

RESEARCH ARTICLE

The Dark Side of Humor in the Workplace: Aggressive Humor, Exhaustion and Intention to Leave the Organization

SABINA R. TRIF

Babeș-Bolyai University, Cluj-Napoca, Romania

OANA C. FODOR

Babeș-Bolyai University, Cluj-Napoca, Romania

Abstract

Humor is inherent to social interaction and research has mainly focused on the potential benefits of using humor at work. However, different types of humor exist and this study builds on the Job Demands-Resources Model (JD-R) to argue that aggressive humor in the workplace is a demand rather than a resource. Specifically, the study explores the association of aggressive humor and the intention to leave the organization manifested by the employees and the role of exhaustion as a potential explanatory mechanism. Moreover, the study explored the potential buffering role of the quality of leader-employee exchange (LMX) for the negative effects of aggressive humor. The study employed a cross-sectional design in order to test a moderated mediation model. Data were collected from 101 call-center operators and team leaders working in a multinational company. Our findings show indeed that aggressive humor in the workplace is predictive for exhaustion, which, in turn, predicts the employees' intentions to leave the organization. Contrary to our expectation, the moderating role of LMX did not receive empirical support. Theoretical and practical implications are discussed.

Keywords

aggressive humor, intention to leave, exhaustion, quality of leader-member exchange

Introduction

Humor and laughter are ubiquitous in social interaction both inside and outside of work. Within organizations, in particular, humor seems an important contributor to the productivity, creativity, motivation and wellbeing of employees (Guenter, Schreurs, Van Emmerik, Gijsbers & Van Iterson, 2013; Mesmer-Magnus, Glew & Viswesvaran, 2012; Romero & Cruthirds, 2006). Moreover, anecdotal evidence suggests that younger employees expect to work in a “fun” environment and are less likely to leave the organization when work is not boring (Levine,

2005; Romero & Pescosolido, 2008). As such, many organizations (e.g. Google, Microsoft) strive to build a culture of “fun”.

At the same time, humor comes under many shapes and forms and may serve important emotional, cognitive or social functions that are sometimes paradoxical and in contradiction. For instance, humor can act as a coping mechanism under stress, a way to enhance cohesion in a group or reduce status and power differences or it can be a punishment device directed at correcting deviant behavior or even excluding members from a group (Martin & Ford, 2018).

Most research on the effects of humor in the workplace have focused on the positive type of humor and its positive effects (Mesmer-Magnus, Glew & Viswesvaran, 2012), while ignoring (with some exceptions such as: Yam, Christian, Wei, Liao & Nai, 2018; Romero & Arendt, 2011) the negative type of humor that also shapes social interaction at the workplace and may play a role in organizational exit and other potentially negative outcomes.

This research addresses this gap. It distinguishes between affiliative/ positive and aggressive/ negative humor in the workplace and explores the impact of the latter on the intention to leave the organization displayed by the employees. The study also aims to shed light on the underlying mechanism explaining this relation and explores the mediating role of exhaustion. Finally, the study builds on the Social-Exchange Theory (Emerson, 1976) and the Job Demands-Resources Model (JD-R; Demerouti et al., 2001) and investigates the potential buffering role of the quality of leader-employee exchange (LMX) in mitigating the negative effects of aggressive humor at work.

Humor in the Workplace

In organizational settings, humor refers to verbal and nonverbal communication episodes that trigger positive affective and cognitive reactions at least in some of the individuals or groups that are engaged in the interaction (Crawford, 1994, Romero & Cruthirds, 2006). So far, humor has been mostly conceptualized as an individual trait that employees hold (Martin, Puhlik-Doris, Larsen, Gray & Weir, 2003). However, in line with Curşeu and Fodor (2016) and Sosik (2012) we argue that, as humor is inherent to social interaction, it can also be depicted as a social construction, a group or an organization level property. As an emergent state, group humor emerges out of the individual behaviors (displays of humor) and interactions among the team members and different groups working in the organization will display different types of group humor.

Moreover, despite the initial monolithic and positive view on humor, scholars have recently begun to distinguish between positive/ adaptive and negative/ maladaptive types of humor (Cann, Watson & Bridgewater, 2014; Romero & Arendt, 2011; Wisse & Rietzschel, 2014). According to Martin *et al.* (2003), positive humor (self-enhancing and affiliative humor styles) reflects tolerance and acceptance of the others and of the self and it is non-hostile. Such humor reduces interpersonal tensions and facilitates social relations (Howland & Simson, 2014), while contributing to increased satisfaction, team cooperation and commitment (Romero & Arendt, 2011). Most research on the psychology of humor was carried out so to explore the correlates and consequences of this type of humor, with a particular focus on the coping role that positive humor has on dealing with stress (Bizi et al. 1988), boredom and routine (Korczynski, 2011), and the role in emotion regulation (Samson and Gross 2012).

On other hand, negative humor (self-deprecating and aggressive humor styles) reflects judgmental humorous communications about the self and others and can have detrimental effects. Aggressive humor is particularly relevant for the social interactions at the workplace and it refers to using sarcasm, ridicule and putting others down (Guenter et al., 2013; Martin et al., 2003).

According to De Koning & Weiss (2002), aggressive humor may be explained by the superiority theory (La Fave, Haddad & Maesen, 1976) stating that individuals boost their egos at the expense of others. By using ridicule and sarcasm that belittle the other colleagues, one is able to engage in favorable social comparison processes and boost one's self worth. At the same time, due to behavioral mimicry, aggressive humor can become an emergent state of the whole organizational group. The use of aggressive humor is claimed to have a negative impact on the members of an organization as it leads to dysfunctional competitiveness and hinders social interactions and collaboration (Romero & Cruthirds, 2006).

Aggressive Humor and Employee Exhaustion

Several studies started to document the negative effects of aggressive humor in the workplace. Romero and Arendt (2011) show that aggressive humor positively predicts reported levels of stress, possibly due to the impaired social connections. Similarly, Avtgis and Taber (2006) point out that there is a positive relationship between using aggressive humor and burnout for the person using that particular style of humor. This study moves further from such research in that it explores the effects of aggressive humor conceptualized as an emergent state of the organizational group one is part of (an not an individual preference/trait) on the intention to leave the organization, mediated by emotional exhaustion.

Burnout is one of the common concerns of modern organizations due to its debilitating effects (Salvagioni et al., 2017). Burnout is a response to prolonged exposure to emotional and interpersonal job stressors (Maslach, Schaufeli & Leiter, 2001) and it is defined by three dimensions: exhaustion, cynicism and perceived inefficacy (Maslach et al., 2001). Emotional exhaustion is the most widely reported dimension by burned-out employees (Maslach et al., 2001) when describing their experience and it refers to an emotional drain and diminished capacity to get involved in the task at hand.

The Job Demands-Resources Model (JD-R, Bakker & Demerouti, 2007; Bakker et al., 2003; Demerouti et al., 2001) is an overarching model that explains exhaustion, as well as well being at the workplace. In short, the model argues that every work place has several characteristics that can be divided in job demands or job resources. Job demands include physical, psychological, social and organizational elements that require extra effort to deal with. Employees can compensate the required extra effort with breaks or other recovery activities. However, when this is not possible or insufficient, they experience physiological and psychological costs and strain, such as emotional exhaustion due to a depletion of resources (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007). In contrast, job resources include physical, psychological, social and

organizational factors that are either helpful in accomplishing the work objectives, or they may reduce the negative effects of job demands and produce positive outcomes (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007). In the work context, when job demands are high and job resources are scarce, the probability of strain is at its highest point. Conversely, when resources are high, they may buffer the negative effects of job demands.

Most studies have so far conceptualized (positive) humor and fun as a job resource that helps employees cope with daily stress, overload and other job demands (Doosje, De Goede, Van Doornen & Goldstein, 2010; Georganta & Montgomery, 2016; Mesmer-Magnus, Glew & Viswesvaran, 2012; Robert & Wilbanks, 2012). However, as previously pointed out, humor is sometimes aggressive and used to put other coworkers down by using sarcasm and ridicule. In turn, aggressive humor may be associated with a feeling of alienation, competitiveness and problematic behaviors (Martin et al., 2003; Huo, Lam & Chen, 2012), as well as with negative emotions on the side of the target of the aggressive humor. Therefore, we argue that aggressive humor is not necessarily an asset in the work life, but it can also be a job demand that can generate significant strain.

Aggressive humor usually targeting one's gender, race, values or competencies is perceived as mean by the communication recipient (Martin et al., 2003). The exposure to aggressive humor that is personally taxing within one's organizational group will trigger a mobilization of cognitive, emotional and physiological resources in order to protect oneself (Baker & Demerouti, 2007). For instance, the target of the aggressive humor episode might attempt to counteract the ridicule with a witty comment or a list of rational arguments against it. On the other hand, aggressive humor is likely to take a toll at the emotional level as well, as the target of the aggressive humor might be more or less successful in activating the regulatory mechanism that will help in handling the negative emotions triggered by the ridicule. The effort and attention directed towards coping with aggressive humor in the organization and the activation of the performance-protection strategies may lead to

an even faster depletion of resources in organizational settings (Demerouti, Bakker, Nachreiner & Schaufeli, 2001). As such, when an imbalance occurs between the exposure to aggressive humor in the workplace (as a job demand), in addition to the task requirements and the available resources, the employees are likely to experience emotional exhaustion.

In line with these arguments, we propose the following hypothesis:

H1. Aggressive humor is positively associated with exhaustion.

The Mediating Role of Exhaustion in the Relation between Aggressive Humor and Intentions to Leave the Organization

One important organizational outcome for organizations is represented by intentions to leave the organization because it may lead to future replacement costs (O'Connell & Kung, 2007) and lower productivity (Baloch, 2009; Park et al., 2013). Multiple studies (Kim & Stoner, 2008; Leiter & Maslach, 2009; Du Plooy & Roodt, 2010; Lu & Gursay, 2016) show that burnout at the workplace is an important predictor for turnover intentions.

As previously argued, the exposure to aggressive humor in the workplace could lead to emotional exhaustion, as it requires activating strategies to cope with it, which accelerates the depletion of resources. Consequently, when individuals experience exhaustion, they are likely to try to distance themselves from the environment in the attempt to protect themselves and recover (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007).

In addition, Leiter (1993) shows that individuals faced with exhaustion tend to overemphasize coping mechanisms that involve avoidance and withdrawal. Bakker et al. (2003) also show that high levels of exhaustion are associated to intentions to leave the organization.

In line with these, we propose the following hypothesis:

H2. Exhaustion mediates the relation between aggressive humor and intention to leave the organization.

Leader – member exchange as a buffer of the negative effects of aggressive humor

In line with the social exchange theory, we argue that organizational groups are forums of continuous interaction and transactions, not only among team members, but also between team members and their leader. Such exchanges rely on the fact that each party has something valuable to offer (Wayne et al., 1997) and the process is contingent on the exchange partner's actions (Emerson, 1976). In the end, the quality of the leader-member exchange (LMX) is directly proportionate to the perceived value of the exchange process (Wayne et al., 1997).

A low quality LMX relies on contractual specifications and is associated with fewer resources provided by the leader (Gerstner & Day 1997). On the contrary, high-quality leader-member exchange relationships include respect, trust and obligations that maintain a state of reciprocal influence between the actors (Harris & Kacmar, 2005). Moreover, in high quality LMX, team members are protected against the harming influence of negative relations within their teams, they receive more resources, emotional and instrumental support, benefits and career development opportunities from the leader (Fodor et al., under review; Graen et al., 1990; Kacmar, et al., 2003). Moreover, having the leader's appreciation and support leads to a reframing of the job demands (Bakker, Demerouti & Euwema, 2005). Such a positive leader-member exchange relationship tends to be predictive for job performance and work attitudes (Fodor et al., under review; Janssen & Van Yperen, 2004).

Given the arguments stated before, we argue that developing a high quality leader – member exchange relationship becomes a job resource in the organizational context (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007). LMX may act as a buffer in the relation between exhaustion associated with the exposure to aggressive humor, on the one hand, and the intentions to leave the organization, on the other hand. Receiving emotional and instrumental support from the leader may act as a coping mechanism with the exhaustion caused by the aggressive humor

displayed by fellow team members, thus restoring the balance between job demands and job resources.

Therefore, we hypothesize that:

H3. Leader-member exchange (LMX) moderates the relation between exhaustion and intention to leave the organization, such that for high levels of LMX, the positive relation between exhaustion and intention to leave the organization becomes weaker.

Methods

Sample

Data for the study were collected among professionals working in an Eastern European division of a multinational company that provides digital marketing, customer service and technical support services to its clients. 101 call-center operators and team leaders (52 women) initially answered an anonymous questionnaire that was administered online, as part of a larger research project. The questionnaire included a briefing explaining the study broad objectives, as well as information regarding the voluntary and anonymous nature of data collection and analysis.

Measures

Aggressive humor was assessed with a four-item scale developed by Curşeu and Fodor (2016). A sample item is "While we work together, some of our colleagues try to intimidate others by ridiculing and making fun of them". The Cronbach's alpha for the scale is 0.94.

Exhaustion was assessed with the three items measuring vigor extracted from the

UWES - 9 scale (Schaufeli, Bakker & Salanova, 2006). Vigor reflects a highly energetic state while working characterized by a willingness to invest extra effort and overcome difficulties and it is considered the direct opposite of the exhaustion dimension of burnout (Maslach, Schaufeli, & Leiter, 2001). Therefore, when the items measuring vigor are reverse coded, they are adequate for measuring the target construct. A sample item is "At my work, I feel bursting with energy" (reverse coded). The Cronbach's alpha for the scale is 0.79.

Intention to leave the organization was assessed with three items developed by Kelloway, Gottlieb and Barham (1999). A sample item is "I am thinking about leaving this organization" and Cronbach's alpha for the scale is 0.93.

Leader member exchange (LMX) was assessed with the seven-item scale developed by Graen and Uhl-Bien (1995). A sample item is "I have enough confidence in my leader that I would defend and justify his/her decision if he/she were not present to do so", and Cronbach's alpha is 0.93.

Results

The analyses were carried out using OLS regression analyses and, in line with the procedures for probing moderated mediation, we have estimated various regression models. We used PROCESS 3.4 macro (Hayes, 2013) for SPSS, model 14 that allows probing for a moderated mediation model. The means, standard deviations and the bivariate correlations are reported in *Table 1*.

Table 1. *Descriptive statistics and inter-scale correlations*

	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.	7.
1. Aggressive Humor	2.38	1.19							
2. Exhaustion	3.00	1.43	.38**						
3. Intention to leave	1.91	1.24	.17	.46**					
4. LMX	3.65	.92	-.23*	-.09	-.10				
5. Gender			-.03	.11	.14	.05			
6. Age	27.38	9.89	-.14	-.37**	-.08	-.03	-.06		
7. Tenure (months)	14.79	7.60	.10	.06	.30**	-.10	-.04	.17	

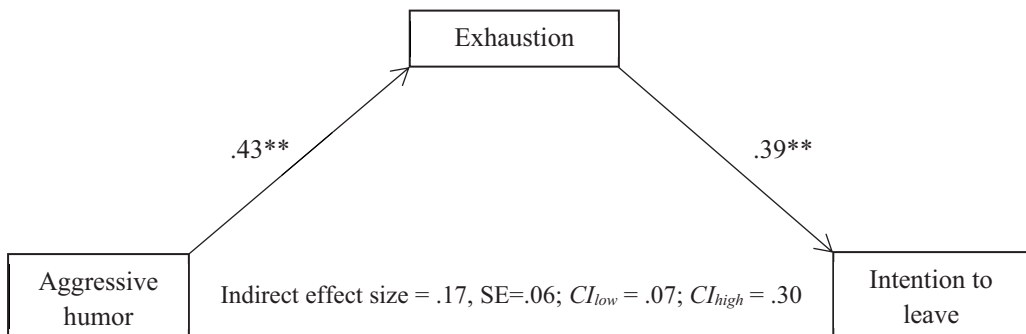
N=99

Note: *M* = mean, *SD* = standard deviation, LMX = leader-member exchange, * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$

The first hypothesis states that aggressive humor experienced at work is positively associated with employee exhaustion. The results indicate that the model including aggressive humor, as well as age and tenure in the organization as controls, explains 26.9% of the variance in emotional exhaustion ($R^2 = .269$, $F(3,94) = 11.58$, $p = .000$). Aggressive humor positively predicts exhaustion ($b = .43$, $SE = .11$, 95% $CI = [.21, .64]$, $p = .0001$), thus the first hypothesis received empirical support. As exposure to aggressive humor at work gets higher, the probability to experience exhaustion also increases.

The second hypothesis states that exhaustion mediates the relation between

aggressive humor and intention to leave the organization. As *Figure 1* illustrates, the regression coefficient for the relation between aggressive humor and exhaustion is positive and statistically significant ($b = .43$, $p = .0001$, $SE = .11$, 95% $CI = [.21 - .64]$), and so is the regression coefficient between exhaustion and intention to leave the organization ($b = .39$, $p = .000$, $SE = .09$, 95% $CI = [.21, .57]$). The indirect effect of aggressive humor on intention to leave the organization via exhaustion is significant ($b = .17$, $SE = .06$, 95% $CI = [.07, .30]$), while the direct effect becomes insignificant ($b = -.03$, $SE = .10$, 95% $CI = [-.23, .17]$). Thus, the second hypothesis received support.



Note: Reported values correspond to unstandardized coefficients; CI = confidence interval, SE = standard errors, * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$

Figure 1. *Mediation Model*

The third hypothesis states that leader-member exchange (LMX) moderates the relation between exhaustion and intention to leave the organization, such that for high levels of LMX, the positive relation between exhaustion and intention to leave the organization becomes weaker. The overall model is significant, $R^2 = .26$, $F(6, 91) = 5.44$, $p = .0001$. The direct effect of exhaustion on intention to leave is positive and significant ($b = .38$, $SE = .09$, $p = .0001$, 95% $CI = [.20, .56]$). The direct effect of LMX on intention to leave is not significant ($b = -.01$, $SE = .13$, $p = .93$, 95% $CI = [-.27, .24]$). The interaction effect is also not significant ($b = -.02$, $SE = .07$,

$p = .7888$, 95% $CI = [-.16, .12]$), such that there is no sufficient proof to claim that LMX buffers the negative effect of aggressive humor on intention to leave the organization via exhaustion. Thus, the third hypothesis did not receive empirical support.

Discussion

While most of the extant research focuses on the positive implications of positive humor and fun at work, our paper addressed the less explored effects of aggressive humor in the workplace. Specifically, we explored the relationship between the exposure to

aggressive humor within the organizational teams and the intention to leave the organization and introduced exhaustion as a possible explanatory mechanism for it. Moreover, we tested LMX as a moderating variable for the relationship between exhaustion and intention to leave the organization.

By building on the Job Demands – Resources Model (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007), we argued that aggressive humor can be seen as a job demand in the workplace, leading to physiological and psychological costs and strain. Our findings support this idea. High levels of exposure to aggressive humor (humor that targets a person's values, traits or competencies and belittles him/her) are associated with an emotional drain and a diminished capacity to get involved in the task at hand. This may be explained by the fact that individuals facing episodes of aggressive humor displays from their team members have to find strategies to defend themselves and regulate the negative emotions associated with the derogatory comments. Doing this requires mobilizing extra effort, on top of what is needed for performing the regular tasks required by their professional roles, resulting in a depletion of resources and finally exhaustion.

Moreover, our findings show that a higher exposure to aggressive humor within the organizational teams is associated with more pronounced intentions to exit the organization, due to emotional exhaustion. This finding is aligned with other research pointing out that, when overwhelmed by demands, individuals adopt defending strategies such as avoidance and distancing oneself from the aversive situations (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007; Leiter, 1991). Therefore, while many organizations strive to cultivate a “fun” work environment and many articles in the business and management literature (Rasmusson, 1999; Riordan, 2013; Urquhart, 2005) explored how we can inject fun into the workplace we claim that not all type of “fun” is beneficial for individual and organizational outcomes. On the contrary, aggressive humor seems an important trigger for emotional exhaustion and organizational exit.

Additionally, we have hypothesized that a positive leader – employee exchange

relationship might act as a job resource (Bakker et al., 2005) and buffer the negative effects of emotional exhaustion generated by aggressive humor. Specifically, we claimed that in the presence of high quality LMX, the relation between exhaustion and the intentions to leave the organization would become weaker. This hypothesis did not receive support.

An explanation for the lack of support for the moderating effect of LMX may reside in other factors that could interfere with the impact of LMX. Dunegan, Uhl-Bien and Duchon (2002) showed, for instance, that task characteristics have an impact on the effects of LMX. For example, LMX has a greater impact for tasks that are high in intrinsic motivation. It is possible, that given the homogeneity of our sample (data was collected from employees with similar professional roles coming from the same organization), the nature of the task might have overshadowed the influence of LMX. Similarly, Kacmar, Witt, Zivnuska and Gully (2003) showed that the frequency of communication with the leader moderated the effect of LMX and we did not account for this in our study.

Moreover, Lam (2003) introduced the team-member exchange (TMX), the parallel concept for LMX that focuses on the quality of team members' interactions, as another important factor in organizational settings. It is possible that in this organizational context, the interaction with colleagues plays a more important role in finding ways to cope with job demands.

Another explanation for the lack of support for our hypothesis may be derived from the small sample size, which lowers the probability of finding an effect even if it exists (Kotrlík & Higgins, 2001).

Implications

The results of the study have multiple implication both at a theoretical as well as at a practical level. At the theoretical level, the study adds an important insight to the Job Demands-Resources model, as it brings evidence that humor at work (i.e. aggressive humor) can be conceptualized as a demand, not only as a resource as most of the research on the topic has done. At the same time, it

highlights emotional exhaustion as a mechanism for the way aggressive humor is related to organizational outcomes, such as intentions to leave the organization.

At a practical level, the study informs managerial practice and offers a basis for designing interventions that shape a beneficial (and at least non-harmful) use of humor in organizations. For instance, the organizational interventions might be directed at raising awareness among leaders and team members on the different types of humor (affiliative/positive versus aggressive/negative) and their different outcomes. Moreover, other interventions might aim at deflecting the negative consequences (i.e. withdrawal and organizational exit) of aggressive humor, by teaching employees to employ more constructive coping mechanisms, apart from distancing and avoidance strategies.

Limitations and Future Research Directions

Next to the contributions, the study also presents a series of limitations. First, the data was collected using self-report measures and this is associated with a risk of the common method bias (Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Lee, & Podsakoff, 2003), as well as with a possible desire to distort the reality. However, in line with Conway & Lance (2010), we argue that self-report data collection was appropriate for the goals of this study, given that it explored constructs that rely on the employees' subjective experiences (their perception on the level of exposure to aggressive humor, experience of emotional exhaustion and the quality of perceived interaction with their leader). We also tried to address the risk of social desirability, by communicating about and ensuring the anonymity of data collection.

Another limitation of the study is the cross-sectional design that does not allow making any causal inferences. Future studies might explore the relations with longitudinal and experimental designs, while they may also test the hypotheses on other populations, representative for different work domains. Moreover, future studies may look into other negative effects of aggressive humor aside of

emotional exhaustion and intention to leave the organization and the associated explanatory mechanisms.

Acknowledgement

Sabina Trif and Oana C. Fodor were supported by a grant of the Executive Unit for Financing Higher Education, Research, Development and Innovation (UEFISCDI), project number PN-III-P1-1.1-TE-2016-0778. The funders had no role in study design, data collection and analysis, decision to publish, or preparation of the manuscript.

References

- Avtgis, T. A., & Taber, K. R. (2006). "I laughed so hard my side hurts, or is that an ulcer?" The influence of work humor on job stress, job satisfaction, and burnout among print media employees. *Communication Research Reports*, 23(1), 13-18.
- Bakker, A. B., & Demerouti, E. (2007). The job demands-resources model: State of the art. *Journal of Managerial Psychology*, 22(3), 309-328. DOI: 10.1108/02683940710733115
- Bakker, A. B., Demerouti, E., & Euwema, M. C. (2005). Job resources buffer the impact of job demands on burnout. *Journal of Occupational Health Psychology*, 10(2), 170-180. DOI: 10.1037/1076-8998.10.2.170
- Bakker, A., Demerouti, E., & Schaufeli, W. (2003). Dual processes at work in a call centre: An application of the job demands-resources model. *European Journal of Work and Organizational Psychology*, 12(4), 393-417. DOI: 10.1080/13594320344000165
- Baloch, Q. B. (2009). Effects of job satisfaction on employees motivation & turn over intentions. *Journal of Managerial Sciences*, 2(1), 1-21.
- Bizi, S., Keinan, G., & Beit-Hallahmi, B. (1988). Humor and coping with stress: A test under real-life conditions. *Personality and Individual Differences*, 9(6), 951-956. DOI: 10.1016/0191-8869(88)90128-6
- Cann, A., Watson, A. J., & Bridgewater, E. A. (2014). Assessing humor at work: The humor climate questionnaire. *Humor*, 27(2), 307-323. DOI: 10.1515/humor-2014-0019
- Conway, J. M., & Lance, C. E. (2010). What reviewers should expect from authors regarding common method bias in organizational research. *Journal of Business and Psychology*, 25(3), 325-334. DOI: 10.1007/s10869-010-9181-6
- Crawford, C. B. (1994). Theory and implications regarding the utilization of strategic humor by leaders. *Journal of Leadership Studies*, 1(4), 53-68. DOI: 10.1177/107179199400100406
- Curseu, P. L., & Fodor, O. C. (2016). Humor and group atmosphere: Development of a short scale for evaluating affiliative and aggressive humor in groups. *Team Performance Management*, 22(7/8), 370-382. DOI: 10.1108/TPM-04-2015-0022

- De Koning, E., & Weiss, R. L. (2002). The relational humor inventory: Functions of humor in close relationships. *American Journal of Family Therapy*, 30(1), 1-18. DOI: 10.1080/019261802753455615
- Demerouti, E., Bakker, A. B., Nachreiner, F., & Schaufeli, W. B. (2001). The job demands-resources model of burnout. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 86(3), 499-512. DOI: 10.1037/0021-9010.86.3.499
- Doosje, S., De Goede, M., Van Doornen, L., (2010). Measurement of occupational humorous coping. *Humor - International Journal of Humor Research*, 23(3), 275-305. DOI: 10.1515/humr.2010.013
- Du Plooy, J., & Roodt, G. (2010). Work engagement, burnout and related constructs as predictors of turnover intentions. *SA Journal of Industrial Psychology*, 36(1), 1-13. DOI: 10.4102/sajip.v36i1.910
- Dunegan, K. J., Uhl-Bien, M., & Duchon, D. (2002). LMX and subordinate performance: The moderating effects of task characteristics. *Journal of Business and Psychology*, 17(2), 275-285. DOI: 10.1177/014920639201800105
- Emerson, R. M. (1976). Social exchange theory. *Annual Review of Sociology*, 2(1), 335-362. DOI: 10.1146/annurev.so.02.080176.002003
- Fodor, O.C., Cursu, P.L., Bria, M. & Flestea, A.M. (under review). Autonomy to fail: An investigation of workload, work autonomy, interpersonal relations and performance in service teams
- Georganta, K., & Montgomery, A. (2016). Exploring fun as a job resource: The enhancing and protecting role of a key modern workplace factor. *International Journal of Applied Positive Psychology*, 1(1-3), 107-131. DOI 10.1007/s41042-016-0002-7
- Gerstner, C. R., & Day, D. V. (1997). Meta-Analytic review of leader-member exchange theory: Correlates and construct issues. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 82(6), 827-844. DOI: 10.1037//0021-9010.82.6.827
- Graen, G. B., & Uhl-Bien, M. (1995). Relationship based approach to leadership: Development of leader-member exchange (LMX) theory of leadership over 25 years: Applying a multi-level multi-domain perspective. *Leadership Quarterly*, 6(2), 219-247. DOI: 10.1016/1048-9843(95)90036-5
- Graen, G.B., Wakabayashi, M., Graen, M.R., and Graen, M.G. (1990). International Generalizability of American Hypothesis about Japanese Management Progress: A Strong Inference Investigation, *Leadership Quarterly*, 1, 1-23.
- Grueter, H., Schreurs, B., Van Emmerik, I. H., Gijsbers, W., & Van Ierssen, A. (2013). How adaptive and maladaptive humor influence well-being at work: A diary study. *Humor*, 26(4), 573-594. DOI: 10.1515/humor-2013-0032
- Harris, J.K., & Kacmar, K. M. (2005). Easing the strain: The buffer role of supervisors in the perceptions of politics-strain relationship. *Journal of Occupational and Organizational Psychology*, 78(3), 337-354. DOI: 10.1348/096317905X26110
- Hayes, A. F. (2013). *Introduction to mediation, moderation, and conditional process analysis: A regression-based approach*. New York: Guilford, 1609182308.
- Howland, M., & Simpson, J. A. (2014). Attachment orientations and reactivity to humor in a social support context. *Journal of Social and Personal Relationships*, 31(1), 114-137. DOI: 10.1177/0265407513488016
- Huo, Y., Lam, W., & Chen, Z. (2012). Am I the only one this supervisor is laughing at? Effects of aggressive humor on employee strain and addictive behaviors. *Personnel Psychology*, 65(4), 859-885. DOI: 10.1111/peps.12004
- Janssen, O., & Van Yperen, N. W. (2004). Employees' goal orientations, the quality of leader-member exchange, and the outcomes of job performance and job satisfaction. *Academy of Management Journal*, 47(3), 368-384. DOI: 10.2307/20159587
- Kacmar, K. M., Witt, L. A., Zivnuska, S., & Gully, S. M. (2003). The interactive effect of leader-member exchange and communication frequency on performance ratings. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 88(4), 764-772. DOI: 10.1037/0021-9010.88.4.764
- Kelloway, E. K., Gottlieb, B. H., & Barham, L. (1999). The source, nature, and direction of work and family conflict: A longitudinal investigation. *Journal of Occupational Health Psychology*, 4(4), 337-346. DOI: 10.1037//1076-8998.4.4.337
- Kim, H., & Stoner, M. (2008). Burnout and turnover intention among social workers: Effects of role stress, job autonomy and social support. *Administration in Social Work*, 32(3), 5-25. DOI: 10.1080/03643100801922357
- Korb, S., Grandjean, D., Samson, A. C., Delplanque, S., & Scherer, K. R. (2012). Stop laughing! Humor perception with and without expressive suppression. *Social Neuroscience*, 7(5), 510-524. DOI: 10.1080/17470919.2012.667573
- Korczynski, M. (2011). The dialectical sense of humour: routine joking in a Taylorized factory. *Organization Studies*, 32(10), 1421-1439. DOI: 10.1177/0170840611421256
- Bartlett, J. E., Kotrlik, J. W., & Higgins, C. C. (2001). Organizational research: Determining appropriate sample size in survey research appropriate sample size in survey research. *Information Technology, Learning, and Performance Journal*, 19(1), 43-50. DOI: 10.1.1.486.8295
- La Fave, L., Haddad, J., & Maesen, W. A. (1976). Superiority, enhanced self-esteem, and perceived incongruity humour theory. *Humor and Laughter: Theory, Research, and Applications*, 63-91. DOI: 10.4324/9780203789469-5
- Lam, T. (2003). Leader-member exchange and team-member exchange: The roles of moderators in new employees' socialization. *Journal of Hospitality & Tourism Research*, 27(1), 48-68. DOI: 10.1177/1096348002238880
- Leiter, M. P. (1991). Coping patterns as predictors of burnout: The function of control and escapist coping patterns. *Journal of Organizational Behavior*, 12(2), 123-144. DOI: 10.1002/job.4030120205
- Leiter, M. P. (1993). Burnout as a developmental process: Consideration of models. In W. B. Schaufeli, C. Maslach, & T. Marek (Eds.), *Professional Burnout: Recent Developments in Theory and Research* (pp. 237-250). Washington, DC: Taylor & Francis.
- Leiter, M. P., & Maslach, C. (2009). Nurse turnover: the mediating role of burnout. *Journal of nursing management*, 17(3), 331-339. DOI: 10.1111/j.1365-2834.2009.01004.x

- Levine, M. (2005). *Ready or not, here life comes*. New York, NY: Simon & Schuster.
- Lu, A. C. C., & Gursos, D. (2016). Impact of job burnout on satisfaction and turnover intention: do generational differences matter?. *Journal of Hospitality & Tourism Research*, 40(2), 210-235. DOI: 10.1177/1096348013495696
- Martin, R. A., & Ford, T. (2018). *The psychology of humor: An integrative approach*. Academic Press.
- Martin, R. A., Puhlik-Doris, P., Larsen, G., Gray, J., & Weir, K. (2003). Individual differences in uses of humor and their relation to psychological well-being: Development of the Humor Styles Questionnaire. *Journal of Research in Personality*, 37(1), 48-75. DOI: 10.1016/S0092-6566(02)00534-2
- Maslach, C., Schaufeli, W. B., & Leiter, M. P. (2001). Job burnout. *Annual Review of Psychology*, 52(1), 397-422. DOI: 10.1146/annurev.psych.52.1.397
- Mesmer-Magnus, J., Glew, D. J., & Viswesvaran, C. (2012). A meta-analysis of positive humor in the workplace. *Journal of Managerial Psychology*, 27(2), 155-190. DOI: 10.1108/02683941211199554
- O'Connell, M., & Kung, M. C. (2007). The Cost of Employee Turnover. *Industrial Management*, 49(1), 14-19.
- Park, K. O., Kim, S. Y., & Kim, J. K. (2013). Hospital nurses' experience of bullying in the workplace and burnout, organizational commitment, turnover intention and nursing productivity. *Journal of Korean Clinical Nursing Research*, 19(2), 169-180.
- Podsakoff, P. M., MacKenzie, S. B., Lee, J. Y., & Podsakoff, N. P. (2003). Common Method Biases in Behavioral Research: A Critical Review of the Literature and Recommended Remedies. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 88(5), 879-903. DOI: 10.1037/0021-9010.88.5.879
- Rasmusson, E. (1999). A funny thing happened on the way to work. *Sales and Marketing Management*, 151(3), 97-8. DOI: 10.5465/257094
- Riordan, C. M. (2013). We all need friends at work. Article retrieved from: <http://blogs.hbr.org/2013/07/we-all-need-friends-at-work/>.
- Robert, C., & Wilbanks, J. E. (2012). The wheel model of humor: Humor events and affect in organizations. *Human Relations*, 65(9), 1071-1099. DOI: 10.1177/0018726711433133
- Romero, E. J., & Arendt, L. A. (2011). Variable effects of humor styles on organizational outcomes. *Psychological Reports*, 108(2), 649-659. DOI: 10.2466/07.17.20.21
- Romero, E. J., & Cruthirds, K. W. (2006). The use of humor in the workplace. *Academy of Management Perspectives*, 20(2), 58-69. DOI: 10.5465/AMP.2006.20591005
- Romero, E., & Pescosolido, A. (2008). Humor and group effectiveness. *Human Relations*, 61(3), 395-418. DOI: 10.1177/0018726708088999
- Salvagioni, D. A. J., Melanda, F. N., Mesas, A. E., González, A. D., Gabani, F. L., & De Andrade, S. M. (2017). Physical, psychological and occupational consequences of job burnout: A systematic review of prospective studies. *PLoS ONE*, 12(10), 1-29. DOI: 10.1371/journal.pone.0185781
- Schaufeli, W. B., Bakker, A. B., & Salanova, M. (2006). The measurement of work engagement with a short questionnaire: A cross-national study. *Educational and Psychological Measurement*, 66(4), 701-716. DOI: 10.1177/0013164405282471
- Sosik, J. J. (2012). Taking levels of analysis in humor more seriously: comment on Romero and Arendt. *Psychological Reports*, 110(2), 527-534. DOI: 10.2466/03.PR0.110.2.527-534
- Türkaya, S. (2007). Burnout and humor relationship among university lecturers. *Humor - International Journal of Humor Research*, 20(1), pp. 73-92. DOI:10.1515/HUMOR.2007.004
- Urquhart, J. (2005). Creating a fun workplace. *Health Care Registration: The Newsletter for Health Care Registration Professionals*, 14(11), 3-5.
- Yam, K. C., Christian, M. S., Wei, W., Liao, Z., & Nai, J. (2018). The mixed blessing of leader sense of humor: examining costs and benefits. *Academy of Management Journal*, 61(1), 348-369. DOI: 10.5465/amj
- Wayne, S. J., Shore, L. M., & Liden, R. C. (1997). Perceived organizational support and leader-member exchange: A social exchange perspective. *Academy of Management Journal*, 40(1), 82-111. DOI: 10.2307/257021
- Wisse, B., & Rietzschel, E. (2014). Humor in leader-follower relationships: Humor styles, similarity and relationship quality. *Humor*, 27(2), 249-269. DOI: 10.1515/humor-2014-0017