

A Study on Coping Humor, Perceived Stress and Well-Being among Foreign and Indian Students

Swathi Padiapati^{1*}, Atefeh Livani²

ABSTRACT

In the modern world, people are dealing with emotional conflicts and stressors factors that confer tensions and daily difficulties for human life. Although there are millions of techniques to deal with these tensions and anxieties, one of the most prominent practices to overcome is appealing to either satire or a simple sense of humor. Humor procures us to replace the anxious feelings with delightful emotions. Humor assists alleviate stress, it also makes to watch the world in the best situation and change our attitude and meditation in very relevant media. Current empirical study comprise the concept of humor theory and its effects so that investigate the relationship between humor and stress and the welfare of Indian and foreign students as an objective of research. Present study conducted by questionnaire (random sampling) procedure besetting a collection of about 80 students consists of both 40 Indian and 40 foreign students of both sexes(bachelor, master and PhD degrees) at University of Osmania, Hyderabad, India. Three questionnaires were shared encompassing some implications such as perceived stress, coping with greed for mental health and sub implications like health testing for autonomy, environmental domination, personal growth, positive relationship with others, goal in life and self esteem. Obtained results revealed significant differences by t-test ($p = 0.03$ and 0.02 where $p < 0.5$), among Foreign and Indian students respectively. It was found both of couple sub implications of personal growth and purpose in life, autonomy and personal growth the significant factors between foreign and Indian students respectively.

Keywords: *Humor, Stress, Well-Being, Students*

Humor is an aspect of human personality, which is regarded as a ubiquitous quality in people. Actually, it means the ability to find things funny around us or any place or situations, the state that people figure out that something is funny, or the quality of being or becoming funny. According to oxford dictionary it has been asserted as the quality of being amusing or comic, particularly as declared in literature or speech; his tales are

¹ Department of Psychology, UCS, Osmania University, Telangana State, India

² Department of Psychology, UCS, Osmania University, Telangana State, India

*Responding Author

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thoroughly full of humor. Although it is difficult to embed an exact definition of humor, but it has been described in ancient civilizations in variety of perspectives. Plato, Aristotle and other scientists or philosophers of the ancient era have defined their opinion about humor by many similar words. Humor has mentioned in the Islamic tradition frameworks as a positive effect on well-being. The recent researches have illustrated that sense of humor procures us to cope and deal with the stress on one hand and rising the quality of life on the other hand. Psychologists regarded to humor as one of the properties of the human personality, and have scrutinized it from variety of views. In the 1960s, Psychologists acknowledged that breaking joke and laugh for man's being was beckoned criticism and review sake of being very high importance (Korotkof, 1991). Psychological approaches proclaimed that humor can be a bypass for coping stress and is been manifested it is a position for easier adaptation and compromising. There is a parallel movement between humor and individual creativity. From a broader view point of life, humor can be a kind of social-targeted message that underpins specific physiological and psychological variables through of its own social functions, path and content.

Many theories have been developed for humor in terms of which tried to describe what humors are, what social functions it deserves, and what would be attended humorous. Among the prevailing kinds of theories that endeavored to comprise the existence of humor, there are psychological theories, the massive majority of which attended humor to be very saliently manner; there are spiritual theories, which addressed humor to be an inexplicable mystery or mystical experience. Although lots of classical theories of humor and laughter may be distinguished, in contemporary academic literature reviews, three theories of humor exhibited frequently: Relief theory, Superiority theory and Incongruity theory. Among present humor scientists, there are no consensus ideas, which of these 3 theories of humor is most viable. However, we recognize that each theory be sets explaining all cases of humor; also we now acknowledge that although each theory generally mantles its own area of focus, many instances of humor can be posed and outlined by more than one theory (Abel and Maxwell 2002).

Well-being or wellbeing, welfare or wellness is a general and board term for the situation of an individual or group, for example their social, economic, psychological, spiritual or medical state; a high level of well-being implicates in some sense the individual or group's condition is positive, while low well-being is related to negative happenings. In philosophy the term well-being is employed to seek to how well a person's life traverses. Philosophers discussed that well-being come into view through meditating about what parents want to procure for their children. They identified a number of various kinds of theories. These encompass the hedonism, desire-fulfillment theory, objective list theory, perfectionism, and some 'mixed' or 'hybrid' views of well-being. Well-being is matured through covering one's aspects or interplay with their environment and other people.

Many different things can lead to stress - from physical (such as fear of something damaging) to emotional (such as concern over your family or job) natures what may be conducted. Stress

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is often the first step in learning how to better get on well with your periphery ambient. Some of the most common origins of stress are: survival stress, internal stress, environmental stress and fatigue and overwork (Cann et al 2008).

Humor is an amazing stress alleviator and breakdown to upsets. It is clinically confirmed to be effective sense muscles, introducing more oxygen into your lengths and falling your blood pressure. Current research evaluated coping humor, perceived stress and well-being among Foreign and Indian Students via questionnaires procedures and with assuming some sub implications such as autonomy, environmental mastery, personal growth, positive relations with others, purpose in life, self-acceptance, total psychological well-being, perceived stress and coping of Humor. Frederickson and Levinson (1994) investigated individuals who declared smiles during the negative arousal of sad and troubling events. Kelter et al.(1997) studied Duchenne laughter correlated with reduced awareness of distress. Kuiper and Martin (1998) scrutinized the positive emotions that able to loosen the grip of negative emotions on peoples' meditation. They proposed the stress-moderating effects of sense of humor appear to operate, at least in part, through more positive appraisals and more realistic cognitive processing of environmental information. Lefcourt et al. (1995) figured out a positive relationship between humor appreciation, one aspect of perspective-taking humor, and the coping technique of distancing. Folkman and Lazarus (1985) surveyed ways of coping scale humor, stress, and coping strategies. Kuiper et al. (1993) also evaluated the use of humor as a coping mechanism was positively correlated with the distancing and confronted coping subscales of the ways of coping scale indicating both emotion-focused and problem-focused aspects for dealing with stress. The objective of current survey was an evaluation upon the coping humor, perceived stress and well-being among foreign and Indian students.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Hypothesis

1. There will be high level of perceived stress among foreign students compared to Indian students.
2. There will be low level of Coping of humor among foreign students compared to Indian students.
3. There will be high level of psychological well-being among Indian students compared to foreign students.
4. There will be positive correlation between humor and psychological well-being among Indian and Foreign students.
5. There will be negative correlation between perceived stress and psychological well-being among Indian and Foreign students.

Perceived Stress Scale

The Perceived Stress Scale (PSS) consists of 10 items. It is a most widely used psychological instrument for measuring the perception stress. It is a measure of the degree to which situations in one's life are appraised as stressful. Items were designed to tap how unpredictable, uncontrollable, and overloaded respondents find their lives. The scale also

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includes a number of direct queries about current levels of experienced stress. The PSS was designed for use in community samples with at least a junior high school education. The items are easy to understand, and the response alternatives are simple to grasp. Moreover, the questions are of a general nature and hence are relatively free of content specific to any subpopulation group. The questions in the PSS ask about feelings and thoughts during the last month. In each case, respondents are asked how often they felt a certain way.

Coping humor scale

The Coping Humor Scale (CHS) is a self-report measure of 7 items that measures the degree to which respondents make use of humor in coping with stress in their lives.

Psychological Well-being scale

This scale was developed of 18 items which consists of a series of statements reflecting the six areas of psychological well-being: autonomy, environmental mastery, personal growth, positive relations with others, purpose in life, and self-acceptance. Respondents rate statements on a scale of 1 to 6, with 1 indicating strong disagreement and 6 indicating strong agreement.

Sample

A sample of 80 students studying in Osmania University campus was selected for this study. The sample includes 40 Indian and 40 foreign students consisting of both gender. The sample is selected using random sampling technique.

Procedure

The subjects were asked to sit in a noise free environment and answer the statements of each scale genuinely. They were also assured about their confidentiality. The scales were clipped together and instructions were provided by the investigator as per each scales. For Perceived Stress Scale the following instruction were given, “The questions in this scale ask you about your feelings and thoughts during the last month. In each case, you will be asked to indicate by circling how often you felt or thought a certain way. For both Coping humor scale and Psychological well-being scale, the following instructions were given- Please indicate how strongly you agree or disagree with each of the following statements (Martin 1996).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The distribution of the sample and its analysis with respect to Indian and Foreign students on variables like perceived stress, humor and psychological well-being were obtained according to tables and figures.

Hypothesis

Figure 1 and Table 1 display the percentage of perceived stress and mean, SD and t-ratio of perceived stress among Indian and foreign students respectively.

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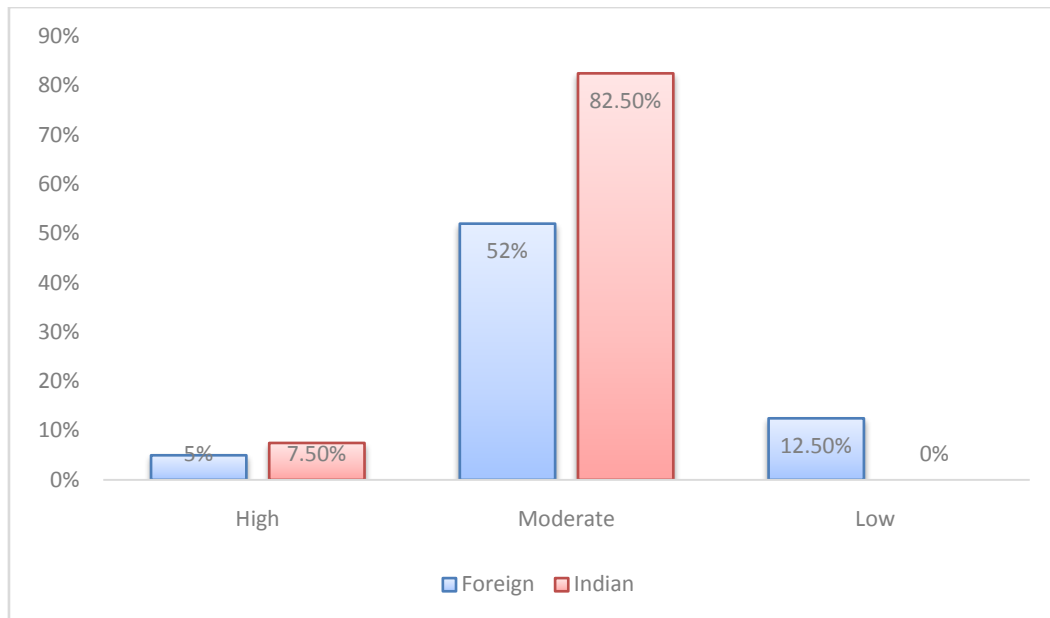


Figure 1 Percentage of perceived stress among Foreign and Indian Students

Table 1 Mean, SD and t-ratio of Perceived Stress among Indian and Foreign Students

Sample	Perceived stress		t-ratio
	Mean	SD	
Foreign	20.15	4.3	0.23
Indian	21.3	3.8	

According to the Table1, total mean score for foreign students is 20.15 while the total mean score for Indian students is 21.3. SD for foreign students was observed around 4.3 and for Indian students, it is about 3.8. The t- ratio is found to be ($p = 0.23$, where $p > 0.5$) which indicates that there was no significant difference among Foreign and Indian students in perceived stress.

Hypothesis

Figure 2; Table 2 and Figure 3 Show the percentage of coping humor; mean, SD and t-ratio of coping humor and mean of coping humor among Foreign and Indian Students respectively.

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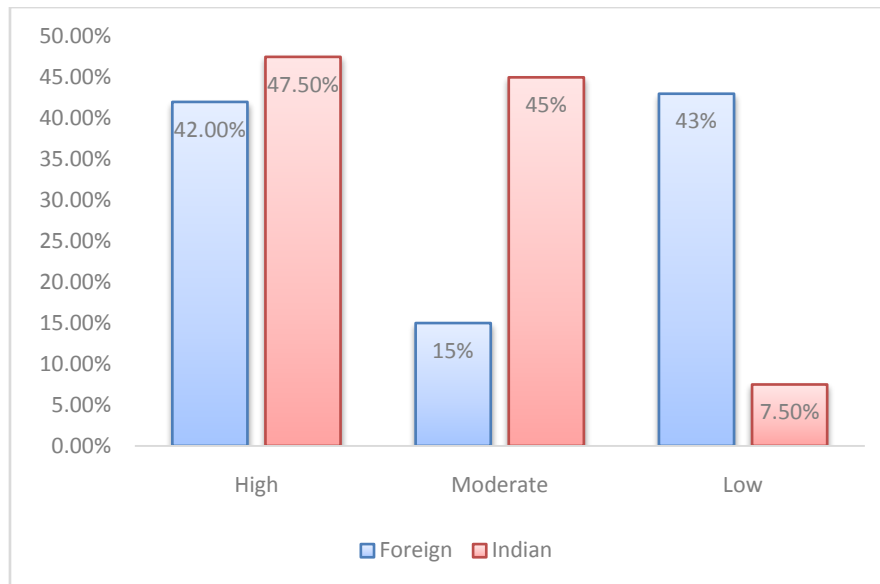


Figure 2 Percentage of coping humor among Foreign and Indian Students

Table 2 Mean, SD and t-ratio of coping humor among Foreign and Indian Students

Sample	Coping Humor		t-ratio
	Mean	SD	
Foreign	19.56	2.8	0.18
Indian	20.45	2.4	

According to Table 2, total mean score for foreign students is 19.56 while the total mean score for Indian students it is 20.45. SD for foreign students is 2.8 and for Indian students, it is 2.4. The t- ratio was found to be ($p = 0.18$, where $p > 0.5$) which indicates that there was no significant difference among Indian and Foreign students.

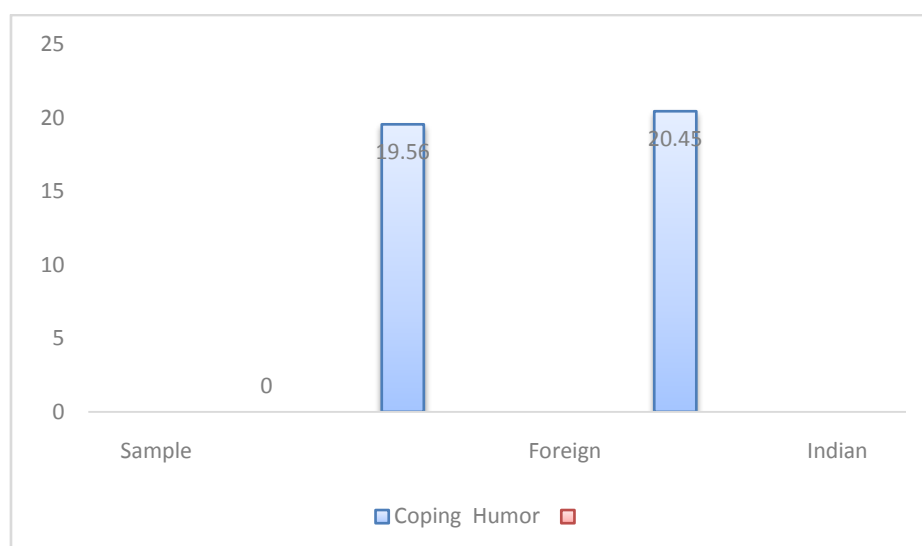


Figure 3 Mean of coping humor among Indian and Foreign Students

Hypothesis

Tables 3, 4, 5 and figure 4 comprise the percentage of components of Psychological Well-Being, percentage of components of Psychological Well-Being, Mean, SD and t-ratio of components of Psychological Well-Being and mean of components of Psychological Well-Being among Foreign Students, Indian Students, Foreign Students and Indian and Foreign Students respectively.

Table 3 *Percentage of components of Psychological Well-Being among Foreign Students*

Components of Psychological Well-being	High	Moderate	Low
Autonomy	85%	15%	0%
Environmental Mastery	65%	32.5%	2.5%
Personal Growth	60%	37.5%	2.5%
Positive Relations with Others	47.5%	50%	2.5%
Purpose in Life	57.5%	42.5%	0%
Self-Acceptance	65%	32.5%	2.5%
Total Psychological Well-being	12.5%	87.5%	0%

Table 4 *Percentage of components of Psychological Well-Being among Indian Students*

Components of Psychological Well-being	High	Moderate	Low
Autonomy	62.5%	30%	7.5%
Environmental Mastery	75%	15%	10%
Personal Growth	67.5%	27.5%	5%
Positive Relations with Others	67.5%	30%	2.5%
Purpose in Life	47.5%	50%	2.5%
Self-Acceptance	45%	27.5%	7.5%
Total Psychological Well-being	27.5%	70%	2.5%

Table 5 *Mean, SD and t-ratio of components of Psychological Well-Being among and Foreign Students*

Components of Psychological Well-being	Foreign		Indian		t-ratio
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	
Autonomy	15.12	2.33	13.8	3.21	0.03
Environmental Mastery	14.32	2.86	14.07	3.93	0.4
Personal Growth	14.45	3.19	14.2	3.8	0.42
Positive Relations with Others	13	2.92	14.3	3.34	0.02
Purpose in Life	13.5	2.78	12.85	3.33	0.14
Self-Acceptance	14	3.3	14.5	4.01	0.23
Total Psychological Well-being	81.7	15.07	82.42	10.23	0.40

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According to Table 5 t-ratios for both Indian and Foreign students were achieved ($p = 0.03$, where $p < 0.5$), ($p = 0.4$, where $p > 0.5$), ($p = 0.42$, where $p > 0.5$), ($p = 0.02$, where $p < 0.5$), ($p = 0.14$, where $p > 0.5$), ($p = 0.23$, where $p > 0.5$) and ($p = 0.40$, where $p > 0.5$) which indicated that there are significant differences, no significant, no significant, significant, no significant, no significant and no significant differences among Indian and Foreign students respectively.

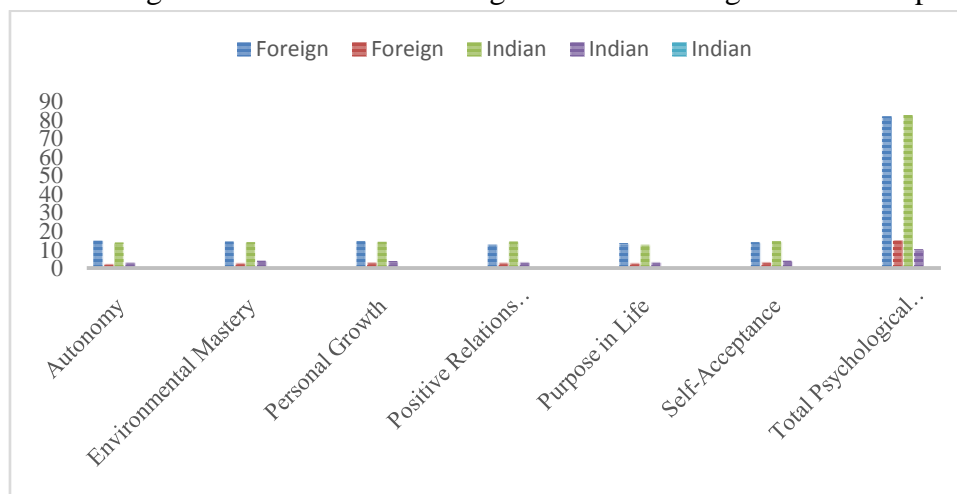


Figure 4 Mean of components of Psychological Well-Being among Indian and Foreign Students

Hypothesis

Table 6 and 7 encompass correlation between components of psychological well-being, perceived stress and coping of humor and correlation between components of psychological well-being, perceived stress and coping of humor among Indian and Foreign Students respectively.

Table 6 Correlation between components of psychological well-being, perceived stress and coping of humor among Indian Students

R	Autonomy	Environmental Mastery	Personal Growth	Positive Relations with Others	Purpose in Life	Self-Acceptance	Total Psychological Well-being	Perceived stress	Coping Humor
Autonomy		-0.01	0.46	0.22	0.1	0.25	-0.01	-0.3	-0.4
Environmental Mastery	-0.01		0.16	0.44	-0.03	0.09	0.09	-0.01	0.06
Personal Growth	0.98	0.14		0.38	0.18	0.30	-0.26	-0.29	-0.26
Positive Relations with Others	0.22	0.44	0.38		-0.14	0.31	0.23	-0.0	0.25
Purpose in Life	0.10	-0.03	0.18	-0.14		0.05	0.10	-0.16	0.05
Self-Acceptance	0.25	0.09	0.3	0.31	0.05		0.26	-0.01	0.07
Total Psychological Well-being	-0.01	0.09	-0.05	0.23	0.10	0.26		-0.25	0.27
Perceived stress	-0.3	-0.02	0.29	0.23	-0.016	-0.01	-0.25		-0.17
Coping of Humor	0.41	0.06	0.26	0.25	0.056	0.07	0.27	-0.17	

Table 7 Correlation between components of psychological well-being, perceived stress and coping of humor among Foreign Students

R	Autonom y	Environmenta l Mastery	Persona l Growth	Positive Relation s with Others	Purpos e in Life	Self- Acceptanc e	Total Psychologica l Well-being	Perceive d stress	Copin g Humor
Autonomy		0.53	0.45	0.48	0.25	0.37	0.01	0.025	-0.01
Environmenta l Mastery	0.53		0.42	0.23	0.29	0.51	-0.02	0.15	-0.12
Personal Growth	0.45	0.42		0.12	0.54	0.35	--0.0	0.32	-0.01
Positive Relations with Others	0.48	0.23	0.12		0.14	0.17	0.08	-0.03	-0.15
Purpose in Life	0.25	0.29	0.54	0.14		0.50	0.13	0.35	0.16
Self- Acceptance	0.37	0.51	0.35	0.17	0.50		0.15	0.15	-0.6
Total Psychological Well-being	-0.01	-0.02	-0.0	0.08	0.13	0.15		-0.11	0.39
Perceived stress	0.02	0.15	0.32	-0.03	0.35	0.15	-0.11		-0.18
Coping humor	-0.01	-0.12	-0.01	-0.15	0.16	-0.06	0.39	-0.18	

Lefcourt and Martin (1983) achieved that a sense of humor alleviates the disruptive impact of stressful experiences. Humor can make a media of areas to cope with variety of stressful causes. The correlation and multiple regression analyses led to unearth that humor was integrated with lower loneliness, lower depression, and higher self-esteem upon 96 college students as well as emerging some differences to the sex of the subject and the frequency with subjects assigned humor to cope. In sum up, the sense of humor brings an important role in the psychological adjustment of some subjects. Yip and Martin (2006) surveyed relationships among sense of humor, emotional intelligence (EI), and social competence in 111 undergraduate participants. By the way, the emotional management formidability was in positive coherence with both implications of self-enhancing humor and trait cheerfulness, and negatively correlated with trait bad mood. Ability to accurately perceive emotions resulted negatively overlap to aggressive and self-defeating humors. Positive humor fashions and trait cheerfulness were positively united with various domains of social competence, whereas negative humor fashions and trait bad mood were negatively integrated with social competence. Finally, the emotional management facet of EI was positively correlated with several social competence domains. Paul (2002) investigated whether sense of humor adjusts immunosuppressive effects of stress or not. At two time periods one and one-half months apart, forty subjects carried out the daily hassles scale and generated saliva samples for determining Secretary Immunoglobulin A (S-IgA) levels. Four scales were employed to measure miscellaneous trends of the sense of humor. A negative correlation was released between frequency of hassles at time 1 and S-IgA levels at time. By the way, hierarchical multiple regression analyses paved significant moderating effects of three of the 4 humor evaluations on existing relationship between hassles and S-IgA. Subjects with low scores on the humor scales revealed a stronger negative connection between hassles and S-IgA than did

those with high humor scores. Sirigatti et al (2014) studied the psychometric properties of Humor Style Questionnaire (HSQ) and relationship of humor with Physiological Well-being Scales (RPWB) with total candidates of 293 which comprised 178 females and 115 males, Italian high school and undergraduate university students who were aged from 14 to 25 years. Current study resulted that males significantly more attention of aggressive humor than females; no differences were realized between adolescents and young adults in the attention of humor trends. Affinitive and self-enhancing humor styles were positively pertained to six dimensions of the RPWB, whereas Self-defeating humor was negatively underpin with the RPWB. Also, it was figured out that significant and positive interplays between humor as assessed by the HSQ and RPWB. Overall, the findings were in full coincidence with the theoretical structure and usefulness of the HSQ in an Italian context and the differential role of humor ingredients in the variety of dimensions of RPWB. Martin and Dobbin (1989), emphasized that Laboratory assays have assented some impresses of comedy watching on lots of immunity factors with existing inconsistent results, methodological difficulties and analgesic effects with negative emotions. By the way, some significant correlations acquired between trait measures of humor and immunity, pain tolerance, or self-reported illness symptoms. Also, it has been reported that there are little evidences of stress-moderating effects of humor on physical health factors and no evidences of raised longevity with greater humor.

Kuiper et al (1993) investigated the interplays between sense of humor and cognitive appraisals and re-appraisals of potentially stressful fields by 44 female university students for an academic examination frequently at a time interval. Sense of humor was detected to contain a negatively association to both perceived stress and dysfunctional standards for self-evaluation as well as a sense of humor may facilitates coping and adjustment. Ford et al (2015) reported that women presented low propensity in coping sense of humor measured pertaining on their performance on standardized mathematical tests compared to men. Applying an experimental design revealed that coping sense of humor was positively pertained to women's performance on a math test taken under situations of stereotype threat but not under conditions of no stereotype threat. Mediation analyses offered that in the stereotype-threat situation, state anxiety mediated the relationship between coping sense of humor and test circumstances. Women higher in coping sense of humor accomplished better because they felt less anxiety while doing the test. Chen et al(2007) targeted Chinese participants, as compared to Canadian norms that resulted significantly lower scores on the humor styles using both questionnaire sub implications and coping humor scale, especially on Aggressive humor. No significant gender differences were obtained based on sub implications in the Chinese participants group, whereas Canadian males represented more attraction of both aggressive and self-defeating humors in comparison to females. Although no gender difference was proclaimed on coping humor in the Canadian participants, Chinese males gained significantly higher scores on this scale in comparison to females. In the both groups, younger participants reflected more use of Afflictive and Aggressive humors. Ziv(1988) employed relevant humor and no humor upon both experimental group and a control group containing 161 students. The achieved results asserted significant differences among the

target groups in favor of the group learning with humor. Neither significant sex differences nor interplays were detected. In the next experience applied a replication of the first one, employing 132 students (all females) in one-semester introductory psychology course divided randomly into two groups. Humor was used in one, and the same trainer taught the second group without inducing humor. Again, significant differences were disclosed and the group under education with humor had gained higher scores by final test. Martin et al (2003) revealed that four scales differentially associate to forecasted practices to peer ratings of humor styles and to assess of mood (cheerfulness, depression, anxiety and hostility), self-esteem, optimism, well-being, intimacy, and social support. The first two scales were coherent with previous humor tests; therefore the Aggressive and Self-defeating humor scales largely tap different dimensions. It was found that males got marks more than females on aggressive and self-defeating humor properties. Fry (1995) offered that women with high and good senses of humor may be more formidable at hugging restructuring and reappraising stressful life situations in more positive phases and also reliable to unearth implications in the stressful circumstances and perceived stressful events as overwhelming to their personal growth by predicting some achievements from the experiences. Rim (1988) obtained significant relationships between assesses of humor and defensive mechanisms such as minimization via staring on the bright side of things, and reversal by attempting to discoverer reflect something funny in a distressing state. According to Overholser(1992) humor can create a media of ability to quench different stressful positions. The Coping Humor Scale was run particularly to measure the level to adjust stressful life situations plus assessment son humor appreciation and humor creativity upon 96 college students. Obtained results presented humor was related to lower loneliness and depression, and higher self-esteem based on correlation and multiple regression analyses. In spite of being some differences between sexes of both subject and frequencies applied but findings were in full agreement that sense of humor procures a prominent role in the psychological adjustment of some subjects.

CONCLUSION

Present study indicated that there was a high level of perceived stress and psychological well-being, a low level of coping of humor, a positive correlation between humor and psychological well-being and a negative correlation between perceived stress and psychological well-being among Indian and Foreign students; therefore all the hypotheses were accepted.

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