

## **The Use of Humor by Primary School Administrators and Its Organizational Effect on Schools**

**Ahmet Şahin<sup>i</sup>**

Alanya Alaaddin Keykubat University, Antalya

### **Abstract**

The purpose of this study is to determine the aim of primary school administrators' use of humor and the organizational effects of their use of humor according to the opinions of the school administrators and teachers. The study was modelled as a multiple holistic case study. The study group consists of 9 administrators and 12 teachers working in the primary schools in the province of Antalya in the year of 2015. For data collection, the researcher developed and used a semi-structured data collection form. The data obtained were subjected to both descriptive analysis and content analysis. As a result, both the administrators and the teachers reported that the constructive use of humor of the primary school administrators was superior to the destructive ones. The results also revealed that the positive effects of the humor used by administrators were higher than the negative effects on school and subordinates.

**Keywords:** *Humor, use of humor, organizational effects of humor, primary schools, school administrators.*

-----  
<sup>i</sup> **Ahmet Şahin** (PhD) is currently serving as an assistant professor in Alanya Alaaddin Keykubat University, Faculty of Education, Department of Educational Management. He has served as a teacher, assistant principal and researcher in various educational settings. He is currently studying on the effectiveness of use of humor in schools.

**Correspondence:** ahmetsh@yahoo.com | ahmet.sahin@alanya.edu.tr

## **Introduction**

Humor, which can lead us to experience both positive as well as negative emotions, is an important part of our everyday life as well as our business environment. While humor at times can create a positive environment with both sides caught up in laughter, at other times it can also be destructive where one is having fun and the other is unhappy. In other words, humor can play a constructive or destructive role between parties and can have both positive and negative consequences for organizations (Cann, Watson and Bridgewater, 2014, p.309; Lyttle, 2007, p.239; Malone, 1980, p.359; Meyer, 2000, 329). Accordingly, it is expected that the destructive effects decrease and the constructive effects increase in an organizational environment where humor is used effectively. It is understood that effective humor use has significant effects on many factors, such as organizational performance, organizational effectiveness and organizational productivity. In this regard, it was deemed necessary to focus on the use of humor in organizations and the determination of its effects on the organization as a result.

The use of humor in organizations is not just a joke symbolically spoken at the beginning of meetings or office comics that only a few employees can understand. On the contrary, humor is both a dynamic communicative behavior that connects people together as well as an effective administrative tool. Humor is a strategy that can be learned and developed that everyone can use to create a positive working environment (Crawford, 1994, p.28). Humor helps to increase morale, productivity, motivation and creativity within organizations, as well as to create a more positive organizational culture (Hoffman, 2007, p.1). Cann, Watson and Bridgewater (2014, p.309, 317) state that positive humor styles among employees, which are supported by their administrators, need to be associated with high job satisfaction and high organizational commitment. In short, in organizations where a positive atmosphere of humor is dominant, job satisfaction and organizational commitment will be higher; if the opposite holds true, job satisfaction and loyalty will decrease.

It is stated that humor has an important role in facilitating communication and improving the atmosphere in organizations. It is also mentioned that administrators who use humor and enjoy humor can strengthen their relationships in business life as perceived by their subordinates. It is expected that the effect that emerges when negative humor is used may have the opposite effect on a number of leadership outcomes (Decker and Rotondo, 2001, p.459).

The use of humor in organizations is one of the fundamental variables affecting the organization's culture and atmosphere and often evokes positive and constructive feelings. Although this is the general perception of humor, humor can also have destructive effects. However, the conscious and effective use of humor can turn even destructive outcomes into constructive situations. Therefore, in terms of organizational effectiveness and efficiency, the use of humor in organizations is remarkable. As a matter of fact,

Vacharkulksemsuk, Sekerka and Fredrickson (2011, p.105) indicate that positive emotions will create a positive emotional atmosphere in organizations, and such an atmosphere will lead to organizational growth and increase in performance.

It is emphasized that humor is a tool that can be used to design and plan the culture of an organization in a business environment while also mentioning that it is a central factor in organizational culture (Crawford, 1994, p.15; Leslie-Bole, 1985, p.168). When used in a supportive and positive manner, humor can establish a business environment where employees in the workplace enjoy their work, team spirit is nourished, and unity is valued offering rich content for creative humor. All these elements contribute to the development of the organization's culture in which humor is considered not a destructive part but rather a constructive part of workplace interaction (Holmes, 2007, p.534).

Organizational humor includes amusing and ridiculous communications that produce positive emotions and cognizance in individuals and organizations (Romero and Cruthirds, 2006, p. 59). Humor's psychological, cognitive, and emotional responses and its impact on the communication process indicate that humorous working environments can shape the atmosphere as well as informal social relationships (Decker and Rotonda, 2001, p.251). Therefore, it can be said that humor that awakens positive feelings can also have a positive effect on the organizational atmosphere.

It is suggested that administrative effectiveness increased through using humor in establishing positive communication to gain an optimistic perspective in the work environment, creating a positive atmosphere in the workplace, playing a role in facilitating and developing social relationships, providing a different and more correct perspective on solving problems by providing the ability to break ineffective thinking styles and cycles of inferior thinking, or in other words bringing about employees' positive organizational output by being a tool to spearhead creative problem solving and innovation in the workplace (Güler and Güler, 2010, p.207; Lyttle, 2007, p.240; Meyer, 2000, pp.328-329). However, when considering the role of humor in organizations, if all humor is not considered to be positive and constructive, it is necessary to take into account both the positive and negative effects of humor. Nevertheless, many organizations have ignored that in studies of organizational atmosphere, it has been shown that humor may be an important part of organizational atmosphere (Cann, Watson and Bridgewater, 2014, p. 309). In this respect, it can be said that humor needs to be analyzed in an organizational context and comprehensive explanations put forth.

Throughout the school day, teachers are busy with a series of unplanned activities other than teaching, such as making photocopies, from preparing course material to communicating with parents, following legislative changes and writing reports. Oftentimes, these things cause unpleasant negative emotions such as worry, anxiety, burnout and stress in teachers (Hurren, 2008, p.83). It is stated that a

positive organizational culture and atmosphere are very effective in removing all of these negative emotions (Çelik, 2000, p.v; Doğan, 2013, p.101, 163-164; George and Jones, 2012, p.28; Türk, 2007, p.34; Vural, 1998, p.71). With regard to the topic, Hurren (2006, p.383) suggests that humorous environments and humorous environments supported or created by principals can be used as an effective means of increasing teachers' job satisfaction. George and Jones (2012, p.73) see humor as a tool that can be used to give employees a more positive mood. Aslan (2006, p.1) states that individuals tend to have positive emotions during moments of positive thinking and negative emotions during moments of negative thinking. In fact, humor can create an atmosphere that allows individuals to feel better about the unit they work with, even though they may not be satisfied with their leader (Avolio, Howell and Sosik, 1999, p.225). In this case, it can be stated that humor is important in terms of providing a positive organizational atmosphere. Based on the positive and negative effects of humor on organizations, it can be said that research is needed to investigate the use of humor by school administrators and the organizational effects that arise as a result.

In conclusion, this study is important in the creation of a constructive organizational atmosphere in schools, so that it can make a positive impact on organizational output, such as employee motivation, job satisfaction and performance, organizational health and organizational effectiveness. The purpose of research in this direction is to determine the purpose primary school administrators use humor, and the organizational effects their humor has on the school. In line with this general objective, answers to the following questions were sought. According to the views of primary school administrators and teachers:

1. What are school administrators' intentions in using humor?
2. What organizational effects on the school does the humor that school administrators use in their work environment have?

## **Method**

### **Research Model**

Aiming to determine the organizational effect of primary school administrators' use of humor on the school according to the views of administrators and teachers, this study utilizes one of the qualitative research methods, the holistic multiple-case study design (Fraenkel, Wallen and Hyun, 2011, p.435; Güler, Halıcıoğlu and Taşğın, 2013, p.39; Yıldırım and Şimşek, 2011, p.77, 290).

### **Working Group**

The working group consisted of nine administrators and twelve teachers working in ten different primary schools in the province of Antalya in the year of 2015. When the study group was determined, the maximum variation sampling method from among the purposeful sampling methods was used taking into

consideration variables such as task, gender and branch (Büyüköztürk, Çakmak, Akgün and Demirel, 2010, p.89). Four of the school administrators participating in the qualitative study were principals, and five of them were assistant principals. Of the administrators, seven participants were men and two were females. One administrator had graduated with an associate degree, one from a three-year education institute, five with a bachelor's and two with master's degrees. The administrators had worked as administrators for between two and twenty-seven years, and it seemed that the total working time for them was between 8.5 and 34 years. Half of the twelve teachers who participated in the study were female participants. When the distribution of teachers according to their branches was examined, it was observed that there were four classroom teachers, one guidance counselor and seven branch teachers. The teachers' working periods ranged from five to thirty years. Of the teachers, one had an associate degree, ten a bachelor's degree and one a master's degree.

### **Data Collection Tools and Collection of Data**

Interviewing and observation techniques were used together in the data collection process. In the interviews, data was gathered through semi-structured interview forms consisting of open-ended questions. In the first part of the interview form, questions were asked to determine the demographic characteristics of the participants. In the second part, two open-ended questions were used to determine the depth of the administrators' use of humor and the effects of their humor on the organization. Voice recording was used to collect interview data.

An observation form developed by the researcher was used to collect the observation data. In the observations, the environment, the people and their characteristics found in the surrounding environment, the events that occurred in the observations, the body language and the sound levels of the people, the emotions that were felt (For example, because the person using humor is angry, it is allowed. Everyone laughs. I see the person at the center of the humor crying.), the humorous atmosphere felt, and the style of humor were taken note of.

In the interviews, the data were collected through a semi-structured interview form consisting of open-ended questions. At the same time, the researcher in the interviews recorded attention-grabbing environmental factors and recorded the participants' body language and voice tones as interview notes and used them in evaluations. In the first part of the interview form, questions were asked to determine the demographic characteristics of the participants. In the second part, two open-ended questions were used to determine the depth of the administrators' use of humor and the effects of their humor on the organization. At the same time, detailed questionnaires were prepared for each question so that the participants were able to evaluate every aspect of the research topic. Questions were asked to each individual participant during the interviews, and they were asked to express their opinions. When expressing their opinions, the researcher

made note of the details mentioned in the interviews and asked detailed questions about issues not covered in the probes asking the participants to express their opinions on the related issues. Within this framework, participants were asked, “(1) *For what purpose do your school administrators use humor? Can you explain?* (2) *What are the organizational effects the humor your school administrators use in their work environment have on the functioning of the school, in particular with regards to teachers?*” Administrators involved in the study were asked to evaluate all the above questions according to their own viewpoint.

Within the scope of the study, the nature of the qualitative research method required only information gathered from volunteer teachers and administrators. In the study, face-to-face individual interviews with participants and observations throughout the school were made. Due to the fact that the research also carried the characteristics of a case study, the interviews were conducted with administrators and teachers’ in schools in their own natural work environments. Voice recording was used to collect interview data. Teacher interviews lasted an average of 38 minutes, and administrator interviews lasted an average of 29 minutes.

### **Analysis of Data**

Both the descriptive analysis and the content analysis were performed when analyzing the data, and the NVivo program was used (Yıldırım and Şimşek, 2011, pp.224-229). Later, analytical generalization was carried out on the results of the research (Güler, Halıcıoğlu and Taşğın, 2013, p.344).

With regard to the validity and reliability of the data, a course of action was prepared by the expert in the field of educational management and supervision, along with the researcher, on the conceptual framework of the research and on the basis of the research questions, the criteria and the thematic framework for harmonization and coherence in the analysis of the data. In terms of cohesion and adaptation in the analysis, an administrator’s and a teacher’s data were analyzed together according to the determined course of action. The analyses that the researcher and field specialist had done independently of each other increased the credibility of the research because of the fact that the coding is in great agreement. Later research findings were shared with two administrators and two teacher participants, and they were asked to read and confirm whether the findings obtained correctly reflected their views (Güler, Halıcıoğlu and Taşğın, 2013, p.360). The experiences of the participants in the findings were found to correlate with the results of the research. This situation was accepted as an internal validity factor. The inclusion of the opinions of school administrators and teachers from different educational areas with different demographic characteristics and their consistency with each other increases the external applicability of the research. It also improves the reliability of studying the research process clearly, archiving raw data and, if it is deemed necessary, to be open to testing düzeyini (Yıldırım and Şimşek, 2011, p.256-274).

In order to keep the participant information confidential from the investigator, code names were used, such as A1, A2, etc. for administrator participants and T1, T2, etc. for teacher participants.

## Findings

In this section, primarily the purpose for the use of humor by primary school administrators is given, and then the organizational effects on the school resulting from the humor are presented.

### School Administrators' Purpose for Using Humor

The opinions of administrators and teachers about the purposes for humor of primary school administrators in relations with administrators are presented in Table 1 and Table 2.

**Table 1:** Purpose for Using Humor According to the Opinions of the Administrators

Opinions	A1	A2	A3	A4	A5	A6	A7	A8	A9
<b>Constructive Use</b>									
To manage conflict	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
To strengthen the relationship and communication between people	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓
To forward messages or instructions through humorous to prevent offense	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	
To create a cheerful, happy and sincere environment, to have a good time	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓
To empower personal emotion in a positive way	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓		
To criticize	✓			✓		✓	✓		✓
To increase the morale and motivation of colleagues as team members	✓	✓	✓				✓	✓	
To entertain, to make them happy and peaceful		✓	✓	✓					
To change the point of view through humor							✓	✓	
To be able to present different perspectives (to develop different ideas, to look at events from a different perspective)			✓				✓		
To prevent distraction			✓						
To change the negative administrator perception and create a particular image								✓	
To encourage creative thinking			✓						
<b>Disruptive Use</b>									
To ridicule (to criticize someone)							✓		

The use of humor most frequently expressed by the administrators involved in the study regards the use of humor in conflict. In relation to the subject, A3 expressed his opinion that the purpose of humor is to soften the environment or situation and that s/he tries to reduce the tension by drawing their attention to something else by saying, "I am trying to use humor to distance and relax the staff in an environment where there is a high level of conflict during a stressful and tense situation." As for A5, s/he expressed his opinion regarding the use of humor during conflict and tension. "You use humor. Of course. Because as I said, humor brings about positivity when it is balanced. It creates a positive environment. Humor is also one of the most important factors in reducing the tension when trying to create a positive atmosphere. Humor is one

*of the most important tools used for this purpose. Little jokes or tiny jests may be very effective... usually to soften the environment.*” Another reason for using humor in conflict is to try to reduce the tensions between people. In this context, A3 says, *“For instance, if the environment appears to be tense when I am explaining something, I start to use humor when I begin to feel that there is a problem arising or something to be misunderstood by the other party.”*

Another purpose of the administrators’ use of humor was to strengthen interpersonal relationships and communication. Administrators touched on the fact that they try to use humor as a means of communicating and chatting about this situation. They also point out that they use it to eradicate boring environments, create positive energy in the environment, and work to develop social interaction and communication. In this regards, A3 expresses his ideas as follows. *“Another thing is to improve the social interactions within the group. I act jokingly or use humor in a group setting to create the atmosphere, which would bring the group to socialize or come closer together, or to bring about a closeness eradicating frigid emotions and formalities in between. I use it to set up an environment that allows individuals to build strong relationships that bring them side-by-side. I use it to make people laugh, to create a more close-knit environment, to get away from fatigue or from formalities.”* As for A2, s/he emphasizes the importance of humor when it comes to communication by saying, *“I use it to establish positive relations with people. I am trying to develop in-house social interaction using different types of humor ... So, of course, I use humor to develop interaction in the group. To facilitate relationships in the school, to create a positive environment. I do these joke and wisecracks in that moment to create positive energy.”*

Another use of humor is the use of humor by people to convey messages or instructions without causing offense. In this regard, A1’s views were as follows. *“When you give the message that I want to give humorously, the effect on the opposite person is great; it is permanent; and it is farther away from being offensive. Think about it, the teacher was late. You call him/her to the principal’s office instead of rebuking and reproaching him/her by asked him/her why s/he was late, you try to figure out why s/he was late by saying something like ‘The child must not have slept; you must have been rocking the cradle.’ This creates comfort in this friend and tells candidly why s/he was late.”*

Administrators also talked about the use of humor to create a cheerful, happy and sincere environment and to have a good time. When examined in depth, administrators seemed to use humor to refresh, to relieve tiredness and stress, to allow others to calm down and to cheer them up. One of the administrators, A1, said, *“I usually use humor to make people feel relaxed, to allow people to overtake the tension, and to create a cheerful, loving and friendly atmosphere. For example, I see my teacher friend in school having low morale. I invite him/her to my room and sit with him/her. I definitely comfort him/her by using humor such as did you see a bad dream or something.”* A3 expresses that s/he also uses humor for this

purpose, saying, *“I use humor to make the other staff happy, make them laugh, create a more friendly environment, get rid of that tiredness or whatever else of being formal.”*

Other constructive purposes for using humor by administrators were to strengthen and criticize employees’ personal emotions in a positive way, to increase morale and motivation in team members, to make them happy and at peace, to be able to change and persuade their point of view through humor, to offer different perspectives, to change the negative perception of administrators, and to encourage creative thinking.

Another use of humor by the administrators was the use of humor for satire, which is a destructive type. On this subject, A7 mentions that humor can be used to ridicule by saying, *“We can say that sometimes ridiculing an event, and ridicule occupies a great deal of our literature, goes hand-in-hand with humor, even if it is not exactly the same, it’s somewhat close.”*

**Table 2:** *The Intentions of Humor Usage of Administrators according to Teachers*

<b>Opinions</b>	T1	T2	T3	T4	T5	T6	T7	T8	T9	T10	T11	T12
<b>Constructive Use</b>												
To have a good time, to relieve stress, to relax, to improve morale	✓	✓				✓	✓				✓	✓
To manage conflicts				✓	✓			✓		✓	✓	✓
To motivate employees		✓				✓						✓
In order to draw attention to deficiencies and faults (in a critical and witty way)		✓				✓						✓
To improve relationships between people and their social relationships									✓	✓		✓
To support us and guide us in dealing with our problems		✓										✓
To rid us of our tiredness	✓	✓										
To develop different perspectives						✓						
To make the other party proud												✓
To win over a person												✓
To make matters permanent in the mind						✓						
To expound, to explain								✓				
To tell of the work that needs to be done												✓
<b>Disruptive Use</b>												
To criticize (destructive)						✓	✓					
To warn and intimidate			✓							✓		
To gather attention at meetings (in a sarcastic manner)										✓		
To express our shortcomings and mistakes (destructively)										✓		
To transfer administrative instructions to employees sarcastically			✓									

The most commonly expressed use of humor by teachers participating in the study was to have a good time, to relieve stress, to relax, and to improve morale. In this regard, it was seen that the teachers emphasized laughing, cheering up, improving morale, being happy, relaxing, relieving stress and creating a positive environment. On the subject, T2 said, *“So, they call for us when they see our morale is down and that we are sad and tired. S/he joke with us, hangs out, tells jokes, makes us laugh. S/he tries to motivate us.”* As for T12, s/he expresses his/her thoughts by saying, *“So I’ve seen jokes that cheer up the group and fills the person at the center of the joke with pride, and even makes him/her laugh. It is meant to make people happy.”*

Another use of humor seems to be related to the use of humor in conflict. Teachers emphasize that administrators use humor in conflict to reduce the tension in conflicts, soften the environment and resolve the conflict. On this topic, the views of one of the teachers, T8, are as follows: *“They can use it to soften the environment.”* T10 says, *“To slow down the environment, to calm it down. If there is tension in the environment and if that person is not in that particular situation, I think humor is being done to comfort the environment. In other words, the environment is relaxed; I think that humor is used to relax the environment. You know how it’s as if their job is to manage and direct the environment because they’re the school administrator. Maybe they think in that context and use it as a means of humor for that purpose.”*

Other constructive opinions expressed by teachers about the administrators’ use of humor include motivating their employees, attracting attention to deficiencies and mistakes through humor, improving interpersonal relationships, improving social relations, helping to cope with problems, relieving tiredness, making sure things are kept in mind, making people proud and winning them over, giving orders and instructions without offending through humor, and allowing different perspectives to be developed.

O6 says the following regarding using humor to motivate teachers. *“I swear the humor that administrators use is often used to pump us up at work when they see a lack in motivation.”* T12 conveys his views on this subject as follows. *“Sometimes in schools, things have to be done in teams. And when choosing that team, if it was grunt work, only through their portraying it as a ‘super women’s group’ were they able to pull it off, and we’ve always made jokes such as for this reason, we’ve only given this work to our female friends and women, and in this way I think they have ended up giving a bit more support through humor. In other words, s/he understands the joke; s/he also is able to jokes. As a result, the team working with him/her is also encouraged a bit.”*

Some teachers state that the administrators criticize them in a constructive way through humor regarding deficiencies and mistakes, wisely pointing out their own deficiencies and mistakes. In this respect, T6 states, *“So what you are doing wrong or what you should not do is not presented through rough language, but rather by joking and trying present it in a better way without creating offense.”* As for T2, *“If*

*I work in my school, I have to prepare my students and my tasks, I do not constantly do it in my documents, I am a person who makes mistakes. Of course, the administrator across from me makes a joke. S/he criticizes me without offending. Of course, this will happen, and I think it's a positive action. So, why didn't you do it? Why doesn't it say none? I am both laughing and grieving as a result of the well-placed humor. I will try not to do it again."*

As for developing relationships between people, T10 says, *"Maybe things are done to ensure the environment warms up."* As for T12, s/he talked about the humans using humor to improve and facilitate social relations by saying, *"Besides, it's one of the purposes of using humor. As far as I understand, it's to develop social relations. Sometimes, it makes social relations easier."*

Other uses of humor that teachers referred to were to criticize, warn and intimidate destructively, to attract attention to meetings sarcastically, to speak of deficiencies and mistakes destructively, and to convey to employees the instructions from the administration with a sarcastic attitude. Some of the teachers said the following.

*"She uses humor as a means of criticism. But while s/he uses it, s/he creates destructive negative emotions in the other party, and you just begin to get angry."* (T7)

*"At meetings, there may be sarcasm to garner attention. It may be through words spoken."* (T10)

*"I do not even want to say hello when I go to that school (to the new school). They don't attract but rather repel, and I'd say that the humor they use is constantly sarcastic. It's like putting down or humiliation. That's what we call it. Whether you want to or not, if you are constantly being hanged or cut, you end up distancing yourself or disliking the school."* (T3)

### **The Organizational Impact of School Administrators' Humor in the Work Environment**

The views of the administrators and teachers on the effect of the humor used by administrators on the school are gathered under two headings as constructive and destructive effects and presented in Table 3 and Table 4.

**Table 3:** *The Organizational Effects on Schools of Humor from the Perspective of the Administrators*

<b>Opinions</b>	A1	A2	A3	A4	A5	A6	A7	A8	A9
<b>Constructive Influences</b>									
It provides a positive working environment.	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓			✓	✓
It motivates teachers and enhances their performance.		✓	✓	✓			✓		
It improves relationships and communication between people and facilitates cooperation.		✓		✓	✓			✓	
Employees are happier, cheerful.	✓				✓	✓	✓		

It has a positive effect.	✓	✓			✓	✓
It breaks any teacher resistance of not doing any work and makes you work fast, healthily and self-sacrificially.			✓	✓	✓	
It creates feelings of comfort, peace, and safety.				✓	✓	✓
It softens the environment.	✓	✓			✓	
It increases employee loyalty and organizational commitment.	✓					✓
It establishes empathy and brings superiors and subordinates closer together.	✓					✓
It increases productivity and effectiveness.				✓		
<b>Disruptive Effects</b>						
It causes the work to be neglected, slowed down, slacked off, and relaxed.					✓	✓

According to Table 3, administrators believed that their own humor provides a positive working environment in their schools. In this context, A3 points out that humor provides a positive work environment for the school by saying, *“I believe that I am happy and that being in a positive atmosphere allows for constantly gain for the school organization, and I am doing everything I can for it to develop. Or, do whatever it takes for it to be like that. In fact, humor provides a positive working environment, and it provides an atmosphere of work.”*

At the same time, it was also mentioned that the humor that administrators use motivates teachers, increasing their job satisfaction and performance. In this regard, A3 and A4 both say, *“Now, it improves the performance of the staff at the top, teachers, and the other staff. This also means that the performance of the school also increases. Teacher motivation is also very important. Because, it’s the teachers who work in school. The more they are ready, the more their performance improves in such a school, and this situation is reflected in a positive way for people and our country. Whenever humor is absolutely not destructive and does not hurt human dignity, it always motivates people in a positive way. The result is always positive. It is a situation that is favorable to all.”* (A3) *“The motivation of teachers improves their performance. Absolutely. I think if we talk about from one to ten, we can say six to seven. It affects six to seven. Because humor brings people closer together.”* (A4)

Other constructive effects of the humor used by administrators are that they enable the teachers to feel comfortable, peaceful and safe, because it can improve the relations and communication between the people, facilitate their cooperation, make the employees happy and cheerful, break off the teachers’ resistance against working, allow work to be fast, healthy and devoted, allow teachers to feel comfortable, at peace and secure, soften the environment, improve employee loyalty, increase organizational commitment, allow superiors and subordinates to become closer, and increase organizational productivity and effectiveness. Some administrators’ views on the constructive effects on the school of the humor used by administrators are as follows.

“People become more sincere towards each other.” (A2)

“Because humor brings people closer together. Teachers also like that. That is why teachers now have to open themselves up to using such humor. “(A4)

“Humorous language strengthens communication between people; it strengthens their ties ... They feel closer to you and they becomes more open to communication and cooperation. Humor actually facilitates communication and cooperation; it is used as a facilitator ... They see that warmth, sincerity, and emotion below the skin, and they feel close and safe.” (A8)

“At the same time, they feel your support through the humor you use when they see you, and they become committed and loyal to you. Because they see you as one of them.” (A1)

The devastating effects of the humor that the administrators use are thought to have caused the work to be put off, slow down, slack off and relax. In this regard, A6 says, “*There is no trouble caused by the humor used with primary school teachers. Maybe it’s because I’m a primary school teacher. There’s no humor there. But, I see and feel like you’re getting sidetracked. I do not know why? A relaxation becomes a relaxation in the teacher in secondary school. So, when I get approach work with humor, I begin to feel like the job will get done even if we don’t work.*”

**Table 4:** *The Organizational Effects on Schools of Administrators’ Humor from the Perspective of the Teachers*

<b>Opinions</b>	T1	T2	T3	T4	T5	T6	T7	T8	T9	T10	T11	T12
<b>Constructive Influences</b>												
It motivates employees and increases our performance.	✓	✓				✓		✓	✓	✓		✓
It promotes rapport and sincerity.	✓		✓							✓	✓	
It comforts the employees.	✓		✓				✓			✓		
It softens the environment.							✓			✓		✓
It makes employees happy.	✓											✓
It improves the communication and relationships between people.	✓		✓								✓	
It breaks off resistance to not doing work and turns desires into requests.					✓							✓
It improves educational success.		✓										
It provides unity			✓									
It has positive effects.								✓				
<b>Destructive Effects</b>												
It lowers my motivation, makes me unhappy, creates a negative environment, and creates destructive feelings.			✓				✓					
It offends employees and makes them upset.							✓			✓		
It causes the employees to be embarrassed and causes them to withdraw from the administrators.										✓		

The most voiced view of teachers about the influence on the school of humor by administrators is that the administrator's humor motivates the employees and increases teacher performance. In this regard, T8 says regarding the effect of humor in terms of motivation in his work, *"Once in a while, I think it is very effective in motivation."* As for T10, s/he refers to the constructive effect of humor on motivation and performance by saying, *"Those in the hallways and those in the room motivate me, draw closer and sympathize. It increases the performance of teachers and increases motivation."*

Another effect of the humor that administrators use is to increase the closeness and sincerity among employees. As far as the subject is concerned, a teacher said, *"It draws people closer together. I think it's beautiful. This is how it should be. But you still have to have a natural limit. It's needs to be about not going beyond that friend but the closeness between friends. If we are very sincere, sincerity will grow even more."* (T10)

It was also stated that the humor that the administrators used makes the employees feel comfortable, happy and it softens the environment. Some teachers' opinions on this are as follows.

"If humor is being used, of course, people will feel more comfortable. Our movements will change based on that." (T7)

"I think it loosens up the environment. It's very positive. It is relaxing." (T10)

"I think it also makes it a little more forward and provides more relaxation." (T1)

"We laugh and we're happy, if I can say so myself." (T11)

The other constructive effects on the school of the administrators' use of humor are to develop interpersonal communication and relationships, to break off resistance towards work, to strengthen interpersonal relations, to increase success in education and training, and to bring about cooperation with employees.

With regards to communication between people and the development and strengthening of their relationships, T3 says, "it strengthens communication." T11 says, "It increases communication. I believe that relationships are strengthened." T1 says, "Sincerity also improves friendships."

Some teachers have pointed out that the use of humor breaks off resistance towards not doing work, and they argue that the administrators' use of constructive humor allows them to do their jobs self-sacrificially. In this regard, T5 shares his opinion saying, "It is absolutely positive. Because there are some things that the teacher will do from the heart and soul, giving of him/herself, not just with regards to their formal tasks. There is a meeting outside of school. We all have to come together and do something. Or there are situations in which we have to stay for extracurricular activities and help the school. It's certainly a

situation that will pave the way for giving of ourselves. In other words, you cannot say no. For example, you cannot say no to someone who is smiling back when they say something to you. But you can easily reject someone who is sulking at you.”

Teachers who are concerned about the destructive effects of the administrator’s humor on the school suggest that they reduce my motivation, make me unhappy, create a negative environment, create destructive feelings, offend and bother workers, cause employees to be ashamed and withdraw from administrators. In these regards, T3 points out that his/her motivation falls and s/he is unhappy in the school environment by saying, *“So the humor they are actually using creates a negative environment. Yes, it’s negative and destructive for me. So, it’s not a positive influence for me. It reduces my motivation. Of course, you are also unhappy when you step into such a school environment. You are happy when you leave.”* T10 expresses his embarrassment, brokenness and sadness as follows. *“Those ridicules in the meetings keep me away. Because I feel like a student at that moment in everyone’s eyes. Actually, sometimes I think that. There are times when I do things to students. To embarrass them. But as for me I call on the students next time who I had intended to embarrass. I do this consciously. I explain the reason that I did it to bring shame on them. I am terribly sorry when it is done at meetings. I feel very saddened. I do find it right though. Because of our deficiencies.”*

### **Discussion and Conclusion**

When the purpose for administrators’ humor in their relationships is evaluated, it is seen that constructive use patterns are higher than destructive use patterns according to the opinions of administrators. According to the opinions of teachers, it can be said that the purpose for administrators’ humor are generally constructive. The fact that both teachers and administrators support each other strengthens both the idea that the humor used by administrators is constructive and the idea that an atmosphere where positive humor dominates in the school will create a positive working environment for the employees. Indeed, Williams and Clouse (1991, p.45) argue that administrators and teachers think that humor is important in terms of creating a satisfying work environment. Matthias (2014, pp.iii-iv), on the other hand, emphasizes that the use of humor in schools can make the atmosphere in schools efficient, and it is important for administrators to be able to use humor positively.

When the opinions of the administrators regarding the effects of the administrators’ humor on the school and the employees were examined, it was determined that the humor used by the administrators had two types of organizational effects: constructive and destructive on the school. Administrators believe that the humor they use creates a positive working environment in their schools, motivates teachers, increases job satisfaction and performance. As a matter of fact, Fields (2011, p.65) states that working with administrators who regularly use humor in their schools brings about higher job satisfaction in teachers than working with

administrators who little or rarely use humor, and he says that administrators who use humor in the school show that the teachers have received it positively. Other constructive effects of humor used by administrators are that it improves the relations and communication between the people, facilitates their cooperation, makes the employees happy and cheerful, reduces stress, breaks off resistance against teaching, allows work to be efficient, healthy and self-sacrificial, makes teachers feel comfortable, at peace, and secure, softens the environment, increases employee loyalty, increases organizational commitment, achieves closer superior-subordinate relationships, and increases organizational productivity and effectiveness. Administrators think that in regard to the destructive effects of the humor they use, humor causes work to be neglected, slowed down, slacked off of and relaxed upon. When the considerations of the administrators are evaluated, it can be said that the effect of the humor they use on schools is more constructive than destructive. This shows that administrators think that their humor usage has positive effects on the school.

A similar result was obtained when the opinions of teachers regarding the effects that the humor administrators use has on school were evaluated, and it was found that the humor had both constructive and destructive effects on the school. According to the teachers' opinions, there were more constructive effects than destructive. Teachers emphasized that the humor the administrators use motivates the staff, motivates the employees in the school, increases their performance, increases their rapport and sincerity, relaxes and cheers up the employees, softens the environment, develops the communication and relationships among the people, and unifies. Regarding the destructive effects of the administrators' humor on the school, teachers mentioned reducing the motivation of employees, making them unhappy, offending and hurting, embarrassing, creating a negative environment, causing destructive emotions and causing them to withdraw from the superior-subordinate relationship.

When the opinions of both the administrator and the teacher are evaluated together, it can be said that the effect of the administrator's humor on the school is more constructive than destructive. Similar to the results of Williams and Clouse (1991, p.1, 45), humor use improves the informal school atmosphere, increases social ties, helps conflict resolution, and increases loyalty. He also emphasizes that humor can be used as a means of reducing stressing in schools. Lyttle (2007, p.239) states that humor can have positive effects on organizational life such as reducing stress, team cohesion, occupational motivation, providing ideas and relieving frustration altogether.

When evaluated in general, it can be said that the administrators' purpose in using constructive humor in the primary school exists, and the humor they use is in direct proportion to the purpose for usage, effecting schools more constructively than destructively. The results strengthen the idea that administrators' use of humor is influential on the atmosphere of schools. Indeed, it is emphasized that in one study, administrators have more influence on the school atmosphere than anyone else, administrators use humor to improve the school atmosphere and strengthen teacher and administrator loyalty (Hurren, 2006, p.374-375).

Therefore, it can be said that a positive atmosphere is dominant through the use of humor in primary education institutions. In this case, it can be considered that schools have the necessary atmosphere for positive organizational outputs and that effective leadership and organizational efficiency and effectiveness can be increased (Tutar, 2003, p.253).

Based on all these results, it is possible to make primary school administrators and teachers aware of the effects of organizational humor and allow them to use it constructively through awareness raising activities regarding the humor that is used by the administrators of primary education institutions and their teachers in administrator relations. Guides for practitioners can be drawn up showing how to create school environments where a positive humor atmosphere can dominate by showing the constructive and destructive forms of humor used in schools in terms of influence and effect. The effects of school humor on organizational factors such as organizational attachment, job satisfaction, burnout, motivation and performance can be investigated.

### References

- Aslan, H. (2006). *Ortaöğretim kurumlarında görev yapan öğretmenlerin öğrenilmiş güçlülük düzeyleri ve cinsiyetlerine göre mizah tarzlarının incelenmesi*. Yayımlanmamış Yüksek Lisans Tezi, Çukurova Üniversitesi Sosyal Bilimler Enstitüsü, Adana.
- Avolio, B., Howell, J. M., & Sosik, J. J. (1999). A funny thing happened on the way to the bottom line: Humor as a moderator of leadership style effects. *Academy of Management Journal* , 42 (2), 219-227.
- Büyüköztürk, Ş., Çakmak, E. K., Akgün, Ö. E., & Demirel, F. (2010). *Bilimsel araştırma yöntemleri*. Ankara: Pegem Akademi.
- Cann, A., Watson, A. J. & Bridgewater, E. A. (2014). Assessing Humor at Work: The humor climate questionnaire. *Humor* , 27 (2), 307-323.
- Crawford, C. B. (1994). *Strategic humor in leadership: practical suggestions for appropriate use*. Retrieved December 08, 2014, from ERIC Database.
- Çelik, V. (2000). *Okul kültürü ve yönetimi*. Ankara: PegemA Yayıncılık.
- Decker, W. H., & Rotondo, D. M. (2001). Relationships among gender, type of humor, and perceived leader effectiveness. *Journal of Managerial Issues* , 13 (4), 450-465.
- Doğan, E. Ş. (2013). *Örgüt kültürü ve örgütsel bağlılık*. İstanbul: Türkmen Kitabevi.
- Fields, J. P. (2011). *Perceptions of teachers: Effects of principals' uses of humor on teacher job satisfaction*. Unpublished Doctorate Dissertation. East Tennessee State University, USA.
- Fraenkel, J. R., Wallen, N. E. & Hyun, H. H. (2011). *How to design and evaluate research in education* (5th ed.). New York: McGraw-Hill.
- George, J. M. & Jones, G. (2012). *Understanding and managing organizational behavior*, (6th Ed.). United States: Prentice Hall.
- Güler, Ç. & Güler, B. U. (2010). *Mizah, gülme ve gülme bilimi*. Ankara: Yazıt Yayıncılık.

- Güler, A., Halıcıoğlu, M. B. & Taşğın, S. (2013). *Sosyal bilimlerde nitel araştırma yöntemleri*. Ankara: Seçkin Yayıncılık.
- Hoffman, M. (2007). *Does sense of humor moderate the relationship between leadership style and conflict management style?* Unpublished Dissertation of Doctor of Philosophy, The Graduate College at the University of Nebraska, Nebraska.
- Holmes, J. (2007). Making humour work: Creativity on the job. *Applied Linguistics*, 28(4), 518–537.
- Hurren, B. L. (2006). The effects of principals' humor on teachers' job. *Educational Studies*, 32 (4), 373-385.
- Hurren, B. L. (2008). The effects of principals' humor on teachers' job satisfaction (E. Reçepoğlu, Trans.). *Eğitim ve Bilim*, 33 (150), 74-86.
- Leslie-Bole, C. H. (1985). Humor as a communicative strategy in an organizational culture. Unpublished thesis of Master of Arts in communication. Faculty of the University of Delaware, USA.
- Lyttle, J. (2007). The judicious use of management of humor in the workplace. *Business Horizons*, 50, 239-245.
- Malone, P. B. (1980). Humor: A double-edged tool for today's managers? *Academy of Management Review* (5), 357-360.
- Matthias, G. (2014). *The relationship between principals' humor style and school climate in Wisconsin's public middle schools*. Unpublished Doctorate Dissertations, The University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, Milwaukee.
- Meyer, J. C. (2000). Humor as a double edged sword: Four functions of humor in communication. *Communication Theory*, 10 (3), 310-331.
- Romero, E. J. & Cruthirds, K. W. (2006). The use of humor in the workplace. *Academy of Management Perspectives*, May, 58-69.
- Tutar, H. (2003). *Örgütsel iletişim*. Ankara: Seçkin Yayınevi.
- Türk, M. S. (2007). *Örgüt kültürü ve iş tatmini*. Ankara: Gazi Kitabevi.
- Vacharkulksemsuk T., Sekerka, L. E. & Fredrickson, B. L. (2011). Establishing a positive emotional climate to create 21st-century organizational change. Neal M. Ashkanasy, Celeste P. M. Wilderom and Mark F. Peterson (Editors), *The Handbook of Organizational Culture and Climate* (s.101-118). Los Angeles, USA: Sage Publications, Inc.
- Vural, Z. B. A. (1998). *Kurum kültürü*. İstanbul: İletişim Yayınları.
- Yıldırım, A., & Şimşek, H. (2011). *Sosyal bilimlerde nitel araştırma yöntemleri*. Ankara: Seçkin Yayınevi.
- Williams, R. A. & Clouse, R. W. (1991). *Humor As a management technique: Its impact on school culture and climate*. Retrieved October 10, 2014, from ERIC database (ED 337 8669) <http://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/ED337866.pdf>