THE CHARACTER TO LEAD: A CLOSER LOOK AT CHARACTER IN LEADERSHIP

Myranda S. Grahek, A. Dale Thompson, and Adria Toliver
Leadership Worth Following, LLC

This study explored The Worthy Leadership Model's (Thompson, Grahek, Phillips, & Fay, 2008) "Character to Lead" construct, which encompasses three factors (Personal Integrity and Ethics; Organizational Integrity and Courage; and Humility, Gratitude, and Forgiveness) and nine dimensions (personal integrity, ethics, openness, organizational integrity, courage, power, humility, gratitude, and forgiveness). This article reports the results of an empirical test of the model's character construct using a behavioral measure of character in leadership. The measure (The Worthy Leadership Profile for Executives, WLP*e*) consisted of self-ratings by director and executive-level leaders ($N = 275$) along with ratings of these leaders by their managers, direct reports, peers, and others ($N = 4,127$ raters). Psychometric characteristics of the ratings are reported along with the relationship of ratings of character in leadership to selected personality variables. The article also examines the degree to which managers, peers, and direct reports perceived factors of character (as compared to factors of capacity and commitment) as being important to leaders' roles and to the likelihood of future success and/or failure. Finally, the study explored the degree to which ratings on the character construct were related to employees' perceptions of selected job-related outcomes (past job performance, failure to reach full potential, perceived support for the leadership efforts of others, and overall perceptions of worthy leadership).

Keywords: character, leadership, worthy leadership, multirater, 360 feedback

In a previous paper we (Thompson, Grahek, Phillips, & Fay, 2008) proposed a model of leadership called "Worthy Leadership" (i.e., "the ability to guide, direct, or influence people in a way that has great merit, character, and value," p. 367). This model included three constructs that we labeled: The Capacity to Lead, The Commitment to Lead, and The Character to Lead. Foundational to the model was the intention to bring together, in one model, what was believed ultimately to provide a more complete understanding and description of the complex nature of leadership, without making it so complex that it would have limited practical application.

The Worthy Leadership Model intentionally placed the discussion of character in leadership (in our model, "The Character to Lead") squarely on the table alongside the more well established leadership dimensions of intelligence, knowledge, and experience-related factors in leadership (in our model, "The Capacity to Lead"), and what executives want to do and care about in leadership (in our model, "The Commitment to Lead"). It was hoped that by doing so, consulting and other psychologists would ultimately be better able to describe, explain, and predict both success and failure in leadership as well as important business outcomes. The character in leadership construct, in particular, was intended to bring a tangible definition and appropriate balance to an aspect of leadership that, on the one hand, is all too easily reduced to one-dimensional sweeping judgments about whether a person is judged to be "good" or "bad" (and to halo-related assumptions that so easily flow from such attributions), or, on the other hand, to the view that character in leadership is too complex to understand, measure, and appropriately use to anticipate important leadership and business outcomes.

The current study responds to the need to begin looking more closely at the model and its many assumptions. Since The Character to Lead construct is the newest and least researched portion of the model, it was chosen first for examination. The current study used data collected from The Worthy Leadership Profile for Executives (WLP*e),* a multirater feedback process based upon The Worthy Leadership Model (Thompson et al., 2008). The study examines the degree to which character in leadership could be behaviorally measured, to what extent it is multidimensional, and the relationship of character to selected variables. The study then looked at similarities and differences among individuals and their leaders in the degree to which components of The Character to Lead were perceived as being important to individuals' roles. This study also examines the perceived importance of character as contributing to leaders' future leadership success and/or failure. Lastly, the study presents data on the perceptions of raters about the degree to which character in leadership is seen as related to organizationally important outcomes including past performance, the failure to reach full potential, followership, and to overall worthy leadership.

Operationalizing Character in Leadership

As background, The Worthy Leadership Model is comprised of three constructs labeled by Thompson et al. (2008) as The Capacity to Lead (hereafter, "capacity"), The Commitment to Lead (hereafter, "commitment"), and The Character to Lead (hereafter, "character"). The Worthy Leadership Model was built using literature reviews on leadership, analyses of failed leaders, in-depth interviews with senior executives, and from extensive experience in assessing and coaching senior leaders. (For a complete review of the model and its origins, see Thompson et al., 2008.) The goal was to build a model of leadership anchored in readily observable and measurable behaviors that would help predict success in leadership and other important business outcomes.

Of specific focus in the present study is character in leadership, which in The Worthy Leadership Model, encompasses three factors and nine dimensions. The construct was not based upon any one theory of personality, leadership, or performance (Thompson et al., 2008). That said, it is acknowledged that many theories, such as Big Five, Transformational Leadership, Positive Psychology, Ethical Leadership, and so forth, could be represented in it. Within the character construct, we identified three factors: Personal Integrity and Ethics (PIE), Organizational Integrity and Courage (OIC), and Humility, Gratitude, and Forgiveness (HGF), which will now be described.

Personal Integrity and Ethics (PIE)

We view the first factor, Personal Integrity and Ethics (PIE), as being fundamental to leadership and as similar to commonly used definitions of "integrity" (e.g., adhering to moral and ethical principles, honesty) and "trustworthiness" (e.g., taking responsibility for one's conduct and obligations) (TheFreeDictionary.com, n.d.). Our theoretical definition of PIE encompasses three dimensions (personal integrity, ethics, and openness). Leaders acting in a manner consistent with high scores on the PIE factor are viewed as maintaining consistency in their words and behavior across situations,

holding themselves and others to high ethical standards, and candidly and openly sharing information with others.

Organizational Integrity and Courage (OIC)

We labeled the second factor Organizational Integrity and Courage (OIC). Our view is that OIC raises the bar on integrity, and identifies the need for leaders to take personal accountability not only for their own behavior, but also for the behavior of their organizations. OIC in our model consists of three dimensions: organizational integrity, courage, and power. We argue that leaders acting with high OIC help to ensure that organizational promises and commitments are kept, courageously confront difficult issues, and have an equitable, fair, and responsible approach to the use of power. While OIC might have different specific manifestations at different organizational levels, we believe that OIC can and likely should be demonstrated at all levels of the organization.

Humility, Gratitude, and Forgiveness (HGF)

The third and final factor is Humility, Gratitude, and Forgiveness (HGF). HGF is seen as a fundamental orientation to leadership and life that includes effectively handling oneself in a non-egocentric, positive, and offense-resistant manner. In The Worthy Leadership Model, HGF is broken out into three dimensions (Humility, Gratitude, and Forgiveness). We believe that leaders acting with HGF will represent their contributions accurately, accept praise graciously, show sincere appreciation to others, resist taking personal offense, and help others grow through failures without resentment or retribution.

Research Questions

Having operationalized our views of character in leadership, many important questions were raised. Five of the most notable ones included:
- Can character in leadership be measured?
- Is what is being measured character in leadership?
- Is character in leadership viewed as important?
- Do colleagues (i.e., leaders, direct reports, peers) perceive character in leadership as likely to contribute to future success and failure?
- What important outcomes might be related to character in leadership?

Can Character in Leadership Be Measured?

To begin answering the question "Can we measure character in leadership?" we compared the descriptive statistics of character to the descriptive statistics of capacity and commitment. We also compared the internal consistency of our measure of character to similar multirater and personality-based measures of character. In doing so, we wanted to know if our character measure was psychometrically similar to other well researched, validated, and applied measures of character and similar to variables commonly associated with character. The second component of this question examined how best to describe character in leadership. We propose that character in leadership is multidimensional. We used confirmatory factor analysis to test whether character in leadership was best described by one overall construct (i.e., The Character to Lead), three factors (i.e., PIE, OIC, HGF), or nine dimensions (i.e., Personal Integrity, Ethics, Openness, Organizational Integrity, Courage, Power, Humility, Gratitude, and Forgiveness).

Is What Is Being Measured Character in Leadership?

To assess the validity of our measure of character we compared our dimensions of character to character-related traits like responsibility and work ethic (with which high correlations were expected), and with leadership-related traits like dominance, ascendancy, and achievement (which

were predicted to have lower correlations). More specifically, research has shown that five scales of the California Psychological Inventory (CPI 260®; Gough & Bradley, 2005) (e.g., Responsibility [Re], Social Conformity [So], Self Control [Sc], Achievement via Conformance [Ac], and Work Orientation [Wo]) are related to various aspects of character (Hogan, 1973). Empathy (Em) has also been identified as an important component of some aspects of character (Grief & Hogan, 1973). Additionally, Hogan and Ones (1997) proposed that conscientious individuals, over time, develop an identity of a "person with integrity," and identified Ac and Flexibility (Fx) as factors measuring conscientiousness.

In the current study, we attempted to assess the validity of our dimensions of character using personality traits that have been found to be related to character in other research. Specifically, we examined the correlation of our behavioral ratings of character dimensions to the above-named scales of the CPI 260®: Re, So, Sc, Ac, Wo, Fx, and Em (Gough & Bradley, 2005). We also examined the relationship of dimensions of character with Amicability (Am), defined by Gough and Bradley as individuals viewed as cooperative and appreciative of others. While past research has not examined the relationship between Am and character in leadership, we hypothesized that highly amicable leaders would be more likely than those low on amicability to use power appropriately and to demonstrate gratitude and forgiveness toward others (i.e., HGF in The Worthy Leadership Model).

Additionally, we looked to differentiate character in leadership from other forms of leadership effectiveness and emergent leadership by looking for divergent validity. We hypothesized that character in leadership was different from some of the other well established and often assessed personality traits that are frequently related to leadership. To test this hypothesis, we first examined the relationship of our dimensions of character to two CPI 260® composite scales: Leadership (Lp; defined as confidence in their ability to lead, manage, and direct people) and Managerial Potential (Mp; as the willingness to assume responsibility for the work of others and all the tasks that go along with management responsibility) (Manoogian, 2006, pp. 30, 41). Additionally intelligence, dominance, and femininity–masculinity have been found to be related to perceptions of leadership effectiveness (Lord, De Vader, & Alliger, 1986). To serve as a personality substitute for intelligence we looked at the CPI 260®'s Conceptual Fluency (Cf.: comfort with intellectual and conceptual manners). We also examined Dominance (Do: dominance), and Sensitivity (Sn: femininity–masculinity). Finally, we examined four additional scales (Cs: Capacity for Status, Sy: Sociability, Ai: Achievement via Independence, and Sp: Social Presence) identified by Gough (1984, 1990) as significantly related to peer and direct reports' perceptions of emergent leadership. It was expected that all of these traits would have little relationship to our dimensions of character.

Is Character in Leadership Viewed as Being Important?

To examine this question we again turned to the multirater feedback process. As part of the WLP*e* process, leaders and their managers identified the factors they felt were most important for the leader's role by assigning importance ratings to the 12 factors of The Worthy Leadership Model. We hypothesized that the three factors of character would be perceived as having varying levels of importance across leadership roles. We assumed that PIE would be perceived by participants, and likely their leaders, as critically important to participants' roles more frequently than other factors of the model. This would be consistent with previous research which has found individuals perceived integrity as important to their leadership roles (Wood & Vilkinas, 2007). We further hypothesized that OIC and HGF would be identified as being critically important less frequently than other factors of the model.

Do Colleagues Perceive Character in Leadership as Likely to Contribute to Future Success and Failure?

We hypothesized that the three factors of character would not be identified by raters as being likely to contribute to leaders' success in reaching their full potential at a level greater than chance (raters were asked to select the three of 12 factors that would most likely contribute to the leaders' potential success). Our hypothesis derived from research showing that leadership success is most often found

in research to be most related to capacity-related variables (e.g., intelligence; Schmidt & Hunter, 2004) or ascendancy-related variables (e.g., dominance; Lord, De Vader, & Alliger, 1986). We expected raters in our sample to perceive similar factors (e.g., capacity-related factors) as most likely to contribute to future success. However, we believed that failure in leadership might not be just the absence (or inverse) of success, and hypothesized that the factors of character would be identified as likely to contribute to a leader's failure to reach his or her full potential.

What Important Outcomes Might Be Related to Character in Leadership?

Lastly, we wanted to investigate what important outcomes might be related to, or even predicted by, our measure of character in leadership. The multirater data allowed us to begin addressing this question by examining the perceptions of these possible relationships. Although Nowack (2009) noted there are many obstacles to using multirater feedback in research (e.g., correlations of ratings between and within groups and rater biases), some researchers (Brown & Trevino, 2006) have suggested that employee perceptions may provide the best source of information on character in leadership.

During the course of our use of the WLP*e*, we have collected data on perceptions of important leadership outcomes for research (nonapplied) purposes. These outcomes included: evaluations of past performance, failure (likelihood that leaders will fail to reach their full potential), followership (likelihood that leaders will genuinely support the leadership efforts of others), and our own concept of worthy leadership (demonstrating "leadership worth following"). Previous research (e.g., Brown, Trevino, & Harrison, 2005) examining the relationship of character in leadership to important outcomes has found people are more satisfied with leaders who demonstrate high character and they perceive ethics as being related to positive perceptions of leadership (Morgan, 1993). Hogan, Curphy, and Hogan (1994) found that while leaders' ratings of individuals' overall effectiveness were largely influenced by judgments of technical competence (capacity), direct reports' ratings of an individual's overall effectiveness were largely influenced by judgments of integrity (character). When Kouzes and Posner (2004) surveyed characteristics people looked for in leaders whose direction they would willingly follow and admire, 88% indicated honesty (in our model, being trustworthy and demonstrating consistency between word and deed). These findings suggest that character in leadership may not be related to overall effectiveness, but rather to other important outcomes (e.g., judgments of character and honesty, and others' willingness to follow).

In the current study, we predicted that (1) the character construct would not account for additional variance in past performance beyond that accounted for by the capacity and/or commitment constructs. Instead, we hypothesized that (2) character would be negatively related to the likelihood that a leader will fail to reach his or her full potential and account for more variance in failure than the capacity and/or commitment constructs. We also hypothesized that (3) character would be more related to the degree to which the leader is seen as genuinely supporting the leadership efforts of others (followership) than to capacity and/or commitment. Lastly, we hypothesized that (4) capacity, commitment and character would be equally related to overall ratings of worthy leadership. Specifically, we predicted that the greatest portion of variance in worthy leadership would be explained by accounting for all three constructs.

Method

Sample

The sample consisted of 274 participants from various, primarily retail, organizations who took part in a number of different leadership development programs that included a multirater process between 2005 and 2010. The programs, provided by Leadership Worth Following, LLC, a Dallas-based consulting firm, ranged from stand-alone multirater feedback experiences to multiday assessment processes that included an interview, simulations, and problem-solving and work-style inventories. Raters were selected by the participant and typically included a primary leader, secondary leader, direct reports, peers, and others. Raters received an email requesting their

feedback for the participant. All nonleader responses were voluntary as raters could decline to complete the survey. There were a total of 4,127 raters whose data was used in the study. This included persons who rated themselves (identified hereafter as "participants") and all of the persons who rated them. The mean number of raters per participant was 14.06 ($SD = 4.02$). All participants included in the sample had a minimum of five nonself raters which could include one primary leader and one secondary leader. In the current sample, 96.3% of participants received feedback from primary leaders and 76.6% from secondary leaders. Direct report, peer, and other categories were optional, but required three raters when used. The average participant was rated by 4.4 direct reports, 4.6 peers, and 3.3 others. Participants were asked to provide demographic information for research purposes. This included education, age, gender, ethnicity, organizational level and time in their current role, geographic location, and industry. The majority of participants (82.8%) had been in their roles for more than one year, 92.7% had at least some college education, 72.9% were male and primarily white or Caucasian (72.3%), Hispanic or Latino (20.1%), or African American (4.4%).

Measures

Worthy Leadership Profile for Executives (WLP*e*). Participants were asked to complete an online multirater tool (The Worthy Leadership Profile for Executives [WLP*e*]) which was based on The Worthy Leadership Model (Thompson et al., 2008). The overall survey included ratings of behaviors, ratings of the importance of the 12 factors of The Worthy Leadership Model, and ratings on criterion-related items.

Behavioral ratings. The WLP*e* consists of 120 behaviors assessing 12 factors, and organized into our three constructs (capacity, commitment, and character). Raters were asked to indicate the extent to which the participant demonstrated each described behavior on a 5-point Likert scale (i.e., 1 = no extent, 2 = little extent, 3 = some extent, 4 = great extent, 5 = very great extent, 6 = not applicable). Dimension and construct ratings were calculated by averaging all behaviors corresponding to the specific factors and dimensions. Ratings of "Not Applicable" were not included in the calculation of mean ratings.

Importance ratings. Participants and their primary and secondary leaders were asked to rate the relative importance of each of The Worthy Leadership Model's 12 factors to the participant's current position by identifying four factors as *important*, four as *very important*, and four as *critically important*.

Criterion items. Lastly, all of the raters, except for the participants themselves, were asked six additional criterion- or outcome-related items that were not included in participant feedback reports, but were used for research purposes. These questions included:

- An evaluation of what factors of The Worthy Leadership Model would most contribute to the participant's success or failure, namely, "If this individual reaches his or her full potential, strengths in which three factors (of the 12 factors of The Worthy Leadership Model) will contribute most to his or her success?" (Contribute to Success), and "If this individual fails to reach his or her full potential, weaknesses in which three factors (of the 12 factors of The Worthy Leadership Model) will contribute most to his or her failure?" (Contribute to Failure);
- An evaluation of the participant's past performance, namely, "How would you rate this individual's overall performance during the past year? (Past Performance)" (1 = below average to 5 = above average);
- A prediction of the participant's likelihood of failure in reaching his or her full potential namely, "How likely is it that this individual could fail to reach his or her full potential because of factors under his or her control? (Failure)" (1 = very unlikely to 5 = very likely);
- An evaluation of the participant's willingness to demonstrate followership, namely, "To what extent does this individual genuinely support the leadership efforts of senior leaders, peers, and subordinates? (Followership)" (1 = no extent to 5 = very great extent); and

- An evaluation of the participant's Worthy Leadership, namely, "To what extent does this individual demonstrate leadership worth following? (Worthy Leadership)" (1 = To No Extent to 5 = To a Very Great Extent).

California Psychological Inventory (CPI 260®).   Most participants ($N = 220$) in the current data set also completed the California Psychological Inventory (CPI 260®) as part of a more extensive development assessment process. This inventory is derived from the full 434-item version of the CPI 260®, and includes 29 scales intended to assess attributes or "folk-concepts" that people use to understand themselves and others (Gough & Bradley, 2005). In this research the following scales were used: Ac, Ai, Am, Cf, Cs, Do, Em, Fx, In, Lp, Mp, Re, Sc, Sn, So, Sp, and Sy.

Methodology

The data were analyzed at the construct level (i.e., The Capacity to Lead, The Commitment to Lead, and The Character to Lead), factor level (i.e., PIE, OIC, HGF), dimension level (i.e., personal integrity, ethics, openness, organizational integrity, courage, power, humility, gratitude, and forgiveness), and item level (e.g., Follows through on personal commitments and promises) using a variety of techniques. First, descriptive statistics were completed and psychometric properties of the measure were examined. The WLP*e* went through a small revision in 2007. The data used for this portion of the current study only includes completed surveys for the revised version. Means, standard deviations, variances, and inter-item correlations were calculated at the dimension level.

Because we were relying on a single method (ratings), we needed to determine if there were indeed (as hypothesized) three factors and/or nine dimensions that define The Character to Lead. We therefore conducted a confirmatory factor analysis (CFA), with maximum likelihood estimation, on the ratings of a sample of all nonself raters completing the revised version of the survey ($N = 3,853$). This was intended to test whether character in leadership was best described by one overall construct (i.e., character), by three specific factors (i.e., PIE, OIC, HGF), or by nine separate dimensions (i.e., personal integrity, ethics, openness, organizational integrity, courage, power, humility, gratitude, and forgiveness).

We then explored the convergent and divergent validity of the Worthy Leadership Profile's character dimensions with scales on the California Psychological Inventory (CPI 260®) thought to be related to similar character concepts and leadership effectiveness and emergence. In this analysis, the averages of all nonself ratings by dimension were correlated with participants' CPI 260® scores, which were completed as part of their development experience. Data for participants completing either version of the WLP*e* and the CPI 260® were used in this and subsequent analyses.

Next, we examined raters' perceptions of what was considered important for participants' roles as well as what factors were seen as likely to contribute to participants' future success and/or failure. The percentages of participants, primary leaders, and secondary leaders identifying the factors of character considered to be critically important were computed and compared to the likelihood those percentages were less than, or greater than, what would be expected by chance using a chi-square test. All nonself raters also selected the three factors they saw as most likely to contribute to the participants' success and failure in reaching their full potential. The percentage of raters identifying factors of character as critical to success and failure were computed and compared to the likelihood those percentages were less than, or greater than, what would be expected by chance using a chi-square test.

Lastly, hierarchical regression analyses were used to compute the relationship between the constructs (character, capacity and commitment) and four criterion items (past performance, failure, followership, and worthy leadership). For this analysis, scores for the constructs were calculated by averaging all nonself ratings by item and then averaging all items within the construct. Changes in adjusted R-squared (ΔR^2) were examined for the incremental validity the character construct might add to capacity and commitment. Semipartial correlations were examined to compare the unique variance accounted for by character.

Table 1
Descriptive Statistics and Variable Correlations for Worthy Leadership Constructs Ratings

	M	SD	% Not Rated	Capacity to Lead	Commitment to Lead	Character to Lead
Capacity to Lead	4.00	.78	4.35%	(.79)		
Commitment to Lead	4.04	.78	5.84%	.91	(.78)	
Character to Lead	4.07	.77	4.51%	.85	.94	(.78)

Note. Numbers in parentheses represent Cronbach's alpha; all correlations are significant at the .001 level.

Results

Descriptive Statistics

Means, standard deviations, variances, and interscale correlations are shown in Table 1. The results will be summarized around the major questions raised in the research.

Can Character in Leadership Be Measured?

The average item descriptive statistics for character, capacity, and commitment, are displayed in Table 1. The mean, standard deviation, Cronbach's alpha, percentage of items not rated for the character construct are consistent with those for the other constructs. The only significant, albeit small, difference was in the mean score for character compared to the means for the capacity and commitment (character to capacity, .07, $t(2, 727) = 13.204$, $p < .001$; character to commitment, .03, $t(2, 727) = 7.151$, $p < .001$). The descriptive statistics and correlations for the character factors and dimensions are presented in Tables 2 and 3, respectively. The high correlations among the three constructs (capacity, commitment, and character), three character factors, and nine character dimensions suggest multicollinearity. These results could be explained by mono-method bias (i.e., all data coming from the same multirater data source), or could suggest a potential weakness in the model (e.g., conceptual overlap among the dimensions) that should be explored in future research.

Dimensionality of Character

The current study did not conduct CFA on the full Worthy Leadership Model. Instead CFA was limited to the character construct to determine if it could be described multidimensionally. The results of the CFA tested the appropriateness of the one construct, three factor, and nine dimension models of character ratings completed by all nonself raters. Using the rule of thumb for normed fit indices (e.g., CFI and RFI) as posited by Sun (2005), values greater than .9 are an "acceptable" model fit, and values exceeding .95 represent a "good" model fit. According to Browne and Cudeck (1993), an RMSEA less than .08 represents an "acceptable" model fit. Fit indexes showed that the one-construct model begins to approach acceptable fit ($\chi^2 = 9260.0$, $p < .001$, CFI = .87, RFI = .84, RMSEA = .07). The three-factor model provided a slightly better fit ($\chi^2 = 8619.2$, $p < .001$,

Table 2
Descriptive Statistics and Variable Correlations for Character Factor Ratings

	M	SD	% Not Rated	PIE	OIC	HGF
Personal Integrity and Ethics (PIE)	4.15	.26	3.19%	(.92)		
Organizational Integrity and Courage (OIC)	4.03	.25	4.63%	.87	(.90)	
Humility, Gratitude, and Forgiveness (HGF)	4.00	.26	5.38%	.87	.83	(.91)

Note. Numbers in parentheses represent Cronbach's alpha; all correlations are significant at the .001 level.

Table 3
Descriptive Statistics and Variable Correlations for Character Dimension Ratings

	M	SD	# of Items	% Not Rated	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
1. Personal Integrity	4.08	.29	5	3.54%	(.83)								
2. Ethics	4.33	.24	4	4.65%	.83	(.84)							
3. Openness	4.03	.29	3	1.37%	.85	.69	(.72)						
4. Organizational Integrity	4.16	.23	4	4.65%	.83	.83	.76	(.72)					
5. Courage	3.93	.30	4	5.65%	.66	.59	.62	.79	(.78)				
6. Power	4.00	.32	3	3.60%	.81	.72	.79	.79	.61	(.84)			
7. Humility	4.04	.25	4	4.68%	.84	.78	.79	.83	.65	.86	(.74)		
8. Gratitude	4.09	.29	3	5.33%	.80	.73	.76	.76	.56	.80	.86	(.72)	
9. Forgiveness	3.89	.30	4	6.13%	.76	.66	.71	.69	.47	.86	.81	.82	(.84)

Note. Numbers in parentheses represent Cronbach's alpha; all correlations are significant at the .001 level.

CFI = .88, RFI = .85, RMSEA = .06). The nine-dimension model fits the data best with both the CFI and RMSEA reaching acceptable cut offs (χ^2 = 6526.2, p < .001, CFI = .91, RFI = .88, RMSEA = .06). See Table 4 for a full comparison.

Is What Is Being Measured Character in Leadership?

To further explore the validity of our measures of character in leadership, we examined the relationship of the nine dimensions of character to CPI 260® scales identified in previous research as significantly related to character (see Table 5). The current study did not support the relationship of our individual character variables to Fx or Em. Personal integrity, ethics, openness, organizational integrity, humility, gratitude, and forgiveness (six of the nine character dimensions) showed the greatest evidence for convergent validity with the character-related personality traits, correlating significantly with five of the remaining six CPI 260® scales we examined (Re, So, Sc, Ac, Wo, and Am). Power was also found to be related to only four scales (Re, Sc, Ac, and Wo). Courage correlated only with the Re and Am scales.

Table 6 presents the relationships between dimensions of character with the Mp and Lp scales from the CPI 260®. These findings provide evidence for convergent validity with Mp (willingness to assume responsibility for the work of others and all the tasks that go along with management responsibility (Manoogian, 2006) and divergent validity with Lp (confidence in their ability to lead, manage, and direct people (Manoogian, 2006).

In addition to examining convergent validity, we also looked for divergent validity between character and CPI 260® scales typically related to overall leadership effectiveness or emergent leadership (see Table 6). We found no statistically significant correlations between the nine dimensions of character and the five CPI 260® scales we examined (i.e., Cs, Sy, Sn, Sp, Ai). The remaining CPI 260® scales (In, Do, Cf.) were related to one or two dimensions, largely supporting our hypothesis of divergent validity. Seven of the nine dimensions of character showed no positive

Table 4
Measures of Goodness of Fit for Confirmatory Factor Analyses (CFAs)

Model	Chi square	df	p	Chi square/df	CFI	RMSEA
9-factor model	6526.2	491	<.001	13.29	.91	.056
3-factor model	8619.2	524	<.001	16.45	.88	.063
1-factor model	9260.0	527	<.001	17.57	.87	.066

Note. RMSEA = Root mean squared error of approximation.

Table 5
Correlations Between Character Dimensions and CPI 260® Scales Related to Character

Dimension Name	Responsibility (Re)	Social Conformity (So)	Self Control (Sc)	Ach. via Conformance (Ac)	Work Orientation (Wo)	Flexibility (Fx)	Empathy (Em)	Amicability (Am)
Personal Integrity	0.20**	0.14*	0.17*	0.13†	0.14*	−0.15*	−0.06	.15*
Ethics	0.22**	0.14*	0.18**	0.17*	0.17*	−0.09	−0.03	.17*
Openness	0.20**	0.13†	0.14*	0.09	0.13†	−0.11	0.01	.13*
Organizational Integrity	0.23**	0.07	0.16*	0.12†	0.15*	−0.07	−0.03	.16*
Courage	0.16**	−0.05	0.02	0.06	0.01	−0.05	−0.01	.13†
Power	0.21**	0.09	0.15*	0.12†	0.20**	−0.03	−0.03	−.02
Humility	0.24**	0.12	0.14*	0.12†	0.17*	−0.05	0.05	.18**
Gratitude	0.27**	0.20**	0.22**	0.14*	0.26**	−0.08	0.04	.16*
Forgiveness	0.23**	0.14*	0.21**	0.16*	0.21**	−0.10	0.05	.25**

† $p < .10$. * $p < .05$. ** $p < .001$.

Table 6

Correlation Between Character Dimensions and Selected CPI 260® Scales

Dimension Name	Managerial Potential (Mp)	Leadership Potential (Lp)	Dominance (Do)	Capacity for Status (Cs)	Sociability (Sy)	Social Presence (Sp)	Sensitivity (Sn)	Achievement via Independence (Ai)	Conceptual Fluency (Cf)	Independence (In)
Personal Integrity	0.16**	0.02	−0.04	−0.08	−0.08	−0.13	−0.05	−0.05	0.06	−0.13
Ethics	0.15*	0.04	−0.03	−0.05	−0.10	−0.12	0.02	−0.01	0.11	−0.10
Openness	0.11	0.02	−0.01	−0.05	−0.05	−0.10	−0.06	−0.04	0.04	−0.16*
Organizational Integrity	0.14*	0.10	0.04	−0.03	−0.07	−0.14*	−0.02	−0.06	0.04	−0.01
Courage	0.11	0.15*	0.18**	0.07	0.04	−0.01	−0.14*	−0.07	0.02	0.15*
Power	0.16**	0.06	−0.02	−0.01	−0.03	−0.06	−0.10	0.001	0.10	−0.05
Humility	0.17**	0.09	0.01	0.01	−0.01	−0.06	−0.01	0.02	0.11	−0.06
Gratitude	0.21**	0.12†	0.03	0.00	−0.02	−0.10	−0.03	0.04	0.17**	−0.06
Forgiveness	0.17**	0.04	−0.04	−0.04	−0.04	−0.08	−0.12	−0.01	0.13	−0.10

† $p < .10$.   * $p < .05$.   ** $p < .001$.

correlations to the CPI 260® scales. Courage was found to be significantly related to Do and In while negatively related to Sn. Gratitude was found to be significantly related to Cf.

Is Character in Leadership Viewed as Important?

We asked participants ($N = 274$), as well as their primary leaders ($N = 264$) and secondary leaders ($N = 210$) to classify each of the 12 factors associated with capacity, commitment and character of The Worthy Leadership Model into one of three categories of importance (*critically important*, *very important*, and *important*) for the participant's role. We tested whether the rate at which participants and their leaders identified the factors of character (i.e., PIE, OIC, and HGF) as being critically important was significantly greater than or less than chance (33%). PIE was identified as critically important by 60.2% of participants, $\chi^2(1, N = 274) = 89.13, p < .001$, 43.9% of Primary Leaders, $\chi^2(1, N = 264) = 13.36, p < .001$, and 38.6% of Secondary Leaders, $\chi^2(1, N = 210)$ 2.59, *ns*. In the case of participants, PIE was ranked second most important out of all 12 factors. OIC and HGF were identified as critically important by all three groups at rates significantly less than chance (33%). OIC was selected by 23% participants, $\chi^2(1, N = 274) = 13.184, p < .001$, 20.8% of primary leaders, $\chi^2(1, N = 264) = 18.56, p < .001$, and 23.8% of secondary leaders, $\chi^2(1, N = 210) = 8.57, p < .01$. HGF was identified as critically important by only 6.6% of participants, $\chi^2(1, N = 274) = 88.321, p < .001$, 5.3% of primary leaders, $\chi^2(1, N = 264) = 93.34, p < .001$) and 5.7% of secondary leaders, $\chi^2(1, N = 210) = 72.09, p < .001$ (Figure 1).

Do Colleagues Perceive Character in Leadership as Likely to Contribute to Future Success and Failure?

We next examined raters' ($N = 3,853$) perceptions of which factors of The Worthy Leadership Model were judged to be critical to participant's future success and failure. Raters were allowed to select three factors (of the 12 factors in the model) as most likely to contribute to the participant's success and failure. PIE was selected as critical to success more frequently than OIC (9.6%) and HGF (6.7%). Specifically, PIE was selected by 24.5% of raters as contributing to success, a rate that is similar to what would be expected by chance (25%), $\chi^2(1, N = 3,853) = .513, ns$). OIC, $\chi^2(1,$
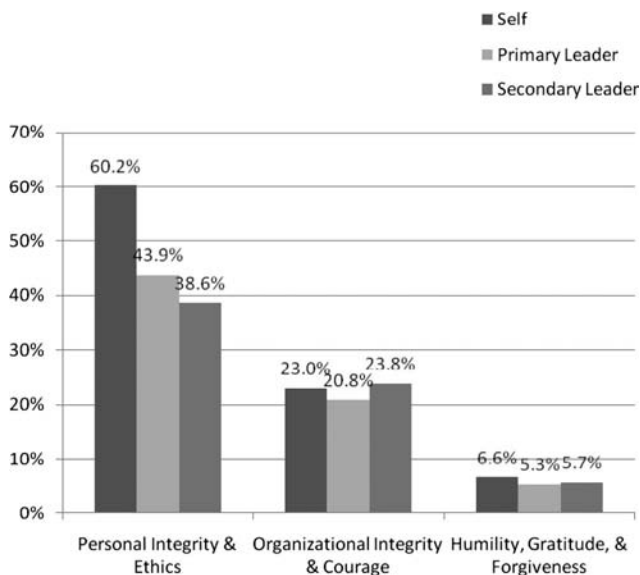

Figure 1. Percentage of participant, primary leaders, and secondary leaders identifying the character to lead factors as critically important to the participant's role.
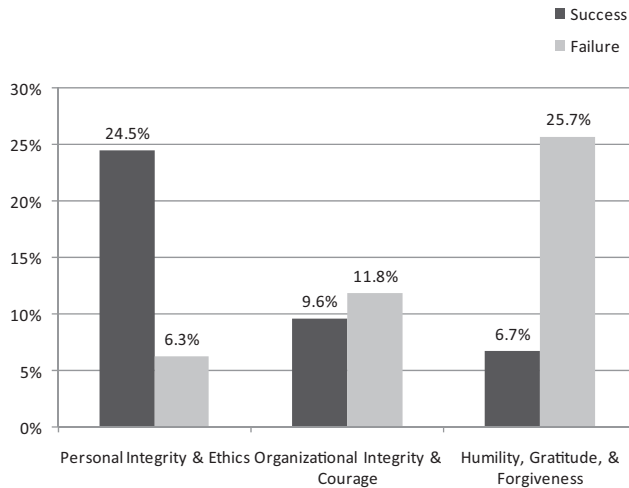
Figure 2. Percentage of raters identifying the character to lead factors as contributing to the participant's future success and failure.

$N = 3{,}853) = .487.16$, $p < .001$, and HGF, $\chi^2(1, N = 3{,}853) = 686.52$, $p < .001$, were selected as contributing to success at rates significantly less than chance (25%). Considering factors raters perceived to be related to failure, the reverse trend was observed. HGF was selected by 25.7% of participants as contributing to failure, a rate similar to chance, $\chi^2(1, N = 3{,}853) = .92$, *ns*, while OIC (11.8%), $\chi^2(1, N = 3{,}853) = 358.97$, $p < .001$, and PIE (6.3%), $\chi^2(1, N = 3{,}853) = 722.06$, $p < .001$) were selected as contributing to failure significantly less frequently than chance. We also found that 32.6% of direct reports ($N = 1{,}207$) identified HGF, $\chi^2(1, N = 1{,}207) = 223.20$, $p < .001$, as one of the three factors most likely to contribute to failure. Only two factors of capacity (Capacity to Know, $\chi^2(1, N = 1{,}207) = 358.97$, $p < .001$ at 50.2%, and Capacity to Reason and Make Good Decisions, $\chi^2(1, N = 1{,}207) = 358.97$, $p < .001$ at 38.9%) were selected more frequently by direct reports as likely to contribute to participants' possible failure (Figure 2).

What Important Outcomes Might Be Related to Character in Leadership?

The last question we sought to explore was what outcomes might be related to character in leadership. As noted above, raters responded to four questions for research purposes only. These questions were related to past performance, followership, failure, and worthy leadership. Since these criterion items were collected as a part of the same ratings tool and by the same individuals rating the dimensions of character, there is a concern about common method variance. Instead of placing primary attention on the (likely inflated) size of the correlations, however, we focused on the incremental validity that the character construct provides to the capacity and commitment constructs in predicting important outcomes. A series of hierarchical multiple regression analyses was performed to determine the unique contribution of the character constructs as predictors of the four criterion items (Tables 7–8).

The first of the four criterion items tested was past performance. As hypothesized, capacity was a significant predictor of past performance, accounting for 62% of the variance, $\beta = .786$, $t(1, 272) = 20.962$, $p < .001$. The addition of the commitment variable in the second step and character in the third step did not account for additional variance in past performance.

The second of the four criterion items tested was failure. In this analysis, character was entered in the first step and accounted for 30% of the variance in failure, $\beta = -.547$, $t(1, 272) = -10.773$, $p < .001$. The addition of commitment accounted for an additional 5% of the variance, $\beta = -.65$, $t(1, 271) = -4.487$, $p < .001$. The addition of capacity in the third step accounted for an additional

Table 7

Hierarchical Regression Results for Outcome Variables (Past Performance, Failure, Followership, and Worthy Leadership)

Constructs	R	Adj R^2	R^2 Change	F Change	Sig F Change
Past Performance					
Capacity	.786	.616	.618	439.407	.000
Capacity + Commitment	.786	.615	.001	.429	.513
Capacity + Commitment + Character	.788	.616	.002	1.732	.189
Failure					
Character	.547	.297	.299	116.062	.000
Character + Commitment	.590	.343	.048	20.132	.000
Character + Commitment + Capacity	.616	.372	.032	13.850	.000
Followership					
Capacity	.738	.542	.545	204.427	.000
Capacity + Commitment	.810	.653	.112	55.452	.000
Capacity + Commitment + Character	.840	.700	.049	27.889	.000
Worthy Leadership					
Capacity	.844	.711	.712	672.076	.000
Capacity + Commitment	.900	.809	.099	141.004	.000
Capacity + Commitment + Character	.923	.850	.042	75.877	.000

Note. $N = 274$. Adj = Adjusted.

3% of the variance, $\beta = -.42$, $t(1, 270) = -3.772$, $p < .001$. In the final model, and in contradiction to our initial hypothesis, only capacity was a significant predictor of Failure ($sr^2 = .017$).

The third of the four criterion items tested was followership. In the first step, capacity accounted for 54% of the variance in followership, $\beta = .74$, $t(1, 272) = 14.298$, $p < .001$. The addition of commitment accounted for an additional 11% of the variance, $\beta = .84$, $t(1, 271) = 7.447$, $p < .001$.

Table 8

Correlations, Partial, and Semi-Partial Correlations for Past Performance, Failure, Followership, and Worthy Leadership From Regression Analysis Presented in Table 5

Constructs	r	Partial	Part
Past Performance			
Capacity	.786	.359	.245
Commitment	.701	.274	.182
Character	.640	−.005	−.003
Failure			
Capacity	−.547	.022	.017
Commitment	−.589	−.087	−.069
Character	−.609	−.221	−.178
Followership			
Capacity	.738	.016	.009
Commitment	.810	.060	.032
Character	.838	.376	.221
Worthy Leadership			
Capacity	.844	.439	.188
Commitment	.875	.425	.180
Character	.803	.468	.204

Note. $N = 274$.

Character then accounted for an additional 5% of the variance, $\beta = .694$, $t(1, 270) = 5.281$, $p < .001$. In the final model, character ($sr^2 = .221$) accounted for the largest amount of unique variance (capacity, $sr^2 = .009$; commitment, $sr^2 = .032$).

The last of the criterion items tested was worthy leadership (i.e., To what extent does this individual demonstrate leadership worth following). As hypothesized, capacity accounted for 71% of the variance in Worthy Leadership, $\beta = .844$, $t(1, 272) = 25.924$, $p < .001$. The addition of commitment accounted for an additional 10% of the variance, $\beta = .561$, $t(1, 271) = 11.875$, $p < .001$. The addition of character accounted for an additional 4% variance in Worthy Leadership, $\beta = .301$, $(1, 270) = 8.711$, $p < .001$. As with followership, in the final model character ($sr^2 = .204$) accounted for the largest percentage of unique variance in Worthy Leadership (capacity, $sr^2 = .188$; commitment, $sr^2 = .180$).

Discussion

The main goal in conducting this study was to extend the research on character in leadership. Using The Worthy Leadership Model we outlined five questions to help guide us through this process: 1) Can character in leadership be measured?; 2) Is what is being measured character in leadership?; 3) Is character in leadership viewed as important?; 4) Do colleagues perceive character in leadership as likely to contribute to future success and failure?; and 5) What important outcomes might be related to character in leadership? The process of addressing these questions opened our eyes to caveats and additional questions, but also provided evidence suggesting we are on the right track.

Can Character in Leadership Be Measured?

We sought to answer the question, "Can we measure character in leadership?" by comparing the descriptive statistics and psychometric properties of the character construct to the more traditional capacity and commitment constructs. We hypothesized that the average (1) mean (2) standard deviation, (3) inter-item correlations, and (4) percentage of missing values for the character construct would be statistically similar to those in capacity and commitment. Our results supported this hypothesis. We found that character in the Worthy Leadership Profile for Executives (WLP*e*), at a psychometric level, is similar to capacity and commitment constructs traditionally measured in 360 instruments. We found similar percentages of items not rated, similar average Cronbach's alphas, and similar standard deviations to these constructs. Character items, on average, were rated slightly higher than capacity items, suggesting that raters may be somewhat more likely to provide lenient ratings on character items. However the difference is small, and is not likely meaningful in practice.

We also looked at how our character measure compared to existing multirater and personality-related measures of character. We found similar Cronbach's alphas when comparing our dimensions of character ($\alpha = .72$–$.84$) to two other 360-degree rating approaches to the measurement of character: the Leadership Questionnaire (Wood & Vilkinas, 2007) and Craig and Gustafson's (1998) Perceived Leader Integrity Scale (PLIS). The Leadership Questionnaire ranged from $\alpha = .50$ to $.60$. and the PLIS reported $\alpha = .97$. Although the PLIS appears to have a higher average Cronbach's alpha, the WLP*e* Character construct performs notably better than the Wood measure. The WLP*e* character construct also has Cronbach's alphas with personality-type measures of character such as Peterson, Park, and Seligman's (2005) Values in Action Inventory of Strengths measure ($\alpha = .70$), and Hendrix's (2001) United States Air Force Academy measure ($\alpha = .88$). Overall, we found evidence that the character dimension in our model a) can be operationalized behaviorally, observed, and measured through a multirater tool, b) from a psychometric perspective, is as sound as capacity and commitment measures in the same tool, and c) is consistent with Cronbach's alpha measures found in existing multirater and personality-based measures of character.

The current study did not conduct CFA on the full Worthy Leadership Model. Instead, CFA was limited to the character construct to determine if it could be described multidimensionally. The results of the CFA supported our belief that character is likely one unified construct that is best

described multidimensionally. The one construct (The Character to Lead) and three factors (PIE, OIC, and HGF) models approach acceptable standards of fit while the finer distinctions of the nine dimensions (personal integrity, ethics, openness, organizational integrity, courage, power, humility, gratitude, and forgiveness) are likely most accurate and meet standards of acceptable fit (Browne & Cudeck, 1993).

Is What Is Being Measured Character in Leadership?

We also looked at how perceptions of character are related to scales of a commonly used personality inventory (CPI 260®), specifically to those scales thought to be related to character (to show convergent validity), and scales linked to other aspects of effective leadership (to show divergent validity). On the convergence side, character is strongly correlated with most of the expected CPI 260® scales, including Responsibility, Self Control, Achievement via Conformance, Work Orientation, and Amicability. Additionally, what made intuitive sense is that the courage dimension (in the OIC factor), while relating well to Responsibility, does not correlate as well with the more "conformance" characteristics. The correlations between OIC dimensions and some of the scales related to emergent leadership (i.e., Dominance, Independence, Achievement, etc.) provides additional support for the assertion that while OIC is at least in part related to character, it also is related to the more traditional conceptualizations of leadership found in capacity and commitment. Overall, the character dimensions correlate most strongly with the expected personality measures of, and overall perceptions of character in leadership. The exceptions are the dimensions of organizational integrity, courage, and power, which are likely related to more than just character and will be explored in future research.

Is Character in Leadership Viewed as Important?

We next looked at whether character in leadership is viewed as important. When we examined how frequently participants and their leaders identified the character factors as critically important to the participants' current roles, we found PIE is identified as "critically important" by participants and primary leaders at a rate significantly greater than chance. Similar to past research (Wood & Vilkinas, 2007), leaders viewed integrity and ethics as central to their leadership roles and recognized that they are the "ethical role models" for others and the organization (Trevino, Brown, & Hartman, 2003). Furthermore, participants are even more likely than their leaders to identify PIE as "critically important." Our findings provide additional evidence that leaders view personal integrity as critical to their roles. It is possible that while participants view integrity as fundamentally important to who they are as leaders, their superiors may tend to emphasize task-related factors as more central to their roles (e.g., decision-making and strategy). Despite the prevalence of public and dramatic leadership failures, it is interesting that OIC and HGF are not viewed as more important in leadership roles.

The results of the study related to importance ratings are at one level reassuring, and at another level troubling. On the one hand, it is reassuring to know that participants and their leaders see personal integrity as important to their roles, and for participants nearly as important as having knowledge and decision-making skills. They see leadership roles as requiring "competence" and a commitment to "doing the right thing." But what is not being rated as important (e.g., OIC and HGF) may also be telling. If participants and their leaders don't see OIC and HGF as important, they may be missing key components of what, when missing, may lead to failure, and when present, lead to engaged followership.

Do Colleagues Perceive Character in Leadership as Likely to Contribute to Future Success and Failure?

We asked participants' colleagues (their leaders, peers, direct reports, and others) what factors would most likely contribute to the participants' future successes or failures. Taking all rater groups together, we find that PIE is more likely to be identified as contributing to success than to failure; OIC is identified as contributing to success and failure at similar rates; and HGF is more likely to

be identified as contributing to failure. These distinctions raise the possibility that what colleagues see as leading to success may be different than what they see as leading to failure. And that failure may not simply be "caused" by the lack of a success factor. It also raises the possibility that failure is not simply the lack of success, but may be a different and distinct entity. This is an area that needs much closer examination.

When looking only at direct reports' classifications of factors contributing to participants' success and failure, HGF is perceived as likely to contribute to failure at a rate greater than chance. These results highlight the important issue of perspective. In looking at data in the previous section, participants identified PIE as critically important for success in their roles, while their leaders did not. And further, leaders viewed neither OIC nor HGF as critically important to success. But in looking at factors contributing to potential failure from the vantage point of the direct reports, the role of HGF stands out. Direct reports appear to want their leaders to demonstrate humility, gratitude, and forgiveness, and see weaknesses in these areas as contributing to potential leadership failure. Leaders may want to carefully consider what they see as important to their success (or to avoiding failure), and consider that others around them may have differing needs, or value things that they may see as not critically important. There appears to be meaningful differences in what is seen as important (PIE, OIC, and/or HGF) for what (their role, contributing to success and/or failure), and by whom (individual, their leader, and/or direct reports). These differences may have profound implications for how individuals lead.

What Important Outcomes Might Be Related to Character in Leadership?

We asked five additional questions regarding colleagues' perceptions of participants. The first related to perceptions of what got leaders to their current positions. Traditionally, a leader's capacity, in particular his or her intelligence, has been seen as providing the single best explanation for past success (see, e.g., Schmidt & Hunter, 2004). We recognize that the models and the related assessment processes focusing on the skills and competence of leaders can account for a large proportion of the successes in leadership. Our findings confirmed the historical findings, and our expectations, regarding the roles of capacity and character in predicting success. Specifically, raters' perceptions of participants' capacity significantly predict their ratings of past performance. Commitment and character did not account for additional variance in ratings of past performance. This said, it is likely that capacity may be necessary, but not sufficient, in explaining leadership success. There remain many complex issues concerning how one or multiple constructs may be essential for success, or at a minimum, compensate for weaknesses or shortcomings in other constructs. It is important to understand how these constructs operate. For example, there seem to be many situations where leaders may not have exceptional intelligence or knowledge (e.g., capacity), but may successfully compensate through working longer and harder on the right things (e.g., showing commitment). Overall, it seems clear that success will likely continue to be best predicted by capacity variables, but we should continue to examine situations in which commitment, in particular, and character may serve as equal, better, or additive (or perhaps compensatory) predictors of performance.

The second question we asked regarding colleagues' perceptions of participants was intended to tap perceptions of why leaders would fail to reach their full potential (failure). Specifically we asked "How likely is it that this individual could fail to reach his or her full potential because of factors under his or her control?" We expected that character would account for the greatest amount of variance in raters' perceptions of participants' likelihood to fail, but this finding was not supported. What we found was that perceptions of participants' capacity accounted for the most variance in our failure variable. Still, it is important to remember that the criterion used to address this question consisted of raters' perceptions of the participant's likelihood to fail in reaching his or her full potential, not perceived failure in their job, or actual failure in their roles. Upon further review and examination of the question that was asked, perhaps raters were most likely thinking about the individuals' abilities or willingness to grow, change, and develop. Additional research is needed to further explore the relationships between and among capacity, commitment, character, and perceptions of different aspects or types of failure. There is a need to more clearly define what is meant

by failure, and how failure may be different from just the absence of success. There is also a need to examine whether there are different types of failure. One type may be simply the opposite of success, or the absence of success, and thus be best predicted by capacity variables. Another type of failure may be catastrophic failure. Catastrophic failures are those that may be vastly different due to their scale and impact. It seems from Thompson et al. (2008), that this type of failure may be better predicted by character. However, that type of failure may not be easily measured in typical multirater instruments because of the framing of the questions and the low incidence of that type of failure that raters may actually have encountered. In any case, the issue of defining, identifying, measuring, and predicting failure in its many forms will need more attention.

The third question explored constructs contributing to colleagues' perceptions of whether participants would follow others (followership). Specifically, we wanted to know what constructs were related to perceptions of participants genuinely supporting the leadership efforts of others (i.e., senior leaders, peers, and subordinates). The concept of followership is aligned with the principles of servant leadership (Russell & Stone, 2002), and suggests that an effective leader needs to be willing and able to support and follow others. Some of the characteristics identified by Russell and Stone (2002) as cornerstones of servant leadership include honesty, integrity, trust, and appreciation. These are some of the same characteristics that define character in our model. The findings of the current study supported the hypothesis that while capacity, commitment, and character all predicted followership, character accounted for the greatest proportion of the variance in followership.

The final question regarding colleagues' perceptions of participants addressed the relationship between the three constructs of The Worthy Leadership Model, and raters' overall perceptions of what was necessary for a leader to be seen as demonstrating worthy leadership. We found character to be most related to perceptions of demonstrating "leadership worth following," but not more significantly than capacity or commitment. Our findings therefore supported our belief that leaders need to be more than just smart, and/or just effective at delivering results, and/or just good at managing others (e.g., many parts of capacity and commitment). Garnering the full engagement and discretionary effort of followers appears to require character as well. These findings parallel the important outcomes (i.e., job satisfaction, dedication, and willingness to raise concerns) found for similar theories of character in leadership, such as "ethical leadership" (Brown, Trevino, & Harrison, 2005). Although the more traditional constructs of capacity and commitment are likely important and necessary for successful performance, they appear to be insufficient for a leader to be seen as demonstrating "worthy leadership."

Limitations

One limitation of the current study is the generalizability of our samples. The current participants were limited to executive and director-level leaders primarily from retail organizations, all of whom were participating in leadership development programs. Many of these leaders were likely high potential individuals due to the selection criteria used for such programs. Although not ideal for generalizing to all levels of leadership, to other types of organizations and industries, or to leaders who are not viewed as positively as those in this sample, our findings did provide evidence that can be examined in other samples.

Another limitation of the current study was its reliance upon a single data source (i.e., multirater feedback ratings) for assessing individuals' character and performance. The relatively high correlations among the dimensions and constructs suggest multicollinearity and that the correlations may be an artifact of the multirater assessment process (e.g., raters not using the "full scale" to differentiate among a participant's behaviors). To further understand and validate our measures of character and understand how character in leadership is similar to and different from capacity and commitment, future research should expand CFA analysis to the full Worthy Leadership Model and examine the differing relationships of factors and dimensions across the model to important outcomes (e.g., past performance, perceived and actual failure). Future research should also examine these relationships using alternative measures such as assessment results (e.g., simulations, interviews, etc.).

Past researchers (e.g., Salam, Cox, & Sims, 1997) have found significant differences among rater groups and concluded that these differences can provide meaningful insight into perceptions of leaders' behavior. The current study did not examine the agreement within and/or across rater groups. Future research should investigate the areas in which groups may have real and meaningful differences in their ratings as well as where the factors or constructs contributing to overall perceptions of important criterion may differ across rater groups.

In the study's examination of what participants and their leaders viewed as being important to their roles, the alternative (e.g., what individuals and their leaders see as not being important to their roles) was not examined. Participants and their leaders were limited to classifying the factors into three categories: important, very important, and critically important. Looking separately at what factors are perceived as being relatively unimportant could be an equally interesting dynamic to explore.

The validity of the outcome variables used in the current study is another limitation. The outcome variables consisted of single items tapping raters' perceptions and have not been validated against objective measures. Better criterion variables could be drawn from performance appraisal data, objective performance data (sales, etc.), and employee opinion and engagement surveys. However, they nonetheless provide insight into the perceptions of what leaders' colleagues (e.g., leaders, peers, direct reports) see as important and related factors.

Arguably, one of the most important limitations of the current study is the absence of a well defined measure of failure to use as a criterion variable. The question used in the current survey likely did not tap the intended domain of performance. A particular challenge will be finding appropriate measures of failure. Despite these limitations, there is growing evidence for the role of character in leadership.

Implications for Consulting Psychologists

The Worthy Leadership Model (Thompson et al., 2008) was developed in response to a perceived need for consulting psychologists to have a more compelling lens through which to view leadership, so we could better help our clients. As practitioners, we saw serious misses in predictions, development efforts, and in our clients' approaches to building their cultures, which often resulted in too much failure impacting too many stakeholders. We suggest one reason for these misses was an overreliance on what a leader "can do" (capacity). Although adding an emphasis on identifying and understanding what a leader "wants to do" (commitment) was helpful, we still felt something missing. The current study suggests that followers and organizations want and need more from their leaders than just capacity and commitment; they also want and need leaders to demonstrate character (what a leader "will do"). As consulting psychologists, it is our view that we will do better work for more stakeholders if we draw appropriate and balanced attention to capacity, commitment, *and* character in how we frame what is important to leadership roles, how we assess potential leaders, and how we derive and formulate our recommendations. In that way, we believe we can help our clients better understand, identify, and develop strong leadership for their organizations, and better avoid failure in whatever form(s) it may take.

Looking more deeply at The Character to Lead construct, the present study suggests that character in leadership can be viewed and perceived at a global level (similarly to "g" in the realm of intelligence), but can also be operationalized into factors and dimensions that relate to important outcomes (much like spatial reasoning, verbal reasoning, in relation to "g"). There is also evidence to suggest that different components of character in leadership relate to different outcomes. Just as leadership is more than capacity and commitment, character in leadership is also multidimensional. Specifically, it is our view that character in leadership includes personal integrity, ethics, openness, organizational integrity, courage, power, humility, gratitude, and forgiveness. We believe this is enough complexity to bring appropriate richness to a very complex construct (character in leadership), but also straightforward enough to be practical and usable in practice. We further believe the data presented here largely supports this view.

It is also important to take a closer look at how character in leadership relates to important outcomes, such as failure in leadership. One of our initial hypotheses stated that character in

leadership was related to failure, but this was not supported in the current study. Our professional experiences, qualitative research, and analysis of public failures in leadership suggest we may need to look more deeply at the nature of failure. We propose that there may be at least two very different types of failure. The first type might be caused by weaknesses in capacity in leadership (as suggested by ratings collected in the current study) and second type of failure might be caused by weaknesses in character in leadership. Furthermore, these failures may result in very different outcomes or magnitudes of impact. For example, failure may have individual-level consequences impacting an individual's ability to reach his or her full potential (i.e., common failure). Alternatively, failure may have organization-wide consequences ultimately leading to its possible collapse (i.e., catastrophic failure). In the future, we need to look carefully and specifically at these, and potentially other, types of failure. In doing so, we will need to carefully delineate them, find ways to measure them, and look at what might differentially predict them. Ultimately, we need to seize the opportunity to help our clients understand not only what forms success can take as we assess and develop leaders, this study suggests we need to separately call attention to what forms failure can take, as an important addition to assessment and consulting.

Finally, as we research and apply The Worthy Leadership Model, we are often confronted with questions such as, "What is character?" We have been pressed to define to what extent it relates to various theories of personality, traits, motivation, or even philosophies. We believe the questions of "How is character in leadership measured?" and "What does it predict?" are equally important questions. In our work, we have tried to behaviorally define character *in leadership*, build it into our assessment and development processes, understand its impact on results, people, and culture, and even discuss to what extent it can be developed. We advocate for continued debate, refinement, and consensus building on what we as a field believe character in leadership and its underlying theories, really are. However, we do not want to do so at the expense of moving our practice ahead through the operationalization, incorporation into assessment and development processes, and continued research on its relationship with important outcomes. As consulting psychologists, these are critical topics for us to address as we work to better serve our clients.

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