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Relationship between Humor, Emotional Intelligence and Interpersonal Relationship of College Students

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Abstract: ***The aim of this study was to explore the relationships among interpersonal relationships, humor, and emotional intelligence of college students. To achieve this, the study conducted theoretical discussions on the research variables, constructed a research model and hypotheses, and revealed the direct and mediating effects among the variables. To validate the hypotheses, questionnaires were administered to 315 college students from a university in China to assess their interpersonal relationships, humor, and emotional intelligence. Descriptive statistical analysis was conducted on the collected data, correlations among dimensions were analyzed, and direct relationships and mediating effects for the research hypotheses were examined. The statistical analysis yielded the following results: Firstly, humor had a significant positive impact on college students' interpersonal relationships. Secondly, humor had a significant positive impact on college students' emotional intelligence. Thirdly, emotional intelligence had a significant positive impact on college students' interpersonal relationships. Fourthly, emotional intelligence significantly mediated the relationship between humor and interpersonal relationships among college students. The educational significance of this study lies in its potential to provide educators and schools with information on how to effectively promote these traits and abilities to enhance interpersonal relationships among undergraduate students in China, thereby further promoting their high-quality employment and personal development.***

Keywords: Interpersonal relationships, Humor, Emotional intelligence.

1. Introduction

1.1 Research Background and Necessity

With the advancement of quality education, experts and scholars in the field of education are exploring various approaches to enhance students' interpersonal relationships while respecting their individual development and focusing on their lifelong growth. They are dedicated to fostering students' abilities to interact effectively with others and independently explore and solve interpersonal problems. The state of interpersonal relationships reflects the understanding of students' social situations by both students and educators (Li, 2008).

Research on college students' interpersonal relationships is not only a crucial way to explore the enhancement of their social skills but also an important method for monitoring the quality of higher education in cultivating students' personal competencies. Attention to college students' interpersonal skills has become a developmental trend in international higher education quality assessment (Wang, 2014). Through evaluating their interpersonal relationships, students can understand their strengths and weaknesses in social interactions, thereby improving their social strategies and abilities accordingly. Educators can use the assessment results to provide personalized guidance and support, improving teaching quality while helping students overcome social obstacles and enhance social outcomes (Wang & He, 2002).

College students' interpersonal relationships encompass not only their achievements in social interactions but also the combined effects of their various explicit social activities and the implicit educational influences during their university years (Xu et al, 2013). Essentially, interpersonal relationships refer to students' comprehensive qualities and abilities, covering their holistic development throughout their college education (Xiong, 2013).

Further analysis of existing research reveals that emotional intelligence plays a crucial role among external factors influencing interpersonal relationships (Bar-on, 2010; Li, 2008). Wang (2014) found that emotional intelligence has a significantly positive impact on interpersonal relationships. Li (2008) further demonstrated that emotional intelligence can directly improve students' interpersonal relationships. Therefore, universities should emphasize cultivating students' emotional intelligence to help them better adapt to campus life, promote personal growth and social development, and thereby enhance the quality of their interpersonal relationships.

Additionally, a literature review indicates that among internal factors, a sense of humor has a significant role in improving interpersonal relationships (De & Weiss, 2002; Liu et al., 2009; McIlheran, 2006). It can enhance social motivation, develop social skills, and build self-confidence (Azim et al., 2005). Miczo (2004) showed that by positively using humor, students can establish better social relationships and achieve success. In a survey of college students' sense of humor, studied their overall sense of humor and professional identity, finding that college students' overall sense of humor was below average (Tian, 2012).

Currently, there are several pressing issues regarding interpersonal relationships among Chinese college students. Firstly, it has been observed in educational settings that students engage in relatively few interpersonal interactions and lack the cultivation of emotional intelligence (Li, 2008). Traditional classroom assessments and teaching methods typically focus on the quantification of individual academic performance, neglecting student interactions and emotional communication. This unidirectional learning model often

leads students to prioritize personal performance in the classroom while overlooking cooperation and communication with peers. The lack of interpersonal interaction limits the development of students' emotional intelligence, leaving them with insufficient experience and skills to handle interpersonal and emotional issues. Therefore, educators need to employ innovative teaching methods and assessment tools to foster student cooperation and communication, cultivating their emotional intelligence and making them more confident and mature in future interactions.

Secondly, the traditional education system tends to be result-oriented, focusing on final grades or scores based on standardized tests, and lacks evaluation of students' multiple intelligences and abilities, failing to objectively reflect the state of their interpersonal relationships (Wang, 2014). The limitations of this evaluation method not only affect students' academic development but also indirectly impact their interpersonal relationships. The singularity of the evaluation method may suppress students' creativity and desire for expression, causing them to lack confidence and initiative in interactions with peers, teachers, and the community. Under a more comprehensive and inclusive evaluation system, students can better showcase their talents and personalities, thereby promoting good interactions and cooperation with others and providing more possibilities for the development of interpersonal relationships.

In summary, research on interpersonal relationships needs to pay more attention to internal factors such as students' individual sense of humor and emotional intelligence, providing more targeted recommendations to achieve more effective educational reform and enhance students' interpersonal relationship skills (Xiong & Xu, 2008). Therefore, future research on college students' interpersonal relationships should comprehensively consider individual factors and the cultivation of emotional intelligence to provide more targeted suggestions, achieving more effective educational reform and enhancing students' interpersonal relationship levels.

Based on the above research, literature searches show that numerous studies have explored factors influencing interpersonal relationships, mainly focusing on the impact of learning attitudes and learning environments. However, among college students, research on the impact of a sense of humor and the role of emotional intelligence on interpersonal relationships is relatively limited. Therefore, to improve college students' interpersonal relationship levels, attention first needs to be given to their sense of humor and emotional intelligence levels. This study selected 315 freshmen and sophomore undergraduates as subjects to analyze the relationships among sense of humor, emotional intelligence, and interpersonal relationships. Based on the research results, suggestions are made to support college students in improving their social skills and sense of humor, promoting the development of emotional intelligence, and helping them form good interpersonal relationships and achieve holistic development.

1.2 Research Purpose

The purpose of this research is to identify the relationship between humor, emotional intelligence and interpersonal relationship of Chinese college students. Additionally, this study aims to explore the potential mediating role of emotional intelligence in the relationship between humor and interpersonal relationship among Chinese college students.

1.3 Research Questions

In order to achieve the purpose of the research, the specific research questions are set as follows:

1) Is there a direct relationship between the structural relationship among humor, emotional intelligence and interpersonal relationship of college students in China?

2) When the humor of college students in China has an impact on interpersonal relationship, do emotional intelligence play a mediating role?

2. Method

2.1 Research Model and Hypothesis

The purpose of this study is to investigate the impact of humor and emotional intelligence on college students' interpersonal relationship. Based on previous research, this study proposes a theoretical research model (Figure 1) and the following hypothesis.

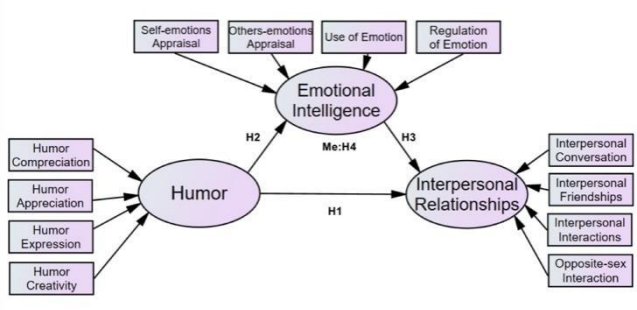

Figure1: Research Model

In addition, according to the relationship between the model and various factors, this study established the following hypotheses (H1-H4).

H1: In China, college students' humor has a positive impact on interpersonal relationship.

H2: In China, college students' humor has a positive impact on emotional intelligence.

H3: In China, college students' emotional intelligence has a positive impact on interpersonal relationship.

H4: In China, college students' humor has a positive impact on interpersonal relationship through emotional intelligence.

2.2 Research Participants

The subjects of this study were 315 first-year and second-year college students from a university in China who voluntarily participated. These 315 students were representative, objective, and applicable, meeting the criteria for survey participants. A questionnaire survey was conducted among

these 315 college students, and the results were analyzed. A total of 325 questionnaires were distributed, and after excluding errors and invalid questionnaires, the actual sample size was 315. The actual questionnaire recovery rate was 96.9%. Questionnaire data were collected using non-probability sampling methods, and participants included both male and female freshmen in their first year of undergraduate study. Among the respondents, there were 146 male students (46.3%) and 169 female students (53.7%). There were 180 first-year students (57.1%) and 135 second-year students (42.9%). The demographic distribution of the study population is shown in the table below.

Table 1: Frequencies

Variables	Items	N	Percentage
Gender	Male	146	46.3%
	Female	169	53.7%
Grade	Freshman	180	57.1%
	Sophomore	135	42.9%
Total		315	100

2.3 Research Tools

1) Interpersonal Relationships

This study used the Interpersonal Relationship Scale developed by Yin (2015) to measure the degree of interpersonal relationship distress. The scale consists of 28 items categorized into four dimensions: interpersonal conversation, interpersonal friendships, interpersonal interactions, and opposite-sex interaction, with 7 items per dimension. The questionnaire employed a 5-point Likert scale for self-reporting, ranging from strongly disagree (1 point) to strongly agree (5 points). The reliability for each dimension of the scale were as follows: interpersonal conversation.862, interpersonal friendships.869, interpersonal interactions.772, and opposite-sex interaction.899. The overall reliability was.925, all exceeding.8, indicating high reliability and validity. In the provided table, the AVE (Average Variance Extracted) for each item was >0.6 and the CR (Composite Reliability) loading coefficient, indicating good convergent validity of the scale.

Table 2: The CFA of Interpersonal Relationships Scale

	Variable	Items	Estimate	CR	AVE	P
Interpersonal Relationships	Interpersonal Communication	IR1	.839	.862	.623	***
		IR2	.769			***
		IR3	.724			***
		IR4	.723			***
		IR5	.737			***
		IR6	.789			***
		IR7	.679			***
	Interpersonal Friendships	IR8	.753	.869	.632	***
		IR9	.654			***
		IR10	.775			***
		IR11	.828			***
		IR12	.829			***
		IR13	.873			***
		IR14	.765			***
	Interpersonal Interactions	IR15	.776	.772	.679	***
		IR16	.657			***
		IR17	.767			***
		IR18	.820			***
		IR19	0.767			***
		IR20	0.887			***
		IR21	0.823			***
	Opposite-sex Interactions	IR22	0.843	.899	0.670	***
		IR23	0.787			***
		IR24	0.886			***
		IR25	0.876			***
		IR26	0.776			***
		IR27	0.624			***
		IR28	0.866			***

According to the index requirements, in this model, $\chi 2/df$ is 1.075, which meets the model adaptability standards. The RMSEA value of 0.016 indicates that the model is highly suitable. The NFI and RFI values are .972 and .966, respectively, both of which have passed the standard of greater than.8. The IFL, TLI, and CFI values are all .976, .997, and .969, indicating that the model has a good fit with the sample data and the relationship between variables in the model has certain explanatory power. Therefore, the overall fitting effect of this theoretical model is good, and the relationship between variables in the model has certain explanatory power.

Table 3: Fit Indices of Interpersonal Relationships Scale

Name	$\chi 2/df$	RMSEA	NFI	RFI	IFI	TLI	CFI
Value	1.075	.016	.972	.966	.976	.997	.969
Result	pass	pass	pass	pass	pass	pass	pass

2) Humor

This study used the humor scale was developed by Yang (2012), which comprises four dimensions: humor comprehension (4 items), humor appreciation (8 items), humor expression (7 items), and humor creativity (6 items). The questionnaire employed a 5-point Likert scale for self-reporting, requiring respondents to rate their responses on a scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). The reliability for each dimension of the scale were as follows: humor comprehension.914, humor appreciation.824, humor expression.838, and humor creativity.879. The overall reliability was.897. The values of AVE and CR for each item indicate good convergent validity of the scale.

Table 4: The CFA of Humor Scale

	Variable	Items	Estimate	CR	AVE	p
Humor	Humor Comprehension	H1	.993	.914	.682	***
		H2	.832			***
		H3	.764			***
		H4	.755			***
		H5	.721			***
		H6	.798			***
	Humor Appreciation	H7	.712	.824	.649	***
		H8	.783			***
		H9	.924			***
		H10	.775			***
		H11	.769			***
	Humor Expression	H12	.753	.838	.602	***
		H13	.782			***
		H14	.897			***
		H15	.723			***
		H16	.731			***
		H17	.863			***
		H18	.765			***
	Humor Creativity	H19	.846	.879	.650	***
		H20	.878			***
		H21	.865			***
		H22	.760			***
		H23	.703			***
		H24	.763			***
		H25	.811			***

According to the index requirements, in this model, $\chi 2/df$ is 1.442, which meets the model adaptability standards. The RMSEA value of .037 indicates that this model is highly suitable. The NFI and RFI values are .972 and .942, respectively, and both have passed the standard of greater

than .8. The IFL, TLI, and CFI values are all .941, .991, and .982, indicating that this model has a good fit with the sample data. Therefore, the overall fitting effect of this part of the theoretical model is good, and the relationship between variables in the model has certain explanatory power.

Table 5: Fit Indices of Humor Scale

Name	χ2/df	RMSEA	NFI	RFI	IFI	TLI	CFI
Value	1.442	.037	.972	.942	.941	.991	.982
Result	pass	pass	pass	pass	pass	pass	pass

3) Emotional Intelligence

The study's measure of learning engagement was based on the tool developed by Law et al. (2014), which divides emotional intelligence into four dimensions: self-emotions appraisal, others-emotions appraisal, use of emotion, and regulation of emotion. There are a total of 16 items, with 4 items per dimension. The questionnaire utilized a 5-point Likert scale for self-reporting, requiring respondents to evaluate their answers on a 5-point scale ranging from strongly disagree (1 point) to strongly agree (5 points). The reliability for each dimension of the scale were.887 (self-emotions appraisal), .866 (others-emotions appraisal), .886 (use of emotion), and .880 (regulation of emotion), with an overall validity of .875, all exceeding.8, indicating high reliability and validity. In the table below, an AVE value > .6 and CR loading coefficient for each item demonstrate good convergent validity of the scale.

Table 6: The CFA of Emotional Intelligence Scale

	Variable	Items	Estimate	CR	AVE	p
Emotional Intelligence	Self-emotions Appraisal	EI1	.869	.887	.611	***
		EI2	.759			***
		EI3	.725			***
		EI4	.766			***
	Others-emotions Appraisal	EI5	.755	.866	.632	***
		EI6	.651			***
		EI7	.776			***
		EI8	.824			***
	Use of Emotion	EI9	.773	.886	.680	***
		EI10	.659			***
		EI11	.767			***
	Regulation of Emotion	EI12	.727	.875	.670	***
		EI13	.803			***
		EI14	.747			***
		EI15	.856			***
		EI16	.764			***

According to the index requirements, in this model, x^2/df is 1.630, which meets the model adaptability standards. The RMSEA value is.045, indicating that this model is very suitable. The NFI and RFI values are.940 and.931, respectively, both of which have passed the standard of greater than 0.8. The IFL, TLI, and CFI values are all .976, .972, and .976, indicating that this model has good fitness with the sample data. Therefore, the overall fitness effect of this theoretical model is good, and the relationship between variables in the model has certain explanatory power.

Table 7: Fit indices of Emotional Intelligence Scale

Name	χ2/df	RMSEA	NFI	RFI	IFI	TLI	CFI
Value	1.630	.045	.940	.931	.976	.972	.976
Result	pass	pass	pass	pass	pass	pass	pass

3. Research Results

3.1 Model Validation Analysis

Evaluate the effectiveness of a model by comparing the goodness-of-fit index (CFI), Tucker-Lewis index (TLI), and the root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA) to detect model misfitting. Generally, RMSEA values close to.05 and goodness-of-fit index values between.80 and 1.00 suggest good to excellent fit. RMSEA values between.05 and below.08 are considered a reasonable fit.

In this model, χ2/df is 1.323, which meets the model fitness criterion. The RMSEA value is.033, indicating that the model is highly suitable. The NFI and RFI values are.886 and.874, respectively, both of which pass the criterion of greater than.8. The IFL, TLI, and CFI values are all .965, .989, and .912, respectively, indicating that the model has good fit with the sample data. Therefore, the overall fitness effect of this theoretical model is good, and the relationship between variables in the model has certain explanatory power.

Table 8: Fit indices of Theoretical Model

Name	χ2/df	RMSEA	NFI	RFI	IFI	TLI	CFI
Value	1.323	.033	.886	.874	.965	.989	.912
Result	pass	pass	pass	pass	pass	pass	pass

3.2 Descriptive and Variable Correlation Analysis

To better understand the participants' knowledge or proficiency levels across different variables, we computed the mean and standard deviation. Table 9 presents descriptive statistics for three variables of interest—humor, emotional intelligence, and interpersonal relationships. These statistics include the standard deviation (SD), skewness, and kurtosis values, providing information on variability, symmetry, and peakedness of the distributions, respectively. These measurements are crucial for assessing the distributional characteristics of variables and determining appropriate statistical analyses.

The range of kurtosis values were from -.627 to -.026, and the range of skewness values were from -.848 to.019. The distribution is non-normal when the absolute value of skewness is more than 2 and the absolute value of kurtosis is more than 3. The variables used in this study can be considered to meet the criteria for normality.

Table 9: Descriptive Statistics (N=315)

		Min	Max	M	SD	Skewness	Kurtosis
Emotional Intelligence	SEA	1.00	5.00	3.655	1.023	-.848	-.447
	UE	1.25	5.00	3.694	.940	-.753	-.478
	RE	1.00	5.00	3.686	.961	-.706	-.370
	OEA	1.00	5.00	3.618	.950	-.642	-.455
Humor	HC1	1.00	5.00	3.641	.959	-.661	-.375
	HA	1.00	5.00	3.602	1.055	-.642	-.627
	HE	1.00	5.00	3.625	.808	-.171	-.394
	HC2	1.00	4.17	2.843	.712	-.152	-.056

Interpersonal Relationships	IC	1.06	5.00	3.354	.815	-.024	-.026
	IF	1.00	5.00	3.627	.816	-.134	-.036
	II	1.00	5.00	3.152	.792	-.026	-.077
	OI	1.00	5.00	3.376	.812	-.019	-.083

Note: SEA: self-emotions appraisal, OEA: others-emotions appraisal, UE: use of emotion, ROE: regulation of emotion HC1: humor comprehension, HA: humor appreciation, HE: humor expression, HC: humor creativity, IC: interpersonal conversation, IF: interpersonal friendships, II: interpersonal interactions, OI: opposite-sex interaction.

As shown in Table 10, the measurement analysis results of the observed (measured) relationships between all variables in this study are presented, providing an overall summary of the relationships between variables. Additionally, correlations can be analyzed from both positive and negative directions, and the magnitude of the correlation coefficient can indicate the degree of closeness between the variables. Before testing hypotheses, correlation analysis can be conducted to demonstrate the strength of the relationships between all variables used in the research hypotheses. From correlation analysis Table 10, it can be observed that the correlation coefficients between all variables are significant and positive at the 1% level. Regarding college students' interpersonal relationships, the correlation coefficients between interpersonal relationships and various variables range from 0.538 to 0.558, indicating a high correlation between each variable and interpersonal relationships. This has a significant impact on improving students' academic performance. The correlation coefficient between emotional intelligence and humor is 0.501, significant at the 0.01 level (two-tailed), indicating a medium-strength positive correlation between the two. This suggests that as humor increases, interpersonal relationships may also increase. This could be because when students have a high sense of humor during communication, they are more likely to engage in pleasant interactions, thus improving interpersonal relationships.

Therefore, humor, emotional intelligence, and interpersonal relationships are all positively correlated.

Table 10: Correlations Between Observed Variables

	1	2	3
1.Interpersonal Relationships	1		
2.Humor	0.558**	1	
3.Emotional Intelligence	0.538**	0.501**	1

***p<.001 **p<.01.

3.3 Verification of Mediating Model

1) Analysis of Direct Effect

The correlation analysis indicates that humor (H) and emotional intelligence (EI) have significant direct effects on interpersonal relationships (IR). Therefore, it is necessary to conduct a more comprehensive and accurate analysis of the influencing relationships through path analysis. Using the path analysis method, the study examined the influence of H on EI, the influence of EI on IR, the influence of H on IR, and the mediating role of EI in the relationship between H and IR.

In this study, all variables were standardized, which is a common practice in structural equation modeling, for the following reasons: First, standardization eliminates differences in measurement units, enabling the comparison of relative effects among variables. Second, standardization enhances the interpretability of the model by removing the influence of variable scales, making the results easier to explain. Third, standardization helps mitigate the impact of multicollinearity (i.e., high correlations among independent variables) on coefficient estimates. Finally, standardized parameters provide a common metric for evaluating variables, facilitating model comparisons and interpretations.

When explaining the path coefficients (β), the significance of all direct paths was indicated by a Pearson index <.001. All the confidence intervals for the mediating effects did not include zero.

Table 11: Path Analysis

Hypotheses	Paths	β	S.E.	CR	p
H1	H → EI	.642	.052	12.220	.000
H2	EI → IR	.338	7.242	5.833	.000
H3	H → IR	.621	.056	13.010	.000

2) Analysis of Mediating Effect

<Table 12> presents the mediation analysis for emotional intelligence in the relationship between humor and interpersonal relationships. To more accurately validate the mediation effects, the Bootstrap method was employed with 1000 iterations, setting the confidence interval level to 95%, and using the bias-corrected non-parametric percentile method for sampling. As shown in the table, the total effect of humor on emotional intelligence is .632, with a confidence interval of [.578, .685], excluding 0, indicating the existence of the total effect. The direct effect is.326, with a confidence interval of [.090, .347], excluding 0, indicating the existence of the direct effect. The total indirect effect is.306, with a confidence interval of [.216, .514], excluding 0, indicating the existence of the total indirect effect. The indirect effect of emotional intelligence is .219, with a confidence interval of [.137, .294], excluding 0, indicating the presence of emotional intelligence's indirect effect, confirming hypothesis H4.

Table 12: Analysis of Mediating Effects

Paths	β	S.E.	LLCI	ULCI
Total effect	.632	.027	.578	.685
Direct effect	.326	.063	.090	.347
Indirect effect	.306	.068	.216	.514

In light of the analysis of the research findings, ascertain the acceptance or rejection of the hypotheses formulated within this study (See Table 13).

Table 13: Results of Hypothesis Testing

Hypothesis	Result
H1: In China, college students' humor has a positive impact on interpersonal relationship	Accept
H2: In China, college students' emotional intelligence has a positive impact on emotional intelligence	Accept
H3: In China, college students' humor has a positive impact on interpersonal relationship	Accept
Me H4: In China, college students' humor has a positive impact on interpersonal relationship through emotional intelligence	Accept

4. Conclusion

4.1 Research Summary

This study aimed to explore the relationship between humor, emotional intelligence, and interpersonal relationships among Chinese college students. Theoretical hypotheses regarding the correlations between these three variables were formulated based on previous research.

To conduct the study, questionnaire surveys were conducted, taking into account the characteristics of college students. Descriptive statistical analysis was conducted on the collected data, correlations among dimensions were analyzed, and direct relationships and mediating effects for the research hypotheses were examined. Findings from the data collected from valid questionnaires yielded the following discoveries:

The results confirmed the suitability of the model established in this study, which was developed based on an examination of previous research. Secondly, the validation of the research hypotheses yielded several significant outcomes:

Firstly, humor was found to have a positive impact on interpersonal relationships, indicating that individuals with higher levels of humor are more likely to perform better in interpersonal relationships.

Secondly, humor was found to have a positive impact on emotional intelligence, suggesting that individuals with higher levels of humor tend to have higher emotional intelligence in interpersonal interactions.

Furthermore, emotional intelligence was found to have a positive impact on interpersonal relationships, indicating that individuals with higher emotional intelligence are more likely to have better interpersonal relationships.

Moreover, emotional intelligence was found to mediate the relationship between humor and interpersonal relationships, indicating that emotional intelligence plays an important role in translating humor into interpersonal relationships.
These findings contribute to our understanding of the complex interplay between humor, emotional intelligence, and interpersonal relationships among Chinese college students.

4.2 Discussion and Conclusion

The first hypothesis examines the relationship between humor and emotional intelligence, proposing that humor positively influences emotional intelligence. The findings of this study confirm this hypothesis, indicating that individuals with higher humor levels demonstrate better emotional intelligence. These results are consistent with the previous research by Tian (2015), highlighting the importance of humor in the daily interactions of Chinese college students.

The second hypothesis proposes a positive relationship between emotional intelligence and interpersonal relationships. The findings of this study provide substantial evidence supporting this hypothesis, indicating that individuals with higher levels of emotional intelligence perform better in interpersonal communication skills. This study aligns with the previous research by Wang and He (2002) and Wang (2014), emphasizing the significance of emotional intelligence in enhancing interpersonal relationships. Emotional intelligence plays a crucial role in helping individuals effectively cope with and handle the challenges and pressures in interpersonal relationships, thereby promoting improvements in communication with others and ultimately enhancing interpersonal relationships.

The third hypothesis suggests a positive correlation between humor and interpersonal relationships. The findings of this study strongly support this hypothesis, indicating that individuals with higher levels of humor are able to achieve better interpersonal relationships. Similar to the study by Tian (2012), this research employs correlation analysis and path analysis to demonstrate that all dimensions of humor significantly correlate with interpersonal relationships.

Finally, the fourth hypothesis posits the mediating role of emotional intelligence between humor and interpersonal relationships. The findings of this study strongly support this hypothesis. Humor may contribute to enhancing the pleasantness of interactions, thereby boosting emotional intelligence and fostering better interpersonal relationships. These findings are consistent with the regression analysis conducted by Wang (2014). This study employed path analysis and model construction methods, offering a more comprehensive understanding of the mediating relationships within the specific research context.

4.3 Limitations and Suggestions

This study has certain limitations that need to be acknowledged. Firstly, the study focused exclusively on the variables of humor, emotional intelligence, and interpersonal relationships. Other potential factors that may impact interpersonal relationships, such as communication skills and cultural background, were not considered. Future research should incorporate a broader range of variables to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the factors influencing interpersonal relationships. Secondly, the generalizability of the findings may be limited due to the relatively small and homogenous sample of Chinese college students. Replication studies with larger and more diverse samples, including participants from multiple universities and professional English learning organizations, would enhance the external validity of the results.

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