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The Psychological Effect of Humble Leadership on Employee Turnover and Resilience

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Abstract

A leader is merely overhead unless he is bringing out the best in his employees. Unfortunately, many leaders lose sight of this. Power, can cause leaders to become overly obsessed with outcomes and control, and, therefore, treat their employees as means to an end. The key, is to help people feel purposeful, motivated, and energized so they can bring their best selves to work. When leaders are humble, show respect, and ask how they can serve employees as they go about improving the organization, the outcomes can be astonishing.

Humility is as one of the major critical leadership factors that induces a culture whereby the working staff have a sense of inclusion. When practiced, the employees see selfless act in their leaders, a style characterized by behaviour of humility,e.g. facing criticism and acknowledging their mistakes; allowing the employees to learn and develop; demonstrating valour, e.g. taking personal risks for the larger good; and holding them personally responsible for outcomes, this way the employees are more likely to exhibit their feelings to be a part of their working teams-- be it men or women. Employees who notice selfless behavior in their managers are more Innovative- exhibiting new ideas and ways of doing work better. Moreover, they are more engaged in team onus behavior, working beyond office hours, doing the work of an unreported colleague.

Following a bottom-up leadership style, the study of humble leadership has attracted increasing attention from working scholars in recent past around the planet. But its effectiveness on employees engagement and mechanism still lack rigorous empirical study. In this research paper, we have prepared the mechanism and boundary condition by which humble leader's act and behaviour influences the employees' turnover intention. Two wave data was collected from 251 sales and technological personnel in India supporting our hypothesized model. It was found that humble leader behavior is significantly not related to follower turnover intention. The relationship between the two is further partially inter weaved by organizational identification, and moderated by leader expertise.

Keywords: Humble Behavior; Selfless Act, Turnover Intention, Organizational Identification; Leader Expertise.

Introduction

Globally, Business schools prepare people to deal with internal crises, rather than external crises, where it is not the strategy of the company that is in question, rather, it is the ability of leaders to figure out how to get used to that strategy.

Leaders are recognized for their unique talents and skills they bring to their teams; there is a sense of *belongingness* when they share the commonalities with their colleagues. It's important for leaders to get this balance right, as questioning for too much uniqueness can erase employees' sense of belonging. However, altruism is one such attribute of a leader who can balance this out of their employees and across the board.

Leadership gradually influences the work lives of employees (Qian et al., 2018) and is viewed as an important Social and Situational factor that affects the employee responses in the workplace (Williams et al., 2010; Nguyen et al., 2016; Wang et al., 2018 a). Social context is "an integral ingredient enabling the kinds of mental models that lead to resilience" (Lengnick-Hall et al., 2011, p. 247; Cooper et al., 2019, p. 89). Leadership has an important role to play in the employee resilience-building process (Harland et al., 2005; Nguyen et al., 2016). **Humble leadership** is viewed as modeling How to grow, which aids employees welcome their own developmental journeys (Owens and Hekman, 2012; Rego et al., 2017).

Humility is a lasting and stable human quality whose root lies in its "enhancing-other" orientation (Chancellor and Lyubomirsky, 2013). Earlier, humility was viewed as a personal weakness (Morris, Brotheridge, & Urbanski, 2005) associated with "shyness, lack of ambition, passivity, or lack of confidence" (Vera & Rodriguez-Lopez, 2004, p. 393). Vera and Rodriguez-Lopez (2004) view humility as "a mandatory strength for leaders and organizations owning it, and a dangerous weakness for those lacking it." Nielsen, Marrone and Slay (2010) viewed humility as a "desirable personal quality that is an understanding of oneself through awareness of personal identities, strengths, and limitations" (p. 34). Owens, Johnson, & Mitchell (2013) defined "humility" as an inter-personal characteristic that encompasses a willingness to view oneself accurately; appreciate others' strengths and contributions; and openness to new ideas and feedback (p. 1518). Owens and Hekman (2012) generalized three categories of humble leader behavior: (a) acknowledging limitations and mistakes, (b) recognizing followers' strengths and contributions, and (c) modeling teachability.

Humble leadership focuses on leaders' transparency about their own developmental processes. *Humble Leadership* is a bottom-up leadership

approach that *involves patient listening, observing others and learning by doing*. Empirical research on leader humility shows that leader's humility encourages supportive organizational containment, reinforces employee learning orientation, job satisfaction, work engagement, and retention (Owens et al., 2013), and tempers the ill effects of leader narcissism, leading to positive follower outcomes (Owens, Wallace, & Waldman, 2015).

THEORY AND HYPOTHESES

In Latin Language, Humility, means "humus or humi", i.e. "on the ground" or "earth" (Owens & Hekman, 2012), or, "modesty, and not conceited". People with humility are down to earth people, not concerned about their status, low key players and pushes others in front. They work in the background and give the credit to their team members, thereby encouraging them to do things better and better. They do not believe in individualism but rely on team participation. As Nielsen et al (2010) stated, true humility is "a desirable personal quality reflecting the willingness to understand the self (identities, strengths, limitations), combined with perspective in the self's relationship with others". At organizational level, Ou et al (2014) found that humility among owners is connected to the integration of the top management team. At individual level, humility is reflected to positively impact subordinate's attitudes and behaviors, such as encouraging follower engagement and psychological freedom (Owens & Hekman, 2012), facilitating follower self-efficacy, motivation, identification and trust in leader through socialized charismatic leader behavior (Nielsen et al., 2010), and promoting employee retention as mediated by job satisfaction (Owens et al., 2013).

Humble Leaders and Followers' Turnover Intention

Turnover intention is the tendency to quit from the current organization, which is a crucial indicator for actual turnover behavior (Shore & Martin, 1989). This intention to quit could be due to job dissatisfaction, intention to quit, preference for a new job and the possibility to get one (Mobley, Horner, & Hollingworth, 1978). The immediate supervisor is perhaps one of the most influential factors in one's work life, influencing subordinates' job performance, attitudes and behaviors (Perry, Witt, & Penney, 2010). Indeed, leadership behavior has been shown to be a powerful predictor of employee turnover intention (Tse, Huang, & Lam, 2013; Wells & Pwachey, 2011). In essence, leaders who acknowledge faults and limitations in open public are found to empathize with others easier, which eliminate followers' concern of exposing themselves in inexperience and mistakes (Weick, 2001). Leaders who recognize the colleagues potential advantage and strengths and involve them in the most suitable projects, are most likely to retain their followers (Graen, Liden & Hoel, 1982). Further, leaders who show openness are more

likely to listen to and carry the colleagues voice, even for ideas that opposed to him. Many studies have revealed that participating in organizational decisions can usher followers' organizational identification, which in turn reduces their intention to quit(Mitchell et al., 2001).

Hypothesis 1: Humility behavior of leader is negatively related to followers' turnover intention.

Being followers of a humble leader, continuous growth and progress promote the identification of individual in the organizational, thereby positively affecting one's attitude and behavior. This infers the mechanism of how the behavior of a humble leader inhibit follower's turnover intention. This mediating role is theorized and hypothesized by following two steps: (1)the effect of humble leader behavior on one's identity in the organization, and (2) the effect of organizational identification on one's turnover intention.

The behavior of Humble leader does have positive effect on followers' organizational identification by enhancing followers' membership and their internalization of organizational goals and values (Ashforth, Harrison, & Corley, 2008). Based on emotional contagion mechanism (Barsade, 2002), leader's positive emotions have

direct influence on followers', which leads to the emotional convergence (Bono & Ilies, 2006). The loyalty and commitment of Humble leader to the organization contagiously spread to his/her followers, thereby, encouraging them to identify with their associations. Besides, the way humble leader treat their subordinate is likely to be imbibed by followers and thus, treat each other alike, for the promotion of authentic, trustful relationship among organization members. Humble Leaders' always draw followers' attention to organizational goals and values, rather than following their-selves' reputation(Reave, 2005).

The behaviors of Humble Leaders' spotlight organization strengths. Organization members later lend more faith in the significance and reliability of organization goals and values, and have more psychological attachment and sense of belonging toward the organization. In fact, previous studies have shown evidence that humble leader behavior positively affect follower's developmental organizational identification (Dutton et al., 2010; Qu et al., 2013).

Employees with high organizational identification are willing to adopt converging goals and involve in extra-role behavior in order to achieve collective performance. Riketta's (2005) meta-analysis showed that organizational identification has relatively high correlation with job involvement, in-role and extra-role performance. Employees with high organizational identification are more emotionally attached and are more

likely to continue in the organization. The research of Abrams, Ando and Hinkle's (1998) showed the negative correlation between organizational identification and turnover intention. Bamber and Iyer (2002) further verified the same relationship through reducing organizational-professional conflict. In fact, turnover occur unless organizational goals and values are adopted and shared by employee (Payne & Huffman, 2005).

From the above we can deduce that, humble leaders' behavior positively affects the followers' organizational identification (Qu et al., 2013), and that, the followers are less likely to leave, if they are attached to their organizations (Tse, Huang, & Lam, 2013). Going by this, organizational identification transmit the effect of humble leader behavior on turnover intention.

Based on the above, the following hypotheses are being proposed:

Hypothesis 2: The behavior of Humble leader is positively related to his followers' organizational identification.

Hypothesis 3: Organizational identification defines the relationship between the behaviour of a humble leader and the intention of followers' turnover.

The Role of an Expert Leader

The competency role of a Leader in an organization generally involves task-competence and social-competence (Darioly et al., 2011), whereas our study is concerned with the task-competence as perceived by subordinate, namely the expertise of a leader. Expert Leaders, usually are more knowledgeable and have sufficient skills in their field as compared to other members in the organization or department, and are able to organize their knowledge in more meaningful ways (Hunter, Tate, Dzieweczynski, & Bedell-Avers, 2011). Leaders are required to have the ability to identify the problem, comprehend it, define it, and guide their followers to solve it (Mumford, Friedrich, Caughron, & Byrne, 2007). Hence, leader expertise is critical in effective problem-solving and decision making (Sternberg, 2003; Goodall & Pogrebna, 2014). Coincidentally, humble leader devote much of their time and energy in enhancing their follower's development and growth, which could be noticed when humble leader is thought of as an expert leader, and who has the ability to provide effective assistance and guidance to his followers when they are in difficulty. Leader's willingness and capability of promoting followers' development journeys enhances the   followers' commitment, dedication and retention in the organization.

Coincidentally, humility and expertise are viewed as two key dimensions of professional spirit in most business parlance , for example, medical

care personnel , and lawyers and judges . Based on the above cited example, the effectiveness of humble leader significantly reduces and questioned if the leader is perceived as a non-expert. This is true when acknowledging faults and limitations, a humble leader may be looked down upon as a coward, and thus lose reputations and his followers' confidence in him and organization, which may significant-ally impact the organizational productivity and performance, thereby, resulting in follower's turnover intention (Price & Garland, 1981). In contrast, if the leader is a professional and a specialized one, the followers will cherish leader's humble behavior, for example, showing gratitude to leader's support, and appreciate the leader's compliment. In this case, followers of humble leader are willing to involve in more team work and have more satisfaction, instead of quitting. Thus, it is hypothesized that:

Hypothesis 4: The expertise of a Leader moderates the relationship between humble leader behavior and followers' turnover intention. This negative relationship will be stronger under the condition of higher leader expertise rather than lower leader expertise.

Sampling

In order to test the hypotheses, 375 employees were solicited to participate in this research. Participants consisted of R&D personnel, finance support representatives and leaders of Finance companies. During the first phase of data collection, participants were handed a survey which contained measures of how they perceived humble leader behavior and leader expertise. We received 341 completed surveys (91%). Approximately three and a half weeks later, participants who completed the Time 1 survey were then asked to report about their organizational identification and turnover intention. After due matching and filtrating, 252 samples left with efficient and complete data at both Time 1 and Time 2 (74%).

The sample had 159 males and 93 females. Among them, (a)24% were around 25, 76% were between 25 and 39, (b)72% were unmarried, 28% married,(c) 42% had bachelor's degree, 49% masters and 9% post masters,(d) 48% were working in the current organization for less than two years, 41% were between three to five years, 11% were between five to ten years and 1% longer,(e) 17% were managers, 43% were research and development personnel, 40% were supporter.

Measurement

All items were scored on a five-point scale ranging from Strongly Disagree (1) to Strongly Agree (5). Humble leader behavior was measured with Owens et al's (2013) nine-item scale, E.G: "This person actively seeks feedback, even if it is critical"; "This person is willing to

learn from others." The humble leader behavior instrument provided an adequate internal reliability ($\alpha=0.93$).

The Leaders' expertise was measured with the help of Podsakoff, Todor & Schuler's (1983) three-item instrument. E.g. "Nobody knows the jobs better in my department than my supervisor". The leader expertise provided an adequate internal reliability ($\alpha=0.86$).

The overall Organizational identification was measured with the help of a six-item instrument developed by Meal & Ashforth (1992). E.g. "When I talk about my organization, I usually say 'we' rather than 'they'"; "When someone criticizes the organization, it feels like a personal insult". The organizational identification scale provided an adequate internal reliability ($\alpha=0.88$).

The Turnover intention of employees was measured with a four-item instrument developed by Farh, Tsui, Xin, and Cheng (1998), such as "I often think of quitting my present job", and one positive item "I am planning for a long-term development in this company". The turnover intention scale provided an adequate internal reliability ($\alpha=0.78$).

Some demographic variables , including age, gender, marital status, education degree, tenure in current organization and position type, were controlled in regression analysis.

OUTCOMES

A series of Confirmatory Factor Analyses (CFA) using AMOS software and maximum likelihood technique to test the distinctiveness of the study constructs, was first conducted. The Outcomes showed that the four-factor measurement model i.e. (humble leader behavior,leaders expertise, organizational identification, turnover intention) fits the data quite well ($\chi2=203.357$, df=98, GFI=.954, ITI=.988, CFI=.987, RMSEA=.053). Four alternative models were further tested through combining correlated factors and were then compared with the proposed model. As shown in Table 1, all the alternative models fitted the data significantly than the hypothesized model, thereby, suggesting that the hypothesized model was most appropriate for the factor structure.

A common method model (bottom part of Table 1) was also applied, with all indicators from Time 1 loading on a common method factor and all indicators from Time 2 loading on another, to deal with the potential common bias method. This is similar to Harman 1 factor test except given two separated time points. The common method model also fitted the data well ($\chi2=207.225$, df=97, GFI=.934, IFI=.966, CFI=.966, RMSEA=.057). However, the chi-square test of model fit comparison suggested that the hypothesized model fits the data much better ($\Delta\chi2=3.868$, Δdf=1, p<.01). Hence, the procedures do not eliminate

concern of common method bias but suggest it does not appear to play a significant role in our data.

Table 1. Confirmatory Factor Analysis Results

Measurement Models	x^2	df	x^2/df	GFI	IFI	CFI	RMSEA
Hypothesized four-factor model	203.357	98	2.075	.954	.988	.987	.053
Three-factor model A *Humble leader behavior and organizational identification were combined into one factor*	471.32	101	4.67	.751	.838	.837	.122
Three-factor model B *Humble leader behavior and leader expertise were combined into one factor*	276.08	101	2.73	.873	.924	.923	.084
Two-factor model *Humble leader behavior, leader expertise and organizational identification were combined into one factor*	542.64	103	5.27	.728	.808	.807	.132
One-factor model	585.18	104	5.63	.715	.790	.788	.137
Common method factor model	207.225	97	2.136	.934	.966	.966	.057

Note: GFI = Goodness of Fit Index; IFI = Incremental Fit Index; CFI = Comparative Fit Index; RMSEA = Root Mean Square Error of Approximation.

Table 2 below depicts the descriptive statistics and correlations among all variables. As perceived and expected, humble leader behavior positively related to organizational identification (r=.58, p<.01), and negatively related to turnover intention (r=- .68, p<.01). In addition, organizational identification (r=-.50, p<.01) and leader expertise (r=-.69, p<.01) were negatively related to turnover intention. All these results aided the preliminary support to our hypotheses.

Table 2. Mean, Reliability, Standard Deviation, and Correlation

Variable	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1. Age	1.80	0.48	-									
2. Gender	1.41	0.49	-.18	-								
3. Marriage	1.29	0.46	.37	-.05	-							
4. Education	2.59	0.61	-.02	-.05	-.17**	-						
5. Tenure	1.67	0.72	.29	-.06	.22**	-.07	-					
6. Position	2.56	1.10	-.26	.22**	-.05	-.02	-.14*	-				
7. Humble leader behavior	3.63	0.78	.07	.01	-.06	.13*	-.08	-.08	(.93)			
8. Leader expertise	3.46	0.89	.11	-.05	-.02	.14	-.04	-.08	.74**	(.85)		
9. Organizational identification	3.66	0.73	.06	-.06	-.09	.08*	-.09	-.05	.58**	.54**	(.87)	
10. Turnover intention	2.65	0.77	-.09	-.00	-.04	-.13*	.07	.10	-.68**	-.69**	-.50**	(.78)

Note: N=249. *p<.05; **p<.01. two-tailed. Cronbach's alpha (α) coefficients are reported in diagonal.

Testing of Hypothesis

Based on the most extensive work by Baron & Kenny (1986), we used SPSS 20.0 to test the simple mediation and moderation models. We further bootstrapped the confidence intervals to access whether organizational identification mediated the indirect effect (Preacher, & Hayes, 2004) of humble leader behavior and followers' turnover

intention, and conducted a simple slope test to access whether leader expertise moderated the relationship. The mediating and moderating model regression tests are reported in Table 3.

As shown there and consistent with Hypothesis 1, Model 4 showed that humble leader behavior was negatively related to followers' turnover intention (β=-.65, p<.001). This block of variables accounted for 47% of the variance in turnover intention. Additionally, consistent with Hypothesis 2, Model 2 showed that humble leader behavior was positively related to organizational identification (β=.54, p<.001). Thus, the first two conditions of mediation hypothesis were met. To examine the third condition of the mediation, we regressed turnover intention on organizational identification with the effect of humble leader behavior controlled (Model 5). The results supported our Hypothesis 3 because organizational identification remained negatively related to turnover intention (β=-.19, p<.01), while the negative effect of humble leader behavior on turnover intention reduced (β=.55, p<.001), thus indicating a partial mediation effect. The indirect effect of humble leader behavior on turnover intention via organizational identification was estimated as -.0965 with the 95% bias-corrected confidence interval. Since the confidence interval (-.179 to -.013) did not including zero, the indirect effect was statistically significant (p < .01), providing additional support for Hypothesis 3.

Table 3. The Results of Hypotheses Test

	Organizational Identification		Turnover Intention				
	M1	M2	M3	M4	M5	M7	M8
Intercept	3.72***	1.97***	3.20***	5.31***	5.68***	2.86***	2.85***
Control variables							
Age	.17	.06	-.15	-.03	-.01	.01	.03
Gender	-.07	-.11	-.06	-.02	-.04	-.05	-.04
Marriage	-.16	-.10	-.07	-.15	-.16	-.14	-.13
Education	.07	-.01	-.17	-.07	-.07	-.05	-.04
Tenure	-.10	-.04	.11	.04	.03	.04	.04
Position	-.02	-.01	.06	.03	.03	.03	.03
Independent							
Humble Leader behavior		.54***		-.65***	-.55***	-.34***	-.37***
Mediator							
Organizational identification					-.19**		
Moderator							
Leader expertise						-.37***	-.39***
Interaction							
Humble leader behavior × Leader expertise							-.10**
R²		.03	.35	.04	.47	.49	.55	.57
R² change	.03	.32	.04	.43	.02	.51	.02
F-statistic	1.37	18.25***	1.82	30.17***	28.57***	36.71***	34.60**

Note: N=249. **p<.01, ***p<.001, two-tailed.

Model 8 of Table 3 shows the results of examining whether leader expertise moderates the negative effect of humble leader behavior on turnover intention. The interaction term of humble leader behavior and leader expertise was significant (β=-.10, p<.01) and explained an additional 2% of the variance in turnover intention. Consistent with our expectation, as shown in Figure 1, the negative relationship of humble

leader behavior and turnover intention is relatively stronger for employees who perceived higher leader expertise. The simple slope test further verified that, at high level of leader expertise, humble leader behavior was negatively and significantly related to turnover intention (simple slope $=-.46$, $t=-6.65$, $p<.01$). On the other hand, at low leader expertise, the relationship of humble leader behavior and turnover intention was not significant (simple slope $= -.28$, $t= -4.07$, n.s.). Thus, Hypothesis 4 was supported.

Figure 1. Humble Leader Behavior - Leader Expertise Interaction for Turnover Intention
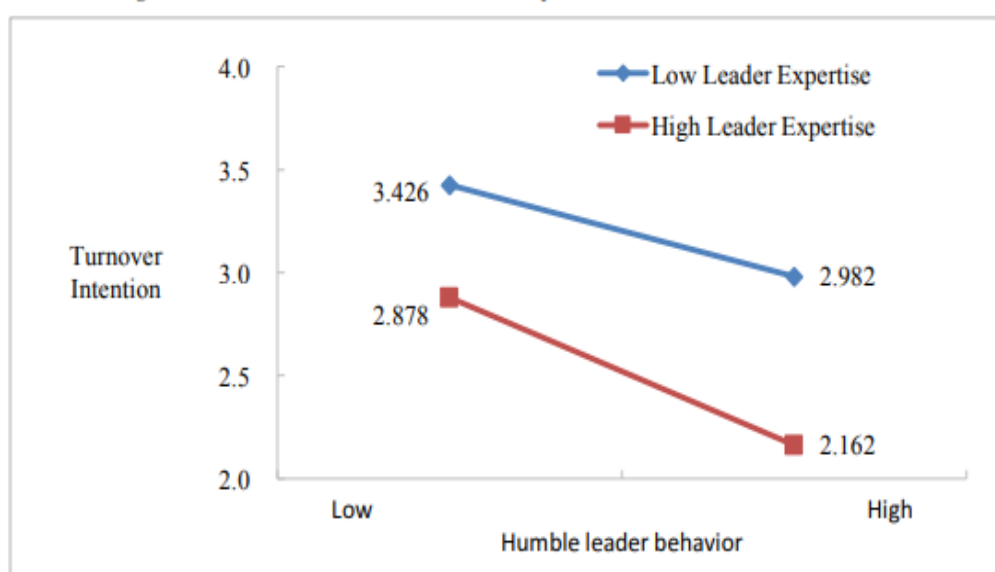
We found that humble leader behavior affects follower turnover intention directly and indirectly through organizational identification. In addition, our results revealed that leader expertise moderates the direct effect of humble leader behavior. The effect of humble leadership behavior on follower turnover intention is much stronger with high leader expertise rather than low. Our findings contribute to the current humble leadership literature in several ways.

Implications

First, we advance humble leadership research by constructing and verifying the theoretical model of humble leader behavior and follower's turnover intention. Humility and leadership were considered as two contradictory terms in the past, because humble leaders usually be misinterpreted as incapable to motivate followers and hardly to gain their reputations (Ou et al., 2014). However, our study shows that there is a significant negative relationship between humble leader behavior and follower turnover intention. This finding demonstrates that humble leader behavior should be considered as an important predictor in follower's positive work-related outcome. Further, the impact of humble leader behavior on follower turnover intention serves as an important contributor for verifying the efficiency of humble leadership.

Second, our study has contributed to addressing the insufficient attention paid to the explanatory mechanisms linking humble leader behavior to follower outcomes. Drawing from the perspective of intrinsic psychological motivation, we found that organizational identification acts as important mediating mechanism between humble leader behavior and follower turnover intention. Identifying with the organization is an important contributor to follow outcome, especially to humble leadership process.

The research also provides a new insight into understanding the boundary conditions on the relationship between humble leader behavior and follower turnover intention. Our findings indicated that leader expertise serves as an important moderator in the negative relationship between humble leader behavior and follower turnover intention.

Employees perceived high level of leader expertise, in comparison with low leader expertise, have less turnover intention when exposure to high level of humble leader behavior. Thus, we contribute to the research stream by addressing the important question of when humble leader behavior matters more by identifying leader expertise as an crucial individual difference.

Implications

The Research findings provide important managerial implications for practitioners. First, the results suggest that humble leader behavior should be encouraged within organizations because it inhibits followers' turnover intention by promoting their organizational identification. Specifically, leaders with humility are more likely to succeed because "lack of humility has been cited as a key reason leader or their organizations fail" (Nielsen et al., 2010). The inner virtue of humility is thus critical important for effective leadership. However, expressed humility is more operational and easier to cultivate, relative to the stable trait of humility. Our results have verified the efficiency of humble leader behavior in alleviating followers' turnover intention.

As noted above, we opine that whether managers have the virtue of humility or not, they will perform better in motivating followers and achieving better job performance

when they lead with humble approach and demonstrate more humble behaviors in their interaction with subordinates.

Furthermore, organizations should put more emphasis on reducing employee's turnover intention considering its costly consequence. The results show that the inhibiting effect of humble leader behavior on follower turnover intention significantly magnified in the context of high

leader expertise, which provides us a new insight in dealing with employee turnover intention. Besides leader's behavior, leader expertise that perceived by followers also exerts pivotal impact on follower turnover intention. Thus strong and solid leader expertise should be advocated in organizations. More specifically, professional knowledge and skill could be considered as selection criteria in promotion system, and further developed through leadership training and development program.

Limitations and Future Research Directions

Our study has several limitations that future research should address. First, although the data was collected in two different phases with a three-week span, data were all rated by employees, the potential common method bias could not be removed completely (Podsakoff, Mackenzie, Lee, & Podsakoff, 2003). Further research could conduct longitudinal researches with data collected from multiple sources.

Second, our findings is limited because it is just based on scientific and technological personneL particularly in NorthWestt India. Despite as a bright contribution, it is still unknown whether the relationships identified here remain unchanged when replicated to other regions or different kind of organizations, as culture factors potentially shaping employee's interpretation of perceived leader behavior. Thus, future researchers are encouraged to investigate the relationship of humble leadership and follower turnover in cross-culture context.

Third, our research was based on individual level, but leadership, in essence, is a multi-level and complicated process. The extension of humble leader behavior to organizational level can help to fully understand the affecting process of humble leadership (Greer, 2013). In addition, the role of different levels of identifications (i.e. social identification, team identification, relational identification) should be taken account in humble leadership process.

We believe, therefore, it would be theoretically meaningful for future research to examine the multi-level effects of humble leader behavior.

Finally, we focused only on the interaction of humble leader behavior and leader expertise, but other boundary conditions might be important as well. For example, followers with high power distance will be more sensitive to leader's humble behavior, and subsequently will arise more work engagement (Tang, Long, & Zhou, 2015). Owens & Hekman (2012), as well, recommended several contingencies of humble leader behavior, including perceived sincerity, the presence of extreme threat and time pressure, and organizational culture of learning. Thus, the establishment of humble leader behavior and the contingencies of its influence represent a promising and important future research direction.

Theoretical Development and Research Framework

The approaches to leadership and self-expansion theory (Aron & Aron, 1986) provided solid theory to explain how a humble leader fosters and interacts with followers. These approaches to leadership suggests that followers play an active role in activating a certain regulatory focus among leaders, thus affecting a leaders' behavior. Followers behave conducively to meet their leaders' hopes and expectations (Uhl - Bien et al., 2014). In this way, followers are often found to be active, powerful players in the proper leadership process.

In this study, humble leadership is regarded as one specific kind of follow-the-leader leadership. Humble leadership refers to a bottom-up leadership approach that considers followers as equal and valuable partners (Owens & Hekman, 2012). Such leaders develop followers by promoting their performance and providing direction, support and empowerment. Moreover, humble leaders pass success on to their subordinates (Morris et al., 2005; Van Dierendonck, 2011). A leader's humility, as perceived by subordinates, affects his relationships, communications and level of trust with employees and management (Nielsen et al., 2010). These factors can in turn affect employee commitment, engagement and performance.

Self-Expansion Theory (SET) showcases the inherent social-psychological nature of leaders and followers (Dansereau et al., 2013). When humble leaders reallocate resources and share similar perspectives, subordinates are more likely to incorporate their leaders into the self. As such, an interpersonal inclusion will result in greater self-efficacy and an enhanced sense of the self (Lewandowski & Ackerman, 2006).

Based on SET, we examined a theoretical model in which leader humility would trigger followers' self-expansion process through their inclusion of leader in self. This psychological change in followers then enhances their core self-efficacy and eventually benefit their innovation performance. The complacent theory of creativity also highlights that employee's zest and motivation is the third factor that drives innovation (Amabile and Mueller, 2008).

Exhibiting inclusion and to reap its rewards, leaders should embrace a selfless leadership style. When leaders showcase their own personal growth, they ensure the growth and learning of others; by admitting to their own imperfections, they make it okay for others to be the same, too.

Too often leaders are focused on bending others and "winning" arguments. When people debate in this way, they become so focused on proving the validity of their own views, that they miss out on the

opportunity to learn from other points of view. Inclusive leaders are humble enough to suspend their own agendas and beliefs. In doing so, they not only augment their own learning, but they substantiate followers' unique perspectives.

The business environment is surrounded by Ambiguity and Uncertainty. So why not embrace them? When leaders humbly admit that they don't have all the answers, they create space for others to step forward and offer solutions. They also engender a sense of interdependence. Followers understand that the best bet is to rely on each other to work through complex, ill-defined problems.

Inclusive leaders empower others to lead. By reversing roles, leaders not only facilitate employees' development but they model the act of taking a different perspective, something that is so critical to working effectively in diverse teams.

Fishbowl — a method for facilitating dialogue.

At a typical fishbowl gathering, a small group of employees and leaders sit in circle at the center of the room, while a larger group of employees are seated around the perimeter. Employees are encouraged to engage with each other and leaders on any topic and are invited into the innermost circle. In these unscripted conversations, held throughout the year in a variety of venues, leaders routinely demonstrate humility —by admitting to employees that don't have all the answers and by sharing their own personal journeys of growth and development

At one fishbowl session, shortly after the company introduced same-sex partner benefits in 2007, a devoutly religious employee expressed concerns about the new benefits policy — in front of hundreds of other employees. Rather than going on the defensive, a senior leader skillfully engaged that employee in dialogue, asking him questions and probing to understand his perspectives. By responding in this way, the leader validated the perspectives of that employee and others who shared his views. Other leaders shared their own dilemmas and approaches to holding firm to their own religious beliefs yet embracing the company's values of treating all employees fairly. Dialogues such as these have made a palpable difference at Rockwell Automation. Employees have higher confidence in their leaders, are more engaged, and feel more included — despite their differences.

A selfless leader should not be mistaken for a weak one. It takes tremendous courage to practice humility in the ways described above. Yet regrettably, this sort of courage isn't always rewarded in organizations. Rather than selecting those who excel as self- promotion, as is often the case, more organizations would be wise to follow the lead

of companies like Google, Rockwell Automation, and others that are re-imagining what effective leadership looks like.

Source: www.mspguide.org

Humble leadership is defined as a leadership style in which a leader evaluates him/herself and subordinates through a multifaceted and objective lens, appreciating subordinates' positive worth, strengths, and contributions (Owens et al., 2013; Yuan et al., 2018). It contains three behavioral components: (a) a willingness to acknowledge one's limits and mistakes; (b) shining a spotlight on employees' contributions and strengths; and (c) keeping openness to advice, ideas, and feedback (Owens et al., 2013; Owens and Hekman, 2016).

According to SIP(Social Information Processing) theory, employees understand their work environments through the processing of social cues, which in turn shapes their reactions (Salancik and Pfeffer, 1978; Rego et al., 2017). Because of their high status, leaders can be viewed as vital social cues in workplaces (e.g., Yaffe and Kark, 2011). The actions of a leader in response to environmental challenges or adversities play a vital role in affecting employee resilience (Bullough et al., 2014). SIP theory also states that humble leadership represents powerful and valuable social information that can shape the perceptions of employees and influence employees' reactions through the use of language and symbols. Humble leadership views problems and past mistakes as opportunities. By converting crises into developmental challenges, humble leadership provides intellectual stimulation to facilitate employees' adaptive coping reactions (Owens et al., 2013). Additionally, humble leadership fosters supportive organizational contexts, including an empowering climate (Ou et al., 2014), legitimization of subordinate growth and development (Owens and Hekman, 2012), and reinforcing employee learning. It meshes closely with the concept of resilience, which, consistently emphasizes positive coping and achieving growth. Moreover, humble leadership opens lines of communication (Elrod, 2013), increases employees' psychological safety (Walters and Diab, 2016), and builds trust within organization (Elrod, 2013; Cooper et al., 2019), which can all be viewed as important antecedents to employee resilience (Cooper et al., 2019).

Humble leadership is perceived by employees as a model of how to grow and leads employees to feel that their own growth and improvement processes are legitimate and necessary (Owens and Hekman, 2012, 2016). Furthermore, it prompts employees to approach opportunities (Rietzschel, 2011) and orients employees to progressively strive toward achieving their potential. Additionally, through recognition of one's own limits and past mistakes, humble leadership legalizes uncertainty, inspires employees' growth, and creates climates of empowerment and autonomy (Ou et al., 2014; Yuan et al., 2018). This self-disclosure suggests that limits, past mistakes, and even setbacks can be overcome, ultimately facilitating development, shaping employee work-related promotion

focus (Wang et al., 2018c) rather than work-related prevention focus which concerns about security and losses (e.g., Higgins, 2000; Akhtar and Lee, 2014).

Leaders with integrity and treating people humbly, help maximize the contributions of their employees and thus, build goodwill for their organization. As important as these attributes are for managing a team, they also drive business by attracting investors, customers and potential staff members.

There are three upshots managers can act on immediately to improve their leadership abilities:

1. **Setting a good example:** It is imperative to set the right example not only with one's behavior, but also with one's actions, thereby, taking care of any performance issues quickly in order to show that problems are not intensified.

2. **Being honest:** When things in the company are happening, you want to tell employees as much as you can about these events. It's OK not to have all the answers. When you don't, just being honest and telling employees as much as you can, and letting them know you will try out more as quickly as possible.

3. **Supporting your employees:** A humble leader is an advocate for his team members and stand up for them during difficult times. In addition, it's important to support their career growth by highlighting their accomplishments to everyone in the company.

Research has found that humble leadership requires a multitude of skills and depends on the kind of role and organization. A humble Leader should
1. Have Strong Communication Skills,
2. Posses Good listening skills ,
3. Have Passion and commitment,
4. Be filled with Positivity,
5. Foster Innovation,
6. Foster Collaboration ,
7. Exhibit Honesty,
8. Exhibit Empathy,
9. Exhibit Humility.

The Three Keystone Behaviors of Humble Leaders

Humble leaders foster the organizational decisiveness through three keystone behaviors:

◆ They are **open** to different perspectives at the start of every decision journey. These leaders don't begin by building a case or exerting their power to convince people of their analysis or gut instincts about what course to take. Instead, they focus their judgment and storytelling skills on defining and explaining the problem to be solved. Then they gather alternative courses of action from the people who will be impacted by the decision, purposefully including input from a more diverse range of people than usual.

◆ They also **invite** open feedback after making a decision. Humble leaders don't use their power and influence to "sell the decision" and preemptively shut-down resistance. Instead, they ask, and expect, the broader group who is impacted by a decision to consider how much they buy-in to it, especially if they have concerns about the process that led to the decision. They know this active consideration improves understanding, and that it is better to hear concerns now than be derailed by them later.

◆ They **set check-points** to re-open or re-affirm decisions as conditions change. Such leaders don't say, "It's decided, so just do it!" and expect unwavering execution despite unexpected results or changing circumstances. Instead, they know that the world has a say in the outcome of their decisions, so to be agile, they must keep an open mind as results unfold. Without this effort, most organizations proceed with blinders on, sometimes sticking to obsolete decisions that need to change, and other times forgetting important decision details that are still relevant. The most effective leaders avoid these pitfalls. They humbly keep track of their decision-making with the same management discipline they apply to other critical business activities.

Humility is a core quality of leaders who rely on teamwork, rapid learning and high performance in their teams. Humble people tend to be aware of their own weaknesses, are eager to improve themselves, are appreciative of others' strengths and are focused on goals beyond their own self-interest.

Among employees, it's linked to lower turnover and absenteeism. These strengths are often overlooked because humble people tend to fly under the radar, making outsiders think it's their teams doing all the work.

Humble leaders can also be highly competitive and ambitious. But they tend to avoid the spotlight and give credit to their teams.   They also ask for help and listen to feedback from others, setting an example that causes subordinates to do the same.

Humble leaders accept that their specialized expertise is limited (in some cases obsolete) and are open to learning from others. This is especially true when it comes to digital knowledge, as many of the leaders who are

tasked with leading digital transformations are not digital natives themselves. If this tension is not managed wisely, leaders run the risk of making bad or inappropriate decisions.

Humble leaders require a clear vision for where they want to go, without necessarily needing a concrete roadmap for how to get there. Not managed wisely, leaders run the risk of providing no "north star" for their team members. On the other hand, if they are not grounded in reality, they may serve up lofty, unrealistic, or intangible goals.

Humble Leadership values listening carefully to others before deciding. If this application is not managed wisely, leaders run the risk of missing important information that resides in the team members surrounding them. Conversely, if a leader refrains from providing their viewpoint, they miss the chance to apply their own valuable knowledge.

Humble Leadership values empowering others to achieve goals. Whens not managed wisely, leaders run the risk of alienating and marginalizing promising talent. Alternatively, they may undermine their own authority by sharing power too broadly.

Humble Leadership acknowledges that doing something quickly, and failing fast, is often more important than doing it perfectly. If not managed wisely, leaders run the risk of delaying the launch of key initiatives or directives due to a fear of imperfection. Conversely, bringing initiatives forward without ample consideration and testing can lead to embarrassing results.

Humble Leadership and Employee Innovation Behavior

A leader can express his immediate influence by directing and evaluating the employees' work and controlling their access to resources and information (Gupta & Singh, 2013). The essence of leadership in general lies in its ability to influence employees' willingness to engage in creative endeavors by creating a work context (Anderson et al., 2004). Humble leaders can be regarded as one form of ambient stimulus, and this stimulus exists widely in the whole organization and is recognized by subordinates (Walters & Diab, 2016). Several factors have been found to be beneficial for creativity, such as autonomy in work, challenging work tasks, support for innovation, appreciation for creative work, feedback and treating employees as partners by involving them in decision-making (De Jong & Den Hartog, 2007). All these factors are most likely practiced by humble leaders because they acknowledge their own limitations, appreciating follower's strengths and modeling teachability.

When leaders acknowledge their own limitations (Owens & Hekman, 2012), they signal to the team that it is human not tot be perfect. Then, the subordinates feel more safety with risk taking and perform innovative

behavior, contribute creative ideas, and question suggestions and decisions (Burke et al., 2006). Humble leadership is also found to lead to a perceived legitimization of the employees' developmental journey that increases the psychological freedom and engagement of employees (Owens & Hekman, 2012). Furthermore, employees' perception of psychological freedom was found by other researchers to be related to creativity and innovation (De Jong & Den Hartog, 2007; Hennessey & Amabile, 2010). Together, these factors stimulate more in-depth processing and innovative behaviors.

By spotlighting and appreciating follower's strengths, leaders foster a development orientation and continuous small changes within the organization. Humble leaders who recognize and appreciate their employees' knowledge and expertise are more likely to appreciate employees' creative efforts. This leadership style allows employees to solve a problem or task because it is interesting or challenging to do so rather than for external rewards (Owens & Hekman, 2012, p. 804).

Modeling teachability by showing an openness towards learning, by being a model for followers and by considering alternative views is described as being most important for followers to perceive uncertainty as less threatening (Owens & Hekman, 2012). This leader behavior is a demonstration to the employees that their expertise is valued by their leader and signals a degree of participation and involvement. Incorporating subordinates' ideas and suggestions into decisions leads to idea generation and innovative output within the organization (De Jong & Den Hartog, 2007, p. 49).

In short, humble leaders accept new things with an open mind, admit their own defects and deficiencies and are eager to learn from others, and humble leadership has a significant impact on the process and results associated with organizational learning (Owens and Hekman, 2012). Furthermore, humble leadership can lead to an open mind that accepts criticism, creating an inclusive organizational atmosphere (Delbecq, 2006). In turn, humble leadership makes it is easier to show supportive behavior toward employee innovation.

For an organization as a whole, humble leadership means not only embodying certain personal qualities but also recognizing and appreciating knowledge and guidance from the superego (Standish, 2007).

Humble Leadership Lessons from Ramayana

1. Student Life of Lord RAM

Lord Ram was an exemplary student. He learnt scriptures and archery, sword fighting at Maharishi Valmiki's ashram. In order to be a good

leader one should know ones subject well. No one can rise to the top without learning the core skills – skills required to complete the job. A measure of intelligence is required but along with that one must have a disciplined approach to learning. No one can move ahead in life if the basics are not learnt.

2. Displaying strength during Sita's Swayamvara

Lord Ram went to King Janaka's kingdom along with Sage Parasurama. There he very easily displayed his strength in stringing Lord Shiva's bow and thus winning the hand of the princess Sita.

It is not the physical strength but the character of Lord Ram which is displayed here like before touching the bow, Lord Ram bowed and took blessings.

As humble leaders and managers one has to respect the task assigned to him. He has to display strength of character in completing the task. It is not about brute force, it is about the inner strength one need to harness in order to complete the assigned task.

3. Honoring the wishes of his father

When King Dashrath and Queen Keikeyi informed Lord Ram about the terms and conditions of the vow and what the queen wished, Shri Ram bowed his hands and said he would gladly adhere to their command. There was no doubt in his mind, no complaints. This shows humility at its best.   He knew that being exiled to the forest is probably not fair, but he accepted the same in totality. Where there is acceptance and when you accept what's given, you can view things positively. Where there is no acceptance you end up complaining and cribbing about it. He did not cry over the fact that he was a prince and used to princely comforts which he has to give up now, because of a vow made by his father.

Similarly, as a leader, there will be situations which will be thrust upon us. Situations not of our making, but we have to bear the brunt of the same. A true leader will show humility and look at the bigger picture. In the corporate world we have to obey i.e.(follow the instructions) of the top management.

4. The exile

Lord Ram knew about the difficulties he had to face.   Obviously living in the forest for 14 years for a prince who is used to princely comforts is certainly not a bed of roses. On the contrary it would have been more like a bed of nails. Yet he accepted the life of a hermit just as he had accepted living like a prince with equanimity.

As leaders, there will be times when the going gets tough. A true leader is one who accepts the good and the bad with equanimity.

5. Depth of emotions

During the period of exile, Sita gets kidnapped by Ravan. Shri Ram was distraught at what had happened. He did not hide his emotions. At the same time he did not get emotionally weak and give up on his beloved wife.

Similarly, as a leader depth of emotions are equally important. You don't show weakness by feeling emotions. You show weakness when you let your emotions weaken your resolve. Emotions should be used as a charger, a battery power to rise and find solutions to the problems. A leader will not succumb to the emotional distress.

6. Making Allies

Lord Ram knew very well that searching for Sita was not a one man's job. He went ahead looking for her but along the way he made strong allies. Whether it was Sugriva or Vibhishana, it was the allies and the friendships, which helped Him conquer Ravan.

Similarly as leaders one should build a strong network of allies. A strong second line is a strategic requirement in today's world.

7. Clarity in vision

Lord Ram was very clear about what he wanted. The goals and objectives and the way he would go about achieving them was very clear. There was a Vision – whether it was getting Sita back.

Similarly as a leader, having a vision is extremely important but having clarity in that vision is even more critical. The is No point in viewing the future through blurred spectacles.

8. Identifying the latent potential in the team members
Lord Ram understood the powers and capability of Hanuman and the entire Vanar Sena of Sugriv. He encouraged them, motivated the team and got them to complete what is considered as a near impossible task of building a bridge over the ocean.
As a leader, one should never underestimate the power of his team. It is the leaders   job to identify the potential in each team member so that this can finally be used in realising the ultimate goal.
9. Belief   in Abilities

Not once did He ever doubt that he would not get Sita. He believed in himself and he believed in his ability to get the best out of his Vanar Sena.

As a leader it is essential to believe in oneself. If you can't believe in yourself, in your ability, and your strengths, then how can anyone else believe in you? The minute your self-belief is shaken, you can be assured that your team will stop believing in you.

10. Planning

There was no doubt that Lord Ram's planning was perfect to the end. From organizing a search party, getting advice from the elders in the team (like Jambavat), trusting the young and energetic Hanuman, to planning the war strategy, everything was well planned.

When you fail to plan, you plan to fail. Planning is a key skill required of every leader. Planning is done at each and every stage of every activity and planning should be done in detail.

11. Organizing resources

What did He have with him? A brother who could fight and Lord Hanuman who could fly! Besides that he had essentially an army of monkeys. Yet he organised these available resources to carry out his plans.

A real leader does not get daunted because of lack of perfect resources. A real leader will take the available resources and make them perfect.

12. Respecting the team's opinion

Despite misgivings from the tribal chiefs, Shri Ram accepted Vibhishan under his protection and even took advice from Vibhishan. He used Vibhishan's knowledge and made assessments about Ravan's strength. Never once did he underestimate Ravan's power or strength.

It doesn't matter who in the team, gives the idea. If the idea or the advice is worth it, a leader should respect the individual and accept the advice. There is no rule which says that only the leader should do all the thinking. In fact for succession planning, it is vital that a leader encourages his team to also think. A remarkable trait in real leaders is that they respect their teams opinion and thought process, nurture it and let it blossom. This is where Ravana failed.

13. Execution of plans

Lord Ram personally oversaw the execution of the detailed plans made by him. Between Lakshman and himself, they taught the army of Sugriv and the tribal chiefs the art of warfare. He saw to it that the bridge was constructed well – even though the same was commissioned to Nala (a descendent of Vishwakarma).

Planning without Execution is probably the most wasteful aspect of management. There is no point in planning if the same cannot be executed. And execution has to be perfect lest all the detailed planning is pointless. It is the leader's responsibility to ensure that the team executes the plans, to foresee any deviations and to take corrective measures accordingly.

14. Crisis Management

Lord Ram's life was not a bed of roses. Besides facing the exile, the kidnapping of Sita, it was Lakshman's grave injury in battle which was probably one of the most painful aspects faced by Shri Ram. Yet, he did not lose his cool. Hanuman was sent to get the Sanjivani plant which eventually saved Lakshman's life. It was Lord Hanuman's expertise which Shri Ram depended upon.

The one thing a leader is sure of facing during the course of his leadership years is crisis. There can be multiple crises. Handling the crisis with composure and level-headedness is a critical quality one has to imbibe. Invariably this quality surfaces only when faced with the crisis. As a leader, one cannot always provide solutions every time to handle a crisis. One has to trust the expertise of his team and expect them to support him at the time of any crisis.

15. Following the Code of Conduct & Ethics

During the battle with Ravan, there was a time when Ravan was rendered weapon less and was all alone. Shri Ram stopped fighting and told Ravan that the war/ battle can be continued when he was armed again.

There can never be any compromise on code of conduct and ethics. Integrity of a leader should never be questioned. The day a leader's integrity is questioned, he has lost all that he has accumulated by way of qualities and respect.

These are the leadership lessons that we learn from the Ramayana.

Humility Lessons from Ramayana

- **Consulting the Team Members:** Lord Rama seeks view of his team leaders, whereas Ravana imposes his views on team leaders.

- **Local Leadership:** Lord Ram acts on the advice of Vibhishana, who is the local leader whereas Ravana ignores intelligence provided by his own spies.

- **Resolving Differences & Carrying everyone along:** Lord Rama pacifies Lakshman who has contrary view and keeps his team together. In similar situation, Ravana not only refuses the advice of Vibhishana but turns him in to a mortal enemy..

- **In search for Friends and not Enemies:** By praying to Ocean God, Lord Rama is displaying humility in bringing Ocean God on his side. On other hand, Ravana doesn't make any effort to have Ocean God on his side to impeding the advance of Lord Rama's army.

A Humble Leader like Lord Rama doesn't impose his views on team and carries them along but he doesn't defer or abdicates decision making, whereas Ravana imposes his views on his team but defer decision making and lets things drift and doesn't take any proactive steps for defense of his kingdom.

Source: myvoice.opindia.com

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