

Learning from Fun Leadership Experiences

The low appeal of nursing is currently a challenge in Finland and many other countries. Retaining factors that would keep nurses within the field have been discussed, as have attracting factors that would draw new workers to the field. Finnish discourse often focuses on the heaviness of nursing, shift work, bad leadership and low work wellbeing. The last can be influenced by many things, such as the use of humor. Workplaces can learn to use positive humor, which raises spirits and increases a sense of community. The purpose of this study was to survey fun workplace experiences in the social and health care field and what was learned from them. The study was conducted in 2016-2017 by collecting narratives (N=34) from master's degree students in Leadership. The data were analyzed through inductive content analysis. Fun experiences in personnel leadership showed and reinforced social capital and a sense of community at the workplace. The sense of community included developing workplace community skills, maintaining a sense of togetherness, advancing workplace well-being and doing activities, spending time and using professional skills together. Learning from fun experiences through reflection was formed from leadership that increases workplace well-being. This consisted of four categories: reinforcing a fun work atmosphere, reinforcing togetherness, appreciative leadership and the multiplicity of the supervisor's role. Positive humor can be used to advance workplace well-being and personnel retention.

Keywords: *leadership, humor, work well-being, experience-based learning, Finland*

Introduction

The nurse shortage of the Finnish social and health care field has become a major challenge that has not yet been overcome. Nursing is seen as hard and underpaid work, an opinion that has only become more common as nursing has become more burdensome because of the COVID-19 pandemic. The social and health care field must increase not only its attractiveness, but also its ability to retain nurses.

Workplace humor, joy and fun have also been studied by Goswami et al. (2016). According to their study, supervisors' use of positive humor increased their subordinates' positive feelings at work and increased their commitment to work. Supervisors' use of transformational leadership style strengthened the connection between their positive humor and their subordinates' positive feelings. Hughes (2009) has also shown a connection between transformational leadership and subordinates' commitment to their organization, trust-building and work satisfaction. Supervisors who use transformational leadership are assumed to use more humor than other supervisors.

Satisfied employees achieve good results, which leads to the success of the organization. Central features of successful workplace communities are

1 openness, trust, bravery, honesty, active communication and a positive
2 atmosphere. In healthy workplace communities, the members are able to
3 influence things and topics are discussed regularly, openly and honestly, which
4 increases members' sense of belonging to the community (Laaksonen 2008,
5 128.) These factors increase worker retention.

6 Positive humor can be used at the workplace to lighten even heavy days, to
7 aid the expression of feelings, make handling difficult things easier and to
8 repair and build relationships. Workplace atmosphere depends on interpersonal
9 relationships and the chemistry between people. By improving workplace
10 atmosphere, it is possible to create a dynamic community that enables
11 individuals' creativity and innovativeness. It is also possible to meet co-
12 workers during leisure time, breaking official hierarchies and thus creating new
13 connections (Khalili 2016; Fluegge-Woolf, 2014). Green, Albanese, Cafri &
14 Aarons (2014) found that supervisors can even affect the quality of care by
15 improving workplace atmosphere.

16 This article discusses fun situations related to personnel leadership in the
17 social and health care field and learning from them. The respondents were
18 professionals in the field who were studying leadership and would graduate to
19 work as supervisors.

20 21 22 **Literature Review**

23 24 **The Use of Humor at Work**

25
26 Humor is famously a difficult skill that requires social awareness and
27 emotional intelligence, as fun and humor mean different things to different
28 people (Plester, Cooper-Thomas & Winquist, 2015). The benefits of humor in
29 increasing general well-being have been well-known for a long time, and
30 workplace humor in particular has been connected to better performance, work
31 satisfaction and a sense of togetherness. Humor has also been found to have a
32 positive effect on health, managing work-related stress, easing exhaustion and
33 worker retention (Mesmer-Magnus, Glew & Viswesvaran 2012; Goswami,
34 Nair, Beehr & Grossenbacher 2015). Humor also serves functions such as
35 building and maintaining collegiality and good relationships (Holmes 2006,
36 26). Humor can also be seen as a leadership tool that can be used to reach
37 positive results for the organization (Wijewardena, Härtel & Samaratunge
38 2010).

39
40 Often certain colleagues understand each other's humor better than others
41 because of their similar senses of humor (Mesmer-Magnus et al. 2012). This is
42 entirely natural, as people are different and form connections easier with
43 certain people. We can also identify people who laugh and are generally more
44 amused than others (Mesmer-Magnus et al. 2012). Such people's company is
45 often actively pursued, as their laughter and positivity can be infectious. They
46 are good at seeing the good and amusing side in events, which makes them

1 eager to express their positive emotions. There are also people at workplaces
2 who produce moments of humor and laughter by communicating in an amusing
3 way (Mesmer-Magnus et al. 2012). These employees have the ability to present
4 things in a humorous fashion and they enjoy making others laugh. They can
5 also lighten difficult situations through humor, which helps everyone in
6 managing their stress and handling difficult topics.

7 Fun situations at the workplace offer individual staff members refreshing
8 breaks, which have positive effects and increase commitment to the
9 organization and work goals (Plester & Hutchinson 2014). Humor can also be
10 used to positively influence team productivity, personnel development and
11 group processes such as efficient information sharing, goal formation and
12 emotion management (Romeron & Pescosolidon 2008). A clear connection has
13 been found between humor and innovation. Employees whose supervisors used
14 humor more often saw themselves as more innovative than did employees who
15 saw creativity and innovation as requirements at their work (Pudt 2015).

16 Employee humor has been shown to have a positive effect on health,
17 coping with work-related stress and work efficiency (Mesmer-Magnus et al.
18 2012). Humor between employees from two different organizations was
19 studied by Charman (2013), who found that humor was a central factor in the
20 work relationship between police officers and ambulance staff. Humor was
21 used to manage the demands of work and to strengthen group values and the
22 common bonds between the two groups. Humor can be used to serve many
23 functions at work, one of which is advancing a sense of collegiality. One of the
24 most important uses of humor is building and maintaining good relations with
25 coworkers (Holmes 2006, 26; Mesmer-Magnus et al. 2012, Cooper 2008).

26 A positive, genuine sense of fun can be a sign of a healthy organization
27 (Georganta & Montgomery, 2019), which can be used to create more
28 productive and harmonious workplaces (Plester et al. 2015). A fun work
29 environment increases employee commitment and productivity (Fluegge-
30 Woolf, 2014), increases camaraderie and aids in reaching a flow state (Plester
31 & Hutchison, 2014). A sense of fun may also increase feelings of belonging,
32 acceptance and togetherness and improve teamwork and efficiency (Georganta
33 & Montgomery 2019).

34 In summary, the use of positive humor at the workplace level creates and
35 maintains relationships, strengthens group values, increases efficiency and
36 improves employee commitment to the workplace community and its goals. On
37 an individual level, humor releases tension, increases innovation, refreshes and
38 helps manage the demands of work by improving health. Humor can also be
39 used to interpret events, handle difficult matters and express emotions. The use
40 of humor increases positive emotions. It is clear that successful, positive humor
41 has many useful effects on both the individual and workplace level, which is
42 why all employees can be encouraged to use it.

43 44 **Experiential Learning**

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1 The use of humor can be learned through the everyday experiences of each
2 supervisor and subordinate. The theory of experiential learning dates to the
3 1930s. John Dewey (1859-1952) was one of the first to use the concept of
4 learning by doing. He was a US pedagogist and one of the central developers
5 and representatives of Pragmatism (Kolb 1984.). The model of experiential
6 learning was later developed by David Kolb. In his model, learning works
7 through reflecting on concrete actions and experiences, which results in the
8 theoretical understanding of phenomena and improved operating models. This
9 process of learning emphasizes experiences, impressions and self-reflection
10 (Kolb 1984).

11 Workplace learning can be formal learning, such as attending training, or
12 everyday learning through various work situations (Nikolova, Van Ruysseveldt, De
13 Witte, & Van Dam, 2014). Hagar and Halliday (2009) define unofficial,
14 everyday learning as goalless learning that happens in various situations and
15 offers individuals both inner and outer benefits. Everyday learning is not tied to
16 a time or place and can happen alone or in groups. According to Nikolova et al.
17 (2014), everyday learning happens through reflection, experimentation and by
18 learning from coworkers and supervisors. Workplace learning also improves
19 organizational performance (Kleefstra, Altan & Stoffers 2020).

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22 Methodology

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24 Materials and Methods

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26 The purpose of this study is to survey the fun workplace experiences of
27 master's degree students in social and health care leadership that are related to
28 personnel leadership. The study questions are:

29

30 1. What are fun experiences in personnel leadership like?

31 2. What could be learned from fun experiences in personnel leadership?

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33 The aim is to produce new information on how the participants understand
34 humor and how humor is used in work units in the social and health care field.
35 This study also aims to give development proposals on how to create fun
36 situations and how to use humor at workplaces.

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1 **Target Group**

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3 The data were collected in 2016-2017 from master's degree students in
4 social and health care leadership (N=47), who had at least three years of
5 experience in the field. One third had a degree in social work and two thirds in
6 health sciences (e.g., registered nurses, public health nurses, midwives,
7 paramedics, physiotherapists, bioanalysts, radiographers). Approximately one
8 third worked as supervisors.

9

10 **Data**

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12 The study was presented to students orally during class and later textually
13 on the electronic Moodle platform. The students submitted their responses
14 electronically to a folder on Moodle, which could only be opened by the
15 teacher. The students were asked to write a narrative according to the following
16 instructions:

17

- 18 - Share one personal anecdote about a situation related to personnel
19 leadership that you found fun. What did you learn from the experience?

20

21 The following additional guidelines were given:

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- 23 - Write a narrative that contains a beginning (circumstances, actors,
24 environment) middle (the event itself) and an end (how the situation
25 was resolved or resolved itself). You can change the names of
26 participants and narrate the event as a story. You do not have to share
27 your own role. The event must, however, be something that genuinely
28 happened and was witnessed by you, whether as a subordinate,
29 supervisor, bystander or participant.

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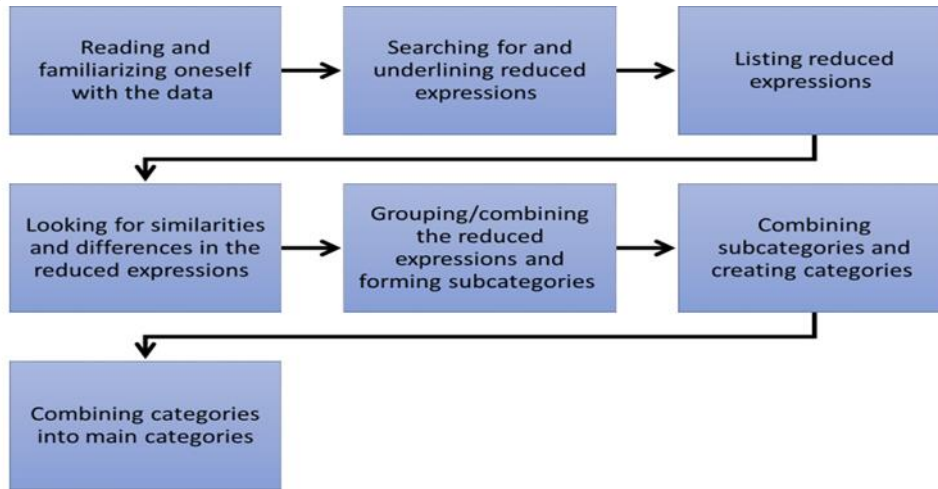
31 **Data Analysis**

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33 The data were analyzed through inductive content analysis. The purpose of
34 the analysis was to produce new information on what the respondents
35 understand as humor and how humor is used in units of the social and health
36 care field. The data were read through several times to obtain a full picture of
37 their contents. The data were then reduced, grouped and abstracted (Hiesh &
38 Shannon 2004). Through analysis the phenomenon under study was described
39 in a reduced and abstracted fashion that suited the study's aims and research
40 scheme.

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1 *Figure 1. The Progress of Data-Based Content Analysis (Tuomi & Sarajarvi*
 2 *2018)*



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5 One hundred seventy-three (173) original expressions relevant to the study
 6 questions were picked from the data. The data were then reduced by coding the
 7 chosen original expressions in a way that preserved their meaning. There were
 8 196 reduced expressions, which were compared to discover expressions with
 9 similar contents. These were then grouped under subcategories, which were
 10 then given names that covered all the expressions placed under them. This
 11 resulted in 31 subcategories. The same process was then used to create eight
 12 categories from the subcategories, which were then used to create two main
 13 categories. The synthesis created through reduction, grouping and abstraction
 14 answers the study's aims and research scheme (Hiesh & Shannon 2004). Table
 15 1 gives an example of the creation of subcategories.

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Table 1. An Example of the Creation of Subcategories

| Original expression | Reduced expression | Subcategory |
|---|---|------------------------------|
| <i>The head nurse wanted to change practices and to get the staff to participate in discussions. They wanted to create a more loose and open atmosphere. (18)</i> | Supervisor daring to act different | |
| <i>The project manager played the role of a blood sausage with lingonberry jam. Everyone laughed after the unveiling. (33)</i> | Supervisor daring to take on a different role | Supervisor's open-mindedness |
| <i>The workplace has a good atmosphere between staff and the supervisor enables their own participation in lightening the mood with their behavior (12)</i> | Supervisor's behavior lightening the mood | |

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1 **Ethical Background and Reliability of the Study**

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3 The topic of the study is important to leadership and personnel well-being,
4 and is thus significant even from the perspective of wider society. The study
5 was conducted using good research ethical practices by following general
6 honesty, accuracy and carefulness in all phases of the study. An attempt has
7 been made to present the results of the study as openly as possible (Vilkka
8 2015, 41–53). Permission for conducting the study was sought from the
9 Tampere University of Applied Sciences, with whom an agreement was made
10 on the use of the research data. The original data are owned by the Tampere
11 University of Applied Sciences. The participants were informed both orally
12 and textually of the purpose and aims of the study and of its confidentiality and
13 voluntariness. The data were copied electronically and protected by password
14 to ensure no outsiders had access to them. After the study was finished, the
15 copied data were destroyed.

16 The goal of scientific research is to produce new information of the
17 studied phenomenon that is as reliable as possible. In assessing reliability, the
18 goal is to assess the truthfulness of the information produced by the study. The
19 criteria of reliability in qualitative research are credibility, confirmability,
20 reflexivity and transferability. Credibility has been reinforced by reading the
21 data several times to understand the perspective of those who participated in
22 the study. Confirmability has been strengthened by describing the progress of
23 the analysis as accurately as possible, so the reader may follow its logic and
24 reliability. Reflexivity means ensuring the researcher is aware of their own
25 starting points as the conductor of the study. After analysis, the researchers
26 noted that similar results have been reached in earlier studies, which increases
27 the study's reliability. To help assess transferability, this article describes the
28 study's participants (Tuomi & Sarajärvi 2009).

30 **Results**

31 **Fun Experiences in Personnel Leadership**

32
33 The fun experiences written by social and health care field professionals
34 were formed, through inductive content analysis, from the following four
35 categories: *Togetherness, Openness and bravery, Appreciating and rewarding*
36 *skills and Equality*. They formed the main category of *Strengthening*
37 *community and social capital* (Table 2.)
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1 *Table 2. Fun Experiences in Personnel Leadership*

| Subcategory | Category | Main category |
|--|-----------------------------------|--|
| Working together Spending time together Solving problems together Advancing work well-being | Togetherness | |
| Supervisor laughing at their own mistakes Supervisor's open-mindedness Supervisors' innovativeness | Openness and bravery | Strengthening community and social capital |
| Verbal rewards Monetary rewards Well-being benefits offered by employer | Appreciating and rewarding skills | |
| Experiencing equality Supervisor's participation as an equal Low levels of hierarchy | Equality | |

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4 Togetherness appeared in the responses as *doing* together. Most often the
5 activities were related to something done outside of work, such as the work
6 community's visits to a summer cabin, staff days, farewell parties, Christmas
7 parties or training events.

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23 Maintaining team spirit increased the sense of togetherness. For instance,
24 experiences of the workplace community staying together even under
25 challenging situations or the entire personnel, supervisors included, having
26 experiences together strengthened team spirit. Some workplaces had so called
27 "our things" that increased a sense of togetherness. Staff days, on which the
28 employer arranges some fun event for the personnel, were seen as increasing a

1 sense of togetherness. Most respondents mentioned staff days as doing so
2 while also being fun experiences.

3 “You know those “our things”? ... Every team has them or at least should have.
4 Even better, it’s great when the supervisor is part of it!”
5

6 One of the things forming openness and bravery was the supervisors’
7 ability to laugh at their own mistakes. This does not mean self-mockery, but
8 the ability to acknowledge one’s own mistakes. An openminded supervisor can
9 even succeed in activating the personnel to contribute more by breaking old
10 ways of doing.

11
12 “To me it’s always a fun experience when people, subordinates or supervisors,
13 admit to, share, laugh at and learn from their own mistakes.”
14

15 Supervisor’s innovativeness was seen as a fun personnel leadership
16 experience. Through their innovativeness the supervisor can, e.g., create a good
17 atmosphere at the start of the day.
18

19 “The head nurse made coffee for everyone for the morning meeting and had often
20 baked something. While drinking coffee we went through the day’s work and
21 finally the supervisor took out a book and read the day’s poem.”
22

23 Appreciating and rewarding skills included verbal rewards, which was
24 thanks and recognition for a job well done. Other ways of appreciation
25 included monetary rewards and well-being benefits offered by the employer.
26 Rewards and appreciation were seen as part of personnel leadership.
27

28 “One fun experience I could mention is the last Christmas party arranged by our
29 previous employer.”
30

31 “The company management decided to reward the employees with an extra bonus
32 that was paid right before Christmas. The bonus was paid as a certain percentage
33 of your income and the number was larger for those who received a lower wage.”
34

35 One of the things forming equality was experiencing equality with the
36 supervisor in a situation where they participated in creating a fun atmosphere.
37 Seeing the supervisor participating as one of the employees was seen as a fun
38 experience.
39

40 “I came to the conclusion that fun personnel leadership at my workplace is
41 having fun at work, and having supervisors as part of the fun. Our people don’t
42 stop talking when a supervisor walks past. They join in on the talk and fun.”
43

44 Low levels of hierarchy were seen as fun experiences. One such example
45 was a situation where hierarchies were discarded and work roles forgotten.
46

47 “The managing nurse was responsible for organizing the Christmas party and one
48 of their tasks was planning and directing the Christmas play, where the roles were

1 played by employees. While working on the play, a momentary humorous
 2 relationship developed between the supervisor and the subordinates. While
 3 making the play the hierarchy disappeared and they forgot their work roles.”

4 5 **Learning from Fun Experiences in Personnel Leadership**

6
7 The social and health care professionals’ categories of learning from fun
 8 experiences in personnel leadership were *Reinforcing a fun work atmosphere*,
 9 *Reinforcing togetherness*, *Appreciative leadership* and *The multiplicity of the*
 10 *supervisor’s role*. They formed the main category of *Leadership that increases*
 11 *workplace well-being* (Table 3.)

12
13 **Table 3. Learning from Fun Experiences in Personnel Leadership**

| Subcategory | Category | Main category |
|--|---|--|
| Genuineness Spontaneity Trust Creating a fun work environment | Reinforcing a fun work atmosphere | |
| Acceptance Connection with others Supporting togetherness Inclusion | Reinforcing togetherness | Leadership that increases workplace well-being |
| Appreciation Rewarding Presence Listening | Appreciative leadership | |
| Pointing the way Role model Being an example | The multiplicity of the supervisor’s role | |

14
15 Reinforcing a fun work atmosphere could be seen in the supervisor’s
 16 genuineness, relaxedness, and in their willingness to laugh at themselves, to show
 17 their funny side and to trust in the power of humor. Spontaneity could be seen
 18 in the supervisor’s innovativeness, relaxedness, flexibility and in their ability to
 19 act without needless restraint and to “go all in”.

20
21 “To be able to smile at the experiences of others, I must be able to laugh at
 22 myself [the supervisor says]. Fun and amusing experiences help us when we must
 23 make less nice decisions.”

24
25 “This workplace experience also taught me that the supervisor taking the stage
 26 and moving away from their safe work role supports their subordinates moving
 27 outside their comfort zone. The supervisor had created something fun for the
 28 audience, not made a mockery of themselves.”

29
30 Trust was the supervisor allowing humor and fun in everyday work. Joy
 31 and laughter were allowed, as were mistakes. The supervisor themselves inspired

1 trust. Reinforcing a fun work atmosphere meant creating a relaxed atmosphere,
2 seeing the fun even in small things and using humor as a source of power,
3 while also considering the limits of humor.

4
5 “This supervisor taught me that personnel can be led “through joy”. Of course
6 they participated in us nurses’ reports to find out more about our tenants’
7 conditions, but at the same time they created a good mood among us nurses.”
8

9 Reinforcing togetherness included acceptance, which meant listening to
10 subordinates, having a positive attitude, allowing fun, supporting subordinates
11 and cheering them. Connecting with others consisted of keeping subordinates
12 informed, intervening in problems, reinforcing team spirit and by meeting
13 subordinates in more relaxed situations.

14
15 “It’s good for the personnel to see a more relaxed supervisor, who turns out to be
16 a normal person. It’s also good for the whole workplace to do fun stuff together
17 and see that their work is appreciated.”
18

19 A sense of togetherness could be improved through common fun
20 experiences, by spending time with coworkers without working and by
21 organizing fun events. Inclusion meant listening to employees on developing
22 the workplace and encouraging subordinates to develop and innovate their
23 jobs. It could also include organizing common events.
24

25 “The supervisors showed an ability put themselves out there and be innovative.
26 Their idea of a relaxed afternoon together succeeded perfectly. Sometimes it’s
27 good to “check your brain at the door” and meet our coworkers in a looser
28 setting. Staff days at their finest!”
29

30 Appreciative leadership meant perceiving the supervisor as an equal with
31 their subordinates. Equality between units was also emphasized, while
32 excessive camaraderie was frowned upon. Rewarding a well-done job was seen
33 as important, whether it was material or verbal. Positive feedback was also
34 seen as important.
35

36 “Another important lesson was that even if it’s just one workplace in a large
37 organization, all workplaces should have an equal position. Forepeople have an
38 important role in maintaining this.”
39

40 The supervisor’s presence was seen as important. They had to be
41 approachable and willing to participate in their subordinates’ joys and sorrows.
42 Listening included considering others, expressing interest in the personnel and
43 listening to subordinates.
44

45 “It’s good for the supervisor to show themselves so they don’t remain distant to
46 their subordinates. I want to be a supervisor who’s approachable and aware of
47 everyday routines, not someone who hides behind their desk and monitor.”
48

1 “Stable situations are rare at work. Situations change and you can’t expect things
2 to stay the same. The head nurse must be present in their subordinates’ workplace
3 joys and sorrows.”
4

5 The multiplicity of the supervisor’s role included the supervisor being the
6 one to point the way in e.g., the use of humor. They were also a role model in
7 that not everything needed to be known perfectly. The subordinate had to set
8 natural boundaries to their action and follow them. The supervisor was also a
9 role model in leading with joy.

10
11 “Through their own relaxed and humorous attitude, the supervisor can have an
12 effect on the entire workplace and its atmosphere.”
13

14 “The supervisor points the way and gives their subordinates a chance to be more
15 free. Sometimes you work hard on a tight schedule, but sometimes lightness is
16 required to maintain team spirit and morale. Recharging mental batteries pays
17 itself back many times over. The team is more productive and innovative.”
18

19 The supervisor was an example on how to act in various situations in e.g.,
20 the use of humor. They could also demolish prejudices through their actions.

21
22 “Humor is an important source of strength... which is heavily implied by the
23 supervisor’s model and guidelines. There needs to be room for humor, but it can’t
24 be allowed to drown out actual work.”
25

26 “The supervisor can through their own example break prejudices related to
27 gender.”
28

29 30 **Discussion**

31 32 **Assessment of Results**

33
34 The fun personnel leadership narratives of social and health care
35 professionals discussed and emphasized the importance of strengthening social
36 capital and a sense of community. Togetherness included doing things,
37 spending time and using professional skills together, developing workplace
38 community skills, strengthening team spirit and advancing workplace well-
39 being. Mesmer-Magnus et al. (2012) have also found that supervisors’ and
40 subordinates’ use of humor can advance work groups’ sense of togetherness.
41 According to Holmes’ study (2006), humor has many functions at the
42 workplace, one of which is advancing collegiality. One of humor’s most
43 important functions was building and maintaining good relationships with
44 coworkers. Such collegiality is often built and maintained through humor. A
45 workplace where people experience pleasant feelings, and which has a good
46 atmosphere helps people recover. Positive emotional states are caused by shared
47 success, achievements, receiving and giving support, kindness and good group
48 humor (Aro, Aho, Kehonpää, Lappi & Rämö 2012).

1 Openness and bravery were shown in the responses as the supervisor's
2 ability to laugh at their own mistakes, open-mindedness and innovativeness.
3 Trust is created through open communication. According to Georganta &
4 Montgomery (2019), a fun workplace atmosphere also involves genuineness,
5 spontaneity and trust. Trust can be considered a part of the workplace's social
6 capital, which enables a work organization that is creative and develops
7 effectively (Klausser 2012; Baker, Mathis Stites-Doe & Javadin 2016).
8 Commitment and genuineness are good starting points for credible and
9 exemplary leadership. Leading bravely with a natural and personal style is
10 more important than individual characteristics (Husman 2015, 19.).

11 The responses of the social and health care professionals saw appreciative
12 leadership as appreciation and rewarding. Being present and listening were also
13 included in appreciative leadership in the responses. The appreciation of skills
14 was seen in the responses as verbal and monetary rewards as well benefits
15 offered by the employer. A benefit could be e.g., an evening paid for by the
16 employer. Equality was seen in the responses as the experience of equality, the
17 supervisor participating as an equal and low levels of hierarchy. Dickson-Swift
18 et al. (2014) also found that people want to feel useful and important and to be
19 treated as individuals. One of the supervisor's basic jobs is to make their
20 subordinates experience these feelings. It is a leader's job to create an
21 environment, in which everyone can use their abilities fully. This can be
22 achieved by leading with openness and transparency (Dickson-Swift, Fox,
23 Marshall, Welch & Willis, 2014).

24 According to Kolb (1984), learning proceeds from the reflection of
25 concrete experiences and actions towards theoretical understanding and new
26 procedures. In the narratives of fun personnel leadership in social and health
27 care, learning through reflection consisted of leadership that increases
28 workplace well-being. In turn, it consisted of four categories: reinforcing a fun
29 work atmosphere, reinforcing togetherness, appreciative leadership and the
30 multiplicity of the supervisor's role. Reinforcing a fun work atmosphere
31 included genuineness, trust, spontaneity, and creating a fun work atmosphere.
32 The fun experiences also taught about the multiplicity of the supervisor's role.
33 It included pointing the way and acting as a role model and an example. Humor
34 has an effect on general well-being and health, helps manage work-related
35 stress, lessens fatigue and improves worker retention (Mesmer-Magnus et al.
36 2012). A fun work atmosphere involves genuineness, spontaneity and trust
37 (Georganta & Montgomery 2019).

38 According to the social and health care professionals' responses,
39 reinforcing togetherness could be learned from one's own experience of
40 personnel leadership, acceptance, connection to others, reinforcing
41 togetherness and inclusion. The sense of togetherness was often built through
42 unofficial events. Humor can be used to advance collegiality and to build and
43 maintain good relationships with coworkers (Holmes 2006, 26, Mesmer-
44 Magnus et al. 2012). Humor can also be used to form connections with others
45 (Fegai 2011) and to increase an experience of connection with others

1 (Georganta & Montgomery 2019). Positive workplace humor has been shown
2 to have a connection with worker retention (Mesmer-Magnus et al. 2012).

3 The results of this study were quite similar to those of earlier studies on
4 the use of humor in the workplace, even though not all earlier studies were
5 made in the context of the social and health care field. Humor and leadership
6 appear quite similar globally and regardless of context, even though the
7 concept of fun is still somewhat unclear. The social and health care
8 professionals saw humor as something that increases togetherness, trust-
9 inspiring leadership, appreciation for skills and equality. All of these reinforce
10 a sense of community and social capital.

11 12 13 **Conclusions**

14
15 The following conclusions are presented:

- 16
17 • There is a role for positive humor in the workplace and in leadership.
18 Positive humor is seen to influence many positive factors that affect
19 work well-being and work retention. The supervisor's genuineness and
20 relaxedness are positives in many senses and do not diminish their
21 credibility. Workplaces that allow humor often have an atmosphere of
22 open communication and permissiveness, which further increases trust.
23 Positive humor and the supervisor's openness rather increased their
24 appreciation among their subordinates than diminished it.
- 25 • The social and health care professionals' responses emphasized how the
26 fun experiences of personnel leadership and learning from them
27 happened outside regular working hours, at relaxed events organized by
28 the employer such as staff days. This suggests that workplace
29 communities need activities organized by the employer outside of
30 regular working hours.
- 31 • Supervisors could use humor even as a potential leadership tool to help
32 achieve positive results for the organization. Improving work well-
33 being increases work retention. One factor improving well-being could
34 be a workplace environment that allows and uses humor.

35
36 Further research could focus on supervisors' views on the importance of
37 positive humor. Another topic could be the views of supervisors and
38 subordinates on how a workplace environment that supports the use of positive
39 humor is created.

40 41 42 **References**

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