

Title: A preliminary field study report on human dignity and spiritual leadership in the workplace

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Abstract

Human dignity is widely accepted as a core social construct and expression of human value. While its meaning and validity are disputed in some circles, the acceptance of human dignity is essentially ubiquitous in the social sciences. Despite its ubiquity, human dignity has not been widely explored as an aspect of contemporary organizational leadership research. There have been few field studies involving leader and follower perceptions of human dignity as a social (i.e. 2nd bottom-line) outcome of leadership behavior. This presentation will provide preliminary results of the authors' on-going, qualitative field study involving leaders and followers in nonprofit and for-profit organizations, including perceptions of human dignity as an element of the leader-follower relationship.

Spiritual leadership theory (Fry, 2003) rests on the assumption that leaders can positively impact the well-being of followers while also producing positive results for stakeholders, society, the environment, and themselves. The authors have previously proposed that human dignity is a key, albeit implied, philosophical foundation of spiritual leadership theory (Kyle et al, 2017b) and an element of leader meaning-making (Kyle et al, 2017a). The broader scope of this research explores the conceptual connections between human dignity, higher-order needs, and the elements of spiritual leadership theory. Specifically, the research explores the relationship between leader behaviors that contribute to a sense of self-actualization and membership and, in turn, the perception of the acknowledgement or denial of dignity in the leader-follower relationship.

References

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