



THE EFFECT OF EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE AND SELF-EFFICACY ON THE SENSE OF DARK HUMOR IN STUDENTS OF THE FACULTY OF PSYCHOLOGY

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Abstract:

This study examines the impact of emotional quotient (EQ) and self-efficacy on the perception of dark humor among psychology students. Dark humor, which involves satirical or morbid themes, is linked to cognitive and emotional processes, making it relevant to psychological research. EQ refers to an individual's ability to perceive, understand, and regulate emotions, while self-efficacy is the belief in one's capability to overcome challenges. Using a quantitative correlational design, this research employed purposive sampling to select psychology students. Standardized scales measured EQ, self-efficacy, and dark humor appreciation, while multiple regression analysis assessed their impact on humor tendencies. The findings suggest that both EQ and self-efficacy significantly shape students' humor preferences. Higher EQ is associated with a deeper understanding and appropriate use of dark humor, while self-efficacy boosts confidence in expressing it socially. These results underline the role of psychological factors in humor appreciation and highlight the importance of emotional regulation and self-confidence in humor expression.

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INTRODUCTION

Research is crucial for society, particularly in understanding the relationship between emotional intelligence and self-efficacy in the development of dark humor among college students. Dark humor is often seen as taboo, capable of offending many. However, in the context of psychology, dark humor can be seen as a form of expression that reflects a person's emotional depth and intelligence in responding to social reality (Lenggogeni et al., 2022; Navarro-Carrillo et al., 2020; Powell, 2022). Given that psychology students, such as those at UIN Malang, interact directly with issues of emotion, emotional intelligence, and self-efficacy in their daily lives, this research is relevant to understanding how these two factors influence how they respond to and express humor, especially humor that contains heavy or taboo themes (Alessandri, 2023). This research provides new insights into the deeper dimensions of humor, which have not been widely explored in previous studies.

One problem facing society is a lack of understanding of the influence of emotional intelligence and self-efficacy on humor, particularly dark humor, which is often considered controversial and taboo. In many cultures, humor containing elements of violence, death, or tragedy is usually regarded as inappropriate. However, for individuals with high emotional intelligence and strong self-efficacy, dark humor can be a tool for coping with stress or as a form of self-expression (Nielsen et al., 2024; Raecke & Proyer, 2024). Despite this, there is still a lack of understanding of how these two factors contribute to students' perceptions and appreciation of dark humor, particularly among psychology students who encounter complex psychological concepts daily.

Among psychology students at UIN Malang, particularly in the Faculty of Psychology, dark humor is frequently used in everyday conversation, both verbally and nonverbally. Psychology students who are familiar with various psychological theories and human behavior have a deeper understanding of human feelings and emotions, which can potentially influence how they respond to dark humor (Woods et al., 2021). This phenomenon is interesting to investigate further, as dark humor not only serves as a means of emotional release but also reflects their ability to manage anxiety, fear, and emotional intelligence in the face of often harsh and stressful social realities.

Several previous studies have discussed various aspects of humor, including dark humor, and the influence of emotional intelligence and self-efficacy in everyday life (Dionigi et al., 2024; Kincal, 2024). However, many studies have not explored in depth how emotional intelligence and self-efficacy specifically influence students' perceptions of dark humor. Existing research generally focuses on the influence of emotional intelligence on social relationships or social intelligence, while the relationship between emotional intelligence, self-efficacy, and dark humor remains rare (Dueñas et al., 2020). Therefore, this study attempts to fill this gap and offer new insights into the role of these two factors in humor, a topic often considered taboo.

Several other studies have examined humor in a psychological context, but few have linked dark humor to other psychological factors such as emotional intelligence and self-efficacy. Most studies focus on humor in general without distinguishing between types of humor, such as dark humor, which has greater emotional depth and social connotations (Owen, 2020; Raecke & Proyer, 2022; Zwier, 2020). This study contributes by examining dark humor as a form of psychological expression influenced by the emotional intelligence and self-efficacy of psychology students, and invites us to understand better how these elements interact in the lives of students who frequently encounter complex and stressful social situations.

The primary focus of this study is the extent to which emotional intelligence and self-efficacy influence students' perception and appreciation of dark humor. The main argument of this study is that students with high emotional intelligence and high self-efficacy tend to have a better understanding of dark humor and can express it in social contexts more healthily and constructively. This study aims to provide a deeper understanding of the relationship between these two psychological factors and their impact on humor, especially humor with taboo or sensitive connotations. This research is expected to provide new insights into how emotional intelligence and self-efficacy shape students' perceptions and understanding of dark humor. With a more holistic approach, this study aims to broaden awareness of the critical role these two psychological factors play in students' daily lives, especially in environments filled with academic and social pressures. This research also paves the way for further study on the

influence of humor on students' learning and personal development, which could contribute to the development of psychology education curricula.

Hypothesis

The following hypotheses were developed in this study:

Emotional Quotient (EQ)/Emotional Intelligence.

Emotional intelligence is the ability to sense, understand, and selectively apply the power and sensitivity of emotions as a source of human energy and influence. Students need to possess emotional intelligence to manage emotions in their social and everyday environments. As a first hypothesis:

H1: Emotional quotient influence on the sense of dark job

Self-confidence (self-efficacy).

Self-confidence, or self-efficacy, is an individual's belief in their ability to increase motivation, cognitive resources, and take the necessary actions in the situations they face. Students with high self-confidence are more likely to be sensitive to incorporating humor into their daily lives. The independent variables are emotional quotient/emotional intelligence (X1) and self-efficacy/self-confidence (X2), while the dependent variable is sense of dark job (Y).

RESEARCH METHODS

Research Design

This study aims to explain the influence of emotional intelligence (emotional quotient) and self-efficacy on the sense of dark humor. The research design is a quantitative correlational study, which aims to determine the relationship between emotional intelligence (EQ), self-efficacy, and the sense of dark humor (Razafsha et al., 2022). This type of study does not aim to establish a causal relationship, as the researcher does not intervene. Instead, it focuses on measuring the strength and direction of the relationships between the variables in a natural setting. Using statistical analysis, the study will quantify the associations among the independent variables (EQ and self-efficacy) and the dependent variable (dark humor).

Variable Identification

The independent variables in this study are self-efficacy and emotional intelligence, also known as emotional quotient (EQ). Self-efficacy refers to an individual's belief in their ability to succeed in specific tasks or challenges. Emotional intelligence, or EQ, involves the ability to perceive, understand, manage, and regulate emotions, both in oneself and others. The dependent variable in this study is the sense of dark humor, which refers to the ability to appreciate or create humor that involves taboo or sensitive topics, often perceived as morbid, satirical, or uncomfortable. The interaction between these independent variables and the dependent variable is the focus of this research (Waqar et al., 2020).

Operational Definition

Self-Efficacy/Confidence. It is an individual's belief in their ability to increase motivation and cognitive resources, as well as in the actions or situations they face. *Emotional Quotient (Emotional Intelligence)* is the ability to feel, understand, and selectively apply emotional power and sensitivity as a source of human energy and influence. *Dark Humor* is a type of humor that is similar to taboo subjects and can cause controversy among groups that are less able to understand the broader meaning intended.

Data Sources and Data Collection Instruments

This study uses primary data collected directly from respondents, specifically Psychology students at UIN Malang. The data collection instrument is a questionnaire designed to capture relevant information on emotional intelligence, self-efficacy, and the sense of dark humor among participants (Lee, 2024). The self-administered questionnaire method was used in this study, in which respondents independently completed the questionnaire. This method ensures that the collected data reflects participants' personal perspectives and self-assessments, minimizing biases arising from external influences during data collection.

Data Analysis Methods

Validity Test

Validity tests used in research activities aim to determine the validity of a questionnaire. Questionnaire items are said to have strong validity if there is a parallel score (i.e., a high correlation) with the total item score. To test the questionnaire items' validity, the Pearson product-moment correlation test is used. The person-product moment correlation is a method for correlating each item with a total score, the sum of its scores.

Reliability Test

A reliability test is a tool used to measure a questionnaire as an indicator of a variable. A questionnaire is considered reliable if responses to its questions are consistent and stable over time. The reliability test used in this study was SPSS version 25.0.

Multiple Linear Regression Analysis

Multiple linear regression is used to determine the influence of independent variables on the dependent variable. The multiple linear regression analysis used in this study uses the following formula:

$$Y = a + b_1X_1 + b_2X_2 + e \quad DH = a + b_1EQ + b_2SE + e$$

Information:

DH : *Dark Humor*

a : Constant

b1 : Variable regression coefficient emotional

b2 : Self variable coefficient efficacy

EQ : *Emotional Quotient*

SE : Self-efficacy

e: Error

t value

The t-value is used to determine the influence of the independent variables, namely emotional quotient (X1) and self-efficacy (X2), independently on the dependent variable (Y), namely sense of dark humor. To determine the t-value, a test was carried out using the SPSS version 17.0 application using the following criteria:

Ho: $\beta = 0$ means there is no influence caused by the independent variable (X) independent of the dependent variable (Y).

Ha: $\beta = 0$ means that there is an influence caused by the independent variable (X) independent of the dependent variable (Y).

Ho is accepted if the probability value is ≥ 0.05 ; Ho is rejected if the probability value is > 0.05

F value

The F value is used to determine the independent variables (X) simultaneously against the dependent variable (Y). To determine the F value, a test is carried out using the SPSS version 25.0 application with the following criteria:

Ho: $\beta = 0$ means that the independent variables (X) together do not influence the dependent variable (Y).

Ha: $\beta = 0$ means that the independent variables together influence the dependent variable (Y)

Ho is accepted if the probability value is ≥ 0.05 ; Ho is rejected if the probability value is > 0.05

Coefficient of Determination (R²)

The Coefficient of Determination (R²) test assesses the percentage of variation in the dependent variable explained by the independent variable. This test was conducted using SPSS version 25.0 to evaluate the strength of the relationship between the variables and to determine the proportion of the dependent variable's variability attributable to the independent variable.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Result

This results section presents empirical findings on the relationships among emotional quotient, self-efficacy, and a sense of dark humor among college students. Data analysis includes validity and reliability tests, as well as hypothesis testing through multiple linear regression. The results provide an overview of each variable's contribution to shaping dark humor preferences, both individually and simultaneously.

First hypothesis (H1): Emotional quotient positively influences the sense of dark humor

The first hypothesis (H1) tested in this study is that emotional intelligence positively influences the sense of dark humor. Based on the analysis results, the probability value (p-value) for the relationship between emotional intelligence and dark humor was 0.002, which is smaller than 0.05. This indicates that emotional intelligence

plays a vital role in shaping dark humor preferences in college students. Students with higher levels of emotional intelligence tend to have a better understanding and more appropriate responses to dark humor. They can express it in a more social and controlled manner. This demonstrates the importance of emotional management in social interactions.

Table 1. Validity of the Emotional Quotient Variable

Item	<i>Sig. < 0.05</i>	RCount > RTable (0.279)	Information
1	0.010	0.360	Valid
2	0,000	0.516	Valid
3	0,000	0.552	Valid
4	0,000	0.495	Valid
5	0,000	0.641	Valid
6	0,000	0.598	Valid
7	0,000	0.611	Valid
8	0,000	0.604	Valid
9	0,000	0.619	Valid
10	0.011	0.358	Valid
11	0.049	0.280	Valid
12	0,000	0.617	Valid
13	0,000	0.638	Valid
14	0,000	0.705	Valid
15	0,000	0.575	Valid
16	0,000	0.565	Valid
17	0,000	0.748	Valid
18	0,000	0.478	Valid
19	0,000	0.516	Valid
20	0,000	0.630	Valid

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Based on the data described in Table 1 above, the data were analyzed using SPSS version 25.0 to assess variable validity. The table shows that all questionnaire items and items in the emotional quotient (EQ) variable yielded significant values. <0.05, thus all questionnaire items can be considered valid. Furthermore, the validity of the questionnaire items is also supported by the calculation where RCount > RTable.

Based on the explanation above, it can be concluded that all items in the questionnaire for the emotional intelligence variable (Emotional Quotient) are valid. Each item has a significance value (sig.) of less than 0.05, and the correlation result (RCount) is greater than the table value (RTable), which indicates the validity of these items. Furthermore, for the self-efficacy variable, the validity test results suggest that all items meet the same validity criteria, with significance values less than 0.05 and item correlations exceeding the RTable value, confirming its validity.

Table 2. Validity of Self-Efficacy Variable

Item	<i>Sig. < 0.05</i>	RCount > RTable (0.279)	Information
1	0.010	0.297	Valid
2	0,000	0.594	Valid
3	0,000	0.615	Valid
4	0,000	0.425	Valid
5	0,000	0.643	Valid
6	0,000	0.564	Valid
7	0,000	0.525	Valid
8	0,000	0.542	Valid
9	0,000	0.395	Valid
10	0,000	0.328	Valid
11	0.001	0.314	Valid
12	0.001	0.367	Valid
13	0.002	0.401	Valid
14	0.004	0.569	Valid
15	0.012	0.366	Valid

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Based on the data described in Table 1 above, the data were analyzed using SPSS version 25.0 to assess variable validity. The table explains that all 15 questionnaire items were administered to 50 respondents. The items in the emotional quotient (EQ) variable yielded a significant value. <0.05, thus all questionnaire items can be considered valid. Furthermore, the validity of the questionnaire items is also supported by the calculation where Rhitung > R Tabel.

Based on the explanation above, the items in the questionnaire for the emotional intelligence (EQ) variable are valid. Each item has a significance value (sig.) of less than 0.05 and a correlation value (RCount) greater than the table value (RTable), indicating its validity. Meanwhile, the validity of the Sense of Dark Humor variable can be determined by referring to the following table, which shows that all items in this variable meet the same validity criteria, with significance values below 0.05 and reasonably high item correlations.

Table 3. Validity of Dark Humor Variables

Item	<i>Sig. < 0.05</i>	RCount > RTable (0.279)	Information
1	0.044	0.299	Valid
2	0.001	0.465	Valid
3	0,000	0.563	Valid
4	0,000	0.526	Valid
5	0,000	0.625	Valid
6	0,000	0.516	Valid
7	0,000	0.457	Valid
8	0,000	0.539	Valid
9	0,000	0.454	Valid
10	0.001	0.322	Valid

11	0.026	0.627	Valid
12	0,000	0.616	Valid
13	0,000	0.629	Valid
14	0,000	0.577	Valid
15	0,000	0.487	Valid
16	0,000	0.568	Valid
17	0,000	0.592	Valid
18	0,000	0.525	Valid
19	0,000	0.604	Valid
20	0,000	0.586	Valid

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Based on the data described in Table 3 above, the data were obtained through variable validity analysis using SPSS version 25.0. The table shows that all questionnaire items and the items in the emotional quotient (EQ) variable yielded significant values. <0.05 , thus all questionnaire items are considered valid. Furthermore, the validity of the questionnaire items is also supported by the calculation where $R_{Count} > R_{Table}$. It can be concluded that the criteria for the dark humor variable are valid.

Table 4. Variable Reliability

No	Variables	Cronbach's Alpha	Critical Value	Information
1.	<i>Emotional Quotient</i>	0.882	0.60	Reliable
2.	<i>Self-Efficacy</i>	0.761	0.60	Reliable
3.	<i>Dark Humor</i>	0.877	0.60	Reliable

Based on Table 4 above, all variables have Cronbach's Alpha values greater than the critical value (0.60). Therefore, it can be concluded that all variables in this study exhibit high reliability. A Cronbach's Alpha value greater than 0.60 indicates that the questionnaire used to measure each variable can be relied upon to obtain consistent and valid data. Therefore, it can be concluded that the questionnaire used in this study has good reliability for measuring emotional intelligence, self-confidence, and dark humor in college students.

Second hypothesis (X2). The Relationship Between Self-Confidence and Dark Humor Preference in Psychology Students

After assessing the reliability of each variable, the next step was to conduct a multiple linear regression. This was done because this study involved more than two interrelated variables. The purpose of multiple linear regression analysis is to identify the relationships and interactions among the independent variables (emotional intelligence and self-confidence) and the dependent variable (sense of dark humor). Through this analysis, the extent of each independent variable's contribution to influencing the dependent variable can be determined.

Coefficients^a

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	40.965	3.755		10.910	.000
	Emotional Quotient	.146	.062	.242	2.373	.002
	Self efficacy	.724	.069	1.076	10.555	.000

a. Dependent Variable: dark humor

Based on the table above, the significance Value (p-value) for the emotional intelligence variable (X1) is 0.042, which is less than 0.05. Therefore, it can be concluded that the emotional intelligence variable (X1) influences the dark humor variable (Y). This indicates that emotional intelligence plays a vital role in shaping students' preferences for dark humor. Meanwhile, the self-confidence variable (self-efficacy) has a significance value (probability value) of 0.00, which is also smaller than 0.05. Based on these results, it can be concluded that self-efficacy also influences dark humor, contributing significantly to increased self-confidence in expressing it.

ANOVA^a

Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	1357.075	2	678.538	13.883	.000 ^b
	Residual	2297.105	47	48.875		
	Total	3654.180	49			

a. Dependent Variable: Dark Humor (Y)

b. Predictors: (Constant), Self Efficacy (X2), Emotional Quotient(X1)

Figure 1. Results of Multiple Linear Regression Analysis (F Value)

Based on the table above, the significance value (p-value) is 0.00, which is less than 0.05, so H_0 is rejected, and H_a is accepted. Thus, it can be concluded that both independent variables (emotional intelligence and self-confidence) exert a simultaneous, or concurrent, influence on the dependent variable (dark humor). This shows that the combination of these two factors influences students' dark humor preferences, so that neither variable alone plays a role; instead, both interact to form a tendency toward dark humor among psychology students.

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.900 ^a	.809	.801	1.892

a. Predictors: (Constant), Self efficacy, Emotional Quotient

Figure 2. Determination Analysis

Based on the results of the determination analysis (R^2) above, the adjusted R^2 value is 0.801, indicating that the dark humor variable is influenced by the emotional intelligence (X_1) and self-confidence (X_2) variables to the extent of 80%. This shows that both variables strongly influence students' preferences for dark humor. Meanwhile, the remaining 20% of the variation in dark humor is influenced by other variables not explained in this study. Therefore, although emotional intelligence and self-confidence make significant contributions, other factors not examined in this study may also play a role in the expression of dark humor.

Discussion

This research formulates two problems, of which the first problem formulation is explained: "Is there an influence of emotional quotient on the sense of dark humor?" Moreover, in the second problem formulation, "Is there an influence of self-efficacy on the sense of dark humor?" Based on the two hypotheses above, the results can then be interpreted through the analysis and testing presented above. The following explanations relate to the research results:

First hypothesis (H1): Emotional quotient positively influences the sense of dark humor

Based on the t-test results, the probability value (P_v) was 0.002, which is less than 0.05, indicating a significant positive effect of emotional intelligence (emotional quotient) on students' ability to appreciate dark humor. Therefore, the first hypothesis (H1), which states that "emotional intelligence has a positive effect on the ability to appreciate dark humor," is accepted. This means that students with higher emotional intelligence tend to be better able to respond to and understand dark humor in their social context.

This finding aligns with existing literature, which states that emotional intelligence is closely related to various social aspects, including humor processing. For example, Baharun (2023) emphasized that individuals with high emotional intelligence can recognize and manage their emotions well, which helps them understand humor containing taboo or controversial themes. Another study by Khoiroh et al. (2024) also supports this finding, stating that people with high emotional intelligence can manage their emotions more effectively in social situations involving humor, including dark comedy, which requires a more careful and thoughtful approach.

Theoretically, these findings broaden our understanding of how emotional intelligence influences responses to humor. They suggest that emotional intelligence plays a crucial role in mediating how individuals respond to humor, particularly dark humor, which often involves sensitive topics (Aziz & Sain, 2025; Hina, 2024). In practice, these findings imply that developing emotional intelligence in education can help individuals better understand and appreciate humor in a healthier, more contextual way (Herlina, 2024; Jali, 2025). Therefore, emotional education in educational settings, such as schools or universities, can improve students' ability to manage their emotions and interact better in complex social situations, including responding to more controversial humor.

Second hypothesis (X2). The Relationship Between Self-Confidence and Dark Humor Preference in Psychology Students

Based on the data exposure of the analysis results that have been presented through testing and analysis using the t-test related to the influence of self-efficacy on the sense of dark humor, a probability value (Pv) of $0.000 < 0.05$ was obtained, thus it can be explained that self-efficacy has a positive influence on the sense of dark humor. So, the first hypothesis (X1) states that “self-efficacy has a positive influence on the sense of dark humor.” This means that students need self-confidence and self-efficacy to create humor in their social environment (Bali & Heru, 2024; Safitri & Zawawi, 2025). This is, of course, part of the concept of dark humor, which displays humor that some people consider taboo. So, someone needs to have self-confidence in mixing it well.

Based on the multiple linear regression analysis above, the F value (p-value = 0.00) was not significant ($p > 0.05$). This then proves that emotional quotient and self-efficacy simultaneously have a positive and considerable influence on the sense of dark humor (Abdullah et al., 2024; Sain et al., 2025; Umar et al., 2024). The results of the analysis demonstrate that 80% of the variance in the sense of dark humor can be explained by emotional quotient and self-efficacy (Munawwaroh et al., 2024; Nisa' et al., 2024; Widiyari et al., 2024). This finding is supported by the determination analysis, which further confirms the substantial role these two factors play in shaping individuals' appreciation and expression of dark humor.

In general, based on the analysis of the variables in this study, it can be concluded that emotional intelligence (emotional quotient) and self-efficacy positively influence the ability to appreciate dark humor. From this statement, it can be interpreted that a person's ability to create dark humor is closely related to their level of emotional intelligence and self-confidence. This indicates that individuals with high emotional intelligence and strong self-confidence are better able to manage dark humor, reflecting their ability to understand and use humor in challenging, controversial social situations.

CONCLUSION

The first hypothesis confirms that emotional quotient (EQ) positively influences a person's sense of dark humor. This research highlights that individuals with higher emotional intelligence are better equipped to express and appreciate dark humor in their social environments. These findings align with existing theories that emphasize the importance of emotional regulation and self-awareness in navigating complex social interactions. The ability to perceive and manage emotions plays a crucial role in understanding and engaging with humor that may be considered taboo or controversial. This study contributes to the growing body of literature on the psychological factors that shape humor preferences and their role in social dynamics.

The second hypothesis demonstrates that self-efficacy positively impacts a person's sense of dark humor. Those with higher levels of self-confidence are more likely to express humor, particularly in challenging or socially sensitive situations. This aligns with the literature on self-efficacy, which links belief in one's abilities to personal expression and social behavior. The ability to express dark humor often requires a level of comfort with oneself and the environment. However, this study's limitations, such as its sample size and specific demographic, suggest that further research could explore these relationships in more diverse populations and examine the long-term effects of emotional intelligence and self-efficacy on humor appreciation.

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