

Behind the Laughs: The Relationship between Narcissism and Humor Styles in an  
Individualistic Culture

by

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### **Abstract**

One hundred and ten college students from general education and general Psychology classes completed measures of narcissism, humor styles, and a 20-item humor appreciation survey online. The purpose of this study was to determine whether the past results (e.g., Besser & Zeigler-Hill, 2011) could be replicated in an individualistic culture. Results showed similar results, with grandiose narcissism having a positive correlation with adaptive humor styles, and vulnerable narcissism having a negative correlation with maladaptive humor styles but a positive correlation with aggressive forms of humor. I discuss implications of these findings and the relationship between narcissistic traits and humor styles.

## Chapter I

### Introduction

Getting people to laugh can be tricky. Saying just the right thing at the right time to make someone laugh can be something of an art. This is why philosophers, scientists, and other academics dating all the way back to Plato and Aristotle have studied humor (Ford, Kyle, Raymond, & Tracy, 2016). Psychologically, humor is studied in two different ways: humor appreciation and humor production. While *humor appreciation* is most simply defined as what someone finds humorous, *humor production* refers to the jokes, wit, and comedy that a person uses to build relationships with others by trying to make them laugh (Moran, Rain, Marina, Elizabeth, & Raymond, 2014).

Psychologists have examined the ways that personality might relate to the features of humor. For example, Martin, Puhlik-Doris, Larsen, Gray, and Weir (2003) identified multiple ways in which the personality trait of humor, or "a sense of humor," could be conceptualized. They then created the Humor Styles Questionnaire (HSQ) to distinguish among the different ways in which people use humor to build relationships. They divided humor production into both interpersonal and intrapsychic functions that are most often used in everyday life (Martin et al., 2003; Mendiburo-Seguel, Páez, & Martínez-Sánchez, 2015). The HSQ covers both maladaptive and adaptive humor styles. Maladaptive humor is considered to be self-defeating (such as degrading jokes towards oneself) or aggressive (e.g., jokes that are negative toward or hurtful to others). Adaptive humor styles include being self-enhancing (e.g., making positive jokes about oneself) or affiliative (e.g., making jokes in order to build relationships) (Martin, Lastuk, Jeffery, Vernon, & Veselka, 2012).

Whereas many other psychologists, including Eysenck, Cattell, McGee, and Ruch, have studied the relationship between humor and personality, Martin et al.'s (2003, 2012) contributions are arguably the most influential (Mediburo-Seguel et al., 2015). Since the creation of the HSQ, several studies have found a positive correlation between adaptive humor styles and healthy personality traits, such as happiness (Ford et al. 2016; Yue, Chun-Lok, & Hiranandani, 2016), emotional stability (Meyer, Helle, Raymond, Lengel, & DeShong, 2017; Poncy, 2017; Zeigler-Hill, Gillian & Vrabel, 2016), self-esteem and anger-management (Torres Martin, Navarro-Carrillo, & Carretero-Dios, 2018), and over-all well-being (Heintz, 2017; Jovanovic, 2011), as well as a positive correlation between maladaptive humor styles and unhealthy moods such as depression and anxiety (Ford, 2017).

### **The Dark Triad**

In recent years, the HSQ has also been used to discover that humor styles have a connection to the Dark Triad, the name for the combination of the personality traits of Machiavellianism, Narcissism, and Psychopathy (Veselka, Schermer, Martin, & Vernon, 2010; Watts, 2017). Machiavellianism represents exploitative and manipulative characteristics; narcissism refers to inflated views of specialness; and psychopathy references antisocial qualities that a person possesses (Watts, 2017). Veselka et al. (2010) showed that psychopathy and Machiavellianism positively and significantly correlated with maladaptive humor styles, and narcissism positively and significantly correlated with adaptive humor styles. This research was replicated and expanded by Martin et al. (2012), who further investigated the relationship between humor styles and the sub-factors of the Dark Triad (in addition to the global scores). That study mostly

strengthened Veselka et al.'s (2010) original results, with the exceptions of narcissism correlating significantly and positively with aggressive humor. It also demonstrates the importance of studying the factors that compromise the Dark Triad traits, since all factors of each trait did not always correlate with the same humor styles.

### **Narcissism Research and its two Dimensions**

Narcissism, in general, has been an increasing topic of interest for psychologists over the years. Studies show that narcissists are more willing to go against pro-social norms in favor of their own self-interests and ego than those who are not narcissistic. They are also shown to be particularly aggressive when responding to insults, even if the victim is not responsible for the insult (Tamborski, Brown, & Chowning 2012), and has been linked to limited empathy (Di Pierro et al., 2017). Furthermore, narcissism researchers (e.g., Derry, Ohan, & Bayliss, 2017) have proposed that this construct can be divided into two subcategories. *Grandiose narcissism* is related to interpersonal feelings of others (such as entitlement, avoidance, and superiority). *Vulnerable narcissism* is considered to be intrapersonal factors or negative thoughts and feelings about oneself (such as contingent self-worth and envy). Studies have shown that grandiose and vulnerable narcissism are associated with the use of different coping strategies (Ferne, Fung, & Nikčević, 2016) and different humor styles (Besser & Zeigler-Hill, 2011). Besser and Zeigler-Hill found that vulnerable narcissism is positively correlated with maladaptive humor, and negatively correlated with adaptive humor styles. The same study shows that grandiose narcissism is positively correlated with adaptive humor styles, and negatively correlated with maladaptive humor styles.

## **Cultural Influence on Identity**

Social science researchers have shown that norms and traditions can affect behavior and cognitions in different cultures (Oyserman, Coon, & Kemmelmeier, 2002). In individualistic cultures, personal identity is based primarily on separateness, whereas in collectivist cultures it is more important to create an identity based on social position (Becker et al., 2012). “People in collectivist cultures, compared to people in individualist cultures, are likely to define themselves as aspects of groups, to give priority to in-group goals, to focus on context more than the content in making attributions and in communicating, to pay less attention to internal than to external processes as determinants of social behavior, to define most relationships with in-group members as communal, to make more situational attributions, and tend to be self-effacing” (Triandis, 2007, p. 907). Collectivists also use social support as a basis for determining self-esteem (Cheng & Kwan, 2008).

Whereas in individualistic countries the identity and needs of an individual are valued more highly, in a collectivist culture, the needs of the groups are what is considered most important. Besser and Zeigler-Hill (2011) believed these cultural differences could cause influence differences in interpersonal interaction in individualistic countries and that conducting a similar study in an individual culture would help to generalize the results found in their study (as mentioned above). No research has been conducted to test this possibility.

## **Importance of Replication in Social Science Research**

Psychology is currently in a “replication crisis,” meaning that current efforts to replicate many existing studies have not yielded the same results (Maxwell, Lau, &



Howard, 2015). This is an issue because it means that studies built on previous studies could be operating on weak foundations, leading psychology down an inaccurate path. In order to correct this issue, some argue one way to ensure accurate results is for multiple replications (Maxwell et al. 2015; Pashler & Harris 2015). Currently, there is no count of how many errors have been made in psychological research, but there is indication that the amount may be high (Pashler & Wagenmakers 2012). While there are arguments against the replication crisis, such as the claim that low alpha levels keep errors low, exact replications are not needed, and that eventually errors will “prune” out (Pashler & Harris, 2012), Pashler and Harris argue that low alpha levels do not impose any limits on the rate of errors, theoretical replications could be affected by bias, and that there is no evidence to support the prediction that the errors will be rectified given enough time.

### **Thesis Statement**

The use of humor styles between the two types of narcissism has not yet been studied within individualistic cultures (Besser & Zeigler-Hill, 2011). Additionally, there has not been a study conducted including a humor appreciation component. This study's aim is to replicate and expand Besser and Zeigler-Hill's findings to individualistic cultures, using MTSU students as a base sample. It evaluated the relationship between maladaptive and adaptive humor styles and vulnerable and grandiose narcissism in the United States. Similar results in individualistic countries would help to generalize the results found by Besser and Zeigler-Hill with Israeli participants, and could further clarify the distinction between the two types of narcissism. I believe that results in an individualistic country will be relatively the same as the results in a collectivist culture. Although culture does affect interpersonal interactions, I think this study will help prove

that narcissistic traits are those that exist because one is not aware or concerned with how they are perceived by others. I would also like to add an appreciation component. This would determine if there is any connection between grandiose and vulnerable narcissism and humor appreciation (what people find humorous) as well as how people try to be funny, as has been shown in previous research. I expect that there will be a positive correlation between grandiose narcissism and affiliative humor appreciation, as well as a positive correlation between vulnerable narcissism and aggressive humor appreciation.

**H<sub>1</sub>:** There is a positive correlation between grandiose narcissism and adaptive humor styles (affiliative and self-enhancing).

**H<sub>2</sub>:** There is a positive correlation between vulnerable narcissism and maladaptive humor styles (aggressive and self-defeating).

## Chapter II

### Method

#### Participants

One hundred and ten college students (23 men, 69 women, 18 other or no response) from general education and general Psychology classes completed the survey. Ages ranged from 18-34 years ( $M = 20.9$ ,  $SD = 2.85$ ) and class status ranged from Freshmen to Senior (two freshmen, 38 sophomores, 32 juniors, and 20 seniors, with 18 other or missing). With respect to ethnicity, the sample included four Asians, 22 Blacks, 51 Whites, and 33 others or preferred not to specify. Additionally, 83 individuals confirmed that English was their native language.

#### Measures

The Pathological Narcissism Inventory (PNI; Pincus, Ansell, Pimentel, Cain, & Wright, 2009) measures different dimensions of grandiose narcissism and vulnerable narcissism. This 52-item inventory measures responses on a 6-point scale (0 = *not at all like me*, 5 = *very much like me*). It represents seven dimensions of pathological narcissism: contingent self-esteem (e.g., “It’s hard for me to feel good about myself unless I know other people like me”), exploitative tendencies (e.g., “I can make anyone believe anything I want them to”), self-sacrificing self-enhancement (e.g., “I try to show what a good person I am through my sacrifices”), hiding of the self (e.g., “When others get a glimpse of my needs, I feel anxious and ashamed”), grandiose fantasy (e.g., “I often fantasize about being recognized for my accomplishments”), devaluing (e.g., “When others don’t meet my expectations, I often feel ashamed about what I wanted”), and entitlement rage (e.g., “It irritates me when people don’t notice how good a person I

am”). These seven dimensions can then be grouped into grandiose narcissism (Entitlement Rage, Exploitativeness, Grandiose Fantasy, Self-sacrificing Self-enhancement) and vulnerable narcissism (Contingent Self-esteem, Hiding the Self, Devaluing) (Pincus et al., 2009), which were used for the purposes of this study. Pincus et al. report that the PNI has acceptable reliability and validity, with internal consistency values for the subscales ranging from .70-.88. With the current sample, these values were acceptable, ranging from .71-.88.

Participants also completed the Humor Styles Questionnaire (HSQ; Martin et al., 2003) to determine use of the four different humor production styles. This 32-item questionnaire uses a 7 point Likert scale (1 = *totally disagree*, 7 = *totally agree*). The four subscales, with eight items each, assess styles of affiliative (e.g., “I laugh and joke a lot with my friends”), self-enhancing (e.g., “My humorous outlook on life keeps me from getting overly upset or depressed about things”), aggressive (e.g., “If someone makes a mistake, I will often tease them about it”), and self-defeating (e.g., “I let people laugh at me or make fun at my expense more than I should”) humor. Martin et al. report acceptable reliability and validity data for the HSQ. In the present study, affiliative, self-enhancing, and self-defeating scales had adequate internal consistencies (affiliative:  $\alpha = .859$ ; self-enhancing:  $\alpha = .784$ ; self-defeating:  $\alpha = .793$ ). However, the aggressive scale was not shown to have strong internal consistency ( $\alpha = .498$ ).

Finally, participants completed a humor appreciation survey developed specifically for this project. I began with a compilation of 42 jokes taken from the Edinburg Fringe Arts Festival's funniest jokes competitions from 2015-2017 (Jones, 2015; Reilly, 2017; Shepherd, 2016). I used this competition because the public rates the

jokes and the jokes are likely to show similarity between American and the United Kingdom's culture. I edited or omitted some of the jokes to make them more relatable to a United States sample.

These jokes were then distributed to volunteers who rated them on a 5-point "funniness" scale (1 = *not at all funny*, 5 = *very funny*). Twenty volunteers, consisting of both my advisor's and my own peers and colleagues, rated these jokes. I narrowed down the top 10 funniest and least funny jokes using their ratings, and created the humor appreciation survey. The funniest and least funny jokes were used in order to capture possible differences across the different humor styles. I calculated the total scores for these two categories by summing the respondents' ratings for the 10 items from each category.

The survey included instances of affiliative humor (e.g., I went to Barnes & Noble and asked the woman for a book about turtles. She asked: "Hardback?" and I was like: "Yeah, and little heads") and aggressive humor (e.g., "I don't do Crossfit. I have a personality."). However, there were no self-enhancing and self-deprecating jokes due to their intrapersonal nature. The original 40 jokes and their mean "funniness" ratings appear in Appendix A.

## **Procedure**

I received IRB approval before recruiting any participants and measures were distributed (Appendix B). Participants received an e-mail from selected professors, which included a link to the online study. Participants then used the link to fill out the informed consent form, followed by the humor appreciation survey, Humor Styles Questionnaire,

and the Pathological Narcissism Inventory (in counterbalanced order). Finally, they provided demographic information: gender, academic year, race, age, and whether or not English was their native language.

## Chapter III

### Results

#### *Descriptive Statistics*

Table 1 presents the descriptive statistics for the major measures. As the table shows, participants scored higher on vulnerable narcissism than grandiose narcissism. With respect to humor styles, participants were mostly affiliative. As expected, the participants rated the least funny jokes as significantly less funny than the most funny,  $t(109) = 8.32, p < .001$ .

Table 1.

#### *Descriptive Statistics for Major Measures*

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<u>Measure</u>	<u>Mean</u>	<u>Std. Deviation</u>
HSQ_affiliative	44.80	8.86
HSQ_self_enhance	36.23	8.43
HSQ_aggressive	27.91	6.41
HSQ_self_defeat	30.22	9.12
NPI_contingent	3.14	0.98
NPI_exploitative	3.21	0.92
NPI_sacrifice	3.70	0.93
NPI_self_hide	3.83	1.05
NPI_grandiose	3.92	0.97
NPI_devalue	2.95	0.96
NPI_rage	2.83	0.96
Vulnerable_narcissism	12.75	3.25
Grandiose_narcissism	10.83	2.18
Not_Funny_Total	22.60	8.12
Very_Funny_Total	27.58	8.82

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*Note.*  $N = 110$ . HSQ = Humor Styles Questionnaire, NPI = Narcissistic Personality Inventory.

### *Test of Hypotheses*

According to H<sub>1</sub>, I expected to find a positive correlation between grandiose narcissism and the use of adaptive humor styles (affiliative and self-enhancing).

Grandiose narcissism was only shown to have a slight positive correlation with the adaptive styles of humor (affiliative:  $r(98) = .214, p = .025$ ; self-enhancing:  $r(98) = .119, p = .217$ ). It was also shown to have a negative correlation with aggressive humor ( $r(98) = -.070, p = .469$ ), but a positive and significant correlation to self-defeating humor ( $r(98) = .205, p = .031$ ). These results provide partial support the hypothesis.

For H<sub>2</sub>, I predicted a positive correlation between vulnerable narcissism and the use of maladaptive humor styles (aggressive and self-defeating). Results showed that vulnerable narcissism was negatively correlated with the use of aggressive humor ( $r(98) = -.184, p = .054$ ) and positively correlated with the use of self-defeating humor ( $r(98) = .345, p = .000$ ). Results also showed that vulnerable narcissism was negatively correlated to adaptive humor styles (affiliative:  $r(98) = -.165, p = .085$ ; self-enhancing:  $r(98) = -.216, p = .023$ ). These results provided mixed support for the hypothesis.

### *Supplemental Analyses*

I included a humor appreciation component to this study in order to explore the possibility of a connection between humor production and vulnerable and grandiose narcissistic traits. Results showed a slight correlation between grandiose narcissism and ratings of both “very funny” ( $r(110) = .17, p = .07$ ) and “less funny” jokes ( $r(110) = .17, p = .07$ ). No significant relationship was found between vulnerable narcissism and the “very funny” jokes ( $r(110) = -.01, p = .90$ ) or the “less funny” jokes ( $r(110) = -.04, p = .66$ ). Ratings of the less-funny jokes were shown to have a significant correlation to self-



defeating humor ( $r(110) = .23, p = .015$ ). This could be because those that who have a hard time relating to the humor of others make fun of themselves in an attempt to gain laughs or attention.

## **Chapter IV**

### **Discussion**

The purpose of this study was to replicate and expand Besser and Zeigler-Hill's (2011) previous research to individualistic cultures. I designed the study to evaluate the relationship between maladaptive and adaptive humor styles and vulnerable and grandiose narcissism in the United States. I hypothesized that grandiose narcissistic traits would correlate positively with adaptive humor styles, and that vulnerable narcissistic traits would positively correlate with maladaptive humor styles. These results would help generalize the results found by Besser and Zeigler-Hill with Israeli participants, and could further clarify the distinction between the two types of narcissism. Results supported the idea that there is a correlation between grandiose narcissism and adaptive humor styles, but failed to support the idea that there is a significant correlation between vulnerable narcissism and maladaptive styles. When broken into aggressive and self-defeating subtypes, however, vulnerable narcissism correlated negatively with aggressive humor. This was unexpected, as narcissism and aggressive behavior have been shown to be highly correlated in past research (Martin et al., 2012), and vulnerable narcissism was significantly and positively correlated with aggressive humor in that study. The reason for this is unknown, but could be a rare incongruity from the majority because of the sample or location.

In congruency with Besser and Zeigler-Hill's study, vulnerable narcissism was negatively correlated to adaptive humor styles. Moreover, as opposed to where Besser and Zeigler-Hill found a negative correlation between maladaptive humor styles and grandiose narcissism, results in this study showed grandiose narcissism to have a positive correlation to self-defeating humor. This is interesting because grandiose narcissism has been shown to relate to high self-esteem, but self-defeating humor is aimed at pointing out one's own flaws. It could be, however, that self-defeating humor is encouraged more in the current society as both vulnerable and grandiose narcissism were positively correlated to this form of humor in this study.

Cultural difference was a major consideration of this study. While previous studies have explored the link between narcissism and self-esteem, as well as the link between culture and self-esteem, no prior research has conducted a cross-cultural analysis of these two factors. Those with high self-esteem have been shown to have the tendency to use more benign forms of humor to build relationships or elevate themselves than forms of humor that are injurious (Besser & Zeigler-Hill, 2011). Research shows maintenance of self-esteem is conducted differently between collectivistic and individualistic cultures. Cheng and Kwan (2008) found that collectivists were more likely to report both attachment anxiety and avoidance. The report also shows that attachment anxiety and avoidance relate to basing self-esteem on appearance and social support.

In the original study conducted by Besser and Zeigler-Hill (2011), grandiose narcissism positively correlated with adaptive humor and vulnerable narcissism was positively correlated with maladaptive humor. Likewise, this study also showed a

positive correlation between grandiose narcissism and the use of adaptive humor styles. In contrast, this study found vulnerable narcissism to be positively correlated only with self-defeating humor and a negatively correlated with aggressive humor. It is unclear whether cultural influences affected these results considering the use of aggression correlates with those who have low self-esteem in individualistic cultures (Stuck & Sporer, 2002), but self-defeating humor was also found to correlate with high self-esteem (grandiose narcissism). Further research may be needed to explore the potential of cultural influence. Other cultural aspects may also need to be considered. There is still the possibility that other cultural characteristics, such as high versus low context orientations, could have an effect.

Regardless, there does seem to be a connection between vulnerable narcissism and most subcategories of maladaptive humor in both types of culture. This confirms the overall belief that narcissistic traits are related to humor styles and how individuals express and communicate when possessing these characteristics in both collectivist and individual cultures.

#### *Discussion of Supplementary Results*

Results showed that grandiose narcissism was positively correlated to all jokes in the humor appreciation component of this study. Vulnerable narcissism, conversely, was not shown to have any relationship to any jokes in the survey. It could be, as mentioned before, that vulnerable narcissistic traits have been related to low self-esteem and aggression rather than relationship building. In general, laughing at others jokes are often more affiliative in nature, which could account for these results.

### *Implications for Future Research*

Future researchers may want to explore these relationships through more in-depth analyzes by breaking down each subcategory of vulnerable narcissism and comparing it to each sub-category of maladaptive humor styles. A more specific connection between subcategories of vulnerable and grandiose narcissism and the subcategories of humor styles may provide more insight as to why people use different humor styles between the two types of narcissism. This analysis can be conducted using the data within this study, and may be utilized in future research, but was not relevant to the current study's purpose.

It may also be beneficial to study these interactions by observations instead by self-reported measures. This is both because people sometimes receive or appreciate jokes better when spoken aloud versus read from a paper, and because it is difficult to determine exactly how humorous an individual found a joke based on a 5-point self-reported scale. Especially in the case of humor appreciation and humor styles, it may be more effective to see these interactions occur naturally or in person.

Lastly, researchers might consider other components of culture as factors in how narcissistic traits might relate to different humor styles, or examine collectivist and individualist perspective and their relation to humor styles on a more individualized level. Though this study cross-examined to complete society's cultural nature, it is possible for each individual in a society to exist on a continuum between possessing collectivist and individualistic views. Examining the difference in humor styles through collectivistic and individualistic preferences, types of narcissism, and humor styles, may provide a clearer picture of how, or if, these factors are related. It is important to eliminate all

possible influences before determining whether these findings, and the findings of others, can be generalized among every culture and population.

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## Appendix A

I am conducting research on the possible connection between personality traits and humor. Below is a list of possible jokes that will be used in my study. Your response to this survey will only be used to determine which jokes to include in the study. Please rate the jokes below on how funny you believe each joke to be, based on the following scale: 1-not at all funny, 2- a little funny, 3-undecided, 4-funny, 5-very funny. If you do not understand the joke, please rate it as a 3, or undecided. I hope you enjoy some laughs. Thank you for your time!

[\* indicates “not funny” jokes used for the final survey; \*\* indicates “very funny” jokes used in the final survey].

1. My dad has suggested that I register for a donor card. He’s a man after my own heart. \_\_\_\_\_ ( $\mu = 2.89$ ,  $SD = 1.15$ )
2. \*\*Why is it old people say ‘there’s no place like home’, yet when you put them in one...? \_\_\_\_\_ ( $\mu = 3.00$ ,  $SD =$  )
3. I’ve been happily married for four years – out of a total of 10. \_\_\_\_\_ ( $\mu = 2.58$ ,  $SD = 1.35$ )
4. \*Is it possible to mistake schizophrenia for telepathy, I hear you ask. \_\_\_\_\_ ( $\mu = 2.37$ ,  $SD = 1.26$ )
5. I’ll tell you what’s unnatural in the eyes of God. Contact lenses. \_\_\_\_\_ ( $\mu = 2.74$ ,  $SD = 1.28$ )

6. Two flies are playing soccer in a saucer. One says to the other, “Make an effort, we’re playing in the cup tomorrow.” \_\_\_\_\_ ( $\mu = 2.53$ ,  $SD = 1.29$ )
7. \*Maybe Hitler wouldn’t have been so grumpy if people hadn’t left him hanging for high-fives all the time. \_\_\_\_\_ ( $\mu = 2.53$ ,  $SD = 1.54$ )
8. \*\*I went to Barnes & Noble and asked the woman for a book about turtles. She asked: “Hardback?” and I was like: “Yeah, and little heads.” \_\_\_\_\_ ( $\mu = 3.42$ ,  $SD = 1.35$ )
9. Laughter is the best medicine, though it tends not to work in the case of impotence. \_\_\_\_\_ ( $\mu = 2.58$ ,  $SD = 1.31$ )
10. I spent the last three days, alone, trying to learn escapology. I need to get out more. \_\_\_\_\_ ( $\mu = 2.74$ ,  $SD = 1.28$ )
11. \*\*Life is like a box of chocolates. It doesn’t last long if you’re fat. \_\_\_\_\_ ( $\mu = 3.16$ ,  $SD = 1.5$ )
12. \*I don’t do Crossfit. I have a personality. \_\_\_\_\_ ( $\mu = 2.00$ ,  $SD = 1.05$ )
13. \*\*When I was younger I felt like a man trapped inside a woman’s body. Then I was born. \_\_\_\_\_ ( $\mu = 3.32$ ,  $SD = 1.35$ )
14. How many people here are psychic? Raise my hand! \_\_\_\_\_ ( $\mu = 2.32$ ,  $SD = 1.25$ )
15. \*I’m allergic to nuts, which means that if I ever want to commit suicide I can do it by Ferrero Rocher. \_\_\_\_\_ ( $\mu = 2.89$ ,  $SD = 1.33$ )
16. My friend and I were in a bar debating where the bartender originates from. I said he was an Eskimo. He said Native American. Turns out he was an Eskimo. Inuit all along. \_\_\_\_\_ ( $\mu = 2.89$ ,  $SD = 0.94$ )

17. My wife and I can never agree on holidays. I want to fly to exotic places and stay in five-star hotels. And she wants to come with me. \_\_\_\_\_ ( $\mu = 3.32$ ,  $SD = 1.46$ )
18. \*\*They say children give you something money can't buy. Yes, poverty. ( $\mu = 3.32$ ,  $SD = 1.06$ )
19. My dad's a real family man – he's got three of them. \_\_\_\_\_ ( $\mu = 3.42$ ,  $SD = 1.26$ )
20. My boyfriend and I used to argue over the bed. I liked to sleep all stretched out like a starfish and he liked to sleep with a blonde lady called Leanne. \_\_\_\_\_ ( $\mu = 3.16$ ,  $SD = 1.39$ )
21. My mother wears the burqa – mainly because she doesn't want to be seen with my dad. \_\_\_\_\_ ( $\mu = 2.32$ ,  $SD = 1.29$ )
22. Recently in court, I was found guilty of being egotistical. I am appealing. \_\_\_\_\_ ( $\mu = 3.47$ ,  $SD = 1.17$ )
23. If you don't know what introspection is – you need to take a long, hard look at yourself. \_\_\_\_\_ ( $\mu = 2.8$ ,  $SD = 1.22$ )
24. Did you know if you count the number of stars in the universe and compare that to the number of grains of sand on a beach, you can ruin a vacation? \_\_\_\_\_ ( $\mu = 3.00$ ,  $SD = 1.53$ )
25. \*Why are disabled toilets big enough to run around in? \_\_\_\_\_ ( $\mu = 2.16$ ,  $SD = 1.39$ )
26. \*\*I was really disappointed that Kayne West and Kim Kardashian didn't call their new kid Wicky Wicky Wicky Wild Wild. \_\_\_\_\_ ( $\mu = 2.32$ ,  $SD = 1.06$ )
27. \*The Bible would have been so different if Adam and Eve had simply decided to buy a PC instead. \_\_\_\_\_ ( $\mu = 2.42$ ,  $SD = 1.35$ )

28. Whenever I'm on a date with a girl I tell her she has an amazing laugh to trick her into thinking she's been laughing a lot. \_\_\_\_\_ ( $\mu = 2.47.8$ ,  $SD = 1.31$ )
29. "Son, I don't think you're cut out to be a mime."  
  
"Was it something I said?" asks the son.  
  
"Yes." \_\_\_\_\_ ( $\mu = 3.11$ ,  $SD = 1.37$ )
30. \*\*I'm dating a PE teacher at the moment. So I am literally embracing my childhood fears. \_\_\_\_\_ ( $\mu = 3.00$ ,  $SD = 1.11$ )
31. \*\*You have to think positively, for example, I don't have a drinking problem. I have a drinking opportunity. \_\_\_\_\_ ( $\mu = 3.47$ ,  $SD = 1.58$ )
32. I wasn't sure about this beard at first but it's grown on me. \_\_\_\_\_ ( $\mu = 1.18$ ,  $SD = 1.18$ )
33. \*I've run this joke past all my black and ethnic-minority friends, and she said it was fine. \_\_\_\_\_ ( $\mu = 2.68$ ,  $SD = 1.42$ )
34. \*After my grandfather's funeral, I scattered his remains over the garden, which was horrible because he hadn't been cremated. \_\_\_\_\_ ( $\mu = 2.89$ ,  $SD = 1.60$ )
35. I bought a muzzle for my pet duck. Nothing flashy, but it fits the bill. \_\_\_\_\_ ( $\mu = 2.8$ ,  $SD = 1.27$ )
36. Trump's nothing like Hitler. There's no way he could write a book. \_\_\_\_\_ ( $\mu = 3.00$ ,  $SD = 1.27$ )
37. I've given up asking rhetorical questions. What's the point? \_\_\_\_\_ ( $\mu = 2.89$ ,  $SD = 1.15$ )

38. I'm looking for the girl next door type. I'm just gonna keep moving house till I find her. \_\_\_\_\_ ( $\mu = 2.89$ ,  $SD = 1.15$ )
39. \*\*I like to imagine the guy who invented the umbrella was going to call it the 'brella'. But he hesitated. \_\_\_\_\_ ( $\mu = 3.32$ ,  $SD = 1.42$ )
40. I'm bad with names. It's not my fault, it's a condition. There's a name for it. \_\_\_\_\_ ( $\mu = 3.00$ ,  $SD = 1.49$ )
41. I have two boys, 5 and 6. We're no good at naming things in our house. \_\_\_\_\_ ( $\mu = 3.26$ ,  $SD = 1.56$ )
42. I wasn't particularly close to my dad before he died... which was lucky, because he stepped on a land mine. \_\_\_\_\_ ( $\mu = 3.21$ ,  $SD = 1.51$ )
43. Whenever someone says, 'I don't believe in coincidences.' I say, 'Oh my God, me neither!' \_\_\_\_\_ ( $\mu = 2.79$ ,  $SD = 1.58$ )
44. \*As a vegan, I think people who sell meat are disgusting; but apparently people who sell fruit and veg are grocer. \_\_\_\_\_ ( $\mu = 2.74$ ,  $SD = 1.15$ )
45. \*For me dying is a lot like going camping. I don't want to do it. \_\_\_\_\_ ( $\mu = 2.42$ ,  $SD = 1.58$ )
46. \*\*I wonder how many chameleons snuck onto the Ark. \_\_\_\_\_ ( $\mu = 3.47$ ,  $SD = 1.26$ )

## Appendix B

### IRB

#### INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW

Office of Research Compliance,  
010A Sam Ingram Building,  
2269 Middle Tennessee Blvd  
Murfreesboro, TN 37129



BOARD

### IRBN007 – EXEMPTION DETERMINATION NOTICE

Wednesday, October 24, 2018

Principal Investigator **Aleea Hollandsworth** (Student)  
Faculty Advisor Tom Brinthaup  
Co-Investigators NONE  
Investigator Email(s) *ajh7k@mtmail.mtsu.edu; tom.brinthaup@mtsu.edu*  
Department Communications Studies & Psychology

Protocol Title ***Behind the laughs: The relationship between narcissism and humor styles in an individualistic culture***  
Protocol ID **19-1058**

Dear Investigator(s),

The above identified research proposal has been reviewed by the MTSU Institutional Review Board (IRB) through the **EXEMPT** review mechanism under 45 CFR 46.101(b)(2) within the research category (2) *Educational Tests*. A summary of the IRB action and other particulars in regard to this protocol application is tabulated as shown below:

IRB Action	EXEMPT from further IRB review***	Date	10/24/18
Date of Expiration	NOT APPLICABLE		
Sample Size	300 (THREE HUNDRED)		

Participant Pool	<b>Healthy Adults (18 or older) - MTSU Students</b>
Exceptions	Online consent and data collection are permitted
Mandatory Restrictions	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Participants must be 18 years or older</li> <li>2. Informed consent must be obtained from the participants</li> <li>3. Identifying information must not be collected</li> </ol>
Restrictions	<b>All restrictions for exemption apply</b>
Comments	NONE

\*\*\*This exemption determination only allows above defined protocol from further IRB review such as continuing review. However, the following post-approval requirements still apply:

- Addition/removal of subject population should not be implemented without IRB approval
- Change in investigators must be notified and approved
- Modifications to procedures must be clearly articulated in an addendum request and the proposed changes must not be incorporated without an approval
- Be advised that the proposed change must comply within the requirements for exemption
- Changes to the research location must be approved – appropriate permission letter(s) from external institutions must accompany the addendum request form
- Changes to funding source must be notified via email ([irb\\_submissions@mtsu.edu](mailto:irb_submissions@mtsu.edu))
- The exemption does not expire as long as the protocol is in good standing
- Project completion must be reported via email ([irb\\_submissions@mtsu.edu](mailto:irb_submissions@mtsu.edu))
- Research-related injuries to the participants and other events must be reported within 48 hours of such events to [compliance@mtsu.edu](mailto:compliance@mtsu.edu)

IRBN007      Version 1.3  
Office of Compliance

Revision Date 05.22.2018 Institutional Review Board  
Middle Tennessee State University

## Post-approval Protocol Amendments:

The current MTSU IRB policies allow the investigators to make the following types of changes to this protocol without the need to report to the Office of Compliance, as long as the proposed changes do not result in the cancellation of the protocols eligibility for exemption:

- Editorial and minor administrative revisions to the consent form or other study documents
- Increasing/decreasing the participant size



**Only THREE procedural amendment requests will be entertained per year. This amendment restriction does not apply to minor changes such as language usage and addition/removal of research personnel.**

Date	Amendment(s)	IRB Comments
NONE	NONE.	NONE

The investigator(s) indicated in this notification should read and abide by all applicable post-approval conditions imposed with this approval. [Refer to the post-approval guidelines posted in the MTSU IRB's website.](#) Any unanticipated harms to participants or adverse events must be reported to the Office of Compliance at (615) 494-8918 within 48 hours of the incident.

All of the research-related records, which include signed consent forms, current & past investigator information, training certificates, survey instruments and other documents related to the study, must be retained by the PI or the faculty advisor (if the PI is a student) at the secure location mentioned in the protocol application. The data storage must be maintained for at least three (3) years after study completion. Subsequently, the researcher may destroy the data in a manner that maintains confidentiality and anonymity. IRB reserves the right to modify, change or cancel the terms of this letter without prior notice. Be advised that IRB also reserves the right to inspect or audit your records if needed.

Sincerely,

Institutional Review Board  
Middle Tennessee State University

Quick Links:

[Click here](#) for a detailed list of the post-approval responsibilities. More information on exempt procedures can be found [here](#).