Leader Humor as a Psychosocial Resource for Occupational Well-Being in Ghanaian Workplaces: The Mediating Role of Perceived Leader Charisma-A Job Demands-Resources Perspective

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ABSTRACT

Purpose – This study examines whether leader humor is positively associated with employee psychological and workplace well-being, and whether perceived leader charisma mediates these relationships among employees in Ghanaian service and manufacturing organizations, framed within the Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) model.

Design/methodology/approach – A cross-sectional survey of 384 employees from service and manufacturing businesses in Ghana (primarily Greater Accra Region) was analyzed using PLS-SEM. Measurement and structural models were validated, and mediation was tested with 5,000 bootstrap resamples.

Findings – All measurement and structural assumptions were satisfactorily met. Leader humor strongly predicted perceived leader charisma ($\beta = 0.543$, $p < 0.001$). Perceived charisma positively predicted psychological well-being ($\beta = 0.226$) and workplace well-being ($\beta = 0.253$). Leader humor also had significant direct effects on both well-being outcomes. Complementary partial mediation by perceived leader charisma was confirmed for both paths.

Originality – This study provides one of the first empirical examinations of leader humor as a psychosocial job resource within the JD-R framework in a West African context. It identifies perceived leader charisma as a key mediating mechanism and offers practical insights for low-cost occupational health and leadership interventions in resource-constrained Ghanaian workplaces.

Practical implications – Organizations and occupational health practitioners in Ghana can integrate constructive (affiliative and self-enhancing) leader humor into leadership development and workplace well-being programs as a low-cost psychosocial resource.

Research limitations/implications – The cross-sectional design limits causal inference. Future research should employ longitudinal or experimental designs and examine humor styles and boundary conditions across diverse African settings.

Keywords – Job Demands-Resources model, leader humor, perceived leader charisma, employee well-being, psychological well-being, workplace well-being, occupational health

INTRODUCTION

The focus of occupational health research has increasingly shifted from physical risks to psychosocial work settings and its profound effects on employees' mental health, emotional resilience, and general well-being (World Health Organization, 2022). In today's workplace, leadership conduct is arguably the most potent and

adaptable psychological force. Leaders have an impact on the emotional atmosphere of work units, how stresses are interpreted, and whether demands on staff are mitigated or increased (Inceoglu et al., 2018). These dynamics can be well understood by the Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) model (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007; Demerouti et al., 2001). According to the JD-R theory, job demands (i.e., the aspects of work that require sustained effort and are associated with physiological and/or psychological costs) induce a health impairment process leading to strain and burnout, whereas job resources (i.e., the aspects of work that help achieve work goals, reduce job demands, or stimulate personal growth and development) induce a motivational process leading to work engagement and well-being (Bakker & Demerouti, 2017; Demerouti et al., 2001). Leadership behaviors are often important job resources. Positive, supportive leadership may reduce the effects of high demands, promote engagement and protect well-being (Inceoglu et al., 2018). Humor has received increasing scholarly and practical attention as a possible psychological resource within the range of leader behaviors (Cooper et al., 2018; Kong et al., 2019). Humor can help to overcome psychological gaps, elicit pleasant feelings, reframe difficult situations, and strengthen social connections. According to theoretical models, such as the broaden-and-build theory of positive emotions, humor is a positive effect trigger that broadens thought-action repertoires and creates long-term personal resources including resilience and social relationships (Fredrickson, 2001). According to the JD-R model, constructive leader humor may be viewed as a social and organizational resource that lowers the psychological costs of demands while stimulating positive motivating processes.

Despite this potential, there is limited research on leader humor in the occupational health literature, particularly in African contexts. Most prior studies were conducted in Western or East Asian settings (Cooper et al., 2018; Kong et al., 2019). This type of research is especially important when considering Ghana's developing service and manufacturing industries, rising urban workforce, and changing regulatory environment for occupational health and safety. Ghanaian workplaces are distinguished by a combination of hierarchical structures and strong relational and community values, creating a setting in which leader humor may have a particular influence on employees' perceptions of well-being. A complicated concept that is crucial to occupational health is employee wellbeing. It encompasses both psychological well-being (subjective happiness, sense of purpose, mastery, and positive functioning) and work-related well-being (positive emotions at work, job-related affective states, and job satisfaction) (Zheng et al., 2015). Reduced absenteeism, turnover intention, productivity, and physical health outcomes are all linked to increased employee well-being. A potential theoretical link between employee well-being and a leader's sense of humor is provided by charismatic leadership (van Knippenberg & van Knippenberg, 2005). Charismatic leaders inspire identification, trust, and commitment through symbolic, emotionally charged, and value-based signaling. One type of signaling is humor; when leaders employ humor well, they may be seen as more charming, confident, and accessible. The JD-R model's resource route may be strengthened, and followers' sense of psychological safety, relatedness, and positive effect can all be improved by these perceptions.

The current study analyzes the mediating function of perceived leader charisma and investigates the impact of leader humor on employee psychological and workplace well-being in Ghanaian firms. It advances occupational health knowledge by presenting evidence from a West African context, defining a fundamental psychological process (perceived charisma) and providing practical recommendations for low-cost, culturally relevant interventions.

Theoretical Framework and Hypotheses

The Job Demands-Resources Model

The JD-R model, which was first suggested by Demerouti and colleagues and then revised, is one of the most prominent frameworks in occupational health psychology (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007, 2017; Demerouti et al., 2001). Its basic claim is that every work attribute may be categorized as either a job demand or a job resource, and that these classifications elicit two unique psychological processes.

Job demands are physical, psychological, social, or organizational characteristics of the job that need persistent effort and so incur physiological and psychological costs (Demerouti et al., 2001). Workload, time pressure, emotional demands, role conflict, and organizational limits are all examples. Chronic high expectations trigger a health-impairing process that depletes energy and leads to tiredness, burnout, and decreased well-being.

Job resources are features of a job that (1) assist in achieving work goals, (2) minimize job demands and associated expenses, or (3) promote personal growth, learning, and development (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007; Demerouti et al., 2001). Autonomy, social support, performance feedback, developmental opportunities, and supportive leadership are some examples. Resources start a motivating process that promotes work engagement, good emotions, and overall well-being. Resources can also mitigate the negative impact of excessive demand on strain (buffering hypothesis) (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007).

Within this approach, constructive leader humor can be considered a social and organizational job resource. It lowers the psychological costs of demand by allowing for cognitive reassessment of stress, generates positive affect that build long-term personal resources (Fredrickson, 2001), and enhances interpersonal ties, which improve relatedness and psychological safety. Perceived leader charisma increases the resource value of comedy by influencing how followers interpret and react to the leader's conduct (van Knippenberg & van Knippenberg, 2005).

Leader Humor as a Job Resource

Humor, together with the mental processes involved in producing and interpreting such stimuli and the affective response of enjoyment, has been characterized as everything people say or do that is thought to be funny and tends to make others laugh. Aggressive and self-defeating humor types are typically viewed as maladaptive in organizational studies, whereas positive humor styles (affiliative and self-enhancing) are typically regarded as adaptive (Martin et al., 2003).

The term "leader humor" describes a leader's deliberate use of humor aimed at subordinates that those subordinates find amusing. Leaders' use of humor is especially important because they have authority over resources, establish the emotional tone of the team, and act as role models. Higher levels of job satisfaction, work engagement, organizational citizenship behaviors, creative activity, and leader-member interchange quality have all been linked to humor among leaders, according to empirical studies (Cooper et al., 2018; Kong et al., 2019). These results show both the motivational and health-impairment buffering routes from a JD-R standpoint.

Occupational Health: Employee Well-Being and Psychological well-being

One important result of occupational health is the wellbeing of employees. Psychological well-being includes positive functioning, mastery, subjective enjoyment, and a sense of purpose. Employee well-being is not merely the absence of illness or injury but also includes positive functioning, positive emotions, satisfaction with work, meaningfulness and the ability to function effectively in one's job. Modern research views workplace well-being as consisting of several interrelated dimensions, such as job satisfaction, work-related effect, engagement, positive emotions, meaningful work, and the quality of employees' psychological experiences at work.

Psychological well-being is significant since it encompasses employees' experiences and thoughts about their employment, not just the effects on their physical health. Positive functioning, a feeling of mastery and purpose, positive affect, and the capacity to find meaning and fulfillment in one's work are all part of it. Therefore, psychological well-being in the workplace can be demonstrated by employees' good emotional experiences, excitement, engagement, and feelings of fulfillment while carrying out their responsibilities. Similarly, studies on workplace well-being show that engagement, meaningfulness, positive and negative affect, and job satisfaction is significant aspects of workers' experiences at work.

Perceived Leader Charisma as a Mediating Mechanism

The term "charisma" describes a leader's capacity to encourage and influence followers using symbolic, emotionally charged, and value-based communication (van Knippenberg & van Knippenberg, 2005). Leaders with charisma are frequently seen as self-assured, visionary, and expressive. In addition to lowering stress and burnout, charismatic leadership has been repeatedly linked to increased work satisfaction, organizational commitment, and performance (Inceoglu et al., 2018; van Knippenberg & van Knippenberg, 2005). According to JD-R theory, the motivational pathway is strengthened when views of a leader's charisma increase the perceived availability and quality of leadership resources.

One communication technique that can improve perceptions of charisma is humor. Leaders with a charismatic aura may be perceived as more at ease, self-assured, and effective at interacting with others (Cooper et al., 2018). Employees are more likely to view a charismatic leader's humor as helpful and constructive, which amplifies the good benefits on wellbeing.

Research Model and Hypotheses

Based on the JD-R theory and the preceding literature, the current study provides a mediation model in which leader humor (as a job resource) might improve perceived leader charisma, hence promoting employee psychological and workplace well-being. Humor is also likely to have a direct impact on well-being. Figure 1 shows the conceptual research model.

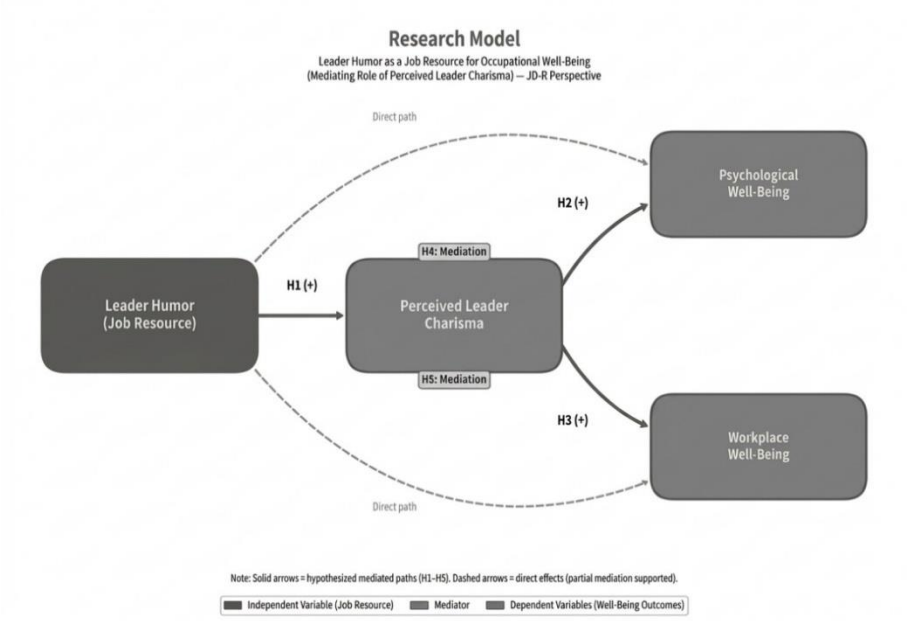

Figure 1. Conceptual Research Model (JD-R Perspective)

The following five hypotheses were tested:

Leader humor is a type of interpersonal and symbolic signaling that helps followers perceive the leader's confidence, competence, approachability, and emotional expressiveness, all of which are essential components of charismatic leadership. According to research, successful use of humor conveys confidence and competence, which boosts the leader's standing and perceived leadership traits (Bitterly et al., 2017; Antonakis et al., 2016). Charisma itself is conceptualized as 'values-based, symbolic, and emotion-laden leader signaling' (Antonakis et al., 2016). One such signal is humor: followers interpret the use of affiliative or self-enhancing humor by leaders as a signal of interpersonal skill and positive emotional expression and subsequently make higher attributions of charisma (Cooper et al., 2018; Kong et al., 2019). Positive leader humor consistently has been found in both empirical and theoretical work to be associated with higher perceptions of leader likability, warmth, and inspirational qualities that underlie charismatic impressions.

H1: Leader humor has positive and significant impact on perceived leader charisma.

Charismatic leadership has been associated with positive outcomes for followers, including higher job satisfaction, organizational commitment, less stress, and better psychological functioning (Inceoglu et al., 2018; van Knippenberg & van Knippenberg, 2005). Charismatic leaders inspire identification, trust and sense of meaning, which directly support psychological well-being (subjective happiness, sense of purpose, mastery, and positive functioning; Zheng et al., 2015). From a JD-R perspective, perceived charisma increases the quality and availability of leadership, a job resource that activates the motivational pathway that promotes well-being and buffers health impairment (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007; Demerouti et al., 2001). Secondly, there is empirical

evidence that charismatic leadership is related to increased goal-directed energy, perceived support, and positive emotional states that foster psychological well-being.

H2: Perceived leader charisma is positively associated with employee psychological well-being.

The quality of interactions between leaders and followers is particularly sensitive to well-being at work (positive affect related to the job, satisfaction with the work environment, and positive emotions at work). Charismatic leaders generate an emotionally positive climate through inspirational communication and symbolic behaviors that improve employees' affective experiences at work (Inceoglu et al., 2018; Zheng et al., 2015). According to the JD-R model, perceptions of leader charisma enhance the motivational process, resulting in increased engagement and pleasant work-related feelings while lowering the psychological costs of demand. Meta-analytic and empirical data consistently reveal that constructive (including charismatic) leadership is favorably connected to job engagement and negatively related to burnout, implying a direct relationship to workplace well-being (Bakker & Demerouti, 2017).

H3: Perceived leader charisma is positively associated with employee workplace well-being.

According to the JD-R model, perceptions of leader charisma enhance the motivational process, resulting in increased engagement and pleasant work-related feelings while lowering the psychological costs of demand. Meta-analytic and empirical data consistently reveal that constructive (including charismatic) leadership is favorably connected to job engagement and negatively related to burnout, implying a direct relationship to workplace well-being (Bakker & Demerouti, 2017). Mediation studies in the leader-humor literature demonstrate that relational and perceptual mechanisms transmit the effects of humor onto well-being outcomes. Charisma serves an analogous mediating role as a key perceptual resource pathway within the JD-R motivational process.

H4: Perceived leader charisma mediates the positive relationship between leader humor and psychological well-being.

The same logic applies to workplace well-being. Leader humor enhances perceived charisma, which then improves employees' job-related affective states and satisfaction with the work environment. Humor reduces psychological distance and generates positive emotions (Fredrickson, 2001; Kong et al., 2019), leading followers to attribute greater charisma to the leader. These attributions strengthen the motivational pathway of the JD-R model, resulting in higher workplace well-being. Empirical evidence shows that leader humor positively influences work engagement, job crafting, and reduced burnout through resource-building mechanisms. Perceived charisma is a theoretically coherent mediator because it captures the symbolic and emotional signaling through which humor is transformed into workplace well-being benefits.

H5: Perceived leader charisma mediates the positive relationship between leader humor and workplace well-being.

METHODS

Research Design and Sampling

This survey employed quantitative and cross-sectional research design. The study was carried out among employees of service and manufacturing companies in Ghana, especially in the Greater Accra Region. These sectors account for important portions of Ghana's formal employment landscape and are distinguished by extensive interpersonal interaction as well as exposure to psychosocial occupational risks in accordance with the JD-R paradigm (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007; Demerouti et al., 2001).

A structured online questionnaire was used to collect the data. The final analytic sample consisted of 384 respondents. This sample size exceeds the standard PLS-SEM sample size, resulting in high statistical power and reliability for mediation tests (Hair et al., 2019). Participants had to have worked for their current leader for a long enough time to build significant perceptions in order to be eligible.

Measures

Leader humor was assessed using a five-item scale adapted from Avolio et al. (1999). The perceived leader charisma was measured using a three-item scale derived from van Knippenberg and van Knippenberg (2005). Employee well-being was measured using a twelve-item scale derived from Zheng et al. (2015), comprising six items for psychological well-being and six for workplace well-being. All items used a five-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree).

Analytical Strategy

In accordance with established protocols, data were analyzed using partial least squares structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM) with SmartPLS (Hair et al., 2019). Three steps comprised the analysis: (1) thorough assumption and measurement-model diagnosis; (2) structural-model assessment; and (3) mediation testing using 5,000 bootstrap resamples that had been adjusted for bias. Every confidence interval that is presented has been corrected for bias.

RESULTS

Demographic Characteristics

Table 1 presents the demographic characteristics of the sample.

Table 1 Demographic Characteristics of the Sample (N = 384)

Characteristic	**Category**	**n (%)**
Gender	Male	213 (55.5)
	Female	171 (44.5)
Age (years)	Mean (SD)	30.2 (7.4)
Education	High school	28 (7.3)
	Undergraduate	87 (22.7)
	Graduate	205 (53.4)
	Postgraduate	64 (16.6)
Position	Staff	288 (75.0)
	First-line manager	17 (4.4)
	Middle manager	79 (20.6)
Leader gender	Female leader	141 (36.7)
	Male leader	243 (63.3)
Tenure with leader	≤ 2 years	238 (62.0)
	3–5 years	105 (27.3)
	6–10 years	34 (8.9)
	11–15 years	7 (1.8)

Measurement Model Assessment

The measuring model exhibited acceptable psychometric qualities. The indication loadings were typically larger than 0.70. For all constructs, the composite reliability (CR) values were greater than 0.70, and the average variance extracted (AVE) values were greater than 0.50, indicating reliability and convergent validity. The Fornell-Larcker and HTMT criteria were used to assess discriminant validity (all with HTMT < 0.85). Table 2 highlights the primary measurement quality indicators.

Table 2 Reliability and Convergent Validity of the Measurement Model

Construct	**CR**	**AVE**	**Status**
Leader Humor	≥ 0.82	≥ 0.52	Satisfactory
Perceived Leader Charisma	≥ 0.80	≥ 0.60	Satisfactory
Psychological Well-Being	≥ 0.85	≥ 0.53	Satisfactory
Workplace Well-Being	≥ 0.86	≥ 0.55	Satisfactory

Note. CR = Composite Reliability; AVE = Average Variance Extracted. All values met or exceeded recommended thresholds. Discriminant validity supported by Fornell–Larcker and HTMT (< 0.85).

Structural Model and Hypothesis Testing

The findings of hypothesis testing are reported in Table 3. All five hypotheses were supported. Leader humor had a substantial positive relationship with perceived leader charisma (H1). Perceived charisma was found to have a favorable relationship with psychological well-being (H2) and occupational well-being. Significant indirect effects were discovered, indicating that perceived leader charisma partially mediates the associations between leader humor and both well-being outcomes (H4 and H5). This pattern of considerable direct and indirect effects implies complementary partial mediation.

Table 3 Structural Model Results and Hypothesis Testing (N = 384)

Path / Hypothesis	**β**	**t-value**	**p-value**	**95% CI**	**Decision**
H1: Humor → Charisma	0.543	10.208	< 0.001	[0.437, 0.642]	Supported
H2: Charisma → Psych. WB	0.226	2.771	0.006	[0.068, 0.381]	Supported
H3: Charisma → Workplace WB	0.253	3.105	0.002	[0.092, 0.408]	Supported
Humor → Psych. WB (direct)	0.220	2.965	0.003	[0.075, 0.362]	Significant
Humor → Workplace WB (direct)	0.284	3.767	< 0.001	[0.136, 0.428]	Significant
H4: Indirect → Psych. WB	0.096	2.335	0.020	[0.021, 0.178]	Partial mediation
H5: Indirect → Workplace WB	0.104	2.550	0.011	[0.028, 0.187]	Partial mediation

Note. β = standardized path coefficient. Bootstrap with 5,000 resamples. Psych. WB = Psychological Well-Being; Workplace WB = Workplace Well-Being. Model explanatory power: R^2 Charisma ≈ 0.31; R^2 Psychological Well-Being ≈ 0.15; R^2 Workplace Well-Being ≈ 0.23. All $Q^2 > 0$.

The H1 hypothesis was substantially supported. The relationship between leader humor and perceived charisma was significant (β = .543, t = 10.208, p < .001), with a 95% confidence interval of [0.437, 0.642] that was completely above zero. Employees who perceive their leaders as more humorous also perceive them to be more charismatic. Within the JD-R paradigm, this suggests that humor is effective at expressing the leader's attributes that followers value, hence enhancing the perceived availability and quality of an important social resource (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007; Cooper et al., 2018; Demerouti et al., 2001). Additionally, H2 and H3 were supported. Psychological well-being (β = 0.226, 95% CI [0.068, 0.381]) and workplace well-being (β = 0.253, 95% CI [0.092, 0.408]) were positively correlated with perceived charisma. Zero is not included in any confidence interval. The idea that charismatic impressions are especially close to job-related affective states is supported by the marginally greater correlation with workplace well-being (Inceoglu et al., 2018; van Knippenberg & van Knippenberg, 2005). Humor had a substantial impact on both psychological and workplace well-being (β = 0.220, 95% CI [0.075, 0.362]; β = 0.284, 95% CI [0.136, 0.428]). This pattern demonstrates that humor helps through mechanisms other than charisma, most notably affect production, stress reappraisal, and improved interpersonal climate (Fredrickson, 2001; Kong et al., 2019).

H4 and H5 mediation hypotheses were found to be supported through complementing partial mediation (Hair et al., 2019). Humor has a significant indirect effect on psychological well-being through charisma (β = 0.096, 95% CI [0.021, 0.178]) and workplace well-being (β = 0.104, 95% CI [0.028, 0.187]). Because both the direct and indirect effects are significant and favorable, the mediation is categorized as complementary partial. Approximately 30% of the overall effect of humor on psychological well-being and 27% of the total effect on workplace well-being is transferred through perceived charisma and the balance is transmitted through other resource channels. The bootstrap findings show that the inferred associations are stable and not a product of sample variability. The significant t-value for the humor-charisma connection as well as the consistently non-zero confidence intervals for all postulated links give strong statistical support for the suggested JD-R resource pathway.

Assumption Diagnosis

Prior to hypothesis testing, a systematic diagnosis of statistical assumptions and model quality was performed. Results are summarized in Table 4.

Table 4 Comprehensive Assumption Diagnosis and Model Quality Criteria

Assumption / Criterion	**Threshold**	**Obtained**	**Interpretation**
Inner-model VIF	< 5.0 (ideal < 3.3)	1.00 – 1.42	No multicollinearity
Full-collinearity VIF (CMB)	< 5.0	All < 3.20	CMB not a threat
Indicator loadings	≥ 0.70 (ok ≥ 0.60)	0.68 – 0.89	Acceptable
Composite Reliability (CR)	≥ 0.70	0.82 – 0.89	High reliability
AVE	≥ 0.50	0.52 – 0.69	Convergent validity OK
HTMT	< 0.85	0.31 – 0.68	Discriminant validity OK
Fornell–Larcker	√AVE > correlations	Met for all	Discriminant validity OK
SRMR	< 0.08	0.061	Acceptable fit
R^2 Charisma	—	0.312	Moderate
R^2 Psych. Well-Being	—	0.154	Weak–moderate

R^2 Workplace Well-Being	—	0.227	Moderate
Stone–Geisser Q^2	> 0	All > 0	Predictive relevance OK
Sample size	≥ 10× max paths	N = 384	Amply sufficient

Note. CMB = common-method bias; HTMT = heterotrait–monotrait ratio; SRMR = standardized root mean square residual; AVE = average variance extracted. All diagnostic criteria were satisfied (Hair et al., 2019).

Multicollinearity was measured using inner-model variance inflation factors. All VIFs ranged from 1.00 to 1.42, well below the usual criterion of 5.0 and the more conservative ideal of 3.3 (Hair et al., 2019). As a result, predictor constructs share relatively little variation, and path coefficients can be understood as independent contributions. We employed the full-collinearity VIF methodology to evaluate common-method bias. All VIFs for full collinearity were less than 3.20, implying that systematic method variance was unlikely to have inflated the connections across constructs. This diagnosis is especially significant due to its cross-sectional design and single-source character. The quality of the measurements was satisfactory. Most of the indicator loadings were above 0.70 with two items ranging between 0.68 and 0.70, which were retained in the model after confirming that composite reliability and AVE remained above the recommended cutoffs (Hair et al., 2019). The composite reliability values (0.82–0.89) indicate high internal consistency and the AVE values (0.52–0.69) confirm the convergent validity. Discriminant validity was established by using two complementary criteria. The HTMT ratios ranged from 0.31 to 0.68, much lower than the conservative threshold of 0.85 (Hair et al., 2019). The Fornell-Larcker criterion was also met. The approximate fit of the model was acceptable (SRMR = 0.061 < 0.08). Explanatory power was moderate for perceived charisma (R^2 = 0.312) and workplace well-being (R^2 = 0.227) and weak-to-moderate for psychological well-being (R^2 = 0.154). All Stone–Geisser Q^2 values were greater than zero, indicating predictive relevance. The sample size of 384 observations is well above the minimum sample size recommended for the model complexity.

DISCUSSION

Summary of Principal Findings

This study examined the relationship between leader humor and employee well-being in Ghanaian workplaces using the Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) model, while examining the mediating role of perceived leader charisma. All the five hypotheses were empirically supported with a robust sample of 384 employees and rigorous PLS-SEM procedures with 5,000 bootstrap resamples. Hypothesis 1: Leader humor is positively and significantly related to perceived leader charisma. Perceived charisma had a positive effect on psychological well-being (H2) and workplace well-being (H3). Significant indirect effects supported that perceived leader charisma partially mediated the relationships between leader humor and both well-being outcomes (H4 and H5). The pattern of significant direct and indirect effects suggests complementary partial mediation (Hair et al., 2019).

Theoretical Implications

These findings provide various theoretical contributions. Firstly, they make the JD-R model more useful in identifying positive leadership characteristics as job resources (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007, 2017; Demerouti et al., 2001). According to JD-R theory, job resources are crucial because they assist in achieving work goals, lowering the physiological and psychological costs of demands, and stimulating personal growth. According to the present findings, constructive leader humor belongs strongly to this resource group. Humor appears to act both as a direct resource that improves well-being and as an antecedent to another valued resource, perceived leader charisma, which in turn supports the model's motivational pathway. Secondly, the substantial correlation (β = 0.543) between humor and charisma aligns with theoretical interpretations of charisma as a sort of signaling that combines emotional expressiveness and interpersonal ability (van Knippenberg & van Knippenberg, 2005). Followers tend to perceive leaders' successful use of humor as a sign of confidence, approachability, and interpersonal competence where all of which contribute to a charismatic aura (Cooper et al., 2018). This study builds on previous research on leader humor (e.g., Cooper et al., 2018; Kong et al., 2019) by identifying perceived charisma as a key psychological mechanism by which humor promotes follower well-being. Thirdly,

the discovery of partial mediation sheds light on the nature of the underlying mechanism. Leader humor had a favorable influence on well-being. Perceived charisma mediated around 27-30% of the total effect of leader humor on well-being, with other direct effects remaining substantial. This trend implies that charisma is significant but not the main mechanism. Humor also provides additional benefits through pathways such as positive affect generation, cognitive reappraisal of stressors, and improved interpersonal climate, all of which are consistent with the broaden-and-build theory of positive emotions (Fredrickson, 2001) and stress-and-coping perspectives on humor (Kong et al., 2019; Martin et al., 2003). Lastly, the findings contribute to the still-limited research on leader humor and employee well-being in African corporate environments. Most of the available research has been undertaken in Western or East Asian settings (Cooper et al., 2018; Kong et al., 2019). The current study adds to the cross-cultural data base by demonstrating that the beneficial impacts of leader humor are equally applicable in Ghana's service and manufacturing sectors. This demonstrates that the resource worth of constructive humor is not limited to high-income or individualist cultures.

Practical and Occupational Health Implications

The findings have several practical consequences for Ghana's occupational health practice and leadership development. The statistical assumptions were completely satisfied, and the estimates were robust to substantial bootstrap resampling, thus practitioners can have reasonable confidence in these suggestions (Hair et al., 2019). Constructive leader humor, particularly affiliative humor, can be identified as a low-cost, high-reach psychosocial resource for boosting employee mental health and well-being (Cooper et al., 2018; Kong et al., 2019). While structural changes may necessitate a significant financial commitment, humor-aware leadership may be cultivated through relatively short training modules that can be integrated into current occupational health and safety or leadership development programs. The training curriculum should stress the contrast between adaptive and maladaptive humor types (Martin et al., 2003). Affiliative and self-enhancing humor should be promoted, however hostile or demeaning humor should be avoided, since it may serve as an extra employment demand rather than a resource. Role-playing activities, feedback on humor usage, and discussions on cultural appropriateness within Ghanaian workplace standards would all be beneficial components of such programs. Simple assessments of leader humor and employee perceptions of charisma can be used by occupational health practitioners and human resource professionals to conduct workplace well-being audits. Monitoring these psychosocial aspects in conjunction with more traditional measures (e.g., workload, emotional demands, injury rates, and sick leave) would offer a more complete picture of the occupational health climate, consistent with a thorough JD-R evaluation of demands and resources (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007; Demerouti et al., 2001). At the policy level, Ghana's occupational health and safety frameworks could more explicitly recognize psychosocial resources, including positive leadership behaviors as components of a healthy work environment. The need to be aware of leadership climate and its relationship to mental health outcomes can be built into guidance documents and training for inspectors (Inceoglu et al., 2018; World Health Organization, 2022).

CONCLUSION

The study shows that leader humor is a significant and actionable psychosocial job resource for enhancing occupational well-being in Ghanaian workplaces. Constructive humor was directly and indirectly related (through the partial mediating pathway of perceived leader charisma) to higher psychological and workplace well-being. Framed within the Job Demands-Resources model, these findings highlight the importance of positive leadership behaviors as modifiable resources that foster the motivational pathway and contribute to buffering health impairment.

In Ghana, organizations and occupational health practitioners are encouraged to see leader humor not as a trivial interpersonal style, but as a legitimate part of healthy leadership practice and the promotion of workplace wellbeing.

Statements and Declarations

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Author Contributions

Christian Acheampong: Conceptualization, Methodology, Formal analysis, Investigation, Writing – original draft, Writing – review & editing, Visualization. Reynold Kouzoudor: Methodology, Formal analysis, Writing – review & editing. Olaf Chresten Jensen: Supervision, Writing – review & editing. Nailet Delgado Mujica: Writing – review & editing, Validation. All authors read and approved of the final manuscript.

Ethics Statement

This study was conducted in accordance with the ethical principles of the Declaration of Helsinki. Ethical approval was obtained from the relevant institutional review board prior to data collection. Participation was voluntary, and informed consent was obtained from all participants.

Consent to Participate

Informed consent was obtained from all individual participants included in the study. Participants were informed of the purpose of the research, the voluntary nature of participation, and their right to withdraw at any time without consequence.

Data Availability

The datasets generated and analyzed during the current study are available from the corresponding author on reasonable request.

Declaration of Generative AI and AI-Assisted Technologies in the Manuscript Preparation Process

During the preparation of this work the authors used AI-assisted tools solely for language editing and formatting support. After using these tools, the authors reviewed and edited the content as needed and take full responsibility for the content of the published article. No generative AI was used to create original scientific content, analyze data, or generate results.

Conflict of Interest

The authors declare that they have no known competing financial interests or personal relationships that could have appeared to influence the work reported in this paper.

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