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# A Study on the Role of Humour in Classroom

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## I. INTRODUCTION

**H**UMAN Resource is one of the five important factors of production. They are the building block of every organisation. Without humans, no work can be initiated as a team. Thus, the importance of human in this world is immense and inevitable. The behaviour of every single being is unique in nature. It is said that "there is no map to human behaviour". Therefore, many of them working together may lead to arising of minute conflicts in the organisation. Here comes the need for managing human resources. Unlike other resources management of humans is very complex and difficult activity. To bring everyone together under a single roof, the management must give its employees the best environment and try to retain their valuable skills in the organisation. This will be the most tedious task that a firm will ever face, and this problem can only be dealt with appropriate human resource management techniques.

Organisational culture and behaviour are important factors that influence the behaviour of its employees. According to Ravasi and Schultz (2006) organizational culture is a set of shared assumptions that guide what happens in organizations by defining appropriate behaviour for various situations. A "healthy" organisational culture implies increase productivity, growth, efficiency and reduce unfavourable behaviour from the side of the employees and their turnover. A new emergence in the field of improving organisational culture and behaviour is Humour management. Involving humour element in every segment of work done in the organisation has proved to improve the overall development of employees and the efficiency of the firm.

Humour could be incorporated in any organisation. As it is an emotional phase, success of use of humour will be different in each context. Its success depends on the situation where humour is applied. Sharing humour gives relief from boredom, builds relationships, improve companionship among colleagues and creating a positive effect in the organisation. In accordance with the psychological researches, it is evident that only a happy person can perform with his full potential. Thus, to increase human productivity inculcation of humour in workplace is very important.

## II. STATEMENT OF PROBLEM

Teaching is considered as the noblest profession among the other professions. Teachers play a very important role in developing a student, institution, community and country. To find passionate teachers is one of the difficult tasks faced by every institution. Controlling a class is an art. Teachers need special skill and dedication to keep a class lively and interesting. A student faces around 5 to 6 teachers per day in college life. The efficiency of a teacher is a vital point in a class room. He should be competent, updated and enthusiastic. It is the duty of teachers to be more creative and optimistic to see that a class is enjoyed by every student. For that he has to bring in lots of techniques into the class. Humour plays an important role in attracting the concentration of the students from being bored, dull, sleepy or bunk the class. So, the researcher aims to study the role of Humour in managing the students.

## III. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

- To know the concept of Humour Management.
- To find out whether the use of humour can make classes more effective.
- To determine which type of humour is commonly used by teachers.
- To bring out the positive and negative effects of using humour in classrooms.
- To identify the role of humour in building a good teacher - student relationship.

## IV. SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

Humour is an emotion and the perceptions about it will be unique for each person. The workplace humour has proved to improve the overall communication and relationship between superiors and students. Here we examine the role of humour in making the class students lively. Humour is an element which is effectively evaluated and implemented in huge organisation. What makes work different is the examination and presence of humour in an institution like college where no one teaches or trains the professors to use humour but in comparison with

Other institutions the use of humour in colleges are the implications are higher.

## SCOPE OF THE STUDY

The researcher is keen to study the use of Humour and the humour management techniques used by college teachers. The study covers the Professors of Christ College (Autonomous), Irinjalakuda. As the importance of humour in classroom is examined, a perfect opinion about its effectiveness can only be given teachers.

## RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

### Data Collection

Primary Data is taken as a source of information. This data is collected using Questionnaires from professors of Christ College (Autonomous) to evaluate the level of use of humour and to determine which type of humour is significantly used.

### Sample Design

Sample is the source from which the data is collected. The sample represents the population. The overall size of the sample Population is the teaching staff of the college which is 176 in number i.e. 98 teachers in self-financing section and 78 in the aided section. The Sampling technique opted for Proportionate stratified sampling method to select the representation. The whole population is divided into two strata-self-financing teachers and aided teachers and a proportion from each stratum which is 49 from self-financing and 39 from aided, that ends up in a total of 88 sample units. While distributing the questionnaire I adopted simple random method to select each sample unit from the Sample Size of 88.

### Data Analysis

I made a percentage presentation of the statements using multiple bar diagram. Various inferential tools like reliability analysis, Kolmogorov-Smirnov Normality test and Non-Parametric tests like Mann Whitney U test and Kruskal Wallis test was adopted to compare the various demographic factors and their relationship with variables throughout the test.

### Hypotheses

The various hypothesis that is set in the study in order to achieve the objectives of the study are as given below:

- $H_1$  = The population is not normal
- $H_1$  = There is no significant relationship between gender and effectiveness of humour.
- $H_1$  = There is no significant relationship between age and building up of relationship between teachers and students using humour as a tool.

## REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Jelena and Sara (2010), studied on the topic "The Serious Business of Humor -A qualitative study

on Humor as a management tool" and have reached to a conclusion that humour is being used and will be continuously used as an effective method in managing their organisation. They suggest that the use of humour in the context of Swedish organisations have resulted in reduced stress, improved communication, group cohesiveness, creativity and leadership effectiveness.

- Pollak and Freda (1997), in their study "Humor, learning, and socialization in middle of level classrooms" discusses the fact that the teachers who cannot laugh on their own mistakes will never be able to create a positive climate or environment for the students to learn. They tried to make us understand that learning is a process of trial and error and that the error may happen from the side of teachers or students. The ability of teachers to conceal the error or accepting the mistake and eventually laughing at themselves (self-depreciating humour) improve the quality of learning and helps the students to minimise their stress.
- Steele and Karen E (1998), in his examination on the topic "The Positive and Negative Effects of the Use of Humor in the Classroom Setting" gives us an outlook about the reality that stress level of students need to be maintained to enhance the learning ability of the same. This new era of education is hectic with deadlines, rules and regulations creating a very competitive climate for students that increase the amount of stress.
- Gardner. R.L. (2006)," in his enquiry on "Humor in pedagogy: How ha-ha can lead to aha!" inspects the possibility of increasing the examination scores of undergraduates in distance education course who undertook lectures containing humour. To achieve the objective of the study he compared the students learning the humour infused lectures and those studied the same material without the touch of humour.
- Decker and Rotondo's (2001), work on "Relationships among gender, type of Humor, and perceived leader effectiveness" reflects the actuality that the use of humour in work environment can create miracles. The practice of jesting eventually resulted in facilitating psychological changes in behaviour, interaction and in coping with stress. It builds a sense of motivation in the minds of the subordinates and assist in learning and clarifying work tasks.
- Avolio, Howell and Sosik (1999), in examination about the topic "A funny thing happened on the way to the bottom line: Humor as a moderator of leadership style effects" revealed that humour can be considered as an important characteristic of a competent leader. These leaders can enhance the work environment as well as for the wellbeing

of the employees. The attitude and behaviour of the leaders can influence the work life of the followers or subordinates.

- **Walter Fisher (1984)**, through his study "*Narration as a human communication paradigm: The case of public moral argument*" analyse the reality that storytelling is the key and general activity among human and that this the most significant for human understanding, action and interaction. Storytelling is one of the crucial ways to exhibit humour in life and thus this method is widely used to maintain better relations with other fellow beings.
- **Romero, E. and Arendt, L. (2011)**, discovers through his research "*Variable Effects of Humor Styles on Organizational Outcomes*" that there are various aspects in the organisation that can be enhanced with the involvement of humour in those organisations. Productivity indicators like stress management, organisation commitment, teamwork and cooperation between team members shows huge variations due to positive impact of use of humour and thus has enhanced the organisational behaviour of the employees and eventually the employer.
- **Chan (2010)**, in his study about the issue "*Does workplace fun matter? Developing a useable typology of workplace fun in a qualitative study*" demonstrate that fun environment uphold the positive and happy mood within the employees and hence lead to the amplified productivity, commitment and job satisfaction. The pleasurable activities crafted by Chan has constructed a happy work environment.
- **Bellert, J.L. (1989)**, in her dissertation "*Humor: A therapeutic approach in oncology nursing*" explains about the uses of humour by nurses among cancer patients and caregivers. She claims that humour can rejuvenate the patients by restoring the hope and energy in them. She as a nurse analysed the effect of application of humour among the oncology patients by promoting the use of humour library books, videos, costumes and cartoons. She says that humour have healing power that enhance the patient's capability to fight against the disease and return back to their normal state of living.
- **Elliot (2013)**, in his research paper "*Finding the fun in daily occupation: An investigation of humor*" studies the perceived benefits of humour. Through this research he examines the significant correlation between occupational engagement and humour. He highlights the neuroscience of use of humour, laughter and fun that enhance the experience in occupational engagement. According to him, making an activity fun can result in change in individual behaviour and qualitative experience.
- **Diener et al (1999)**, in his analysis about topic "*Subjective well-being: three decades progress*" provides various aspects that influence the emotional well-being or subjective well-being of individuals. According to him Happiness has a great influence on the well-being of a person. Positive emotions help people not only to outlast but also to rise above when met with negative circumstances.
- **J Holmes (2007)**, has widely conducted several theses regarding the usage of humour in the organisational behaviour, communication and leadership skills of an individual. Among the theses the most notable is "*Humour and the Construction of Maori Leadership at Work*". Sword is the powerful tool in the armoury of a soldier similarly Humour is the strongest weapon in the arsenal of a leader. They emphasise that humour provides leaders with priceless and elegant resources for cooperatively achieving the workplace objectives. Humour enables to make this possible by incorporating both power and politeness.
- **Barbara Miller's (2008)**, critically examines about the topic "*The Uses and Effects of Humor in the School Workplace*", she comprehensively studied the role of humour among the teachers in schools. The main intention of the study was to review the teacher's perception and uses and effects of humour in the venue of an elementary school. She identified that teachers employ humour for self-relaxation and to lower the stress associated with teaching young children. Findings included details like the other positive effects of humour in building collegial relationships, rejuvenation and in preventing burn-out.
- **David. D (2015)**, in enquiry on the theme "*Examining Peer Perceptions of Humorous Communication in the College Classroom*" suggests that teachers who should enlighten the students must not suppress the feelings of the students and encourage the humorous interaction in the classroom, but also attempts to nurture a surrounding in which humour is encouraged.

### Reliability Analysis

Cronbach's alpha,  $\alpha$  (or *coefficient alpha*), developed by Lee Cronbach in 1951, measures reliability, or internal consistency. "Reliability" is how well a test measures what it should. Reliability analysis allows you to study the properties of measurement scales and the items that compose the scales. The Reliability Analysis procedure calculates several commonly used measures of scale reliability and provides information about the relationships between individual items in the scale. Cronbach's alpha tests to see if multiple question Likert scale surveys are reliable. Intraclass correlation coefficients can be used to compute inter-rater reliability estimates. There are many different models to

reliability of data like Alpha(Cronbach), Split-half, Parallel and Strict Parallel. Here we have used Cronbach (Cronbach) to test internal consistency based on the average inter-item correlation. Cronbach's alpha will tell you if the test you have designed is accurately measuring the variable of interest.

Reliability Statistics	
Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.515	28

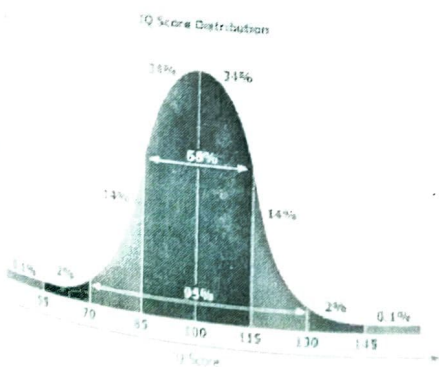
Source: Spss Output

The result  $\alpha$  coefficient will range from 0 to 1 providing overall assessment of a measure's reliability. If all the scale items are entirely independent from one another, then  $\alpha = 0$  and, if all the items have high covariances, then  $\alpha$  will approach to 1 as the number of items in the scale approaches infinity. However,  $\alpha$  which is  $\geq 0.5$  is acceptable and  $\geq 0.7$  is highly reliable. In the above output we see that the  $\alpha$  is above .5 and hence the scales taken here are 'good' for studying the concept dealt here.

### One Sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov Normality Test

The One-Sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test procedure compares the observed cumulative distribution function for a variable with a specified theoretical distribution, which may be normal, uniform, Poisson, or exponential. The Kolmogorov-Smirnov Z is computed from the largest difference (in absolute value) between the observed and theoretical cumulative distribution functions. This goodness-of-fit test tests whether the observations could reasonably have come from the specified distribution. Normality tests helps us to determine the distribution in data for the variable.

The normal distribution is useful because of the central limit theorem. In its most general form, under some conditions (which include finite variance), it states that averages of samples of observations of random variables independently drawn from independent distributions converge in distribution to the normal. The normal distribution is sometimes informally called the **bell curve**. The One Sample K-S test helps us to understand this concept of normal distribution and thus determine which type of test that is to be adopted for the study. The normal distribution is as shown in the below diagram.



For the above test, the hypothesis is set as follows

### Hypothesis 1

$H_0$  = The population is normal

$H_1$  = The population is not normal

### One Sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test

Particulars	A1	A2	A3	A4	A5	A6	A7	A8	A9	A10	A11	A12	A13	A14	A15
Kolmogorov-Smirnov Z	2.278	3.196	1.906	2.427	2.222	1.974	1.754	2.197	2.117	1.335	2.113	3.822	1.112	1.112	1.112
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	.001	.000	.000	.001	.017	.000	.001	.016	.000	.007	.000	.000	.000

Source: Spss Output

Here we reject the  $H_0$  as the Asymp.Sig value is less than 0.05 and accept the  $H_1$  which indicates that the population is not normal. This test implies that the population chosen is not normal and thus the curve is not bell-shaped curve. It may be either right or left skewed curve. This test was adopted not only to determine the normality but also to understand whether it is possible to conduct parametric tests. As we have rejected the Null Hypothesis we cannot conduct any parametric tests on the data provided from the sample adopted from the test population.

### Mann-Whitney U test

Here in this test we have selected to compare the gender (grouping variable) and the effectiveness of humour. The effectiveness of humour is computed by adding up A3, A7, A8, A26 and A28. For conducting the Mann-Whitney U test the hypothesis is set as below

### Hypothesis 2

$H_0$  = There is no significant relationship between gender and effectiveness of humour.

$H_1$  = There is significant relationship between gender and effectiveness of humour.

The  $H_0$  is rejected when the Asymp Sig value is greater than 0.05 which indicates that there is no relationship between dependent variable and dichotomous independent variable.

### Mann-Whitney U test

Particulars	Effectiveness of humour (A3+A7+A8+A26+A28)
Mann-Whitney U	401.000
Wilcoxon W	611.000
Z	-2.229
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	.026

Source: Spss Output

Here we see that  $Asymp.Sig < 0.05$  which implies that we can reject the Null hypothesis which shows that there is significant relationship between gender and effectiveness of humour. The quality and humour and effect of humour in class room changes with the gender i.e. male and female.

### Kruskal Wallis Test

Like Mann Whitney U test given above we have Age and Building the relationship between teachers and students is studied using Kruskal Wallis H test. The relationship

building is assessed by taking different scales like A5, A9, A19, A22 and A27. The hypothesis adopted for conducting this study is

### Hypothesis 3

$H_0$  = There is no significant relationship between age and building up of relationship between the teachers and students using humour as a tool.

$H_1$  = There is significant relationship between age and building up of relationship between the teachers and students using humour as a tool.

The  $H_0$  is rejected when the Asymp Sig value is greater than 0.05 which indicates that there is no relationship between dependent variable and independent variable.

Kruskal Wallis H test

Particulars	Building relationship between teachers and students (A5+ A9+ A19 +A22+ A27)
Chi-Square	3.451
df	2
Asymp. Sig.	.178

Source: Spss Output

In the above study as the Asymp.Sig is 0.178, it is greater than .05 and so we will have to accept null hypothesis. This implies that there is no significant relationship between age and building up of relationship between professor and students using the different types of humour. In fact, we understand from this study that age is not a barrier in using humour and age does not influence in developing a good relationship between teachers and students. Both young and senior most teachers are equally successful in creating better environment in the class room. Thus, the using of Humour in a better manner is not concerned with age and years of experience of teachers.

## VIII. FINDINGS

Humour management is an emerging trend of management in the present scenario. The workplace humour can improve the communication, leadership and morale of employees in an organisation. Here we examined classroom humour where Professor were the higher authority and students as the subordinates. The perception behaviour of students is inspected from the viewpoint of the top authority that is the teachers. The findings that I made in this research is as follows:

- Professors are very ambitious that they choose this career intentionally. This helps in increasing their dedication to their own job.
- Making the learning environment pleasant can improve the productivity. Thus, maintaining a friendly relation between teachers and students can help to improve the interest towards the subject.
- Qualified and skilful teachers are selected to teach the students. So, they make every dry paper interesting to learn.

- Teachers try their level best to improve classes by involving humour in the classroom.
- Teasing which is an important form of humour is not used by teachers. It is treated as a negative form of humour and can hurt people easily.
- Usage of humour is a difficult task for teachers as they do not possess practical knowledge and application of humour.
- Jokes is one of the commonly used forms of humour and it is a tool used to grab the attention of students.
- Anecdote being another form of humour is frequently used to apply humour in class to make the topic easily understandable to students.
- Even though teasing is a negative form of humour, professor have an opinion that teasing has a strong relationship between teachers and students.
- Puns are double meaning jokes but this form of humour is not entertained much in a classroom.
- Teasing when frequently use and targeting a single person is very dangerous. It can damage the relationship of students.
- Professor say the almost all students respect and enjoy their jokes.
- Character formation is the important part of education in today's scenario.
- Imparting time for recreation and informal conversation can help developing confidence in students while taking class.
- Teachers don't like using self-deprecating humour that can seriously affect their self-esteem which results in disrespect from the students.
- Humour can make class active and engaging, but teachers must have a basic knowledge to incorporate humour in classroom.
- Teasing can be used as a tool to grab the attention of irritating students but when it is overused, it exceeded it may seriously affect the mind of students.
- Teachers have a neutral opinion about whether students like humour or not. This is based on perception-based behaviour of humour.
- Teachers also have an opinion that students like teachers who are funny and friendly to them. Teachers who show aggressive behaviour in classrooms are disliked by students.
- Professors who are flexible in their approach can only adapt to different students and effectively manage the class.
- Inculcating the opinions given by students can help improve their overall morale in the classroom outside. This can be used as a tool to engage students.
- Collecting feedbacks can help find the areas of improvement faced by students in his classroom. This helps in improving the quality of teaching.

can help teachers to identify student's opinion about them and their lectures.

Teachers are always ready to change when mistakes are pointed out by the management or students.

Use of humour frequently can eat up the teaching time and thus syllabus couldn't be completed in time.

Completing syllabus has become the only aim of education today. They do not see to it whether the students could grasp anything useful to them in their real life.

Teachers give more importance to moral values and they never tell lies to grab the attention of students.

Professors are not sensitive, and they don't easily get hurt when students make fun of them. They don't react to these by reducing the marks of students in their subject.

Teachers sometimes manipulate the original events to make it believable to students. In this way they can to present the event more beautifully among the students.

By testing hypothesis, we found that the gender is significantly related with effectiveness of humour. This implies that male and female uses humour in different ways and impact of this humour is different in various contexts.

Age is not a barrier in building up an effective student teacher relationship. Young teachers and Senior teachers are equally active in creating a peaceful learning environment for students.

## SUGGESTIONS

In this study I couldn't examine different aspects that are important to make this study more appropriate. Some of my recommendations that could be made use of in the further research are given below:

1. Students perception on humour was not observed directly thus future examination can be made by studying the viewpoint of students.

2. Scales can be used to measure the level of humour used by teachers in a classroom.

3. Professors must be given an awareness about the effectiveness of using humour in learning environment.

4. Majority of the Professors face huge difficulty in inculcating humour in their subject. They can be given theoretical base on humour to develop their skill to make classes lively and interesting.

## CONCLUSION

Humour element used in learning environment was used throughout the project. Management as we know is an art of getting things done through others. "A good manager is part of the art of leadership, of getting things done with people, of getting things done." Dwight D.

Eisenhower. Humour can be used in every spectrum from workplace to home. It serves many purposes like effective communication, improving leadership and management skills etc. This project was a qualitative assessment on use of humour and its implications in classroom.

Professors take great interest in involving humour in their classrooms. They make the classes very much lively by using different types of humour like teasing, jokes, anecdotes and self-depreciating humour. They make the learning environment pleasant for the students and increase their concentration and attention towards the subject and classroom. Lecturers try to build a positive relationship among students to improve communication and carry interactive and funny conversations to bring innovation and higher morale. Lending ears to the opinions of students have uplifted them and has brought great motivation to the students. Thus, this project helped us to understand the different concepts of humour and its application in classroom and its implications.

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