

A Study on the Impact of Humorous Behavior on Employee Work Engagement in the IT Industry with Special Reference to Coimbatore City

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ABSTRACT

Employee work engagement is crucial for productivity and organizational success in the IT industry, where employees often face high stress and workload pressure. This study examines the impact of humorous behavior on employee work engagement in IT companies in Coimbatore City. A descriptive research design was adopted, and primary data were collected from 208 IT employees using a structured questionnaire. Secondary data were obtained from journals and books. Statistical tools such as percentage analysis, correlation, chi-square, and ANOVA were used. The findings reveal that positive humorous behavior reduces stress, improves team bonding, motivation, and engagement, while inappropriate humor may cause conflicts. Overall, humor can be an effective engagement tool.

INTRODUCTION

Employee work engagement is vital for organizational success, particularly in the IT industry where employees face heavy workloads and high stress. To address these challenges, organizations are adopting humorous behavior to create a positive work environment. This study examines the impact of humorous behavior on employee work engagement in IT companies in Coimbatore City. A descriptive research design was used, with primary data collected from 208 IT employees through a structured questionnaire. Statistical tools such as percentage analysis, correlation, chi-square, and ANOVA were applied. The findings reveal that positive humor reduces stress, improves team bonding, and enhances employee motivation and engagement, making it a low-cost strategic tool for workplace effectiveness.

RESEARCH BACKGROUND

In Coimbatore's high-pressure IT sector, stress and burnout frequently lead to employee disengagement. This research explores how workplace humor acts as a psychological resource to boost morale. By analyzing local IT firms, the study examines humor's role in enhancing work engagement and fostering a productive, supportive organizational culture.

Objectives of the study

- To understand the concept of humorous behavior and examine employees' perception of humor in the IT work environment.
- To assess the level of employee work engagement and analyze the relationship between humorous behavior and employee engagement.

Statement of the problem

- The IT industry is highly demanding, and employees face work pressure and long hours, leading to stress, burnout, and reduced employee engagement.
- The role of humorous behavior in improving employee engagement is less explored in the Indian IT industry, and inappropriate humor may create workplace conflicts.

Scope of the study

- The study is confined to IT companies operating in Coimbatore City and focuses on employees working at different levels in medium and large IT organizations.
- The study examines the influence of humorous behavior by managers, supervisors, and co-workers on employee engagement, motivation, stress reduction, and team bonding.

Limitations of the study

- The study is confined to IT companies in Coimbatore City with a limited sample size due to time constraints, which may restrict the generalization of the findings.
- The data collected through questionnaires may involve personal bias, and humor being subjective may be interpreted differently by individual respondents.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Sampling Plan

The sample for the study consists of 208 employees working in various IT companies in Coimbatore City. Data were collected through a well-structured questionnaire distributed both personally and online to gather information on humorous behavior and employee work engagement.

Sampling Technique

Convenience sampling, a non-probability sampling method, was adopted based on the accessibility and willingness of respondents, considering time constraints.

Methods of the Study

The study is based on both **primary and secondary data**.

- **Primary Data**
Primary data were collected through a structured questionnaire prepared for the purpose of the study. The questionnaire was circulated among IT employees in Coimbatore City through Google Forms, and the responses were collected for analysis.
- **Secondary Data**
Secondary data were collected from books, journals, magazines, research articles, and websites related to humorous behavior, employee engagement, and organizational behavior.

Statistical Tools Used

The following statistical tools were used for the analysis and interpretation of data:

- Percentage Analysis
- Chi-Square Test

Percentage Analysis

Percentage analysis is a statistical tool used to analyze and interpret the data collected from respondents. It helps in understanding the distribution of responses and comparing different categories in a simple and meaningful manner.

The formula used for percentage analysis is:

$$\text{Percentage} = \frac{\text{Total Number of Respondents}}{\text{Number of Respondents}} \times 100$$

Chi-Square Test

Chi-square is a statistical test commonly used to compare observed data with data one would expect to obtain according to specific hypothesis. The chi-square test is always testing what scientists call the null hypothesis, between the expected and observed states that there is no significant difference result. The formula for chi-square is:

$$\text{Chi-square} = (O-E)^2/E$$

ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION

Percentage Analysis

- Percentage analysis shows that most respondents belong to the 21–30 age group, indicating a young IT workforce, with many having less than five years of experience.
- The majority of respondents agreed that humorous behavior exists in their workplace.
- Most employees felt that humor helps reduce work-related stress and creates a positive work environment.
- Respondents agreed that positive humor improves communication, interpersonal relationships, and motivation at work.
- A small percentage felt that excessive or inappropriate humor may cause distraction, but overall humor positively enhances employee work engagement.

Chi-square analysis

Chi-square analysis between age and humor at work that helps reduce stress

Null hypothesis(H₀): There is no association between age and humor at work reducing stress. Alternative hypothesis(H₁): There is an association between age and humor at work reducing stress.

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	1.200 ^a	3	0.753
Likelihood Ratio	1.621	3	0.655
Linear-by-Linear Association	.047	1	0.828
N of Valid Cases	208		

Interpretation: The Chi-square table shows that the Pearson Chi-square significance value is 0.753. When compared with the p-value (0.05), our calculated value is greater than the p-value (0.753 > 0.05). Therefore, we accept the null hypothesis (H₀) and reject the alternative hypothesis (H₁). Hence, there is no association between age and humor at work reducing stress.

Chi-square analysis between gender and humor at work that helps reduce stress

Null hypothesis(H₀): There is no association between gender and humor at work reducing stress.

Alternative hypothesis(H₁): There is an association between gender and humor at work reducing stress.

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	1.981 ^a	1	0.159
Likelihood Ratio	2.010	1	0.156
Linear-by-Linear Association	1.971	1	0.160
N of Valid Cases	208		

Interpretation: The Chi-square table shows that the Pearson Chi-square significance value is 0.159. When compared with the p-value (0.05), our calculated value is greater than the p-value (0.159 > 0.05). Therefore, we accept the null hypothesis (H₀) and reject the alternative hypothesis (H₁). Hence, there is no association between gender and humor at work reducing stress.

Findings

- Percentage analysis reveals that most respondents are young employees (21–30 years) with less than five years of experience, indicating a youthful IT workforce.
- A majority of respondents agreed that humorous behavior exists in their workplace and helps reduce work-related stress while creating a positive work environment.
- Employees perceived that positive humor improves communication, interpersonal relationships, motivation, and overall work engagement.
- Chi-square analysis shows that there is no significant association between age and humor at work reducing stress ($p > 0.05$).
- Similarly, there is no significant association between gender and humor at work reducing stress, indicating that humor is perceived equally across age and gender groups.

Suggestions

- Organizations should encourage positive humor to reduce stress and create a relaxed work environment.
- Managers and team leaders can use appropriate humor to motivate employees and strengthen team bonding.
- Companies may organize fun and interactive activities to improve communication and employee engagement.
- Care should be taken to avoid negative or offensive humor that may cause misunderstandings or conflicts.
- Incorporating humor in training and informal interactions can reduce burnout and improve productivity and performance.

Conclusion

The study reveals that humor plays an important role in enhancing employee engagement and creating a positive work environment in the IT industry. It helps reduce stress, improve motivation, strengthen team relationships, and increase productivity. While age influences workload pressure and work–life balance, it does not significantly affect enthusiasm or commitment to work. Humor is valued across age groups and contributes to better communication and organizational culture. Overall, fostering positive humor can help organizations create a happier, more productive, and engaging workplace.

Review of literature

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