

## Student Opinions of Humor in Educational Communication

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### *Abstract*

The purpose of this paper is to investigate the opinions of primary school and high school students regarding the role of humor as a practice in the management of educational communication on the part of the teacher. More specifically, it is investigated whether and to what extent humor affects the students' behavior towards the teacher, the educational process as well as their personality. First, a theoretical approach to the subject is made, in order to highlight the idea that teacher-student pedagogical communication is considered to be the most lively and dynamic part of the educational process, because through it all the messages that signal action, attitude and, in general, teacher's behavior is conveyed. This means that the form of communication chosen by the teacher, either consciously or unconsciously, affects not only his relationship with the student, but also the content and the result of the educational processes. In this case, we have chosen humor as a pedagogical communication practice, given that the research data identify it as an important, effective means between the teacher and the students, the effect of which is particularly beneficial for the educational process, the classroom climate and the relationship between the teacher and the students as well as for the student himself. To implement the purpose of the research, a questionnaire with closed-ended questions was created, which was distributed to primary school and high school students in the first ten days of May 2023 in the city of Ioannina. The findings of the research are considered particularly interesting confirming the majority of the theoretical data that preceded it. The paper ends with conclusions and final remarks.

*Keywords:* humor, educational communication, student opinions.

### 1. Introduction

Social communication presents particular research interest from a pedagogical point of view, given that it is the core of every social relationship, influencing its content. In particular, pedagogical communication among teacher and students is considered the most lively and dynamic part of the educational process, because through it all the messages marking the action, the attitude and, in general, the behavior closely connected with the teachers' role are conveyed. In this sense, every action of the protagonist of the communication processes at school, i.e., the teacher, transmits messages with specified or undefined interpretations, which determine not only the type of communication, but, to a significant extent, the attitude of the receiver of the messages in the educational school activities and, therefore, his general behavior and, of course, the formation of his personality. The teacher knows, or at least should know, from a pedagogic point of view, that the form of communication he chooses, consciously or unconsciously, affects and

determines not only his relationship with the student, but also the content and the result of the educational processes.

Specifically, pedagogical communication is a key feature of pedagogical interaction consisting of all the practices -speech and action- of teachers and students in the context of the pedagogical relationship. Pedagogical communication between participants in school life is achieved through the use of symbols, which are signified in social reality. Because language is a vast system of symbols, it is also, therefore, the basis of communication. As a meaningful process, it encompasses mechanisms for encoding and decoding messages through symbols (Brunner & Huber, 1989; Konstantinou, 2015).

Every communication is defined by two dimensions: the relationship and the content. Where two people communicate, there is the corresponding social relationship, in the context of which the communication unfolds. This communicative relationship is the interpretive key to understanding the second dimension, i.e., content, which concerns the information (knowledge) containing more than one messages. These messages, which may be clear or implied, verbal or non-verbal, concern the content of the education and are mainly sent out by the teacher. When, therefore, for a specific or non-specific reason, the teacher-student communication relationship is disrupted, e.g., due to the ironic attitude of the first, then, despite the fact that the teacher is considered an expert in his subject, there usually follows a rejection of the content of the teaching, i.e., of the education (knowledge, ideas, messages) and, consequently, of the teacher himself (Hobmair u.a, 2002; Konstantinou, 2015; Watzlawick, Beavin & Jackson, 1969).

## 2. The role of humor in educational communication

The type of practice used by the teacher in his pedagogical communication with the students affects not only the relationship between them but also the content of the teaching, learning and, in general, the educational process. In this case, we have chosen humor as a pedagogical communication practice, given that the research data identifies it as a very important, beneficial and effective medium between the teacher and the students. It is a communicative tool that applies to all aspects of everyday life, inside and outside the school (Chaniotakis, 2011; Konstantinou, 2003).

In a more meaningful approach, humor is defined as “the perception of things and life from their funny and comic side, as well as the expression of this aspect both in (one’s) oral and written speech in a clever, witty way” (Babinotis, 2005: 1952-53). According to a shorter definition with positive characteristics, “humor is a special form of communication that aims to provoke laughter” (Chaniotakis, 2011: 31). In a somehow different formulation, the concept of humor “means the teacher’s ability to deal with the child’s concerns and distresses from a position of power”, i.e., detached and without identifying emotionally with the child (Bollnow, 1964, as. ref. Chaniotakis, 2011: 32). This means that humor management involves both mental processes for creating, perceiving and understanding a joke, and emotional reactions to it (e.g., laughing, smiling). Thus, positive or friendly humor can, among other things, turn even negative emotions into positive ones (Martin & Ford, 2018).

However, there is also negative or aggressive or self-deprecating or “black” humor, which includes derogatory elements of another person’s personality, such as sarcasm, irony, mockery, nationalistic, racial or cultural jokes, and sexual innuendos. This type of humor can cause pain, anxiety, hostility, feelings of shame and lowered self-esteem in one’s personality. Also, the research data highlights the negative impact it has on learning, when the teacher uses this particular form of humor in the educational process. Therefore, this type of humor is, obviously, unsuitable as a means of communication either in everyday social relations or, even more, in

pedagogical relations between teacher and students (Chabeli, 2008; Chaniotakis, 2011; Papadopoulou, 2020).

Based on the above, it becomes clear that humor as a concept includes both emotional and cognitive characteristics. According to this, the teacher can effectively manage a problematic situation in the classroom, such as a student's misbehavior or stress in an examination process using positive or friendly humor, as a pedagogical practice that causes laughter. Consequently, the effect of positive humor, from its pedagogical perspective, is particularly beneficial for the educational process, the classroom climate and the relationship between the teacher and the students, as well as for the student himself. Specifically, it favors social interaction and relationships between the teacher and students, but also between students, encourages school learning, especially for children with learning difficulties, enhances students' performance and self-esteem, frees students' ability to express themselves, creates feelings of pleasure, relieves and softens moments of tension and anxiety, while, at the same time, it cultivates the important social skill and attitude of managing everyday issues. Also, the frequent use of humor as a practice by the teacher forms conditions for promoting the creative and critical ability, as well as the emotional intelligence of the student (Askildson, 2005; Chabeli, 2008; Chaniotakis, 2011; Papadopoulou, 2020).

These positive elements of pedagogical communication contribute to limiting behavior problems and strengthening good mood and good relations between the teacher and the students, but also between the students themselves. Additionally, positive humor can also be used as a means of de-escalating a student's unruly or aggressive behavior. Moreover, humor as a pedagogical practice affects the educational process in two indirect ways. The first is to stimulate and maintain students' interest in the educational process. In this case, the use of humor during the teaching process is considered particularly important, since it encourages students who feel boredom, tediousness, insufficiency, or have some learning difficulty to better understand the lesson and show increased performance in school tests. The second way is the positive effect on the school climate and social interaction in the classroom. In this sense, these two factors ensure the smooth operation of the educational process, promote the pedagogical content and contribute significantly to the development of desirable behavior practices and, overall, the student's personality (Chaniotakis, 2011; Deneire, 1995; Kontogiannis & Krokou, 2020; Konstantinou, 2015; Papadopoulou, 2020).

In conclusion, positive or friendly humor is considered, from a pedagogical point of view, an important component of a successful practice in the educational process as well as in everyday life, as long as it is used in an appropriate pedagogical way, taking into account the prevailing conditions and the peculiarities of the students, in order to be easily understood and to bring about the desirable result. This fact is also confirmed by relevant research (Kailari, 2019; Konstantinou, Chatzisavva & Logotheti, 2022; Konstantinou & Konstantinou, 2021; Samikou, 2016), according to which students of primary and secondary education in Greek schools in their evaluation of the qualities of a "good" teacher rank in the highest scales (1<sup>st</sup> preference) his ability to use humor as a component of his communication with his students.

Despite the positive effects of humor, many teachers avoid integrating it into their teaching, possibly due to the pressure of the curriculum or the perception that humor does not fit in with their teaching and their role or for fear of losing control of the classroom, as well as the respect they think they deserve. This means that the use of humor can become an unsafe learning tool, endangering the smooth functioning of the classroom and creating additional difficulties in the educational task, if the teacher does not manage it wisely and carefully, taking into account a number of conditions, which can ensure its smooth integration into the educational process. First of all, the teacher must know the safe limits between teaching and the jokes he will use, showing respect to the age, individual characteristics, needs and interests of the children. It is necessary that his humor is addressed to all students indiscriminately leaving out jokes about the individual

characteristics of the students, since even a well-intentioned teasing in the school environment can have negative consequences for achieving a balanced climate in the school unit (Chaniotakis, 2011; Logotheti, 2017).

The experience of humor is well-known to all people and constitutes a universal practice. Every person, regardless of age, gender, socio-economic level, in all civilizations and cultures, has experienced humor. Differences in its use and the circumstances in which it is considered appropriate or inappropriate may occur between different cultures, but the response to humor, namely laughter, is common to all cultures. It is pointed out, however, that while people are capable of perceiving a stimulus as funny and laugh at it, regardless of age, gender, social or economic status, culture and time, the way of receiving and evaluating a stimulus as a joke differs from person to person. This means that some external, individual and social characteristics can influence the evaluation of whether something is or is not humorous. Characteristics such as nationality, culture, emotional mood, intellectual capacity of the recipient, gender, age, which are strong differentiation factors of the way individuals perceive, accept and create humor belong in this category (Martin, 2007; Martin & Ford, 2018).

Since, therefore, the specific form of pedagogical communication affects not only the behavior of the student and the relationship between the participants in the educational process, but also creates favorable conditions for the learning content, we thought that it is of particular research interest to deal with this topic.

### 3. Research purpose and methodology: Questionnaire

As mentioned in the introductory part, the purpose of this research is to investigate the opinions of primary school and high school students on the role of humor as a practice in the educational communication between the teacher and the students. In particular, it is investigated whether and to what extent humor affects the students' behavior towards the teacher, the educational process, but also their personality.

The present research was conducted at a local level and due to the fact that the sample is very specific there might be some limitations in generalizing the results. However, this does not mean that the research and pedagogic value of the findings is not quantifiable and recognizable, given that, in any case, through the findings, a specific trend regarding the purpose of the research emerges. We need to point out that this particular research constitutes one of the first attempts (maybe the very first) to investigate students' opinions in Greek bibliographic data. The questionnaire consists of seventeen (17) closed-ended questions which enable the student to grade his answers. The questionnaire was distributed to a total of 178 students of the 6th grade of primary school and 1st, 2nd and 3rd grade of high school (60 and 118 respectively) in the city of Ioannina (randomly selected schools) in the first ten days of May 2023. Before it was distributed to the students, a pilot test of the questionnaire was carried out with the participation of five (5) high school students and five (5) primary school students respectively, from which it was possible to improve the language formulation of some questions. The completion of the questionnaire, which lasted approximately ten (10) minutes, was carried out in the presence of the researchers, in order to clarify any questions on the part of the students.

#### 3.1 *Statistical test: Validity and reliability of the research*

To ensure the validity of the questionnaire, we used the relevant theories that define the concept of humor and its role in pedagogical communication and the educational process. Also, the pilot test of the questionnaire acted as reinforcement in this direction.

Regarding the statistical test, we point out that by coding the answers and applying the two-tailed t-test for independent samples, we examined whether there is a statistically significant difference between the answers of boys and girls and found out that no statistically significant difference was found in all questions except for the question “I prefer the teacher to communicate with me without using humor” ( $p\text{-value}=0.036 < 0.05$ ). In this question, the boys stated that they prefer the teacher to communicate with them without using humor. In addition, we examined whether there is a statistically significant difference between the responses of primary school and high school students. From this particular examination we found out that there is no statistically significant difference between the two grades ( $p\text{-value}<0.05$ ) in 13 out of the 16 questions of the questionnaire. Specifically, a statistically significant difference ( $p\text{-value}=0.009$ ) was found in the question “I am used to others making humor to me”, in which primary school students stated that they are more used to receiving humorous comments compared to high school students. A statistically significant difference ( $p\text{-value}<0.045$ ) was also detected in the question “I prefer the teacher to communicate with me without using humor”, in which high school students prefer more than primary school students the teacher not to communicate with humor with them. Finally, in the question “How much does humor affect you in your educational relationship with the teacher?”, a statistically significant difference was also found ( $p\text{-value}=0.011$ ). In this question, the high school students seem to have been more influenced by the teacher’s humor and state that this affects their relationship with the teacher.

In addition, an internal consistency check of our questionnaire measurement scales was carried out and it was examined whether the questions show a high coherence or correlation both with each other and with the object of our research. The internal consistency and reliability of the factors created were examined by means of Cronbach’s alpha coefficient. Cronbach’s alpha index was found in all questions higher than 0.7. This means that the results of the questionnaire survey are characterized by high reliability and consistency. Therefore, the questionnaire is, in any case, reliable.

#### 4. Comprehensive presentation of research findings

##### 4.1 *Demographics*

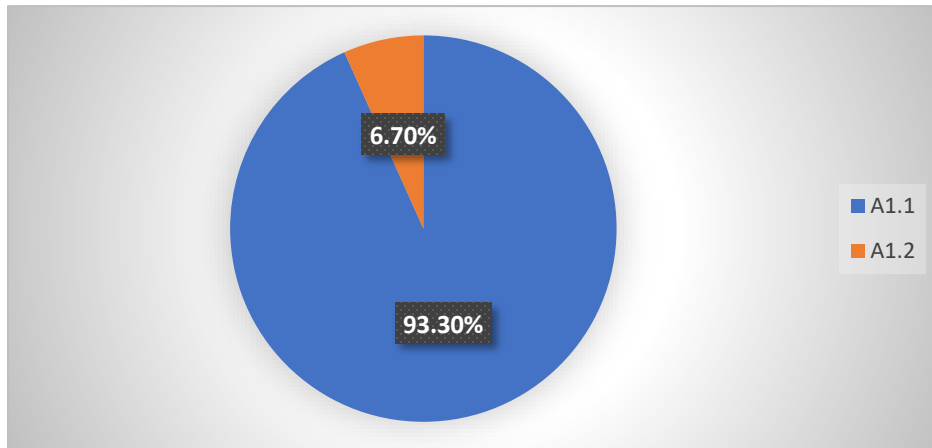
The students of the 6th grade of the primary school and the 1st, 2nd and 3rd grades of the high school, who participated in the research, amount to 178, with a slight numerical superiority of girls over boys ( $N=94$  and  $N=84$  respectively). Also, high school students outnumber primary school students (118 and 60 respectively).

##### 4.2 *Students’ views on the concept of humor*

*Question A1: What does the word (concept) “humor” mean to you?*

A1.1 It means that someone tells a joke that causes me to smile or laugh.

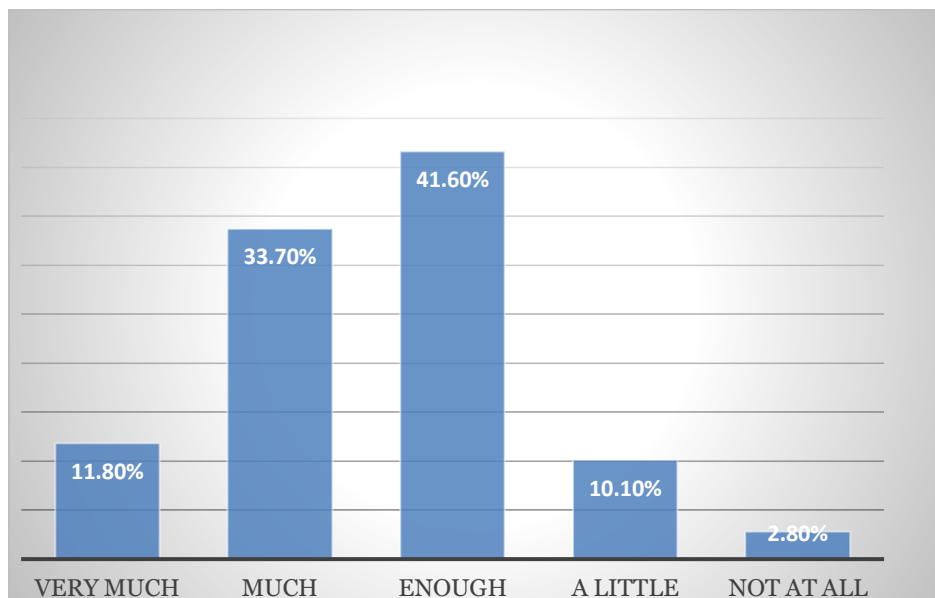
A1.2 It means that someone says something that is not funny and requires me to laugh.



The vast majority of students, at a rate of 93.3%, gave an unequivocal answer regarding the definition of humor facilitating the interpretation of their answers in the subsequent findings directly related to its meaning. There is, of course, a percentage of the order of 6.7%, which either does not know the concept or has not realized humor in practice.

#### 4.3 Students' views on their experiences of humor.

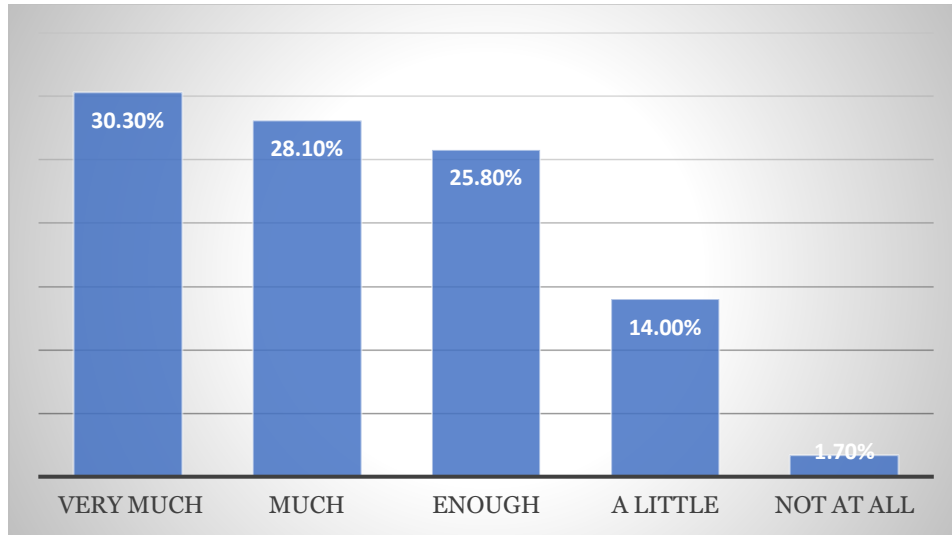
*Question A2.1: I am used to being made fun of*



Summing up the three positive ratings “too much” (11.8%), “a lot” (33.7%) and “quite a bit” (41.6%), one finds out that 87.1% of the students have experienced humor, obviously in their family, school and wider social environment. This percentage is almost exactly in accordance with the above finding (A1), demonstrating at the same time a small percentage of ignorance or absence of experiences of humor as a practice. Certainly, the remaining cumulative percentage of 12.9% of “a little” (10.1%) and “not at all” (2.8%) ratings is not negligible for students, who are not used to humor. This means that their respective responses that follow are affected by their lack of experiencing humorous situations.

4.4 Students' wishes for the teacher's humor in the classroom

Question A2.2: Would you like your class teacher to make humor in class?



The sum of the three positive ratings “very much” (30.3%), “a lot” (28.1%) and “enough” (25.8%) gives us the percentage of 84.2%, which clearly emphasizes that the vast majority of students crave humor as a classroom practice. Of course, there is also here a cumulative percentage of 15.8% of ratings “a little” (14%) and “not at all” (1.7%), which does not want humor. Based on the previous finding (12.9%), this percentage is probably related to the students who lack experiences of humor. In other words, students who have not experienced humor in practice.

4.5 The students' opinions about the teacher's non-use of humor in the communication between them

<b>Question A2.3: I prefer the teacher to communicate with me without making humor</b>		
<b>Graduation</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentages %</b>
<b>Not at all</b>	53	29.8
<b>A little</b>	84	47.2
<b>Enough</b>	28	15.7
<b>Much</b>	5	2.8
<b>Very much</b>	8	4.5
<b>In total</b>	178	100.0

In this specific finding, adding the two negative ratings “a little” (47.2%) and “not at all” (29.8%), a percentage of 77% is extracted, according to which the students express the desire for the teacher to prefer humor in his communication with them. This specific finding confirms the previous one and clearly shows the students' desire for the teacher to use humor as a practice in their communication.

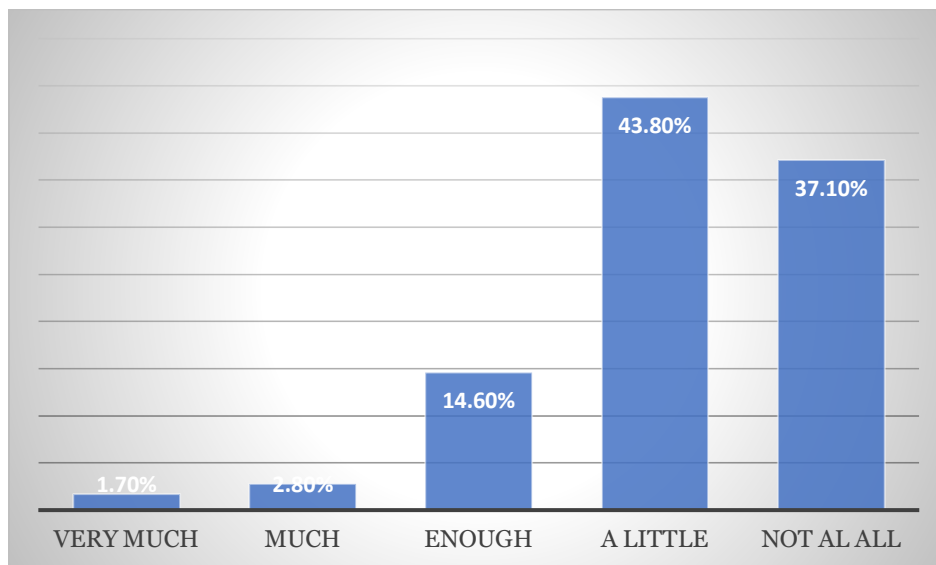
4.6 *The students' opinions about the teacher's humor in his communication with their classmates*

<b>Question A2.4: Do you want the teacher to make humor only with your classmates?</b>	
<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentages %</b>
100	56.2
44	24.7
20	11.2
10	5.6
4	2.2
178	100.0

Based on the sum of the two negative ratings “a little” (24.7%) and “not at all” (56.2%) we are led to an overwhelming percentage of 80.9%, according to which the students confirm previous findings. That is, they want the teacher to communicate with humor not only with their classmates but also with them personally.

4.7 *The students' preferences for the strict teacher*

Question A2.5: *I prefer the teacher to be strict with his students*



Adding the two negative ratings “a little” (43.8%) and “not at all”, (37.1%) one finds out that the vast majority of students (80.9%) do not prefer a strict teacher. Obviously, the students want the teacher to be more pleasant and familiar to them. However, there is also a cumulative percentage (19.9%) of the three positive ratings “very much” (1.7%), “a lot” (2.8%) and “enough” (14.6%), which is not inconsiderable, which, perhaps due to experiences and a different perception of things, wants him strict.



4.8 *The students' views on the effect of humor on their relationship with the teacher*

<b>A2.6 How much does humor affect you in your educational relationship with the teacher?</b>		
<b>Graduation</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentages %</b>
<b>Not at all</b>	18	10.1
<b>A little</b>	40	22.5
<b>Enough</b>	47	26.4
<b>Much</b>	44	24.7
<b>Very much</b>	29	16.3
<b>In total</b>	178	100.0

The percentage of 67.4%, obviously slightly lower than the previous ones, summing up the three positive ratings “very much” (16.3%), “a lot” (24.7%) and “enough” (26.4%), shows that the students are of the opinion that humor affects, apparently positively, their relationship with the teacher. Of course, the remaining percentage 32.6% of the ratings “a little” (22.5%) and “not at all” (10.1%) is clearly considerable for the students, who, for various reasons, express an opposite opinion.

4.9 *Students' views on the role of humor in changing their mood in the classroom*

<b>Question A2.7: Does your mood change when the teacher makes humor in class?</b>		
<b>Graduation</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentages %</b>
<b>Not at all</b>	6	3.4
<b>A little</b>	16	9.0
<b>Enough</b>	44	24.7
<b>Much</b>	53	29.8
<b>Very much</b>	59	33.1
<b>In total</b>	178	100.0

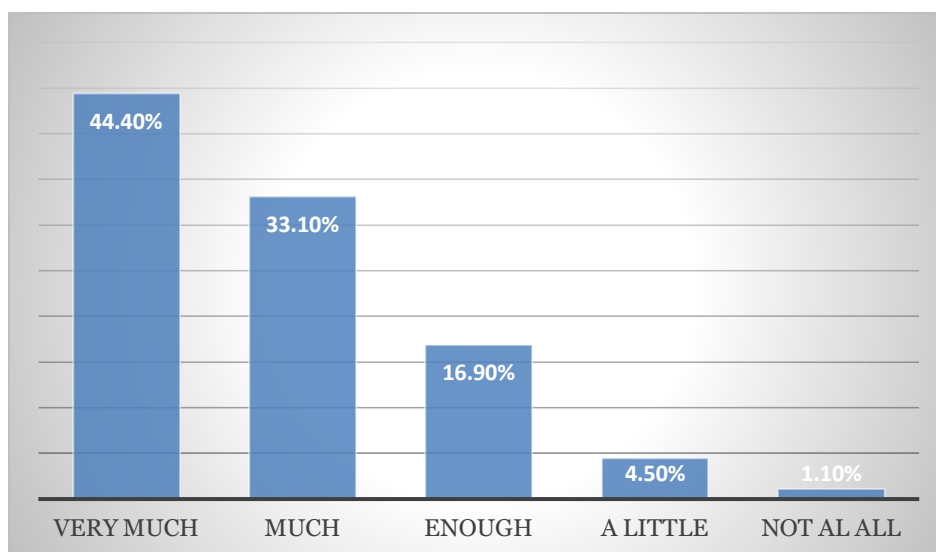
As regards the change in students' mood brought about by humor in class the percentage is very high. More specifically, adding up the three positive ratings “very much” (33.1%), “a lot” (29.8%) and “enough” (24.7%) there is the overwhelming percentage of 87.6 %, which clearly demonstrates that humor changes the mood of students in a positive direction. However, there is also a 12.4% of students, the sum of the ratings “a little” (9%) and “not at all”

(3.4%), which, either due to ignorance or due to lack of experience in humor, implies they are not affected by humor.

#### 4.10 Students' views on the contribution of humor in the creation of a good climate among them

*Question A2.8: Do you think that humor helps having a good climate in the classroom and among the students?*

The almost absolute percentage of 94.4%, as a product of the sum of the three positive ratings “very much” (44.4%), “a lot” (33.1%) and “enough” (16.9%), leaves little doubt that humor clearly contributes to the formation of a good climate among them. Even a percentage of students without experiences or ignorance of the practice of humor, seems to express a positive opinion on this matter.



#### 4.11 Students' views on the effect of humor in teaching

**Question A2.9: Does humor affect teaching/learning, i.e., does it make you more interested in the lesson?**

Graduation	Frequency	Percentages
Not at all	7	3.9
A little	27	15.2
Enough	62	34.8
Much	50	28.1
Very much	32	18.0
<b>In total</b>	<b>178</b>	<b>100.0</b>

From the sum of the three positive ratings “very much” (18%), “a lot” (28.1%) and “enough” (34.8%), there occurs another overwhelming percentage of 80.9%, according to which students emphatically state that humor increases their interest in the lesson. This finding acquires

notable importance, given that it forms very positive conditions for the active participation of the student in the lesson, a decisive point in the organization of the teaching and learning process for the teacher.

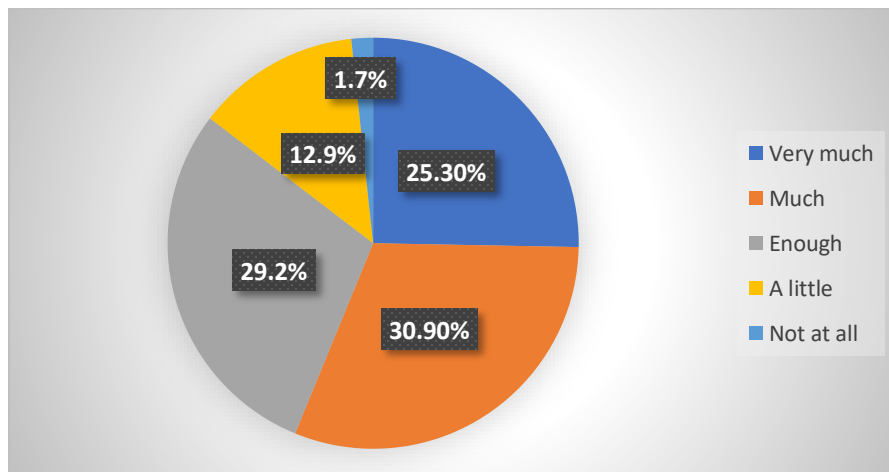
4.12 *Students' views on the contribution of humor to the student's free expression of opinion*

<b>Question A2.10: Does humor make you feel brave enough to speak your mind freely?</b>		
<b>Graduation</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentages %</b>
<b>Not at all</b>	8	4.5
<b>A little</b>	32	18.0
<b>Enough</b>	51	28.7
<b>Much</b>	58	32.6
<b>Very much</b>	29	16.3
<b>In total</b>	178	100.0

An overwhelming percentage of 77.6%, almost the same as the previous findings, occurs from the sum of the three positive ratings “very much” (16.3%), “a lot” (32.6%) and “enough” (28.7%), regarding the contribution of humor to the free expression of opinion. A very high majority of students state that humor encourages them to speak their mind freely. Therefore, humor turns out to be a very good “counselor” for the development of dialogue and the cultivation of student democracy.

4.13 *Students' views on the role of humor in relieving tension and stress in the classroom*

*Question A2.11: When there is tension, worry and anxiety in the classroom, does humor relieve you and make you feel more comfortable and cheerful?*

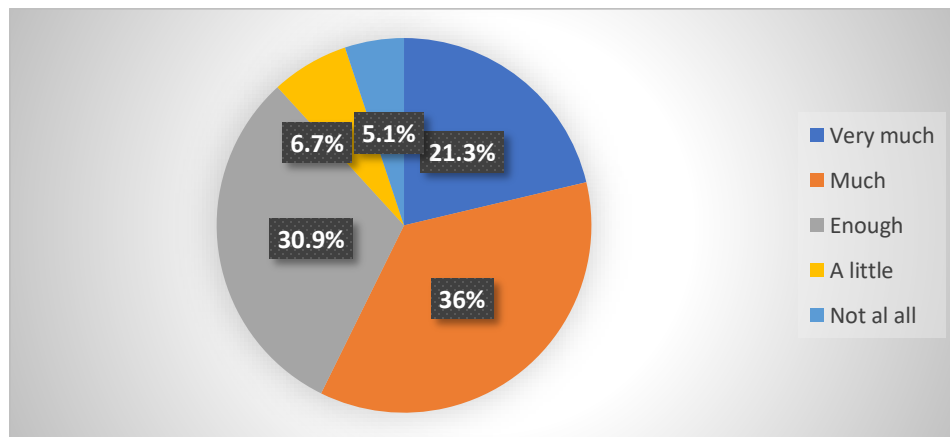


As far as the role of humor in relieving tension and stress in class is concerned the percentage of the sum of the three positive ratings “very much” (25.3%), “a lot” (30.9%) and “quite

a bit” (29.2%) is even higher. Specifically, the students, at a rate of 85.4%, are of the opinion that humor contributes decisively to the reduction of tensions and stress. In other words, the practice of humor relaxes, relieves and helps to change their mood in a positive direction.

4.14 *Students’ views on the contribution of humor to making a greater effort to participate in the lesson*

*Question A2.12: When you have a teacher with a sense of humor, does it make you try to participate more in class?*



Regarding the contribution of humor to making a greater effort to participate in the lesson, the percentage from the sum of the three positive ratings “very much” (21.3%), “a lot” (36%) and “enough” (30.9%) is clearly higher. More specifically, the vast majority of students, at a percentage of 88.2%, state that humor encourages them to participate more enthusiastically in the lesson, which is in line with a similar finding mentioned above.

4.15 *Students’ views on the role of humor in the improvement of grades improvement of grades*

The percentage of students (73.6%) who claim that humor helps them improve their grades is very high, but slightly lower than the previous findings. This percentage results from the sum of the three positive ratings “very much” (14%), “a lot” (30.9%) and “enough” (28.7%).

<b>Question A2.13: When you have a teacher with a sense of humor, do you feel motivated to get better grades?</b>		
<b>Graduation</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentages %</b>
<b>Not at all</b>	11	6.2
<b>A little</b>	36	20.2
<b>Enough</b>	51	28.7
<b>Much</b>	55	30.9
<b>Very much</b>	25	14.0
<b>In total</b>	178	100.0

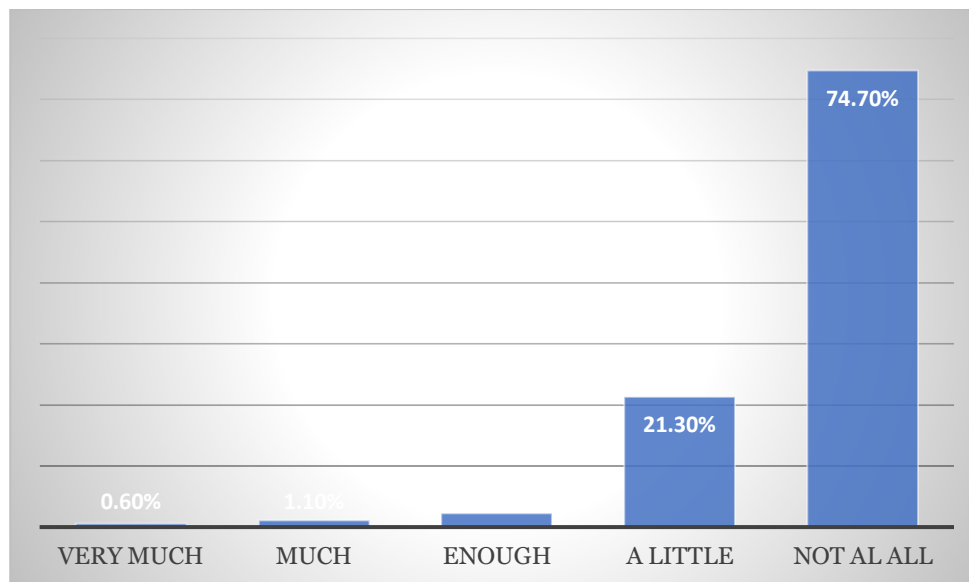
4.16 *The students' opinions on the teacher as a humor model in their daily life*

<b>Question A2.14: Do you want to be like the teacher and use humor in your everyday life?</b>		
<b>Graduation</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentages %</b>
<b>Not at all</b>	11	6.2
<b>A little</b>	33	18.5
<b>Enough</b>	56	31.5
<b>Much</b>	51	28.7
<b>Very much</b>	27	15.2
<b>In total</b>	178	100.0

The percentage of students from the sum of the three positive grades “very much” (15.2%), “a lot” (28.7%) and “enough” (31.5%), who are of the opinion that they are willing to imitate the teacher's sense of humor in their daily lives is almost similar to the previous one (75.4%). In this case it is proven that the teacher becomes a positive model of behavior for his students.

4.17 *The students' views on the necessity of humor in human relationships*

*Question A2.15: Do you think that humor is not needed, because it does not help to create good relationships among people?*



The highest of all percentages in the survey findings (96%) concerns students' views of humor as a necessary component of social relationships. Specifically, from the sum of the two negative ratings “a little” (21.3%) and “not at all” (74.7%) it turns out that the students, in their overwhelming majority, are of the opinion that humor contributes, to a catalytic degree, to the creation of good social relationships.

## 4.18 Students' experiences of their teachers' use of humor

<b>Question A2.16: Do you have experiences of teachers who used humor in your class?</b>		
<b>Graduation</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentages %</b>
<b>Not at all</b>	7	3.9
<b>A little</b>	24	3.5
<b>Enough</b>	54	30.3
<b>Much</b>	55	30.9
<b>Very much</b>	38	21.3
<b>In total</b>	178	100.0

Finally, regarding the students' experiences of humor from their teachers, there also turns out an overwhelming percentage of 82.3%. In particular, adding up the three positive ratings "very much" (21.3%), "a lot" (30.9%) and "enough" (30.3%), there occurs a very positive element in the management of communication by teachers. More specifically, the students state that they have, at a very high percentage, positive experiences from their teachers in the use of humor as a practice in their communication.

## 5. Interpretation of findings and final conclusions

As we mentioned in the theoretical part, the teacher knows or, at least, should know from a pedagogical point of view that the form of communication he chooses, consciously or unconsciously, affects not only his relationship with the student, but also the content and the result of the educational processes. In order to investigate the topic, we chose humor as a pedagogical communication practice, given that the research findings identify it as a very important beneficial and effective means between the teacher and the students. It is a communicative tool applicable to all aspects of everyday life, inside and outside school.

All the theoretical and research data highlight humor as an educational practice, which favors social interaction and relationships between the teacher and students, but also between students, encourages school learning, especially for children with learning disabilities, strengthens students' performance and self-esteem, frees students' ability to express themselves, creates feelings of pleasure, relieves and softens moments of tension and palliates anxiety, while, at the same time, cultivates the important social skill and attitude to manage everyday issues. Also, the frequent use of humor as a practice by the teacher forms conditions for promoting the creative and critical ability, as well as the emotional intelligence of the student.

Indeed, from the overall findings of our research, there are confirmed, to an indisputable degree, all the beneficial effects of humor in educational communication. Besides, even from a rational point of view, it would be paradoxical for students not to accept an educational practice that causes smiles and laughter, when we know from research that at school, as a social and pedagogical institution, normative conditions prevail, i.e., the application of rules, obligations, pressure, scoring, competition, etc.

From the initial findings, it turns out that the vast majority of primary school and high school students (93.3%) conceptually know what "humor" means, which leads to more solid conclusions regarding their answers. Also, the majority has experienced humor as a practice in

their immediate and wider environment. There is, of course, also a minority, approximately an average of 13%, which showed not to have perceived or experienced humor in practice. These students' opinions can also be demonstrated by the following questions of the questionnaire, in which it is found that they "ignore" the beneficial qualities of humor. Interpreting the two specific findings, we consider that they constitute a self-evident sociological and pedagogical fact in accordance with these students' experiences which are linked to the prevalence of different education and socialization processes in their family as well as in their school and wider social environment.

The findings that impress with their overwhelming percentages (95% and above) are those that have as reference points the acceptance of humor as a practice that contributes to the positive climate among students promoting good human relations. The rest of the research findings also demonstrate (at an overwhelming percentage of 75%) the clearly positive effect that humor has on teaching, on students' expressing free opinion, their being activated in lessons, their performance, the change of their mood, the release of tensions and stress, their relationship with the teacher and, more broadly, the climate of the classroom and the conditions of the school.

In conclusion, it is confirmed by the findings of our research and, in fact, at overwhelming percentages, that humor constitutes a practice that is very close to the needs and desires of the student and which, with almost absolute certainty, has exclusively beneficial properties for the educational communication and process, the student and the teacher. Therefore, humor constitutes a pedagogical recommendation to the teacher to utilize and properly cultivate as an important social skill in the educational communication and his relationship with his students.

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