

THE ARCHETYPAL IMAGES OF LEADERSHIP

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Abstract *This paper explores the archetypal images of leadership that are commonly acquired by individuals (leaders and followers). This study has identified four broad archetypes through a qualitative study of sketches of leaders' characters using projective technique. The study compares and contrasts these archetypes with other similar frameworks. A questionnaire is used to measure these archetypes as reflected in the self-concepts of 414 subjects. Evidence of reliability and validity of these archetypes as meaningful constructs is discussed. The paper further explores implications of the archetypal perspective of leadership on both emergence and effectiveness of leadership.*

Keywords: Leadership, Leadership Archetypes, Leadership Styles

INTRODUCTION

Leadership has been studied through the ages in the form of different stories and the same have been passed down as archetypal images of leaders. These collective images of leadership have been reflected in epics, religious texts, fiction, and pop culture (Crowther, 2011; Mir, 2010; Graham et al., 2003; Feeney, 1986; Renard, 1999; Chen & Meindl, 1991). This study attempts to look at leadership from an archetypal perspective. It leverages thoughts from archetypal psychology, psychometric approach, and contemporary organizational leadership research to build a simple framework for understanding archetypal images of leadership which are shared by the collective, i.e., leaders and followers alike.

ARCHETYPES

Defining archetypes is far from simple. Depending on the source, different aspects of this fairly complex concept are emphasized (Hillman, 1975; Sells, 2000; Stevens, 2003; Knox, 2001). And yet, understanding of archetypes is almost certainly ubiquitous (Hogenson, 2004). Jung observed that humans deal with abstraction by projecting their own internal structures, conflicts, images of the psyche on to the abstract outside them. Hence, creativity, stories, deep-rooted beliefs, fantasies, cultural assumptions including religion, and concept of God Himself, are all in many ways consistent across the world and across humans. These patterns that are common to all humans and human societies can be referred to as archetypes (Jung, 1936). Jung therefore described archetype as the collective unconscious. It is that unconscious aspect of the psyche which is not gained

by personal acquisition but possibly by natural biological instincts and, hence, is common to all of us and connects us into one collective understanding at a very unconscious level (Jung, 1936). Unfortunately, archetype as a term has been used to mean various things, too loosely and without precision. In contemporary research, it has been taken to mean any pattern or image or prototypical behaviour that has been collectively inherited or naturally existing (Hogenson, 2004). Mahlberg (1987) and Rosen et al. (1991) both used empirical studies to show evidence of collective unconscious memory which indicates that collective memories may be accessed without conscious effort even in controlled conditions. Given its primal nature, archetypes may have an evolutionary function as well (MacLennan, 2006).

Archetype theory has its share of criticism (Neher, 1996). Notwithstanding the criticism of the archetype theory, archetypes, whether learnt or innate biological patterns of behaviours/beliefs, are helpful in understanding of human behaviour, social interactions, and propagation of social institutions including leadership and followership. Given how leaders, emerge in groups, collective images of leadership may have an impact on how leaders are perceived by their followers. Further, this view assumes that a leader's emergence is a social process and a process of the collective. Here, the term 'collective' may or may not be subconscious unlike the Jungian view which supports the subconscious view (Hillman, 1975). A distinction is neither necessary nor material from the point of view of this study.

LEADER ARCHETYPES

When leaders operate and act in a group, leadership emerges as more and more followers start to see an incumbent as a

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leader (Meindl, 1995). Leader archetypes can be seen as the collective images that act as reference points to what a leader could be. Depending on the social reality of the group, different images may be favoured. This triggers a social signalling where followers communicate this new perception to the incumbent, creating a leadership identity (Potters et al., 2007). This is further reinforced by leader-member exchange to create a sustainable feedback-based leadership process which continues to build on the leader's and followers' working self-concept (Lord & Brown, 2003).

Archetype, as a theoretical concept, can be helpful in understanding leadership. It may help explain common meanings and images that we hold about leadership and leaders. This study is preceded by many others that have explored archetypes in organizations, management, and leadership in different ways. Archetypes have been discussed in leaders' style of managing crisis (Lalonde, 2004), strategic change (Greenwood & Hinings, 1993), human capital development factors like learning (Kang, Morris & Snell, 2007), providing leadership (Vries et al, 2010), managing organization change (Carr, 2002), innovation management (Keupp & Gassmann, 2009), managing organization transitions (Miller & Friesen, 1980), organization character (Bridges, 2000), organization cultural archetypes, and associated leader traits (Cameron & Quinn, 2005). The exploration of archetype with respect to the collective images of leadership is being attempted in this study by using a mix of projective techniques as well as psychometric approach.

The aim of this study is to reflect on the archetypal view of leadership which,

- (a) comprises collective images of leaders and
- (b) can be measured as reliable and stable constructs, using a self-report measure.

This research uses the concept of archetypes to further the understanding of leadership as a collective process. This study specifically doesn't argue about utility of archetypes as a construct (differentiated from other leadership constructs), nor does it investigate how these archetypes, if real constructs, are formed.

QUALITATIVE EXPLORATION OF LEADER ARCHETYPES

This study has sought to understand leader archetypes as sketches of leaders' perceived characters. To understand these collective images and for them to be real archetypes, they must be,

- (a) accessible and common to the collective (across individuals) and
- (b) associated with a set of behavioural patterns consistently.

Projective technique was used as a research method to evoke a wide range of responses about follower perceptions about leaders' motives and actions. Projective techniques are known to offer valuable insights as an exploratory and qualitative research method (Catterall & Ibbotson, 2000; Donoghue, 2000). To access these archetypal images (meaning of various archetypes), a pictorial ambiguous stimuli with human-like figures was used. These were then used to evoke descriptions of an imaginary leader through interviews with 53 participants. Each participant was offered up to five different pictures, randomly selected from a pool of 10 ambiguous pictorial stimuli and which could lead to five different caricatures. 37 participants responded to all five pictures whereas, nine responded to four, and the rest responded to only three. The 53 participants were managers from a convenience sample and had a median work experience of 5 years (mean = 5.3, SD = 1.4). Of the 53 managers, 30 were female and 23 were male, all of them Indians.

The participants were given the following instructions,

"This is an exercise in creativity. You will be shown a series of random images which will be ambiguous and are so, by design. You are requested to look at them and find a leader in the picture. Then you will be asked to imagine what kind of leader that identified person is, in your imagination. You may use any kind of story to create that imaginary character. Please describe motivations, statements and actions but not traits of the identified imaginary leader. There are no other rules. Please feel free to use your creativity."

To guide the conversation, other probing questions were used,

"What does he want to do?"

"What will happen next?"

"What do people around him think about this?"

The probing was minimalistic and all interviews lasted from 20 to 50 minutes approximately. During the interview, responses were coded into themes using thematic analysis as per the guidelines of Braun & Clarke (2006). Common themes were categorized by frequency and over 31 distinct themes arose (figure 1). These were then combined to form clusters of seemingly similar archetypes using inductive reasoning. These were then assigned thematic names.

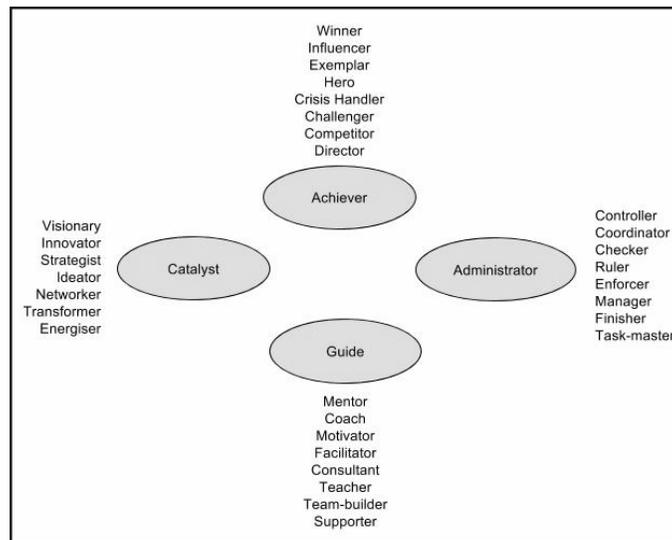


Fig. 1: Different Themes Mapped to the Archetypes

The common themes were arrived at based on the implied objective of leadership as well as the impact it had on followers as described in the stories during the interviews (Table 1).

Table 1: Objective and Impact of Leader Archetypes

Aspect	Achiever	Guide	Administrator	Catalyst
Objective of leadership	Victory, Success	Humanistic Growth, Supporting others	Maintenance, Functioning	Transformation, Innovation
Impact on followers	Drive, Achievement	Affiliation, Bonding	Stability, Security	Inspiration, Engagement

These themes were portrayed as both effective as well as ineffective, depending on the context of the stories. Consider the following descriptions from the participants:

“He is not going to succeed because he is very good at planning, but breathes down the neck of his people. I am sure his manager would like him. I wouldn’t be so sure whether his subordinates will. He is a task master. Success at any cost.”

I think he is a very nice leader. People follow him because they like him. He is the kind of person, who genuinely cares how people feel about things. Though, I think some people take advantage of him. But I guess that’s all right ...”

“He is the kind of person who people are easily influenced by. He is aggressive and is fine with that. They like him because of his personality (corrects it to charisma). But he is just the face of the show.”

Such contrasting themes emerged from the interviews describing how one image is not all positive or how each archetype image is not perfect. Many responses were similarly given in a manner that showed leaders had to be balanced.

“... no, he values performance, but doesn’t treat his people any differently, if they didn’t perform. He supports them but demands results no less.”

“I will have to say that he is out there getting his hands dirty but he is not a simpleton. He knows his stuff and knows how to apply it. I mean he is not a preachy guy... he will do it himself if that is what it takes. He doesn’t carry the baggage of his leadership everywhere.”

Although most responses identify common central images for leaders, behaviours from other themes are also attributed to the same leader. While these images are central to how individuals describe a leader, they are not categories of leaders, i.e., these themes are not necessarily mutually exclusive. They were described to coincide with each other.

Based on a thematic analysis, the following four archetypal themes were recognized:

1. Achiever
2. Guide
3. Administrator
4. Catalyst

It must be kept in mind that these words by themselves do not demonstrate the true meaning of archetypes. They are mnemonics and may grossly distort the real meaning if understood literally. That said, there are similarities between these archetypes and other known archetypes as described by other scholars. For example, Achiever and Hero (Campbell & Blake, 1989), Guide and the wise old man (Mayes, 1999), administrator and ruler (Pearson & Marr, 2003), catalyst and magician do share some meanings (Tallman, 2003).

THE ACHIEVER

The achiever archetype is the quintessential doer. It is the image of a leader who assumes leadership of an expedition or a mission. The object of leadership is to achieve milestones, goals which are clear, tangible, quantitative and rewarding. The achiever sees followers as those who have the same shared goal—to achieve a milestone, climb to the top, and produce results.

“He is telling people that they have to meet 150% of their targets and they will all be able to do what no one has done before ... is motivating them.”

“If you don’t know how to do it, tell me. But, if you are here, you should know this by now...”

“No one remembers that guy who came second. It’s the best, the top, the first or nothing.”

“They think here is a dedicated leader who leads by example.”

“Nothing sells like success.”

The achiever seeks a challenge in terms of milestones. As long as the challenge is competitive, she rises to it. The achiever is recognized by others as an exemplar. In stating so, achiever strives for recognition, usually material and something that can be leveraged, like status and acknowledgement of their worth. The instrumental measure of the effectiveness for the achiever is victory. She seeks competence, often achieves goals with a show of potency.

THE GUIDE

The guide is the enabler. She assumes leadership of a set of followers with same beliefs, values, emotional bonds, and commitments. The object of such a leader is to develop followers; help them grow so they can achieve. The guide looks for followers who can share these values. She nurtures them, helps them grow, draws power from her ability to enable them and their dependency on the affection she bestows upon them. In many ways, good and bad, the guide has parental functions within the scope of leader-follower relationship.

“We stand for an excellent quality of work. That is the legacy of this company. Let’s be proud of it.”

“He is challenging them to grow and learn more. He doesn’t delegate so he can free his time, he delegates, so they can grow... he is building talent.”

“Why don’t you take an off. [I don’t] think you will be able to work like this. May be you will be more productive after you are back tomorrow. Go home and let me know if you need something.”

“People love him. Trustworthy peer and for juniors he is a father figure... sort of..”

The guide seeks commitment from his followers in terms of in-group values and the promise of growth—the kind that challenges followers. The instrumental measure of success for the guide is rather subjective and involves what they have enabled through others and the commitment they have created. The guide sees an inviting challenge in creating a team/family and usually sees it as the most important responsibility of the leader.

THE ADMINISTRATOR

The administrator is the preserver. Her primary object is to maintain status quo, keep things running and create stability/order. She finds challenge in disarray, inefficiencies, and endeavours to take out inefficiencies. The administrator uses leadership to preserve, maintain, and run the show. Detail, quality, perfection, and continuous improvement are the mainstays of such a leadership. The administrator demands respect for the written word and the orders, traditions, and conventions.

“The rules are there for a reason. If you have problem with them, let’s talk about it. But following them is non-negotiable. You should appreciate the reason behind them.”

“You have 10 people who report into you. How can you let such a thing slip? There should be a way to catch these problems. Fix this process [of approvals]...”

“I want hourly updates till this problem is fixed. Tell me what support you need. Share reports with all stakeholders. Use the backup for now, but get this up and running as fast as you can.”

“He is in control and knows the system in and out. Very political may be.”

The administrator works through the hierarchy and encourages the same of others. The tried and tested is preferred; when things break and/or are not working right, they are very methodically replaced. The administrator doesn’t leave out room for surprises and provides utmost

clarity, stability, and security to the followers. Administrator is the perfect coordinator when rules of engagement are clearly laid down. The instrumental measure of success is adherence and compliance to both ends and means.

THE CATALYST

The catalyst is an agent of transformation. Her primary object is to facilitate change. She works out ways to transform whatever she touches. The catalyst acts as a buffer for exchange of ideas, from everywhere especially from boundaries of horizon. The catalyst brings a change which isn't obvious, it's bold and requires courage to see beyond uncertainty and present. The catalyst dwells in ambiguity without despising it and finds opportunity in that which is not yet understood or realized.

"This is good. But let's find a better way of doing this."

"Don't worry about making mistakes. Take risks."

"You are not seeing the big picture. We may not have the same suppliers tomorrow and may even have to buy from our competitors. Let's do ..."

"What do all of you think? Any ideas, suggestions or questions?"

"I think people find him very charming. He just gets you excited by all the possibilities."

"People share ideas with him."

The catalyst promises a vision of transformation and acts as a bridge to allow for it to happen. The catalyst demands openness and creativity from her followers and in exchange she promises pioneering adventures. Desire to see beyond change is the cornerstone of such archetype.

Besides the four themes, another frequently appearing theme was that of a leader who tricks, manipulates, and abuses people through false promises and hopes. This has been deliberately kept out of the archetypal framework proposed in this study for the following reasons—(a) it corresponds to dark side of personality (b) it may be attributed to any of the

four proposed archetypes. It must be added that by no means can the archetype of a leader be limited to one framework. While the endeavour has been to capture archetypes of leaders as present in the collective, there are many ways in which they can be presented and at multiple levels. In this study, the focus was to keep the number limited and yet arrive at composite archetypes that can prove to be internally consistent and valid constructs. Consider, for example, the nurturer (affectionate caring for followers) theme and supporter (focused on supporting others) theme which have been merged within the Guide archetype to provide it a broader and yet comprehensive meaning.

FOUR ARCHETYPES AND OTHER FRAMEWORKS

As discussed in the earlier section, archetypal images of leaders are not new in concept. More often than not, leadership archetypes have been studied as leadership styles and roles. But they are not completely congruent with an archetypal view of this study. This study proposes that archetypal images of a leader may pre-exist in follower's minds. When a leader subscribes to these behavioural patterns, followers may respond to these archetypes rather than leader's actions directly. This could be an especially important process during leadership emergence as no precedence of behaviour may otherwise be available to the followers. Archetypes may not, by themselves, imply effectiveness or success. For example, followers in a very stable environment may not respond well to a leader subscribing to a catalyst image. This behavioural pattern may not be viewed as leader-like in such a situation.

This four-archetype model also roughly aligns itself with much researched competing values' framework (Cameron & Quinn, 2005). This thematic similarity is not absolute, however. Some differences persist. For example, catalyst with a focus on change and open culture with a focus on ideas are the most divergent in meaning but do have similarities nonetheless. Further, it is expected that within an organizational context, achiever archetype would be more relevant to a market culture. Table 2 shows constructs similar to the four archetypes from other authors:

Table 2: A Comparison of Archetypes from Other Scholars

Researcher	Achiever	Guide	Administrator	Catalyst
Jung <i>Collective unconscious</i> (Jung, 2014)	Hero	Wise old man	Father	Magician
Quinn, Cameron <i>Organization Culture Archetypes</i> (Cameron & Quinn, 2005)	Market	Clan	Plant	Open
Vries <i>Leadership Styles Archetypes</i> (Vries et al, 2010)	Transactor, Builder, Communicator	Coach	Processor	Strategist, Change Catalyst, Innovator

QUANTITATIVE RESEARCH

Given the problems of projective techniques (Lilienfeld, Wood & Garb, 2000) which was the primary method of identifying broad archetypal images of leadership, an empirical method was deemed necessary to establish that these are real and meaningful constructs. A self-report measure was used to establish that these are uni-dimensional archetypes which are congruent with not just images of leader, but also with the self-image of leaders. If this is to be true, not only do collective images impact emergence of leadership as seen by followers, but also as perceived by leaders themselves.

SCALE CONSTRUCTION

A short 60 item questionnaire was written with a five-point Likert agreement scale with 1 being 'strongly disagree' and 5 being 'strongly agree'. The questionnaire was developed to measure archetypes through leader self-concept. The scales were constructed using the findings from the qualitative themes which emerged from the thematic analysis of responses to the ambiguous visual stimuli. Item construction was done in a way to reduce overly desirable items, keep items short to increase clarity, ensure low-grade readability, and reduce culturally agnostic leadership behaviours. Based on scale analyses, five items for each scale were dropped which had lowest correlations with test scores. The resulting questionnaire had average number of 6.6 words across 40 items. The reading level for the questionnaire was found to be at 8 grade level (Flesch, 1948). 414 individuals (convenience samples of students, managers from retail, manufacturing and IT/ITES sectors, and military officers) took the questionnaire online. The demographics of the sample have been provided in Table 3.

Table 3: Demographic for Psychometric Study Sample

Demographics for the sample (n = 414)		No. of respondents
Gender	Female	52
	Male	362
Work sector	IT/ITES	60
	Manufacturing	128
	Military	111
	Retail	115
Work Experience	No Work Experience	74
	< 5 years	147
	5 to 10 years	109
	10 to 15 years	59
	> 15 years	25

Reliability

Results were analysed to measure: (a) Reliability - internal consistency, (b) Inter-item correlations, and (c) Test retest reliability. Please see Table 4 for all measures of reliability. Guide scale had the highest mean while Administrator had the lowest mean raw scores. Achiever also had the highest variance while Administrator had the lowest variance. Internal consistency was estimated using Cronbach's alpha with all values being at or more than 0.7. Given that the number of items was relatively low at 10, a slightly lower Cronbach's alpha may be acceptable (Schmitt, 1996; Cortina, 1993). Removing one item in the administrator scale could have increased the alpha to 0.74. Whereas this indicates that further research can increase the reliability of the scale, the item was not removed because it was considered important to the scale from the standpoint of adding more meaning to it. High inter-item correlations indicate adequate to high internal consistency of all the four the scales (Cortina, 1993). Retest Reliability of 0.68–0.81 over a four-week period with a sample of 58 respondents is healthy and indicates stable constructs over the four week period.

Table 4: Reliability Statistics for the Archetype Scales

Archetype Scales	No. of Items	Mean n=414	Standard Deviation n=414	Cronbach's Alpha n=414	Inter-item Correlations n=414	Test Retest 4 weeks n=49
Achiever	10	5.26	0.70	0.86	0.39	0.81
Guide	10	5.39	0.48	0.72	0.22	0.70
Administrator	10	5.21	0.40	0.70	0.18	0.68
Catalyst	10	5.24	0.62	0.81	0.29	0.72

Validity

Establishing validity is a rather subjective quest. It is about continuous exploration of meaning of a measure (Kline, 2014). Effort has been made to understand the evidence

available to demonstrate different aspects of validity of the measures.

The correlation matrix in Table 5, shows that Achiever and Guide archetypes are negatively correlated. Also, Administrator and Catalyst are negatively correlated.

This negative correlation is to be expected (Burke et al., 2006). Given that achiever archetype is concerned with achievement which has a performance focus, and guide archetype is concerned with learning and relationships, the inverse relationship is to be expected (Seijts & Latham,

2005). Similarly, Administrator archetype responsible for maintaining the system is negatively correlated to the catalyst archetype which strives for change. This is expected, as focus on status quo negatively impacts focus on change (Hambrick, Geletkanycz & Fredrickson, 1993).

Table 5: Intercorrelations in the Archetype Scales

<i>n</i> = 414	Achiever	Guide	Administrator	Catalyst
Achiever	1			
Guide	-0.581**	1		
Administrator	-0.184**	-0.236**	1	
Catalyst	0.190**	0.000	-0.442**	1

To further explore this structure, a principal component analysis was carried out to understand these constructs better. A clear two-factor model emerges from the data (see Table 6, Figure 2 and 3). The structural model indicates a four axis circumplex model which confirms the interpretation from correlation data.

Archetypes are leader images that seem to be common across followers and by that extension in all people including leaders. These notions of a leader are also images that leaders may create in others' mind. An important method of establishing construct validity for archetypes would be exploration of multirater follower feedback and its correlates with self-concept.

Table 6: Components Extracted Through Principal Component Analysis

Archetypes	Component	
	1	2
Achiever	0.86	0.26
Guide	-0.90	0.20
Administrator	0.09	-0.87
Catalyst	0.12	0.81

2 components were extracted using principal component extraction and varimax rotation

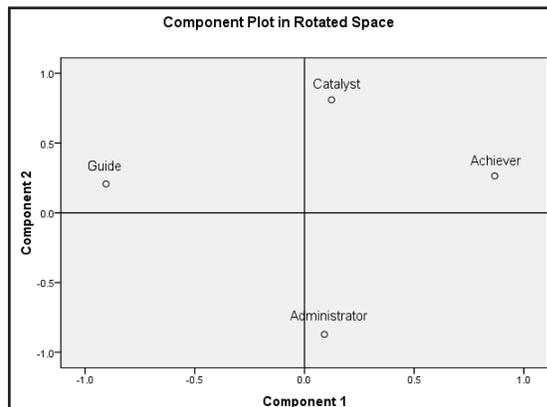


Fig. 2: Circumplex Model of the Archetypes

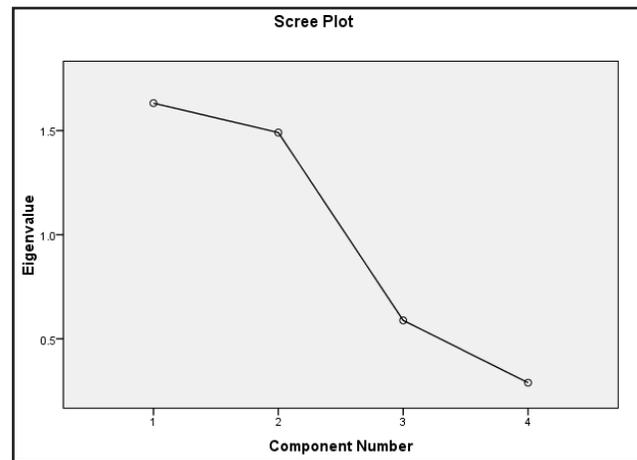


Fig. 3: Scree Plot of the Archetypes for the Two-factor Model

KMO measure of sample adequacy was found to be at 0.42 with Barlett's test of sphericity showing significant results. Component plot using varimax rotation indicates a two component 2-axis model. The two components accounted for over 78% of the variance.

DISCUSSION

Archetypes, as studied in this paper, are meaningful, useful, and measurable constructs that describe collective images of leaders. Although more validity evidence can be collected, it is clear that these are broad and consistent images of leadership that we all hold in our minds. Further, research could explore if these are common across cultures. This is important given the subliminal level at which culture may impact the perception of leadership we hold in our minds (Yan & Hunt, 2005). If these archetypes are indeed collective images of a leader, they should be present across cultures. However, their manifestations may differ.

Correlations and internal consistency figures provide insights that these archetypes are stable, consistent, and may

be explained by two factors. These may be interpreted as concern for people vs. task/goal and need to sustain status quo vs. change. Not surprisingly, this understanding can also be extended to leadership situations as well as functions of organizational leadership; the four archetypes may also describe a common functional understanding of leadership impact—welfare of people, achievement of goal, maintaining system function, and changing to adapt (Pfeffer, 1977).

Archetypal images of leaders describe how individuals are perceived but may also be about individual differences. It is expected that a leader who relates very highly with the catalyst archetype may be high on the big five personality factor openness. Similarly, it is also expected that Guide archetype may be high on Agreeableness factor. These hypotheses are worth investigating as impact of individual differences in personality is well known to impact leadership styles (Zaccaro, Kemp & Bader, 2004). However, archetypes, as hypothesized here are more than just individual leadership styles. They are, more importantly, the images of leadership that we all hold. Hence, complementary to leader's self-concept, further understanding of these images would come from a multirater feedback by followers and stakeholders of leaders (Church & Waclawski, 1998). How a leader is viewed and what kind of impact he/she creates may be mapped using these four dimensions. Further research may help explore this.

Leadership exists within a dynamic and interactive context where situation impacts leaders and leaders impact situations. It is expected that leaders who are perceived to be effective would score highly on archetypes that are closest to the shared values of the team or values needed in a situational context (Gillespie & Mann, 2004). Given similarities with the competing values framework model, it may be important to consider how archetypes of leaders may be related to the four cultural archetypes. Leaders depending on their orientation may move to cultures where they may be seen as more successful and valued (Rothbaum, Weisz & Snyder, 1982). Effectiveness aside, leaders subscribing to behaviours in line with an organization's culture may emerge as leaders more quickly and strongly.

From a theoretical standpoint, archetypal images of leadership, if so basic, must have evolutionary roots as well. Creativity for example, a key component of the catalyst archetypal image, could come from environmental pressures where creative problem solving could have produced evolutionary advantages for social human groups (Gabora & Kaufman, 2010). Similarly, the need for exercising control over environment which could have evolutionary origins could also indicate the roots of administrator archetype (Leotti, Iyengar, & Ochsner, 2010). These are evolutionary hypotheses which could explain the nature of these leadership archetypes. To be certain of evolutionary basis of archetype

framework as summarized by van Vugt and Ronay (2013) must be met. However, with or without a discussion on its roots and origins, it can be said that leadership archetypes as constructs provide another dimension in which leadership emergence and effectiveness can be understood.

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