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## The relationship between stress and humor with Asian college students

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**THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN STRESS AND HUMOR WITH ASIAN COLLEGE**

**STUDENTS**

**A Thesis**

**Presented to the**

**Department of Counseling**

**and the**

**Faculty of the Graduate College**

**University of Nebraska**

**In Partial Fulfillment**

**of the Requirements for the Degree**

**Master of Arts**

**University of Nebraska at Omaha**

**by**

**Michelle Kristine Jordan**

**February 2002**

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THESIS ACCEPTANCE

Acceptance for the faculty of the Graduate College,  
University of Nebraska, in partial fulfillment of the  
requirements for the degree Master of Arts,  
University of Nebraska at Omaha.

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THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN STRESS AND HUMOR WITH ASIAN COLLEGE  
STUDENTS

Michelle K. Jordan

University of Nebraska, 2002

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The purpose of this study was to examine the interaction of humor and stress in the Asian students in the University of Nebraska's International Language Learning Program (ILUNO). Intensive language students completed self-report questionnaires measuring stress and humor. The Spearman correlation revealed that humor has no significant impact on stress experienced by the Asian students. When the level of humor was high, stress symptoms were high.

## Table of Contents

Chapter I: Introduction.....	1
Statement of the Problem.....	7
Purpose of Study.....	8
Hypotheses.....	8
Importance of Study .....	10
Scope and Delimitations .....	11
Definition of Terms .....	11
Chapter II: Review of Literature .....	13
Physical Effects of Stress.....	13
The Psychological Effects of stress.....	14
The Social Effects of Stress .....	15
Cultural Differences of Stress .....	16
The Effects of Humor on Stress .....	17
Humor .....	17
Chapter III: Methodology .....	22
Subjects.....	22
Instrumentation.....	22
Reliability and Validity.....	23
Procedure .....	24
Data Analysis .....	24
Chapter IV: Results .....	25
Chapter V: Conclusion .....	32

<b>Limitations .....</b>	<b>35</b>
<b>Implications.....</b>	<b>36</b>
<b>Future Research.....</b>	<b>36</b>
<b>References.....</b>	<b>38</b>
<b>Appendices.....</b>	<b>43</b>



## Chapter I

### Introduction

This study explored some differences among Asian students in how stress is affected by humor. Research has shown that stressful life events can have a detrimental affect on individuals by influencing illness physically, psychologically and socially (Romas & Sharma, 1995). The concept of stress is complex and is often difficult to illustrate. According to Lederman (1996), “Stress is defined as a state of disharmony or threats to homeostasis” (p. 2). Everyone has experienced stress, but how one perceives stress is what makes it positive or negative. When we face a stressor, we first respond with our minds by interpreting the stressor as being positive or negative. If we interpret the stressor as being negative, our bodies’ natural defense is to turn to a fight or flight response (Romas & Sharma 1995). The result of such stress is to experience physical symptoms that may include increased perspiration, abdominal discomfort, cold hands or feet, dry mouth, increased pulse-rate, raised blood pressure, and frequent urination. This wear and tear eventually lowers the body’s immune response and creates an increased susceptibility to chronic physical illnesses such as cancer, hypertension, cardiovascular disease, stroke, and asthma (Bourne, 1995; Lederman, 1996; Romas & Sharma, 1995).

The effects of physical stress can influence one’s psychological well-being. According to Foote and Seibert (1999), stress affects the body psychologically and is responsible for anxiety and anxiety related disorders that, “Affect between three and six million Americans annually, two-thirds of them women” (p. 3). These disorders include panic disorder, agoraphobia, social phobia, specific phobia,

generalized anxiety, obsessive-compulsive disorder, and post-traumatic stress. Each year, it is estimated that at least 10% of the population in the United States experiences some form of anxiety (Bourne, 1995). Stress has been shown to increase anxiety. In addition, stress is correlated to psychological consequences such as depression and chemical dependency (Anisman & Merali, 1999; Dixon & Reid, 2000). According to this study, stress may increase the possibility that psychological problems will occur.

Stress affects the body in more ways than physically and psychologically. Dual career couples are at increased risk of occupational stress due to role conflict and work overload (Elloy, 2001). According to Hobson, Delunas, and Kesic, (2001), the added stress on United States (U.S.) workers has contributed to increased problems with absenteeism, voluntary turnover, job satisfaction, lower productivity and higher health care costs. There may be additional stress in the work environment by pressuring workers to adopt continuous new technology and education (Wood, 2001). Another social effect of stress has been an increase in family-related problems such as infidelity and divorce (Hobson, et. al.).

There are additional factors to consider when exploring stress regarding diverse populations. According to Saldana (1994) acculturation significantly adds to the level of psychological distress experienced by minorities. Minorities may suffer the stress brought on by learning a language in a new culture, a limited time of residence in the U.S., and the limited availability of coping resources (Miranda & Matheny, 2000). Diverse populations may also feel frustrated due to unemployment and socioeconomic status; anxious in response to a new and

unknown environment, and conflict from being pulled between their customs and values (Hovey, 2000). Some research has shown Asian Americans experience higher levels of stress due to self-inflicted expectations (Vandervoort, Divers, & Madrid, 1999). Among the population of Asian American females, stress brought on by societal expectations may contribute to an increased rate of attempted suicide (Thompson, 2000).

The type of stress experienced by Asians can be different than the type of stress experienced by others in the general public. For example, in Asian cultures restraint of emotions is considered a sign of maturity, and it is believed that emotions should be suppressed (Vance, DeVaney, & Wittmer, 1995). Instead of going to outside resources to seek help in dealing with difficulties, members of the Asian population are more likely to handle the difficulties within their own family (Sue & Sue, 1999). Additionally, many Asians will hide their emotional problems until stress manifests itself in a physical manner such as headaches and fatigue.

There are many factors associated with stress, and there are several ways of reducing stress. The most obvious way to reduce stress is through intervention. Nutrition is one way to address stress. Since stress is related to certain cancers according to research done by Marandino (2000), the best way to prevent stress is to eat a diet that is low in fat, high in fiber, and contains plenty of fruits and vegetables. Marandino suggests that, there is a “strong correlation between a high intake of dietary fat and breast cancer” (p. 1). There are some foods or substances that may add to anxiety and increase one’s stress, such as caffeine. Caffeine and nicotine might trigger anxiety and panic attacks by acting as stimulants (Bourne,

1995). Research shows that hypoglycemia is correlated to an individual's stress level. Hypoglycemia is a condition caused by low blood sugar; symptoms include light-headedness, anxiety, trembling, weakness, irritability, and heart palpitations. With the condition of hypoglycemia, anxiety and panic attacks can be brought on by lack of proper nutrition. By eating regular healthy meals, one can prevent the onset of these symptoms. Food allergies can also cause similar symptoms (Bourne, 1995).

In addition to good nutrition, stress might be controlled and reduced through exercise. In research done by Anshel (1996), aerobic exercise reduced systolic blood pressure and created superior motor skills. Anshel further explains how aerobic exercise can strengthen the body and decrease the effects of stress. Regular exercise improves concentration, improves the body's resistance to disease, regulates sleeping patterns, and increases energy levels (Romas & Sharma, 1995). Exercise also provides a positive outlet for tension and frustration by relaxing muscles (Bourne, 1995).

One technique that is used for stress prevention and reduction is relaxation. Relaxation can include yoga, meditation, biofeedback, massage, visual imagery, deep breathing, and progressive muscle relaxation (Romas & Sharma, 1995). Yoga has been found to increase short-term changes in mood (Anshel, 1996). Relaxation techniques have demonstrated their effectiveness in assisting clients with pain management, helping to cut health care costs, and improving the quality of life (Stetson, 1997).

Humor is another approach used to prevent and reduce the effects of stress. Researchers have acknowledged the potential for humor and laughter to have therapeutic benefits on the body in many ways (White & Winzelberg, 1992). Laughter has been shown to affect the body physically by stimulating the bodies' immune response to disease (Cann, Calhoun, & Nance, 2000). Research shows that laughter can lower the severity of colds and increases the body's resistance to respiratory infections (Martin & Dobbin, 1988; McClelland & Cheriff, 1997).

Not only can laughter prevent illnesses, but it also has been shown to substantially reduce pain (Cousins, 1981). Pain is reduced through the gate control mechanism, which controls how painful the impulse can be according to the person's previous experience and perception with the pain (Nevo, Keinan, & Teshimovsky-Arditi, 1993). Pain can then be reduced through the neuroendocrine and immunological systems. Nevo, et. al.(1993) state that "humor acts as a modifier of neuroendocrine hormones involved with the classic stress response and have shown significant reductions of serum levels of cortisol, dopac, and epinephrine, and growth hormone after minutes of laughter while watching a humorous video" (p. 74).

The beneficial impact of humor psychologically is undeniable. Humor has the ability to change how one perceives stress so that the effect an event has on someone depends largely upon how he or she perceives it. For example, a good sense of humor can change the focus on a negative event long enough to allow positive thoughts to decrease the negative thoughts about the event (Cann, Holt & Calhoun, 1999). One's perception comes from how one internally speaks to oneself.

According to Bourne (1995), negative self-talk increases agitation of fear, irrational beliefs, and can become a bad habit. Individuals who use humor to cope with life's difficulties are also better at adjusting to life's surprises (Thorson, Powell, Sarmany-Schuller & Hampes, 1997).

In the same way that humor can change one's perception, it can also alter one's mood (Martin & Lefcourt, 1983). Self-talk is subtle and goes unnoticed, but it has a direct impact on one's moods and feelings (Bourne, 1995). Humor serves as a psychological defender of negative events, and in this way decreases one's negative reaction to the stressor by acting as a distraction (Moran & Massam, 1999). The negative mood is changed because the physiological state of arousal is reduced when there is laughter or humor (White & Winzelberg, 1992). Humor may also give objectivity from a situation in order to encourage finding solutions that enable one to cope with stress (Overholser, 1991; Thorson & Powell, 1996).

Humor plays an important role by enhancing one's enjoyment of healthy life situations by increasing optimism and self esteem (Martin, Kuiper, Olinger, & Dance, 1993). Higher scores on Thorson & Powell's Multidimensional Sense of Humor Scale (1993a & 1993b), are associated with good psychological health, and lower scores are associated with psychological distress.

Humor has social qualities as well. Humor can positively influence marriage by creating marital satisfaction. People respond to humor by smiling or laughing, the process generates a feeling of mastery, and then emotionally they feel pleasure and tension release from dealing with feelings in an acceptable fashion (Ziv & Gadish, 1989). Trust is correlated with low levels of stress. Laughter also

increases intimacy and trust in relationships by creating an environment of lessened anxiety, which creates a willingness to trust others (Hampes, 1999 & 2001). This also indicates that a person with a high sense of humor is also likely to have a high sense of trust therefore creating effective stress management.

Predictors of humor are self-monitoring and assertiveness. It is important to use humor to accurately respond to any given social situation and meet the needs required of the situation. Assertiveness also helps with appropriate delivery of information, producing a positive reaction (Bell, McGhee, & Duffey, 1986). Assertiveness encourages expression of one's feelings and is a way of getting one's needs met (Bourne, 1995).

When counseling diverse populations, humor has been shown to aid in tension reduction (Maples, Dupey, Torres-Rivera, Phan, Vereem & Garrett, 2001). The counselor must also understand that even though clients may be of a different culture, these individuals have their own unique personality (Kruger, 1996). Research has shown that there are several ways to prevent and treat stress by nutrition, exercise, relaxation, and recently through humor. Despite all that's been done in researching humor, there is still more that needs to be done with regard to stress and humor among diverse populations.

### Statement of the Problem

Researchers have explored the impact that stress has on the body physically, psychologically, and socially (e.g., Romas & Sharma, 1995). There is significant evidence that there is a correlation between humor and how the body responds to stress (Bourne, 1995; Romas & Sharma, 1995). However, there is a need for

identifying the potential importance of humor in prevention and treatment.

Identifying a possible correlation between high levels of humor and low stress would illustrate the importance of humor in psychological health. Noting a correlation between high levels of humor and low levels of stress might influence how personal problems are solved in therapy. Further examination about similar correlations between humor and how the body responds to stress among Asian individuals is needed. There is a need for research on the relationship between stress and humor among Asian students.

#### Purpose of the Study

Although humor has been shown to reduce stress in many populations, the importance of humor and its connection between stress among people of Asian heritage has not been demonstrated. The purpose of this study is to investigate the correlation between humor and stress with Asian students in the University of Nebraska at Omaha in the International Language Learning Program (ILUNO).

#### Hypothesis

1. There is no significant relationship between the Multidimensional Sense of Humor Scale (MSHS) (Thorson & Powell, 1993b) scores and the Stress Audit (Miller, Smith, & Mehler, 1982) Stress Scores among Asian Students.
  - 1) There is no significant relationship between the Multidimensional Sense of Humor Scale (MSHS) (Thorson & Powell, 1993b) scores and the Stress Audit (Miller, Smith, & Mehler, 1982) Job Stress scores among Asian students.



- 2) There is no significant relationship between the Multidimensional Sense of Humor Scale (MSHS) (Thorson & Powell, 1993b) scores and the Stress Audit (Miller, Smith, & Mehler, 1982) Family Stress scores among Asian students.
- 3) There is no significant relationship between the Multidimensional Sense of Humor Scale (MSHS) (Thorson & Powell, 1993b) scores and the Stress Audit (Miller, Smith, & Mehler, 1982) Personal Stress scores among Asian students.
- 4) There is no significant relationship between the Multidimensional Sense of Humor Scale (MSHS) (Thorson & Powell, 1993b) scores and the Stress Audit (Miller, Smith, & Mehler, 1982) Social Stress scores among Asian students.
- 5) There is no significant relationship between the Multidimensional Sense of Humor Scale (MSHS) (Thorson & Powell, 1993b) scores and the Stress Audit (Miller, Smith, & Mehler, 1982) Environmental Stress scores among Asian students.
- 6) There is no significant relationship between the Multidimensional Sense of Humor Scale (MSHS) (Thorson & Powell, 1993b) scores and the Stress Audit (Miller, Smith, & Mehler, 1982) Financial Stress scores among Asian students.
- 7) There is no significant relationship between the Multidimensional Sense of Humor Scale (MSHS) (Thorson & Powell, 1993b) scores

and the Stress Audit (Miller, Smith, & Mehler, 1982) Muscular Stress scores among Asian students.

- 8) There is no significant relationship between the Multidimensional Sense of Humor Scale (MSHS) (Thorson & Powell, 1993b) scores and the Stress Audit (Miller, Smith, & Mehler, 1982) Parasympathetic Nervous System Stress scores among Asian students.
- 9) There is no significant relationship between the Multidimensional Sense of Humor Scale (MSHS) (Thorson & Powell, 1993b) scores and the Stress Audit (Miller, Smith, & Mehler, 1982) Sympathetic Nervous System Stress scores among Asian students.
- 10) There is no significant relationship between the Multidimensional Sense of Humor Scale (MSHS) (Thorson & Powell, 1993b) scores and the Stress Audit (Miller, Smith, & Mehler, 1982) Emotional Stress scores among Asian Students.
- 11) There is no significant relationship between the Multidimensional Sense of Humor Scale (MSHS) (Thorson & Powell, 1993b) scores and the Stress Audit (Miller, Smith, & Mehler, 1982) Cognitive Stress scores among Asian Students.
- 12) There is no significant relationship between the Multidimensional Sense of Humor Scale (MSHS) (Thorson & Powell, 1993b) scores and the Stress Audit (Miller, Smith, & Mehler, 1982) Endocrine Stress scores among Asian Students.

- 13) There is no significant relationship between the Multidimensional Sense of Humor Scale (MSHS) (Thorson & Powell, 1993b) scores and the Stress Audit (Miller, Smith, & Mehler, 1982) Immune Stress scores among Asian Students.

#### Importance of the Study

This study will identify the possible correlation between humor and stress among a sample of Asian students attending the University of Nebraska at Omaha. The results will help to inform the potential importance of humor in prevention and treatment of stress related to physical illnesses. Identifying a possible correlation between high levels of humor and low stress would illustrate the importance of humor in psychological health. Noting a correlation between high levels of humor and low levels of stress might influence how personal problems are solved in therapy.

#### Scope and Delimitations

This study was conducted to determine whether a correlation exists between humor and stress in Asian students at the University of Nebraska at Omaha International Language Learning Program (ILUNO). Two questionnaires were administered to the N=27 out of 30 in the sample population. The subjects were given 45 minutes to complete and return the questionnaires. All 27 of the questionnaires were returned. The researcher collected the questionnaires and a critical analysis of the data was completed.

Possible limitations of the study include the participants' low levels of English proficiency. Self-reporting of humor and stress is another limitation of the

study, due to the participants' cultural perception and understanding of humor and stress. Asian students becoming acculturated to America may be affected by cultural differences. Another limitation includes the small number of subjects that participated in the study.

### Definition of Terms

The specific terms used in this study are defined as follows:

1. Sense of Humor – For our purposes, humor will be defined as the scores on the Multidimensional Sense of Humor Scale.
2. Stress – For our purposes, stress will be defined as the scores on the Stress Audit.
3. Asian Students – Japanese, Chinese, and Korean students residing in the International Language Learning Program (ILUNO) at The University of Nebraska at Omaha.

## Chapter II

### Review of the Literature

There has been a tendency to change the focus of health care from institutionalized care to prevention and self help. More often people are seeking to have more control over their lives in order to have more peace and serenity. Some have already sought to change stress in their lives by adding balance through the use of a philosophy like yoga or Zen. By observing what it is that causes stress in our lives, we begin to take positive action to change life styles, thus preventing the illnesses that affect our well-being (Romas & Sharma, 1995).

#### Physical Effects of Stress

Anthropologist Walter B. Cannon first explained stress as a “fight or flight” syndrome (Cannon, 1932). The assumption is that a person will respond to stress by fighting the stressor or by avoiding it. If one chooses to view the stressor as an opportunity for growth, then the mind will fight the stressor. If one decides that the stressor is too much for the person to handle, then the mind will decide to run away from the stressor. The theory goes on to conclude that it is up to the individual to choose how to respond to stress, and a person’s attitude determines how one responds to stress. Once stress has turned one against oneself emotionally, then stress can cause physical damage.

Current research supports the physical connection between stress and a suppression of immune responses. Paik, To, Lee, Kim, & lee (2000) found that stressful academic examination significantly increases cell-derived cytokines (cell-mediated humoral immunity and macrophage activities) and may decrease

macrophage (cell-mediated cellular immunity). This means that academic exams increase the amount of work that the immune system must do in order to defend the body against sickness. Stress also keeps the immune system from fighting sickness efficiently. Their findings suggest that there may be a decrease in the immune response when humans display symptoms of stress related depression from examinations, grief, separation and divorce.

Lederman (1996) maintains that stressors directly affect maternal, fetal and neonatal complications because they are linked to the stress system. The system in the body that is responsible for reproduction, growth, and immunity are connected to the stress system. Growth is inhibited during stress, and prolonged exposure to stress will suppress the growth hormone secretion. This will also decrease the immune response. The size and duration of the stressor will make the body vulnerable to additional factors that hurt reproductive health.

According to Senior (2001), stress and depression decrease the immune response's ability to fight off cardiovascular disease and breast cancer. Senior's study shows how exposure to chronic stress may cause illness. Chronic exposure to stress can also have an effect on individuals with depression. The findings further suggest that increased levels of stress hormones can be responsible for advancing the progression of cancer.

### The Psychological Effects of Stress

Physiological and psychological reactions to stress were researched in a study by Anisman & Merali (1999). They found that the incidence of utilizing alcohol and drugs to self medicate was increased among individuals experiencing

stressful events in their lives. Other findings were that stress has the ability to induce psychiatric pathology, depression, and anxiety symptoms. Further, the duration of exposure to the stress can create a more debilitating isolation, thus increasing the psychological symptoms.

Another study done by Dixon & Reid (2000) described how individuals who experience high levels of negative life stress and low levels of positive life stress are more likely to experience depressive symptoms than those who experience high levels of both negative and positive life stress. The findings suggest that one needs positive life stress in addition to negative life stress to provide a cushion for the body to adapt. This study also indicates that depressive symptoms are related to both positive and negative life stress in that the two help to cancel each other out.

#### The Social Effects of Stress

Lindorff (2000) identified a strong relationship between strains and perceived and received social support. This study evaluated male and female managers and how they respond to emotional support. The findings of this study support the perspective that both sexes benefit from the perception that support is available to them if they need it; however, for men with low levels of perceived support, receiving high levels of emotional support may result in added strain.

Elloy (2001) supports the idea that there is a risk for increase of stress in dual-career couples. This study indicates how overload and role conflict raises stress levels. Conflict arises when the demands of one area become unable to coexist with those of another. The demands of the roles of work will also cause stress levels to increase in the home.

Hobson, Delunas, & Kesic (2001) attribute increased absenteeism and lower productivity to the stress of balancing family life and work. This study evaluated how many organizations bring about increased stress due to excessive job demands and pressures for overtime hours and more attention to improved cost-effectiveness. The findings support the contention that stress is related to rising healthcare costs, higher rates of family violence and divorce, as well as reduced productivity.

### Cultural Differences of Stress

Previously cited research suggests that stress touches all individuals physically, psychologically and socially. An additional element is that stress may affect Asians differently than others. In a study done by Vandervoort, Divers, & Madrid (1999) Asians were found to be more anxious and to have more irrational beliefs. The study goes on to include that Asian culture accentuates irrational beliefs, thus making the Asian society higher in stress. This study also includes how some Asian cultures have perfectionist standards and encourage the repression of emotions. Asian culture often views mental illness as a sign of emotional weakness, even though seeking treatment may also be more acceptable. The study concludes, however, that there is no correlation between diversity differences in anxiety and irrational beliefs

Research by Thompson (2000) looks at how social stress contributes to a higher rate of attempted suicide among Asian females. Thompson explains that factors such as arranged marriages, religious differences, and pressure from family to conform to traditions increase the possibility of suicide attempts. The study also



explains how adolescent female's experience increased stress due to the high values placed on them by their society during school and employment.

### The Effects of Humor on Stress

Researchers often suggest that one way to fight stress is by preventing it. A variety of intervention efforts attempt to make a positive impact on reducing stress, such as improved nutrition, exercise and relaxation. There is also an increasing amount of research on preventing stress by the uses of humor. Research is showing that humor may have significant and preventive effects on the negative outcomes of stress.

In research done by Bell, McGhee, & Duffey (1986), predictors of humor were self-monitoring and assertiveness. The results explain how important it is to use humor to accurately respond to a given social situation and meet the needs required of the situation. Assertiveness also helps with appropriate delivery of information, producing a positive reaction. Assertiveness encourages expression of one's feelings and is a way of getting one's needs met (Bourne, 1995).

### Humor

The idea that humor affects the body in many ways was recognized by Norman Cousins (1979) through his personal account of recovery from collagen disease through the use of laughter and vitamin C. A basic assumption of his theory is that a lot of laughter or humor has the capability of reducing stress by changing one's perception and thus changing how the body is challenged by stress. Humor acted as a natural painkiller and provided hours of pain relief for the author. With his study, the medical profession was encouraged to look at how pain is treated in a

hospital setting. The possibility of lowered health care costs made humor an attractive alternative to medication.

Martin & Dobbin (1988) illustrated how a sense of humor can moderate the immunosuppressive effects of stress. In their study, samples of subjects' saliva were taken to check for secretory immunoglobulin A (S-IgA). S-IgA is part of the immune system's prevention against viral and bacterial infections. Their study showed how humor, in meaningful levels, could be prevention against viral and bacterial infections. McClelland & Cheriff (1995) reported similar findings that suggest a good sense of humor is related to a reduction in frequency and severity of colds.

Thorson, Sarmany-Schuller, & Hampes (1997) identified humor as a means to cope with critical life problems. Research seemed to demonstrate that some people are more successful in adapting to serious losses later in life than others. Their study emphasized that those individuals also seem to maintain an air of serenity. Research was clear that a sense of humor is correlated with a positive adaptation with age. This work had led Thorson & Powell (1993a & 1993b) to develop the Multidimensional Sense of Humor Scale (MSHS), a more valid instrument of measurement in assessing different dimensions of humor.

Thorson & Powell (1996) found a series of correlations between personality traits and sense of humor with age and gender. The study showed that although aging women utilize humor to cope with stressors more often than men, men are more likely to be the creators of humor than women. This suggests that the appreciation for humor is equal in gender even though there are different

dimensions of humor that one gender favors more than the other. This study also explained how this age difference explains humor as a coping mechanism, which may be due to a more mature generation whose socialization has been to display more respect.

Another study appears to support the idea that humor can help one to cope with life stressors. Martin, Kuiper, Olinger & Dance (1993) found that humor does more than prevent possible viral and bacterial infections. Humor also increases an individual's self-concept and level of self-esteem. An individual with humor is viewed as having confidence. This study goes on to say that when people feel good about themselves, they also feel good mentally. In other words, overall psychological well-being is improved.

In a study by Martin & Lefcourt (1986) uses of humor indicated a reduction in the impact of stress. Individuals with high scores on the sense of humor scale showed less negative relationships, less depressed moods, and less negative life events. Their study goes on to explain that as humor increases, the effects of stress are weakened. In addition, individuals who use humor to reduce stress in stressful situations also tend to use humor in non-stressful situations.

The third important area of humor research is in the social setting. Since the destruction of stress can be felt physically, psychologically, and socially, it is only natural that humor has the capability to reach those areas as well. A relationship between humor and intimacy was indicated in a study done by Hampes (2001). In this study, humor is correlated with close interpersonal relationships as well as reducing stress. Humor brings individuals closer by giving a feeling of comfort.

As individuals feel more intimacy and comfort, this seems to increase empathy. This study shows that individuals with high humor are associated with positive and satisfying interpersonal relationships. Hampes (1999) has also demonstrated how humor is correlated with trust in the same way. His study goes on to explain that individuals who are high in humor are better prepared to handle the stress of trusting another individual. This is due to how a humorous individual perceives stress. By finding humor in stressful situations, one can adapt better to stress.

Additional research has shown that humor has an impact on other cultures as well. In a study done by Maples, Dupey, Torres-Rivera, Phan, Vereem & Garrett (2001), it was found that the counselor, when counseling Native Americans, Asian Americans, Latinos, and African Americans to help emotionally release tension and encourage recovery could utilize humor. The study suggests the addition of existential theory and some general conditions when using humor to counsel these groups. The study goes on to address five basic conditions that must be met before humor can be used: 1). Both client and counselor should be comfortable with the use of humor, 2). The humor must be used appropriately to enhance the session, 3). There must be mutual trust in the counseling relationship, 4). Counselors must have permission from the client to use the humor and time humor accordingly, 5). Using humor in counseling must fit each client individually.

Another study appears to support the idea that humor's appropriateness is an important factor for counseling ethnically diverse populations. Kruger (1996) found that although humor is universal, it is important to take into consideration intercultural differences. Another consideration is that, although there are cultural

differences, the counselor must also take the individual's personality into account. Their findings revealed that humor could be a positive addition to the therapeutic process when used carefully and respectfully with regard to counseling the culturally diverse.

While questions remain regarding the connection between humor among diverse groups, even less is known about connections between humor and how the Asian population responds to stress, including Asian students in post secondary education. Despite all that has been done in researching humor, there is much more that needs to be done, including research with Asians. Perhaps the amount of time spent in the United States has more to do with the perspective of the Asian American humor than how they utilize humor in their lives. Another factor one might speculate could be that the amount of stress decreases after living in the U.S. for a specific time period.

The above-cited literature represents a representation of available research regarding the effects of humor on stress within populations. Although much research illustrates how humor affects stress physically, psychologically, and socially, little has been done on the relationship between humor and its relationship with stress among Asian people.

## CHAPTER III

### Methodology

#### Participants

The study utilizes a Spearman Correlation to relate the participants' stress, humor, and the relationship between stress with and without humor. The participants were 27 volunteer students between the ages of 19-35. The participants are also students who are of Asian heritage and attending the University of Nebraska at Omaha in the ILUNO Program. The participants were given 45 minutes to complete and return the questionnaires. There were 27 out of 30 of the questionnaires that were returned. The researcher collected the questionnaires and a critical analysis of the data was completed.

#### Instrumentation

The instruments used were the Stress Audit Scale (Miller, Smith, & Mehler, 1988) to measure stress, and The Multidimensional Sense of Humor Scale (MSHS)(Thorson & Powell, 1993a & 1993b) to measure sense of humor. The Stress Audit is a 238-item questionnaire that measures experienced and projected susceptibility to stress in the areas of Situations, Symptoms, and Vulnerability Factors. The questionnaire asks respondents to indicate the levels of stress on a five-point Likert scale 1 = almost always or not stressful, and 5 = never or very stressful. There are six scales under the Situations Factor: Family, Individual Roles, Social Being, Environment, Financial, and Work/School. There are seven scales listed under the Stress Symptoms Factor: Muscular system, Parasympathetic nervous system, Sympathetic nervous system, Emotional, Cognitive system,

Endocrine, and Immune system. On the Stress Vulnerability Factor section there are items relating to the frequency of behaviors. The items are eating, sleep, exercise, alcohol, caffeine, tobacco use, the ability to express emotions, and social and spiritual resources. The subject's rate the amount of stress experienced in the last six months and the amount of stress anticipated in the next six months, by using a five-point Likert scale.

The MSHS is a 24-item questionnaire developed by Thorson & Powell (1993a & 1993b) that measure sense of humor. The questionnaire asks subjects to agree or disagree with statements on a five-point Likert scale from 0 = "strongly disagree" to 4 = "strongly agree". The questions are related to coping humor, humor creativity, appreciation of humor, attitudes toward humor and humorous individuals.

#### Reliability and Validity

The reliability of the MSHS questionnaire (Thorson & Powell, 1993) consisted of a multiple norm group of 234 respondents. The MSHS has high reliability among the samples with a Cronbach's alpha of reliability at .92. The MSHS was validated by factor analysis. The scale scores do not discriminate between age and gender (Thorson & Powell, 1993).

The test/retest reliability coefficient of the Stress Audit (Miller, Smith, & Mehler, 1988), ranged from .65 to .92 on a sample of 237 stress clinic patients. The internal consistency/reliability of the Stress Audit fell around .76 and .97. There is extensive quality assurance among and across each scale.

### Procedure

The Institutional Review Board (IRB) granted permission to conduct research and assigned number 438-01-EP. All participants will be treated according to the “Ethical Principles of Psychologists and Code of Conduct” (American Psychological Association, 1992).

The procedure was to contact the advisor of the Asian students from the ILUNO program. The advisor contacted the Asian students with a proficiency level in English that enabled understanding and completion of the questionnaires. The advisor contacted the Asian students stating the nature of the study, its purpose, and the request of participants’ interest in the study. The researcher was highly respectful of the Asian students’ wishes as reflected by Sue & Sue (1999) in order to enhance response rates. Subjects interested in participating were given a copy of ‘the rights of research participants’ and asked to sign and return the consent form to the researcher prior to completing the instrument. The research was conducted in class at 11:00 a.m. The process took one hour to complete. After completing the consent form, the subjects completed the two questionnaires. Asking the subjects to leave their name off of the questionnaires provided anonymity and confidentiality. Once collected, the questionnaires were returned the researcher and kept securely in a locked drawer.

### Data Analysis

The MSHS was designed to measure the participant’s humor relating to coping humor, humor creativity, appreciation of humor, attitudes toward humor and humorous individuals. The stress Audit was designed to measure stress sources for



six stress factors. To evaluate the hypotheses a Spearman correlation was chosen. This correlation measured the consistency of the relation between humor and stress on an ordinal scale. A calculation was executed for the significance of the correlation.

## Chapter IV

### Results

The purpose of this study was to investigate the correlation between humor and stress in Asian students in the ILUNO program at the University of Nebraska at Omaha. To complete this study, 27 Asian students were individually administered a stress questionnaire and a humor questionnaire with specific directions for completion.

#### Presentation of Results and Demographic Data

Relevant information from the survey was summarized using the Spearman to determine the statistical relationships established by the Spearman test between the 13 hypotheses.

Table 1 highlights the results of the self-reported demographic data that was collected from the survey. Participants were asked to self-report their gender, ethnicity, residence, and marital status. The questions were used to provide a profile of the research population. There is a breakdown of the subject's ethnicity that will help determine any differences that may be related to ethnicity. The subject's residence will show how a respondent's home might have an effect on their stress level and humor. Finally, the entire 27 subjects were single so there is not a representation of the married population. Therefore this research only reflects the stress and humor of single individuals.

Table1

Subject Demographics

<b>GENDER</b>	<b>SUBJECTS</b>	<b>PERCENTAGE</b>
MALE	13	48%
FEMALE	14	52%
TOTAL	27	
<b>ETHNICITY</b>		
JAPANESE	8	30%
CHINESE	4	15%
KOREAN	14	52%
TOTAL	26	
<b>RESIDENCE</b>		
RURAL	5	19%
SUBURBAN	2	7%
URBAN	12	44%
INNER CITY	7	26%
TOTAL	26	
<b>MARITAL STATUS</b>		
MARRIED	0	0%
SINGLE	27	100%
TOTAL	27	

Table 1 shows the demographics of the participants. There were a total of 27 respondents, all undergraduates from the University of Nebraska at Omaha. The participants were all of Asian heritage, and in the 1600 level intensive language program. The participants were made up of Korean (52%), Japanese (30%), and Chinese (15%).

There were (13) male and (14) female Asian students. All (100%) of the Asian students were single. Of the Asian students (44%) lived in urban, (26%)

lived inner city, 19% rural, and (7%) suburban areas. Under the ethnicity and residence sections, information on one case was missing.

Table 2 shows the mean and raw score for humor and each of the stress sources. The raw score is the sum of each participants totaled likert score under the individual stress sources and humor.

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Table 2

The Mean and Sum of Stress and Humor Scores

<b>VARIABLES</b>	<b>MEANS</b>	<b>SUM</b>
JOB	113.92	2962
FAMILY	113.42	2949
PERSONAL	116.77	3036
SOCIAL	118.31	3076
ENVIRONMENTAL	126.50	3289
FINANCIAL	113.73	2957
MUSCULAR	110.54	2874
PARASYMPATHETIC	112.15	2916
SYMPATHETIC	109.65	2851
EMOTION	104.81	2725
COGNITION	108.54	2822
ENDOCRINE	113.00	2938
IMMUNE	125.04	3251
HUMOR	61.46	1598

---

The highest stress among the Asian students was the environment category, and the lowest stress level among Asian students was the family category. Each category of stress questions had a different number of items. The correlation under emotion has the lowest score, but was not the lowest overall stress score.

Table 3 shows the correlation between humor and stress sources in ascending order. Significance testing was done for the correlation coefficient.

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Table 3

Humor and Stress Correlation

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STRESS SOURCE	CORRELATION
HUMOR VS. FINANCIAL	-0.162
HUMOR VS. PARASYMPATHETIC	-0.133
HUMOR VS. SOCIAL	-0.120
HUMOR VS. PERSONAL	-0.050
HUMOR VS. IMMUNE	-0.036
HUMOR VS. SYMPATHETIC	-0.027
HUMOR VS. COGNITION	0.004
HUMOR VS. MUSCULAR	0.021
HUMOR VS. EMOTIONAL	0.041
HUMOR VS. ENVIRONMENTAL	0.058
HUMOR VS. ENDOCRINE	0.072
HUMOR VS. JOB	0.126
HUMOR VS. FAMILY	0.200

---

The results of the Spearman are listed in table 3. The results indicated that in Hypothesis 1, the Spearman was  $r_s = 0.126$  for humor and job stress. There was no statistically significant relationship between scores on humor and job stress in this comparison.

For Hypothesis 2, the results of the Spearman was  $r_s = 0.200$  for humor and family stress. There was no statistically significant relationship between scores on humor and family stress.

For Hypothesis 3, the Spearman was  $r_s = 0.050$  for humor and personal stress. There was no statistically significant relationship between scores on humor and personal stress.

For Hypothesis 4, the Spearman was  $r_s = -0.120$  for humor and social stress. There was no statistically significant relationship between scores on humor and social stress.

For Hypothesis 5, the Spearman was  $r_s = 0.058$  for humor and environmental stress. There was no statistically significant relationship between scores on humor and environmental stress.

For Hypothesis 6, the Spearman was  $r_s = -0.162$  for humor and financial stress. There was no statistically significant relationship between scores on humor and financial stress.

For Hypothesis 7, the Spearman was  $r_s = 0.021$  for humor and muscular stress. There was no statistically significant relationship between scores on humor and muscular stress.

For Hypothesis 8, the Spearman was  $r_s = -0.133$  for humor and parasympathetic nervous system stress. There was no statistically significant relationship between scores on humor and parasympathetic nervous system stress.

For Hypothesis 9, the Spearman was  $r_s = -0.027$  for humor and sympathetic nervous system stress. There was no statistically significant relationship between scores on humor and sympathetic nervous system stress.

For Hypothesis 10, the Spearman was  $r_s = 0.041$  for humor and emotional stress. There was no statistically significant relationship between scores on humor and emotional stress.

For Hypothesis 11, the Spearman was  $r_s = 0.004$  for humor and cognitive stress. There was no statistically significant relationship between scores on humor and cognitive stress.

For Hypothesis 12, the Spearman was  $r_s = 0.072$  for humor and endocrine stress. There was no statistically significant relationship between scores on humor and endocrine stress.

For Hypothesis 13, the Spearman was  $r_s = -0.036$  for humor and immune stress. There was no statistically significant relationship between scores on humor and immune stress.

### Summary

This Chapter presented the data collected from the research survey. Spearman correlation tests were performed on all 13 hypotheses, and the results were reported. The findings of the research could be used as a foundation for subsequent studies on characteristics that are important to humor and stress.

Chapter 5 further discusses the research findings and provides conclusions, limitations of the study, and implications for the counseling profession, recommendations for and future research.



## Chapter V

### Discussion

This research study investigated the relationship between humor and stress among Asian students. The data collected on the 13 hypotheses is discussed, followed by limitations of the study, and implication for future research.

Two instruments were used to evaluate humor and stress. The results of the Spearman correlation indicate that there were no significant findings that would lead one to conclude that humor impacts stress among Asian students in the International Language Learning Program at UNO.

Hypothesis 1 showed no significant correlation between humor and job stress at the .05 level ( $r_s = .126$ ). A majority of the Asians were currently working only part-time or not at all. Most of the Asians left a job to come to the United States. They may have previously felt stress within the past six months and foresee job stress in the future six months after they graduate.

In Hypothesis 2 the results reflect only a slight correlation between humor and family stress at the .05 level ( $r_s = 0.200$ ). This is not surprising with what research has shown about Asians and the importance that is placed on family respect. Research shows that Asians derive their strength from their family. Family stress is generated from issues that arise from interacting with family members. Issues can be related to expectations or communication styles.

Hypothesis 3 identified no significant correlation between humor and personal stress at the .05 level ( $r_s = -0.050$ ). This area showed high levels of stress in this area, which can be accounted for in a few ways. First of all, all of the Asian

students had to change residence and living conditions within the last six months. Some Asians have gone through sexual harassment, sexual assault, and problems with weight. All of the Asian students experienced moving to a new country with different laws and a different culture.

In Hypothesis 4, there was no significant correlation between humor and social stress at the .05 level ( $r_s = -0.121$ ). The Asian students have a high level of stress in this area that can be accounted for by changes that come along with moving to a new country. The Asians scored high on the questions pertaining to making new friends, ethnic prejudices; they have all had to temporarily end other relationships, and feeling self-conscious in a new environment.

However, the results did indicate that Asian students in this study experienced some stress symptoms more intensely than other stress symptoms. The designer of the Stress Audit did make a comment that the Asian group is by far the “most stressed out group “ that has taken the Stress Audit. In Hypothesis 5, the lack of correlation between humor and environmental stress could be seen by the Asians’ perception of having a lack of social support because perception dictates how much of a role stress will play in an individual’s life. Asians may also feel increased stress since they are minorities in a country where minorities are being highly scrutinized at the current time.

Hypothesis six shows that there is no correlation between humor and finance stress at the .05 level ( $r_s = -0.162$ ). Since some of the Asians in the intensive language program are coming from an environment where the schools in their country are more expensive than abroad, their need for a job is not quite as

important. The investigator was informed that money is not a problem for most Asians. The stress level under the finance section was moderate. One explanation could be that they have less freedom than they did in the past to spend money. Another explanation is that the stress put upon an individual to take care of his/her family is quite high. Asians want to be respectful of their families. If an individual's behavior is disrespectful in anyway, it is considered an act against the family.

The Hypotheses pertaining to physical symptoms resulting from stress Hypothesis 7 (muscular stress) ( $r_s = 0.021$ ), Hypothesis 8 (parasympathetic nervous system stress) ( $r_s = -0.133$ ), Hypothesis 9 (sympathetic nervous system stress) ( $r_s = -0.027$ ), and Hypothesis 12 (Endocrine stress) ( $r_s = 0.072$ ) all results showed that there was no statistically significant correlation between humor and the physical symptoms (at a .05 level). The results will be addressed together. The questions pertaining to tension headaches, change in appetite, constipation, dizziness, and fatigue are all symptoms of stress. It is possible that the symptoms could have resulted from several other illnesses that are not related to stress.

Hypothesis 10 indicated no statistically significant correlation between humor and emotional stress at a .05 level ( $r_s = 0.041$ ). Again, the stress level was very high. The Asian students have had changes in their living arrangements and support systems. Another factor in Asian emotions is the lack of displaying emotions. When an individual hides their feelings, the feelings will manifest themselves in other ways.

In Hypothesis 11, there was no significant correlation between humor and cognitive stress at a .05 level ( $r_s = 0.004$ ). The subjects are learning a new language,

and will be less confident, have more mental confusion, and their cognition may be affected. Asians place a high importance on success. The stress of school and not letting their families down is noticeable with cognitive stress.

Hypothesis 13 was a little surprising, in that the research has shown how humor can significantly reduce immune stress symptoms. However, the results showed that there was not a statistically significant difference between humor and the immune stress at the .05 level ( $r_s = -0.036$ ). Even though the Asian students seem to use humor in different ways, the levels of stress were quite high. It is not certain as to the reason for this change. It is possible that the Asian students have a different way of looking at humor, but their scores on the MSHS do not reflect this. It is also possible that the amount of stress that each one felt in all 13 areas, is too much, and the humor did not make as much of an impact as it might have otherwise.

### Limitations

Generalizing the findings for this study to the population-at-large is limited. The sample size of the study was small. The number of Asians in the International Language Learning Program that understood the English language well enough to complete the instruments was minimal. Self-reporting of humor and stress is another limitation of the study, due to the participants' cultural perception and understanding of humor and stress.

There is an under-representation of the Asian population because there were only single subjects, most without children. The investigator was told that all of the subjects were single, however, some marked married. This particular question they

seemed to have trouble understanding. It seemed that they thought the stress questionnaire was asking, "What is more stressful?" There were some language translation problems.

Another limitation of the study is that several Korean individuals did not want to fill out the questionnaires. They needed additional explanation and persuasion. They explained that the length of the stress questionnaire took them more time than they wanted to spend on it.

Finally, the acculturation time for each Asian could be different. The time spent in America was different for individuals, and their culture norms may have changed. Maybe there is an initial adjustment time that individuals go through when moving to another country and humor may not be as strong at preventing stress during this particular time.

### Implications

When counseling multicultural clients it should be recognized that some cultures accept humor more readily than other cultures. Therefore, it is very important to approach humor in a culturally sensitive way. Each client will be different and should be treated as an individual as well. The results of this study have several implications regarding stress. There seems to be greater expectations put upon the Asian students, which may create additional stress. In the counseling setting it is important to investigate the role that stress plays with each client.

### Future Research

In order to gain more significant information and powerful data about the findings from this small study, it will be beneficial to study a much larger

population, which would be more representative of Asian students. Furthermore, it may be beneficial to look at the different stress felt by Asians in different majors.

Thus, as mentioned earlier in the limitations section of this study, in future research it would be imperative to account for conducting the same study in a new environment may also change the outcome of the research. There is a possibility that the stress changes of subjects occurred due to the change in country. To eliminate this variable, the same study would need to be conducted in their mother country.

The results of this study suggest that high levels of humor will not reduce stress symptoms in Asian students in the U.S. attending the ILUNO Program. Continued study with the improvements and changes suggested is indicated to discover more about the perception of events in Asians' lives and how it results in stress. Equally important is the role that humor plays in their lives.

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## Appendices



Institutional Review Board (IRB)  
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November 8, 2001

Michelle Jordan  
College of Education -Kaiser 421  
UNO - VIA COURIER

IRB # 438-01-EP

TITLE OF PROPOSAL: The Relationship Between Stress and Humor With Asian College Students

SECONDARY INVESTIGATORS:

DATE OF FULL BOARD REVIEW \_\_\_\_\_ DATE OF EXPEDITED REVIEW 10-26-01

DATE OF FINAL APPROVAL 11-08-01 VALID UNTIL 10-26-02

EXPEDITED CATEGORY OF REVIEW: 45CFR46.110; 21CFR56.110, Category 7

The Institutional Review Board (IRB) for the Protection of Human Subjects has completed its review of the above-titled protocol and informed consent document(s), including any revised material submitted in response to the IRB's review. The Board has expressed its opinion that you are in compliance with HHS Regulations (45 CFR 46) and applicable FDA Regulations (21 CFR 50.56) and you have provided adequate safeguards for protecting the rights and welfare of the subjects to be involved in this study. The IRB has, therefore, granted unconditional approval of your research project. This letter constitutes official notification of the final approval and release of your project by the IRB, and you are authorized to implement this study as of the above date of final approval.

Please be advised that only the IRB approved and stamped consent/assent form can be used to make copies to enroll subjects. Also, at the time of consent all subjects/representatives must be given a copy of the rights of research participants. The IRB wishes to remind you that the PI or Co-PI is responsible for ensuring that ethically and legally effective informed consent has been obtained from all research subjects.

Finally, under the provisions of this institution's Multiple Project Assurance (MPA #1509), the PI/Co-PI is directly responsible for submitting to the IRB any proposed change in the research or the consent document(s). In addition, any unanticipated adverse events involving risk to the subject or others must be promptly reported to the IRB. This project is subject to periodic review and surveillance by the IRB and, as part of their surveillance, the IRB may request periodic reports of progress and results. For projects which continue beyond one year, it is the responsibility of the principal investigator to initiate a request to the IRB for continuing review and update of the research project.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Ernest D. Prentice".

Ernest D. Prentice, Ph.D.  
Co-Chair, IRB

EDP/kje

## ADULT CONSENT FORM

### TITLE OF THE RESEARCH STUDY

**THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN STRESS AND HUMOR WITH ASIAN COLLEGE STUDENTS**

### INVITATION

You are invited to participate in this research study. The information in this consent form is provided to help you decide whether to participate. If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to ask.

### WHY ARE YOU ELIGIBLE?

You are eligible to participate because you are an Asian student between 19-30 years of age, currently enrolled, and attending classes at the University of Nebraska at Omaha.

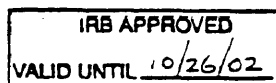
### WHAT IS THE PURPOSE OF THIS STUDY?

The purpose of this study is to find out if there is any correlation between humor and low stress in the Asian population.

### WHAT DOES THIS STUDY INVOLVE?

This study will take 30 minutes to complete. The following is the procedure that you will undergo as a participant in this study.

You will be given two questionnaires to answer and circle the appropriate response to each question. The first questionnaire is a 238-item instrument designed to examine the situations, symptoms, and vulnerability factors of stress. The second questionnaire is a 24-item Likert questionnaire that measures several areas of humor: recognition of oneself as a humorous person, recognition of others' humor, appreciation of humor, laughing, perspective, and coping humor. When finished you will return the questionnaire to the researcher and return to your normal daily activities.



Participants Initials \_\_\_\_\_

**WHAT ARE THE POSSIBLE RISKS AND DISCOMFORTS YOU COULD EXPERIENCE?**

Some individuals may find some psychological discomfort in answering the questionnaire. All subjects are answering a questionnaire that will not impose any physical, sociological, economic, and legal risk.

**WHAT ARE THE POSSIBLE BENEFITS TO YOU?**

The benefit you may receive from participating in this study may increase the awareness of stress and how humor can assist in your success as a student.

**WHAT ARE THE POSSIBLE BENEFITS TO SOCIETY?**

Results from this study may help the mental health field and medical field to recognize how Asian students can use humor to help reduce and control stress thus creating beneficial programs to help aid all students.

**WHAT IS THE ALTERNATIVE TO PARTICIPATING?**

An alternative to participating in this research is to simply not participate. There will be no penalty given and the academic grade will not reflect non-participation.

**WHAT SHOULD YOU DO IN CASE OF AN EMERGENCY?**

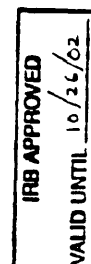
If you are injured or have an adverse reaction because of this research, you should immediately contact one of the personnel listed at the end of this consent form.

**HOW WILL YOUR CONFIDENTIALITY BE PROTECTED?**

The only persons who will have access to your research records are the study personnel of the research, the Institutional Review Board (IRB). The information from this study may be published in scientific journals or presented at scientific meetings but your identity will be kept strictly confidential.

**WHAT ARE YOUR RIGHTS AS A RESEARCH PARTICIPANT?**

You have rights as a research participant. These rights are explained in *The Rights of Research Participants*, which you have been given. If you have any questions concerning your rights, you may contact the Institutional Review Board (IRB), telephone (402) 559-6463.



Participants Initials \_\_\_\_\_



**WHAT ARE YOUR FINANCIAL OBLIGATIONS?**

There are no financial obligations for participating in this study.

**WHAT WILL HAPPEN IF YOU DECIDE NOT TO PARTICIPATE?**

You can decide not to participate in this study or you can withdraw from this study at any time. Your decision will not affect your care or your relationship with the investigator(s), or the University of Nebraska at Omaha. Your decision to not participate will not result in any loss of benefits to which you are entitled. If any new information develops during the course of this study that may affect your willingness to continue participating, you will be informed immediately.

**DOCUMENTATION OF INFORMED CONSENT**

**YOU ARE VOLUNTARILY MAKING A DECISION WHETHER TO PARTICIPATE IN THIS RESEARCH. YOUR SIGNATURE MEANS THAT YOU HAVE READ AND UNDERSTOOD THE INFORMATION PRESENTED AND DECIDED TO PARTICIPATE. YOUR SIGNATURE ALSO MEANS THAT THE INFORMATION ON THIS CONSENT FORM HAS BEEN FULLY EXPLAINED TO YOU AND ALL YOUR QUESTIONS HAVE BEEN ANSWERED TO YOUR SATISFACTION. IF YOU THINK OF ANY ADDITIONAL QUESTIONS DURING THE STUDY, YOU SHOULD CONTACT THE INVESTIGATOR(S). YOU WILL BE GIVEN A COPY OF THIS CONSENT FORM.**

\_\_\_\_\_  
SIGNATURE OF PARTICIPANT

\_\_\_\_\_  
DATE

**MY SIGNATURE AS WITNESS CERTIFIES THAT THE PARTICIPANT SIGNED THIS CONSENT FORM IN MY PRESENCE AS THEIR VOLUNTARY ACT AND DEED.**

\_\_\_\_\_  
SIGNATURE OF WITNESS

\_\_\_\_\_  
DATE

IRB APPROVED  
VALID UNTIL 10/26/02

Participants Initials \_\_\_\_\_



- 4 -

College of Education  
Counseling Department  
Omaha, Nebraska 68182-0167  
(402) 554-2727

I CERTIFY THAT ALL THE ELEMENTS OF INFORMED CONSENT DESCRIBED ON THIS CONSENT FORM HAVE BEEN EXPLAINED FULLY TO THE PARTICIPANT. IN MY JUDGEMENT, THE PARTICIPANT IS VOLUNTARILY AND KNOWINGLY GIVING INFORMED CONSENT AND POSSESSES THE LEGAL CAPACITY TO GIVE INFORMED CONSENT TO PARTICIPATE IN THIS RESEARCH.

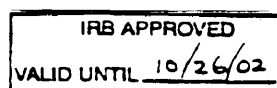
\_\_\_\_\_  
SIGNATURE OF INVESTIGATOR

\_\_\_\_\_  
DATE

**AUTHORIZED STUDY PERSONNEL**

PRINCIPAL INVESTIGATOR

Michelle Jordan                      Office: (402) 554-2727      Home: (402) 738-8338  
Graduate Student University of Nebraska at Omaha Department of Education in  
Counseling.



Participants Initials \_\_\_\_\_