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1 Leader Humility, Team Humility and Employee Creative Performance: The 2 Moderating Roles of Task Dependence and Competitive Climate

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4 In the unpredictable economic environment, both academics and professionals have
5 been keen to identify effective leadership style that can induce more employee
6 creative performance in work. Prior research has investigated different types of
7 leadership styles and their consequences for employee behavior in work environments.
8 In the recent management literature, humble leadership has been found to generate a
9 number of positive behavioral outcomes among employees. However, relatively little
10 is known about the influences of leader humility on team processes, or about the
11 boundary conditions these effects. The current study examined first, the relationships
12 among leader humility, team humility and employee creative performance; and
13 second, the moderating role of competitive climate in the moderation effect of task
14 dependence in the relationship between team humility and employee creative
15 performance. Hierarchical linear modeling was applied to analyze the cross-level data
16 with 76 work teams and 531 employees. The results showed that leader humility
17 exerts its impact on team humility, which in turn influences employee creative
18 performance. The effect of team humility on employee creative performance was
19 found to be strongest under high task dependence and high competitive climate.
20 Practical implications regarding how to optimize the positive impact of leader
21 humility are discussed.

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23 Key words: leader humility, team humility, creative performance, task dependence,
24 competitive climate

25

26 1. Introduction

27 “Confucius said to a disciple ‘Shall I teach you what is understanding? To know what
28 it is that you know, and to know what it is that you do not know--that is
29 understanding.’” (*The Analects of Confucius*)

30 Facing a complex economic environment and fiercely competing markets, academics
31 and practitioners have been striving to identify the qualities of a good leader, one who
32 can help an organization achieve increased efficiency, productivity, and profitability.
33 Ancient schools of philosophy may give an answer. For example, Confucius
34 considered humility to be a virtue, and this view of humility is deep-rooted in regions
35 where Confucius culture exerts its influence (e.g., East Asia). Humility has been
36 regarded as a personal quality of being humble, modest, down-to-earth and

open-minded (Peters, Rowat & Johnson, 2011). There has been an increase in research on leader humility in the recent leadership literature (Bharanitharan, Chen, Bahmannia, & Lowe, 2019; Zapata & Hayes-Jones, 2019; Qin, Chen, Yam, Huang, & Ju, 2019; Lee, Berry, & Gonzalez-Mulé, 2019; Rego & Simpson, 2018; Rego, Owens, Yam, Bluhm, Cunha, Silard, Gonçalves, Martins, Simpson, & Liu, 2019; Zhang, Ou, Tsui, & Wang, 2017). Humility has been shown to result in a series of positive organizational outcomes and is thus considered a strategic virtue of an organization (Vera & Rodriguez-Lopez, 2004). It has been stated that humble leadership could improve employee engagement (for example by encouraging employees to share their ideas and opinions; Li, Li, Fu, & Ullah, 2019), employee pro-social behavior (Owens, Yam, Bednar, Mao, & Hart, 2019), subordinate psychological empowerment (Jeung & Yoon, 2016), subordinate self-efficacy (Mao, Chiu, Owens, Brown, & Liao, 2019), subordinate task performance (Wang, Owens, Li, & Shi, 2018), team creativity (Hu, Erdogan, Jiang, Bauer, & Liu, 2017), and team effectiveness (Owens & Hekman, 2015). Nevertheless, although leader humility has received increased research attention in general, it remains a relatively unexplored topic in the literature on tourism and hospitality.

It is important to investigate the influence of leader humility on employees' creativity in the hospitality context. First, to better cater to changing customer preferences and embrace technology trends, hotel managers should be humble enough to admit that their younger subordinates may be more knowledgeable of customer's need (especially young customers), and more skillful in using social media and latest technologies (e.g., virtual reality) to engage customers. Second, employees in the hospitality industry engage in a large number of face-to-face service encounters, and creative performance is needed to maximize service quality and customer satisfaction (Tsai & Lee, 2014). According to Ostrom, Bitner, Brown, Burkhard, Goul, Smith-Daniels, Demirkan and Rabinovich's (2010), service can be either designed to be rigid and standardized; or flexible and dynamic. The latter type of service is often co-created with customers, and the significance of co-creation in hotel industry has been highlighted (Chathoth, Altinay, Harrington, Okumus, & Chan, 2013). In this regard, employee's creative rather than standardized service is crucial in successfully engaging customers. Hospitality scholars have revealed that the antecedents of employee's creative performance/innovative behaviors can be grouped into employee-related factors such as emotional intelligence (Darvishmotevali, Altinay, & De Vita, 2018), job engagement (Kim & Koo, 2017), use of social media (Sigala, & Chalkiti, 2015), and company-related factors such as competency-based pay (Hon, 2012), leader-member-exchange (Kim and Koo, 2017), task feedback (Hon, Chan, & Lu, 2013) and supervisors' transformational leadership (Wang, Tsai, & Tsai, 2014). Hence, a further understanding of how leaders' behaviors can enhance employee creative performance is necessary in the dynamic workplace of hospitality. Recent research has suggested that employees' creativity can be triggered by their leader's

humble attitude and behavior. Humble organization leaders provide a supportive organizational environment that facilitates team voice, team information sharing, and creative idea generation among employees (Hu et al., 2017; Liu, Mao, & Chen, 2017; Wang, Zhang, & Jia, 2016; Wang, Liu, & Zhu, 2018). The contagious nature of humility implies that leader humility can influence a team process, leading to employees' creative performance. In work teams where team leaders and team members have frequent interactions, humble leaders would be viewed as role models for team members to emulate, leading to humble behaviors on the part of employees (Owens & Hekman, 2015; Rego et al., 2017). In particular, team members imitate their leaders by acknowledging their own strengths and weaknesses and being open to different ideas (i.e., team humility), which is crucial for generating creative ideas. Thus team humility can be considered an important team process that transfers the influence of leader humility to employee creative performance. Based on the above argument, the first research objective of the current study was to investigate the relationships among leader humility, team humility and employee creative performance.

Despite strong evidence demonstrating the beneficial effects of leader humility on a host of employee behavioral outcomes (e.g., Li et al., 2019; Owens et al., 2019; Wang et al., 2018), the effect of team humility on employee creative performance, and the boundary conditions of such effect, have been much less explored. In fact, the effect of team humility on employee creative performance may be contingent on certain job characteristics (Owens & Hekman, 2016). For example, task dependence as a job characteristic can be considered a contingent factor in the workplace. Task dependence, which refers to the extent to which employees have to depend on their colleagues to complete tasks, has been found to foster cooperation among employees (Wageman & Baker, 1997), leading to work effectiveness (Taggar & Haines, 2006). Task dependence has also been proved to be an important contingent factor in predicting organizational behaviors (e.g., Bachrach, Powell, Collins, & Richey, 2006). Hence, this job characteristic can lead to more cooperation, information sharing and idea generation, strengthening the effect of team humility on employee creative performance.

Workplace competitive climate can be another contingent factor in the effect of team humility on creative performance. Competitive climate is believed to be a powerful tool to boost work performance (Schrock, Hughes, Fu, Richards, & Jones, 2016). Employees may like to compete with their co-workers, as competition may satisfy the need for a sense of competence according to the Self-Determination Theory (Deci & Ryan, 2000). In a highly competitive climate, employees have a stronger desire to excel by developing creative solutions to finish their job tasks, especially when their creativity will be acknowledged and praised by their team (i.e., team humility). Hence there would be mutual positive reinforcement between team humility and employee

creative performance in a competitive climate. However, how task dependence and competitive climate interactively influence the impact of team humility on employee creative performance is still an unanswered question. Thus, the second purpose of this study was to examine the three-way interaction effect among task dependence, competitive climate and team humility on employee creative performance. Our research contributes to the extant literature by revealing the underlying mechanism through which leader humility influences employee creative performance and the boundary conditions of team humility's effect on employee creative performance. Practically, we offer implications regarding how to improve employee creative performance through leader's behaviors.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Leader Humility: Its Meanings and Consequences

Concepts of humility have cultural and historical roots. For example, in the West, Socrates taught that we should admit our ignorance, as all wisdom comes from wondering. In the East, Confucius taught that we should admit what we do and do not know; one should be eager to learn and should not feel ashamed to ask and learn from one's inferiors. Humility has been referred to as a psychological quality characterized by "being more humble, modest, respectful, down-to-earth and open-minded rather than arrogant, self-centered or conceited" (Peters et al., 2011, p. 151). Although humility is often associated with modesty and low self-regard (Tangney, 2000), the former is distinctive in that it pertains to the personal quality of having a low self-focus and high other-focus (Wright, Nadelhoffer, Thomson Ross, & Sinnott-Armstrong, 2017). Positive psychologists have demonstrated the positive associations between humility and implicit self-esteem (Rowatt, Powers, Targhetta, Comer, Kennedy, & Labouff, 2006), state empathy (Labouff, Rowatt, Johnson, Tsang, & Willerton, 2012), trait perspective taking (Labouff et al., 2012), general ethical orientation and reaction to disagreement (Wright et al., 2017).

In the organization context, leader humility refers to an interpersonal characteristic that encompasses the following components: (1) being willing to view oneself accurately; (2) appreciating others' strengths; (3) being open to new ideas, that is, teachable (Owens, Johnson, & Mitchell, 2013). By this definition, a humble leader is expected to acknowledge his or her abilities as well as mistakes, and welcome novel ideas by praising followers' strengths and contributions and encouraging them to express ideas.

Leader humility has been found to foster a number of individual-level organizational outcomes such as followers' feeling of being trusted, a personal sense of power,

psychological empowerment (Jeung & Yoon, 2016), reduced subordinate's emotional exhaustion (Wang et al., 2018), subordinate's relational energy (Wang et al., 2018), subordinate's voice (Li et al., 2019) and task performance (Wang et al., 2018), and employee engagement (Owen et al., 2013) and job satisfaction (Owen et al., 2013). In addition, leader humility has been demonstrated to produce positive group-level team outcomes such as information sharing, psychological safety (Rego et al., 2017), humility (Rego et al., 2017), learning orientation (Owens et al., 2013), and innovation (Liu et al., 2017). Leadership scholars have also investigated the boundary conditions of the influence of leader humility. For example, power distance and task interdependence have been found to attenuate the influence of leader humility (Hu et al., 2017; Liu et al., 2017). Despite accumulated research evidence of the positive impact of leader humility on employee and team performance, the underlying mechanism and its possible boundary conditions are not well understood. (A summary of recent studies on leader humility was shown in table 1)

Please insert table 1 here

2.2 Leadership and Workplace Creativity

The relationship between leader behavior and employee creativity has been extensively studied in prior research (Oldham & Cummings, 1996; Amabile, Schatzel, Moneta, & Kramer, 2004; Shalley, Zhou, & Oldham, 2004; Tierney, Farmer, & Graen, 2006). Workplace creativity is “the process of generating novel/original ideas that are useful” (Hughes, Lee, Tian, Newman, & Legood, 2018, p. 551). Thus, we define employee creative performance as hotel employee's generation of novel and useful ideas to complete job tasks. It is generally found that “positive leadership” is essential in promoting followers' creativity. Positive leadership behaviors include transformational leadership (Gong, Huang, & Farh, 2009), leader-member-exchange (Volmer, Spurk, & Niessen, 2012), moral leadership (Gu, Tang, & Jiang, 2015), empowering leadership (Zhang & Bartol, 2010; Dong, Liao, Chuang, Zhou, & Campbell, 2015) and servant leadership (Yoshida, Sendjaya, Hirst, & Cooper, 2014). Leader humility shares some characteristics with positive leadership. For example, humble leaders are supportive, encouraging and open-minded. They welcome new ideas and diverse opinions, as they believe that they have their own weaknesses and are not superior to others. In addition, humble leaders may encourage followers to challenge the status quo, which is expected to promote intellectual stimulation.

It has been demonstrated that employee creativity is affected by both individual creative-relevant characteristics and contextual factors (Oldham & Cummings, 1996). A leader's behaviors play a crucial role in promoting or discouraging employee creativity in an organization. In particular, supportive rather than controlling supervision appears to contribute to employee creative performance (Oldham &

Cummings, 1996). A supportive supervisory style encompasses activities such as encouraging employees' voice behavior and praising their good work, and it is expected to enhance employees' intrinsic motivation (i.e., their interest in the job task itself), leading to their creative performance (Oldham & Cummings, 1996). A humble leader also has characteristics of a supportive leader. A humble organization leader sends out signals that he or she is willing to listen to novel ideas, welcomes others' critiques, and acknowledges subordinates' strengths. A humble leader cultivates a safe environment where employees' diverse opinions and creativity are encouraged and praised, rather than being punished. In this context, team members are psychologically empowered to speak up or provide novel solutions to problems (Li et al., 2019). Therefore, employees' creative performance may be enhanced as they have opportunities to think outside the box and speak up to their team, resulting in the generation of even more creative ideas.

2.3 Leader Humility and Team Humility: The Social Learning Perspective

Leader humility is thought to influence team humility, leading to enhanced employee creative performance. According to the social learning theory (Bandura, 1977), individuals are able to learn new information and behaviors by observing others' behaviors. People learn by observing the consequences of behaviors, which in turn form expectations that guide their future behavior. In particular, people model behaviors that are believed to be credible and attractive (Bandura, 1977). A humble leader may be viewed as an attractive leaders due to their positive attitude and behaviors demonstrated (e.g., appreciating other's strengths and acknowledging one's weaknesses), thus serving as role models for his or her team. The workplace is employees' immediate social environment where they can learn from each other. It has been argued that people tend to refer to their immediate social environment for information or cues so as to adapt their behaviors or thoughts. For example, Salancik and Pfeffer (1978) took a social information processing approach to understand the influence of social information on employee job attitude. They posited that an individual's immediate social environment offers information about desirable attitudes and opinions, forming social norms within organizations that constrain the rationalizing of past behaviors and thoughts. Likewise, leader humility can serve as a social cue in the work environment, signifying the importance of such attitudes and behaviors within organizations. Employees may idealize their leaders as role models (Gabriel, 1997) and may form collective prototypicality with their leaders, as leaders may be believed to exemplify team values (Yoshida et al., 2014). The influence of a role model on an individual's behavior has been well-documented (Buunk, Peiró, & Griffioen, 2007; Sy, Côté, & Saavedra, 2005). For example, Buunk et al. (2007) found that participants who were exposed to a successful role model had a higher degree of

inspiration, identification, and proactive career behavior. Such identification with and admiration of role models may generate the desire to emulate the role model's behavior (Gabriel, 1997). As such, it is likely that leaders' desirable characteristics and behavior can influence the team process.

Humble leaders can serve as role models for their subordinates to imitate. Through the process of organizational socialization, team members gradually learn that humility is a desirable quality in their hotels by observing their leaders' humble behaviors. Afterwards, team members emulate the humble behaviors of leaders in their hotels. At the same time, team members may learn from each other's humble attitude and behavior. In addition, any newcomers to humble teams may legitimize themselves by following others' humble behaviors. Such organizational socialization strengthens the humble culture (i.e., team humility) within the organization. Prior research demonstrated that leader humility induced collective team humility (Owens & Hekman, 2015). Hence, we hypothesized that:

H1: Leader humility positively influences team humility.

2.4 Team Humility and Employee Creative Performance

The humble culture induced by leader humility is likely to induce employee creative performance. Prior research demonstrated that leader humility resulted in followers' voice (Rego, Owens, Leal, Melo, e Cunha, Gonçalves, & Ribeiro 2017), team voice (Liu et al., 2017), team effectiveness (Rego et al., 2017), team information sharing and team creativity (Hu et al., 2017). With regard to the influence of team humility, Owens and Hekman (2015) discovered that collective humility as a team process can influence team promotion focus, leading to enhanced team performance. The relationship between humility and creativity has long been studied. Confident humility is considered an essential component of the creative personality (Mcmullan, 1976). Admitting one's ignorance drives one to learn from others, generating creativity and even scientific innovation (Fischer, 1999; Firestein, 2012). In sum, humble people tend to acknowledge their ignorance in some areas and can go beyond the boundaries of their existing knowledge to generate new ideas. When it comes to the team, team humility signals that team members are not necessarily superior to their co-workers and every teammate's strengths and contributions will be valued. As a consequence, in a humble team environment, employees are more willing to learn from the strengths of their teammates to fill in gaps in their own knowledge. In addition, humble team members are more empathic and more skilled at perspective-taking (Labouff, et al., 2012), thus more intellectual stimulation may occur. In sum, team humility facilitates the sharing of ideas and influences team members to look at problems from different perspectives, leading to their creative

performance. Hence, the following hypothesis was proposed:

H2: Team humility positively influences employees' creative performance.

2.5 The Moderating Roles of Task Dependence and Competitive Climate

Prior research has suggested that job characteristics and work climate can moderate the impact of leadership on employee performance. Task dependence refers to the extent to which employees' job duties need to be accomplished together with their colleagues. We propose that the influence of team humility on employee creative performance will be stronger in high task dependence situations, as team humility facilitates information sharing and mutual learning. First, mutual task dependence has been shown to contribute to interpersonal relationships and trust among employees (De Jong, Van der Vegt, & Molleman, 2007), and this may in turn influence knowledge sharing (Staples & Webster, 2010); Second, task dependence increases one's felt responsibility for another's job performance (Pearce & Gregersen, 1991), resulting in a greater sense of responsibility to share information for others' task completion and contributing to creative performance. Third, task dependence promotes mutual learning and complex thinking (Johnson & Johnson, 1989), which may also enhance creative performance. In particular, team members tend to learn from each other, and employees may receive more intellectual stimulation through sharing different views. By contrast, low task dependence does not require employees to rely on information sharing or resource exchange among co-workers, reducing the benefits of team humility. That is, task dependence is likely to amplify the benefits of team humility.

Competitive workplace climate (hereafter called competitive climate) may also moderate the possible moderating role of task dependence. Competitive climate refers to 'the degree to which employees perceive organizational rewards to be contingent on comparison of performance against that of their peers' (Brown, Cron, & Slocum Jr, 1998, p. 89). Traditionally, there have been two competing schools of thought regarding the impact of a competitive workplace climate. On the one hand, competition to some extent can boost work performance, as employees may strive to fulfill their need for competence by comparing themselves with others (Sauer & Bass, 1990). Prior research suggests that a competitive reward structure enhances speed of task completion (Beersma, Hollenbeck, Humphrey, Moon, Conlon, & Ilgen, 2003); on the other hand, competition may also hamper work performance by reducing helping behavior and even increasing counter-productive behavior against others (Enns, & Rotundo, 2012). In the current research, it is proposed that the positive influence of a competitive climate on creativity will be more salient than the negative influence, if there is high team humility. Under such conditions, team members are modest and

may not strive for career success through undesirable work behaviors (e.g., reduced helping). Prior research suggests that compared to persons with low humility, persons with high humility are more helpful (Labouff et al., 2012), show more gratitude (Rowatt et al., 2006), demonstrate more acceptance of those who disagree with them (Wright et al., 2017) and are more likely to enhance social relationship quality (Peters et al., 2011). In addition, the honesty-humility dimension of personality has been shown to be positively related to cooperation and negatively related to counter-productive work behaviors (Zettler & Hilbig, 2010; Zettler, Hilbig & Heydasch, 2013). Humble employees may still share ideas and help each other in a competitive work environment. As a result, work-related competition can be an important motivator for humble team members' creativity and innovation.

In light of the above, we expected that a competitive climate and task dependence interact as influences on the relationship between leader humility and employee creative performance. In particular, the impact of team humility on individual creativity would be the strongest under the conditions of high vs. low competitive climate accompanied by high vs. low task dependence. As discussed previously, humble individuals are indeed more likely than prideful people to help others, enhance social relationships, and strengthen social bonds (Labouff et al., 2012; Peters et al., 2011). In hotels, where customers' satisfaction is largely determined by every point of customer-employee interaction, we expected that humble employees would cooperate to better understand and satisfy customers' growing needs. The long working hours in hotels also require more interaction, cooperation and even emotional support among employees. Therefore, humble team members who depend on each other for task completion (i.e., high task dependence) are likely to cooperate with each other and share information or novel ideas in order to achieve creative performance.

In addition, the moderating role of task dependence may be strengthened by competitive climate. In a highly competitive work environment, employees' need for competence may lead them to strive for success through cooperation with their teammates. Thus, the moderating role of task dependence in the relationship between team humility and creative performance will be strengthened. In contrast, in a less competitive environment, employees may have lower motivation to achieve success, leading to lower perceived importance and low intention of team sharing. Hence, the moderating role of task dependence in the relationship between team humility and employee creative performance would be weakened. In a word, under conditions of high task dependence and high competitive climate, team humility will have the strongest effect on employees' creative performance. Therefore, the following hypothesis was put forward:

H3: Task dependence and competitive climate interact in their influence on the strength of the relationship between team humility and employee creative

performance, such that the relationship is strongest in a high vs. low competitive climate condition in combination with high vs. low task dependence.

The research model that depicts the cross-level relationship among the constructs was shown in figure 1.

Please insert figure 1 here

3. Methodology

3.1 Sample and Procedure

Participants in the current study were employees from the hotel industry in Guangdong Province, China. China has the world's second largest GDP and has a prosperous tourism market. Guangdong Province ranks number one among all provinces in terms of GDP. To generate samples, one of the authors contacted general managers at 24 hotels from a star-rating hotel list provided by the provincial tourism administration office to seek their approval to participate in this study. Those hotels cover 3 to 4 star rating hotels in different cities in Guangdong province and vary in their ownership (i.e., state-owned, private, foreign invested hotels). A total of 10 hotel managers agreed to participate in this study. Before the main study, a pilot study was conducted to ensure hotel employees understand the questionnaire, after which minor changes in wordings were made. The questionnaires were distributed to supervisors and front-line employees by administrators from the human resource management departments. Respondents were briefed about the purpose of the survey and then they provided written informed consent to participate, and participation was voluntary. To address potential method bias, we applied a series of measures (Podsakoff, MacKenzie, & Lee, 2003). For example, the questionnaire survey was self-administered and ensured to be anonymous. Respondents were told that there were no right or wrong answers. Respondents were ensured that their colleagues would not be able to read their answers; the surveys were returned by mail in sealed envelopes by the human resource managers of each hotel between October, 2018 to December, 2018. Of the 800 questionnaires that were distributed, 531 valid questionnaires were returned (excluding incomplete questionnaires), resulting in a response rate of 66.3%. The respondents came from 76 work teams, defined in our study as departments. Hence, we have a nested data structure with employees nested in teams. We applied hierarchical linear modeling (HLM) to test our hypotheses as the data is multilevel in nature and HLM can simultaneously estimate the impact of factors at different levels on the individual-level outcomes (Raudenbush & Bryk, 2002). Random coefficient model was used to analyze effects of the individual level predictors on employee creative performance, and intercepts-as-outcome models were used to examine cross-level main effects and interaction effects. The data were

processed using AMOS 25, SPSS22.0, and HLM 6.08.

3.2 Measures

The measurement scales of the current study were adapted from the existing literature. Respondents were required to indicate their agreement with each item statement from “strongly disagree=1” to “strongly agree=5”. Team members were asked to rate the humility of their immediate team leader and their team. The measure of leader humility was adapted from Owens et al. (2013). One sample item is “Our team leader admits it when he or she does not know how to do something”. Team humility was measured with similar scales with some changes in wording changed. Measures of task dependence, competitive climate and creative performance were adapted from Pearce & Gregersen (1991), Brown et al. (1998), and Jabri (1991). Sample items are “I work closely with others in doing my job”, “My leader frequently compares my performance with that of my coworkers.”, and “At work, I link ideas that originate from multiple sources”, respectively. The items on all measures were reviewed by two bilingual (English and Chinese) organizational scholars and a translation / back-translation method was used to ensure equivalence of meanings between the English and Chinese questionnaires. To test our hypotheses, we introduced a series of employee and team/organizational characteristics as control variables in the analysis to exclude any potential influences on employee work behavior or performance. For example, employee demographics, team size, team tenure. We also included control variables for each of the ten hotels, as employee creative performance may vary by hotel. This is consistent with prior employee behavior research (e.g., Ling, Lin & Wu, 2016; Foss, Pedersen, Reinholt Fosgaard, & Stea, 2014).

4. Findings

4.1 Descriptive statistics

The sample consisted of slightly more men (54.8%) than women (45.2%). Staff who were aged between 18-30 accounted for 51% of the sample. Roughly three fourths of the sample completed high school or less education. The sample consisted of nearly three fourths frontline staff, and around one fourth frontline supervisors. The demographics of the respondents and the hotel profile are summarized in Table 1.

Please insert table 2 here

4.2 Reliability and Validity

The Cronbach’s alpha and composite reliability of the constructs both surpassed the

threshold values of 0.7. Discriminant validity was indicated by the squared multiple correlation of each construct being greater than the correlation coefficients of each pair of constructs (see table 2). Confirmatory factor analysis was performed with AMOS. The result suggested that the fit indices were satisfactory ($\chi^2/df=2.96$, CFI = 0.95; GFI = 0.91; NFI = 0.93; RMSEA = 0.06; SRMR = 0.04). All loadings for the paths between each item and the construct of which the item was a part were significant. And the average variance extracted of each construct was greater than the acceptable value of 0.50 (Anderson, & Gerbing, 1988) (see table 3). And we conducted model comparisons by combining two or more constructs items into one construct, which revealed that the proposed model has a better fit than the four-factor model ($\chi^2/df=3.79$, CFI = 0.93; GFI = 0.89; RMSEA = 0.07), three-factor model ($\chi^2/df=4.93$, CFI = 0.90; GFI = 0.86; RMSEA = 0.09), two-factor model ($\chi^2/df=7.06$, CFI = 0.84; GFI = 0.79; RMSEA = 0.11) and one-factor model ($\chi^2/df=12.63$, CFI = 0.70; GFI = 0.66; RMSEA = 0.15).

Please insert table 3 here

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4.3 Data Aggregation

To assess the appropriateness to aggregate the data into the group level, as a common practice in multilevel studies, intraclass correlation coefficient (ICC) should be calculated. ICC(1) and ICC(2) were commonly used as indicators, and failure to meet the threshold standard indicates inappropriateness for data aggregation. In the current study, leader humility, task dependence and competitive climate were measured with reports from each team member. The ICC(1) and ICC(2) of these constructs all surpassed the threshold or recommended values (i.e., 0.1 for ICC(1), 0.7 for ICC(2))(Ozkaya, Hult, Dabas, Kolev, Dahlquist, & Manjeshwar, 2013). In particular, team humility ICC(1)=0.45, ICC(2)=0.81; leader humility ICC(1)=0.44, ICC(2)=0.81; task dependence ICC(1)=0.35, ICC(2)=0.74; competitive climate ICC(1)=0.41, ICC(2)=0.79. The results suggest that the intraclass correlation coefficients of our team-level constructs are acceptable. Thus, these constructs were appropriate for higher level analysis and were aggregated at the team level.

4.3 Hypothesis Testing

We created a number of hierarchical linear models to test the hypotheses. The results were shown in Table 4. In Model 1, only creative performance was included as the level-1 outcome variable. The result indicated that the intercept was significant ($\gamma=4.03$, $p < 0.01$), suggesting that it was appropriate to perform cross-level analysis. In

Model 2, independent and control variables were included. Team humility was grand centered as an independent variable. Gender, age, education, and position were controlled for at Level 1, and team size, team tenure, and different hotels were controlled for at Level 2. The result suggests that team humility ($\gamma = 0.75, p < 0.01$) was a significant predictor of employee creative performance, which means that the changes in the team-level humility influence employee creative performance, supporting H2. In Model 3, the two hypothesized moderators and their interaction term were added. The interaction between team humility and task dependence was significant ($\gamma_{TH \times TD} = 0.05, p < 0.01$); the interaction between task dependence and competitive climate was also significant ($\gamma_{TD \times CC} = -0.10, p < 0.05$). In Model 4, we added the three-way interaction term, which was significant ($\gamma_{TH \times CC \times TD} = 0.06, p < 0.05$). This interaction effect was plotted in Figure 2. As shown in the figure, the line representing high task dependence and high competitive climate had the deepest slope and intersected with other lines, which means that the effect of team humility on employee performance is strongest under high task dependence and high competitive climate condition, supporting H3. To test the relationship between leader humility and team humility, as they were both treated as level-2 constructs, we applied multiple-regression analysis with hotels, team size and team tenure as control variable. The result suggests that leader humility positively influences team humility ($B = 0.663, p < 0.01$), supporting H1.

Please insert table 5 here

Please insert table 6 here

5. Discussion

5.1 General Discussion

Our study aimed first, to examine the relationships among leader humility, team humility and employee creative performance; and second, to uncover the interactive moderating effect of task dependence and competitive climate in the relationship between team humility and employee creative performance. The findings revealed that leader humility influenced team humility, which in turn affected employee creative performance. Our findings are generally congruent with Social Learning Theory in that employees learned humble behaviors from their leaders and their team member, which were perceived to be desirable within their organization, which in turn led to their creative performance.

Our finding in the hotel context is congruent with an extant study that discovered leader humility's impact on team humility (Rego et al., 2017). Humble leaders are likely to serve as role models in organizations, inspiring emulation of their behaviors by team members (i.e., team humility). Our study also demonstrated that team

humility influences employee creative performance. It is likely that leader humility and team humility nurture an environment of open discussion, information sharing, complex thinking, and cooperation among team members, which may foster employee creative performance. This is consistent with extant research that demonstrated leader humility promotes team information sharing and team creativity (Hu et al., 2017). Consistent with Wang et al. (2014), tenure plays its role in affecting employee creativity. In particular, our results reveal that team tenure positively affects employee creative performance. As the team grows mature, a better understanding of each other among team members facilitates cooperation and information sharing which engender employee creative performance.

Task dependence and competitive climate were found to interactively moderate the relationship between team humility and employee creative performance. In particular, this relationship is strongest when task dependence and competitive climate are both high. First, as shown in model 4, the significant interaction effect between team humility and task dependence on employee creative performance was found. When task dependence is high, communications and cooperation among team members are required to complete job tasks (Wageman and Baker, 1997), the positive benefits induced by team humility (e.g., cooperation and sharing etc.) on employee creative performance is strengthened. Second, when competitive climate is also high, as shown in the three-way interaction term in model 4, such effect of team humility is even stronger. This may suggest humble employees, even when they are under fierce competition, still strive to achieve better creative performance through cooperation, rather than using counter-productive behaviors against other team members, to fulfill their needs for competence (Sauer & Bass, 1990). Although not hypothesized, a negative interaction effect between task dependence and competitive climate on employee creative performance was found. This may be because without the quality of being humble, competition may lead to tension and even counter-productive behaviors among team members (Enns & Rotundo, 2012), reducing the positive effect of task dependence on employee creative performance.

The contributions of our study are mainly two-fold. First, our research extends previous studies by further validating the cross-level influence of leader humility on individual employee's creative performance through team humility, which has been largely ignored in extant research. Although the influence of leader humility on team creativity through team process (e.g., team sharing) was validated, our novel finding further demonstrated that leader humility can exert its influence on individual employee's performance through a team process (i.e., team humility). This finding is crucial in the hospitality context, as an individual employee's interaction with customers may have a direct impact on customer satisfaction. An employee's creativity may surprise customers, leading to customer satisfaction (e.g., Dong et al.,

2015). We added to the extant literature by revealing another type of leader behavior that fosters employee creativity, namely leader humility.

Second, our study found that the impact of team humility on creative performance was moderated by task dependence and competitive climate. In particular, the effect of team humility on employee creative performance was greatest when task dependence and competitive workplace climate were both high rather than low. In the context of high task dependence and high competition, employees tend to have more interactions and sharing in order to complete their task, and they tend to view the competition among team members as benign. These factors appear to amplify the impact of team humility on employees' creative performance. This is congruent with prior research showing that humility influences interpersonal relationship quality (Peters et al., 2011) and thus fosters employee information or knowledge sharing, such that team humility has the strongest effect under high task dependence and high competitive climate. In contrast, low task dependence requires much less cooperation and information sharing, and low competitive climate triggers much less employee job motivation, leading to a weaker effect of team humility on creative performance.

5.2 Research Implications

The current study offers several theoretical implications. First, this is the first study to demonstrate the cross-level positive impact of team humility on employee creative performance in the hospitality industry (i.e., group level and individual level), narrowing the gap on this topic in the hospitality literature. Although China has a deep historical and philosophical root of humility, prior research seems largely to ignore its organizational impacts in China. Our study verified the power of humility in the Chinese work context. It will be interesting to investigate other Chinese cultural values, as well as their interaction with humility, as effects on work behavior. In addition, the influence of humility on other work attitudes and behaviors, such as work engagement, organizational citizenship behavior, job satisfaction and turnover intention, should be further explored. It is likely that leader humility can induce additional types of positive work behaviors that were not evaluated in the current study.

Second, our research paves way for future research on leader humility by elucidating the underling mechanism through which leader humility influences employee behavior. Leader humility was found to exert its impact on creative performance through team humility, narrowing the research gap on the cross-level impact of leader humility. Our research paves the way for future research on how leader humility influences an individual employee's behavior through a team process. Future researchers may test the cross-level effect of leader humility through other team

processes such as team reflexivity, team learning orientation and team efficacy. Although leader humility has been found to indirectly influence team promotion focus (Owens and Hekman, 2015), future studies regarding the impacts of leader humility on other team emergent states are warranted (e.g., team-level goal orientation, team resilience, and team justice climate).

Third, the current study contributes to extant literature by illuminating the boundary conditions of the influence of team humility on employee creative performance, discovering the nuanced effects of job characteristics in such relationship. Although there is accumulating research evidence that substantiates the positive influence of leader humility, research regarding the conditions (e.g., job characteristics, work climate) under which the positive impacts of leader humility will be strongest is still far from mature. In fact, taking into consideration the complex nature of task characteristics and work group climate, it is necessary to investigate the joint effect of these factors in the relationship between team humility and employee behaviors. Our study demonstrated that task dependence and competitive climate jointly moderated the influence of team humility on employee creative performance. A better understanding of the circumstances under which team humility will have the strongest effect will pave the way for future research. Other job characteristics can be considered in future studies.

5.3 Practical Implications

Our study also offers some practical implications. First, hospitality leaders should demonstrate humble behaviors to their subordinates in order to generate creativity. The traditional parental leadership style and authoritarian leadership are mainly leader-focused and emphasize the authority of leaders. A more other-focused leader behavior such as humility is suggested to cater to the new generation of employees who may be more individualistic and self-focused. In particular, leaders should not only acknowledge their own weaknesses or limitations but also be open to different ideas or suggestions from their subordinates. For example, free lunch gatherings can be introduced as a relaxed and informal occasion where leaders and their subordinates can exchange ideas. This kind of idea sharing is particularly important in the hotel industry where front-line employees have direct interactions with customers and thus may be more knowledgeable than their leaders are about customers' diverse and changing needs. In this regard, a humble leader is expected to receive employees' different opinions on improving customer service. In addition, leader humility can supplement other leadership styles (e.g., transformational leadership) to optimize the leaders' positive influence. Frequent on-site supervision can allow leaders to obtain immediate job feedback from employees, and take this opportunity to encourage and collect creative ideas.

Second, leaders should develop an enlightened work environment that facilitates the emergence of team humility. It may be difficult for every team member to be humble, and acknowledging one's weaknesses might negatively impact self-esteem. In such situations, leaders should facilitate the emergence of team humility by setting themselves up as role models for the teams. Group sharing sessions can be held to help team members better understand and acknowledge their own strengths and weaknesses. For example, meeting rooms can be furnished with round tables, comfortable chairs, an uplifting aroma and natural lighting to cultivate a warm and inspiring ambience that welcomes open discussions and stimulates creativity. As long as team humility is developed, a number of positive organizational outcomes may be foreseen.

Third, for highly competitive work groups, leaders should pay more attention to developing team humility. As previously discussed, competition among team members may have either positive or negative consequences. To leverage the motivational benefits of competition and minimize its detrimental effects, leaders should focus on enhancing team humility because humble team members tend to build better interpersonal relationships with their co-workers even when they are competitors at work. Although it may be difficult to cultivate team humility (e.g., let team members acknowledge their own weaknesses) in teams where work-related competition is fierce, leaders can strive to achieve this by sharing stories about successful but humble individuals in the hotel industry or in the business world and at the same time indicating the adverse impacts of arrogance. Additionally, leaders can emphasize team goals more than individual goals and reiterate the importance of humility in achieving common goals. For relatively low competitive group, other organizational support practices can be consider to enhance the effect of team humility on employee creative performance. For example, recognition of and even incentives for employee's creative ideas can be applied.

Fourth, for highly task dependence work groups where competition is relatively small (e.g., F&B, engineering departments), cultivating team humility can be also considered as a useful tool to enhance employee creative performance. For example, after the groups complete some important job tasks together, team leaders can organize meetings that help team members to reflect the positive and negative aspects of the team in doing similar tasks, and consider areas for improvement or creative solutions by comparing practices of other groups. And leaders can play their roles in helping team members to appreciate other team's strengths and acknowledge their teams own weaknesses. For low task dependence work groups, design of a competitive work environment can help to maximize benefits of team humility.

6. Conclusions

Our study demonstrates that leader humility increases team humility, and team humility has a positive influence on employee creative performance. Most importantly, the effect of team humility on creative performance is contingent on task dependence and competitive climate. Specifically, the association between team humility and employee creative performance is strongest when there is high task dependence as well as a highly competitive climate. To the best of our knowledge, this is a pioneer study that points to a possible underlying mechanism of leader humility's impact on individual employee creative performance (via team humility) and demonstrated a three-way interaction effect among team humility, task dependence and competitive climate in predicting creativity.

7. Limitations and Future Research Directions

Future research may be conducted in the following directions. First, we may need to identify other job characteristics and work climate factors that can alter the impact of team humility on employee creativity. Second, other team processes or team emergent states may be discovered in explaining the relationship between leader humility and employee creative performance. Third, other types of employee behaviors can be studied as consequences of leader humility. Studies on how leader humility influences customer-employee interactions and customers' attitudinal and behavioral outcomes are also necessary.

The following limitations of the current study should be acknowledged. First, this is a cross-sectional study and thus we cannot draw conclusions about causality. Fortunately, we applied a series of procedures to minimize potential common-method bias and demonstrated that such bias is not a major concern in the current study. Researchers in future studies should ask team leaders to rate each employee's creative performance independently at different time points. Second, we chose to study only a small number of hotels in Guangdong, China, which may influence the generalizability of our findings. Future research may consider conducting a longitudinal study to validate the research model.

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