

## Humour and Forgiveness in Students – A Review

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### ABSTRACT

The purpose of the current study was to review several research publications to determine the connection between humour and forgiveness, particularly for students. Studies have shown a strong connection between humour or forgiveness and psychological health. The type of mechanism a person chooses and feels comfortable using, however, varies from person to person and situation to situation.

*Keywords: Humour, Forgiveness*

The best and most fun time in a student's life used to be during their time in school and college, but that has changed in the modern era. Numerous pressures, including pressure to perform well on tests, interpersonal conflict, career decisions, and more, affect students on a daily basis. There is perpetual rivalry as a result of the constant race to accomplish something. This run could result in the student experiencing a great deal of stress and strain, as well as perhaps acquiring a mental ailment. These tensions can be effectively handled by using humour and forgiveness.

Having a sense of humour about the difficulties of life is an useful coping mechanism that can really improve general health and facilitate stress reduction. That's because having a sense of humour about life's challenges can help you connect with others, view things from a different perspective, normalise your experience, and prevent things from seeming too overwhelming or scary. This is in addition to the many and significant health benefits of laughter. (Scott & Fogoros, n.d)

By letting go of anger, resentment, and hostility, forgiveness can foster feelings of empathy and compassion as well as better coping mechanisms for dealing with stress and, in some cases, even affection for the offender. According to studies, some people are just more forgiving by nature. They thus tend to have lower levels of sadness, anxiety, stress, wrath, and aggression as well as more life satisfaction. However, those who harbour resentments are more susceptible to having severe depression and PTSD, as well as other medical issues. (Swartz, n.d)

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### *Humor*

Svebak, stated that sense of Humor is “a characteristic of the individual and reflects readiness for understanding as well as producing humorous cognitive processes and to display related effects of smiling and laughter” (Svebak 2014 in Scheel, 2017).

There are four different kinds of humour: affiliative humour (using humour to amuse others, make others feel comfortable, and improve relationships), self-enhancing humour (allowing a person to deal with stressful situations by viewing them from a humorous angle), aggressive humour (the propensity to use humour to put down or attack other people, which includes teasing, ridicule, sarcasm, hostility, derision, or disparagement types of humour), and self-defeating humour, which includes excessive self-deprecating humour used to win friends, joining in on other people's laughter when they are being mocked or disparaged, and accepting being the target of other people's jokes. (Martin, Puhlik-Doris, Larsen, Gray and Weir, 2003 in Hampes, 2016).

127 undergraduate students were the subject of a 2014 study by Williams and Emich. They looked examined individual differences that affected people's emotional and cognitive reactions to failed humour and their desire to continue regulating positive affect in others after a failed attempt. They implied that bad humour is nothing to laugh at. An understudied phenomenon that has ramifications for interpersonal conduct in organisations, such as helping, group decision making, and intragroup conflict, can be better understood by understanding people's willingness to keep trying to control the effects of others.

In a study done in 2013 by Ghayas and Malik, the researchers looked at the relationship between humour sense and students' levels of creativity and sociability. Results showed that the sole significant predictor of sociability was attitude toward humour and hilarious people, or the subscale of humour.

### *Forgiveness*

According to McCullough (2000), “Forgiveness is a pro-social motivation, which is expressed through the decreased desire to avoid the transgressing person and to harm or seek revenge toward that individual and increased desire to act positively toward the same person”.

The topology of seven types of forgiveness are Premature instantaneous forgiveness (An unauthentic form of forgiveness indicated by denying or forgetting the transgression), Arrested forgiveness (The forgiveness is denied between the victim and wrongdoer), Conditional forgiveness (The acceptance of forgiveness under some conditions like apology, acceptance, and change in unacceptable behavior), Pseudo or mutual forgiveness (The process in which immature forgiveness is given or accepted in the necessity to restore the pre conflict relation), Collusive forgiveness (The process of avoiding conflict or opposition even when there is an unsolved severe injustice), Repetitious forgiveness (The successive, but incomplete attempts to stop relational transgression) and Authentic process forgiveness (The unconditional, self-regarding, altruistic, pro-social motive to avoid revenge for the good of self and the offender). (Walrond-Skinner, 1998 in Joy, 2018)

A cognitive paradigm has been used to explain forgiveness by Enright, Santos, and Al-Mabuk. For this, they made a distinction between the moralities of justice and forgiveness. Forgiveness morality says that, despite having the right to retaliate, one forgoes that right in favour of giving one's due, equality, and fairness. It is not the responsibility of the

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wrongdoer to show compassion; rather, it is a gift extended by the wronged party. (Enright, Santos and Al-Mabuk 1989 in Joy, 2018).

Singh and Sharma (2018) looked explored the connection between psychological well-being and forgiveness in females between the ages of 18 and 21. The findings showed a strong link between females' psychological wellbeing and forgiveness. It showed that women who are forgiving are more likely to experience increased psychological well-being.

Akhtar, Dolan, and Barlow (2016) conducted a qualitative study to examine the perceived impacts of state forgiving practise on various mental wellbeing outcomes and the variables affecting the relationship between forgiveness and wellbeing. It was discovered that, particularly among religious and spiritual cultures, forgiving a variety of actual interpersonal offences may be a significant factor of psychological well-being.

A study by Kumari and Madnawat (2016) examined the impact of forgiveness and gratitude on the wellbeing of 60 female college students. The findings demonstrated a strong relationship between forgiveness and gratitude and overall happiness. The results of multiple regression analysis showed that the only significant predictor of wellbeing was gratitude.

### ***Humor and Forgiveness***

A study by Hampes (2016) was conducted on 112 college undergraduates. It was predicted that self-enhancing humor would be positively correlated with forgiveness and aggressive humor negatively correlated with forgiveness. The results showed that Self-enhancing humor was significantly and positively correlated with all of the forgiveness measures, aggressive humor and self-defeating humor were significantly and negatively correlated with some of the forgiveness measures and affiliative humor was not significantly correlated with any of the forgiveness measures.

## **CONCLUSION**

Humor or forgiveness are viewed as preferable methods to handle life's events since they enable people to handle the circumstances more effectively. There have been many studies done to show how humour and forgiveness can assist people in dealing with life's tragedies in a positive way. In order to improve both one's psychological and physical welfare, this paper focuses on the psychological advantages of employing humour and forgiveness. What kind of mechanism one utilises and feels comfortable with, however, differs from person to person and circumstance to circumstance.

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### **Conflict of Interest**

The author(s) declared no conflict of interest.

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