

The Effect of The Perception of Employees About Their Managers' Humor Styles on Job Satisfaction

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ABSTRACT

Effective management of human, which is the most important resource of organizations, leads to increasing overall performance of the organizations and thus, gaining competitive advantage. In this sense, watching employees' desires and needs, in order not to unstabilize their job-life balance, which increases their job satisfaction, is one of the most crucial topics that needs to be paid attention by organizations so as to be powerful and eternal. Furthermore, adopting and using positive and negative humor styles in organizations, along with the perception of employees about their managers' humor styles, has recently drew attention and been researched in literature. Positive humor styles are thought to increase employees' job satisfaction, while negative humor styles are believed as having a decreasing effect on employees' job satisfaction. In this research, the perceptions of employees about their managers' humor styles and its effect on their job satisfaction is researched. In the frame of the research, local and foreign organizations, performing in production and service sector in the city of Bursa, Turkey, are evaluated as population. In this sense, a comparison is made between two sectors in terms of analyses results. In terms of measurement, Martin and Puhlik-Doris (2003)'s Humor Styles Questionnaire (HSQ) and Weiss et.al. (1967)'s Minnesota Job Satisfaction Questionnaire are used.

Key words: organizational humor, positive humor, negative humor, job satisfaction

INTRODUCTION

Organizations, have to put effort into developing themselves and adapting the constant changing environmental conditions in order to live. The decisions, which are made as a result of analysing and evaluating both the interior and the exterior environment of the organization, provides advantage and power for the competition in the sector. Managing an organization so as to increase organizational effectiveness; leads to consolidation of the organization. In other words, the succesful attempts in the process of strategic management accrue, with managing human resources in a strategic way (Uyargil, 1997).

The humor styles that are adopted in the organization, constitute great importance in terms of increasing the job satisfaction of human resources and managing them in the way that helps to reach the organizational goals.

The purpose of this study is to investigate the effect of managers' humor styles, on the job satisfaction of employees. In the scope of the research, the service sector organizations (hotels) and production sector organizations (textile, food, automotive) in the city of Bursa are taken as main population. As for the measurement, Human Styles Questionnaire, which is developed by Martin and Puhlik-Doris in 2003; and Minessota Job Satisfaction Questionnaire, which is developed by Weiss et al., in 1967 are used.

The reason for having service sector and production sector as separate; is the fact that service cannot be dimensioned, defined and measured physically because of its being dynamic. On the other hand in production sector, the physical definitions and dimensions of the products can be

identified. Furthermore, service, consists activities that are led by human behaviour. Human resources activities, in organizations that are active in production sector; are implemented by private departments such as public relations. The employees and the customers do not have the chance of coming face to face until the offering of the production. In service sector on the other hand, the employees and the customers are face to face all the time. In this sense, perceived humor styles and the level of job satisfaction differ.

THEORIES ABOUT HUMOR

Humor, has drew the attention of a lot of scholars, starting from Eflatun, who was a well-known philosopher in the Classical Era. Those scholars, put forward some theories about humor in order to find an answer to the question “why people laugh?” (Recepoğlu, 2011).

The first of these theories is *Superiority Theory*. According to this theory, people who laugh, are superior to the others. People laugh, because they live good and positive experiences and these experiences are considered as superior to bad and negative experinces (Usta, 2005; Özer, 2014). Despite of the fact that Superiority Theory is not a thoroughly comprehensive humor theory (Morreall, 2009), it helps explaining a lot of humorous situations (Avşar, 2008).

The earlier information about this theory is based on the ideas of Platon and Aristoteles. Platon, suggests that humor is a combination of the joy that stems from being superior to other peoples' misfortunes, and the pain, that stems from being mocked by other people. According to Aristotle, who agrees with Platon, humor is based on having faults and not being decent (Sanders, 2001).

According to the *Divergence Theory*, the joy that comes from humor, mainly stems from realising that a situation, which seems serious at the beginning, is in fact not that serious. The change in this perception, generally ends with pleasure and laughing (Martin, 2004).

Starting from the 13th century, the most comprehensive explanations on Divergence Theory are put forward by Kant and Schopenhauer. According to Kant (1790), humor appears when there emerges a situation which turns out to be nothing (Keith-Spiegel, 1972). When expectations turn out to be nothing, laughing appears (Martin, 1998). According to Schopenhauer, humor appears when there is a sudden perception of dissonance between the events (Morreall, 1997). When there is a dissonance between the perception and thought, perception is always true. In this sense, the effect of the perception on thought, creates joy and laughter (Keith-Spiegel, 1972).

As for *Relief Theory*, the very first explanation is put forward by Descartes (1649). Descartes, identifies humor as a delight when it is realised that a situation does not intend to give harm. When a person feels surprise, because of an unexpected event, laughter appears. Furthermore, when a potential danger or a harmful situation disappears, laughter appears again. In addition to this, getting rid of the burden of an unrest feeling and having a mood of joy and delight, causes laughter. The appearance of laughter, is because of the fact that it cuts the usual thinking system with sudden good and delightful values. In this sense, one gets rid of the thought that is under control (Türkmen, 1996).

Psychonalitic Theory, suggests that a sense of humor reflects the personal dilemmas and individuals, transform their sexual and aggressive feelings, which are seen dangerous, into interactions that are socially embraced. Humor, helps decreasing the anxiety, which causes forbidden feelings to emerge. With the help of humor, the forbidden feelings that constitute threat for individuals, can be expressed and embraced by the society easily (Freud, 2003). The

contemporary scholars such as Minsky (1981), explains senseless humor as well, different from Freud, who suggests that comprehending the situation is obligatory in order to create humor. Minsky also emphasises that by getting rid of the censors or not thinking about them, an individual can experience humor (Minsky, 1980; cited in Mulder and Nijholt, 2002).

HUMOR STYLES

Humor, can be used as an individual expression style in social environment (Martin, Puhlik-Doris, Larse, Gray and Weir, 2003). In the model that is developed by Martin et al. (2003), humor can be both positive and negative and it can be used for affecting the individual and the other people. In this sense, 4 humor styles are defined (Reisoğlu, 2014). The positive styles are "Affiliative" and "Self Enhancing" humor. The negative styles are "Agressive" and "Self Defeating" humor (Tümekaya, 2006; Çeçen, 2007; Kazarian, Martin and Shahe, 2004).

Affiliative Humor, is a humor style that is developed by the individual considering and respecting both himself/herself and the other people. *Self-Enhancing Humor*, is a humor style that helps decreasing negative feelings by considering the needs of both himself/herself and the others. On the other hand *Agressive Humor*, is a style that doesn't fit with social norms in the sense that it is used for satisfying the individual needs without considering others. As for *Self-Defeating Humor*, it is a style that is used for enjoying others without self respect (Martin et al., 2003).

There are some opinions on using humor styles in organizations (Mesmer-Magnus and Viswesvaran, 2012; Ünal, 2014). Some researchers state that in organizations, which adopt positive humor styles; employees feel happier, healthier, more creative and less stressful. Thus, the social interaction between the managers and the employees enhances and creative thought and problem solving capabilities increase (Morreall, 2009).

In addition Avolio (1999), states that humor is a very important trait that should be adopted by managers. Especially positive humor styles that are used by managers, helps employees feel positive about their job and work environment. Therefore, their job satisfaction levels increase (Ünal, 2014).

JOB SATISFACTION

Job satisfaction, which is defined as employees' emotional reactions towards their jobs, emerged in 1920's, became absolut after World War II and its importance has started to be realised in 1930's and 1940's (Sevimli and İşcan, 2005). After 1940 - 1950's, the studies on job satisfaction have gained speed. Although job satisfaction is considered as a way just for gaining high efficiancy; in fact, it is compulsory for the general success of the organization (Judge and Church, 2000 cited in Gözen, 2007).

The job satisfaction of employees, is a research area that is studied frequently by researchers. The most common definition of job satisfaction is put forward bu Locke (1976). According to Locke, job satisfaction is a positive and pleasing emotional situation that stems from individual's job (Haque and Taher, 2008).

Job satisfaction is also defined as the attitude of the individual towards the job (Robbins, 1999). Mullins (1993), states that motivation has a close relationship with job satisfaction. The needs of the employee, social relationships, management style and quality, job design, compensation, working conditions and the long-term opportunities are considered as the determiners of job satisfaction (Byars and Rue, 1997; Moorhead and Griffin, 1999). Job

satisfaction has also a great effect on organizational commitment and turnover rates (Byars and Rue, 1997; Moorhead and Griffin, 1999). According to Robbins (1999), labor power, whose job satisfaction level is high, increases the organizational productivity without distracting factors such as turnover or absenteeism.

Organizational Outcomes of Job Satisfaction

Employee rights, have been considerably important in recent years. The more the employees have satisfaction from their jobs, the more the perfect outcomes their organizations obtain. The expectations of every single organization are high performance, low turnover and low absenteeism. However, in order to make real these three expectations, organizations should be aware of the importance of job satisfaction (Sun, 2002).

According to a research conducted by Motowidlo (1984), employees who have a high degree of job satisfaction, treat their coworkers more sensitive. In other researches, it has been proved that a high level of job satisfaction increases employees' self-confidence, performance and productivity; decreases stress, tension, anxiety and absenteeism (Kim, 2002).

In literature, there are also researches that prove high job satisfaction levels also contribute to the organizational profitability. The fact that organizations, which do not give importance to the job satisfaction of their employees, have difficulty in competing with organizations that give importance to job satisfaction of their employees, is an inevitable truth (Yaşarsoy, 2014). Furthermore, a low level of job satisfaction causes alienation of job, being indifferent and thus, some kind of psychological problems (Ghazzawi, 2008).

Job satisfaction is a dynamic variable. Managers/leaders should not neglect job satisfaction of their employees soon after they become sure that they are satisfied. Job satisfaction can be obtained quickly; but it can be lost quickly as well (Akıncı, 2002).

RESEARCH METHOD AND FINDINGS

In this section, the purpose and scope of the study is tried to explained. The suggested hypotheses are put forward and the measurement method is given.

Research Instrument

The first measure that is used in this research is Humor Styles Questionnaire (HSQ), which is developed by Martin ve Puhlik-Doris (1999), and it has 32 items.

The second measurement that is used in this research is Minnessota Satisfaction Questionnaire (MSQ). It is developed by Weiss et al. (1967) and it has 20 items.

Sampling and Data Collection

The purpose of this study is to investigate the effect of managers' humor styles, on the job satisfaction of employees. In the scope of the research, the service sector organizations (hotels) and production sector organizations (textile, food, automotive) in the city of Bursa are taken as main population. The survey forms are delivered via hard copy and via e-mail. 401 surveys are collected and the data is analysed and interpreted by SPSS 20.0 package programme. Field (2013), suggests that the appropriate sample size for multiple regression analysis, should be 10 or 15 times higher than the variable number. In this sense, there are 8 variables and 401 participants of this research, which proves that multiple regression analysis is appropriate for this research.

Analysis

A pilot survey of 53 participants is applied at the beginning of the research. The data is analysed by SPSS 20.0 package programme and a result of 0,847 Cronbach's Alpha is obtained.

Research Model

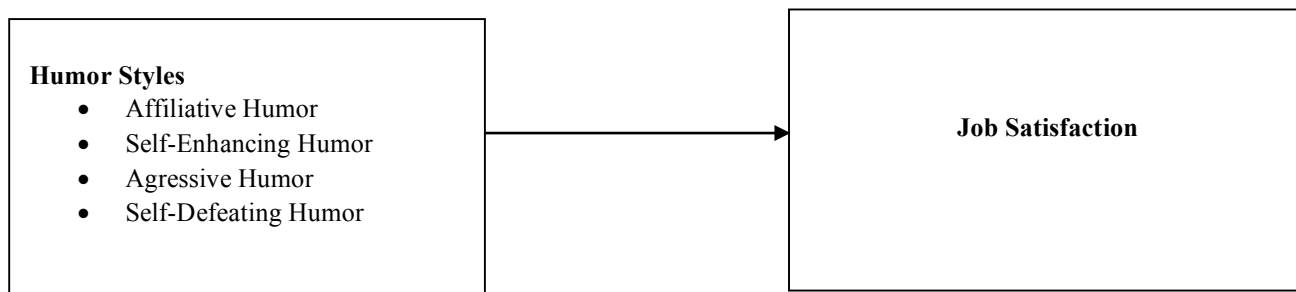


Figure 1. The Effect of Managers' Humor Styles on Employees' Job Satisfaction

ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

In this section of the research, the frequency and percentage tables of demographical findings are given. In addition, the regression analysis according to the hypothesis are demonstrated.

Findings of Frequency and Dispersion of Percentages Findings and Demographical Findings

The frequency and percentage findings about the demographical status of the participants are as follows (Table 1):

Table 1. Frequency and Percentage Variance

Variable	Degree	N	%
Gender	Female	165	41,1
	Male	236	58,9
Age	18-24	31	7,7
	25-29	75	18,7
	30-39	175	43,6
	40-49	99	24,7
	50+	21	5,2
Marital Status	Single	140	34,9
	Married	261	65,1
Education	High School	32	8
	College	34	8,5
	University	249	62,1
	Post-Graduate	86	21,4
Sector	Production	244	60,8
	Service	157	39,2
Scale of the Organization	Small	4	1
	Medium	85	21,2
	Large	312	77,8
Department	IT	9	2,2
	Finance	56	14
	HR	140	34,9
	Public Relations	8	2
	R&D	3	0,7
	Other	185	46,1
Work Duration	0-3 years	156	38,9
	4-7 years	103	25,7
	8-11 years	60	15
	12-15 years	23	5,7
	16 +	59	14,7
Experience	0-3 years	79	19,7
	4-7 years	53	13,2
	8-11 years	100	24,9
	12-15 years	61	15,2
	16 +	108	27

Hypothesis

H₁: In production sector, there is a statistically meaningful effect of employees' perception about their managers' Affiliative Humor Style, on their Job Satisfaction: $h_1: \mu_1 > \mu_2$

H₂: In production sector, there is a statistically meaningful effect of employees' perception about their managers' Self-Enhancing Humor Style, on their Job Satisfaction: $h_2: \mu_1 > \mu_2$

H₃: In production sector, there is a statistically meaningful effect of employees' perception about their managers' Self-Defeating Humor Style, on their Job Satisfaction: $h_3: \mu_1 > \mu_2$

H₄: In production sector, there is a statistically meaningful effect of employees' perception about their managers' Agressive Humor Style, on their Job Satisfaction: $h_4: \mu_1 > \mu_2$

H₅: In service sector, there is a statistically meaningful effect of employees' perception about their managers' Affiliative Humor Style, on their Job Satisfaction: $h_5: \mu_1 > \mu_2$

H₆: In service sector, there is a statistically meaningful effect of employees' perception about their managers' Self-Enhancing Humor Style, on their Job Satisfaction: $h_6: \mu_1 > \mu_2$

H₇: In service sector, there is a statistically meaningful effect of employees' perception about their managers' Self-Defeating Humor Style, on their Job Satisfaction: $h_7: \mu_1 > \mu_2$

H₈: In service sector, there is a statistically meaningful effect of employees' perception about their managers' Agressive Humor Style, on their Job Satisfaction: $h_8: \mu_1 > \mu_2$

Findings in Production Sector

H₁: In production sector, there is a statistically meaningful effect of employees' perception about their managers' Affiliative Humor Style, on their Job Satisfaction: $h_1: \mu_1 > \mu_2$

In ANOVA table (Table 2), it is seen that F value is statistically meaningful as $p < .001$ ($F_{243-1} = 26.035$).

Table 2. ANOVA Statistics

Phase		Sum of Squares	df	Square of Means	F	p
1	Regression Value	3,857	1	3,857	26,035	,000
	Surplus Value	35,851	242	,148		
	Total	39,708	243			

There is a statistically meaningful effect of Affiliative Humor Style on employees' Job Satisfaction. Affiliative Humor, affects Job Satisfaction in a ***negative way***.

Table 3. Coefficients Table

Phase		Non-Standardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	p
		B	Standard Error	Beta		
1	(Job Satisfaction)	4,335	,093		46,460	,000
	Participant	-,170	,033	-,312	-5,102	,000

H₂: In production sector, there is a statistically meaningful effect of employees' perception about their managers' Self-Enhancing Humor Style, on their Job Satisfaction: $h_2: \mu_1 > \mu_2$

In ANOVA table of this model (Table 5), it is seen that the *hierarchical regression analysis is not statistically meaningful* ($p > .05$). *Hypotheses is rejected*.

There is not a statistically meaningful effect of Self-Enhancing Humor on Job Satisfaction.

Table 5. ANOVA Statistics

Phase		Sum of Squares	df	Square of Means	F	p
1	Regression Value	,594	1	,594	3,673	,056
	Surplus Value	39,114	242	,162		
	Total	39,708	243			

H₃: *In production sector, there is a statistically meaningful effect of employees' perception about their managers' Self-Defeating Humor Style, on their Job Satisfaction:h₃: $\mu_1 > \mu_2$*

In ANOVA table (Tablo 6) of this model, it is seen that *the hierarchical regression analysis is not statistically meaningful (p>.05). Hypotheses is rejected.*

There is not a statistically meaningful effect of Self-Defeating Humor Style on Job Satisfaction.

Table 6. ANOVA Statistics

Phase		Sum of Squares	df	Square of Means	F	p
1	Regression Value	,610	1	,610	3,778	,053
	Surplus Value	39,097	242	,162		
	Total	39,708	243			

H₄: *In production sector, there is a statistically meaningful effect of employees' perception about their managers' Aggressive Humor Style, on their Job Satisfaction:h₄: $\mu_1 > \mu_2$*

In ANOVA table (Table 7), of this model, it is seen that *the hierarchical regression analysis is not statistically meaningful (p>.05). Hypotheses is rejected.*

Table 7. ANOVA Statistics

Phase		Sum of Squares	df	Square of Means	F	p
1	Regression Value	,023	1	,023	,138	,711
	Surplus Value	39,685	242	,164		
	Total	39,708	243			

Findings in Service Sector

H₅: *In service sector, there is a statistically meaningful effect of employees' perception about their managers' Affiliative Humor Style, on their Job Satisfaction:h₅: $\mu_1 > \mu_2$*

In ANOVA table (Table 8) of this model, it is seen that **the hierarchical regression analysis is not statistically meaningful (p>.05).**

In service sector, Affiliative Humor Style does not have a statistically meaningful effect on employees' Job Satisfaction.

Table 8. ANOVA Statistics

Phase		Sum of Squares	df	Square of Means	F	p
1	Regression Value	,001	1	,001	,003	,958
	Surplus Value	53,672	155	,346		
	Total	53,673	156			

H₆: *In service sector, there is a statistically meaningful effect of employees' perception about their managers' Self-Enhancing Humor Style, on their Job Satisfaction: $h_6: \mu_1 > \mu_2$*

In ANOVA table (Table 9) of this model, it is seen that the hierarchical regression analysis is not statistically meaningful ($p > .05$). **Hypotheses is rejected.**

There is not a statistically meaningful effect of Self-Enhancing Humor Style on employees' Job Satisfaction.

Table 9. ANOVA Statistics

Phase		Sum of Squares	df	Square of Means	F	p
1	Regression Value	,260	1	,260	,754	,387
	Surplus Value	53,413	155	,345		
	Total	53,673	156			

H₇: *In service sector, there is a statistically meaningful effect of employees' perception about their managers' Self-Defeating Humor Style, on their Job Satisfaction: $h_7: \mu_1 > \mu_2$*

In ANOVA table (Table 10) of this model, it is seen that **the hierarchical regression analyses is statistically meaningful** ($p < .05$). **Hypotheses is accepted ($F_{156-1} = 5.493$).**

In service sector, Self-Defeating Humor Style has statistically meaningful effect on employees' Job Satisfaction.

Table 10. ANOVA Statistics

Phase		Sum of Squares	df	Square of Means	F	p
1	Regression Value	1,837	1	1,837	5,493	,020
	Surplus Value	51,836	155	,334		
	Total	53,673	156			

Self-Defeating Humor Style has a negative effect on employees' Job Satisfaction.

Table 11. Coefficients Table

Phase		Non-Standardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	p
		B	Standard Error	Beta		
1	(Job Satisfaction)	4,098	,153		26,804	,000
	Self-Defeating Humor	-,139	,059	-,185	-2,344	,020

$$\text{Job Satisfaction} = 4.098 + [(-.139 \times \text{Self-Defeating Humor Style})]$$

H₈: In service sector, there is a statistically meaningful effect of employees' perception about their managers' Agressive Humor Style, on their Job Satisfaction: $h_8: \mu_1 > \mu_2$

In ANOVA table (Table 12) of this model, it is seen that the hierarchical regression analyses is statistically meaningful ($p < .01$). **Hypotheses is accepted ($F_{156-1} = 12.320$).**

Table 12. ANOVA Statistics

Phase		Sum of Squares	df	Square of Means	F	p
1	Regression Value	3,952	1	3,952	12,320	,001
	Surplus Value	49,721	155	,321		
	Total	53,673	156			

$$\text{Job Satisfaction} = 4.188 + [(-.184 \times \text{Agressive Humor Style})]$$

Agressive Humor has a negative effect on employees' Job Satisfaction.

Table 13. Coefficients Table

Phase		Non-Standardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	p
		B	Standard Error	Beta		
1	(Job Satisfaction)	4,188	,131		31,988	,000
	Agressive humor	-,184	,053	-,271	-3,510	,001

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

A good sense of humor, is necessary in organizations in order to assure creativity, development and communication. **When managers adopt Positive Humor Styles**, they behave more relaxed and close to the employees; therefore they set up a good communication system in the organization and pay attention to the needs of the employees. Thus, **the level of Job Satisfaction increases** (Yukl ve Lepsinger, 1990).

According to Decker and Rotondo (2001), humor, is very useful in the sense of assuring motivation, coping with stres and creating good relationships among managers and employees.

Thus, performance increases.

In this research, it has been found that while **Positive Humor Styles (Affiliative) increase employees' Job Satisfaction; Negative Humor Styles (Agressive and Self-Defeating) decreases employees' Job Satisfaction**. Therefore, it is crucial for managers to adopt Positive Humor Styles within the organization in order to increase the level of Job Satisfaction of employees. The more the level of Job Satisfaction is high, the more productive the employees will work and serve.

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