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Attitudes toward mental disorders, humor styles, and quality of life in adolescents involved in the "Mind the Mind" project

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Abstract

The present study investigated the relationships between students' attitudes toward individuals with mental disorders, humor styles used as coping mechanisms, and quality of life.

A correlational-comparative quantitative design was applied to a sample of 293 students aged 15 to 17 from two high schools in Brașov. The instruments used were the CAMI Scale for assessing attitudes toward individuals with mental disorders (Taylor & Dear, 1981), the HSQ Scale for humor styles (Martin et al., 2003), and a self-developed scale for quality of life. Exploratory factor analyses confirmed the structure of the three scales, and Cronbach's Alpha coefficients indicated adequate internal consistency (α ranging from .52 to .78).

Results showed that affiliative humor was positively correlated with quality of life, whereas aggressive and self-defeating humor were negative predictors. Social restrictiveness and authoritarianism were significant predictors of aggressive humor, which in turn was negatively associated with benevolence. Gender differences analysis revealed that males scored higher on authoritarianism, social restrictiveness, and aggressive and self-defeating humor, while females scored higher on benevolence. Differences between school profiles indicated higher benevolence scores among students from Science College compared to those from Technical College.

The study supports the hypothesis that humor styles and attitudes toward individuals with mental disorders are interconnected and influence students' quality of life. Affiliative humor emerges as a protective factor for psychological well-being, while aggressive and self-defeating humor represent risk factors associated with authoritarian and restrictive attitudes and lower benevolence. The findings highlight the importance of educational and socio-emotional interventions that promote positive humor styles and prosocial attitudes to reduce stigmatization and increase the social inclusion of individuals with mental disorders.

Keywords: stigmatization, mental disorders, affiliative humor, aggressive humor, quality of life, prosocial attitudes

Introduction

In recent decades, the issue of stigmatization of individuals with mental disorders has become a topic of interest in social psychology and European mental health policies. The European project "Mind the Mind" was developed with the aim of combating stereotypes, promoting understanding of mental disorders, and supporting the inclusion of affected individuals through social education. In Romania, the project's implementation in Brașov involved educational activities for middle and high school students, focused on dismantling prejudices, fostering empathy, and cultivating prosocial attitudes toward stigmatized individuals.

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From a psychological perspective, attitudes are complex structures composed of cognitive, affective, and behavioral components that guide an individual's perceptions and reactions toward other people or social phenomena. In the context of mental health, analyzing attitudes is important for understanding processes of stigmatization and social integration. Taylor and Dear (1981) proposed a tripartite model of attitudes toward individuals with mental illness, including authoritarianism, benevolence, and social restrictiveness.

Authoritarianism reflects the perception of people with mental disorders as fundamentally different and incapable of self-regulation, requiring external supervision and control. This "us–them" dualistic view reflects a psychological need for order and predictability, supported by defensive projection mechanisms (Taylor & Dear, 1981). In contrast, benevolence involves an empathic, humanistic, and altruistic attitude oriented toward support and acceptance, though it may include a paternalistic component. Social restrictiveness, on the other hand, reflects the tendency to limit the contact and participation of individuals with mental disorders in the community, based on the perception of them as a social burden.

Beyond attitudinal structures, humor plays an important role in understanding social interactions and psychological well-being. Humor is considered a complex personality trait and a coping mechanism with adaptive or maladaptive potential (Martin et al., 2003). Contemporary studies distinguish between adaptive humor styles, such as affiliative humor oriented toward social cohesion and positive emotional regulation, and maladaptive styles, such as self-defeating and aggressive humor, which may mask insecurity and amplify interpersonal tensions (Dyck & Holtzman, 2013; Yue, Anna, & Hiranandani, 2017).

Affiliative humor contributes to maintaining harmonious relationships, reducing stress, and strengthening a sense of belonging, and is positively correlated with self-esteem and psychological well-being (Dyck & Holtzman, 2013). In contrast, self-defeating humor involves making jokes at one's own expense to gain social acceptance and is associated with anxiety, depression, and low self-esteem (Martin et al., 2003). Aggressive humor, characterized by sarcasm and ridicule, serves as a defensive strategy to assert the self but negatively affects interpersonal relationships and empathy (Martin et al., 2003).

Based on these theoretical premises, the present study aims to investigate the relationship between students' attitudes toward individuals with mental disorders, humor styles used as coping mechanisms, and how these relate to quality of life. The attitudinal dimensions of authoritarianism, benevolence, and social restrictiveness illustrate the spectrum through which students may interpret and respond to mental health issues, ranging from control to compassion and exclusion. Simultaneously, affiliative (adaptive), self-defeating, and aggressive (maladaptive) humor styles represent coping mechanisms through which young people manage interpersonal relationships, with direct implications for well-being and social integration.

Method

The research is quantitative, employing a correlational-comparative design, aimed at investigating the relationships between students' quality of life, the humor styles they use, and their attitudes toward individuals with mental disorders. This type of design is considered appropriate for examining associations between variables without manipulating them, allowing for the analysis of the strength and direction of the relationships present in the collected data.

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Data collection took place between April 11 and May 13, 2025, in two high schools in Brașov involved in the "Mind the Mind" project. The questionnaire was administered online, anonymously, in accordance with ethical principles.

The collected data were exported in electronic format, processed, and coded using Microsoft Excel, and statistically analyzed with IBM SPSS Statistics, version 26.

The research sample consisted of 293 students, selected from an initial total of 379. To obtain a homogenous sample in terms of age, participants aged 13, 14, 18, and 19 were excluded. Thus, the ages of the included participants ranged from 15 to 17 years (M = 16.03, SD = 0.82). Age distribution was as follows: 15 years (31.7%), 16 years (33.8%), and 17 years (34.5%).

Participants came from two educational institutions: the Technical College (n = 156; 53.2%) and the Science College (n = 137; 46.8%). Regarding grade level, the distribution was: 8th grade – 4.8% (n = 14), 9th grade – 39.6% (n = 116), 10th grade – 34.8% (n = 102), and 11th grade – 20.8% (n = 61). These values indicate a predominance of high school students, corresponding to middle and late adolescence. In terms of gender, 161 students (54.9%) were male, and 132 (45.1%) were female.

The Community Attitudes Toward the Mentally Ill (CAMI) Scale, was used to assess students' attitudes toward individuals with mental disorders. It consists of 40 items formulated as statements, to which participants respond on a Likert scale (1 = "strongly disagree" to 5 = "strongly agree"). The scale's reliability has been evaluated through Cronbach's alpha coefficients and item–scale correlations in multiple studies. Data from distinct samples indicate adequate internal consistency for all four dimensions of the scale: authoritarianism $\alpha = .58–.68$, benevolence $\alpha = .70–.76$, social restrictiveness $\alpha = .34–.63$, and community mental health ideology $\alpha = .25–.61$ (Taylor & Dear, 1981). In the present study, three CAMI dimensions were used: authoritarianism, benevolence, and social restrictiveness, each assessed with 5 Likert-scale items, with reverse scoring applied where appropriate.

The Humor Styles Questionnaire (HSQ), developed by Martin et al. (2003), was used to evaluate humor styles. The scale was translated into Romanian by Sîrbu Alexandru-Andrei and has been used in numerous international studies (Dyck & Holtzman, 2013; Ruch & Heintz, 2016). It consists of 32 items formulated as statements, rated on a Likert scale (1 = "strongly disagree" to 5 = "strongly agree"). The instrument includes four humor style dimensions: affiliative, self-enhancing, aggressive, and self-defeating. Reliability coefficients ranged between $\alpha = .77$ and .81 (Martin et al., 2003). In the present study, three HSQ dimensions were used to assess humor styles: affiliative, aggressive, and self-defeating, each measured with 3 Likert-scale items.

The scale for analyzing students' quality of life was designed to capture students' subjective perceptions of their emotional well-being and social relationships. Responses were recorded on a Likert scale from 1 to 5, where 1 indicates "strongly disagree" and 5 "strongly agree." Scores for each dimension were calculated by summing the corresponding items, applying reverse scoring where appropriate.

Findings and discussion

To explore the factorial structure of the CAMI Scale, an exploratory factor analysis (EFA) was conducted using Varimax rotation to facilitate factor interpretation.

The KMO index was .84, and Bartlett's test was significant ($p < .001$), indicating that the correlation matrix was suitable for factor analysis. The factor analysis identified three main factors

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with eigenvalues of 4.51, 1.53, and 1.24, which together explained approximately 48.62% of the total variance of the items (Factor 1 = 30.11%, Factor 2 = 10.23%, Factor 3 = 8.28%). Items with reverse scoring were recoded to ensure the directional consistency of the factors. Item communalities ranged from .271 to .633, indicating good suitability of the items for the extracted factors.

Exploratory Factor Analysis – Community Attitudes Toward the Mentally Ill (CAMI) Scale

	Factor Loadings			
Item	*F1*	*F2*	*F3*	*Communalities*
S14. I would not want to live near someone who has had a mental illness.	.754			.568
S15. Anyone with mental problems should be excluded from holding public office.	.708			.504
S10. It is best to avoid any person with mental problems. (reverse-scored item)	-.688	-.244	.168	.561
S12. People with mental illnesses should be isolated from others.	.686	.286	-.266	.622
S13. A person with a mental illness cannot get married.	.645	.108	-.268	.500
S8. People with mental illnesses are a burden on society. (reverse-scored item)	-.643	-.142	.290	.518
S11. People with mental illnesses are not capable of responsibility.	.615	.327	.165	.512
S1. People with mental illnesses do not have the will to get better.	.144	.634		.428
S9. There are sufficient opportunities for people with mental illnesses. (reverse-scored item)		-.622		.393
S3. A person with mental illness needs control like a small child.	.389	.604		.519
S2. People with mental disorders should be hospitalized immediately.	.213	.550		.352
S4. We should not protect people with mental illnesses.	.102	.393	-.325	.271
S7. We should adopt a more tolerant attitude toward people with mental illnesses.	-.143		.782	.633
S6. People with mental illnesses have long been ridiculed.			.679	.476
S5. People with mental illnesses should not be excluded from society.	.253		-.608	.437
Eigenvalori	4.51	1.53	1.24	
Variance explained	30.11	10.23	8.28	

To explore the factorial structure of the Humor Styles Questionnaire (HSQ), an exploratory factor analysis (EFA) was conducted using Varimax rotation to allow clearer factor interpretation. The suitability of the data for factor analysis was assessed using the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin (KMO) index and Bartlett's test of sphericity.

The KMO index was .73, and Bartlett's test was significant ($p < .001$), indicating that the correlation matrix was suitable for factor analysis. The factor analysis identified three main factors with eigenvalues of 3.00, 1.71, and 1.32, which together explained approximately 67.19% of the total variance (Factor 1 = 33.42%, Factor 2 = 19.08%, Factor 3 = 14.69%). Item communalities ranged from .498 to .751, indicating good suitability of the items for the extracted factors.

Exploratory Factor Analysis – Humor Styles Questionnaire (HSQ) Scale

	Factor Loadings			
Item	*F1*	*F2*	*F3*	*Communalities*
U6. I joke about my mistakes or weaknesses to make my classmates like me more.	.850	.134		.750
U10. Sometimes I exaggerate when joking about myself just to make others laugh.	.842	.111		.722

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U4. I let others laugh at me to keep them in a good mood.	.790			.638
U9. If I don't like someone, I make fun of them.		.857	-.106	.751
U8. If a classmate makes a mistake, I sometimes tease them about it.	.174	.793	.242	.718
U3. If I find something very funny at school, I laugh and joke even if it might upset someone.	.142	.718	.306	.629
U1. I like to make my classmates laugh.	.109		.855	.742
U2. I don't have to try very hard to make my classmates laugh – I seem naturally humorous.		.199	.748	.600
U5. I often come up with funny ideas when I am with my friends or classmates.		.109	.697	.498
Eigenvalori	3.00	1.71	1.32	
Variance explained	33.42	19.08	14.69	

It was assumed that students' perceptions of quality of life could be described by a limited number of underlying factors reflected in the scaled items. Exploratory factor analysis was expected to reveal coherent dimensions representing different aspects of quality of life. To explore the factorial structure of the students' quality of life scale, an exploratory factor analysis (EFA) was conducted using Varimax rotation for clearer interpretation.

The KMO index was .78, and Bartlett's test was significant ($p < .001$), indicating that the correlation matrix was suitable for factor analysis. The factor analysis revealed two main factors with eigenvalues of 3.05 and 1.10, which together explained 51.95% of the total variance (Factor 1 = 38.17%, Factor 2 = 13.78%). Item communalities ranged from .380 to .660, indicating good suitability of the items for the extracted factors. Reverse-scored items were recoded to ensure directional consistency of the factors.

Exploratory Factor Analysis – Scale for Assessing Students' Quality of Life

	Factor Loadings		
Item	*F1*	*F2*	*Communalities*
C8. I manage my homework and school responsibilities well.	.686	.154	.494
C3. I feel stressed or overwhelmed by school. (reverse-scored item)	.674	-.188	.490
C7. I feel motivated to study and achieve my goals	.649	.434	.610
C6. I can freely discuss my problems with my parents/guardians.	.649	.120	.435
C5. I get along well with my teachers.	.604	.358	.492
C2. I feel sad or depressed. (reverse-scored item)	.513	.343	.380
C1. I feel satisfied with myself and what I do.	.192	.789	.660
C4. C4. I feel included in my group of classmates.		.770	.594
Eigenvalori	3.05	1.10	
Variance explained	38.17	13.78	

To assess the internal consistency of the instruments used, Cronbach's Alpha coefficients were calculated, which allowed the evaluation of the degree to which the items of each scale coherently measure the same psychological construct.

The Authoritarianism scale ($\alpha = .52$) and the Benevolence scale ($\alpha = .53$) showed modest internal consistency for the five items of each scale. The Social Restrictiveness scale ($\alpha = .77$) showed good internal consistency. These results align with data from the literature, where internal consistency ranged from $\alpha = .34$ to .76 (Taylor & Dear, 1981).

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The Affiliative Humor scale (α = .68) showed moderate internal consistency. The Aggressive Humor (α = .74) and Self-Defeating Humor (α = .78) dimensions showed good internal consistency for the three items of each scale. These results are consistent with previous studies, where internal consistency ranged from .77 to .81 (Martin et al., 2003).

The internal consistency of the Quality of Life scale, evaluated based on its eight items, showed good reliability (α = .75) for measuring students' perceptions of managing school responsibilities, social relationships, emotional well-being, and social inclusion.

Exploratory Factor Analysis – Descriptive Analysis

	N	*Minim*	*Maxim*	*Mean*	*SD*	Skewness	Kurtosis
Age	293	15	17	16.03	.815	-.050	-1.491
Quality of Life	293	12	40	28.62	6.088	-.452	-.233
Aggressive Humor	293	3	15	7.24	3.044	.651	-.080
Self-Defeating Humor	293	3	15	6.57	3.152	.850	.013
Affiliative Humor	293	3	15	11.17	2.721	-.641	.113
Authoritarianism	293	5	25	12.67	3.716	.567	.137
Social restrictionism	293	5	25	11.62	4.193	.646	.544
Benevolence	293	5	25	18.18	3.429	-.877	.890

Regarding students' quality of life, scores ranged from 12 to 40, with a mean of 28.62 and a standard deviation of 6.09. The distribution of this variable showed slight negative skewness (−0.452) and moderate platykurtosis (−0.233).

The humor styles analysis revealed mean values of 7.24 (SD = 3.04) for aggressive humor, 6.57 (SD = 3.15) for self-defeating humor, and 11.17 (SD = 2.72) for affiliative humor. The distributions were moderate, with slight deviations from symmetry: aggressive humor (skew = 0.651), self-defeating humor (0.850), affiliative humor (0.641). Kurtosis values were close to zero, indicating relatively normal distributions.

Regarding attitudes toward people with mental disorders, scores showed a mean of 12.67 (SD = 3.72) for authoritarianism, 11.62 (SD = 4.19) for social restrictiveness, and 18.18 (SD = 3.43) for benevolence. The negative skewness of benevolence (−0.877) indicates that participants tended to score higher on this dimension, while the positive kurtosis (0.890) suggests slight leptokurticity.

It was expected that significant gender differences would exist in benevolence attitudes, with women showing higher scores compared to men. To test this difference, an independent samples t-test was used, which allows comparison of the means of two independent groups. The results showed that women (M = 19.11, SD = 3.16) scored significantly higher on benevolence than men (M = 17.42, SD = 3.45), t(291) = −4.34, p = .001, d = 0.51, indicating a moderate to strong effect.

Gender Differences in Authoritarianism Attitudes

	Gender	*M*	*SD*	*t*	*Df*	*p*	*d Cohen*
	Male	13.29	4.02				
Authoritarianism				3.20	291	.002	.38
	Female	11.92	3.15				

Significant gender differences were expected in benevolence attitudes, with women showing higher scores compared to men. To test this difference, an independent samples t-test was

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Gender Differences in Benevolence Attitudes

	Gender	M	SD	t	Df	p	d Cohen
	Male	17.42	3.45				
Benevolence				-4.34	291	.001	.51
	Female	19.11	3.16				

Significant gender differences were expected in social restrictiveness attitudes, with men showing higher scores compared to women. To test this difference, an independent samples t-test was used, which allows for the comparison of the means of two independent groups. The results showed that men (M = 12.28, SD = 4.63) scored significantly higher on social restrictiveness than women (M = 10.83, SD = 3.43), t(291) = 2.99, p = .003, d = 0.36, indicating a moderate effect.

Gender Differences in Social Restrictiveness Attitudes

	Gender	M	SD	t	Df	p	d Cohen
	Male	12.28	4.63				
Social Restrictiveness				2.99	291	.003	.36
	Female	10.83	3.43				

Significant gender differences were expected in self-defeating humor, with men showing higher scores compared to women. To test this difference, an independent samples t-test was used, which allows for the comparison of the means of two independent groups. The results showed that men (M = 7.19, SD = 3.33) scored significantly higher on self-defeating humor than women (M = 5.81, SD = 2.74), t(291) = 3.80, p = .001, d = 0.45, indicating a moderate effect.

Gender Differences in Aggressive Humor

	Gender	M	SD	t	Df	p	d Cohen
	Male	7.89	2.99				
Aggressive Humor				4.14	291	.001	.49
	Female	6.45	2.92				

Significant gender differences were expected in self-defeating humor, with men showing higher scores compared to women. To test this difference, an independent samples t-test was used, which allows for the comparison of the means of two independent groups. The results showed that men (M = 7.19, SD = 3.33) scored significantly higher on self-defeating humor than women (M = 5.81, SD = 2.74), t(291) = 3.80, p = .001, d = 0.45, indicating a moderate effect.

Gender Differences in Self-Defeating Humor

	Gender	*M*	*SD*	*t*	*Df*	*p*	*d Cohen*
	Male	7.19	3.33				
Self-Defeating Humor				3.80	291	.001	.45
	Female	5.81	2.74				

Significant differences were expected between school profiles in benevolence attitudes, with students from Science College showing higher scores compared to those from Technical College. To test this difference, an independent samples t-test was used, which allows for the

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comparison of the means of two independent groups. The results showed that students from the Science College (M = 18.81, SD = 3.45) scored significantly higher on benevolence than those from the Technical College (M = 17.63, SD = 3.32), t(291) = −2.98, p = .003, d = −0.35, indicating a moderate effect.

Differences by School Profile in Benevolence Attitudes

	School Profile	*M*	*SD*	*t*	*Df*	*p*	*d Cohen*
Benevolence	Technical College	17.63	3.32	-2.98	291	.003	-.35
	Science College	18.81	3.45				

A significant relationship was expected between humor styles and students' quality of life, with affiliative humor being positively associated and self-defeating and aggressive humor being negatively associated with quality of life.

To test this relationship, multiple regression was used, with quality of life as the dependent variable and humor styles (affiliative, self-defeating, and aggressive) as predictors. The analysis was conducted in three successive models to evaluate the incremental contribution of the predictors to the dependent variable.

The results indicate that humor styles have a significant influence on students' quality of life. Affiliative humor contributes positively, suggesting that social relationships and the expression of positive humor are associated with better quality of life. In contrast, self-defeating and aggressive humor are negative predictors, suggesting that these humor styles may be associated with a lower perceived quality of life.

Multiple Regression Results on the Predictive Role of Humor Styles on Students' Quality of Life

Model	*Variables*	*B*	*SE B*	*B*	*t*
1	*R^2 0.09*				
	F 28.77				
	Constant 21.12				
	Affiliative Humor	.67	.12	.30	5.36
2	*R^2 0.19*				
	F 35.34				
	Constant 24.12				
	Affiliative Humor	.77	.11	.34	6.51
	Self-Defeating Humor	-.63	.10	-.32	-6.18
3	*R^2 0.21*				
	F 26.25				
	Constant 24.75				
	Affiliative Humor	.86	.12	.38	7.04
	Self-Defeating Humor	-.56	.10	-.29	-5.31
	Aggressive Humor	-.29	.11	-.14	-2.58

Note: Dependent variable: Quality of Life
*p < .001, N = 293
Model 1 – Predictor: Affiliative Humor
Model 2 – Predictors: Affiliative Humor, Self-Defeating Humor
Model 3 – Predictors: Affiliative Humor, Self-Defeating Humor, Aggressive Humor

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Regression Equations:

1. Quality of Life = 21.12 + 0.67 × Affiliative Humor
2. Quality of Life = 24.12 + 0.77 × Affiliative Humor − 0.63 × Self-Defeating Humor
3. Quality of Life = 24.75 + 0.86 × Affiliative Humor − 0.56 × Self-Defeating Humor − 0.29 × Aggressive Humor

It is expected that there is a significant relationship between social restrictiveness and authoritarianism attitudes and aggressive humor, with these attitudes being positive predictors of aggressive humor.

To test this relationship, multiple linear regression was used, with aggressive humor as the dependent variable and social restrictiveness and authoritarianism as predictors. The analysis was conducted in two models to evaluate the incremental contribution of the predictors to the dependent variable.

The results suggest that social restrictiveness and authoritarianism attitudes are significant predictors of aggressive humor. The higher the levels of social restrictiveness and authoritarianism, the more frequently students exhibit aggressive humor. This highlights the link between authoritarian attitudes and the way humor is expressed in social interactions.

Multiple Regression Results for the Predictive Role of Social Restrictiveness and Authoritarianism on Aggressive Humor

Model	*Variables*	*B*	*SE B*	*B*	*t*
1	R^2 0.14 *F 49.19*				
	Constant 4.03				
	Social Restrictiveness	.27	.03	.38	7.01
2	R^2 0.16 *F 27.55*				
	Constant 3.15				
	Social Restrictiveness	.22	.04	.30	4.96
	Authoritarianism	.11	.05	.14	2.28

Note: Dependent variable: Aggressive Humor

*p < .001, N = 293

Model 1 – Predictor: Social Restrictiveness

Model 2 – Predictors: Social Restrictiveness, Authoritarianism

Regression Equations:

1. Aggressive Humor = 4.03 + 0.27 × Social Restrictiveness
2. Aggressive Humor = 3.15 + 0.22 × Social Restrictiveness + 0.11 × Authoritarianism

It is expected that there is a significant relationship between humor styles and social restrictiveness, with aggressive humor being positively associated, and self-defeating humor being negatively associated with social restrictiveness.

To test this relationship, multiple linear regression was used, with social restrictiveness as the dependent variable and aggressive humor and self-defeating humor as predictors. The analysis was conducted in two models to evaluate the incremental contribution of the predictors.

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Results indicate that aggressive humor is positively associated with social restrictiveness, suggesting that students who frequently use aggressive humor tend to adopt more socially restrictive attitudes. Conversely, self-defeating humor has a negative association, indicating that humor focused on self-undermining may be linked to lower levels of social restrictiveness.

Linear Regression Results on the Predictive Role of Aggressive and Self-Defeating Humor on Social Restrictiveness

Model	*Variable*	*B*	*SE B*	*B*	*t*
1	*R^2 0.14*				
	F 49.19				
	Constant 7.83				
	Aggressive Humor	.52	.07	.38	7.01
2	*R^2 0.15*				
	F 27.33				
	Constant 8.54				
	Aggressive Humor	.57	.07	.41	7.39
	Self-Defeating Humor	-.16	.07	-.12	-2.19

Note: Dependent variable: Social Restrictiveness
*p < .001, N = 293

Model 1 – Predictor: Aggressive Humor

Model 2 – Predictors: Aggressive Humor, Self-Defeating Humor

Regression Equations:

1. Social Restrictiveness = 7.83 + 0.52 × Aggressive Humor
2. Social Restrictiveness = 8.54 + 0.57 × Aggressive Humor − 0.12 × Self-Defeating Humor

It is expected that there is a significant relationship between aggressive humor and benevolence, with aggressive humor being negatively associated with benevolence.

To test this relationship, simple linear regression was used, with benevolence as the dependent variable and aggressive humor as the predictor.

Results suggest that students who use aggressive humor more frequently tend to have lower levels of benevolence, indicating a negative association between this humor style and prosocial attitudes.

Linear Regression Results on the Predictive Role of Aggressive Humor on Benevolence

Model	*Variable*	*B*	*SE B*	*B*	*t*
1	*R^2 0.08*				
	F 27.98				
	Constanta 20.59				
	Aggressive Humor	-.33	.06	-.29	-5.29

Note: Dependent variable: Benevolence
*p < .001, N = 293

Model 1 – Predictor: Aggressive Humor

Regression Equation:

1. Benevolence = 20.59 − 0.33 × Aggressive Humor

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Conclusion

The study results indicate the existence of significant relationships between humor styles, attitudes toward individuals with mental disorders, and students' quality of life, providing support for the initial theoretical hypotheses. First, affiliative humor was positively associated with quality of life, highlighting the role of harmonious social relationships and the expression of positive humor in promoting students' psychological well-being. In contrast, self-defeating and aggressive humor were negative predictors of quality of life, suggesting that these maladaptive humor styles are associated with lower perceptions of well-being and difficulties in managing interpersonal relationships.

Regarding attitudes toward individuals with mental disorders, it was observed that social restrictiveness and authoritarianism are significant predictors of aggressive humor. Students with higher levels of authoritarian and restrictive attitudes exhibit aggressive humor more frequently, highlighting the link between negative perceptions and stereotypes of individuals with mental health problems and the expression of humor in social contexts. In parallel, aggressive humor correlates positively with social restrictiveness and negatively with benevolence, indicating that this humor style reflects both tendencies toward social exclusion and deficits in prosocial attitudes. Conversely, self-defeating humor was negatively associated with social restrictiveness, suggesting that students who engage in self-undermining humor tend to adopt less restrictive attitudes toward individuals with mental disorders.

Gender differences analysis revealed that males score higher on authoritarianism, social restrictiveness, aggressive humor, and self-defeating humor, while females score higher on benevolence. This indicates a tendency for differentiation in attitudes and humor styles by gender, with moderate effects on prosocial behaviors and perceptions of others' mental health.

Differences between school profiles indicated that students from the Science College scored higher on benevolence than those from the Technical College, suggesting that the educational environment can influence prosocial attitudes and empathy toward individuals with mental disorders.

In conclusion, the study supports the hypothesis that humor styles and attitudes toward individuals with mental disorders are interconnected and influence students' quality of life. Affiliative humor represents a protective factor and promoter of well-being, while aggressive and self-defeating humor are risk factors, correlated with authoritarian and restrictive attitudes and with lower levels of benevolence. The results underscore the importance of developing socio-emotional skills and educational interventions that encourage positive humor styles and prosocial attitudes to reduce stigma and promote the social inclusion of individuals with mental disorders.

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