

**THE RELATION BETWEEN SENSE OF HUMOR AND SOCIAL COMPETENCE****Kumud Gaur, Ph.D.***Post Doctoral Fellow, UGC, Dept. of Education, V.M.L.G. College, Ghaziabad***Abstract**

The Multidimensional Sense of Humor Scale and Social Competence Scale were given to 1481 higher secondary students of Varanasi city to find out the relationship between their sense of humor and social competence. Significant positive correlation was found between sense of humor and social competence ($r = .43, p < .05$).

Key Words: *Sense of Humor, Social Competence, Higher Secondary Students, Multidimensional Sense of Humor Scale, Social Competence Scale.*



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INTRODUCTION

Humor is generally recognized as one of our most significant psychosocial resources, which is beneficial to both individuals and society (Craik & Ware, 1998). In recent decades, humor is one of the popular topics in various fields of researches, particularly in the disciplines of Psychology. Among these researches, many have assumed that a sense of humor is an asset for both physical and psychological well being. They tend to propose that individuals with greater sense of humor possess a number of other positive characteristics, like being optimistic, higher self confidence, self acceptance and sense of autonomy (Kuiper and Martin, 1998). A common notion in human literature is that people who are humorous are believed to be capable to cope with stress more effectively, to enjoy better physical health, to experience less negative emotions, to have better and healthier relationships with others (Kuiper & Olinger, 1998).

The need for social competency can be seen in almost every part of everyone's life. Children who are accepted by their peers or display prosocial and responsible forms of behavior at school

tend to be high achievers, whereas socially rejected and aggressive children appear to be especially at risk for academic failure (Dishion, 1990; Feldhusen, Thurston & Benning, 1970; Green, Forehand, Beck & Vosk, 1980).

The ever increasing demands from society have led to excessive competition amongst people, a need to excel others and to leave others behind. This has created a stressing-distressing situation and adaptation to the rapidly changing times is becoming difficult day by day.

Being a social animal, a student must receive knowledge of himself and others, but the youth of today does not know how to live together and how to cater to the needs of the society. These things create several complexities in the society and educational setup e.g. dropouts, juvenile delinquency, suicide, job termination because of poor peer relationships and low social skills (Bryan, 1997).

Humor has been found to function in the social setting as a successful means of social influence (Kane et al, 1977, Goodchilds, 1972, Martineau, 1972); as a communication tool providing a socially acceptable outlet for aggression (McGhee, 1980; Winick, 1976); as a means of teaching and reinforcing social skills (Ransohoff, 1975); and as a strategy for coping with stress, fear and anxiety (Masten, 1986; Murphy and Moriarty, 1976). It is reasonable to conclude that humor is an effective social skill.

Given the similarities between social competence and humor in their adaptive functions and positive social outcomes, it seems reasonable to examine the relationship of these two important constructs. However, no study had addressed the relationship of humor and social competence in Eastern U.P. as far as researcher's knowledge is concerned. Thus researcher conducted this study.

Objectives

- 1) To find out relationship between sense of humor and social competence of higher secondary students?

Hypotheses

Following null hypothesis was framed to test the objective of the present study and this was tested at 0.05 level of confidence.

Ho.1: There is no significant relationship between sense of humor and social competence of higher secondary students.

Method

Present study was carried on the lines of descriptive survey.

Population

11th and 12th standard students studying in various higher secondary schools of Varanasi city, constituted the population of the study.

Sample selection

The technique of simple random sampling was used for the selection of sample.

Tools

Two tools were used to achieve the objective, namely, The Multidimensional Sense of Humor Scale (MSHS; Thorson & Powell, 1993) (adopted and translated by the researcher) and Social Competence Scale (developed by the researcher).

Results and discussion

To determine the relationship between sense of humor ($M = 61.15$, $SD = 7.78$) and social competence ($M = 104.66$, $SD = 5.87$) of higher secondary students, product moment correlation of coefficient was computed.

The table 1 shows the summary of result:

Table 1: Summary of correlation between sense of humor and social competence

S.N.	Variable	No. of sample	Correlation Coefficient value (r)
1	Sense of humor and social competence	1481	.431*

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

Table 1 indicates significant positive correlation between sense of humor and social competence, $r = .43$. Hence, the null hypothesis $H_0.1$ was rejected at 0.05 level of significance.

This finding is similar with the findings of Masten (1986), McGhee (1989), and Yip and Martin (2006).

Conclusion

The findings of the present study have important educational implications for the freshers, teachers, educational administrators, planners and policy makers. As we have found significant positive correlation between sense of humor and social competence of higher secondary students, we can say that promoting both i.e. sense of humor and social competence of students may help in various ways. Given the long line of research history on humor (Freud, 1905; Spencer, 1860), it seems plausible that humor may play a germane role as a coping mechanism on the initial

personal-emotional adjustment of students. Similarly promotion of social competencies may be useful in the prevention of childhood psychosocial problems such as delinquency and drug use (Chung and Elias, 1996), the promotion of academic adjustment (Gresham and Elliott, 1990), and in the treatment of behavioral and emotional problems such as oppositional defiant disorder, conduct disorder, depression, and anxiety (Vera and Gaubatz, 2002). Special curriculum, group activities, use of humor in teaching etc. may help the students. So, the teacher, school authority and the parents of the concerned children should be aware in this aspect and help and cooperate with each other.

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