The autocratic leadership style and its relation with sense of humor

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to explain the relation between leadership style and sense of humor by applying a humor styles questionnaire (HSQ) and leadership scale for sport (LSS) on a sample of 80 persons of prominent leaders in the field of sport (leaders & coaches) age \( M =42.68, SD = 0.975 \). The results indicated a positive correlation between autocratic leadership style and sense of humor. And that prompted me to try explaining that relationship.

Key words: Autocratic, leadership style, Sense of humor

Introduction

In this study, which applied to a number of prominent leaders in the field of sport (locally, regionally and internationally) and some of the technical managers of the national teams, Results indicated that the majority have a style of autocratic leadership and in the same time they have a high sense of humor. I was expecting that the style of democratic leadership is overarching with a sense of humor, but the results were different from my personal expectations. Which led me to deepen my reading about leadership and humor, so that I can interpret those results. Leadership has multiple definitions over the years, although it is difficult to define a specific concept (Hoy & Miskel, 1991).

Humor is more than just funny concepts; it represents a multifunctional management tool that can be used to achieve many objectives. It supports attempts to build group cohesion, enhance communication (Meyer 1997); People who exhibit self-enhancing humor have a humorous view of life and are not overly distressed by its inevitable tribulations. “Humor is not about comedy; it is about a fundamental cognitive function,” This mean it is coping mechanism for dealing with stress, which assists in maintaining a positive perspective. Self-enhancing humor is negatively related to neuroticism and positively related to self-esteem and favorable emotions. We posit that when this type of humor is used in organizations, the initiator’s intention is to enhance his/her image relative to others in the group or organization. Lastly, this humor style is centered more on the individual (Romero & Cruthirds 2006). “Many
theories believe that the key concept of humor is understanding incongruity, and this involves a mental process similar to problem solving. Many recent studies have shown that there is a relationship between general intelligence, verbal intelligence, and humor where humor production ability is an honest indicator of intelligence, Mesmer-Magnus, J., Glew, D., & Viswesvaran, C. (2012)

**Theoretical Background:**

Psychoanalysis Theory Freud (1960), Freud describes humor as one of the finest psychological achievements of man, because it is conceived in its conception of a defensive psychological mechanism to adapt to the stress external and internal challenges.

Biological Theory Instinct, The nerves are “awakened”, when the senses are stimulated, and then the human being laughs out of pure pleasure (Hill, 1998)

**Social Theory:**

Laughter is contagious, a feeling of exclusion is created if one does not join in the laughter. Although humour is part of daily interaction, it is a complex social psychological and communicative event. Moursund (1976).

Perceived organizational support (POS) theory, Support received are more highly valued if they are provided in a discretionary manner and fulfil teamwork’ important socioemotional needs and motives (Rhoades & Eisenberger, 2002).

Leadership is the sum of knowledge and skills of gathering a group of people around particular goals and putting them in action for accomplishing such goals (Çelik, 2000; Eren, 1991, 2003; Şişman, 2004). Or process of influencing motivations and activities of an organized group toward goal achievement, effectiveness and success of the organization Rauch & Behling, 1984 House et al (1999).

**Humor and leadership:**

both include deductive and offensive behaviors (Avolio, 1999) humor styles range from deductive humor styles, which involve affiliative and self-enhancing humor, to offensive humor styles, which include aggressive (Martin et al., 2003). Research in leadership suggests that leadership styles often coexist with humor styles (Vecchio et al., 2009). Leaders who use constructive humor are more effective at assigning and explaining tasks and making guidelines more acceptable. They can make the presentation of objectives more interesting and provide a persuasive message regarding the importance of accomplishing them (Lyttle, 2001)

**Research Aims:**

The relationship between autocratic leadership style and sense of humor in the selected research sample

**Research procedures:**

Methodo:-

The researcher has used the descriptive method supported by the survey studies in order to fit research nature.

sample:-

The participants for this study, representing the 80 (leaders &coaches) for the basic experience, age (M =42.68, SD =0.975).
Table 1:  
Statistical Characterization of the Sample of Research  
in Age and Experiences.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>measuring unit</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Median</th>
<th>Standard Deviation</th>
<th>Skewness</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>year</td>
<td>42.68</td>
<td>42.00</td>
<td>0.975</td>
<td>-0.200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experiences</td>
<td>year</td>
<td>18.70</td>
<td>19.00</td>
<td>1.11</td>
<td>0.165</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table (1) shows the modality of the distribution of the sample in the variables of Age and Experience, where the coefficients of the torsion of these variables are limited to (± 3).

**Measurement of Variables:**  
**Leadership Scale for Sport (LSS):**

The development of the Leadership Scale for Sport (LSS) was for a range of purposes. The Multidimensional Model of Sport Leadership was developed by Chelladurai (1978) to determine if certain leadership theories were applicable to the sporting environment. The purpose of the development of the LSS (Chelladurai & Saleh, 1980) was to attempt to deal with certain problems relating to leadership in the sport context by testing the Multidimensional Model (Salminen & Liukkonen, 1994). It is a questionnaire made up of 40 items that are divided into 5 subscales. 13 items relate to Training and Instruction, 9 items relate to Democratic Behaviour, 5 items relate to Autocratic Behaviour, 8 items relate to Social Support, and 5 items relate to Positive Feedback.

**Multidimensional Sense of Humor**

**Scale (MSHS) Thorson and Powell (1993)**

The MSHS is an instrument consisting of 24 itemsthat assess the multidimensional aspects of sense of humor,considering four dimensions (humor production; coping oradaptive humor; appreciation of humor and attitudes towards humor and humorous people). It is presented in the form of a 3-point Likert scale, ranging from 3 (strongly agree) to 1 (strongly disagree). Eighteen statements are positively-phrased and six are negatively-phrased to control for response-set bias.

After the researcher verified the validity of the research tools (Leadership Scale for Sport & Multidimensional Sense of Humor), applied to the research sample consisting of 80 (leaders & coaches) in the period from Tuesday 10-10-2017 to Tuesday 24/10/2017.
Results:

The statistical tables showed the existence of correlations between the dimensions of the various types of humor and the different driving styles. The results also showed that the highest links were between the autocratic leadership style and the dimensions of humor.

Table 2:

Statistical description for the responses of the study sample of leadership scale in sport

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Median</th>
<th>Standard Deviation</th>
<th>Skewness</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Authoritarian behavior</td>
<td>52.66</td>
<td>52.50</td>
<td>3.82</td>
<td>-0.677</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Training behavior</td>
<td>27.88</td>
<td>28.00</td>
<td>5.35</td>
<td>-0.072</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Democratic behavior</td>
<td>15.49</td>
<td>16.00</td>
<td>2.56</td>
<td>-0.164</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>social behavior</td>
<td>34.51</td>
<td>35.00</td>
<td>3.71</td>
<td>-0.833</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boost Behavior</td>
<td>22.29</td>
<td>23.00</td>
<td>2.44</td>
<td>-1.121</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>152.83</td>
<td>154.00</td>
<td>8.18</td>
<td>-0.741</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table (2) shows the modality of the distribution of the sample in the variables leadership scale in sport, where the coefficients of the torsion of these variables are limited to (± 3).

Table 3:

Statistical description of the research sample responses to Humor Styles Questionnaire

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Median</th>
<th>Standard Deviation</th>
<th>Skewness</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Creativity and the ability to produce Humor</td>
<td>22.35</td>
<td>23.00</td>
<td>3.41</td>
<td>0.069</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>and social integration</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The ability of the individual to use humor</td>
<td>14.70</td>
<td>15.00</td>
<td>2.10</td>
<td>-0.229</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>As a mechanism of confrontation and dealing with situations</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Estimation of humor</td>
<td>4.76</td>
<td>5.00</td>
<td>0.95</td>
<td>-0.057</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trends towards humor and funny people</td>
<td>5.80</td>
<td>6.00</td>
<td>1.53</td>
<td>0.499</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>47.61</td>
<td>48.00</td>
<td>4.48</td>
<td>-0.338</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table (3) shows the modality of the distribution of the sample in the variables of Humor Styles, where the coefficients of the torsion of these variables are limited to (± 3).
Table 4:  
The correlation matrix between the Humor Styles Questionnaire & leadership scale in sport

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Leadership Scale for Sport (LSS)</th>
<th>Humor Styles Questionnaire</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>ST.D</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Authoritarian behavior</td>
<td>28.55</td>
<td>5.56</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Training behavior</td>
<td>15.58</td>
<td>2.73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Democratic behavior</td>
<td>34.91</td>
<td>3.39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boost Behavior</td>
<td>22.48</td>
<td>2.22</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sum</td>
<td>154.38</td>
<td>10.88</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creativity and the ability to produce</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The ability of the individual to use humor</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Estimation of humor</td>
<td>4.83</td>
<td>0.98</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trends towards humor and funny people</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sum</td>
<td>47.98</td>
<td>5.40</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Shows the significant level \( p < 0.05 = 0.217 \)

Table (4) shows the correlation coefficient between variables Humor Styles Questionnaire & leadership scale in sport.
Discussion:
That is, leadership is a skill and ability to influence others by motivating their motivation to accomplish specific goals. So as long as we talk about skill and ability, it means that no matter what the leader's commanding style is, it does not mean that the leader follows one style in his administration, but he may use more than one style. Most of the leaders confirm that they do not ignore their employees where they hear and give them the chance to express their views and presentation of proposals, even the final decision was made by the leader only. As noted by some of the leader, the process of management and decision making, taking into account the different positions and there is no one and a bit of leadership, the successful leader uses more than a style of leadership and even if he knows what he will do in the end, However, a good leader can combine the two roles (Roger, 1994). The two categories actually distinguished two different style of leadership namely autocratic and democratic. It is clear the theories that dealt with explanation and interpretation leadership styles and its classification was omitted the different attitudes. According to All port (1935) attitude is a mindset or a tendency to act in a particular way due to both an individual's experience and temperament. There is no doubt that the leader who leads the organization for success makes staff more connected to him and regardless of his style of leadership, Sigmund Freud is the first person who talk about this personal association and describe it through the association of his patients with him and called it Transference. He wrote, “there is no love that does not reproduce infantile stereotypes,” which, for him, explained why so many of us choose spouses like our parents. This may explain why employees are associated with their managers, despite the use of strict leadership style. On the other hand, we must be aware that there is a difference between the leadership style and the personality traits of the leader; a leadership style is a very different from a leadership trait. A leadership trait, like a personality one, is something that is stable and tends to be active across many situations.

Conclusion:
Through the previous reviews I deduce several points as follows:
- The styles of leadership (authoritarianism - democracy ...) are closely related to the leader decision maker and not related to his personal traits.
- There is no specific style for each leader, but the style varies according to the nature and details of the subject.
- When the leader is fully aware of all the details and results, he follows the authoritarian style of not wasting time arguing and justifying.
- People are associated with a leader who leads to success regardless of his style.

- People who have a high level of humor are characterized by a high level of multiple intelligences.
- From the above, we can say that the ability of the leader to produce or understand humor, depends on the linguistic and social intelligence, personality traits and genetic. This does not conflict with the style of his leadership that he follows, Because the style of leadership depends on his experience and his own professional abilities.
References


## Appendix (1)

### Multidimensional Sense of Humor Scale (MSHS)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Authors</strong></th>
<th>James A. Thorson and F. C. Powell</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Category</strong></td>
<td>Self-report scale</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Description</strong></td>
<td>The MSHS contains 24 statements that respondents rate on a three-point Likert scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 3 (strongly agree). Eighteen statements are positively-phrased and six are negatively-phrased to control for response-set bias.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Number of Items</strong></td>
<td>24 items</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Measures</strong></td>
<td>In addition to an overall Sense of Humor score, factor analysis of the MSHS indicates four principal factors: (1) humor creativity and uses of humor for social purposes, (2) uses of coping humor, (3) appreciation of humorous people, and (4) appreciation of humor.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Population</strong></td>
<td>Adults</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Applications</strong></td>
<td>The MSHS is useful for comparing groups on sense of humor for determining correlates between sense of humor and other personality variables.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Time</strong></td>
<td>10 minutes or less</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Availability</strong></td>
<td>On the ISHS website or from the first author at <a href="mailto:jthorson@mail.unomaha.edu">jthorson@mail.unomaha.edu</a></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| **Online Materials** | **MSHS Questionnaire**  
**Original Sample and Scoring Information** |
Appendix

(2)

The Multidimensional Sense of Humor Scale

(MSHS)

1. I’m regarded as something of a wit by my
2. I can say things in such a way as to make people
4. People look to me to say amusing things
5. I use humor to entertain my friends
6. I’m confident that I can make other people laugh
7. Other people tell me that I say funny things
8. Sometimes I think up jokes or funny stories 0.63 0.42 9. I can often crack people up with the
things I say 0.85 10. I can ease a tense situation by saying something funny
11. I can have some control over a group of people by my uses of humor
12. Humor helps me cope
13. Uses of wit/humor help me master difficult situations
14. Coping by using humor is an elegant way of adapting
15. Trying to master situations through uses of humor is really dumb
16. Humor is a lousy coping mechanism
17. Uses of humor help to put me at ease .
18. I can use wit to help adapt to many situations
19. I appreciate those who generate humor .
20. I like a good joke .
21. Calling somebody a “comedian” is a real insult .
22. I dislike comics .
23. People who tell jokes are a pain in the neck .
24. I’m uncomfortable when everyone is cracking jokes .
Appendix

(*)

The Leadership Scale for Sport (LSS) Test Authors: P. Chelladurai & S. D. Saleh


1. See to it that every athlete is working to his capacity
2. Explain to each athlete the techniques and tactics of the sport
3. Pay special attention to correcting athletes' mistakes
4. Make sure that his part in the team is understood by all the athletes
5. Instruct every athlete individually in the skills of the sport
6. Figure ahead on what should be done
7. Explain to every athlete what he should and should not do
8. Expect every athlete to carry out his assignment to the last detail
9. Point out each athlete's strengths & weaknesses
10. Give specific instructions to each athlete as to what he should do in every situation
11. See to it that the efforts are coordinated
12. Explain how each athlete's contribution fits into the whole picture
13. Specify in detail what is expected of each athlete

Items for Autocratic Behavior:

1. Work relatively independent of the athletes
2. Not explain his action
3. Refuse to compromise a point
4. Keep to him
5. Speak in a manner not to be questioned

Items for Democratic Behaviour

1. Ask for the opinion of the athletes on strategies for specific competitions
2. Get group approval on important matters before going ahead
3. Let his athletes share in decision making
4. Encourage athletes to make suggestions for ways of conducting practices
5. Let the group set it's own goals
6. Let the athletes try their own way even if they make mistakes
7. Ask for the opinion of athletes on important coaching matters
8. Let athletes work at their own speed
9. Let the athletes decide on the plays to be used in the game

Items for Social Support:

1. Help the athletes with their personal problems
2. Help members of the group settle their conflicts
3. Look out for the personal welfare of the athletes
4. Do personal favors to the athletes
5. Express affection he feels for his athletes
6. Encourage the athlete to confide in him
7. Encourage close and informal relations
8. Invite athletes to his home

9. Items for Positive Feedback (Rewarding Behaviour)
10. Compliment an athlete on his performance in front of others
11. Tell an athlete when he does a particularly good job
12. See that an athlete is rewarded for a good performance
13. Express appreciation when an athlete performs well
14. Give credit when credit is due