

Research on the Influence of Humble Leader on Leader themselves: Based on the Theory of Resource Conservation

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Keywords: Humble leadership; Emotional exhaustion; Turnover intentions; Work engagement; Power perception

Abstract. Previous research on humble leaders focused on how humble leaders positively influence subordinate behavior, while we focus on the psychological health effects of humble leadership behavior on leadership. Based on the theory of resource conservation, we propose that humble leaders will not only bring benefits to subordinates and organizations, but also reduce the consumption of resources by humble leaders. In particular, our results show that (1) Humble leaders are negatively related with turnover intentions, and positively related with work engagement; (2) humble leaders reduce their turnover intentions by reducing their emotional exhaustion. (3) Humble leaders increase their work engagement by reducing emotional exhaustion. (4) Humble leaders' perception of their own power moderate the indirect relationship, and the greater the perceived power, the stronger the indirect relationship.

Introduction

In recent years, scholars have increasingly focused on humble leaders (Morris, Brotheridge, & Urbanski, 2005; Nielsen, Marrone, & Slay, 2010; Owens & Hekman, 2012). Humble leaders are willing to look at themselves accurately, appreciate the strengths and contributions of themselves and others, be good at learning new knowledge, and be teachable (Morris et al., 2005; Owens, Johnson, & Mitchell, 2013; Ou et al, 2014). Humble leadership is thought to motivate subordinates and promote the effectiveness of individuals (Owens, Wallace, & Waldman, 2015), teams (Rego et al., 2017) and organizations (Ou, Waldman, & Peterson, 2015), empirical studies show that humility Leadership can promote the psychological security of subordinates (Dutton, 2010), organizational identity (Qu Qing and He Zhizhen, etc., 2013).

However, while previous studies have shown that humble leaders are good for subordinates' positive behavior, there is little known about the impact of humble leaders on leadership themselves (Wang, L., Owens, 2018). In particular, there is a lack of theory and basis for influencing the leaders' own mental health. Therefore, based on the theory of resource conservation theory (Hobfoll, 1988, 1989, 2001), this paper believes that humble leaders experience less resource depletion, which in turn reduces emotional exhaustion, which leads to increased work engagement and reduced turnover intentions. In addition, we propose this influence is moderated by the power that the leader perceives, and this indirect effect is stronger when the leader perceives the greater power. Therefore, this paper combines the leadership of humble theory with the theory of resource conservation, fills in the gaps in the influence of humble leaders on themselves, and further promotes the theory of humble leadership.

Theory and Hypotheses

Humility originated in theology, philosophy, and psychology (Tangney, 2002). It is considered a virtue. In recent years, scholars have begun to explore the effectiveness of humility in leadership (Morris et al., 2005; Nielsen et al., 2010). Humble leadership is described from the perspective of personal traits and behavior. The perspective of personal traits regards humility as a stable character and personality trait (Collins, 2001; Morris et al., 2005). The behavioral perspective is that humble leaders can Learning from management practices is malleable (Owens & Herman, 2012). At present,

behavioral perspectives have become the dominant research perspective for humble leaders. Humble leaders include an objective understanding of themselves, appreciation of others, and openness to new information, which is widely recognized by scholars (Owens, 2009). Existing research includes the impact of humble leaders on individual and team levels, namely individual work engagement and job performance (Owens et al., 2012), team creativity (Vera & Rodriguez-Lopez, 2004). Although humble leaders have been shown to have a positive impact on subordinates, our research focuses on the mental health of individual leaders.

Turnover intentions is a psychological tendency that reflects the individual's attitude towards work and is a prerequisite for actual separation. This paper argues that the intention to leave is the degree to which an individual wants to leave his current job and find other job opportunities (Fan Jingli, 1998). Humble leaders can objectively see their own strengths, weaknesses and limitations. This candid attitude allows subordinates to recognize themselves more. At the same time, the humble leadership accepts the views and opinions of subordinates in a sincere manner. Subordinates establish intimate relationships and effectively enhance the trust of subordinates in leadership. Therefore, based on the clear perception of humble leaders and working in a good organizational atmosphere, humble leaders will have a lower Turnover intentions ;work engagement is a positive cognitive and emotional state. Humble leaders usually show full work enthusiasm, full energy and concentration. For example, Humble leaders will actively discover the advantages and contributions of their subordinates, and be able to objectively receive feedback from employees and actively grasp the operation of the organization. (Morris JA, 2005), and second, humble leaders are eager to learn, open to accept new things, help to enhance and improve their ability, while creating an organizational learning atmosphere, given Humble leaders are actively paying attention to their subordinates and actively accepting new things. We believe that humble leadership with high work engagement, therefore, we propose:

Hypothesis 1a: Humble leadership is negatively related with turnover intentions.

Hypothesis 1b: Humble leadership is positively related with work engagement.

Emotional exhaustion refers to the exhaustion of feelings and exhaustion of emotional resources and physiological resources caused by people paying a large amount of emotional resources at work (Li Chaoping, Shi Kan, 2003). The emotional exhaustion of leaders is a manifestation of leadership mental health. In organizations, leaders need to display appropriate work emotions in interaction with employees, which consumes certain emotional resources. Therefore, we propose people's efforts based on the theory of resource conservation. Acquiring, protecting and retaining their resources, when people respond to work needs, such as impression management behavior, they will spend a lot of emotional resources to self-regulate (Cote, 2005; Brotheridge & Lee, 2002), humble leaders can follow their own acting in a way that does not require a lot of resources for impression management behavior, and therefore experiences less negative emotions (Exline, Campbell, Baumeister, Joiner, & Krueger, 2004), and emotional labor theory also supports this view (Kammeyer-Mueller et Al., 2013), the false performance of emotions will seriously damage the mental health of individuals. Humble leaders can clearly understand themselves, face their own deficiencies and mistakes frankly, and openly appreciate the advantages and contributions of others. Therefore, humility Leaders do not need to consume their emotional energy and psychological resources. Hold their own impression in front of his followers, at the same time, humble leadership will be open and positive attitude to learning, and thus bring more to add resources, experience less emotional exhaustion, therefore, we propose:

Hypothesis 2: Humble leadership is negatively related with emotional exhaustion.

COR theory suggests that when people encounter resource losses, they protect their resources by avoiding and withdrawing behavior to prevent further damage and loss (Halbesleben, 2006; Hobfoll, 2002; Wright & Cropanzano, 1998). When people perceive the disappearance of emotional resources, they will produce a series of negative work attitudes and behaviors, such as reduced work effort and the use of evasive attitudes to maintain and protect their resources. Empirical studies have shown that emotional exhaustion is negatively related with turnover intentions (Cropanzano, Rupp, & Byrne,

2003; Knudsen, Ducharme, & Roman, 2009). In general, we propose that humble leaders reduce their turnover intentions by reducing emotional exhaustion, so we propose:

Hypothesis 3a: Emotional exhaustion mediates the relationship between humble leadership and turnover intentions.

Work engagement is generally regarded as a positive state in which individuals are highly integrated into their work both physically and psychologically, and is characterized by three aspects of vitality, dedication and concentration (Schaufeli W B, 2002). People with high levels of work are often passionate and creative, more proactive and focused on their work, and they enjoy the fun and sense of accomplishment that they bring to work. First, humble leaders face themselves and their employees in a real state. They don't need to disguise themselves in front of employees. They will consume less energy and resources. Therefore, they have more energy and resources to invest in the actual work tasks (Lanaj, Johnson, & Barnes, 2014; Schaufeli & Bakker, 2004). On the contrary, when a less humble leader, they need to invest more resources into the management of impressions, because the false expression of emotions and values will lead to the continued consumption of spiritual resources, thereby reducing the level of leadership work engagement (Gardner et al, 2009; Grandey, 2003), therefore, we propose:

Hypothesis 3b: Emotional exhaustion mediates the relationship between humble leadership and work engagement.

Although we believe that humble leaders feel less emotional exhaustion, this relationship is strengthened or weakened by the power perceived by the leader. In particular, humility is often seen as a weakness, and only when the leader has a certain power base, such as control over critical resources or social status (Owens & Hekman, 2012; Weiss & Knight, 1980), humble leadership will show the effectiveness of the organization. When humble leaders perceive their own decision-making and control, and have the ability to realize the ideas of subordinates, they will feel less emotional exhaustion. On the contrary, when humble leaders perceive their own power, followers are because of their kindness and being kind and obeying yourself will feel more emotional exhaustion. Studies have shown that effective leaders should be able to control the autonomy of followers while holding decision-making control, while recognizing that learning from others is valuable while maintaining confidence in their own views (Zhang et al., 2015). Therefore, we propose:

Hypothesis 4: The power perceived by the leader moderates the relationship between humble leadership and emotional exhaustion. When the perceived power is greater, the humble leader perceives less emotional exhaustion.

Hypothesis 5: Leader-perceived power moderates the indirect of humble leaders ,via emotional exhaustion, on turnover intentions, the greater the perceived power, the lower turnover intentions.

Hypothesis 6: Leader-perceived power moderates the indirect of humble leaders ,via emotional exhaustion, on work engagement, the greater the perceived power, the higher work engagement.

In summary, we propose a mediation model with adjustments, as shown below:

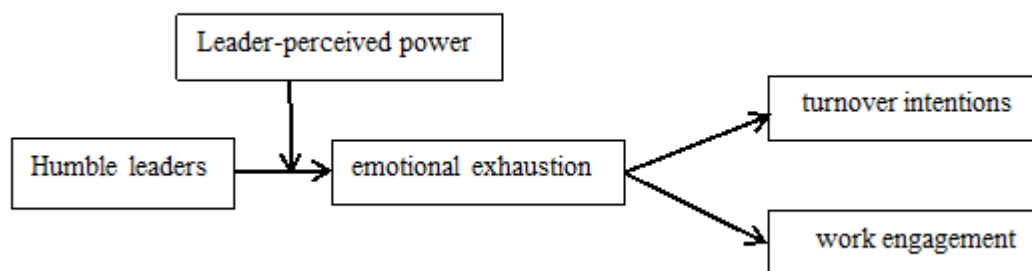


Figure. 1 The Model of humble leaders

Research Method

In this study, 130 subordinates-leader matching data were selected. The leaders were all supervisors or managers of various industries, and finally obtained 110 matching samples (response rate of 84.6%). The subordinates assessed the leadership of humble leaders and led the self-evaluation emotional exhaustion. Turnover intentions, work engagement, and perceived power, control variables are demographic variables, leading previous levels of emotional exhaustion and leading previous turnover intentions. We used Mplus to analyze the data, and the results showed that the humble leader was significantly negatively related with emotional exhaustion ($b=-0.19$, $p<0.05$), Emotional exhaustion mediates the relationship between humble leadership and turnover intentions and also mediates humble leadership and work engagement. The result does not contain zero in the 95% confidence interval. The interaction between the power of leadership perception and the humble leader significantly predicts emotional exhaustion. The moderation effect diagram shows that when the leader perceives more power, Humble leaders perceive less emotional exhaustion and eventually all assumptions are tested.

Research Result

This study expands the literature research on leadership humility in the organization. By integrating the theory of resource conservation, this paper finds that humble leaders can not only benefit their subordinates, but also benefit themselves because they do not need to consume energy in front of their subordinates to maintain their self-image. Feel less emotional exhaustion, have higher mental and physical health, and second, humble leaders are good at listening and appreciating subordinates, have close relationships with subordinates, and therefore have a lower turnover intentions, while humble leaders open the attitude accepts new information and then manages the organization in a more effective way, that is, the humble leader puts more effort into the work. Finally, when leaders show humility and have some decision-making and control, they experience less emotional exhaustion. In summary, this study provides a new theoretical perspective for humble leaders and enriches the study of humble leaders.

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