



SENSE OF HUMOR AND LONELINESS AMONG YOUNG ADULTS: A CORRELATIONAL STUDY

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Abstract: The present study examined the relationship between loneliness and humor styles among young adults. A quantitative correlational research design was adopted. A total of 399 participants aged 18–30 years were selected using convenience sampling. Data were collected using the UCLA Loneliness Scale (Version 3) and the Humor Styles Questionnaire (HSQ) measuring affiliative, self-enhancing, aggressive, and self-defeating humor. Descriptive statistics, Pearson correlation, and independent sample t-test were used for analysis. Results indicated that loneliness did not show a statistically significant correlation with affiliative humor ($r = -.018$), self-enhancing humor ($r = -.026$), aggressive humor ($r = -.037$), or self-defeating humor ($r = .020$). Gender differences in loneliness were also not significant. The findings suggest that humor styles may not be directly associated with loneliness among young adults in this sample. Future research may explore mediating variables such as social support, self-esteem, and cultural influences.

Index Terms - Loneliness, Humor Styles, Young Adults, UCLA Loneliness Scale, Humor Styles Questionnaire (HSQ).

I. INTRODUCTION

Loneliness is a subjective emotional experience characterized by a perceived discrepancy between desired and actual social relationships. It is increasingly recognized as a significant psychological concern among young adults due to academic pressures, lifestyle changes, urbanization, and increased dependence on digital communication. Loneliness has been linked to depression, anxiety, low self-esteem, and reduced social functioning.

Humor is considered a psychological resource that facilitates emotional regulation and interpersonal bonding. According to Martin et al. (2003), humor can be expressed in different styles such as affiliative humor, self-enhancing humor, aggressive humor, and self-defeating humor. Adaptive humor styles may strengthen social relationships and promote well-being, while maladaptive humor styles may negatively influence social functioning.

The present study aims to examine the relationship between humor styles and loneliness among young adults. Understanding this relationship may contribute to developing psychosocial interventions that utilize humor-based coping strategies.

II. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To assess the level of loneliness among young adults.
2. To assess the level of humor styles among young adults.
3. To examine the relationship between loneliness and humor styles among young adults.
4. To examine whether demographic variables such as age and gender influence loneliness.

III. HYPOTHESES

H0: There will be no significant relationship between humor styles and loneliness among young adults.

H1: Humor styles will show a significant relationship with loneliness among young adults.

IV. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The present study employed a quantitative cross-sectional correlational research design to examine the relationship between loneliness and humor styles. Convenience sampling was used to recruit participants. A total of 399 young adults aged between 18 and 30 years participated in the study.

Tools Used:

1. UCLA Loneliness Scale (Version 3): A 20-item standardized scale used to measure subjective feelings of loneliness and social isolation.
2. Humor Styles Questionnaire (HSQ): A 32-item standardized scale developed by Martin et al. (2003) measuring four humor styles: affiliative, self-enhancing, aggressive, and self-defeating humor.

Procedure:

Participants were informed about the purpose of the study and assured confidentiality. Informed consent was obtained. The questionnaires were administered online/offline and responses were collected. Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, Pearson correlation coefficient, and independent sample t-test.

V. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

A total of 399 participants were included in the analysis. The demographic distribution and descriptive statistics are presented below.

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics of Study Variables

Variable	Min	Max	Mean	SD
Loneliness	38	61	49.85	4.66
Affiliative Humor	21	48	31.72	4.21
Self-Enhancing Humor	21	45	34.75	4.48
Aggressive Humor	18	47	31.34	4.50
Self-Defeating Humor	19	48	35.01	4.67

Table 2: Correlation Matrix of Loneliness and Humor Styles

Variables	Loneliness	Affiliative	Self-Enhancing	Aggressive	Self-Defeating
Loneliness	—	-.018	-.026	-.037	.020
Affiliative	-.018	—	.019	-.017	.087
Self-Enhancing	-.026	.019	—	-.051	.031
Aggressive	-.037	-.017	-.051	—	-.030

Self-Defeating .020 .087 .031 -.030 —

Note: None of the correlations were statistically significant ($p > .05$).

An independent samples t-test revealed no significant gender difference in loneliness, $t(397) = 0.576$, $p = .565$. Male participants ($M = 50.01$, $SD = 4.96$) and female participants ($M = 49.73$, $SD = 4.44$) reported similar loneliness levels. Age was also not significantly correlated with loneliness ($r = .066$, $p = .185$).

The findings indicate that loneliness was not significantly associated with affiliative, self-enhancing, aggressive, or self-defeating humor styles. This is contrary to many theoretical expectations that adaptive humor reduces loneliness. Cultural variations in humor expression, limited age range, and the influence of other psychosocial factors such as social support and self-esteem may explain the absence of significant relationships.

VI. CONCLUSION

The present study examined the relationship between loneliness and humor styles among young adults. Results showed no significant association between loneliness and any of the four humor styles measured. Gender and age also did not significantly influence loneliness. These findings suggest that humor styles may not independently predict loneliness among young adults, and the experience of loneliness may depend on broader psychological and social variables.

VII. LIMITATIONS

1. The study used a cross-sectional correlational design, limiting causal interpretation.
2. Convenience sampling may reduce generalizability of findings.
3. Self-report measures may introduce response bias.
4. The sample had a restricted age range, which may limit variability in loneliness.

VIII. FUTURE SCOPE

1. Future studies may use longitudinal designs to examine changes over time.
2. Mediating factors such as perceived social support, mattering, and self-esteem may be explored.
3. Cross-cultural studies may help understand cultural influences on humor and loneliness.
4. Experimental studies can assess humor-based interventions for reducing loneliness.

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