

Charisma as a cognitive-affective phenomenon: a follower-centric approach

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- Abstract:** *Purpose* – The intention of this paper is to conceptualize charisma as a multidimensional, cognitive-affective phenomenon for the reason that the current practice of conceptualization and operationalization of charisma in terms of observable extraordinary behaviour of the leader has diluted “attributed extraordinariness” while disregarding other facets that the theorists assume to be part of charisma.
- Design/methodology/approach* – The existing literature on charisma in many diverse disciplines is appraised in order to enumerate the dimensions of charisma. Accordingly, the paper presents a working definition of charisma and makes suggestions on developing a scale of charisma as a multidimensional, cognitive-affective phenomenon.
- Findings* – The paper concludes that charisma is a cognitive-affective phenomenon and is characterized by “Leader extraordinariness”, “Leader archetypicality” “Leader group prototypicality” (cognitive dimensions), “Reverence with awe” and “Love with enthusiasm” (affective dimensions).
- Research limitations/implications* – Other than explaining how a scale of charisma could be developed, the paper also explains how the proposed conceptualization opens up new avenues for the exploration of routinization of charisma and follower psychological dynamics.
- Practical implications* – While the paper urges leaders to appeal to followers

emotionally and to use the impression management techniques, it urges followers to be vigilant about the “dark side of charisma”.

Originality/value – The present paper can be taken as the first attempt at conceptualizing charisma as a multidimensional, cognitive-affective phenomenon, though charisma has been long thought to be so. As it takes a follower-centric approach and incorporates many dimensions of charisma which are presently neglected in operationalizing charisma, the suggested scale of charisma will more validly measure the charisma of leaders than scales presently used.