

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN COPING THROUGH HUMOR AND MENTAL WELL-BEING IN UNIVERSITY STUDENTS: THE MEDIATING ROLE OF REAPPRAISAL

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Abstract

Using humor as a coping tool in the face of stressful situations increases positive affect and well-being by enabling individuals to evaluate the negative situation from a new perspective. In this study, the mediating role of reappraisal in the relationship between coping through humor and mental well-being was examined. The sample of the study consisted of 505 university students studying at state universities in Turkey in the 2023-2024 academic year. Data were collected from students in state universities in 20 different cities of Turkey. Considering the ease of accessing data, the convenient sampling method was preferred. The Coping with the Humor Scale, the Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Well-Being Scale Short Form, and the Reappraisal subscale of the Emotion Regulation Scale were used as data collection tools in the study. The reliability of the scales used in the study was examined by confirmatory factor analysis. The relationships between variables were examined by Pearson correlation analysis and regression analysis was performed using Process Macro (model 4). In the regression analysis, mediation was tested with the Bootstrap technique. According to the results of correlation and regression analyses, it was seen that there were significant positive relationships between coping through humor, mental well-being, and reappraisal. According to the results of regression-based Bootstrap analysis, coping through humor is a predictor of mental well-being and reappraisal has a partial mediating role in the relationship between coping through humor and mental well-being. It is thought that the results obtained can contribute to research and application examples involving humor and reappraisal in increasing the mental well-being of university students and fill a gap in the literature.

Keywords: Coping through Humor, Mental well-being, reappraisal, Emotion regulation, University students.

Üniversite Öğrencilerinde Mizah Yoluyla Başa Çıkma ve Mental İyi Oluş Arasındaki İlişki: Yeniden Değerlendirmenin Aracı Rolü

Öz

Bireylerin stresli durumlar karşısında mizahı bir baş etme aracı olarak kullanması, olumsuz durumu yeni bir bakış açısıyla değerlendirmesini sağlayarak olumlu duygulanımını ve iyi oluşunu artırmaktadır. Bu çalışmada da mizah yoluyla başa çıkmanın mental iyi oluş ile ilişkisinde yeniden değerlendirmenin aracı rolü incelenmiştir. Araştırmanın örneklemini Türkiye'deki devlet üniversitelerinde 2023-2024 eğitim öğretim yılında öğrenim gören 505 üniversite öğrencisi oluşturmuştur. Veriler Türkiye'nin 20 farklı ilindeki devlet üniversitelerinde öğrenim gören öğrencilerden toplanmıştır. Verilere ulaşmanın kolaylığı göz önünde bulundurularak kolayda örnekleme yöntemi tercih edilmiştir. Çalışmada veri toplama aracı olarak Mizah Yoluyla Başa Çıkma Ölçeği, Warwick-Edinburgh Mental İyi Oluş Ölçeği Kısa Formu ve Duygu Düzenleme Ölçeği'nin Yeniden Değerlendirme alt boyutu kullanılmıştır. Araştırmada kullanılan ölçeklerin güvenilirliği doğrulayıcı faktör analizi ile incelenmiştir. Değişkenler arasındaki ilişkiler Pearson korelasyon analiziyle incelenmiş ve regresyon analizi Process Macro (model 4) kullanılarak gerçekleştirilmiştir. Yapılan regresyon analizinde Bootstrap tekniği ile aracılık test edilmiştir. Korelasyon ve regresyon analizi sonuçlarına göre mizah yoluyla başa çıkma, mental iyi oluş ve yeniden değerlendirme arasında pozitif yönlü anlamlı ilişkilerin olduğu görülmüştür. Regresyon temelli Bootstrap analizi

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sonuçlarına göre mizah yoluyla başa çıkma mental iyi oluşun bir yordayıcısı olup, yeniden değerlendirmenin mizah yoluyla başa çıkma ile mental iyi oluş ilişkisinde kısmi aracılık rolü bulunmaktadır. Elde edilen sonuçların üniversite öğrencilerinin mental iyi oluşlarının artırılmasında mizahın ve yeniden değerlendirmenin kullanılmasını içeren araştırma ve uygulama örneklerine katkı sunabileceği ve literatürdeki bir boşluğu doldurabileceği düşünülmektedir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: Mizah yoluyla başa çıkma, Mental iyi oluş, Yeniden değerlendirme, Duygu düzenleme, Üniversite öğrencileri.

1. Introduction

People can use different resources to cope with the stressful situations they encounter in life (Amjad & Dasti, 2022). These mechanisms used to cope with stressful situations are especially important for young adult university students. One of the most important reasons for this is that this period is considered a transition period in which many sources of stress are exposed (Besser & Zeiger-Hill, 2011). During this age period, university students experience many things about adult life for the first time, are in search of identity, and many of them live apart from their families for education. As a result, they experience stress, and their well-being is negatively affected (Chow & Healey, 2008; Erkoç & Danış, 2020). Considering that neuroplasticity decreases with young adulthood and most mental disorders occur until the age of twenty-four, it is thought that it is important to examine the mechanisms used by university students to cope with stressful situations in life (Kays et al., 2012; Kessler et al., 2005). At this point, humor is one of the important coping ways that is widely used among young adults in dealing with stressful events in life and helps the person move away from negative experiences (Kuiper & Martin, 2010; Samson & Gross, 2014).

Humor can be defined as funny and entertaining content that contributes to seeing the different aspects of existing situations and can strongly affect negative emotions (Åstedt-Kurki & Isola, 2001; Bag, 2020). From a theoretical perspective, humor is seen as a defense mechanism used by the superego to calm the anxious ego, but it is also an important resource that allows the person to get away from problems and gives a perspective of reappraisal (Freud, 1928; May, 1953). Humor helps cope with stress and increases happiness and positive affect (Lefcourt, 2001; Yerlikaya, 2009). Thus, it contributes to the improvement of mental health (Kaya & Yağan, 2022).

Humor appears as a desirable personality trait because it offers different perspectives on life events and creates an environment of consensus (Kuiper & Martin, 2010). Humor increases psychological well-being by allowing people to make positive reappraisals when coping with stressful situations in life (Maiolino & Kuiper, 2016). Studies have shown that the use of humor contributes to increased psychological well-being as well as physical well-being; It shows that it helps reduce stress, anxiety, and depression (Çalışan Demir & Tagay, 2015; Lefcourt, 2001; Martin, 2001). Therefore, examining how the use of humor as a coping tool affects psychological well-being will contribute to the use of humor as a resource in increasing well-being (Kaya & Yağan, 2022; Salesman & Deniz, 2017).

Well-being is an important concept of positive psychology and is defined as the ability of positive emotions to have greater dominance over negative emotions. In addition, the concept of well-being has been discussed by researchers from different perspectives, including "subjective well-being" and "psychological well-being." While subjective well-being refers to the individual's satisfaction with life by experiencing more positive emotions, psychological well-being deals with the individual's ability to live a functional life as well as experiencing positive emotions (Diener, 2000; Ryff, 1989). The concept of mental well-being was put forward, considering that both concepts address well-being from different perspectives and are insufficient to explain (Kayış & Salesman, 2019). Mental well-being is defined as having functional experiences in which people can experience more positive emotions in life

experiences that lead to happiness by combining the concepts of subjective and psychological well-being (Keyes, 2002).

Mental well-being enables people to increase their positive emotions, realize their abilities, develop their strengths, become productive and efficient, and contribute to society (World Health Organization, 2014). In addition, mental well-being helps people establish more qualified and safe relationships and adapt to the environment (Keldal, 2015). Therefore, it can be said that increased mental well-being enables a person to feel better, be more successful, and show higher coping skills (Trenoweth, 2017). At this point, it is thought that increasing mental well-being in young adult university students and examining variables that will contribute to increasing mental well-being are important for both preventive and interventional guidance activities.

When faced with negative situations, the positive use of humor as a source of struggle contributes to the individual's cognitive reappraisal of the event and move away from the negative emotions caused by the event (Braniecka et al., 2019; Fredrickson et al., 2000). At this point, it is stated that humor has an emotion regulation function and can be used within the scope of antecedent-focused and response-focused emotion regulation strategies (Doosje et al., 2010; Samson & Gross, 2012). While antecedent-focused emotion regulation strategies facilitate the use of an adaptive sense of humor to reduce the effects of a stressful situation, response-focused emotion regulation can lead to the use of unhealthy humor in which negative emotions are suppressed (Amjad & Dasti, 2022; Poncy, 2017). Considering that young adults who are successful in emotion regulation are more likely to achieve their goals and have higher satisfaction with life (Jovanovic, 2011; Mathews, 2016), using humor as a coping tool is likely to increase the individual's well-being when combined with functional emotion regulation strategies (Amjad & Dasti, 2022).

Studies examining how the use of humor affects well-being show that cognitive reappraisal, which allows re-framing and evaluating negative events, contributes to this process (Fritz et al., 2017). Cognitive reappraisal provides the opportunity to evaluate stressful factors from different perspectives and produce alternative perspectives of less stressful situations (Park, 2010). At this point, even if the stressful situation cannot be changed with reappraisal, it may be possible to change the negative emotions created by this situation or to focus on other situations that create positive emotions (Fritz et al., 2017). From this perspective, the use of humor is considered a resource that supports reappraisal (Kuiper, 2012).

Looking at the literature, there is evidence that the use of humor is associated with the reappraisal of events (Abel, 2002; Braniecka et al., 2019; Fritz et al., 2017; Ojeda & Kiang, 2014). In addition, although studies have found a strong connection between humor styles and well-being, the role of emotion regulation in this relationship has not been examined (Martin, 2010). There is a need to investigate the relationship between humor and the well-being of young adults, especially on the axis of cognitive emotion regulation. The results obtained can create a comprehensive theory regarding the well-being of individuals (Amjad & Dasti, 2022). When the studies conducted in Turkish culture were reviewed, it was concluded that there are studies examining the relationships between coping through humor, mental well-being, happiness levels, psychological well-being, and forgiveness (Kağan & Atalay, 2018; Kayış & Satici, 2019; Kütük & Ümmet, 2022; Satici & Deniz, 2017). On the other hand, no study examining whether reappraisal has a mediating role in the relationship between coping through humor and mental well-being, which is aimed to be examined within the scope of this study, has been found by me.

Considering that coping through humor can contribute to the mental well-being of university students with various developmental difficulties, examining the mediating role of reappraisal in this relationship will be an important resource for preventive and interventionist mental health practices based on humor and reappraisal. For this purpose, the hypotheses of the study are as follows:

H1: Coping through humor predicts mental well-being positively and statistically significantly.

H2: Coping through humor predicts reappraisal positively and statistically significantly.

H3: Reappraisal predicts mental well-being positively and statistically significantly.

H4: The mediating role of new reappraisal in the relationship between coping through humor and mental well-being is statistically significant.

2. Method

This study was designed according to the relational screening model and aimed to explain the relationships between the variables examined, coping through humor, mental well-being, and reappraisal, and to make predictions about the results (Büyüköztürk et al., 2014). In addition, in the study, the mediating role of reappraisal in the relationship between coping through humor and mental well-being was examined in line with predictive relationship research.

2.1. Participants

The research sample consists of 505 university students, aged between 19 and 31 ($\bar{x}=22$), who continue to study at state universities in Turkey in the 2023-2024 academic year. Data were collected from students in state universities in 20 different cities of Turkey. The population is university students studying at state universities all over Turkey, and the capacity of the sample to represent the population was increased by collecting data from university students in many different provinces. Considering the ease of accessing data, the convenient sampling method was preferred. Since the sample was reached through academics working in different provinces, convenience sampling was used to save time and cost (Büyüköztürk et al., 2014). While determining the sample size to be studied, it was stated that each indicator variable to be measured should have 15 units (Stevens, 2009). From this point of view, it is considered that the number of people constituting the study group is sufficient for the research. In addition, the requirement that the sample size should be at least five times the number of variables was also met (Büyüköztürk, 2002).

Within the scope of the research, data was collected online by preparing a Google Form. This form was delivered to the participants with the help of the academicians teaching at their universities. In the prepared form, brief information was given about how to destroy the data collected within the scope of the research and how to ensure confidentiality, and the consent form signed by the researcher for the security of the process was also shared. In the forms, participants were asked whether they received psychological support or had a psychiatric diagnosis. Data of people with a psychiatric diagnosis or who stated that they were in the process of receiving psychological support were excluded from the scope. The study was conducted in a non-clinical sample. Of the 505 students in the study group, 259 are female (51.3%), and 246 (48.7%) are male. 34 (6.7%) of the students are in the preparatory class, 140 (27.7%) in the first grade, 172 (34.1%) in the second grade, 67 (13.3%) in the third grade, 92 (18.2%) in the fourth grade and above. The students participating in the study continue to study at the faculties of Education, Law, Health, Engineering, and Medicine.

2.2. Measures

Coping through Humor Scale. The scale was developed by Martin (1996) and adapted to Turkish culture by Yerlikaya (2009). The scale aims to evaluate whether people can use humor as a coping method in situations that create stress can be said that as the scores on the scale, which has a maximum of 28 points, increase, the use of humor as a coping method increases. The scale consists of seven items. In the adaptation study, Cronbach's alpha value of the scale was found to be .67 (Yerlikaya, 2009). As a result of confirmatory factor analysis, it was found that the tested model was significant ($\chi^2= 50,916$; $Sd= 14$; $p< 0,001$) and that the one-factor structure of the scale was confirmed according to the calculated goodness of fit ($\chi^2/df= 3.63$ $RMSEA= .07$, $SRMR= .03$, $CFI= .97$, $GFI= .97$, $AGFI= .95$, $IFI= .97$). In this study, Cronbach's alpha coefficient for internal consistency of the scale was found to be .84.

Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Well-Being Scale. The scale was developed by Tennant et al. (2007), and its short form was adapted into Turkish by Demirtaş and Baydemir (2019). It can be said that mental well-being increases as the scores obtained from the five-point Likert-type scale increase. The scale consists of seven items. In the adaptation study, the Cronbach's alpha of the scale was examined in two separate study groups, and the values were found to be .84 for the first study group and .86 for the second study group. As a result of confirmatory factor analysis, it was found that the tested model was significant ($\chi^2= 55,687$; $Sd= 14$; $p< 0,001$) and that the one-factor structure of the scale was confirmed according to the calculated goodness of fit ($\chi^2/df= 3.98$ $RMSEA= .08$, $SRMR= .04$, $CFI= .97$, $GFI= .97$, $AGFI= .94$, $IFI= .96$). In this study, Cronbach's alpha coefficient for internal consistency of the scale was found to be .83.

Emotion Regulation Scale/Reappraisal. The Emotion Regulation Scale adapted into Turkish by Eldeleklioğlu and Eroğlu (2015) was developed by Gross and John (2003). The scale consists of ten items and two subscales in total. These dimensions are reappraisal and repression. Sub-dimensions are evaluated separately. Eldeleklioğlu and Eroğlu (2015) found the Cronbach Alpha coefficient to be .78 for the reappraisal subscale and .73 for the concealment subscale. As a result of confirmatory factor analysis, it was found that the tested model was significant ($\chi^2=111,909$; $Sd=34$; $p< 0,001$) and that the two-factor structure of the scale was confirmed according to the calculated goodness of fit ($\chi^2/df=3,29$ $RMSEA= .07$, $SRMR= .05$, $CFI= .95$, $GFI= .96$, $AGFI= .94$, $IFI= .95$). In this study, Cronbach's alpha value of the scale was calculated as .82 for the reappraisal subscale and .78 for the suppression subscale.

2.3. Analysis

Skewness, kurtosis, and Mahalanobis outlier analyses were performed to determine whether the data were suitable for parametric tests, and 35 unsuitable data were eliminated. It was seen that all of the standardized scores of the remaining data were between -3 and +3, and it was concluded that there were no one-way outliers in the data set (Schumacker & Tomek, 2013). Skewness and kurtosis values are presented in Table 1, and the data are assumed to be normally distributed. In the study, the presence of multicollinearity, which is one of the prerequisites for regression analysis, was examined through the variance inflation factors and tolerance values of the variables in the model. If $VIF \geq 10$ and $TV \leq 0.10$, a multicollinearity problem is mentioned. It was seen that the VIF values of the variables in this model were 1.34, TV values were .75, and there was no multicollinearity problem. In the study, the mediating role of reappraisal in the relationship between coping through humor and mental well-being was analyzed using the Regression-Based Bootstrapping Technique. To check the significance of the mediation effect, bootstrapping was applied. As a result of the bootstrapping process, which is the process of retesting the significance of direct and indirect effects by increasing the number of samples, the lower and upper confidence interval limits are determined, and for the indirect effect to be significant, this limit must not include zero. In this research, 5000 bootstrapping (resampling) was performed to determine the lower and upper confidence intervals and the Bootstrapp coefficient (Hayes, 2017). This analysis is expressed as a mediation model in the regression analysis literature and is an analysis that is similar to multiple regression analysis and examines to what extent the existing relationships between variables are explained according to the established model (Gürbüz, 2019). The bootstrapping method uses a powerful technique called resampling is a statistical test and this test is used to test the importance of the mediating variable (Gürbüz, 2019). Analyzes were carried out with the SPSS 26 PROCESS program.

2.4. Ethics Committee Approval

The approval of the ethics committee, dated 24.04.2024 and numbered E-35592990-050.01.04[050.01.04]-3461561, was received from the Research and Publication Ethics Committee of the National Defense University. All procedures performed in these studies were by the APA ethical

guidelines, the ethical standards of the institutional research committee, and the 1964 Helsinki Declaration and its later amendments.

3. Results

3.1. Pearson Analysis

Before the mediation analysis, the relationships between the variables were examined by correlation analysis. The results obtained are shown in Table 1:

Table 1

Descriptive Statistics and Correlation Analysis Results

	n	Min.	Max.	\bar{x}	Ss	Skewness	Kurtosis	(1)	(2)	(3)
(1) Coping through humor	505	9	28	18.29	4.94	.24	-1.17	1	.59**	.38**
(2) Mental well-being	505	9	32	20.82	5.56	-.19	-.86	.59**	1	.51**
(3) Reappraisal	505	10	30	22.75	5.24	-.37	-.79	.38**	.51**	1

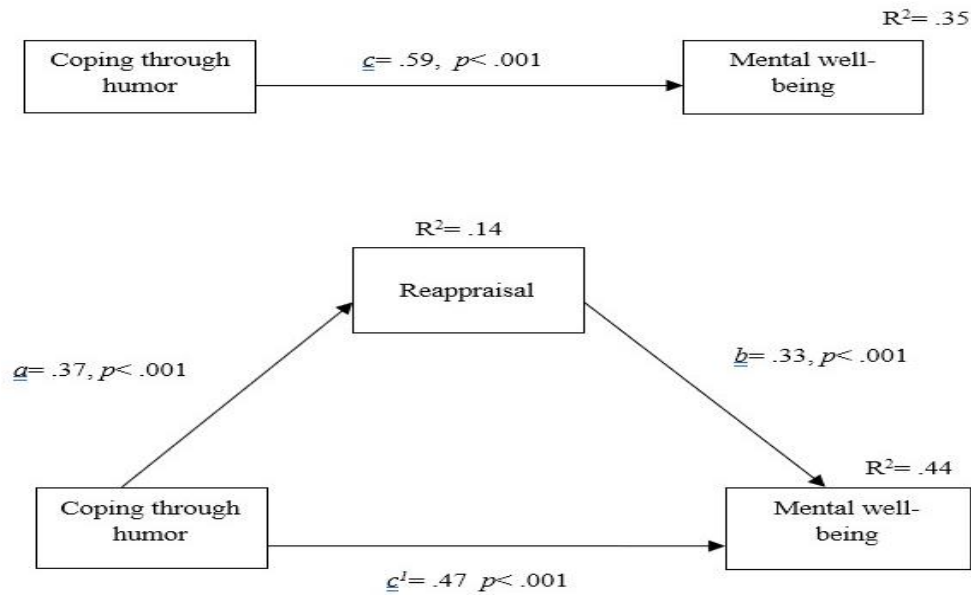
When Table 1 is examined, it is assumed that the distribution is normally distributed since the skewness and kurtosis values are in the range of ± 2 (George & Mallery, 2019). According to the results of the correlation analysis examining the relationships between the variables, there is a significant positive relationship between coping through humor and mental well-being ($r = .59, p < .01$) and reappraisal ($r = .38, p < .01$). When the relationship between mental well-being and reappraisal is analyzed, it is seen that there is a positive and highly significant relationship ($r = .51, p < .01$). Accordingly, it can be said that mental well-being and reappraisal increase as coping through humor increases, and mental well-being increases as reappraisal increases.

3.2. Mediation Analysis Results

The Regression-Based Bootstrapping Technique analyzed the mediating role of reappraisal in coping through humor and mental well-being. Within the scope of these analyses, 5000 bootstrap samples were used to adjust the estimates for bias error and the values obtained were examined at 95% confidence intervals reflecting the adjusted results. The model created to perform mediation analysis was made according to Model 4, proposed by Hayes (2017), in the presence of one independent, one dependent, and one mediator variable. The shape of this model is shown in Figure 1, and the mediation analysis results calculated by Bootstrapping Technique are shown in Table 2:

Figure 1

Coping through Humor Predicts Mental Well-Being through Reappraisal



Indirect effect ($a*b$)= .12; %95 CI [.09; .17]

Figure 1 shows that coping through humor directly predicts reappraisal positively ($B= .37; p< .001$). Similarly, reappraisal directly predicts mental well-being positively ($B= .33; p< .001$). In addition, coping through humor predicted mental well-being positively, and the total effect was significant ($B= .59; p< .001$). When the mediator variable reappraisal was included in the model, this effect was found to be .46, and the value was still significant. Since the coefficient resulting from the inclusion of mediator variables in the model is still significant, there is a partial mediation effect. The bootstrapping coefficient and 95% confidence intervals (CI) for the significance of the indirect effects of partial mediation determined in the model are given in Table 2.

Table 2

Bootstrapping Results of the Mediation of Reappraisal in the Effect of Coping through Humor on Mental Well-Being

Indirect effects	Coefficient	S.e.	%95 GA		R ²	F ₍₂₋₄₀₂₎
			LLCI	ULCI		
CTH → R → MWB	.12	.04	.09	.17	.44	137.472
Direct effects						t-value
CTH → MWB	.47	.04	.43	.61		12.93**
Total effect						
CTH → MWB	.59	.05	.58	.74	.35	16.33**

Note: ** $p< .001$; CTH; Coping through Humor; R; Reappraisal MWB: Mental Well-Being; Se: Standard error; GA: Confidence Interval

Table 2 shows that coping through humor and reappraisal explain 44% of the variance in mental well-being, and the partial mediation model is significant [$F_{(2, 502)} = 137.472, p < .001$]. To be able to say that the hypothesis of the mediation analysis is confirmed, the confidence interval values obtained should not contain zero (Gürbüz, 2019). Based on the results obtained from Table 2, it is understood that the mediating role of reappraisal in the effect of coping through humor on mental well-being is significant (Bootstrap Coefficient = .12, 95% CI [.09; .17]), and confidence intervals do not include zero value.

4. Discussion

This study, it was aimed to examine whether reappraisal, one of the emotion regulation strategies, has a mediating role in the relationship between coping through humor and the mental well-being of university students in Turkey. As a result of the analyses, the first and second hypotheses of the study were confirmed as coping through humor increases, mental well-being, and reappraisal increases. Similarly, in line with the third hypothesis of the study, it was observed that mental well-being increased as reappraisal increased. Studies support the results obtained from this study and reveal that there are significant relationships between humor and mental well-being (Amjad & Dasti, 2022; Ganz & Jacobs, 2014; Kayış & Satıcı, 2019). In addition, there are also studies showing a significant relationship between coping through humor and psychological well-being (Açıkgöz, 2016; Kaya & Yağan, 2022; Kuiper & Martin, 2010; Satıcı & Deniz, 2017).

From a theoretical point of view, humor is one of the defense mechanisms that people use to soothe their egos, and thanks to humor, people can look at their problems from different perspectives (Freud, 1928; May, 1953). Thus, the person who uses humor as a coping skill in the face of stressful situations can see the funny aspects of the events and take these unwanted and stressful experiences less seriously (Kaya & Yağan, 2022; Martin, 2001; Yerlikaya, 2009). With the use of a humorous perspective, the negative feelings of the person who finds new cognitive alternatives to the stressful situation decrease and the person starts to feel better (Abel, 2002). In addition to the psychoanalytic approach, some approaches see humor as a positive character strength or a desirable personality trait used to cope with stressful life events (Kuiper & Martin, 2010). One of the common features of all these approaches addressing humor is the emphasis that humor increases positive affect and psychological well-being when used as a coping tool (Maiolino & Kuiper, 2016). Negative emotions that decrease with the use of humor, which enables experiencing different perspectives in the face of stressful situations, strengthen both physical and psychological health (Çalışan Demir & Tagay, 2015; Lefcourt, 2001). In addition to all these, when the literature is examined, it is seen that the use of humor positively affects one's physical health, ability to adapt to the environment, relationships with other people, and self-confidence (Abel, 2002; Tümkaya, 2007). Thus, it can be said that the use of humor in coping with stressful situations contributes significantly to the improvement of mental health by enabling the person to handle stressful situations from different angles (Kaya & Yağan, 2022). In this context, the third hypothesis of the study is that reappraisal has a mediating role in the effect of university students' coping through humor on mental well-being.

According to the results obtained, the fourth hypothesis of the study was also confirmed. It was found that coping through humor and reappraisal explained 44% of the variance in mental well-being and the mediating role of reappraisal in the effect of coping through humor on mental well-being was significant. Similar to the result obtained from this study, Fritz et al. (2017) stated that one of the mechanisms linking humor styles and well-being is cognitive reappraisal. Amjad and Dasti (2022) examined the relationship between humor styles, emotion regulation, and subjective well-being in young adults and found that adaptive humor styles had a significant positive relationship with adaptive emotion regulation and subjective well-being, while maladaptive humor styles were positively associated with maladaptive emotion regulation and negatively associated with subjective well-being. In the same study,

emotion regulation was found to be a mediator between humor styles and subjective well-being in young adults. Accordingly, it was stated that adaptive humor could be added to psychoeducational interventions. Similar to the results obtained from this study, Branicka et al. (2019) revealed that humor contributes to healthy emotion regulation through positive reappraisal in a study with depressed patients. This situation can occur when people use a humorous perspective in the face of stressful situations and reduce negative psychological experiences. On the other hand, unhealthy humor is positively associated with emotion regulation difficulties rather than positive emotion regulation (Mathews, 2016).

Reappraisal of negative events, finding alternative perspectives, or redirecting attention from stressful situations to more functional areas strengthens people's coping skills (Park, 2010). At this point, the use of humor as a coping method increases cognitive reappraisal and thus people's ability to cope with stress (Kuiper, 2012). Studies support that the use of humor contributes to the reappraisal of negative events (Ojeda & Kiang, 2014). Considering that the use of humor in coping with stressful experiences increases the well-being of individuals, it is thought that the results obtained support the understanding of how humor contributes to increasing mental well-being through reappraisal. In Turkey, there is no study examining the mediating role of cognitive reappraisal in the relationship between coping through humor and mental well-being. It is thought that the results obtained in this context will contribute to the field.

5. Suggestions and Limitations

University students are in a period in which they experience many experiences for the first time in a developmental context and begin to fulfill the responsibilities of adulthood. Increasing the mental well-being of university students in this period contributes not only to increasing their well-being but also to leading a more productive and functional life. At this point, it is very important to know the variables that increase mental well-being to improve mental well-being. Considering the emotional benefits that humor-based experiences can provide (Branicka et al., 2019; Szabo, 2003), it is recommended that humor practices, including cognitive reappraisal-based practices, should be considered in both individual and group counseling interventions to humor increase the mental well-being of university students and to ensure that they lead a more functional life. In addition, it is recommended that humor and reappraisal-based practices should be increased, and how they affect mental well-being should be further examined through both quantitative and qualitative studies. The cross-sectional nature of this study is a limitation, and it is suggested that the mediating role of reappraisal in the relationship between humor use and mental well-being in university students should be examined with longitudinal studies. In addition, the fact that humor types were not handled separately can be considered as a limitation.

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