

MEASURES OF INTELLECTUAL HUMILITY: A REFERENCE GUIDE

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June 2016

Introduction

This reference guide is the concluding effort of a multi-year grant to research intellectual humility (IH). Much like general humility, defining intellectual humility—what it is, what it looks like, and how to measure it—depends on how each researcher frames it. Thus, this guide includes eight different measures ranging from general humility to specific aspects of intellectual humility.

Developing these measures was no easy feat for their respective researchers: hours were spent recruiting participants, refining questions, testing and retesting for significance, and analyzing results. Intellectual humility is still a new field—our team of researchers are among the first to truly delve into this area of study and develop the measures included herein—so sharing this information is not only intended to educate the reader about the fruitful results of this research, but also to spur scholars towards adding to it.

Acknowledgements

We thank the John Templeton Foundation for their generous grants that allowed us to pursue this research. We also thank the researchers who contributed measures for this guide and otherwise supported their development:

- Jason Baehr
- Judith Danovitch
- Aiden Gregg
- Peter Hill
- Joshua Hook
- Mark Hoyle
- Rick Leary
- Elizabeth Krumrei-Mancuso
- Nikhila Mahadevan
- Brad Owens
- Tenelle Porter
- Wade Rowatt
- Peter Thompson
- Jennifer Wright

Finally, we thank the professionals who offered grant, management, and other invaluable support to our research efforts and the completion of this resource guide:

- Desiree Silva
- Rebecca Sok

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Using the Reference Guide

The guide is organized into three parts:

- General humility measures that include sub-scales or items relevant to intellectual humility
- Content-general intellectual humility measures
- Content-specific intellectual humility measures

Within these sections, measures are labeled as either *content-general* (i.e., measuring intellectual humility across areas of knowledge) or *content-specific* (i.e., measuring intellectual humility within a particular knowledge area such as religion or a science), and either as a *self-report* measure or a *3rd-person report* measure. All eight measures included in this resource guide take a *trait-level* approach to measurement.

Additional Resources

For more information about intellectual humility and the research that led to these measures, please visit:

<http://thethrivecenter.org/research/research-projects/the-science-of-intellectual-humility/>

<http://humility.slu.edu/>

<http://publicdiscourseproject.uconn.edu/>

<https://www.bigquestionsonline.com/2012/06/24/what-intellectually-humble/>

<http://cct.biola.edu/blog/we-know-part-debunking-myths-about-intellectual-humility/>

Measure: **General Humility of Others**
Type: Content-general | Third-person
Author: Brad Owens

Definition of Humility

This measure was developed to index *general* humility rather than intellectual humility and represents a social or observed form of humility. Nevertheless, most of the items appear to bear on intellectual humility, resembling items from other scales in this guide.

Additional Notes

Since humility is a characteristic that is assigned by others, has clear relational implications, and is often inappropriate to assign to oneself, this social capture of humility helps circumvent many of the psychometric issues with assessing humility via self-report. This measure has most often been used to explore the implications of leader humility on employee (and team) motivation, performance, moral behavior, and turnover.

Items

Individuals are asked to rate the focal person's humility by using the following 9-item scale. All items were assessed on a 5-point scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree).

1. This person actively seeks feedback from others, even if it is critical.
2. This person admits it when they don't know how to do something.
3. This person acknowledges when others have more knowledge and skills than him- or herself.
4. This person takes notice of others' strengths.
5. This person often compliments others on their strengths.
6. This person shows appreciation for the unique contributions of others.
7. This person is willing to learn from others.
8. This person is open to the ideas of others.
9. This person is open to the advice of others.

Scoring

Sum or average scores. No items are reverse-scored.

Citations

Owens, B. P., Johnson, M. D., Mitchell, T. R. (2013). Expressed humility in organizations: Implications for performance, teams, and leadership. *Organization Science*, 24, 1517-1538.

Measure: Humility/Modesty/Open-Mindedness
Type: Content-general | Self-report
Author: Jennifer Wright

Definition of Humility

Humility is an epistemically (low self-focus) and ethically aligned (high other-focus) positioning of oneself within the context of the surrounding universe.

Additional Notes

Humility is teased apart from two neighboring constructs: modesty and moral flexibility/open-mindedness. Two sub-scales (“Religious Humility” and “Moral Flexibility”) may track content-specific aspects of humility.

This scale has been used with both young adults and adults across the US.

Items

All responses are on the following 7-point scale: *Strongly Agree, Agree, Somewhat Agree, Neutral, Somewhat Disagree, Disagree, Strongly Disagree*

The Humility Scale: A Multi-Faceted Tool

Final Version

Religious Humility (Low Self-Focus: Existential Awareness)

1. I often feel humble when I think of a Higher Power.
2. God requires us to be humble.
3. Ultimately, there is a Supreme Being who gets all of the credit and glory for our individual accomplishments.
4. My Creator works through me in all my good actions.
5. I accept my total dependence upon the grace of God.

Cosmic Humility (Low Self-Focus: Existential Awareness)

6. I often find myself pondering my smallness in the face of the vastness of the universe.
7. I often think about the fragility of existence.
8. I frequently think about how much bigger the universe is than our power to comprehend.
9. When I look out at the stars at night, I am often deeply humbled.
10. I feel awe towards the mysteries and complexities of life.

Environmental Humility (Low Self-Focus: Existential Awareness)

11. Humans have to learn to share the Earth with other species.
12. We should always try to be in harmony with Mother Nature.
13. I often feel in touch with Mother Nature.
14. It's important from time to time to commune with nature.
15. Caring for humanity requires us to care about the environment.

Other Focus (High Other-Focus: Extended Compassion)

16. I often place the interests of others over my own interests.
17. My friends would say I focus more on others than I do myself.

18. I always find myself making sacrifices for others.
19. My actions are often aimed towards the wellbeing of others.
20. I care about the welfare others, at times more than my own welfare.

Valuing Humility (Indirect Measure of Humility)

21. Humility is a virtue.
22. I find humble people to be very admirable.
23. A good dose of humble pie is often necessary.
24. Teaching kids the value of humility is very important to their development.
25. It's important to always keep one's accomplishments in perspective.

The Modesty Scale: Final Version

Internal Modesty

1. Like most people, I am just an average person.
2. I am just an ordinary person like everyone else.
3. At the end of the day, I am no better than anyone else.
4. I am a run-of-the-mill individual, like most people.
5. I am just your average "Jill or Joe."

Public Modesty

6. I often try to change the subject when people say good things about me.
7. I do not like it when others pay attention to my accomplishments.
8. I feel embarrassed when other people praise me in public.
9. It makes me uncomfortable to talk about my successes and strong points with others.
10. It makes me feel uncomfortable when others talk about my successes.

The Flexibility and Open-mindedness Scale: Final Version

Moral Flexibility

1. I often need to change my views on moral issues.
2. I feel unsure that I know what morality demands.
3. I am very uncertain about my positions on matters of ethics.
4. I tend to change my mind a lot about morality.
5. I don't have any strong beliefs when it comes to people's moral values.

Open-Mindedness

6. It's always important to be open to new ideas.
7. Open-mindedness is a virtue.
8. I always try to be receptive to new and different beliefs and values.
9. I always try to be an open-minded person.
10. We should never close ourselves to new and different ways of thinking.

Scoring

Sum or average scores. No items are reverse-scored.

Citations

Nadelhoffer, T., Wright, J.C., Echols, M., Perini, T., & Venezia, K. (in press). The varieties of humility worth wanting: An interdisciplinary investigation. *Journal of Moral Philosophy*.

Wright, J.C., & Nadelhoffer, T. (in press). Humility: The (potential) philosophical significance of what we've learned (in press), *Ethical Theory and Moral Practice*.

Nadelhoffer, T. & Wright, J.C. (in press). The twin dimensions of the virtue of humility: Low self-focus and high other-focus. *Moral Psychology, Volume 5: Virtues and Happiness*, (Eds. W. Sinnott-Armstrong & C. Miller), Cambridge: MIT Press.

Measure: Limitations/Openness/Defensiveness
Type: Content-general | Self-report
Author: Krumrei-Mancuso, Elizabeth

Definition of Intellectual Humility

A nonthreatening awareness of one's intellectual fallibility. Consistent with the literature on IH, such awareness should result in openness to revising one's viewpoints, lack of overconfidence about one's knowledge, respect for the viewpoints of others, and lack of threat in the face of intellectual disagreements. As such IH is conceptualized as both an intrapersonal and interpersonal construct that would be associated with outcomes such as open-mindedness and tolerance for others.

Additional Notes

One-month test-retest was .75.

Items

Independence of Intellect and Ego

1. I feel small when others disagree with me on topics that are close to my heart.
2. When someone contradicts my most important beliefs, it feels like a personal attack.
3. When someone disagrees with ideas that are important to me, it feels as though I'm being attacked.
4. I tend to feel threatened when others disagree with me on topics that are close to my heart.
5. When someone disagrees with ideas that are important to me, it makes me feel insignificant.

Openness to Revising One's Viewpoint

6. I am open to revising my important beliefs in the face of new information.
7. I am willing to change my position on an important issue in the face of good reasons.
8. I am willing to change my opinions on the basis of compelling reason.
9. I have at times changed opinions that were important to me when someone showed me I was wrong.
10. I'm willing to change my mind once it's made up about an important topic.

Respect for Other's Viewpoints

11. I can respect others even if I disagree with them in important ways.
12. I can have great respect for someone even when we don't see eye-to-eye on important topics.
13. Even when I disagree with others, I can recognize that they have sound points.
14. I am willing to hear others out, even if I disagree with them.
15. I welcome different ways of thinking about important topics.
16. I respect that there are ways of making important decisions that are different from the way I make decisions.

Lack of Intellectual Overconfidence

17. My ideas are usually better than other people's ideas.

18. For the most part, others have more to learn from me than I have to learn from them.
19. When I am really confident in a belief, there is very little chance that belief is wrong.
20. On important topics, I am not likely to be swayed by the viewpoints of others.
21. I'd rather rely on my own knowledge about most topics than turn to others for expertise.
22. Listening to perspectives of others seldom changes my important opinions.

Scoring

Reverse-key items 1-5 and 17-22.

Citations

Krumrei-Mancuso, E. J., & Rouse, S. V. (2016). The development and validation of the Comprehensive Intellectual Humility Scale. *Journal of Personality Assessment*, 98, 209-221. doi:10.1080/00223891.2015.1068174

Krumrei-Mancuso, E. J. (2015, May). Measurement of intellectual humility. In W. C. Rowatt (Chair), *Measurement and potential benefits of intellectual humility relative to arrogance*. Symposium conducted at the annual convention of the Association for Psychological Science, New York, NY.

Krumrei, E. J. & Rouse, S. V. (2014, May). *The development and validation of a scale of intellectual humility*. Annual Convention of the Association for Psychological Science, San Francisco, CA.

Measure: **General Intellectual Humility Scale**
Type: Content-general | Self-report
Authors: Mark Leary & Rick Hoyle

Definition of Intellectual Humility

General intellectual humility can be distinguished from general uncertainty or lack of self-confidence by the degree to which people hold their beliefs tentatively specifically because they are aware that the evidence on which those beliefs are based may be limited or flawed, that they lack important information, or that they may not have the expertise to understand or evaluate aspects of the evidence. The Intellectual Humility Scale is a measure of *general* intellectual humility. The modifier “general” is used to distinguish the general tendency to display intellectual humility or conceit across a wide array of domains and topics.

Additional Notes

The Intellectual Humility Scale is a six-item measure designed to capture the general tendency toward intellectual humility without reference to specific views.

Items

Please choose a number from 1 to 5 to indicate the extent to which each statement describes you:
Not at all like me 1 2 3 4 5 Very much like me

1. I question my own opinions, positions, and viewpoints because they could be wrong.
2. I reconsider my opinions when presented with new evidence.
3. I recognize the value in opinions that are different from my own.
4. I accept that my beliefs and attitudes may be wrong.
5. In the face of conflicting evidence, I am open to changing my opinions.
6. I like finding out new information that differs from what I already think is true.

Scoring

Sum or average scores. No items are reverse-scored.

Citations

Leary, M. R., Diebels, K. J., Davisson, E. K., Isherwood, J. C., Jongman-Sereno, K. P., Raimi, K. T., Deffler, S. A., & Hoyle, R. H. (2016). Cognitive and interpersonal features of intellectual humility. Manuscript submitted for publication. *Manuscript introducing the measure

Deffler, S. A., Leary, M. R., & Hoyle, R. H. (2016). Knowing what you know: Intellectual humility and judgments of recognition memory. *Personality and Individual Differences*, 96, 255-259. doi: 10.1016/j.paid.2016.03.016

Measure: Intellectual Humility & Knowledge

Type: Content-general | Self-report

Author: Tenelle Porter

Definition of Intellectual Humility

Both the awareness of one's intellectual fallibility and the valuing of the intellect of others (given the large body of literature on *general* humility suggesting that an appreciation of others is an integral facet of humility (e.g., see Tangney, 2000; Davis et al., 2011; Davis & Hook, 2014)).

Additional Notes

The entire scale has been used successfully among adult samples (the best fitting confirmatory factor analyses show a single-factor structure accounting for method effects of the negatively worded items, and the scale has sufficient alpha reliability of around .70); however, among adolescents (freshmen & sophomores in high school), the scale appears to have a different factor structure such that the negatively worded items do not load together with the positively worded items. Thus, if individuals were going to administer this scale to high school students, it is recommended to either eliminate the negatively worded items from the scale or treat them as a separate factor.

Items

1. I am willing to admit it if I don't know something.
2. I like to compliment others on their intellectual strengths.
3. I try to reflect on my weaknesses in order to develop my intelligence.
4. I actively seek feedback on my ideas, even if it is critical.
5. I acknowledge when someone knows more than me about a certain subject.
6. If someone doesn't understand my idea, it's probably because they aren't smart enough to get it.
7. I sometimes marvel at the intellectual abilities of other people.
8. I feel uncomfortable when someone points out one of my intellectual shortcomings.
9. I don't like it when someone points out an intellectual mistake that I made.

Scoring

Reverse-key items 6, 8, 9

Citations

Porter, T. (2015, May) *Intellectual humility: Importance for learning in school and from opposing views*. Intellectual Humility Conference, Catalina Island, CA.

Measure: Limitations-Owning
Type: Content-general | Trait-level | Self-report
Author: Wade Rowatt

Definition of Intellectual Humility

An appropriate awareness and acknowledgement of one's intellectual limits.

Additional Notes

Using statistical data techniques, it was found that the 12-item self-report measure of intellectual humility (using the limitations-owning perspective) taps three components of IH (owning-limits, love of learning, discomfort with intellectual limits), which clearly support the philosophical limitations-owning model of IH (namely that IH is a golden mean between intellectual arrogance and intellectual servility). The 12-item IH scale was internally consistent and correlated with measures of intellectual humility and agreeableness (positively) and negatively with narcissism, dogmatism, and hubristic pride (i.e., arrogance/conceit). This scale is based on the theoretical model of intellectual humility developed by Whitcomb, D., Battaly, H., Baehr, J., & Howard-Snyder, D. (2015). Intellectual Humility: Owning our limitations. *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research*, 91(1). doi: 10.1111/phpr.12228.

Items

Carefully read each statement and choose which option most closely describes you.

Strongly disagree 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 Strongly agree

Love of learning

1. If I don't understand something, I try to get clear about what exactly is confusing to me.
2. When I don't understand something, I try hard to figure it out.
3. I love learning.
4. I care about truth.

Discomfort with intellectual limits

5. I focus on my intellectual weaknesses too much.
6. When I know that I have an intellectual weakness in one area, I tend to doubt my intellectual abilities in other areas as well.
7. I am overly preoccupied with some of my intellectual weaknesses.
8. When I think about the limitations of what I know, I feel uncomfortable.

Owens limits

9. I have a hard time admitting when one of my beliefs is mistaken.
10. When someone points out a mistake in my thinking, I am quick to admit that I was wrong.
11. I feel comfortable admitting my intellectual limitations.
12. I am quick to acknowledge my intellectual limitations.

Scoring

1. Reverse-key items: $5+6+7+8+9$
2. Compute subscale scores
 - a. Love of learning: $1+2+3+4$
 - b. Discomfort with intellectual limits: $5r+6r+7r+8r$
 - c. Owns limits: $9r+10+11+12$
3. Compute total scale score: $1+2+3+4+5r+6r+7r+8r+9r+10+11+12$

Citations

Haggard, M., Rowatt, W.C., Leman, J., Meagher, B., Moore, C., Whitcomb, D., Battaly, H., Baehr, J., & Howard-Snyder, D. (manuscript in preparation). *Development and validation of the Limitations-Owning Intellectual Humility Scale.*

Measure: Religious Intellectual Humility
Type: Content-specific | Trait-level | Self-report
Author: Joshua Hook

Definition of Intellectual Humility

How someone handles situations that make it difficult for most people to negotiate ideas fairly—intellectual humility involves having an accurate view of one’s intellectual strengths and weaknesses, as well as the ability to negotiate different ideas in an interpersonally respectful manner.

Additional Notes

Participants completed a modified version of the Cultural Humility Scale (CHS; Hook et al., 2013). Participants self-reported their own level of IH toward different types of religious beliefs and values. Both the original CHS, as well as the adapted CHS (for religious beliefs and values) had high levels of internal consistency, and were significantly associated with other measures of humility (Hook et al., 2015), as well as relationship variables such as working alliance (Hook et al., 2013) and forgiveness (Hook et al., 2015).

Items

Rate each item on a 5-point rating scale from 1 = *strongly disagree* to 5 = *strongly agree*

Regarding different types of religions beliefs and values, I...

1. Am respectful
2. Am open to explore
3. Assume I already know a lot.
4. Am considerate
5. Am genuinely interested in learning more.
6. Act superior.
7. Am open to seeing things from other perspectives.
8. Make assumptions
9. Am open-minded.
10. Am a know-it-all.
11. Think I understand more than I actually do.
12. Ask questions when I am uncertain.

Scoring

Positive subscale items: 1, 2, 4, 5, 7, 9, 12

Negative subscale items: 3, 6, 8, 10, 11

A total IH score can be calculated by reverse-scoring the negative items and taking the mean of all items.

Citations

Hook, J. N., Davis, D. E., Owen, J., Worthington, E. L., Jr., & Utsey, S. O. (2013). Cultural humility: Measuring openness to culturally diverse clients. *Journal of Counseling Psychology*, 60, 353-366.

Hook, J. N., Davis, D. E., Van Tongeren, D. R., Hill, P. C., Worthington, E. L., Jr., Farrell, J. E., & Dieke, P. (2015). Intellectual humility and forgiveness of religious leaders. *Journal of Positive Psychology, 10*, 499-506.

Hook, J. N., Farrell, J. E., Johnson, K. A., Van Tongeren, D. R., Davis, D. E., & Aten, J. D. (in press). Intellectual humility and religious tolerance. *Journal of Positive Psychology*.

Measure: **Specific Intellectual Humility Scale**
Type: Content-specific | Self-report
Authors: Rick Hoyle & Mark Leary

Definition of Intellectual Humility

Whereas general intellectual humility is a characteristic of the person, specific intellectual humility reflects both that personal attribute and features of the person's view with respect to a specific domain, topic, or issue.

Additional Notes

The Specific Intellectual Humility Scale is a nine-item measure designed to capture the degree to which specific views are held with humility. A distinctive feature of the scale is its adaptability: items are written so that a one or two word description of a domain, topic, or issue can be inserted in order to measure the humility with which people hold a specific view or set of views.

Psychometric evaluation demonstrates that the measure works equivalently across a wide range of domains, topics and issues. The correlation between specific and general intellectual humility varies across domains, topics, and issues, ranging from near zero to moderate. Similarly, the correlations between intellectual humility for different domains, topics, and issues varies and are no more than moderate in magnitude.

Insert the same word or phrase in each blank to direct respondents' attention to a specific domain (e.g., religion, education), topic (e.g., separation of church and state, charter schools), or issue (e.g., prayer in schools, common core curriculum). Produce a single score by averaging responses to the nine items.

Items 7, 8, and 9 constitute an abbreviated version of the measure for use in survey studies allowing a small number of items per variable.

Items

People have different views about _____. Please choose a number from 1 to 5 to indicate how much each statement below describes your views about _____.

Not at all like me 1 2 3 4 5 Very much like me

1. My views about _____ are just as likely to be wrong as other views.
2. I recognize that my views about _____ are based on limited evidence.
3. Although I have particular views about _____, I realize that I don't know everything that I need to know about it.
4. It is quite likely that there are gaps in my understanding about _____.
5. My sources for information about _____ might not be the best.
6. I am open to new information in the area of _____ that might change my view.
7. My views about _____ today may someday turn out to be wrong.
8. When it comes to my views about _____ I may be overlooking evidence.
9. My views about _____ may change with additional evidence or information.

Scoring

Sum or average scores. No items are reverse-scored.

Citations

Hoyle, R. H., Davisson, E. K., Diebels, K. J., & Leary, M. R. (2016). Holding specific views with humility: Conceptualization and measurement of specific intellectual humility. *Personality and Individual Differences*, 97, 165-172. doi: 10.1016/j.paid.2016.03.043 *Article introducing the measure