

EVALUATING THE ADAPTIVE AND MALADAPTIVE EMOTIONAL, INTERPERSONAL, AND COPING FUNCTIONS OF HUMOR

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Introduction

- Humor is a complex construct that can significantly impact a person's mood, relationships, and coping (Ford et al., 2016; Ruch, 2008)
- Some forms of humor are associated with positive affect, stronger social bonds, and adaptive coping strategies (Kuiper et al., 1998; Markey et al., 2014; Ziv, 2010)
- Humor may also be maladaptive when used to suppress emotions, demean others, or to avoid problems (Janes et al., 2015; Ruch, 2008; Tucker et al., 2013)
- The COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted the need for positive coping methods and resilience.
- As a complex construct, research is needed to better understand humor, its measurement, and associated outcomes (Lefcourt, 2001; Ruch, 2008)

Humor Measurement

- A conceptual/definitional approach has been taken to measure humor (Martin, 1996; Thorson & Powell, 1991)
 - Trait/Style → Humor Styles Questionnaire
 - Behavior → Situational Humor Response Questionnaire
 - Coping Mechanism → Coping Humor Scale
- Different measures assess different domains
 - Emotional
 - Social
 - Coping
- The many definitions and functions of humor make it difficult for any single measure to comprehensively and economically capture all of the dimensions (Scheel, 2017)

Humor Measures

- Humor Styles Questionnaire (HSQ; Martin et al., 2003)
 - A** Assesses adaptive and maladaptive humor styles
 - Aggressive, Self-Enhancing, Self-Defeating, & Affiliative
 - 32 items, 7-point Likert-type scale
- Situational Humor Response Questionnaire (SHRQ; Martin & Lefcourt, 2012a)
 - B** Assesses frequency and extent to which individuals display humor in daily lives
 - 21 items, 5-Guttman-type ratings
- Coping Humor Scale (CHS; Martin & Lefcourt, 2012b)
 - C** Assesses how people use humor to cope with stress
 - 7 items, 4-point Likert-type scale

A Aggressive: sarcastic, ridiculing, pokes fun
E.g., "If someone makes a mistake, I will often tease them about it."

B Self-Defeating: direct humor towards self, usually with a wish to belong, ends up being the butt of the joke
E.g., "I often go overboard in putting myself down when I am making jokes or trying to be funny."

C Self-Enhancing: does not take self too seriously; laughs at self, laughs at situations
E.g., "Even when I'm by myself, I am often amused by the absurdities of life."

D Affiliative: Telling jokes to amuse others, strengthen bonds
E.g., "I laugh and joke a lot with my friends."

13. If you were eating in a restaurant with some friends and the waiter accidentally spilled a drink on you ...

6. I have often felt that if I am in a situation where I have to either cry or laugh, it's better to laugh.

Study Objectives

- To identify the underlying dimensions of humor as defined by the three most prominent measures:
 - HSQ, SHRQ, & CHS
- To produce a more economical composite measure
- To assess the convergent and discriminant validity of the composite measure
- To assess the concurrent validity of the composite measure using psychological outcomes:
 - Emotional → +/- Affect, Self-Esteem
 - Social → Social Support, Interpersonal Style
 - Coping → Coping Style, Satisfaction With Life

Research Design

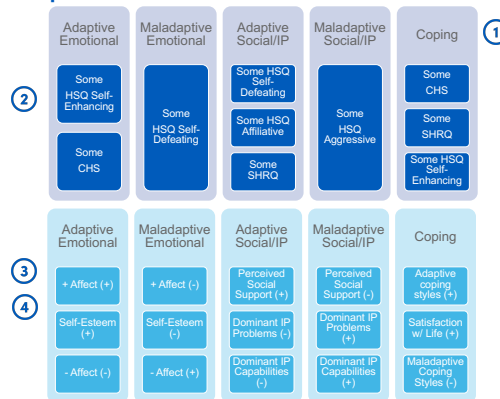
- Quantitative and cross-sectional study design
- N = 300 undergraduate students
- Eligibility based on:
 - Age: 18 or older
 - Undergraduate student status
 - Ability to provide informed consent
- Measures:
 - Humor: HSQ, SHRQ, CHS
 - Emotion: PANAS, SISES
 - Social: PSSM, BIC, IIP-C-IRT
 - Coping: MAX, SWLS

ABBREVIATIONS
Positive and Negative Affect Scale (PANAS); Single Item Self-Esteem Scale (SISES); Maladaptive and Adaptive Coping Style Questionnaire (MAX); Satisfaction with Life Scale (SWLS); Perceived Social Support Measure (PSSM); Battery of Interpersonal Capabilities (BIC); Inventory of Interpersonal Problems – Circumplex – Item Response Theory (IIP-C-IRT).
References for each measure will be provided upon request.

Data Analyses

- Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA)
 - To identify factors underlying dimensions of a large set of items
- Composite Scale Construction (Martin et al., 2003)
 - Items selected to form new composite scale based on based on substantive and empirical criteria (e.g., high factor loadings, high corrected item-total correlations, etc.)
- Correlational Analyses
 - To assess for convergent and discriminant validity
 - To assess for criterion validity

Expected Results



References (full list available upon request)