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**FOLLOWER ATTRIBUTIONS OF “JUST RIGHT”:
TOWARD A THEORY OF LEADER VERSATILITY**

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Psychology

by

Robert D. Reimer

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The thesis of Robert D. Reimer was reviewed and approved* by the following:

Rick Jacobs
Professor of Psychology
Thesis Advisor

James LeBreton
Professor of Psychology

Jonathan Cook
Assistant Professor of Psychology

Melvin Mark
Head of the Department of Psychology

*Signatures are on file in the Graduate School

ABSTRACT

This study employed a person-centered approach to classify leaders with respect to measures of forceful, enabling, strategic, and operational behaviors. The sampled leaders ($N=3,249$) are representative of a variety of organizations across North America. Broadly defined, versatility involves leadership behaviors that compliment dynamic conditions. This definition intimates the leader's intentional regulation of behaviors in the real-world milieu of ever-changing workplace conditions coupled with enduring expectations for high performance. Latent profile analysis provides evidence for four types of leaders: *individuating*, *collaborative*, *directive*, and *domineering*. Theoretical arguments for personality acting as an antecedent to versatility types are offered. Meaningful associations were identified between the types and outcome measures (i.e., supervisory ratings of leader effectiveness, leader ratings of team performance, and measures of team climate). Theoretical and practical implications of the findings are discussed.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF FIGURES	v
LIST OF TABLES	vi
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	vii
Follower perspectives of “just right”: Toward a theory of leader versatility	1
Foundations of Leader Versatility	3
Leader strengths	5
Leader failure	8
Leader personality	10
The Search for “Just Right”	14
Identifying Profiles of Leader Versatility	17
Individual Antecedents and Outcomes of Leader Versatility	18
Personality	18
Leader effectiveness, team performance, and team climate	22
Method	23
Participants	23
Measures	25
Analytical strategy	27
Results	28
Identifying types of versatile leaders	29
Cluster Validation	32
Personality characteristics of leader types	34
Outcomes of versatile leader types	34
Discussion	36
Theoretical implications	36
Limitations	42
Implications for practice	44
Conclusion	45
References	47
Appendix A Figures	56
Appendix B Tables	57

LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1: The “Too Little/Too Much” rating scale	25
Figure 2: Profiles of four latent classes based on subordinate ratings of a leader’s forceful, enabling, strategic, and operational behaviors. Mixing probabilities for clusters are indicated by reported percentages (N = 3,249).	29

LIST OF TABLES

Table 1: LVI 3.0 structure and behavioral content.....	25
Table 2: HPI scales and definitions	26
Table 3: Bivariate correlations for personality, versatility, and outcome measures	28
Table 4: Comparison of LC cluster models based upon BIC	29
Table 5: Means and standard deviations of subordinate ratings of leader forceful, enabling, strategic, and operational behaviors in four latent classes.....	29
Table 6: Leader counts by type and role	31
Table 7: Means and standard deviations of leader ambition, adjustment, and interpersonal sensitivity in four latent classes	34
Table 8: Group contrasts of leader HPI scale scores with reference to <i>individuating</i> leader type.....	34
Table 9: Group contrasts of supervisor ratings of leader performance, leader measures of team performance, and subordinate ratings of team climate.	35

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Follower perspectives of “just right”: Toward a theory of leader versatility

Broadly defined, leader versatility involves a leader’s intentional manipulation of behaviors to achieve sustainable, positive outcomes in the real-world milieu of ever-changing workplace demands. Such demands include increasing globalization, rapidly developing technology, and changing concepts with respect to the characteristics of relationships between organizations and employees (Gelfand, Erez, & Aycan, 2007; Schneider, Ehrhart, & Macey, 2013). With so much uncertainty ascribed to the modern workplace, it is fitting that contemporary research streams echo Mintzberg’s observation about the indispensability of leaders who are able to adapt to uncertainty (Dragoni, Tesluk, & Oh, 2009; Mintzberg, 1975; Yukl & Mahsud, 2010). Furthermore, flexibility and openness to change are implicit to the idea of leadership in the United States (Hoppe & Bhagat, 2007). Together, these ideas represent a characterization of the workplace that necessitates versatility on the part of the leader. Researchers and leaders alike face a substantial challenge in answering the summons to both understand and develop good leaders (Jackson & Lindsay, 2014).

From the traditional attraction or selection perspective, organizations seek to match leaders with specific characteristics to known constraints in order to achieve desired outcomes. This perspective is rooted in the concept of leader-context fit (DeRue, Nahrgang, Wellman, & Humphrey, 2011; Fiedler, 1964). These theories attribute some degree of inertness with respect to the leader and context alike. Building a case for versatility, however, demands an approach that accounts for changes leader and context alike. With this in mind, the Managerial Grid (Blake, Mouton, & Bidwell, 1962) suggests

leaders have a choice, but also tend to rely on an either-or propositions between people or production. In practice, leaders who create such false dilemmas may be missing the mark.

Versatility is proposed as a complex psychological process whereby a leader overrides impulsive, typical behavioral responses in favor of behaviors that simultaneously compliment initiating structure (focus on tasks/productivity) and consideration (focus on people/relationships). Similarly expressed, this idea suggests versatile leaders demonstrate mastery of seemingly opposing, but interdependent behaviors (e.g., tasks and relationships) (Kaiser, 2015).

Conventional assumptions about predicting performance are deeply rooted in the observation that people habitually think, feel, and act (Barrick & Mount, 1991). As will be explored in this manuscript, traditional theories do not explicitly embrace or preclude versatility. In light of modern characterizations of work, considering alternative views of how leaders adapt is necessary to understanding the degree to which leader versatility is theoretically and practicably reasonable. In an applied sense, developing a theoretical framework to distinguish types of versatile leaders provides a means to more fully appreciate understand how these leaders differ. This effort seeks to demonstrate how such types are related to follower, leader, and organizational performance.

Evidence supports the idea that leaders' traits and behaviors have implications in complex environments for outcomes like team performance and leader effectiveness (DeRue et al., 2011). In contrast, empirical efforts to classify leaders according to versatility are conspicuously limited. Notable exceptions includes studies related to leaders' response flexibility (Kenny & Zaccaro, 1983; Zaccaro, Foti, & Kenny, 1991). These studies suggest leaders are better able to perceive contextual needs and meet these

needs by adjusting personal approaches, but also relied laboratory designs using college students. This paper aims to contribute to these prior efforts by: 1) providing a theoretical framework for versatile leader behavior, 2) providing empirical support for types of versatile leaders, and 3) addressing how types can be further distinguished based upon individual differences and outcomes measures using a diverse sample of leaders working throughout North America.

Foundations of Leader Versatility

For a pilot trying to land an aircraft in vision-obscuring weather, success involves a series of mental processes. Pilots monitor a multitude of cues including airspeed, course, glide path, and use known pitch and power settings as the starting point to maintain a desired flight path. In a compound fashion, pilots interpret these cues and initiate control inputs to bring the aircraft through the vision obscuring weather to execute a safe landing. Proficient instrument-rated pilots establish and maintain desired flight parameters through a proactive approach that involves reacting to known conditions while anticipating changes as the aircraft slows or as weather conditions change. In this manner, the pilots maintain requisite flight parameters while disregarding seat-of-the-pants, disorienting sensations. In doing so, pilots mitigate the opportunity for accidents, while maximizing the likelihood for a successful landing. While success involves prerequisite skills, it further relies on a pilot's capacity to reject sensory illusions and the innate inclinations in response to these illusions. Pilots must be able to sort through conflicting information and identify what is reliable and relevant to safely fly the

aircraft. The interconnected network of environmental cues, perception, and behavioral responses is complex, yet such pilots routinely accomplished these landings. As the saying goes, any landing you can walk away from is a good one—but it sure is nice when you can use the plane again too. With this example in mind, this study seeks to identify types of leaders that are able to deftly interact with followers in changing situations to complete daily tasks while enhancing conditions for future work.

Versatile leaders are theorized to operate according to a unique framework that simultaneously contributes to their effectiveness, improves team performance, and is substantiated by superior outcomes. Like the pilot that cannot clearly see the runway due to weather, leaders are similarly blind in the presence of contextual cues that contribute both reliable and distracting information simultaneously. All leaders experience inclinations to respond to contextual cues in natural or comfortable ways. Versatile leaders, however, are theorized to subvert certain natural inclinations in favor of behaviors that accurately match situational, follower, and temporal cues. This proposition serves as a concise definition of what might simply be a definition of good leadership. As such, it is a central premise that versatile leaders engage in complex monitoring of context, others, and self, and use these cues to control their behavioral reactions. This proposition suggests that highly versatile leaders express the capacity to modulate personal behavior across varying circumstances to achieve sustainable outcomes.

A literature review provides three perspectives germane to building the case that versatile leaders are able to modulate their behavior as described. First, a discussion of leader strengths suggests limitations for understanding versatility from traditional theory. Second, a review of theories surrounding leader failure strongly suggests the necessity of

versatility and its relationship to leader success. Third, individual differences are examined, complications explored, and their relationship to leader versatility are offered.

Leader strengths

Selection methods for hiring and promoting leaders remain heavily entrenched in the identification of leader strengths (Kaplan & Kaiser, 2006), where strengths include various competencies and attributes that are positively associated with outcome achievement. The common pitfall with strength measures is that high scores are routinely mistaken as a leader's best agent for achieving influence. Likewise, low scores are interpreted as potential problem areas. Both of these assumptions fail to accommodate the full spectrum of opportunities and constraints derived from followers and situational characteristics.

When strengths are viewed from the perspective of a leader, low scores are likely to be interpreted as a warning for increased risk of failure. Interpreted in this way, weaknesses are summarily avoided or perceived as irrelevant compared to strengths. Consider a leader that receives low ratings from subordinates with respect to consideration, e.g., the leader is perceived as unfriendly, unsupportive, self-interested, and cold in their approach (House, 1971). When this leader has met objective performance goals, negative feedback is likely to be attributed to external factors and therefore perceived as inaccurate (DeNisi & Sonesh, 2011). However, this approach ignores the potentially relevant information provided by followers and may have implications for sustained performance. While simplistic, this example illustrates the all-

or-nothing trap that researchers and practitioners face when contemplating the role of strengths and weaknesses. The result is false dichotomy that generally ignores the vital connection between the task to be accomplished and the people that are needed to do so. Simply stated, strength-based approaches tune out the relevance of behaviors.

The importance of these cues is addressed in part by classifications of situations according to the influence they exert upon behavioral expression (Mischel, 1977). During situations that require acting a certain way leaders are likely to assume scripted roles. Consider a captain of an airliner during a critical emergency or a registered nurse conducting triage after a mass-casualty event, these leaders are likely to take on authoritative roles, make firm decisions with little room for discussion, and hold team members to high performance expectations. Theory holds that these behavioral expressions are more closely related to situational rules and requirements, rather than the personality of the leader. This example suggests behaviors that are strongly autocratic and low on consideration, yet these leaders are demonstrating behaviors that are consistent with situational demands. Followers with an awareness of situational requirements would likely judge these behaviors as appropriate. In contrast, the same leaders are unlikely to enjoy comparable success if applying the same behaviors to achieve routine administrative tasks. Across changing contexts, leader behaviors are judged as welcome or unwelcome by followers; such judgments are presumed to result in subsequent assessment and characterization of the leader and relate to the leader's effectiveness. Therefore, identifying versatility concerns the appropriateness of leader behavior as related to the interaction between leader, follower, and context.

Related to the idea of appropriateness, Fiedler's (1964) contingency model suggests leader effectiveness presupposes that leaders gravitate towards specific tendencies. Hence, success depends on a proper fit between leader, follower, and context. Despite the general deterministic nature of this proposition, followers prefer leaders who engage others in highly complex behavioral patterns (Fiedler, 1971). Fiedler's proposition suggests that followers prefer leaders who accommodate changing needs. This observation highlights a critical flaw of the leader strengths approach. In contrast, a dynamic approach to accommodating changing needs suggests that overused strengths lose their potency (Kaplan & Kaiser, 2006).

Preparing a meal is largely about including the right ingredients in the right proportions. A dash of salt, not a cup, is a welcome addition to the broth. Accordingly a leader's strengths must be constrained by the principle that more is not always better (Kaplan & Kaiser, 2006). Rather than hiding weaknesses with strengths, successful leader interactions undoubtedly involve a sophistication that leverages each in proportion to what is needed. This is the central premise of leader versatility, where versatile leaders enact a full compliment of behaviors in proportion to relevant needs and thereby achieve high-quality exchanges. For the leader who engages in high-quality exchanges with followers, outcomes include improved team performance (Boies & Howell, 2006), increased employee organizational commitment (Epitropaki & Martin, 2005), and additional employee engagement in organizational citizenship behavior (Johnson, 2008). These studies support the broader idea that outcomes are likely preceded by a complex structure of interactions.

Assumptions about this this complex structure should inform decisions about how it ought to be measured. Traditional Likert scales serve a useful purpose for measuring strengths (Kaplan & Kaiser, 2006). However, these scales make few provisions for measuring interactive, adaptive behaviors with respect to factors that determine the appropriateness of the behavior. Kaplan and Kaiser accommodate this need in their measures of versatile behaviors and offer a variation on the traditional scales. This unique approach accounts for relevant leader behaviors in relation to these other factors (see Figure 1).

A final point with respect to strength-based models is the belief that leaders have an increased probability of achieving desirable performance outcomes through the application of strength-based behaviors. This belief presupposes that leaders are suitably matched to the environment and their followers. Thus prescribed, leader failure is largely indicative of defects in the selection process, i.e., a mismatch between the leader and context. Even a leader that is high in all strengths must choose which strengths to leverage to achieve influence. In sum, the proposition that leaders are responsible to overcome challenges and solve problems necessitates a model of leader potential that cannot be reliably described by strength-based approaches. Consequently, it is helpful to understand how failure relates to the leader's behaviors.

Leader failure

Effectiveness criteria offer objective measures of leader failure including reduced performance, increased employee turnover, and reduced organizational survival (Judge,

Piccolo, & Kosalka, 2009). These outcomes are particularly useful for underscoring the cost of leader failure. It is also relevant to understand why leader failure occurs, particularly after establishing a record of past success.

Derailment is a term used to describe previously successful leaders who fail to adapt to changing needs in the workplace (McCall & Lombardo, 1983). This proposition insinuates that leaders can avoid failure by adapting to changing needs. From an organizational perspective, this proposition also hints that there may be an advantage when measures of versatility are used to mitigate leader failure by selecting leaders that will adapt to change. Thus employed, measures of leader versatility offer the potential to predict leader outcomes over and above traditional, strength-based approaches. If versatility diminishes the opportunity for leader failure while increasing performance, then versatility types offer a distinct advantage to predicting leader outcomes. In part, this assertion represents a strategy of leader selection whereby organizations might minimize the occurrence of leader failure while achieving maximum payoffs from leader outcomes. The promise of identifying types of versatile leaders offers a potential solution to the paradox that derailed leaders and their successful counterparts share similar strengths and weaknesses (Shackleton, 1995) by distinguishing leaders who choose to use relevant behaviors over those who do not.

The proposition that failure can be understood in terms of leader versatility relates to the idea that failure and reduced performance can be predicted. In all likelihood, leader failure and diminished outcomes occur for a variety of reasons. Leaders might fail due to inaccurate interpretation of contextual or follower needs (e.g., inaccurate situational awareness), the application of behaviors that contravene contextual or follower demands

(e.g., a lack of judgment or poor self-monitoring), or some other combination of alternate factors. While interesting, these explanations are not as consequential as the notion that versatility reduces the occurrence of leader failure. Thus framed, the implication is that leader failure can be reduced if leaders are able to reliably perceive cues and adapt their behaviors. This premise reflects traditional ideas that have long suggested the need to measure leaders' adaptability to dynamic situations (Stogdill, 1948). In sum, the accumulation of evidence on leader failure provides mounting evidence for expanding theories of leader effectiveness and organizational outcomes that account for leader versatility. With these ideas in mind, it is important to provide a third perspective on leader versatility that accounts for the interactive leadership process that originate with leaders' traits (R. Hogan, Curphy, & Hogan, 1994) .

Leader personality

The preceding discussion presents the case that individuals mired in habitual routine may be prone to reduced performance and subsequent failure, particularly as it relates to the practice of leadership. In contrast, leaders high in versatility produce positive outcomes related to team culture, productivity, job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and employee turnover intentions (Kaiser, Overfield, & Kaplan, 2010). Leader personality is similarly associated with higher performance outcomes, resulting in the notion that versatility is rooted in personality (R. Hogan & Kaiser, 2005).

It is elusive to isolate stable latent traits from behaviors that often appear inconsistent with associated traits (F. H. Allport & Allport, 1921). Nevertheless,

individual differences are generally presumed to map in a direct fashion to behaviors (Mischel, 1968; Mischel & Shoda, 1995). A leading explanation for the observed variance in behaviors is the interactionist perspective that suggests situations provide the opportunity for relevant trait expression (Tett & Guterman, 2000). This perspective provides a meaningful contribution to understanding leader versatility. Versatile leaders are theorized to possess improved perceptions of context that inform the selection and application of favorable behaviors. Accordingly, this proposition works in concert with research streams that propose leaders perceive contextual needs and modify behavioral expression in pursuit of select outcomes (Kenny & Zaccaro, 1983). Further corroborating this idea, research supports the idea that trait-based variance in leadership is related to social perceptiveness and response flexibility (Zaccaro et al., 1991). These ideas have their origins in early leadership theories that acknowledge the link between leader performance and contextual constraints (Stogdill, 1948).

Stogdill (1948) reported, “the qualities, characteristics, and skills required in a leader are determined to a large extent by the demands of the situation in which he is to function as a leader,” (p. 63). Classifying leaders on the basis of specific knowledge, skills, abilities, and other characteristics offers a practical explanation for why a leader succeeds in one role and fails miserably in another. However, such a presumption creates a philosophical monodegree, where the common interpretation involves selecting leaders to specific contexts when the real message should be one that accounts for the dynamic nature of work.

Fiedler’s (1964) contingency model shares the perspective that leader effectiveness is dependent on the degree that different groups of followers and contexts

require different leaders. In contrast, the current study proposes that followers and contexts require different types of leader behavior. According to contingency theory, leaders and contexts are viewed as fixed entities that require active management to achieve optimal matches and outcomes. This interpretation does not preclude the possibility of leader versatility. Arguably, the premise of this paper is that the right type of leader for any situation is the one that can adapt to meet follower and contextual needs. It is important, however, to embrace a broader perspective that leaders are free to modify behavioral expression (Kaiser et al., 2010; Kenny & Zaccaro, 1983). The types of leaders that can do this reliably might be expected to achieve superior outcomes across a more expansive range of task and relational demands. The idea that versatile types of leaders modify behavioral expression complicates the idea of detecting underlying personality traits due to a predicted mismatch between behaviors expected from personality that are theorized to reflect contextual needs as interpreted within the leader. Versatility suggests that manifest behaviors cease to be a point-for-point projection of personality, but rather a complex interaction of various factors.

Situation-interaction moderators involve changes in a person's perceptual interaction with the environment (Cattell, 1963a). According to Cattell, phenomena such as moods, recent learning experiences, and attitudes are theorized to restrict the range of responses, adding further insight into how stable traits may manifest as versatile behavior. Even so, given identical contextual constraints, people experience inclinations to respond in a variety of ways (Kuhl, 1985). It is hard to escape the prevailing notion that traits are useful for describing how a person will generally act, even though situational factors are likely to strongly influence behavior (Fleeson, 2004).

Fleeson (2004) recommended, “personality psychologists need to embrace a new, advanced understanding of traits, realizing that people tend to demonstrate significant flexibility in their behavior and that traits are best used for predicting trends” (p 86). If all people demonstrate flexibility in behavior, then it is likely that some may be able to do so in a manner that involves changes that are more appropriate with regard to follower and situational characteristics.

Flexible trait expression suggests a perspective that versatile leaders function as living examples of Thurstone’s model of comparative judgment (Thurstone, 1994), where leaders continually assess various stimuli and adjust leadership behaviors to meet these needs. In part, it is imprudent to conceive of personality traits as leading to repetitive habits (McCrae & Costa, 1994). Rather, it is more appropriate to understand trait expression as the propensity of a person to act in certain ways across dynamic environmental contexts. Efforts to understand the roots of human behavior, particularly of leaders, continue to grow (Dinh et al., 2014), expanding the opportunity to understand leadership as a complex, person-centered phenomenon rather than as a broad, overarching process of influence. In light of this proposition, there is an apparent need to account for the relative stability of traits and resultant behavioral responses while embracing the role of context as an opportunity for trait expression (Funder, 2006; Tett & Guterman, 2000).

The combined perspectives offered by the preceding discussions including leader strengths, leader failure, and trait expression provide a panoramic view of the promise and challenges associated with classifying versatile leaders. The versatile leader actively engages within and across dynamic contexts by varying his or her behaviors in order to

sustain equilibrium with respect to desired outcomes. Accordingly, versatile leaders are theorized to respond deliberately to stimuli in a dynamic, proactively engaged manner.

The Search for “Just Right”

While the mechanisms that lead to versatility are not fully clear, the preceding literature review indicates versatility is a valuable and theoretically measurable construct. Fiedler’s (1964) contingency theory, explanations for leader failure (Judge et al., 2009; McCall & Lombardo, 1983), and personality theories (Cattell, 1963a; Fleeson, 2004) suggest versatility is measurable. Even so, empirical efforts to classify leaders on the basis of versatility are noticeably missing. As a contextually dynamic phenomenon, measuring versatile leader behaviors with traditional Likert scales (e.g., with responses ranging from never, sometimes, and always) is at odds with an operationalization of versatility that presupposes variability and finesse. This is not to say that traditional measures of leader personality and behaviors cannot be adapted to this purpose, but that an approach that accounts for the subtlety across changing contexts is preferred.

While it might be true to suggest that versatile leaders employ specific behaviors “sometimes,” such descriptions are too simplistic to be of considerable use in assessing versatility. Kaplan and Kaiser (2006) circumvent this pitfall on the Leader Versatility Index (LVI) by classifying leader behaviors on bipolar scales. The bookend structure of items on the LVI is reminiscent of Goldilocks. In the familiar fairytale, interactions with porridge, rocking chairs, and beds serve as satirical accounts of the human search for things that are “just right.” In the same manner, people (e.g., subordinates, peers,

superiors, and others) judge leader behavior as being in or out of congruence with any number of contextual elements and personal biases. With this in mind, the LVI items serve as judgments of the frequency of a leader's behavioral interactions within the work context, ranging on a nine-point scale from "Much too little," through "The right amount," to "Much too much" (Kaiser et al., 2010). Thus delimited on a single scale (see Figure 1), the versatile manner by which a leader relates to others is captured. Such ratings presumably reflect the cumulative interaction with the leader and are not limited to specific points in time. As such, this measure is not intended to capture whether a leader gets it right every time, but rather if a leader generally meets raters' expectations.

Indicating that such an approach has long been warranted, Halpin and Winer (1957) suggest initiating structure, "represents a basic and unique function of leadership...it is possible that other factors (including consideration) may represent only facilitating means for accomplishing this end" (p. 43). Initiating structure involves how the leader defines patterns of organization, communication channels, and the manner by which tasks are accomplished, while consideration is indicative of relational elements like trust, mutual respect, and friendship. Rather than treating these concepts as conceptually independent, the LVI presents a measurement approach that assesses the intersection of these factors onto a single forceful and enabling behavioral dimension. In this manner, the bifurcation of classically distinct behaviors (e.g., consideration and initiating structure) is resolved with the application of scales that address perceptions of behavior with respect to context. For example, the forceful-enabling dimension describes how leaders relate to followers and their changing needs, while concurrently accounting

for task accomplishment. The measurement structure of the LVI addresses the need for a connection between forceful and enabling behaviors.

The temporal tension that exists between immediate, day-to-day tasks and long-term organizational needs is handled similarly (Kaplan & Kaiser, 2006). The LVI also incorporates two constructs that attend to the temporal element of a leader's influence. The strategic and operational dimension relates to the leader's approach to navigating the confounding perspectives between day-to-day tasks and long-term goals that often seem at odds (Kaplan & Kaiser, 2006). In general terms, operational-based behaviors involve prioritization and acute focus on the present, where strategic-based behaviors indicate a leader's focus on future consequences. The strategic-operational dimension suggests in-the-moment adaptation of leader behavior in response to shifting temporal needs according to present and projected organizational needs. A temporally versatile leader intentionally exercises detail-oriented, more immediate, day-to-day task oriented behaviors in harmony with long-term objectives, presumably with a clear understanding with both proximal and distal outcomes. Recent interest in team members' time urgency and pacing styles provides empirical support for a positive main effect on team performance as a function of a leader's temporal leadership (Mohammed & Nadkarni, 2011), hence offering further support for the importance of temporal orientation when assessing leader versatility. Under these conditions, leaders are more likely to maximize team performance by amplifying the benefits of differential pacing styles on a team, while minimizing associated problems.

A final point relates to ideas already expressed on leader failure, and concerns how leaders build teams. Evidence substantiates the idea that leader incompetence results

in negative perceptions of leaders by others, including attributions of selfishness, compulsiveness, and as over controlling (R. Hogan et al., 1994). Accordingly, these perceptions suggest the utility of measuring versatility from others' reports of leader behavior. While useful, these attributions alone are insufficient to validate leaders types, suggesting the need to relate resultant types to other outcome measures. The gold standard for measuring team performance includes measures of productivity, team viability, and the individual growth that results from team interactions (Hackman, 1990). Therefore, successful efforts to categorize leaders from measures of versatility can, in part, be substantiated by comparing rater attributions of leader versatility to objective and subjective performance outcomes.

Identifying Profiles of Leader Versatility

A comprehensive view of leader versatility presumably involves a network of the leader in relation to subordinates, peers, superiors, and others (e.g., customers and clientele) within dynamic contexts. Within the framework of this study, subordinate perceptions of versatility are offered as the foundational factor to classify leaders. With respect to claims that many leadership studies exaggerate follower perceptions of a leader's behaviors (Hunter, Bedell-Avers, & Mumford, 2007), it is acknowledged that subordinates may not understand or fully appreciate the leader's application of particular behaviors. However, followers are in the unique position to measure the appropriateness of leader behavior with respect to the core domain of leader, follower, and context across a wide variety of situations.

This study uses subordinate oriented observations of leaders' forceful, enabling, strategic, and operational behaviors in order to classify leaders. These observations serve as the foundation to extracting types of leaders according to subordinate observations of manifest behaviors. Formally stated:

Hypothesis 1: Leaders can be differentiated according to subordinate ratings of forceful, enabling, strategic, and operational behaviors.

If supported, subsequent evaluation will offer an interpretation of how selected measurements differ across the types of leaders. In particular, this effort is about characterizing the types of leaders based on identified behavioral profiles.

Individual Antecedents and Outcomes of Leader Versatility

The types resulting from hypothesis 1 (if supported) offer the opportunity to further investigate antecedents and outcomes associated with the identified types of versatile leaders. Based on substantial theoretical support, measures of personality and outcomes (i.e., leader effectiveness, team performance, and team climate) are of primary consideration in the present study.

Personality

If supported, hypothesis 1 provides evidence for types of versatile leaders, but does not explain why followers perceive these types. Continuing to build the framework established by the first hypothesis, it is useful to consider to the role of individual

differences as antecedent to the emergence of leader versatility. As previously stated, the effort to identify profiles of leader versatility is contingent upon the emergence of a typology of versatile leader types. Consequently, the following hypotheses are based on the profiles that were identified as a result of testing hypothesis 1. For the sake of brevity, the findings from hypothesis 1 suggest four types of versatile leaders: 1) *individuating*, 2) *collaborative*, 3) *directive*, and 4) *domineering*. Additional information on hypothesis 1, including model selection, cluster characteristics, and interpretations is presented in the results section. It was helpful, if not necessary, to complete the analyses and interpretation for hypothesis 1 in order to generate subsequent hypotheses in an informed manner.

Individual differences are presumed to map in a direct fashion onto behaviors (Mischel & Shoda, 1995). In keeping with ideas presented on versatility theory, it is proposed that these behaviors are related to the leader's revised behavioral responses according to varying contextual constraints. As previously indicated, isolating stable latent traits from varying manifest behaviors is complex. Testing hypothesis 1 and isolating types of versatile leaders reduces part of the difficulty. By grouping leaders according to the behavioral patterns used with followers, trends within and across the types are more readily derived. The Hogan Personality Inventory (HPI) is based on the five-factor model (J. Hogan & Holland, 2003). Research has substantiated the role of personality in the leadership process where personality precedes behavioral manifestation, behaviors influence individuals and teams of followers, which in turn has effects upon performance (DeRue et al., 2011; R. Hogan & Kaiser, 2005; Kaiser & Hogan, 2011). Within this network we observe leadership as a process that originates

within the leader to influence others, but also as a property of the leaders as measured by personality (Judge, Bono, Ilies, & Gerhardt, 2002). This influence is theorized to occur along two paths. In a direct sense the leader's behaviors represent the process of leadership. In a less direct manner, those under the leader's influence build perceptions of who the leader is. With these preceding ideas in mind, the following hypotheses build upon the results of hypothesis 1 as well as the existing personality and leadership literature.

In a general sense, extraversion is the star player in the leadership process (DeRue et al., 2011; Judge et al., 2002) and significantly contributes to the manifestation of interpersonal leader behaviors. Kaiser and Hogan (2011) conclude that ambition (a subfacet of extraversion on the HPI), with its emphasis on being leader-like and achievement oriented, accounts for this relationship. In particular, Kaiser and Hogan found that increased ambition scores related to higher ratings of forceful behaviors. Ambition is hypothesized to be an important contributor to the types of versatile leaders:

Hypothesis 2a: As leader classification types become more versatile (moving from group 4 to group 1), "ambition" levels decrease.

DeRue et al. (2011) examined emotional stability's role with respect to task oriented leader behaviors, finding that it was relatively important for predicting leadership effectiveness. Kaiser and Hogan (2011) hypothesized that this association had more to do with interpersonal leader behavior than task behavior. High adjustment scores are associated with positive leader behaviors such as staying calm, being patient with followers, and adapting to change. Amongst these socially acceptable behaviors, high scores also include a set of confederate behaviors (Hogan Assessments, 2013) including

dispositions to ignore negative feedback, to over-task others, and failure to recognize when others are stressed. Similarly, a set of positive and negative behaviors relate to low ambition scores. Positive behaviors include learning from past experiences. Negative behaviors include unusually high standards for performance, being self-critical, and becoming readily irritated with others. The concurrence of positive and negative behaviors echoes the earlier assertion that strengths overused cease to be strengths. This premise bolsters the idea that moderate scores might be associated a higher prevalence of positive behaviors and diminished negative ones. In a broad sense, there are likely levels of adjustment that work best for leader versatility. With consideration of how adjustment is measured, high adjustment scores are hypothesized to be related to increased prevalence of enabling behaviors and increased likelihood of being classified as versatile.

Hypothesis 2b: As leader classification types become more versatile (moving from group 4 to group 1), “adjustment” levels increase.

Amongst the facets of the five-factor model, Judge et al (2002) found that agreeableness demonstrates the weakest correlation with leadership. As a subfacet of agreeableness, interpersonal sensitivity is represented by behaviors that imply a leader is perceived as friendly and considerate by others (R. Hogan & Hogan, 1992). With these specific characteristics in mind, interpersonal sensitivity has been demonstrated as a reliable predictor of enabling behaviors (Kaiser & Hogan, 2011). Interpersonal sensitivity is positively related to enabling behaviors and is negatively related to forceful ones. Leaders with high interpersonal sensitivity scores build and maintain coalitions, read contextual cues (e.g., political and social) accurately, and generally promote cooperativeness (Hogan Assessments, 2013).

Hypothesis 2c: As leader classification types become more versatile (moving from group 4 to group 1), “interpersonal sensitivity” levels increase

Leader effectiveness, team performance, and team climate

Continuing to build on the findings from the first hypothesis, it is also useful to understand how outcomes vary across types of versatile leaders. In part, this effort addresses the formerly addressed pitfalls of the typical leadership study by including outcomes measures from a variety of sources. With respect to the potential results from hypothesis 1, three measures related to leader performance are evaluated that consider the types of leader types: 1) the immediate supervisor’s rating of leader effectiveness, 2) the leader’s ratings of team performance, and 3) the subordinate ratings of team climate. These outcomes reflect a multi-sourced approach that describes the leader and the leader’s influence on the team within the organization. Because of the heterogeneity of the sample, it is somewhat difficult to address the specific functions and tasks of each team, though measures of overall performance, quality, and quantity of output serve as a composite that works in a general sense. Collecting follower perceptions of leader behavior relates to ideas that the quality of follower-leader relationships is related to follower perceptions of climate (Kozlowski & Doherty, 1989). Taking a relative approach to measuring leader behavior is not ideal (Mathieu, Maynard, Rapp, & Gilson, 2008), but does offer a useful solution to yield results that are comparable across leaders at various levels and in different organizations. Outcome measures are expected to vary

with respect to identified leader types, where the most versatile types of leaders will be most positively associated with favorable outcomes.

Hypothesis 3a: Immediate supervisors rate more versatile types of leaders as more effective than less versatile types of leaders.

Hypothesis 3b: The most versatile types of leaders rate team performance higher than less versatile types of leaders.

Hypothesis 3c: Subordinates that serve under the more versatile types of leaders will rate team climate more favorably than those that serve less versatile types of leaders.

Method

Participants

A consulting firm collected the data used in this study for the purposes of providing developmental feedback to participating leaders. The consulting firm approached the author with an expressed interest in learning more about the role of personality and leader versatility. The researcher was given full access to the data and permission to pursue additional research questions as the author saw fit to address. The facilitator's guide for the LVI provides instructions for participating leaders to nominate a variety of coworkers to provide ratings, especially those who have a good deal of experience working with the target leader (Kaiser et al., 2010). Ratings are used to provide developmental feedback to participating leaders, so leaders are warned against

nominating only coworkers with whom the leader has a very favorable relationship. A portion of the sample used in this study has previously been used in publication (Kaiser, LeBreton, & Hogan, 2013).

Participants selected for this study were limited to multi-rater observations of leaders working full-time in North America. Raters that reported having “not much” opportunity to observe the leader, or who knew the leader “hardly at all” were excluded from analysis. In keeping with recommendations on conducting group research (Moreland, 2010), leaders with less than three subordinates ratings were dropped from the sample. These two exclusion criteria resulted in a sample of 3,249 leader participants. Leaders in this study worked in 72 identified organizations including public, private, and government sectors (this information was not available for 1,530 leaders). On average, followers had worked for 3.76 years ($SD = 3.419$) with the leaders.

Additional demographic data offers the opportunity to further understand how this sample is generalizable to the population of leaders. The mean age of leaders in the sample was 45.14 years ($SD = 7.69$), with a self-reported mean experience level of 14.64 years ($SD = 8.26$) in leadership roles. The average amount of time that leaders had occupied the current leadership role at the time of assessment is 3.98 years ($SD = 3.95$). Leaders worked at various organizational levels, in the following identified roles: 807 “Functional heads,” 733 “General managers,” 429 “Middle managers,” 154 “C-level executives”, 342 “Supervisors,” and 556 leaders describing themselves as serving in “Other” leadership capacities.

The selected sample included 472 leaders with reported measures of normal personality. Personality data was assessed using the Hogan Personality Inventory (HPI).

Measures

The Leadership Versatility Index (LVI)

The LVI is a 360-degree feedback survey administered and scored electronically; the survey consists of 55 items (48 items reflect forceful, enabling, strategic, and operational behavioral scales) and requires approximately fifteen minutes to complete (Kaiser et al., 2010). The LVI is a departure from competency models that conceptualize leadership along typical linear dimensions. LVI scales are centrally anchored with a zero indicating “just right,” flanked on the left by underdoing or “too little,” and on the right by overdoing or “too much” (see Figure 1). The behavioral structure and definitions for the LVI scales is provided in table 1.

Place Figure Here

Figure 1: The “Too Little/Too Much” rating scale

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Table 1: LVI 3.0 structure and behavioral content

Place Table Here

Past research supports LVI as a reliable and valid measure of the four behavioral scales (Kaiser & Hogan, 2011). The independent scale scores for forceful, enabling, strategic, and operational behaviors are used in the proposed analysis to identify latent classes of versatile leaders.

Personality

The HPI assesses normal or bright side personality and is based on the five-factor model (R. Hogan & Hogan, 1992). Scales and definitions are provided in Table 2. The HPI has been evaluated by researchers in more than 450 validation studies to predict performance across a wide range of jobs and industries (R. Hogan & Hogan, 1992). HPI scores are reported in percentiles relative to a norm group composed of representative working adults (Kaiser & Hogan, 2011)

Table 2: HPI scales and definitions

Place Table Here

Leader Effectiveness, Team Effectiveness, and Team Climate

Seven items included in the LVI serve to assess leader effectiveness, team effectiveness, and team climate. Leader effectiveness is a single item with an open response format measures. Respondents are prompted to rate a leader's overall effectiveness "on a ten-point scale where 5 is adequate and 10 is outstanding"; the use of decimals is encouraged on the response forms. For the purpose of this study, only immediate supervisor ratings of leader effectiveness are used in analysis.

Team effectiveness is measured with three items ($\alpha = .80$) using a five point Likert scale, where "1" represents substandard performance that is "unacceptably low," and a "5" represents superior performance, e.g., "extraordinarily high." Items assess the overall effectiveness, quantity, and quality of team output. Scores are limited to leader ratings of team productivity for this study.

Team climate is also measured with three items ($\alpha = .87$). Climate is measured on a five-point Likert scale. Low ratings represent problems, e.g., the team “doesn’t work well together,” where high ratings are indicative of a positive work environment, e.g., the team “works well together.” Only subordinate ratings of team climate are used in this study.

Analytical strategy

Latent profile analysis

Latent profile analysis (LPA) was performed in R using the MCLUST package, version 5.0.2. This software was selected on the basis of demonstrated reliability for models that include continuous data (Haughton, Legrand, & Woolford, 2009). In order to classify leaders on the basis of versatility, data from the leader’s immediate subordinates was aggregated to provide measures of versatility on four scales: forceful, enabling, strategic, and operational. A key assumption related to LPA is that indicator variables are continuous and normally distributed within classes (Bauer & Curran, 2003), where failure to meet this assumption results in the over-extraction of classes.

LPA can be likened to other forms of cluster analysis in that it involves the classification of similar observations into groups on the basis of group-specific means, variances, and covariances (Vermunt & Magidson, 2002; Wolfe, 1970). However, an important distinction of LPA is that it relies on a model-based approach that assumes that the data is generated by a mixture of underlying probability distributions (Vermunt & Magidson, 2002). This approach eliminates the arbitrary choice of clustering criterion

associated data mining approaches and instead relies on empirical comparisons of Bayesian information criterion (BIC). It has been demonstrated that BIC performs better than other criteria for the purpose of identifying a suitable number of latent classes (Nylund, Asparouhov, & Muthén, 2007). The best model is selected empirically by identifying the highest BIC value (Schwarz, 1978). BIC serves as a penalized log-likelihood criterion for assessing relative fit between models. Thus, BIC offers an empirical solution that suggests which model to select as a starting point for evaluating the model's utility.

Multivariate analysis

Multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) is used to investigate differences amongst groups (Tatsuoka, 1988) with respect to isolating hypothesized personality differences and outcomes. A subsample of 472 leaders with available personality measures were used to investigate the role of cluster membership with ambition, adjustment, and interpersonal sensitivity. MANOVA was also used on the full sample of 3,249 leaders to investigate the role of cluster membership on selected outcome variables of leader effectiveness, team effectiveness, and team climate.

Results

Detailed descriptions of the selected measures follow. For bivariate correlations of selected measures, see Table 3.

Table 3: Bivariate correlations for personality, versatility, and outcome measures

Place Table Here

Identifying types of versatile leaders

LPA models based on follower ratings of leader forceful, enabling, strategic, and operational behaviors were compared from one to nine-cluster solutions. Evaluation of models with respect to BIC values (Nylund et al., 2007) indicates a four-cluster solution provides the best fit, and suggests support for hypothesis 1 (see Table 4).

Table 4: Comparison of LC cluster models based upon BIC

Place Table Here

Table 5 provides group means and standard deviations for the forceful, enabling, strategic, and operational behaviors in the identified four-cluster solution. Figure 2 provides a graphical representation of the indicator variables' means by cluster membership. The characterizations of the identified types and subsequent interpretations of the types of leaders are based on the patterns of measured versatile behaviors.

Table 5: Means and standard deviations of subordinate ratings of leader forceful, enabling, strategic, and operational behaviors in four latent classes

Place Table Here

Place Figure Here

Figure 2: Profiles of four latent classes based on subordinate ratings of a leader's forceful, enabling, strategic, and operational behaviors. Mixing probabilities for clusters are indicated by reported percentages (N = 3,249).

Amongst the four identified clusters, cluster 1 is characterized by indicator means that are the most versatile (i.e., closest to 0.00) as compared with the three other types. Cluster 1 means have a maximum deviation of 0.07 from zero on a scale that ranges from

4.00 to -4.00. Compared to the other clusters, this characteristic indicates subordinates rate leaders' behaviors as nearest to "just right." Cluster 1 means are negative, with standard deviations that indicate leaders in this type seldom overuse behaviors. These characteristics resulted in an interpretation of this cluster's as *individuating leaders*. Leaders in cluster 1 are relatively rare, making up just 12% of the overall sample.

Cluster 2 is similar to cluster 1 from the standpoint that scale means are negative and that behavioral ratings are close to "just right" ratings of zero. However, cluster 2 is differentiated from cluster 1 by notable increases in the standard deviations of cluster means. The increased absolute ratings, combined with the increasing variability across all four behavioral scales resulted in the interpretation that these leaders as *collaborative*. Cluster 2 emerged as the predominant type for leaders in the sample, consisting of 50% of the sample.

Cluster 3 presents the first occurrence of a leader type that contains a positive, mean value for a behavioral scale. While the ratings for forceful behavior are only slightly positive compared to the overall scale range, of the observed decline of ratings for enabling, strategic, and operational leader behaviors from "just right" indicates that subordinates are sensitive to the overuse of forceful behaviors. The resulting interpretation is that these leaders appear *directive* to subordinates, where a greater emphasis is placed on pushing for performance rather than creating conditions for subordinates to contribute to team efforts. Leader categorization within cluster 3 occurred at a rate of 33%, making it the second most prevalent type.

Cluster 4 is characterized with the strongest, positive ratings of forceful behavior and the lowest ratings for enabling, strategic, and operational behaviors. This category is

distinguishable from the other types by the presence of the strongest over-used forceful behaviors and the lowest perceptions of empowerment. These two behaviors in particular result in the interpretation of these leaders as *Domineering*. Cluster 4 has the lowest frequency of membership representation of the four latent clusters, representing just 6% of the sample.

While no specific hypotheses were generated with respect to leader role (e.g., senior executive, general manager, supervisor), distributions of these leaders with respect to the identified types is presented in Table 6.

Table 6: Leader counts by type and role

Place Table Here

Interpreting the individual types provides insight into how followers interpret the leaders' targeted behaviors collectively. It is also worthwhile to consider how the observed types relate to each other and with respect to overall leader versatility. Starting at the left of Figure 2 and moving to the right, mean values of behaviors tend to increase in magnitude, indicating declining versatility. At the behavioral level, the only exception to this increasing magnitude occurs between cluster 2 and 3 for forceful behavior. While the magnitude of forceful behaviors in cluster 3 is less than cluster 2, its positive nature is accompanied by increased magnitudes of the other three measured behaviors. Followers appear to be sensitive to overused forceful behaviors, suggesting that leaders might pay a penalty with respect to how other behaviors are judged. Overall, the general trend of growing magnitudes of behaviors suggests an ordinal nature of leader types and declining versatility.

Cluster Validation

Given the problems associated with using a single sample to develop statistical models (Kohavi, 1995), tradition suggests it is prudent to scrutinize the cluster results with a validation effort. The short answer, however, is that validating the cluster solution from an internal perspective represents a logical fallacy. However, for illustration purposes such an approach was explored and alternatives offered from an external perspective.

Internal validity

Internal validity refers to the inferences about whether observed covariation between variables reflects a causal relationship (Shadish, Cook, & Campbell, 2002). Following this definition, to attempt to establish internal validity of a LPA is to suggest that the selected indicator variables (i.e., forceful, enabling, strategic, and operational) precede class membership. Herein lies the aforementioned logical fallacy. In essence the indicator variables represent previously unidentified, latent classes within a population. Simply stated, the indicator variables do not precede class membership, they characterize it. There is no causal inference to be drawn in the traditional sense. To the grander point, the issue of validity is about the inferences that can be made from the model.

External validity

The potential of generalizing types across other samples of leaders represents an important consideration in understanding the stability of identified cluster solutions. The initial validation effort involved predicting cluster membership in a second sample of leaders. Two equally sized subsamples were randomly generated from the available sample of leaders and LPA completed on both samples. The intent was to use the results of the first LPA to predict classifications in the second subsample. Based on this comparison, an error classification rate can be calculated and the stability of the model evaluated. Despite the appeal of this approach, the results were not interpretable. Successive random splits of the data resulted in solutions that favored 4-cluster solutions, but also produced three and five cluster solutions.

There are at least two plausible explanations for differing numbers of cluster solutions within the random subsamples. First, random assignment does not guarantee that the samples are matched, suggesting that the three and five cluster solutions may be appropriate for the subsamples, but perhaps not the larger population of leaders. This observation leads to a second explanation that is more germane and is based on the theoretical assumptions of LPA.

LPA is not a revelation of truth in an exact sense, but rather a tool to interpret heterogeneous populations by identifying useful latent classifications (Goodman, 2002). Within this framework, validity is inextricably linked to the utility of the classifications themselves. Demonstrating utility of the types as a validation effort is therefore related to understanding how the identified model relates to antecedent and outcome measures.

Personality characteristics of leader types

It was hypothesized that personality measures of ambition, adjustment, and interpersonal sensitivity are systematically related to a leader's versatility type. MANOVA was conducted to evaluate this relationship. Results from the MANOVA demonstrated no significant multivariate effects for the relationship using Pillai's Trace $F(9, 1404) = 1.44, p = .17$. These results suggest that Hypotheses 2a, 2b, and 2c are not supported. A complete description of cell means and standard deviations is presented in Table 7, with further details with respect to all seven of the HPI scales presented in Table 8.

Table 7: Means and standard deviations of leader ambition, adjustment, and interpersonal sensitivity in four latent classes

Place Table Here

Table 8: Group contrasts of leader HPI scale scores with reference to *individuating* leader type

Place Table Here

Outcomes of versatile leader types

MANOVA was used to test mean differences in performance outcomes amongst the types. Because of the unequal distribution of the types of leaders in the sample, the assumption that the variances were equal across the four groups was examined using

Box's test of equality of covariance matrices. Results were significant ($p < .001$). The significant Box's test indicates the potential distortion of reported alpha levels and the subsequent need to use Pillai's Trace to account for the unbalanced nature of the design (Rimarčík, 2010). Pillai's Trace, a test for differences between groups was significant, $F(9, 8583) = 85.19, p < .001$. The test indicates that 8% of the variance observed in the outcome variables is associated with leader type (multivariate $\eta_p^2 = 0.082$).

Univariate comparisons were conducted as a follow up to the significant omnibus test. The hypothesized main effect of group membership with respect to supervisor ratings of leader effectiveness (hypothesis 3a) was supported, $F(3, 2861) = 49.62, p < .001, \eta_p^2 = 0.049$. The main effect of leader ratings of team performance (hypothesis 3b) was also supported, $F(3, 2861) = 8.25, p < .001, \eta_p^2 = 0.009$. Finally, the main effect of group membership upon team ratings of team climate (hypothesis 3c) was also supported, $F(3, 2861) = 276.57, p < .001, \eta_p^2 = 0.225$. Detailed contrast results between groups for the three hypothesized relationships with reference to *individuating* leaders are presented in Table 9.

Table 9: Group contrasts of supervisor ratings of leader performance, leader measures of team performance, and subordinate ratings of team climate.

Insert Table Here

Discussion

Theoretical implications

This study helped provide a theoretical framework for versatile leader behavior and offers some unique findings with respect to the types of leaders by these versatile behaviors. In addition to contributing to the literature, this study offers avenues for future research as well as some practical implications for organizations with an interest in leader versatility.

To the extent that a cross-sectional study can capture versatility as averaged over the course of time and changing contexts, the measures used in this study related to leader behaviors in a general sense. With these ideas in mind, Goldilocks and three bears provide a useful illustration. From the bears' points of view, each has personal preferences for the temperature of porridge, the size of chairs, and the softness of their beds. From Goldilocks' perspective, this has less to do with the bears' preferences and had more to do with her own sense of "just right." With this position in mind, we gain the perspective necessary to interpret behavioral tendencies that appear "just right" to followers, where there is a sweet spot that exists between opposing extremes. In the fairytale we see no effort on the part of the bears to accommodate their uninvited guest, in fact some of the early versions of the story suggest she met a bitter fate. However, if the bears had been socially gracious hosts and made the effort to accommodate Goldilocks' needs, then we would have an illustration of versatility that even a child can understand. In the sense that versatility involves purposeful selection of behaviors that

are judged appropriate by followers, the proposed types provide a framework to begin understanding leader effectiveness against the backdrop of real-world complexity.

Types of Versatile Leaders

Interpreting forceful and enabling between the identified leader types suggests two general patterns of behavior for leaders. For *individuating* and *collaborative* leaders (see Figure 2), forceful and enabling behaviors appear to operate in a complimentary manner. Rather than relying on task-oriented or relationship-oriented behaviors to accomplish influence, these leader types use appropriate amounts of forceful and enabling behaviors in unison.

A second, distinct pattern emerges for *domineering* and *directive* leaders. These leaders generally overuse forceful behaviors while abating the conditions for subordinates to control their contributions to work. A possible explanation is that these leaders employ an overly simplistic pattern of thinking, where task performance and relational considerations serve as alternatives to one-another.

Collectively the two patterns contribute a key distinguishing characteristic for identifying versatile leaders. Interpretation of the types suggests that leader versatility involves complex patterns of thinking and behaviors, resulting in favorable conditions where seemingly opposing behaviors effectively compliment one another. Further, this observation refutes the typical way initiating structure is thought to serve as an independent factor that governs consideration (Halpin & Winer, 1957). Halpin and Winer's assertion fits with the idea that goals involve choices between completing the

task or building relationships. While these patterns hold for *domineering* and *directive* leaders, such is not the case for *individuating* and *collaborative* leaders. The complimentary application of forceful and enabling suggests a complex, interactive structure between the leaders' efforts to accomplish tasks while simultaneously creating conditions for followers to contribute.

With respect to strategic and operational behaviors an unexpected pattern emerged. Moving from left to right across the types of leaders (see Figure 2), a trend of declining follower ratings for strategic and operational measures materialized across the four types of leaders. There is a sense that as leaders become less versatile that followers have a declining opportunity to provide an accurate description of the leaders' strategic and operational behaviors. For *domineering* and *directive* leaders, strategic and operational behaviors may simply be irrelevant compared to the prevalence of forceful behaviors. This observation draws on the idea that relying on follower ratings alone represents a lack of balance and points to a need to consider multiple perspectives (Hunter et al., 2007). Subordinates may simply not be the in the best position to evaluate strategic and operational behaviors, particularly when leaders employ more forceful behaviors and restrict enabling behaviors.

As defined, the behavioral content of strategic and operational scales signal "why" a leader is behaving a certain way. While much has been said about a leader's role in organizing a team towards achieving an articulated vision or goals (Griffin, Parker, & Mason, 2010), the behavioral patterns within the *domineering* and *directive* types suggest these efforts may be eclipsed by other behaviors. Particularly for leaders that overuse forceful and underuse enabling behaviors, followers may not be in the position to

accurately assess the leader's strategic and operational behaviors. Simply stated, for leaders that over emphasize *what* has to be done without enabling followers, explanations for *why* a task needs to be done appear to be less relevant. In this way, forceful and enabling behaviors are the more relevant behaviors that these followers observe. For less versatile leaders, followers may not be as aware as to why a particular task needs to be done or how it fits into short- or long-term goals. In contrast, *individuating* and *collaborative* leaders enable followers to contribute to work. These leaders movement towards a proactive and strategic style (Walton, 1985) suggests followers will be more aware of how the leader's actions and their own jobs fit into the organization's goal structure.

Personality

The lack of evidence for a relationship between hypothesized personality variables and leader types serves as a reminder of Mischel's observation that measuring behavioral similarity across diverse situations is untenable (1968). Adhering to this line of reasoning, this apparent limitation is usually overcome by selecting homogenous samples within specific contexts to strengthen the linkages between personality and manifest behavior. The leaders with personality data ($N=472$) represent a rather diverse leader sample including C-level executives (5%), functional heads (29%), general managers (18%), middle managers (10%), and supervisors (25%) in eight identified organizations as well as many more unidentified organizations. Further complicating the matter is the idea that leader types are not based on any singular behavior, but rather a

collection of four behavioral types. Additionally, previous research suggests opposing relationships between personality measures and the four behavioral types. For example, ambition is positively related to forceful and negatively related to enabling behaviors (Kaiser & Hogan, 2011). Similar reciprocal relationships exist for adjustment and interpersonal sensitivity. Furthermore, the low representation of leaders in the *individuating* and *domineering* cells greatly reduced the power to detect meaningful differences between the leader types.

Performance

Fiedler's (1971) review of early studies that explored the contingency view of leader effectiveness suggests that leaders perform better when they engage followers in cognitively complex manners. Classifying leaders with respect to versatility provides an important contribution to the idea that cognitively complex thinking relates leader behavior. Interpreted through the types offered in this study, the evidence suggests that leaders that employ opposing behaviors (e.g., forceful and enabling) in complimentary manners achieve superior outcomes. Considering that the versatility types relied on follower attributions, it is important to consider alternative sources of information (Hunter et al., 2007). Since followers supply the behavioral observations, using alternative rating sources for measures of performance helps to substantiate the assumptions that leader versatility is related to leader effectiveness (rated by the leader's immediate supervisor) and team performance (rated by the leader). The followers supplied ratings of team climate, so it is possible that ratings of the leader behavior and

team climate are biased. However, the findings collectively suggest important main effects of versatile behavior.

This study, in consensus with past research (Bandura, 1971; Lawler, 1993) suggests that followers who perceive environments as being within their control experience increased levels of efficacy. In this regard, employee involvement may be an important mediating effect between a leader style that is comprised from a complimentary profile of behaviors and performance outcomes. Past research has offered evidence of significant mediation effects of empowering leadership at both the individual and group levels (Fong & Snape, 2013). The findings in the present study as well as the multi-level nature of mediating effects, suggest it is important that future models of leader versatility are multi-level in nature to account for within-group and between-group differences in versatile leadership.

It is also important to consider the importance of improving motivation in the workplace (Latham & Pinder, 2005) where reciprocal interactions are hypothesized between cognition, affect, and behavior. As a social influence process, leadership has effects on individual followers as well as collectives of followers. Affective responses to work are of growing importance, with research suggesting the importance of reducing job demands and increasing the availability of resources (Demerouti, Bakker, Nachreiner, & Schaufeli, 2001). Improving leader behavior to more closely match the profiles suggested in this study may be an important consideration with respect to the job demands-resource (JD-R) model as a way of simultaneously reducing demands that originate directly from the leader while availing the leader to serve in a more resource-oriented role (e.g., providing structure, support, etc.) for followers to perform. In part, such a proposition is

supported by the idea that leader effectiveness may rest on important interactions between the leader and the team. The concept of leader versatility as a style of leadership is closely related to a characteristic of the social identity model of leadership effectiveness, where effectiveness is related to how the leader's behavior is group oriented and perceived to benefit the group (van Knippenberg & Hogg, 2003). To the extent that followers judge a leader's behavior as "just right," there are close parallels to the idea that the leader's behaviors are beneficial.

Future research efforts should also seek to address the multilevel nature of versatility as it relates to how versatility manifests with leaders' peers, supervisors, and clientele. The evidence provided by this study suggests that follower attributions of leader versatility are substantially related to how the leader is evaluated in terms of effectiveness, indicating that follower ratings may be more pertinent than previously considered with respect to leader effectiveness. Criticisms on the value of follower attributions of leader behavior often suggest followers are sampled for convenience or as a means to accumulate large amounts of data. The results of this study suggest that follower ratings of relevant leader behaviors are of great value in understanding leaders and the outcomes they achieve.

Limitations

While the study offers strong support for understanding leader effectiveness from the perspective of followers, this phenomenon requires a more expansive approach to accounts for the full spectrum of leader interactions in the workplace. Depending on the

nature of work and its relevant tasks, interactions with peers and subordinates may elicit different behaviors by leaders. These behaviors are likely to be valued differently as organizational structures and contexts differ. Future studies should seek to further understand how leaders achieve versatility when the nature of their relationships is influenced by hierarchical structures of the organizations in which they serve. Research is also needed to address the complexity as personality, context, and behaviors interact with respect to the outcomes achieved.

To some degree, answering these types of questions was limited by the cross-sectional design employed in this study. While useful for illuminating versatility as a phenomenon of interest, a longitudinal design would be invaluable to furthering the understanding of how leader behaviors affect outcomes across time—this would be particularly useful for understanding how leaders communicate and direct growth-oriented behaviors in comparison with diurnal behaviors. This may reveal important characteristics of how strategic and operational behaviors are in fact salient to followers.

Behaviors that are “just right” are theorized to emerge from personality characteristics that interact with one another, the leader’s experiences (e.g., training, mentors, feedback, etc.), and concurrent contextual cues. If so, linear combinations of trait measures may be a poor choice for detecting these nuanced effects. Thus, future research should carefully consider this limitation and explore alternative means. Furthermore, due to the relatively low observation of *individuating* and *domineering* leaders identified in the present study, future designs must accommodate a sampling strategy to permit further investigation of the contributions individual differences make towards leader versatility.

Likewise, it may be important to expand the model to include covariates such as training interventions to understand how developmental experiences relate to the emergence of versatility. Learning experiences and attitudes are theorized to play a role in behavioral expression (Cattell, 1963b), suggesting that versatility may be a learned behavioral adaptation.

Implications for practice

This study offers empirical support for the assumed association between leader versatility and performance outcomes. In all likelihood there are leaders who followers simply esteem, there are other leaders who drive team performance, and yet other leaders who appear effective to superiors (much to the dismay of followers). Measures of versatility and the resultant types suggest a practical approach to identifying leaders that aptly succeed from each perspective in a concurrent manner. Indeed, leaders that achieve this balance might represent the archetype of versatility and offer substantial benefits to organizations seeking to develop high potential leaders.

It is incumbent upon the organization to determine to what degree leader versatility is useful. The sample used for this study suggests it should be advantageous for many if not most institutions and agencies interested in understanding versatility in the context of their organizations. Arguably, *domineering* leaders are still performing and achieving outcomes for the organization. The hard question to answer is, “At what cost?” Are reduced employee perceptions of team climate resulting from a forceful leader resulting in increased turnover or hindering team performance? Is a leader’s forceful

drive for performance occurring at the cost of developing junior employees into future leaders? Leader versatility may be a viable method for organizations to mitigate the intangible costs often associated with these issues.

While much remains to be understood about leader versatility, it is clear that leader behaviors matter. To the extent that behaviors can be learned, organizations should consider using interventions (e.g., developmental feedback, training, coaching, etc.) that promote thinking about leader versatility. Such interventions should seek to advance leaders' understanding of versatility with respect to the complimentary and competing relationships that exist between forceful and enabling behaviors. Additionally, interventions should address how these behaviors relate to outcomes of interest to the team, the leader, and the organization. Inasmuch as leader types of versatility demonstrate relative influence upon measures of leader effectiveness, team performance, and team climate, improving leader versatility appears to be an important consideration to improve human capital.

Conclusion

Versatility is of substantial interest to the contemporary workplace, yet is largely overlooked and absent from descriptions of leader behavior (Bass, 1990). Throughout recorded history kings, philosophers, and scientists have championed the importance of versatility. Solomon called it wisdom. Homer's Odysseus serves an iconic representation of cunning and intellect. Plato called for leaders to identify inventive solutions for societal problems. Even Einstein weighed in on the matter, suggesting that the true

measure of intellect is rooted in the ability to change. In sum, the essence of versatility is timeless and is surely worthy of close and careful attention by scientists and practitioners alike.

The preceding panorama of historical thoughts on versatility intimate the universal appeal of versatility. Therefore, the limitations of this study must be considered while keeping in mind that this study embraced the complexity of leadership. It was conducted with leaders in true-to-life work, used observational data of actual leader behavior, and occurred across a myriad of workplace contexts throughout North America. Furthermore, this study incorporated leaders with roles across practicably every conceivable level of leadership in corporate, not-for-profit, and government organizations. As such, versatility is a measurable leader phenomenon that holds across a broad set of conditions. The heterogeneity of the sample lends ample support to the value of person-centered approaches to understanding universal principles of how leaders behave, how others perceive leader behavior, and the utility of these judgments with respect to performance outcomes. With the above in mind, this study supports the perspective that the time is “just right” for further efforts to explore versatility as an important element of the leadership process.

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Appendix A

Figures

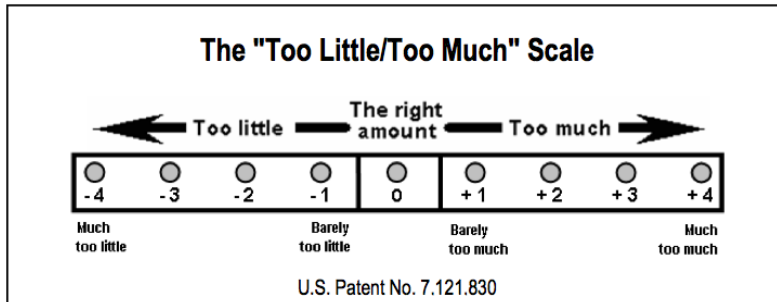


Figure 1. The “Too Little/Too Much” rating scale. Reproduced from R. B. Kaiser, D. V. Overfield, and R. E. Kaplan, 2010, *Leadership Versatility Index*® version 3.0: Facilitator’s Guide, Greensboro, NC. Kaplan DeVries Inc. Copyright 2010 by Kaplan DeVries Inc. Used with permission from the publisher.

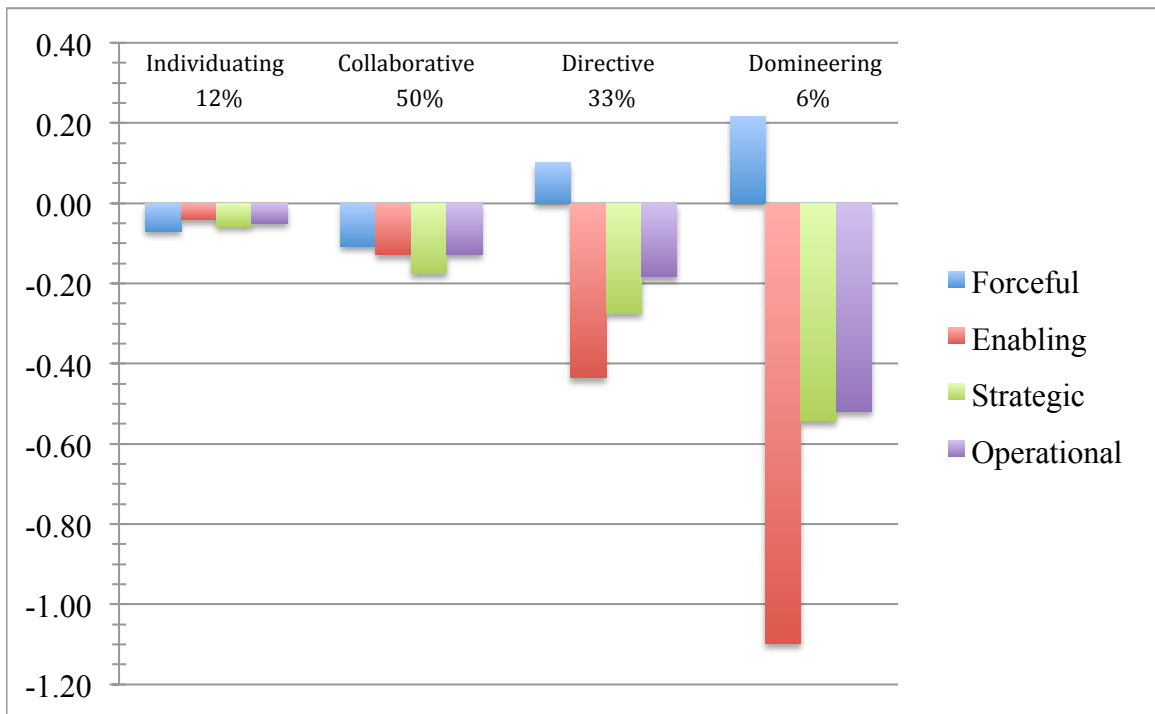


Figure 2. Profiles of four latent classes based on subordinate ratings of leaders’ forceful, enabling, strategic, and operational behaviors. Mixing probabilities for clusters are indicated by reported percentages (N = 3,249). Means and standard deviations of forceful, enabling, strategic, and operational characteristics for the four latent classes are reported in Table 5, Appendix B.

Appendix B

Tables

Table 1.
LVI 3.0 dimensions and behavioral content

Forceful		Enabling	
Taking the lead for pushing and performance		Creating conditions for others to lead and contribute	
Takes charge	In control Assumes authority Gives direction Steps in	Empowers	Empowers people Gives people room Hands-off Trusts people
Declares	Decisive Takes stand Speaks up Doesn't back down easily	Listens	Participative Relies on input Open to influence Receptive to pushback
Pushes	Pushes people hard Expects a lot Direct when dissatisfied Holds people accountable	Supports	Shows appreciation Treats people well Sensitive to people's feelings Gives the benefit of the doubt
Strategic		Operational	
Positioning the organization for the future		Focusing the organization for the near term	
Direction	Future-oriented Thinks strategically Big-picture perspective Anticipates change	Execution	Short-term focus Tactical Attention to detail Follows up
Growth	Aggressive about growth Launches many changes Makes bold moves Entrepreneurial	Efficiency	Conservative about risk Practical about change Incremental change Efficient
Innovation	Questions the status quo Embraces change Open to new ideas Encourages innovation	Order	Goes by the book Stays with the tried and true Organized Process-oriented

Table 2.
HPI scales and definitions

Scale	Definition
Adjustment	Steady under pressure
Ambition	Leader-like and achievement oriented
Sociability	Socially proactive
Interpersonal Sensitivity	Perceptive and tactful
Prudence	Conforming, dependable, and conscientious
Inquisitive	Analytical and imaginative
Learning approach	Concerned with building job-related knowledge

Table 3.
Bivariate correlations for personality, versatility, and outcome measures

	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.	7.	8.	9.	10.
1. HPI: Ambition (Self)	-									
2. HPI: Adjustment (Self)	0.361 **	-								
3. HPI: Interpersonal Sensitivity (Self)	0.286 **	0.344 **	-							
4. LVI: Forceful (Subordinate)	0.187 **	-0.195 **	-0.093 *	-						
5. LVI: Enabling (Subordinate)	-0.039	0.163 **	0.246 **	-0.368 **	-					
6. LVI: Strategic (Subordinate)	0.225 **	0.01	0.053	0.421 **	0.106 **	-				
7. LVI: Operational (Subordinate)	-0.117 *	-0.036	-0.065	0.093 **	0.072 **	-0.214	-			
8. Team performance (Leader)	0.094 *	0.071	0.035	0.007	-0.02	-0.018	0.001	-		
9. Team climate (Subordinate)	0.103 *	0.098 *	0.054	0.069 **	-0.013	0.094	0.029	0.111 **	-	
10. Leader effectiveness (Superior)	0.054	0.115 *	0.035	-0.053 **	0.058 **	-0.002	-0.006	0.193 **	0.189	-

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)

N = 472 for Hogan ratings; N = 3247 for team performance; N = 3249 for team climate; N = 2866 for leader effectiveness

Table 4.

Comparison of LC cluster models based on BIC criterion

Cluster Model	Hypothesis	LL	BIC	df
Model 1	3-cluster	-1568.74	-3347.72	26
Model 2	4-cluster	-1477.57	-3213.90	32
Model 3	5-cluster	-1453.73	-3214.74	38
Model 4	6-cluster	-1441.098	-3237.99	44

Note: All three solutions assume ellipsoidal shapes with equal sizes and orientation. Values in bold indicate optimal cluster solution. *LL* log-likelihood, *BIC* Bayesian information criterion

Table 5.

Means and standard deviations of subordinate ratings of leader forceful, enabling, strategic, and operational behaviors in four latent classes

	Cluster 1		Cluster 2		Cluster 3		Cluster 4	
	Versatile		Quasi-versatile		Quasi-Authoritarian		Authoritarian	
	\bar{X}	<i>s</i>	\bar{X}	<i>s</i>	\bar{X}	<i>s</i>	\bar{X}	<i>s</i>
Forceful	-0.07	0.11	-0.11	0.28	0.10	0.58	0.22	1.08
Enabling	-0.04	0.08	-0.13	0.18	-0.44	0.38	-1.10	0.73
Strategic	-0.06	0.08	-0.17	0.19	-0.27	0.39	-0.54	0.70
Operational	-0.05	0.07	-0.13	0.17	-0.18	0.34	-0.52	0.61

Table 6.

Leader counts by type and role

	Type				Total
	<i>Individuating</i>	<i>Collaborative</i>	<i>Directive</i>	<i>Domineering</i>	
Senior executive	6%	5%	4%	7%	154
Other executive	22%	25%	26%	29%	807
General manager	23%	24%	22%	14%	733
Functional head	16%	13%	13%	14%	429
Middle-manager	15%	15%	20%	24%	558
Supervisor	9%	9%	4%	6%	226
Other	10%	11%	11%	5%	342
Total	392	1617	1060	180	3249

Table 7.
Means and standard deviations of leader ambition, adjustment, and interpersonal sensitivity in four latent classes.

	Cluster 1 Versatile		Cluster 2 Quasi- versatile		Cluster 3 Quasi- Authoritarian		Cluster 4 Authoritarian	
	\bar{X}	<i>s</i>	\bar{X}	<i>s</i>	\bar{X}	<i>s</i>	\bar{X}	<i>s</i>
Ambition	61.10	25.46	60.91	26.09	65.61	24.71	63.10	21.59
Adjustment	62.11	26.28	55.61	25.94	54.21	26.61	50.48	28.62
Interpersonal Sensitivity	49.65	35.06	48.48	32.77	49.67	30.76	54.57	30.60

Table 8.
Group contrasts of leader HPI scale scores with reference to *individuating* leader type

		Dependent Variable						
		Adj	Amb	IS	Soc	Prud	Inq	LA
<i>Collaborative</i>	Contrast	11.64	2.00	4.92	4.59	9.33	-6.18	4.81
	Std. Error	6.63	6.40	8.17	7.30	6.50	6.87	6.63
	Sig.	0.08	0.76	0.55	0.53	0.15	0.37	0.47
<i>Directive</i>	Contrast	7.90	4.51	0.02	7.78	5.18	4.24	4.29
	Std. Error	3.98	3.85	4.91	4.38	3.91	4.13	3.98
	Sig.	0.05	0.24	1.00	0.08	0.19	0.31	0.28
<i>Domineering</i>	Contrast	6.50	0.19	1.17	2.37	5.89	1.08	0.08
	Std. Error	3.71	3.59	4.58	4.09	3.64	3.85	3.71
	Sig.	0.08	0.96	0.80	0.56	0.11	0.78	0.98

Note: Adj = Adjustment, Amb = Ambtion, IS = Interpersonal sensitivity, Soc = Sociability, Prud = Prudence, Inq = Inquisitiveness, and LA = Learning approach

Table 9.
Group contrasts of superior ratings of leader performance, leader measures of team performance, and subordinate ratings of team climate with reference to *versatile* leaders

		Dependent Variable		
		Leader Effectiveness	Team Performance	Team Climate
<i>Collaborative</i>	Contrast	-0.17	-0.11	-0.28
	Std. Error	0.07	0.04	0.03
	Sig.	0.01	0.00	0.00
<i>Directive</i>	Contrast	-0.44	-0.13	-0.62
	Std. Error	0.07	0.04	0.03
	Sig.	0.00	0.00	0.00
<i>Domineering</i>	Contrast	-1.16	-0.29	-1.12
	Std. Error	0.11	0.06	0.05
	Sig.	0.00	0.00	0.00