

## **The Influence of Humor on Students Resilience**

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### **Abstract**

Humor refers to something that is considered funny, fun, and entertaining. The use of humor can contribute to psychological health, healthy relationships, quality of life, good communication, and effective coping strategies. There has been a lot of literature that discusses the influence of humor on one's psychology. Humor has a positive impact on negative feelings such as stress, anxiety, and depression. This study aims to determine the factors that come from humor that can form resilience in students. Systematic database search (PubMed, ProQuest, Google Scholar, JSTOR, and Scencedirect) for peer-reviewed, English article, published 2012-2022 that reports on the effect of humor on personal development which in turn creates resilience. The selection of articles used the guideline from PRISMA and in the selection process, the inclusion and exclusion criteria were considered. 35 articles according to the topic were then analyzed as a whole. The results of the analysis in the study show that positive humor has a good influence on individual self-development. Some of these positive influences include self-esteem, problem-solving skills, good relations, self-enhancing, negotiation, good communication, coping mechanisms, and mindfulness. This research can be a consideration for building sustainable mental health in universities. Universities can consider using humor as a medium to build positive character which in turn supports the creation of resilience in students. Then this will affect a positive academic atmosphere so that students will feel comfortable and get life satisfaction.

**Keywords:** Humor, students, education, personality, resilience

### **Introduction**

Humor Refers To Something That Is Considered Funny, Fun, And Entertaining. From A Psychological Perspective, Humor Can Be Seen As A Personal Quality In Defending Themselves From The Negative Emotions They Face, Such As Stress And Depression (Mora Ripoll And Quintana Casado, 2010). The Use Of Humor Can Contribute To Psychological Health, Healthy Relationships, Quality Of Life, Good Communication, And Effective Coping Strategies. On The Other Hand, Negative Use Of Humor (Such As Humiliating Or Ostracizing Someone) Can Jeopardize A Person's Well-Being Or Status; Therefore, It Is Important To Understand Quirks In Relation To Humor To Encourage Positive Use And Prevent Psychological Violence (Cengiz, Sunay, And Yasar, 2018).

There has been a lot of literature that discusses the influence of humor on one's psychology. Humor has a positive impact on negative feelings such as stress, anxiety, and depression (Sánchez et al., 2017). In addition, humor can also influence on the comfort of interpersonal relationships because it can reduce negative emotions and promote good results (Jinping Zhao et al., 2019). Humor can be a laughter therapy or treatment to prevent, improve, and maintain physical, social, and mental function and further contribute positively to one's life (Mora Ripoll and Quintana Casado, 2010). Recent research has shown that humor can affect a person's personal development related to Biological, Psychological, Social, Environmental, and Behavioral factors (Gonot-Schoupinsky, Garip, and Sheffield, 2020).

Increasing mental health problems in students can cause several problems. Perceived stressful conditions can increase the risk of taking alcohol and smoking. On the other hand, negative conditions such as stress can affect students' sleep quality (Almoj Ali et al., 2017), persistence in learning (Heckman, Lim, and Montalto, 2014), and depression (Dalky and Gharaibeh, 2019). The demands for mental health on students encourage the formation of resilience in order to manage stress and other negative emotions in order to adapt to various (Galante et al., 2018). Resilience is also needed so that students are able to overcome various mental health problems they feel (Pidgeon et al., 2014).

Resilience is needed for students in adapting to the university environment (Wang, 2009). Resilience is considered as a condition of individuals who are able to solve problems and adapt to their environment (Santilli, Grossen, and Nota, 2020). Several studies have shown that resilience is able to reduce the mental burden on students' psychology, manage academic activities well, and become a strategy in dealing with stress or other negative feelings (Abbott et al., 2009). The definition of resilience is considered as a dynamic trait, outcome, or process involving exposure to stress or adversity, which is further followed by successful adaptation (Ahern et al., 2006). Therefore, resilience is considered as a quality of individuals to develop in the face of problems or difficulties. The findings of the literature show that resilience in a university environment can have a positive impact on mental health, and successful adaptation to a university environment (Wang, 2009; Peng et al., 2012)

The association between positive impact of humor and resilience is very strong. Humor is able to create positive emotions and be a good coping strategy for students (Gidwani, Chaudhary, and Banerjee, 2021). Therefore, it is very appropriate if the use of humor is used as a medium for character building in the university environment.

### ***Aims and Review Questions***

This study aims to determine the factors that come from humor that can form resilience in students. Our review question is What are the effects of humor in the development of individuals to shape the character of resilience?

## **Method**

### ***Study design***

Systematic review was chosen in this study because it identifies the scope of the literature and investigates the relationship between one finding and another (Munn et al. 2018). This review follows the PRISMA–ScR guidelines in the process of article searching, article selection, and writing review results (Tricco et al., 2018).

### ***Search strategy***

A search was conducted in April 2022 to identify relevant articles, published in English since 2012, in PubMed/Medline, Scopus, ProQuest, JSTOR, and Emerald Insight. A broad search strategy was used: Population (students), Intervention (laughter and humor), Comparison (none), Outcomes (relationship between humor and student resilience), Study design (all) (PICOS). Boolean search features humor or, deep laughter and resilience. Search results (n = 47) were imported into the Rayyan systematic review application for duplicate resolution and data management.

### ***Eligibility criteria***

The following are the inclusion criteria in the article reduction process:

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| <b>Inclusion<br/>Criteria</b> | <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Peer-reviewed original articles published in international databases between 2012-and 2022</li><li>2. Full-text articles in English regarding the topic of humor and resilience or humor and personal development.</li><li>3. Discuss the effect of humor on personal development which in turn creates a resilience</li></ol> |
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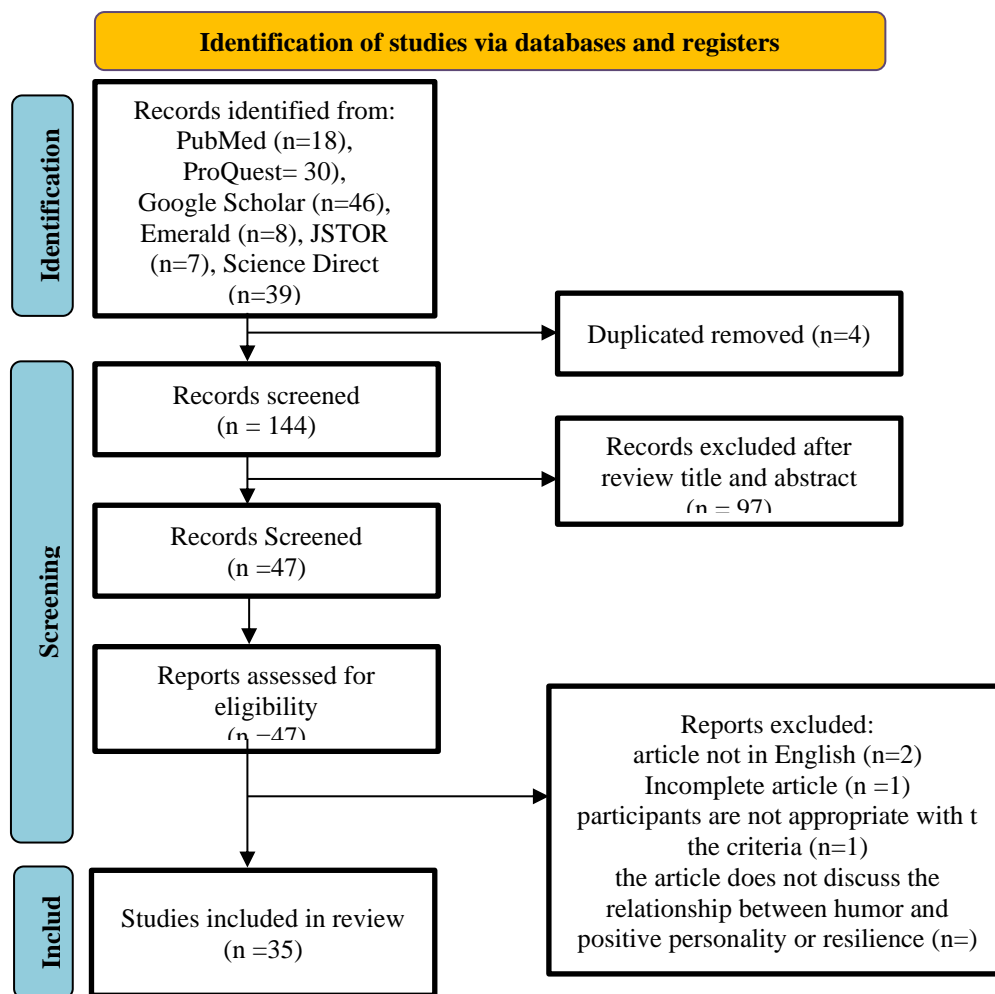
## **Data Extraction and Analysis Process**

Screening of titles and abstracts excluded 97 articles as shown in the PRISMA flowchart. Forty-seven articles were identified and assessed (Table 1); to find articles that match the topic of study. A critical assessment of the sources of evidence is carried out by considering the inclusion criteria and exclusion criteria. In line with the agreed data extraction table, the following variables were extracted: research references (title and author), research objectives, research location, population and sample, relationship between humor and personality, humor and resilience, and humor in the academic environment. All relevant results were extracted using the inclusion criteria. The data extracted from this study was then analyzed using a qualitative synthesis method software by Atlas.ti.

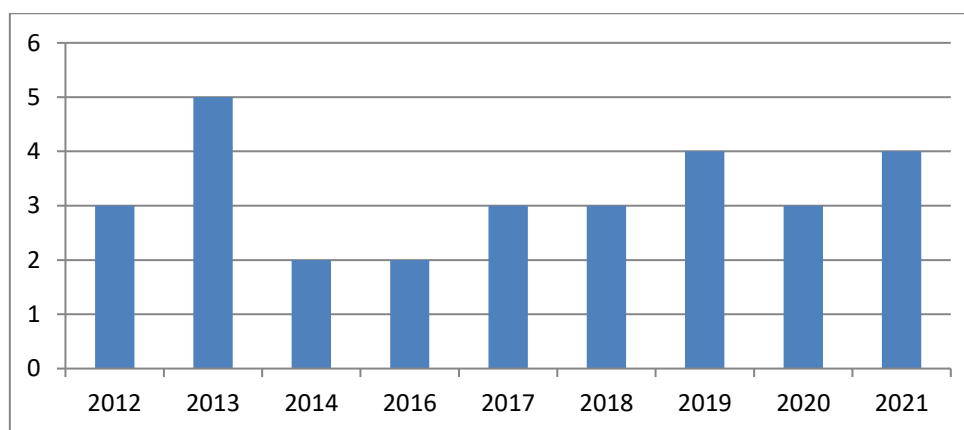
## **Results**

Based on the article selection process contained in the PRISMA flow chart, the researchers found 39 articles that deserved to be selected as inclusion articles in this review. Articles published in the period 2013-2022 (Fig. 2). Almost all articles discuss the influence of humor on emotions, resilience, coping mechanisms, and positive character. The humor in this review is the humor that is applied to students at the university for the sake of building positive character in students.

A total of 39 articles discuss different themes related to humor and a positive personality that supports toughness. The discussion of the results in this article will discuss eight themes based on the information obtained from the inclusion article. It is included in the category of positive personality which can refer to resilience and coping strategies to reduce stress, anxiety, and other negative feelings (Fig.3).

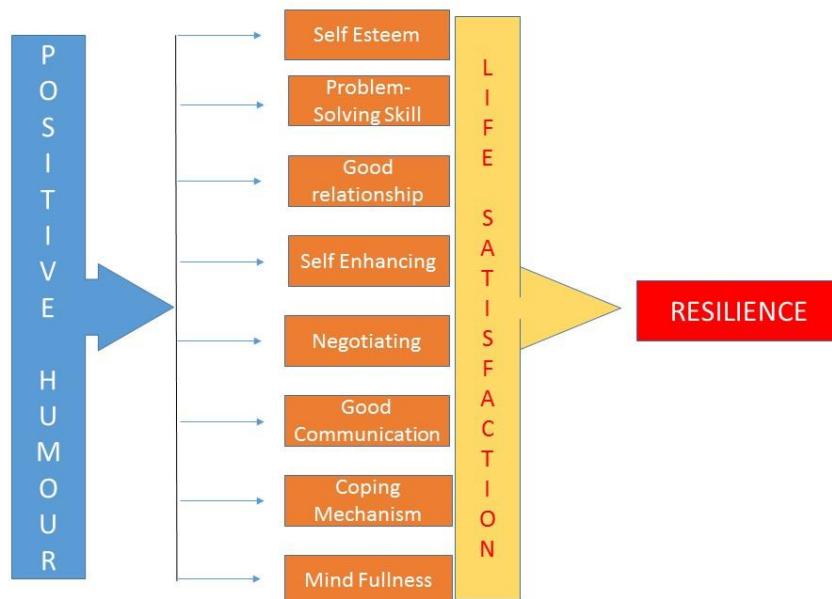


**Figure 1** Flow Chart of the Study



**Figure 2** Articles Published Period between 2012-2021

Humor can be defined as a stimulus to make someone laugh. The use of humor can show a positive correlation to a person's personality. Positive humor can contribute to creating good communication, relationships, and quality of life in an individual's life (Cengiz, Sunay, and Yasar 2018; Lin, Hong, and Liu 2022). Conversely, negative humor (such as bullying or ostracizing people) can have a negative impact on life, especially psychological conditions in individuals. Therefore, it is very important to understand the use of humor to encourage positive use without causing psychological violence in the individual.



**Figure 3** *Positive Humour Factors associated with Life Satisfaction and Resilience*

## Humor and Self-enhancing

Humor can improve well-being in children. This is caused by the influence of humor that can affect children in respecting themselves (Koo and Lee, 2015; Gidwani, Chaudhary, and Banerjee, 2021). Self-esteem is an important part of an individual's personality. Humor that can increase a child's sense of self-esteem will affect their psychological well-being (Koo and Lee, 2015; Zhou et al., 202; Ozyesil, 2012). Effective use of humor helps in the development of a more positive and healthier self-concept. Therefore, humor has a strong relationship with Self-enhancing. Humor can regulate emotions and be an effective coping strategy in helping individuals to deal with various problems. Therefore, individuals have the potential to be able to deal with problematic situations, which leads to higher self-esteem (Galloway, 2010).

In a study conducted by Fabio and Duradino showed that the style of humor and self-enhancing has a relationship with the ability to negotiate in individuals (Fabio, 2020). A good negotiation attitude is needed by individuals to establish cooperation in an organization. In addition, individuals who have good negotiating skills will help them maintain relationships with social groups around them. The use of humor can be done as a way to improve interpersonal relationships that can create healthy communication, thereby contributing to the relationship of an individual with a group (Özyeşil, Deniz, and Kesici, 2013; Ozyesil, 2012; Salavera, Usán, and Jarie, 2020).

## Style of Humor and Self-esteem

This type of humor style can be used as a way of predicting self-esteem in children and students. This will then affect academic success, academic achievement, and how they interact with other friends (Gidwani, Chaudhary, and Banerjee, 2021). Positive attitude, optimism, and resilience-building interventions can use humor as a medium to build resilience. Humor is also known as a coping mechanism that can be used by students and university students to reduce negative feelings in dealing with problems. Therefore, humor can increase positive health in

individuals (Reddy, 2013). Through this, the psychological condition of students will be able to adapt to all changing conditions and overcome the academic burden.

Healthy humor (adaptive humor) is an expression that can improve the health and well-being of individuals. This is because adaptive humor is able to increase social interaction and self-efficacy attitudes in individuals. In contrast to the style of unhealthy humor (maladaptive humor) which can damage the welfare of others so that it is dangerous for individual relationships with other people (Schneider, Voracek, and Tran, 2018; Reizer, Munk, and Katz Frankfurter, 2022). People with affiliative humor style will feel satisfaction in their lives and have fewer symptoms of stress and depression (Fritz, 2020). While harmful humor actually makes a person dissatisfied with his life and has symptoms of high stress and depression (Dyck and Holtzman, 2013). Therefore, a healthy humor style can reflect a positive mindset so that people who have a sense of humor will be liked by many people (Cann and Cann, 2013). In addition, we found in the literature that humor can increase creativity in individuals (Chang et al., 2015). These benefits can be a potential for the academic community to use humor as a medium in increasing creative attitudes in students and also forming positive characters in themselves, so that students will have an attitude of resilience.

## **Humor and Personal Development**

Considering humor to be used for personal development within the individual is a good move. Humor can increase psychological well-being, happiness, and positive emotions (Edwards and Martin, 2014). Humor is able to create daily emotional positivity with subjective and psychological well-being. This is based on the fact that humor can be a coping strategy to reduce negative feelings such as stress and depression (Jingjing Zhao, Kong, and Wang, 2012). A person lacking in emotional expression (or high coping with stress), self-defeating humor, and low use of humor to enhance social relationships are the most detrimental factors for psychological well-being (Páez, Mendiburo Seguel, and Martínez-Sánchez, 2013; Di Fabio and Duradoni, 2020).

The effect of humor that gives positive emotions to individuals is correlated with how individuals respond to problems. Individuals who have a humorous nature tend to be able to solve problems higher than someone who does not have a humorous or non-humorous nature. The effect of humor is to increase flexibility in oneself so that it allows a person to deal with his problems. Humor can directly improve an individual's performance in solving problems and creating new, harmonious relationships. In addition, humor can also create an attitude of optimism in the face of something (Zhou et al., 2021). An optimistic attitude will help individuals to have the courage to face all conditions and also solve the problems they face (Reizer, Munk, and Katz Frankfurter, 2022). Therefore, humor training can be applied to students so that they are able to be flexible, optimistic, and solve the problems and challenges they face in the university learning process. When the components of these attitudes are united in students, it will be possible if students have self-resilience in dealing with academic situations.

## **Discussion**

Resilience needs to be possessed by students to face the various conditions they face. Academic demands sometimes make them feel stressed, depressed, and anxious. These negative emotions will certainly affect their academic ability and achievement in studying at the university. Therefore, students are a group that is vulnerable to mental health problems.

Coping and counseling strategies can be a medium to minimize the negative impact of poor mental health conditions (El-Monshed et al., 2022). Especially in unexpected situations such as the Covid-19 Pandemic which has caused many changes in the education sector. The change is the change from the face-to-face system to online learning which has a bad influence on the mental health of students.

Humor becomes an effective strategy in creating resilience in students. The positive effect of humor can create positive emotions in students which in turn can shape the character of resilience. Humor is able to foster an attitude of mind-fullness in the body so that it can get rid of negative feelings (Galante et al., 2018). If an individual has positive emotions, then they can think clearly to deal with any conditions and be able to solve the problems they face. Positive emotions need to be owned by students in order to create a positive and fun learning space. Students who have a high sense of humor tend to be able to overcome problems through positive emotions from the effects of humor than students who do not have a sense of humor (non-humor) (Zhou et al., 2021).

Self-respect or commonly called self-enhancing is one of the determinants of optimism in oneself. Someone who feels confident in himself will have a sense of optimism in dealing with various situations. Previous studies have shown that there is a relationship between humor and optimism and self-esteem. Humor is able to make a person respect himself, so that it can give a sense of satisfaction with life (Fabio, 2020). In addition, the sense of optimism that arises from the influence of humor also becomes necessary to have so that someone is able to easily adapt to their environment (Reizer, Munk, and Katz Frankfurter, 2022). However, it should be noted that there are differences in the types of humor styles. Positive humor can have a positive impact on the emotions and personality of individuals, but on the contrary, negative humor that tends to harm oneself and others can damage interpersonal relationships (Dyck and Holtzman, 2013).

Universities need to consider using humor as a means of creating a positive environment for student learning. Based on research that has been done students tend to like teachers who have a high sense of humor. This is because it can reduce tension during the learning process (Huss and Eastep, 2016). This ability is a positive influence that makes students feel comfortable and entertained so as to create a positive academic climate. But the humor chosen for learning activities must be relevant, otherwise it will cause students to feel dissatisfied with the ongoing academic activities. Likewise, excessive use of humor in lectures and other course activities can reduce the subject matter communicated (Abrams and Segrist, 2019).

It turns out that humor is also able to provide some examples of positive attitudes that support students to have a resilience attitude. Humor can improve communication and negotiation skills in individuals (Fabio, 2020). This ability is needed to build a harmonious relationship between his students, students and lecturers, as well as to others. Someone who has a sense of humor will get much higher social support than someone who does not have a sense of humor (Koo and Lee, 2015). Therefore, the use of humor as a medium to build resilience in students is something that is very suitable. The positive influence of humor can build a positive character in students who are able to build a positive atmosphere in resilience learning activities can also be a form of self to adapt to the environment and change, as well as better problem solving.

## **Conclusion**

In conclusion, current research findings contribute to our understanding of the psychological mechanisms of resilience, emotion regulation, peer relationships, problem

solving, and self-esteem that humor can apparently shape. This research can be a consideration for building sustainable mental health in universities. Universities can consider using humor as a medium to build positive character which in turn supports the creation of resilience in students. Then this will affect a positive academic atmosphere so that students will feel comfortable and get life satisfaction.

## Declaration of Conflicting Interests

The authors declared no potential conflicts of interest with respect to the research, authorship, and/or publication of this article.

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