



Explaining the Communication Pattern of Attention to Health and Humor in the Work Environment with the Mediating Role of Sports Activities in Elementary School Teachers

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Article Info

Article type:

Original Research

How to cite this article:

Norouzian, R., Khanmohammadi, A., & Khanehkeshi, A. (2024). Explaining the Communication Pattern of Attention to Health and Humor in the Work Environment with the Mediating Role of Sports Activities in Elementary School Teachers. *Health Nexus*, 2(4), 82-87.

<https://doi.org/10.61838/kman.hn.2.4.10>



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ABSTRACT

This research aims to elucidate the relationship between health awareness and humor in the work environment, with a specific focus on the mediating role of sports activities among elementary school teachers. A correlational survey method was employed. The study population comprised all male and female elementary school teachers in Sahne City, totaling 289 individuals (126 men and 163 women). A sample of 182 participants was selected using the Krejcie and Morgan table. Research instruments included healthcare questionnaires (Sijtsama & Backus, 2009), humor measurement in the work environment (Maja et al., 2009), and self-reports on sports activities. Data analysis was conducted using SPSS 22 and SmartPLS 3 software, utilizing descriptive statistics, the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test, and structural equation modeling via the partial least squares method. Results indicated that teachers' attention to health and sense of humor are favorable. Teachers' sports activities ranged from low to moderate levels. Increased health awareness among elementary teachers correlated with higher levels of humor. However, sports activities did not significantly affect teachers' humor levels or mediate the relationship between health awareness and humor. The findings suggest that the mediating variable (sports activities) did not reach the desired level to impact teachers' humor significantly. Similarly, health awareness did not considerably influence humor through sports activity mediation. It is recommended that specialized classes for physical and mental sports activities (e.g., yoga, meditation) be planned and implemented for teachers.

Keywords: Health, humor, work environment, teachers, sports activities

1. Introduction

The education and upbringing of children today and in the future require efficient, competent, and motivated teachers who significantly contribute to both mental and physical health (1). Teachers serve as fundamental pillars of the educational system, and their moral and psychological characteristics are invaluable assets in the teaching and learning process. The foundational document on the

transformation of teacher education, introduced by Eswah, Amin, and Basir, emphasizes that good character is a crucial attribute that aids teachers in effective teaching (2). One of the significant responsibilities of teachers is to foster sustainable learning in students. Research indicates that teachers' humor and positive disposition lead to both quantitative and qualitative improvements in students' cognitive, intellectual, and behavioral skills (3). Therefore,

integrating humor into teaching accelerates the achievement of educational goals, namely, fostering sustainable learning among students.

Teachers continuously interact within an educational system regarding work and professionalism, making their development vital to career success. Humor and a positive disposition in interactions with others are essential strategies. Humor, one of the most common personality traits, significantly affects the quality of communication with colleagues and others (4).

Humor is a powerful tool for enhancing the efficiency of the educational process. Appropriate humor by teachers during instruction can substantially improve students' learning and information retention. It also helps capture learners' attention and concentration during the educational process. Berger asserts that education becomes more enjoyable and effective when accompanied by humor. Creating a humorous atmosphere in the educational environment can reduce disciplinary issues before they arise and aid in the deep retention of learned information. Teaching with humor makes learning sessions feel shorter for students (5, 6).

Given the definition of humor and the complexities in the educational environment, humor and ease of speech contribute to health, work success, and organizational survival. Many researchers have found that humor is related to various dimensions of social interaction, with social competence being one of them. Humor permeates all aspects of social interaction, including politics, the workplace, and the environment. According to psychologists, humor is crucial for physical and mental health as it promotes a positive outlook, high self-confidence, stress management, and better communication. The characteristics of humor facilitate communication, acceptance, and satisfactory interactions with friends and colleagues (7-11).

Given the essential role of teachers in education, their professional commitments, job interactions, and the role of humor in achieving educational goals and professional success, this study aims to answer a crucial question: What are the levels of health and sense of humor among elementary school teachers in Sahne city in their work environment?

2. Methods and Materials

2.1. Study Design and Participants

This research is descriptive-correlational. The statistical population included all primary school teachers in Sahne city, totaling 289 individuals, during the academic year of 2019-2020. A sample of 182 participants was selected through convenience sampling. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic and adherence to health protocols, the research questionnaires were uploaded to an online survey system. The link to the questionnaire was provided to the sample group for remote completion.

2.2. Data Collection Tools

A) Health Attention Questionnaire: This questionnaire measures individuals' attention to their health. It consists of 11 questions across different areas of health attention, rated on a 5-point Likert scale (completely agree, agree, neither agree nor disagree, disagree, completely disagree). Scoring is as follows: completely agree = 5, agree = 4, neither agree nor disagree = 3, disagree = 2, completely disagree = 1. A score of 40-55 indicates high attention to health-related issues, 25-40 indicates some attention, and below 25 indicates little attention (12).

B) Workplace Humor Questionnaire: This one-dimensional questionnaire assesses the sense of humor in the workplace. It contains 14 questions rated on a 5-point Likert scale (never, rarely, sometimes, often, consistently) (13).

2.3. Reliability and Validity of Research Variables

Table 1 presents the results of Cronbach's alpha for each research variable. The Health Attention scale (10 items) has an alpha of 0.832, and the Humor scale (11 items) has an alpha of 0.854. Both scales exceed the threshold of 0.7, indicating reliable items. The combined reliability for Health Attention is 0.868, and for Humor, it is 0.878, both above 0.7 and in favorable conditions. The average variance extracted (AVE) for Health Attention is 0.401; for Humor, it is 0.400, close to 0.5, indicating favorable conditions.

Table 1

Reliability and Validity of Research Variables

Variable	N (items)	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability	AVE
Attention to Health	10	0.832	0.868	0.401
Humor	11	0.854	0.878	0.400

2.4. Data Analysis

Data analysis was conducted using SmartPLS software through SEM method.

3. Findings and Results

The study included 182 participants, with a gender distribution of 59.3% women (108 participants) and 40.7% men (74 participants). The age distribution was as follows: 42.2% were aged 32-38 years, 25.6% were aged 25-31 years, 24.4% were aged 39-45 years, 6.7% were aged 46-52 years, and 1.1% were aged 53-60 years. Regarding educational

fields, 16.5% of teachers had degrees in psychology and counseling, 8.8% in Persian literature, and 7% in accounting.

Table 2 shows the descriptive statistics for the primary research variables. The average value of the sports activity variable is 2.80, with a standard deviation of 0.985. The average attention to health among the 182 respondents is 42.02, with a standard deviation of 5.04. The average humor variable among respondents is 42.85, with a standard deviation of 6.76. Descriptive statistics such as variance, skewness, kurtosis, and minimum and maximum values for each research variable are also presented.

Table 2

Descriptive Statistics of Main Research Variables

Variable	Sport Exercise	Attention to Health	Humor
Number	182	182	182
Mean	2.80	42.0022	42.857
Standard Deviation	0.985	5.048	6.768
Variance	0.969	25.491	45.814
Kurtosis	-0.108	-0.553	-1.032
Standard Error of Kurtosis	0.180	0.180	0.180
Skewness	-0.181	0.717	2.272
Standard Error of Skewness	0.358	0.358	0.358
Minimum	1	23	15
Maximum	5	50	55

The Kolmogorov-Smirnov test results for the health attention variable showed a test statistic of 0.100 with a significance of 0.000, and for the humor variable, a test statistic of 0.070 with a significance of 0.029. Both variables have significance levels below 0.05, indicating non-normal distributions. Therefore, non-parametric statistics should be used for analysis.

The confirmatory factor analysis of the primary research variables using SmartPLS software is depicted in Figure 1.

The natural wit scale initially included 14 items; however, 3 items were removed due to factor loadings below 0.4. Similarly, the health attention scale had 11 items, with one item removed for the same reason. The remaining items had factor loadings above 0.4 and were retained in the model.

The structural model of attention to health and humor with the mediating role of the amount of sports activity in primary school teachers has a favorable fit.

Table 3

Attention to Health and Humor with the Mediating Role of Sports Activity

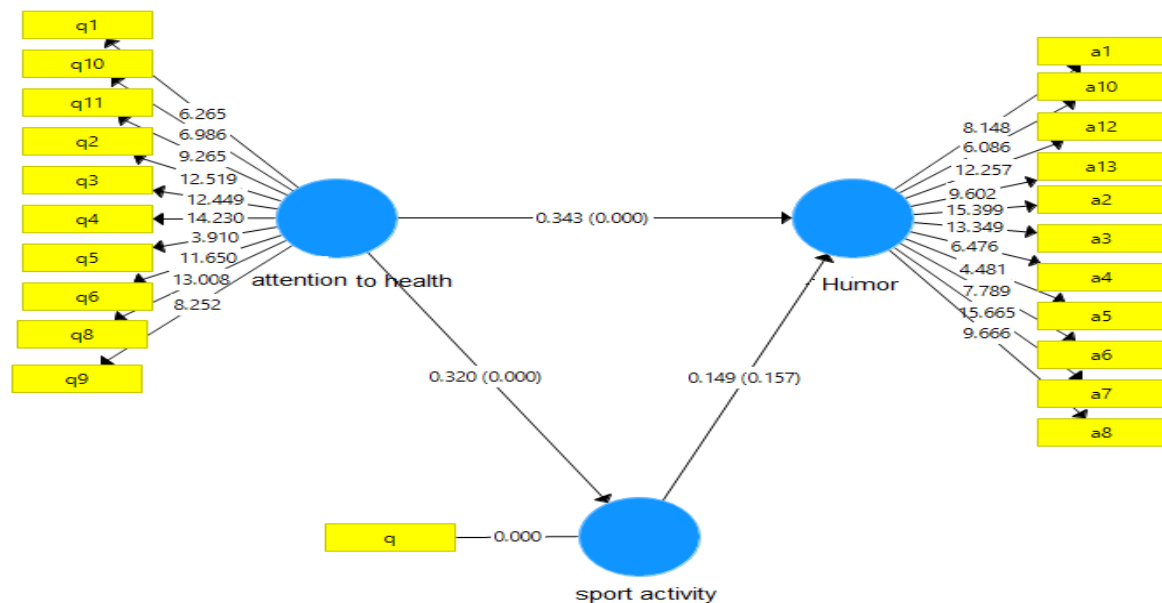
Statistic	SRMR	D-ULS	D-G	NFI	Chi-Square
Value	0.08	1.73	0.43	0.70	415.748

The path analysis model examined the effect of the health attention variable on humor levels and the mediating role of sports activity. Results showed that sports activity does not significantly affect humor levels, while health attention significantly impacts humor. Consequently, the mediating

role of sports activity is negated. The fitting results of this model show that the SRMR statistic is 0.08, equal to the desired index of 0.08. The chi-square value is 415.748, and the NFI value is 0.70, indicating an acceptable model fit and confirming the general hypothesis of the research.

Figure 1

Path Analysis of Research Variables



4. Discussion and Conclusion

A focused analysis of the results shows that the majority of elementary school teachers in Sahne City pay considerable attention to their health, with 40.7% paying much attention, 35.2% paying moderate attention, 19.2% paying very high attention, 3.3% paying low attention, and 1.6% paying very little attention. This indicates that most primary teachers are aware of their health and well-being, and their health status is favorable. These findings align with theories and prior research (3, 5-11, 14-16).

Given that teachers in this study demonstrate considerable attention to their health, it can be concluded that they maintain health-oriented lifestyles and effective

body management. The age range of participants (25 to 60 years) suggests that the study's statistical population is relatively young, making it natural for them to be sensitive and diligent about health issues. Moreover, as a cultured and educated group, they are expected to take their health seriously. Cockerham and Ritchie (1997) have noted that attention to a healthy lifestyle is crucial for personal health management and preventing diseases through healthy eating and daily sports activities. Health-oriented lifestyles include decisions about the type of food, sports activities, overcoming stress, not consuming addictive substances, smoking, preventing accidents, and managing physical appearance. Modern social systems prioritize health, recognizing humans as the most valuable asset of any

system. These findings are particularly significant among young and educated individuals (6, 15, 17).

The results also indicated that health attention positively influences humor. This finding is consistent with theories and prior research (5, 7, 17). Since teachers in this study place high importance on their health, and since health enhances happiness and humor, their humor levels are expected to be higher. This humor likely includes affiliative and self-enhancing humor, which boosts social interaction and serves as a defense mechanism against stress (17). Humor also improves overall health, mental and physical well-being, positive thinking, social relations, and mental health (6, 12).

In summary, the research confirms that attention to health plays a significant role in enhancing teachers' humor, positively impacting their professional performance and interactions. This underscores the importance of promoting health-oriented lifestyles among teachers to foster a positive work environment and improve educational outcomes.

This study has several limitations that should be acknowledged. Firstly, the sample was limited to elementary school teachers in Sahne City, which may not be representative of teachers in other regions or educational levels. Secondly, the study relied on self-reported data, which could be subject to response biases. Additionally, the cross-sectional design of the research does not allow for causal inferences between health attention, humor, and sports activities. Lastly, the COVID-19 pandemic might have influenced the responses related to health and sports activities, potentially affecting the generalizability of the findings.

Future research should consider expanding the sample to include teachers from different regions and educational levels to enhance the generalizability of the results. Longitudinal studies are recommended to better understand the causal relationships between health attention, humor, and sports activities. Incorporating objective measures of health and physical activity, alongside self-reported data, could provide a more comprehensive understanding of these variables. Additionally, exploring the impact of specific types of sports activities on humor and overall well-being could offer more targeted insights.

The findings of this study suggest that promoting health awareness among teachers can enhance their sense of humor,

positively impacting their professional interactions and performance. Educational institutions should consider implementing regular health and wellness programs, including physical and mental activities such as yoga and meditation, to support teachers' well-being. Professional development programs focusing on the integration of humor in teaching could also be beneficial. By fostering a healthy and positive work environment, schools can improve teacher satisfaction and effectiveness, ultimately enhancing student outcomes.

Authors' Contributions

Not applicable.

Declaration

In order to correct and improve the academic writing of our paper, we have used the language model ChatGPT.

Transparency Statement

Data are available for research purposes upon reasonable request to the corresponding author.

Acknowledgments

I would like to express our gratitude to all individuals helped us to do the project.

Declaration of Interest

The author reports no conflict of interest.

Funding

According to the author, this article has no financial support.

Ethics Considerations

The study adhered to the ethical guidelines for research with human subjects as outlined in the Declaration of Helsinki.

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