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A Person-Centered Approach to Expressed Humility in Leadership

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Outline

• Expressed humility
  – Leaders’ identities as humble individuals

• Person-centered approaches
  – Latent profile analysis (LPA)

• Current study
  – Findings
  – Implications
Expressed Humility

• 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
Expressed Humility

• For example,

—The Kellogg Company, a Fortune 500 company, lists humility as one of its six core values
Expressed Humility

• 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

- 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

• 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

Owens et al., 2013
Expressed Humility

• 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

• Previous research has not taken an identity-based approach

— Person-centered leadership research needed
Expressed Humility

• 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

• Who has some familiarity with

  – Latent profile analysis?
  – Latent class analysis?
  – Growth mixture modeling?
  – Cluster analysis?
  – Median split?
What do you see?

- A normal distribution?
- What if it’s too good to be true?
Variable-centered Approaches

- 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

• 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

• 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?
Current study

• 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

• 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
Current study

• 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
Current study

• 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

Teachability-Minor

Accurate Self-View: 5%
Appreciative of Others: 61%
Teachability: 35%

Teachability-Moderate

Accurate Self-View: -1.5
Appreciative of Others: -1
Teachability: -0.5

Teachability-Dominant

Accurate Self-View: 0
Appreciative of Others: 0.5
Teachability: 1
Current study

- 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
Current study

• Team performance relations

  – Proportion of
    • Teachability-Minor, $r = -.18, p < .05$
    • Moderate, $r = .15, p < .05$
    • Teachability-Dominant, $r = -.05, ns$
Implications and Summary

- 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

• 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

• 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

• 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

• 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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