Beta-Testing of an Intervention Workbook to Promote Humility

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INTRODUCTION & PURPOSE

- Humility is a virtue that minimizes the importance of the self in the interest of others. It has been associated with a host of benefits, including better self-rated physical health, better relationship quality, higher academic performance, higher patience and empathy, and higher ratings of job performance (Davis et al., 2013; Krause, 2010; Peters, Rowatt, & Johnson, 2011).

- Lavelock et al. (under review) tested a workbook intervention to promote humility, and in its inaugural efficacy study, this workbook promoted trait humility in its participants over and above alternative virtue workbooks, a positivity workbook, and a non-action control group.

- The present study seeks to replicate the results of Lavelock et al. (under review) with an updated version of the same humility workbook intervention.

- We hypothesized that this 8-hour self-directed workbook would produce higher levels of trait humility than in positivity workbook or a non-action control condition.

METHOD

- Participants: N = 72 undergraduate psychology students at VCU
- Humility Group (n = 24), Positivity Group (n = 24), Controls (n = 24)
- Design: 3 condition x 2 time point; longitudinal, experimental design

- Independent Measures: 8-hour self-directed workbooks
- Humility workbooks were given to the humility group to see if they increase humility
  - PROVE: Pick a time when you were not humble, Remember your abilities within the big picture, Open yourself, Value all things, and Examine limitations
  - Positivity workbooks were given to positivity group to see if they improved mood
  - HAPPY: Have a meaningful outlook, Apply your strengths, Put things in perspective, Paint a positive picture of your future, and Yes to others
- Assessment occasions occurred at pre-test and two-week follow-up

RESULTS

- Humility, positivity, and control pre-test scores were not significantly different at baseline
- Humility group: increased significantly in trait humility, t(23)=−2.59, p=.051, and decreased in trait negativity, t(23) = 3.938, p < .01
- Positivity group: did not increase significantly in trait humility, t(23) = -1.830, p = .080, and decreased in trait negativity, t(23)=2.534, p = .019
- Control group: did not change in trait humility, t(23) = .597, p = .556, or in trait negativity, t(23) = .043, p = .966

TRAIT HUMILITY

- We found that the humility workbook did indeed significantly increase trait humility and decreased trait negativity between pre-test and follow-up
- Participants in the positivity and non-action control condition participants did not improve in trait humility
- The positivity condition did decrease in trait negativity, showing that it was an appropriate manipulation that affects mood, but not necessarily virtue
- These data suggest that interventions to promote virtue seem to do so in addition to improving mood, perhaps as a byproduct, but that interventions to improve mood do not necessarily affect virtue, but do improve mood
- We conclude that this workbook intervention to promote humility appears efficacious in its beta-testing.

DISCUSSION

REFERENCES


