

WHY DO YOU THINK I LAUGH?
GENDERED PERCEPTIONS OF THE FUNCTIONS OF HUMOR

A Senior Thesis
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Abstract

This study examines gendered differences in perception of humor functions in 311 male and female college students. Subjects ratings on three different test instruments were obtained: Multidimensional Sense of Humor Scale (MSHS), Uses of Humor Index (UHI), and Social aspects of Humorousness. Analysis of the MSHS indicated an interaction effect of Gender and Humor Dimension whereby men rated higher than women in Humor Production and women rated higher than men in Appreciation of Humorists. Results from the Same vs Self comparison of the Uses of Humor Index displayed a main effect for Condition and Humor Type as well as an interaction effect for Gender by Humor Type and for Condition by Humor Type. Analysis of the Same vs Opposite Sex comparison showed main effects for Gender, Target, and Humor Type and an interaction effect of Target by Humor Type. That is male targets were judged to use humor for negative uses more so than were female targets. The results from the social aspects instrument showed women to be more socially sensitive than men to the importance of sender and receiver characteristics and to humor offensiveness in influencing humor effectiveness.

Humor is a pervasive aspect of human society and is found in nearly all cultures (Apte, 1985). Humor is clearly important to people. In western society we go so far as to spend valuable resources such as gas, electricity, and money in order to watch popular comedians at the local comedy club or to rent the latest comedy on video. Humor is an indispensable aspect of day to day discourse in many cultures, being particularly prevalent among close friends, but also, in some cases, between strangers and between certain family members, as noted in anthropological accounts of 'joking relations' (Apte, 1985). Although some other primates have been observed to make facial gestures that resemble smiling (Darwin, 1965), no other species appears to have as complex a system of humor as humans do. But why do we laugh? What about laughter and humor has made it survive into the present time?

J. Porteous (1989) claims that laughter and humor played an important role in "the development of human sociality and so to the evolution of higher order intelligence in humans." How? Well, try this simple experiment... just smile. According to Sroeffe and Waters (1976), smiling and laughing are part of a tension-release system. It is the relief that this tension-release system creates which is attributed with reinforcing smiling and laughing in our ancestors. Now, since smiling generally causes others to smile causing a sense of tension release for those involved, smiling and laughing would encourage "sustained attentional contact between social partners" (Porteous, 1989). In short, humor may serve as a mechanism for fostering and maintaining social bonds which may in turn develop creativity and higher order thinking.

Another function of humor was proposed by Freud (1916), who authored one of the earliest monographs on the topic of humor. He argued that humor, like dreaming, is a way of releasing libidinal (aggressive and sexual) energy which, when held back, causes anxiety. He stated that both jokes and dreams emanate from the unconscious mind and even share certain characteristics. The first characteristic both dreams and jokes share is condensation, representing concepts, ideas, or images by a single word or image. Jokes which rely on the play on words exemplify condensation. Second, jokes and dreams are both absurd. In the same way that dreams make little sense at times, so too do some forms of humor, such as slap-stick humor. Third, both jokes and dreams share the characteristic of representation, a term used to describe words, images, or phrases that can be used to mean many things (i.e. symbols). But, Freud also noted, jokes and dreams are fundamentally different. For instance, while both are techniques for overcoming inhibitions, they do so in different ways. While dreams may broach the taboo topic of sexuality through symbols, in the waking moments of life it is easier to joke about taboo topics like sexuality than it is to talk about them. A second difference between the two is that, in jokes, nonsense can be an end in itself (i.e., may not have any hidden meaning) whereas in dreams nonsense usually signals some deeper meaning. A third difference is that jokes are social in nature; Freud even said that one cannot joke by oneself, whereas dreaming is clearly not social. A fourth difference between jokes and dreams is that in making jokes we actively seek pleasure. Dreams, on the other hand seek the avoidance of displeasure. That is, a joke

does not "work" if it is not pleasurable, while a dream serves its purpose simply by avoiding any form of displeasure. In short, while dreams and humor use different means both serve to relieve unconscious tension or anxiety.

From a sociological perspective, humor has been shown to be a means of empowerment. Rose Laub Coser (1960) observed the uses of humor by patients in a hospital setting. She identified three main uses of humor. First, jokes told by the patients tended to unify them and create feelings of equality. Second, humor served to define boundaries by creating a sense of solidarity among the in-group - the patients - while excluding outsiders such as doctors and nurses. Third, humor served to make something undesirable more acceptable.

Regardless of whether one studies humor from a philosophical, an evolutionary, a psychoanalytic, or a sociological perspective, an underlying thread can be found in most research in humor, namely, that humor is, by its very nature, social or interpersonal.

Crawford (1995) further draws attention to the social and, indeed, collaborative nature of humor in her book, Talking Difference. As she notes, humor requires tacit cooperation between the humor generator and the receiver. Both the teller of the joke and the listener must signal their acknowledgment that humor is about to take place, and having taken place, was successful. For example the teller signals discourse as humorous by using such prefatory remarks as, "have you heard the one about...", or "you'll never believe what just happened to me...". The listener(s), if willing to listen to the joke, then signals to the teller that they are receptive to it, using verbal or nonverbal cues (e.g., smiling, eye contact etc.). Not

all attempts at being humorous succeed, often reflecting a lack of sensitivity on the part of the teller to the appropriateness of the topic of the humor or to the situational context.

Indeed, the fact that it is often very difficult to predict when something will be perceived as humorous or not, or by whom, suggests that there are many as yet untested social aspects to the psychology of humor that need to be explored. Unfortunately, experimental research on humor has focused for the most part on obtaining participants' judgments of the funniness of decontextualized jokes presented in a laboratory context - i.e., devoid of the situational and interpersonal dimensions that characterize uses of humor in actual conversational context. Some researchers, such as Kramer (1981) and Crawford (1989; 1995) have argued that, in focusing on humor in this way, more germane aspects of humor as actually used and produced in daily life have been ignored or neglected. One of these aspects, they argue, is the issue of gender-related differences in humor perception and use.

Gender and Humor

Many of the early analyses of humor have either ignored the variable of gender altogether or have treated humor as though it were mainly a male activity. For example, Freud claimed that women simply do not joke. Martin Grotjan (1957) proposed that women do not tell jokes because jokes are inherently aggressive (something which, presumably, women are not). H.D. Duncan (1962) argued that pornographic jokes (told by men, typically) are used as a form of social degradation, reducing the authority of the lady as wife, mother, or virgin by showing her animal lust. Duncan further claimed

that obscene humor (by which he meant humor involving prostitutes) serves to subordinate women; "in her reduction to a thing bought, she is now inferior to the men" (Duncan, 1962). The prevailing view, as typified by these authors, was that women are not inclined (or even able) to joke, and figure in joking behavior largely as the butt of the joke or as an outside appreciator of male-generated humor.

In contrast to this position, others have pointed out that women are by no means only the targets of humor, but quite often generate and enjoy humor just as much as men do. It may just be that women's humor is not as visible as that of men, just as so many other contributions of women - e.g., in domains such as science and medicine - have been largely hidden until specifically sought out by interested researchers. In fact, in the realm of folklore there exists a sizable body of data on jokes and joking that includes records of female and male humor. These records indicate that women do produce and appreciate humor, though the focus of their humor may differ from men's humor. That is, while men tend to joke more about - and have a greater appreciation for jokes about - penis size, fear of pain to the testicles, and fear of castration, women, on the other hand, have a greater appreciation of humor dealing with women's experiences (menstruation, pregnancy, fear of rape, female apparel), jokes showing violence to men done by women, and jokes in which men are made to appear disgusting. So, it is not so much that women do not tell jokes, they may simply tell jokes which men find harder to appreciate, and vice versa. As a result of this, men and women may find the same thing funny, but for different reasons (see also Lundell, 1993).

Another domain of difference in male/female humor concerns disparaging humor. Some studies have shown that both women and men find a joke funnier when a woman is the butt of the joke (Cantor, 1976, but see Mundorf, Bhatia, Zillman, Lester, & Robertson, 1988). Women comedians' style of humor is often said to be self-deprecating relative to that of most male comics (Sheppard, 1985). Self-deprecating humor may signal low self-esteem. It may also, however, suggest that women use humor as a form of self disclosure aimed at creating solidarity with others - e.g., self-deprecating humor communicates to others that one has faults just like anyone else. This 'communal' style of interpersonal relationship is thought to characterize women more so than men and may be operating in their use and appreciation of self-disparaging humor (Maltz, 1982; Svebak, 1975).

In contrast, men are often described as preferring put-down humor more so than women (e.g., Mundorf et al., 1988). This preference may in turn be linked to a tendency for so-called agentic forms of relating often associated with the typical male communicative style. In this mode, the aim is to set up a hierarchy between the speaker and the listener - to show that the speaker indeed has the floor or to put the listener down as a way of showing the speaker's higher status. Therefore, the purpose of disparaging humor from the agentic point of view may be to signal distance and dominance relations.

Although there exist by now several empirical studies of sex differences in humor appreciation (e.g., Derks & Arora, 1993; Groch, 1974; Ingrando, 1980), humor in these studies has typically been

defined in terms of cartoons or jokes, forms that, as Chapman and Gadfield (1976) point out, quite often tend to be created by men for a male audience. Despite much theoretical interest in humor and gender roles (e.g., Gallivan, 1992; Nietz, 1980), the persistent neglect of the diverse and complex aspects of humor as it is actually used in everyday interactions- or mixed-gender group settings has made for what Crawford (1989) argues is a distinctly male bias in the literature on humor.

Clearly, more research is needed that addresses humor in more varied and naturalistic settings (e.g., Ervin-Tripp & Lampert, 1992), and that explores people's perceptions of underlying functions of humor in different everyday situations. One recent study of note in this regard focused on people's perceptions of the uses of humor in conversational context (Graham, Papa, & Brooks, 1992). This study was able to identify three distinct aspects of humor - positive (e.g. humor used to entertain, delight), expressive or adaptive (humor used to defuse tension, cope with a difficult situation, disarm potentially aggressive others) and negative (humor used to demean or insult).

While providing a useful scale for assessing uses of humor in conversational contexts, Graham et al. did not, however, consider whether any of those uses might be judged differently by or for each gender. For example, might the negative uses of humor be more strongly associated with men than with women, whereas the expressive or coping aspects be more associated with women rather than with men? Similarly, might people perceive their own uses of humor differently than uses of humor by members of their same sex or by members of the

opposite sex? Furthermore, would the two sexes concur in their assessment of the extent to which humor is gendered? Questions such as these formed the basis for the present study.

Rationale

This study had three goals: 1) to explore people's perceptions of the frequency with which humor is used for different purposes; 2) to uncover similarities and differences between men and women in perceptions of humor use and effectiveness; and 3) to compare men and women's perceptions of the uses of humor as these are applied to the self, to members of the same sex, or to members of the opposite sex.

In pursuing these goals we extended the Graham et al (1992) study to compare gender differences in the perceptions of uses of humor under three experimental conditions: when individuals are making judgments with respect to their own uses of humor, when judgments are elicited for members of the same sex, and when judgments are elicited for members of the opposite sex. This design, it is argued, provides insights into the degree to which individuals use humor in ways that are consistent or deviant from what they perceive to be typical uses of humor by members of the same or opposite sex. In addition, the design affords general insight into gender role stereotypes regarding different uses of humor and the extent to which the two genders converge or diverge in the specific beliefs they maintain with respect to the other gender.

An additional component of this study was the inclusion of a set of items specially created to examine gender differences in sensitivity to certain social aspects influencing humor effectiveness. Specifically, we were interested in gender differences

in the following two situations: 1) sensitivity to teller versus audience characteristics as influencing the effectiveness of a joke, and 2) sensitivity to a joke's offensiveness to oneself versus others as influencing its success.

Finally, we included a standard test instrument from the literature designed to assess an individual's overall sense of humor.

Designed by Thorson & Powell (1993), the Multidimensional Sense of Humor Scale is used to see if there would be gender differences in any of this scale's four dimensions- the dimensions being humor production, humor appreciation, humor coping, and appreciation of humorist.

Hypotheses

On the basis of trends in the literature on sex differences in humor appreciation (Ingrando, 1980; Lundell, 1993; More & Roberts, 1975), we expected that men would be perceived as using humor more than women, and using humor more to insult, demean or show hostility while women, in turn, were expected to use humor more to ease interpersonal relations and show intimacy. Gender differences were not expected in coping or expressive aspects of humor use. To the extent that women are thought to be more adept at creative uses of language, it was hypothesized that they might show higher self ratings on use of humor to express creativity as compared to men.

With respect to the items pertaining to humor offensiveness, it was expected that women might be less amused by offensive humor in general, whether it is directed at the self or at others, as compared to men. Similarly, to the extent that women are perceived to be more socially attuned than men, it was expected that women might be more

attuned to the importance of audience as well as teller characteristics on the effective delivery of a joke, while men (more likely to see themselves as producers of humor) might be sensitive mainly to teller characteristics.

Method

Participants

Three-hundred eleven college students (including 121 males and 190 females) recruited from the Psychology subject pool at Texas A&M University participated in this study for course credit. The age of subjects ranged from 18 to 25 years. The majority were Caucasian.

Materials

Subjects completed two standardized test instruments, a Multidimensional Sense of Humor (MSHS) Scale, taken from Thorson and Powell (1993) and a Uses of Humor Scale, taken from Graham et al (1992) and rated an additional set of 5 items specifically created for the present study.

I. MSHS Scale

A total of 272 Ss completed this instrument. This scale, developed by Thorson and Powell (1993), is designed to provide an overall measure of a person's sense of humor. It consists of 24 statements to which subjects are to indicate their degree of agreement or disagreement on a 5 point Likert-type scale. A factor analysis undertaken by Thorson and Powell (1993) showed the existence of four distinct factors: Humor Production, Humor as a Coping Device, Attitudes towards Humorists, and Humor Appreciation. A list of the 24

items (indicating the item with high loading on each factor) is provided in Appendix A.

II. Uses of Humor Scale

Items for this scale, developed by Graham (1992), were derived by the authors from various functions ascribed to humor in different studies in the literature. The scale, in its full form, consists of a set of 24 functions of humor, including using humor "to demean others," "to entertain others," or "to disarm potentially aggressive others" for which subjects are to judge the extent to which they use humor for those purposes on a 5-point Likert scale in which 1 indicates 'almost never' and 5 indicates 'almost always.' A subsequent factor analysis by Graham et al. (1992) indicated three distinct factors (reflecting 11 of the 24 items) as accounting for 61% of the variance in the scale. They termed the factors Positive, Expressive and Negative uses of humor. We added the item, "to be creative with language", to the list as Crawford (1995) has suggested that this aspect has not been sufficiently studied in humor literature. Appendix B provides a list of the complete set of 25 items.

While Graham et al (1992) only tested Ss self rating on frequency of use of humor for each purpose, we examined three types of rating. One set of subjects (including 37 men and 54 women) were to rate their own pattern of humor usage (Self Rating Condition). Another set of subjects (which included 46 men and 47 women) were instructed to base their ratings on their perceptions of how often members of their same sex would use humor for a particular function (Same Sex Condition), while a third set of subjects (which included

38 men and 89 women) were instructed to judge how often members of the opposite sex would use humor for the various functions (Opposite Sex Condition).

III. Social Aspects of Humorousness

A set of four items, specially created for this study to assess social aspects of the perceived effectiveness of humor were also included. The items asked for subjects' extent of agreement with the following statements: "A good joke will be equally funny regardless of who tells it"; "A good joke will be equally funny regardless of the audience"; "If a joke is offensive to me I don't find it funny"; and "If a joke is offensive to others I don't find it funny."

Procedure

272 of the subjects were tested together in a mixed gender group setting in a classroom. They first completed the Uses of Humor scale, followed by the MSHS scale, followed by the Social Aspects items. An additional set of 39 male and female subjects were subsequently tested in a classroom setting on the Uses of Humor and Social Aspects items only.

Results

Separate analyses of variance were performed on the three test instruments, as described below.

I. Multidimensional Sense of Humor Scale

The ratings from the 5 point scale were recoded into a 0 to 4 point scale (where 4 equals "strongly agree"), following the coding

scheme described by Thorson and Powell (1993) to allow for appropriate coding of items phrased in a reverse way.

The ratings from the items loading high on the four dimensions of humor were then used for the analysis of variance. The items that comprised the four dimensions are summarized in Table 1.

The results of the 2 (Gender) x 4 (Humor Dimension) analysis of variance showed a main effect of Humor Dimension [$F(3,810) = 8.57$, $p < .00001$]. Dimension 4 (Humor Appreciation) received the highest mean rating (3.57), followed by Dimension 3 (Attitudes Toward Comedians) with a mean score of 3.40, while Dimensions 2 (Coping; 2.72) and 1 (Humor Production; 2.47) showed lower ratings.

Furthermore, a significant interaction between Gender and Humor Dimension was also found [$F(3, 810) = 8.57$ $p < 0.00001$]. Inspection of the interaction means showed that the largest difference between the genders was for Dimension 1, Humor Production, where ratings by men were higher than those by women (the means were 2.62 vs. 2.37, respectively); similarly, the genders appeared to differ on Dimension 3, Attitudes Toward Comedians, in that women showed higher ratings than men (3.50 vs. 3.26). On the other two dimensions the gender difference was minimal (for Humor Appreciation - mean scores for men vs. women were 3.51 vs. 3.61; for Coping the means were 2.76 vs. 2.69 respectively).

II. Uses of Humor Scale

For the Uses of Humor Scale two separate analyses of variance were done. One compared ratings of subjects in the Self Rating condition with those of subjects who rated members of the same sex (Same Sex condition). The second analysis compared the Ss' ratings

in the Same Sex condition with those of subjects in the Opposite Sex condition. Each of the analyses was undertaken comparing gender differences as a function of the types of uses of humor, using the averaged values from those items that showed high factor loading on the three uses found by Graham et al. (1992) - namely, Positive, Expressive and Negative (specific items underlying each factor are found in Table 2).

A. Self Versus Same Sex Comparison

A 2x2x3 ANOVA was performed, with the independent variables being Gender, Condition (Self versus Same Sex) and Humor Type (Positive, Expressive, and Negative).

The analysis of variance found a main effect for Condition [$F(1,180) = 8.23$ $p < .004$] indicating that those in the Same Sex condition tended to give higher overall ratings (mean of 3.31) than those in the Self Rating condition (mean score of 3.11). There was also a main effect of Humor Type [$F(2,360) = 135.13$ $p < 0.00001$], indicating that Positive uses of humor were rated the highest (mean of 3.82) followed by Expressive uses (mean of 3.04), followed by Negative uses (mean of 2.77).

In addition to the above main effects (Table 3) there were two interaction effects: Gender by Humor Type [$F(2, 360) = 7.68$, $p < .0005$] and Condition by Humor Type [$F(2,360) = 9.12$, $p < .0001$]. The former interaction showed that men and women tended to be similar in their ratings of Positive and Expressive uses of humor, differing

mainly in the Negative uses of humor. As indicated in Table 4, men were rated higher than women on this aspect of humor (the means were 2.95 vs. 2.60, respectively).

Finally, the Condition by Humor Type interaction showed that condition differences in ratings of humor type were found only on the Negative uses; for this humor type, subjects (whether men or women) tended to show higher ratings when judging members of the same sex than when rating their own frequency of using humor for negative purposes (3.04 vs. 2.50 for same sex vs. self rating conditions, respectively). See Table 5 for a summary of the means.

Analysis of Individual Items

A separate set of ANOVAS were done for each of the 25 items in the instrument; the results of these can be found in Appendix B. In table 6 and 7, items which were found to be significant are summarized in terms of the main effects. In almost all of the above scores, men scored on the average higher than women for the main effects of Gender and Condition. No item showed a significant interaction effect.

B. Same Versus Opposite Sex Comparison

A 2 (Subject Gender) x 2 (Target Gender) by 3 (Humor Type) ANOVA was performed on the mean ratings of subjects on the relevant items comprising the three Humor Types. See Table 8 for a summary of the ANOVA table. As can be seen from the table, there were significant

effects of Gender, Target, and Humor Type, as well as a Target by Humor Type interaction. The Gender effect showed that women gave higher ratings overall as compared to men (3.44 vs 3.26). The main effect of Target showed that ratings for male targets were higher than those for female targets (3.40 vs. 3.25). However, as the interaction effect indicates, this was true primarily for Negative humor uses (3.31 vs. 2.81 for male vs. female targets, respectively). There were no noteworthy differences between male and female targets in the other two uses of humor, as is summarized in the table 9.

Analysis of Individual Items for the Same v. Opposite Sex Comparison

A separate set of ANOVAS were done for each of the 25 items in the instrument; the results of these can be found in Appendix C. In tables 10-12, items which were found to be significant are categorized according to whether they were main effects of Gender or Target or interaction effects. For all items, females gave higher average ratings than the men. Table 11 describes the main effect for Target. In all but item 6, to allow others insight into another's state of mind, male targets were rated higher than the women. When the interaction between Gender and Target was examined (table 12), item 3, "to entertain others", showed men rating women lower than the women rated themselves. For items 4 "to show a sense of humor", 7 "to help one adjust to a new role", and 9 "to decrease another's aggressive behavior" both women and men rated their own sex higher than the opposite sex rated them. For items 19 "to control others",

23 "to avoid telling personal information", and 24 "to allow one to cope with a serious subject", both genders rated the opposite sex higher than the men or women rated those members of the same sex. And in item 20, "to express one's feelings", men rated women and members of the same sex lower than the female rates men and other women.

C. Social Aspects of Humorousness

Two final sets of analyses were undertaken on the four additional items included in the test instrument. One analysis examined gender differences as a function of whether a joke's effectiveness is influenced by the teller or the audience. Thus, the variables in the ANOVA were Gender and Joke Teller/Receiver. The results of this analysis showed a main effect of Joke Teller/Receiver [$F(1, 271) = 6.92, p < .0001$]. This effect indicated that subjects in general (whether male or female) agreed more strongly with the statement "a good joke will be equally funny regardless of who tells it" than with the statement "a good joke will be equally funny regardless of the audience" (2.30 vs. 2.01, respectively). There was a trend for a Gender effect [$F(1,271) = 2.61, p < .1$] indicating that women tended to show stronger disagreement than men did with the two statements (2.24 vs. 2.04, respectively). See Table 13.

The second analysis focused on Gender differences as a function of an offensive joke's humorousness where the joke was offensive to the person involved or offensive to others. The results here showed

a main effect of Gender [$F(1,271) = 5.92, p < .016$], with women finding offensive humor more objectionable than men (3.20 vs. 2.86 for women vs. men, respectively). The variable of Offensiveness was also significant [$F(1,271) = 11.94, p < .0006$]. This effect showed that individuals in general (whether men or women) found humor that is offensive to them to be more objectionable than humor that is offensive to others (3.19 vs. 2.93, respectively). There was no interaction effect. See Table 14.

Discussion

As stated in the introduction, psychological research on humor has for the most part focused rather narrowly on people's judgments of the funniness of jokes or cartoons presented in a laboratory setting. Little attention has been paid to how humor might actually be used to serve different social ends in conversational context. Nor has there been much systematic or theoretically-informed analysis of actual gender-related differences or stereotypes of gender differences in the perception of humor in social context. The present study was therefore designed to provide empirical evidence for possible gender differences in perceptions of uses of humor in daily life.

At this point it may be instructive to summarize the findings from this study before turning to their implications.

1. Sense of Humor. The main findings from the Sense of Humor scale was a gender difference whereby men scored higher than women on the Humor Production dimension of the scale. This result replicates a similar finding by Thorson and Powell (1993) and is consistent with other reports in the literature to the effect that men are more likely to produce humor than women - at least in mixed sex contexts.

Our study found no evidence, however, for sex differences in the Coping Dimension of humor, in contrast to Thorson and Powell's (1993) report that women scored higher than men on this dimension. Instead, we found that women scored higher than men on the Attitudes towards

Comedians dimension (which Thorson and Powell had not found to differ between the sexes). Neither our own results nor those of Thorson and Powell found gender differences in the Humor Appreciation component of the scale.

Based on our results, it would appear that the men in our sample perceived themselves as more likely to generate humor than did the women; the women, in turn, were more appreciative of humorous individuals (comedians). Both sexes appeared to concur in regarding humor as a useful coping device.

2. Uses of Humor. For both comparisons (self vs. same sex, and same vs. opposite sex conditions), our results showed a consistent gender difference whereby men were rated (by men and women alike) to use humor in negative ways more so than women. Thus, humor used to demean or insult someone, or to show hostility were all uses of humor attributed more strongly to men than to women. Interestingly, when rating themselves (Self rating condition) men and women alike tended to distance themselves from negative uses of humor, as compared to when they rated members of the same sex as using humor for negative purposes. The overall analyses showed no difference across the genders in the positive or expressive uses of humor.

A look at the individual items analyses on the Same vs. Opposite Sex comparison showed that, of the four items on which Gender effects were significant, two of these reflected negative uses: to demean others and to show hostility.

The two other items on which gender differences emerged, with men rating themselves higher than women, were 'to entertain others' and 'to defend one's ego against possible damage.' The first of these seems to be consistent with findings from previous studies that men are perceived as being the producers of humor more so than women, who are typically the target of the joke (e.g., Sheppard, 1985). The second of these findings has no prior precedent in the empirical literature, but is not inconsistent with a view that humor can be used to project an appearance of being in control of a situation, and as such it is not surprising that men (to the extent that they seek to project themselves as being in a dominant role) identify with this aspect of humor more so than women.

With respect to the Creativity measure, an interaction effect approached significance, suggesting that each sex tended to rate the other sex as less high on that measure; still, women rated themselves highest relative to all other groups (i.e., women rating men, or men rating men or women on this measure).

Social Aspects Influencing Humorousness

Our study provides the first empirical evidence regarding gender differences in social sensitivity with respect to humor effectiveness. The findings on the four items included to tap social influences demonstrated that women were more attuned than men to the influence that audience and teller characteristics can have on a

joke's success; men were less likely to take audience characteristics into account in judging a joke's effectiveness.

Furthermore, women tended to report finding offensive humor to be less acceptable than men, although both sexes found humor offensive to themselves as less amusing than humor offensive to others. These findings are compatible with claims made in the humor literature that men are less disturbed than women by humor that is considered to be offensive or hostile. They also corroborate the gender difference in negative uses of humor noted above: in other words, not only are men more likely than women to use humor for negative purposes, they are also less bothered by the characteristics of the audience or the potentially offensive content of the humor.

Taken together, our findings present a consistent picture in which men acknowledge that they are more likely to use humor for negative purposes more so than women; and both sexes agree that negative uses are more characteristic of men than of women. Moreover, our findings suggest that women are more responsive to social parameters influencing humor effectiveness, and are less likely to consider something amusing if it is objectionable or directed at an inappropriate audience.

Unlike the other studies on humor, ours was the first study that specifically sought to explore humor uses as perceived by each gender for each gender. At the same time, it is acknowledged that further research, using a similar design as the one adopted here but with a

more precise and fine grained selection of items, may be necessary in order to better understand specific patterns of gender differences and similarities in humor perception.

Table 1. Summary of Dimensions and their Corresponding items.

Dimension 1	Humor Production
	Other people tell me that I say funny things.
	My clever sayings amuse others.
	I can say things in such a way as to make people laugh.
	I'm regarded as something of a wit by my friends.
	I'm confident that I can make other people laugh.
	People look to me to say humorous things.
	I use humor to entertain my friends.
	I can often crack people up with things I say.
	I can ease a tense situation by saying something funny.
	I can actually have some control over a group by my uses of humor.
Dimension 2	Coping
	Humor helps me cope.
	I use wit or humor to help me master difficult situations.
	Coping by using humor is an elegant way of adapting.
	Trying to master situations through use of humor is really dumb.
	Humor is a lousy coping mechanism.
	Uses of humor help to put me at ease.
	I can use wit to help adapt to many situations.
Dimension 3	Attitude towards Comedian
	Calling somebody a "comedian" is a real insult.
	I dislike comics.
	People who tell jokes are a pain in the neck.
Dimension 4	Humor Appreciation
	I appreciate those who generate humor.
	I like a good joke.

Table 2. Items corresponding to three factors

Function 1 (Positive Affect) item 8: to play with others item 14: to ease the tension wrought by new information item 17: to increase liking by others
Function 2 (Expressiveness) item 6: To allow others insight into another's state of mind item 15: to disclose difficult information item 16: to let others know personal likes and dislikes item 20: to express ones feelings item 23: to avoid telling personal information.
Factor 3 (Negative Affect) item 1: to express hostility item 2: to demean others item 22: to put others in their place.

Table 3. Self versus Same Sex Condition

	F ratio	P
Gender	0.43	<0.5113
Condition	8.23	<0.0046
Function	135.13	<0.00001
Gender & Condition	0.04	<0.8446
Gender & Function	7.68	<0.0005
Condition & Function	9.12	<0.0001
3-way interaction	0.69	<0.5004

Table 4. Mean for Gender x Humor Type Interaction

	Male	Female
Humor Type 1: Positive Affect	3.79	3.86
Humor Type 2: Expressive	2.97	3.10
Humor Type 3: Negative Affect	2.95	2.60

Table 5. Summary of means for Condition x Factor

	Condition		Average
	Self	Same sex	Across condition
Factor 1	3.80	3.84	3.82
Factor 2	3.01	3.06	3.04
Factor 3	2.50	3.04	2.77

Table 6. Main Effect for Gender

Item	M	F	Function 1: gender
Item 2. to demean others.	3.07	2.60	7.98
			p<0.0053
Item 3. to entertain others	4.61	4.22	12.26
			p<0.0006
Item 21. to defend one's ego against possible damage.	3.53	3.17	4.69
			p<0.0321
Item 22. to put others in their place.	3.08	2.61	7.40
			p<0.007

M= male subject F= female subject

Table 7. Main Effect for Condition

Item	Self	Same	Function 1: condition
item 2. to demean others.	2.41	3.27	26.18
			p<.000
item 17. to increase liking by others.	3.64	3.99	6.31
			p<0.0131
item 22. to put others in their place.	2.56	3.13	10.81
			p<0.001

Table 8. Summary of Results for Same vs. Opposite Sex Comparison

	(Same v. Opposite)	
	F ratio	P
Gender	8.62	<0.0037
Condition	12.17	<0.0006
Humor type	99.86	<0.00001
Gender x Condition	1.75	<0.1868
Gender x Humor type	0.67	<0.5114
Condition x Humor type	8.27	<0.0003
Gender x Function x Condition	0.75	<0.474

Table 9. Means for Target by Humor Type

	Male Target	Female Target
Factor 1 (Positive)	3.90	3.80
Factor 2 (Expressive)	3.16	3.12
Factor 3 (Negative)	3.31	2.81
Mean for gender	3.40	3.25

Table 10. Main Effect for Gender

Item	M	F	Gender
	mean	mean	F ratio p
1. to express hostility.	2.46	3.76	8.8* p<0.003
3. to entertain others	4.15	4.12	12.44* p<0.0001
10. to minimize anxiety.	3.43	4.03	4.86* p<0.028
11. to reduce boredom	3.65	3.73	8.32* p<0.004
17. to increase liking by others.	3.88	4.51	4.05* p<0.04
21. to defend one's ego against possible damage.	3.22	3.76	14.3* p<0.0002

Table 11. Main Effect for Target

	M	F	Target
Item	mean	mean	F ratio
			p
2. to demean others.	3.74	2.99	25.62*
			p<0.0001
3. to entertain others	4.63	4.03	36.85*
			p<0.0001
4. to show a sense of humor.	4.28	4.02	4.83*
			p<0.029
6. to allow others insight into another's state of mind.	2.76	3.14	8.17*
			p<0.004
15. to disclose difficult information.	2.85	2.47	5.97*
			p<0.01
17. to increase liking by others.	4.17	3.38	8.49*
			p<0.004
21. to defend one's ego against possible damage.	3.99	2.98	50*
			p<0.000
22. to put others in their place.	3.39	2.91	9.42*
			p<0.002
24. to allow one to cope with a serious subject.	3.34	3.00	5.25*
			p<0.02

Table 12. Interaction Between Gender and Target

	M-M	M-F	F-M	F-F	G & T
Item	mean	mean	mean	mean	F ratio
	[SD]	[SD]	[SD]	[SD]	p
3. to entertain others	4.59	3.71	4.67	4.34	7.54*
	[0.61]	[0.96]	[0.56]	[0.81]	p<0.006
4. to show a sense of humor.	4.34	3.84	4.21	4.19	4.05*
	[0.79]	[0.92]	[0.79]	[0.90]	p<0.045
7. to help one adjust to a new role.	3.38	3.29	3.12	3.68	5.2*
	[0.94]	[1.04]	[1.08]	[0.89]	p<0.02
9. to decrease another's aggressive behavior.	3.30	3.00	3.07	3.40	5.49*
	[0.93]	[1.04]	[0.94]	[0.95]	p<0.02
19. to control others	2.34	2.42	2.68	2.13	4.27*
	[1.05]	[1.24]	[1.09]	[0.99]	p<0.039
20. to express one's feelings.	3.30	3.42	3.45	3.51	0.05*
	[0.88]	[0.79]	[1.03]	[1.01]	p<0.05
23. to avoid telling personal information.	3.15	3.45	3.98	3.15	13.37*
	[1.21]	[1.03]	[1.01]	[1.14]	p<0.0003
24. to allow one to cope with a serious subject.	3.13	3.08	3.55	2.91	3.86
	[1.15]	[1.05]	[1.06]	[0.95]	p<0.05

note: For this table, the first letter denotes the gender of the subject and the second letter denotes the gender of the target. M-M and F-F coincide with the same sex condition, M-F and F-M coincide with the opposite sex condition.

Table 13. Summary of mean for items 50 and 51

	Men	Women
Teller	2.15	2.40
Audience	1.92	2.08
mean for gender	2.04	2.24

Table 14. Summary of means for items 52 and 53

	Men	Women
Self Offensive	3.01	3.32
Other Offensive	2.71	3.08
mean for gender	2.86	3.20

Appendix A

1. Sometimes I think up jokes or funny stories.
2. I use wit or humor to help me master difficult situations.
3. I'm confident that I can make other people laugh.
4. I dislike comics.
5. Other people tell me that I say funny things
6. I can use wit to help adapt to many situations.
7. I can ease a tense situation by saying something funny.
8. People who tell jokes are a pain in the neck.
9. I can often crack people up with things I say.
10. I like a good joke.
11. Calling somebody a "comedian" is a real insult.
12. I can say things in such a way as to make people laugh.
13. Humor is a lousy coping mechanism.
14. I appreciate those who generate humor.
15. People look to me to say amusing things.
16. Humor helps me cope.
17. I'm uncomfortable when everyone is cracking jokes.
18. I'm regarded as something of a wit by my friends.
19. Coping by using humor is an elegant way of adapting.
20. Trying to master situations through use of humor is really dumb.
21. I can actually have some control over a group by my uses of humor.
22. Uses of humor help to put me at ease.
23. I use humor to entertain my friends.
24. My clever sayings amuse others.

Appendix B

Self vs Same Sex

	M-self	M-	F-self	F-same	Factor Gender	Factor Conditio	Factor G&C	Mean Square
	mean	mean	mean	mean				
	[SD]	[SD]	[SD]	[SD]	p value	p value	p value	
1. to express hostility.	2.73	2.62	2.37	2.81	0.32	1.22	3.50	0.985
	[0.804]	[0.968]	[1.05]	[1.08]	p<0.560	p<0.271	p<0.0631	
2. to demean others.	2.59	3.55	2.22	2.98	7.98*	26.18*	0.36	1.280
	[1.07]	[1.21]	[1.09]	[1.13]	p<0.0053	p<.000	p<0.5473	
3. to entertain others	4.62	4.60	4.09	4.34	12.26*	0.98	1.49	0.570
	[0.545]	[0.614]	[0.917]	[0.815]	p<0.0006	p<0.3231	p<0.2234	
4. to show a sense of humor.	4.22	4.34	4.24	4.19	0.22	0.08	0.44	0.784
	[0.976]	[0.788]	[0.889]	[0.900]	p<0.637	p<0.776	p<0.510	
5. to disarm potentially aggressive others.	3.45	3.32	3.22	3.15	1.85	0.51	0.05	1.020
	[0.767]	[1.09]	[0.965]	[1.14]	p<0.175	p<0.477	p<0.823	
6. to allow others insight into another's state of mind.	2.84	2.89	3.02	3.11	1.72	0.23	0.01	1.02
	[1.21]	[1.05]	[0.900]	[0.914]	p<0.191	p<0.632	p<0.915	
7. to help one adjust to a new role.	3.35	3.38	3.54	3.68	3.02	0.40	0.16	0.879
	[1.033]	[0.954]	[0.905]	[0.887]	p<0.084	p<0.529	p<0.687	
8. to play with others.	4.24	4.00	4.24	4.19	0.62	1.49	0.66	0.652
	[0.760]	[0.834]	[0.799]	[0.825]	p<0.431	p<0.224	p<0.419	
9. to decrease another's aggressive behavior.	3.38	3.30	3.39	3.40	0.18	0.06	0.12	0.855
	[0.861]	[0.931]	[0.940]	[0.948]	p<0.67	p<0.812	p<0.727	
10. to minimize anxiety.	3.65	3.49	3.93	3.77	3.74	1.24	0.00	0.930
	[0.919]	[1.06]	[0.843]	[1.03]	p<0.055	p<0.266	p<0.998	
11. to reduce boredom	3.84	3.60	3.96	3.94	2.46	0.82	0.53	1.000
	[1.04]	[1.01]	[1.03]	[0.919]	p<0.119	p<0.366	p<0.469	
12. to facilitate relationship patterns.	3.57	3.40	3.69	3.60	1.20	0.80	0.07	0.903
	[0.867]	[0.97]	[1.011]	[0.925]	p<0.275	p<0.371	p<0.794	
13. to help others relax and feel comfortable	4.00	3.77	4.11	4.13	3.56	0.75	1.00	0.713
	[0.782]	[0.960]	[0.793]	[0.824]	p<0.061	p<0.337	p<0.319	
14. to ease the tension wrought by new information.	3.51	3.32	3.52	3.53	0.51	0.35	0.46	1.060
	[0.989]	[1.14]	[947]	[1.04]	p<0.478	p<0.555	p<0.498	

15. to disclose difficult information.	2.54	2.60	2.63	2.47	0.01	0.10	0.42	1.260
	[1.10]	[1.14]	[1.14]	[1.12]	p<0.908	p<0.750	p<0.517	
16. to let others know personal likes and dislikes.	3.05	3.21	3.37	3.21	1.15	0.00	1.15	0.985
	[1.13]	[0.931]	[0.917]	[1.02]	p<2.843	p<0.977	p<2.84	
17. to increase liking by others.	3.57	4.04	3.70	3.93	0.01	6.31*	0.74	0.901
	[1.01]	[0.859]	[1.08]	[0.818]	p<0.916	p<0.0131	p<0.390	
18. to develop ones sense of humor.	3.34	3.64	3.69	3.77	1.28	0.73	0.14	1.280
	[1.17]	[1.21]	[1.10]	[1.07]	p<0.259	p<0.395	p<.710	
19. to control others	2.27	2.34	1.98	2.13	2.56	0.48	0.06	1.110
	[1.17]	[1.05]	[1.04]	[0.992]	p<0.111	p<0.491	p<0.808	
20. to express one's feelings.	3.35	3.30	3.67	3.51	3.29	0.52	0.12	0.961
	[1.06]	[0.883]	[0.971]	[1.02]	p<0.071	p<0.473	p<0.725	
21. to defend one's ego against possible damage.	3.43	3.62	3.19	3.15	4.69*	0.20	0.45	1.24
	[1.09]	[0.945]	[1.20]	[1.12]	p<0.0321	p<0.654	p<0.505	
22. to put others in their place.	2.84	3.32	2.28	2.94	7.40*	10.81*	0.26	1.30
	[1.36]	[1.07]	[1.17]	[1.09]	p<0.007	p<0.001	p<0.610	
23. to avoid telling personal information.	2.78	3.15	2.89	3.15	0.08	2.96	0.08	1.50
	[1.32]	[1.22]	[1.24]	[1.14]	p<0.773	p<0.087	p<0.773	
24. to allow one to cope with a serious subject.	3.19	3.13	3.11	2.91	0.92	0.72	0.20	1.05
	[0.876]	[1.15]	[1.06]	[0.952]	p<0.340	p<0.398	p<0.658	
25. to be creative with language	3.41	3.02	3.13	3.34	0.02	0.25	2.93	1.373
	[1.21]	[1.15]	[1.21]	[1.11]	p<0.901	p<0.619	p<0.089	

Appendix C

Same v. Opposite

				Factor	Factor	Factor	Mean	
	M-M	M-F	F-M	F-F	Gender	Target	G&T	Square
	mean	mean	mean	mean	F value	F value	F value	F value
	[SD]	[SD]	[SD]	[SD]	p value	p value	p value	p value
1. to express hostility.	2.62	2.29	2.96	2.81	8.8*	2.69	0.39	1.04
	[0.97]	[0.87]	[1.08]	[1.08]	p<0.003	p<0.102	p<0.531	
2. to demean others.	3.55	3	3.93	2.98	1.45	25.62*	1.81	1.11
	[1.21]	[1.06]	[0.09]	[1.13]	p<0.23	p<0.0001	p<0.18	
3. to entertain others	4.59	3.71	4.67	4.34	12.44*	36.85*	7.54*	0.503
	[0.61]	[0.96]	[0.56]	[0.81]	p<0.0001	p<0.0001	p<0.006	
4. to show a sense of humor.	4.34	3.84	4.21	4.19	0.88	4.83*	4.05*	0.699
	[0.79]	[0.92]	[0.79]	[0.90]	p<0.34	p<0.029	p<0.045	
5. to disarm potentially aggressive others.	3.32	2.92	3.07	3.15	0.01	1.15	2.63	1.089
	[4.08]	[1.15]	[0.91]	[1.14]	p<0.94	p<0.28	p<0.10	
6. to allow others insight into another's state of mind.	2.89	3.18	2.63	3.1	1.62	8.17*	0.48	0.900
	[1.05]	[0.86]	[0.95]	[0.91]	p<0.20	p<0.004	p<0.488	
7. to help one adjust to a new role.	3.38	3.29	3.12	3.68	0.21	2.64	5.2*	1.02
	[0.94]	[1.04]	[1.08]	[0.89]	p<0.644	p<0.10	p<0.02	
8. to play with others.	4.00	4.21	4.19	4.19	0.62	0.93	0.92	0.59
	[0.83]	[0.66]	[0.75]	[0.82]	p<0.432	p<0.335	p<0.337	
9. to decrease another's aggressive behavior.	3.30	3.00	3.07	3.40	0.41	0.02	5.49*	0.916
	[0.93]	[1.04]	[0.94]	[0.95]	p<0.521	p<0.886	p<0.02	
10. to minimize anxiety.	3.49	3.37	3.70	3.76	4.86*	0.04	0.48	0.939
	[1.06]	[0.97]	[0.88]	[1.03]	p<0.028	p<0.85	p<0.48	
11. to reduce boredom	3.59	3.71	4.13	3.93	8.32*	0.10	1.40	0.877
	[1.01]	[0.89]	[0.92]	[0.92]	p<0.004	p<0.75	p<0.23	
12. to facilitate relationship patterns.	3.40	3.58	3.61	3.60	0.67	0.37	0.48	0.899
	[0.97]	[0.92]	[0.96]	[0.92]	p<0.41	p<0.54	p<0.48	
13. to help others relax and feel comfortable	3.76	3.84	3.74	4.13	1.04	3.26	1.46	0.819
	[0.96]	[0.86]	[0.94]	[0.82]	p<0.31	p<0.07	p<0.23	
14. to ease the tension wrought by new information.	3.32	3.24	3.54	3.53	3.23	0.10	0.07	1.027
	[1.14]	[0.91]	[0.96]	[1.04]	p<0.07	p<0.75	p<0.79	
15. to disclose difficult information.	2.59	2.47	3.10	2.47	2.62	5.97*	2.74	1.192
	[1.13]	[1.03]	[1.08]	[1.12]	p<0.10	p<0.01	p<0.09	

16. to let others know personal likes and dislikes.	3.21 [0.93]	3.26 [0.95]	3.28 [0.93]	3.21 [1.02]	0.00 p<0.94	0.00 p<0.94	0.19 p<0.66	
17. to increase liking by others.	4.04 [0.86]	3.71 [1.04]	4.29 [0.73]	3.94 [0.82]	4.05* p<0.04	8.49* p<0.004	0.01 p<0.91	0.696
18. to develop ones sense of humor.	3.64 [1.20]	3.32 [0.93]	3.62 [1.07]	3.76 [1.06]	1.98 p<0.16	0.33 p<0.56	2.37 p<0.12	
19. to control others	2.34 [1.05]	2.42 [1.24]	2.68 [1.09]	2.13 [0.99]	0.03 p<0.86	2.39 p<0.12	4.27* p<0.039	1.190
20. to express one's feelings.	3.30 [0.88]	3.42 [0.79]	3.45 [1.03]	3.51 [1.01]	0.78 p<0.78	0.46 p<0.46	0.05* p<0.05	
21. to defend one's ego against possible damage.	3.62 [0.94]	2.81 [1.13]	4.36 [0.87]	3.15 [1.18]	14.3* p<0.0002	50* p<0.000	2.07 p<0.15	1.01
22. to put others in their place.	3.32 [1.06]	2.87 [1.12]	3.46 [1.16]	2.94 [1.09]	0.43 p<0.51	9.42* p<0.002	0.05 p<0.81	1.26
23. to avoid telling personal information.	3.15 [1.21]	3.45 [1.03]	3.98 [1.01]	3.15 [1.14]	2.96 p<0.09	2.96 p<0.09	13.37* p<0.0003	
24. to allow one to cope with a serious subject.	3.13 [1.15]	3.08 [1.05]	3.55 [1.06]	2.91 [0.95]	0.75 p<0.39	5.25* p<0.02	3.86 p<0.05	1.113
25. to be creative with language	3.02 [1.15]	2.81 [1.13]	2.91 [1.37]	3.34 [1.10]	1.40 p<0.23	0.41 p<0.52	3.31 p<0.07	

Humor: Part A

We are interested in your perception of how humor is used in conversation by members of your sex. Please indicate above whether you are male or female, and rate the extent to which you feel most members of your sex engage in each of the following uses of humor in conversation. So if you are male, rate how often you feel most men use humor; if you are female, rate how often you feel most women use humor.

Use of Humor by Most Members of My Sex

Items	Almost Never					Almost Always				
1. to express hostility.	1	2	3	4	5					
2. to demean others.	1	2	3	4	5					
3. to entertain others	1	2	3	4	5					
4. to show a sense of humor.	1	2	3	4	5					
• 5. to disarm potentially aggressive others.	1	2	3	4	5					
6. to allow others insight into another's state of mind.	1	2	3	4	5					
7. to help one adjust to a new role.	1	2	3	4	5					
8. to play with others.	1	2	3	4	5					
9. to decrease another's aggressive behavior.	1	2	3	4	5					
10. to minimize anxiety.	1	2	3	4	5					
11. to reduce boredom	1	2	3	4	5					
12. to facilitate relationship patterns.	1	2	3	4	5					
13. to help others relax and feel comfortable	1	2	3	4	5					
14. to ease the tension wrought by new information.	1	2	3	4	5					
15. to disclose difficult information.	1	2	3	4	5					
16. to let others know personal likes and dislikes.	1	2	3	4	5					
17. to increase liking by others.	1	2	3	4	5					
18. to develop ones sense of humor.	1	2	3	4	5					
19. to control others	1	2	3	4	5					
20. to express one's feelings.	1	2	3	4	5					
21. to defend one's ego against possible damage.	1	2	3	4	5					
22. to put others in their place.	1	2	3	4	5					
23. to avoid telling personal information.	1	2	3	4	5					
24. to allow one to cope with a serious subject	1	2	3	4	5					
25. to be creative with language	1	2	3	4	5					

Humor: Part A

We are interested in your perception of how humor is used in conversation by members of the opposite sex. Please indicate above whether you are male or female, and rate the extent to which you feel most members of the opposite sex engage in each of the following uses of humor in conversation. So if you are male, rate how often you feel most women use humor; if you are female, rate how often you feel most men use humor.

Use of Humor by Most Members of Opposite Sex

Items	Almost Never			Almost Always	
1. to express hostility.	1	2	3	4	5
2. to demean others.	1	2	3	4	5
3. to entertain others	1	2	3	4	5
4. to show a sense of humor.	1	2	3	4	5
5. to disarm potentially aggressive others.	1	2	3	4	5
6. to allow others insight into another's state of mind.	1	2	3	4	5
7. to help one adjust to a new role.	1	2	3	4	5
8. to play with others.	1	2	3	4	5
9. to decrease another's aggressive behavior.	1	2	3	4	5
10. to minimize anxiety.	1	2	3	4	5
11. to reduce boredom	1	2	3	4	5
12. to facilitate relationship patterns.	1	2	3	4	5
13. to help others relax and feel comfortable	1	2	3	4	5
14. to ease the tension wrought by new information.	1	2	3	4	5
15. to disclose difficult information.	1	2	3	4	5
16. to let others know personal likes and dislikes.	1	2	3	4	5
17. to increase liking by others.	1	2	3	4	5
18. to develop ones sense of humor.	1	2	3	4	5
19. to control others	1	2	3	4	5
20. to express one's feelings.	1	2	3	4	5
21. to defend one's ego against possible damage.	1	2	3	4	5
22. to put others in their place.	1	2	3	4	5
23. to avoid telling personal information.	1	2	3	4	5
24. to allow one to cope with a serious subject	1	2	3	4	5
25. to be creative with language	1	2	3	4	5

Age: _____ Race\ Ethnicity: _____
 Major: _____ Sex: I am _____ (M or F)

Humor: Part A

We are interested in your perception of how you use humor in your conversations. Please indicate above whether you are male or female, and rate the extent to which you feel you engage in each of the following uses of humor in a conversation

My Use of Humor

Items	Almost Never					Almost Always
1. to express hostility.	1	2	3	4	5	
2. to demean others.	1	2	3	4	5	
3. to entertain others	1	2	3	4	5	
4. to show a sense of humor.	1	2	3	4	5	
5. to disarm potentially aggressive others.	1	2	3	4	5	
6. to allow others insight into another's state of mind.	1	2	3	4	5	
7. to help one adjust to a new role.	1	2	3	4	5	
8. to play with others.	1	2	3	4	5	
9. to decrease another's aggressive behavior.	1	2	3	4	5	
10. to minimize anxiety.	1	2	3	4	5	
11. to reduce boredom	1	2	3	4	5	
12. to facilitate relationship patterns.	1	2	3	4	5	
13. to help others relax and feel comfortable	1	2	3	4	5	
14. to ease the tension wrought by new information.	1	2	3	4	5	
15. to disclose difficult information.	1	2	3	4	5	
16. to let others know personal likes and dislikes.	1	2	3	4	5	
17. to increase liking by others.	1	2	3	4	5	
18. to develop ones sense of humor.	1	2	3	4	5	
19. to control others	1	2	3	4	5	
20. to express one's feelings.	1	2	3	4	5	
21. to defend one's ego against possible damage.	1	2	3	4	5	
22. to put others in their place.	1	2	3	4	5	
23. to avoid telling personal information.	1	2	3	4	5	
24. to allow one to cope with a serious subject	1	2	3	4	5	
25. to be creative with language	1	2	3	4	5	

Humor: Part B

For this part of the survey, please rate the extent to which you agree or disagree with the following statements, as they apply to YOU.

	<u>Strongly Disagree</u>			<u>Strongly Agree</u>	
	1	2	3	4	5
26. Sometimes I think up jokes or funny stories.	1	2	3	4	5
27. I use wit or humor to help me master difficult situations.	1	2	3	4	5
28. I'm confident that I can make other people laugh.	1	2	3	4	5
29. I dislike comics.	1	2	3	4	5
30. Other people tell me that I say funny things	1	2	3	4	5
31. I can use wit to help adapt to many situations.	1	2	3	4	5
32. I can ease a tense situation by saying something funny.	1	2	3	4	5
33. People who tell jokes are a pain in the neck.	1	2	3	4	5
34. I can often crack people up with things I say.	1	2	3	4	5
35. I like a good joke.	1	2	3	4	5
36. Calling somebody a "comedian" is a real insult.	1	2	3	4	5
37. I can say things in such a way as to make people laugh.	1	2	3	4	5
38. Humor is a lousy coping mechanism.	1	2	3	4	5
39. I appreciate those who generate humor.	1	2	3	4	5
40. People look to me to say amusing things.	1	2	3	4	5
41. Humor helps me cope.	1	2	3	4	5
42. I'm uncomfortable when everyone is cracking jokes.	1	2	3	4	5
43. I'm regarded as something of a wit by my friends.	1	2	3	4	5
44. Coping by using humor is an elegant way of adapting.	1	2	3	4	5
45. Trying to master situations through use of humor is really dumb.	1	2	3	4	5
46. I can actually have some control over a group by my uses of humor.	1	2	3	4	5
47. Uses of humor help to put me at ease.	1	2	3	4	5
48. I use humor to entertain my friends.	1	2	3	4	5
49. My clever sayings amuse others.	1	2	3	4	5
50. A good joke will be equally funny regardless who tells it.	1	2	3	4	5
51. A good joke will be equally funny regardless of the audience.	1	2	3	4	5
52. If a joke is offensive to me, I don't find it funny.	1	2	3	4	5
53. If a joke is offensive to others, I don't find it funny.	1	2	3	4	5

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