

THE HUMILITY OF LEADERS AND THE PSYCHOLOGICAL CAPITAL OF LEADERSHIPS

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Abstract

Humility in leadership tends to be perceived, wrongly, as a sign of weakness (Exline & Geyer, 2004). However, as a set of forces (ability to understand one's strengths and weaknesses, recognition and respect for others' abilities, readiness to learn), humility has been understood as crucial to the effectiveness of leaders (eg, Ou et al. Owens & Hekman, 2016, Owens et al., 2015, Vera & Rodriguez-Lopez, 2004). One possible explanatory reason for this beneficial effect is the ability of humble leaders to promote the psychological capital (PsyCap of Psychological Capital). PsyCap, as a four-dimensional construct (self-efficacy, hope, resilience, optimism), predicts relevant attitudes and behaviors at both the individual and team levels (Dawkins et al., 2015, Luthans et al., 2015). The empirical evidence about the antecedents of PsyCap, however, is scarce. There is also little empirical evidence on the consequences of the leaders' humility. This research tests how humble leadership contributes to the development of the PsyCap of individuals and teams. Two experimental studies (method of the scenarios) were carried out, the first adopting the level of individual analysis (n = 148 individuals), and the second the team (n = 74 teams). The results suggest that individuals and teams subject to the experimental condition (humble leader) have higher levels of PsyCap than those submitted to the control (transactional leader) condition. This research corroborates previous evidence and contributes to the enrichment of the literature on humble leadership and on PsyCap.

Keywords: leadership, humility, individual psychological capital, team psychological capital.

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