

Development of Humility Scale and the Relationship among Leader Humility, Authority and Personal Background

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Abstract. There is still much controversy about the construct and measurement of humility. This study probes the concept and connotation of humility from different views of China and the West. The humility scale was developed by pre-testing and exploratory factor analysis. This study performed descriptive analysis and regression analysis to examine hypothesis. The results show that the first developed humility scale has good reliability and validity. Authority is positively correlated with some facets of humility, "knowing limits" and "showing courtesy". The top-level leaders have higher "knowing limits" than the middle leaders or below. Leaders over 40 know their limitations better than leaders under 40. Similarly, female leaders are better than men, and unmarried leaders are better than others. Future research needs to further improve the generalization of humility scale. Conclusions and suggestions can be used as a reference for the study of humility in leadership.

Introduction

When business corruption and scandals occur repeatedly, facing the crisis of trust in the leadership, it is necessary to seek new and appropriate leadership standards. At the same time, we must pay attention to the development of personality, honesty, integrity, and humility. In recent years, many studies have found that leader humility plays an important role in the effect and process of leadership [1-5] [10-11]. In recent years, many studies have found that leader humility plays an important role in the effect and process of leadership. Chinese ancients highly praised the cultivation of humility; in the I-Ching, there is one hexagram of humility [6]. Confucius has five virtues of gentleness, kindness, courtesy, thrift and yielding [7], which means "humility". However, in modern business society, everyone competes to survive, and it is rare for ordinary contacts to be able to abide by etiquette. If one asks for humility, it is considered against the normal situation by ordinary people to "Merit but not boast, meritorious service but not pride, virtue but not residing", it has been regarded by the general public as contrary to the usual situation. In the field of leadership, scholars have been paying more and more attention to the issue of humility. This study aims to analyze this trend and first discuss the concept and connotation of humility from different perspectives of China and the West.

Theoretical and Literature Discussion

Humility in China

China's traditional culture attaches great importance to the virtue of humility, which can be found in many ancient classics. In one of China's most ancient classics, Shang Shu, it has been recorded that "Complacency brings losses and humility benefits, it is the way of heaven" [8], raising the level of humility to the level of heaven. I Ching says, "A humble gentleman is humble enough to be a self-herdsman" [6], and esteemed those who know how to be strict with self-discipline. Chinese culture attaches importance to the virtues of humility, and it is found in many ancient classics. In the Analects of Confucius, Yan Yuan expresses "If you have talents, you should consult those who have no talent, you should ask for less talent. If you have knowledge, you will feel like you haven't learned. If you have enough knowledge, you will feel empty"; Moreover, Confucius says: "Smart and wise, keep the foolish; Incomparable outstanding achievements, and can give in; Courage inspires the world, and guard it with fear; Rich in the world, keep it humble." [7] As for Taoism, Lao Zi highly praises humility [14]. Chapter 66 of Tao Te Ching says: "Therefore, the river and sea can be the king of the

hundred valleys, so they can be the king of the hundred valleys". Lao Tzu further revealed the mystery of true strength: "Weak is better than strong" (Chapter 36), "Keeping soft is better than strong" (Chapter 52) and "Strong is at a disadvantage, weak is always good" (Chapter 76); Chapter 22: "Not showing yourself, not being self-righteous, so more prominent; not boasting of yourself, so have merit; not arrogant, so can grow; no struggle, so the world cannot compete with it" [9].

Humility in the West

The concept and definition of humility are still controversial in academia [10-11]. In addition, China and the West have different interpretations of humility [2] [5]. Western culture believes that a person's success or greatness is related to the characteristics humility. However, humility is a concept that is often misunderstood. Morris et al. pointed out that authentic humility is not self-abasement [12]; authentic attitude is the key. Humility implies a sustained attitude of progress, humble people know their limits, avoid complacency, and desire to do better [13]. Nielsen et al. emphasized that humility is an ideal personal quality that individuals are willing to know themselves and pay attention to their relationships with others [14]. Owens et al. argued that humility is an open attitude towards one's own will, appreciation of others and feedback [10]. Humility not only means knowing oneself correctly, but this kind of correct understanding should come from the individual's understanding of others, and the individual needs to adjust his own knowledge based on the feedback of others [15]. Some scholars have given humility a more rigorous facet. For example, Morris et al. proposed that the three dimensions of humility are self-awareness, openness and transcendence [12]. Rowatt et al. believed that the essence of humility should include five aspects: sincerity, fairness, open-mindedness, respectfulness of others, an absence of arrogance, egotism or conceit [16]. Owens et al. proposed that humility includes the willingness to view oneself correctly, appreciation of others and openness to feedback [10]. In addition, Ou et al. added self-concept of self-transcendence pursuit and transcendent self-concept; they divided humility into 6 dimensions, 3 dimensions are behavioral representations of humility, and 3 dimensions are about cognition and motivation [11].

This study integrates the views of Chinese and western scholars, defines humility as "One person has merits but take credit", and proposes six aspects as follows: Open-mindedness [6-7] [9] [17]; Self-awareness [6-7] [16] [18-19]; Self-reflection [7] [13] [20-21]; Showing courtesy [13] [16] [22-23]; Sense of transcendence [10] [11-12] [19]; Attitude of gratitude [7] [9] [20] [23].

The Relationship between Authority and Humility

Authority is a legal power that can be granted to a specific person or position, which is obtained by the position of the organization [24]. Morris et al. studied the relationship between humility and leader's personality and put forward the hypothesis that high self-management will lead to high humility and humility will lead to social power motivation [12]. In addition, the higher the authority, the stronger the motivation for social power, and the higher the humility, because they want to have a wider network of people to consolidate their career and influence. Peterson & Seligman pointed out that the power status gap between leaders and subordinates is quite related to the effect of humility [22]. A logical inference is that when a person is low-level leader, he is in the stage of building merit. He must do his duty and try his best to perform. However, when the power and ability of leaders in high positions are affirmed, if he demonstrates the virtue of humility, he will be more respected by his subordinates. Therefore, there should be a positive relationship between authority and humility. That is to say, the higher the authority of the leader, the humbler he is.

Method

The self-developed humility scale was designed, the pre-test and exploratory factor analysis was carried out. Through interviews, expert validity, and taking 70 MBA master students and 45 in-service students of School of Management as the subjects of the pre-test questionnaire, the analysis of the pre-test data was conducted for three times. The common factors were extracted by using the principal components analysis methods, and the common factors were extracted by the maximum variance

rotation method. The eigenvalue of the component is greater than 1 and the factor load is greater than 0.5. Finally, humility extracts six main factors and 22 items. The official samples of 109 collected from in-service EMBA students of School of Management. Authority measurement used the eight-item Power Perception Scale ($\alpha = .93$) developed by Hersey and Natemeyer [25].

Results

The result is a total of seven factors (see Table 1) with a cumulative variance of 69.12%. The factor load is less than 0.5 to be deleted, and the items classified as inappropriate components are also deleted. Finally, 21 items are retained, after extraction, seven factors are named as: self-awareness, gratitude, introspection, acceptability, knowing limits, transcendence, and showing courtesy. The Cronbach α of humility = .633 fits the requirement of Cronbach α for exploratory factor analysis by the first development scale is between 0.45 and 0.60, so the scale is still acceptable.

Table 1. Factor analysis results

Facet	Item	Factor loading	Cronbach α
Self-awareness	I usually know clearly what I need to improve	.774	.784
	I am always able to face others with an open mind.	.740	
	In case of failure, I try to find out what I have committed.	.729	
	I can always face myself honestly	.689	
Gratitude	Every time I succeed, I will thank others for their contributions.	.805	.679
	All my successful experiences are helped by others.	.761	
	Most of my success depends on luck and other external factors.	.694	
	I don't usually take credit for the success of things.	.581	
Introspection	My failure was mainly caused by external factors.	.946	.978
	In case of failure, I know clearly that responsibility will not be shirked.	.858	
Acceptability	I can accept different ideas and practices from myself.	.795	.586
	I am happy to adopt the ideas put forward by my subordinates.	.795	
	A person should be willing to listen to other people's opinions.	.509	
Knowing limits	I know clearly which is my major and which is not.	.854	.547
	As a capable person, I clearly understand my limits.	.781	
Transcendence	When subordinates have better ideas, supervisors should not stick to their own opinions.	.760	.420
	The world is actually very complicated, don't think you can master the truth.	.722	
	Listening to opinions from subordinates may affect the authority of the supervisor.	.653	
Showing courtesy	On general occasions, I will give others the courtesy to sit first.	.794	.450
	On general occasions, I always politely let others speak first.	.648	
	In general banquet, I will let others eat first.	.569	
Humility Scale (Internal Consistency)			.633

According to gender, age, position and marital status, the variance analysis shows that there is no significant difference between humility and background variables such as gender, age and position. Only in the marriage part and humility showed significant differences, then LSD Post hoc test results found that married and unmarried were significantly higher than other people such as divorced or widowed. In the seven facets of humility, further analysis is made on the differences in details with various background variables. The results show that women are significantly higher than men in the "knowing limits" dimension ($p < .005$). In age, those over 40 years old (inclusive) are significantly higher than those under 39 years old in the "knowing limits". And with the increase of age, the age over 50 is significantly higher than that between 45 and 49 years old, and the age between 40 and 44 years old is significantly higher than that under 39 years old. In the analysis of the differences in marriage, unmarried people are significantly higher than married, divorced or widowed people in the aspect of "acceptability". The analysis of difference in "knowing limits" or "self-awareness", top level leaders is significantly higher than that of middle and low level leaders. This study further analyzed the relationship of authority in seven aspects of humility, the results show that authority is positively

correlated with "knowing limits" and "showing courtesy". It shows that the greater the authority of the supervisor, the more he can know his limits and the more he can show external courtesy.

Findings and Conclusions

There is no significant difference between the overall humility and the background variables such as gender, age and position. The results show that there is no obvious relationship between male or female supervisors, age or position and overall humility. However, in marriage, it is found that both married and unmarried are humbler than divorced or widowed. The divorced or widowed people may be affected by major changes in their marital life, which may affect the cultivation of personal humility.

In the facets of humility, "knowing limits" of women is higher than that of men's. In age, over 40 have a higher "limit of knowledge" than under 39, as Confucius said: "40 is not perplexed", which is also proved here. After 40 years old, with the increase of age, the ability of "knowing limits" is gradually improved. As Confucius said, "forty is not confused". Regarding top-level leaders is higher than that of middle and low level leaders in "knowing limits" or "self-awareness". That is, "knowing limits" is to be able to view oneself accurately, understand one's specialty and length, and continuously and objectively evaluate one's ability and limit. It is not only related to age, but also the level of position, based on one's experience in life or work. In "acceptability", unmarried people are higher than married or divorced or widowed people. The unmarried supervisors are usually more willing to accept opinions from others. Unmarried people may be more open because they are less burdened with family opinions and housework, or there is no family member nearby to offer advice from time to time. Authority is positively correlated with "knowing limits" and "showing courtesy". That is, the greater the authority or the higher the position, the more one should know one's ability limit and professional level, so "knowing limits" is higher. In addition, the more you respect others, the more courtesy you can show when you behave with this mentality [21].

This study found that the higher the position, the older the age, and the greater the authority, the more people can clearly understand their ability limit, knowing which is their own specialty, which is not their own specialty, the more courteous attitude they can show. And the position is higher-level supervisor, or those who are over 40 years old, the greater the impact. Obviously, the degree of humility is related to the level of position or age, and may be related to the individual's life experience in life or work.

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