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Studying the Relationship between Humor, Job Satisfaction and Organizational Citizenship Behavior

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ABSTRACT

Background: Over the last few years, a variety of studies for the causes and effects of the job satisfaction and turnover of nurses have been conducted. In recent years, the nursing shortage and anticipated increase in demand for nursing services as well as the importance of nurses' job satisfaction in quality of patient care have brought increased interest in discovering ways to enhance job satisfaction and improve nurse retention. **Objective:** The purpose of this research was to study the relationship between humor, job satisfaction and organizational citizenship behavior (OCB) among hospital's nurses in Iran. After distributing questionnaires, 294 accurate questionnaires have been used for data analysis. This research was conducted using three separate Questionnaires. Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) was conducted to examine the relationship between humor, job satisfaction and organizational citizenship behavior. **Results:** The finding showed that humor influences on job satisfaction with a significant path coefficient at 0.78; humor influences on OCB with a significant path coefficient at 0.64 and job satisfaction influences on OCB with a significant path coefficient at 0.69. **Conclusion:** The results of this study state that having a sense of humor is a powerful way to enhance job satisfaction and employees' OCB.

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INTRODUCTION

Over the last few years, a variety of studies for the causes and effects of the job satisfaction and turnover of nurses have been conducted (Park and Kim, 2009). In recent years, the nursing shortage and anticipated increase in demand for nursing services as well as the importance of nurses' job satisfaction in quality of patient care have brought increased interest in discovering ways to enhance job satisfaction and improve nurse retention (Andrews and Dziegielewski, 2005; Rondeau and Wagar, 2006; Park and Kim, 2009). Based on Lu *et al.* (2005) job satisfaction has been considered as a key antecedent of voluntary turnover. The impact of nurse turnover on the effectiveness of an organization is significant (Park and Kim, 2009). High nurse turnover can influence negatively on an organization's capacity to meet patient needs and provide quality care (Shields and Ward, 2001). Reasons like working longer hours, heavy workloads, staff shortage, lack of funds for training and development and a culture of nurses using their own time and money to undertake training, causes job dissatisfaction among nurses (Tai *et al.* 1998; Newman and Maylor, 2002). Job dissatisfaction reduces the ability of providing the sustain, adequate and appropriate level of service to patients in both acute and primary settings (Newman *et al.* 2002).

Job Satisfaction has been widely studied in organizational research. Lund (2003) in an empirical investigation examined the impact of organizational culture types on job satisfaction in a survey of marketing professionals in a cross-section of firms in the USA. The result showed that job satisfaction levels varied across corporate cultural typology. Job satisfaction was positively related to clan and adhocracy cultures, and negatively related to marketing and hierarchy cultures. O'Leary *et al.* (2009) investigated the relationship between job characteristics and job satisfaction among physicians in Russia. The study showed that, male doctors reported higher levels of satisfaction than female doctors, while those who worked in polyclinics were more satisfied than those employed by hospitals. Female physicians were more satisfied in their relations with patients and colleagues than their male counterparts. The majority of physicians were dissatisfied with administration and time constraints. Toker (2011) Investigated the level of job satisfaction among academicians in the university of Turkey. The result showed that the job satisfaction levels of the academicians were found be

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moderately high. Park and Kim (2009) examined whether and how different types of organizational culture are associated with job satisfaction and turnover intention among hospital nurses in Korea. The results showed that among the different types of culture, consensual culture and rational culture had significant, positive associations with the nurses' job satisfaction. In addition, consensual culture exhibited the strongest, negative association with the turnover intention of the nurses, while hierarchical culture showed a significant, positive association.

From a managerial perspective, it is crucial to know what factors influence employee satisfaction (Matzler *et al.* 2004). One of this factors that effects on employee satisfaction is humor (Mesmer-Magnus and Viswesvaran, 2012). Humor is "any communicative instance which is perceived as humorous" (Martineau, 1972, p. 114). Humor is verbal and nonverbal communication, which produces a "positive cognitive or affective response from listeners" (Crawford, 1994, p. 57). Much humor research is focused on humor's effects on four personal outcomes: burnout, stress, coping, and health (Mesmer-Magnus and Viswesvaran, 2012). There is little shared understanding as to the role of humor in the workplace (Mesmer-Magnus and Viswesvaran, 2012). In the 1980s, researchers began to explore the possibility that sense of humor may also contribute to workplace effectiveness (Decker, 1987; Parsons, 1988; Remington, 1985). The subject of humor has been used in a range of literatures like applied psychology (Cooper, 2005; Ford and Ferguson, 2004); advertising (Hatzithomas *et al.* 2011; Limbu *et al.* 2012; Alden *et al.* 2000; Beard, 2005; Beard, 2008); relationship to team or group effectiveness (Romero and Pescosolido, 2008); communications (Wanzer *et al.*, 2005); neurology (Bartolo *et al.*, 2006; Coulson and Williams, 2005); leadership style and performance (Hughes and Avey, 2008) and product innovation (Ekvall, 1996).

Although there are examples of studies of humor, the literature is most often conceptual, and does not empirically examine the value of humor for service organizations (Slåtten *et al.* 2011). The purpose of this paper is to study the relationship between humor, job satisfaction and OCB between hospital's nurses.

1- Job satisfaction:

Job satisfaction has been widely studied over the last four decades of organizational research. Job satisfaction has been defined and measured both as a global construct and as a concept with multiple dimensions or facets.

As a global construct, job satisfaction can be defined as the feelings an employee has about the job in general as well as satisfaction with specific aspects, such as supervision, pay, opportunity for advancement, and morale (McNeese-Smith, 1997; Kangas *et al.*, 1999; Park and Kim, 2009). Locke (1976) defined job satisfaction as a pleasurable, emotional state resulting from the self-appraisal of one's job or job experiences. Employee job satisfaction is an important attribute that organizations desire of their staff.

2- Humor:

Researchers have spent centuries trying to isolate a definition for "humor" and to describe what it means to say someone has a "sense of humor". However, these efforts have been fraught with complications given the complexity of the humor construct. Humor is a universal trait. It has existed in every culture, ancient and modern. It transcends language, geography, and time. Despite the enduring nature of humor, it has seldom been taken seriously by organizational scientists (Mesmer-Magnus and Viswesvaran, 2012).

Romero and Cruthirds (2006, p.59) define humor as "amusing communications that produce positive emotions and cognitions in the individual, group, or organization". In the management literature, humor is defined as a message whose ingenuity, verbal skill, and/or incongruity has the power to evoke laughter (Bergeron, and Vachon, 2008).

3-Organizational Citizenship Behavior (OCB):

Organizational citizenship behavior (OCB) has become a major construct in the fields of the psychology and management and received a great deal of attention in the literature. OCB can be defined as individual behavior that is discretionary, not directly or explicitly recognized by the formal reward system, and that in the aggregate promotes the effective functioning of the organization (Organ, 1988). More recently, the definition of OCB has been expanded to include not only the categories of altruism (helping behaviors aimed directly at specific persons) and generalized compliance (conscientious performance for the good of the organization) but also the categories of courtesy, sportsmanship, and civic virtue (Podsakoff *et al.*, 2000).

4- Hypothesis development:

The growing importance of employee satisfaction has led to an increasing interest in studying the antecedences and consequences of the construct (Matzler *et al.* 2004). Kinicki *et al.* (2002) and Cote and Morgan (2002) argued that personal characteristics can have a significant impact on job satisfaction. One of this characteristics can be humor. The benefits of humor for general well-being have long been touted. Past empirical research has suggested that some of these benefits also exist in the work domain (Mesmer-Magnus

and Viswesvaran, 2012) Humor in the workplace has been identified as beneficial (Hopton *et al.* 2013). Having a great sense of humor provides many clear advantages. It increases energy and gives a feeling of well-being by stimulating the release of chemicals, such as endorphins and adrenaline (Miller, 1996). It decrease depression, anxiety and stress, as well as enhance one's mood, immunity to illness, and life/family satisfaction (e.g. Celso *et al.*, 2003; Martin, 1996; Lefcourt, 2001; Martin, 2001; Martin and Dobbins, 1988; McGhee, 1999). The humor facilitates social interaction and reduces the social distances among people (Yildızbas and Cakır, 2009). Positive emotions shared among coworkers contribute to positive affect spirals which have been found to promote improved coworker relationships, group member performance, organizational citizenship behaviors, and work satisfaction (Evans and Dion, 1991; Gully *et al.*, 1995; Mullen and Copper, 1994). Most authors claim that someone who is perceived as having a good sense of humor is viewed as being competent, knowledgeable, happy, and socially confident (Dobson, 2006). Researches also suggest positive humor may have the potential to buffer the deleterious effects of workplace stress through its use as a coping mechanism (helping promote relaxation, tension reduction, and dealing with disappointments; (Lippitt, 1982) and its ability to lubricate social interactions in stressful circumstances (Martin *et al.*, 2003). As you can see in Figure 1, one of the employee humor's out come can be job satisfaction.

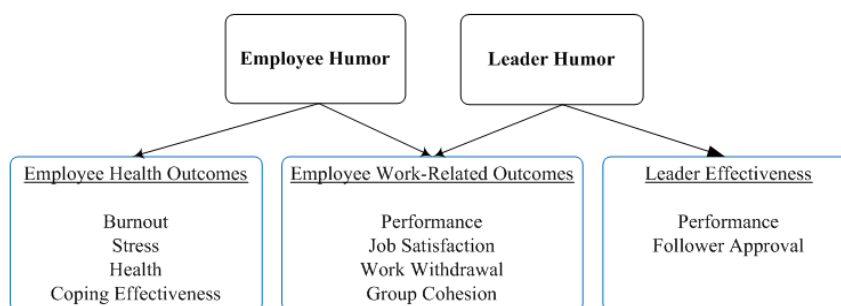


Fig. 1: Employee and leader humor outcomes (Mesmer-Magnus and Viswesvaran , 2012).

Based on some literature humor has been associated with job satisfaction (Brief and Weiss, 2002; Booth-Butterfield *et al.*, 2007; Parsons, 1988; Robert and Yan, 2007; Rupert and Kent, 2007; Schickedanz, 1993; Susa, 2002; Wanzer *et al.*, 2005) and OCB (Evans and Dion, 1991; Gully *et al.*, 1995; Mullen and Copper, 1994).

Hence, hypotheses are formulated as follow:

H1: Humor has a positive impact on job satisfaction

H2: Humor has a positive impact on OCB

H3: Job satisfaction has a positive impact on OCB.

On the basis of theoretical background the following conceptual model is developed.

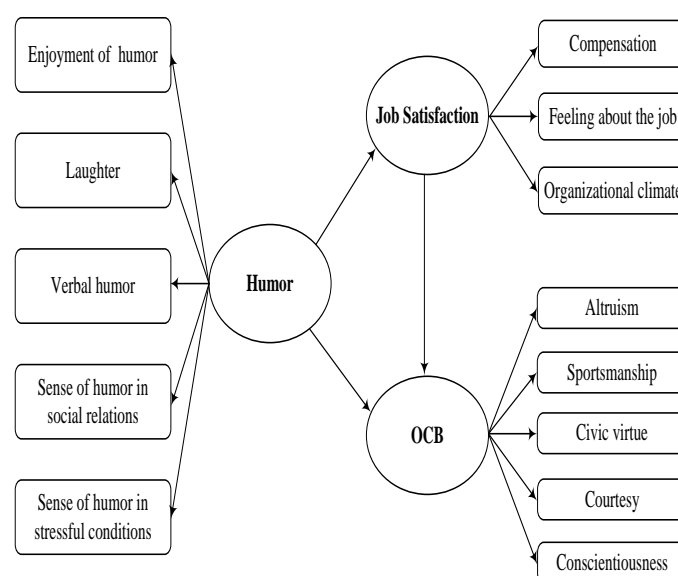


Fig. 2: Conceptual framework.

5-Methodology:

This paper used an empirical research design by questionnaire survey method to test the research hypothesis.

Sample:

The study took place at hospitals in Iran. A random sample of 387 nurses was selected and 387 questionnaires were distributed, of which 294 were yielded completed. Regarding the demographic information, most participants were female (78.6 percent), age from 22 to 50 years old and all of them were academic educated

Instruments:

This research was conducted using three separate instruments. The instruments were completed using a self-report method. Humor was assessed using the Sense of Humor Questionnaire (SHQ) developed by Khoshouei *et al.* (2009). The SHQ uses 25 items to measure the five subscales: Laughter (five items); Enjoyment of humor (five items); Verbal humor (five items); Sense of humor in social relations (five items) and Sense of humor in stressful conditions (five items). Respondents were asked to select the suitable point on a 5 points Likert scale, ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). The reliability of these subscales has been found to be satisfactory, the Cronbach's alpha was 0.82. For job satisfaction based on Weiss *et al.* (1967) and Eskildsen *et al.*, (2010) a questionnaire was developed with three subscales: Compensation (three items); Feeling about the job (four items) and Organizational climate (six items). Respondents were asked to select the suitable point on a 5 points Likert scale, ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). The reliability of these subscales has been found to be satisfactory, the Cronbach's alpha was 0.84 which is reasonably high. OCB was assessed by Bell and Menguc (2002) Questionnaire (with five subscales), the Cronbach's alpha was 0.78.

Data analysis:

Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) was conducted to test the hypotheses and to examine the relationships among the humor, job satisfaction and OCB. An important strength of SEM is its ability to incorporate the psychometrician's notion of constructs and measurement error in estimation procedure (Fornell and Larcker, 1981). We relied on several statistics to evaluate the goodness-of-fit of the models that includes: CMIN/df, RMSEA, CFI, NFI, NNFI, GFI and AGFI. Two statistical programs, SPSS 18 and Amos 21, were utilized to conduct the data analyses.

6-Results:

First measurement models were separately analyzed. Fit indices of the measurement models has been displayed in Table 1.

Table 1: Fit indices of the measurement models.

Model	CMIN/df	GFI	NNFI	NFI	CFI	RMSEA
Humor	2.12	0.901	0.928	0.932	0.918	0.056
Job satisfaction	2.32	0.921	0.930	0.970	0.925	0.072
OCB	1.89	0.915	0.941	0.904	0.926	0.048
Suitable fit	<3	>90%	>90%	>90%	>90%	<10%

As you can see in Table 1 these indices meet all of the selected criteria and suggest that overall fit of the measurement models is reasonable and acceptable.

Hypotheses testing:

SEM has been used for testing the hypotheses of research. Table 2 shows the fit indices of the structural model.

Table 2: Fit indices of the structural model.

Model	CMIN/df	GFI	NNFI	NFI	CFI	RMSEA
structural	2.65	0.912	0.942	0.954	0.914	0.061
Suitable fit	<3	>90%	>90%	>90%	>90%	<10%

For testing the hypotheses two indices named CR and P. If $CR > 1.96$ was used then in the significance level of 0.05 are confirmed the hypotheses. In Table 3 has been displayed the hypotheses and regression coefficients.

Table 3: Hypotheses and regression coefficients.

Hypotheses	Regression coefficients	CR	P	Result
Humor has a positive impact on job satisfaction	0.78	4.521	0.00	Confirmed
Humor has a positive impact on OCB	0.64	6.437	0.00	Confirmed
Job satisfaction has a positive impact on OCB	0.69	7.538	0.00	Confirmed

As you can see, humor has a strong influence on job satisfaction and OCB with a significant path coefficient at 0.78 and 0.64. In addition, job satisfaction has a positive impact on OCB with a significant path coefficient at 0.69.

7-Discussion and managerial implications:

Over the last few years, a variety of studies has been conducted for the causes and effects of the job satisfaction and turnover of nurses (Park and Kim, 2009). In recent years, the nursing shortage and anticipated increase in demand for nursing services as well as the importance of nurses' job satisfaction in quality of patient care have brought increased interest in discovering ways to enhance job satisfaction and improve nurse retention (Andrews and Dziegielewska, 2005; Rondeau and Wagar, 2006; Park and Kim, 2009). The growing importance of nurses' satisfaction has led to an increasing interest in studying the antecedents of their satisfaction. One of the factors that has a significant impact on job satisfaction is humor (Brief and Weiss, 2002; Booth-Butterfield *et al.*, 2007; Parsons, 1988; Robert and Yan, 2007; Rupert and Kent, 2007; Schickedanz, 1993; Susa, 2002; Wanzer *et al.*, 2005). Therefore, the main objective of this research was to determine the effects of humor on job satisfaction. The other objectives of this research were to determine the effects of humor on OCB and the effects of job satisfaction on OCB. The results from this study support the accepted hypothesis that humor is positively related to job satisfaction and OCB. The finding showed that humor influences on job satisfaction with a significant path coefficient at 0.78; humor influences on OCB with a significant path coefficient at 0.64 and job satisfaction influences on OCB with a significant path coefficient at 0.69.

This research creates an important implication for organizational practice. The results of this study state that having a sense of humor is a powerful way to enhance job satisfaction and employees' OCB. As previous researches showed employee humor is associated with enhanced work performance, satisfaction, workgroup cohesion, health, and coping effectiveness, as well as decreased burnout, stress, and work withdrawal (Mesmer-Magnus and Viswesvaran, 2012). Therefore, it is necessary to attention to this subject. Tackling nurse dissatisfaction in order to improve retention will require many factors like increased attention to compensation, education, and career development and flexibility (Rambur *et al.*, 2003). Creating a humorous workplace is an important factor that must be considered by leaders of organizations. Leader's sense of humor influences many of the same employee work-related outcomes as does employees' own humor. For example, humor by leaders/supervisors has been shown to reduce withdrawal behaviors (Wells, 2008) and increase subordinate job satisfaction and commitment (Burford, 1987; Decker, 1987).

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