

Fostering a Positive Work Environment: Effects of Emotional Intelligence, Psychological Safety, and Humor Styles on Employee Performance

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ABSTRACT

The present research determines the connection among emotional intelligence, psychological safety, humor styles, and employee work performance in organizations across Pakistan. The research philosophy for the study was positivism and quantitative method was used. So, design of the study was descriptive. Data were collected from 219 employees using a convenience sampling approach. The researcher collected the data with the help of four Standardized instruments. The data was analyzed with descriptive and inferential statistics i.e. frequency, percentage, Pearson Product Moment correlation and simple linear regression. The findings indicated a noteworthy optimistic relationship among emotional intelligence and work performance. Moreover, different humor styles showed varying degrees of association with work performance. However, psychological safety did not display a noteworthy relationship with any of the examined factors. These findings presented the importance of emotional intelligence and humor styles in influencing employee performance, providing valuable insights for workplace improvement. Future research should incorporate diverse sampling strategies and longitudinal methodologies to further validate and expand these findings.

Keywords: Emotional Intelligence, Psychological Safety, Humor Styles, Work Performance.

INTRODUCTION

Organizations worldwide are recognizing the significance of workplace dynamics, including emotional intelligence (EI), psychological safety (PS), and humor styles (HS), in shaping employee performance and engagement. These factors influence how employees interact, handle workplace challenges, and contribute to organizational goals. A workplace that nurtures emotional intelligence, promotes psychological safety, and encourages positive humor raises an atmosphere where workers feel appreciated, motivated, as well as authorized to execute at their best (Newman et al., 2017).

The ability to identify and control one's own and other people's emotions is known as emotional intelligence. According to research, workers with high EI are more likely to exhibit leadership traits, settle disputes amicably, and support harmonious team dynamics (Miao et al., 2017). Additionally, emotionally intelligent workers typically manage stress at work effectively, have excellent interpersonal skills, and adjust to changing work situations (Schlaerth et al., 2017). Due to its role in creating a collaborative and emotionally supportive workplace culture, emotional intelligence (EI) has been found to positively correlate with job satisfaction and overall work performance (Cote, 2017).

Psychological safety is another essential factor influencing employee performance (Frazier et al., 2017). Workplaces that prioritize psychological safety encourage open communication, innovation, and teamwork, ultimately improving organizational effectiveness (Newman et al., 2017). Conversely, environments with low psychological safety often experience reduced employee engagement, communication barriers, and heightened workplace stress, all of which can negatively affect job satisfaction and performance (Edmondson & Lei, 2017).

Humor styles also significantly impact workplace relationships and morale. Optimistic humor styles, like affiliative as well as self-enhancing humor, contribute to a supportive work environment by alleviating stress, fostering stronger interpersonal connections, and boosting employee engagement (Mesmer-Magnus et al., 2018). Leaders who utilize humor appropriately can strengthen team dynamics and enhance motivation, whereas inappropriate humor may lead to misunderstandings and workplace conflicts (Yam et al., 2018).

Self-enhancing humor, in particular, enables individuals to maintain a sense of humor even in high-pressure situations. This humor style fosters resilience and motivation, helping employees maintain consistent performance under stress (Yip & Martin, 2006). By encouraging a positive mindset, self-enhancing humor improves overall efficiency in the workplace (Cann & Matson, 2014). Affiliative and self-enhancing humor are linked to better psychological well-being, better team performance, and higher job satisfaction, according to a meta-analysis on workplace humor (Mesmer-Magnus et al., 2012).

Limited studies have explored their combined influence on employee performance. Understanding the interplay between these factors is essential for developing strategies to enhance productivity, foster employee well-being, and drive organizational success. The current study aims to investigate how humor styles, psychological safety, and emotional intelligence relate to employee performance prediction. The goal of this research is to give organizations useful insights into creating a friendly, creative, and productive workplace culture by examining these factors all together.

Statement of the Problem

A positive and productive work environment plays a vital role in improving employee performance, job satisfaction, and overall organizational success. However, many workplaces face challenges in creating an atmosphere that promotes well-being and collaboration. Research indicates that emotional intelligence (EI), psychological safety (PS), and humor styles (HS) significantly affect employee behavior, interpersonal relationships, and workplace performance (Miao et al., 2017; Newman et al., 2017). Despite increasing awareness of these factors, limited research has examined their combined influence within organizational settings. Exploring how these elements interact can offer valuable insights into fostering a more effective workplace culture and improving employee outcomes.

Emotional intelligence has been associated with stronger leadership skills, effective conflict resolution, and greater adaptability in dynamic work environments (Schlaerth et al., 2017). Psychological safety, on the other hand, has been related to higher levels of teamwork, and creativity of employees (Frazier et al., 2017). Additionally, humor styles play a key role in workplace interactions, with positive humor promoting collaboration and negative humor potentially undermining team cohesion (Mesmer-Magnus et al., 2018).

As modern workplaces become increasingly complex, understanding the psychological and social factors that contribute to employee performance is essential. The present research wants to bridge this research gap by examining the effects of emotional intelligence, psychological safety, humor styles on work performance. By examining these interactions, the study seeks to provide empirical evidence that can

guide organizations in developing strategies to enhance employee well-being, build a supportive work culture, and boost overall productivity.

Rationale of the Study

In today's dynamic workplace, employees must navigate both technical demands and interpersonal interactions. Understanding the association among emotional intelligence, psychological safety, humor styles, and work performance is vital for establishments looking to enhance output, creativity, as well as employee well-being. While these factors have been extensively studied individually, limited research examines their collective impact in professional settings. The present research wants to address that gap by examining how extent emotional intelligence, psychological safety, and humor styles together contribute to work performance key elements in creating collaborative and high-achieving workplaces.

This research focuses on identifying strategies to improve workplace culture. Emotional intelligence plays a significant role in fostering psychological safety as well as promoting optimistic humor styles, which, in turn, enhance employee performance by encouraging innovation, reducing stress, and strengthening professional relationships. Examining the connections between humor styles, psychological safety, and emotional intelligence can provide organizations with valuable strategies for improving both employee performance and workplace culture.

Objective

- To investigate the correlation among employees' emotional intelligence (EI), psychological safety (PS), humour styles (HS) and work performance (WP).
- To analyse effects of employees' emotional intelligence, psychological safety and humour styles on their work performance.

Hypotheses

H₁: Emotional intelligence is positively related with work performance.

H₂: Psychological safety has a noteworthy correlation with work performance.

H₃: Affiliative humour style is positively linked to work performance.

H₄: Self-enhancing humour style is positively linked to work performance.

H₅: Aggressive humour style is negatively related with work performance among employees.

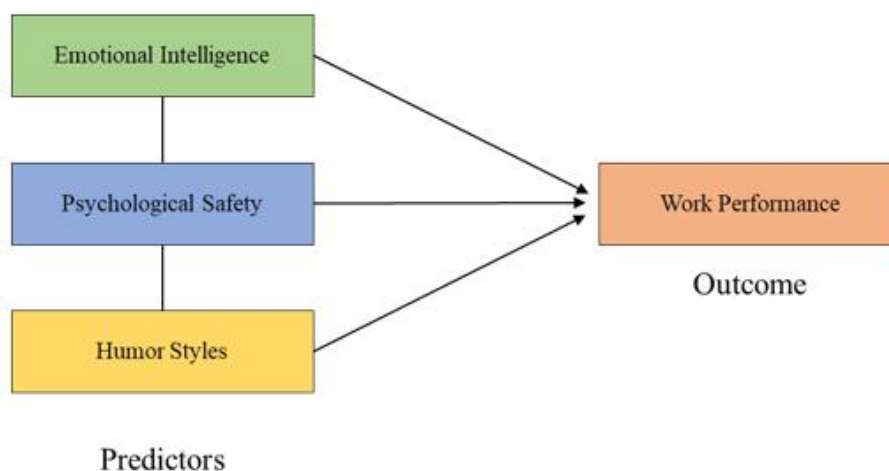
H₆: Self-defeating humour style is related with work performance among employees.

H₇: There is significant effects of emotional intelligence, psychological safety and humour styles on their work performance.

Delimitation

- Participants must be between 18 and 65 years old.
- Employees must have at least an intermediate-level education.
- A minimum of three months of work experience is required for inclusion in the study.

Conceptual Framework



LITERATURE REVIEW

A positive workplace environment is essential for employee productivity, job satisfaction, and organizational success. Several psychological and social factors influence workplace interactions, with emotional intelligence (EI), psychological safety (PS), and humor styles (HS) playing significant roles in shaping employee behavior and performance.

Emotional Intelligence and Employee Performance

Emotional intelligence (EI) is widely recognized as a crucial element of professional success. It characterizes an individual's ability to identify, understand, regulate, and utilize emotions in social and professional settings (Salovey & Mayer, 1990). Resilience, leadership, and problem-solving abilities are common traits of high EI professionals, and they all enhance workplace performance (Miao et al., 2017). Research consistently demonstrates that workplace outcomes such as job satisfaction and employee engagement are positively connected with emotional intelligence (EI) (Schlaerth et al., 2017).

Additionally, those with emotional intelligence are better at speaking clearly, settling disputes, and creating a positive work atmosphere (Cote, 2017). Emotional intelligence (EI) is a powerful predictor of job performance across a variety of industries (O'Boyle et al., 2018), highlighting its importance for career success. Organizations are giving Emotional Intelligence (EI) development programs more importance in order to increase staff efficiency because of its impact on leadership, decision-making, and stress management (Goleman et al., 2019).

Psychological Safety and Workplace Performance

A person's sense of a workplace where they can voice concerns, take chances, and express ideas without worrying about unfavorable outcomes is known as psychological safety (PS) (Edmondson, 1999). Psychologically safe workers are more inclined to share knowledge, solve problems, and be creative (Frazier et al., 2017). Psychologically unsafe workplaces can reduce creativity, raise stress levels, and impede employee engagement (Newman et al., 2017).

Psychological safety is a key factor in fostering teamwork, particularly in high-pressure work environments. Employees who feel secure in sharing their thoughts report higher job satisfaction and greater willingness to contribute innovative ideas (Edmondson & Lei, 2017). Additionally, leadership and organizational culture significantly influence psychological safety. Supportive leadership encourages open communication and trust, which further enhances team collaboration (Carmeli et al., 2018). Given

its importance in creating inclusive and innovative work environments, organizations are increasingly focusing on psychological safety to enhance worker well-being as well as performance.

Humor Styles and Employee Performance

Humor is essential to workplace communication, as it affects stress levels, interpersonal connections, and team cohesion. According to Martin et al. (2003), there are two main categories of humor styles: negative (aggressive and self-defeating) and positive (affiliative and self-enhancing). Affiliative humor contributes to a pleasant work environment by strengthening relationships at work, fostering social connections, and lowering tension (Mesmer-Magnus et al., 2018). Self-enhancing humor has been linked to improved emotional resilience and job satisfaction. It entails keeping a humorous attitude under difficult conditions (Tremblay, 2017).

On the other hand, aggressive humor characterized by sarcasm or ridicule can create a toxic workplace atmosphere, leading to decreased morale and interpersonal conflicts (Yam et al., 2018). Similarly, self-defeating humor, where people use humor at their own expense, may negatively impact self-esteem and contribute to burnout (Doorn et al., 2021). The role of humor in leadership is particularly significant; leaders who use humor appropriately can strengthen team dynamics and motivation, while inappropriate humor can damage credibility and trust (Cooper et al., 2018).

Theoretical Framework

Emotional Intelligence Theories

Emotional intelligence has been conceptualized through various models emphasizing its cognitive and behavioral components. One of the foundational frameworks is the Ability Model of Emotional Intelligence (Salovey & Mayer, 1990). This model categorizes EI into four key domains: Perceiving emotions, utilizing emotions, understanding emotions, Regulating emotions. This model emphasizes that EI is an ability that can be established over time, making it particularly relevant for workplace training programs that aim to improve collaboration and professional success.

Psychological Safety Theories

It plays a vital role in workplace dynamics, moreover is rooted in various psychological and organizational theories. Edmondson (1999) developed the concept within the framework of Social Exchange Theory (Blau, 1964), recommended that workplace associations function as reciprocal exchanges. When employees perceive a safe and supportive work environment, they are more likely to involve in idea-sharing, innovation, as well as teamwork, ultimately enhancing organizational commitment.

Humor Styles and Workplace Theories

Humor is another psychological factor that significantly impacts workplace interactions. Martin's Humor Styles Model (2003) categorizes humor into four types:

1. Affiliative humor: Strengthens social bonds and promotes positive interactions.
2. Self-enhancing humor : Supports people deal with anxiety via maintaining an optimistic perspective.
3. Aggressive humor: Involves sarcasm or ridicule, which can lead to workplace conflict.
4. Self-defeating humor : Involves self-disparagement, which can undermine self-esteem and contribute to stress.

While positive humor styles enhance workplace relationships, negative humor styles can lead to tension and decreased job satisfaction. Understanding these dynamics allows organizations to cultivate a healthy and engaging work environment.

Work Performance Theories

Work performance is a fundamental concept in organizational behavior and has been explained through multiple theoretical models.

- Campbell's Theory of Work Performance (1990) distinguishes between performance (actions taken) and effectiveness (outcomes achieved), emphasizing task proficiency as a key determinant of workplace success.
- Griffin, Neal, and Parker's Adaptive Performance Model (2007) highlights the importance of flexibility in responding to changing job demands, making adaptability a critical component of modern work performance.
- Koopmans et al.'s (2011) Multidimensional Work Performance Model categorizes performance into three dimensions: Task performance, Fulfilling job responsibilities effectively. Contextual performance, involving in activities that support a positive work atmosphere. Counterproductive work behavior (CPWB), Behaviors like absenteeism or workplace deviance that negatively impact organizational aims.

METHODOLOGY

Study Design

The research philosophy for the study was positivism and quantitative method was used. So, design of the study was descriptive.

Population

Population of the study comprised of employees from numerous organizations and industries to capture a diverse range of emotional intelligence levels, psychological safety perceptions, humor styles, moreover work performance metrics.

Sample

Sample comprised of 219 employees holding different job positions across multiple departments in various organizations. Furthermore, convenience sampling technique was used to choose sample.

Instruments

The study's instrument was a questionnaire that focused on work performance, humor style, psychological safety, and emotional intelligence. The Wong and Law scale (2002) was used to test emotional intelligence. The 16 items on this measure are scored on a 7-point Likert scale, where 1 represents strongly disagree and 7 represents strongly agree. Edmondson's (1999) scale, which consists of seven items with a 5-point Likert scale—1 denoting strongly disagree and 5 denoting strongly agree—was used to measure psychological safety. The Humor Styles Questionnaire (HSQ) was used to evaluate humor style (Martin et al., 2003). This 32-item test, which uses a 7-point Likert scale (1 being absolutely disagree and 7 being completely agree), assesses four distinct humor styles.

The Individual Work Performance Questionnaire (Koopmans et al., 2014) was used to evaluate work performance. This 18-item test, which is rated on a 5-point Likert scale (1 = seldom to 5 = usually), evaluates three work performance aspects: task performance, contextual performance, and counterproductive work behavior.

Pilot Testing

In order to evaluate the instruments' reliability, 30 employees participated in a pilot study. Strong internal consistency was demonstrated by the Wong & Law Emotional Intelligence Scale's Cronbach's alpha of 0.82, the Psychological Safety Scale's 0.85, the Humor Styles Questionnaire's 0.88, and the Individual Work Performance Questionnaire's 0.90. The results validated that the tools were appropriate for the primary investigation.

Data Collection

The survey was distributed across different organizations to recruit participants. Employees who expressed willingness to contribute completed the study. The survey comprised an informed consent form, demographic information sheet, Wong & Law Emotional Intelligence Scale (WLEIS), Psychological Safety Scale, Humor Styles Questionnaire, and Individual Work Performance Questionnaire, with clear instructions. All ethical guidelines were adhered to throughout the study.

Data Analysis

The data were analyzed with SPSS software version 26. The data were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics such as; frequency, percentage, Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient and simple linear regression.

RESULTS

Table 1
Demographic Characteristics of the Participants

Characteristics	<i>f (%)</i>	Mean	(SD)
Age		30.10	8.39
Gender			
Male	112 (51.1)		
Female	106 (48.4)		
Prefer not to say	1 (0.5)		
Marital Status			
Single	118 (53.9)		
Married	98 (44.7)		
Other	3 (1.4)		
Education Level			
Intermediate	13 (5.9)		
Bachelors	106 (48.4)		
Masters	80 (36.5)		
Above	20 (9.1)		
Job Type			
Full-time	179 (81.7)		

Part-time	20 (9.1)		
Internship	14 (6.4)		
Other	6 (2.7)		
Work Experience		6.82	7.13
Tenure in Current Organization		5.21	6.65

f = Frequency, % = percentage, SD = Standard Deviation

The respondents' demographic information is shown in Table 1. The participants were 30.10 years old on average (SD = 8.39). One (0.5%) of them chose not to reveal their gender, while 106 (48.4%) were female and 112 (51.1%) were male. Regarding marital status, 3 (1.4%) reported other statuses, 98 (44.7%) were married, and 118 (53.9%) were single. Of the participants, 106 (48.4%) possessed a bachelor's degree, 80 (36.5%) possessed a master's degree, 13 (5.9%) finished intermediate school, and 20 (9.1%) had credentials higher than a master's degree.

The majority of participants (179, or 81.7%) had full-time jobs, compared to 20 (9.1%) who had part-time jobs, 14 (6.4%) who were interns, and 6 (2.7%) who had other jobs. The participants had an average of 6.82 years of work experience (SD = 7.13) and had been with their current organizations for an average of 5.21 years (SD = 6.65). The study included employees from various job roles, departments, and organizations, ensuring a diverse representation of workplace experiences.

Table 2
Correlation Matrix of Study factors

No.	factors	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1.	Emotional Intelligence	1						
2.	Psychological Safety	-0.058	1					
3.	Affiliative Humor	-0.028	-0.040	1				
4.	Self-Enhancing Humor	0.374**	0.000	0.245**	1			
5.	Aggressive Humor	-0.381**	-0.007	-0.161*	-0.178**	1		
6.	Self-defeating Humor	-0.017	0.113	-0.017	0.084	0.409**	1	
7.	Work Performance	0.478**	0.061	0.136*	0.317**	-0.420**	-0.181**	1

***p < 0.01*

The correlation matrix for the study variables ; humor styles (HS), psychological safety (PS), job performance (WP), and emotional intelligence (EI) is shown in Table 2. The findings show that whereas EI has a negative link with violent humor ($r = -0.381$, $p < 0.01$), it partakes a positive relationship with self-enhancing humor ($r = 0.374$, $p < 0.01$) as well as overall WP ($r = 0.478$, $p < 0.01$). There are no discernible relationships between EI and either affiliative humor or PS.

WP exhibits positive associations with self-enhancing humor ($r = 0.317$, $p < 0.01$), affiliative humor ($r = 0.136$, $p < 0.05$), moreover emotional intelligence ($r = 0.478$, $p < 0.01$). While aggressive humor partakes a direct relationship with self-defeating humor ($r = 0.409$, $p < 0.01$), it has inverse relationship with EI ($r = -0.381$, $p < 0.01$), self-enhancing humor ($r = -0.178$, $p < 0.01$), and WP ($r = -0.420$, $p < 0.01$). In a similar vein, self-defeating humor has a negative link with WP ($r = -0.181$, $p < 0.01$) and a direct relationship with violent humor ($r = 0.409$, $p < 0.01$).

Table 3

Multiple Regression Analysis on Task Performance by Emotional Intelligence, Self-enhancing humor, and Aggressive humor

Variables	B	SE B	β	t	p	95% CI	
						LL	UL
Constant	0.66	0.45		1.45	0.149	-0.24	1.55
Emotional Intelligence	0.28	0.05	0.36	5.27	< 0.001	0.18	0.39
Self-enhancing Humor	0.02	00.01	00.15	2.28	0.023	0.003	0.04
Aggressive Humor	-0.01	0.01	-0.07	-1.10	0.272	-0.02	0.01

$R = 0.47, R^2 = 0.22, \Delta R^2 = 0.21 (F = 20.64^{**})$

$^{**}p < .001$

Table 3 displays the results determines the effects of emotional intelligence, aggressive humor, and self-enhancing humor on task performance. There were 219 participants in the analysis. With $R = 0.47$ and $R^2 = 0.22$, the whole model was able to clarify 22% of the variance in task performance. The model's $F(3, 215) = 20.64, p < 0.01$, indicated statistical significance. With a standardized coefficient (β) of 0.36 ($p < 0.001$), it was found that emotional intelligence was a substantial positive predictor of task performance. With a β of 0.15 ($p = 0.023$), self-enhancing humor also substantially predicted task performance. However, with a β value of -0.07 and a p-value of 0.272, aggressive humor did not significantly predict task performance.

Table 4

Multiple Regression Analysis on Contextual Performance by Emotional Intelligence, Self-enhancing humor, and Aggressive humor

Variables	B	SE B	β	t	p	95% CI	
						LL	UL
Constant	0.61	0.41		1.48	0.139	-0.20	1.42
Emotional Intelligence	0.24	0.05	0.34	5.02	< 0.001	0.15	.34
Self-enhancing Humor	00.02	0.01	0.18	2.83	0.005	0.01	0.04
Aggressive Humor	-0.01	0.01	-.06	-.93	.352	-0.02	0.01

$R = 0.47, R^2 = 0.22, \Delta R^2 = 0.21 (F = 20.81^{**})$

$^{**}p < 0.001$

Table 4 presents the results of Contextual performance that used emotional intelligence, aggressive humor, and self-enhancing humor. The model has a statistically significance overall model ($F(3, 215) = 20.81, p < 0.001$) and explains 22% of the variance in contextual performance ($R^2 = 0.22$). Contextual performance was found to be significantly positively predicted by emotional intelligence ($\beta = 0.34, p < 0.001$).

Contextual performance was also favorably influenced by self-enhancing humor ($\beta = 0.18$, $p = 0.005$). Nevertheless, contextual performance was not substantially predicted by aggressive humor ($\beta = -0.06$, $p = 0.352$).

Table 5

Multiple Regression Analysis on Counterproductive Work Behavior by Emotional Intelligence, Affiliative humor, Aggressive humor, and Self-defeating humor

Variables	<i>B</i>	<i>SE B</i>	β	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>	95% CI	
						<i>LL</i>	<i>UL</i>
Constant	0.13	0.56		0.23	0.816	-0.97	1.23
Emotional Intelligence	0.01	0.05	0.01	0.09	0.930	-0.11	0.12
Affiliative Humor	-0.02	0.01	-0.17	-2.89	0.004	-0.03	-0.01
Aggressive Humor	0.05	0.01	0.39	5.34	0.000	0.03	0.07
Self-defeating Humor	0.01	0.01	0.11	1.67	0.097	-0.02	0.03
$R = 0.499$, $R^2 = 0.25$, $\Delta R^2 = 0.24$ ($F = 17.73^{**}$)							

$^{**}p < 0.001$

The findings of a multiple regression study on counterproductive work behavior, which predicted it using three distinct humor types and emotional intelligence, are shown in Table 5. The model is statistically significant overall ($F(4, 214) = 17.73$, $p < 0.001$) and accounts for 25% of the variance in counterproductive work behavior ($R^2 = 0.25$). Counterproductive Work Behavior was not significantly predicted by emotional intelligence ($\beta = 0.01$, $p = 0.930$). Conversely, Aggressive Humor Style demonstrated a substantial positive influence on Counterproductive Work Behavior ($\beta = 0.39$, $p < 0.001$), whereas Affiliative Humor adversely predicted Counterproductive Work Behavior ($\beta = -0.17$, $p = 0.004$). Additionally, with a β value of 0.11 and a p -value of 0.097, self-defeating humor did not substantially predict counterproductive work behavior.

Table 6

Multiple Regression Analysis on overall Work Performance by Emotional Intelligence, and Humor Styles

Variables	<i>B</i>	<i>SE B</i>	β	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>	95% CI	
						<i>LL</i>	<i>UL</i>
Constant	1.61	0.35		4.63	< .001	0.93	2.29
Emotional Intelligence	0.19	0.04	0.35	5.22	< 0.001	0.12	0.27
Affiliative Humor	0.01	0.004	0.08	1.28	0.202	-0.003	0.01
Self-enhancing Humor	0.014	0.01	0.14	2.21	0.028	0.001	0.03
Aggressive Humor	-0.02	0.01	-0.21	-3.04	0.003	-0.03	-0.01

Self-defeating Humor	-0.01	0.01	-0.10	-1.58	.115	-.02	.002
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$R = 0.57, R^2 = 0.33, \Delta R^2 = 0.31 (F = 20.67^{**})$

*** $p < 0.001$*

The findings of a multiple regression study on total work performance, which predicted it using humor styles and emotional intelligence, are shown in Table 6. The total model is statistically significant ($F(6, 212) = 20.67, p < 0.001$) and accounts for 33% of the variance in overall work performance ($R^2 = 0.33$). Overall work performance was substantially predicted by emotional intelligence ($\beta = 0.35, p < 0.001$). It is also shown that self-enhancing humor style positively predicts work performance ($\beta = 0.14, p = 0.028$). Conversely, work performance was adversely predicted by aggressive Humor ($\beta = -0.21, p = 0.003$). Neither self-defeating humor nor affiliative humor substantially predicted work performance. The effects of self-defeating humor and affiliative humor were not significant ($\beta = 0.08, p = 0.202$ and $\beta = -0.10, p = 0.115$, respectively).

DISCUSSION

The findings offer a nuanced understanding of the interplay between emotional intelligence (EI), psychological safety (PS), humor styles (HS), and work performance (WP). These results align with existing literature while extending knowledge on their individual and interactive roles in organizational behavior. A strong, positive relationship between EI and WP supports prior evidence that emotional intelligence enhances both task and contextual performance by promoting emotional regulation, empathy, and effective interpersonal communication (Brasseur et al., 2013; Miao et al., 2017). This is consistent with theoretical frameworks like the Ability Model of Emotional Intelligence (Salovey & Mayer, 1990) and the Job Demands-Resources Model (Demerouti et al., 2001), which contend that emotionally intelligent workers are better able to adjust to demands at work and produce better results.

Furthermore, the results indicated that EI not only enhances individual effectiveness but also promotes healthier team dynamics by fostering trust and open communication which are critical components of collective success (Schulze & Krumm, 2017). Recent empirical studies support this, showing that EI facilitates shared leadership and psychological empowerment, both of which are linked to enhanced group performance (Khalili, 2021).

Interestingly, this research did not identify a statistically significant relationship between psychological safety and work performance. Although PS is typically associated with greater creativity, engagement, and team learning (Edmondson & Lei, 2014), its direct influence on performance appears to be conditional, possibly shaped by leadership style, organizational norms, or the nature of the work itself (Frazier et al., 2017; Newman et al., 2017). Such findings suggest that PS may serve more effectively as a moderator or mediator in workplace outcomes rather than as a standalone predictor. It could also function as a prerequisite for other success factors such as innovation or employee well-being rather than directly boosting performance.

The role of humor in the workplace is further elucidated by this study. Self-enhancing humor emerged as a positive predictor of work performance, corroborating findings that link it with resilience, optimism, and lower stress levels (Scheel et al., 2016; Ruch et al., 2018). Conversely, aggressive humor negatively correlated with performance, echoing prior literature that links such humor with interpersonal conflict and reduced team morale (Samson & Gross, 2012). Affiliative humor, while socially beneficial, did not show

a strong direct impact on performance, indicating that its effects may be more relational than performance-based a point those merits further exploration.

Regression analyses revealed that EI, self-enhancing humor, and aggressive humor collectively accounted for approximately 33% of the variance in WP. This supports frameworks such as Fredrickson's (2001) Broaden-and-Build Theory, which suggests that direct emotional states promote cognitive flexibility, creativity, and problem-solving abilities. The absence of a positive relationship among PS and WP may indicate that PS interacts with other constructs such as EI serving as a contextual enhancer rather than a direct contributor.

CONCLUSION

The present research determines relationship among emotional intelligence (EI), psychological safety (PS), humor styles (HS), and work performance (WP) to understand their collective role in shaping a positive workplace environment. The findings highlighted the significant impact of EI on work performance, showing a positive association with constructive humor styles, such as self-enhancing humor, and a adverse relationship with aggressive humor. This indicated that workers with higher emotional intelligence are more likely to use humor in an optimistic way, fostering a more engaging and productive work atmosphere.

Affiliative and self-enhancing humor was positively correlated with work performance, indicating that workers who use humor to improve relationships and manage stress typically perform better. On the other hand, humor that was forceful and counterproductive had a detrimental impact on productivity, emphasizing the potential drawbacks of humor styles that demean others or oneself in a professional setting. Notably, psychological safety did not exhibit significant correlations with other variables, implying that while it remains essential for workplace culture, its direct influence on emotional intelligence, humor styles, and performance may require further investigation.

The results emphasize the value of developing constructive humor and emotional intelligence as components of organizational strategies to improve employee well-being and performance. Organizations may establish work environments that empower employees, boost productivity, and promote long-term success by addressing the limitations noted and utilizing the study's insights.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The subsequent recommendations are proposed:

- Organizations may implement EI training programs to help employees recognize, regulate, and use their emotions effectively.
- Leaders should model emotionally intelligent behaviours to encourage a workplace culture that values empathy, self-awareness, and interpersonal communication.
- Managers may encourage collaboration, active listening, and constructive feedback to strengthen psychological safety and innovation.
- Leadership programs may include emotional intelligence and humor management to enhance team engagement and stress management.
- Leaders may learn how to use humor effectively to foster team unity and create a supportive work culture.
- Future studies may explore the role of psychological safety in greater depth, examining its potential indirect effects on emotional intelligence, humor styles, and performance.

- Additional research may consider industry-specific workplace cultures, as humor styles and emotional intelligence may vary across different professional settings.
- Investigating the impact of remote and hybrid work models on emotional intelligence, psychological safety, and humor use can provide insights for adapting these concepts to modern work environments.

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