

AN ANALYSIS ON HUMOR STYLES AND SELF-ESTEEM

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Abstract

The researchers conducted the study to determine the level of humor styles and self-esteem of the high school students. The study also aimed to find out if there is a significant relationship between the four humor styles (affiliative, self-enhancing, aggressive, and self-defeating) and self-esteem. Moreover, the research investigated which among these styles of humor highly predicts self-esteem. The sample consisted of 120 participants composed of 67 males and 53 females from the high school department of Baliuag University with the use of random sampling method. This quantitative method is a descriptive Correlational study. The variables were assessed by Humor Styles Questionnaire (HSQ) and Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (RSES). The findings revealed that adaptive humor styles were positively associated with self-esteem, whereas, the maladaptive humor styles negatively related to self-esteem. Among the four humor styles, self-enhancing humor highly predicted self-esteem.

Keywords: humor styles, affiliative, self-enhancing, aggressive, self-defeating, self-esteem

In contemporary psychology, the definition of humor has lost its narrow focus because it has become a broad umbrella term for all laughter-related phenomena, be it jokes, stand-up comedy, television sitcoms, political satire and ridicule. Humor can now be considered as aggressive and hostile, benevolent and philosophical (Martin, 2007).

More recently, Martin, Puhlik-Doris, Larsen, Gray, & Weir (2003) developed a 2x2 conceptualization of everyday functions of humor. The first dimension refers to whether humor

is used as (a) intrapersonal (to enhance the self) or (b) interpersonal (to enhance one's relationship). The second dimension of Martin's model is related to (a) adaptive or positive (benign) and (b) maladaptive or negative (malign) types of humor.

These two broad functions of humor results in four different styles of humor namely: affiliative (used to enhance one's relationships with others in a way that is relatively benign and self-accepting), self-enhancing (used to enhance the self in a way that is tolerant and non-detrimental to others), aggressive (humor that is done at the expense and detriment of one's relationships with others), and self-defeating (humor that is done at the expense and detriment of the self).

Most of us would agree that humor is good for us in every possible way. For instance, Martin (2007) reported that humor helps us boost positive emotions and counteract negative moods. When we laugh, our energy level boosts and we feel more cheerful. It can also help us stave off depression, anxiety, and irritability by replacing negative feeling with pleasurable emotions.

Let's not forget humor's social benefits. Humor brings people together and makes a more relaxed atmosphere. It "breaks the ice" among people on their first encounters. In addition, it can help people get to know each other more easily. Humor and playful communication strengthen one's relationships by triggering positive feelings and fostering emotional. In fact, it also helps improve trust, communication, cooperation and group cohesiveness (Martin, 2007).

Not surprisingly, past research has shown that humor has health benefits as well. For example, Collinson (2002) stated that humor gives a relaxed feeling and helps relieve stress. It also strengthens immune system, lowers blood pressure, and helps relax muscles due to stress. Researchers have also found that humor has cardiovascular benefits.

Taken these amusing benefits of humor all together, indeed it can be said that that people who are frequently engaged in humor (e.g., those who have great sense of humor) must be

generally less depressed, anxious, pessimistic, and should have overall feelings of well-being, greater optimism, and self-esteem. Fiyaz, Majeed, & Khan (2016) insists that humor gives that mirthful pleasant feeling that contributes to emotional well-being, thus, sense of humor is also an important component of mental health.

Another important factor that contributes to well-being is self-esteem. According to Abdel-Khalek (2016), self-esteem refers generally to an individual overall positive evaluation of the self; it is an overall cognitive and emotional appraisal of one's own worth. It is how a person thinks, feels, and acts that implies that he/she accepts, respects, and believes in himself/herself. It involves self-respect, self-acceptance and an appreciation of self-worth that embraces both strengths and limitations. Self-esteem affects nearly every facet of one's life — our confidence, interpersonal relations, communication, work, academic performance, body image, well-being, etc.

People with healthy self-esteem have the strength and flexibility to take charge of their lives and grow from their mistakes without the fear of rejection. They tend to be confident, have self-direction, have an awareness of personal strengths, have the ability to solve problems and learn from their mistakes. Individuals who have high self-esteem also tend to be optimistic, have good self-care, cooperative attitude, and a good sense of personal limitations. However, self-esteem has downsides as well. Too much self-love can result in an off-putting sense of entitlement and an inability to learn from failures.

On the other hand, people with low self-esteem tend to lack confidence, have a negative view of life and distorted view of self and others. They also have feeling of being unloved and unlovable and have a tendency to mistrust others inappropriately. Moreover, individuals possessing little self-regard can lead themselves to become depressed, to fall short of their potential, or to tolerate abusive situations and relationships.

Abdel-Khalek (2016) pointed out that the concept of self-esteem is extensively researched in psychology. One of the most studied variables that is related to self-esteem is academic

achievement. Research exploring the links between self-esteem and academic achievement has spawned such magnitude of research literature over the last decade (Hassan & Jami, 2016). There is also a growing body of research regarding the integration of humor and self-esteem in educational system. For instance, Kerla (2015) conducted a research investigating the association of humor styles with self-esteem and school success. The results revealed that adaptive humor styles are found to be good predictors of adolescents' global self-esteem and school success. On the contrary, students who utilized maladaptive humor styles tend to harbor negative feelings towards school and consider themselves as less competent.

To date, there is currently only limited research investigating the link between the two constructs, humor and self-esteem, which are both conducive to psychological well-being. Moreover, relatively little is known about sense of humor and its potential relationship to self-esteem of adolescents. The goal of the researchers is to investigate the relationship between the humor styles and self-esteem of the high school students. Furthermore, the present study aims to find out which humor styles highly predict self-esteem.

Significance of the Study

There are few studies that analyze the techniques and styles of humor manifested in early adolescence. The findings of this research have direct implications for curricular and extracurricular activities, which through targeting certain styles of humor have the potential to reduce the negative effects of self-esteem that is beneficial to students, especially to those who are possessing low self-esteem. Humor can serve many functions, including those which foster group cohesion, or the solidification of self-esteem domains through humor generation within a peer group. For example, among adolescents, for whom peer approval and acceptance are so important, the adaptive self humor style (self-enhancing humor) may provide the adolescent with an opportunity to exhibit intellectual, social, and physical appearance competencies, through the generation and comprehension of humor. Some of adaptive interpersonal or

social serving aspect of humor is the maintenance of group standards, enhancement of group cohesion, and the acceptance of an individual within a group, all of which are central concerns in adolescence. Likewise, the present study may also serve as a future reference for future researchers who will conduct research regarding humor and self-esteem. More importantly, the research informs people on which particular humor style is beneficial to self-esteem, thus, they will resort in utilizing this humor style which would enable them to develop a healthy self-esteem that can positively affect their well-being which might in turn enhance their interpersonal relationships thereby, to have contributions to healthy communications.

Review of Related Literature

Over the past two decades, psychologists perceived humor as a single-dimensional construct. For instance, a number of researchers believe that sense of humor is considered to be a stable personality trait (Greengross, Martin & Miller, 2012). However, Martin, Puhlik-Doris, Larsen, Gray, & Weir (2003) pointed out that there has been a dramatic shift in the way researchers have conceptualized humor. Sense of humor is now regarded as "a very broad and multi-faceted construct which is best viewed as a class of loosely related traits."

Martin, Puhlik-Doris, Larsen, Gray, & Weir (2003) maintained that humor can be conceptualized in a myriad of ways. For example, humor can be viewed as a habitual behavioral pattern (tendency to laugh frequently, to tell jokes and amuse others, to laugh at other people's jokes), a cognitive ability (ability to create humor, to amuse others, to "get the joke," to remember jokes), an attitude (enjoyment of particular types of humorous Material), an aesthetic response (enjoyment of particular types of humorous material), a world view (bemused outlook on life), a coping strategy (tendency to maintain a humorous perspective in the face of adversity) or defense mechanism (Martin, 2007).

Vaughan, Zeigler-Hill, & Arnau (2014) stated that the manner in which people use humor in their social interaction is

the most relevant aspects of humor for psychological adjustment because it is a fundamentally interpersonal phenomenon that can occur in virtually any social situation and is used to fulfill a variety of interpersonal functions, including social control, status maintenance, group cohesion, and integration (Martin, 2007). For instance, the use of humor has been found to decrease the social distance between individuals during initial encounters which provides a distinct social advantage to those with greater skill at both employing and recognizing humor (Zeigler-Hill, McCabe, & Vrabel, 2016).

A 2 x 2 conceptualization model relating to uses of humor in daily life, which have been found to be related to individual differences in psychological well-being, was developed by Martin, Puhlik-Doris, Larsen, Gray, & Weir (2003). The model suggests that there are two underlying dimensions that concern interpersonal nature of the humor (i.e., injurious or benign) and the target of enhancement (i.e., self or relationships with others).

Humor Styles

The first dimension in this model refers to whether humor is used (a) to enhance the self (intrapersonal), or (b) to enhance one's relationships with others (interpersonal). The second underlying dimension is related to adaptive or positive (benign) and maladaptive or negative (malign) types of humor.

Martin, Puhlik-Doris, Larsen, Gray, & Weir (2003) stated that the intrapersonal aspect of humor relates with amusement and also involves the capacity to cope with stress or make use of humor as a defense mechanism. On the other hand, the interpersonal aspect of humor is associated with increasing other's feelings of social well-being, dealing with conflicts, appearing more attractive and strengthening ties. These two broad functions of humor form four different styles of humor: benign interpersonal humor known as affiliative humor, benign intrapersonal humor known as self-enhancing humor, malign interpersonal humor known as aggressive humor, and malign intrapersonal humor known as self-defeating humor.

Affiliative Humor

Affiliative humor is a positive humor style that involves sharing humor through jokes or witty remarks, without insulting or harming anyone. It involves the use of humor in social situations as a way to strengthen the quality of social relationships, increase group cohesion and attraction, and reduce interpersonal tensions, while maintaining a sense of self-acceptance, through strategies such as telling humorous anecdotes or engaging in witty banter in order to put others at ease (Mendiburo-Seguel, Páez, & Martínez-Sánchez, 2015). Because the use of affiliative humor affirms both the self and others, it is associated with greater intimacy in interpersonal relationships (Cann, Stilwell, & Taku, 2010) and greater conflict resolution in dating couples (Campbell, Martin, & Ward, 2008).

On using this type of humor, we make clear that things are on a fun level, and that our intention is to interact on that level with others. It is associated with extraversion, interpersonal attraction, self-esteem, satisfaction with relations and, in general, positive feelings and emotions (Martin, Puhlik-Doris, Larsen, Gray, & Weir, 2003).

Research has also shown this style of humor to be positively related to general self-esteem (Kuiper, Grimshaw, Leite, & Kirsh, 2004). Results from several studies have also shown this humor style to be positively related to satisfaction with social support, intimacy, positive mood, and coping styles (Zeigler-Hill, McCabe, and Vrabel, 2016). In addition, with regard to Big Five personality traits, affiliative humor is positively related to Extraversion, Agreeableness, and Openness (Ozyesil, Deniz, & Kesici, 2013). Conversely, affiliative humor is negatively related to depression, anxiety, aggression, and competitiveness (Dyck & Holtzman, 2013).

Self-Enhancing Humor

Self-enhancing humor refers to a humorous view of the world, found in people who tend to laugh at life's adversities and idiosyncrasies, and maintain a humorous outlook on life. For example, someone who utilizes self-enhancing humor style may

possess the ability to find humor in unpleasant situations which may, in turn, prevent the person from being overwhelmed by negative emotions. Furthermore, people who have a self-enhancing humor style use humor to achieve intrapersonal rewards, that is, to enhance or maintain positive psychological well-being (Markey, Suzuki, & Marino, 2014).

This style would be the closest to humor as a form of coping, since it allows us to distance ourselves from such stimuli that are stressful or generate problems (Cann & Collette, 2014). In general, it enables a person to reduce negative emotions and maintain a positive and realistic view in adverse situations. It is negatively related to negative emotions such as anxiety, depression and neuroticism (Besser, Luyten, & Mayes, 2012).

Research findings have shown self-enhancing humor to be positively related to global and social self-esteem (Leist & Müller, 2012), intimacy, positive mood, coping styles, satisfaction with social support, as well as perceived social support (Martin, Puhlik-Doris, Larsen, Gray, & Weir, 2003). In addition, self-enhancing humor is positively related to Extraversion and Openness (Mendiburo-Seguel, Páez, & Martínez-Sánchez, 2015). Conversely, self-enhancing humor appears to be negatively related to general psychological symptoms, depression, and anxiety (Tucker, Wingate, O'Keefe, Slish, Judah, & Rhoades-Kerswill, 2013).

Aggressive Humor

Aggressive humor is an injurious form of humor that involves the use of sarcasm, teasing, ridicule, derision, and put-down. This kind of humor is not necessarily shared with others. In addition, individuals high in aggressive humor use humor, not to make interpersonal relationships more rewarding for the self and others but rather tease, insult, manipulate and ridicule others to demonstrate their superiority without concern for the impact such humorous belittlement might have on others and to enhance one's self (Ford, McCreight, & Richardson, 2014).

An individual who is characterized by the aggressive

humor style will engage in humor that is likely to have a negative impact on others but may sometimes fail to understand the negative impact of this injurious form of humor (Veselka, Schermer, Martin, & Vernon, 2010). Not surprisingly, the use of aggressive humor has been shown to be detrimental to interpersonal relationships (Cann, Zapata, & Davis, 2011; Kuiper, Kirsh, & Leite, 2010).

This style of humor has been shown to be positively related to Neuroticism, hostility, aggression, and anger. Conversely, previous research has found negative relationships between aggressive humor and intimacy, relationship satisfaction, Agreeableness, Conscientiousness (Ruch & Heintz, 2013) and the interpersonal skills of emotional support and conflict management (Kuiper, Grimshaw, Leite, & Kirsh, 2004). Thus, overall, this style of humor is potentially detrimental in nature.

Self-Defeating Humor

Self-defeating humor refers to allowing oneself to be the "butt of the joke," such as a person making fun of his or her own appearance, so as to gain approval and attention from others. It is hypothetically related to defensive denial, whereby one hides one's negative feelings and avoids facing up to aspects of oneself that are rejected; it is associated with emotional need and dependence, avoidance and low self-esteem (James & Foxa, 2016).

Self-defeating humor also involves the use of excessively self-disparaging humor (e.g., a person making disparaging remarks about his or her own intelligence) in order to ingratiate oneself to others. Individuals who rely on the self-defeating humor style may use humor as a way to avoid confronting problems and dealing with negative feelings (e.g., fear of failure; Kuiper & McHale, 2009).

Research findings have shown this style of humor to be positively related to general psychological symptoms, depression, hostility, and anxiety. Conversely, negative relationships were found for self-esteem (both global and social),

satisfaction with social support, intimacy, positive mood, relationship satisfaction, Conscientiousness, and Openness. In addition, Self-defeating humor was negatively related to anxiety control (both events and reactions). Overall, self-defeating humor is also potentially detrimental in nature, but this style of humor is generally shared with others (Kuiper, Grimshaw, Leite, & Kirsh, 2004).

Humor Styles in High School Students

Fox, Dean, & Lyford (2013) maintained that children's humor development can be viewed as reflecting their cognitive development. Bergen (2007) stated that with age comes the ability to appreciate more sophisticated forms of humor. It is not until middle childhood that the ability to use humor in social situations is displayed, and by 11-12 years children can use humor as a very effective means of social interaction and communication (Bergen, 2007) – what Martin, Doris, Larsen, Gray, & Weir (2003) refer to as 'affiliative humor.'

Führ (2002) provided evidence for the appearance of humor as a coping tool in early adolescence. In fact, 960 participants aged 11-14 years completed Coping Humor Scale (CHS), developed for adults (Martin, 2007) and a new Children Coping Humor Strategy Survey (CCHSS) wherein three factors emerged: 1) use of humor to cope with stress, 2) aggressive use of humor, and 3) humor as a mood booster.

Saroglou & Scariot (2002) conducted two studies regarding humor styles, personality, and school performance taking Belgian high school and college students as their sample. The results showed that affiliative and self-enhancing humor styles were positively related to self-esteem whereas self-defeating humor was negatively related to self-esteem.

Fox, Hunter, & Jones (2016) took students from secondary schools as their sample to their longitudinal study examining the associations between humor styles and psychosocial adjustment. Data were collected at two time points: fall and summer. It was found that self-defeating humor was associated with an increase in both depressive symptoms and loneliness,

and with a decrease in self-esteem. Self-esteem predicted an increase in the use of affiliative humor over the school year but not vice-versa.

Führ (2001, 2002) stated that early adolescence starts from the period of grade seven to grade eight. During this transition from childhood to adulthood, a teenager experiences the growth spurt, the cognitive pattern shifts from the concrete operational stage to the formal operational stage, and the "self" faces topics such as industry, self-abasement, self-identity, and role confusion.

Klein and Kuiper (2006) believe that humor is a form of social interaction and communication, successful social development in early adolescence leads to positive social relations and better peer acceptance; in contrast, failed social development does not only affect a teenager's social relations and status, increases the chance of being alienated and ignored, but may even lead to victimization as well. Since such influences may last the entire adolescence and even continues into adulthood (Kirsh, 2005), researchers and teachers would better understand social interactions and patterns of life-coping in this stage through the understanding of the use and expression of humor during mid-childhood.

Self-Esteem

Self-esteem is one of the most investigated constructs in psychology that it has yielded an incredible and extensive body of research literature (Abdel-Khalek, 2016). It refers to an individual's subjective evaluation of his or her worth as a person (Trzesniewski, Donnellan, & Robins, 2003).

Macdonald & Leary (2012) also said that self-esteem is commonly conceptualized as the "feeling that one is 'good enough', and consequently, individuals with high self-esteem do not necessarily believe they are superior to others. That's why according to Ackerman, Witt, Donnellan, Trzesniewski, Robins, Kashy (2011), self-esteem involves feelings of self-acceptance and self-respect, and in contrast to the excessive self-regard and

self-aggrandizement that characterizes narcissistic individuals. Yorra (2014) defined self-esteem as a certain attitude and a perception of one's self. According to McClure, Tanski, Kingsbury & Sargent (2010) self-esteem is an overall reflection of an individual's self-worth.

People with high self-esteem tend to be more creative, has positive characteristics such as initiative, strong coping skills, feelings of confidence, feeling of worthiness, persistence in the face of challenges, feeling of positive regard about oneself, feeling of happiness, and longevity. People with high self-esteem also feel good about themselves, feel a sense of belonging and security, and respect and appreciate others. They also tend to be successful in life because they feel confident in taking on challenges and risking failure to achieve what they want; they have more energy for positive pursuits. They are expected to be 'less shaken' by job stressors and accompanying consequences (Mruk, 2006).

People with low self-esteem on the other hand, are emotionally more vulnerable and interact less adequately with others in their environment. They tend to be less effective in interpersonal relationships and may be predisposed both to depersonalize people and to experience feelings of incompetence in their relationships with others. People with low self-esteem also tend to be extremely dependent on others for validation (Khezerlou, 2017). According to the study of Cockerham, Stopa, Bell, & Gregg (2009), self-esteem also relate to internalizing psychological problems, in which individuals' over learned automatic and unconscious self-evaluation and refers to the cognitive and experiential mode.

In the study of Kernis (2003), self-esteem is an important psychological construct because it is a central component of individuals' daily experience; it refers to the way that people feel about themselves, which reflects and affects their ongoing transactions with their environment and the people they encounter in it. He also said that the role of self-esteem is framed in dichotomous terms where people evaluate themselves. Self-esteem is based on intuitive self-views that are connected to

immediate affective relations toward the self, and is based on deliberative self-views that are connected to evaluative judgments (Jordan, Spencer, Zanna, Hoshino-Browne, & Coreel, 2003).

Galambos & Costigan (2003) pointed out that adolescents' psychological well-being and self-esteem can be interpreted as indicators of the adaptive emotion regulation which is crucial for ongoing developmental processes in adolescence. Similarly, indicators of psychological distress (e.g., depression) can be viewed as capturing emotion dysregulation. Adolescence is a specific period of life when the perception of self is still developing and might be influenced by one's current emotional state (Mann & de Vries, 2004).

Several studies have found that high self-esteem individuals are more persistent in the face of failure than the low self-esteem individuals. High self-esteem individuals also appear more effective in self-regulating goal-directed behavior (Di Paula and Campbell, 2002). A high level of self-esteem supplies individuals with the ability to accept happy moments, to handle unpleasant situations, to cope effectively with challenges, to engage in close relationships and to improve their strengths. High self-esteem is also considered to positively moderate the expression of dysfunctional schemata and depressive symptoms at the experience of negative life events (Stavropoulos, Lazaratou, Marini, & Dikeos, 2015).

In general, Cheng & Furnham (2004) pointed out that people high in self-esteem are happier than those low in self-esteem. In addition, self-esteem was found to be positively correlated with optimism, and negatively correlated with hopelessness (Lyubomirsky, Tkach, & DiMatteo, 2006) raising the possibility that self-esteem relates to happiness instrumentally, by predisposing people to view themselves as efficacious and to hold positive expectations about their lives (Baumeister, Campbell, Krueger, & Vohs, 2003).

Ha (2006) reported that people with low self-esteem suffer from feelings of worthlessness, inferiority, and emotional instability, so leading to dissatisfaction with life. Moreover, there

is a tendency of respondents with low self-esteem scores to have a general negative attitude toward many things, including other people and personal circumstances (Mackinnon, 2015).

Self-Esteem in High School Students

The period of adolescence is important for the process of self-esteem formation. The formation of self-esteem can be stimulated, encouraged both by parents and teachers. The level of self-esteem is mirrored in the adolescent's attitude and behavior, both at home and at school (Mogonea and Mogonea, 2014).

Lavoie (2012) maintained that adolescents with high level of self-esteem are characterized by the capability of influencing positively the opinion and behavior of others; they tackle new situations positively and confidently; they have a high level of tolerance towards frustration; they accept early responsibilities, they assess correctly situations; they communicate positive feelings about themselves; they succeed in having a good self-control and the belief that the things they are undergoing are the result of their own behavior and actions.

Therefore, adolescence is the critical period for the development of self-esteem and self-identity, and low self-esteem may endanger adolescent's emotional regulation (Lin, Tang, Yen, Ko, Huang, & Liu, 2008).

Humor Styles and Self-Esteem

A considerable amount of literature has been published about the relationship between humor styles and self-esteem. For instance, during the scale development of Humor Styles Questionnaire (HSQ), a number of measures of psychological health and well-being have also been correlated to HSQ scales. These tests assessed several variables such as mood, aggressiveness, self-esteem, optimism, psychological well-being, psychiatric symptoms, intimacy, and social support satisfaction. Martin, Doris, Larsen, Gray, & Weir (2003) found multiple significant associations with different well-being measures, especially for self-enhancing and affiliative humor. Results showed that measures of well-being and self-esteem positively associated to

affiliative humor, and the opposite was true for anxiety and depression.

Ford, Lappi, & Holden (2016) examined the link between humor styles, happiness, and four personality traits that characterize happy people which include extraversion, locus of control, self-esteem and optimism. The findings revealed that healthy humor styles were found to mediate the association between each of the four happy personality traits and happiness. More specifically, self-esteem was positively associated with adaptive humor styles, and the opposite was true for aggressive and self-defeating humor styles.

A study conducted by Yue, Liu, Jiang, & Hiranandani (2014) investigated the mediation effect of humor styles on the association between self-esteem and subjective happiness. The results showed that adaptive humor styles mediated the effect of self-esteem on subjective happiness. Moreover, the results revealed that self-esteem positively correlated with adaptive humor styles and subjective happiness. On the other hand, self-esteem negatively associated with self-defeating humor and subjective happiness. In addition, greater use of adaptive humor styles predicted higher level of self-esteem. However, aggressive humor was found to be uncorrelated with self-esteem and subjective happiness.

Hiranandani & Yue (2014) conducted a comparative study between Chinese and Indian sample, examining the connection between humor styles, gelotophobia, and self-esteem. The results reported that both affiliative and self-enhancing humor styles positively and significantly correlated with self-esteem but was negatively related to gelotophobia in both cultures. On the contrary, self-defeating humor positively associated with self-esteem in the Indian sample only. Echoing the findings of Yue, Liu, Jiang & Hiranandani's (2014) study, aggressive humor was found to have no significant association with self-esteem. Regarding the mediating effects of humor styles on self-esteem and gelotophobia, both benign humor styles mediated the link between self-esteem and gelotophobia in Indian sample. However, in the Chinese sample, the relation between

self-esteem and gelotophobia was only mediated by affiliative humor.

Kuiper, Grimshaw, Leite & Kirsh (2004) concluded that people who were more likely to use adaptive humor had greater self-esteem and "more positive self-competency judgments" and people who rather used maladaptive humor styles had lower levels of self-esteem. People with high levels of affiliative humor and self-enhancing humor had very low levels of depression. Consequently, individuals who often used self-defeating humor were more likely to be depressive. The use of "self-focused maladaptive" humor was also linked to poorer well-being. Zeigler-Hill and Besser (2011) studied the mediation of humor styles between pathological narcissism and self-esteem. It was found that the association between grandiose narcissism and high self-esteem was accounted for by the tendency for those with high levels of grandiose narcissism to engage in adaptive forms of humor. Similarly, the association between vulnerable narcissism and low self-esteem was accounted for by the tendency for those with high levels of vulnerable narcissism to engage in maladaptive forms of humor and refrain from using adaptive styles of humor.

Locally, Balagtas, Hingan, Samar, and Villano (2015) explored the effects of group stereotypes, humor styles, and the interaction of these two on the perceived academic competence. Results showed that both group stereotypes and humor styles have significant effects on the perceived academic competence, with Aktibista stereotype being perceived as more academically competent than Atletista stereotype, affiliative humor style as being more academically competent than self-enhancing, self-defeating, and aggressive humor styles, and with self-enhancing humor style as being more competent academically than aggressive humor style.

McCosker and Moran (2012) explored the relationships between interpersonal competence, self-esteem and humor styles. The findings concluded that high levels of affiliative, aggressive, and self-enhancing humor styles correlated with high self-esteem, and the opposite was true for self-defeating humor.

Ogurlu (2015) found that people with high levels of emotional intelligence (i.e., individual who possess empathy, emotional control, social awareness, and self-esteem) tend to utilize affiliative and self-enhancing humor, whereas, people who lack emotional intelligence have a tendency to use aggressive and self-defeating humor.

Stieger, Formann & Burger (2011) studied the association of implicit and explicit self-esteem to humor styles, specifically self-defeating humor. The results found that individuals who scored high on affiliative humor have secured high self-esteem. On the contrary, people who had low scores on affiliative humor have secured low self-esteem. Moreover, individuals who possess damaged self-esteem scored higher on self-defeating humor than people with secure high self-esteem.

Kuiper and McHale (2009) examined how a certain style of humor is correlated with self-evaluation standards (which are the primary evaluative components of self-esteem) and psychological well-being. Higher level of self-evaluation standard was found to have a positive correlation with affiliative style of humor, which leads to greater levels of social self-esteem and lower levels of depression. It was also found that the greater confirmation of negative self-evaluation standards leads to the use of self-defeating humor style, which results in a lower level of social self-esteem.

Ozyesil (2012) studied the prediction level of self-esteem on humor styles and positive-negative affect. The results revealed that there is a positive significant correlation between self-esteem and affiliative and self-enhancing humor styles. On the contrary, negative correlations were found between self-esteem and aggressive and self-defeating humor styles. Moreover, higher levels of self-enhancing humor predicted higher levels of social self-esteem and reduced depression. Higher levels of self-defeating humor predicted lower levels of social self-esteem and higher levels of depression.

According to Martin, Kuiper, Olinger, & Dance (1993), that greater level of humor is associated with a more positive self-concept when considered in terms of self-esteem and self-worth

evaluation, which is supported by Stigger, Forman, & Burger (2011) by theorizing that damaged self esteem or people is associated with self-defeating humor; the less self-esteem the person has, more likely that person will use self-defeating humor.

Another study by Vaughan, Ziegler-Hill, & Arnau (2014) found that individuals with stable high self-esteem reported the highest levels of affiliative humor as well as the lowest levels of aggressive and self-defeating humor. In contrast, individuals with unstable high self-esteem reported low levels of affiliative humor as well as high levels of aggressive humor and self-defeating humor.

Zhao, Wang, & Kong (2014) found out in their research that there is a relationship between humor styles and life satisfaction and it was fully mediated by social support and self-esteem; “The paths from evaluative humor style via social support and via self-esteem to life satisfaction were both significant.”

Theoretical Framework

Humor Styles Model

The theory used in this study was the humor styles model outlined by Martin, Doris, Larsen, Gray, & Weir (2003), which involve four types of humor namely affiliative, self-enhancing, aggressive, and self-defeating humor. The affiliative and self-enhancing humor both fall under the adaptive humor styles, whereas the aggressive and self-defeating humor fall under the maladaptive humor styles. Moreover, the affiliative and aggressive styles of humor are primarily focused on others as opposed to the self-enhancing and self-defeating which are focused on oneself. Affiliative humor is related to saying funny things, telling jokes, or making witty remarks, without insulting or harming anyone, in order to enhance social relationships and reduce interpersonal tensions. Self-enhancing humor involves the use of humor for the purpose of maintaining a positive and humorous outlook on life despite the stress and adversities they are faced with. People who have an aggressive humor style uses

humor, not to facilitate relationships and reduce interpersonal tension, but rather as a means to attack or demean others.

Self-Esteem as Worthiness

Morris Rosenberg (1965) defined self-esteem in terms of a particular type of attitude, one that is thought to be based on the perception of a feeling, a feeling about one’s “worth,” which is to say one’s character or value as a person. The distinguishing characteristic of defining self-esteem this way is that it is seen primarily as affective in nature: In this case, self-esteem is based on a particular feeling, one of being worthy or what is often referred to as worthiness. This emphasis on evaluative mental processes and affective experience, rather than on behavior and its outcomes, means that self-esteem can be seen in terms of the psychology of attitude formation. The second distinguishing feature of defining self-esteem and working from this position is that self-esteem is seen primarily in terms of a certain attitude. It is one that concerns a person’s evaluation or judgment of their own “worth,” which brings the notion of values into play in self-esteem work. Whereas the chief value question for a competence-based approach is whether some particular domain of behavior matters to an individual, one’s worth as a person is a more basic and rather universal issue.

Conceptual Framework

The present study aims to investigate the humor styles, which involve four kinds of humor namely a) *affiliative*, the type of humor that includes saying funny things and telling jokes, b) *self-enhancing*, involves a generally humorous outlook on life in the face of difficulties c) *aggressive*, the tendency to use humor for the purpose of criticizing or manipulating others, as in sarcasm, teasing, ridicule, derision, or disparagement humor and d) *self-defeating humor*, the humor that is excessively critical and ridiculing of oneself and attempts to amuse others by doing or saying funny things at one’s own expense, high school students employ. The current study also aims to determine the relation of the four humor styles with global self-esteem. The present study also aims to find out what particular humor style highly predicts humor styles affects self-esteem. The diagram

below shows the relationship between humor styles and self-esteem.

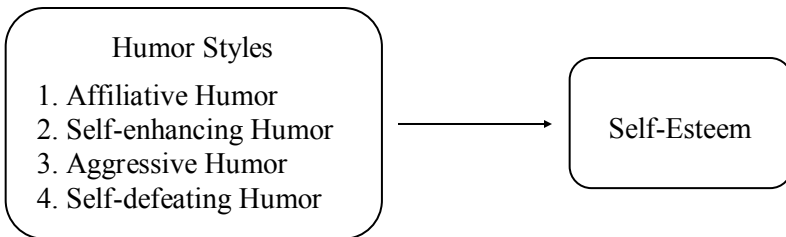


Figure 2. Schematic diagram of relationship between humor styles and self-esteem.

Statement of the Problem

1. What styles of humor do high school students employ as measured by the Humor Styles Questionnaire in terms of: (a) Affiliative Humor; (b) Self-enhancing Humor; (c) Aggressive Humor; (d) Self-defeating Humor
2. What is the level of self-esteem of the high school students?
3. Is there a significant relationship between the four humor styles and self-esteem?
 - 3.1. Is there a significant relationship between affiliative humor and self-esteem?
 - 3.2. Is there a significant relationship between self-enhancing humor and self-esteem?
 - 3.3. Is there a significant relationship between aggressive humor and self-esteem?
 - 3.4. Is there a significant relationship between self-defeating humor and self-esteem?
4. What particular humor style highly predicts the self-esteem of the high school students?

Scope and Delimitation of the Study

The study makes a new contribution to the understanding of the relationship between humor styles and self-esteem. It does, however, have limitations. For instance, it should be noted that this study is correlational in nature, and relies on the use of self-

report, which prevents from understanding causal relationship between humor style and self-esteem. Therefore, the data are subject to sources of bias such as social desirability. The underlying assumption for the present study was that individuals' humor styles are predictive of self-esteem, but this cannot be established using the present data.

Moreover, the language used in the questionnaires was English which may be culturally different from Filipinos, especially those who don't have a tight grasp of the English language leading them to inaccurate understanding of the questions, thus it is possible that the language bias might influence the scores of individual.

Research Design

This research utilized the descriptive correlation method, a quantitative method of research that examines the relationship or the covariation between two or more quantitative variables. This study was designed to study the association among humor styles, namely the affiliative, self-enhancing, aggressive and self-defeating, and self-esteem.

Participants and Sampling Procedure

The study utilized a purposive sampling procedure wherein a total of 120 students (48% female) were selected from the high school department of Baliuag University. The mean age of the participants was 15.72 with a standard deviation of 4.67.

Instrumentation/Measure

Humor Styles Questionnaire (HSQ)

The Humor Styles Questionnaire (HSQ) developed by Martin, Doris, Larsen, Gray, & Weir (2003) consists of 32 self-report items assessing the degree to which people habitually engage in four distinct styles of humor namely *affiliative humor* (e.g., "I laugh and joke a lot with my closest friends"), *self-enhancing humor* (e.g., "Even when I'm by myself, I'm often amused by the absurdities of life"), *aggressive humor* (e.g., "If I don't like someone, I often use humor or teasing to put them

down”), and *self-defeating humor* (e.g., “I will often get carried away in putting myself down if it makes my family or friends laugh”). Participants will indicate whether they agree or disagree with each item using a 7-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree). The Humor Styles Questionnaire has demonstrated a Cronbach alpha ranging from .53 to .83 in previous studies (Ford, Lappi, & Holden, 2016; Fox, Hunter, & Jones, 2016).

Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (RSES)

The Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale is a popular scale originally developed by sociologist Dr. Morris Rosenberg (1965) to measure adolescents' global self-worth or self-acceptance by measuring both positive and negative feelings about the self. The inventory includes 10 items, half of the items are worded in a positive direction (“On the whole, I am satisfied with myself”); the other half are worded in a negative direction (“All in all, I am inclined to feel that I am a failure”). The scale is answered using a 4-point Likert scale format ranging from *Strongly Disagree*=1 to *Strongly Agree*=4. Statements that are negatively constructed are reverse scored, that is, SA=0, A=1, D=2, SD=3. During the development of the scale, Rosenberg (1965) reported reliable and valid psychometric properties. The inventory generally has high reliability: test-retest correlations are typically in the range of .82 to .88, and Cronbach's alpha for various samples are in the range of .77 to .88 (see Blascovich and Tomaka, 1993 and Rosenberg, 1986 for further detail).

Data Gathering Procedure

The testing was conducted in groups of 40 people inside the vicinity of Baliuag University high school library. After providing informed consent, the respondents completed the Humor Styles Questionnaire and Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale within approximately 30–40 minutes. After the completion of the questionnaires, participants were given a debriefing session that provided further details of the study.

Data Analysis and Statistical Treatment

Pearson product-moment correlation was performed to assess the relationship between humor styles and self-esteem. Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient is used to discover the relations between two variables and indicates whether the two sets overlap or coincide, the intensity of the match and whether this relationship is directly or inversely proportional.

Multiple linear regression analysis was also used to determine which among the humor styles highly predict self-esteem. Multiple linear regression analysis is used to determine the coefficients of the two or more independent variables involved in estimating the amount of the dependent variable.

Results

Table 1. Mean and Standard Deviation of Humor Styles Questionnaire.

Variable	Mean	Standard Deviation	Verbal Description
Affiliative humor	4.81	5.902	Slightly Agree
Self-enhancing humor	4.36	5.388	Slightly Agree
Aggressive humor	3.29	4.874	Slightly Disagree
Self-defeating humor	3.64	6.076	Slightly Disagree

Table 1 shows the means and standard deviations of humor styles computed from the Humor Styles Questionnaires (HSQ) scale of the participants, which assesses the degree to which people habitually engage in four distinct styles of humor namely affiliative, self-enhancing, aggressive, self-defeating from the 32-item questionnaire.

The results reported that the most utilized humor style was affiliative humor (M = 4.81). This suggests that selected sample slightly agree that they generally use well-intentioned practical jokes, or witty remarks in their daily social interaction

as a way to improve the quality of their social relationships, increase group cohesion, and reduce tension to put others at ease. In addition, the results showed that the second most utilized humor style was self-enhancing (M = 4.36). This indicates that the participants also slightly agree that they use humor to maintain a humorous point of view in life, even when faced with different adversities.

Next to self-enhancing humor was self-defeating humor with M = 2.86. This means that the respondents slightly agree that they make fun of oneself to amuse or gain love and approval from others and as a way to avoid confronting problems and dealing with negative feelings.

Lastly, results indicated that the least utilized humor style was aggressive humor (M = 3.64). The result suggests that the participants slightly disagree that they use humor which involves demeaning or making fun of other people just to enhance one's self.

Table 2. Mean and Standard Deviation of Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale.

Variable	Mean	Standard Deviation	Verbal Description
Self-esteem	3.16	2.442	Agree

Table 2 presents the mean and standard deviation of self-esteem assessed from the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (RSES) scale of the respondents, which measures adolescents' global self-worth or self-acceptance by measuring both positive and negative feelings about the self. The mean response obtained was 3.16. This indicates that the participants generally seem to possess healthy self-esteem.

Table 3. Correlations between humor styles and self-esteem.

Variable	R	sig	Verbal Description
Affiliative humor	.71	.017	Moderate positive correlation
Self-enhancing humor	.73	.014	Moderate positive correlation
Aggressive humor	-.61	.029	Moderate negative correlation
Self-defeating humor	-.73	.024	Moderate negative correlation

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (1-tailed).

Pearson product-moment correlations were computed to assess the association between humor styles and self-esteem. Table 3 summarizes the correlations between the four humor styles and self-esteem. As can be seen, a direct relationship was found between affiliative humor and self-esteem ($r=.71, p<.05$). This means that students utilizing affiliative humor have high levels of self-esteem.

Moreover, self-enhancing humor demonstrated a significant and an even stronger positive correlation to self-esteem ($r=.76, p<.05$). The findings suggest that participants who have self-enhancing humor tend to have greater self-esteem.

On the contrary, self-esteem was found to be negatively significantly related to aggressive humor, $r = -.61, p < .05$. The results suggest that respondents utilizing aggressive humor have low levels of self-esteem.

Lastly, the results reported that self-defeating humor style had an even greater inverse correlation with self-esteem ($r = .76, p < .05$). This means that students using self-defeating have lower levels of self-esteem.

Table 4. Regression of self-esteem on humor styles.

	Model	R	R ²	F	B	t	Sig.
1	(Constant)	.873	.762	45.67	25.441		
	Affiliative				.214	.664	.016
	Self-enhancing humor				.259	1.080	.019
	Aggressive humor				-.113	-1.433	.036
	Self-defeating humor				-.206	-.369	.024

The beta-value (β) is a measure of how strongly each predictor variable influences the criterion variable. A multiple linear regression was calculated to predict self-esteem based on their humor styles. A significant regression equation was found, $F(4, 135) = 45.67, p < .05$, with an R^2 of .762, indicating that this model was statistically significant and explained 76.2% of variance in self-esteem.

Based on the data seen in Table 4, the humor style that highly predicted self-esteem was self-enhancing humor, $\beta = .259, p < .05$. This suggests that students with higher scores on this subscale were expected to have higher self-esteem after controlling the other variables in the model. Affiliative humor was also found to be significant to the prediction of self-esteem, $\beta = .214, p < .05$, indicating that participants with high scores on this subscale were expected as well to have high level of self-esteem. This means that self-enhancing humor is a better predictor of self-esteem.

On the contrary, self-defeating humor has a significant negative weight ($\beta = -.206, p < .05$), indicating that students with higher scores on self-defeating were expected to have lower self-esteem. This is also true for aggressive humor, reporting a lower $\beta = -.113, p < .05$. The results indicate that respondents high on aggressive humor style were expected to have lower self-esteem.

Discussion

The present study explored the relationship between humor styles and self-esteem. Furthermore, the present research aimed to determine which among the four humor styles highly predict self-esteem. This chapter provides the interpretations of the data gathered from the respondents of the study.

The results of this study revealed that the style of humor students utilize the most is affiliative humor which indicates that majority of the respondents use humor to attain social and interpersonal reward. More so, they use humor to entertain others in order to improve the quality of their social relationships (Mendiburo-Seguel, Páez, & Martínez-Sánchez, 2015).

On the other hand, the results showed that the humor least utilized by students was aggressive humor. Ford, McCreight, & Richardson (2014) maintained that people high in aggressive humor tend to use humor to attack or put down other people, and thus involves sarcasm, teasing, ridicule, derision, hostility, or disparagement humor. Those high in this style of humor tend to be high in hostility and low in agreeableness (Martin, et al., 2003; Saraglou & Scariot, 2002).

The researcher's predictions that positive styles of humor would associate directly with self-esteem and negative styles of humor would relate inversely with self-esteem were supported by the results of the present study—that is, a significant positive relationship was found between adaptive humor styles and self-esteem. On the contrary, a negative significant correlation was found between maladaptive humor styles and self-esteem. In other words, students who possess higher self-esteem were more likely to use benign styles of humor while students with lower self-esteem tend to use self-defeating humor. Therefore, positive humor styles may be seen as desirable traits by others, and may function to foster relationships, whereas the negative humor styles may be seen as undesirable, or even offensive.

The findings of this study also revealed that the humor style that is highly predictive of self-esteem is self-enhancing humor. This is supported by the study of Ozyesil (2012) in which individuals possessing higher levels of self-enhancing humor predicted higher levels of social self-esteem.

These findings have been confirmed in a past study conducted by Martin, Doris, Larsen, Gray, & Weir (2003) in which affiliative and self-enhancing humor were found to have a direct relationship with self-esteem. Another study that is consistent with the findings of the present study was by Hiranandani and Yue (2014) wherein students who possess higher self-esteem tended to use more adaptive styles of humor than maladaptive humor styles.

As a matter of fact, the findings also supported Saroglou & Scariot's (2002) study in which healthy styles of humor related positively with self-esteem, whereas, unhealthy styles of humor related negatively with self-esteem. The results also jibe with the findings of Ozyesil (2012) in which a direct significant correlation was found between self-esteem and affiliative and self-enhancing humor styles, and the opposite was true for aggressive and self-defeating humor.

In congruence with the findings of this research is the research conducted by Kuiper and McHale (2009) who reported that humor styles mediate the relationship between beliefs about the self and low self-esteem. Individuals who were more likely to engage in adaptive humor had greater self-esteem and people who rather used negative humor styles had lower levels of self-esteem.

Hence, the results of this study imply that people who have high self-esteem use humor in a more positive and adaptive way than those individuals who possess low self-esteem. One factor that may affect their use of humor is their interpersonal expectations. People with high levels of self-esteem may be more likely to engage in interpersonal interactions to improve the quality of their social relationship, thus, they expect social acceptance from their environment than other individuals (Vaughan, Ziegler-Hill, & Arnau, 2014) which may allow these

people to approach people with more confidence and facilitate the use of adaptive styles of humor.

It is remembered that affiliative humor style involves the use of humor in social situations as a way to enhance the quality of social relationships, improve group cohesiveness and attraction, and reduce interpersonal tensions (Mendiburo-Seguel, Páez, & Martínez-Sánchez, 2015). Thus, it is also possible that the utilization of positive humor styles may increase social acceptance and contribute to the expansion of social support which may, in turn, increase the level of self-esteem. For instance, it was found that humor styles mediate the relationship between beliefs about the self and low self-esteem (Kuiper and McHale, 2009). People who have more positive self-beliefs engage in more affiliative humor, which in turn increases self-esteem.

People with high self-esteem are also characterized to be persistent in face of failure and difficult circumstances than those who have low self-esteem (Di Paula and Campbell, 2002). We can recall that self-enhancing humor pertains to a humorous outlook on life, coping with difficult situations by viewing them from a humorous perspective (Markey, Suzuki, & Marino, 2014).

Hence, it is possible that individuals possessing high self-esteem, when faced with stressful events, tend to resort to self-enhancing humor to cope with their problems. Past research argued that humor styles, particularly self-enhancing humor, is associated with optimistic and cheerfulness (Martin, Doris, Larsen, Gray, & Weir, 2003). This may suggest that people utilizing self-enhancing humor, despite the life adversities they are facing, may be more likely to maintain a positive view of the world and be optimistic in times of stress, which may, in turn, bolster their self-esteem.

The findings also showed that self-defeating humor negatively associated with self-esteem. This may imply that people who disproportionately focus on their negative attributes are particularly prone to engage in self-defeating humor and thus may feel worthless and experience lower self-esteem (Kuiper and McHale, 2009). Ha (2006) stated that individuals low on self-

esteem suffer from feelings of worthlessness, inferiority, and emotional instability, so leading to dissatisfaction with life. Moreover, low self-esteem people may be more likely to have a general negative attitude toward many things, including other people and personal circumstances (Mackinnon, 2015, p. 15) and this may be shown through the humor they use, specifically, self-defeating humor which uses humor to poke fun at their own weaknesses in order to ingratiate themselves to others.

Recommendation

The present findings have potentially interesting implications for future research on the relationship between humor styles and self-esteem. The researchers recommend that this study be conducted with other participants of other school but of the same age as there are very few studies that have been conducted examining the link between adolescents' humor styles and self-esteem. The researchers also suggest that the questionnaires be translated in the native language to eliminate the language bias that might exist.

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