The Impact of Leader’s Humor on Employees’ Psychological Empowerment: the Moderating Role of Tenure

Panagiotis Gkorezis  
PhD Student, Department of Economics  
Aristotle University of Thessaloniki

Leonidas Hatzithomas  
PhD Student, Department of Economics  
Aristotle University of Thessaloniki,

Eugenia Petridou  
Associate Professor, Department of Economics  
Aristotle University of Thessaloniki

INTRODUCTION

Humor is claimed to improve interpersonal relationships in both work and non-work life. In the latter case, according to Nezlek and Derks (2001), the use of humor is positively related to how pleasant people’s lives are and how confident they feel when they socialize with others. Within the organizational context, humor is considered to be a fundamental ingredient of good and healthy employment relationships, particularly regarding that of leader-employee (Avolio et al., 1999; Cooper, 2004; Decker and Rotondo, 2001; Priest and Swain, 2002).

In management literature, there is growing empirical research exploring the connections between humor and job-related attitudes. This is attributed to the early call for investigation of humor in the literature (Duncan, 1982; Duncan et al., 1990). For example, authors have examined the correlation of the use of humor with motivation (Crawford, 1994), group cohesiveness (Duncan, 1984), organizational culture (Clouse and Spurgeon, 1995), organizational creativity (Lang and Lee, 2010), and communication (Mettee et al., 1971). Further, few empirical studies have investigated the moderating influence of leader’s humor on relationships between leader and employee behavior (Avolio et al., 1999; Vecchio et al., 2009). However, many unanswered questions on this
topic exist regarding the effect of organizational humor on other organizational variables and the mechanisms which accounts for its critical role in the workplace. The present paper attempts to contribute to the research void by examining the impact of leader’s use of both positive and negative humor on a contemporary and core management construct, that is, psychological empowerment. Additionally, it attempts to demonstrate the important role of tenure in the extant literature. Thus, the moderating effect of tenure in the relationship between leader’s humor and employees’ psychological empowerment is also investigated.

THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

Definition of Empowerment

Recently, the notion of empowerment has received increased research attention. Empowerment is regarded as a management tool which can be implemented in every organization and in every sector (Lashley, 1999). Particularly, in the service sector where employees interact with customers, empowerment is considered as an essential management practice (Fulford and Enz, 1995). Empowerment is separated into two main approaches: structural and psychological. Regarding the former, empowerment is related to such management practices that grant power and authority on employees. For example, Bowen and Lawler (1995) define empowerment as the dissemination of four organizational features: (1) information about organizational performance; (2) rewards based on organizational performance; (3) knowledge that enables to understand and contribute to organizational performance; (4) power to make decisions that influence work procedures and organizational direction. This approach is concerned with the view that providing employees with more power and authority enhances both employees’ and organizational effectiveness. Yet, structural approach of empowerment presents one disadvantage – it does not incorporate individuals’ personal experiences. In other words, it assumes that empowering management practices increase, de facto, employees’ feelings of empowerment. Psychological empowerment fills this dearth since it emphasizes the psychological state of the employees.

Psychological empowerment is defined as intrinsic task motivation manifested in four cognitions: meaning, competence, self-determination, and impact. Meaning is perceived as “the value of a work goal or purpose, judged in relation to an individual’s own ideals or standards” (Spreitzer, 1995: 1443). Competence, or self-efficacy, is “an individual’s belief in his or her capability to perform work role activities with skill” (Spreitzer, 1995: 1443). Self-determination is termed as “an individual’s sense of having choice in initiating and regulating actions” (Spreitzer, 1995: 1443). Impact is “the degree to which an individual can influence strategic, administrative or operating outcomes at work” (Spreitzer, 1995: 1443).

Recently, there has been a growing research body regarding the antecedents of psychological empowerment (Bordin et al., 2007; Chiang and Jang, 2008; Koberg et al., 1999). However, the majority of these empirical studies are concerned with demographic variables (Dimitriades and Kufidu, 2004; Hancer and George, 2003) or organizational factors (Bordin et al., 2007; Siegall and Gardner, 2000). Further, within the psychological empowerment context, there is a substantial number of studies examining the impact of leader-member exchange on the psychological empowerment of employees (Aryee and Chen, 2006; George and Hancer, 2003; Kim and George, 2005; Laschinger et al., 2003)
Yet, there is no particular emphasis on other mechanisms of interpersonal interactions between supervisor and employee. The present paper contributes to the relevant literature investigating leader’s use of positive and negative humor as an antecedent of employee’s psychological empowerment.

**Humor and Empowerment**

Humor is a social expression with beneficial effects on physical and psychosocial health and well-being. It is a multifaceted human expression, generated through the activation of three groups of mechanisms, namely, cognitive, affective, and interpersonal mechanisms (McGhee, 1974). That is, comprehension of humor requires cognitive abilities (Eisend, 2009) and some positive emotional and social contextual factors, such as a warm atmosphere (Rothbart, 1976) and communicator’s identification with one’s audience (Meyer, 2000). This study focuses on interpersonal mechanisms of humor, since these seem to affect to a greater extent the relationships between leaders and employees, compared to cognitive and affective mechanisms (Cooper, 2008; Lynch, 2002).

According to Martin et al. (2003), there exist four different styles of interpersonal humor: affiliative, self-enhancing, aggressive, and self-defeating humor. Individuals who adopt affiliative style of humor engage in non-hostile joking behavior, saying funny stories about themselves, aiding in relationship building. Self-enhancing humor is a coping mechanism for reducing the impact of stressful events on mood states. In general, people who exhibit self-enhancing humor are not overly distressed by the experience of ambiguous life events and as a result they maintain a positive perspective of life. Aggressive humor involves “put-down,” racist, ethnic, and sexist humor, as well as sarcastic, teasing, and satiric humorous expressions. This style of humor may insult and humiliate other people, increasing their anxiety and at the same time reducing their perceived well-being. Finally, self-defeating persons tend to ridicule themselves, through the use of self-disparaging jokes, in an attempt to amuse other people and gain their acceptance (Romero and Cruthirds, 2006).

The aforementioned humor styles can be broadly categorized into two major groups, namely, positive and negative humor styles. Affiliative, self-enhancing, and moderate self-defeating humorous approaches can be considered as positive humor styles since they are positively related with psychological well-being, self-esteem, intimacy, and relationship satisfaction (Martin et al., 2003). On the contrary, aggressive and self-disparaging humor styles result in predominantly negative emotional reactions such as neuroticism, anger, and aggression (Romero and Cruthirds, 2006). Hence, they can be characterized as negative humor styles.

The main stream of management research (regarding the role of positive and negative humor in the workplace) has concentrated on two sets of paradoxical humor functions, control and resistance as well as identification and differentiation (Lynch, 2002). Most of the studies proved that humor functions as a control mechanism in the workplace (Collinson, 1988, 1992). Particularly, it can act as an effective management tool motivating employees to identify with the organizational culture (Lynch, 2002). Indeed, in management studies humor has been approached as a successful administrative practice that can improve the cohesiveness of a group (Cooper, 2008; Duncan and Feisal, 1989; Duncan, 1982).

Moreover, some researchers have proposed that humor may operate as an empowerment management strategy (Miller, 1996). As Vinton (1989) argues, humor
can eliminate interpersonal barriers associated with formal hierarchy in the workplace. Duncan and Feisal (1989) claim that work can become meaningful when managers use positive humor to communicate with their employees because humorous expressions are an important aspect of some other meaningful group interactions such as friendship. In the same vein, a humorous work environment releases employees’ creativity, reinforcing their sense of freedom and individual’s belief in his or her capabilities (Miller, 1996). Based on the aforementioned reasoning, it can be assumed that:

**H1:** The use of leader’s positive humor exerts a positive effect on employee’s psychological empowerment.

**H2:** The use of leader’s negative humor exerts a negative effect on employee’s psychological empowerment.

**Tenure as a Moderator**

Tenure is a demographic variable which plays an influential role in management and psychological research (Cohen, 1993; Griffeth et al., 2000). In fact, there are research efforts exploring the moderating impact of tenure in job-related associations (Bradley, 2007; Moser and Galais, 2007; Norris and Niebuhr, 1984; Shirom et al., 2008; Wright and Bonett, 2002). Within psychological empowerment, there is a plethora of studies that incorporate tenure in their models (Dimitriades and Kufidu, 2004; Hancer and George, 2003; Huang et al., 2006; Kim and George, 2005; Koberg et al., 1999). This study attempts to identify tenure as a possible moderator of the leader’s humor-employees’ psychological empowerment relationship.

Past research indicate that new employees tend to be more enthusiastic and optimistic about their workplace, thus experiencing a “honeymoon period” (Huang et al., 2006). Schein (1971) argues that during their first short period of employment individuals are concerned with establishing and understanding their identities and proving themselves as recognized members of their organization. In order to achieve this, newcomers focus on building interpersonal relationships (Katz, 1978) such as the relationship between employees and supervisor. Also, being new in the workplace lead employees to perceive it through their “rose-colored glasses” and to emphasize primarily the positive aspects of their new work environment. As a result, new employees primarily highlight leaders’ positive behavior and diminish their negative behavior. Similarly, short-tenure employees perceive and often “filter” the use of leaders’ humor, thereby improving their sense of humor. Further, supervisors in a new relationship with new employees are more likely to engage in positive rather than negative behavior. Supervisors play a central role in adjusting newcomers to the organization and developing themselves into organizational members (Jablin et al., 1987). During this stage of organizational socialization in which employees “adapt to new job and organizational roles” (Chao et al., 1994: 730), supervisors frequently manifest positive feelings overriding potential negative feelings that may emerge.

In contrast, long-tenure employees may increasingly become more burned out and less motivated (Wright and Bonett, 1997) resulting in experiencing a more negative attitude towards their organization than new employees. They are less enthusiastic and more sensitive to negative than positive aspects of leader’s use of humor. Moreover, longer tenure employees’ relationships with organization are changed owing to socialization (Norris and Niebuhr, 1984). Therefore, as tenure increases, employees
familiarize with their supervisors and take their positive humor for granted. From the leaders’ perspective, when interacting with long-tenure employees, they are prone to articulate, in terms of their long-term relationship, their negative feelings towards their subordinates. As such, this study hypothesizes that tenure will moderate the impact of a leader’s humor on employees’ psychological empowerment. More specifically,

\[ H3: \text{The positive relationship between a leader’s positive humor and employees’ psychological empowerment is stronger for short-tenure employees than for long-tenure employees.} \]

\[ H4: \text{The negative relationship between leader’s negative humor and employees’ psychological empowerment is stronger for long-tenure employees than for short-tenure employees.} \]

**METHOD**

**Sample**

The sample of the study consisted of 101 service employees working in four different U.S. dinner houses. Overall, 150 usable questionnaires were distributed and 101 were returned producing a response rate of 67.3%. Of the 101 respondents who participated in the study, 48% were female and 52% were male. With respect to age, the majority (78%) of the respondents ranged from 18 to 30 years old. Finally, nearly 40% of the respondents have worked for the present organizations for less than one year.

**Measures**

Regarding the questionnaire used in the study, psychological empowerment was measured using Spreitzer’s (1995) 12-item empowerment scale. Leader’s use of positive and negative humor was assessed using the items of Dubinsky et al. (1995). Responses were recorded on seven-point and five-point Likert type scale respectively. Tenure was measured by an open-ended question which asked the respondents the number of months they have been employed in the present organization.

**RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

Scale reliabilities and correlations for the tenure, humor styles, and psychological empowerment variables are shown in Table 1 and Table 2. Alpha reliabilities for all of the scales show strong internal reliability for the measured constructs (Table 1). The results indicate that strong relationships exist between leader’s use of humor and employees’ psychological empowerment (Table 2).

As far as leader’s humor is concerned, it appears that while positive humor exerts a positive effect, negative humor has a negative effect on employees’ psychological empowerment (Table 3 and 4). Positive humor, such as affiliative and moderate self-defeating humor, can facilitate interpersonal interactions, reducing social distance between supervisors and their subordinates. On the other hand, negative humor is an aggressive way to establish hierarchical relations, teasing and belittling the lower status employees (Romero and Cruthirds, 2006). Aggressive humor can be detrimental to the well-being of employees since it induces hostility and anger, while at the same time is negatively related to relationship satisfaction (Martin et al., 2003). The findings also reveal that the supervisors of U.S. dinner houses use more frequently positive humor.
(M = 2.61) and less frequently negative humor (M = 1.84). This may be attributed to supervisors’ recognition that their positive humorous expressions in the workplace lead to be viewed as more likeable and effective (Priest and Swain, 2002; Rizzo et al., 1999).

The examination of the moderating role of tenure indicated that tenure differentially influences the above relationships. Tenure was captured as an interval level data point. As such, two hierarchical regression analyses were performed to assess the moderating effect of tenure upon the relationship between leader’s humor, both positive and negative, and employees’ psychological empowerment.

In line with hypothesis 3, it seems that the relation between leader’s positive humor and employees’ psychological empowerment is stronger for short-tenure employees. Newcomers react more favorably to participative leadership since they are generally more enthusiastic about their new job (Helmreich et al., 1986). During this “honeymoon period” (from three months to two years) (Bauer and Green, 1998) short-tenure employees desire to be accepted and feel like members of a cohesive work group (Kim and George, 2005). A leader’s positive humor can develop strong bonds with the newcomers and make them feel more welcomed, valued, and supported. On the other hand, long-tenure employees maintain high quality relationships with their supervisors

Table 1
Reliability Analysis (Cronbach’s Alpha)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Measures</th>
<th>Items</th>
<th>Cronbach’s Alpha</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Employees’ Psychological Empowerment</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>0.884</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leader’s positive humor</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0.884</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leader’s negative humor</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>0.924</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2
Correlation Matrix

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>M</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>Tenure</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Leader’s positive humor</th>
<th>Leader’s negative humor</th>
<th>Empowerment</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Tenure</td>
<td>0.52</td>
<td>0.502</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>1.28</td>
<td>0.451</td>
<td>0.599**</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leader’s positive humor</td>
<td>2.61</td>
<td>1.02</td>
<td>0.023</td>
<td>0.187</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leader’s negative humor</td>
<td>1.84</td>
<td>0.90</td>
<td>-0.194</td>
<td>-0.100</td>
<td>-0.372**</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Empowerment</td>
<td>4.81</td>
<td>1.02</td>
<td>0.368**</td>
<td>0.136</td>
<td>0.323**</td>
<td>-0.352**</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**p < 0.01  
*p < 0.05
### Table 3
Hierarchical Regression Analysis for the Moderating Role of Tenure on the Effect of Leader’s Positive Humor on Employees Psychological Empowerment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>R² increment</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>beta</th>
<th>t-score</th>
<th>p-value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Step 1</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Positive Humor</td>
<td>0.104**</td>
<td>11.433</td>
<td>0.323</td>
<td>3.381</td>
<td>0.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Step 2</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tenure</td>
<td>0.130**</td>
<td>14.848</td>
<td>0.361</td>
<td>3.543</td>
<td>0.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Step 3</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Positive-Humor x Tenure</td>
<td>0.053**</td>
<td>12.873</td>
<td>-0.721</td>
<td>-2.658</td>
<td>0.009</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cumulative R²</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>0.287</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*p < 0.05  
**p < 0.01

### Table 4
Hierarchical Regression Analysis for the Moderating Role of Tenure on the Effect of Leader’s Negative Humor on Employees Psychological Empowerment

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>R² increment</th>
<th>F</th>
<th>beta</th>
<th>t-score</th>
<th>p-value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Step 1</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negative Humor</td>
<td>0.124**</td>
<td>13.834</td>
<td>-0.352</td>
<td>-3.719</td>
<td>0.000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Step 2</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tenure</td>
<td>0.093**</td>
<td>13.443</td>
<td>0.311</td>
<td>3.400</td>
<td>0.001</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Step 3</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negative-Humor x Tenure</td>
<td>0.032*</td>
<td>10.592</td>
<td>-0.415</td>
<td>-2.012</td>
<td>0.047</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Cumulative R²</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>0.249</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*p < 0.05  
**p < 0.01
that are characterized by mutual trust (Cooper, 2004). Hence, it is believed that positive humor is a relatively ineffective management tool for improving long-tenure employees’ psychological empowerment since they are already getting support. Indeed, as depicted in Table 3, a leader’s positive humor has a more significant positive impact on the psychological empowerment of short-tenure employees than on long-tenure ones.

Moreover, a second hierarchical regression analysis (Table 4) provides support for tenure as a moderator of the leader’s negative humor-employees’ psychological empowerment relationship. Particularly, a leader’s negative humor results in a statistically significant decrease in psychological empowerment of long-tenure employees. Workplace jokes imply both shared understandings and a common form of expression for a group of people. Newcomers do not share the same meanings with their supervisors and, as a result, they cannot distinguish the disguised aggression that can sometimes be expressed in a humorous way (Lynch, 2009). Thus, the psychological empowerment of short-tenure employees remains less affected by a leader’s disparaging humor. As far as the high-tenure group of employees is concerned, though humor can lubricate their social relations with coworkers, a leader’s aggressive humor can insult and humiliate them, reducing their psychological empowerment.

However, the high correlation between tenure and age (Table 1) raises the issue of collinearity and the possible influence of age in the examined moderating hypotheses. To explore this, a three-way interaction among leader’s positive (and negative) humor, tenure, and age was tested. The three-way interaction term was entered into the hierarchical regression analysis as the last step after the independent variable (leader’s positive and negative humor), tenure and age as moderators, and the two-way interactions among leader’s positive (and negative) humor, tenure and age. The three-way interaction term was not significant for both positive (b = -0.256, p > 0.10) and negative humor (b = -0.55, p > 0.10), thus suggesting that age has no effect on the moderating impact of tenure in the relationship between leader’s humor and employees’ psychological empowerment.

LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH

This study has some limitations. The research was conducted on specific organizational cultures that are humor-oriented towards customers. Therefore, manifestation of humorous behaviors and attitudes may be more explicit than in other workplaces. Also, the present findings, based on data from U.S. dinner houses, allow one to make limited inference to other contexts. Another limitation concerns the subjective nature of humor. Further, because all constructs were measured with self-report questionnaires from the same employees, relationships might be inflated due to common method variance. These limitations suggest directions for future research.

Specifically, the present results should be replicated in both different sectors and countries. Moreover, the moderating effect of other demographic variables, such as age or gender, may reveal useful insights regarding the relationship between humor and psychological empowerment. Finally, the reverse relationship between employees’ use of humor and supervisor’s psychological empowerment may be a future research area for investigation.
CONCLUSION

Humor is a central ingredient of individuals' work and non-work life. It is present in people's daily activities and behaviors. Within the workplace context, humor may result in both employee and organizational benefits. Yet, there is a considerable void regarding empirical studies that utilize the concept of humor in relation to psychological empowerment. The current study fills this gap by examining the impact of leader's humor on employees' psychological empowerment. The results confirm the important role of humor in human resources management demonstrating that its use may increase employees' (dis)empowerment feelings. Furthermore, this study shows that leader's humor is moderated by tenure in its relationship with employees' psychological empowerment.

More specifically, the results indicate that the use of positive humor from a leader may enhance new employees' psychological empowerment, whereas more-tenured employees respond more negatively to the leader's negative humor regarding their perceptions of psychological empowerment. This finding may be attributed to the "honeymoon period" in which new employees are positive and optimistic about their new workplace and are inclined to give emphasis on the positive, and not the negative aspects of it.

IMPLICATIONS

The results of the study suggest constructive implications for organizations and, particularly, leaders. One core implication is the vital role of leader's humor in enhancing employees' psychological empowerment. Positive aspects of leader's humor may increase employees' psychological empowerment and negative ones may hinder such feelings. As such, leaders need to take humor more seriously (Avolio et al., 1999) regarding their interactions with their subordinates and the way they use their different styles of humor.

Yet, the present results demonstrate another substantial implication. That is, leaders may handle their sense of humor in line with their employees' tenure. According to the results, different styles of leader's humor have different effects on employees' psychological empowerment depending on employees' tenure. When coping with new employees, leaders must give emphasis to their positive humor since the latter has a significant influence on their perceptions of psychological empowerment. In the case of long-tenure employees, the findings are quite the opposite. More tenured employees, presumably having adjusted to their workplace conditions, respond (negatively) mainly to leader’s negative style of humor. These findings suggest that both styles of humor constitute important antecedents of employees' psychological empowerment. Thus, leaders should focus on positive aspects of humor in order to enhance short-tenure employees' psychological empowerment and be cautious of not demonstrating negative expressions of humor since this will decrease long-tenure employees' psychological empowerment.
References


Testing Measures of Equity Sensitivity for Resistance to Response Distortion

Eric W. Liguori, Shannon G. Taylor, Sungwon Choi, Donald H. Kluemper, and Kerry S. Sauley

Equity sensitivity research has struggled to accumulate a coherent body of findings consistent with equity theory tenets, due in part to problems concerning the construct’s measurement. Inaccurately measuring one’s equity preferences may affect the validity of predictions made from distorted scores. Employing a within-subjects design with two independent samples, the present study compares the resistance of various equity sensitivity measures to response distortion. Study participants completed surveys under conditions of low and either moderate (in Sample 1) or high (in Sample 2) distortion. Findings suggest newer measurement approaches are more resistant to response distortion than traditional measures of equity sensitivity.

Creativity And Firm-Level Performance: The Mediating Effects Of Action Orientation

Laurence G. Weinzimmer, Eric J. Michel, and Jennifer L. Franczak

Previous research investigating the link between creativity and performance has been limited. A possible explanation may be that even though an organization possesses certain levels of creativity, these attributes do not impact performance directly. This study argues that a firm’s ability to take action mediates the creativity-performance relationship. It draws on organizational behavior literature to first develop an action orientation measure, establish the construct validity of that measure, and hypothesize that action orientation mediates the creativity–firm performance relationship. Doing so further establishes the criterion validity of the action orientation measure in predicting firm performance.

The Impact of Leader’s Humor on Employees’ Psychological Empowerment: The Moderating Role of Tenure

Panagiotis Gkorezis, Leonidas Hatzithomas, and Eugenia Petridou

Recently, organizational humor has been at the center of management literature. Authors have examined its significant role in working relationships and job-related attitudes. The present paper attempts to provide useful insights regarding its impact on important organizational outcomes by exploring the influence of leader’s use of (positive and negative) humor on the psychological empowerment of employees. Moreover, it examines the moderating effect of tenure in the above relationships. Data from 101 service employees in U.S. dinner houses show that leader’s humor, both positive and negative, is associated with psychological empowerment. Leader’s use of positive humor has a positive
impact while the use of leader’s negative humor exerts a negative effect on employees’ psychological empowerment. Further, tenure indicates a determinative impact on the relationship between leader’s humor and employees’ psychological empowerment. More specifically, the results demonstrate that more tenured employees respond more strongly to the leader’s use of negative humor with greatly reduced feelings of psychological empowerment. In contrast, new employees are influenced mainly by leader’s use of positive humor with regard to their feelings of psychological empowerment.

**Integrative Study**

Intersecting Three Muddy Roads: Stability, Legitimacy, and Change .......... 96

*Scott Droge, Michelle Lane, and Shane Spiller*

Several decades of research by multiple academic disciplines studying institutional theory, organizational legitimacy, and environmental enactment have resulted in a multiplicity of conceptual definitions. While this can be helpful, it may also confuse scholars who are attempting to conduct research in these areas. This narrative reflects on these three interrelated streams of research and provides a useful framework for comparing them. The framework provides a basis for comparing and contrasting these constructs and their attributes. Although this study attempts to provide a theoretical integration, it is also careful to leave theoretical distinctions intact. Brief examples are included to clarify the salient features of each theory while integrating their similarities and attending to their differences.