

**THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN STRESS PERCEPTION
LEVEL AND STYLE OF HUMOR: FINDINGS FROM
UNIVERSITY MANAGERS**

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Senol CAVUS
Economics and Management Faculty.
Kyrgyzstan Turkey Manas University.
senol.cavus@manas.edu.kg

Mine HALIS
Social Science Institutes
Celal Bayar University.
minehalis@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this research is to investigate the relationship between stress perception level and styles of humor and ability to cope with stress through humor. The research is work-intensive, and therefore has been carried out on managers, who work at a stressful environment caused by labor stress factors. Although the research generally aimed to investigate the stress perception level of managers, in particular, aimed to make a research on university administrators due to time and sample restraints. When it is considered that stress conditions could be assessed in the context of corporate identity and corporate culture, that the sampling has a homogeneous appearance in terms of stress conditions, emerges as another factor to be considered. Therefore, it was found suitable to run the research at a single institution, and Kyrgyzstan Turkey Manas University administrators have been chosen as samples.

Keywords: Humor styles, Positive humor, Negative humor, Stress perception level, Coping through humor

ÖZET

Bu araştırmanın amacı mizah tarzları ve stres algılama düzeyi arasındaki ilişkiyi mizah yoluyla başa çıkma becerisi bağlamında araştırmaktır. Araştırma, genelde yöneticilerin stres algılama düzeyini araştırmayı hedeflemiş olsa da özelde -araştırmada zaman ve örneklem kısıtı nedeniyle- üniversite yöneticileri üzerinde araştırma yapılmıştır. Stres

koşullarının kurumsal kimlik ve kurumsal kültür bağlamında değerlendirilebileceği göz önüne alınca örneklemin stres koşulları açısından homojen bir görünüme sahip olması dikkate alınması gereken diğer bir faktör olarak ortaya çıkmaktadır. Bu nedenle de araştırmanın tek bir kurumda yapılması uygun bulunmuş ve Kırgızistan Türkiye Manas Üniversitesi yöneticileri örneklem olarak seçilmiştir. Bu kapsamda üniversitedeki tüm yöneticilere ulaşılmış ve % 90 oranında geçerli sayılan anketlerle toplanan bilgilerden elde edilen sonuçlara göre; araştırmanın hipotezini oluşturan savların bir kısmı araştırma sonuçları ile desteklenmiş, bir kısmı ise desteklenmemiştir. Bu sonuçlar, yeni araştırmaların yapılmasını gerektirebilecek bir durum olarak kabul edilebilir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Mizah Tarzları, Olumlu mizah, Olumsuz mizah, Stres Algılama Düzeyi, Mizah Yoluyla Başa Çıkma,

INTRODUCTION

Today, it is accepted that humor is a voluntary and positive personal quality. Humor is also considered as a positive strength in human life, and many theorists define humor as a harmonious and well-planned strategy in stress management. Moreover, it has been determined that people who have a good sense of humor often use these strategies to deal with difficulties of life with self-confidence (Bozdemir, 2011:5). In many different cultures in the world, it is considered that humor is useful for psychological and physical health, improves relationships between people, reduces tension, and altogether assists the individuals' quality of life.

The understandings of management are influenced by the differences in changing and developing world. Point of view to the management has changed, so new model theories for the comprehension of management are always produced. It is possible to benefit from humor in managements as well as in social life, political arena and educational fields. While the importance of humor is well-known, and used usually to become cheerful in social life, to overcome problems in political life, to make learning easy in education, but it is not much used in management like other fields. One of the most important reasons not to use humor in management is the fear of appearing weak and reducing manager's

dignity. However, today the demands for humanistic management have increased, so humor may have a role to soften tension and to give authority a human identity. From managers' point of view, as humor has importance to increase the quality of effective communication between people, it will help them to have a reliable communication with other people. As a result, humor both affects social relations of people positively, and helps them to overcome the problems and difficulties they face. A large number of experimental studies have been done on this subject, and some results have come out, which support the idea that the sense of humor has a function on reducing stress, depression and anxiety (Yerlikaya, 2009:1-2). So, the regulating effect of the sense of humor on stress, depression and anxiety has caused investigating humor as a strategy of coping with problems (Martin, 1998:44).

In literature, there are not many studies about the relation between the perception level of stress and humor style of managers, which makes our research original. It also contributes the literature because it is the first research on university managers who are the subject of our study. As universities are expected to produce science, and guide the community, it is clear that the managers working there face with different stressors on the same expectations. If we suppose that the humor style of university managers affects perception level of stress positively, it is doubtless that this situation will make positive results for the academicians in management positions.

It constitutes the problem of study that thanks to humor, there is a relation between perception level of stress and different humor styles of university managers working in KTMU, and the ability of coping with problems, or not.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Humor as a Concept

Humor is an important part of daily life. It includes laughing, entertaining, and teasing people or manners in a kind way, and appears as an activity in every fields of life. At the same time, it is one of the most important means of our social life.

Like in the previous centuries, in this century philosophers, scientists, artists, and even religious functionaries have dwelled on negative feelings more than positive feelings in their studies related to the feelings. They have given less attention to the subjects such as humor, happiness, joy and laughter than other subjects. As humor has not been appreciated enough as serious research subject till the beginning of 1980s, the researches on humor are mostly recent. On the contrary, the humorous point of view to the events is as old as history of humanity.

Many attempted to define 'humor' up till now. Every community has tried to define 'humor' in different categories in different ages as a result of their cultural accumulations. Although humor is defined differently, there is 'laughter' in humor more or less on the basis of all definitions. Humor has certainly an important role on the action of laughter which happens according to different elements. Sense of humor has different aspects which generally cheer people up, destroy offenses, reduce anxiety and give pleasure. At the same time, it is also accepted that humor is an impulse which improves creativity, cures psychological health. Although people do not show it clearly, they can communicate without hurting each other if there is humor. Sense of humor sometimes presents some aspects of daily life in a comic way, and sometimes evaluates some hurtful events and strange or absurd points of life in a specific way (Bozdemir, 2011:20)

However, although researches on humor are insufficient and recent, most of them assumed that the sense of humor is a positive personal quality which improves psychological health and good personality. Researches have showed that humor improves psychological and physical health, develops social relations, reduces work stress, and that people who have a good sense of humor generally have some positive personal qualities such as optimism, self-confidence and autonomy (Tüm kaya, 2011:159-161).

Human beings always have to cope with various problems, and unfortunately there is not only one way to be satisfied throughout one's life. As humor is a way of coping with problems in life, it protects people from merciless realities of life, and provides them social adaptation by

making socialization. At the same time, as the sense of humor is a psychological balance against insurances of life, it helps people to reduce psychological tensions (Thorson, Powell, Sarmany and Hampes, 1997: 605-606; Akkaya, 2011:31).

It is a common opinion that sense of humor has positive effects on psychological health. It is a general topic on this subject that having a good sense of humor is an effective strategy in coping with negativity and problems. This idea is especially common between personality theorists. Freud states that humor is the most reliable of defense mechanisms, and expresses that in negative situations humor helps individual to avoid negative feelings without losing true points of view (Yerlikaya, 2009:31). Sense of humor is an important characteristic of self-realized people, and it is also an important component of their insight about themselves, so humor has a function of helping individual to have different points of view on his/her problem by avoiding his/her problem enough.

Humor is claimed to have an important function in coping with problems and difficulties in people's lives. Some indications supporting this idea experimentally have been found in many researches on health.(Abel,2002:369).The results of researches have showed that people who have a good sense of humor can cope with stress efficiently, they have less negative feelings and more positive relations. As a result they are healthier than other people. In addition, humor takes attention as a way of reducing negative effects of stress, anxiety and depression (Martin,1998).

Moreover, as a means of thought, interpretation and expressing opinion, humor is a means of communication which is interesting and attractive, so it helps people to focus on messages. Humor has also many results such as laughing, dreaming, thinking, analyzing, making reason-result relation, comparing, making people feel and making intrinsic. Rein has classified humor as 'positive humor' and 'negative humor'. He explains positive and negative humor as: (Sepetçi, 2010:4)

Table – 1: The Types of Humor

Positive Humor	Negative Humor
----------------	----------------

• Provides a positive look at life,	• Causes a negative look at life,
• Helps to see the differences nice,	• Uses differences in order to vilify,
• Uses positive language,	• Uses a negative language,
• Creates positive feelings for the opposites	• Creates negative feelings to the opposites
• Respects the feelings of the other people,	• Hurt the feelings of the other people
• Comforting as style and approach,	• In general, irritating jolted,
• Does not create a sense of exclusion.	• Creates a sense of exclusion.

Since time of Bergson, while expressing humor and reasons of humor, many famous researchers, who have first studied humor systematically, express that humor has positive effects on people. One of the most important ways in order to benefit from humor is the sense of humor which begins to be acquired in childhood. It is also important here what you understand from the expression ‘sense of humor’. As the psychological dimensions of humor have begun to be evaluated, another concept which is tried to be explained is sense of humor (Sepetçi, 2010:4).

Martin (1998) states that there is a difference between the terms of ‘humor’ and ‘sense of humor’. According to Martin, while the characteristics of humor such as action, speaking or writing can cause fun, sense of humor can be a personal quality or personal change. So it makes sense of humor a concept in psychological field of personality.

As a concept of ‘sense of humor’ is generally used by researchers in psychological field in order to express that people differentiate from each other on how often they are busy with humor, which situations they find funny, kinds of humor they use, it can be used to express the dimensions of personal differences, too (Ruch, 1998).

Sense of humor can supply the action of laughing even in weaknesses and deficiencies. In order to evaluate a good sense of humor, a creative mastery is needed. Humor is sometimes applied to explain the defective sides of a person opposite us. Mutual tolerance is needed here, too. Witty remarks which an employee makes about his/her employer, parodies or caricatures which comedians take aim at politicians are made by relying on understanding of opposite person (Bozdemir, 2011:4)

The word 'humor' has an effective meaning, but the concept of 'sense of humor' seems to have a narrower and clear meaning. The concept of 'sense of humor' means consistent personal quality, and is generally used to emphasize personal differences mentioned above. As it includes the ability of entertaining and amusing others, it has started to comprise the meaning of some positive personal characteristics. As a result of this situation, the definition of having 'sense of humor' can be defined thanks to the meaning of not having 'sense of humor'. When somebody is told that he/she doesn't have a good sense of humor, it means to say that he/she is an extremely serious, fanatic, selfish, heartless, capricious and radical person. This positive point of view on the subject 'sense of humor' is still an acceptable idea (Martin, 2007).

At the end of their researches and studies in 2003, Martin and his friends brought up that sense of humor could be considered in six different dimensions:

1. As a cognitive ability (the ability of understanding, making, creating and remembering jokes),
2. As an esthetic reaction (appreciating humor and admiring different kinds of humor materials),
3. As behavior models which have turned into habits, often the inclination of laughing, making jokes and entertaining others, and laughing others jokes,
4. A personal character related to feelings (habit of being cheerful),
5. As a manner of behavior (positive attitude towards humor, looking at external world surprisingly),
6. As coping with problems or defense mechanism (carrying on the humorous point of view to the troubled events)

The Theory and Kinds of Humor

In categorizing humor, Martin's (Martin and his friends, 2003:321) classification has been accepted in most of studies. This classification investigates personal differences by using humor in four dimensions. Two of those dimensions are positive (affiliative and self-enhancing), two of them are negative (self-defeating and aggressive kinds of humor).

Affiliative humor is a kind of humor which individual can also focus on other people while he/she is taking his/her needs into consideration. As positive and healthy humor, affiliative humor is a kind of humor which is basically tolerant and not aggressive, approves individual and others, and improves attractiveness and affiliation between people. Affiliative humor is expected to be joyful, extroverted, having high self-respect, and mostly related to positive feelings. Understanding of affiliative humor is a harmonious kind of humor including the ability of using humor (such as joking, telling anecdotes, telling comic things, intelligent witty remarks) in order to entertain and relax other people. There is personal and interpersonal respect in this kind of humor (Bozdemir, 2011:26).

Self- enhancing humor is about personal sides of humor. It includes protecting humorous point of view against stress, and even negative events in daily life. People having self-enhancing humor can both have more satisfying relations with other people or themselves, and have a humorous point of view against problems in coping with stress (Martin, 2007:303,279). Negative kinds of humor are expressed as self-defeating humor and aggressive humor.

Self- defeating humor includes some behaviors which individual always runs himself/herself down in order to make other people laugh (Yerlikaya, 2003:15). People using self-defeating humor apply for this kind of humor in order to avoid solving problems creatively.

People having **aggressive humor** use this humor in order to meet their needs dealing with only their superiority and their own pleasures (Yerlikaya, 2003:15).

Humor and Management

Since the concept of management started to be researched as science it has been discussed on the problems of managements and organizations in both private sector and public sector. In order to find the most convenient management and organization for institutions, new theories and concepts have been suggested. Organizational theorists and managers have tried to benefit from these theories and concepts. Nowadays, the efforts of finding perfection in organizations are still going on, but the concept of authority has changed with many social relations. It was thought in the

past that authority and humor were opposite concepts, but nowadays, people in management use humor in solving problems and personal relationships.

The problems, deficiencies or faults in management supply rich materials for humor. So, when talking about management and humor, the flaws of management first come to the mind. The most important works written in this field are three volumes with the names: Law of Parkinson, Peter's Principle, Recipes of Peter, Peter's Ideas, and Scott Adam's Principle of Dilbert. In those works, as a result of nature of management or incompetence of managers, the flaws of management are mentioned in humorous style (Güneş, Durdu, 2010).

There are two basic proposes in Law of Parkinson. These are: a) every work uses necessary time to complete it and b) there is no relationship between the number of people doing that work and the capacity of work. Parkinson supports these hypotheses with concrete examples. In Law of Parkinson, while searching the laws of process in management, Northcote Parkinson discusses the results of especially bureaucracy and formalism in organizations in a humorous style. By expressing in the first part of his book that as a rule, every work is long enough to be spend special time on it; Parkinson says that the idlest person may seem like the busiest one. At the end he mentions about the famous law of relationship between the volume of work and the number of employees. According to this law, 'whether the work increases or decreases, and there is not even any work to do, the number of employees will increase continuously (Fişek, 1972:16-17).

In addition, with increasing competition in the business world, employees are known to work much more to keep pace with the rapid changes. As a result, the number of anxious, depressed and low morale employees is increasing day by day. Most of them feel burned out, but as they are afraid of losing their jobs, they cannot talk about it. However, the managers know how to provide a positive contribution to the quality of the work by creating a corporate culture that allows people to feel good about themselves, and by making working environment enjoyable and challenging. All of these issues have supported the tendency of putting

humor into work. The managers have deduced that humor provides an invaluable skill in coping with increasing job stress and increase productivity at the same time. And humor in the workplace creates a motivation from within the employee for the quality of the work.

In order to be successful in his/her job, managers should create a conducive working environment to communicate effectively with employees, be friendly and accessible to the employees, and demonstrate them that they are a part of the team. Communication styles, which employees feel themselves welcome in order to bring new ideas and foster creativity, increases quality service. A good sense of humor can help to be successful in each of those listed. In short, companies and managers today need to make the same kind of commitment to finding ways to make work enjoyable, if they want to survive and thrive in the 21st century.

Relationship between Stress and Humor

The reaction of laughter is attributed to sudden nervous discharges in relaxation theory which takes a person's stress and tension away from him and rescues the individual from physical and psychological tensions. Different humor styles are thought to have different roles in dealing with stress. Therefore, analyzing sense of humor separately in terms of healthy and unhealthy styles of humor to search stress, anxiety and depression on the regulatory impact will contribute to understand that in what way the use of humor is effective in reducing the potential negative effects of stress.

It is another important question that in which sources of stress the sense of humor is a more effective strategy in life. Researches on stress examine potential stressors under two hoods as "major life events" and "everyday problems" which can cause people to experience stress and negative effects of both physical and psychological health (Lazarus and Folkman, 1984). The scales designed to measure major life events which can cause a person to live life stress usually includes life events such as 'jailing', 'The death of a loved one', 'unwanted pregnancy' or 'bankruptcy' (Yerlikaya, 2009:5).

As such events rarely happens in the normal course of life, on these measurement tools people are mostly asked to indicate that thinking last a year when they have experienced such an event. The evaluation of great life events can significantly remote from flexibility although perception of the stress in an event or situation is due to how the person interprets the stress. A situation like a person's losing a beloved person would be a heavy experience for most people. It is another important question whether having a humorous point of view or having a style of humor is an effective strategy for life events (job loss, a dramatic change in economic conditions, etc.) which would require re-integration (Yerlikaya, 2009:5).

On the other hand, as the frequency of occurrence of these and similar events is fewer, it is stated major life events to predict the stress experienced in daily level do not have a significant share, but "everyday problems" also known as perceived by the small life events are more effective to predict the state of stress and negative emotions than major life events (Yerlikaya, 2009:5) Everyday problems are events or conditions which appear as a result of the daily interaction with the environment and make them worried and sad (Lazarus and Folkman, 1984). Everyday troubles include less serious events such as 'traffic jam', 'work intensity' or 'clashes with others'. It is possible that the individual can be more flexible against these events than major life events. It is known that both types of stressors have the influence on stress perceived and negative emotions experienced by person (Yerlikaya, 2009:6).

It has been found that humor is an important strategy to cope with the stress of business life and people who use humor for this purpose can more easily cope with problems (Abel, 2002:365-381). In addition, researchers have documented that humor at work has an effect of increasing morale by spending time with fun and helps managing job stress. The power of humor increases mental performance to work efficiently by reducing daily stress levels. It provides emotional flexibility required for the employees. The person in team who experiences the stress can rectify his own emotional state quickly with the power of humor without affecting the performance of the entire team.

Person benefiting from the positive effects of humor within the team can also increase the team's chance of success on the project (Baum, David, Team Building II How Humor Creates Winning Teams, 1999:1, www.laughterremedy.com).

Despite the severity of the business environment, humor has a multi-functional aspect which makes the business environment more enjoyable by relieving the interaction within the organization and reducing interpersonal tensions. If used properly, the use of humor can be used as a means of effective communication and motivation which mitigates disputes in the personnel management (Romeo ve Cruthirds, 2006).

THE STUDY

This research is a descriptive research prepared as survey model. This research is qualitative type of research that examines the relationship among styles of humor, coping with humor and perception of stress through correlational survey. For this purpose quantitative data collected through a Likert-type approach was analyzed. Scan model aims to investigate a matter and all kinds of change in the present situation, which are the subject of invisible effort to influence the individual or the object in their own terms and presents as it is. In the study information was gathered from participants compiled through the scales. This aspect of research serves as an example of self-transfer research. Descriptive research carried out in two ways as self-transfer research and observation research. Data for self-transfer research is based on information collected from individual. Information from participants can be obtained through questionnaires through interviews both in written form and orally. Observation of the research data can be collected though observation of participants by the researcher. Dependent variables of the research are perceived stress, and coping humor. Independent (predictor) variables are "styles of humor" (Self-enhancing humor, affiliative humor, aggressive humor, self-defeating humor).Kyrgyzstan-Tukey Manas University was

chosen as a sample to evaluate the relationship between humor and stress among academic and administrative staff of university

Based on the literature review, research model is designed as a conceptual map. Quantitative research methods were used to explore the relations between research variables which are included on the conceptual map. Research was designed to collect primary data. The conceptual framework of the study is as follows:

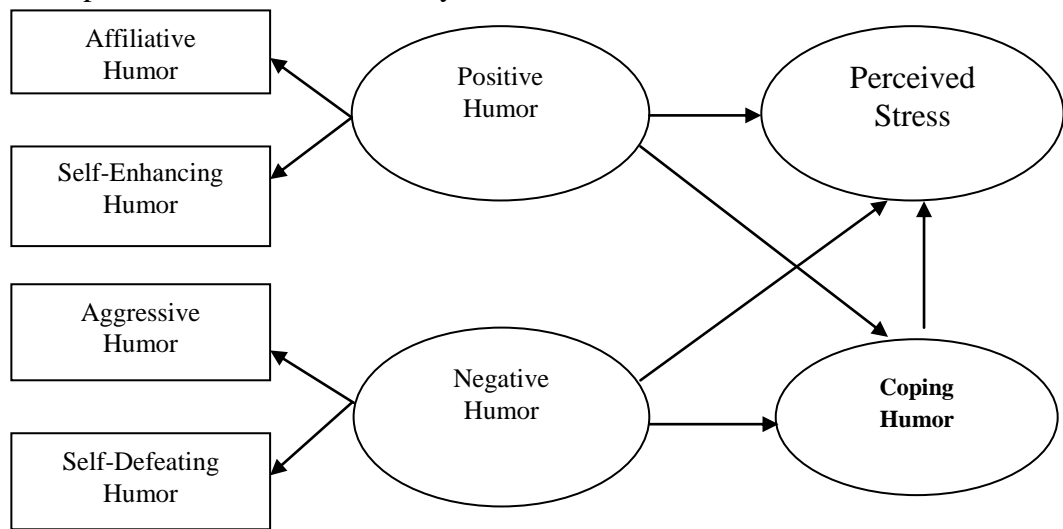


Figure 1: Conceptual Structure of Research Model

Evaluation of data collection instrument

In this research, the measures related to stress variable were obtained using “Perceived Stress Scale”, and the measures related to “humor styles “variable” were obtained by “Humor Styles Questionnaire”, and the measures related to “coping humor scale” variable – were obtained by “Coping Humor Scale.”

All the items, taking place in the Turkish form, obtained in the adaptation period of the scale into Turkish are the variable factor loadings that observed between the factors .32 through .75 of the original form. Based on these findings, it can be stated that the scale has a reliable factor structure. In the adaptation period of the scale into Turkish, Croanbach alpha internal reliability in correlation with each subscale is indicated by .74 for Affiliative Humor /Social use Humor, by .78 for Self Enhancing

Humor, by .69 for Aggressive Humor, and .67 for Self Defeating Humor (Yerlikaya,2003).

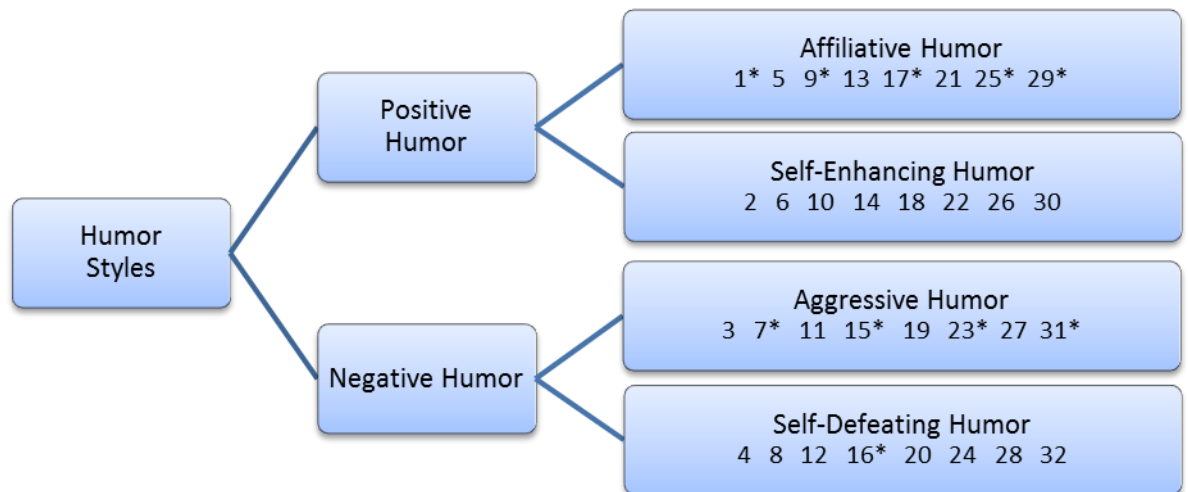


Figure-2: General Structure of the Humor Styles Scale
(* Reverse scored items)

Original version of “Humor Styles Scale” was developed by Martin and Puhlik-Doris (1999) as 60 items to measure four different humor styles; later the number of items was decreased to 32 after the revision by Martin, Puhlik-Doris, Gray and Weir (2003). Responses to this scale are designed as seven scaling ranging from “I absolutely disagree” to “I absolutely agree”. Humor Styles Scale consists of two parts – positive humor and negative humor. Positive humor styles consist of Self Enhancing Humor and Affiliative Humor; whereas negative humor styles contain Self Defeating Humor and Aggressive Humor. The questions in each sub dimension, which consists of 8 items with one reverse-calculated part, are aimed at measuring the changes of sense of humor according to the given dimensions (Martin, Puhlik-Doris, Larsen, Gray and Weir, 2003).

Adaptation of the scale into Turkish was done by Yerlikaya (2003). He has done researches on structural validity, internal consistency, criterion validity and test-retest reliability. Basic component factor analysis and varimax rotation methods were used for the factor analysis. In order to

identify internal reliability coefficients, Cronbach alpha values were calculated. In order to analyze the relationship between item analysis, test-retest reliability, criterion-related validity, criterion variables and humor styles scale points, Pearson correlations were identified. Obtained findings showed that the scale consists of four factors as it does in the original and each factor is equivalent to four subscales made of 8 items in the original scale (Yerlikaya and Inanc, 2003).

Table- 2: Statistics of Reliability of the scales used in this study

	<i>in Yerlikaya (2003) C. Alpha</i>	<i>in this research C. Alpha</i>
Humor Styles Scale		
Affiliative Humor	.74	.70
Self-Enhancing	.78	.69
Aggressive	.69	.75
Self-Defeating	.67	.60
Coping Humor Scale	.67	.78
Perceived Stress Scale	.84	.84

The Coping Humor Scale (CHS), consists of 7 items, is a self-expression scale developed to measure the use of humor as a strategy to cope with stressful conditions (Martin and Lefcourt, 1983; Martin, 1996). This scale was also adapted into Turkish by Yerlikaya (2003) and validity reliability tests have been done. In this research, in the result of depriving the variability which has negative item-total correlation from the scale the internal reliability Croanbach alpha coefficient which is calculated to check the reliability of the scale was .78.

Perceived Stress Scale was developed by Cohen, Kamarck and Mermelstein (1983) and considerably widely used as a measuring instrument. Perceived Stress Scale is an instrument for measuring the degree of the stress and at what level it makes the respondent's life unpredictable, uncontrollable and overloaded. This scale was adapted into Turkish by Yerlikaya (2003) and it has .84 as an internal consistency Croanbach alpha coefficient. For this research, .84 reliability coefficient

was obtained in the result of the deprival of 4 variables which have negative item-scale correlation from the scale.

Normality Test

Parametric statistical tests depend on the assumption that data were sampled from a Gaussian distribution. Normality test was developed to determine whether parametric or non-parametric tests should be used for the collected data. Kolmogorov-Smirnov test is the only sample at this aim. As it shown in the table below, the results of the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test which was done to determine whether data are distributed normally or not, revealed that all data have normal distribution having $p > 0.05$. According to these results, parametric tests were used for the hypothesis test.

Table-3: The normality test of collected data

	KM	KGM	SM	KYM	PM*	NM*	ASO	MYBÇÖ
Mean	3.75	3.02	2.08	2.55	6.77	4.62	20.93	20.05
Median	3.786	3.000	2.000	2.500	6.607	4.500	21.000	19.000
Variance	0.371	0.429	0.487	0.442	1.003	1.359	17.483	18.729
Std. Deviation	0.61	0.65	0.69	0.66	1.01	1.17	4.18	4.33
Skewness	0.112	0.088	-0.013	-0.117	0.500	-0.057	-0.132	0.097
Kurtosis	-0.684	0.825	-1.063	-0.463	0.493	-0.462	-0.449	0.223
K-Smirnov ^a Sig.	.200*	.200*	0.192	.200*	.200*	.200*	.200*	0.143

*. PM: positive humor, NM: Negative humor, other abbreviations previously used in the text.

FINDINGS

In accordance with the research examples related to humor styles; degree of stress perception and coping with humor in university administrators; gender, marital status, age and other specifying statistics are indicated in the following table.

Table-4: Demographic statistics of the sample

Demographics Profile	Frequency (N:420)
Gender and Marital Status	married woman: 6 (14,3) single woman: 3 (7,1) married man: 29 (69,0) single man: 4 (9,5)

Age	Under 25: 26 (61,9) 26 - 35 ages: 10 (23,8)	36 - 45 ages: 3 (11,9) 56 +: 1 (2,4)
Spouse's Employment Status	single: 7 (16,7)	working: 19 (45,2) unemployed: 16 (38,1)
How many children do you have	No children: 9 (21,4) 1 child: 8 (19,0) 2 children: 18 (42,9)	3 children: 6 (14,3) 4 children: 1 (2,4)
Nationality	Turkish: 30 (61,4)	Kyrgyz: 12 (38,6)
How many years have you been working	10 - 15 Years: 9 (21,4) 16 - 20 Years: 23 (54,8)	20 - 25 Years: 6 (14,3) 26 + Years: 4 (9,5)
As Manager (academic or administrative)	academic: 13 (31,0) administrative: 18 (42,9)	Missing: 11 (26,2)

Research models and Hypothesis Testing:

Humor's having many aims in everyday usage is widely studied in the literature part of the research. Usage of humor is tested with its two functions on the basis of this research. Humor can be used both for the individual's own profit and for his contribution in his relationships with other people. Individual's using humor for his own purpose is related to his attempt of showing his own superiority by putting others into difficult conditions. At the same time, humor is also used as a way to ease tension, that is, the struggle to overcome the negative conditions of the stressful situations by using humor.

H1: There is a relation between humor style and stress perceiving degree.

*H1_a: There is a relation between **positive** humor style and stress perceiving degree.*

*H1_b: There is a relation between **negative** humor style and stress perceiving degree.*

Stress, an important constituent of working life, is very important factor from the viewpoint of the productivity and individual's health. All individuals react to the stress differently based on various reasons. For this reason, individuals demonstrate different actions and behaviors in coping with stress. Coping with the stress is mainly related to holding the effects of the stress in a positive level by the attempts towards reduction

and elimination of the negative results of the stress. Although stress is an inevitable part of human life it is important to defend oneself from it and its impact on the life of the individual. Individuals' actions and behaviors related to coping with stress like humor are sides of the personal character. Relationship possibility between the humorous actions that people perform in certain events and their reaction towards stress provocateurs can seem an interesting topic. Humor style is connected with both the individual's personality and his sensitiveness to various cases. Ability to understand stress provocateurs better and to solve their background reasons can have a relationship with humor styles. Beside the fact that the sense of humor is considered as a positive character trait, it is also evaluated as an effective coping strategy or as a defense mechanism according to some theorists. It brings a notion that using humor to protect oneself from the negative consequences of the stress provocateurs is an effective way of coping, and showing no protection is ineffective. Ways applied to cope with the stress can be considered separately or together with each other in each dimension of stressful cases in the human life. Stress is an experience which can have indications in each physiological, emotional, cognitive or behavioral dimension. These dimensions also have influences on each other. Accordingly, in the attempts to cope with the stress these dimensions, which are already occupied with the stress, can take part in a certain form (Yerlikaya, 2009).

H2: There is a relation between humor style and coping humor.

*H2_a: There is a relationship between **positive** humor style and coping humor.*

*H2_b: There is a relationship between **negative** humor style and coping humor.*

Regardless to the humor style the relationship between coping humor ability and stress perceiving degree can be theoretically stated as a relationship. Actually, coping humor can also be considered as an ability to invent humor in difficult situations. If we look from this point of view, we can think that there is a negative relationship between humor perceiving degree and coping humor ability. Therefore, the research covered the testing of the following hypothesis:

H3: There is a negative relationship between coping humor ability and stress perceiving degree.

A correlation analysis was conducted in order to test the relations theoretically appeared on the model which is conceptually designed to test the hypotheses listed above. It was observed that some hypotheses are accepted and some of them are rejected within this framework. There is a certain need to take also restrictions based on examples and other unconsidered faulty factors into account.

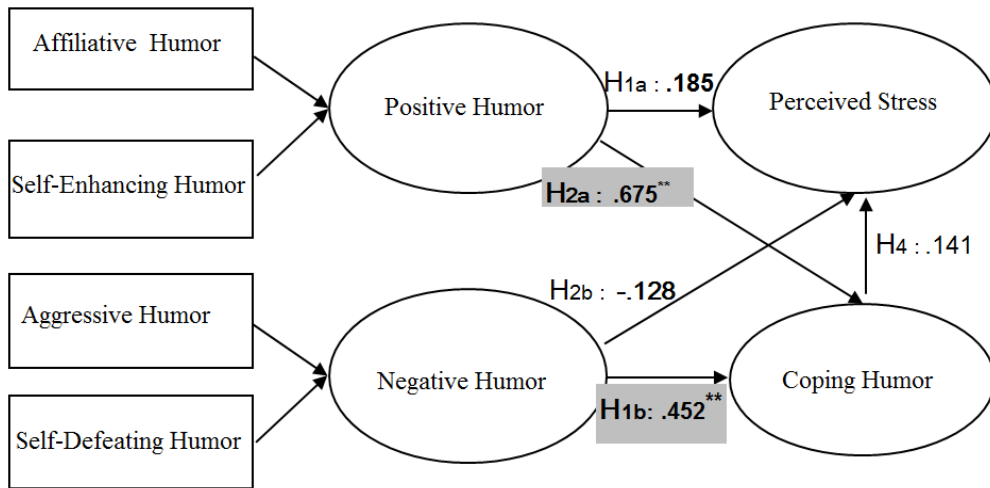


Figure-3: Relationships between Variables in the Research Problem

As an addition to the conceptual relations diagram which includes above mentioned hypotheses, the results of “t” test, which was carried out in order to reflect that correlation analysis results and these variables have different variants, are indicated in the following table.

Table-5: Relations between the investigated variables

Parameters	r	Sig.
H1a Positive Humor → Perceived Stress	.185	.242
H1b Positive Humor → Coping Humor	.675**	.000
H2a Negative Humor → Perceived Stress	-.128	.418
H2b Negative Humor → Coping Humor	.452 *	.003
H3 Perceived Stress → Coping Humor	.051	.746

In the analysis of the hypotheses designed according to the variables considered in the research problem, correlation analysis was also applied. The results of the correlation analysis related to three main and two sub hypotheses established in this framework are shown in the table above. The cells of the table which include the correlation values which have comprehensible interrelations with each other are indicated with shadowed pattern. According to this information, there is a comprehensible relationship between the positive humor style and coping humor variables ($r=.675$; $p<.01$) and there is also a relationship between the negative humor style and coping humor variables ($r=.425$; $p<.05$).

CONCLUSION

The research results which can be revealed out of the findings discovered in the analyses performed with the data collected by questionnaire aimed at solving research problem can be summarized in this way: in analyzing the relationship between humor style and stress perceiving degree, no relation was found between positive humor style and stress perceiving degree, but there was a relationship between negative humor style and stress perceiving degree. In analyzing the relationship between humor style and coping humor, no relationship between positive humor style and coping humor verse the hypothesis. However, as in our hypothesis, there was a relationship between negative humor style and coping humor. There was no relationship between stress perceiving styles and humor styles.

The results of this research besides containing a generalizing peculiarity, gives a hint that there should be further inclusive researches similar to this one as it could not prove the theses claimed in hypotheses. Accordingly, lacking proofs of hypotheses can be the peculiarity of this research. Different samples and reviewing of other universe researches can be needed because the absence of proof does not mean the proof of absence.

REFERENCES

- Abel, Millicent (2002). Humor, stress, and coping strategies. *Humor: International Journal of Humor* (pp.365–381). 15–4.
- Akkaya, Mergübe (2011). *Sınıf Öğretmenlerinin Sınıf Yönetimi Becerileri ile Mizah Tarzları Arasındaki İlişkinin İncelenmesi*, Yeditepe Ün. SBE, Yayınlanmamış Yüksek Lisans Tezi İst.
- Aslan, Hatice (2006). *Ortaöğretim Kurumlarında Görev Yapan Öğretmenlerin Öğrenilmiş Güçlük düzeyleri ve Cinsiyetlerine Göre Mizah Tarzlarının İncelenmesi*, Çukurova Ün. SBE. Yayınlanmamış Yüksek Lisans Tezi, Adana.
- Baum, David. *Team Building II How Humor Creates Winning Teams*, 1999, http://www.laughterremedy.com/humor.dir/humor_main.html, Erişim tarihi,26.01.2012.
- Bozdemir, Emre (2011). *Ergenlerin Mükemmeliyetçilikleri İle Mizah Duyguları Arasındaki İlişkinin İncelenmesi*. Gazi Ün. EBE, Yayınlanmamış Yüksek Lisans Tezi, Ankara.
- Clouse, R.W. and Spurgeon (1995). K.L. Corporate analysis of humor. *Psychology A Journal of Human Behavior*, (pp. 1-24). 32.
- Eric J. Romero and Kevin W. Cruthirds (2006), The Use of Humor in the Workplace Executive *Academy of Management Perspectives*. (pp. 58-69). May 1, 2006 Vol. 20 no.2 .
- Fişek, Kurthan (1972), Yönetim ve Mizah, *Amme İdaresi Dergisi*, (pp.14-40). c.5, no 3.
- Goldwyn, Samuel, A New Kind of Leadership, 2010, http://www.laughterremedy.com/humor.dir/humor_main.html, (Erişim tarihi, 26.01.2012)
- Güneş, Durdu, 2010, <http://www.makalemarketi.com/is-dunyasi/insan-kaynaklari/1320-yoneticilikte-mizahin-gucu.html>, (Erişim tarihi,20.01.2012
- Kanner, A. D., Coyne, I. C., Schaefer, C., and Lazarus, R. S (1981), Comparison of Two Modes of Stress Measurement: Daily hassles and Uplifts Versus Major Life Events, *Journal of Behavioral Medicine*, (pp.1-39). 4.
- Kuiper,N.A., Martin R. A., and Dance, K. A (1992), Sense of Humor and Enhanced Quality of Life, *Personality and Individual Differences*, (pp.1273-1283). 13.
- Lancaster, H (1996). Your career may be a laugh track away from the fast track (Managing Your Career column). *Wall Street Journal*, March 26.
- Lazarus, R.S. and Folkman, S (1984), *Stress, Appraisal and Coping*, NewYork: Springer.
- Martin R. A (1998). Approaches to the sense of humor: A historical view, (Ed: W. Ruch) *The sense of humor*, New York: Mouton de Gruyter.
- Martin R. A., Puhlik-Doris, P., Larsen, G., Gray, J. and Weir, K (2003), Individual Differences in Uses of Humor and Their Relation to Psychological Well-Being: Development of the Humor Styles Questionnaire. *Journal of Research in Personality*, 37, 48-75.
- Martin, R. A (2007). *The Psychology of Humor An Integrative Approach*. USA: Elsevier Academic Press.

- Martin, R.A. Puhlik-Doris, P., Larsen, G., Gray, J. and Weir, K (2003). Individual Differences in Uses of Humor and Their Relation to Psychological Well- Being: Development of the Humor Styles Questionnaire. *Journal of Research in Personality*, 37(1)
- Maslow, A (1954), Motivation and Personality, New York: Random House.
- Puhlik-Doris, P (1999). *The Humor Styles Questionnaire: A New Multidimensional Measure of Sense of Humor*. Master Thesis, The University of Western Ontario, London, Ontario.
- Romero, Eric J. and Cruthirds, Kevin W., The Use of Humor in the Workplace Executive, http://www.laughterremedy.com/humor.dir/humor_main.html (Erişim tarihi, 23.12 2012)
- Sepetçi Ceyhan (2010). *Okul Yöneticilerinin Mizah Tarzlarının Betimlenmesi*. Gaziosmanpaşa Üniv. SBE, Yayınlanmamış Yüksek Lisans Tezi, Tokat.
- Thorson, James A. Thorson, F.C. Powell, Ivan Sarmany-Schuller and William P. Hampes (1997). Psychological Health and Sense of Humor *Journal Of Clinical Psychology*, (pp. 605-619). Vol, 53(6), (1997)
- Tümkiye, Songül (2006). Öğretim Elemanlarının Mizah Tarzları ve Mizahı Yordayıcı Değişkenler, *Eurasian Journal of Educational Research*, (pp, 200-208). 23.
- Yerlikaya, E. E (2003). *Mizah tarzları ölçeğinin uyarlama çalışması*. Çukurova Üniversitesi SBE, Yayınlanmamış Yüksek Lisans Tezi, Adana.
- Yerlikaya, E. E (2009). *Üniversite öğrencilerinin mizah tarzları ile algılanan stres, kaygı ve depresyon düzeyleri arasındaki ilişkinin incelenmesi*. Çukurova Üniversitesi SBE, Yayınlanmamış Doktora tezi, Adana.
- Yerlikaya, E. and İnanç, B (2003). Mizah Tarzları Ölçeği Güvenirlik ve Geçerlik Çalışması (Özet Kitabı). *VII. Ulusal Psikolojik Danışma ve Rehberlik Kongresi*, Malatya İnönü Üniversitesi.