

Understanding Humor-based Leadership's Impact on Work Value and Performance with a Special Emphasis on Shandong

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ABSTRACT

The research examines how leadership humor affects work value and performance specifically within the context of Shandong China. Leadership practices that use humor have become a subject of rising interest because they show promise to shape both workplace environments employee motivation and organizational success. The analysis combines research from three different sources including published scholarly publications along with company reports and existing studies to examine the work value effects of humorous leadership approaches. Researchers used thematic analysis to determine prominent data patterns that explain how humor affects leadership success as well as group unity and performance outcomes. The study indicates that leadership executed through humor enhances job quality but also found a better result block in an outcome that these two ultimately affect jointly. Humor is a major key and is a mode of creativity that is often used to deflect anxiety and raise company morale. The study makes an important contribution to the use of humor as a strategic leadership practice that enhances organizational performance. This study concludes that Shandong businesses should adopt the fun leadership strategy as it positively affects the outcome of worker productivity and organization.

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Contribution/Originality: This research contributes to the literature regarding the effects of humor-based leadership on employee engagement, performance, and organizational culture in the Shandong province of China. It proposes a new understanding of how humor could perhaps break down traditional hierarchies in Chinese companies in which cultural exchange, innovation, and display of work may increment.

1. Introduction

Current organizational environments accept humor-based leadership as a recognized style because it helps leaders develop strong connections with teammates while improving network communication and driving staff productivity. The use of humor by leaders impacts different aspects of workplace relationships because it boosts team morale while promoting creativity and minimizing workplace stress. Leadership through humor creates a supportive workspace known as "humor-oriented leadership" that generates positive results for both organizational performance and employee satisfaction.

Multiple research projects have demonstrated why humor stands essential to leadership. [Liu et al. \(2024\)](#) conducted research that showed humor from leaders enhances advice behaviors through its ability to improve open communication and idea exchange. [Evans et al. \(2019\)](#) investigated how workplace humor evaluation differs between employees depending on leader characteristics while examining gender effects in the workplace. The researchers from [Yunneng et al. \(2022\)](#) studied leader-affiliative humor as a vital motivator for work engagement in young employees. An exploratory study by [Xu et al. \(2023\)](#) examined knowledge-sharing promotion through humor by determining how humor improves psychological safety and team dynamics needed for innovation.

Humor-based leadership produces benefits that go further than one person. A leader who uses humor helps build a specific way of working within the organization. Leaders who use humor in their interactions create a more peaceful working space that invites new thinking and feedback sharing. People here receive strong job backing and strive harder to exceed objectives according to [Yunneng et al. \(2022\)](#) research. Companies moving fast in competitive fields require leaders who integrate humor because they need creative and innovative employees to succeed.

The research studies about humor-based leadership show that it powerfully affects how employees behave and how organizations work. According to [Liu et al. \(2024\)](#), effective humor use by leaders at work creates an environment where staff seek guidance while sharing thoughts during open meetings. Enabling teamwork through humor enhances how people work together and makes both teams and individuals more productive. [Evans et al. \(2019\)](#) studied humor behavior at work to see how people perceive gender leadership roles. They discovered humor enhances employees' relationship with their superiors allowing them to feel better about work while strengthening their trust in leaders.

[Yunneng et al. \(2022\)](#) studied how workers engage with their tasks at work through affiliative humor methods. Their data proved that leaders boost employee connection through friendly humorous actions, particularly with employees from younger demographics who need work-life balance support. Research proves that humor helps different work generations connect better to achieve better results at work. [Tan et al. \(2020\)](#) stated that humor helps teams overcome organizational hierarchy and establishes better communication channels. When employees feel safe expressing themselves through humor they can participate in problem-solving as their ideas are not feared or criticized.

Humor-based leadership needs specific adjustment in Shandong China because of its distinct cultural and workplace patterns. As a historical center of Confucian belief and traditional power relations, Shandong does not naturally support humor-based leadership. Multiple studies show how humor connects superior positions with employee involvement in structured work settings. Humor connects leaders to employees better since it reduces workplace distance, especially in Chinese settings where leaders stay unapproachable (Cheng et al., 2021). Humor plays a useful role in leadership practices within Shandong's current business settings.

1.1. Research Objectives

- i. To explore the influence of humor-based leadership on employee work engagement in Shandong.
- ii. To examine how humor affects employee performance and creativity.
- iii. To evaluate the role of humor-based leadership in fostering a positive organizational culture in Shandong businesses.

2. Literature Review

Organizations more frequently recognize humor-led guidance as a workable strategy that skillfully employs humor to enhance organizational culture and odds of staff performance and workplace consequences. Numerous studies examine the characteristics of humor in leadership on staff motivation company-wide engagement and imaginative thinking in Chinese work settings (Wang & Hou, 2023). This chapter reviews studies and applied theories on humor-based leadership and assesses its effects on workplace culture and job performance, especially with respect to Chinese contexts, particularly Shandong province. Table 1 below provides a simple description of the main concepts discussed in the literature as the impact of humor-based leadership on employee performance, work culture, and organizational outcomes, particularly in the Chinese culture of Shandong.

Table 1: Literature Summary Table

Topic	Key Findings	References
Humor and Leadership: Theoretical Foundations	Humor-based leadership, rooted in affiliative leadership principles, builds trust and fosters a comfortable environment, leading to improved employee engagement and work performance. Leader humor enhances psychological safety, reduces stress, and promotes creativity in the workplace.	Xu et al. (2023) highlighted the role of humor in enhancing knowledge sharing and self-efficacy. De Souza et al. (2019) emphasized how humor reduces stress and improves job satisfaction and work performance. Sobral et al. (2019) discussed humor as a leadership catalyst to resolve challenges and build positive leader-follower relationships.
Humor's Impact on Work Culture	Humor helps overcome hierarchical barriers, promoting open communication and positive organizational culture. In China, especially in Shandong, humor-based leadership reduces the severity of authority while maintaining	Wang et al. (2022) demonstrated how humor strengthens leadership outcomes and creates supportive workplaces. Lu et al. (2022) identified humor as a strategy to reduce psychological stress and workplace tension. Zhang and Yang (2024) confirmed that humor-based leadership improves communication

	respect and building more accessible relationships between leaders and employees.	and trust in Shandong's hierarchical context.
Humor and Employee Performance	Humor boosts job satisfaction, motivation, creativity, and overall employee performance. Positive humor reduces stress, enhances innovative thinking, and encourages knowledge-sharing and collaboration. However, improper humor can negatively impact trust and performance.	De Souza et al. (2019) found that humor improves job performance and satisfaction. Ying et al. (2024) showed humor enhances healthcare employee performance in Taian City. Xu et al. (2023) demonstrated humor's role in improving collaboration and performance in teams. Yam et al. (2018) noted the mixed impact of humor, where negative humor can harm trust and relationships.
Humor and Creativity	Humor in leadership fosters creativity by creating an environment of psychological safety where employees feel free to express novel ideas. This results in improved problem-solving and innovation, which are essential for organizational success, especially in innovative sectors.	Li et al. (2019) showed that humor improves employee creativity by strengthening psychological capital. Rosenberg et al. (2021) confirmed that leaders who use humor to build relationships achieve better creative results. Huang et al. (2023) found humor as a stress-reducing tool, aiding productivity and creativity.
Relevance to Shandong and Cultural Context	In Shandong, humor helps reduce the effects of traditional hierarchical leadership, improving communication and trust between employees and leaders. Humor-based leadership is essential for adapting to the region's evolving business needs, particularly for innovation-driven sectors.	Zhang and Yang (2024) demonstrated humor's ability to reduce hierarchical barriers in Shandong. Qi et al. (2023) and Ying et al. (2024) highlighted how humor-based leadership fosters knowledge sharing, collaboration, and innovation, which are crucial for the region's competitiveness in the global economy.

Individuals who use leadership methods that incorporate humor replicate the affiliative leadership principles by their use in developing associations, and by creating a comfortable organizational environment. A leadership approach such as this has positive impacts on employee engagement communication and work performance progress. [Zang et al. \(2021\)](#) used their research to demonstrate that a leader's affiliative humor due to psychological safety and self-efficacy increases knowledge sharing in teams. Oral histories show that leader humor can successfully reduce stress as it increases employee creativity which leads to positive emotions in the workplace context and fosters a safe supportive workplace environment ([de Souza et al., 2019](#)). According to [Sobral et al. \(2019\)](#), Humor serves as a catalyst for overcoming leadership hurdles by establishing competent and approachable leader representations that boost worker engagement and performance.

The perception of humor during communication affects how it influences both employee position and leader influence according to [Carnevale et al. \(2022\)](#). Negative varieties of workplace humor consisting of hostile or sarcastic actions create trust reductions between leaders and followers which reduces status in both parties. Leaders should

exercise caution regarding their use of humor to achieve beneficial outcomes in their leadership relationships.

The presence of humor serves as an essential force to develop an organizational culture. Through humor, organizations gain a powerful mechanism that overcomes company hierarchy and helps leaders foster open dialogue with their staff members. [Sobral et al. \(2019\)](#) demonstrated that managers who use humor build stronger leadership outcomes because it creates supportive workplaces that enable workers to share thoughts freely while maintaining professional respect. China stands out because its traditional workplace hierarchies bar employees from conducting effective open communication. The province of Shandong maintains orthodox Confucian beliefs and leadership norms which makes leadership humor a valuable tool to build interactive work relationships.

Various academic studies have examined how humor brings value to leadership situations in Chinese organizations. The implementation of humor-based leadership enables psychological stress reduction and helps stop undesirable workplace behaviors according to [Lu et al. \(2022\)](#). This strategy produces a uniform management discipline. In Shandong province, employees follow a culture built around seniority leadership but use humorous conduct which allows them to preserve their leaders' authority while reducing its severity. Through humor, employees can relate better to their leaders and form connections that strengthen the working environment despite maintaining organizational hierarchy ([Meng & Chang, 2024](#)).

Multiple scholarly investigations examine how leadership styles based on humor influence employee work results. Employees who experience leader humor demonstrate increased job satisfaction and motivation because it creates feelings of inclusivity which in turn drives better performance. The studies of [Wang et al. \(2022\)](#) discovered that workers who experience humor from their leaders present better performance results and higher job satisfaction levels. From a positive perspective, humor has the power to make people feel calmer and promote innovative thinking while boosting motivational levels in employees because it generates both calmness and support for workers.

The investigators at [Ying et al. \(2024\)](#) investigated the connection between workplace humor and healthcare employee performance within the Taian City healthcare sector of China. Research results demonstrated how humor creates positive effects on employee performance and especially enhances both worker engagement and service quality from a customer perspective. In this situation, humor-based leadership decreased workplace tension while professionals opened themselves to perform extra responsibilities beyond their regular duties. Affiliative humor serves as a key performance factor according to [Qi et al. \(2023\)](#) since their research demonstrates how this humor approach enhances team collaboration and knowledge sharing between colleagues.

Research indicates that humor acts on performance differently depending on specific circumstances at the same time leadership humor brings rewards based on both humor selection and cultural considerations at play during its delivery. [Yam et al. \(2019\)](#) study demonstrates how humor serves as both a blessing and an obstacle for workplace outcomes because improper management of humor generates unintended negative results. Employee performance along with organizational results suffers when negative humorous behaviors like aggression or sarcasm destroy relationships and decrease employee trust.

Leadership activation of workplace humor during employee interactions creates conditions that lead to innovative solutions and different issue-handling strategies. The research by [Wang and Hou \(2023\)](#) proves leadership strategies based on humor create several positive work outcomes due to enhanced creativity and innovation. Humor tools establish psychological safety that allows personnel to express unusual professional opinions without fear of rejection. The partnership proves crucial for achieving business success within the service industry along with hospitality.

The study conducted by [Li et al. \(2019\)](#) proved that leaders who use humor can improve employee creativity through their impact on psychological capital. The research found that humor in leadership strengthens both employee resistance to adversity and their positive outlook which enables creativity to flourish. Through a trust-based environment leaders stimulate employee innovation which produces superior organizational results. [Rosenberg et al. \(2021\)](#) performed a systematic review of workplace leadership humor which established that leaders who utilized humor to build positive relationships achieved better creativity and innovation results.

Hotel industry employees gain creative strength while relieving stress through the use of humor. [Salem et al. \(2023\)](#) investigated how humorous leadership affects upward voice and change resistance in hotel management. The researchers have established that workplace humor leads employees to feel comfortable with sharing their opinions which decreases their resistance to organizational change initiatives. The conservation of resources theory supports this finding because humor functions as a stress-reducing resource which leads to improved work performance ([Huang et al., 2023](#)). Using humor as a stress-management tool enables leaders to improve employee productivity by creating a relaxed yet focused working environment where workers defeat procrastination.

2.1. Relevance to Shandong and Cultural Context

Humor-based leadership in Shandong holds unique importance because of specific cultural elements and organizational characteristics in the region. As an area that maintains strong Confucian influences, Shandong places great importance on displaying authority and preserving social and hierarchical order. The cultural standards of such an environment might make humor seem inappropriate for leadership practices at first glance. Research by [Zhang & Yang \(2024\)](#) demonstrates that humor has proven successful in reducing hierarchical structures which results in better employee-leader communication and trust formation. Leadership practices that include humor have the ability to create an engaging work environment that younger employees specifically need in the Shandong region ([Qi et al., 2023](#)).

In the current global economy innovation becomes increasingly vital so Shandong-based companies need to implement dynamic leadership approaches that foster collaboration. The research by [Ying et al. \(2024\)](#) demonstrates how humorous leadership stimulates knowledge exchange and strengthens team relations while boosting work outcomes needed for innovation development. The continuously developing economy of Shandong stands to gain a competitive advantage through humor-based leadership which develops adaptable and resilient employees.

3. Research Methods

The study conducts research based on secondary data to examine how humor-based leadership affects work values and employee performance in Shandong Chinese businesses. As mentioned in the [Table 2](#) the collection of secondary data depends on analyzing dependable and credible information from academic journals alongside company reports together with previous surveys and case studies. These research materials allow scientists to detect patterns and trends related to leadership conduct and work humor features together with employee results without gathering new information.

Table 2: Research Method Overview

Aspect	Description
Study Focus	The study examines the impact of humor-based leadership on work values and employee performance in Shandong Chinese businesses using secondary data.
Secondary Data Sources	The research utilizes academic articles, industry reports, company reports, and previous surveys as secondary data sources. This data helps identify patterns in leadership and employee performance.
Data Sources and Justification	The secondary data sources are chosen for their credibility and relevance to leadership styles, organizational culture, and employee behavior in Shandong businesses.
Thematic Analysis	A thematic analysis approach is applied to evaluate recurring patterns within the secondary data. This allows for an understanding of how humor-based leadership affects employee engagement and performance.
Data Collection Process	Thematic analysis involves reading secondary data to identify patterns. Themes include "humor fostering creativity," "humor reducing stress," and "the role of humor in leadership effectiveness."
Theme Categorization	Themes are categorized into sub-groups related to leadership behavior, employee engagement, and performance outcomes, making the data more manageable.
Theme Definition and Validation	After identification, themes are checked and validated for evidence, ensuring they reflect the secondary data accurately. The themes help demonstrate the impact of humor in leadership within Shandong's cultural context.
Significance of Thematic Approach	Thematic analysis offers a flexible yet structured approach to interpreting secondary data, allowing for insights into leadership styles and organizational behavior.

This study relies on academic articles in combination with industry reports along with previous survey data as its secondary information sources stated in [Table 2](#). Scientific research for this analysis consists of journal literature that investigates how humor enriches leadership abilities. [Lê & Schmid \(2022\)](#) demonstrate new research approaches to study organizational behavior which focuses on leadership impact on worker performance. The article by [Busetto et al. \(2020\)](#) demonstrates qualitative research applications in organizational studies and details its practical use in this field. The research tools presented by these sources serve to outline methods for humor-based leadership evaluation across various business environments.

Industry reports about leadership and organizational culture patterns within China specifically in the Shandong region will supplement academic literature for this project. Consulting firms together with local business associations supply practical performance data about leadership humor in addition to its practice dynamics. These resources help the study gain awareness about how Shandong's cultural characteristics affect the implementation strategies of humorous leadership in this specific regional context (Privitera, 2024).

3.1. Thematic Analysis

As Table 2 says the systematic evaluation of secondary data patterns makes use of thematic analysis. The thematic analysis method will adopt procedures described by Bougie & Sekaran (2019) and Busetto et al. (2020) to discover frequent patterns within qualitative data. Secondary data becomes more manageable through thematic analysis because it generates distinct categories that incorporate major concepts. The research implements the following steps as part of the thematic analysis.

A complete reading of secondary source data will serve to uncover patterns linking leadership humor and employee performance and work culture. This paper explores how humor-based leadership affects employee engagement alongside employee motivation job satisfaction and performance quality at work. The assessment of each source will determine recurring patterns throughout "humor fostering creativity," "humor reducing stress" and "the role of humor in leadership effectiveness."

The researchers will arrange the discovered themes into essential sub-groups. Leadership humor styles fit under the classification of "humor's impact on leadership behavior" and employee performance and work outcomes fall into the employee engagement and productivity dimensions. The organizing process enables proper result organization while ensuring that the analysis tracks down essential data aspects. Ghanad (2023) explains that this thematic research approach delivers comprehensive insights about leadership-humor connections by demonstrating the effects different humor styles create in organizations.

The completion of theme identification leads to categorization before moving on to theme definition. The researcher checks and validates that each theme includes suitable evidence and supporting examples stemming from secondary data sources. The improved themes will enable researchers to establish findings regarding the work outcome effects of humor-based leadership within Shandong's cultural organizational realities.

Thematic analysis brings unfettered data interpretation along with an organized plan to explore leadership humor in all its aspects. The research design illustrated by Lê & Schmid (2022) works well to examine complex organizational issues such as leader behavior affecting employee outcomes. Using thematic analysis, this study will examine how organizational staff and culture are transformed because of humor to gain more insight into its impact on workplace settings and performance outcomes.

4. Results

Secondary data underwent thematic analysis which uncovered the main topics about humor-based leadership together with its impact on workplace culture and worker

productivity. Following [Table 3](#) is the reflection of the identified themes that have been organized into a table providing descriptions and their relation to the research question.

Table 3: Thematic Analysis Table

Theme	Description	References
Humor's Influence on Motivation	Humor in leadership positively influences employee motivation by creating a more engaging and supportive work environment. Leaders using humor can reduce stress, enhance job satisfaction, and increase employee willingness to perform at higher levels.	Xu et al. (2023) noted that affiliative humor in leadership encourages employee participation and fosters a more motivated workforce. Li et al. (2019) also identified that humor enhances psychological capital, which boosts creativity and motivation at work.
Creativity and Knowledge Sharing	Humor-based leadership promotes knowledge sharing and creativity by fostering an open and psychologically safe environment. Humor encourages employees to share ideas freely, thus boosting innovation and collaborative problem-solving.	Xu et al. (2023) explored how leader humor enhances knowledge-sharing self-efficacy, contributing to increased creativity. Rosenberg et al. (2021) and Abdillah (2021) found that humor facilitates more open communication, which is critical for innovation and problem-solving within teams.
Psychological Safety	Humor promotes psychological safety, allowing employees to take risks, voice concerns, and contribute ideas without fear of judgment. This fosters a culture of trust and respect.	Potipiroon & Ford (2021) emphasized the mediating role of psychological safety in leader humor's effect on employee voice. Yam et al. (2018) and Carnevale et al. (2022) discussed how humor helps in maintaining a positive environment where employees feel secure to express themselves.
Employee Engagement and Performance	Humor-based leadership enhances employee engagement, leading to higher job performance. A positive, humorous work environment increases commitment and performance through better relationships and a positive work culture.	De Souza et al. (2019) found a strong correlation between humor styles in leadership and improved employee performance and job satisfaction. Wang et al. (2021) highlighted the link between prosocial leader humor and employees' organizational citizenship behavior, which reflects higher performance levels.
Cultural Context in Shandong	The use of humor-based leadership in Shandong, China adopts local cultural aspects which adopt Confucian beliefs that value hierarchical order through showing respect to authority figures. The use of humor allows leaders to mitigate rigid hierarchical systems thus building better relationships with their employees.	Zhang & Yang (2024) discovered that humor functions as a barrier-breaking mechanism in Chinese hierarchies because it creates more open communication between leaders and workers while lessening employee stress. According to Cui & Song (2024) , the combination of paternalistic leadership with humor enhances trust and engagement among workers.

Leadership humor functions as a critical factor for increasing employee work engagement within Shandong since the region has traditionally used traditional hierarchical leadership styles. Leadership techniques that use humor work to reduce workplace boundaries thus creating a workplace environment that feels more comfortable and less formal. Bougie & Sekaran (2019) studied how leader-affiliative humor strengthens emotional safety and confidence within employees leading to increased work involvement. Employee decision-making participation remains restricted in Shandong mainly because of its traditional leadership framework. The use of humor has a tendency to reduce power dynamics which makes employees feel confident to participate actively in workplace discussions (Cui & Song, 2024).

The research by de Souza et al. (2019) proves that leader humor leads to increased employee job satisfaction which supports work engagement. People who worked under leaders who used humor presented heightened levels of engagement and role-specific emotional involvement. The research conducted by Zhang & Yang (2024) shows that humor strengthens workplace connections which leads to increased engagement among Shandong educational institutions. Table 3 (Theme 1: Humor's Influence on Motivation) shows that using humor increases both engagement and job satisfaction at work which supports the emerging business need for team-based and welcoming workspaces in Shandong.

A leadership style based on humor demonstrates major effects on employee performance together with creative abilities. The atmosphere that develops through humor promotes innovation since it lowers stress and encourages employees to think creatively. A psychologically safe work environment develops when innovative leaders employ humor according to Li et al. (2019). Creativity elevates within such workplaces because workers feel secure enough to offer innovative suggestions to their leadership. According to Li (2021), employee performance increases when humor helps reduce psychological anxiety within organizational settings. Employee performance gets better when they experience decreased stress levels. According to Yam et al. (2018), leadership humor produces obvious advantages which include greater creative output and enhanced problem-solving ability provided there is appropriate usage of humor by leaders. The growing business sector of Shandong demands proper utilization of humor to enhance creativity since companies focus on increased innovation to succeed in global markets. Leadership humor shown in Table 3 (Theme 2: Creativity and Knowledge Sharing) encourages employees to exchange knowledge and perform creative tasks. The findings correspond with Xu et al. (2023) showing that humor provides incentives for knowledge sharing and these sharing practices are vital for team-based innovation processes. Inside a conducive environment generated through humorous leadership employees feel comfortable to engage in open communication that leads to creative solutions and superior performance results.

The cultural environment of Shandong achieves enhanced benefits from leading through humor to create favorable organizational environments. Shandong Province adopts Chinese culture in its organizational pattern by allowing leaders to take authority positions. Humor creates a workplace atmosphere of relaxation that eliminates employee rank differences and enhances trust between all colleagues. Research by Potipiroon & Ford (2021) shows that psychological safety receives enhancement through humor-based leadership methods that motivate employees toward organizational success.

The research conducted by [Zhang & Yang \(2024\)](#) revealed that educational establishments in the Shandong region achieved both trusting relationships and collaborative engagement and open communication through humor-based leadership. The organizational method produced improved communication while simultaneously decreasing conflicts which led to higher work harmony. [Wang et al. \(2021\)](#) proved leadership humor establishes supportive helping behaviors and collaborative action because such actions generate positive work environments for organizations.

Theme 3 in [Table 3](#) shows how workplace humor creates advantageous organizational cultural environments. Working in a supportive workplace becomes possible due to humor since employees develop better relationships with leaders and colleagues which creates stronger teamwork and elevated organizational commitment. Businesses in Shandong must adopt participative leadership methods because the present market calls for meeting international requirements.

5. Conclusion

The present study has analyzed the effects of humor-based leadership on employee work engagement, performance, and organizational culture in Shandong, China. Concordant secondary and thematic analysis, this study set out to investigate three specific research objectives: (1) to explore the influence of humor-based leadership on employee work engagement in Shandong, (2) to examine how humor affects employee performance and creativity, and (3) to evaluate the role of humor-based leadership in fostering a positive organizational culture in Shandong businesses. The results, backed up by the analysis in [Table 3](#), provide valuable information regarding the use and benefits of humor at a leadership level in the country.

The data establishes that Shandong businesses benefit from humor-based leadership through positive enhancements in work culture combined with improved employee performance. Leadership humor functions as an essential instrument to boost employee engagement, especially for organizations operating under hierarchical structures such as Shandong institutions. The introduction of light-heartedness in traditional command-and-control systems helps stimulate employee performance and develops work communities that support candid discussions with staff members. [Table 1](#) demonstrates how different studies continuously support humor as a beneficial force for improving employee engagement, creativity, and job satisfaction. The investigation of [Xu et al. \(2023\)](#) alongside [de Souza et al. \(2019\)](#) produced meaningful results concerning the motivational effects of humor whereas [Li et al. \(2019\)](#) demonstrated how humor can boost creativity via knowledge sharing.

Employee performance rises substantially through humor-based leadership because such an approach establishes a psychologically secure environment for effective collaboration and innovative exchanges between personnel. [Table 3](#) establishes through its data collection that workplace performance receives enhancement through humor at the same time as creativity becomes stimulated. [Potipiroon and Ford \(2021\)](#) established how humor builds psychological safety yet [Zhang and Yang \(2024\)](#) and [Ying et al. \(2024\)](#) proved its impact on improved work performance in Shandong education and healthcare institutions. An organization's implementation of humor results in developing a stronger organizational culture by creating better relationships between leadership and staff through enhanced trust levels and team building coupled with stronger employee involvement. Staff approachability toward leaders becomes possible

through the use of humor because humor helps break down communication barriers per the research findings of [Carnevale et al. \(2022\)](#).

5.1. Recommendations for Businesses in Shandong

The research shows that Shandong businesses can leverage humor-based leadership as a strong tool to boost employee commitment job operation efficiency and workplace atmosphere quality. Businesses in Shandong should embrace humor as a leadership approach to stay competitive in the global market as they advance their operations. Several effective methods exist for Shandong businesses to incorporate humor-based leadership into their operations as follows:

a) Encourage Humor in Leadership Styles

Business leaders in Shandong must practice humor at work to develop an open environment that enhances trust and original thinking. Effective leaders need training to apply humor that supports team integration while maintaining formal positions. The leaders should develop affiliative humor techniques that build positivity while upholding organizational rank relationships.

Leaders who use humor properly build a workspace where staff members can freely share their thoughts and input while solving new problems collectively. Humor helps employees speak openly while building new connections and teamwork throughout the company structure.

b) Leverage Humor to Boost Creativity and Knowledge Sharing

Teams at Shandong organizations should use humor as a tool to improve both creativity and knowledge-sharing practices. Leaders should use humorous moments during team meetings and brainstorming to help employees think creatively and bravely contribute their ideas without being critiqued. Companies in Shandong need to use this method to develop new products and fight global competition.

A favorable workplace environment develops when leaders and staff use humor to develop better connections while decreasing job-related stress. Shandong companies need to put humor at the heart of their organizational culture to support employee commitment and keep excellent workers.

Ethics Approval and Consent to Participate

As secondary data is used in this study, namely academic journals, industry reports, older surveys, and so forth, there is no possibility of direct contact with human participants. So, ethical considerations concerning the participant's approval or the approval of the ethics committee are not required in this research. However, all secondary data in the research study were obtained from numerous dependable and notable publications that adopt ethical research practices making the data reliable and credible. The data used in the present study has been properly referenced to give due credit to the original researchers and authors. Furthermore, the study adheres to the ethical guidelines for secondary data analysis - utilizing the data in a decent and without mishandling or misrepresentations of it. The study aims to offer useful insights into how

funny leadership works in Shandong business settings striving for ethical data collection, analysis, and outcome.

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Conflict of Interest

The authors declare there are no conflicts of interest.

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