Follower Perceptions of Leader Humility: Implications for Workplace Well-Being

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Organizational Problem
As the popular saying goes, “People leave managers, not jobs.”
• Leader behaviors influence how their team members feel about the work environment
• Workplace well-being influences overall engagement, performance, and turnover intention
• No research has examined the relationship between perceptions of leader humility and workplace well-being

The goal of this research was to examine the effect of follower perceptions of their leader’s humility on their own well-being in the workplace.

What is Humility?
- Appreciation for followers’ strengths and successes
- Teachability, learns from others, considers alternative views
- Heightened self-awareness and acknowledgement of one’s limitations

What is Well-Being?
- Happiness (pleasure attainment and pain avoidance)
- Sense of meaning, value, and purpose (self-actualization)
- Satisfying interpersonal relationships

Methods
Surveyed 1,130 individuals in a large tech organization; 357 individuals responded
Participants were asked about:
• Perceptions of their leader’s humility
• Overall relationship with their leader
• Their current well-being in the workplace
• Perceptions of organizational support

Key Findings
Leader Humility had a significant effect on Leader-Member Exchange (1.33***)
Perceived Organizational Support had a strong significant effect on Follower Well-Being (0.96***)
Leader Humility had a strong significant indirect effect on Follower Well-Being (1.26***). This relationship was fully mediated by Perceived Organizational Support and Leader-Member Exchange.

Results
Perceived Organizational Support
Leader Humility
Leader-Member Exchange
Follower Well-Being

What are recommendations? Managers should be trained to exhibit humility and foster follower well-being in the following ways:
• Celebrate the strengths and accomplishments of team members
• Ask questions and seek feedback from team members
• Be open to the advice and ideas of others
• Admit mistakes and opportunities for self-growth
• Provide opportunities for team members to connect with others
• Help team members find meaning in their work
• Provide opportunities for team members to develop

Acknowledgments
A special thanks to my advisor Dr. Caryn Carlson, whose guidance made this project possible, and my second reader, Dr. Ethan Bursill for providing support in the final stages. Thank you to the leaders from the large tech organization for your partnership. An added thanks to Dr. Mary Rose, who went above and beyond to support my research. Many thanks to the entire HDO faculty for teaching me how to think critically. And to my HDO peers, whose collective humor and sarcasm propelled me through this program, thank you all.

References

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