Relationship Between Humor Styles and Individual Difference Variables

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1. Introduction

Purpose of Study

To explore how groups of individuals defined by specific humor use profiles, or humor types, may differ on other individual difference variables such as, self-esteem, loneliness, depression, and Big Five traits.

Why are we interested in Humor Styles?

Humor is a multi-faceted construct which can be used in different ways to cope with stressful events (Cann & Colette, 2014), develop group relationships (Martin et al., 2003), belittle others, make fun of oneself to feel accepted by a group (Schermer et al., 2017), or to control social interactions (Fitts et al., 2009). There are different ways to express humor and these may be related to individual difference variables.

Humor Styles Defined

Self-enhancing Humor
Self-enhancing humor is an adaptive humor style that maintains self-esteem. Individuals who score high on this dimension are more likely to use humor to cope with stressors and tend to have a humorous outlook on life (Martin et al., 2003).

Self-defeating Humor
Self-defeating humor involves saying funny things by making fun of one's self and laughing with others when they are being made fun of (Martin et al., 2003).

Affiliative Humor
Affiliative humor is an adaptive humor style that is focused on enhancing interpersonal relations by making funny jokes to amuse others (Martin et al., 2003).

Aggressive Humor
Aggressive humor is a maladaptive humor style that involves using humor to belittle, ridicule, and manipulate others (Martin et al., 2003).

The Big Five Traits

- **Extraversion:** Individuals who score high on extraversion tend to be energetic, social and prefer stimulating environments (Plessen et al., 2020).

- **Openness to experience:** Individuals who score high on openness to experience tend to be more open to emotions, feelings, and to new ideas (Plessen et al., 2020).

- **Conscientiousness:** Individuals who score high on conscientiousness tend to be perceived as self-disciplined, organized, and competent (Plessen et al., 2020).

- **Neuroticism:** Individuals who score high on neuroticism tend to be less emotionally stable, experience sadness, anxiety, and are self-conscious (Plessen et al, 2020).

- **Agreeableness:** Individuals who score high on agreeableness tend to be sympathetic, warm, and considerate (Plessen et al., 2020).

2. Hypotheses

- Loneliness, depression, and neuroticism will positively correlate with self-defeating humour, whereas, extraversion, openness to experience, and high self-esteem will positively correlate with affiliative humor.

- A non-linear correlation is predicted between loneliness and age whereas for sex, we predicted that males will report higher scores of loneliness than females.

3. Methodology

Participants
Adults aged 18-70 years of age may participate in this study. Participants will be recruited through the MOS SONA system, specifically those enrolled in MOS 1021 A/B at Western University. We plan to recruit 500 participants total of which are male and female.

Measures:

Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (RSES): 10-item scale measuring positive and negative feelings about the self (e.g. "I take a positive attitude toward myself).

Robinson Single Item Self-Esteem Scale (SISES): 1-item scale measuring global self-esteem (e.g. ""I have high self-esteem.").

Big Five Personality Inventory (BFI-10): 10-item scale measuring the Big Five traits (e.g. "I see myself as someone who is relaxed, handles stress well.").

Humor Styles Questionnaire (HSQ): 32-item scale measuring the four humor styles (e.g. "If I am feeling depressed, I can usually cheer myself up with humor.").

Three-Item Loneliness Scale (TILS): 3-item scale measuring feeling of loneliness (e.g. "how often do you feel that you lack companionship").

NEO-N Depression Items: 9-item scale measuring neuroticism and depression (e.g. I tend to blame myself when anything goes wrong.").

Demographic Questions: 4-items that will include participants' age, sex at birth, education status, and employment status.

Procedure:
Participants will complete one questionnaire made up of 88 items that will take approximately 30 minutes to complete and will then receive 0.5 research credits towards MOS 1021 A/B, upon completion.

4. Proposed Method of Data Analysis

1. Descriptive Statistics: Mean, SD, Skew Kurtosis, and Chronbach's coefficient alpha for each of the self-report scales.

2. Examine the correlations between age and the self-report scales, as well as possible sex differences in mean scores (assessed using independent t-test).

3. Investigate zero-order correlations between all variables.

4. Conduct a single ordinary least-squares regression, to predict loneliness.

5. Acknowledgements

6. References

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