

# The Effect of Managers' Humility on the Emotions and Ethical Behaviors of Nurses at Besat Hospital in Hamadan: Explaining the Mediating Role of Workplace Spirituality

Ali Reza Aghighi<sup>1\*</sup> , Hanieeh Manteghi<sup>2</sup> 

1- Department of Management, Faculty of Management and Accounting, Payame Noor University, Tehran, Iran.

2- Department of Psychology, Payame Noor University, Tehran, Iran.

\*Correspondence should be addressed to Dr. Ali Reza Aghighi; Email: [a.aghighi@pnu.ac.ir](mailto:a.aghighi@pnu.ac.ir)

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## Abstract

**Background and Objective:** Although recent research has investigated the positive effects of manager humility on employees' work-related outcomes, the role that manager humility can play in promoting employees' positive psychological resources and emotions, such as empathy and gratitude, has been relatively neglected. The aim of this study was to investigate the effect of managers' humility on empathy, appreciation and ethical behaviors of nurses working in Besat Specialized and Super-specialty Educational and Medical Center in Hamadan.

**Methods:** The present study was descriptive survey-based. The statistical population included the nurses of Besat Specialized and Super-specialty Educational and Medical Center in Hamedan, consisting of 390 people. The sample size was 198 people, which was determined based on Morgan's table using simple random sampling method. For collecting data, five questionnaires were used. Their validity was tested by convergent validity, while their reliability was confirmed by calculating Cronbach's alpha and the proposed model was analyzed using structural equations modeling. In this study, all ethical considerations were observed and no conflict of interest was reported by the authors.

**Results:** The results showed that all the relationships were significant; managers' humility predicted 81% of spirituality in the workplace, 52% of ethical behaviors, 48% of empathy and 29% of gratitude. Also, managers' humility predicts 76 percent of ethical behaviors, 49 percent of empathy, and 65 percent of gratitude through workplace spirituality.

**Conclusion:** The findings show that manager's humility has important consequences for creating positive emotions and behaviors in the employees. The organizations with more integrity can create more desirable working environments to encourage the individuals to show positive feelings. In addition, they can make personal and organizational values and increase meaningfulness of work, which leads to increased perception of spirituality in the workplace.

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## Summary

### Background and Objective

Although recent research has investigated the positive effects of manager humility on

employees' work-related outcomes, the role that manager humility can play in promoting employees' positive psychological resources and emotions, such as empathy and gratitude, has been relatively neglected (1, 2). In the empirical and theoretical studies in the field of humility, it has

been acknowledged that the humility of managers fosters a supportive atmosphere, including an atmosphere of empowerment and team integration (3). Research shows that managerial humility provides the context for environmental development, in which employees have a greater ability to be self-aware and engage in ethical reasoning (4). Even if manager humility has been recognized as a stimulator for the development of a positive perception in the organizational fields, interpersonal relationships and team processes, there is a need to examine the humble role of the manager in fostering perceptions of other atmospheres such as spirituality in the workplace (2-5).

The aim of this study was to investigate the effect of managers' humility on empathy, appreciation and ethical behaviors of nurses working in Besat Specialized and Super-specialty Educational and Medical Center in Hamadan.

## Methods

**Compliance with ethical guidelines:** To observe ethical considerations, the necessary explanations about the objectives of the research were provided to the participants before conducting the study. The participants were also assured that their information would remain confidential, and that the information would be used only for the purpose of the study. All the participants were free to participate in or quit the study. After receiving informed consent from the participants, anonymous questionnaires were distributed among them, which were, then, collected and analyzed.

The present study was descriptive survey-based. The statistical population included all the nurses of Besat Specialized and Super-specialty Educational and Medical Center in Hamedan, consisting of 390 people. The sample size was determined to be 198 based on Morgan's table, who were selected using simple random sampling method. For collecting data, five questionnaires were used. Their validity was tested by convergent validity, while their reliability was confirmed by calculating Cronbach's alpha. The proposed model was analyzed using structural equations modeling.

## Results

The results showed that all the relationships were significant; leaders' humility predicted 81% of spirituality in the workplace, 52% of ethical behaviors, 48% of empathy and 29% of gratitude. Also, the leader's humility predicts 76 percent of ethical behaviors, 49 percent of empathy, and 65

percent of gratitude through workplace spirituality.

## Conclusion

In general, the findings of this study well supported the proposed hypotheses. The findings of this study are consistent with the previous studies that show humble managers directly enhance the ethical behavior (2, 9), appreciation (10) and empathy of the employees (11, 12). In addition, the results of this study confirmed the indirect effect of managers' humility on ethical behavior, appreciation and empathy through spirituality in the workplace. The results of this study regarding the mediating role of spirituality in the workplace in promoting moral behavior, appreciation and positive empathy of nurses at Besat Hospital in Hamadan are consistent with the findings of similar studies due to the modest behavior of the manager. The findings indicate that humble managers create an environment of spirituality in the workplace that affects the development of ethical behavior, appreciation and empathy of employees. The findings of the present study are consistent with the findings of some researchers (13-14) about the importance of humility of managers and leaders in promoting spirituality in the workplace and further increasing the positive emotions and behaviors of employees (9, 15, 16). The present study has several practical implications for managers and organizations. Organizations need to promote humility in their managers and supervisors to increase employee appreciation and help them consider the views of others and act more ethically. Training programs should be designed to reinforce the positive virtue of humility in managers and leaders at all levels. Our study shows that humble managers stimulate positive emotions and behaviors in their employees by cultivating a spiritual environment in the workplace. Organizations should organize several workshops and seminars to explain the importance of spirituality at work to the employees. By creating a sense of spirituality in the workplace, we can reduce the stress level of the employees, who face a lot of work and other problems. An organizational culture that values honesty and humility may bring humble managers to the forefront, which can be helpful in creating a spiritual workplace.

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### Ethical considerations

According to the authors, this article is obtained from the research project entitled "The Effect of Managers' Humility on the Emotions and Ethical Behaviors of Nurses at Besat Hospital in Hamadan: Explaining the Mediating Role of Workplace Spirituality" approved by the Research Ethics Committee of Payame Noor University with the ethics code IR.PNU.REC.1400.049.

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### Conflict of interest

The authors reported no conflict of interest in this study.

### Authors' contribution

Writing the article: first author and collecting data: second author.

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