Personality in Work Humour: only when people are pleasant
Maren Rawlings, Bruce Findlay, Kim Muraca
Swinburne University of Technology

The approaches taken in the development of most questionnaires in the area of humour studies involved the assumption of major dimensions and then the creation of items tailored for them, for example, Martin et al. (HSQ; 2003), Thorson and Powell (MSHS; 1993) and Booth-Butterfield and Booth-Butterfield (HOS; 1991). In particular, Ruch and Kohler’s (STCI; 1998) model was strongly influenced by the Five Factor Model of personality (Costa & McCrae, 1992). Specific items within each questionnaire typically refer to a range of different environments, making the assumption that people behave somewhat similarly across situations. Theories of “Emotional Labour” (Hochschild, 2003) and “Impression Management” (Goffman, 2004), however, suggested that in some situations personality characteristics are suppressed. The present study describes the development of an instrument specifically constructed to gauge a person’s use of and reaction to humor in the work-place. When a practical level of correlation was adopted (Royall, 1986), the scale “Sharing” was found to correlated with extraversion and the scale “Gossip – disapproval” was negatively correlated with agreeableness. No personality measures were found to be “practically” significant with items which made up the short form of the Humour at Work scale (HAW).

We celebrated the 150th Anniversary of the Eight Hour Day in Australia in 2006. Although we are experiencing a minerals boom, restructuring is occurring in the manufacturing sector. In particular, value-added production (e.g. clothing and car making) is going off shore, as well as IT service industries. Although there is some expansion in tourism and high-end creative or specialty products, most new jobs are service related and involve shifts that for added productivity, violate the 8-hour-day principle. These positions need a fair amount of “face work” or emotional labour.
In their Australian research on affective well-being and intrinsic job satisfaction in the work-place, Hosie, Sevastos and Cooper (2006) remarked that “Organizations now need employees who will willingly exceed formal job requirements in order to improve organizational productivity. Human resources practices should strive to create an environment that overtly encourages…a social exchange relationship in preference to a purely economic exchange relationship” (p. 254). Companies should create an environment where employees identify with and share the organization’s goals and objectives. Their careful and thorough analysis of the relationships between managers and their employees, however, made no reference to humour, a traditional means of expressing either satisfaction or dissatisfaction.

In contrast, in New Zealand, Holmes (2000; 2006; Holmes & Stubbe, 2003) used critical discourse analysis (CDA) to examine data from the Victoria University Language in the Workplace Project. They found many examples of humour being used for playful and strategic purposes. In particular Holmes and Marra (2002) found that subversive humour increased in work-place meetings compared with other work-place settings. They reported that 40% of the humour in organizational meetings was subversive, compared with 60% being reinforcing humour.

One of the aims of this study was to elucidate the role played by the personalities of individual workers in their approaches to work-place humour. Martin., Puhlik-Doris, Larsen, Gray, & Weir, (2003) designed the Humor Styles
*Questionnaire* (HSQ), a general humour scale, to reflect the individual personality in their *Self-enhancing* and *Self-defeating* scales and to reflect the individual’s behaviour to others in the *Affiliative* and *Aggressive* scales. All their items were in the first person. They validated the 32 item HSQ against the 240 items of the NEO PI-R (Costa, & McCrae, 1992) with 152 respondents. For the sake of clarity, only correlations greater than $r = .20$ are reported. Significant positive correlations were found between HSQ *self-enhancing* and extraversion and openness, and significant positive correlations were found between HSQ *affiliative* and extraversion and openness, together with a significant negative correlation with neuroticism. Between HSQ *aggressive* and agreeableness and conscientiousness, there were significant negative correlations. HSQ *self-defeating* correlated significantly positively with neuroticism and significantly negatively with agreeableness and conscientiousness. When a replication was carried out (Greven, Chamorro-Premuzic, Arteche & Furnam, 2008) with a much larger sample ($N = 1038$), this pattern was repeated (correlations between $r = .25$ and $r = .51$), except for that between HSQ *self-defeating* and agreeableness which was much smaller.

The *Multidimensional Sense of Humor Scale*, developed by Thorson and Powell (1993) was developed from a literature search that led to the supposition that a person’s sense of humour was composed of six elements. After “brainstorming” items that were suggested by these elements and 3 rounds of factor analysis, they developed a four factor model that could be summarized as “I can create humour” (11 items), “Humour helps me to cope” (7 items), “I appreciate humour” (2 items) and “I don’t like joking” (4 items). All their items
were in the first person. Ruch and Kohler’s *State-Trait Cheerfulness Inventory* (STCI; 1998) was strongly influenced by the Five Factor Model of personality (Costa & McCrae, 1992) with underlying theoretical dimensions of “cheerfulness, seriousness and bad mood” (Ruch & Kohler, 1998, p. 205). Specific items within each of these questionnaires typically refer to a range of different environments, making the assumption that people behave somewhat similarly across situations, that is, that humorous behaviour is the result of personality influencing consistent humorous traits.

The *Humor Orientation Scale* (HOS) developed by Booth-Butterfield and Booth-Butterfield (1991) consisted of 17 items in the first person, in a uni-dimensional model (Cronbach’s $\alpha = .90$). They conducted confirmatory factor analysis to test the worth of a one factor model over a two factor model and chose the more parsimonious solution, although the difference was very small. In addition they looked at situations in which an individual will or will not attempt humour by asking respondents to write in a free response task about situations appropriate for humour use and situations inappropriate for humour use. These situations were not constrained and were coded into conceptually similar categories; low humor, non-verbal, impersonation, language, other orientation and expressiveness. They concluded that persons higher on the HOS will perceive more situations as appropriate for humour use and fewer situations as inappropriate for humour use and will use more of the different categories identified.
In a public arena, such as the workplace, Goffman (2004) maintained that the individual was concerned with the presentation of the self and maintained a positive self-image by engaging in face-work, by increasing positive face (concerned with connoted features such as attractiveness or affiliation) and demanding negative face (of denoted features like precedence or personal space) when challenged by the actions of others. People, by frame analysis, understand the social situations they find themselves in (analogous to acting in theatre) and engage in interaction rituals or displays that align the individual with a group (e.g., using humour about a particular class or sex). In such situations of impression management, it would be expected that personality characteristics would be suppressed. Hochschild (2003) suggested that particular forms of employment require the suppression of personality and the adoption of expected modes of address (emotional labour) between server and customer. The use of humour at work could be a strategic or subversive reaction to these constraints because it is considered to be not serious or not on the record. In fact humour is most easily generated (Attardo, 1993) by breaking the rules or conversational maxims of scientifically based real and true communication (Grice, 1989).

In general, extraverts rated themselves higher on having a sense of humour in a study by Craik, Lampert & Nelson (1996). The two humour style indices derived from *The Humorous Behavior Q-sort Deck* correlating significantly with extraversion were: *socially warm v. cold* and *reflective v. boorish*. When extraverts were separated from introverts, significant results were found for the humorous style *socially warm v. cold* for extraverts and *socially warm v. cold* and *competent*
v. inept for introverts (p. 289). The authors concluded that introverts were more likely to value humour competence in their personal humour styles than extraverts, who felt they had a good sense of humour if they did not use vulgarity.

German adults who were heterogeneous with regard to profession, education and status, were participants in a study by Ruch and Hehl (1998) that involved the use of the NEO-PI (Costa & McCrae, 1992) as a measure of five factors of personality, and the 3-Witz-Dimensionen humor test (Ruch 1992). The 3-WD humor test was designed to test the funniness and aversiveness of jokes and cartoons in three humour categories: incongruity-resolution humour, nonsense humour and sexual humour. Ruch and Hehl found a previously well-established association between the personality factor of openness and appreciation of humour structure (nonsense and residual incongruity) and a negative association between openness and the funniness ratings of incongruity resolution humour. They concluded that “irrespective of how much individuals appreciate humor, open individuals tend to prefer unresolved or residual incongruity and closed individuals prefer resolvable incongruities” (Ruch & Hehl, 1998, p.134).

The perceived specific qualities associated with a good sense of humour were investigated by Cann and Calhoun (2001). Noting that research has shown that most individuals believe that they have an above average sense of humour (e.g., Martin & Lefcourt, 1983), they randomly allocated participants to each of three groups by giving them the instruction to rate on 36 qualities categorized by Alicke (1985), either someone with “a below average sense of humor”, “a well
above average sense of humor”, or “someone who is a typical college student” (Cann and Calhoun, 2001, p.120). Only the Humour Type main effect was significant. The authors concluded that persons with a well above average sense of humour were seen as more positive. Low social desirability was only associated with a well above average sense of humour if the person was judged “Boastful” or “Restless”. Persons with an above average sense of humour, however, were rated lower on “Mature”.

In a second study, Cann and Calhoun (2001) used the same instructions as for the first study but replaced Alicke’s (1985) qualities with a two-page modified version of the NEO-FFI (Costa & McCrae, 1992). Again only the Humor Type main effect was significant and on all five factors. The well above average type was perceived as being less neurotic, more extraverted, more open, more agreeable, and less conscientious than the below average type. Compared to the typical college student, the well above average humor type was less neurotic, more extraverted and more agreeable, but more conscientious and there was no difference on openness.

The work situation differs in many aspects from the family or social milieu. In a study in the USA, beginning with the “Depression” (November 1931 to May 1932), fourteen workers were closely observed in a separate room (Roethlisberger & Dickson, 1939; 1964). Humour was used to control other workers’ outputs (the “chiseller” or the “speed-king” (p.60) and to entertain. The types of humour and
games that the workers employed, however, appeared to Homans to be aimed at adjusting the wage-effort exchange in their favour.

The situation changed with the return of servicemen after the Second World War. In a variety of industries in the USA during 1951 to 1955, fooling around occurred in shipping departments, where young men considered themselves temporary, and humour was reported amongst the welders, who had skills that were not readily learned. “The welders are always patting each other on the back….kid each other and have a lot of spirit…. The self-assurance and bravado of welders cannot be overstressed” (Sayles, 1963, p.26). Generally humour appeared absent on assembly lines and conflict with management dominated this post-war work milieu.

In a London department store, humorous remarks by workers were directly observed. They occurred between individuals and between groups: “mutual teasing about personal habits, appearance, love experience, morality and, in particular, work and method of work” (Bradney, 1957, p.183). Horse-play was rare and only occurred between young males (who also used obscenity with each other). The humorous remarks that Bradney observed expressed frustration, solidarity with other employees and mild rebuke, generally to cope with “difficult” conditions imposed by management practices, but sometimes just couched as an exchange of pleasantries.
Humour can be seen as a “countervailing force” to address “workplace subjugations” (Warren & Fineman, 2007, p. 95). Filling the elevator with oversized “Russian Dolls” (dressed in business dress and representing minorities) when clients were expected, was a strategy designed to comment on unfavorable management practices (p. 101). Deliberate pilfering play was aimed at relieving boredom, such as “target dough”, hurling dough at a clock 30 feet away, and “blackberry golf” using frozen fruit and a squeegee (Linstead, 1985, p. 18). Supervision was resisted by using strategic humour. A male supervisor checked a female employee for the second time and was told “I see, you don’t want to trust me, you want to marry me”, an irony inferring power and gender imbalance, (Ackroyd & Thomson, 1999, p.112). The site services inspector (“Stop! Health and Safety!”) was set up with a faked accident involving a microscooter (Warren & Fineman, 2007, p. 102).

In any workplace, workers hear what is expected of their behaviour from stories holding high performers up to praise, and low performers are subjected to shame (Foster, 2004). The corporate culture can be passed on in humorous stories. “Conformity is essential for the survival of the group as a whole…and motivates people…. to minimize their eccentricities” (p.86).

The question to be answered in our research was whether the individual’s humorous behaviour reflected personality traits in the arena of the workplace, or whether the influence of the workplace frame (e.g., face-work, boredom or stress)
caused changes in the style of humour that individuals saw themselves and other people adopting.

Method

Three studies are reported in this presentation. The first involved the development of the *Humour at Work* (HAW) scale. The second involved the validation of this scale against the *Humour Styles Questionnaire* (HSQ – Martin, Puhlik-Doris, Larsen, Gray, & Weir, 2003), a measure of general humour use, and further validation involving a measure of personality, the M37 (Rawlings, 2001; Boldero, Rawlings & Haslam, 2007), using a snow-ball internet sample of workers in Australia (largely from Victoria). The third study was a validation of the HAW scale on a sample of Prison Correctional Officers and other correctional employees, all working at a privately owned Victorian Prison.

In contrast to the humour scales outlined above, the approach adopted in the development (in the first study) of the *Humour at Work* scale was empirical. Diverse fields were perused, such as linguistics, evolutionary theory, social psychology and organizational psychology. This led to the development of items in several themes (development, emotional labour, gender-class, discourse management, teasing, personality, ethnic differences, politeness, management and workplace). There were 150 items in the first person and 150 items in the third person chosen for the initial creation of the scale. Although the internet
recruitment was international, respondents were mainly from Australia (217 of 306).

The validation in the second study was carried out with a snow-ball internet sample of 379 Australians in work. The questionnaire consisted of 62 items of the HAW and measures of Mood (PA/NA – Watson, Clark & Tellegen, 1988), Altruism (Goldberg, 1999), Impression management (EPQ-R lie scale, Eysenck, Eysenck & Barrett, 1985), Personality (M37, Rawlings, 2001; normed in Australia), Humor Styles (HSQ – Martin et al., 1993), and workplace scales not relevant to this report.

In the third study, the 62 items of the *Humour at Work* scale were presented, together with the *Humor Styles Questionnaire* (Martin et al., 2003), the *Attitude to Life Scale* (ATL – Ryff & Keyes, 1995) and the *Depression, Anxiety and Stress Scale* (DASS-21, Lovibond & Lovibond, 1995). Respondents were 98 employees of a private Victorian prison (54 men and 44 women whose modal age was 30-39 years). The respondents either used an internet link or were provided with a paper version of the questionnaires.

**Results**

Exploratory factor analyses lead to the identification of eight scales:

- *Sharing* (8 items, Cronbach’s $\alpha = .85$), *Nasty workplace* (9 items, Cronbach’s $\alpha = .85$), *Gossip* (8 items, Cronbach’s $\alpha = .80$), *Nice workplace* (7 items, Cronbach’s $\alpha = .80$),
No humour (8 items, Cronbach’s $\alpha = .69$), Stirring (8 items, Cronbach’s $\alpha = .76$), Teasing (7 items, Cronbach’s $\alpha = .73$) and Supporting (7 items, Cronbach’s $\alpha = .81$). Factor analysis of the factors revealed two superfactors, Pleasant Climate and Unpleasant Climate. This concluded the analysis of results from the first study.

In the second study, as the sample was large, a criterion of “practical significance” of $r = .30$ was chosen (Royall, 1986). The correlations of the scales of the HAW (eight scales and 62 items as above) with demographic factors such as age, gender or the number of people interacted with each day, although significant, failed to reach this criterion. There were no correlations that reached this criterion between the scales of the HAW and positive affect (PA) or negative affect (NA), nor with the ERQ-R lie scale. Altruism, however, correlated at a practical level with Sharing ($r = .38, p < .01$), Nice workplace ($r = .32, p < .01$) and Nasty workplace ($r = -.30, p < .01$). Common method variance (Podsakoff, MacKenzie, Lee, & Podsakoff, 2003) was estimated by mixing items from the Altruism and EPQ-R lie scales ($r = .16, p < .01$) and it was concluded that variation attributable to doing such questions on the internet was of this order.

The HAW scales that correlated with the HSQ scales were as follows: With the HSQ Affiliative, Sharing ($r = .56, p < .01$), No Humour ($r = -.39, p < .01$), Nice Climate ($r = .37, p < .01$), Supporting ($r = .34, p < .01$); with HSQ Self- enhancing, Sharing ($r = .36, p < .01$), Supporting ($r = .40, p < .01$), with HSQ Aggressive, Stirring ($r = .48, p < .01$), Gossip (disapproving, $r = -.50, p < .01$) and
HSQ Self-defeating, Stirring ($r = .44, p < .01$), Teasing ($r = .31, p < .01$). Nasty Climate did not correlate to criterion level with the scales of the HSQ.

Only two of the HAW scales correlated to criterion with scales of the M37. These were Sharing ($r = .33, p < .01$) with extraversion and Gossip (disapproving, $r = .30, p < .01$) with agreeableness.

Confirmatory factor analysis was performed on each scale of the HAW and as a result of discarding items, reliabilities dropped (range Cronbach’s $\alpha = .63$ to .83). The final short version of the HAW consisted of two scales, reflecting the superfactors of the exploratory factor analysis in the first study. These scales were called Pleasant Climate (8 items, Cronbach’s $\alpha = .76$) and Unpleasant Climate (5 items, Cronbach’s $\alpha = .78$) and correlated with each other ($r = -.33$) indicating that they were distinct scales, in a bivalent model (Cacioppo, Gardner & Berntson, 1997). The indices of fit for this structural model were Chi-square (64) = 93.5, $p = .009$, GFI = .96, AGFI = .95, TFI = .97, CFI = .97, RMSEA = .035, SRMR = .042 and Bollen-Stine Bootstrap $p = .141$.

When the short version of the HAW was validated with the scales of the HSQ, Pleasant Climate correlated to the criterion level with HSQ Affiliative ($r = .31, p < .01$) and HSQ Self-enhancing ($r = .35, p < .01$). There were trends ($r < .20, p < .01$) for Unpleasant Climate correlating negatively with the HSQ Affiliative and Self-enhancing scales and positively with the HSQ Aggressive scale. In
addition, there was a trend for the HSQ Self-defeating scale to correlate with Pleasant Climate.

Correlations between the HAW Pleasant Climate scale and Unpleasant Climate scales and the scales of the personality measure, M37 were significant but did not reach the criterion level. One correlation between M37 (Dis)Agreeableness and Unpleasant Climate could be described as a trend ($r = .23$, $p < .01$). Although it had been previously used (Boldero, Rawlings & Haslam, 2007), it could be argued that the M37 (containing 37 items, Rawlings, 2001) was not a suitable measure of personality for a sample in work ($N = 379$). When correlations were taken between the scales of the M37 and the scales of the HSQ, the emerging pattern (see Table R1 below) was similar to that reported by Martin et al., (2003) who used the 240 items of the NEO-PI R with 152 participants and in a subsequent much larger replication ($N = 1038$, Greven, et al., 2008). In particular, significant correlations ($r < .20$) occurred between the scales as described in the replication above, with the exception of HSQ self-defeating, where the negative correlation with conscientiousness was very small (of the order of common method variance).
Table R1: Correlations between the Humor Styles Questionnaire and the M37

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Neuroticism</th>
<th>Extraversion</th>
<th>Openness</th>
<th>Agreeableness</th>
<th>Conscientiousness</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>$\alpha = .87$</td>
<td>$\alpha = .84$</td>
<td>$\alpha = .78$</td>
<td>$\alpha = .80$</td>
<td>$\alpha = .82$</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Style</th>
<th>Correlation</th>
<th>Correlation</th>
<th>Correlation</th>
<th>Correlation</th>
<th>Correlation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Affiliative</td>
<td>.38**</td>
<td>.21**</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-Enhancing</td>
<td>-.24**</td>
<td>.24**</td>
<td>.25**</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aggressive</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>-.45**</td>
<td>-.21**</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-Defeating</td>
<td>.22**</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>-.11*</td>
<td>-.11*</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed) *Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

The confirmed scales of the HAW were then correlated with demographic variables. In Study 2, 45.1% of the respondents worked in organizations that employed 10 people or less and 48.5% of respondents worked in organizations of between 11 and 50 people. There were no significant correlations with number of people in the organization, number of men contacted each day or number of women contacted each day. There was no correlation between age and Pleasant or Unpleasant Climate. For these shorter scales of the HAW, those who were educated to the tertiary level were compared with those who were educated to the secondary level. The results (CHIDIST[12] = 11.00, $p = .53$) indicated no significant difference in the pattern of response attributable to education level.

When the model was compared using female and male samples, the results
(CHIDIST[12] = 14.60, $p = .26$) indicated that there were no significant gender differences. Similarly when those in management were compared with general employees on the model, the results (CHIDIST[12] = 7.00, $p = .86$) indicated that there were no significant differences in the way these two groups responded to the HAW.

Within one workplace, a private prison ($N = 98$), in the third study, the HAW was validated against the HSQ. It was found that the HAW *Pleasant Climate* scale (Cronbach’s $\alpha = .80$) correlated with all four scales of the HSQ as follows: *affiliative* ($r = .61, p < .01$), *self-enhancing* ($r = .43, p < .01$), *aggressive* ($r = .26, p < .05$) and *self-defeating* ($r = .25, p < .05$). There were no significant correlations for HAW *Unpleasant Climate* scale with the scales of the HSQ. In addition, the HAW *Pleasant Climate* scale had a marginally significant correlation ($r = .20, p = .055$) with *Positive Relations with Others* (pro - ATL – Ryff & Keyes, 1995). When corrected for attenuation (Cronbach’s $\alpha = .56$ for the ATL-pro), the correlation improved ($r = .30$).

Two scales of the Depression, Anxiety & Stress (DASS – 21, Lovibond & Lovibond, 1995), *depression* ($r = .25, p = .02$) and *stress* ($r = .22, p = .44$) correlated significantly with the HAW *Unpleasant Climate* scale (Cronbach’s $\alpha = .67$). There were no significant correlations found between any of the scales and age or gender.
Discussion

The purpose of this research was to investigate whether an individual’s personality traits were reflected in the way they saw themselves and others use humorous behavior in the workplace. There were a number of well-established studies that showed that the ways people in social situations generally used or preferred humour, was correlated with measures of their personality (e.g., Martin et al., 2003, Ruch & Kohler, 1998; Thorson & Powell, 1993). Booth-Butterfield & Booth-Butterfield (1991) developed a unidimensional scale which they subjected to structural equation modeling, but again this was considered only as a measure of humour in generalized settings.

The public arena is the place in which individuals negotiate their personal “face” according to Goffman (1967; 2004), in terms of enhancing their positive face and defending their negative face. In the workplace, actions relating to personal face needs are constrained by the demands of emotional labour (Hochschild, 2003) in managing up (keeping the boss happy) or in service (keeping the customer happy). It was postulated that because humour is off the record and not serious (Attardo, 1993), it might be used to express either playfulness in the work milieu or dissatisfaction or subversion (Roethlisberger & Dickson, 1939; 1964; Bradney, 1957; Ackroyd & Thomson, 1999; Warren & Fineman, 2007). In the case of boredom, observations had been made of humorous acts that fulfilled both functions (Linstead, 1985 b).
Several different fields were appraised for the study, e.g., linguistics, evolutionary theory, social psychology and organizational psychology. Creation of items in several themes (development, emotional labour, gender-class, discourse management, teasing, personality, ethnic differences, politeness, management and workplace) resulted from the reading. Items beginning with the first person (150) were balanced by items in the third person about other people’s behaviour (150) to try to capture humorous influences on both positive and negative face (my humorous behaviour and the humorous behaviour of others). After exploratory factor analysis, eight reliable scales (62 items) emerged, with two super factors 

Pleasant Climate and Unpleasant Climate

The second study involved the validation of the HAW as a humour scale. Confirmatory factor analysis was performed on each of the eight scales and then the scales were entered into a model to see if they discriminated against each other. This testing resulted in a two-factor model that was forecast by the super factors in the first study. These scales correlated with each other at just above the criterion level, suggesting that they were distinct and that the underlying model was bivalent (Cacioppo, Gardner & Berntson, 1997). The HAW Pleasant Climate was found to correlate to criterion level with the HSQ Affiliative and Self-enhancing scales (Martin et al., 2003). There were trends for Unpleasant Climate to correlate negatively with the HSQ Affiliative and Self-enhancing scales and positively with the HSQ Aggressive scale. In addition, there was a trend for Pleasant Climate to correlate positively with the HSQ Self-defeating scale. This observation may be attributed to cultural values found in Australians, who may
indulge in self-denigrating humour as a social behaviour to avoid being labelled a “Tall Poppy” (Feather, 1989; Peeters, 2004a, Peeters, 2004b).

In answer to the question about whether underlying personality factors affected humour at work, the two scales were correlated with the M37. It was established that the M37 was a valid scale by comparing the patterns of correlations between the HSQ and the M37 with two previous studies of the HSQ and the NEO-PI R (Martin et al., 2003; Greven, et al., 2008). Correlations between the HAW Pleasant Climate scale and Unpleasant Climate scales and the scales of the personality measure, M37 were significant but did not reach the criterion level and only one correlation between Unpleasant Climate and M 37 (Dis)Agreeableness could be described as a trend. There were no practically significant correlations between the HAW Pleasant Climate and Unpleasant Climate scales and age, gender, or position at work.

The third study provided evidence for validation of the HAW as a measure of humour within one work facility. Within a private prison it was found that the HAW Pleasant Climate scale correlated with all four scales of the HSQ. There were no significant correlations for HAW Unpleasant Climate scale with the scales of the HSQ. In addition, after correction for attenuation, the HAW Pleasant Climate scale had a significant correlation with Positive Relations with Others (pro - ATL – Ryff & Keyes, 1995). Additional findings revealed that two scales of the Depression, Anxiety & Stress questionnaire (DASS – 21, Lovibond & Lovibond, 1995), depression and stress, correlated significantly with the HAW Unpleasant
Climate scale. There were no significant correlations found between any of the scales and age or gender. As the Unpleasant Climate scale contained items all in the third person, it might be considered to be useful in indicating work environments that are concomitant with personal distress.

In conclusion, the workplace appears to be a public arena in which people are concerned to defend their face needs. If these needs are under little threat by the humorous behavior of others, people are inclined to use a type of humour that is related to their underlying personality and they seek out positive relations with others. They are pleasant to each other. If in the workplace, the humorous behavior of others seen to be unpleasant, then personal feelings of stress and depression may be present. Behaviours reflecting personality, however, are less evident. Conformity may be essential when groups are under pressure.
References


