

THE ROLE OF SIMILAR HUMOR STYLES
IN INITIAL ROMANTIC ATTRACTION

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

| | |
|-----------------------|-----|
| ABSTRACT..... | III |
| ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS..... | IV |
| LIST OF TABLES..... | V |
| LIST OF FIGURES..... | VI |
| INTRODUCTION..... | 1 |
| METHOD..... | 14 |
| RESULTS..... | 21 |
| DISCUSSION..... | 38 |
| REFERENCES..... | 44 |
| APPENDIX A..... | 50 |
| APPENDIX B..... | 54 |
| APPENDIX C..... | 55 |
| APPENDIX D..... | 56 |
| APPENDIX E..... | 59 |

ABSTRACT

The vast majority of humor research has concentrated on the positive effects that humor bestows upon both physical health and social well-being (Lefcourt, 2001; Martin, 2001). Very little research has focused on the importance of humor in initial romantic attraction or general likeability. Furthermore, nearly all humor research has neglected the role of potentially harmful or detrimental forms of humor, such as sarcasm, derision, and self-deprecation. The present study assessed ratings of general likeability and initial romantic attraction for both adaptive and maladaptive humor styles. Further, the current study investigated whether similarity in humor styles is a significant predictor of general likeability and initial romantic attraction. Overall, adaptive humor styles were rated more attractive and likeable than maladaptive humor styles. However, this result was moderated by a significant similarity effect. Specifically, there were higher levels of initial romantic attraction and likeability when there was a match between the participant's humor style and the target's humor style than when there was a discrepancy. Consistent with Byrne's (1971) similarity-attraction hypothesis, the present study demonstrated that similarity in humor styles is a critical determinant in initial romantic attraction, particularly for maladaptive humor styles.

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LIST OF TABLES

| Table | Page |
|--|------|
| 1. Classification of the Four Humor Styles along Two Dimensions | 4 |
| 2. Overall Ratings of General Likeability and Romantic Attraction Towards the Four Humor Styles | 22 |
| 3. General Likeability and Romantic Attractiveness of the Target as a Function of Participants' Humor Style: Maladaptive Humor Style | 24 |
| 4. General Likeability and Romantic Attractiveness of the Target as a Function of Participants' Humor Style: Adaptive Humor Style | 28 |
| 5. Correlations between Self Humor Style and Target's General Likeability and Romantic Attraction: Maladaptive Humor Styles | 32 |
| 6. Correlations between Self Humor Style and Target's General Likeability and Romantic Attraction: Adaptive Humor Styles | 33 |
| 7. Correlations between Four Humor Styles and Big Five Personality Measures | 35 |
| 8. Using Self Humor Style to Predict Attraction and General Likeability with Personality Effects being Controlled: Aggressive Style | 36 |
| 9. Using Self Humor Style to Predict Attraction and General Likeability with Personality Effects being Controlled: Self-defeating Style | 37 |

LIST OF FIGURES

| Figure | Page |
|---|------|
| 1. Photograph Stimulus of the Male Target | 16 |
| 2. General Likeability of the Target as a Function of Participants' Humor Style: Maladaptive Humor Style | 25 |
| 3. Romantic Attraction to the Target as a Function of Participants' Humor Style: Maladaptive Humor Style | 26 |
| 4. General Likeability of the Target as a Function of Participants' Humor Style: Adaptive Humor Style | 29 |
| 5. Romantic Attraction to the Target as a Function of Participants' Humor Style: Adaptive Humor Style | 30 |

INTRODUCTION

It is widely recognized that humor is a valued trait in numerous cultures (Buss, 1988). Social desirability studies have found a sense of humor to be among the most favorably evaluated personality traits (Anderson, 1968; Craik, Lampert & Nelson, 1996). Furthermore, a sense of humor in others appears to be a highly desirable quality in a potential mate. Hansen (1977) found that possessing a sense of humor was ranked third out of 33 potential qualities for a relationship. Furthermore, Hewitt (1958) found that 81% of males and 90% of females considered having a sense of humor as a critical quality in a mate. Children whom their peers recognize as humorless were liked the least and were less likely to be chosen to attend social activities (Sherman, 1985). Finally, Murstein and Brust (1985) found that couples in a relationship who possessed similar senses of humor had higher levels of loving, liking, and a predisposition to marry.

Despite these facts, there are a few major limitations in previous research concerning the role of humor in interpersonal relationships. First, although several studies have related humor to mate desirability and relationship outcomes, little research has been conducted to test the specific role of humor in initial romantic attraction. Second, the majority of humor research has classified humor exclusively as an adaptive personality characteristic that has numerous social and personal benefits. Thus, previous studies have largely neglected the potential deleterious or harmful forms of humor, such as sarcasm, self-deprecation and taunting. To the best of our knowledge, no study has identified ratings of attraction and likeability for maladaptive forms of humor and, also, in what ways these deleterious humor styles may influence the development of romantic relationships.

The purpose of the current study, then, is to assess ratings of romantic attraction and general likeability for both adaptive and maladaptive forms of humor. The primary purpose, however, is to investigate whether similarity in humor styles is a critical predictor of initial romantic attraction.

The concept and assessment of humor

“Sense of humor” refers to humor as a stable personality trait that persists over time and situations. It is a comprehensive concept comprised of a class of loosely related traits (Ruch, 1998). Previous research has implemented numerous conceptualizations of humor. Sense of humor has been defined as: a cognitive skill (e.g., ability to remember, create and understand jokes; Feingold & Mazzella, 1996); an appreciation of humor (Ruch & Hehl, 1998); a consistent behavior pattern (e.g., tendency to laugh frequently; Craik, Lampert & Nelson, 1996); an emotional disposition (e.g., habitual cheerfulness; Ruch & Kohler, 1998); a bemused outlook on the world and humor (Svebak, 1996); or a coping strategy or defense mechanism (e.g., tendency to maintain a humorous perspective in the face of adversity; Lefcourt & Martin, 1986).

It is evident that all of these conceptualizations of humor share a common viewpoint – that humor is a desirable, adaptive personal construct. The impetus of researchers to focus solely on the beneficial, benign aspects of humor while neglecting the potentially deleterious and harmful forms of humor can be misleading. For instance, despite the widespread view that a sense of humor is an important component of healthy psychological functioning, existing self-report humor scales show weak and inconsistent relations with various indicators of well-being. The practice of classifying humor solely as a positive characteristic may explain the low correlations between sense of humor and healthy psychological functioning (Martin, 2003). Maladaptive forms of humor are ubiquitous. In relation to healthy well-being, the absence of

these potentially harmful or injurious forms of humor may be just as critical as the possession of the more beneficial and favorable forms of humor.

Currently, the majority of self-report humor measures do not distinguish between the potentially adaptive functions of humor and uses of humor that may be less conducive and potentially deleterious to well-being (Kuiper & Martin, 1998). Scales such as the Situational Humor Response Questionnaire (SHRQ; Martin & Lefcourt, 1984; Martin, 1996), the Sense of Humor Questionnaire (SHQ; Svebak, 1996) and Coping Humor Scale (CHS; Martin & Lefcourt, 1983) do not assess the specific ways in which people use humor in their everyday lives. Rather, they tend to focus on the quantity or quality of humor. The Humor Styles Questionnaire (HSQ; Martin, 2003), on the other hand, is an exception.

The Humor Styles Questionnaire distinguishes two dimensions relating to different uses or functions of humor in everyday life. The first dimension in the humor styles paradigm centers around whether humor is used to enhance the self or to enhance one's relationships with others. The second dimension lies in whether the functions of humor are relatively benign and benevolent (adaptive) or potentially detrimental or injurious (maladaptive). Depending on one's position on these two dimensions, one can be categorized into one of the four humor styles (see Table 1).

Table 1

Classification of the Four Humor Styles along Two Dimensions

| | Adaptive | Maladaptive |
|-----------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| Enhances Others | <i>Affiliative</i> | <i>Self-Defeating</i> |
| Enhances Self | <i>Self-Enhancing</i> | <i>Aggressive</i> |

Note. Adapted from Martin, 2007.

Affiliative humor

Individuals high on this dimension tend to say funny things, to tell jokes, and to engage in witty banter. This is done in order to amuse others, to facilitate relationships and to enhance social bonds (Lefcourt, 2001). This is essentially a non-hostile, tolerant use of humor that is affirming of both the self and of others and implies a sense of self-acceptance.

Self-enhancing humor

Individuals high on this dimension possess a humorous outlook on life, have a tendency to be amused by the absurdities and incongruities in life, and also maintain this humorous perspective even in the face of stress or adversity (Kuiper, Martin, & Olinger, 1993). This humor style is similar to the concept of coping humor and relates to the use of humor as an emotion regulation (Dixon, 1980). It is seen as a healthy defense mechanism that allows one to avoid negative emotions while maintaining a realistic perspective on potentially aversive situations.

Aggressive humor

This humor style relates to the use of sarcasm, teasing, ridicule and derision (Zillman, 1983). It is used to manipulate others by means of an implied threat of ridicule. It is described as the tendency to express humor without regard for its consequences or potential impact on others and includes compulsive expressions of humor (e.g., sexist or racist humor) in which one finds it difficult to resist the impulse to say funny things that are likely to hurt or alienate others (Janes & Olsen, 2000).

Self-defeating humor

This dimension involves excessive self-disparaging humor, attempts to amuse others by doing or saying funny things at one's own expense as a means of gaining approval or social

acceptance. Furthermore, individuals high on this dimension allow themselves to be the “butt” of others’ jokes. Finally, these individuals use humor a means of defensive denial, or the tendency to engage in humorous behavior as means of hiding one’s negative feelings or to avoid dealing with problems (Kubie, 1971).

Correlations between humor styles and five-factor personality traits

Martin (2003) assessed the correlations between the four humor style scales with each of the personality characteristics seen in the Big Five Inventory (BFI): Extraversion, Neuroticism, Openness to Experience, Agreeableness, and Conscientiousness. Extraversion is most strongly related to affiliative humor ($r = .47, p < .001$). It is also significantly, but less strongly, related to self-enhancing humor ($r = .28, p < .001$), but unrelated to aggressive and self-defeating humor (r 's = .13 and .10, respectively). Aggressive and self-defeating humor were negatively related to agreeableness ($r = -.59, p < .001$, and $r = -.23, p < .01$, respectively) and conscientiousness ($r = -.37, p < .001$ and $r = -.34, p < .001$, respectively). In addition, both aggressive and self-defeating humor were both positively related to neuroticism ($r = .21, p < .05$, and $r = .35, p < .001$, respectively). Finally, openness to experience was related to both affiliative ($r = .23, p < .01$) and self-enhancing humor ($r = .27, p < .001$), but not to aggressive or self-defeating humor.

Limitations of previous studies

Due to the recent innovation of the humor styles paradigm, there has been no research that uses these humor styles to examine the role of humor in attraction. Previous humor and attraction research has focused on varying degrees of humor, rather than different types of humor. The Humor Style paradigm presents the opportunity to examine differences in the functions and forms of humor, rather than differences in quantity or quality.

Secondly, it is essential to develop a series of vignettes that allow for humor style manipulations. By creating these vignettes, we can create targets that capture different humor styles and will be instrumental in future humor style research. With the new humor styles paradigm, it is interesting to see whether similarity in both adaptive and maladaptive styles leads to attraction. Although beneficial, purely correlational studies tend to diminish or even obscure the link between humor and attraction.

Finally, previous studies lack clarity and consistency in defining attraction. It is unclear whether attraction referred to a general likeability, attractiveness, romantic attractiveness, or dating desirability. This confusion in defining attraction may lead to complications in the interpretation of results.

The current study

The current study has three primary goals intended to overcome limitations of previous studies. The first goal is to create a series of vignettes that accurately and realistically capture the four humor styles. The second goal is to identify and assess ratings of romantic attraction and likeability towards the four humor styles. Most importantly, the third goal is to examine whether similarity in humor styles, particularly in maladaptive styles, promotes higher levels of initial romantic attraction and general likeability.

Is humor evolutionarily attractive?

After completing *The Origin of Species*, Darwin (1859) became dissatisfied with natural selection as the sole mechanism for evolutionary change. He observed that some characteristics, such as the plumage of peacocks, had no survival value and even impaired survival. To account for these circumstances, Darwin (1871) proposed his theory of “sexual selection” as a second process that caused evolutionary change. The concept of sexual selection describes the evolution

of certain characteristics that enable individuals to gain advantage over same-sex competitors in obtaining successful mating (Buss & Barnes, 1986). Darwin divided sexual selection into two distinct but theoretically related processes: intra-sexual competition and inter-sexual selection.

Intra-sexual competition involves competition between members of the same sex for mating access to members of the opposite sex. Selected characteristics could be those that enable winning in direct combat. However, these characteristics might be noncombat traits, such as producing successful mate-attracting signals or acquiring resources desired by the opposite sex.

Inter-sexual competition, on the other hand, involves preferential mate choice, which Darwin termed “female mate choice” because females tend to be more choosy and selective than males. Darwin attributed this higher selectivity due to the fact that, in most cases, females have greater parental investment and can only produce a limited number of offspring.

Sexual selection theory suggests that traits, such as humor, are desired because they are metabolically expensive to produce, hard to maintain, and not easily counterfeited. Therefore, these qualities will be the most reliable indicators of genetic fitness (Miller, 1998). Furthermore, sexual selection has played a greater role than natural selection in shaping these aspects of our minds, especially creativity and humor.

More specifically, there should be gender differences in the appreciation and production of humor since females are choosier than males. Hay (2000) documented that humor in courtship has been much more rarely produced by females than by males. Kotthoff (2000) reported evidence that males were more likely than females to produce verbal humor in informal social situations. Although quality of humor is probably a better indicator of genetic fitness than

quantity (Bressler, 2006), the more frequent attempts by males to be funny suggest that their humor-production abilities were a product of sexual selection.

There has been neurological support for these gender differences as well. Azim, Mobbs, Menon and Reiss (2005) found that presenting humorous images engages a network of subcortical regions including the nucleus accumbens, a key component of the mesolimbic dopaminergic reward system. Further, the degree of humor intensity was positively correlated with greater activation. Finally, this effect was greater for females than males, suggesting that females find humor more rewarding and a greater indicator of a positive mating relationship than do males.

Due to these gender differences in the production and appreciation of humor, this study only used female participants. Because females are more particular than males in mate selection due to greater parental investment, the effects should be more predominant for females than for males. Furthermore, females tend to be primarily humor appreciators while males tend to be humor producers. In fact, males tend not to prefer humorous females. Instead, they prefer females who respond positively and emotionally to their own humor production. By laughing at a male's joke, females may increase their level of attractiveness by affirming the male of his genetic fitness. Thus, the use of male participants and female targets was not necessary in this current investigation.

In sum, there has been both empirical and neurological evidence supporting the evolutionary claim that humor is attractive because it is a reliable indicator of genetic fitness. However, it must be noted that the forms of humor that have been studied in attraction research have been the more beneficial, adaptive forms of humor. This study was the first to measure levels of attraction towards individuals possessing maladaptive forms of humor.

Hypothesis 1: Adaptive humor style effect

We predicted a main effect for adaptive humor styles. Thus, we expected that the adaptive humor styles would be rated more attractive and likeable than the maladaptive humor style for both the self dimension and for the other dimension. Taken together, we predicted two specific hypotheses:

- a) Self-enhancing targets will receive higher attraction and likeability ratings than aggressive targets (self-dimension).
- b) Affiliative targets will receive higher attraction and likeability ratings than self-defeating targets (other dimension).

Similarity and attraction

Byrne's (1971) similarity-attraction hypothesis posits that the more similar someone is to another person, the more that he/she will tend to like that person. The notion of "birds of a feather flock together" points out that similarity is a crucial determinant of interpersonal attraction. Findings suggest that interpersonal similarity and attraction are multidimensional constructs (Lydon, Jamieson, & Zanna, 1988), in which people are attracted to others who are similar to them in demographics, physical appearance, attitudes, interpersonal style, social and cultural background, personality, interests and activities preferences, and communication and social skills.

The matching hypothesis proposed by Murstein (1972) suggests that people are more likely to form long-standing relationships with those who are equally physically attractive as they are. Murstein found evidence that supported the matching hypothesis by having photos of dating and engaged couples rated in terms of attractiveness. A definite tendency was found for couples of similar attractiveness to date or engage.

According to Byrne's (1971) law of attraction, affinity towards a person is positively related to the proportion of attitude similarities associated with that person. Miller (1972) pointed out that attitude similarity activates the perceived attractiveness and favorability information from each other, whereas dissimilarity would reduce the impact of these cues. Buss and Barnes (1986) also found that people prefer their romantic partners to be similar in certain demographic characteristics, including religious background, political orientation or socio-economic status.

Humor similarity and attraction

Very little research has been conducted on the role of humor similarity and initial attraction. As one exception, Fraley and Aron (2004) conducted an experiment examining the degree to which a shared humorous experience during a first encounter between strangers leads to greater feelings of closeness. Same-sex strangers participated together in a series of tasks that were designed either to generate a great deal of humor or to be enjoyable but not humorous. After completing these tasks, they were each asked to rate their perceptions of their partner, including how close they felt to the other person. As predicted, the participants in the humorous condition reported feeling much closer and more attracted to each other afterwards, as compared to those in the non-humorous condition.

While we tend to be attracted to people with whom we have a humorous interaction in our first encounter, we may be particularly attracted to those who laugh at our jokes, since this indicates that they share our sense of humor (Martin, 2003). Laughing at the funny things another person says is a way of not only expressing feelings of attraction but also of enhancing one's own attractiveness to the other person (Grammer, 1990).

Cann, Calhoun, and Banks (1997) conducted an experiment in which participants were instructed to tell a joke to a same-sex stranger who was actually a confederate. For half the

participants, the stranger laughed at the joke and, for the other half, the confederate did not laugh at the joke. Half of the participants were also given information indicating the stranger held similar attitudes and beliefs about social issues, whereas the other half were led to believe that the stranger held dissimilar views. The participants subsequently rated their perceptions of the stranger and their feelings of attraction to him or her.

As predicted, the results indicated that both greater similarity in attitudes and the stranger's laughter in response to joke telling led to more positive perceptions and greater attraction to the stranger. Interestingly, however, the effect of laughter on the part of the stranger was even powerful enough to overcome the well-established negative effect of attitude dissimilarity on attraction. A stranger with dissimilar social attitudes who laughed was perceived more positively than was a stranger with similar attitudes who did not laugh. These humor perceptions seem to be even more important than the well-established effect on attraction of sharing similar attitudes and beliefs.

Hypothesis 2: Humor style similarity effect

We hypothesized that individuals should be more attracted to a target who shares their own humor style. To avoid the confounding effect of the adaptive style effect, we compared individuals' attraction to the targets whose humor styles have the same valence but come from different dimensions. For example, both affiliative and self-enhancing styles are adaptive; however, the affiliative style is from the other dimension and self-enhancing style is from the self dimension, indicating their primary goal of being humorous is different. We hypothesized that people will like the style that matches their own better, even though both styles are adaptive and generally attractive. The same logic can be applied to the two maladaptive humor styles - aggressive and self-defeating. Taken together, we predicted four testable hypotheses:

- a) Affiliative targets will be rated more attractive and likeable by affiliative participants than by self-enhancing participants.
- b) Self-enhancing targets will be rated more attractive and likeable by self-enhancing participants than by affiliative participants.
- c) Aggressive targets will be rated more attractive and likeable by aggressive participants than by self-defeating participants.
- d) Self-defeating targets will be rated more attractive and likeable by self-defeating participants than by aggressive participants.

METHOD

Participants

Participants were 292 single, heterosexual female students from a medium-sized public university in the southeast. The age of the participants ranged from 17 to 45 years old ($M = 18.95$, $SD = 2.29$). Initially, there were 311 participants. However, nineteen participants were removed from statistical analysis for a variety of reasons: 13 missed the manipulation check, one was male, three were homosexual, and two missed key background information. All participants volunteered their participation in exchange for course credit in an introductory psychology course. Participants signed up for this study titled “Interpersonal Judgment Study” through a Web-based sign-up system

Procedure

Prior to experimentation, a focus group was used to test the accuracy and realism of the humor manipulation in the vignettes. Once the manipulation showed reasonable effectiveness, participants were scheduled to complete the study on campus. When the participants arrived, they were seated and given an informed consent form to sign. Once they had given their consent, they were instructed that they were participating in an interpersonal judgment study. They were then randomly assigned a packet of materials. The packet included a photograph with accompanying vignette and a questionnaire that included romantic attraction and general likeability questions about the target. In addition, the questionnaire included the participants’ demographic information, a 44-item version of the Big Five Inventory, perceived personality of the target questions and, finally, a copy of the Humor Styles Questionnaire.

Participants were instructed to complete the packet in the order it was arranged. This ensured that the participants were not primed to the nature of the study by completing the Humor

Styles Questionnaire first. Confidentiality and anonymity were emphasized. Once the participant completed the packet, she was debriefed and thanked for coming.

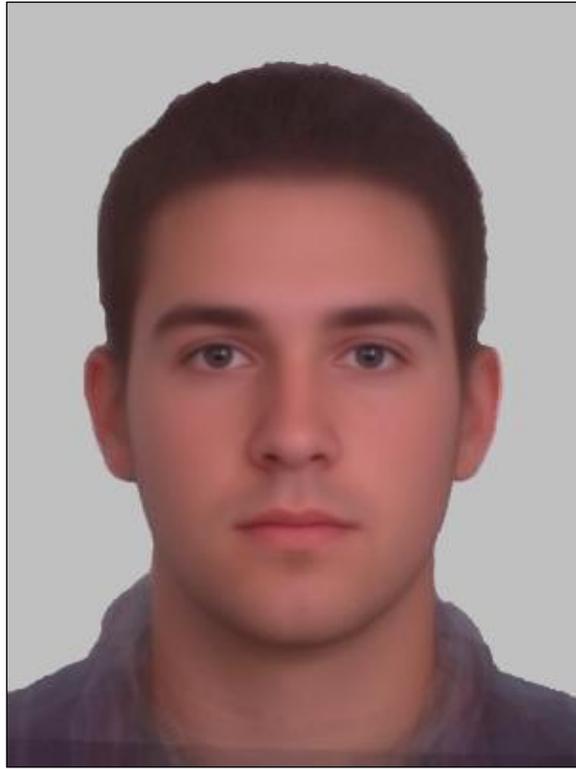
Stimulus materials

Photograph. For our choice of target stimuli we decided to utilize facial averaging software rather than student model participants who may have been identifiable to experimental participants. The software program was provided with permission by The Face Research Lab at the University of Aberdeen in Scotland. The male photo (see Figure 1) was presented to nine female undergraduate and graduate research assistants for prescreening evaluations of physical attractiveness; research assistants were blind to the true nature of the ratings at the time of evaluation. Research assistants rated the physical attractiveness of each face on a 7-point Likert scale, where 1 indicated “*very unattractive*”, 4 indicated “*neutral*”, and 7 indicated “*very attractive*”.

Our intent was to isolate one male face whose physical attractiveness was determined to be slightly greater than the midpoint of the scale, in order to protect against ceiling or floor effects, in accord with previous attraction research (e.g., Luo, 2007). Similar methodologies, used to reduce the risk of confounding, have been employed in other cross-gender studies of physical attractiveness (e.g., Bailey & Garrou, 1983; Byrne, London, & Reeves, 1968; Horton, 2003).

Figure 1

Photograph Stimulus of the Male Target



Vignettes. A single hypothetical description of the target was created for all conditions. Only the manipulated variable – humor style – was free to vary. An ambiguous summary was created, such that the characteristics of the person described maintained universal validity, in line with the notion of the Barnum Effect (Forer, 1949). This summary included several background characteristics such as name, age, sex, and ethnicity, a general self-description which contained the humor manipulation, hobbies and interests, and a statement of relationship beliefs. By drafting a purposely vague character composition of the target, we aimed to limit factors that would mask the effects of the other variables on perceptions of the target’s attractiveness (e.g. friendly or smart).

In total, we generated four versions of the character description. The name “Cameron” was selected for our target in all descriptions. All descriptions were alleged to have come directly from the target in response to the question: “How would you describe yourself? To draw participants’ attention to the humor manipulation, all descriptions began with the sentence “The most important thing about me is my humor.” Following this sentence was the humor style manipulation, which included one or two brief sentences that echo the sentiment of each humor style. This was accomplished by modifying the statements found in the Humor Style Questionnaire:

Affiliative: “I tend to be the life of the party. I like to tell jokes and funny stories. I just want to make other people laugh and have a good time. Making other people laugh comes pretty naturally to me.”

Self-enhancing: “I try to maintain a positive outlook on life even when I’m having a bad day. I constantly use humor to deal with stress and to cheer myself up. Even when I’m by myself, I laugh at the funny things around me.”

Aggressive: “I’ve been known to make fun of other people when they mess up or do something stupid. It’s just hard not to laugh when people make a mistake. If I think of something funny, I have to tell it, even if it is not appropriate.”

Self-defeating: “I make fun of myself a lot in order to make other people laugh. I usually just laugh along when other people make fun of me. As long as it keeps everyone in good spirits and laughing, making fun of myself is okay.”

Complete versions of all target stimuli are available in Appendix A

Measures

Demographic and personal characteristics. Questions for gender, ethnicity, age, sexual orientation, and relationship status were all represented in the questionnaire packet. During the recruitment phase of this investigation, participants were eligible to participate only if they were single or casually dating. Those who mentioned they were in a committed relationship were removed from data analysis. The inquiry about relationship status was, therefore, an item used to ensure that all participants were in fact single, and presumably available to freely evaluate the romantic attraction of a potential partner. A complete copy of demographic and personal characteristics is available in Appendix B.

Perceived humor style manipulation – Manipulation check. Participants were asked to identify the target’s humor style by selecting one of the four descriptions:

“He tends to make a lot of jokes and wants to make others laugh.”

“He tends to see humor in all situations and uses humor to cheer himself up”.

“He tends to make fun of other people even if it seems inappropriate.”

“He tends to make fun of himself and be the butt of other people’s jokes.”

Note that these four descriptions were worded differently from the manipulations provided in the vignette. Thirteen out of 311 participants (4.2%) failed to correctly identify the humor style of the target and thus were removed from final analyses.

Likability and attractiveness of the target. The participants rated the target's general likeability and their romantic attraction to the target. General likeability was measured using Reysen's Likeability Scale (RLS; Reysen, 2005). This scale draws on a range of interpersonal qualities and contexts, as evidenced by sample items "[Cameron] is likeable" and "I would like [Cameron] as a friend". Ratings are made on a 7-point Likert scale, where 1 = *very strongly disagree*, 4 = *neither agree nor disagree*, and 7 = *very strongly agree*. The four applicable individual item scores were averaged to indicate the target's likability such that low scores indicate limited target likability, whereas high scores denote elevated target likability. The RLS has an alpha reliability measure of .88.

Romantic attraction was assessed using a slightly modified version of Romantic Attraction Scale (Campbell, 1999). The four items were "*I am attracted to Cameron*", "*I am romantically interested in Cameron*", "*I would like to become romantically involved with Cameron*" and "*Given the opportunity, I would go on a date with Cameron*". As with the original items on the RLS, the additional attraction items were rated by participants using the same 7-point Likert format based on strength of agreement with target statements. The four items were averaged to indicate participants' attraction to the target. The RAS has an alpha reliability measure of .90. A complete copy of the questionnaire used to assess romantic attraction and general likeability is available in Appendix C.

Self personality. The participants rated themselves on the Big Five Inventory (BFI; Benet-Martinez & John, 1998; John & Srivastava, 1999). The BFI contains 8-item scales assessing

Neuroticism and Extraversion each, a 10-item Openness scale, and 9-item measures of Agreeableness and Conscientiousness each. Participants were asked to indicate the degree to which each item was descriptive of them on a 5-point scale ranging from *strongly disagree* to *strongly agree*. The alpha reliability measures for the BFI are as follows: .86 for extraversion, .83 for agreeableness, .81 for conscientiousness, .83 for neuroticism, and .78 for openness. A complete copy of the 44-item Big Five Inventory is available in Appendix D.

Self humor style. The Humor Styles Questionnaire contains four eight-item scales that measure the four humor styles: affiliative, self-enhancing, aggressive, and self-defeating. Each scale is comprised of a list of statements describing different ways in which humor might be experienced (Martin, 2003). The ratings for these statements are made on a 7-point Likert scale, where 1 = “*Totally Disagree*”, 4 = “*Neither Agree nor Disagree*”, and 7 = “*Totally Agree*”. After reversing the negatively keyed items, we averaged across all eight items in each scale to obtain the scale scores. The alpha reliability measures of the subscales for the four humor styles are as follows: .78 for affiliative, .82 for self-enhancing, .70 for aggressive, and .79 for self-defeating.

Some of our analyses require a classification of participants into one of the four primary humor styles. To determine participants’ primary humor style, we standardized all four scales via the use of z-scores. The subject’s humor style was classified by the highest z-score of the four humor styles. A complete copy of the Humor Style Questionnaire (HSQ) is available in Appendix E.

RESULTS

Adaptive humor style effect

In accordance with an evolutionary psychology theoretical framework, humor is an attractive quality because it is an adaptive personality characteristic that is linked and connected to other attractive qualities. Furthermore, having a sense of humor is an indicator of genetic fitness. Thus, according to the adaptive humor style hypothesis, all participants (irrespective of their own humor style) should be more attracted to and find more likeable the affiliative targets than the self-defeating targets. Further, participants should be more attracted to and find more likeable the self-enhancing targets than the aggressive targets. To test these hypotheses, the authors conducted two separate t-tests, one with romantic attraction as the dependent variable and one with general likeability as the dependent measure. Table 2 shows the mean attraction and general likeability ratings that each of the four humor styles received from participants, irrespective of the participants' own humor style.

Consistent with the hypotheses, self-enhancing targets were rated more likeable, $t(147) = 7.09, p < .001$, and more attractive, $t(147) = 5.55, p < .001$ than aggressive targets. However, there was so no significant difference between affiliative and self-defeating targets for either likeability, $t(141) = -1.40, ns$, or romantic attraction, $t(141) = -.22, ns$

Table 2

Overall Ratings of General Likeability and Romantic Attraction Towards the Four Humor Styles

| | Self dimension | | Other dimension | |
|----------------------------|----------------|------------|-----------------|----------------|
| | Self-Enhancing | Aggressive | Affiliative | Self-Defeating |
| General Likeability | | | | |
| <i>M</i> | 5.65 | 4.62 | 5.40 | 5.57 |
| <i>SD</i> | .63 | 1.09 | .70 | .71 |
| <i>N</i> | 75 | 74 | 76 | 67 |
| Romantic Attraction | | | | |
| <i>M</i> | 5.23 | 3.90 | 4.99 | 5.04 |
| <i>SD</i> | 1.29 | 1.63 | 1.13 | 1.40 |
| <i>N</i> | 75 | 74 | 76 | 66 |

Humor style similarity effect

According to the similarity-attraction hypothesis, individuals should be more attracted to partners who have humor style characteristics similar to their own. The humor styles paradigm is separated along two dimensions; whether humor is used in an adaptive or maladaptive fashion and whether humor is used to benefit the self or enhance relationships with others. Thus, we compared attraction and likeability ratings between affiliative and self-enhancing participants for adaptive targets and also between aggressive and self-defeating participants for maladaptive targets. We predicted that participants would show greater attraction to the target with a similar humor style and this pattern should hold for both adaptive and maladaptive targets.

A series of 2 X 2 ANOVA's were conducted to test the four similarity hypotheses. We first examined the differences between the two maladaptive styles: aggressive and self-defeating. Table 3 presents the mean attraction and likeability ratings of the two maladaptive targets by the maladaptive participants. The ANOVA analysis showed a significant main effect for target humor style for both general likeability, $F(1, 78) = 16.87, p < .05$ and for romantic attraction, $F(1, 78) = 6.63, p < .05$, indicating that self-defeating humor styles are more desirable than aggressive humor styles .

However, these main effects were qualified by significant interactions for both general likeability, $F(1, 78) = 7.82, p < .05$, and for romantic attraction, $F(1, 78) = 7.68, p < .05$. Relative to self-defeating participants, aggressive participants found the aggressive target more attractive and likeable. Similarly, relative to aggressive participants, self-defeating participants found the self-defeating target more attractive and likeable. Figures 2 and 3 visually depict the trend for general likeability and romantic attraction, respectively.

Table 3

General Likeability and Romantic Attractiveness of the Target as a Function of Participants' Humor Style: Maladaptive Humor Style

| Target Humor Style | Participant Humor Style | |
|----------------------------|-------------------------|----------------|
| | Aggressive | Self-Defeating |
| General Likeability | | |
| Aggressive | | |
| <i>M</i> | 5.10 | 4.55 |
| <i>SD</i> | .72 | .96 |
| Self-Defeating | | |
| <i>M</i> | 5.32 | 5.70 |
| <i>SD</i> | .62 | .51 |
| Romantic Attraction | | |
| Aggressive | | |
| <i>M</i> | 4.77 | 3.74 |
| <i>SD</i> | 1.28 | 1.59 |
| Self-Defeating | | |
| <i>M</i> | 4.71 | 5.35 |
| <i>SD</i> | 1.28 | 1.00 |

Figure 2

General Likeability of the Target as a Function of Participants' Humor Style: Maladaptive Humor Style

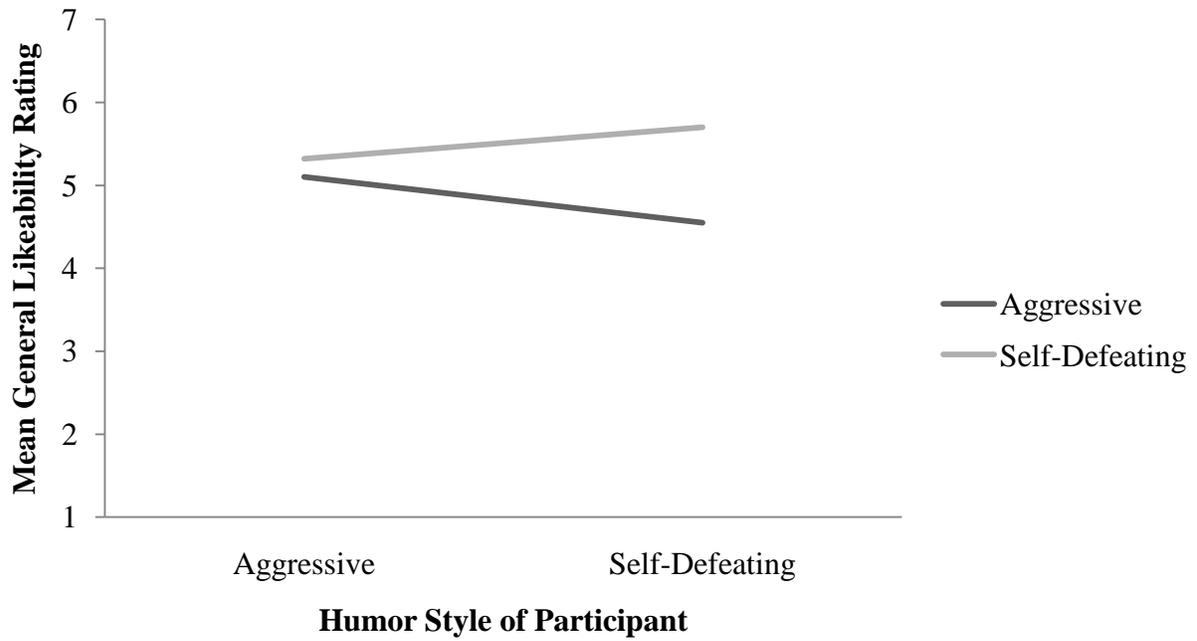
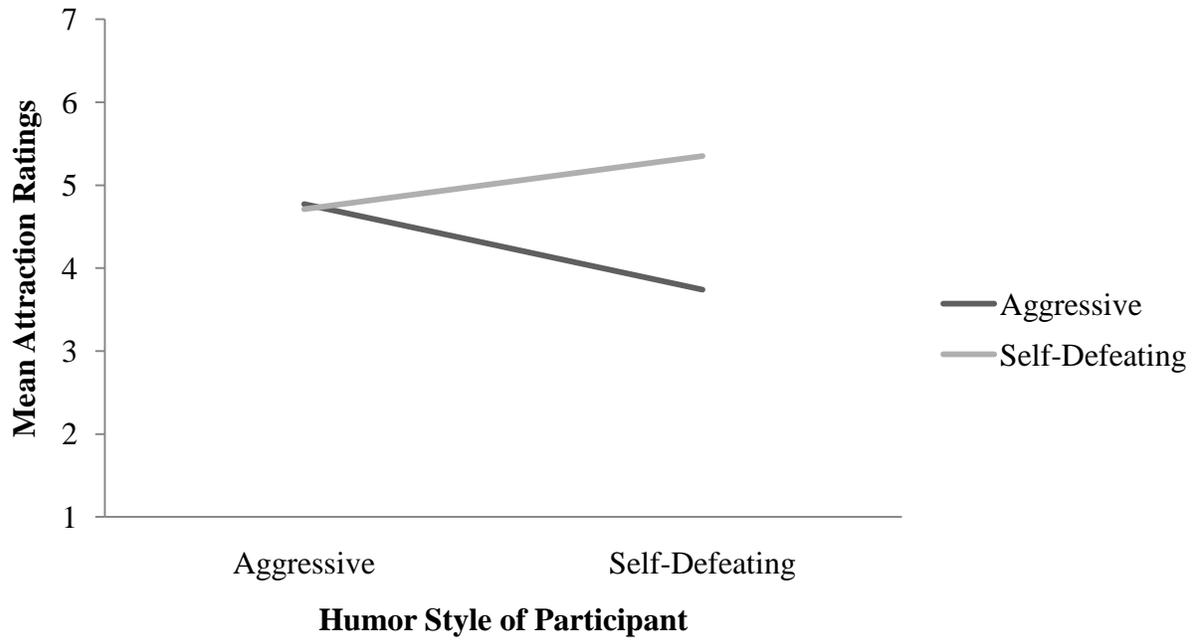


Figure 3

Romantic Attraction to the Target as a Function of Participants' Humor Style: Maladaptive Humor Style



We next examined the differences between the two adaptive styles: affiliative and self-enhancing. Table 4 presents the mean attraction and likeability ratings of the two adaptive targets by the adaptive participants. ANOVA analysis showed a significant main effect for general likeability, $F(1, 65) = 5.02, p < .05$, but not for romantic attraction, $F(1, 65) = 1.02, ns$. Furthermore, there was not a significant interaction when comparing affiliative and self-enhancing participants on general likeability, $F(1, 65) = 1.06, ns$, or romantic attraction, $F(1, 65) = 1.49, ns$. Despite the lack of statistical significance in the interaction, we found a trend similar to the one we found when comparing aggressive and self-defeating participants. Relative to self-enhancing participants, affiliative participants found affiliative targets more likeable and attractive. Relative to affiliative participants, self-enhancing participants found self-enhancing targets more likeable and more attractive. Figures 4 and 5 visually depict the trend for general likeability and romantic attraction, respectively.

Table 4

General Likeability and Romantic Attractiveness of the Target as a Function of Participants' Humor Style: Adaptive Humor Style

| Target Humor Style | Participant Humor Style | |
|----------------------------|-------------------------|----------------|
| | Affiliative | Self-Enhancing |
| General Likeability | | |
| Affiliative | | |
| <i>M</i> | 5.51 | 5.37 |
| <i>SD</i> | .66 | .87 |
| Self-Enhancing | | |
| <i>M</i> | 5.71 | 5.81 |
| <i>SD</i> | .57 | .57 |
| Romantic Attraction | | |
| Affiliative | | |
| <i>M</i> | 5.09 | 4.90 |
| <i>SD</i> | 1.48 | 1.06 |
| Self-Enhancing | | |
| <i>M</i> | 5.02 | 5.58 |
| <i>SD</i> | 1.11 | 1.38 |

Figure 4

General Likeability of the Target as a Function of Participants' Humor Style: Adaptive Humor Style

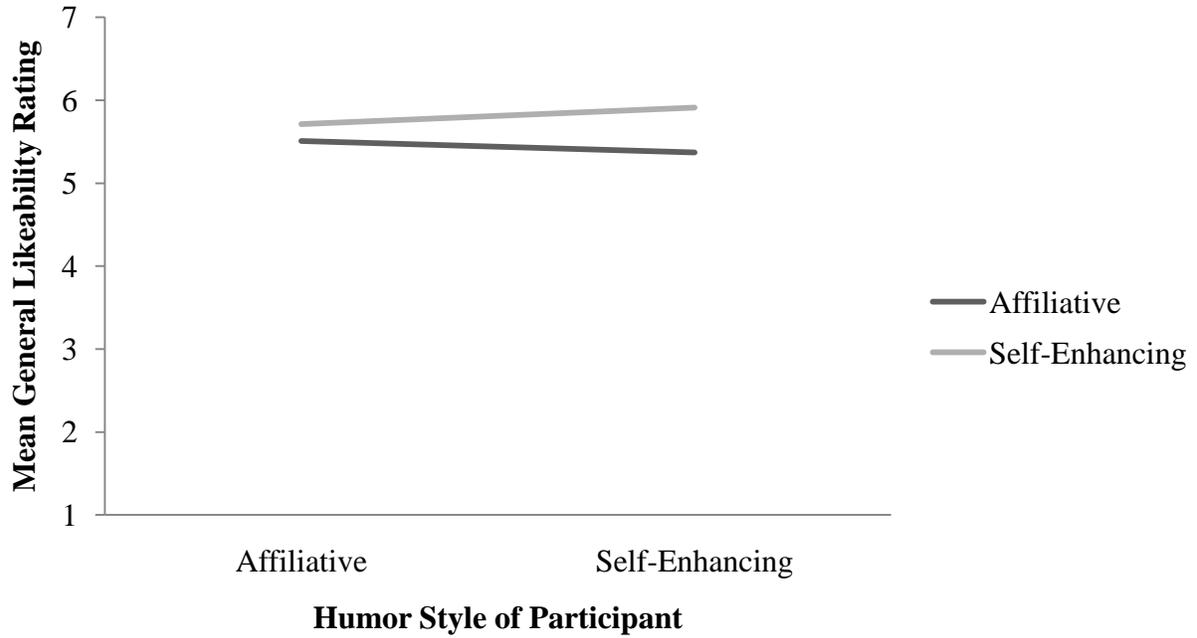
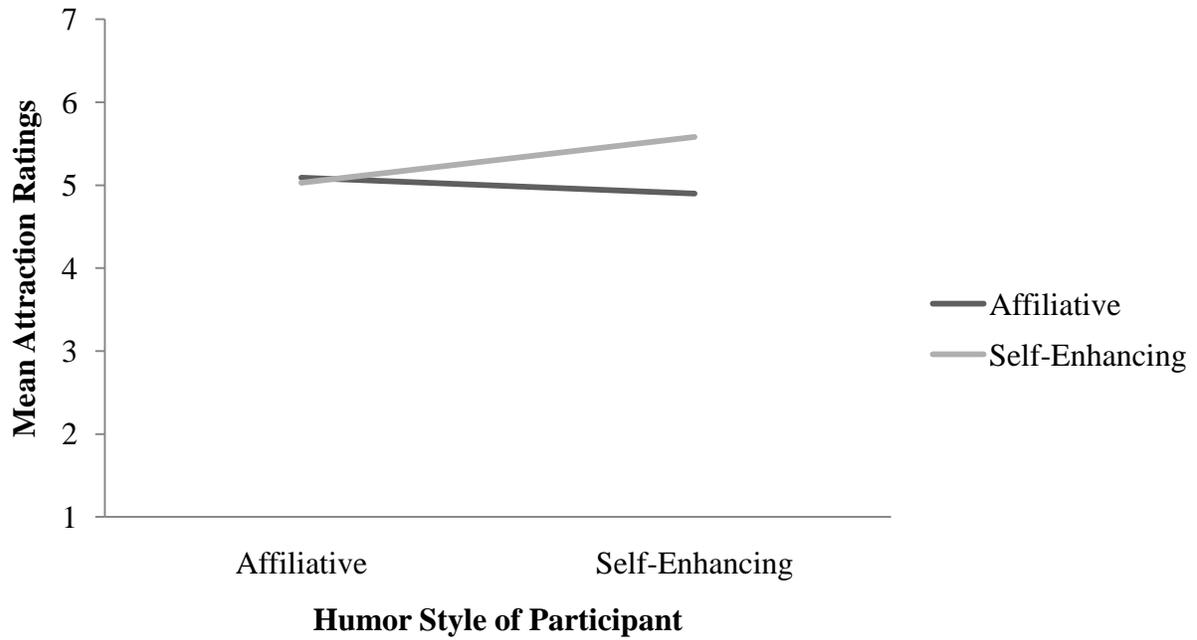


Figure 5

Romantic Attraction to the Target as a Function of Participants' Humor Style: Adaptive Humor Style



In addition to categorizing participants into distinctive humor styles and comparing their mean attraction ratings, we also took a correlational approach to test whether the continuous individual differences in humor style systematically predict differences in attraction to each of the four targets. The similarity-attraction hypothesis suggests we should find positive correlations between humor style and attraction to the corresponding partner. Across the sample, we found that participants were most strongly attracted to and found most likeable the target that was most similar to their own humor style. All of the correlations were positive in direction, consistent with our theory.

Table 5 shows the correlations between maladaptive participants and maladaptive targets for both general likeability and romantic attraction. For aggressive targets, the correlation was significantly higher for aggressive participants than for self-defeating participants. For self-defeating targets, the correlation was significantly higher for self-defeating participants than for aggressive participants.

Table 6 depicts the correlations between adaptive participants and adaptive targets for both general likeability and romantic attraction. For affiliative targets, the correlation was higher for affiliative participants than for self-enhancing participants for both general likeability and romantic attraction. However, for self-enhancing targets, there was a slightly higher correlation for affiliative participants than self-enhancing participants in terms of general likeability but the similarity trend continued for romantic attraction.

Taken together, the 2 X 2 ANOVA and correlation analyses provide ample evidence that similarity is a critical determinant in both general likeability and initial romantic attraction. Although this is especially true for the maladaptive humor styles, we see similarity trends for the adaptive humor styles as well.

Table 5

Correlations between Self Humor Style and Target's General Likeability and Romantic Attraction: Maladaptive Humor Styles

| Target humor Style | Participant Humor Style | |
|--------------------|----------------------------|----------------|
| | Aggressive | Self-Defeating |
| | General Likeability | |
| Aggressive | .32** | .21 |
| Self-Defeating | .03 | .36** |
| | Romantic Attraction | |
| Aggressive | .37** | .19 |
| Self-Defeating | .10 | .35** |

** $p < .01$, two-tailed

Table 6

Correlations between Self Humor Style and Target's General Likeability and Romantic Attraction: Adaptive Humor Styles

| Target Humor Style | Participant Humor Style | |
|--------------------|----------------------------|----------------|
| | Affiliative | Self-Enhancing |
| | General Likeability | |
| Affiliative | .21 | .10 |
| Self-Enhancing | .34** | .30* |
| | Romantic Attraction | |
| Affiliative | .26* | .08 |
| Self-Enhancing | .15 | .16 |

* $p < .05$, two-tailed ** $p < .01$, two-tailed

Personality as a potential confound?

Previous research has shown significant correlations between the Big Five personality measures and the four humor styles (Martin, 2003). We were able to replicate most of these correlations in our sample. Table 7 presents the correlations between the Big Five personality measures and the four humor styles. Given the moderately strong associations between personality and humor style, it is important to control for personality as a potential confound. It is critical to determine whether humor style is the primary factor in variation for the maladaptive humor styles. However, it is less meaningful to conduct such analyses for the adaptive humor styles because we did not find strong evidence for the similarity effect on those styles.

Hierarchical regression analyses were conducted separately for general likability and romantic attraction to aggressive and self-defeating targets: at Step 1 we entered the humor style to predict general likability or romantic attraction; at Step 2 we added the five personality factors into the regression equation. Tables 8 and 9 present the results of these regressions. Both aggressive and self-defeating humor styles were significant predictors for general likeability and romantic attraction at Step 1. When the Big Five personality factors were controlled at Step 2, both aggressive and self-defeating humor styles remained significant predictors; moreover, none of the Big Five factors were significant predictors of general likeability or romantic attraction. Since the beta coefficients remained significant predictors of general likeability and romantic attraction after controlling for personality, we can conclude that the humor styles account for a significant amount of the variation in the dependent measures rather than the variation being explained by differences in personality.

Table 7

Correlations between Four Humor Styles and Big Five Personality Measures

| Personality Variables | Humor Styles | | | |
|-----------------------|--------------|----------------|------------|----------------|
| | Affiliative | Self-Enhancing | Aggressive | Self-Defeating |
| Extraversion | .49** | .30** | .14* | .17** |
| Agreeableness | .13* | .22* | -.43** | -.08 |
| Conscientiousness | .03 | .07 | -.28** | -.10 |
| Neuroticism | -.17** | -.32** | .20** | .06 |
| Openness | .17** | .25** | -.10 | .03 |

* $p < .05$, two-tailed** $p < .01$, two-tailed

Table 8

Using Self Humor Style to Predict Attraction and General Likeability with Personality Effects being Controlled: Aggressive Style

| | Beta coefficients | |
|-------------------|-------------------|------------|
| | Liking | Attraction |
| <i>Step 1</i> | | |
| Aggressive | .32* | .37* |
| <i>Step 2</i> | | |
| Aggressive | .43* | .41* |
| Extraversion | -.05 | .08 |
| Agreeableness | .23 | .19 |
| Conscientiousness | -.01 | .01 |
| Neuroticism | -.19 | -.17 |
| Openness | -.07 | -.21 |

* $p < .05$, two-tailed

Table 9

Using Self Humor Style to Predict Attraction and General Likeability with Personality Effects being Controlled: Self-defeating Style

| | Beta coefficients | |
|-------------------|-------------------|------------|
| | Liking | Attraction |
| <i>Step 1</i> | | |
| Self-Defeating | .36* | .35* |
| <i>Step 2</i> | | |
| Self-Defeating | .36* | .35* |
| Extraversion | -.04 | -.20 |
| Agreeableness | .22 | -.01 |
| Conscientiousness | -.05 | .05 |
| Neuroticism | -.12 | -.12 |
| Openness | .32 | .29 |

* $p < .05$, two-tailed

DISCUSSION

The current investigation was conducted to address the limitations in previous research concerning the link between humor and initial romantic attraction. The primary goal of the present study was to introduce Martin's (2003) humor style paradigm to the romantic attraction literature. The vast majority of existing humor inventories merely assesses the quantity or quality of humor produced, rather than focus on the uses or functions of displayed humor. Further, these inventories neglect the more deleterious or harmful forms of humor and solely identify humor as an adaptive personality characteristic that has numerous social and personality benefits. The purpose of the current study, then, was to evaluate ratings of romantic attraction and general likeability towards both the adaptive and maladaptive humor styles and assess whether similarity in humor styles is a critical determinant of romantic attraction and general likeability.

Combining elements of Darwin's (1871) sexual selection theory and Byrne's (1971) similarity-attraction theory, the current study predicted two primary hypotheses: the adaptive humor style effect and the humor style similarity effect. Overall, it was predicted that adaptive humor styles would be more attractive and likeable than maladaptive humor styles. Further, it was predicted that similarity in humor styles would lead to higher levels of attraction and likeability because we tend to like and be attracted to those who are similar to us.

Evidence for the adaptive humor style effect

In accordance with Darwin's (1871) sexual selection theory, the authors predicted that adaptive humor styles would be more attractive and likeable than maladaptive humor styles. However, the researchers only tested differences across specific dimensions of the humor styles paradigm in order to effectively tease apart the effects. Thus, differences were examined

between the adaptive and maladaptive style on the other dimension (affiliative vs. self-defeating) and on the self dimension (self-enhancing vs. aggressive). Specifically, it was proposed that affiliative humor styles would be more attractive and likeable than self-defeating humor styles. Further, self-enhancing humor styles would be more attractive and likeable than self-defeating humor styles. A series of t-tests produced mixed evidence for the adaptive humor style effect. Self-enhancing humor styles were more attractive and likeable than aggressive humor styles, as predicted.

However, an unexpected result emerged. There was no significant difference in romantic attraction or general likability between affiliative and self-defeating humor styles. In fact, the self-defeating humor styles were slightly more attractive and likeable than the affiliative humor styles. Holistically, the adaptive humor styles were more attractive and likeable than the maladaptive humor styles. However, this effect was accounted for by the significantly lower favorability for aggressive humor styles, rather than a dislike for all maladaptive forms of humor.

These results raise an interesting question: What might explain why self-defeating humor is just as attractive and likeable as the two adaptive humor styles? First, it is important to explain what one means by adaptive. Taken here, the term adaptive connotes a positive correlation with psychologically healthy personality traits. However, based on this sample, self-defeating humor was positively correlated with extraversion and not with neuroticism. Further, it was not negatively related to agreeableness or conscientiousness, as might be expected. This contrasts sharply with previous research (Martin, 2003). Thus, self-defeating humor may not be as maladaptive as previously considered.

Further, a humor style may be adaptive or maladaptive in relation to psychological health and functioning, but that does not necessarily speak to its attractive or likeability factor. When

considering the goal or purpose of the humor styles, it may become more apparent in their attractive quality. Self-defeating forms of humor are used to enhance relationships with others at the expense of the self. Thus, the goal of this particular humor style is an attractive and likeable one, albeit done in a potentially less healthy manner than affiliative humor styles. By making fun of oneself, one decreases the social gap between him/herself and another person and makes the relationship more intimate. Self-deprecation is a humbling process and humility is continually seen as an attractive and likeable quality.

Although humility frequently is equated with a sense of unworthiness and low self-regard, many theorists view true humility as a rich, multifaceted construct that entails an accurate assessment of one's characteristics, an ability to acknowledge limitations, and a forgetting of the self (Tangney, 2000). Authority figures tend to employ self-deprecation or humility in order to lessen the gap between themselves and their subordinates. The majority of professors that are well-liked by their students are those that students see as their equal, rather than a distant authority figure. Thus, self-defeating humor styles are just as attractive and likeable as the adaptive humor styles because those who employ this style do so in order to be liked.

However, the fact that self-defeating humor was just as attractive as the two adaptive styles might be a gender-specific finding; that is, it may only work for females. Since women on average have lower self-esteem than men, they may find more humble individuals more comfortable to hang out with and less intimidating and hence, more likable and attractive. Furthermore, because the goal of self-deprecation is to please others, this may particularly suit women's needs to connect. On the other hand, men probably would not find self-defeating men as likable or attractive as do females. Future research is needed to examine these gender differences.

Evidence for the humor style similarity effect

Byrne's (1971) similarity-attraction hypothesis holds that we are attracted to and like more those that are similar to us. In this study, one would expect greatest evidence for the similarity effect by examining differences within the adaptive humor styles and within the maladaptive humor styles. Because both of the two styles are either adaptive or maladaptive, a preference for the similar style would provide strong support to the similarity effect. By examining differences between adaptive and maladaptive humor styles for both the self and other dimension, it would be impossible to tease apart whether the attraction is due to similarity or to the adaptive humor style effect. Taken all of this into account, four specific hypotheses were formulated.

ANOVA and correlation analyses provided rather strong evidence for the humor style similarity effect, especially for the maladaptive humor styles. As predicted, aggressive participants were more attracted to and found more likeable aggressive targets than did self-defeating participants. Similarly, self-defeating participants were more attracted to and found more likeable self-defeating participants than did aggressive participants. Thus, within the maladaptive humor style categories, there emerged a profound similarity effect. Although the results were not significant, the same trend that was found for maladaptive humor styles emerged for the adaptive humor styles, suggesting that similarity also exists for adaptive humor styles.

Accordingly, similarity appears to particularly work for maladaptive humor styles, which provides strong evidence for the similarity-attraction theory. Similarity is a potent determinant of romantic attraction and general likeability when the humor style is not as attractive and likeable. This finding is consistent with previous research that indicates that individuals with similar maladaptive or abnormal personality styles such as insecure attachment, depression,

schizophrenic tendencies, and antisocial personalities tend to find each other more attractive (see Epstein & Guttman, 1984; Klohnen & Luo, 2003). The evidence for the similarity effect was attenuated when it comes to attraction to the adaptive humor styles. Our results suggested that similarity is an important, yet maybe not critical, determinant of attraction when the humor style is already an attractive and likeable quality. This is quite understandable because there is an important confound—both styles are adaptive and generally deemed as desirable, which makes the choice between the two much harder and also less consequential.

Limitations and future directions

Although the current study provided informative findings regarding the link between humor and attraction, one should be cautious when generalizing these findings due to several limitations. First, the sample of female participants was reduced to only heterosexual, college-aged, Caucasian women. The data from minority participants were excluded to eliminate possible differences in evaluations of interracial attraction (e.g., an African-American female evaluating a Caucasian male). As a result, the findings herein have no bearing on alternative populations of women.

Additional research could explore the role of humor in both same-sex platonic and romantic relationships. It would be interesting to examine the role of humor in friendships, especially male-male friendships, which tend to rely on aggressive humor. Further, it is important as well to examine males' preferences for females' use of humor. Although sexual selection theory successfully predicts that males are primarily humor producers and females are primarily humor appreciators, humor is still a valued trait by males in mate selection and many females do use humor to illustrate their intelligence, creativity and wit.

Perhaps a more looming weakness of the current research is its lack of real-life validity. As is the case with similar photograph- and vignette-based mate-choice studies, the results captured from paper-meetings between female participants and male targets may in no way represent how real-life mate selection processes unfold. For example, a woman's reported romantic attraction toward a man whom she has only seen in a photograph and read about briefly may not reflect accurately her true desire to form a relationship with him. Moreover, her evaluation is based on limited information, which is likely not representative enough to generate a fair holistic judgment of the target. Consequently, the results remain, to some degree, speculative, and should be considered with this limitation in mind.

However, it is important to note that the results of this study are restricted to initial romantic attraction and general likeability. The author makes no comment regarding the role of these humor styles in mate selection, relationship formation, or satisfaction. Although individuals with aggressive humor styles are more likely to be attracted to one another, it is unclear and probably unlikely whether a relationship involving two aggressive humor styles would be healthy or satisfactory.

Further, relationships are a dyadic process and thus depend on the interaction between two individuals. It is thus extremely important for future research to conduct semi-naturalistic field studies on this issue (such as a speed-dating paradigm, see Eastwick, Finkel, Mochon, & Ariely, 2007; Luo & Zhang, 2009) and test the replicability of the current findings in real-life situations. Although speed-dating studies would lose some internal validity, the results may generalize better and illustrate in a more proficient manner how humor styles influence mate selection and relationship formation.

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APPENDIX A

Target Description Stimuli

A1: Affiliative Humor Style

A2: Self-Enhancing Humor Style

A3: Aggressive Humor Style

A4: Self-Defeating Humor Style

A1: Affiliative Humor Style

Name (first name only): Cameron

Gender: Male

Ethnicity: Caucasian

Age: 20

How would you describe yourself? Please respond to the following prompts.

You as a person: The most important thing about me is my humor. I tend to be the life of the party. I like to tell jokes and funny stories. I just want to make other people laugh and have a good time. Making other people laugh comes pretty naturally to me. At times I'm extroverted and outgoing, while at other times, I can be a bit on the quiet side. I like to be independent, but I'm approachable and enjoy social interaction as well. I prefer a certain amount of change and variety in my life and I like to try new things. I consider myself to be an independent thinker, but I certainly can be convinced by a good argument.

Interests: going out, traveling, intramural sports, TV, movies, concerts, listening to music, reading, going out to eat, outdoor activities.

Relationships: I think romantic relationships are a big part of life and I would love to share my life with someone who understands me. However, from my experience, relationships are not just about fun and excitement. Relationships can be risky, but if it's the right person I think it's worthwhile to take the risk. As for now, I'm single but open to dating. I guess I'll see how things unfold in the future.

A2: Self-Enhancing Humor Style

Name (first name only): Cameron

Gender: Male

Ethnicity: Caucasian

Age: 20

How would you describe yourself? Please respond to the following prompts.

You as a person: The most important thing about me is my humor. I try to maintain a positive outlook on life even when I'm having a bad day. I constantly use humor to deal with stress and to cheer myself up. Even when I'm by myself, I laugh at the funny things around me.

At times I'm extroverted and outgoing, while at other times, I can be a bit on the quiet side. I like to be independent, but I'm approachable and enjoy social interaction as well. I prefer a certain amount of change and variety in my life and I like to try new things. I consider myself to be an independent thinker, but I certainly can be convinced by a good argument.

Interests: going out, traveling, intramural sports, TV, movies, concerts, listening to music, reading, going out to eat, outdoor activities.

Relationships: I think romantic relationships are a big part of life and I would love to share my life with someone who understands me. However, from my experience, relationships are not just about fun and excitement. Relationships can be risky, but if it's the right person I think it's worthwhile to take the risk. As for now, I'm single but open to dating. I guess I'll see how things unfold in the future.

A3: Aggressive Humor Style

Name (first name only): Cameron

Gender: Male

Ethnicity: Caucasian

Age: 20

How would you describe yourself? Please respond to the following prompts.

You as a person: The most important thing about me is my humor. I've been known to make fun of other people when they mess up or do something stupid. It's just hard not to laugh when people make a mistake. If I think of something funny, I have to tell it, even if it is not appropriate. At times I'm extroverted and outgoing, while at other times, I can be a bit on the quiet side. I like to be independent, but I'm approachable and enjoy social interaction as well. I prefer a certain amount of change and variety in my life and I like to try new things. I consider myself to be an independent thinker, but I certainly can be convinced by a good argument.

Interests: going out, traveling, intramural sports, TV, movies, concerts, listening to music, reading, going out to eat, outdoor activities.

Relationships: I think romantic relationships are a big part of life and I would love to share my life with someone who understands me. However, from my experience, relationships are not just about fun and excitement. Relationships can be risky, but if it's the right person I think it's worthwhile to take the risk. As for now, I'm single but open to dating. I guess I'll see how things unfold in the future.

A4: Self-Defeating Humor Style

Name (first name only): Cameron

Gender: Male

Ethnicity: Caucasian

Age: 20

How would you describe yourself? Please respond to the following prompts.

You as a person: The most important thing about me is my humor. I make fun of myself a lot in order to make other people laugh. I usually just laugh along when other people make fun of me. As long as it keeps everyone in good spirits and laughing, making fun of myself is okay. At times I'm extroverted and outgoing, while at other times, I can be a bit on the quiet side. I like to be independent, but I'm approachable and enjoy social interaction as well. I prefer a certain amount of change and variety in my life and I like to try new things. I consider myself to be an independent thinker, but I certainly can be convinced by a good argument.

Interests: going out, traveling, intramural sports, TV, movies, concerts, listening to music, reading, going out to eat, outdoor activities.

Relationships: I think romantic relationships are a big part of life and I would love to share my life with someone who understands me. However, from my experience, relationships are not just about fun and excitement. Relationships can be risky, but if it's the right person I think it's worthwhile to take the risk. As for now, I'm single but open to dating. I guess I'll see how things unfold in the future.

APPENDIX B

Demographic and Personal Characteristics

Your Personal Information

What is your gender?

- Male
- Female

What is your ethnicity?

- African-American/Black
- Asian
- Caucasian/White
- Hispanic
- Other: _____

What is your current relationship status?

- Single
- Casually dating
- Committed relationship

What is your sexual orientation?

- Heterosexual
- Homosexual
- Bisexual

How old are you? _____

APPENDIX C

Reysen Likeability Scale (RLS) and Romantic Attraction Scale (RAS)

*For questions 30-37, please indicate your **feelings** about Cameron—the person you just read about. Please indicate your answer by filling in the appropriate bubble.*

| | | | | | | |
|---------------------|------------------------|----------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------|---------------------|------------------|
| Totally Disagree | Moderately Disagree | Slightly Disagree | Neither Agree nor Disagree | Slightly Agree | Moderately Agree | Totally Agree |
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 |

1-----2-----3-----4-----5-----6---7

- | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1. I would like to be friends with Cameron. | O | O | O | O | O | O | O |
| 2. I would like Cameron as a roommate. | O | O | O | O | O | O | O |
| 3. I would like Cameron as a coworker. | O | O | O | O | O | O | O |
| 4. I would ask Cameron for advice. | O | O | O | O | O | O | O |
| 5. I find Cameron’s sense of humor attractive. | O | O | O | O | O | O | O |
| 6. I would go on a date with Cameron. | O | O | O | O | O | O | O |
| 7. Cameron is the kind of guy I would normally date. | O | O | O | O | O | O | O |
| 8. I would like to be romantically involved with him. | O | O | O | O | O | O | O |

- | | | | | | |
|---|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| 15. Is ingenious, a deep thinker..... | <input type="radio"/> |
| 16. Generates a lot of enthusiasm..... | <input type="radio"/> |
| 17. Has a forgiving nature..... | <input type="radio"/> |
| 18. Tends to be disorganized..... | <input type="radio"/> |
| 19. Worries a lot..... | <input type="radio"/> |
| 20. Has an active imagination..... | <input type="radio"/> |
| 21. Tends to be quiet..... | <input type="radio"/> |
| 22. Is generally trusting..... | <input type="radio"/> |
| 23. Tends to be lazy..... | <input type="radio"/> |
| 24. Is emotionally stable, not easily upset..... | <input type="radio"/> |
| 25. Is inventive..... | <input type="radio"/> |
| 26. Has an assertive personality..... | <input type="radio"/> |
| 27. Can be cold and aloof..... | <input type="radio"/> |
| 28. Perseveres until the task is finished..... | <input type="radio"/> |
| 29. Can be moody..... | <input type="radio"/> |
| 30. Values artistic, aesthetic experiences..... | <input type="radio"/> |
| 31. Is sometimes shy, inhibited..... | <input type="radio"/> |
| 32. Is considerate and kind to almost everyone..... | <input type="radio"/> |
| 33. Does things efficiently..... | <input type="radio"/> |
| 34. Remains calm in tense situations..... | <input type="radio"/> |
| 35. Prefers work that is routine..... | <input type="radio"/> |

- | | | | | | |
|--|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| 36. Is outgoing, sociable..... | <input type="radio"/> |
| 37. Is sometimes rude to others..... | <input type="radio"/> |
| 38. Makes plans and follows through with them... | <input type="radio"/> |
| 39. Gets nervous easily..... | <input type="radio"/> |
| 40. Likes to reflect, play with ideas..... | <input type="radio"/> |
| 41. Has few artistic interests..... | <input type="radio"/> |
| 42. Likes to cooperate with others..... | <input type="radio"/> |
| 43. Is easily distracted..... | <input type="radio"/> |
| 44. Is sophisticated in art, music, or literature..... | <input type="radio"/> |

APPENDIX E

Humor Style Questionnaire (HSQ)

People experience and express humor in many different ways. Below is a list of statements describing different ways in which humor might be experienced. Please read each statement carefully, and indicate the degree to which you agree or disagree with it. Please respond as honestly and objectively as you can. Use the following scale:

| Totally Disagree | Moderately Disagree | Slightly Disagree | Neither Agree Nor Disagree | Slightly Agree | Moderately Agree | Totally Agree | | | | | |
|--|---------------------|-------------------|----------------------------|----------------|-----------------------|--------------------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|-----------------------|
| 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | | | | | |
| | | | | | 1---- | 2-----3-----4----5-----6-----7 | | | | | |
| 1. I usually don't laugh or joke around much with other people. | | | | | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 2. If I am feeling depressed, I can usually cheer myself up with humor. | | | | | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 3. If someone makes a mistake, I will often tease them about it. | | | | | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 4. I let people laugh at me or make fun at my expense more than I should. | | | | | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 5. I rarely make other people laugh by telling funny stories about myself. | | | | | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 6. I don't often say funny things to put myself down. | | | | | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 7. I usually don't like to tell jokes or amuse people. | | | | | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 8. I enjoy making people laugh. | | | | | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 9. If I am feeling sad or upset, I usually lose my sense of humor. | | | | | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 10. I don't often joke around with my friends | | | | | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 11. Even when I'm by myself, I'm often amused by the absurdities of life. | | | | | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 12. I usually can't think of witty things to say when I'm with other people. | | | | | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 13. People are never offended or hurt by my sense of humor. | | | | | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 14. I laugh and joke a lot with my friends. | | | | | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |
| 15. If I don't like someone, I often use humor or teasing to put them down. | | | | | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> | <input type="radio"/> |

16. I don't have to work very hard at making other people laugh -- I seem to be a naturally humorous person.
17. I will often get carried away in putting myself down if it makes my family or friends laugh.
18. If I am feeling upset or unhappy I usually try to think of something funny about the situation to make myself feel better.
19. When telling jokes or saying funny things, I am usually not very concerned about how other people are taking it.
20. I often try to make people like or accept me more by saying something funny about my own weaknesses, blunders, or faults.
21. My humorous outlook on life keeps me from getting overly upset or depressed about things.
22. I do not like it when people use humor as a way of criticizing or putting someone down.
23. If I'm by myself and I'm feeling unhappy, I make an effort to think of something funny to cheer myself up.
24. Sometimes I think of something that is so funny that I can't stop myself from saying it, even if it is not appropriate for the situation.
25. I often go overboard in putting myself down when I am making jokes or trying to be funny.
26. I never participate in laughing at others even if all my friends are doing it.
27. When I am with friends or family, I often seem to be the one that other people make fun of or joke about.

28. It is my experience that thinking about some amusing aspect of a situation is often a very effective way of coping with problems.
29. If I am having problems or am unhappy, I often cover it up by joking around, so that even my closest friends don't know how I really feel.
30. I don't need to be with other people to feel amused -- I can usually find things to laugh about even when I'm by myself.
31. Even if something is really funny to me, I will not laugh or joke about it if someone will be offended.
32. Letting others laugh at me is my way of keeping my friends and family in good spirits.