

SUPERVISOR'S STYLES OF HUMOUR AND EMPLOYEE'S SATISFACTION: IS GENDER A MATTER OF INFLUENCE?

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ABSTRACT

Humor in the workplace has garnered significant attention as a research area within organizational behavior and management. However, there exists a notable gap in knowing the influence of supervisors' humor on employee satisfaction, particularly regarding the role of gender in this dynamic within the Sri Lankan context. This study seeks to explore the correlation between supervisor humor styles (affiliative and aggressive) and employee satisfaction, while also considering the potential moderating effect of gender. Employing a quantitative approach, this research engaged 220 employees through convenience sampling. The proposed model was assessed through hierarchical multiple regression, and demographic and personal variables were controlled. The findings of this study indicate that both affiliative and aggressive humor styles of supervisors significantly impact employee satisfaction. Additionally, the findings imply that the association between affiliative and aggressive humor and job satisfaction is significantly influenced by gender. While aggressive humor tends to make employees dissatisfied affiliative humor from supervisors tends to increase satisfaction among employees. By examining how various supervisor humor types affect employee satisfaction in the setting of Sri Lankan culture, this study contributes to the body of existing work. Further, it offers useful insights by pointing out the humor styles that have a favorable or bad impact on worker happiness in Sri Lankan workplaces.

Keywords: Humour, affiliative humor, aggressive humour, satisfaction, ender organization

1. Introduction

To gain a competitive edge, companies concentrate on several conditions. For that, organizational leaders implement multiple techniques to achieve a satisfied workplace by incorporating strategies as leaders behavior in the workplace significantly influences the actions and conduct of subordinates (Hiller et al., 2011). One interpersonal aspect of supervision is the utilization of humor by supervisors. Humor is a regular part of corporate life, especially in conversations among coworkers. Humor is an effective management tool

since it can trigger several positive effects in the domains of organizational behavior and business.

The interest in supervisors' use of humor and its possible influence on employees' attitudes and behaviors as well as business unit effectiveness has surged over the past 20 years (Kim et al., 2016; Kong et al., 2019; Tan et al., 2020). Indeed, supervisor humor holds particular relevance because supervisors wield power and control over resources. Empirical evidence indicates that supervisor humor correlates positively with task performance, innovative actions (Avolio et al., 1999), attachment to the work (Yam et al., 2018), employee creativity, psychological capital (Li et al., 2019), work engagement, positive emotions (Goswami et al., 2016), job satisfaction (Mesmer-Magnus et al., 2018). Furthermore, a positive use of humor by supervisors contributes to a pleasant atmosphere at work (Brender-Ilan, & Reizer, 2021).

Martin et al. (2003) highlighted four different types of humor such as affiliate, self-enhancing, aggressive, and self-defeating. Affiliate and self-enhancing humor is more positive, while aggressive and self-defeating humor is more negative. Supervisors use humor in specific ways, and its influence on employees' behavior in organizations has been recorded (Pundt & Venz, 2017). Though there is growing awareness of the impact of humor, little is known about how managers utilize humor theoretically, and it is unclear exactly how humor influences employee behaviour. Thus, humor may be the most promising of all the communication methods employed by supervisors, but it is also the least widely recognized (Brender-Ilan & Reizer, 2021). This core question is still open-ended today as well.

Gender and humor in the workplace have become an increasingly relevant topic in organizational research. Humor is an omnipresent aspect of workplace culture, and its use has been associated with various positive and negative outcomes. The relationship between humor and employee satisfaction has been well-documented in other contexts (Mesmer-Magnus & Viswesvaran, 2012). However, research has also suggested that humor can have a gendered impact, affecting men and women differently (Brescoll & Uhlmann, 2008). Gender differences in the reception and the outcomes of humor in the organization can be influenced by societal gender stereotypes and expectations (Klein, 2014). For example, research has shown that men often employ aggressive humor, while women tend to employ affiliative humor (Brescoll & Uhlmann, 2008; Romero & Cruthirds, 2006). Understanding these gender dynamics is crucial for supervisors to effectively use humor to enhance satisfaction and promote positive relationships with subordinates.

Further, While many studies have shown the correlation between supervisors' humor and employee satisfaction (Mesmer-Magnus et al., 2018), there hasn't been much research within a Sri Lankan cultural framework. In Sri Lanka, like other Asian nations, collectivism and high power distance hold substantial cultural significance. Culture significantly influences how humor is practiced and perceived in the workplace. In Western countries, humor is widely

accepted in professional contexts and is often used to build rapport, ease tensions, and foster a positive work environment (Goswami et al., 2016). In collectivist cultures, humor is used to promote group harmony (Kim & Plester, 2019). In high power distance cultures, like Sri Lanka, humor from supervisors might be perceived differently than in low power distance cultures. For instance, in countries with high power distance, subordinates might feel uncomfortable with humor that challenges authority or involves playful criticism. Humor is effective in one cultural context but may not translate well to another. For example, sarcasm and irony, common in British humor, might be misunderstood or considered inappropriate in cultures that value direct and clear communication. By recognizing and respecting these cultural differences, organizations can leverage humor to create a more inclusive and satisfying work environment.

Given that humor and satisfaction are intertwined with cultural values, it is crucial to analyze the impact of humor on employee job satisfaction within the Sri Lankan context. This examination is essential not only for understanding the practical implications for supervisors in Sri Lanka but also for advancing existing literature. Hence, this study endeavors to delineate supervisors' humor styles and their impact on employees' satisfaction with their supervisors in the workplace. Furthermore, this research delves into the role of gender in the connection between humor and satisfaction.

2. Reviewing the Literature and Development of Hypotheses

Humor in the workplace is a multifaceted phenomenon that can have both constructive and destructive consequences on employees and organizational outcomes. Humor is often related to increased job satisfaction, reduced stress, and improved well-being among employees (Mesmer-Magnus et al., 2012). At the same time, humor can foster a positive social atmosphere, enhance team cohesion, and contribute to a more enjoyable workplace (Cooper, 2008). However, unfitting or offensive humor can lead to negative consequences, including discomfort, conflict, and a hostile work environment (Holmes, 2007). While moderate and positive humor can enhance creativity and problem-solving, excessive or distracting humor may negatively impact task performance (Romero & Pescosolido, 2008).

In this regard, supervisor humor can be categorized as aggressive or affiliative. Aggressive humor, such as ridicule, may contribute to stress and negative emotions (Martin et al., 2003), while affiliative humor, which amuses without denigrating, can enhance positive relationships (Pundt & Herrmann, 2015). Affiliative humor reflects kindness as it demonstrates modesty and reduces status differences between supervisors and their teams. Affiliative humor, characterized by positive and inclusive jokes, plays a significant role in fostering positive relationships and increasing employee satisfaction. For example, a manager tells a humorous story about a past work mistake to illustrate a point without embarrassing anyone. Self-enhancing humor, while intrapersonal in focus, is a healthy defense mechanism and emphasizes maintaining an optimistic view. For example, when a project meets some issues,

a team leader might say, "Well, at least we've discovered a new way not to do it," to keep spirits high and encourage the team to continue working towards a solution without getting discouraged.

Both the aggressive and self-defeating humor leads to employees' sense that the supervisor is not honest. Supervisors use aggressive humor to boost their own image without considering others. Telling jokes at others' expense is a tactic to shift blame away from themselves. Also the aggressive humor includes making jokes that exclude or alienate certain team members, such as inside jokes that only a few people understand, can create feelings of exclusion and division within the team. Self-defeating humor makes employees feel that the supervisor lacks capability and resources to satisfy their wants. An employee who frequently makes jokes at their own expense, such as saying, "I'm always the one to mess things up, aren't I?" after making a mistake, might be using self-defeating humor. This type of humor can undermine their credibility and affect how others perceive their competence. According to Kuiper et al. (2010), humor is often viewed as a tool to manage workplace stressors, providing a means for employees to navigate challenging situations. Cooper et al. (2018) point out that Humor can play a role in shaping organizational culture, contributing to a positive and inclusive workplace atmosphere.

In this regard, two theories can be used to explain the relationship between supervisors' humor and employee satisfaction: Supervisor members exchange theory and Job Demand-Resource theory. The Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) model stands as a widely acknowledged framework in the realm of occupational health psychology, explaining the control of job elements on employee well-being and performance. Developed by Bakker and Demerouti (2007), this model outlines two primary categories of factors within the work environment: job demands and job resources. This model has been widely cited and applied in various studies and research contexts to understand the relationship between work-related factors and employee outcomes, and it has become a valuable tool for organizations that are interested in improving the work environment (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007). Daily interpersonal events, particularly those at work, significantly impact individuals' self-control resources (Bono et al., 2012; Lilius, 2012), including humor exhibited by supervisors, such as aggressive and affiliative humor.

Supervisors who use aggressive humor may lead to subordinates feeling dissatisfied. This can be explained by the Leader-Member Exchange (LMX) theory, which focuses on how supervisors interact with their subordinates. According to LMX Theory, supervisors build different types of relationships with their subordinates. These relationships can range from in-group to out-group relationships.

2.1 Affiliative humor and satisfaction

Supervisor-affiliative humor, as described by Martin et al. (2003), is a type of humor aimed at positively entertaining others. Affiliative humor is a humorous approach aimed at improving interpersonal relationships. It entails crackingg jokes, kidding around with others, and generally employing humor to unite people and foster a welcoming and upbeat social environment. When supervisors employ this kind of humor in the workplace, it can enhance job resources for employees. According to Pundt and Herrmann (2015) and Cooper et al. (2018), when supervisors employ affiliative humor create a comfortable environment leading to positive emotions and decreasing job stress. By employing affiliative humor, people frequently hope to ease tension, build social ties, and improve everyone's enjoyment of interactions. This, in turn, can lead to an increase in job resources, as indicated by research such as that of Tice et al. (2007).

By utilizing affiliative humor, supervisors contribute to a positive work environment, generating positive emotions among employees through emotional contagion. This heightened positivity correlates with higher job satisfaction. Generally lighthearted and welcoming, this kind of humor can support the development of a sense of belonging and community among group members. Additionally, supervisor affiliative humor, serving as a form of self-disclosure, nurtures closer relationships between supervisors and employees, promoting psychological safety and reducing uncertainty, as highlighted by Mesmer-Magnus et al. (2018).

Here, job satisfaction is the degree to which workers are happy with their positions, the workplace, and the company culture. It includes a range of elements, including the type of job being done, interactions with coworkers and managers, pay, chances for professional development, and compatibility between one's values and those of the company (Judge et al., 2001).

As a result, affiliative humor can foster a more positive and harmonious workplace. Employees who utilize affiliative humor are more likely to form close bonds with one another, experience a supportive and upbeat work environment, and feel a feeling of solidarity with their peers.

Higher levels of job satisfaction may be a result of these beneficial social contacts and the sense of community they foster. Workers are more likely to report better levels of job satisfaction overalls if they like their time at work and feel connected to their coworkers. Furthermore, encouraging open communication, lowering stress levels, and simplifying difficult tasks are all possible benefits of an affiliative humor-heavy workplace, all of which can increase job satisfaction (Mesmer-Magnus, Glew, & Viswesvaran, 2012).

This relationship can be viewed through the lens of the Supervisor-Member Exchange (LMX) Theory, affiliative humor can enhance the quality of the relationship between supervisors and subordinates, thereby boosting satisfaction. Affiliative humor can increase employee satisfaction and build high-quality exchange relationships, enhancing trust and communication. Supervisors' affiliative humor increases employee satisfaction through its effects on building high-quality exchange relationships, enhancing trust and communication (Liden et al., 2004), and creating a positive work environment (Cooper, 2008; Lehmann-Willenbrock & Allen, 2014), as explained by LMX Theory and supported by relevant research. Therefore, the researcher proposes that supervisors' affiliative humor increases employees' satisfaction.

Hypothesis 1_a: Supervisor affiliative humor positively related to employee satisfaction

2.2 Aggressive Humor and Satisfaction

On the other hand, supervisor aggressive humor often leads to excessive teasing, or ridiculing others (Martin et al., 2003), which is likely to reduce employees' resources. This kind of humor is frequently utilized at the expense of other people's sentiments in an attempt to control them or present an air of superiority. It is distinguished by being antagonistic and disparaging, and it can provide a bad environment in social and professional contexts.

Aggressive humor may make the workplace unfriendly and uncomfortable. When workers make offensive jokes, it can cause tension to rise, relationships to become strained, and trust among coworkers to be lost. A less encouraging work environment may result from these unfavorable social interactions. Employees who are regularly exposed to or witness aggressive humor may experience stress, demoralization, and a sense of undervaluation, which can impair their level of job satisfaction. The detrimental effects on interpersonal relationships and social dynamics at work might hamper teamwork, communication, and general job satisfaction. Furthermore, aggressive humor in the workplace can increase stress and make problems harder to handle, which lowers job satisfaction even more through consuming employees' limited resources to cope (Kim et al., 2016; Mesmer-Magnus, Glew, & Viswesvaran, 2012).

Employees subjected to being teased by supervisors may experience anxiety and agitation, requiring them to invest more resources in regulating negative emotions according to workplace norms. The inability to react against supervisors further increases job demand, as employees must navigate emotional regulation and maintain positive relationships with their superiors (Muraven et al., 2018).

In LMX Theory, supervisors form in-group relationships with some subordinates based on mutual trust, respect, and support, while other subordinates may be categorized into out-group relationships with lower levels of trust and support. Supervisors' use of aggressive humor

targets a group of individuals on the team. Subordinates who perceive aggressive humor may feel that they are part of the out-group which leads to feelings of exclusion, bitterness, and dissatisfaction.

Further, subordinates who perceive themselves as out-group members may perceive supervisors' aggressive humor as disrespectful, and hostile. LMX theory suggests that subordinates in low-quality exchange relationships are less likely to receive support and a chance for their career development, and thus they are dissatisfied with their supervisor and the work environment. Aggressive humor leads to ineffective communication and feeling of a support within the supervisor-subordinate relationship. The closed communication and unsupportive relationships lead to subordinates' dissatisfaction. Based on the JDR theory and LMX theory the researcher proposes that supervisors' aggressive humor leads to employee dissatisfaction on their job.

Hypothesis 1_b: Supervisor aggressive humor is negatively related to employees' satisfaction

2.3 Gender and supervisor's humour and employee satisfaction

The influence of subordinate gender on the relationship between supervisors' humor and subordinates' satisfaction is an important aspect to consider due to potential gender biases and differences in interpretation. When it comes to workplace relations and how people interpret a supervisor's behavior—including their use of humor—their gender can have a big impact. Employees' perceptions and reactions to humor may be influenced by gender norms and expectations. Due to gender roles and cultural preconceptions, for instance, humor from male supervisors may be seen differently than humor from female supervisors (Eagly & Karau, 2002). Research suggests that gender stereotypes can shape individuals' perceptions of humor, with men and women often having different expectations and preferences for humor styles (Crawford & Gressley, 1991).

Positive humor from male managers may be more easily accepted and valued, according to Cheng et al, (2024), who suggested that this could increase worker happiness. On the other hand, the same humor from female managers could be interpreted differently and be biased differently, which could have an impact on how satisfied employees are with their work. When employed by male supervisors, negative humor styles like aggressive humor may have a more pronounced negative effect because of views of authority and dominance; but, when used by female supervisors, the same style may present distinct issues because of gender preconceptions.

Subordinates' gender may impact how they interpret and respond to humor from their supervisors, which can influence their satisfaction levels. Further societal norms and expectations regarding gender roles can influence how humor is received and evaluated in the workplace. Women may face greater pressure to conform to traditional gender norms, which

could impact their perception of humor from male supervisors (Sacco et al.,2018). It has been reported that women often employ more friendly communication styles, while men use more assertive and competitive styles (Eagly & Wood, 2013). Subordinates' gender-related communication preferences may influence how they interpret humor from supervisors and its impact on their satisfaction. Subordinate gender can influence the relationship between supervisors' affiliative humor and subordinates' satisfaction through its effects on the perception of humor, adherence to gender norms, communication styles, and organizational culture.

Hypothesis H2: There are significant differences in overall job satisfaction between male and female employees

Hypothesis H3: Gender moderates the relationship between supervisors' humor and employee satisfaction

3. Method

To address the research inquiries and achieve the research objectives, a deductive approach was utilized. This involved employing logical arguments grounded in established theoretical and empirical frameworks to formulate hypotheses. The quantitative method is more appropriate to the chosen approach (Creswell et al, 2020; Edmondson & McManus, 2007). The study relied on cross-sectional and self-reported data. Self-reports are deemed appropriate when the focus of the study pertains to perceived experiences. However, cross-sectional and self-reported data possess inherent limitations, notably susceptibility to common method variance (CMV). The researcher followed the procedure proposed by Chang et al. (2010) and Podsakoff et al. (2003) to minimize CMV in the data collection stage and the analysis stage.

3.1 Sample and procedure

In this study, data was gathered from state sector organizations in the Northern region of Sri Lanka. A total of 400 questionnaires were distributed among the employees working in 20 organizations in the state sectors through convenient sampling. Of the distributed 400 questionnaires two hundred and twenty questionnaires were returned. To ensure confidentiality, no identifying information was collected, and each questionnaire was accompanied by a stamped envelope and a cover letter guaranteeing confidentiality. Respondents were instructed to return the survey directly to the researcher without including their name or address.

3.2 Measures

The Tamil version of all measures was meticulously developed by the standard translation and backtranslation methodology outlined by Brislin (1986). Throughout the study, a five-point Likert-type scale was employed, spanning from 1 (indicating strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree).

For the assessment of the Supervisor's aggressive humor, the researcher utilized an 8-item scale (Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.7$) formulated by Martin et al. (2003). An illustrative item from this scale reads as follows: "If my supervisor does not like someone, he/she often uses humor or teasing to put them down." In the same way, for the evaluation of Supervisor affiliative humor, the researcher employed an 8-item scale (Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.8$) also developed by Martin et al. (2003). An exemplar item from this scale states: "My supervisor enjoys making people laugh".

In this investigation, the job satisfaction of employees was assessed with a job satisfaction inventory, comprising five items. This was initially developed by Brayfield and Rothe in 1951. Despite the vintage of this measurement tool, it remains prevalent in contemporary literature and exhibits satisfactory reliability (Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.8$). Sample items included statements such as "Most days I am enthusiastic about my work," and "I find real enjoyment in my work." The reliability of this scale was found to be acceptable both in prior research and in the current study.

4. Data Analysis and Interpretation

The majority of participants were male, constituting 53% (n = 116) of the sample. Twenty-nine percent of respondents (n = 72) reported being married. In terms of age, a significant portion of respondents (n = 90, 41%) fell within the 36 to 50 age bracket, while only 65 respondents (29%) were less than 35 years old, and 30% were over 50 years old. The largest proportion of participants (n = 124, 56%) had 11-20 years of work experience, while only a minority (56%) had less than ten years of experience. Furthermore, a considerable number of respondents (162) held a graduate degree, whereas only 20 employees (9%) possessed a master's degree. The descriptive statistics of the research variables are presented in Table 01 below. The mean value of the three main research variables (satisfaction, affiliate humor, and aggressive humor) are at moderate levels with reasonable standard deviation ranging from 1.01 to 1.16.

Table 01: Correlations

	M	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1. Satisfaction	2.5	1							
2. Affiliative Hum	2.3	.617**	1						
3. Aggressive Hum	3.4	-.272**	-.201**	1					
4. Age		-.017	.079	-.092	1				
5. Experience		.033	.099	-.128	.616**	1			
6. Marri_Status		.000	.040	-.060	.742**	.552**	1		
7. Educational_Qal		.128	.042	-.088	.557**	.382**	.535**	1	
8. Gender		-.023	-.054	.118	-.059	-.321**	.180**	.212**	1

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

The correlation between the research variables and the respondents' profile variables is tabulated in Table 01. The correlation between the research variables is significant at 0.01 level. The relationships between the three research variables and the respondent profile variable are fragile and insignificant.

4.1 Reliability and validity

Both the reliability of indicators and constructs for the three variables—perceived humor style and employee satisfaction—have been evaluated, and the outcomes are presented in Table 4. The indicator reliability, as per Gotz et al. (2010), was found to be satisfactory, with all latent variables demonstrating loadings higher than 0.7 with their respective factors. Construct reliability was assessed using two measures: Cronbach’s alpha and composite reliability (CR), both of which yielded satisfactory results (above 0.7). These reliability findings indicate that the indicators collectively measure each construct adequately (Hair et al., 2013).

Both convergent and discriminant validity have been examined according to the criteria proposed by Hair et al. (2017). Likewise, convergent validity was evaluated through the average variance extracted (AVE) of each construct, which ranged from 0.72 to 0.68. These values exceeded the expected threshold of 0.5 (Hair et al., 2011), indicating adequate convergent validity for all constructs.

Table 02: Reliability and Convergent validity measures

Constructs	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)
Satisfaction	0.76	0.87	0.82
Affiliative Humour	0.64	0.82	0.73
Aggressive Humour	0.55	0.81	0.68

The researcher used three criteria (Fornell–Larcker criterion, loading and cross loading, and Heterorait-Monotrait (HTMT) ratio, and the results satisfy the requirements of each criterion. After the assessment of the reliability and validity of the indicators/constructs the proposed hypothesis was tested with appropriate statistical tools.

4.2 Hypotheses Testing

The researcher assessed the second (H2,) hypothesis through the t-test and the results are shown in Table 5. The t-test results display that females (M= 2.6) are more satisfied than males (M= 2.5), and this difference is not significant. Therefore, the second hypothesis (H2) that proposes “there are significant differences in overall job satisfaction between males and females” has been rejected.

Table 03: t-test for gender group and job satisfaction

		Gender	N	Mean	P-value	significant
Overall (SAT)	Satisfaction	Male	117	2.6	.74	N.Sig
		Female	103	2.5		

To test the hypothesis 1_a and 1_b the researcher performed multiple regression analysis and the results are presented in Table 4.

Further, the results indicated that while affiliative humor has a positive ($\beta = 0.58$) and significant ($p = 0.00$) impact on satisfaction at 0.01 significant levels aggressive humor has a negative ($\beta = -.15$) and significant ($p = .004$) impact on satisfaction (see Table 7, model 2). Both affiliative and aggressive humor explain 40% ($R^2 = .403$) of the variance in satisfaction. These results indicated that while affiliative humor leads to satisfaction and aggressive humor leads to dissatisfaction among the employees.

Therefore, the first hypothesis (H1a and H1b) has been accepted.

Table 04: Coefficients^a

		B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig
1	(Constant)	1.61	.24		6.55	.000
	Aff_Hum	.62	.05	.58	10.94	.000
	Agg_Hu	-.14	.04	-.15	-2.87	.004

a. Dependent Variable: Satisfaction

4.3 Gender and Affiliated Humour-satisfaction Relationship

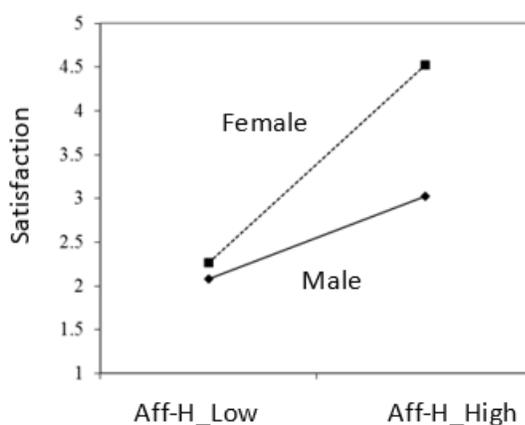
To examine the moderating influence of gender on the correlation between affiliative and aggressive humor and job satisfaction, a hierarchical regression analysis was conducted. In the first step, predictor variables (affiliative humor and aggressive humor) were introduced, followed by the inclusion of the moderator variable (gender) in the second step. Subsequently, the interaction term (affiliative humor * gender), as suggested by Aiken and West (1991), was entered. This process yielded three regression models, detailed in Table 5.

As depicted in Table 5 (Model 2), the presence of the moderator variable shows a positive impact on satisfaction. However, this effect does not reach statistical significance at the 0.05 level when only the predictor variables are considered in the model. To further explore the moderating effect of gender on the positive association between affiliative humor and satisfaction, the interaction term was introduced (Model 3). The results revealed that the interaction term has a positive impact ($\beta = .023$), with its t-statistic ($t = 2.5$) reaching significance at the 0.01 level. Moreover, the F change from Model 2 to Model 3 is significant. These findings indicate that gender moderates the positive relationship between affiliative humor and satisfaction.

Table 05: Outcomes of hierarchical regression analysis- Affiliated Humour

Model	Variables	B	Beta	t	Sig.	R Square Change	Sig. F Change
1	(Constant)	1.037		7.117	.000	.380	.000
	AffHum	.657	.617	11.570	.000		
2	(Constant)	1.002		4.383	.000	.000	.841
	AffHum	.658	.617	11.539	.000		
	Sex	.023	.011	.201	.841		
3	(Constant)	1.030		4.553	.000	.018	.013
	AffHum	.455	.427	4.633	.000		
	Sex	.023	.011	.206	.837		
	InteractionTerm	.116	.232	2.513	.013		

To demonstrate the variation in the positive correlation between different levels of affiliative humor among respondents (high, low) and satisfaction concerning the moderator variable of gender (male, female), a simple slope analysis was conducted as recommended by Aiken and West (1991). Descriptive plots depicting these interactions are presented in Figure 1 below.



The figure indicates that satisfaction is almost the same for both male and female respondents when the affiliated humor is low. Satisfaction is higher for female employees than male employees when affiliative humor is high. The slope of the curve suggests that the positive relationship between affiliative humor and satisfaction, the relationship is stronger for female than male respondents.

4.4 Gender and Aggressive Humor -Satisfaction relationship

To test the moderator effect of gender on the negative relationship between aggressive humor and satisfaction. The interaction term (Aggressive humor * gender) was introduced into the model. Results indicated (Table 6) that the interaction term has a significant impact on satisfaction. The results suggest that gender moderates the negative relationship between aggressive humor and satisfaction.

Table 6: Outcomes of hierarchical regression analysis- Aggressive Humour

Model		B	Beta	t	Sig.	R Square Change	Sig. F Change
1	(Constant)	3.465		15.654	.000	.074	.000
	Agg_Hu	-.251	-.272	-4.170	.000		
2	(Constant)	3.438		11.976	.000	.000	.884
	AggHu	-.252	-.273	-4.149	.000		
	Sex	.021	.010	.146	.884		
3	(Constant)	2.079		2.935	.004	.016	.037
	Agg_Hu	.143	.155	.723	.470		
	Sex	.907	.422	2.037	.043		
	InTerm	-.254	-.643	-2.097	.037		

As shown in the above model aggressive humor has a significant negative impact on satisfaction in the initial model but in the third model, aggressive humor becomes a insignificant variable in predicting satisfaction in the presence of the interaction term. It indicates that gender a moderate negative relationship between aggressive humor and satisfaction.

5. Discussion

This study aimed to identify the supervisors' humor styles (affiliative and aggressive) and their impact on employees' satisfaction, and the influence of gender on the relationship between supervisor's humor and employee satisfaction in the context of Nothern part of Srilankan. This study found that both supervisors' affiliative and aggressive humor have a significant impact on employee satisfaction. Also, the results revealed that gender influences the relationship between affiliated humor and satisfaction and aggressive humor and satisfaction. While supervisors' affiliative humor leads to increased employee satisfaction supervisors' aggressive humor leads to employee dissatisfaction.

The findings of the study have implications for organizational supervisors and practitioners who like to create positive work environments that lead to employee well-being and satisfaction. The contrasting impact of affiliative and aggressive humor highlights the importance of developing supportive and respectful supervisorship practices (Cooper et al., 2018; Kim et al., 2016; Tan et al., 2020). Supervisors who employ affiliative humor effectively create a positive atmosphere. By developing positive interpersonal relationships and promoting a sense of emotional fit, affiliative humor leads to increased employee satisfaction levels. This finding supports existing research findings stressing the role of positive workplace interactions in enhancing employee morale and well-being. In contrast, the use of aggressive humor by supervisors leads to employee dissatisfaction (Holmes, 2007). Aggressive humor, by its demeaning nature, undermines trust and affects morale among employees. This finding highlights the need for supervisors to be aware of their interpersonal relationships and avoid behaviors that damage the morale of the employees in the workplace.

Furthermore, the context of this study, the Northern part of Sri Lanka, where traditional gender role ideology still dominates, highlights the value of considering cultural factors in understanding the impact of supervisor behaviors on employee satisfaction. When we consider the moderation effect of gender, the results revealed that gender influences the relationship between affiliated humor and satisfaction and aggressive humor and satisfaction. Also, few studies found that gender bias can influence the interpretation of humor (Brescoll & Uhlmann, 2008; Crawford & Gressley, 1991). The positive relationship between affiliative humor and satisfaction is stronger for females than males.

6. Managerial and Theoretical Implications

The findings of this study contributed to both the management practice and the literature. Considering the implications for management practice, the organization needs to focus on supervisorship training and development programs focused on increasing communication skills and wide-ranging supervisorship practices. Developing organizational norms that facilitate respectful communication and discourage the use of aggressive humor in the workplace. Supervisors need to be trained to understand the influence of cultural variables on the perception of humor. In addition to that, this study broadens the current understanding by examining the influence of two distinct humor styles on satisfaction within the northern part of Sri Lanka.

Supervisors must have access to thorough training programs provided by organizations, with a focus on the advantages of affiliative humor and the drawbacks of aggressive humor (Jiang, Li, & Hou, 2019). Not only that, it is important to encourage supervisors to exhibit affiliative humor which can strengthen interpersonal bonds, ease stress, and make the workplace a more warm and cheering place to work. Moreover, this study will help to establish explicit policies that are important for organizations to handle the usage of

aggressive humor and any potential problems that may arise. Since being aggressive can lead to dissatisfaction it is preferable to routinely analyze the workplace environment using surveys, focus groups, and other feedback mechanisms to determine the prevalence and impact of various humor styles used by supervisors (Kim & Plester, 2019).

Furthermore, it provides practical perspectives by identifying humor styles specific to Sri Lankan culture that significantly affect employee satisfaction—an essential factor associated with various positive individual and organizational outcomes. Additionally, the research delves deeper into the role of gender in shaping the relationship between supervisors' humor styles and employee satisfaction, thus advancing the existing literature. Seemingly, female employees are prone to show emotions, as they tend to show positive and negative emotions as per this study. In addition to that, this study has incorporated both JDR and LMX theory in the Sri Lankan context in humor style and job satisfaction of state employees. Furthermore, this study helps in identifying the validity of the variables that have already been utilized in other cultural settings.

6.1 Limitations and Future Directions

The limitations of this study present possibilities for future research. First, even though every employee in this empirical study was a government official—a suitable target for the current study—they were all approached conveniently for the time being, which led to selection bias. Therefore, it is advised to employ a systematic sampling to lessen biases in future research. Second, this study does not include any other sectors; it solely examines state sectors. As a result, the generalization problem will arise. Thus, different industries, such as the industrial, IT, and service sectors, may be covered in subsequent studies. Employees in the private sector can be given the most consideration. Thirdly, this study emphasized only the Northern part of Sri Lanka for the study, however, to get accurate results of the used variables, it is recommended to widen the scope by incorporating the whole of Sri Lanka for future studies to get more precise results. Fourth, this study was done through a cross-sectional study at the point of time. To get a deeper understanding of the humor and satisfaction nexus, future research can be broadened by integrating longitudinal studies.

7.0 Conclusion

In conclusion, the results of this research highlight the significant influence of supervisors' humor on shaping employee satisfaction in the workplace. Understanding the distinct effects of affiliative and aggressive humor enables organizations to empower supervisors in fostering positive work environments characterized by trust, harmonious relationships, and mutual respect. By implementing suitable strategies and being mindful of cultural norms, supervisors can leverage humor as a potent tool for enhancing employee satisfaction and driving organizational success. Sri Lanka has a unique culture that affects how people work together. This study highlights how leaders' humor impacts employee satisfaction in Sri Lanka and

helps to improve management practices. Humorr can reduce stress and improve overall well-being. In Sri Lanka, where workplace stress might be common, knowing how humor can lower stress and boost satisfaction is good for both employees and employers. Research from Western countries on humor and leadership may not apply directly to Sri Lanka. Studying this in Sri Lanka ensures the findings are relevant and can be usedd in local organizations.

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