

## **Relationship between Humor Style and Psychological Well-Being of Bangladeshi University Students**

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### **Abstract**

Humor style plays an important role in maintaining psychological well-being. However, no research has yet addressed these concerns. Thus, this study aimed to determine the humor styles and psychological well-being of Bangladeshi university students and the relationship between humor style and their psychological well-being. A sample of 502 university students (346 males and 156 females) was conveniently selected for data collection. The average age of the students was  $22.77 \pm 1.95$  years. The Bangla version of the Humor Styles Questionnaire and Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Well-being Scale were utilized to gather relevant data. The results revealed that positive humor styles, specifically Affiliative ( $36.75 \pm 8.71$ ) and Self-Enhancing ( $36.39 \pm 8.74$ ), were dominant among Bangladeshi university students than negative humor styles. Male students exhibited a higher tendency towards negative humor styles, such as aggressive humor ( $25.55 \pm 7.13$ ) and self-defeating humor ( $28.05 \pm 8.49$ ), compared to their female counterparts. Additionally, urban students demonstrated a higher inclination towards affiliative humor styles ( $37.51 \pm 8.87$ ) in comparison to rural students. Furthermore, it was found that Bangladeshi male university students had higher levels of psychological well-being compared to female students. A total of 15.9% reported poor psychological well-being. Psychological well-being is positively related to self-enhancing and affiliative humor but negatively related to aggressive humor. In conclusion, student's dominant humor style is positive humor style and the majority of students have moderate psychological well-being; however, a significant number of students, particularly females, have poor psychological well-being. Understanding the findings can help to design interventions that promote mental health among Bangladeshi university students.

**Keywords:** Humor, Humor styles, Psychological well-being, university student.

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In Bangladesh, around 76% of students face psychological problems, compared to the global average of 75% (Achol Foundation, 2022; ACHA, 2024). University students experience mental unease and tension as a result of their efforts to discover their identities and confront sensitive personal, interpersonal, and sociocultural issues. Furthermore, their disinterest in class, academic failures, nutritional and sleep patterns, and emotional issues lead to poor mental health problems with which they must cope well (Lovell et al., 2015; Pedrelli et al., 2015). Psychological well-being refers to inter- and intra-individual levels of positive functioning that might include one's relatedness to others as well as self-referent attitudes such as mastery and personal progress (Burns, 2017). Thus, the well-being of university students may be influenced by their humor. Humor is an ability or skill that can assist a person in dealing with a difficult situation and helps people cope with stress effectively, enjoy a better life, experience fewer negative emotions, and have healthier interpersonal relationships (Bennett et al., 2014). Humor can be defined as the tendency of particular cognitive responses to provoke laughter, physical reactions, and amusement (Tariq et al., 2013). So, humor could decrease tensions and inconsistency, emotional pain, and, finally, increase psychological well-being. However, not all humor is beneficial for psychological well-being. Martin et al., (2003) identified four humor styles. Among them two are adaptive such as, i) affiliative and ii) self-enhancing; rest two are maladaptive humor such as, iii) aggressive and iv) self-defeating (Martin et al., 2003; Martin, 2007). Adaptive humor has often been proposed as a personal quality capable of facilitating the achievement of psychological well-being whereas, maladaptive humor has opposite effect.

### **Humor Style and Gender**

In Western culture, gender found mixed results using humor style. For example, **Spanish** males found higher on *aggressive* humor than females (Torres-Marin et al., 2018) but Spanish university male students use all four humor styles (affiliative, self-enhancing, aggressive, and self-defeating) more than female students (Salavera et al., 2020). A cross-cultural study found cultural differences across 28 countries, such as Schermer et al. (2019) investigated the humor styles in 28 countries (some are developed and some are least developed countries) and found men and women did not differ significantly in the *affiliative* humor style score, but men scored higher on the *aggressive*, *self-enhancing*, and *self-defeating* humor style. With the exception of Canadian and American women scored higher on *self-enhancing* humor than men (Schermer et al. 2019). In the Middle East, Shraifin et al. (2021) claimed Jordanian females use more *affiliative* and *self-enhancing* humor than males but males use more *aggressive* & *self-defeating* humor than females (Shraifin et al. 2021). In South Asia, gender roles are found confusing. For example, Idrees et al. (2020) found that Pakistani university male students only used more aggressive humor styles compared to females (Idrees et al., 2020). In India, Hiranandani and Yue (2015) found that male university students have a significantly higher self-related humor style (self-enhancing and self-defeating) than females. In contrast, Gauri and Kanwar (2022) found no gender differences in humor style among Indian students.

### **Humor Style and Wellbeing**

Some researchers claim that self-defeating humor is good for oneself and others (Heintz & Ruch, 2018). In Western culture, humor style found related to one's social skills, psychological distress, and relationship satisfaction. For example, Salavera et al. (2020) conducted a study in Spain on university students and found that humor style was associated with social skills. Lazzaro et al. (2022) found that American University Students' *affiliative* humor was associated with higher levels of *relationship satisfaction* while self-enhancing humor was associated with less psychological distress and greater well-being. Their self-enhancing humor was also found positively related to relationship satisfaction. Furthermore, aggressive humor was not found to be associated with lower relationship satisfaction, and self-defeating humor was not associated with anxiety (Lazzaro et al. 2022). Torres-Marín et al. (2018) conducted a study in Spain and identified that people who frequently use self-defeating humor gain the approval of others through self-mockery, which is the reason for higher levels of psychological well-being (happiness) of Western people (Torres-Marín et al., 2018).

In Asian countries, Chaigusin and Promsri (2020) found that Thai university students' most preferred humor style was 'affiliative humor' while 'aggressive humor' was reported as the least preferred humor style. They also found that excellent students had low aggressive humor (Chaigusin & Promsri, 2020). Riswasono et al. (2022) found that most of the Indonesian universities, who were in dating relationships used affiliative humor (56.4%) and aggressive humor (53%). Moreover, the humor style predicts the forgiveness of university students (Riswasono et al. 2022). Balmores-Paulino (2021) found that adaptive humor styles (affiliative and self-enhancing humor styles) of Philipino University students were positively associated with all the dimensions of psychological well-being, whereas maladaptive humor styles (aggressive and self-defeating humor styles) were negatively associated with psychological well-being indicators. Furthermore, maladaptive humor style (aggressive and self-defeating) appears to be positively associated with direct and hostile forms of collective behavior. Jordanian university students' psychological well-being level was found average on the total scale (Shraifin et al. 2021).

In South Asia, Idrees et al. (2020) found that humor styles significantly related to interpersonal relationships of Pakistani university students. Their findings revealed that the affiliative humor style predicted interpersonal relationships negatively, whereas the self-defeating humor style predicted interpersonal relationships positively (Idrees et al., 2020). Hiranandani and Yue (2015) showed that Indian university students use more adaptive humor style than maladaptive humor style (Hiranandani and Yue, 2015). In another study in India conducted by Gauri and Kanwar (2022), they found aggressive and affiliative humor were the dominant humor styles of university students. They also found no association of humor styles with emotional intelligence and life orientation (Gauri and Kanwar, 2022). Another Indian study conducted by Jolly and Lokesh L (2022) examined the relationship between humor style and subjective happiness in university students and discovered that

adaptive humor styles (affiliative humor and self-enhancing humor) significantly predicted self-esteem and subjective happiness and mediated the relationship between self-esteem and subjective happiness, whereas maladaptive humor style did not (Jolly and Lokesh, 2022). Jiang et al. (2020) conducted a meta-analysis to investigate the relationship between humor style and mental health. They discovered that affiliative and self-enhancing humor improves Subjective Well-Being (SWB) while aggressive and self-defeating humor degrades SWB. Culture and age have no influence on the relationship between humor styles and SWB (Jiang et al., 2020).

### **Humor Style and Residential Background**

According to Utley (1971), urban jokes are associated with wit, while rural jokes are associated with humor. So, the sense of humor may differ between rural and urban areas. Fan et al. (2021) conducted a study in China where they found that urban male students and rural female students exhibit a greater tendency to engage in self-enhancing humor, while urban female students are relatively weak; first-grade senior high school students from the city prefer maladaptive aggressive humor (Fan et al., 2021). Tsuno and Yamazaki (2007) discovered that sense of humor orientation was only associated with a Sense of coherence in rural areas, not in urban areas.

According to the above literature, males outperformed females in terms of *aggressive humor* (Torres-Marin et al., 2018). Most of the Asian students dislike this type of humor (Chaigusin & Promsri, 2020). However, urban Chinese female students who were relatively weak preferred more aggressive humor (Fan et al., 2021), whereas excellent students preferred less (Chaigusin & Promsri, 2020). When it comes to *self-defeating* humor, men use it more than women. This humor style is associated with personal growth (Balmors-Paulino, 2021), happiness (Torres-Marin et al., 2018), and all dimensions of psychological well-being. In the case of *affiliative humor*, no gender difference was found across different countries. The majority of university students preferred this humor style (Chaigusin & Promsri, 2020), which is related to relationship satisfaction (Lazzaro, et al. 2022), all dimensions of psychological well-being (i.e. autonomy, environmental mastery, personal growth, positive relationship with others, purpose in life, and self-acceptance) (Balmors-Paulino, 2021). In the case of *self-enhancing* humor, males are used more than females in most of the country but in Canada and the United States, this is the opposite (Schermer et al., 2019). Moreover, urban male and rural female students use more humor than their counterparts (Fan et al., 2021). Self-enhancing humor is directly associated with four components of psychological well-being such as environmental mastery, positive relations with others, purpose in life, and self-acceptance (Balmors-Paulino, 2021) and also positively associated with subjective happiness (Jolly and Lokesh, 2022).

On the one hand, both affiliative and self-enhancing humor are associated with interpersonal relationships (Idrees et al., 2020), students' academic performance (Bautista, 2022), self-esteem (Jolly and Lokesh, 2022), and subjective well-being (Jian et al.,

2020). However, both aggressive and self-defeating humor styles decrease subjective and psychological well-being in all dimensions (Balmores-Paulino, 2021). Males used all humor styles more than females and humor style was also associated with social skills (Salavera et al., 2020).

However, Bangladeshi university students' humor style psychological well-being status, and relationships were not studied yet considering gender and residential background. Thus, this study aims to identify the relationship of humor style with the psychological well-being of Bangladeshi university students, considering residential background, and gender.

### ***Objectives of the Study***

The following are the particular objectives of the study-

1. Explore the humor-style status of Bangladeshi university students in terms of gender and residence.
2. Explore the psychological well-being status of Bangladeshi university students in terms of gender and residence.
3. Find out the relationship of humor style with the psychological well-being of Bangladeshi university students in terms of gender and residence.

## **Methods**

### **Participants**

An online survey was conducted to collect data using a survey link created on a Google Form. It was then distributed via email and social media like Facebook, WhatsApp, etc. This study included 502 Bangladeshi university students (346 men and 156 women) who filled out an online form. Their ages ranged from 18 to 28 years old. A random sampling technique has been used to collect the sample. Gender, age, residence, education level, and family background were collected as demographic information of the participants.

**Table 1**

*Demographic characteristics of the participants (N=502)*

<b>Demographics</b>	<b>Levels</b>	<b>Frequency (%)</b>
Age	18-22	241(48.0)
	23-28	261(52.0)
Gender	Male	346 (68.9)
	Female	156 (31.1)
Residential status	Urban	312 (62.2)
	Rural	190 (37.8)

Demographics	Levels	Frequency (%)
Level of education	Honors	435 (86.7)
	Masters	67 (13.3)
Family type	Nuclear	379 (75.5)
	Joint	123 (24.5)

## Measures

### *Humor Styles Questionnaire (HSQ)*

The HSQ (Martin et al., 2003) is a 32-item questionnaire designed to assess four types of humor: self-enhancing, affiliative, self-defeating, and aggressive humor. The Bangla version of HSQ was adapted for this study. Eight items assess each of the four humor styles, and respondents rate their agreement with each item on a 7-point Likert scale (1 = Totally disagree to 7 = Totally agree). In the present sample, Cronbach's alpha of affiliative, self-enhancing, aggressive, and self-defeating humor was .69, .74, .60, and .73, suggesting that the scale is reliable to use as an instrument.

### *Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Well-Being Scale*

The Warwick Edinburgh Mental Wellbeing Scale (WEMWBS; Tennant et al. 2007) is a 14-item quick measure for assessing psychological well-being among the general population. This scale along with the Bangla version (Rahman & Imran, 2013) has good reliabilities and construct and concurrent validities. For the scale, participants were asked to rate their responses to their feelings over the past week. They were rated on a 5-point Likert-type scale, from 1 (none of the time) to 5 (all the time)-with total scores ranging from 14 to 70. Higher scores indicate better psychological well-being. For WEMWBS, scores were 'low': 14–42; 'medium': 43–60; and 'high': 61–70 (Fat et al., 2017). The content validity and internal consistency were 0.91. The test-retest reliability was .83 with one week gap. In the present study, the WEMWBS had good internal consistency reliability (Cronbach's alpha= .90).

## Procedure

For this study, a Google Form was created, and the link was distributed via Facebook Messenger and email to the targeted university students. Participants were assured that their information would be kept confidential and only used for research purposes. They were then asked to give honest and sincere answers to the questions. Participants completed questionnaires about their demographics, humor styles, and psychological well-being. Then they were thanked for their sincere cooperation.

## Analysis

Data were analyzed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS), IBM Statistics version 25.0. Descriptive analyses to describe the socio-demographic characteristics. The data were also analyzed by applying independent sample t-tests and bivariate correlations.

## Results

The results of the study are presented in the tables below. Normality tests were performed before the final analysis to check the normality assumption of the collected data. Table 02 displays descriptive statistics for our data, with skewness values ranging from -.520 to .820, which is within Brown's (2015) acceptable range of -3 to +3. Kurtosis values in our data ranged from -.003 to -1.754, which is within the acceptable range of -2 to +2 for a normal distribution, according to George and Mallery (2010).

**Table 2**

*Descriptive statistics for Humor style, PWB, gender, and residential background.*

	Min	Max	M	SD	Skew	Kurt	N
Gender	1.00	2.00	-	-	.820	-1.33	502
Residence	1.00	2.00	-	-	.503	-1.75	502
AF	10.00	56.00	36.75	8.68	-.129	-.261	502
SE	10.00	56.00	36.39	8.72	-.292	-.234	502
AG	8.00	42.00	24.26	7.30	.122	-.417	502
SDH	8.00	52.00	27.05	8.91	-.187	-.497	502
PWB	19.00	70.00	52.32	10.58	-.520	-.003	502

Note: AF= Affiliative Humor, SE=Self-enhancing humor, AG= Aggressive Humor, SDH=Self-defeating humor, PWB= Psychological Well-being.

### Humor Style of Bangladeshi University Students

From Table 03, the result showed that the Affiliative humor style ( $M=36.75$ ,  $SD=8.68$ ) and Self-enhancing humor style ( $M=36.39$ ,  $SD=8.72$ ) were higher among Bangladeshi university students. So, Bangladeshi university students use less aggressive humor and self-defeating humor style.

**Table 3**

*Humor Style of Bangladeshi University Students*

Humor Style	N	Mean	SD
Affiliative	502	36.75	8.68
Self-enhancing	502	36.39	8.72
Aggressive	502	24.26	7.30
Self-defeating	502	27.05	8.91

In terms of gender, from Table 04, the Independent samples t-test indicated that the aggressive humor style score of Male students ( $M=25.55$ ,  $SD=7.13$ ) was significantly higher than female ( $M=21.38$ ,  $SD=6.88$ ) university students,  $t(500)=6.13$ ,  $p<.01$ .



Similarly, self-defeating humor style score of Male students ( $M=28.05$ ,  $SD=8.49$ ) was also significantly higher than female ( $M=24.80$ ,  $SD=9.42$ ) university students,  $t(500)=3.83$ ,  $p<.01$ . It was also looked into further that, urban male student significantly higher than the female urban student in aggressive humor  $t(312)=4.95$ ,  $p<.01$ , and self-defeating humor  $t(312)=4.29$ ,  $p<.01$ . But for rural male students ( $M= 25.18$ ,  $SD=7.07$ ) found higher than female ( $M=19.63$ ,  $SD= 6.88$ ) only in aggressive humor score  $t(188)=4.06$   $p<.01$ . **Thus**, Bangladeshi male university students showed more aggressive and self-defeating humor than female in the urban area but showed more aggressive humor only in rural areas.

**Table 4**

*Humor Style of University Student according to gender*

	Humor Style	Gender	N	Mean	SD	df	t	Level
Overall	Affiliative	Male	346	36.48	8.75	500	-1.05	ns
		Female	156	37.35	8.51			
	Self-enhancing	Male	346	36.54	8.43	500	0.57	ns
		Female	156	36.06	9.35			
	Aggressive	Male	346	25.55	7.13	500	6.13*	.01
		Female	156	21.38	6.88			
	Self-defeating	Male	346	28.05	8.49	500	3.84*	.01
		Female	156	24.80	9.42			
Urban	Affiliative	Male	188	37.37	9.18	312	-0.36	ns
		Female	124	37.74	8.42			
	Self-enhancing	Male	188	36.57	8.43	312	0.56	ns
		Female	124	35.99	9.02			
	Aggressive	Male	188	25.87	7.18	312	4.95*	.01
		Female	124	21.48	6.84			
	Self-defeating	Male	188	29.28	8.41	312	4.29*	.01
		Female	124	24.83	9.77			
Rural	Affiliative	Male	158	35.42	8.13	188	-0.28	ns
		Female	32	35.88	8.87			
	Self-enhancing	Male	158	36.51	8.00	188	0.09	ns
		Female	32	36.34	10.71			
	Aggressive	Male	158	25.18	7.07	188	4.06*	.01
		Female	32	19.63	6.88			
	Self-defeating	Male	158	26.60	8.39	188	1.18	ns
		Female	32	24.69	8.09			
		Total	502					

$p<.01$ \*, ns= Not Significant



In terms of residential background from Table 05, the Independent samples t-test indicated that overall only the affiliative humor style score of urban students ( $M=37.51$ ,  $SD=8.87$ ) was significantly higher than rural ( $M=35.38$ ,  $SD=6.88$ ) university students,  $t(500)=2.53$ ,  $p<.05$ . But there were no significant difference in self-enhancing, aggressive, and self-defeating humor style. Furthermore, when we looked further for university male students, and found urban students ( $M=37.37$ ,  $SD=9.18$ ) showed significantly higher levels of affiliative humor,  $t(188)=2.07$ ,  $p<.05$  than rural students ( $M=35.42$ ,  $SD=8.13$ ). Similarly, urban male students ( $M=29.28$ ,  $SD=8.41$ ) also showed higher self-defeating humor than rural male students ( $SD=26.60$ ,  $SD=8.39$ ). However, there were no significant differences found for female urban or rural students in any humor style. In sum, urban university students showed more affiliative humor than rural university students. Only urban male students showed more affiliative and self-defeating humor than rural male students.

**Table 5**

*Humor Style of University Students according to residents*

Variable	Humor Style	Residence	N	Mean	SD	df	t	Level	
Overall	Affiliative	Urban	312	37.51	8.87	500	2.54*	.05	
		Rural	190	35.50	8.23				
	Self-enhancing	Urban	312	36.34	8.88	500	-0.17	ns	
		Rural	190	36.47	8.48				
	Aggressive	Urban	312	24.26	7.30	500	0.04	ns	
		Rural	190	24.24	7.32				
	Self-defeating	Urban	312	27.51	9.22	500	1.51	ns	
		Rural	190	26.27	8.35				
	Male	Affiliative	Urban	188	37.37	9.18	344	2.07*	.05
			Rural	158	35.42	8.13			
Self-enhancing		Urban	188	36.57	8.80	344	0.07	ns	
		Rural	158	36.51	8.00				
Aggressive		Urban	188	25.87	7.18	344	0.90	ns	
		Rural	158	25.18	7.08				
Self-defeating		Urban	188	29.28	8.41	344	2.96*	.05	
		Rural	158	26.60	8.39				
Female		Affiliative	Urban	124	37.74	8.42	154	1.11	ns
			Rural	32	35.88	8.87			
	Self-enhancing	Urban	124	35.99	9.02	154	-0.18	ns	
		Rural	32	36.34	10.70				
	Aggressive	Urban	124	21.84	6.84	154	1.63	ns	
		Rural	32	19.63	6.88				
	Self-defeating	Urban	124	24.83	9.77	154	0.07	ns	
		Rural	32	24.69	8.09				
	Total			502					

$p < .05^*$ , ns = Not Significant

### Psychological well-being of Bangladeshi University Students

In Table 06, an independent samples t-test indicated that male university students ( $M=53.22$ ,  $SD=10.34$ ) had significantly higher psychological well-being than female students ( $M=50.31$ ,  $SD=10.84$ ),  $t(500)=2.87$ ,  $p<.05$ . Result also indicated that male university students had a higher level of psychological well-being than female only who lived in the urban area. However, there were no significant differences in psychological well-being in terms of overall residential background. Which indicated that urban and rural university students had similar psychological well-being. So, the psychological well-being of male students is better than female students only in urban areas.

**Table 6**

*Psychological well-being of University Students according to gender and residence*

Variable		<i>N</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>Level</i>
Gender	Male	346	53.22	10.34	500	2.87*	.05
	Female	156	50.31	10.84			
Urban	Male	188	53.69	10.44	310	2.49*	.05
	Female	124	50.65	10.75			
Rural	Male	158	52.66	10.24	188	1.80	ns
	Female	32	49.03	11.29			
Residence	Urban	312	52.48	10.65	500	0.44	ns
	Rural	190	52.05	10.48			
Male	Urban	188	53.69	10.44	344	0.93	ns
	Rural	158	52.66	10.24			
Female	Urban	124	50.65	10.75	154	0.75	ns
	Rural	32	49.03	11.29			

$p < .05^*$ ,  $ns = \text{Not Significant}$

The result from Table 07, showed that 60% of university students have moderate levels and 24.1% of students have higher levels of psychological well-being. Contrary, 15.9% (out of 502) university students have poor psychological well-being whereas, 21.2% (out of 156) of them were female and 13.6% (out of 346) of them were male. In addition, about 15% of Bangladeshi University students and 21.2% of female university students bear poor psychological well-being.

**Table 7***Psychological well-being status of University Students according to gender and residence.*

Variables		<i>Psychological well-being</i>							
		<i>Low</i>		<i>Medium</i>		<i>High</i>		<i>Total</i>	
		N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Gender	Male	47	13.6	207	59.8	92	26.6	346	68.9
	Female	33	21.2	94	60.3	29	18.6	156	31.0
Resident	Urban	50	16.0	186	59.6	76	24.4	312	62.2
	Rural	30	15.8	115	60.5	45	23.7	190	37.8
Total		80	15.9	301	60.0	121	24.1	502	

**Relationship of Humor style and Psychological Well-being**

The correlation matrixes of the variables are given in Table 08. The correlation matrix indicated that overall psychological well-being was positively correlated with affiliative ( $r=.167$ ), self-enhancing ( $r=.449$ ) negatively correlated with aggressive humor ( $r=-.159$ ) but a relationship was found for self-defeating humor. When we looked further, our results showed that only male students' affiliative humor positively correlated with psychological well-being but not correlated with female students. In the case of residential background, psychological well-being is positively correlated with self-defeating humor ( $r=.146$ ) of urban university students.

**Table 8***Correlations of different Humor Styles and Psychological well-being of University Students*

Variables		AF	SE	AG	SD
Overall	PWB	.166**	.450**	-.159*	.053
Gender	Male	.214**	.431**	-.239**	.059
	Female	.088	.488**	-.120	-.020
Residence	Urban	.170**	.471**	-.124*	.001
	Rural	.157*	.413**	-.218**	.146*

 $p < 0.01$ \*\*,  $p < 0.05$ \***Discussion**

The present study aimed to explore the status and relationship of humor style and the psychological well-being of Bangladeshi University students. The first objective of the present study was to explore the humor style of Bangladeshi university students in terms of gender and residence. Our findings showed that Bangladeshi university students used positive humor styles more than negative humor styles. This reflects that Bangladeshi students tend to use more affiliative humor and self-enhancing humor than aggressive humor and self-defeating humor style.

Moreover, males and females both tend to use similar positive humor styles (affiliative and self-enhancing). These findings are consistent with the findings of Gauri and Kanwar (2022) in Indian culture where they found no gender difference. However, these findings contradict with Shraifin et al. (2021) in Jordanian culture where they found that only females use more positive humor. This finding indicated that Middle East peoples' humor patterns are different from our Bangladeshi culture. On the other side, in our findings, males considered themselves to be used more for negative humor styles (aggressive and self-defeating humor) than females in rural areas. This finding of our result is consistent with the findings of Shraifin et al. (2021), Martin & Kuiper (1999), Sari & Aslan (2005), and Yerlikaya (2007) where they showed a greater tendency of males to engage in harmful styles of humor.

In the case of residential background, urban students tend to use a more affiliative humor style than rural students which indicates that Bangladeshi University students who live in urban areas use affiliative humor style more than students who live in rural areas. This difference was found only between urban and rural male students but not found in female urban and rural students. This finding is inconsistent with the finding of Fan et al. (2021) who found that urban male students and rural female students exhibit more self-enhancing humor. Moreover, only urban male students tend to use more self-defeating humor than rural male students. This finding suggested that only male students who were living in the urban areas also used self-defeating humor than rural male students.

Our second objective of this study was to explore the psychological well-being status of Bangladeshi University Students in terms of gender and residence. Our findings revealed that the majority of Bangladeshi university students (60%) have a moderate level of psychological well-being, while 15.9% (out of 502) have poor psychological well-being. Of these, 21.2% (out of 156) are female and 13.6% (out of 346) are male. This finding clearly shows that female university students are more vulnerable than male students in Bangladesh. Furthermore, It is also evident that male psychological well-being is significantly better than female university students. But in terms of residential background, students who were from urban and rural areas, possess similar psychological well-being. These findings of us consistent with the findings of Guven (2008) and Akhter (2014) where they found the psychological well-being level of men was higher than that of women. However, our findings contradict the findings of Amran and Khairiah (2014), who found no significant difference in psychological well-being based on gender.

Our third objective of the research was to explore the relationship of humor style and the psychological well-being of Bangladeshi university students in terms of gender and residence. Our findings revealed that affiliative and self-enhancing humor styles are positively related to psychological well-being, whereas aggressive humor styles were negatively related to it. These findings are consistent with the findings of Balmores-Paulino (2021) in the Philippines where they found that adaptive humor positively and maladaptive humor negatively related to all the dimensions of psychological well-being. These findings

are also consistent with Jiang et al. (2020). When we look into further considering gender, we found that only the self-enhancing humor style of female students is positively related to psychological well-being. Contrarily, affiliative humor, aggressive humor, and self-defeating humor styles of female university students are not related to psychological well-being in Bangladesh. This happened in Bangladesh because, in Bangladesh female students do not benefit from affiliated humor. Thus, for the betterment of Bangladeshi female university students need to focus more on self-enhancing humor rather than affiliative humor. When we considered residence, we found that university student who came from rural areas, their self-defeating humor style was positively related to psychological well-being. This finding indicates that Bangladeshi university students who lived in rural areas benefitted from self-defeating humor. In other words, self-defeating humor increases psychological well-being rather than decreasing it among Bangladeshi university students. These findings are inconsistent with the findings of previous researchers such as Balmores-Paulino (2021) and Jiang et al.(2020). This may happen due to the culture of Bangladeshi rural people where people tend to be happy saying funny things at one's own expense. By doing this, rural people in Bangladesh can neutralize their negative emotions and make themselves feel happy. Thus, psychological well-being is positively related with this self-defeating humor.

### **Conclusions**

In conclusion, findings in the present study suggest that urban residential background university male students showed more affiliative humor than rural university male students. Urban male students also showed more self-defeating humor than rural male students. The psychological well-being of male students are better than female students only in urban areas. About 15% of Bangladeshi University students bear poor psychological well-being among them most of them are female students. Psychological well-being is positively associated with affiliative and self-enhancing humor and negatively associated with the Aggressive humor style of Bangladeshi University students but female student's psychological well-being is only associated with self-enhancing humor. Finally, interestingly, psychological well-being is positively associated with self-defeating humor for urban students.

### **Limitations**

The present study has several limitations. First, in this study, an online platform (Google Form) was used to collect the data, and therefore, only students who had internet access and devices could participate. Second, the present study used only self-reported measures to measure psychological well-being and humor style. Thirdly, the most obvious limitation is the small sample size. The present sample represents only university students in Bangladesh, so the generalization of this finding is limited to university students only.

### Future Directions

The generalizability of the results is limited because the sample was only taken from students, so it is suggested that future researchers investigate with a diverse sample, which will undoubtedly increase the external validity of the results. To measure the variables of the study, multiple instruments can be used to get more valid and reliable results. Longitudinal studies in the future can help to determine the contribution of humor styles to other factors contributing to mental health, such as emotional well-being, subjective happiness, and resilience.

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