

## **Sense of Humour of Secondary School Students in Relation to Academic Achievement and Gender**

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### **ABSTRACT**

*Humour is a quality of perception that enables us to experience joy even when faced with adversity. Humour is part of the human experience. As human beings, we have the ability to laugh at others and ourselves, to make jokes, to add humour to situations which are seemingly without humour, and to be ridiculous. Teachers and educators of all levels and disciplines have praised the ability of humour to aid the learning process. The aim of the present study is to investigate sense of humour in relation to academic achievement and gender. The sample of secondary school students were randomly selected from the Derabassi Block. Tools used in the study are Humour Style Questionnaire by Martin et al and CCE Records were checked for academic achievement. The total sample comprised of 54 boys and 54 girls. Data were analyzed by correlation and t-test. Results of the study showed that there was significance difference in sense of humour among males and females of secondary school students and overall sense of humour is more in low achievers than high achievers.*

**Key words:** *Sense of Humour, Academic Achievement, Gender, Secondary School Students.*

### **Introduction**

Humour is part of the human experience. As human beings, we have the ability to laugh at others and ourselves, to make jokes, to add humour to situations which are seemingly without humour, and to be ridiculous. Teachers and educators of all levels and disciplines have praised the ability of humour to aid the learning process, to help students' understanding of key points, and to relax students in moments of anxiety and increased tension. The benefits of humour have been made obvious to them by a variety of personal accounts and descriptions.

### **Humour**

Humour is anything that causes amusement. It is a quality of perception that enables us to experience joy even when faced with adversity. It helps us relieve stress and find out the solutions of the problems. In the present study it will include affiliative humour, self enhancing humour, Aggressive humour, Self Defensive humour.

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### **Academic Achievement**

Academic achievement refers to a student's success in meeting goals of education. It is excellence in all academic disciplines, in class as well as extracurricular activities. For the present study performance in CCE record will be considered as criterion of academic achievement.

This modern age is age of competitions and students especially secondary students become easily stressed. Humour does not only serve for social purpose, but also strengthens our abilities in coping with stress. (Liu, 2012)

Hill (1988) noted that "one of the most important functions of humor is to create a positive learning environment" (p. 20). The use of humor in the classroom can ease nervousness, particularly concerning difficult topics or in situations that are commonly perceived by students to be anxiety-producing such as exams (Berk, 1996; Kher et al., 1999). Furthermore, teacher humor has a positive effect on student enjoyment (Garner, 2006), can give a humanizing effect to the image of the teacher (Torok, McMorris, & Lin, 2004)

Research does indicate that humor as a pedagogical tool can enhance self-esteem, increase self-motivation, reduce classroom anxiety, and promote higher level thinking skills, which are factors that can facilitate learning (Berk, 1996; Evans Palmer, 2010).

Lei, Cohen and Russler, (2010) points out that some college instructors believe that the only way for students to take their education seriously is to be serious and solemn in the classroom. This often means creating a strict classroom environment built on discipline and hard work, perhaps with little or no room for discussion and laughter. However, the most effective instructors are those who engage their students in creative and interesting ways. One way to engage students is to incorporate humour into the college classroom. Humour has psychological, social, and cognitive (educational) benefits.

### **Rationale of the Study**

In everyday life, the students suffer from a lot of stress and tensions. The school-going children are increasingly being burdened with exams and competition. Humour is one of the techniques which are used by people to cope with stress. It can take a person out of depression and makes one feel better and can have a significant positive effect on your life. Researching humor is important as it plays a significant role in the well being in life. This study is an attempt to investigate role of humour in academic achievement of students.

### **Objectives**

1. To study the difference in sense of humour among high achievers and low achievers of secondary school students.
2. To study sense of humour among male and female secondary school students.

### **Hypotheses**

1. There will be no significant difference in sense of humour among high achievers and low achievers.
2. There will be significant difference in sense of humour among male and female students of secondary school.

### Design of the Study

Descriptive survey method is used to obtain pertinent and precise information concerning the present status of the phenomenon.

### Sample

The sample consists of 108 (54 high achiever and 54 low achievers) students of secondary level selected from the government schools of Derrabassi Block. Four schools were selected for data collection. The age of the sample group ranged from 12 to 16 years.

### Tools

1. Humour Style Questionnaire by Martin et al,
2. CCE records from the respective schools.

### Results and Discussion

**Hypothesis:1** There is no significant difference in sense of humour among high achievers and low achievers.

In order to test the hypothesis 1, t-test was employed.

**Table 1**  
**Showing difference between sense of humour and academic achievement**

	Group	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	t-value	p-value
Affiliative Humour	Low achievers	54	34.833	6.720	1.203	0.232
	High achievers	54	36.333	6.231		NS
Self Enhancing Humour	Low achievers	54	35.463	8.222	0.327	0.744
	High achievers	54	36.018	9.375		NS
Aggressive Humour	Low achievers	54	30.814	8.620	2.623	0.010**
	High achievers	54	26.963	6.489		
Self Defencive Humour	Low achievers	54	33.740	7.623	1.768	0.080
	High achievers	54	31.259	6.947		NS
Sense of Humour	Low achievers	54	134.851	17.027	1.300	0.196
	High achievers	54	130.574	17.165		NS

Table 1 shows that mean score and standard deviation of affiliative humour among low achievers was 34.8333 and 6.72015 respectively and in high achievers was 36.3333 and 6.23139 respectively. Its t-value was 1.203. The p-value was 0.232, that indicates the result was insignificant.

Mean score and standard deviation of self enhancing humour in low achievers was 35.4630 and 8.22264 respectively and in high achievers was 36.0185 and 9.37578 respectively. Its t-value was 0.327. The p-value was .744 that indicates the result was not significant.

Mean score and standard deviation of aggressive humour among low achievers was 30.8148 and 8.62002 respectively and in high achievers was 26.9630 and 6.48936 respectively. Its t-value was 2.623. The p-value was 0.010, that indicate the result was significant.

Mean score and standard deviation of self defensive humour in low achievers was 33.7407 and 7.62366 respectively and in high achievers was 31.2593 and 6.94774 respectively .Its t-value was 1.768.The p-value was 0.080 that indicate the result was not significant.

Combined mean and standard deviation of sense of humour in low achievers were 134.8519 and 17.02762 respectively and in high achievers mean was 130.5741 and standard deviation was 17.16579.Its t-value was 1.300 and p-value was .196,the result was not significant.

Affilative humour and self-enhancing humour in high performers is more than low performers. But Aggressive humour and self-defensive humour is more in low achievers than high achievers.

Overall sense of humour is more in low achievers than high achievers.

**Hypothesis:2** There will be significant difference in sense of humour among male and female students of secondary school.

**Table 2**  
**Showing scores of Humour styles between male and female students**

	Sex	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	t-value	p-value
Affilative Humour	Male	57	34.473	5.886	1.900	0.060 NS
	Female	51	36.823	6.961		
Self Enhancing Humour	Male	57	35.684	8.133	0.070	0.944 NS
	Female	51	35.803	9.535		
Aggressive Humour	Male	57	31.526	6.395	3.941	0.001**
	Female	51	25.941	8.295		
Self Defensive Humour	Male	57	34.719	6.485	3.478	0.001**
	Female	51	30.019	7.556		
Sense of Humour	Male	57	136.403	15.955	2.417	0.017*
	Female	51	128.588	17.651		

Table 2 illustrates the use of four different humour styles in both genders. The data were tested by using independent sample t-test to determine the significant differences among genders. In general, the outcomes were satisfactory that both genders use more adaptive humour styles than maladaptive styles of humour. Male students uses significantly more aggressive humour than female ( $t = 3.941$ ) and more self defeating Humour ( $t = 3.478$ ). This finding provides support to Hypothesis 2 that an average level of sense of humour exists among male female students.

Above table 2 shows that the mean of male in sense of humour is more than female. It indicates that males have more sense of humour than females. But mean of academic achievement is more than male. T-value in both variables is significant. Hence there was significance difference in sense of humour and academic achievement among males and females students of secondary schools.

### Interpretation

From above results and discussion it is clear that students who had more affiliative humour and self-enhancing humour were high achievers whereas students with more aggressive humour and self-defensive humour were low achievers. Hence the hypothesis:1 There will be no significant difference in sense of humour among high achievers and low achievers, is accepted. Male students had more sense of humour than female but they perform better than male in academics. The result is insignificant in terms of sense of humour and significant in academic performance. Hence the hypothesis:2 There will be no significance differences in sense of humour and academic achievement among male and female students of secondary schools, is not accepted.

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