The Role of Emotional Intelligence in Workplace Humor

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Benefits of Workplace Humor

• Creativity
• Socialization
• Communication
• Stress
• Boredom
• Frustration

Clouse & Spurgeon, 1995; Duncan, 1982; Holmes & Marra, 2002; Lippitt, 1982; Malone, 1980; Martin et al., 2003; Romero & Cruthirds, 2006; Roy, 1960; Sherman, 1988; Sykes, 1966
A Crisis of Laughter

Photo Credit: https://memegenerator.net/instance/46889873/frowning-cat-there-will-be-no-laughing-no-laughing-do-you-hear
A Crisis of Laughter

- ▲ Depression
- ▲ Emotional exhaustion
- ▼ Leadership performance
- ▼ Self-esteem

Kuiper et al., 2004; Tumkaya, 2007
ARE YOU MOCKING ME?

CUZ I FEEL LIKE I'M BEING MOCKED.

Thanks for making others feel better about themselves by being that self-denigrating person who always predicts personal failure prior to overachievement.

Photo Credit: https://www.someecards.com/usercards/viewcard/077997753b7743d2d41d2f2147d9d76ca5/?tagSlug=encouragement
Emotional Intelligence

- Perceiving Emotion
- Use of Emotion
- Understanding Emotion
- Managing Emotion
- Social Management

Photo Credit: https://memegenerator.net/instance/62088410/ancient-aliens-basically-emotional-intelligence
The Current Study

• Does emotional intelligence affect the way that a listener will interpret an ambiguous humor statement?
• Vignette videos, Self-Rated Emotional Intelligence Scale, Multidimensional Sense of Humor Scale, funniness, appropriateness, perceived attribution, response
• N=859
• Repeated measures ANOVA and multiple regression
Self-Denigration Example
Teasing Example
Results - Teasing

• *Understanding of emotions* demonstrated a marginally significant relationship with respondent perceptions of the appropriateness of teasing at work ($\beta=.064$, $t=1.85$, $p<.10$) and how funny teasing at work was found ($\beta=.062$, $t=1.68$, $p<.10$).

• *Use of emotions* accounted for a significant amount of variance in how appropriate teasing is for outside of work ($\beta=.068$, $t=1.96$, $p<.05$).
Results – Self-Denigration

• *Understanding of emotions* demonstrated a significant relationship with respondent perceptions of how funny the self-denigration was ($\beta=.201$, $t=5.44$, $p<.000$) and how appropriate it was for both work ($\beta=.104$, $t=2.81$, $p<.01$) and outside of work ($\beta=.096$, $t=2.58$, $p<.01$).

• *Perception of emotions* accounted for a significant amount of variance in how appropriate teasing is for in ($\beta=.084$, $t=2.16$, $p<.05$) and outside of work ($\beta=.077$, $t=1.94$, $p<.10$).
Supplemental Analyses

• Males find teasing funnier than females
• Males are more likely to return the joke than females, while females are more likely to ignore or ask the speaker to stop than males
• Females are more likely to perceive they are being insulted with teasing than males
• Self-Denigration is considered more appropriate for work than teasing by both sexes
So What?

- Training has a positive effect on emotional intelligence
- Avoid lectures
- Coaching, experiential learning, feedback

Mattingly & Kraiger, 2018

Photo Credit: https://memegenerator.net/instance/57255745/one-does-not-simply-one-does-not-simply-dismiss-emotional-intelligence-training
The Funniest Joke in the World

Photo Credit: https://sayingimages.com/deer-hunting-meme/
Encore

You Know You’re A Business Professor When...

Employer: why do you wanna be a college professor?
Me: it's in the syllabus
Employer: holy shit when can you start?

Thank you.
Questions?