragments to develop categories for multiple statements (i.e., different notions from one person) and if necessary subsuming old or

1  
2  
3  
4  
5  
6  
7  
8  
9  
10  
11  
12  
13  
14  
15  
16  
17  
18  
19  
20  
21  
22  
23  
24  
25  
26  
27  
28  
29  
30  
31  
32  
33  
34  
35  
36  
37  
38  
39  
40  
41  
42  
43  
44  
45  
46  
47  
48  
49  
50  
51  
52  
53  
54  
55  
56  
57  
58  
59  
60

formulating new categories (Conger, 1998). As we aimed at comparing our results with existing research, Offermann et al.'s (1994) categories (sensitivity, tyranny, intelligence, devotion, charisma, attractiveness, masculinity, and strength) served as a preliminary model guiding the content analysis.

3. Revising the categories after 50 percent of the material was coded. The agreement of different raters was checked, cases of doubt and problems with the scope and overlapping of the categories were discussed within the research team consisting of two researchers and three students (Mayring, 2000). The categories were refined in a way that each category was extended by its opposite (e.g., devoted/disinterested; tyrannical/participative). This two-sidedness of categories used to describe person images is a well-known result from research on personal constructs theory (Bannister & Fransella, 1981).
4. Checking the category codes: About two-thirds of the way through the material, the developing category system was checked to prevent drifting into an idiosyncratic sense of what the codes mean (Miles & Huberman, 1994). Six typical examples (three in the original direction, three opposites) were assigned to each category to illustrate the content of the respective category (e.g., tyrannical/participative: authoritarian, bossy, imperious versus cooperative, collegial).
5. Final revision of the material. The data set was reexamined to make sure that the categories are fully described. Cases of doubt were categorized independently by two researchers; differences in the coding were discussed and resolved.<sup>3</sup>

### *Quantitative analyses*

Descriptive numerical analyses were used to complement the qualitative content analyses. Even the rather basic measures of absolute topic frequency (i.e., total number of times a category is addressed



1  
2  
3  
4  
5 across all interviewees), relative topic frequency (i.e., average percentage of a category in  
6  
7 comparison to the total number of statements across all interviewees) and person frequency (i.e.,  
8  
9 how many of the participants address a certain theme at all) are helpful to avoid weighting single  
10  
11 comments too heavily and generalizing findings too quickly (cp. Schilling, 2006). Although it is  
12  
13 tempting to include the most vivid, interesting or surprising quotes (Bachiochi & Weiner, 2002),  
14  
15 these frequency analyses can help to critically evaluate how representative these statements are for  
16  
17 the whole sample.  
18  
19  
20  
21  
22  
23

## 24 Results

25  
26 *Attributes of leaders in general.* In total, the participants made 349 statements concerning their  
27  
28 views on the attributes of leaders in general. The average number of statements was 4.59 (SD =  
29  
30 1.82; minimum = 1, maximum = 8). Including two new categories that emerged in the last step of  
31  
32 our analyses, fifteen categories emerged (see Appendix for further explanation of the categories).  
33  
34 With the exception of masculinity, all of Offerman et al.'s (1994) categories were also addressed  
35  
36 (sensitivity, tyranny, intelligence, devotion, charisma, strength, and attractiveness). New categories  
37  
38 concerning the characteristics of leaders in general include being *pleasant*, being a *team-player*,  
39  
40 *communicative*, *extraverted*, *organized*, *conscientious*, *honest*, and being *open for new experiences*.  
41  
42  
43  
44

45 *Frequencies.* Having a look at both directions of our category system, the six subcategories  
46  
47 that were used most often by our participants were charismatic (30), tyrannical (28), team player  
48  
49 (25), communicative (25), devoted (24), and conscientious (20). The subcategories honest and  
50  
51 unattractive were not used at all (i.e., only the categories' opposites were addressed). Extra- (2) and  
52  
53 introverted (1), participative (1), attractive (1), unorganized (1), and dishonest (2) yielded very few  
54  
55 statements. The bandwidth of the statements is expressed by the fact that there are no single  
56  
57  
58  
59  
60

subcategories dominating the views of the subjects. Also, an inspection of topic and person frequencies does not reveal outstanding dissimilarities concerning the importance and pervasiveness of a subcategory (see Table 1). Concerning the combined categories (original category plus its opposite), team player/individualist (38; 10.9%), charismatic/non-charismatic (34; 9.7%) pleasant/unpleasant (33; 9.5%) and communicative/not-communicative (31; 8.9%) receive the highest number of statements. The categories attractive/unattractive (1; 0.3%), honest/dishonest (2; 0.6%) and introvert/extravert (3; 0.9%) only play a minor role in the beliefs of the participants.

*Effectiveness/ineffectiveness.* Concerning the effectiveness of leader attributes, the participants categorized 225 statements as effective (64.5%), 119 (34.1%) were regarded as ineffective, 5 statements (1.4%) were not clearly labelled as either effective or ineffective. The relative high number of statements rated as ineffective (119) indicates, as we assumed, that implicit leadership theories are composed of both effective and ineffective attributes. Moreover, by way of an exploratory analysis, we used both sides of our category systems to compare the effectiveness ratings concerning the subcategories. Table 2 shows the cross-table indicating the number and percentage of statements that are normally seen as “favorable” (e.g., pleasant, attractive, teamplayer, charismatic) and those that are usually regarded as “unfavorable” (e.g., unpleasant, unattractive, individualist, non-charismatic; cp. Offermann et al., 1994) that were rated as effective and ineffective by the participants. The most interesting numbers for our purposes are the “unfavorable” statements that are considered effective (6.0%) and the “favorable” ones that are considered ineffective (7.3%). While these proportions are small, they still show that there is at least no deterministic connection (i.e., all favorable traits are seen as effective and all unfavorable are seen as ineffective) between favorable and effective or unfavorable and effective in the implicit leadership theories of our participants.

## Summary and discussion

The starting point of our study was to address the question which effective *and* ineffective characteristics are ascribed to leaders in general. Based on qualitative statements we derived fifteen categories describing leaders in general such as tyrannical, intelligent and organized. Asking our participants to rate the characteristics they named revealed that implicit leadership theories are composed of both effective and ineffective attributes.

We used Offermann et al.'s (1994) categories as a foundation for our categorization and found some overlap between our and their categories. Like Offermann et al. (1994) and Lord et al. (1984), we found charisma (charismatic/non-charismatic), decisiveness/strength (strong/weak), dedication (devoted/disinterested), tyranny (tyrannical/participative), verbal skills (communicative/not-communicative) understanding/sensitivity (sensitive/hard) and intelligence (intelligent/stupid) as important aspects in implicit leadership theories. However, some categories found in prior research were seldomly addressed (attractiveness; cp. Epitropaki & Martin, 2004, who argue that attractiveness may be neither a core prototypic or antiprototypic leadership attribute) or even non-existing (honesty, masculinity), others had to be added (especially teamplayer/individualist, pleasant/unpleasant and open/narrow-minded). Compared to the results of Offermann et al. (1994), the statements in the present study are much more varied resulting in a larger and more complex category system. The resulting category system should be regarded as a starting point for a fresh look at the contents of implicit leadership theories. The relatively high degree of unfavorable attributes named to characterize leaders may indicate that, while implicit leadership theories are mainly coined by positive images, the images of leaders in general are not completely romanticized. Our results also indicate that the quite reasonable assumption that

1  
2  
3  
4  
5 favorable characteristics reflected in implicit leadership theories are effective and unfavorable  
6  
7 characteristics are ineffective cannot be upheld completely. Over 13% of statements of our  
8  
9 participants fell into the positive/ineffective and negative/effective quadrant. It seems to be  
10  
11 necessary to distinguish more carefully between implicit theories concerning leaders in general,  
12  
13 effective and positive (i.e., sympathetic) leaders. As the connectionist model of Lord, Brown,  
14  
15 Harvey, and Hall (2001) pointed out, the 'leader' category is not as static and fixed as formerly  
16  
17 believed. The present results underline the importance of being very careful with the specific  
18  
19 questions we are asking in implicit leadership theories studies. They most certainly work as  
20  
21 constraints in sense of Lord et al. (2001) and may activate quite different aspects of our leadership  
22  
23 beliefs.  
24  
25  
26  
27

28  
29 With respect to the practical implication of our research, some tentative conclusions can be  
30  
31 drawn. We know from prior research that implicit leadership theories are related to the perception of  
32  
33 actual leaders (e.g., Schyns et al., 2007; Shamir, 1992) and their evaluation (Nye & Forsyth, 1991).  
34  
35 While there is more research needed into the different degrees of effectiveness included in implicit  
36  
37 leadership theories and how those implicit leadership theories affect the perception of leaders, we  
38  
39 can assume that people with a more ineffective image of leaders may view their actual leaders in a  
40  
41 more negative light and may rate them more negatively. There is a danger of a self-fulfilling  
42  
43 prophecy when followers that hold ineffective implicit leadership theories do not exert as much  
44  
45 effort for their leader as they could do. The question also arises in how far followers who hold  
46  
47 implicit leadership theories that comprise ineffectiveness will respond to attempts of leaders to  
48  
49 influence them (cf. Kouzes & Posner, 2005).  
50  
51  
52  
53  
54  
55  
56

57  
58  
59  
60  
Limitations and future research

1  
2  
3  
4  
5 As any research, our study has limitations that are worth noting. First, while our study has a  
6  
7 relatively large sample size for a qualitative study, the sample is still too small to generalize. Thus,  
8  
9 our study can only serve as a starting point for future research. Second, our study took place in the  
10  
11 Netherlands and can therefore not necessarily be cross-culturally generalized. Prior qualitative  
12  
13 research on implicit leadership theories in China (Ling, Chia, & Fang, 2000) found completely  
14  
15 different categories as compared to Offermann et al.'s (1994) US American results. Although we  
16  
17 used Offermann et al.'s categories as a starting point, it cannot be ruled out that some of our  
18  
19 categories are unique to the Dutch working context. However, the categories that were not supported  
20  
21 in our study (attractiveness and masculinity) were also the weakest ones in Offermann et al.'s study,  
22  
23 which indicates that our data are not completely different from prior American research.  
24  
25  
26  
27

28  
29 The interpretation of the statements into categories by our participants was undertaken by  
30  
31 researchers and not confirmed by the participants themselves. In order to enhance the credibility of  
32  
33 our interpretation, we excluded cases that were unclear without the context that only the respective  
34  
35 participant could provide. Although this led to quite a few items in the miscellaneous category, it  
36  
37 left the categorization less open to speculation.  
38  
39

40  
41 In our categorization scheme, we use a favorable and an unfavorable anchor for our  
42  
43 categories. However, the judgment was made by the researcher and not confirmed with the  
44  
45 participants. While led by prior research such as Lord et al. (1984), Offermann et al. (1994) and  
46  
47 Epitropaki & Martin (2004), this may be criticized as our personal interpretation. Although it seems  
48  
49 unlikely that, for example, stupid or unattractive are considered positive characteristics, we cannot  
50  
51 completely rule out that our participants perceived them as such. Future research should therefore  
52  
53 examine the emotional value (e.g. likeability) attached to our categories.  
54  
55  
56  
57  
58  
59  
60

1  
2  
3  
4  
5 We asked our participants to rate the attributes they named themselves with regard to  
6  
7 effectiveness. However, we did not explain to them what effectiveness means. Rather we wanted to  
8  
9 assess effectiveness as a part of their implicit leadership theories. Therefore, we do not know which  
10  
11 criteria our participants used to rate effectiveness. Indeed, we would assume that similar to implicit  
12  
13 leadership theories themselves, ratings of effectiveness draw on different dimensions. That is to say  
14  
15 that our participants will likely mean different things when it comes to defining effectiveness. A  
16  
17 general example from prior literature is that leaders seem to consider objective performance as more  
18  
19 important than followers whereas followers find job satisfaction more important (Dansereau, 1995).  
20  
21 Thus, whether or not our participants were thinking of “hard” or “soft” effectiveness, we do not  
22  
23 know. To study this in more detail, a future study could either ask each individual about his/her  
24  
25 criteria for effectiveness or clarify which type of effectiveness is to be used to rate the named  
26  
27 characteristics.  
28  
29  
30  
31

32  
33 Again, in terms of effectiveness, we referred to effectiveness of actual leaders in the  
34  
35 instructions for our participants. One may discuss, whether there are indeed different types of  
36  
37 effectiveness, depending on whether someone is already in leadership position or indeed wants to  
38  
39 emerge as leader<sup>4</sup>. Some characteristics may be useful in leader emergence (e.g., dominance) but  
40  
41 maybe less so in leader effectiveness once in the position.  
42  
43  
44

45 Our instructions explicitly asked our participants to name characteristics that could be  
46  
47 negative/ineffective. This might have triggered more negative/ineffective attributes than a neutral  
48  
49 instruction. Although we collected further data without this possibly biasing instruction and the  
50  
51 results were comparable, we would still recommend for future research to use neutral instructions to  
52  
53 avoid demand characteristics.  
54  
55  
56  
57  
58  
59  
60

## Conclusion

Our study addressed a shortcoming in prior research into implicit leadership theories, namely the assumption that images of leaders in general comprise of images of effective leaders. Using a relatively large sample (for a qualitative study), we could show that images of leaders in general contain characteristics that are regarded as effective and characteristics that are regarded by our participants as ineffective. Consequently, future research needs to distinguish more carefully between the different implicit leadership theories of participants depending on the goal of the respective study. This is crucial when conducting research regarding the perception of leaders, as ineffective implicit leadership theories may have different effect on the perception of leaders than effective ones. Leaders may find it more difficult to influence followers who hold ineffective implicit leadership theories. Knowledge about ineffective implicit leadership theories can help leaders to overcome this problem, for example, by trying to influence their followers' implicit leadership theories or by making clear that they as leaders are very much different from these implicit leadership theories.

**References**

- Altman, D. G. (1991). *Practical Statistics for Medical Research*. London: Chapman and Hall.
- Bachiochi, P.D. & Weiner, S.P. (2002). Qualitative data collection and analysis. In S.G. Rogelberg (Ed.), *Handbook of research methods in industrial and organizational psychology* (pp. 161-183). Oxford: Blackwell Publishers.
- Bannister, D. & Fransella, F. (1981). *Inquiring man: The psychology of personal constructs*. London: Croom Helm.
- Conger, J.A. (1998). Qualitative research as the cornerstone methodology for understanding leadership. *Leadership Quarterly*, 9, 107-121.
- Creswell, J.W. (1998). *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five traditions*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Dansereau, F. (1995). A dyadic approach to leadership: Creating and nurturing this approach under fire. *Leadership Quarterly*, 6, 479-490.
- Den Hartog, D.N., House, R.J., Hanges, P.J., Ruiz-Quintanilla, S.A., & Dorfmann, P.W. (1999). Culture specific and cross-culturally generalizable implicit leadership theories: Are attributes of charismatic/transformational leadership universally endorsed? *Leadership Quarterly*, 10(2), 219-256.
- Eden, D. & Leviatan, U. (1975). Implicit leadership theory as a determinant of the factor structure underlying supervisory behavior scales. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 60, 736-741.
- Eden, D. & Leviatan, U. (2005). From implicit personality theory to implicit leadership theory: A Side-trip on the way to implicit organization theory. In B. Schyns & J. R. Meindl (Eds.), *The Leadership Horizon Series: Implicit Leadership Theories - Essays and Explorations* (Vol. 3, pp. 3-14). Greenwich, CT: Information Age Publishing.
- Ensaria, N. & Murphy, S. E. (2003). Cross-cultural variations in leadership perceptions and



1  
2  
3  
4  
5 attribution of charisma to the leader. *Organizational Behavior and Human Decision*  
6  
7 *Processes*, 92, 52–66.

8  
9  
10 Epitropaki, O. & Martin, R. (2004). Implicit Leadership Theories in applied settings: Factor  
11  
12 structure, generalizability and stability over time. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 89, 293-310.

13  
14 Epitropaki, O. & Martin, R. (2005). From ideal to real: A longitudinal study of the role of implicit  
15  
16 leadership theories on leader-member exchanges and employee outcomes. *Journal of Applied*  
17  
18 *Psychology*, 90, 659-676.

19  
20  
21 Foti, R. J., Fraser, S. L., & Lord, R. G. (1982). Effects of leadership labels and prototypes on  
22  
23 perceptions of political leaders. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 67, 326-333>

24  
25  
26 Frost, P.J. (2004). Handling toxic emotions: New challenges for leaders and their organization.  
27  
28 *Organizational Dynamics*, 33, 111–127.

29  
30  
31 Gardner, W.I. & Avolio, B. (1998). The charismatic relationship: A dramaturgical perspective.  
32  
33 *Academy of Management Review*, 23, 32-58.

34  
35  
36 Glaser, B.G. & Strauss, A.L. (1967). *The discovery of grounded theory*. Hawthorne, NY: De  
37  
38 Gruyter.

39  
40  
41 House, R.J., Hanges, P.J., Javidan, M., Dorfman, P.W., & Gupta, V. (2004). *Culture, Leadership,*  
42  
43 *and Organizations The GLOBE Study of 62 Societies*. London, Sage.

44  
45  
46 Keller, T. (1999). Images of the familiar: Individual differences and implicit leadership theories.  
47  
48 *Leadership Quarterly*, 10, 589-607.

49  
50  
51 Kenney, R.A., Blascovich, J., & Shaver, P.R. (1994). Implicit leadership theories: Prototypes for  
52  
53 new leaders. *Basic and Applied Social Psychology*, 15, 409-437.

54  
55  
56 Kenney, R.A., Schwartz-Kenney, B.M., & Blascovich, J. (1996). Implicit leadership theories:  
57  
58 Defining leaders described as worthy of influence. *Personality and Social Psychology*  
59  
60

1  
2  
3  
4  
5  
6  
7  
8  
9  
10  
11  
12  
13  
14  
15  
16  
17  
18  
19  
20  
21  
22  
23  
24  
25  
26  
27  
28  
29  
30  
31  
32  
33  
34  
35  
36  
37  
38  
39  
40  
41  
42  
43  
44  
45  
46  
47  
48  
49  
50  
51  
52  
53  
54  
55  
56  
57  
58  
59  
60

*Bulletin*, 22, 1128-1143.

Kouzes, J. M. & Posner, B. Z. (2005). Leading in cynical times. *Journal of Management Inquiry*, 14, 357-364.

Krippendorff, K. (1980). *Content analysis: An introduction to its methodology*. Beverly Hills, CA: Sage.

Ling, W., Chia, R.C., & Fang, L. (2000). Chinese implicit leadership theory. *Journal of Applied Social Psychology*, 140, 729-739.

Lord, R.G., Brown, D.J., Harvey, J.L., & Hall, R.J. (2001). Contextual constraints on prototype generation and their multilevel consequences for leadership perceptions. *Leadership Quarterly*, 12, 311-338.

Lord, R.G., Foti, R.J., & de Vader, C.L. (1984). A test of leadership categorization theory: Internal structure, information processing, and leadership perceptions. *Organizational Behavior and Human Performance*, 34, 343-378.

Lord, R.G. & Maher, K.J. (1993). *Leadership and information processing*. London: Routledge.

Mayring, P. (2000). Qualitative Content Analysis. *Forum: Qualitative Social Research*, 2, 1-28.  
Retrieved March, 31, 2001 from <http://www.qualitative-research.net/fqs-texte/2-00/2-00mayring-e.htm>

Meindl, J.R. (1990). On leadership: An alternative to the conventional wisdom. *Research in Organizational Behavior*, 12, 159-203.

Meindl, J. R., Ehrlich, S. B. & Dukerich, J. M. (1985). The romance of leadership. *Administrative Science Quarterly*, 30, 78-102.

Miles, M.B. & Huberman, A.M. (1994). *Qualitative data analysis: An expanded sourcebook* (2<sup>nd</sup> edition). London: Sage.

- 1  
2  
3  
4  
5 Nye, J.L. & Forsyth, D.R. (1991). The effects of prototype-based biases on leadership appraisals: A  
6  
7 test of leadership categorization theory. *Small Group Research*, 22, 360-375.  
8  
9  
10 Nye, J.L. (2002). The eye of the follower - Information processing effects on attribution regarding  
11  
12 leaders of small groups. *Small Group Research*, 33, 337-360.  
13  
14 Nye, J.L. (2005). Implicit theories and leadership perceptions in the thick of it: The effects of  
15  
16 prototype matching, group setbacks, and group outcomes. In B. Schyns & J.R. Meindl (Eds.),  
17  
18 *The Leadership Horizon Series: Implicit Leadership Theories - Essays and Explorations* (Vol.  
19  
20 3, pp. 39-61). Greenwich, CT: Information Age Publishing.  
21  
22  
23  
24 Offermann, L.R., Kennedy, J.K., & Wirtz, P.W. (1994). Implicit leadership theories: Content,  
25  
26 structure, and generalizability. *Leadership Quarterly*, 5, 43-58.  
27  
28  
29 Phillips, J.S. & Lord, R.G. (1986). Notes on the practical and theoretical consequences of implicit  
30  
31 leadership theories for the future of leadership measurement. *Journal of Management*, 12, 31-  
32  
33 41.  
34  
35  
36 Rosch, E. (1978). Principles of categorization. In E. Rosch & B. Lloyd (Eds.), *Cognition and*  
37  
38 *Categorization* (pp. 27-48). Hillsdale, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.  
39  
40  
41 Schein, V.E. (1973). The relationship between sex role stereotypes and requisite management  
42  
43 characteristics. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 57, 95-100.  
44  
45  
46 Schein, V.E. (1975). Relationships between sex role stereotypes and requisite management  
47  
48 characteristics among female managers. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 60, 340-344.  
49  
50  
51 Schilling, J. (2006). On the pragmatics of qualitative assessment: Designing the process for content  
52  
53 analysis. *European Journal of Psychological Assessment*, 22, 28-37.  
54  
55  
56 Schyns, B., Felfe, J. & Blank, H. (2007). Is charisma hyper-romanticism? Empirical evidence from  
57  
58 new data and a meta-analysis. *Applied Psychology: An International Review*, 56, 505-527.  
59  
60

1  
2  
3  
4  
5 Sczensy, S. (2003). A closer look beneath the surface: Various facets of the think-manager-think-  
6  
7 male stereotype. *Sex Roles, 49*, 353-363.

8  
9  
10 Shamir, B. (1992). Attribution of influence and charisma to the leader: The Romance of Leadership  
11  
12 revisited. *Journal of Applied Social Psychology, 22*, 386-407.

13  
14 Strauss, A.L. & Corbin, J. (1998). *Basics of qualitative research: Techniques and procedures for*  
15  
16 *developing grounded theory* (2<sup>nd</sup> edition). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

17  
18  
19 Vance, C. M. (2009). Foundations of a sound economy. *Journal of Management Inquiry, 18*, 179.  
20  
21  
22  
23  
24  
25  
26  
27  
28  
29  
30  
31  
32  
33  
34  
35  
36  
37  
38  
39  
40  
41  
42  
43  
44  
45  
46  
47  
48  
49  
50  
51  
52  
53  
54  
55  
56  
57  
58  
59  
60

**Table 1: Frequency of categories**

|                       | Absolute and relative<br>amount of statements<br>(topic frequency):<br><i>subcategories</i> | Absolute and relative<br>amount of statements<br>(topic frequency):<br><i>categories</i> | Number of<br>persons<br>(person<br>frequency) | Rated as<br>effective | Rated as<br>ineffective |
|-----------------------|---|--|---|-----------------------|-------------------------|
| Introvert             | 1 (0.3 %)   | 3 (0.9%)   | 1   | 1                     | 0                       |
| Extravert             | 2 (0.6%)  |  | 2   | 1                     | 1                       |
| Pleasant              | 18 (5.2%)   | 33 (9.5%)  | 16  | 16                    | 2                       |
| Unpleasant            | 15 (4.3%)   |  | 14  | 0                     | 15                      |
| Communicative         | 25 (7.2%)   | 31 (8.9%)  | 21  | 22                    | 3                       |
| Not-<br>communicative | 6 (1.7%)  |  | 5   | 0                     | 6                       |
| Strong                | 16 (4.6%)   | 28 (8.0%)  | 14  | 13                    | 3                       |
| Weak                  | 12 (3.4%)   |  | 11  | 1                     | 11                      |
| Sensitive             | 18 (5.2%)   | 21 (6.1%)  | 16  | 17                    | 1                       |
| Hard                  | 3 (0.9%)  |  | 3   | 0                     | 3                       |
| Team player           | 25 (7.2%)   | 38 (10.9%)   | 23  | 21                    | 2                       |
| Individualist         | 13 (3.7%)   |  | 11  | 1                     | 11                      |
| Charismatic           | 30 (8.6%)   | 34 (9.7%)  | 27  | 27                    | 3                       |
| Not-charismatic       | 4 (1.1%)  |  | 4   | 1                     | 3                       |
| Devoted               | 24 (6.9%)   | 29 (8.3%)  | 19  | 24                    | 0                       |
| Disinterested         | 5 (1.4%)  |  | 5   | 0                     | 5                       |

## Implicit leadership theories

28

|                   |           |           |    |    |    |
|-------------------|-----------|-----------|----|----|----|
| Tyrannical        | 28 (8.0%) | 29 (8.3%) | 21 | 15 | 12 |
| Participative     | 1 (0.3%)  |           | 1  | 1  | 0  |
| Intelligent       | 13 (3.7%) | 21 (6.0%) | 11 | 10 | 3  |
| Stupid            | 8 (2.3%)  |           | 8  | 0  | 8  |
| Attractive        | 1 (0.3%)  | 1 (0.3%)  | 1  | 1  | 0  |
| Unattractive      | 0 (0%)    |           | 0  | 0  | 0  |
| Organised         | 7 (2.0%)  | 8 (2.3%)  | 7  | 5  | 1  |
| Unorganised       | 1 (0.3%)  |           | 1  | 0  | 1  |
| Conscientious     | 20 (5.7%) | 28 (8.0%) | 18 | 19 | 1  |
| Not conscientious | 8 (2.3%)  |           | 7  | 0  | 8  |
| Honest            | 0 (0%)    | 2 (0.6%)  | 0  | 0  | 0  |
| Dishonest         | 2 (0.6%)  |           | 2  | 0  | 2  |
| Open              | 10 (2.9%) | 16 (4.6%) | 9  | 7  | 3  |
| Narrow-minded     | 6 (1.7%)  |           | 6  | 2  | 4  |
| Miscellaneous     | 27 (7.7%) | 27 (7.7%) | 22 | 20 | 7  |

Table 2: Crosstable on the percentages of favorable/unfavorable and effective/ineffective statements

|             | Effective     | Ineffective  |
|-------------|---------------|--------------|
| Favorable   | 184<br>58.04% | 23<br>7.26%  |
| Unfavorable | 21<br>6.02%   | 89<br>28.08% |

Note. From the total number of 349 statements, 27 fell into the category miscellaneous and 5 were seen as indeterminate with regard to their effectiveness/ineffectiveness.

**Appendix: Category system and examples**

|                       |                          |
|-----------------------|--------------------------|
| <b>Introvert</b>      | <b>Extravert</b>         |
| Quiet                 | Vivid                    |
| Silent                | Curious                  |
| <b>Pleasant</b>       | <b>Unpleasant</b>        |
| Friendly              | Unfriendly               |
| Nice                  | Not nice                 |
| <b>Communicative</b>  | <b>Not-communicative</b> |
| Eloquent              | Not communicative        |
| Articulate            | Difficulties to express  |
| <b>Strong</b>         | <b>Weak</b>              |
| Perseverant           | Unstable                 |
| Takes decisions       | Unsure                   |
| <b>Sensitive</b>      | <b>Hard</b>              |
| Sensitive             | Insensitive              |
| Gentle                | Heartless                |
| <b>Team player</b>    | <b>Individualist</b>     |
| Altruistic            | Egoistic                 |
| Interest in the group | Selfish                  |
| <b>Charismatic</b>    | <b>Not-charismatic</b>   |
| Visionary             | Bureaucratic             |
| Persuasive            | No vision                |



## Appendix (continued): Category system and examples

|                      |                             |
|----------------------|-----------------------------|
| <b>Devoted</b>       | <b>Disinterested</b>        |
| Committed            | Indifferent                 |
| Engaged              | Inactive                    |
| <b>Tyrannical</b>    | <b>Participative</b>        |
| Authoritarian        | Cooperative                 |
| Bossy                | Comradely                   |
| <b>Intelligent</b>   | <b>Stupid</b>               |
| Knowledge            | Stupid                      |
| Smart                | Ignorant                    |
| <b>Attractive</b>    | <b>Unattractive</b>         |
| Good-looking         | Ugly                        |
| Charming             | Repulsive                   |
| <b>Organised</b>     | <b>Unorganised</b>          |
| Strategic            | Leave things over to chance |
| Goal oriented        | Thinking short/term         |
| <b>Conscientious</b> | <b>Not conscientious</b>    |
| Dutiful              | Chaotic                     |
| Conscientious        | Careless                    |
| <b>Honest</b>        | <b>Dishonest</b>            |
|                      | Not always honest           |
|                      | Intransparent               |

**Appendix (continued): Category system and examples**

| <b>Open</b> | <b>Narrow minded</b>        |
|-------------|-----------------------------|
| Open minded | Not interested in new ideas |
| Innovative  | Rather administrative       |

<sup>1</sup> We are indebted to an anonymous reviewer for the formulation of this question.

<sup>2</sup> As one reviewer commented, these instructions may have prompted our participants to think of positive/negative, effective/ineffective which they otherwise might not have done. To address this concern, we drew a small sample of (Dutch) employees ( $N = 11$ ), to whom we administered the same questionnaire as the one used in this study with two alterations: (1) We asked to indicate not more than six attributes (to ensure easy comparison between the participants) and (2) altered the instruction by leaving out the reference to positive/negative, effective/ineffective. We wanted to check in how far participants would still use positive/negative, effective/ineffective attributes without the prompt. On average, the participants named 5.7 characteristics out of which they rated 2.9 as ineffective. Many of the attributes were indeed quite negative (e.g., incapable, inconsequent). Comparing our results to the original data in terms of being favourable/unfavourable and effective/ineffective, the following distribution emerged:

|             | effective | ineffective |
|-------------|-----------|-------------|
| favorable   | 43.10%    | 8.62%       |
| unfavorable | 3.45%     | 44.83%      |

1  
2  
3  
4  
5  
6  
7 Thus, we conclude that that our instructions did not prompt our participants to name  
8  
9 positive/negative, effective/ineffective characteristics but that these are indeed part of an image of  
10  
11 leaders in general.

12  
13 <sup>3</sup> We used the new data outlined in footnote 2 to calculate the inter-rater reliability of the two  
14  
15 coders. In 73% of the cases both coders independently agreed on the same category. The resulting  
16  
17 Cohens Kappa was .71 which can be evaluated as a good degree of inter-rater agreement (cp.  
18  
19 Altman, 1991).

20  
21  
22 <sup>4</sup> We would like to thank an anonymous reviewer for pointing this out to us.  
23  
24  
25  
26  
27  
28  
29  
30  
31  
32  
33  
34  
35  
36  
37  
38  
39  
40  
41  
42  
43  
44  
45  
46  
47  
48  
49  
50  
51  
52  
53  
54  
55  
56  
57  
58  
59  
60