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How follower traits and cultural values influence the effects of leadership

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ABSTRACT

Follower traits and cultural values are important context variables that influence the effectiveness of leader behaviors. Understanding how these variables interact with leader behaviors has been an important scholarly pursuit for the past several decades. Yet, this research is dispersed, and there exist methodological and theoretical limitations within this line of inquiry. We seek to improve our collective understanding of the role of follower traits and cultural values in leadership behavior research. First, we provide a comprehensive review of the extant research on follower traits and cultural values as moderators of leader behaviors. Second, based on our review and analysis of prior research, we identify important patterns in the literature. Third, we highlight methodological shortcomings and solutions that should enhance the quality of future research in this area. We also offer up theoretical insights for future research that should increase our understanding of how follower traits influence leader behaviors.

Over the past several decades a number of studies have examined how follower traits and cultural values moderate the relationships between leader behaviors and follower outcomes (e.g., Gilmore et al., 2013; Zhang et al., 2014). This recent research highlights the importance of considering followers in the leadership process (Bastardoz and Van Vugt, 2019; Carsten et al., 2010; Li et al., 2013; Uhl-Bien et al., 2014). Followers are not all the same (Bastardoz and Van Vugt, 2019; Carsten et al., 2010; Riggio et al., 2008), and it is important to remember them in order to gain further insights into the process of leadership (Uhl-Bien et al., 2014). Because followers are often quite different from one another, it is important to better understand the influence their individual differences have on the effects of leader behaviors. For instance, a leader behavior that greatly helps one follower might only marginally help another, and may even be detrimental to some followers.

Follower characteristics, like traits and cultural values, are also an important aspect of the leadership context (Ayman and Adams, 2018; Liden and Antonakis, 2009). As such, follower traits and cultural values are important boundary conditions for leadership, and knowledge about boundary conditions allows the nature of leadership to be better understood (Antonakis & Day, 2018). Indeed, elucidating boundary conditions is an essential step and building block in theory development (Whetten, 1989). While there are several reviews on how leader personality traits affect the leadership process (e.g., Judge et al., 2002; Judge et al., 2009; Bradley et al., 2020), there has not yet been a comprehensive review on how follower personality traits and cultural values affect a variety of different leader behaviors. Further, the current literature on follower traits as moderators of leadership is dispersed and disorganized. Consequently, it is difficult to fully understand the ways follower traits affect various leader behaviors. This is unfortunate given recent attention on the topic of followership (Bastardoz and Van Vugt, 2019; Uhl-Bien et al., 2014). Thus, this review seeks to integrate prior research on follower traits and cultural values as moderators of leadership to help improve our theoretical and methodological understanding of these important boundary conditions.

Unlike previous reviews that have discussed follower traits and cultural values (e.g., Cheong et al., 2018; Eva et al., 2019; Van Knippenberg and Sitkin, 2013), we do not limit our focus to just one particular leader behavior. As such, we take a broader look at the implications of follower traits in order to uncover patterns across different leadership behaviors. In this review, we not only provide a review of prior empirical research of follower traits as moderators of leader behaviors, but also discuss key patterns, theoretical implications, and methodological considerations. Further, we also provide recommendations on how future research can more effectively investigate how follower traits moderate leadership behaviors. As such, our review should guide researchers interested

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in gaining a more complete understanding of leader behaviors, follower traits, and their interaction.

Moderation effects in leadership

Moderation occurs when the relationship between two variables depends on another variable; this third variable is the moderator variable (Cohen et al., 2003). Over the years, organizational researchers have presented useful taxonomies that describe the nature of different moderation effects (e.g., Bass, 1990; Gardner et al., 2017; Howell et al., 1986; Podsakoff et al., 1995; Schriesheim, 1997). The framework developed by Gardner et al. (2017) is the most current taxonomy and incorporates many key elements proposed by prior leadership and management researchers. Gardner et al. (2017) indicate that there are three major types of moderation effects: (1) strengthening effects, (2) weakening effects, and (3) reversing effects.

Strengthening effects–elsewhere referred to as enhancing or synergistic effects–increase the effect of the leader behavior, such that the relationship becomes stronger in the presence of the moderator variable. For example, Chiu et al. (2016) found that follower proactive personality had a strengthening effect for humble leadership behaviors to team performance; specifically, followers high in proactive personality received more benefit from humble leadership behaviors, and their performance was more positively affected by this leader behavior compared to those lower in the trait. Weakening effects–elsewhere referred to as substitutes or neutralizers–decrease the effect of the leader behavior, such that the relationship becomes weaker in the presence of the follower trait. For example, Mawritz et al. (2014) found that conscientiousness had a weakening effect on the relationship between leader abusive behaviors and follower organization deviance; specifically, followers low in conscientiousness were more likely to be negatively affected by leader abusive behaviors and engaged in greater organizational deviance due to abusive leader behaviors compared to follower high in conscientiousness. To distinguish between strengthening and weakening in the context of follower traits, it is important to consider *which* followers are most impacted by the leader behavior. For strengthening effects, it is followers who are *higher* in the trait who are most affected by the leader behavior; in contrast, for weakening effects, it is followers who are *lower* in the trait who are most affected by the leader behavior. In other words, strengthening effects suggest that those higher in the trait are more affected by the leader behavior, and weakening effects suggest that those lower in the trait are more affected by the leader behavior.

Finally, in addition to strengthening and weakening effects, the last type of moderation effect proposed by Gardner et al. (2017) are reversing effects. Unlike strengthening and weakening effects, which suggest that one type of follower is more or less affected by a leader's behavior due to the follower's trait, reversing effects suggest that some followers will be positively affected by the leader behavior, while others will be negatively affected by the leader behavior. For example, Van Kleef et al. (2010) found that leader behavioral displays of anger *increase* motivation for followers low in agreeableness, but such displays *decrease* motivation for followers high in agreeableness. Figs. 1 through 3 show different examples of each of these three types of moderation effects.

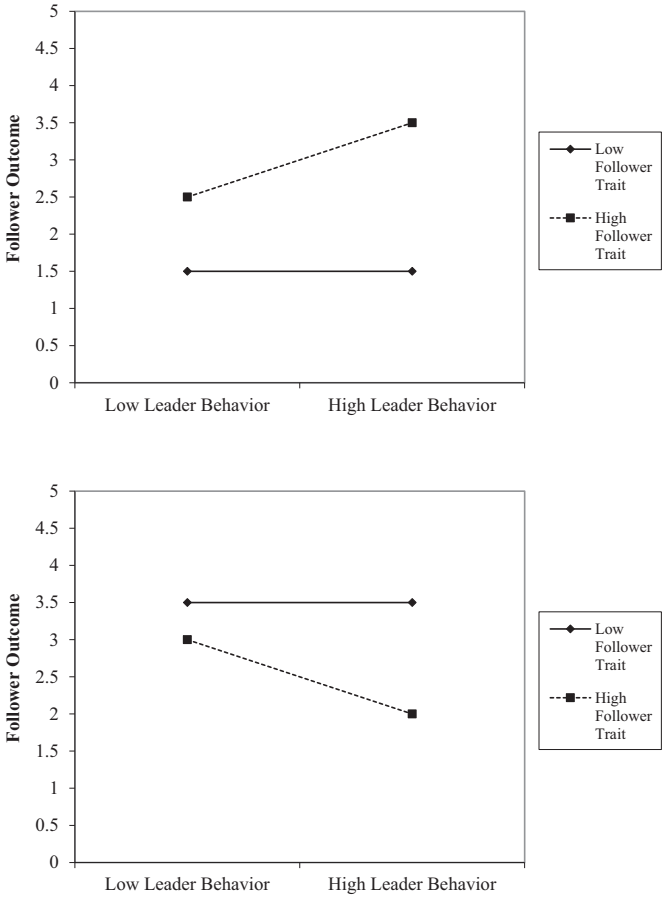

Fig. 1. Examples of strengthening effects.

Review and synthesis of research

To identify relevant articles for our review, we searched prominent management journals in EBSCO.[1] We searched for articles that included all of the following criteria: 1) leader* or supervis* in the abstract, 2) moderat* or interact* in the text, and 3) personalit* or trait* or locus of control or narcissis* or machiavellian* or psychopath* or allocentri* or idiocentri* or power distance or collectivis* or uncertainty avoidance or traditionality or conflict avoidance or proactivity in the text. These more specific traits were included in our search to ensure that we did not miss any prominent traits that have been identified in the leadership literature. Next, we examined the titles and abstracts of the articles and only included those that examined how follower traits influence the outcomes of leader behaviors. Through this process, we identified 71 articles that fit the scope of our review. Within these 71 unique articles, there were 216 follower traits and leader behavior interaction effects.[2] Based on our search of the leadership literature, our review is organized around five broad leader behaviors. We categorize constructive leader behaviors using Inceoglu et al.'s (2018) and Lemonie et al.'s (2019) frameworks of constructive leader behaviors, which include leader change-oriented (e.g., transformational, charismatic), task-oriented (e.g., transactional), relational-oriented (e.g., empowering, supportive), and moral-oriented (e.g., servant, ethical, humble) leader behaviors; we also summarize destructive leader behaviors (e.g., abusive supervision, leader aggression). Table 1 summarizes the various follower traits that were examined. Table 2 shows the moderating patterns each trait has on different types

[1] The journals we included in our search were *Administrative Science Quarterly, Academy of Management Journal, The Leadership Quarterly, Strategic Management Journal, Organization Science, Journal of Applied Psychology, Personnel Psychology, Journal of Vocational Behavior, Journal of Occupational and Organizational Psychology, Human Relations, Journal of Organizational Behavior, Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Process, Group and Organization Management, Journal of Management, Journal of Management Studies, Journal of Personality and Social Psychology, Journal of Applied Social Psychology, Management Science, Journal of International Business Studies, Strategic Entrepreneurship Journal, Journal of Business Venturing, Human Resource Management, International Journal of Human Resource Management, Entrepreneurship, Theory, & Practice, Journal of Business & Psychology, Journal of Business Ethics,* and *Psychological Science.*

[2] Where the interaction effect was interpretable, we also included studies that examined leader behaviors as moderators of follower traits and cultural values because the interaction effects are statistically the same as if the authors had considered the follower trait or cultural value as a moderator.

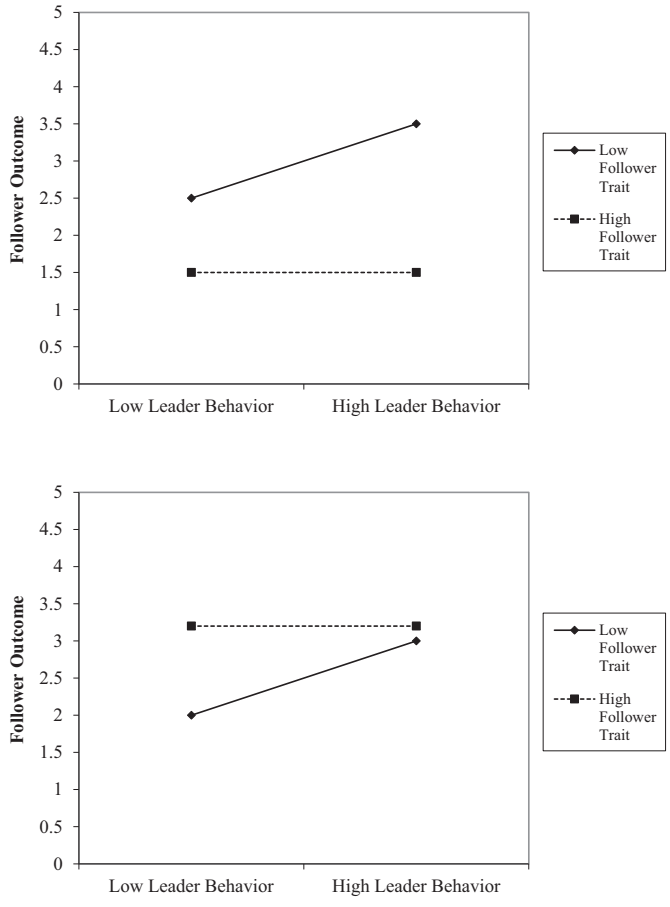

Fig. 2. Examples of weakening effects.

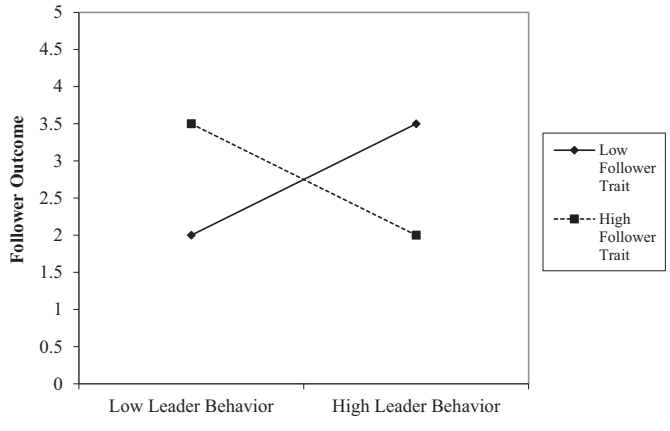

Fig. 3. Example of reversing effect.

of leader behaviors. Table 3 displays the types of interactions associated with each type of leader behavior.

Within each category of leader behavior, we discuss five major groups of follower trait moderators. The first group of traits is the Big-5 traits of conscientiousness, agreeableness, extraversion, emotional stability,[3] and openness to experience. The second group is individual trait cultural values (e.g., power-distance orientation, individualism/collectivism). The third is the different dimensions of core self-evaluation (CSE) which include locus of control, emotional stability, generalized self-efficacy, and self-esteem (Judge et al., 2005). The fourth is proactive personality, given extensive prior empirical research of proactive personality as a moderator of leader behaviors. Finally, we discuss an assortment of traits that were not included in the previous four groups (e.g. trait positive affect, social adaptability).

[3] Given that emotional stability is part of both Big-5 traits and CSE, we summarize the moderating role of emotional stability with the other dimensions of CSE given its theoretical and empirical overlap with these traits.

Table 1
Moderation variables studied.

Variable	Number of Interactions Explored
Big Five	**36**
Conscientiousness	13
Extraversion	6
Agreeableness	7
Emotional Stability (Neuroticism)	9
Openness to Experience	1
Individual trait cultural values	**68**
Power-distance orientation	28
Collectivism (allocentrism)	27
Traditionality	11
Uncertainty avoidance orientation	2
Core Self-Evaluations	**47**
Locus of Control	31
Core self-evaluations	3
Emotional Stability (Neuroticism)	9
Self-esteem	2
Generalized self-efficacy	2
Proactive personality	**13**
Other Traits	**14**
Need for Independence	3
Trait affect	6
Trait self-control or self-regulation	5

Change-oriented leader behaviors

Big-5 personality traits

The Big-5 personality traits are five of the most studied personality traits in the management literature and consist of conscientiousness, openness to experience (openness), extraversion, agreeableness, and emotional stability. Several studies have explored how these traits moderate change-oriented leader behavior. In a study of salespeople, both conscientiousness and openness had weakening effects for transformational leader behaviors, such that transformational leader behaviors only enhanced the indirect relationship between transformational leadership and follower performance via work meaningfulness for followers who were low in conscientiousness or openness (Frieder et al., 2018). For follower extraversion, Frieder et al. (2018) found no significant interaction. Similarly, Felfe and Schyns (2006) did not find follower extraversion to moderate the relationship between leader transformational behaviors and follower leader acceptance. However, Guay and Choi (2015) found that follower extraversion had a weakening effect between leader transformational behaviors and follower individual-focused OCB (OCB-I) and organization-focused OCB (OCB-O). In sum, while the Big-5 traits are diverse, when they moderate change-oriented leader behaviors, they tend to enhance the leader behavior for those who are lower in the trait compared to those who are higher, thereby functioning as weakeners.

Cultural values

Power distance describes the extent to which people accept an unequal distribution of power in organizations and other institutions (Hofstede, 1980). While power-distance, along with the other cultural values described below, is a variable that is often examined at a cultural

Table 2
Summary of how traits generally moderate various leader behaviors (number of tested interactions reported in parentheses).

Follower Personality	Leader Behavior Type				
	Change-oriented	Task-oriented	Relational-oriented	Moral-oriented	Active destructive
Big-5 Traits					
Conscientiousness	–	Mixed effects (5)	–	–	**Weakener (6)**
Extraversion	**Weakener (4)**	–	–	–	–
Agreeableness	–	–	**Reverser (4)**	–	**Weakener (2)**
Openness to Experience	–	–	–	–	**Weakener (2)**
Emotional stability	Mixed effects (5)	–	–	–	**Weakener (2)**
Cultural Values					
Power-distance orientation	Mixed effects (5)	Mixed effects (2)	Mixed effects (7)	Mixed effects (4)	Mixed effects (11)
Collectivism	**Strengthener (22)**	**Weakener (10)**	Mixed effects (6)	Mixed effects (3)	–
Traditionality	Mixed effects (2)	–	Mixed effects (4)	–	**Weakener (5)**
Uncertainty avoidance	Mixed effects (2)	–	–	–	–
CSE Traits					
Internal Locus of Control	**Weakener (2)**	Mixed effects (5)	Mixed effects (16)	–	**Weakener (12)**
Core self-evaluations	–	–	–	–	–
Emotional Stability	Mixed effects (5)	–	–	–	**Weakener (2)**
Self-esteem	–	–	–	–	**Weakener (2)**
Generalized self-efficacy	–	–	**Strengthener (2)**	–	–
Proactive Personality	Mixed effects (3)	Mixed effects (2)	–	Mixed effects (7)	–

Note: Because our aim was to highlight patterns, we only report results for variables that were tested multiple times.

Table 3
Summary of moderation effects depending upon leader behavior.

Leader behavior	Moderation effect					Average explained variance[1]
	Strengthening	Weakening	Reversing	Not significant	Total	
Change-oriented	15	20	0	19	54	4.6%
Active destructive	13	29	0	18	60	2.5%
Moral-oriented	4	8	1	6	19	5.0%
Task-oriented	5	10	2	9	26	3.3%
Relational-oriented	12	13	11	21	57	7.1%
Total	49	80	14	73	216	4.3%

[1] This average only includes studies that reported the explained variance for interaction terms.

level (Hofstede, 1980), these variables can also be examined at the individual level. A variety of studies in our review examined how power-distance orientation influences the impact of various leader behaviors. Kirkman et al. (2009) found that follower power-distance orientation acted as a weakener on the relationship between leader transformational behaviors and follower OCB; likewise, Newman and Butler (2014) found follower power-distance orientation served as a weakener of the positive relationship between leader transformational behaviors and follower affective commitment. However, Schaubroeck et al. (2007) found that team power-distance orientation (measured by taking the team-average of this personality trait) strengthened the relationships between leader transformational behaviors and both team performance and team potency. Also, Sheikh et al. (2013) did not find power-distance orientation to significantly moderate the relationship between leader transformational behaviors and job involvement. Overall, these studies provide a mixed picture of the moderating role of power-distance orientation, at least with regard to the relationship between transformational leadership and follower outcomes. It is interesting to note, however, that power-distance orientation generally acted as a weakener in the relationship between transformational leadership and individual outcomes, but as a strengthener in the relationship between transformational leadership behaviors and team outcomes.

Individualism-collectivism is another cultural trait identified by Hofstede (1980). Whereas individualists emphasize their own personal needs, goals, and well-being, collectivists emphasize the needs, goals, and well-being of the group.[4] Follower collectivism has been found to strengthen the positive relationship between leader transformational behaviors and a variety of follower outcomes, such as affective commitment (Newman and Butler, 2014), job involvement (Sheikh et al., 2013), team potency (Schaubroeck et al., 2007), individual performance (Yang et al., 2010), and team performance (Schaubroeck et al., 2007). Furthermore, Nahum-Shani and Somech (2011) found follower collectivism strengthened the relationship between idealized influence (a dimension of transformational leadership) and follower OCB. Finally, Jung et al. (2009) found collectivism strengthened the relationship between leader transformational behaviors and leader effectiveness, although the interaction effect was only marginally significant. In sum, the moderating effect of collectivism on change-oriented leader behaviors has been well studied, and collectivism consistently strengthens the positive relationships between transformational leadership and positive organizational outcomes.

The cultural value of uncertainty avoidance (Hofstede, 1980) describes the degree to which people are uncomfortable with and avoid ambiguity and risk in their lives. The only two studies we located in our review that investigated follower uncertainty avoidance as a moderator yielded contradictory findings. Newman and Butler (2014)

[4] At the individual level, the traits of individualism and collectivism are often referred to as idiocentrism and allocentrism, respectively (Triandis et al., 1995), and these are the terms used in some of the research we reviewed. However, for the sake of clarity, we use the terms individualism and collectivism when discussing this trait. Further, whereas some researchers investigate individualism-collectivism as opposite ends of the same continuum (e.g., Erdogan and Liden, 2006), other researchers conceptualize them as independent dimensions (e.g., Nahum-Shani and Somech, 2011).

found that uncertainty avoidance strengthens the relationship between leader transformational behaviors and follower affective commitment but Sheikh et al. (2013) found that uncertainty avoidance serves as a weakener of the relationship between leader transformational behaviors and job involvement. These inconsistent findings are curious given that in both studies the dependent variables were job attitudes (i.e., commitment and involvement). Additional research, then, is needed to clarify how follower uncertainty avoidance moderates the relationship between transformational leadership and job attitudes.

Traditionality is a cultural value that describes individuals' respect and commitment to traditional customs and norms (Chen and Aryee, 2007; Schwartz, 1992). Although this value is not formally a part of Hofstede's framework, some researchers suggest that traditionality has considerable overlap with power-distance (e.g., Hui et al., 2004). Li et al. (2013) found follower traditionality significantly weakened the relationship between transformational leader behaviors and follower OCB, but not the relationship between transformational leader behaviors and follower taking charge (a specific type of proactive work behavior; Parker and Collins, 2010). This weakening effect is similar to the effect that power-distance orientation had on the relationship between transformational leadership and individual follower outcomes.

Core-self evaluation

CSE describes the evaluations that individuals make about their ability, competence, and self-worth (Judge et al., 2005). De Hoogh and Den Hartog (2009) found that the effect of leader charismatic behaviors (a dimension of transformational leadership) on follower burnout was weakened by follower locus of control (LOC), but it was strengthened by follower emotional stability. De Hoogh and Den Hartog (2009) tested these relations in two samples; whereas emotional stability was only a significant moderator in one of the two samples, LOC was supported in both. Investigating the moderating role of emotional stability, Guay and Choi (2015) found that it had a weakening effect in the relationship between leader transformational behaviors and follower OCB-I and OCB-O. Lastly, Felfe and Schyns (2006) found that follower emotional stability did not moderate the relationship between leader transformational behaviors and follower leader acceptance. Therefore, except for De Hoogh and Den Hartog's (2009) finding of the moderating role of emotional stability in predicting follower burnout (which was only supported in one sample) the moderation effect of CSE traits resemble those of proactive personality (discussed below), conscientiousness, and openness in that those low in CSE traits are the ones who benefit most from change-oriented leader behaviors.

Proactive personality

Proactive personality describes the tendency for people to engage in change-oriented action by demonstrating initiative, taking action, and persevering in spite of obstacles (Crant, 2000). Several studies have examined how proactive personality moderates the effects of change-oriented leader behaviors. McCormick et al. (2019) found that follower proactive personality had a weakening effect on the relationship between leader transformational behaviors and follower proactive behaviors; similarly, Li et al. (2013) found that proactive personality weakened the relationship between transformational leadership and taking charge.[5] In terms of proactive work behaviors, then, the findings consistently show that those who are less proactive benefit most from transformational leader behaviors. This makes sense as employees who have a proactive disposition should tend to be more proactive regardless of their leader's behavior.

[5] This interaction effect was reported as marginally significant at $p < .10$.

Other Traits

Gilmore et al. (2013) found that follower trait *positive affect* weakens the relationship between leader transformational behaviors and both follower creative performance and OCB; likewise, Tse et al. (2018) found *creative personality* acted as a weakener of the relationship between leader transformational behaviors and follower creativity. Another study found that the relationship between transformational leadership and challenging OCB's was strengthened by followers' *Machiavellianism* (Belschak et al., 2015). Finally, Li et al. (2013) found that the relationship between leader transformational behaviors and follower taking charge is weakened by followers' *learning goal orientation* (i.e., the degree to which they look for challenges and seek to develop their skills). Taken together, leader transformational behaviors seem to have the greatest impact on followers low in positive affect, creativity, and learning goal orientation but high in Machiavellianism.

Follower traits and change-oriented leader behaviors - integration

Overall, most personality traits weaken the effect of leader transformational behaviors on a variety of outcomes, such as follower perceptions of justice (Kirkman et al., 2009), affective commitment (Newman and Butler, 2014), creative performance (Gilmore et al., 2013; Tse et al., 2018), taking charge (Li et al., 2013), and OCB (Guay and Choi, 2015; Li et al., 2013). Thus, followers low in traits such as conscientiousness (Frieder et al., 2018), openness (Frieder et al., 2018), extraversion (Guay and Choi, 2015), locus of control (De Hoogh and Den Hartog, 2009), power-distance orientation (Kirkman et al., 2009; Newman and Butler, 2014), traditionality (Li et al., 2013), proactive personality (McCormick et al., 2019), positive affect (Gilmore et al., 2013), creative personality (Tse et al., 2018), and learning goal orientation (Li et al., 2013) all seem to be most affected by transformational leadership. Given that this finding is generally consistent across different traits and change-oriented leader behaviors, the pattern of results suggests that followers who are low in traits that typically lead to positive organizational outcomes (e.g., conscientiousness, proactive personality, learning goal orientation, creative personality) are actually the ones who benefit most from working under leaders who use change-oriented behaviors.

The two main exceptions to this pattern are that followers high in collectivism generally benefited most from transformational leader behaviors (Jung et al., 2009; Newman and Butler, 2014; Schaubroeck et al., 2007; Sheikh et al., 2013; Yang et al., 2010). Also, transformational leadership appears to have a stronger impact on team outcomes when followers are high in power-distance orientation (Schaubroeck et al., 2007), but a stronger impact on individual outcomes when followers are low in power-distance orientation (Kirkman et al., 2009; Newman and Butler, 2014). Future research should further examine this phenomenon to see why follower power-distance orientation influences the effects of transformational leadership differently depending on the type of outcome.

Active destructive leader behaviors

Big-5 personality traits

Conscientiousness is an important moderator for active destructive leader behaviors. In particular, conscientiousness weakened the relationship between leader abusive behaviors and both organization deviance (Mawritz et al., 2014) and follower performance (Nandkeolyar et al., 2014), but had no significant effect on the relationship between abusive supervision and psychological withdrawal (Mawritz et al., 2014). Also, Tepper et al. (2001) found that employees low in both conscientiousness and agreeableness were more likely to engage in dysfunctional resistance due to abusive supervision, but abusive supervision had no effect among followers who were not low in both traits; they also found that follower conscientiousness had a strengthening

effect between leader abusive behaviors and follower constructive resistance.

Follower openness was also found to moderate the relationship between leader abusive behaviors and both follower deep and surface acting (Wu and Hu, 2013). Openness had a weakening effect on leader abusive behavior on both follower surface acting and deep acting; those low in openness were more likely to increase surface acting and decrease deep acting due to abusive leader behaviors. For those high in openness, the effect of abusive leader behaviors on deep acting was completely negated.

Unlike other areas we reviewed, the findings regarding how follower conscientiousness moderated the effects of active destructive leader behaviors told a similar story across several studies. Conscientiousness consistently has as a weakening effect on the negative consequences of abusive leader behaviors. Like conscientiousness, agreeableness and openness also appear to diminish the effects abusive leader behaviors have on followers.

Cultural values

Several studies in our review found that power-distance orientation weakened the relationship between abusive leader behaviors and positive follower outcomes such as job satisfaction (Peltokorpi and Ramaswami, in press) and perceived interpersonal justice (Lian et al., 2012; Vogel et al., 2015). Power-distance orientation also strengthened the positive relationship between abusive leader behaviors and interpersonal deviance (Lian et al., 2012) and strengthened the negative relationship between authoritarian leader behaviors and follower voice (Li and Sun, 2015). Power-distance orientation has been found to strengthen the relationship between abusive leader behaviors and turnover intentions (Richard et al., in press). Richard et al. (in press) theorized that although followers with a high power-distance orientation are generally less affected by abusive leader behaviors (Hon and Lu, 2016), they may have stronger intentions to quit because instead of directly confronting and retaliating against an abusive leader, they may instead outwardly show support, but quietly start making plans to leave. Finally, one study found traditionality to weaken the effects of abusive leader behaviors on revenge cognitions and follower deviance towards their supervisor (Liu et al., 2010).

Core-self evaluation

De Hoogh and Den Hartog (2009) examined how follower emotional stability and follower LOC moderate leader autocratic behavior and found that follower emotional stability had a weakening effect on the relationship between leader autocratic behaviors and follower burnout. However, they did not find an interaction between autocratic leader behaviors and follower LOC in predicting burnout. Also, Mitchell and Ambrose (2012) found, across three studies, that LOC weakened the positive relationship between leader aggression (a dimension of abusive supervision) and follower retaliation behaviors, and found mixed support for the moderating role of LOC onto problem solving and displaced aggression. Similarly, Zhang et al. (2014) found that CSE weakened the negative relationship between leader abusive behaviors and follower intrinsic motivation. Also, Nahum-Shani et al. (2014) found that follower self-esteem had a weakening effect on the relationship between leader undermining behaviors and follower job-strain and perceived health, but only when the leader was low in supportive behaviors. In general, CSE and dimensions of CSE have a weakening effect on destructive leader behaviors, and followers who are high in CSE traits are more prone to react constructively in the face of destructive leadership. Thus, these traits play a role that is similar to those of conscientiousness, agreeableness, and openness.

Other traits

Self-control describes the ability to control oneself, and this trait is positively correlated with student grade point averages, adjustment, relationships, and interpersonal skills (Tangney et al., 2004). In a leadership context, Meier and Gross (2015) found that self-control did not moderate the relationship between supervision-instigated incivility towards a follower and follower incivility towards the supervisor. However, a study by Yuan et al. (2020) found that the positive relationship between abusive supervision and emotional exhaustion is weakened when followers are high in trait self-control. Similar to self-control, one study examined follower *self-regulation* as a moderator and found self-regulation strengthened the relationship between abusive supervision and job tension (McAllister et al., 2018). Xu et al. (2019) found that trait *positive affect* strengthened the negative effect abusive supervision has on personal initiative.

Previous research has also found that amoral manipulations (a facet of Machiavellianism) strengthen the relationships between abusive supervision and both follower unethical behavior and follower social undermining (Greenbaum et al., 2017). Also, Mackey et al. (2013) found follower social adaptability weakened the relationship between abusive supervision and the following four outcomes: job tension, emotional exhaustion, job satisfaction, and work effort.

Follower traits and active destructive leader behaviors - integration

The findings across the Big-5 traits and active abusive leader behaviors largely mirror what was found with leader change-oriented behaviors, in that those low in Big-5 traits are the ones primarily affected by leader behaviors. Also, we found that CSE traits generally weaken the effects of abusive supervision. In addition, although 12 articles in our review looked at how collectivism influenced the effects of various leader behaviors, none of them examined the influence individualism and collectivism have on destructive leader behaviors. This is unfortunate because we believe that collectivism could have a potentially substantive neutralizing effect on destructive leader behaviors.

Moral-oriented leader behaviors

Big-5 personality traits

Panaccio et al. (2015) found that the interaction between extraversion and servant leader behaviors significantly predicted follower psychological contract fulfillment and indirectly influenced follower OCB. Specifically, extraversion acted to weaken the effect of servant leader behaviors (Panaccio et al., 2015).

Cultural values

Hu et al. (2018) found that power-distance orientation weakened the relationship between humble leader behaviors and team information sharing. They also found that humble leader behaviors did not significantly affect team psychological safety when team power-distance orientation was low, but they did have a significant, negative effect on team psychological safety when team-average power-distance orientation was high. Lin et al. (2019) found power-distance orientation to weaken the indirect relationship between humble leader behaviors and follower voice. Other research has found that power-distance orientation strengthens the positive relationship between benevolent leader behaviors and employee creativity (Lin et al., 2018).

Past research has found that collectivism weakens the relationship between servant leadership and psychological contract fulfillment (Panaccio et al., 2015). However, follower collectivism has been found to strengthen the positive relationship between ethical leadership and loyalty to supervisor, through perceptions of interactional justice (Wang et al., 2017). It is somewhat surprising that two moral leader

behaviors–servant leadership and ethical leadership–were found to play very different moderating roles in regards to their interaction with follower collectivism, especially because there is a high degree of overlap between these two types of leadership (Lemoine et al., 2019). However, perhaps this is because servant leadership behaviors are conceptually more similar to relational leader behaviors than ethical leadership behaviors (Lemoine et al., 2019) and other research in our review has found that relationship-oriented leader behaviors are generally more influential for individualistic followers. In this light, it makes sense that, of the two, servant leadership is the type of moral leadership that is more influential for individualistic followers.

Proactive personality

Studies of how proactive personality moderates the effect of moral-oriented leader behaviors offer a mixed picture. Proactive personality served to weaken the effect of ethical leadership on OCB via negative workplace emotions, (Velez and Neves, 2018), but it had a strengthening effect when moderating the effect of servant leadership on OCB via LMX (Newman et al., 2017). Further complicating these findings, it was found that proactive personality did not moderate the indirect relationship between servant leader behaviors and follower OCB via psychological contract fulfillment (Panaccio et al., 2015) or psychological empowerment (Newman et al., 2017). Relatedly, Chiu et al. (2016) found that team proactive personality (measured by taking the average of proactive personality in the team) strengthened the relationship between humble leader behaviors and team performance via shared leadership.

Other traits

Li et al. (2016) found the relationship between self-sacrificial leadership and taking charge is weakened by follower *risk aversion*, such that only followers low in risk-aversion experienced an increase in taking charge in response to self-sacrificial leadership.

Follower traits and moral-oriented leader behaviors - integration

Overall, some research has found that proactive personality strengthens the effects of humble leadership (Chiu et al., 2016) and weakens the effects of ethical leadership (Velez and Neves, 2018). Perhaps one reason for these different findings is that Chiu and colleagues looked at team outcomes (i.e., team performance), whereas Velez and Neves (2018) looked at individual ones (i.e., OCB). Power-distance orientation was found to weaken the effects of humble leader behaviors (Hu et al., 2018; Lin et al., 2019), but was also found to strengthen the effects of benevolent leadership (Lin et al., 2018). Thus, the findings of how power-distance orientation moderates the relationship between moral leader behaviors and follower outcomes have been somewhat mixed. These conflicting findings of how individual traits can act as strengtheners for some moral oriented leader behaviors but also act as weakeners for others (e.g., proactivity personality, power-distance orientation) highlights the nuanced nature of different moral-oriented leader behaviors. While they have strong theoretical relatedness (Lemoine et al., 2019) the current evidence seems to suggest that follower individual differences, affect these leader behaviors in different, and sometimes contrasting, ways. However, moral-oriented leader behaviors were the least studied leader behaviors in our review (cf. Table 3), so further research is needed in this area to elucidate this finding.

Task-oriented leader behaviors

Big-5 personality traits

Two studies examined the interaction of leader goal-focused behavior and follower conscientiousness. Colbert and Witt (2009) found that follower conscientiousness strengthened the effect of leader goal-focused behavior on follower performance via goal congruence. Additional work by Perry et al. (2010) found that goal-focused leadership can be detrimental for followers low in conscientiousness and emotional stability because it leads to emotional exhaustion. Similarly, Greenbaum et al. (2012) found that the indirect effect of leader bottom-line mentality (BLM) on follower social undermining via follower BLM was moderated by follower conscientiousness. In other words, leader BLM has the potential to cause negative outcomes, but followers high in conscientiousness are less prone to react negatively. Overall, these findings suggest that less conscientious followers may be more likely to be unintentionally harmed by ostensibly constructive, task-oriented behaviors; in contrast, followers high in conscientiousness appear to derive benefits from task-related leader behaviors.

Cultural values

Lee et al. (2000) found that high power-distance orientation has a weakening effect on the positive relationship between leader procedural justice and followers' trust in their supervisor, but not the relationship between leader procedural justice and followers' feelings of psychological contract fulfillment. Other research has found that traditionality weakened the relationship between leader delegation and both organization-based self-esteem and perceived insider status (these outcomes, in turn, positively influenced follower job satisfaction, innovative behavior, and task performance; Chen and Aryee, 2007). Nahum-Shani and Somech (2011) found that individualism-collectivism moderated the relationship between leader contingent-reward behaviors and OCB; collectivism weakened the relationship between leader contingent-reward behaviors and OCB. Conversely, collectivism strengthened the relationship between management-by-exception behaviors and OCB, such that followers high in collectivism were more likely to engage in increased OCB when their leaders engaged in management-by-exception behaviors (Nahum-Shani and Somech, 2011).

Core-self evaluation

As noted earlier, Perry et al. (2010) found that goal-focused leadership can be detrimental for followers low in emotional stability and conscientiousness because it leads to emotional exhaustion; further, they also found evidence for reversing effects, such that followers not low in both conscientiousness and emotional stability had decreased emotional exhaustion due to goal-focused leadership behaviors, but this was only found in one of their two samples. Also, Greenbaum et al. (2012) found that the effect of leader BLM on social underminingwas moderated by follower CSE; it was found that the positive, indirect effect was weaker among those high in CSE. Two studies reported the moderating effect of LOC. Abdel-Halim (1981) explored how LOC moderates the relationship between two aspects of transactional leader behaviors—initiating structure and consideration—and two different outcomes—intrinsic satisfaction and job involvement, respectively. LOC had a weakening effect in moderating the relationship between leader consideration behaviors and follower intrinsic satisfaction. LOC had a reversing effect for the relationship between leader structure initiating behaviors and follower job involvement, such that leader structure initiation led to increased job involvement among those with a higher LOC and to decreased job involvement among those with a lower LOC. These effects were the opposite of what Abdel-Halim (1981) had hypothesized; however, Evans (1974) found that the link between leader consideration behaviors and follower motivation was

stronger for followers with a higher LOC compared to those with a lower LOC, which is consistent with Abdel-Halim's (1981) hypotheses, but not his findings. Unfortunately, these inconsistencies make it difficult to draw conclusions regarding the interaction of task-oriented leader behaviors and follower LOC.

Proactive personality

Li et al. (2011) found that proactive personality had a weakening effect in moderating the relationship between leader developmental feedback (a behavior that aligns with Bass' (1985) definition of transactional leader behavior; Podsakoff et al., 1995) and follower helping behaviors. However, Li et al. (2011) found no support for the moderating effect of proactive personality between leader developmental feedback and follower performance. Therefore, more research is needed to better understand how proactive activity influences the relationship between transactional leader behaviors and follower outcomes.

Follower traits and task-oriented leader behaviors - integration

Overall, the findings of how personality influences the relationships between task-oriented leader behaviors and follower outcomes are somewhat mixed. Followers high in conscientiousness (Colbert and Witt, 2009) and emotional stability (Perry et al., 2010) appear to be helped by task-oriented leader behaviors, whereas followers low in conscientiousness and emotional stability are generally hurt by transactional leadership (Greenbaum et al., 2012; Perry et al., 2010). Power-distance orientation (Lee et al., 2000) and traditionality (Chen and Aryee, 2007) both seem to weaken the effects of transactional leadership. Also, individualistic and collectivistic followers benefit most from different types of transactional leadership (Nahum-Shani and Somech, 2011). Finally, proactive personality had a weakening effect on the relationship between transactional leadership and follower OCB (Li et al., 2011), but no significant effect on the relationship between transactional leadership and follower performance (Li et al., 2013). Therefore, in response to transactional leader behaviors, followers low in proactivity appear to increase their OCB, but not their performance, more than followers high in proactivity.

Relational-oriented leader behaviors

Big-5 personality traits

Chi and Ho (2014) found that follower agreeableness and follower conscientiousness both had reversing effects for the relationship between leader negative emotional expressions (i.e., behavioral expressions of anger or frustration) and follower performance; specifically, the relationship was positive among followers who were high in agreeableness or conscientiousness but negative among those who were low in either trait. However, in several experiments manipulating leader anger, Van Kleef et al. (2010) found that leader displays of anger elicit lower levels of individual motivation, ratings of leader effectiveness, and team performance and elicit increased feelings of workload from followers high in agreeableness; in contrast, leader displays of happiness or no emotion (i.e., low anger) elicit higher levels of team performance, individual motivation, and ratings of leader, along with decreased feelings of workload from followers low in agreeableness. Thus, Van Kleef et al. (2010) found that agreeable followers are harmed by leader negative emotional displays of anger, while Chi and Ho (2014) find that agreeable followers benefit from such displays. Interestingly, both studies relied upon the theory of emotions as social information (EASI; Van Kleef, 2009), yet they theorized, and both found support for, their contradictory hypotheses. Additional work, then, is necessary to clarify how follower agreeableness moderates the relationship between leader expressions of negative emotions and follower performance-related outcomes.

Cultural Values

Lee et al. (2000) found that power-distance orientation weakened the relationship between interactive justice and followers' trust in their leader. Other research has also found that follower power-distance orientation weakens the relationship between LMX and affective commitment to organizational change (Lee et al., 2014). However, power-distance orientation was not found to significantly moderate the relationship between interactional justice and followers' feelings of contact fulfillment (Lee et al., 2000) nor the relationships between LMX differentiation and team coordination or team performance (Sui et al., 2016).

With regard to the moderating effect of collectivism on the relationship between relational-oriented leader behaviors and follower outcomes, Lee et al. (2014) found follower collectivism to weaken the relationship between LMX and affective commitment to organizational change in a sample from the United States and to strengthen the relationship between LMX and affective commitment to organizational change in a sample from South Korea. In this case, country culture influences the moderating effect of collectivism. Previous research has also found that collectivism weakens the effect of leader-member personal life inclusion (one of the three dimensions of *guanxi* leadership) on both interpersonal facilitation and job dedication (Chen et al., 2015). Erdogan and Liden (2006) found that the link between interactional justice and LMX is stronger for followers low in collectivism. They also found collectivism to strengthen the negative effect of interactional justice on ingratiation. Finally, Wu et al. (2019) found that traditionality strengthened the positive effect of mentoring quality on proactive behavior through organization-based self-esteem. Overall, previous research has found mixed results regarding the effects follower power-distance orientation and collectivism have on relational-oriented leader behaviors.

Core-self evaluation

The findings regarding the interaction of relational-oriented behavior and CSE traits are complex. Several studies suggest that followers high in CSE traits benefit most from relational-oriented leader behaviors. Selvarajan et al. (2016) found that follower CSE strengthened the relationship between supportive leader behaviors and reduced work-family conflict. Ozer (2008) found that LOC similarly strengthened the positive relationship between LMX and job performance, but had no effect on the link between LMX and job satisfaction. Runyon (1973) found that LOC had a reversing effect on the relationship between leader participation behaviors and follower leader satisfaction; specifically, when leader participation behaviors were high, followers with a more internal LOC had increased leader satisfaction, but followers with a more external LOC had decreased leader satisfaction; however, there was no moderating effect found for work involvement. And Chen et al. (2016) found that general self-efficacy strengthened the relationship between supportive leader behaviors and follower innovative behaviors via intrinsic motivation.

Conversely, several studies arrive at a very different conclusion, suggesting that followers low in CSE traits benefit most from leader relational-oriented behaviors or that those high in CSE are harmed by relational-oriented leader behaviors. In particular, Chen et al. (2016) found that LOC weakened the relationship between supportive leader behaviors and follower innovative behaviors via intrinsic motivation; this moderating effect is opposite to their findings regarding the moderating role of follower self-efficacy. Further, Cummins (1989) found that LOC weakened the relationship between leader supportive behaviors and follower job satisfaction, such that supportive leader behaviors were associated with higher levels of job satisfaction only for followers low in LOC (i.e., externals). In addition, Elias (2009) explored how LOC moderates the effects of leader promotive and restrictive behaviors on follower turnover intentions, affective commitment, LMX, and job

satisfaction. Promotive leader behavior refers to a leader's attempts to influence followers while listening and including the follower; in contrast, restrictive leader behavior refers to a leader's use of power and position to influence followers (Scholl, 2001). The general pattern that emerged was that followers with an internal LOC do not respond well to restrictive (i.e., directive) types of leader behaviors; however, the findings are inconclusive as to whether those with an internal LOC respond well with a more promotive (i.e., participative) leader.

Other traits

Need-for-independence is a personality variable that describes individuals' desire to have autonomy at work. Three studies examined need-for-independence as a moderator between relational-oriented leadership and follower outcomes (Abdel-Halim, 1983;Tosi, 1970; Wexley et al., 1973). However, none of the studies found need-for-independence had a significant moderating effect. Regarding other traits, two studies looked at how follower *authoritarianism* might influence the effect of relational-oriented leadership behaviors (Tosi, 1970; Wexley et al., 1973), but neither found authoritarianism to be a significant moderator. Brouer and Harris (2007) found *trait negative affect* (but not trait positive affect) moderated the relationship between LMX and work tension, acting as a reverser. Work tension led to increased LMX for followers high in negative affect; however, work tension led to a decrease in LMX for followers low in negative affect. Thau et al. (2007) found that *social-comparison orientation* (i.e., those who tend to look to others in order to better understand themselves) strengthened the negative effect leader interactional justice had on follower antisocial work behaviors. Finally, Van Kleef et al. (2009) found team-average epistemic motivation (i.e., the degree to which individuals in a team have a desire to gain a deep understanding of situations; Kruglanski, 1989) had a reversing moderator effect on the relationship between anger displayed by a leader and team performance. Teams comprised of individuals high in epistemic motivation benefited from displays of anger, whereas teams comprised of individuals low in epistemic motivation benefited from displays of happiness (Van Kleef et al., 2009).

Follower traits and relational-oriented leader behaviors - integration

Although some results in this area yielded contradictory findings, there are some patterns that have emerged from this line of inquiry on the interaction between relational leadership and follower traits. Conscientious followers appear to respond more positively to leader negative emotional expressions (Chi and Ho, 2014), although the results for agreeable followers are mixed. For follower cultural values, relational leadership behaviors appear to be most effective for followers low in power-distance orientation (Lee et al., 2000; Lee et al., 2014) and low in collectivism (Chen et al., 2015; Erdogan and Liden, 2006). Also, this work suggests that followers high in general CSE (Selvarajan et al., 2016) and general self-efficacy (Chen et al., 2016) benefit the most from relational leadership. With LOC, however, the findings are more nuanced. Studies also found that followers with an internal locus of control benefited the most from having a high-quality LMX relationship with their leader (Ozer, 2008) and being the recipients of participative leader behaviors (Runyon, 1973). Conversely, followers with an external locus of control appear to benefit most from supportive leader behaviors (Chen et al., 2016; Cummins, 1989). Therefore, it seems as though followers with an internal locus of control benefit most participative leadership, where they can voice their opinions, whereas followers with an external locus of control derive more benefit when their leaders are supportive. These finding that some dimensions of CSE strengthen relational-oriented leader behaviors while others act as weakeners is specifically theorized by Chen et al. (2016) using self-verification theory. Thus, future research that looks at the dimensions of CSE and how they moderate relational-oriented leader behaviors should disaggregate CSE into its dimensions, as it appears that they influence this leader behavior in different manners.

Important patterns, methodological considerations, and theoretical insights

Based on our review of the literature, we now identify key patterns, theoretical insights gained, and methodological issues related to the investigation of trait moderators in leadership studies. In doing so, we highlight areas for future inquiry and elaborate on ways that future research in this area can be strengthened.

Important patterns

While there were a variety of leader behaviors, follower traits, and outcomes reviewed in our paper, three important patterns emerged across this body of research. First, followers who are *low* in traits that are typically associated with beneficial organizational outcomes like conscientiousness, CSE traits, proactive personality, learning goal orientation, and locus of control tend to be the ones who benefit *most* from change-oriented leadership behaviors. This finding was consistent across many different types of outcomes such as commitment (Newman and Butler, 2014), OCB (Guay and Choi, 2015), and task performance (Gilmore et al., 2013; Tse et al., 2018). Followers high in these traits were not uniformly unaffected by change-oriented leadership behaviors, which suggests that these types of traits do not neutralize the effects of change-oriented leadership behavior; instead, they enhance the effects of change-oriented leader behavior among followers low in these traits. As such, this general pattern indicates that in many instances change-oriented leadership behaviors are most potent among followers whose traits tend to be viewed more negatively because of their organizational implications. Theoretically and practically, this helps inform our understanding of where leadership efforts may be most fruitful.

A second pattern that emerged is that followers who were *high* in traits that are typically associated with beneficial organizational outcomes, such as conscientiousness, agreeableness, and CSE traits, were the *least* affected by destructive leader behaviors. This pattern was consistent across the various outcomes investigated, which suggests that followers high in these traits are more resilient and better able to cope with the toxic behaviors exhibited by destructive leaders. Considering this finding in the context of job-demands resources (JD-R) theory, it suggests that followers high in these traits have a personal trait resource that facilitates their ability to more effectively handle destructive leader behaviors.

Third, although reversing effects were far less common than strengthening or weakening effects (see Table 3 for a comparison), they are arguably the most theoretically and practically significant interaction effects. Indeed, the idea that leader behaviors can simultaneously have both beneficial and costly implications for followers highlights one way in which leader behaviors can sometimes be a double-edged sword. Thus, identifying these contradictory effects should help scholars and practitioners better understand for whom certain leader behaviors will be beneficial or harmful. Likewise, our review highlights which types of leader behaviors are most likely to have reversing effects due to follower traits. It should also be noted that we did not find reversing effects due to follower traits for any change-oriented or active destructive leader behavior effects found in our review; rather, reversing effects were most likely to appear in studies that investigated relational-oriented behaviors (79% of significant effects; cf. Table 3). Specifically, leader displays of emotion, such as anger (Van Kleef et al., 2009; Van Kleef et al., 2010) and general negative emotions (Chi and Ho, 2014), are especially likely to produce reversing effects. Finally, the studies in our review also indicate that reversing effects are more commonly found in experimental studies (Gardner et al., 2017; see Van Kleef et al., 2009 & Van Kleef et al., 2010 for examples).

This is likely due to the ability of experimental designs to focus on one specific variable and control for many factors.

Methodological considerations

Study design

The predominant study design found in the articles included in our review were correlational, survey designs (for some exceptions see Chi and Ho, 2014; Felfe and Schyns, 2006; Mitchell and Ambrose, 2012; and Van Kleef et al., 2009). Of course, these types of designs play an important role in leadership research, but they also have limitations. When considering follower traits as moderators of leader behaviors, it is critical to be mindful that a significant interaction effect might actually have multiple meanings. Many studies in our review used designs in which the followers not only rated their own traits, but also the behaviors of their leader. This is problematic because meta-analytic evidence suggests that followers' traits can significantly affect ratings of leaders' behaviors in at least two ways – (1) because followers' traits influence their perceptions of leader behaviors and (2) because a leader's behavior may differ from follower to follower based on the follower's traits (Wang et al., 2019). As such, when there is a significant interaction between a leader behavior and a follower trait there are three possible explanations for this effect: (1) followers respond differently to a leader behavior due to the general nature of their trait, (2) followers perceive a difference in the leader behavior due to their trait and thus respond differently, or (3) followers are treated differently based on their trait and thus respond differently to the leader behavior.

In support of the first explanation, in some studies, researchers conducted a two-way analysis of variance to determine if there were true differences in leader behaviors or merely differences in perceptions of leader behaviors due to follower traits (e.g., Perry et al., 2010). In other studies, researchers asked multiple followers to rate the same leader behavior and then, after demonstrating adequate agreement, researchers aggregated the different ratings to create their measure of leader behavior (e.g., McCormick et al., 2019). However, across the studies we reviewed, there were varying levels of agreement, and several ICC(1) values had a medium effect size of agreement (LeBreton and Senter, 2008; Murphy et al., 2014). Not surprisingly, no ratings achieved perfect agreement. This suggests that followers do not always agree about their leader's behaviors. We note that any of the three aforementioned reasons for the occurrence of the interaction between leader behavior and follower traits indicate that follower traits matter when studying leader behaviors—but in different ways. As such, future research should more carefully consider the underlying causal mechanisms that explain why follower traits moderate leader behaviors. For example, our review provides consistent evidence that conscientiousness has a weakening effect on leader abusive behaviors; yet, it would be theoretically and practically important to know if this weakening effect is due to differential leader treatment, to a perceptual difference of the leader's behavior, or to followers' capacity, due to their trait, to cope more constructively with the same received (or perceived) leader behavior.

One way to better understand the causal processes that explain how follower traits moderate leader behaviors is by coupling experimental designs with traditional correlational, survey designs. Experimental designs can provide greater clarity around how followers' traits influence the effects of leader behaviors by isolating the leader's behavior. For example, in an experimental design that manipulates leader behaviors, researchers can more accurately assess the role of follower perceptions of leader behaviors because all followers are exposed to the same leader behavior (Wang et al., 2019). As such, this design enables researchers to examine follower perceptions as a control, predictor, or meditating variable. Experimental designs can also rule out the possibility of leaders treating followers differently (e.g., Chi and Ho, 2014; Van Kleef et al., 2010). Of course, leader behaviors may be difficult to create in a laboratory or experimental context (Kelemen et al., 2019), and experimental designs can still suffer from internal validity issues (Lonati et al., 2018); nevertheless, by following best practices, researchers can conduct effective and impactful research on leader behaviors using an experimental design (Lonati et al., 2018; Podsakoff and Podsakoff, 2019). Therefore, we echo the general call made by other scholars to increase the use of experimental designs (e.g., Anderson and Edwards, 2015; Antonakis, 2017; Antonakis et al., 2010; Colquitt, 2008; Mueller, 2018; Podsakoff and Podsakoff, 2019), and encourage researchers to consider experimental designs or multiple methods, when investigating the moderating role of follower traits on leader behaviors.

Effect sizes

As noted previously, we reviewed 216 different moderation effects across 71 articles. Of the 216 different interactions explored, 143 were statistically significant and 73 were not. Of those 143 significant interactions, only 81 included the incremental explained variance of the leader behavior follower trait interaction. The average reported added variance explained by the interactions in our review was about 4% (or 0.04). In terms of leadership effect sizes, this suggests an effect size around the 50th percentile (i.e., half of the effect sizes in leadership research would be below and half would be above this effect size; Bosco et al., 2015), and highlights that follower traits can meaningfully affect the outcomes of leader behaviors. Given that the explained variance for 70 interaction effects went unreported, this effect size should be treated with caution and may be upwardly biased. Effect sizes may also be inflated due to publication bias. However, even taking a conservative approach, and assuming the average explained variance of the 70 significant interaction terms not reported averaged to explain just 1% of added variance, the average explained variance would still be about 2–3%.

We also categorized effect sizes based on outcome studied and found that leader behavior and follower trait interactions explained 5.5% of the variance in constructive performance outcomes (e.g., OCB, proactive behavior, task performance, creative performance), which was more than the variance explained in attitudes (4.0%), negative performance outcomes (3.1%), or emotions (2.8%). We also looked at the leader behavior studied, and interestingly, we found that follower trait interactions with the most-investigated type of leader behavior—destructive leader behavior (see Table 3)—explained the least amount of incremental variance (2.5%), on average. In contrast, follower trait interactions with change-oriented leader behaviors (4.6%), moral oriented behaviors (5.0%), relational-oriented behaviors (7.1%), and task-oriented behaviors (3.3%) all accounted for a greater amount of incremental variance. Of course, it should again be acknowledged that many studies failed to report the incremental variance explained by the interaction effects; nevertheless, these are useful points of comparison for understanding which types of leader behaviors explain the most variance when interacting with follower traits. We encourage leadership researchers to report the explained variance of each interaction term when studying the moderating effects of follower traits. We recognize, that due to space constraints and methodological considerations, researchers may not include each interaction term independently in their analyses, but they could still report the explained variance of the interaction term in the text and conduct each interaction independently to show the unique added variance (see Abdel-Halim, 1981 as an example). This relatively minor addition could help advance research in a significant way by demonstrating the theoretical and practical importance of interaction effects. The reporting of effect sizes should also help future scholars conduct more accurate statistical power analyses.

Sample size

Related to the explained variance of interaction effects found in our review, we were also interested in the sample sizes used to test the

different moderation effects. The average sample size used to test the different moderation effects in our review was about 225. However, the samples in our review had a wide range—from as large as 1277 to as small as 35. Interestingly, comparing the effects of studies with supported results versus those with unsupported results reveals that supported effects had a median sample of 213 (average of approximately 257), whereas unsupported effects had a median sample of 175 (average of approximately 213). Thus, there is some indication that these studies may have been underpowered. Power is an especially important consideration when conducting moderation analysis (Aguinis, 1995; Aguinis and Gottfredson, 2010; McClelland and Judd, 1993), and the lack of power in leadership moderation analysis is an issue leadership scholars have previously discussed (Podsakoff et al., 1995; Villa et al., 2003). Prior research has typically relied upon the effect size estimates provided by Cohen (1977, 1988). However, recent work by Bosco et al. (2015), using evidence from 147,328 correlations in applied psychology research, offers more precise effect size estimates for researchers. Bosco et al. (2015) provide effect size benchmarks for specific research domains (e.g., leadership) and for different outcomes (e.g., attitudes, behaviors). Using these benchmarks of effect sizes, many studies in our review met the recommended power level of 0.80 (Cohen, 1977, 1988); however, many did not. Indeed, lack of power may be one reason why nearly one-third of all of the interactions reviewed were not statistically significant (Aguinis, 1995; McClelland and Judd, 1993). Based on our review, then, we echo prior calls in the literature for researchers to more carefully consider sample size and power in order to avoid Type II errors (failing to reject the null hypothesis when they should) and to provide more confidence in their findings.

We also encourage researchers to examine moderation effects in multiple samples as was done in some of the papers we reviewed (e.g., De Hoogh and Den Hartog, 2009; Mitchell and Ambrose, 2012; Perry et al., 2010; Tepper et al., 2001). By investigating interaction effects across multiple samples, researchers can demonstrate the stability and generalizability of these effects, thereby reducing the likelihood of findings that are attributable to the use of idiosyncratic samples or other methodological artifacts. Further, given the recent attention in management and psychology research around questionable research practices (O'Boyle et al., 2019; O'Boyle Jr et al., 2017; Rynes et al., 2018; Harrison et al., 2017), moderation effects may be prone to be scrutiny due to the relative ease of *p*-hacking (e.g., researchers could measure ten follower traits but only report significant interactions). Thus, whereas researchers have previously recommended the use of larger samples (e.g., Villa et al., 2003), we further suggest that researchers utilize multiple samples in their work.

Measures of follower traits

The studies in our review adopted variable-centric measures of follower traits and predominately focused on one specific follower trait. A variable-centric approach to moderation looks at how one specific trait, such as conscientiousness, moderates a leader's behavior (e.g., Mitchell and Ambrose, 2012). Of course, a variable-centric approach is the most common way to study follower traits and, as seen by our review, has yielded considerable insights into the interactive relationships between leader behaviors and follower traits. Yet, we believe a critical next step to further understand how follower traits influence leader behaviors would be to identify and assess the implications of person-centric profiles of employee traits. Indeed, recent research has found that adopting person-centric approaches provides novel insights into organizational relationships (e.g., Bennett et al., 2016; Gabriel et al., 2015; Klotz et al., 2018). A person-centric approach to measure follower traits could involve creating follower trait profiles based on multiple traits using latent profile analysis (Merz and Roesch, 2011; Perera et al., 2018; Xie et al., 2016).

For example, Merz and Roesch (2011), using latent profile analysis, found three unique personality profiles based on the Big-5 personality traits: well-adjusted, reserved, and excitable. It would be interesting to know how these profiles might moderate different types of leader behaviors. In fact, many studies in our review recognized that multiple traits are important to consider when exploring trait moderators of leader behaviors (e.g., Perry et al., 2010; Tepper et al., 2001; Wang et al., 2017) and examined three-way interactions; however, hothis type of analysis is clearly limited in the number of traits that researchers can simultaneously consider. Further, a pattern of findings that emerged from our review suggests that conscientiousness, agreeableness, internal LOC, and aggregate CSE all similarly function as weakeners for destructive leader behaviors. Exploring profiles of these traits, and how the different profiles may affect the relationship between leader abusive behaviors and follower outcomes, may further our understanding of the role of follower traits, both in relationship to each other and with regards to leader behaviors. Therefore, we call for future studies that examine person-centric profiles of follower traits as moderators to move this line of inquiry forward.

Theoretical insights

Under-investigated leader behaviors

Although moral-oriented leader behaviors were examined in a subset of the articles included in our review, they were investigated less frequently than change-oriented and active destructive leader behaviors were. Recently, scholars have been examining moral-oriented leadership styles with greater frequency (Lemoine et al., 2019). Over the past decade, researchers have shown increasing interest in humble leadership[6] (e.g., Chiu et al., 2016; Owens et al., 2015; Rego et al., 2017), but more studies are needed to fully understand the ways in which follower traits may influence the outcomes of this type of leader behavior. In addition, although many studies in our review examined which follower traits minimized (or exacerbated) the negative effects of active destructive leader behaviors, researchers have yet to consider how follower traits might affect passive destructive leader behaviors (i.e., laissez-faire leadership). It would be worthwhile, then, to examine which follower traits might lessen the negative effects that laissez-faire leadership behaviors have on followers and organizations.

Under-investigated moderators

We also encourage researchers to explore a wider variety of follower traits that might moderate the relationship between leader behaviors and follower outcomes. For example, although certain traits such as conscientiousness, LOC, and proactive personality, have received a relatively large amount of scholarly attention, other follower traits—that may also have important implications for the effectiveness of various leadership behaviors—have received little or no attention. For example, only one study identified in our review explored the follower trait of honesty/humility, which could play an important moderating role in moral approaches to leadership, such as ethical leadership, servant leadership, authentic leadership, and humble leadership (Lemoine et al., 2019; Owens and Hekman, 2012).

Also, while two of the studies (Belschak et al., 2015; Greenbaum et al., 2017) that we reviewed explored follower traits from the dark triad of personality (i.e., narcissism, Machiavellianism, and psychopathy), more research could explore how these personality traits influence the outcomes of leader behaviors. For example, followers high in narcissism may respond more positively to humble leader behaviors and transformational leader behaviors, as both types of leadership acknowledge followers' contributions, thereby satisfying their sense of

[6] For our review, we classified humble leadership (Owens and Hekman, 2012) as a moral-oriented leadership behavior.

self-aggrandizement. In general, given the wide array of understudied personality traits, there remains a variety of interesting and potentially important relationships that should be explored in future studies to increase our understanding of the moderating role of follower traits.

Followership

We encourage researcher to also more fully embrace a followership perspective when studying the role of follower traits and cultural values. As defined by Uhl-Bien et al. (2014) follower characteristics, such as traits and cultural values, serve as a role-based approach to followership and focus on "reversing the lens" of leadership. As previously noted in the section on study design, one way that follower traits and cultural values can influence the leadership process is by influencing how a leader behaves. For example, conscientious followers, because of their diligence, duty, and discipline, likely influences how a leader behaves towards them. Unfortunately, most of the studies in our review did not consider this perspective and did not use methods that would enable a full examination of how follower traits and cultural values influence the leadership process in this way. Experimental designs would be particularly useful in examining this process as they enable a more precise examination of these dynamics and can establish causality. Qualitative methods can similarly serve as a grounded approach to better highlight follower traits and cultural values from a followership perspective. In sum, more fully adopting a followership perspective can push scholarly knowledge forward and provide further insights into the role of follower traits and cultural values.

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