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To whom does transformational leadership matter more? An examination of neurotic and introverted followers and their organizational citizenship behavior

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ABSTRACT

Despite the massive amount of transformational leadership research, the role of followers has not been well-examined in the transformational leadership literature. To understand how leader–follower interactions influence follower organizational citizenship behavior (OCB), we examined the cross-level interactions between transformational leadership and two follower personality traits (neuroticism and extraversion). Using a sample of 215 leaders and 1284 followers, results showed that follower neuroticism moderated the relationships between transformational leadership and organizational citizenship behavior directed toward other individuals (OCB-I) and toward the organization (OCB-O), such that relationships were stronger for those high in neuroticism. Further, follower extraversion moderated the relationships between transformational leadership and OCB-I and OCB-O, such that relationships were stronger for those low in extraversion. Therefore, the inspirational and developmental nature of transformational leaders can offset follower neuroticism and introversion and guide these employees to perform more OCB despite their tendencies to worry, lack confidence, and be shy and withdrawn.

Transformational leaders encourage employee commitment to the mission and values of the organization and inspire motivation by building collective aspirations and beliefs and a sense of community that is based on relationships, shared values, and common goals. The four dimensions of transformational leadership (idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration) emphasize areas such as trust and values, providing meaning and challenge to follower tasks while inspiring followers to go beyond what they think is possible, challenging old assumptions and beliefs while encouraging new ways of thinking, as well as coaching and mentoring while considering the needs, abilities, interests, and goals of followers (Bass & Avolio, 1997). Given this "change-oriented" and "challenging status quo" nature of transformational leadership, it is not surprising that transformational leaders can lead their followers to perform above and beyond what is required, thereby leading them to engage in organizational citizenship behavior (OCB).

Although this positive association between transformational leadership and follower OCB has been empirically supported (Wang, Oh, Courtright, & Colbert, 2011), some researchers have argued that transformational leaders do not impact all followers equally (Bass, 1985; Conger & Kanungo, 1987; Shamir, House, & Arthur, 1993). This implies that the positive influence of transformational leadership is likely to depend on follower differences such as personality. However, very few follower differences have been examined as moderators that impact the underlying processes whereby leaders influence followers.

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The current study takes an interactionist approach (Gilmore, Hu, Wei, Tetrick, & Zaccaro, 2013; Li, Chiaburu, Kirkman, & Xie, 2013) to further explore the relationships between transformational leadership and OCB. The interactionist approach enhances our understanding by suggesting that "the influence of transformational leadership on employee behaviors is most accurately understood by examining how transformational leadership interacts with employee characteristics" (Gilmore et al., 2013, p. 1062). Specifically, we examine the interactions between follower neuroticism and extraversion and transformational leadership in explaining follower OCB. Examining the role of neuroticism and introversion (opposite of extraversion) is interesting because although these traits have been consistently found to be negatively related to OCB (see Chiaburu, Oh, Berry, Li, & Gardner, 2011 for meta-analytic evidence), little is known yet about whether transformational leaders can engage neurotics or introverts to perform above and beyond job requirements.

Specifically, we expect that a transformational leader may have even more positive influence on neurotic or introverted followers because their tendencies (being worried, nervous, and lacking confidence for neurotics; being shy, withdrawn and solitary for introverts) can at least partially be overcome by a leader who engages in idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration. By examining neuroticism and extraversion—two of the Five-Factor Model (FFM; Barrick & Mount, 1991) personality traits—as moderators, we make contributions to the transformational leadership and personality literatures.

Our primary contribution is examining the moderating role of follower personality in the transformational leadership-OCB relationship. This is important because we develop theoretical rationale that helps explain the leader–follower interactions and their impact on follower behaviors, thereby answering calls to examine the follower's role more closely (e.g., Antonakis & House, 2013; Ehrhart & Klein, 2001; Howell & Shamir, 2005; Klein & House, 1995; Lord, Brown, & Freiberg, 1999; Yukl, 1999). Relatedly, Felfe, Tartler, & Liepmann (2004) emphasized the role of follower personality traits in understanding how followers perceive and are influenced by transformational leadership behaviors. The current study therefore extends both the personality and leadership lines of research by addressing an important omission in the literature, providing a more complete picture of the transformational leadership process.

More specifically, we make a contribution to the transformational leadership and personality literatures by examining two broad FFM traits (neuroticism and extraversion). Although neuroticism and extraversion are consistently included in most models of personality and therefore well-examined in the literatures, most transformational leadership research has examined narrow traits as moderators, such as need for autonomy and growth need strength (Wofford, Whittington, & Goodwin, 2001; Yun, Cox, & Sims, 2006), collective efficacy and self-efficacy (Walumbwa, Lawler, Avolio, Wang, & Shi, 2005), allocentrism/idiocentrism (Nahum-Shani & Somech, 2011), and internal locus of control (De Hoogh & Den Hartog, 2009). One exception is De Hoogh & Den Hartog's (2009) study that also examined follower neuroticism as a potential moderator in the relationship between two types of leadership (charismatic and autocratic). However, their results are inconsistent across two small Dutch samples; their finding that the negative relationship between charismatic leadership and burnout was stronger for those with lower levels of neuroticism was supported only in their smaller sample ($N = 91$). As a result, empirical evidence seems equivocal regarding the role of follower neuroticism in the complex leadership process between leaders and followers.

Furthermore, our theoretical framework of two broad FFM traits and transformational leadership is noteworthy. According to the compatibility principle (Ajzen & Fishbein, 2005), the concepts at the same level of specificity can maximize their predictive power. Given that transformational leadership has been examined at a broader level (e.g., Bono & Anderson, 2005; Piccolo & Colquitt, 2006), we expect that neuroticism and extraversion, the two broad FFM traits, will increase the predictive power of their interactions with transformation leadership in explaining variance in OCBs.

To summarize, we examine follower neuroticism and extraversion as moderators in the relationship between transformational leadership and follower OCBs in multi-level contexts. We provide theoretical rationale and empirical evidence linking the transformational leadership, personality, and OCB literatures. Our theoretical framework also has important practical implications. This is not only because employee OCBs are closely related with numerous individual, team, and organizational outcomes (Podsakoff, Whiting, Podsakoff, & Blume, 2009), but also because we can broaden our understanding of how to overcome the weakness of neurotics and introverts in organizations.

Hypotheses development

While we are primarily interested in the potential moderating effect of follower personality, we first consider the direct effects of transformational leadership on follower OCBs.

The direct influence of transformational leadership

Transformational leaders encourage their followers to accept and internalize the organization's mission, visions, and goals, thereby leading to feelings of belonging and identification and to enhanced follower OCB (Shamir et al., 1993), whether directed toward other individuals (OCB-I) or toward the organization itself (OCB-O). Because of the motivating abilities of transformational leaders to inspire followers to perform beyond expectations in a selfless manner and challenge the status quo (Bass & Avolio, 1990), these leaders increase follower effort beyond the requirements of the job description and thus perform more OCB (Podsakoff, MacKenzie, & Bommer, 1996; Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Moorman, & Fetter, 1990). For this reason, transformational leadership has been found to be more strongly related to OCB than in-role performance or task

performance (see Wang et al., 2011 for meta-analytic evidence). We therefore expect to replicate findings of prior studies. Transformational leadership should have a positive impact by enhancing OCBs of followers.

Hypothesis 1: Transformational leadership will be positively related to (a) follower OCB-I and (b) follower OCB-O.

Neuroticism as a moderator of the transformational leadership process

Although recent research has argued that all personality traits have both positive and negative aspects to them (Furnham, Trickey, & Hyde, 2012; Judge, Piccolo, & Kosalka, 2009), individuals with high levels of neuroticism tend to be worried, nervous, anxious, and feel a lack of confidence, fear, sadness, anger, and guilt (Costa & McCrae, 1992). Neurotic followers are likely to experience an increased sense of security and trust when they are led by transformational leaders. One of the effective transformational leadership behaviors is intellectual stimulation; transformational leaders work to instill confidence in followers to feel comfortable thinking outside the box, strive to improve on the status quo, and utilize creativity to seek continuous improvements (Zhu, Avolio, Walumbwa, 2009). Such an increased sense of confidence and enthusiasm from a transformational leader is likely to be more important for these neurotic followers than emotionally stable followers (opposite of neurotics) to perform beyond their job requirements (Parker, 1998) because of their tendency to worry and be nervous.

In addition, neurotic followers are more likely than emotionally stable followers to become able to derive energy to engage in OCBs through transformational leaders' inspirational motivation (e.g., giving challenging developmental assignments and increased expectations). By using inspiring and visionary messages, transformational leaders can reframe the big picture, promote cooperation among group members, and arouse emotions of followers (Bass, 1985; Bass & Avolio, 1994). Such leadership actions may lead followers to be concerned about their goal attainment and contribution to group outcomes. Given that neurotic individuals are strongly motivated to avoid social disapproval and being judged as incompetent (Bendersky & Shah, 2013; Costa & McCrae, 1992), inspirational motivation can have greater influence on neurotic followers' OCBs than emotionally stable followers' OCBs. Through engagement in OCB, neurotic followers may then reduce their social anxiety. Without a transformational leader to help instill confidence and collection vision, neurotics would normally worry or feel anxiety from the leader's increased expectations. Thus, through both of these transformational leadership processes (intellectual stimulation and inspirational motivation), neurotic followers are likely to be more receptive to transformational leadership and thus perform above and beyond what is required in their job (i.e., stronger levels of OCB).

Furthermore, transformational leaders provide the inspiring vision and prioritize a collective cause over self-interest. They focus on trust, values, and ethics that appeal to the emotions of followers, instill pride, and represent self-confidence and self-determination (idealized influence; Bass, 1985; Bass & Avolio, 1994). Such actions help followers persist on meeting shared collective goals (Shamir et al., 1993). Given the tendency to feel social anxiety, neurotic followers are more likely to be influenced by such inspirational actions by transformational leaders as they are more likely to build collective identity and less likely to be worried and anxious about personal capabilities (Shamir et al., 1993). As a result, neurotic followers are more likely to engage in OCBs.

Transformational leaders also help followers grow and gain their own faith and confidence by providing the personal mentoring and developmental attention with the ultimate aim of turning these followers into future leaders (individualized consideration; Bass, 1985; Bass & Avolio, 1994). Such support from transformational leaders is more likely to instill self-worth and self-confidence among neurotic followers (Howell & Shamir, 2005), thereby leading them to perform above and beyond the job requirements. This could either be in the form of OCB-I (e.g., helping other employees, making new employees feel welcome, or expressing genuine concern or courtesy to co-workers) or OCB-O (e.g., helping the organizational image, showing pride in the organization by defending it from criticism, or offering suggestions to improve functioning of the organization). Neurotics have also been shown to perform better and exceed expectations in group settings as their esteem and value rises, thus also leading to social benefits as well (Bendersky & Shah, 2013). Thus we expect that neurotic followers are likely to be more sensitive to leaders' behavior and thus motivated to engage in OCBs when they observe transformational behaviors on the part of their leaders.

On the other hand, we expect that transformational leaders have a weaker impact on followers who are less neurotic (i.e., emotionally stable) than those who are highly neurotic. It seems likely that emotional stability (i.e., low level of neuroticism) more than any of the other FFM traits may serve as a substitute for leadership (Howell, Dorfman, & Kerr, 1986; Kerr & Jermier, 1978) that decreases the ability of transformational leaders to impact follower behavior and, in essence, replaces leadership (Li et al., 2013). This is because emotionally stable followers (i.e., those who are low in neuroticism) tend to remain calm, secure, and confident about their abilities when facing many of the organizational hurdles common today—increased time pressures, exceedingly high expectations, and the challenges brought about by uncertainty (Judge & Bono, 2001). As a result, they are likely to still possess the ability to exhibit strong OCB by assisting coworkers and the organization itself. As such, it is possible that a transformational leader may not be as necessary for emotionally stable followers—who already possess high levels of security and self-confidence and tend to naturally be calm, relaxed, and not anxious about social disapproval—as they are already likely to put forth the resources required to go above and beyond for the benefit of the organization.

Hypothesis 2: Follower neuroticism will moderate the relationship between transformational leader behaviors and (a) follower OCB-I and (b) follower OCB-O, such that the relationship is stronger when follower neuroticism is higher.

Extraversion as a moderator of the transformational leadership process

Individuals with high levels of extraversion tend to be outgoing, social, assertive, upbeat, energetic, and talkative, while those with low levels of extraversion (highly introverted) tend to be shy, quiet, withdrawn, solitary, cautious, and bashful (Costa & McCrae, 1992). Introverted followers—who are less likely to be self-confident (Judge & Ilies, 2002) and to experience and express positive emotions (Watson & Clark, 1997)—are likely to feel an increased sense of confidence and security when transformational leaders demonstrate idealized influence by emphasizing areas such as trust, values, and ethics. This is because transformational leaders will be able to appeal to the positive emotions of these followers (Bass, 1985) and the trust shown to them will instill self-confidence as they become aware of their contributions to collective goals, thereby leading them to open up and attempt to benefit the organization as a result.

Through inspirational motivation, transformational leaders provide challenging assignments and increased expectations (Bass & Avolio, 1997). Such actions are likely to be effective when leading introverted followers to perform above and beyond job requirements because they tend to feel low self-confidence and possess lower goal-setting motivation (Judge & Ilies, 2002). Inspirational motivation behaviors in conjunction with idealized influence behaviors are likely to direct introverted followers' increased self-confidence toward proactively solving task problems, helping coworkers, and speaking up to offer constructive ideas for the organization. Otherwise, their quiet and shy nature would often lead them to further withdraw and go deeper into isolation when pushed to do more than they feel they are capable of doing (Howell & Shamir, 2005).

Providing introverted followers with the confidence to challenge existing assumptions and beliefs may require a transformational leader demonstrating intellectual stimulation. It will be a struggle for introverted followers who are quiet, withdrawn, and cautious to be comfortable standing up to the challenge to question the way things are done and use creativity to seek continuous improvements (Zhu et al., 2009). At the same time, because introverts tend to be collected and not make hasty decisions (Judge et al., 2009), they are more likely to take the time to think through how to challenge the status quo rather than just start speaking up frequently like extraverts who tend to be confident, excited, and outgoing might be prone to do. Those who are shy and withdrawn will also benefit from the personal mentoring and developmental attention of individualized consideration which focuses on the needs, abilities, interests, and goals of followers. As introverts are more likely to focus on the conversation at hand rather than jumping from one conversation to another (Judge et al., 2009) and prefer not to be part of large groups of people, they are more likely to benefit from the personal attention of individualized consideration that may well bring these followers "out of their shells" and make them less willing to feel the need to remain isolated. In combination, these transformational leadership processes are likely to lead introverted followers to be more receptive to transformational leadership and thus perform higher levels of OCB-I and OCB-O because they are likely to be more sensitive to transformational leaders' behavior that provides them with confidence and security.

Alternatively, we expect that transformational leaders will have less influence on followers who possess high levels of extraversion than those who are introverted. This is because extraversion may also function as a substitute for leadership (Howell, Dorfman, & Kerr, 1986; Kerr & Jermier, 1978) that decreases the ability of transformational leaders to impact follower behavior (Li et al., 2013) due to the fact that extraversion (of all the FFM personality traits) is the most highly correlated with leader emergence (Bono & Judge, 2004) and those with high levels of extraversion already tend to be outgoing, social, assertive, energetic, and optimistic. As a result of their active and positive nature, those with high levels of extraversion are likely to better handle challenging assignments and increased expectations. By being outgoing and energetic, they are more likely to go above and beyond by assisting coworkers and the organization itself. Thus, it is possible that extraverted followers—who are already assertive and tend to be optimistic—already possess the resources needed to perform a high level of OCB.

Hypothesis 3: Follower extraversion will moderate the relationship between transformational leader behaviors and (a) follower OCB-I and (b) follower OCB-O, such that the relationship is stronger when follower extraversion is lower.

Method

Participants and procedure

This study used multiple data sources (leaders and followers) in an effort to minimize common method bias (Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Lee, & Podsakoff, 2003). Leaders and their followers were recruited from ten Midwestern U.S. organizations, including four for-profit business organizations, three healthcare organizations, and three government organizations. Of the 1941 followers who were invited to participate via emails from the first author and from company executives supporting the research project, 1284 completed the survey process (66.2%). An average of 5.97 followers responded per leader. Responding followers were 74.5% female, 72.6% had worked for their organizations for at least three years, 57.8% had worked for their current supervisor between 1 and 5 years, the majority were between 31 and 50 years old (53.4%), and 53.1% had at least a Bachelor's degree. Approximately 2–5 weeks after follower ratings were collected (depending on the organization), 215 leaders were asked to provide ratings of followers' OCB (for up to six followers). If a leader had more than six followers, the first author randomly chose 6 followers for the leader to complete OCB ratings on. While most of the followers chosen had completed survey data about the leader, several followers were chosen even if they did not complete the survey on the leader. This was done to protect the anonymity of followers that completed the survey process (since leaders were provided with composite results of the follower rankings) even though it meant some of the OCB ratings collected from leaders were thus unusable.

Measures

Transformational leadership. 20 items of the Multifactor Leadership Questionnaire (MLQ-5X; Bass & Avolio, 1997) were used by followers to assess the four dimensions of transformational leadership: idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration. Followers provided their ratings on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 0 (*not at all*) to 4 (*frequently, if not always*). Sample items include "Instills pride in me for being associated with him/her" (idealized influence), "Talks optimistically about the future" (inspirational motivation), "Re-examines critical assumptions to question whether they are appropriate" (intellectual stimulation), and "Spends time teaching and coaching" (individualized consideration).

Consistent with past studies (e.g., Bono & Judge, 2004), we aggregated across follower ratings for each leader to capture the leaders' typical behavioral patterns shared by followers. A confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) showed that a second-order factor model in which the four dimensions were indicators of a higher order transformational leadership factor fit the data relatively well: $\chi^2_{166} = 1375.51$, $p < .05$; comparative fit index (CFI) = .97; nonnormed fit index (NNFI) = .97; root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA) = .09; standardized root-mean-square residual (SRMR) = .04. This result of the factor analysis is consistent with other past research (e.g., Bono & Anderson, 2005; Piccolo & Colquitt, 2006), and subsequently the higher order transformational leadership factor was used in all analyses ($\alpha = .86$). The intraclass correlation coefficients (ICC) were examined to determine whether aggregation was supported by the data. ICC(1), the proportion of the total variance that can be explained by group membership (within-group variance), was .22, suggesting that aggregation is appropriate (Glick, 1985), and ICC(2), the reliability of the aggregated measure, was .63. Although the ICC(2) value was slightly lower than .70 (Ostroff & Schmitt, 1993), this reliability compares favorably to those reported in other leadership research (e.g., Bono & Judge, 2004; ICC(2) = .57 and Li et al., 2013; ICC(2) = .50).

Personality traits of followers were measured using the 50-item International Personality Item Pool (IPIP: Goldberg, 1999). The IPIP is a public domain personality inventory that directly assesses the Big Five. The instrument has acceptable convergent validities with other well-established personality inventories. For example, the IPIP correlates .85 to .92 with corresponding scales from the NEO-PI-R when corrected for unreliability (Buchanan, Johnson, & Goldberg, 2005). There were 10 items for each of the Big Five personality traits and participants responded to each item based on a 5-point Likert scale (1 = *strongly disagree* to 5 = *strongly agree*). Although only neuroticism and extraversion were examined as potential moderators, other Big Five traits were included as control variables in order to provide a more rigorous test of our predictions. The coefficients alpha (α) in the present study were .89 for extraversion, .86 for neuroticism, .77 for agreeableness, .77 for openness to experience, and .75 for conscientiousness. Sample items include "Am the life of the party" (extraversion), "Get stressed out easily" (neuroticism), "Am interested in people" (agreeableness), "Have a rich vocabulary" (openness to experience), and "Am always prepared" (conscientiousness).

Organizational citizenship behavior was assessed by leaders about their followers using Lee & Allen's (2002) 16-item measure (8 items for OCB-I and 8 items for OCB-O). Meta-analytic evidence (Dalal, 2005) indicates that the two dimensions are related but distinct constructs (i.e., the true-score correlation between them is .64 as compared to .65 in the current study). In the current study, the two OCB factors showed acceptable internal reliabilities (αs = .89 and .90 for OCB-I and OCB-O, respectively). CFAs further revealed that the hypothesized two-factor model ($\chi 2 = 701.95$ with $df = 103$; CFI = .91; NNFI = .90; RMSEA = .09; SRMR = .05) substantially fits the data better than a single-factor model ($\chi 2 = 1578.81$ with $df = 104$; CFI = .78; NNFI = .75; RMSEA = .14; SRMR = .08): $\Delta\chi 2 = 876.86$ with $\Delta df = 1$, $p < .001$. Thus, we used the two factors of OCB for subsequent analyses. Responses were evaluated on a 5-point scale ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 5 (*strongly agree*). Sample items are "Willingly gives his/her time to help others who have work-related problems" (OCB-I) and "Attends functions that are not required but that help the organizational image" (OCB-O).

Control variables.

Organization was included as a series of nine dummy variables to reflect each of the participating organizations as it is likely that there are various differences within the participating organizations (such as structure, culture, climate, etc.) that could otherwise impact findings.

Follower dyadic tenure with the leader was included as a one-item control variable, "How long have you worked for your current supervisor?" (1 = less than 6 months; 2 = 6–12 months; 3 = 1–2 years; 4 = 3–5 years; 5 = 6–10 years; 6 = 10+ years). Because

Table 1
Descriptive statistics, intercorrelations, and reliability estimates.

Variable	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1. Tenure with leader	2.94	1.25	–								
2. Transformational leadership[a]	2.64	.85	−.03	(.86)							
3. Neuroticism	2.31	.69	.01	−.12**	(.86)						
4. Extraversion	3.36	.72	−.09**	.10**	−.18**	(.89)					
5. Conscientiousness	4.15	.55	−.06*	.07*	−.25**	.13**	(.75)				
6. Agreeableness	4.24	.49	−.06*	.13**	−.21**	.31**	.33**	(.77)			
7. Openness to experience	3.73	.55	−.11**	.09**	−.16**	.33**	.14**	.23**	(.77)		
8. OCB-I	4.07	.67	.17**	.17**	−.09*	.11**	.03	.15**	−.02	(.89)	
9. OCB-O	3.87	.70	.15**	.23**	−.09*	.19**	.02	.11**	.10**	.65**	(.90)

Note. N = 746–1277; the reliability estimates (α) are presented in the diagonal.
[a] Aggregated across followers and then repeated for each follower.
* $p < .05$ (two-tailed).
** $p < .01$ (two-tailed).

of its emphasis on bringing about change, it is possible that transformational leadership behavior may be more apparent towards the beginning of one's tenure in a given leadership role or reporting relationship.

Results

Means, standard deviations, intercorrelations, and reliabilities are reported in Table 1. Measures for all primary study variables showed high internal consistency reliabilities, with coefficient alphas ranging from .86 to .90. Correlations with transformational leadership include .17 with OCB-I, .23 with OCB-O, −.12 with neuroticism, and .10 with extraversion (all are significant at $p < .01$; two-tailed).

Hypotheses were tested via hierarchical linear modeling (HLM; Version 7; Bryk & Raudenbush, 1992) based on the recommendations of Gavin & Hofmann (2002) and widespread conceptualizations of leadership as a multilevel construct. HLM is particularly suitable to test cross-level relations when individual data are nested within groups nested within organizations. HLM is superior to using ordinary least square regression because including individuals from the same group violates regression assumptions and underestimates standard errors, leading to overestimated results (Hofmann & Gavin, 1998).

Before testing hypotheses, we estimated a null model that had no predictors at the individual (Level 1) or the team (Level 2) levels to assess whether there were between-group variations in OCB-I and OCB-O (Raudenbush & Bryk, 2002). The ICC(1) value, $ICC(1) = \tau_{00} / (\tau_{00} + \sigma^2)$, for OCB-I was .57, and the ICC(1) value, $ICC(1) = \tau_{00} / (\tau_{00} + \sigma^2)$, for OCB-O was .44. This indicates that 57% and 44% of variance in OCB-I and OCB-O, respectively, exists between groups. Thus, we interpreted this as support that our multilevel analyses are appropriate.

Consistent with Hypotheses 1a–1b, transformational leadership was significantly related to follower OCB-I ($\gamma_{02} = .14$; $p < .001$; Table 2, Model 1), and OCB-O ($\gamma_{02} = .19$; $p < .001$; Table 2, Model 4) after controlling for effects of the organization, follower tenure with the leader, and the other FFM traits.

The remaining hypotheses predicted interactions. To minimize multi-collinearity, Level 1 predictors (i.e., follower personality traits and dyad tenure) were centered around the group mean and the Level 2 predictor (transformational leadership) around the grand mean as recommended for models that test interactions (Hofmann & Gavin, 1998). In testing Hypotheses 2a–3b (the cross-level moderations), we estimated separate HLM models to test each interaction as suggested by Dionne, Yammarino, Atwater, & James (2002) so that we test specific hypotheses linking transformational leader behavior with a specific substitute (i.e., neuroticism or extraversion) and strengthen its predictability. Furthermore, we used one-tailed test in order to achieve the best balance between statistical power and Type I errors (LaHuis & Ferguson, 2009). Simple slope tests were conducted to examine the simple slope of the interaction term with the main effect controlled.

Hypothesis 2a predicted that follower neuroticism moderates the relationship between transformational leadership and OCB-I. After controlling for the nine organization dummy variables, follower tenure with the leader, and the other FFM traits, we entered the interaction term and it was significant ($\gamma_{51} = 6.03$, $p < .05$; Table 2, Model 2). We also compared model deviance values (Model 1 vs. Model 2; Table 2) to test whether the interaction term increases model fit to the data significantly. The result showed that the interaction between follower neuroticism and transformational leadership significantly improved the fit of the model to the data: $\Delta\chi^2\ (1) = 9.75$, $p < .01$. To interpret this effect, the relationship between transformational leadership and follower neuroticism in predicting follower OCB-I was plotted at high and low levels of follower neuroticism (±1 standard deviation around the mean; Fig. 1). The pattern of results was consistent with the hypothesized form of the interaction; OCB-I was positively related to

Table 2
Results of HLM analyses testing the influence of transformational leadership and follower neuroticism and follower extraversion on follower OCB-I and OCB-O.

	OCB-I			OCB-O		
	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5	Model 6
Level 1						
Intercept	3.86***	3.86***	3.86***	3.75***	3.75***	3.75***
Follower tenure with leader	−0.03	−0.61*	−0.08	0.01	−0.71*	−0.04
Follower extraversion	−0.28	−1.70*	−0.32	−0.49	−2.24*	−0.54
Follower agreeableness	0.30	1.52*	1.01*	−0.31	1.20	0.46
Follower conscientiousness	0.97	2.60*	1.70*	1.33	3.34*	2.12*
Follower neuroticism	0.27	−2.99*	−0.83*	0.04	−3.99*	−0.64
Follower openness to experience	−0.38	−0.43*	−0.56*	0.02	−0.04	−0.17
Level 2						
Transformational leadership	0.14***	0.14***	0.14***	0.19***	0.19***	0.19***
Cross-level interaction						
TFL × neuroticism		6.03*			7.43*	
TFL × extraversion			−0.89*			−0.95*
Model deviance	1406.02	1396.27	1398.27	1461.44	1452.85	1456.64
Df	19	20	20	19	20	20
Deviance change		9.75**	7.75**		8.59**	4.80*

NOTE: HLM analyses were performed after controlling for the nine organizational dummy variables. Full coefficients are available upon request.
* $p < .05$ (one-tailed).
** $p < .01$ (one-tailed).
*** $p < .001$ (one-tailed).

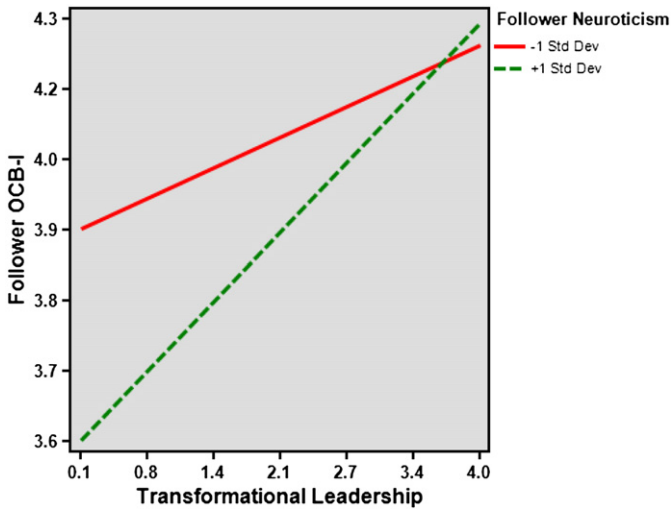

Fig. 1. Interaction effect between transformational leadership and follower neuroticism on OCB-I.

transformational leadership, and the relationship was stronger for those with high levels of neuroticism than for those with low levels of neuroticism. Thus, Hypothesis 2a was supported.

Hypothesis 2b predicted that follower neuroticism moderates the relationship between transformational leadership and OCB-O. Supporting this prediction, the interaction was significant ($\gamma_{51} = 7.43$, $p < .05$; Table 2, Model 5). The deviance difference test result (Model 4 vs. Model 5; Table 2) also showed that the interaction between follower neuroticism and transformational leadership significantly improved the fit of the model to the data: $\Delta\chi^2\,(1) = 8.59$, $p < .01$. To interpret this effect, the relationship between transformational leadership and follower neuroticism in predicting follower OCB-O was plotted at high and low levels of follower neuroticism (± 1 standard deviation around the mean; Fig. 2). The pattern of results was consistent with the hypothesized form of the interaction; OCB-O was positively related to transformational leadership, and the relationship was stronger for those with high levels of neuroticism than for those with low levels of neuroticism. Thus, Hypothesis 2b was supported.

Hypothesis 3a predicted that follower extraversion moderates the relationship between transformational leadership and OCB-I. The interaction term was significant ($\gamma_{21} = -0.89$, $p < .05$; Table 2, Model 3). The deviance difference test result (Model 1 vs. Model 3; Table 2) also showed that the interaction between follower extraversion and transformational leadership significantly improved the fit of the model to the data: $\Delta\chi^2\,(1) = 7.75$, $p < .01$. To interpret this effect, the relationship between transformational leadership and follower extraversion in predicting follower OCB-I was plotted at high and low levels of follower extraversion (± 1 standard deviation around the mean; Fig. 3). The pattern of results was consistent with the hypothesized form of the interaction; OCB-I was positively related to transformational leadership, and the relationship was stronger for those with low levels of extraversion than for those with high levels of extraversion, supporting Hypothesis 3a.

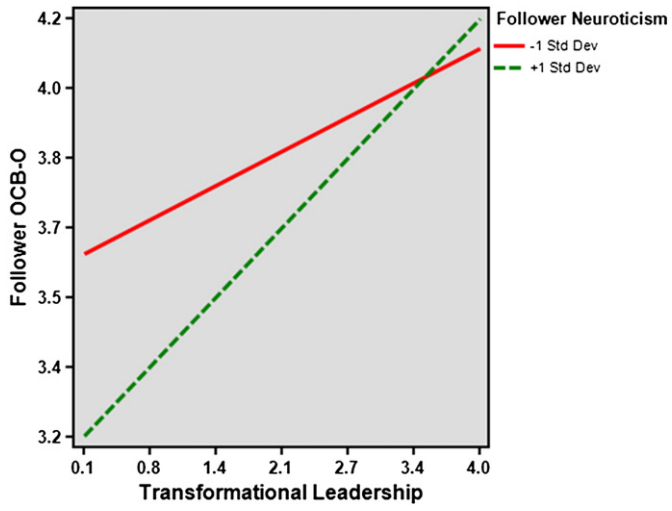

Fig. 2. Interaction effect between transformational leadership and follower neuroticism on OCB-O.

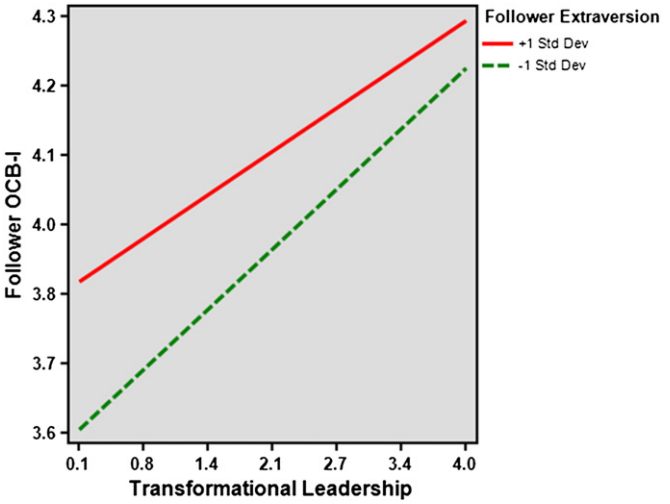

Fig. 3. Interaction effect between transformational leadership and follower extraversion on OCB-I.

Hypothesis 3b predicted that follower extraversion moderates the relationship between transformational leadership and OCB-O. Again, after controlling for the organization, follower tenure with the leader, and the other FFM traits, we entered the interaction term and found it was significant ($\gamma_{21} = -0.95$, $p < .05$; Table 2, Model 6). The deviance difference test result (Model 4 vs. Model 6; Table 2) also showed that the interaction between follower extraversion and transformational leadership significantly improved the fit of the model to the data: $\Delta\chi^2\ (1) = 4.80$, $p < .05$. To interpret this effect, the relationship between transformational leadership and follower extraversion in predicting follower OCB-O was plotted at high and low levels of follower extraversion (± 1 standard deviation around the mean; Fig. 4). The pattern of results was consistent with the hypothesized form of the interaction; OCB-O was positively related to transformational leadership, and the relationship was stronger for those with low levels of extraversion than for those with high levels of extraversion, supporting Hypothesis 3b.

Furthermore, for informational purposes, we also examined the above relationships using the four dimensions of transformational leadership rather than just the higher order factor to examine whether the four dimensions differentially impact OCB[1]. While the higher order transformational leadership factor fit the data relatively well, the fit with the four factors examined individually also yielded similar fit: $\chi^2_{164} = 1282.03$; CFI = .98; NNFI = .97; RMSEA = .09; SRMR = .04. We first re-examined Hypotheses 1a–1b that transformational leadership would be positively related to follower OCB-I and OCB-O after controlling for effects of the organization, follower tenure with the leader, and FFM traits. When each of the four transformational leadership dimensions was examined individually, each dimension was significantly related to both OCB-I and OCB-O—idealized influence ($\gamma_{01} = .12$; $p < .001$ for OCB-I and $\gamma_{01} = .17$; $p < .001$ for OCB-O), inspirational motivation ($\gamma_{01} = .10$; $p < .001$; for OCB-I and $\gamma_{01} = .13$; $p < .001$; for OCB-O), intellectual stimulation ($\gamma_{01} = .08$; $p < .01$; for OCB-I and $\gamma_{01} = .12$; $p < .001$; for OCB-O), and individualized consideration ($\gamma_{01} = .15$; $p < .001$; for OCB-I and $\gamma_{01} = .18$; $p < .001$; for OCB-O). However when all four transformational leadership dimensions were entered into the same model simultaneously, only individualized consideration had significant positive relationships with both OCB-I ($\gamma_{013} = .20$; $p < .001$) and OCB-O ($\gamma_{013} = .20$; $p < .001$).

We next examined whether follower neuroticism moderated the relationship between each of the transformational leadership dimensions and the two OCB factors after controlling for the nine organization dummy variables, follower tenure with the leader, and the other FFM traits. For both OCB-I and OCB-O, idealized influence and inspirational motivation were the two transformational leadership dimensions that interacted with neuroticism to lead to increased OCB, such that the relationship was stronger for those with higher levels of neuroticism: idealized influence ($\gamma_{51} = 3.12$; $p < .001$ for OCB-I and $\gamma_{51} = 3.51$; $p < .05$ for OCB-O) and inspirational motivation ($\gamma_{51} = 3.73$; $p < .001$ for OCB-I and $\gamma_{51} = 4.63$; $p < .001$ for OCB-O).

We then examined whether follower extraversion moderated the relationship between each of the transformational leadership dimensions and the two OCB factors after controlling for the nine organization dummy variables, follower tenure with the leader, and the other FFM traits. For both OCB-I and OCB-O, all four transformational leadership dimensions interacted with extraversion to lead to increased OCB, such that the relationship was stronger for those with lower levels of extraversion: idealized influence ($\gamma_{21} = -0.63$; $p < .01$ for OCB-I and $\gamma_{21} = -0.66$; $p < .05$ for OCB-O), inspirational motivation ($\gamma_{21} = -1.58$; $p < .05$ for OCB-I and $\gamma_{21} = -1.84$; $p < .05$ for OCB-O), intellectual stimulation ($\gamma_{21} = -0.55$; $p < .01$ for OCB-I and $\gamma_{21} = -0.58$; $p < .05$ for OCB-O), and individualized consideration ($\gamma_{21} = -1.80$; $p < .05$ for OCB-I and $\gamma_{21} = -2.04$; $p < .05$ for OCB-O).

[1] Thank you to our anonymous reviewers for suggesting this analysis.

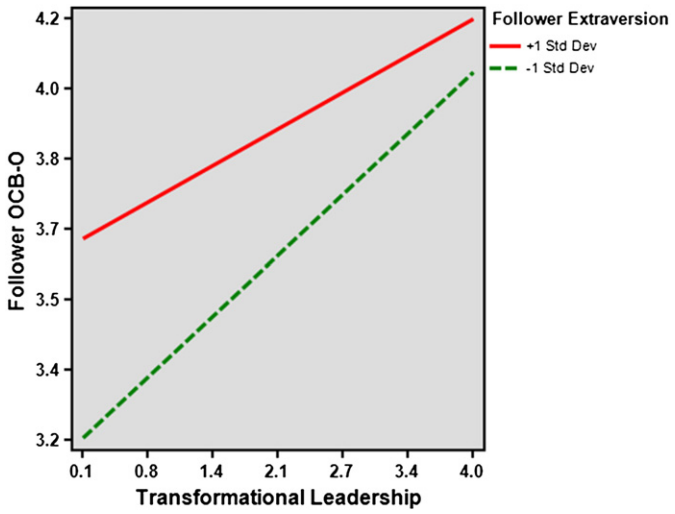

Fig. 4. Interaction effect between transformational leadership and follower extraversion on OCB-O.

Discussion

We examined the moderating roles of follower neuroticism and extraversion in the relationship between transformational leadership and follower OCB based on a sample of 215 leaders and 1284 followers in ten organizations. To our knowledge, this is the first study to systematically examine the role of follower neuroticism and extraversion as moderators in the relationship process between transformational leaders and follower OCB and thus furthers our understanding of the complicated cross-level relationship between leaders and followers.

Theoretical implications

Our first set of hypotheses dealt with the effects of transformational leadership on follower OCB dimensions. Similar to results from prior empirical research, we replicated findings that transformational leadership was positively related to two factors of follower OCB in our ten-organization sample whether viewed as a higher-order factor or as four individual transformational leadership dimensions.

Our main theoretical implication is that follower neuroticism and extraversion play a moderating role in the cross-level relationships between transformational leadership and both factors of follower OCB. These interactions are interesting examples of how transformational leadership and follower personality traits may interact to influence follower OCB. Our findings are important as research strives to learn more about the role of followers by continuing to move further away from focus on the leader as the sole source of leadership (Avolio & Yammarino, 2013). Unlike the mixed results from a prior study that considered neuroticism as a moderator in the relationship between charismatic leadership and follower burnout (De Hoogh & Den Hartog, 2009), our results are consistent with the hypothesized form of the interactions in that transformational leadership was positively related to OCB-I and OCB-O and both of the relationships were stronger for neurotic followers.

In addition, we also found that the positive relationships between transformational leadership and OCB-I and OCB-O were stronger for those with low levels of extraversion, demonstrating that transformational leaders have more of an effect on introverted followers in terms of inspiring and motivating them to perform OCBs. Transformational leaders tend to be able to instill a sense of confidence and security within introverted followers. In combination, these results show that the impact of transformational leadership on OCB becomes stronger to neurotic or introverted followers.

Our results also provide implications for theory development in the transformational leadership literature. For informational purposes, we further tested whether the individual transformational leadership dimensions have different moderating effects depending on the differing levels of follower extraversion and neuroticism. All four transformational leadership dimensions interacted with extraversion to lead to higher levels of OCB-I and OCB-O, such that the relationship was stronger for those who are more introverted. However, we also found that idealized influence and inspirational motivation were the two transformational leadership dimensions that interacted with neuroticism to lead to increased OCB-I and OCB-O, such that the relationship was stronger for those with higher levels of neuroticism. This is likely because the confidence and enthusiasm provided by a transformational leader allows these followers to become more self-confident and able to derive energy through inspirational motivation. Through idealized influence that emphasizes trust, values, and ethics, transformational leaders appeal to the emotions of followers and instill pride and further self-confidence. Consequently, followers are likely to feel more comfortable going above and beyond in terms of performing OCB-I and OCB-O.

The finding that idealized influence (emphasizing group identity) and inspirational motivation (communicating a group vision) were the two transformational leadership dimensions that interacted with neuroticism in the current study aligns well with recent work of Wang & Howell (2010) who demonstrated that those two dimensions are both considered to be group-focused

transformational leadership behaviors (such as behavior aimed to "communicate the importance of group goals, develop shared values and beliefs, and inspire unified effort to achieve group goals"; p. 1135) that are both positively associated with group performance and helping behaviors (OCB). Alternatively, it is possible that intellectual stimulation and individualized consideration did not yield significant interactions with neuroticism because those dimensions have been shown to be individual-focused transformational leadership behaviors that relate to task performance and personal initiative rather than to group performance and helping behaviors (Wang & Howell, 2010).

Limitations and future research

Although this study possesses several strengths, there are limitations. First, there is heavy reliance on follower ratings so results may be inflated by common source bias. Followers provided ratings of transformational leadership and their own personality, while OCB data was obtained from leaders. However, common source bias is not as much of an issue in moderator studies as it is in mediator studies (Podsakoff et al., 1996). Further, follower OCB outcomes were rated by leaders. Second, the data was largely cross-sectional in nature so any causal conclusions need to be interpreted with caution. While the model is grounded in theory and prior empirical research, future longitudinal or experimental research is needed to address the causal directions demonstrated in the current study. Third, the ICC(2) value for transformational leadership is slightly lower than what is considered ideal possibly due to the small group sizes (Bliese, 2000), however, is still higher than what has been shown in other published transformational leadership research.

Fourth, the large percentage of females in the follower sample (74.5%) may raise questions about the generalization of the findings. The large percentage was due in large part to the three healthcare organizations in the sample consisting primarily of nurses who tend to be female. However, results of hypothesis testing remained generally the same (same direction) regardless of whether all companies were examined simultaneously or broken down by industry/category.

Lastly, although the use of HLM with only 6 followers per group could be called into question, Hofmann (1997, p. 740) stated that "if a large number of groups is present, then the number of observations required per group is reduced (e.g., 150 groups requires only five persons per group to obtain a power estimate of .90)". We also feel that the large sample and multi-organization focus gives the study increased external validity and generalizability.

The current study raises several questions to be considered in future research. The significant cross-level interactions of transformational leadership with follower neuroticism and extraversion should provide ample reason for researchers to continue this line of research within the leadership field. Our results are consistent with our theoretical arguments that low levels of follower neuroticism (i.e., high levels of emotional stability) and high levels of extraversion may serve as substitutes for a transformational leader as the possible effect of transformational leadership on OCB is diminished for emotionally stable followers (i.e., those who are low on neuroticism) or extraverted followers. Although transformational leaders also are more effective at helping followers cope with stress (Bass & Riggio, 2006), it is possible that neurotic followers may experience more stress[2] (via burnout, as was shown in De Hoogh & Den Hartog (2009)). This is because neurotics may be less able to cope with the ongoing pressure to meet leaders' increasing expectations. As a result, it could lead to performing more OCB but also to increased levels of stress as well. Future research should also examine this possibility.

In the FFM trait literature, there are other traits that may play a substitute for transformational leadership, and we encourage researchers to more fully examine other follower personality traits or facets of personality traits (such as dutifulness or achievement striving for conscientiousness, altruism for agreeableness, and assertiveness for extraversion) to see how they impact response to leadership as it is possible that some will interact positively with transformational leadership behaviors while others may interact negatively. In addition, future research should examine broader conceptualizations of personality traits such as core self-evaluations (i.e., a composite of locus of control, neuroticism, self-esteem, and generalized self-efficacy) or resiliency.

Future research is also needed to determine whether certain dimensions of transformational leadership are the primary driving forces within relationships supported in prior research. Using a higher order transformational leadership factor has become quite common, but perhaps researchers need to consider examining the individual dimensions more often. Especially when researchers examine the interactions of transformational leadership with follower narrow characteristics, as the principle of compatibility suggests, it may benefit researchers to examine specific dimensions of transformational leadership so as to enhance its predictive power. Further research is also needed to examine whether the current findings generalize to other dimensions of the Full Range of Leadership Model (Bass, 1985) or other leadership theories. It is possible that transformational leaders will be able to positively influence those with high levels of certain personality traits as leadership may also serve as a situational cue that causes certain followers to more fully express their personality traits (trait activation theory; Tett & Burnett, 2003; Tett & Guterman, 2000). Trait activation theory has been supported in some leadership research (such as Colbert & Witt, 2009) who demonstrated that goal-focused leadership moderates the relationship between conscientiousness and job performance.

Finally, it may be a fruitful avenue for researchers to advance our model by including moderated mediation mechanisms. We found that a transformational leader can impact neurotic or introverted followers positively enough that they engage in higher levels of OCB despite their natural tendencies of being nervous, worried, and lacking confidence or being shy, withdrawn, and solitary. This may indicate that transformational leaders are likely to put such followers at ease and instill a sense of calm and confidence within these followers. This is partially due to the ability of transformational leaders to strengthen followers' self-efficacy (Bandura, 1997) through behaviors such as helping them learn from past experiences, bringing out initiative, increasing their confidence and competence, celebrating small successes, verbal persuasion, and encouragement (Sosik & Jung, 2010). Thus, self-efficacy or empowerment may be one of the

[2] Thank you to our anonymous reviewers for suggesting this addition.

potential mediating mechanisms whereby the interactions of transformational leadership and follower characteristics are related to follower behavioral outcomes.

Practical implications

This study also provides important contributions for managers and organizations as both can benefit from understanding that leaders should take followers' personality characteristics into account since some followers are more susceptible to the effects of transformational leaders than others. Leaders need to understand how their behavior interacts with follower characteristics (such as personality traits) in influencing follower outcomes. Leadership training that focuses on the benefits of leader–follower complementary characteristics will be very important as follower characteristics may well influence whom they will want to work for and also whether to continue working for them (Barling, 2014). Leaders need to be able to display different behaviors to motivate followers who are neurotic or introverted.

Managers who demonstrate transformational leadership behaviors on a consistent basis can expect higher OCB (regardless of personality), but this effect will be stronger for followers who possess high levels of neuroticism or low levels of extraversion. For organizations interested in increasing OCB (whether directed toward other individuals or toward the organization), transformational leadership behaviors are likely to have more of an impact on neurotic or introverted followers. Our results show how transformational leaders can even guide those who are nervous, lacking confidence, shy, and withdrawn to perform more OCB. This is important for organizations to know so that they can not only attract the right employees but also retain them since results suggest that a transformational leader is critical for neurotic and introverted individuals to perform beyond formal job requirements. Neurotic followers are more likely to worry, be nervous, and lack confidence, while introverted followers are more likely to be shy and withdrawn. It is not the natural tendency for either neurotics or introverts to feel secure and self-confident. As such, it will likely take a transformational leader focused on trust, ethics, and values to instill faith and confidence and thus provide them with these resources since they do not come naturally to these followers. As a result, they benefit more from the trust, confidence, inspiration, and personal developmental attention demonstrated by transformational leaders.

Additionally, the two transformational leadership dimensions with the strongest neuroticism moderating effects were those of idealized influence and inspirational motivation. Thus, when managers lead neurotic followers, group-focused transformational leadership behaviors (e.g., emphasizing shared values, communicating an enthusiastic vision that builds commitment) will be more effective to encourage cooperation and build trust while leading to increased helping behavior (OCB).

Conclusion

Building upon Kelley's (1988) notion that not all corporate success is due to leadership but also to effective followers, we intended to bring focus to the followers by examining how follower personality interacts with transformational leadership to influence receptiveness and response to those leaders. Our findings thus contribute to the transformational leadership and personality literatures by demonstrating that for those with high levels of neuroticism or low levels of extraversion, the inspirational and developmental nature of transformational leaders can guide these employees to perform more OCB despite their natural tendencies to worry, lack confidence, and be shy and withdrawn. Our results can help researchers build more nuanced research and theory development on the leader–follower interactions so that we can gain knowledge pertaining to the complex nature of leadership processes.

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