

Humour: A Catalyst In Managing Quality Of Education And Life At Workplace

* Madan Kumar & ** Dr Raj Kumar Dhiman

* Assistant Prof. & ** Principal, Raj Rajeshwari College of Education, Bhota, Hamirpur (H.P.)-INDIA

ABSTRACT : The present paper has been designed with the objective to discuss the role of humour as a catalyst in managing the quality of education and life at workplace. As we know that humour plays a vital and crucial role in improving quality of teaching-learning process if used judiciously in teaching-learning situations by the teachers as Friedman et al. (2002)^[9] argued that humour can enhance the teacher-student relationship, makes potentially boring subject matter more interesting, reduces stress felt by students examinations, promotes attendance at classes, creates interest in the course and improves the ability of students to learn and recall material. Similarly, it the sense of humour which can lead us to live a healthy and cheerful life without any stress and strains as Kuiper & Martin (1993)^[16] found out that people having high sense of humour could cope with stress more effectively and they could construct more healthy relationships with others. Moreover, humor has the potential to remedy conflict problems and promote healthy social relations in the workplace. Humor supports attempts to build group cohesion, enhance communication (Meyer, 1997)^[18], boost subordinate satisfaction (Decker, 1987)^[7], contribute to higher productivity (Avolio et al., 1999)^[11] and increase creativity (Brotherton, 1996)^[4]. Researchers have also discovered that humor is constructive in creating and maintaining organizational culture (Clouse & Spurgeon, 1995)^[5], promoting leadership effectiveness (Decker & Rotondo, 2001)^[7] and in generating camaraderie (Vaill, 1989)^[22]. Thus, an attempt has been made to discuss the catalytic role of humour in managing and leading a stress free life in teaching-learning situations as well as at other workplaces.

KEY WORDS: Humour, Catalyst, Quality, Managing, Education, Workplace, Life.

INTRODUCTION

Humour or jokes are the ability of a person, an object, a situation or words that is able to trigger emotions like joy or being entertained. The use of humour in everyday communication has many benefits, both for the listener or presenter. Humour is an element that is very effectively used to attract listeners to feel like they want to receive information conveyed by the presenter. Listeners are also entertained by the humour elements shown by someone else, which can cause a person to laugh. Humour or jokes practiced by the instructor are able to create a learning environment that is cheerful and can help reduce stress and anxiety among students. The practice of the use of humour in the process of interpersonal communication among educators also allows students to feel happier and it helps them concentrate more on their studies. At the same time, educators are also benefited by enjoying a work environment that is filled with more fun and entertainment. This contributes to a happier life style, especially when facing work situations that can sometimes be stressful. The relationship between students and educators who are not friendly with one another can cause various problems within the classroom, for instance, students may feel timid and hesitant to interact or participate. As the globalized world requires the globalization of quality, we should intend to build new strategies and perspective rather than simply embracing current administrative techniques. Further, despite the belief that business is serious, humor can lighten the mood within organizational environments and make work life more enjoyable. Within work groups, which are fundamentally driven by the rules of human interaction, understanding the multifunctional role of humor in organizations can actually contribute to effective management of personnel. Indeed, the proper use of organizational humor can provide valuable benefits to organizations and even more valuable tools to management for motivating staff, communicating effectively and mitigating discord.

Martin et al. (2003)^[17] found four different humour styles in the daily use of humour by individuals. This also refers to individuals differences in the use of humour. Two of the humour styles are positive and healthy, while the other two are negative and unhealthy within the context of psychological wellbeing. So, the judicious use of humour keeping in mind the benefits and ill effects of use of humour styles may surely lead to effective management of teaching-learning process and life at all workplaces.

TYPES OF HUMOUR

Humour is one of the major components for effective management of teaching-learning process and life at workplace. Martin et al. (2003)^[17] has given the following four styles of humour as discussed under:

Affiliative Humour

This humour style is used to enhance one's relationships with others in a benevolent and positive manner. This manner of humour is typically used in a benevolent, self-accepting way. Affiliative individuals often use humour as a way to charm, to attract and amuse others, reduce anxiety among others and improve relationships. They are frequently spontaneous in their joke telling, comic stories, frequently participate in humorous teasing and enjoy laughing with others. Affiliative humour is alike to self-defeating humour because both styles of humour improve the relationships with others. On the other hand, unlike self-defeating humour, affiliative humour is not used at one's own expense.

Self-Enhancing Humour

This humour style is linked to having a good-natured mind-set toward life, having the talent to laugh at yourself, your circumstances and the idiosyncrasies of life in positively, non-detrimental way. It is used by persons to boost the self in a benevolent and positive way. This kind of humour is preeminent understood as a style of coping or emotion-regulating humour in which people use humour to look on the bright side of an unpleasant situation, find the silver lining domain or maintain a positive attitude even in frustrating times.

Aggressive Humour

It is a manner of humour which is potentially negative and detrimental towards others. This style of humour is characterized by the use of teasing, sarcasm, put-downs, disparagement, ridicule, criticism and other types of humour practiced at the expense of others. Aggressive humour style often disregards the impact it might have on others. Prejudices such as racism, racial discrimination and sexism are considered to be the aggressive approach of humour. This type of humour may at times appear like playful enjoyment, but sometimes the primary intent is to harm, to put down or belittle others. Aggressive humour is linked to higher levels of neuroticism along with lower levels of agreeableness and conscientiousness. Persons who exhibit higher levels of aggressive humour be likely to score higher on measures of hostility, unfriendliness and general aggression. Males tend to make practice of aggressive humour style more often than women.

Self-Defeating Humour

This style of humour may characterized by the use of potentially detrimental and unfavourable humour mode towards the self in order to gain appreciation from others. Persons high in this dimension of humour engage in self-disparaging humour in which amusement is often at their own expense. Self-defeating humour style often appears in the form of pleasing others by being the "butt" of the joke. This style of humour may sometimes appear in a form of denial in which humour is practiced as a defence mechanism for hiding negative and unconstructive feelings about the self. A variety of variables are linked with self-defeating humour style. People who more frequently use self-defeating humour show increased depressive symptoms in their behaviour pattern. Individuals who use this style of humour be likely to have higher levels of neuroticism and lower levels of agreeableness and conscientiousness. Self-defeating humour is linked with higher levels of depression, anxiety, apprehension, hesitation and psychiatric symptoms. Furthermore, it is associated with lower levels of self-esteem, psychological well-being, confidence and intimacy. This style of humour also tends to be more common in men than in women.

HUMOUR AS A CATALYST IN MANAGING QUALITY OF EDUCATION

The application of humour at any stage/phase of teaching-learning helps in improving the quality of education as observed and reflected by the following researchers:

Friedman et al. (2002)^[9] argued that humour can enhance the teacher-student relationship, makes potentially boring subject matter more interesting, reduces stress felt by students' examinations, promotes attendance at classes, creates interest in the course and improves the ability of students to learn and recall material.

Hickman & Crossland (2005)^[11] found that the link between laughter and academic success is also well documented. Positive connection between teacher's use of humour and academic achievement even follow students into colleges and beyond.

Banas et al. (2011)^[2] found that the use of humour is necessary to create learning environment. The use of positive, non-aggressive humour has been associated with a more interesting and relaxed learning environment, higher instructor evaluations, greater perceived motivation to learn and enjoyment of the course. They further revealed that the use of negative or aggressive humour aimed at students has been associated with many of the opposite outcomes, including a more anxious and uncomfortable learning environment, lower evaluations of instructors, increased student distraction and less enjoyment of class.

Şenol & Aksu (2015)^[21] revealed that to point out that school principals' creativity increase depending on the increase in their sense of humour- as school principals' capacity of humour raise, their level of creativity goes up as well.

Thus, it is clear from the findings of the research studies that humour plays a crucial & vital role in improving the quality of education and helps in effective management of teaching-learning process.

HUMOUR AS A CATALYST IN MANAGING LIFE AT WORKPLACE

The application of humour at any workplace helps in improving and managing the quality of life as reflected by the researchers discussed below:

Roy (1959)^[20] found that humour relieved boredom for factory machine operators and suggests that using humour makes a monotonous boring job bearable, and therefore these workers were able to stay in these jobs through their use of "the mock aggressions of horseplay".

Decker (1987)^[8] revealed that humour boost subordinate satisfaction.

Csikszentmihalyi (1991)^[6] found that Humour is an important component of organisational life and is a way of coping with the confusion and paradoxes inherent in most organisations and gives people a chance to vent their frustration or anxiety. People develop routines that help them when work gets boring or creates anxiety.

Kuiper & Martin (1993)^[16] found out that people having high sense of humour could cope with stress more effectively and they could construct more healthy relationships with others.

Barsoux (1996)^[3] Humour transforms "worrying inconsistencies into a source of amusement to be celebrated with others"

Brotherton (1996)^[4] found that humour increase creativity.

Meyer (1997)^[18] found that humour support attempts to build group cohesion and enhance communication.

Avolio et al., (1999)^[1] disclosed that humour contribute to higher productivity.

Researchers have also discovered that humour is constructive in creating and maintaining organizational culture (Clouse & Spurgeon, 1995)^[5], promoting leadership effectiveness (Decker & Rotondo, 2001)^[7] and in generating camaraderie (Vaill, 1989)^[22].

Grugulis(2002)^[10] Humour may not actually change organizational situations, it makes them more bearable. Humour may assist with defusing negative emotions, and employees can distance themselves from emotions at work through using humour.

Holmes & Marra (2002a)^[12] found that Humour is an intrinsic part of workplace culture and can minimize status differences between leaders and subordinates, break down barriers between people, and assist organisations to be more responsive.

Holmes & Marra (2002b)^[13] found that humour helps with the difficulties experienced in everyday life and has specific positive uses in organisational interactions. Using humour at work can also have effects that are not always positive, and these can range from humour used as a form of control by those in power, or humour can be used as a challenge by those of lower status.

Idigoras (2002)^[14] humour helps us to relate to others in a more relaxed manner, it helps us to deal with our fear of making a fool of ourselves (to avoid being laughed at, it is better to laugh at ourselves, so that humour acts as a remedy for shyness), it “relativizes” reality (permits us to seek different perspectives on all of those things that make our existence more complicated), it can help us to find solutions to the problems of everyday life, it helps us adapt to change (humour offers many alternative angles), it can help us to reduce feelings of frustration and it permits us to defend ourselves against criticism or offence that challenge our emotional equilibrium.

Klein & Kuiper (2006)^[15] found that the positive impact of Self-Enhancing Humour may have in group setting. Self-Enhancing humour can promote and help maintain personal psychological wellbeing as well as enhance an individual self-worth. The personal psychological wellbeing can help the individual appear more confident and self-assured, which in turn helps the individual appear to have more leadership qualities.

Robert & Yan (2007)^[19] suggest that humour is used for positive motivations—such as reducing stress and anxiety and developing cohesiveness; and also for negative motivations—that involve using humour to communicate harmful messages, dominate others, and even to subvert authority.

The above research studies clearly indicate that humour is need of the hour for effective management of human relations at workplace and increasing productivity of the organization.

CONCLUSION

From the above discussion on research studies, it has been found that educator gets the support of humour for providing quality education in every sphere through its catalytic role in decreasing the intent of stress & strains, anxiety, conflicts, tension and raising the level of wellbeing leading to wellness and healthy life at educational institutions and other workplaces.

Hence, it is crystal clear from the findings of the research studies that humour has applied implications for quality improvement and management of education along with managing life at workplaces.

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