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The Effectiveness of Flourishing Education on Humor and Academic Engagement in Students (Case Study: High School Students of Chalous City)

Sohrabali Harsaj Ghasemi¹, Jamal Sadeghi^{2*}, Alireza Homayouni³

1. PhD student, Department of Educational Psychology, Islamic Azad University, Babol Branch, Babol, Iran.
2. Assistant Professor, Department of Educational Management, Babol Branch, Islamic Azad University, Babol, Iran.
3. Assistant Professor, Department of Psychology, Islamic Azad University, Bandar-e-Gaz Branch, Bandar-e-Gaz, Iran.

❖ **Corresponding Author Email:** jamalsadeghi48@yahoo.com

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Abstract

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Purpose: The humor and academic engagement in students improve their academic performance and success. Therefore, the aim of this research was determine the effectiveness of flourishing education on humor and academic engagement in high school students.

Methodology: The present research was an applied with pre-test and post-test design with experimental and control groups. The statistical population of the research was male and female high school students in Chalous city in the academic year 2019-20. The statistical sample of the research was 30 people who were selected by available sampling method and randomly replaced into two equal groups (15 people in each group). The experimental group underwent the flourishing education 8 sessions of two-hour during two months (one session per week) and the control group during this period did not receive any training. Both experimental and control groups in the pre-test and post-test stages were evaluated in terms of humor (Khashouei, Arizi Samani and Aghaei, 2009) and academic engagement (Reeve and Tseng, 2011) and the data obtained from their implementation were analyzed by methods of univariate analysis of covariance and multivariate analysis of covariance in SPSS software.

Findings: The findings showed that flourishing education led to increase the humor and all five components including the enjoyment of humor, laughter, verbal humor, humor in social relationships and humor in stressful conditions in high school students ($P < 0.05$). Also, flourishing education led to increase the academic engagement and all four components including the engagement of cognitive, emotional, behavioral and agency in high school students ($P < 0.05$).

Conclusion: The findings indicated the effectiveness of flourishing education on increasing students' humor and academic engagement. Therefore, planning to improve them through workshops can play an effective role in promoting students' humor and academic engagement.



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Detailed abstract

Purpose: Educational environments are places where there are many academic obstacles, problems and challenges, and students need a high level of happiness, cheerfulness and humor to overcome them. Humor is a concept for optimizing education, and its appropriate use helps students learn lesson concepts and directs their attention from outside the classroom to inside the classroom, and when educational materials are accompanied by humor, they will often be more enjoyable and effective. In recent decades, humor as one of the concepts of positive psychology approach plays an important role in promoting health and even success and academic progress. Humor and academic involvement in students can improve their performance and academic success. Humor is a concept for communicating with others, facilitating solving life problems, controlling and managing emotions, and creating strong social relationships that show people's feelings, beliefs, and desires. Therefore, the mentioned structure can help competence in social interactions such as creating social relationships, intimate relationships, emotional support and conflict management. In fact, humor is an organized defense mechanism that helps people deal with stressors and emotional conflicts by giving importance to humorous aspects. Humor is a way to replace unacceptable motivations and behaviors and release mental tensions and pressures with a pleasurable state that replaces pessimism and aggression with laughter. Humor is a description of individual differences in a variety of behaviors, thoughts, cognitions, beliefs, experiences, emotions, attitudes, and abilities related to laughter and fun, and humorous people are more emotionally flexible than non-humorous people, problems and life events, even negative ones. They evaluate more positively and adapt well to different problems and challenges. Therefore, the aim of this research was to determine the effectiveness of the flourishing education on humor and academic engagement in second year high school students.

Methodology: The current research was of applied type with a pre-test and post-test design with experimental and control groups. The statistical population of the research was male and female students of the second year of secondary school in Chalus city in the academic year of 2019-20. The statistical sample of the research was 30 people who were selected by the available sampling method and randomly replaced in two equal groups (15 people in each group). In the available sampling method, the researcher selected 30 students from among the male and female students of the second year of high school that he had access to if they had the conditions to enter the study. The conditions for inclusion in the study include living with parents, not taking psychiatric drugs, not having the students or their family members infected with Covid-19 in the past one month, not having received psychological services in the past three months, and not having a history of receiving prosperity education and conditions. Exclusion from the study included refusal to continue cooperation and absence of more than one meeting. The method of conducting the research was that after coordinating with the officials of Chalus List city education department, the samples were identified and 30 people were selected as samples using the available sampling method. The samples were randomly divided into two equal groups (15 people in each group) and one of the groups was considered as the experimental group and the other group as the control group. The experimental group underwent 8 two-hour sessions during two months (one session per week) and the control group did not receive training during this period. The content of the flourishing training was designed by Rassa et al (2017) based on the Sha (2011) package, and the validity of this training package was verified by 5 positive psychology experts and experts with studies and records such as conducting a thesis, research project, article, authoring or translating. Books, counseling and training were in the field of prosperity, it was confirmed that the experimental group received 8 two-hour sessions during two months (one session per week) and the control group did not receive training during this period. Both experimental and control groups in the pre-test and post-test stages in terms of humor (Khashouei, Arizi Samani and Aghaei, 2009) and academic engagement (Reeve and Tseng, 2011) were evaluated and the data obtained from their implementation with univariate covariance analysis and multivariate covariance analysis methods, were analyzed in SPSS software.

Findings: Findings showed that flourishing education increased humor and all its five components, including enjoyment of jokes, laughter, verbal jokes, humor in social relationships, and humor in stressful situations in second year high school students ($P < 0.05$). Also, flourishing education increased academic involvement and all its four components including cognitive, emotional, behavioral and agency involvement in second year high school students ($P < 0.05$). The findings indicated the effectiveness of flourishing education on increasing students' humor and academic engagement. Therefore, planning to improve them through educational workshops can play an effective role in promoting humor and academic engagement of students.

Conclusion: The findings of this research showed that flourishing education increased humor and all its components, including enjoyment of jokes, laughter, verbal jokes, humor in social relationships, and humor in stressful situations in second year high school students. In the interpretation and explanation of these findings, it can be concluded that humor as

one of the constructs derived from the approach of positive psychology is a positive, fun, joyful, hopeful and universal activity that people of different cultural and social contexts experience and have a positive attitude about. The structure of humor is a complex and comprehensive topic in terms of cognitive and emotional and it refers to a quality of behavior and speech that causes entertainment, fun, happiness and joy. Humor can play an important role in life and can attract students' attention from outside the classroom to inside the classroom and reduces the level of tension and stress of situations to a great extent. Prosperity training causes more experience of positive emotions and less experience of negative emotions and increases resilience and as a result better control and management of stressful and tense situations. Other findings of this research showed that flourishing education increased academic involvement and all its components including cognitive, emotional, and behavioral and agency involvement in second year high school students. In the interpretation and description of these findings, it can be concluded that academic engagement is a concept that refers to students' willingness to participate in daily school activities, participate in classes, do homework and follow the teacher's instructions inside and outside the classroom. Students with high academic engagement attend school regularly, focus better on learning, are more committed to school rules, earn higher grades, and are more satisfied with the classroom, school, and education. The structure of academic engagement is a kind of psychological investment to understand and master the knowledge and skills that can be learned in the educational environment and such students are actively engaged in educational activities and tasks to acquire educational knowledge and skills.

Keywords: Flourishing Education, Humor, Academic Engagement, Students.