

Roasting Brings Us Closer - or Pushes Us Apart

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ABSTRACT

When it comes to friendship, roasting is a common aspect and its impact depends on how people use it to either strengthen bonds or create emotional distance. In the midst of that, humor is widely recognized as a tool that nurtures connections, decreases stress, and enables shared positive experiences. In friendship, different types of roasting styles may elicit varying responses. Especially, when it's benign roasting, which sparks playfulness and lightheartedness, as compared to sarcastic roasting, which carries mocking tones and potentially undermines bonds. Humor appreciation plays a big role in this process, as it shapes how an individual may interpret and respond to different roasting styles. The present study examined the relationship between various types of roasting styles in shaping friendship quality among university students, with humor appreciation playing the role of the mediating variable. By using the cross-sectional research design, a data of (N = 100) university students was collected through standardized self-report questionnaires to

investigate the relation. By understanding the dynamics between these variables, it can prove valuable for counselors, educators, and student support programs to promote healthy communication and positive humor among friends.

Keywords: Benign roasting, friendship quality, humor appreciation, sarcastic roasting, young adults

Introduction

One of many things that enrich our experiences and support our emotional and physical well-being is friendship. It contributes to a higher level of happiness and overall healthy mind and body (Lu, 2021). Strong friendship offer companionship, ward off loneliness, and foster life satisfaction and self-esteem (Chopik, 2017). In term of what is quality of friendship, it revolves around dimensions, like trust, closeness, togetherness, and more, which plays a critical role in shaping one's personal development and psychosocial behavior (Alsarrani, 2022). The individual who prefers friends share similarities, as it promotes easy communication, reduce conflicts, and thereby maintain a strong social tie (Ricciardi, 2022). In comparison to that, poor-quality friendship can increase stress, social isolation, and negative emotional feelings. That's why, young adults usually value their friendship more, which contributes to their well-being and fulfills their need for social interaction and belongingness (Pezirkianidis, 2023). Even more so, for college students, friendship act a pivotal role in adjusting them to adulthood, solidifying their identity, and creating a community they can call "home away from home" (Yang, 2024).

Through jokes, humor, puns, and playful remarks, individuals strengthen their friendship bonds and humor plays as a central role in shaping the dynamics of friendship (Alfano, 2024). In young adults, shared humor serves as a foundation for long term friendship alongside values, passions, and interests (Antonovici, 2018). Humor also creates shared meanings and social support, thus enabling friends to trust each other, communicate freely, and navigate relational expectations (Alfano, 2024; Martin, 2018). From a traditional and social perspective, humor is shaped by our social and relational context, meaning it does vary person to person but can reduces stress and help resolve conflicts (Cao, 2023; Martin, 2018). In terms of anxiety and depressive symptoms, humor act as a therapeutic strategy, which has

been applied to reduce such symptoms, and promote wellness. In this way, humor serves as both a social and psychological solution in helping an individual navigate relationships, social cues, and maintain a healthy emotional balance (Malik, 2024).

In accordance to humor, roasting is a common part of it seen among friends, and it also reflect how humor shape social bonds. It's like a form of communication that occurs across lifespans, cultures, and in various contexts (Dawes & Andrews, 2025). Roasting exists on a continuum, existing both as benign and sarcastic, meaning closeness, trust, and in opposite, conflict, and mistrust (Martin & Ford, 2018). Simply, positive humor resonates meaningfulness, warm, and compassion, whereas, negative humor demeans belittling, humiliation, and social distance (Antonovici, 2018; Schermer et al., 2022). On playful end, benign roasting strengthens bonds and enhances relational closeness, as well as known to be associated with healthier relationships, and improved social functioning (Bringa et al., 2023; Lu et al., 2024; MacDonald et al., 2020). On other end, aggressive roasting includes mockery and sharp remarks that targets one's personal insecurities and is seen as inappropriate, creating emotional risks for recipient, thus destroying friendships (Lu, 2024; Schermer et al., 2022). The psychological impact of these two humor/roasting depends on the nature of the relationship between two or more individuals. The distinctions between these two highlights a vastly different psychological social consequences depending on the delivery and relationship context (Matter, 2020).

It is said that our perception of things can make or break our bonds, so, similarly, appreciating humor tends to a psychological response which is characterized by amusement, making one laugh, and perceiving something as funny (Warren et al., 2021). Even when an individual appreciates jokes, there are three parts of humor appreciation. One is simultaneity, which means that you contrast perception or idea at the same time; second is violent appraisal, meaning identifying potential negative stimuli as threatening; and third is benign appraisal, one's ability to understand a person's response that facilitates positive social interactions (Cao et al., 2023). The fact that people interpret humor different plays a key role in regulating emotions and social interactions. Having a sense of humor can address

four universal human needs, such as coping with variety, improving social connections, demonstrating capability, and managing criticism (Alfano et al., 2024).

Most researches focused on types of humor styles or broad aspects, like affiliative and aggressive humor. They studied them in relation to friendship quality in adolescents, adults, co-workers, and more (Alsarrani, 2022; Antonovici et al., 2018). However, the literature typically focused on humor as a general level rather than examining behavior, response, and perception of roasting on friendship. With the weak relation and studies conducted both internationally and according to Pakistani (cultural) perspective, the current research will look into roasting styles, humor appreciation, and friendship quality within a single analytical framework, with humor appreciation playing the role of a mediator. By doing so, this study aims provides a more culturally relevant understanding of how different forms of roasting shape friendship in young adulthood.

The current study can be explained better by theories, like the Benign Violation Theory, which explains that how humor operates within interpersonal relationships. As the introduction presented the information that friendship plays a vital role in young adult's emotional well-being and stress regulation, humor is that one key that facilitates enhanced bonding, reduce tension, and creates shared positive experiences. According to this theory, a situation becomes humorous when it includes violation but still remain benign enough to not cause any psychological harm (McGraw & Warren, 2010). Also, such benign roasting is understood as a mild violation that strengthens interpersonal connections, but when the violation takes a harsh tone, it is no longer amusing and cause discomfort and low satisfaction with friendship (Henrich, 2022).

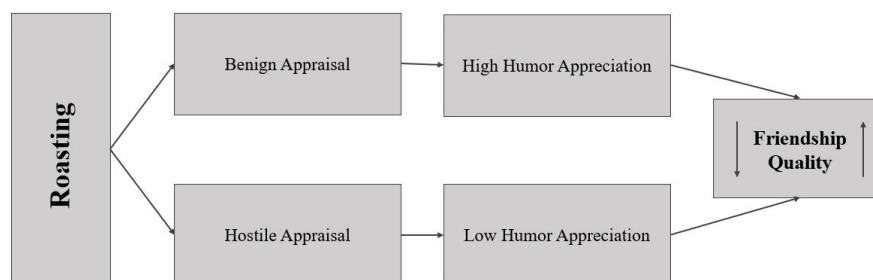


Figure 1. Benign Violation Theory

Also, considering Humor Styles Theory (Heintz & Ruch, 2019), humor is used by individuals to strengthen or weaken interpersonal relationships. It includes affiliative humor which involves light-hearted and playful jokes, which fosters connection and closeness. In comparison, aggressive humor intends to belittle others, thus causing emotional distance, self-esteem, and more, which damages friendship quality. In the midst of that, humor appreciation plays a crucial role in moderating its effects, determining how one perceives a joke (Chan et al., 2018).

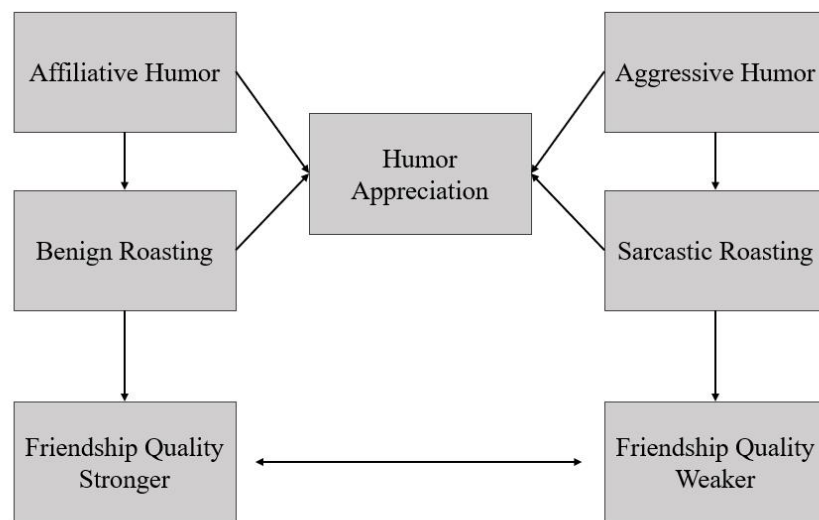


Figure 2: Humor Styles Theory

According to Thibaut and Kelley's Social Exchange Theory (Ahmad et al., 2023) any type of interpersonal relationships is guided by ongoing evaluations of costs and benefits. Individuals naturally look for that reduces their psychological stress, like embarrassment or distress while maximizing affection, support, and satisfaction. Therefore, benign roasting can be viewed as a form of positive exchange, by fostering mutual understanding, warmth, and shared humor. In contrast to that, sarcastic roasting negatively cost the relational output for individuals, thus causing discomfort, low self-esteem, and social tension. By understanding this theory, roasting is categorized as a transactional behavior, impacting friendship quality by depending on the humor style and humor appreciation (Stafford & Kuiper, 2021).

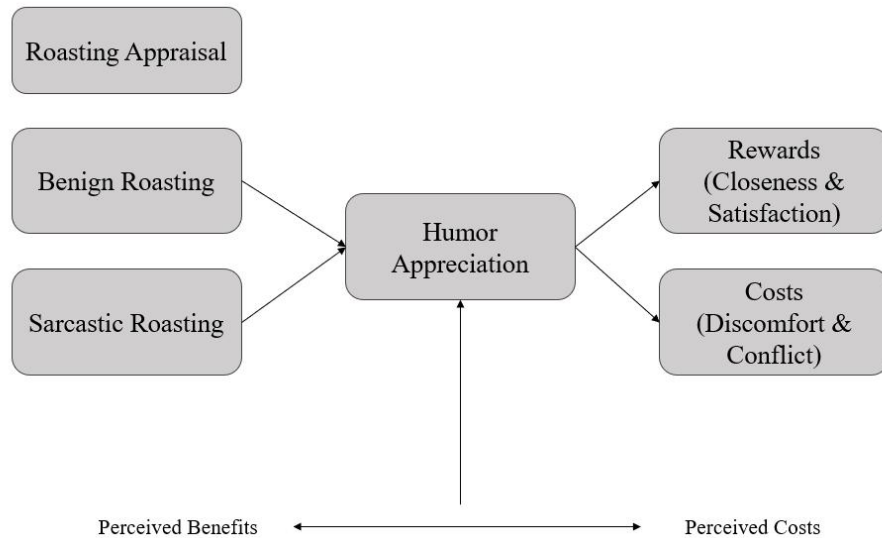


Figure 3. Social Exchange Theory

Hunter's study examined the ways in which various forms of humor affect the dynamics of friendship among youths. The results showed that whereas aggressive humor decreased relationship satisfaction and damaged peer bonding, affiliative humor promoted closeness, emotional security, and decreased conflict among students. These findings showed that while aggressive humor causes interpersonal problems, friendly humor improves the quality of friendships (Hunter et al., 2016).

According to a study done on university students, humor helped people make new friends. While aggressive humor caused discomfort and impeded closeness, students who used affiliative and self-enhancing humor reported more closeness, trust, and comfort in the early phases of friendship. These results highlighted how funny humor encourages the growth of friendships (Carson, 2020). According to a study, close friends also utilize humor as a coping mechanism for disagreements. The results showed that whereas aggressive humor exacerbated conflicts and reduced relational satisfaction, adaptive humor helped ease emotional tension, foster understanding, and restore harmony (Bringa, 2023).

A study examining meme-sharing behaviors showed that affiliative humor strengthened relational satisfaction among young adults. Students who shared playful and friendly humorous content experienced better relationship outcomes, whereas sharing sarcastic or hostile memes produced tension and emotional

discomfort within friendships (Brody & Cullen, 2023). Another study found that where aggressive humor predicted interpersonal conflict and clashing emotional consequences, affiliative humor greatly enhanced students' psychological well-being and sense of social closeness. These results suggested that while sarcastic humor may be negative to relational functioning, friendly humor improves social bonding (Lu et al., 2024).

According to a brief survey, college students' enjoyment and relationship satisfaction were positively correlated with adaptive humor styles, such as affiliative and self-enhancing humor. However, relational strain was predicted by aggressive humor, suggesting that hostile humor can reduce relationships among friends (Lazzaro et al., 2022). According to a cross-cultural study done in 15 different nations, Affiliative humor was consistently associated with less loneliness and more relational satisfaction. On the other hand, aggressive and self-defeating humor was linked to increased levels of loneliness and fewer relationships with others (Schermer, et al., 2022).

A study examining humor in interpersonal communication showed that aggressive humor was linked to verbal aggression and decreased relationship harmony, but affiliative humor encouraged people's safe connection and good social orientation (Chopik, 2017). A study investigated the relationship between personality qualities and various humor types using the Alternative Five-Factor Model. The findings showed that whereas aggressive humor was strongly associated with aggressiveness and lower social compatibility, affiliative humor was associated with positive qualities including activity level and emotional warmth. These results showed that, in contrast to people who use hostile or sarcastic humor, those who use adaptive humor typically develop friendships that are healthier and more fulfilling (Cekrlija et al., 2022).

Another study examined the connection between university students' psychological health and their sense of humor. The findings demonstrated that while aggressive humor was negatively correlated with mental health indicators, affiliative and self-enhancing humor contributed to higher emotional well-being and positive social functioning. This suggests that hostile humor can indirectly harm friendship

quality by affecting emotional stability (Rahman & Hossain, 2024).

A conceptual and empirical paper highlighted that individual use different functions of humor within interpersonal relationships. Humor serves a variety of purposes in interpersonal relationships, according to a conceptual and empirical study. The results showed that while poorly timed or aggressive humor caused communication breakdowns and relational distance, affiliative humor improved emotional sharing, strengthened bonds, and resolved interpersonal misunderstandings. The study stressed the importance of understanding between harmful and productive humor in relationships (Selma, 2016).

A study investigated humor styles along with self-esteem and emotional intelligence and found that adaptive humor styles significantly predicted higher emotional intelligence and stronger self-esteem, both of which are essential for maintaining high-quality relationships. Maladaptive humor styles were not found to contribute positively to interpersonal functioning, indicating their role in decreasing friendship satisfaction (Gakhar & Singh, 2024).

Research conducted on Turkish university students examined humor styles in relation to shyness and automatic negative thoughts. According to the results, students were able to develop more positive social relationships since affiliative and self-enhancing humor was linked to reduced levels of shyness and fewer negative thoughts. Aggressive humor, on the other hand, was associated with more negative thought patterns, suggesting that it could be detrimental to friendships (Ergün Başak & Can, 2014).

A classical study introduced the McGill Friendship Questionnaire, which assesses emotional security, companionship, help, and closeness among friends. The relevance of interpersonal behaviors, including humor, in determining friendship quality was highlighted by the results, which showed that people with higher relationship quality had better social well-being and life satisfaction (Mendelson & Aboud, 1999).

A systematic review on friendship quality and subjective well-being demonstrated that strong friendships were linked with higher life satisfaction, reduced depression, and better psychological functioning. Poor friendship quality

predicted emotional distress, emphasizing the importance of examining behaviors that influence friendships, including roasting and different humor styles (Alsarrani et al., 2022).

Research manifested that People are more attracted to others who share their sense of humor. This study showed that when participants believed a stranger appreciated their joke, they rated that person as more likable even if the stranger did not share similar attitudes. A positive reaction to humor was strong enough to overcome attitude differences, suggesting that humor appreciation is a powerful factor in interpersonal attraction (Cann et al., 1997).

In 2023, a study explains that humor is not understood or appreciated the same way across all cultures. The researchers discovered that depending on how close they feel to others, people from various cultural backgrounds respond to humor in different ways. People feel more at ease appreciating, sharing, and making jokes when there is less social distance (for instance, with friends or familiar people). However, people are more careful and less likely to find the same humor amusing when there is a high social distance (with strangers or remote groups). The study emphasizes how people's perceptions of and usage of humor in everyday life are greatly influenced by culture and social closeness (Cao et al., 2023).

Few researches in Pakistan have examined in humor friendship, and no study has specifically explored benign vs. sarcastic roasting or their effects on friendship quality. Although humor styles have been studied with other variables locally, humor appreciation and friendship quality remain unexplored (Ahmad et al., 2023). A study conducted on Pakistani university students demonstrated that humor styles significantly predicted interpersonal relationship quality. Students who used affiliative and self-enhancing humor reported better identification, emotional experience, and disclosure within friendships, while those using self-defeating or aggressive humor experienced more conflict and relational dissatisfaction. These findings show that positive humor enhances friendship quality, whereas negative humor may weaken it (Idrees et al., 2020).

Another study found that among Pakistani undergraduates, social competency was influenced by both humor and empathy. While students who relied

on aggressive humor demonstrated worse emotional functioning, those that used affiliative humor shown greater empathy and improved social adjustment. The findings highlighted how adaptive humor enhances social competence and fortifies peer relationships (Nazir & Rafique, 2019). A study conducted at COMSATS University Lahore investigated humor styles as predictors of psychological and somatic health. The results showed that students' psychological suffering and poor social functioning were linked to maladaptive humor, such as self-defeating and hostile humor. Adaptive humor, on the other hand, was associated with better emotional and social results, suggesting that it is crucial for creating solid and encouraging friendships (Fatima et al., 2020).

Another study conducted in Lahore looked at humor and mindfulness as indicators of undergraduates' personal growth initiative. While maladaptive humor styles were linked to worse adjustment, students who used affiliative and self-enhancing humor showed more personal growth and improved emotional well-being. These findings subtly demonstrated that healthy interpersonal connections are facilitated by good humor (Rahim, 2024). A study on Pakistani youth revealed that humor styles were significantly related to emotional intelligence and social competence. Students who preferred adaptive humor showed higher emotional intelligence and better peer adjustment, whereas aggressive humor predicted weak social functioning. This study demonstrated that humor plays an essential role in shaping students' relational outcomes (Hussain & Çerkez, 2023).

Considering all these studies, the objectives of the study is to find answers to these questions: a) What is the relationship between benign roasting and friendship quality? b) What is the relationship between sarcastic roasting and friendship quality? c) Does humor appreciation explain variance in friendship quality among university students? d) Does humor appreciation function as a mediator between roasting styles and friendship quality? Moreover, the main hypotheses of the current study is also investigating these: 1) Benign roasting will be associated with friendship quality among university students. 2) Sarcastic roasting will be associated with friendship quality among university students. 3) Humor appreciation will be positively associated with friendship quality among university students. 4) Humor

appreciation will be examined as a potential mediator in the relationship between roasting styles (benign and sarcastic) and friendship quality among university students.

Methodology

Data were collected using a non-probability convenience sampling technique. The total sample consisted of one hundred participants ($N = 100$) university students, including female ($n = 49$) and males ($n = 51$). Data was collected from the University of Management and Technology Lahore. The study included participants who were enrolled as students at UMT, within the age range of 18 to 30 years, and who provided voluntary informed consent to participate.

The Humor Styles Questionnaire (HSQ) was used to assess humor-related behaviors. For the present study, the affiliative humor subscale was used to measure benign roasting, while the aggressive humor subscale was used to measure sarcastic roasting. The questionnaire consists of items rated on a Likert-type scale, with higher scores indicating greater use of the respective humor style (Martin R. A.-D., 2003).

McGill Friendship Questionnaire – Respondent's Affection (MFQ-RA). Friendship quality was assessed using the McGill Friendship Questionnaire – Respondent's Affection (MFQ-RA). This scale consists of 16 items that measure emotional closeness, satisfaction, and positive feelings toward a friend. Responses are recorded on a Likert-type scale, with higher scores indicating better perceived friendship quality (Mendelson M. J., 2013).

Humor Sensitivity Scale. Humor appreciation was measured using the Humor Sensitivity Scale, a self-report measure designed to assess individuals' ability to understand, enjoy, and respond positively to humor in everyday interactions. The scale consists of 10 items, and higher scores reflect higher levels of humor appreciation (Heintz, 2021).

Procedure. All ethical guidelines established by the American Psychological Association (APA) were strictly followed throughout this study. Permission to use the study scales was obtained from the original authors prior to data collection. Participants were fully informed about the purpose, procedures, and nature of the

study before participation, and all provided voluntary informed consent. Participation was entirely voluntary, and participants were free to withdraw at any time without providing a reason. The study was designed to ensure that no physical, psychological, emotional, or social harm occurred. Participant privacy and confidentiality were rigorously maintained, with no personal information disclosed to any third party. Additionally, participants' identities were anonymized during data coding and analysis, and all data were handled carefully during processing and reporting to safeguard confidentiality.

Data Analysis. The variables were tested using the IBM SPSS Statistics 26 to find correlation, t-test, and linear regression between these variables. Also, PROCESS v.4.2 was downloaded to conduct mediation analysis of humor appreciation for types of roasting affecting friendship quality.

Results

This part provides all the statistical analyses conducted on the study variables. First, correlational analysis was conducted to examine the relationships among variables. Next, an independent sample t-test will be presented to indicate a significant difference in one of the demographics with the variables. After that, this section will showcase a reliability statistics table of all the variables to show how consistent the scales were in the study. Finally, regression analysis was conducted to examine how well one or more variables predicted another variable, along with mediating results of roasting on friendship with humor appreciation as mediator.

A total of 100 university students participated in the study. Descriptive statistics for the main study variables are presented in Table 1. Participants reported moderate levels of benign roasting ($M = 34.30$, $SD = 7.59$) and sarcastic roasting ($M = 27.81$, $SD = 7.47$). Friendship quality also showed a relatively high mean score ($M = 112.02$, $SD = 29.50$), and humor appreciation was moderately high ($M = 26.93$, $SD = 5.31$). A Pearson correlation analysis was conducted to examine the associations between benign roasting, sarcastic roasting, humor appreciation, and friendship quality. Results indicated that, Benign roasting was positively correlated with humor appreciation, $r = .284$, $p < .01$. Humor appreciation was positively correlated with friendship quality, $r = .439$, $p < .01$. Sarcastic roasting showed no significant

correlation with friendship quality or humor appreciation ($|r| < .07$, $p > .05$). The friendship quality subcomponents were strongly intercorrelated, Satisfaction and positive feelings, ($r = .936$, $p < .01$), Satisfaction and friendship quality, ($r = .979$, $p < .01$), Positive feelings and friendship quality, ($r = .988$, $p < .01$). Humor appreciation also correlated with satisfaction and positive feelings, $r = .446$ and $.421$, respectively, $p < .01$.

An independent samples t-test was conducted to compare roasting styles, friendship quality components, and humor appreciation between students living in joint versus nuclear family systems. Students from nuclear families reported significantly higher benign roasting ($M = 36.00$, $SD = 8.72$) than those from joint families ($M = 32.66$, $SD = 5.95$), $t(98) = -2.23$, $p = .031$, Cohen's $d = .44$, representing a small-to-moderate effect. There was no significant difference in sarcastic roasting between groups, $t(98) = -0.06$, $p = .346$, Cohen's $d = .02$, indicating a negligible effect. Significant differences were found in friendship satisfaction, with joint family students ($M = 51.73$, $SD = 11.10$) reporting higher scores than nuclear family students ($M = 46.86$, $SD = 14.43$), $t(98) = 1.89$, $p = .007$, Cohen's $d = .37$, a small effect size. Similarly, students from joint families also reported higher positive feelings in friendships, $t(98) = 1.96$, $p = .012$, Cohen's $d = .39$, again reflecting a small effect. Overall friendship quality was significantly higher in joint family students ($M = 117.63$, $SD = 25.48$) compared to nuclear family students ($M = 106.18$, $SD = 32.41$), $t(98) = 1.95$, $p = .009$, Cohen's $d = .39$, demonstrating a small-to-moderate effect. There was no significant difference in humor appreciation, $t(98) = 2.49$, $p = .694$, Cohen's $d = .50$, which reflects a moderate effect, although the mean difference was statistically nonsignificant.

Internal consistency reliability was assessed using Cronbach's alpha. The Humor Styles (Roasting) scale demonstrated acceptable reliability (15 items, $\alpha = .73$). The Friendship Quality scale showed excellent internal consistency (16 items, $\alpha = .92$). The Humor Appreciation scale demonstrated acceptable reliability (10 items, $\alpha = .75$). All scales met the recommended criterion for acceptable internal consistency ($\alpha \geq .70$). All scales demonstrated satisfactory internal consistency, indicating they are reliable measures for assessing benign/sarcastic roasting,

friendship quality, and humor appreciation.

A multiple linear regression was conducted to examine whether benign roasting, sarcastic roasting, and humor appreciation predict friendship quality among university students. The overall regression model was significant, indicating that the predictors collectively explain a meaningful amount of variance in friendship quality, $p < .001$. Results demonstrated that humor appreciation significantly predicted friendship quality, $B = 2.72$, $SE = .52$, $\beta = .49$, $t(149) = 5.23$, $p < .001$, 95% CI $[1.69, 3.76]$. This suggests that higher humor appreciation is associated with higher levels of friendship quality. In contrast, benign roasting was not a significant predictor, $B = 0.70$, $SE = .36$, $\beta = .18$, $t(149) = 1.92$, $p = .057$, 95% CI $[-0.02, 1.42]$. Although borderline, this result indicates a trend but does not reach the conventional significance threshold. Additionally, sarcastic roasting did not significantly predict friendship quality, $B = -0.70$, $SE = .35$, $\beta = -.01$, $t(149) = -0.19$, $p = .844$, 95% CI $[-0.77, 0.63]$, indicating no meaningful relationship.

Table 1: *Mediation of Humor Appreciation for Benign Roasting in Predicting Friendship Quality (N = 100)*

Predictions	95% CI				β	F	R^2	ΔR^2
	B	SE	LL	UL				
Model 1						3.15*	.09	-
Prediction Mediator (HA_T)								
BRT	-0.20	0.07	-0.34	-0.07	-.29			
Gender	-0.05	1.04	-2.11	2.02	.00			
Age	-0.72	0.74	-2.20	0.75	-.10			
Model 2						7.15*	.23	.14
Predicting Outcome (FQ_T)								
BRT (direct effect)	0.73	0.37	0.00	1.47	.19			
HA_T	2.77	0.52	1.74	3.81	.05			
Gender	1.38	5.34	-9.22	11.98	.02			
Age	3.75	3.82	-3.84	11.34	.09			

Note. B = unstandardized regression coefficient; SE = standard error; LLCI =

lowerlevel confidence interval; ULCI = upperlevel confidence interval.

The first regression model examined whether benign roasting predicted humor appreciation. The overall model was statistically significant, $F = 3.15$, $R^2 = .09$, indicating that 9% of the variance in humor appreciation was explained by the predictors. Benign roasting significantly negatively predicted humor appreciation, $B = -0.20$, $SE = 0.07$, 95% CI $[-0.34, -0.07]$, $\beta = -.29$. This suggests that higher levels of benign roasting were associated with lower levels of humor appreciation. Gender ($B = -0.05$, $p > .05$) and age ($B = -0.72$, $p > .05$) were not significant predictors of humor appreciation. The second regression model examined whether benign roasting and humor appreciation predicted friendship quality. The model was statistically significant, $F = 7.15$, $R^2 = .23$, accounting for 23% of the variance in friendship quality. The addition of humor appreciation resulted in a significant increase in explained variance, $\Delta R^2 = .14$. Benign roasting had a significant direct effect on friendship quality, $B = 0.73$, $SE = 0.37$, 95% CI $[0.00, 1.47]$, $\beta = .19$. Humor appreciation was also a significant positive predictor of friendship quality, $B = 2.77$, $SE = 0.52$, 95% CI $[1.74, 3.81]$, indicating that higher humor appreciation was associated with higher friendship quality. Gender ($B = 1.38$, $p > .05$) and age ($B = 3.75$, $p > .05$) did not significantly predict friendship quality.

Table 2: *Mediation of Humor Appreciation for Sarcastic Roasting in Predicting Friendship Quality (N = 100)*

Predictions	95% CI				β	F	R^2	ΔR^2
	B	SE	LL	UL				
Model 1						0.30	.01	-
Prediction Mediator (HA_T)								
SRT	0.40	0.07	-0.11	0.18	.05			
Gender	-0.40	1.09	-2.58	1.77	-.04			
Age	-0.47	0.78	-2.01	1.08	-.06			
Model 2						5.93*	.20	.19
Predicting								
Outcome (FQ_T)								

SRT (direct effect)	-0.02	0.37	-0.36	0.72	-.01
HA_T	2.48	0.51	1.46	3.49	.45
Gender	2.80	5.49	-8.10	13.69	.05
Age	2.83	3.91	-4.92	10.59	.07

Note. B = unstandardized regression coefficient; SE = standard error; LLCI = lower level confidence interval; ULCI = upper level confidence interval

The first regression model examined whether sarcastic roasting predicted humor appreciation. The overall model was not statistically significant, $F = 0.30$, $R^2 = .01$, indicating that only 1% of the variance in humor appreciation was explained by the predictors. Sarcastic roasting did not significantly predict humor appreciation, $B = 0.40$, $SE = 0.07$, 95% CI $[-0.11, 0.18]$, $\beta = .05$. Gender ($B = -0.40$, $p > .05$) and age ($B = -0.47$, $p > .05$) were also not significant predictors of humor appreciation. The second regression model examined whether sarcastic roasting and humor appreciation predicted friendship quality. The overall model was statistically significant, $F = 5.93$, $R^2 = .20$, indicating that 20% of the variance in friendship quality was explained by the predictors. The inclusion of humor appreciation resulted in a substantial increase in explained variance, $\Delta R^2 = .19$. Sarcastic roasting did not have a significant direct effect on friendship quality, $B = -0.02$, $SE = 0.37$, 95% CI $[-0.36, 0.72]$, $\beta = -.01$. In contrast, humor appreciation significantly positively predicted friendship quality, $B = 2.48$, $SE = 0.51$, 95% CI $[1.46, 3.49]$, $\beta = .45$. Gender ($B = 2.80$, $p > .05$) and age ($B = 2.83$, $p > .05$) were not significant predictors of friendship quality.

Discussion

When it comes to benign roasting, it showed a positive relation with humor appreciation. With respect to the first object of the study, the findings provide partial support for H1, meaning that affiliative humor was related to humor appreciation, while the mediation analysis was included in the model (Carson, 2020). However, in the multiple regression analysis, the benign roasting did not show any significance in predicting friendship quality, although the results were ($p = .057$), suggesting a weak association. Although the mixed findings indicate that playful humor alone may not consistently enhance friendship across all contexts, it does

explain that roasting is perceived as friendly and non-threatening, and the findings align with the Benign Violation Theory * (McGraw, 2010). The findings also point out that good humor does strengthen bonds, but when it becomes frequent or poorly timed, it reduces enjoyment, therefore impacting one's friendship (Alsarrani, Hunter, Dunne, & Garcia, 2022). The interpretation is supported by the mediation analysis, which shows that benign roasting was negatively associated with humor appreciation, suggesting that excessive or poorly received roasting may undermine how humor interactions are experienced by others (Schermer J. A.-T., 2022).

In contrast to benign roasting and friendship quality, the second objective examined the relationship between sarcastic roasting and friendship quality. In simple terms, the results did not support H2, as it does not show any significant association with friendship quality in correlational, regression, and mediation analysis. According to previous studies, it was shown that aggressive humor carries criticism, mockery, and power imbalance (Schermer J. A.-T., 2022). However, these studies were conducted internationally, and these results show a significant difference in how sarcastic roasting is perceived in the Pakistani context. In some cases, sarcastic roasting is seen as 'normal' or is dismissed as playful (Rahim, 2024). So, the findings explained that aggressive humor may be neutral or ineffective in shaping friendship quality. It is explained in the Humor Styles Theory (Heintz S. R., 2021) that affiliative humor promotes connection and bad humor risks emotional harm, but according to cultural differences, sarcastic roasting is either ignored, talked over, or taken as mindful and playful humor. An important point here is that the absence of a negative effect does not mean that it's necessarily harmful, but it also does not appear to be a factor that influences friendship quality (Bringa S. A., 2023).

One of the most important findings of the study is the role of humor appreciation acting as a mediation variable. The results strongly support H3, showing a positive association between humor appreciation and friendship quality across correlational, regression, and mediation analysis. Various studies have reported that those who reported higher levels of humor appreciation have greater friendship satisfaction and positive feelings (Carson, 2020). The mediation analysis

also showed that humor appreciation is partially related to benign roasting and friendship quality, but has no relation to sarcastic roasting. Rather than using humor alone, the ability to perceive it, enjoy it, and value it also matters in friendship (Alsarrani, Hunter, Dunne, & Garcia, 2022). Moreover, it suggests that friendship thrives by having a better understanding and appreciation for humor, as it can foster closeness, emotional regulation, and relational satisfaction (Cao, Hou, Dong, & Ji, 2023). The findings are seen as consistent with Social Exchange Theory (Ahmad, 2023), that when benign roasting is appreciated, it increases relational rewards, like enjoyment, whereas sarcastic roasting introduces emotional costs that outweigh potential benefits.

The fourth objective's results showed partial support for H4, as humor appreciation worked with one type of roasting style in affecting friendship quality. Among these variables, the study also found differences based on family systems, like between joint and nuclear families. Individuals who were from joint family systems reported higher friendship satisfaction and positive feelings (Persram, 2021). Also, those who were from nuclear families reported higher levels of benign roasting. These two findings portray a significant cultural difference in emotional expression and interpersonal sensitivity, and the family they live with. Joint family systems emphasize emotional closeness, respect, and harmony, which translates into supportive friendships (Yang). In comparison to that, individuals from nuclear families may engage more freely in playful teasing to form better peer bonding (Dawes M. A., 2025).

Concluding everything up, the findings suggest that not all humor styles are equally beneficial for friendships. Benign roasting can enhance friendship quality, but it depends on how people appreciate humor (Kasunic, 2018). Whereas, for sarcastic roasting, it appears largely irrelevant to friendship quality. Across all analyses, humor appreciation consistently appeared as the most important factor, emphasizing that the perception and enjoyment of humor matter more than the humor itself.

These results contribute to the literature both in terms of implications and culturally, by differentiating between roasting styles and by demonstrating that

humor appreciation is a critical psychological phenomenon in friendship dynamics among young adults.

Limitations and Future Directions

Despite its contributions, the present study has several limitations that should be considered when interpreting the findings. First, the use of a cross-sectional correlational design limits the ability to draw causal conclusions regarding the relationships among roasting styles, humor appreciation, and friendship quality. Future research may benefit from employing longitudinal or experimental designs to better examine the directionality of these relationships. Second, the reliance on self-report measures may have introduced response biases, such as social desirability or subjective interpretation of humor-based behaviors. Incorporating qualitative methods or peer-reported data could provide a more comprehensive understanding of roasting dynamics within friendships. Additionally, the use of convenience sampling and a relatively small sample drawn from a single university limits the generalizability. Although the study was conducted in a collectivistic cultural context, individual differences in cultural values, emotional sensitivity, and humor norms were not assessed.

These factors may influence how roasting and humor are interpreted within friendships. Future studies should include larger and more diverse samples across different universities and cultural contexts. Finally, although humor appreciation was examined as a mediating variable, future research may employ advanced statistical techniques and formal mediation analyses to further clarify the underlying mechanisms through which humor-based interactions influence friendship quality. Addressing these limitations may strengthen the understanding of how humor functions within interpersonal relationships and enhance the applicability of findings across settings.

Conclusion

In conclusion, the study highlights that humor in friendships is not inherently positive or negative; rather, its impact depends on style, context, and interpretation. Benign roasting can enhance friendships when it is appreciated as playful and safe, whereas sarcastic roasting does not reliably contribute to friendship quality. Humor

appreciation emerges as a key psychological mechanism that shapes how humor-based interactions influence friendship experiences. These findings contribute to a more nuanced understanding of humor, roasting, and friendship quality, particularly within the cultural context of university students. This study provides empirical evidence that benign roasting, when paired with humor appreciation, enhances friendship quality, whereas sarcastic roasting does not. Humor appreciation emerges as a key social mechanism in maintaining strong, satisfying peer relationships. The findings contribute to a deeper understanding of the social dynamics of humor among university students and underscore the importance of positive, playful social interactions in friendship development.

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