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Citation:

McLarnon, M. J. W., Weinhart, J. M., O'Neill, T. A., & Dumaisnil, A. (2017, May). *A person-centered approach to expressed humility in leadership*. Paper presented at the 2nd Annual Meeting of Interdisciplinary Perspectives on Leadership Symposium, Mykonos, Greece.

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# A Person-Centered Approach to Expressed Humility in Leadership

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# Outline

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- Expressed humility
    - Leaders' identities as humble individuals
  - Person-centered approaches
    - Latent profile analysis (LPA)
  - Current study
    - Findings
    - Implications
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# Expressed Humility

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- A newly emerging area in the study of leadership
  - Forwarded by Bradley Owens and colleagues (2013; *Organization Science*)
  - Increasingly common to find references to “humility” in organizations’ value systems
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# Expressed Humility

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- For example,
  - The Kellogg Company, a Fortune 500 company, lists humility as one of its six core values



*Kellogg's*

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# Expressed Humility

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- A three-facet model
  - Viewing one's self accurately
  - Appreciating the strengths and abilities of others
  - Being open to learning and receiving feedback from others
    - *Teachability*

# Importance of Expressed Humility

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- Humble individuals lead by acting with modesty, restraint, patience, care
- Together, parallels, but **not** redundant with:
  - Servant leadership
  - Authentic leadership
  - Transformational leadership

# Importance of Expressed Humility

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- Positive relations between expressed humility and leader performance
  - Even after controlling for *g*, conscientiousness, and self-efficacy
  - Leaders with high expressed humility had subordinates with higher
    - Engagement
    - Job satisfaction
    - Retention



# Expressed Humility

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- Previous research has only examined the single core of expressed humility
  - There may be differential effects or importance of the individual facets
    - Or interactive or other forms of non-linear effects

# Expressed Humility

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- Previous research has not taken an *identity-based* approach
  - Person-centered leadership research needed

# Expressed Humility

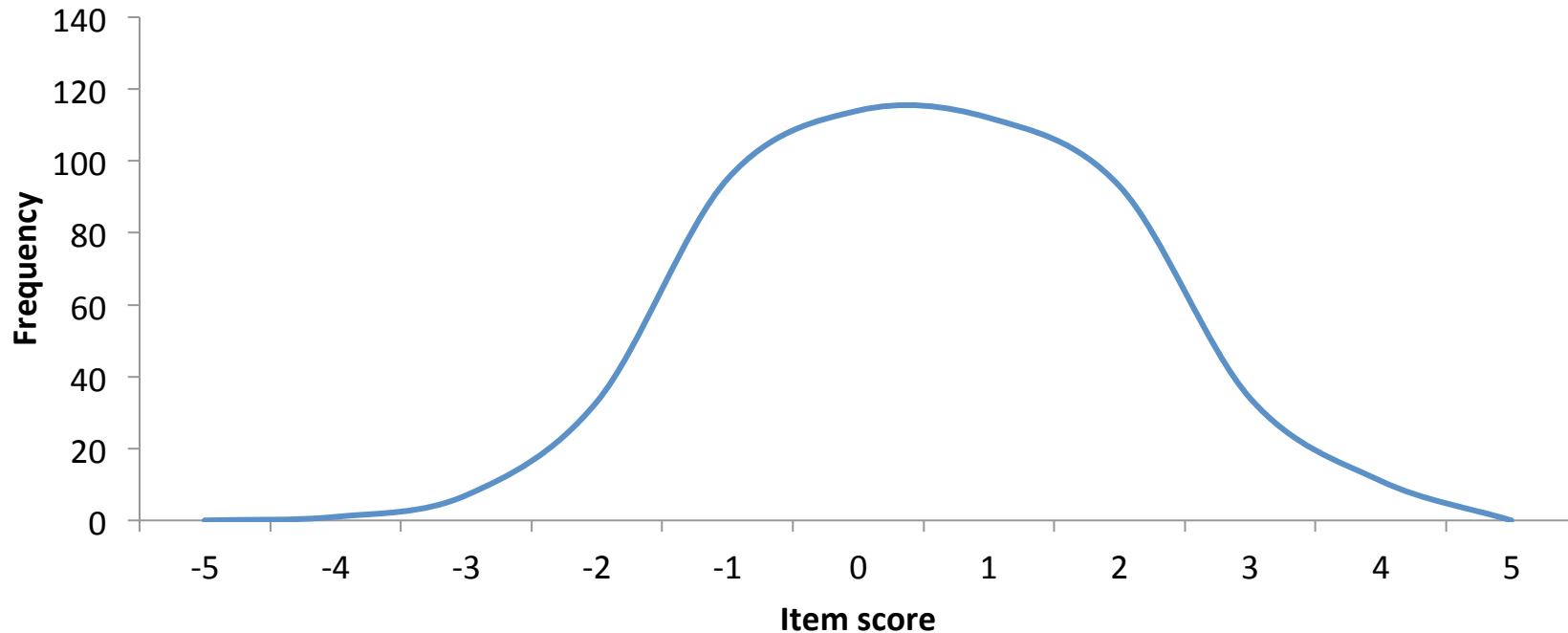
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- Current study aimed to examine expressed humility through a person-centered approach
  - Focus on facet-level variables
    - Seen a more holistic approach
  - Focus on the *types* of identities held by individuals, on the basis of expressed humility

# Person-centered Approaches

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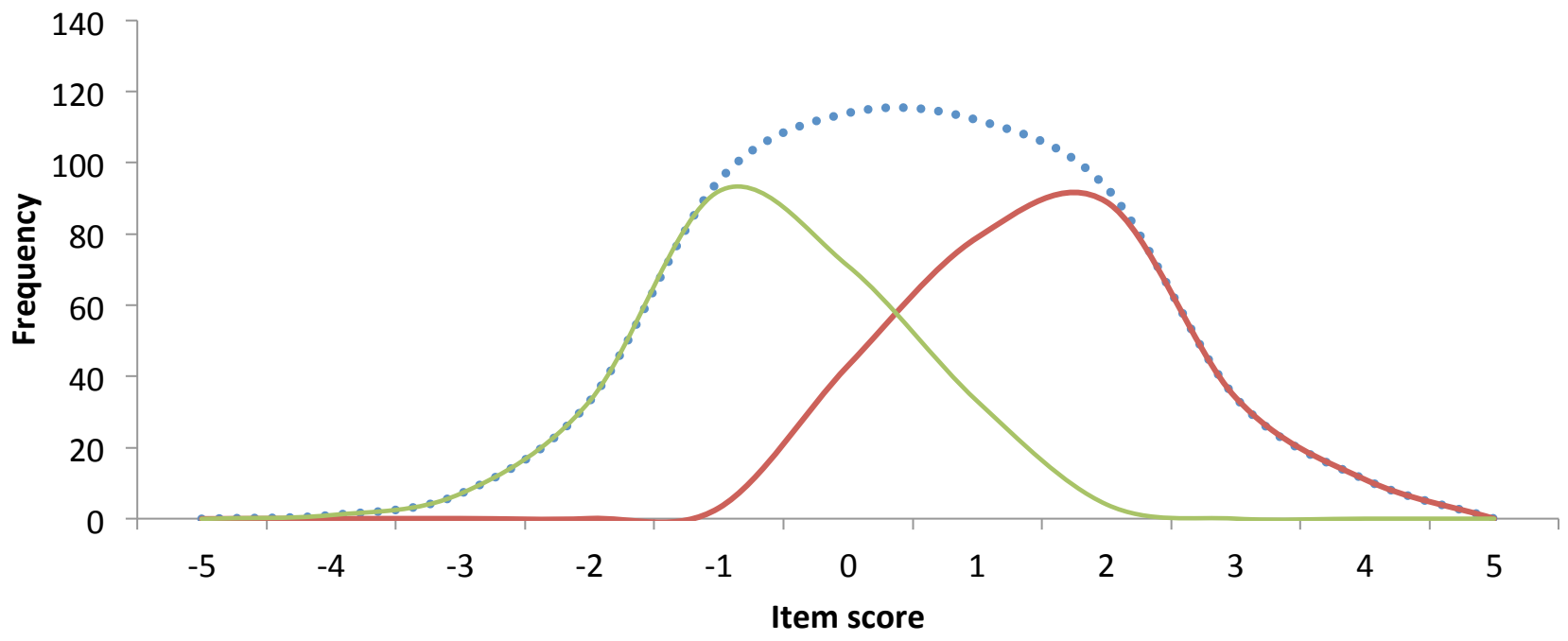
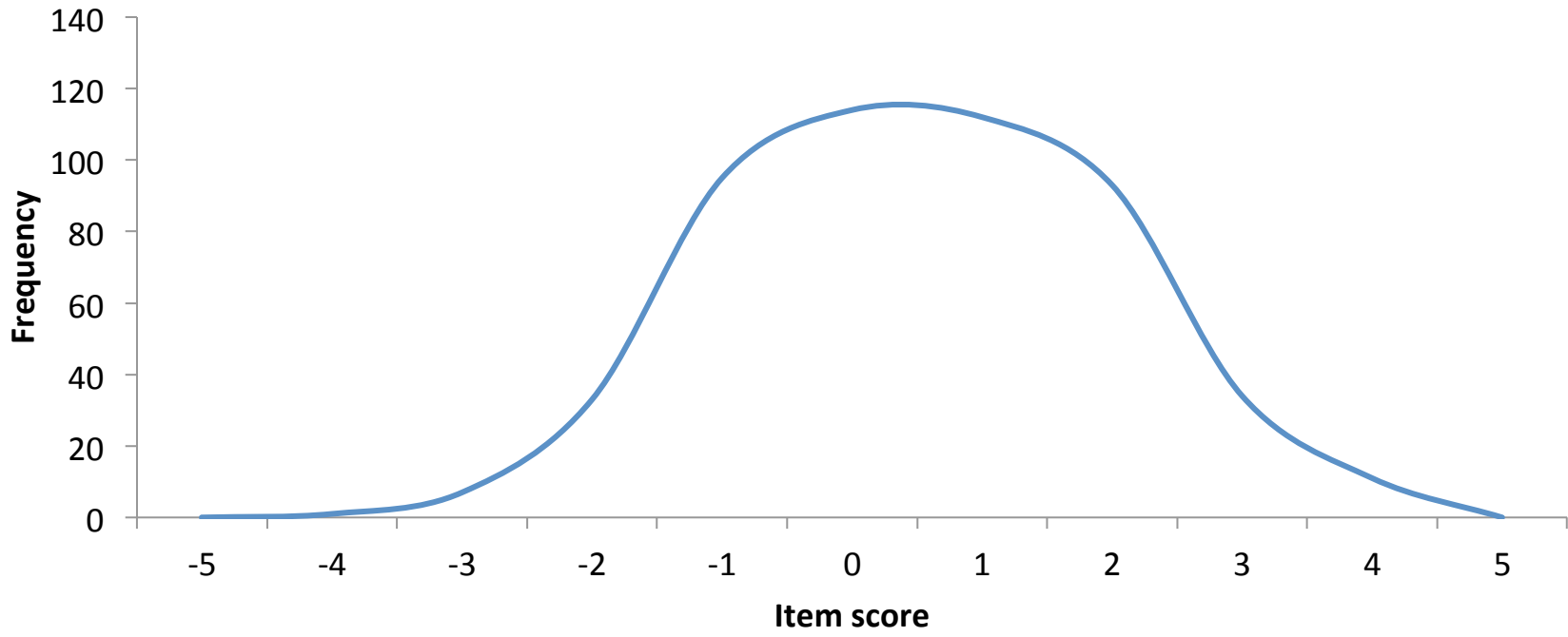
- Who has some familiarity with
  - Latent profile analysis?
  - Latent class analysis?
  - Growth mixture modeling?
  - Cluster analysis?
  - Median split?



Mean = .04  
SD = 1.49  
Skew = .03  
Kurtosis = -.49

What do you see?

- A normal distribution?
- What if it's too good to be true?



# Variable-centered Approaches

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- Correlation
- Regression
- Factor analysis – EFA and CFA
- Typical approaches to SEM
  
- Examine relationships among variables
  - Which are consistent for all members of population, which is homogenous

# Person-centered Approaches


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- Median split, cluster analysis
- Finite mixture modeling
  - LPA, LCA, GMM
- Examine relationships between cases
  - Data may be sampled from separate, underlying populations
  - Uses a categorical latent variable to represent membership



# Current study

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- Major research questions:
    1. Are there a robust set of profiles defined by expressed humility facets?
      - What are the ***potential identities*** of these leaders?
    2. How do levels of leadership efficacy differ across expressed humility profiles?
    3. Does the proportion of individuals with each profile within a team relate to team performance?
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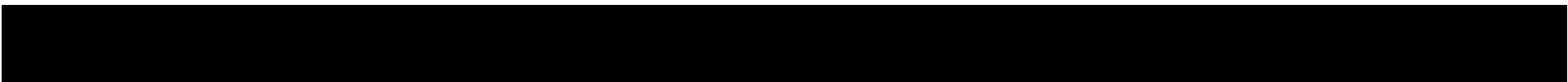
# Current study

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- Study 1
  - 435 senior business school students
  - 52% male
  - ~20 years old
  - Completed Owens et al.'s measure, and a measure of efficacy for leadership

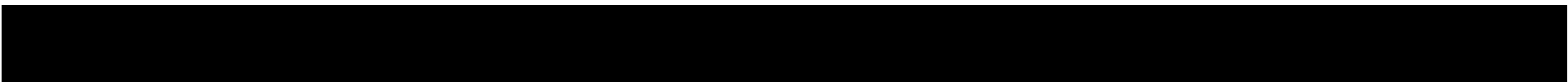
# Current study

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- Study 2
    - 688 engineering students
    - 74% male
    - ~20 years old
    - Randomly assigned to 3- or 4-person teams
    - Completed Owens et al.'s measure
    - Team performance measured by instructor ratings of final report quality
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# Current study

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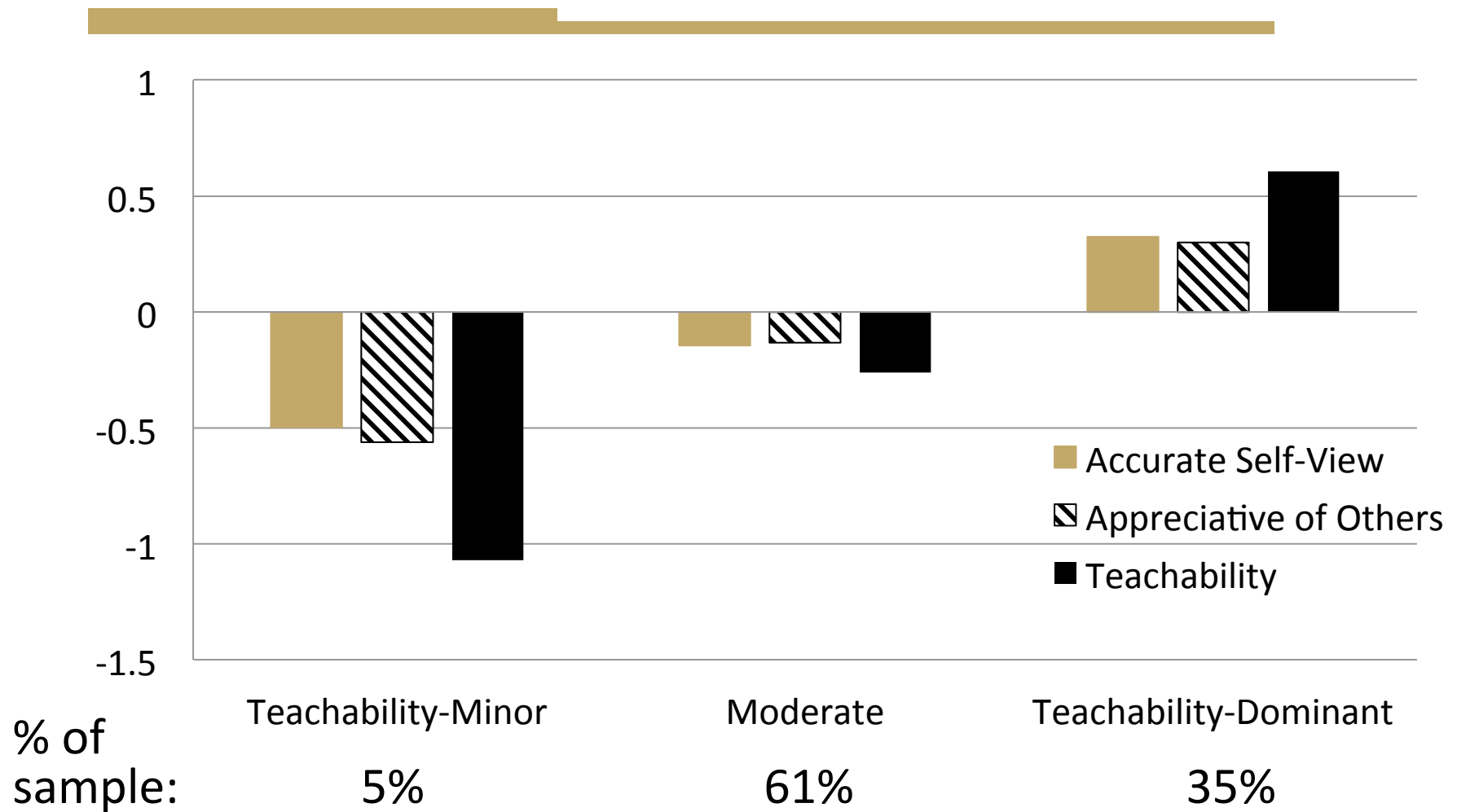
- Owens et al. expressed humility measure
    - Accurate self-view
      - I admit it when I don't know how to do something
    - Appreciation of others
      - I compliment others on their strengths
    - Teachability
      - I am willing to learn from others
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# Current study

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- LPAs conducted with *Mplus 7.4*
  - Efficacy for leadership relations assessed via mean differences across profiles
  - Team performance relation assessed with correlations between proportion of profile members and performance

# Results



# Current study

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- Efficacy for leadership relations (Means/SDs)
    - Teachability-Minor = 3.43 (.34)
    - Moderate = 3.59 (.44)
    - Teachability-Dominant = 3.85 (.51)
  
    - All significantly different,  $p < .05$
    - Cohen's  $d$ s = .37, .56, and .85
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# Current study

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- Team performance relations
  - Proportion of
    - Teachability-Minor,  $r = -.18, p < .05$
    - Moderate,  $r = .15, p < .05$
    - Teachability-Dominant,  $r = -.05, ns$



# Implications and Summary

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- Three-profile solution:
  - Teachability-Dominant
  - Moderate
  - Teachability-Minor
- Robust across two independent samples
- Leaders' identities, in terms of expressed humility, can be categorized into three distinct patterns

# Implications and Summary

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- Three profiles present a coherent summary of leaders' humble identities
- Helps integrate growing literatures on expressed humility and person-centered approaches to leadership identity
  - Need to extend to other forms of leadership

# Implications and Summary

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- Teachability-dominant leaders most likely to believe they can *lead effectively*
  - -Minor leaders lowest
  - To enhance efficacy, promote stronger expressed humility, especially teachability

# Implications and Summary

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- When considered in teams, encourage a greater number of Moderates
  - Nature of teamwork, and potential for *role ambiguity*, may necessitate a moderately humble leader
    - Still need to delegate tasks and mediate relationships

# Limitations and Future Research

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- Cross-sectional
  - Longitudinal studies for outcome relations
  - Dynamics involved with profile switching and emergence
- Self-report
- Relations, within profiles, with other leadership styles and behaviors

**Thank you for your time!**

**Questions?**

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