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Humor Study in Hong Kong

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Abstract

This paper focuses on reviewing the literatures regarding a rather new research topic – “humor”, followed by examining the effect of gender and inter-correlations among the 4 humor styles suggested by Martin Rod (2003), namely affiliative humor, self-enhancing humor, aggressive humor and self-defeating humor. Besides, a new attempt on finding out the relationship among the 4 humor styles and variables of creativity, namely, novelty, diversity and divergent thinking will be investigated. Information concerning humor such as the perception of importance of humor in life, self-rating of humor, important traits necessary for ideal personality and creativity will also be collected.

The current survey-based research employed two sets of instruments for measurement: *Humor Styles Questionnaire (HSQ)* and *Cross Cultural (Chinese) Personality Assessment Inventory-2 (CPAI-2)*. 103 university students (60 males & 40 females) from City University of Hong Kong participated in the research, in which 30 minutes were given to them to fill in the questionnaires. Results showed that there was statistically significant difference between the means of aggressive humor style for male and female students; while both sexes do not perceive themselves humorous, even though they think it is important. Besides, “humorous” were not valued as important trait for ideal personality and creativity by the Hong Kong students.

Table of Content

Content	Page no.
Abstract.....	2
Table of Content.....	3-4
1. Introduction	
1.1 General Information about Humor	
1.1.1 What is “ <i>Humor</i>	6-12
1.1.2 Theories of Humor	12-17
1.1.2.1 Psychoanalytic Theory	
1.1.2.2 Incongruity Theories	
1.1.2.3 Superiority/Disparagement Theories	
1.1.3 Functions and Styles of Humor.....	17-26
1.2. Previous Studies of Humor	
1.2.1 Studies of Humor in the West	26-28
1.2.2 Studies of Humor in Asia.....	28-29
1.3. Humor and Creativity.....	
1.3.1 What is “ <i>Creativity</i> ”?.....	29-31
1.3.2 Studies of Relationship between Humor and..... Creativity	31-36
1.4. Aims and Significance of the Present Study.....	36-38

2. Method

2.1 Subjects.....38

2.2 Measurements.....38-40

2.3 Procedure.....40-41

3. Results

3.1 Perception of Importance of Humor VS..... .42
Self-rating of Humor

3.2 Gender Difference in Self-rating of Humor.....43

3.3 Top 10 Nominated Humorous Persons45

3.4 Valuation of “humorous” as Trait for ideal.....46-48
personality & Creativity

3.5 Inter-correlations of the four Humor Styles48-49

3.6 Gender Difference in Humor Styles.....49

3.7 Relationship between Humor Styles &50
Variables of Creativity

4. Discussion

4.1 Significant of the Present Study.....51-53

4.2 Implications..... 53-55

4.3 Contributions and Limitation..... .56

References.....56-64

1. Introduction

“Humor”- the apparent novel topic, which had long been neglected and unwelcome by researchers because of its unfamiliar, mysterious nature, has now been gaining importance and considerable concern in recent decades over different disciplines in research fields including linguistics, sociology, anthropology, literary studies, philosophy, history, computer science, and biology. While psychological research in humor, accompanying the long-standing research interest in cognitive aspects, has increasing devotion and focus on interpersonal functions, emotional components, and biological processes in humor as well (Mueller, 2006). The emergence of innovative psychological research in humor ranging from one of the earliest empirical research of individual differences in sense of humor conducted by Kambouropoulou (1926, 1930), to the factor analytic approaches to humor appreciation, to the cognitive linguistic approaches to humor, (for example, empirical investigations on the relationship between humor and general creativity emphasizing humor production or comprehension), (Martin, 1998) to the recent neuroimaging studies examining the brain regions involved in the comprehension and enjoyment of humor, and to the evolutionary theories of humor and laughter that raise intriguing hypotheses for future studies, (Mueller, 2006) did tell us nothing more than the fact that *the long unknown mystery of humor will soon be revealed; the truth be unmasked and uncovered; passwords assessable to solving puzzles of humor be decoded; the skin of humor be sliced and defoliated... creepingly and progressively.* As regards the great efforts and contributions made by different scholars concerning the interesting yet challenging topic of humor, let's get some insight and background information by reviewing relevant literatures over humor in

a rather interdisciplinary approach (cross-fertilization) before jumping onto my current research:

1.1 General Information about Humor

1.1.1. What is “*Humor*”?

“*Humor* represents a cognitive, emotional, and motivational stance toward incongruity, as inherent in funny artifacts, but also in inadvertently amusing situations, our fellows behaviors and attitudes, in fate and life and human nature and existence in general. The playful reception, enjoyment and generation of non-serious communication, the composed and cheerful view on adversity that allows to derive a light and positive side in a serious situation, maintaining good mood and enabling oneself and others to smile at it and be amused by the funny aspect, the purposeful use of wit to affect emotional state in others and regulate social relations.” (Ruch, 2002:1).

The questions of what “*humor*” is and the urge of defining the terms “*humor*” and “*sense of humor*” were frequently posed in earlier writings and numerous definitions were presented by different scholars [selected] as follows: According to Henmen, (2001), “*Humor* refers to a playful frame of mind that gives individual a feeling of well-being, better thinking skills, and relieve of pain feeling.” Konx (1951:541), who employed the existential approach, defined *humor* as “playful chaos in a serious world,” and stated that “*humor* is a species of liberation, and it is the liberation that comes to us as we experience the singular delight of beholding chaos that is playful and make-believe in a world that is serious and coercive” (Martin, 1998) Hershkowitz (1977), on the other hand, “described *humor* metaphorically as a coin spinning so rapidly we can see both sides simultaneously”. (Wicher, 1985). As stated by Simpson &

Weiner (1989), “the Oxford English Dictionary defines *humor* as ‘that quality of action, speech, or writing which excites amusement; oddity, jocularly, facetiousness, comicality, fun.’” while “the term ‘*sense of humor*’ will be used here in a more specific sense, to refer to a personality trait or individual difference variable (or, more likely, a family of related traits or variables). Thus, *sense of humor* is viewed as a construct within the domain of personality psychology.” Allport, taking the same direction, discussed *sense of humor* as a characteristic of the healthy or mature personality. (Martin, 1998:16-17, 42-43)

Apart from the above definitions, the meaning of the term “*humor*” has been changing along with the historical development in different cultures. In the Western world, “humor”, which was originally meaning *liquid* in Latin, had undergone a lot of changes throughout history, and eventually became the supreme term. According to Schmidt-Hidding (1963), “The meaning of the term ‘humor’ has changed often and significantly throughout history and during different epochs it has been viewed as a predominant *mood, talent, virtue, style, philosophical attitude or world view.*” (Ruch, 1998, Schmidt-Hidding, 1963 & Wickberg, 1998) Before the late 16th century, the term “*humor*” was *not* in the field of the comic or funny, but as medical science progressed, humoral pathology was abandoned and the term *humor* survived as an anthropological theory. (Ruch, 2002) As stated in the Oxford English Dictionary in 1616, “*humor* referred to a more or less predominant mood quality either positive (good humor) or negative (bad humor). Good humored and bad humored eventually became dispositions and by the turn of the 16th century the dictionary definition of good humor was ‘the condition of being in a cheerful and amiable mood; also, the disposition or habit of amiable cheerfulness.’” (Ruch, 1998) However, in the 1680’s, the meaning of

humor in Europe became so negative, expanded to include behavior deviating from social norms, or abnormality in general. By that time, “a *humor* meant an odd, uncommon, and eccentric character whose peculiarities emerged from an imbalance of body fluids and who was subsequently laughed at. While later, this involuntary funny, odd and quaint object of laughter became known as the *humorist*, and the *man of humor* took pleasure in exposing and imitating the peculiarities of the humorist. Humor and wit became seen as *talents* relating to the ability to make others laugh. Then, the next significant shift was humanism, inasmuch as *humor* acquired its positive, versus formerly neutral, meaning (the frequent association of “good” and “humor” eventually made the neutral term humor into a positively loaded term). By the end of the 17th century, moralists tried to distinguish between “true” and “false” wit, as they did between “good” and “bad” humor. And according to Schmidt-Hidding (1963), a term became necessary for the *humanitarian*, *tolerant*, and *benevolent* forms of laughter, and that term was found in good humor, later humor alone. During this epoch there was also a gradual shift in humor *dispositions* from sheer *ability* (a talent of ridicule, wit, or humor) to make others laugh to a *virtue* of sense of humor. And until the beginning of the 19th century, the conceptual distinction between wit and humor was completed. Humor received a philosophical twist; e.g., Samuel Taylor Coleridge (1772-1843) stated that humor arises ‘whatever the finite is contemplated in reference to the infinite’ (quoted from Schmidt-Hidding, 1963: 141) In the second half of the 19th century the sense of humor was part of the English life style and a person lacking it was not considered complete.” (Ruch, 1998 & 2002)

While in China, the term “*humor*” has been undergoing a rather different evolution throughout history. “*Humor* was first documented around 2,500 BC in China when the first Chinese poetry and literary books appeared. Humor has not been valued in Chinese society

compared with the Western as there has been a cultural bias against humor.” (Yue, 2007)

According to Kao (1974), “The Chinese word *youmo* of humor first appeared in 1923 in the literary supplement of Beijing’s Morning Post.” *Youmo* is the first Chinese translation for humor, which was first translated by Dr. Lin Yu-tang (1895-1976) Before the translation of *Youmo*, *huaji*, which was first used by Chu Yuan, was used to characterize ‘a smoothen and ingratiating manner with the prince which he obviously did not possess’ (Kao, 1974), this traditional term was gradually given up and replaced by the modern term *youmo* by the Chinese people. Over 3000, Chinese humor has evolved greatly from comics acts, shows, or drama, to satires prose, folk satires, political satire, to jerk humor, cold humor and non-sense humor. (Yue, 2007).

However, despite the above different definitions of humor, Raskin (1998:95) argued that, “The concept of the *sense of humor* is, of course, hard to define both because of the complex nature of humor and of the somewhat elusive nature of the trait of being able to detect and/or produce. Ruch, (1998) shared the similar view with Raskin, expressed his view that the questions of seeking to define the terminology of “*humor*” and “*sense of humor*” were somewhat misleading which imply answers containing absolute truth. (p.5) He stated that rather than answering the above questions, it is more important to consider the question “How have we used humor so far”, that is, to consider the multiple usage of “*humor*”. He also expressed his view that “current terminology can be considered in a state of flux: new concepts and terms are constantly added while older terms are still in use; thus, different terms for the same phenomena coexist.” And therefore, he claimed that “‘*humor*’ then means something different depending on the framework and unawareness of these coexisting and

differing terminologies leads to confusion in both theory and empirical findings.” Besides, he further clarified his view in his later paper (2002) that, “There is *not yet* an agreed-upon terminology in research on humor, not to speak of a consensus on the definition of humor. Rather, there are different and conflicting terminological systems and *two* should be mentioned at the outset as they assign different roles to the key term “*humor*”. (p.6) The two major terminological systems are as follows:

“This historical nomenclature stems from the field of aesthetics (as studied by philosophers and psychologists) where the *comic* – defined as the faculty able to make one laugh or to amuse – is distinguished from other aesthetic qualities, such as beauty, harmony, or the tragic. Humor is simply *one* element of the comic – as are wit, fun, nonsense, sarcasm, ridicule, satire, or irony – and basically denotes a smiling attitude toward life and its imperfections: an understanding of the incongruities of existence. Humor in this narrow sense was seen to be based on a sympathetic heart, not on a superior spirit (like wit), or vitality/high spirits (like fun). (p.6).

And in this system, the meaning of “*sense of humor*” is narrower, Nicolson (1946) suggested that it does not incorporate what would be understood by a “sense of fun”, “sense of wit”, or “sense of mockery” and so forth.

“... the sense of humor, as distinct from, the sense of the comic, is affected, not by a sudden manifestation of the incongruous, but by a gradual realization of the incongruous. This is a significant difference. It suggests that the sense of humor, unlike the appreciation of wit, does not require the stimulus of condensation and surprise. It suggests also that the sense of humor entails processes which are slower than those of

the physical or immediate reaction; that it is an attitude of mind rather than an activity of mind' that it is a contemplative subconscious habit rather than an intuitive flash; ..." (p.14).

Ruch (2002), on the other hand, gave the following illustration on another major terminological system: ‘

“The alternative, almost incompatible, current use of “humor” is its role as an umbrella term to all phenomena of the funny, including the capacity to perceive, interpret, and enjoy but also create and perform non-serious incongruous communications. Thus, in this terminology humor has replaced the comic/funny as the supreme term, and is treated as a neutral concept; i.e., not restricted to positive occasions for laughter. Several newer terms are used to distinguish among phenomena, but it would be wrong to speak of a fully-fledged terminological system. Regarding the key terms, ‘humor creation’ now comes closest to ‘wit’, ‘aggressive humor’ resembles mock/ridicule, and ‘coping humor’ is similar but not identical to ‘humor’ in the traditional sense. While this understanding of “humor” seems to dominate in current Anglo-American research its new use as a collective term is not unproblematic. The positive connotation prevails and often psychologists have difficulty in treating humor as a neutral concept. This can be seen in the fact that humor inventories typically refer to positive occasions for laughter and lack items relating to the dark side of humor, e.g., a skillful and effective use of sarcastic remarks. Furthermore, research hypotheses almost exclusively relate humor to positive not negative phenomena.” (p.3).

In brief, the terminology “*humor*” and “*sense of humor*” do *not* have an absolute, distinct definition separately given the fact that they are greatly affected by nature to different degrees (complex and elusive). Besides, the differences in terminology are thought as a product of cultural developments as well. In the Western world, humor was once

defined as a positive, negative, or neutral term given the different period of time, and it has been viewed as a predominant mood, talent, virtue, style, philosophical attitude or world view; while in China, humor was first documented around 2,5000 BC but because of the cultural reason, humor has *not* been valued so much in Chinese society compared to the western ones.

1.1.2 Theories of Humor

Enormous theories of humor were devised by scholars, but most of them were grouped into few major categories; for instance, “Monro (1963) classified existing humor theories into *four* types, which he labeled superiority, incongruity, release from restraint, and ambivalence.” “Eysenck (1942) proposed a theory of humor suggesting that humor involves *three* components or facets: cognitive, conative, and affective. The cognitive aspects are emphasized in incongruity theories of humor, the conative in superiority/disparagement theories, and the affective in theories that stress the positive emotions associated with laughter.” (Martin, 1998). In order to have a better understanding on humor and to grasp an overview of how major theorists interpreting humor, *three* representative and influential theories, namely, psychoanalytic, incongruity, and superiority will be represented as follows:

1.1.2.1. Psychoanalytic Theory

Instead of specifically discussing individual differences on humor or employing the term “sense of humor”, Freud put great emphasis on the processes that he hypothesized to happen in all individuals when they are responding to *mirthful* situations. “According to Freud, humor (as distinct from jokes) is a sort of *defense mechanism* that allows one to face a difficult situation without becoming overwhelmed by unpleasant emotion.” (Martin, 1998).

Interestingly, Freud (1928:5) viewed humor as the action of the *parental superego* attempting to comfort and reassure the anxious ego. The book *Jokes and their relation to the unconscious* (Freud, 1960 [1905]), and a short paper entitled “Humor” (Freud, 1928) are *two* major theoretical writings written by Freud concerning the topic of “humor”. Freud proposed that there are *three* different types or categories of mirthful experience: *jokes* (German *Witz*, sometimes inaccurately translated as “wit”), *the comic*, and *humor*. (Martin, 1998) “Each of these involves a saving or economizing of *psychic energy* which, having become unnecessary for its normal purposes, is *dissipated* in the form of laughter. From Freud’s interpretation, the third category of mirthful experience, that is, the term “humor”, “occurs in situations in which persons would normally experience *negative emotions* such as fear, sadness, or anger, but the perception of amusing or incongruous elements in the situation provides them with an *altered* perspective on the situation and allows them to avoid experiencing this negative affect. The *pleasure* of humor (in this narrow sense) arises from the release of energy that would have been associated with this painful emotion but has now become redundant.”(Martin, 1998:18-19).

The main claim of Freud’s Psychoanalytic theory is that “humor” is considered as a kind of defense mechanism for us to deal with or overcome our negative, unpleasant emotions such as fear, sadness, or anger. It is also viewed as the action of the parental superego aiming to comfort and reassure the anxious ego, for which the pleasure of humor arises from the release of psychic energy that is dissipated in the form of laughter.

1.1.2.2 Incongruity Theories

According to Latta (1999), Incongruity theory is to be found in the Roman poet and satirist Horace, who wrote:

“If a painter chose to join a human head to the neck of a horse, and to spread feathers of many a hue over limbs picked up now here now there, so that what at the top is a lovely woman ends below in a black and ugly fish, could you, my friends, if favored with a private view, refrain from laughing?” ([c.16 B.C.?] 1929:451)
(Latta, 1999:101)

In Martin’s text (1998), contrary to Psychoanalytic theory, which emphasizes emotion and motivation, incongruity theories focus on the *cognitive* elements of humor. According to this approach, “humor involves the bringing together of two normally disparate ideas, concepts, or situations in a surprising or unexpected manner.” (Martin, 1998): The following claims made by the writers Kant and Schopenhauer are representative within this approach

“According to Kant, “laughter is an affection arising from the sudden transformation of a strained expectation into nothing”. (quoted by Piddington, 1963: 168). In other words, that which is originally perceived in one (often serious) sense is suddenly viewed from a totally different (usually implausible or ludicrous) perspective, and the original expectation bursts like a bubble, resulting in a pleasurable experience accompanied by laughter. Similarly, Schopenhauer stated that “the cause of laughter in every case is simply the sudden perception of the incongruity between a concept and the real objects

which have been thought through it in some relation, and laughter itself is just the expression of this incongruity. ...All laughter then is occasioned by a paradox.” (quoted by Piddington, 1963:172) (p.25).

Besides, Eysenck (1942: 307) summarized the cognitive elements involved in humor by stating that “laughter results from the sudden, insightful integration of contradictory or incongruous ideas, attitudes, or sentiments which are experienced objectively.” (Martin, 1998). While Koestler further elaborated the incongruity approach to humor by linking up the relationship of humor and creativity as follows:

“The term “bisociation” refer to the juxtaposition of two normally incongruous frames of reference, or the discovery of various similarities or analogies implicit in concepts normally considered remote from each other. According to Koestler, the process of bisociation occurs in scientific discoveries and artistic creativity as well as in humor. Humor is thus seen as part of the creative activity of humans.” (p.25-26)

The main focus of Incongruity theories is on the cognitive aspects of sense of humor, particularly the *creative* thought processes that are involved in *humor* production and comprehension. Kant and Schopenhauer did contributions on emphasizing that laughter arises by the sudden perception of the incongruity between two normally disparate ideas; while Koestler coined the term “bisociation” for implying the close relationship between humor and creativity.

1.1.2.3. Superiority/Disparagement Theories

Superiority or disparagement theories are among the *oldest* theories of humor, dating back to Plato and Aristotle. Aristotle concluded that “laughter arises primarily in response to weakness and ugliness. The superiority approach, suggested by a famous statement of Thomas Hobbes that, - the passion of laughter is nothing else but some sudden glory arising from some sudden conception of some eminence in ourselves, by comparison with the infirmity of others, or with our own formerly (quoted by Piddington, 1963:160). Thus, humor is thought to result from a sense of superiority derived from the disparagement of another person or of one’s own past blunders or foolishness.” (Martin 1998) While Gruner (1978, 1997), one of the most outspoken advocates of this approach, stated that “ridicule is the basic component of all humorous material, and ... to understand a piece of humorous material it is necessary only to find out who is ridiculed, how, and why” (Gruner, 1978:14). He further proposed that ‘what is necessary and sufficient to cause laughter is a combination of *a loser, a victim* of derision or ridicule, with suddenness of *loss*’” (Gruner, 1978:31). (Martin, 1998) Besides, Gruner concurred with Rapp’s (1949, 1951) phylogenetic theory which suggests that humor evolved in humans from the laughter of *triumph in battle*, through mockery and ridicule, to work-play, jokes and riddles. Martin (1998:30), in his paper “*Approaches to the sense of humor: A historical review*” suggested a possible implication of this theory, “...sense of humor is positively related to general traits of aggression, hostility, or dominance. If humor always involves some aggressive element, then those who enjoy and express humor most, regardless of the content or type of humor involved, would be expected to be most aggressive.”

The main claim of the superiority/disparagement theories is that, as illustrated by Aristotle, “laughter arises primarily in response to weakness and ugliness.” (Marin, 1998) While Gruner’s proposition (1978:31) on the cause of laughter arises from a combination of a loser, a victim of derision or ridicule with suddenness of loss seems to imply that sense of humor is positively related to general traits of aggression, hostility, or dominance.

1.1.3 Functions and Styles of Humor

I. Functions of humor

Humor is inseparable from our total life experience. According to Koller (1988:17), “humor is estimated to comprise almost one-half of the total nature of human life.” Ruch (1998) figured out *the importance of humor* by saying that “both laypersons and scholars assign the sense of humor a prominent role in our lives; and that in everyday life we use expressions like having or lacking a sense of humor to explain why people behave the way they do.” Along the recent, continual efforts made by researchers on exploring the different functions of humor, apparent results seem to confirm that having a sense of humor would *benefit* us in a number of ways. For example, according to Kuiper & Martin (1998:159), “Researchers generally assume that individuals with a greater sense of humor possess a number of other desirable traits, *such as greater optimism, self-acceptance, self-confidence, and autonomy*. Humorous people are also thought to be able to cope more effectively with stress, to generally experience less negative moods such as depression and anxiety, to enjoy greater physical health, and to have more positive and healthy relationships with others (Kuiper & Olinger in press).” The following are the review of various literatures concerning the different research results that confirmed and viewed sense of humor as a *desired human quality*:

“There is a consensus in the psychological literature that a sense of humor has many benefits (e.g. McGhee, 1991; Mindess, 1971; Ziv, 1981b). Maslow ¹(1954), stated that one characteristic of *healthy*, self-actualizing people is that they possess a non-hostile sense of humor. Sense of humor helps in *coping with stress* (Biz et al. 1988; Lefcourt & Martin, 1986; Nezu et al., 1988), *pain* (Cousins, 1981, 1989; Nevo et al, 1983), *burnout* (Pines et al., 1980). Humor improves *processes of creative thought* (Ziv, 1983), *learning processes* (Zillmann & Bryant, 1983), and above all makes *an important contribution to social processes*, both on the individual level and group level (Martineau, 1972). Humor *improves both physical and mental health*, strengthens the immune system, produces muscle relaxation, and *enhances positive emotions* (McGhee, 1991)

Besides, Sense of humor is one of the most frequently mentioned *characteristics of the Ideal teacher* (Drayer, 1970; Ziv, 1981b). It has been suggested that humor has a beneficial influence on *reduction of anxiety*, *attracting attention*, and *retention of information*. Humor may serve as a *coping device* for teachers as well as students to deal with stress, anxiety, and aggression (Zajdman, 1993; Ziv, 1981b). Humor has the potential of *creating a social atmosphere* conducive to learning. It serves as a *valuable technique* in solving educational problems, and in coping with demands of society and the education system (Zajdman, 1993; Ziv, 1981b).” (Aharonson, Nevo, & Klingman, 1998:13)

Apart from Maslow, one of the personality theorists, Allport also discussed the importance of a sense of humor in psychological health. In Allport’s (1961) Personological theory of Personality, “sense of humor is viewed as a characteristic of the healthy or mature personality. He considered the mature personality to be characterized by a positive and integrated sense of self, warm relationship with others, realistic perceptions, a unifying

¹ A healthy or mature sense of humor may be viewed as part of a constellation of positive personality characteristics that enhances general well-being

philosophy of life, and insight. He viewed *a mature sense of humor* as being closely related to insight, as it involves the ability to laugh at oneself while maintaining a sense of self-acceptance. Quoting the novelist Meredith, Allport (1961:292) described a healthy sense of humor as ‘the ability to laugh at the things one loves (including, of course, oneself and all that pertains to oneself), and still to love them’. In his study of prejudice, Allport (1954:437) also discusses sense of humor as a characteristic of the *unprejudiced or tolerant personality*. He stated that ‘one who can laugh at oneself is unlikely to *feel greatly superior* to other.’ (Martin, 1998)

Beside the above interpretation of sense of humor by Allport, humor is thought to be beneficial as follows:

Humor as liberation (approach):

“The disparagement/superiority approach to humor seems to portray humor as a rather negative human activity, associated with aggression, hostility, and derision. However, several theoretical approaches to humor, although derived from the disparagement/superiority approach, have taken a *more positive perspective*, noting that humor *enhances one’s self-esteem and feelings of competence* in the face of external threat. Rather than focusing on the hostile, sarcastic, and derisive aspects of superiority humor, this approach – *humor as liberation*, emphasizes the *positive feelings of well-being and efficacy*, and the *sense of liberation and freedom from threat* experienced when one is able to poke fun at other people or situations that would normally be viewed as threatening or constrictive.

“... this approach seems to suggest that individuals with a sense of humor, as compared to their more serious and sacred aspects of life, while *continuing to embrace life despite its injustice, hypocrisy, and foolishness*. An implication would also be that a sense of humor

allows for more adaptive and authentic functioning because it helps the individual to avoid becoming overwhelmed by the constraints and demands of life.” (Martin, 1998:41)

Furthermore, Killinger (1977) confirmed the benefit of humor by finding that humor enables us to *break free of the mental sets*... keep problems in perspective, or provides a different focus. Koestler (1975) suggested that humor affect an *increase in objectivity*; increase our ability to see the same data through a variety of frameworks. Studies carried out by Maddi & Kobasa (1984) and Crowley, Hayslip & Hobdy (2003) showed that people with a good sense of humor will develop *high self-esteem, self-efficacy, and strong ego strength and self-determination*. And according to the research carried out by Cann & Calohoun, (2001), individuals possessing a *higher sense of humor* were perceived as *lower in neuroticism and higher in agreeableness* than “typical”, or “below average” sense of humor others. The findings confirmed the importance of a high sense of humor as a social asset.

In addition, previous research has provided evidence that sense of humor *facilitates social and interpersonal interactions*. “Hampes (1992) found *significantly higher interpersonal intimacy and lower social isolation* among participants with higher levels of laughter responsiveness (SHRQ). Also, senses of humor scores were significantly related to high endorsement of self-descriptive adjectives reflecting sociability among university students (Kuiper & Martin, 1993) as well as among clinically depressed patients, but not schizophrenics.” (Kuiper et al. in press).

For the aspect of promoting psychological well-being, according to Martin & Lefcourt (1983), “individual with a greater sense of humor are *less* adversely affected by stressful life events, as shown, for example, by *less increase in negative moods* such as depression and anxiety (and less decrease in immune functioning as measured by secretory immunoglobulin

A.” (Martin & Dobbin, 1988) “Kuiper et al. (1993) found that individuals with higher levels of coping humor, as assessed by the CHS were more likely to appraise an upcoming academic examination as a positive challenge rather than a negative threat, and to subsequently evaluate their own performance and adjust their expectations for future performance in a more realistic and self-protective manner. We have also found some evidence of *positive enhancement effects* of sense of humor. Kuiper and Martin (1993) found that individuals with higher scores on various humor measures had *higher levels of self-esteem, less discrepancy between their actual and ideal self-concepts, and more stable self-concepts, and were less likely to endorse dysfunctional self-evaluative standards and irrational, excessive contingencies for perceptions of self-worth.*”

To summarize, previous research has provided some evidence that sense of humor may be viewed as a *multidimensional* positive personality characteristic with a number of *facilitative* effects. These include stress-reduction and positive enhancement effects ranging from more positive cognitive appraisals of life events to more facilitative social and interpersonal interactions.

II. Styles of humor

Recently, Martin Rod (Martin, Puhlik-Doris, Larsen, Gray, & Weir, in submission) revised his approach and conceptualized interpersonal and intrapsychic functions of humor in everyday life from a social functionalist perspective (Martin, Puhlik-Doris, Larsen, Gray, & Weir, in submission). According to this approach, *four* general functions (4 Humor Styles) of humor emerge by crossing two distinctions, namely whether humor is relatively benign and benevolent versus potentially detrimental or injurious.

(1) Affiliative humor

“Affiliative humor is benign communal humor such as telling jokes, engaging in witty repartee, or otherwise amusing others as a means of promoting social cohesion, morale, and attraction, and reducing conflicts and tension.” (Ruch, 2002). People who belong to this style inclined to say funny things, to tell jokes, and to engage in spontaneous witty banter to amuse others, to facilitate relationships, and to reduce interpersonal tensions. (Lefcourt, 2001). Vaillant (1977) further explained that people with affiliative humor style are likely to put others at ease, and also likely to engage in self-deprecating humor, saying funny things about themselves and not taking themselves overly seriously, while maintaining a sense of self-acceptance. “This is an essentially non-hostile, tolerant use of humor that is affirming of self and others and presumably enhances interpersonal cohesiveness and attraction. This style of humor is expected to be related to extraversion cheerfulness, self-esteem, intimacy, relationship satisfaction, and predominantly positive moods and emotions.” (Martin et al., 2003)

(2) Self-enhancing humor

According to Ruch (2002), “*Self-enhancing humor* is seen as benign agentic humor involving, for example, humor as a means of coping with stress, perspective-taking humor, or humor as a defense mechanism.” Kuiper, Martin, & Olinger (1993) stated that “This dimension involves a generally humorous outlook on life, a tendency to be frequently amused by the incongruities of life, and to maintain a humorous perspective even in the face of stress or adversity.” Martin (1996) further asserted that self-enhancing humor is closely allied to the concept of coping humor, while Lefcourt et al. (1995) related it to perspective-taking humor. It was also considered as an emotion regulation or coping mechanism (Dixon,

1980; Martin, Kuiper, Olinger, & Dance, 1993) This style is most consistent with the Freudian definition of humor; as mentioned earlier, Freud viewed humor as a healthy defense mechanism that allows one to avoid or overcome negative, unpleasant emotions, while maintaining a realistic perspective on a potentially aversive situation. (Freud, 1928) According to Martin, Puhlik-Doris, Larsen, Gray & Weir (2003), “In comparison to Affiliative humor, this use of humor has a more intrapsychic than interpersonal focus, and is therefore not expected to be as strongly related to extraversion. Given the focus on the regulation of negative emotion through humorous perspective-taking, this dimension is hypothesized to be negatively related to negative emotions such as depression and anxiety and, more generally, to neuroticism, and positively related to openness to experience, self-esteem, and psychological well-being.”

(3) Aggressive humor

Ruch (2002) illustrated that aggressive humor “refers to humor used to enhance the self at the expense of one’s relationships, as seen, for example, in ridicule, sarcasm, mockery, or manipulative or coercive uses of humor.” While Zillman (1983), on the same direction, believed that this style is related to “the use of sarcasm, teasing, ridicule, derision, “put-down,” or disparagement humor.” Jane & Olson (2000) further stated that “it also includes the use of humor to manipulate others by means of an implied threat of ridicule” (Martin et al. (2003) expected that “this dimension of humor is positively related to neuroticism and particularly hostility, anger, and aggression, and negatively related to relationship satisfaction, agreeableness, and conscientiousness.”

(4) Self-defeating humor

“Self-defeating humor is humor used to enhance relationships with others at the expense or detriment of oneself, such as excessively self-disparaging humor, or humor as avoidance or denial.” (Ruch, 2002) Kubie (1971) stated that “this dimension involves excessively self-disparaging humor, attempts to amuse others by doing or saying funny things at one’s own expense as a means of ingratiating oneself or gaining approval, allowing oneself to be the ‘butt’ of others’ humor, and laughing along with others when being ridiculed or disparaged. This dimension is also hypothesized to involve the use of humor as a form of defensive denial, or the tendency to engage in humorous behavior as a means of hiding one’s underlying negative feelings, or avoiding dealing constructively with problems.” Fabrizi & Pollio (1987) pointed out that “although individuals who are high on this humor dimension may be seen as quite witty or amusing, there is an element of emotional neediness, avoidance, and low self-esteem underlying their use of humor.” (Martin, Puhlik-Doris, Larsen, Gray & Weir, 2003) Martin et al. (2003) also claimed that “this style of humor is expected to be positively related to neuroticism and negative emotions such as depression and anxiety, and negatively related to relationship satisfaction, psychological well-being, and self-esteem.”

As interpreted by Ruch (2002), “...in a first study of Humor Style Questionnaire (HSQ) developed by Martin Rod which involved several samples, the two measures of “benign” styles of humor are generally positively related to indicators of psychological health and well-being, and negatively related to negative moods. In contrast, the two measures of “detrimental” uses of humor are positively correlated with measures of poor psychological functioning, and negatively related with measures like self-esteem or social support. This

suggests that psychosocial well-being may be related as much to the absence of certain deleterious forms of humor as to the presence of more beneficial forms of humor.”

Research over the 4 Humor Styles has become popular since it first suggested by Martin Rod, a lot of previous research was undergone such as the exploration on the humor styles, peer relationships, and bullying in middle childhood (Klein & Kuiper, 2006); study on the humor styles, culture-related personality, well-being, and family adjustment among Armenians in Lebanon (Kazarian & Martin, 2006); a comparison of humor styles, coping humor, and mental health between Chinese and Canadian university students (Chan & Martin, 2004), Porter Chan’s study on humor styles, humor production in the classroom, and student ratings among university teachers, and Hampes’s study (2006) on the relation between humor styles and shyness, and so forth.

In brief, previous research confirmed that the 4 different humor styles suggested by Martin Rod, namely, affiliative humor, self-enhancing humor, aggressive humor and self-defeating, do have their own distinct characteristics, and both affiliative and self-enhancing humor were found to be related positively to agreeableness, openness, and self-esteem, whereas aggressive humor was related negatively to agreeableness and conscientiousness. Besides, self-defeating humor was related negatively to self-esteem or constructs such as emotional stability. Furthermore, self-enhancing humor is related to Freud’s Psychoanalytic Theory; while aggressive and self-defeating humor are thought to be linked to Disparagement Theories.

1.2. Previous Studies of Humor

‘1.2.1 Studies of Humor in the West

Among all the previous research of humor carried out in the West, I will just focus on the *gender and humor* studies since it is one of the main focuses of my current research.

According to Lampert & Tripp, (1998:235-237) “For a large part of this century, social scientists have commented that, when it comes to humor, men are more likely to joke, tease, and kid, whereas women are more likely to act as an appreciative audience than to produce humor of their own (Freud, 1905; Grotjahn, 1957; McGhee, 1979a; Ziv, 1984), and in public and mixed group settings, this pattern seems to have found some empirical support (Coser, 1959, 1960; Middleton & Moland, 1959; Smith & Goodchilds, 1959) Prior to 1970 and the start of the women’s movement, researchers also reported with some frequency that men were more likely than women to enjoy humor in general and especially tendentious forms with underlying aggressive and sexual themes.” (Malpass & Fitzpatrick, 1959; O’Connell, 1960; Spiegel et al., 1969).

“The greater penchant of men for humor has typically been ascribed to gender differences in *accepted standards of sex-appropriate behavior and social status*. As philosophers have argued, in social interaction humor frequently serves as an expression of social superiority (Descartes, 1911 [1649]; Hobbes, 1840 [1641]), a social corrective (Bergson, 1911), and, as already noted, a socially acceptable vehicle for expressing taboo thoughts and feelings (Freud, 1905). Because men more than women tend to be socialized to be *dominant and independent and encouraged to act in aggressive ways*, the expectation has generally been that men would be the more likely to use humor to establish dominance and social control (McGhee, 1979b). On the other hand, socialized to be nurturant, submissive, and especially

sensitive to the feelings of other people, women would be expected to be receptive to humor, yet to be more circumspect about their own clowning or joking behavior, which for them might appear immodest or derisive. Women would also be unlikely to display any enjoyment of humor which might betray feelings of sexuality or hostility. Against this backdrop of role-appropriate behavior, the argument then is that men are the more likely to initiate the use of humor because for them humor offers greater social benefits and fewer costs than it does for women.” While *social status* also figures largely into the benefits and costs equation for humor use. In everyday discourse, conversational acts, including humorous ones, carry with them certain risks depending on the person to whom they are directed. Requests, suggestions, criticism and the like are much more costly when made toward someone of greater power or status because of the heightened possibility of reproach than when directed to someone of lower status who may feel obligated to comply or acquiesce (sBrown & Levinson, 1987) Accordingly, individuals of a higher standing should possess a greater freedom to tease or make jokes about subordinates than vice versa, and in social hierarchies unrelated to gender, researchers have found this to be the case.” (Lampert & Tripp, 1998:235-237)

To summarize, previous research has supported that there is gender difference of humor, in which men tend to produce and enjoy jokes and humor more than female do; and male tends to produce more aggressive jokes with sexual content than women. Main reasons of the difference suggested were the socialization practices (or gender-role socialization) and social status one belongs to, for example, men who have long been socialized and internalized to be dominant, strong, tends to produce humor in an aggressive way; while men of a higher status/standing should hold a greater freedom on teasing the subordinates.

1.2.2 Studies of Humor in Asia

In recent years, research over the topic of humor has emerged and increased progressively in Asia, such as in China, Taiwan, Japan, and so forth. It has been such an interesting fact that the perception of humor among eastern and western countries is so different. According to a recent research conducted by Yue, Hao, Lan & Yan (2006), humor is ranked among the *least* important factors in relation to the ideal Chinese personality among the undergraduate students from Inner Mongolia Normal University; while it was found that humor is considered *non-significant* to some high creatively occupations. Humor was also found to be represented *mostly by comedians* in that research. Similar to the above results, Singaporean participants was found to have reported significantly *less use of humor for coping* in a cross-cultural, cross-gender comparison of Singaporean humor study (Nevo, Nevo & Yin, 2001). It was reported that “Content analysis of jokes supplied by Singaporean students reflected conservative values: Compared with American students, they reported a significantly greater number of jokes with aggressive content and relatively fewer jokes with sexual content. However, according to Fudano (2000), huge differences between Chinese in Shanghai and Japanese in the Kansai area (Osaka) were found: “when a new teacher tells an unfunny joke, Chinese students do not laugh and Japanese students laugh to be polite. Among close friends, Chinese students laugh at unfunny jokes, Japanese do not.” Obviously, there was cultural reason behind the scenario. Besides, according to the creativity research carried out by Rudowicz & Yue (2000), it was found that “humorous” were missing in the Chinese perception of creativity. Yue pointed out that “‘Humorous’, consistently attributed to a creative person (Cropley, 1992; Hocevar & Bachelor, 1989; Runco & Bahleda, 1987; Wu, 1992), is *not* indicative of creativity in the minds of Chinese. Therefore, according to

the previous research findings, Chinese people seems *not* to be so humorous, to which they consider both creativity and humor as not so important.

1.3. Humor and Creativity

1.3.1 What is “*Creativity*”?

“The word “*Creativity*” derives from the Latin *creare*: to make and the Greek *Krainein*: to fulfill. (Young, 1985) Franken (1994:396) stated that “Creativity is defined as the tendency to generate or recognize ideas, alternatives, or possibilities that may be useful in solving problems, communicating with others, and entertaining ourselves and others” While Weisberg in his book (1993:4), pointed out that “‘creative’ refers to novel products of value, as in ‘The airplane was a creative invention.’” “‘Creative’ also refers to the person who produces the work, as in ‘Picasso was creative.’” “‘Creativity,’ then refers both to the capacity to produce such works, as in ‘How can we foster our employees’ creativity?’ and to the activity of generating such products, as in ‘Creativity requires hard work.’” Csikszentmihalyi (1997) defined creativity as “any act, idea, or product that changes an existing domain, or that transforms an existing domain into a new one... What counts is whether the novelty he or she produces is accepted for inclusion in the domain.”

“Creativity is the paradoxical integration of doing and being. Thus, it is a flexible encounter with our world – an active letting go, an aggressive receptivity, a passive responding. It is the assimilation and integration of polarities to find new directions, new solutions, and a fresh viewpoint. It is the integration of our logical side with our intuitive side, our left-brain with our right. It is all of these and more.”

“Creativity is more than mere spontaneity for it involves deliberation as well.

It is more than divergent thinking for it converges on some solution: it not only generates possibilities, but also chooses among them. It is more than originality which may only express the bizarre, the uncommon – a purposeless reshuffling of combinations. It is as much asking the right question as finding the correct answer. It is more than play, though it includes play; it is more than work, for it involves letting go as well. It can be as ordinary as unblocked growth or extraordinary as the peak achievements and experiences of humankind. It is more than conscious effort, though at times an active encounter with the world is an essential component. It is more than revealing “archetypal symbols of a collective unconscious.” For creativity is an advance and change as well as an expression of continuity with the past. It is more than the result of past directions for something emerges as a consequence that was not present in the cause. The creative product is more than the creator envisions – and the creator becomes more by creating it.”(Young, 1985:1)

Among the theorists, “Maslow (1968), the psychologist, in his studies of “self-actualizing” people finds that health, genius, talent and productivity are *not* synonymous. He maintains that there are two kinds of creative abilities. The first, he calls, the “*self-actualizing creativeness*” and the second “*Special talent creativeness*”. The former abilities, as opposed to the latter, seem to be close to good mental health and perhaps unrelated to genius talent or productivity.” Maslow (1968) also says, “It is better to make a first rate soup than a second rate painting.” Creativity is the actualizing of our potential. It is the expression of ourselves in our becoming. It is our “being becoming.” It is our adventure into the unknown.” (Young, 1985)

According to the previous research on creativity, it has been found that there are obvious cultural and gender difference within the topic of creativity. For example, Rudowicz & Yue

(2001) stated that “Chinese culture has been known to be non-supportive to the growth and development of creativity.” (Bond, 1991; Ho, 1994; Rudowicz & Hui, 1994) Besides, Harris (1989) revealed the gender difference on creativity by stating that “According to studies dealing with the nature of the creative artist, factors characterizing such a person – productive imagination, perceptual organization, and task orientation – are surely not alien to women. ... The answer is that, for the most part, women do not perceive themselves as artists.”

1.3.2 Studies of Relationship between Humor and Creativity

Apart from the studies of humor and creativity separately, researchers have been putting efforts in researching the relationship between humor and creativity over the past 50 years, and there seems to be no doubt that humor is positively correlated with creativity, backed up by the previous findings. The term “*bisociation*” coined by Koestler appeared to be another breakthrough in the research area of the positive, close relationship between humor and creativity. Related literatures regarding the studies in this specific area will be reviewed in the following:

“There has been research since the 1950s documenting a close relationship between humor and creativity. People with a better sense of humor tend to be more creative. There is even evidence that you can boost scores on a standardized test of creativity by exposing people to humor or other conditions which establish a “playful atmosphere.” (McGhee, n.d.)

As mentioned in the above text (1.1.2.2), one implication of incongruity theories is that sense of humor is closely associated with creativity. O’Connell (197:327) suggested that

“the individual with a sense of humor ‘is skilled in rapid perceptual-cognitive switches in frame of reference’, an ability which is also presumably important in creativity more generally.” (Martin, 1998) According to Dr. Edward de Bono, “Both humor and creativity have elements of surprise. They ostensibly start in one direction, abruptly veer off in another, and then often find their way back to their original paths.” (Robinson, 1998)

The following are the details of Koestler’s concept of “*bisociation*”:

“Arthur Koestler (*The Act of Creation*, 1963) considered "bisociative thinking"- recognizing, linking or combining ideas - as all important to creative thinking. Creativity – in response to dilemmas, paradoxes and complexity -- has since been studied in the light of bisociative and divergent thinking (cf René Victor Valqui Vidal.

Creativity and Problem Solving, 2004). But although a considerable range of skills has been devoted to creativity, the experiential nature of humour in providing a bridging dynamic between the dissociated elements of a dilemma seems to have been largely ignored - except perhaps as a personality characteristic of the "creative". However humour may well be a precursor to what is labelled as creativity -- a carrier or catalyst for it.

Edward de Bono (*Lateral Thinking for Management*, 1971) indicates that learning most effectively occurs through this process. He cites humour as the most evident example of how the brain works as a thinking tool -- with learning occurring when a jump in perception occurs. The result is a new idea or insight. The process of creative (generating from nothing) thinking is therefore exemplified in humour. When an alternative perception is not seen, it is the process of bridging this gap and understanding the alternate paths, and their interplay, through which the humour is generated.

<http://www.laetusinpraesens.org/musings/humourx.php#crea>

Similarly, the following scholars further supported and confirmed with Koestler's idea of bisociation. According to Craik & Ware, (1998) "Generating humor requires capacities akin to those associated with creativity, namely, ideational fluency and originality of thought" (Derks & Hervas, 1988; Koestler, 1964; Nevo & Nevo, 1983)

Wicher (1985) also stated that:

"To Koestler, creativity involves a bisociation or intersection of two frames of reference, schemata, or interpretations. The particular type of bisociation which creates humor is described as the collision" of the two frames. Despite the loss which comes from translating a metaphor into a literal statement, I interpret the word "collision" to refer to a seeming incompatibility between the two interpretations (that is, to the initially incongruous nature of one in the context of the other), or simply to the surprising quality of one of them. Thus a "colliding bisociation" looks much like a "resolved incongruity." Something like bisociation is also echoed when rhetoricians speak of the duality or co-occurrence found in all tropes: a focus on two opposites, two different yet similar referents or two contiguous things or events.

Possibly the link between humor and metaphor, therefore, is through creativity. Enjoyment of humor is in part an aesthetic enjoyment of a creative product, and the jokester shows individual creativity by engaging in a bisociative process to play an incongruity-resolution game. In support of this claim, consider a popular operational definition of creativity: that it involves a product both original and appropriate – something novel yet sensitive to reality constraints, i.e., which fits the problem. "Some data from our lab show that originality ratings of jokes are highly correlated with both surprise and resolution ratings

McGhee's cognitive mastery theory of humor (1974) may also apply to tropes as well

as jokes and help explain why tropes enliven jokes. Again, creativity is involved in all these comparisons because art is required to communicate in a way which is concise and indirect yet clear, paradoxical but sensible, and crafted so that the listener's contribution is independent but still appropriate.

Thus tropes and humor may also share what McGhee (1979) calls fantasy assimilation in a playful context, and a freedom from rigid adherence to models of reality, which is also a general correlate of creativity" (p.179-181)

Based on incongruity theory, sense of humor as a form or domain of creativity has been discussed by a number of writers, including Bleedorn (1982), Ferris (1972), Murdock and Ganim (1993), O'Connell (1969a), Treadwell (1970), Wicher (1985), and Ziv (1980)." (Martin, 1998) A number of researches have investigated sense of humor as a form of creativity. For example, "Babad (1974) examined the degree to which general creativity is related to both humor appreciation and humor production. As expected, scores on the creativity tests were significantly correlated with the rated funniness of subjects' humor productions, but not with humor appreciation scores." While "Brodzinsky and Rubien (1976) had undergraduates complete the Remote Associates Test (RAT) as a measure of creativity or divergent thinking ability, along with a Humor Production Test. A significant correlation was found between creativity scores on the RAT and rated funniness of the cartoon captions. Clabby (1980) also defined sense of humor in terms of production.. He had subjects complete a number of humor-production tasks, such as 'write a funny presidential campaign slogan'. The rated funniness of these responses was found to be significantly correlated with a measure of creativity that involved thinking of uncommon uses for five objects. And according to a study carried out by Rouff (1975), a significant correlation ($r=.37$) was found

between humor comprehension and creativity.” (Martin, 1998) Besides, in Fabrizi & Pollio (1987a) study, humor production was positively correlated with the test of creativity, particularly originality and elaboration, but not with self-esteem. These authors concluded that ‘being funny may be a sign of acting out in a not so well-functioning or not so self-assured person’. (Fabrizi & Pollio, 1987a”760).

Apart from the above findings, research has showed that humor can boost creativity and also enhance the productivity in the workplace. For instance, a research showed that “simply listening to a humorous recording increases scores on a subsequently given creativity test. People also perform more creatively on a task when it is framed as “play” than when it is framed as “work.” While simply watching comedy films is enough to improve creative problem solving, and the amount of improvement is greater than watching a serious movie.” (McGhee, n.d.) Apart from it, Robinson (1998) pointed out that “Over 50 years of research on creativity has shown that playfulness and humor have a positive impact on the quantity of ideas and the quality of creative thinking in groups, which can lead to an increase in the organization’s innovative output.” While McGhee illustrated an example that, “A survey conducted in the mid-1980s found that 84% of Vice Presidents and personnel directors interviewed in 100 of the largest corporations in the country felt that employees with a sense of humor are more effective on the job than people with little or no sense of humor. The organization conducting the survey concluded that “People with a sense of humor tend to be more creative, less rigid and more willing to consider and embrace new ideas and methods.” (McGhee, n.d.)

In brief, numerous research has confirmed with Koestler’s idea of “bisociation”, which stated that there is a close, positive correlation between humor and creativity; while humor

can boost creativity as well. It has been widely applied in the workplace nowadays to enhance creativity, innovation and productivity.

1.4. Aims and Significance of the Present Study

After reviewing all the literatures above, *research questions* were formulated as follows:

(1.) *“Even though many studies have confirmed the importance and benefits of humor, especially in the Western world, do Chinese people really less value humor as suggested and proved by the previous findings (for example, Yue’s findings(2006))?”*

(2.) *It was suggested that socialization practice does make a contribution to the gender difference in humor, would it also apply to Chinese society? Would Chinese men inclined to produce and enjoy humor more than Chinese women do?”*

(3.) Besides, *“What are Chinese’s perception on humor and creativity? Do they think that humor and creativity are closely entwined with each other as suggested by the previous empirical investigations of the correlation between humor and creativity?”*

(4.) Also, *“After reviewing the 4 Humor Styles suggested by Martin Rod, could it apply to Chinese Society? Would the results of Chinese people consistent with the previous research such as having self-enhancing humor positively correlated to affiliative humor, and aggressive humor positively correlated to self-defeating humor?”*

Therefore, methodologically, the present study intends to (1) investigate the valuation and perception of humor by Hong Kong Chinese students; to try to verify if the current findings consistent with the previous ones. Besides, the current research aims to (2) find out if there is any gender difference in the perceptions of importance of humor, self-rating of humor and also within the 4 humor styles among the Hong Kong students. Furthermore, it is hoped to (4) generate some new findings, that is, the extent to which creativity is correlated to the 4 different humor styles respectively. Hypotheses were set as follows:

Hypothesis 1: Chinese students perceive themselves as being non-humorous and do not value humor even though they may think it is important.

Hypothesis 2: Male students consider themselves more humorous than female students.

Hypothesis 3: Hong Kong students would consider entertainers the most humorous.

Hypothesis 4: Chinese do not value humor as an important trait for creativity and ideal personality.

Hypothesis 5: There is a positive correlation between styles of humor and variables of creativity such that self-enhancing humor style is positively correlated with affiliative humor style, and self-defeating humor is positively correlated with aggressive humor.

Hypothesis 6: There is a gender difference in humor styles such that male tends to have aggressive humor style than female have.

Hypothesis 7: Humor styles are positively correlated with variables of creativity in the present study.

Method

2.1 Subjects...

110 questionnaires were distributed and 102 were collected. The participants of the present study are all university students from City University of Hong Kong, of which 60 (58.3%) are males, and 42 (40.8%) are females. Their age range from 17 to 25, with mean age 22.3 (S.D. =10.8) Among all the participants, 22 are Year 1 students, 38 are Year 2 students, and 42 are Year 3 students; to be subject-specific, 9 are science students (18.6%), 11 are arts students (10.8%), 32 majoring business (31.4%), 12 majoring engineering (11.8%), 1 law student (1%) and 27 social sciences students (26.2%).

2.2 Measurements

The instruments used by the current survey research were a set of compiled questionnaire, which comprised of *two* parts: *Humor Styles Questionnaire (HSQ)* and the *Cross-Cultural (Chinese) Personality Assessment Inventory-2 (CPAI-2)*. The *Humor Styles Questionnaire (HSQ)*, which was devised by Martin et al. (2003), is aimed at measuring the *four* humor styles, namely, affiliative humor, self-enhancing humor, aggressive humor and self-defeating humor, and was constructed using a sequential construct-based approach using several fairly large samples of participants with a broad age range. Factor analysis was used to reduce items and to arrive at largely orthogonal dimensions. While the Self-enhancing and Affiliative humor scales correlate significantly and fairly strongly with the Situational Humor Response Questionnaire (SHRQ) and Coping Humor Scale (CHS), the Aggressive and Self-defeating scales seem to assess dimensions that are *not* tapped by these measures. The internal consistencies of the four scales are adequate as demonstrated by Cronbach alphas

ranging from .77 to .81, despite the reduction to only 8 items per scale. 32 questionnaires were developed by respective authors in order to measure the four humor dimensions, while the Chinese translation of the Humor Styles Questionnaire was set by email and amended by Dr. Chen Guo-hai from Guangdong University of Foreign Studies. For the current Chinese version of Humor Styles Questionnaire, there were 25 questions, of which 8 (Q1, 5, 9, 13, 17, 21 and 25) items were proposed to measure affiliative humor; 5 (Q2, 6, 10, 14 and 18) items were to measure enhancing humor; 7 (Q3, 7, 11, 15, 19, 22 and 24) items were to measure aggressive humor and 5 (No. 4, 8, 12, 16 and 20) items were to measure self-defeating humor. Response to each of the items can be made on a seven-point scale from 1 (Disagree) to 7 (Agree). For items proposed to measure affiliative humor, five are reverse items. For items proposed to measure self-enhancing humor, aggressive humor and self-defeating humor, all of them are in positive sense. Higher scores represent a more inclination to the particular humor style.

While the *Cross-Cultural (Chinese) Personality Assessment Inventory-2 (CPAI-2)* is the extended version of the Chinese Personality Assessment Inventory (CPAI), which was re-standardized by Prof. F. M. Cheung, Prof. K. Leung, and Dr. J. X. Zhang (the Authors) in 2001. The CPAI was originally developed as an indigenous instrument to measure Chinese personality (Cheung, Leung, Fan, et al., 1996). A combined etic-emic approach was adopted in the development of the CPAI. The original CPAI consists of 22 personality scales, 12 clinical scales; and three validity scales. It was standardized on a representative sample of Chinese people in the People's Republic of China and in Hong Kong. Within the CPAI, *four* personality factors are extracted from the personality scales of the CPAI, namely,

Dependability, Social Potency, Individualism, and Interpersonal Relatedness. While in the CPAI-2, *new* scales related to *Openness* are added. There are 28 personality scales, 12 clinical scales, and three validity scales on CPAI-2 (Cheung et al., 2004, *Acta Psychologica Sinica*) In my current research, I have adopted the Chinese version CPAI-2; while 3 variables, namely, “Novelty” (NOV), “Diversity” (DIV) and “Divergent Thinking” (DIT) under the Personality Scales in the CPAI-2 were selected. They were acted as variables of creativity in the study. Response to each of the items can be made by either choosing “Yes” or “No”. There were 58 selected items in my questionnaire of which items proposed to measure the 3 variables are sorted out and grouped for further analysis, details as follows: Sum of items 8, 10, 12, 14, 15, 22, 23, 39, 43 and 58 describing the variable “Novelty” (NOV), of which items 8, 22 and 58 are reverse items; sum of items 3, 4, 6, 7, 9, 27, 34, 35, 54 and 57 describing the variable “Diversity” (DIV), of which items 6, 7 and 9 are reverse items; while sum of items 11, 16, 19, 20, 24, 25, 41, 44, 47 and 56 describing the variable “Divergent Thinking” (DIT), of which items 24, 25 and 56 are reverse items. The internal consistencies of the six scales (each including 10-11 items) are quite adequate as demonstrated by Cronbach alphas ranging from .54 to.69.

Apart from the above two instruments, there were some fill-in the blanks and open-ended questions in the questionnaire aimed to collect some generation information concerning “humor”, such as the perception of importance of humor and self-rating of humor.

2.3 Procedure.....

110 questionnaires were distributed in the Information Space located near the exhibition area of the Library Lobby of the City University of Hong Kong for 2 weeks in December

2006. The return rate was 92.7% (102 collected). Respondents were invited to fill in the questionnaire and they were given 30 minutes to do the questionnaire.

Questionnaire data were later inputted into the computerized software program - *Statistical Packages for Social Sciences (SPSS)* for data analysis. Statistical procedures such as Mean Test (descriptive statistics), independent t-test and one-way ANOVA (inferential statistics) were then undergone to interpret and analyze the data collected.

Results

Table 1. Means and Standard Deviations for the Perception of Importance of Humor and the Self-Rating of Humor for Male and Female Participants separately (42 females, 60 males)

	<u>Male</u>		<u>Female</u>		T-value
	Mean	S.D.	Mean	S.D.	
Perception of Importance of Humor	7.60	1.85	7.95	1.23	-1.08
Self-rating of humor	6.33	1.85	5.93	1.64	1.14

Note: *p<.05; **p<.01; *** p<.001.

3.1 Perception of Importance of Humor VS Self-rating of Humor –

Both male and female students think humor is important, but they do *not* perceive themselves humorous.

Table 1 shows students' perception of importance of humor in life and the self-rating of humor for both sexes separately. As shown in the table, the mean scores for the perception of importance of humor for male and female are 7.60 (S.D.=1.85) and 7.95 (S.D.=1.23) respectively, which indicate *higher* mean scores than those for the self-rating of humor for male and females, which are, for male (Mean=6.33; S.D.=1.85) and for female (Mean=5.93; S.D.= 1.64). The figures represent that *both* sexes rated themselves *not* so humorous (a rating of only about 6), even though they think humor is important (as high as a rating of approximately 8). It *confirmed* Hypothesis 1 of the current study and is also *consistent* with

some previous research on topic of Chinese humor such as the humor research carried out by Yue, Hao, Lan & Yan (2006).

3.2 Gender Difference in Self-rating of Humor –

Male students rated themselves *more* humorous than female students do.

According to Table 1, the mean scores for the self-rating of humor for male is 6.33 (S.D.=1.85), which is *higher* than the means score for the self-rating of humor for female (Mean= 5.93; S.D.=1.64) It reflected that male students considered themselves *more* humorous than the female students. And this result tends to be in line with and supported some previous studies on *gender and humor*; in which male are inclined to perceive themselves *more* humorous, such as capable of producing more jokes than females do. Besides, Hypothesis 2 is perfectly *confirmed*.

Apart from the above findings, although the difference between the mean scores of the perception of importance of humor and the self-rating of humor between male and female as shown in Table 1 (independent t-test) are not statistically significant ($p > .05$); the *total* difference of mean scores between the two variables are very significant, ($t(101)=8.66$, $p < .001$) as presented in the Paired sample t-test. Therefore, it can be concluded that students from City University of Hong Kong do think that the important of humor and their self-rating of humor is *statistically different*; in other words, they think humor is important but they do not consider themselves humorous.

Table 2. Percentage, Category and Rank of the Top 10 (most frequently) Nominated Humorous Persons

(N=213)			
Nominee	Category#	Rank	%
周星馳	H	1	17.2
黃子華	H	2	10.8
詹瑞文	J	3	9.5
林海峰	H	4	4.7
曾志偉	H	4	4.7
鄭中基	S	5	4.3
Mr. Bean	H	6	3.9
森美	J	6	3.9
吳君如	H	7	2.6
許冠文	H	7	2.6
Total			64.2

Note: Category#: “H” stands for “Humorist”; “J” stands for “DJ”; “S” stands for “Singer

3.3 Top 10 Nominated Humorous Persons –

City U students consider entertainers the *most* humorous

Table 2 illustrates the ranking, respective percentage and category to which the top 10 humorous nominees belong to. As presented in the table, *most* of the top 10 nominated humorous persons by City U students are “*humorists*” (7 out of 10), in which 周星馳 (17.2%) ranked top, 黃子華 (10.8%) the second, 詹瑞文 (9.5%), the DJ, ranked the third and so forth. Besides, the table also revealed that the total percentage of the top 3 nominees accounts for almost 40% (37.5%) over the whole sample; while the top 10 nominees comprise well over half (64.2%) of the total percentage among all 65 nominated persons. It can be concluded that students consider “*humorists*”, together with other *entertainers* such as singers and DJs working in media industry the *most* humorous. This result *supported* Hypothesis 3. Furthermore, the current findings are *consistent* with the research finding by Yue, Hao, Lan, and Yan (2006) , - that undergraduate students in Mainland China consider *comedians* as the *most* humorous as well.

Apart from the above findings, results of all humorists, singer and DJs, being the top 10 nominated humorous persons (in which *none* are politicians, scholars or businessmen etc) and also only Mr. Bean, 1 foreigner nominee out of 10, appears to imply that, in Hong Kong Chinese students’ mind, humorous persons are *only narrowly restricted* to those (Hong Kong people) who are in entertaining and media industry.

Table 3. Rank, Means and Standard Deviations for the Characteristics important for an Ideal Person for Males and Female Participants separately. (60 males, 42 females)

Characteristics	Rank	Male		Rank	Female		T-value
		Mean	S.D.		Mean	S.D.	
Self-confident	1	2.78	1.98	3	4.03	2.40	0.68
Decisive	2	4.00	1.95	6	4.76	1.79	-2.0*
Intelligent	3	3.50	2.55	1	3.76	2.49	-2.83**
Creative	4	4.03	2.45	4	4.22	2.35	-0.39
Modest	5	4.15	2.61	2	3.78	2.82	0.68
Patient	6	4.36	2.28	5	4.66	2.48	-0.63
Independent	7	4.86	2.56	7	4.80	2.39	0.13
<i>Humorous</i>	8	5.10	2.54	8	5.39	2.47	-0.57

Note: *p<.05; **p<.01; *** p<.001.

3.4 Valuation of “*humorous*” as Trait for ideal personality & Creativity –

I. Chinese do not value “*humorous*” as an important trait for ideal personality

Table 3 illustrates the ranks of different traits for ideal personality suggested by both male and female students. According to the above table, it clearly shows that “*humorous*” ranked *the least* by *both* male and female students from City University of Hong Kong, with mean scores for male and female 5.10 (S.D.=2.54) and 5.39 (S.D.=2.47) respectively; in other words, students of both sexes appear to think that being humorous is *not* important *at all* for ideal personality. It perfectly *confirmed* with Hypothesis 4 and the previous research that reported humor is *not* valued by Chinese people.

Table 4. Rank, Means and Standard Deviations for the Characteristics important for Creativity for Male and Female Participants separately. (60 males, 42 females)

Characteristics	Male			Female			T-value
	Rank	Mean	S.D.	Rank	Mean	S.D.	
Conceptive	1	2.78	2.08	1	3.20	2.42	-0.91
Observing	2	3.23	2.25	3	3.73	2.16	-1.11
Original	3	3.25	2.13	2	3.44	2.29	-0.43
Individualized	4	4.17	2.46	4	4.56	2.42	-0.79
Humorous	5	4.50	2.22	5	4.76	2.43	-0.54
Influential	6	4.71	2.58	6	4.98	2.30	-1.19
Artistic	7	4.83	2.43	7	5.31	2.39	-0.30
Practical	8	5.27	4.60	8	5.46	2.49	-0.37

Note: *p<.05; **p<.01; *** p<.001

3.4 Valuation of “*humorous*” as Trait for ideal personality & Creativity –

II. Chinese do not value “*humorous*” as an important trait for creativity

Table 4 represents the ranks of different traits considered by both male and female students. As shown in Table 4, *both* sexes rated “*humorous*” 5 and it revealed that they do *not* value humor as a *really important* trait for creativity. They considered “Conceptive”, “Observing”, “Original” and “Individualized” as much more important than “Humorous” for creativity. This result is *consistent* with Hypothesis 5 and it firmly *supported* the research carried out by Rudowicz & Yue (2000, 2003) that “Chinese undergraduates in mainland

China, Hong Kong and Taiwan *did not* value humor as an important contributing factor to creativity.”

Table 5. Inter-correlation among the 4 Humor Styles

	AF	SE	AG	SD
AF				
SE	0.25*			
AG	-0.02	0.09		
SD	-0.14	0.09	0.57***	

Note: “AF” = “Affiliative humor
 “SE” = “Self-enhancing humor”
 “AG” = “Aggressive humor”
 “SD” = “Self-defeating humor
 (*p<.05; **p<.01; *** p<.001)

3.5 Inter-correlations of the four Humor Styles Questionnaire scales –

Self-enhancing humor style is positively correlated with affiliative humor style, while self-defeating humor is positively correlated with aggressive humor.

Table 5 shows the inter-correlation among the 4 humor styles, namely, affiliative humor, self-enhancing, aggressive humor and self-defeating humor. The results indicate that self-enhancing humor is positively (positive sign “+”) related to affiliative humor; ($r=.25$, $p<.05$) while self-defeating humor is positively related to aggressive humor ($r=.57$, $p<.001$)

And, it was found that *both* self-enhancing humor and self-defeating humor are negatively related to aggressive and self-defeating humor respectively ($r=-.02$, $r=-.14$). All of the above results *supported* Hypothesis 5.

Table 6. Mean, Standard Deviations and the Effect of Gender on the 4 Humor Styles

Variable	Male (N=60)		Female (N=42)		T-value
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD	
Humor Styles					
Affiliative humor	4.86	0.95	4.89	0.78	-0.19
Self-enhancing humor	4.04	1.01	4.18	1.20	-0.60
<i>Aggressive humor</i>	3.47	1.07	3.08	0.96	1.89*
Self-defeating humor	3.35	1.09	3.02	1.07	1.48*

Note: * $p<.05$; ** $p<.01$; *** $p<.001$

3.6 Gender Difference in Humor Styles –

Male students tend to have aggressive humor style than female students have

Table 6 shows the gender difference in the 4 humor styles among the City U students. According to Table 6, male students inclined to have aggressive humor style than female students have, with the mean score of 3.47(S.D.=1.07), which is *higher* than the mean score for aggressive humor for female (Mean 3.08, S.D.=0.96); besides, the difference between the means scores of both sexes is *significant* ($t(101)=1.89$, $p<.05$) Thus, Hypothesis 6 is *confirmed*. Apart from the above findings, the table revealed that male students tend to have self-defeating humor style *more* than female have; while female students tend to have affiliative humor style and self-enhancing humor style *more* than male students have.

Table 7. Inter-correlations among the 4 Humor Styles and 3 variables of Creativity, namely, Novelty, Diversity and Divergent Thinking

	AF	SE	AG	SD
Novelty	-0.34**	-0.07	0.01*	-0.14
Diversity	-0.39***	-0.02	0.07**	-0.21*
Divergent thinking	-.037***	-0.03	0.05*	-0.06

Note: “AF” = “Affiliative humor”
 “SE” = “Self-enhancing humor”
 “AG” = “Aggressive humor”
 “SD” = “Self-defeating humor”
 (*p<.05; **p<.01; ***p<.001)

3.7 Relationship between Humor Styles & Variables of Creativity –

Humor styles are *not* all positively correlated with variables of creativity in the present study

Table 7 illustrates the inter-correlations among the 4 humor styles and the 3 variables of creativity of the students from City University of Hong Kong. *Surprisingly*, Hypothesis 7 is *not* confirmed. Table shows that affiliative humor is *negatively correlated* with creativity variables of novelty ($r=-.34$, $p<.01$) diversity ($r=-.39$, $p<.001$) and divergent thinking, ($r=-.37$, $p<.001$) of which they are all *very significant*; while aggressive humor is *positively correlated* with novelty, diversity and divergent thinking, of which they are statistically significant respectively ($r=.01$, $p<.05$; $r=.07$, $p<.01$; $r=.05$, $p<.05$) Besides, results show that self-enhancing humor and self-defeating humor are negatively correlated with variables of creativity, but nonsignificant.

Discussion

4.1 Significant of the Present Study

All hypotheses of the current study, except *Hypothesis 7*, were *confirmed* and *supported* by previous studies mentioned in the literature review part. The *level of significance* of all findings will be explored in details as follows:

First of all, regarding the investigation on the perception of importance of humor in life versus self-rating of humor among the university students from City University of Hong Kong, *statistically significant* result was shown – there was a *very significant* difference ($p < .001$) between the means of perception of importance of humor and self-rating of humor ($t(101) = 8.66, p < .001$). As the mean score of the perception of importance of humor shown by Table 1 was *higher* than that of self-rating of humor, that is, students rated the importance of humor higher scores, we can grasp quite a clear picture that students do rate themselves *not* so humorous, *but* still perceive humor as important.

Secondly, taking a specific look at the mean scores of both male and female students, it can be found that male rated themselves *more* humorous than females students do (Mean = 6.33 > 5.93); however, precisely, the difference between the two means are *non-significant* ($t(101) = 1.14, p > .05$). This finding is consistent with the literatures of gender role socialization and social status mentioned above.

Thirdly, concerning the top 10 humorous persons nominated by the students, *no* level of significance can be witnessed from the table (Table 2) since there was only ordinal scale (i.e. Ranking) allowing for comparisons. Even if it is so, the percentage figures strongly revealed that humorists are thought to be the most humorous persons by students. The nomination of

9 out of 10 Chinese, in which most are humorists and entertainers, implies the fact that students in Hong Kong are under great influence by the mass media and consumerism.

Fourthly, as regards Table 4, *no* means of traits between male and female except “decisive” was *statistically significant* ($t(101)=-2.0, p<.05$) The negative sign (-) of the t-value further illustrated that there was a *negative* relation for the mean difference between male and female students on “decisive” trait; male students rated “decisive” second from the top whereas female students rated “decisive” trait third from the least. Besides, the ordinal data (rank) from Table 3 and 4 told us that “humorous” was not considered as an important trait for both ideal personality and creativity. It revealed that “humor” is *not* valued among Hong Kong students. It will be discussed in next session of Chinese culture in great details.

Besides, when it comes to the inter-correlation among the 4 humor style, significant data can be found. According to Table 5, self-enhancing humor style is positively correlated with affiliative humor style ($r=.25, p<.05$), of which significant, mild correlation can be derived. Nevertheless, the positive correlation between aggressive humor style and self-defeating humor style denoted a very significant, moderate correlation ($r=.57, p<.001$). It can be concluded that the correlation between self-defeating humor and aggressive humor is stronger than that of between affiliative humor and self-enhancing humor.

Furthermore, Table 6 generated even more meaningful data. According to Table 6, there was statistically significant difference between the mean scores of aggressive humor for male and female ($t(101)=1.89, p<.05$), of which male students tend to possess the aggressive humor style more than female students do (Mean=3.47>3.08) This result confirmed with literature mentioned above that “men were more likely than women to enjoy humor in

general and especially tendentious forms with underlying aggressive and sexual themes.”
(Malpass & Fitzpatrick, 1959; O’Connell, 1960; Spiegel et al., 1969).

Besides, there was significant difference between the mean score of self-defeating humor between male and female students, $(t(101)=1.48, p<.05)$, of which male students inclined to possess self-defeating humor more than female students do (Mean=3.35>3.02) Reciprocally, female students tend to possess affiliative humor style (Mean=4.89>4.86) and self-enhancing humor style (Mean=4.18>4.04) than male students do; however, the results were not significant. ($p>.05$)

Lastly, for the inter-correlations among the 4 humor styles and the 3 variables of creativity, the findings were quite unusual. It was found that the negative correlation among affiliative humor and the 3 variables of creativity were very significant respectively ($p<.01$; $p<.001$; $p<.01$); while the positive correlation among aggressive humor and the 3 creativity variables were significant respectively. ($p<.05$; $p<.01$; $p<.05$) As for the negative correlations among self-defeating humor, self-enhancing humor and the creativity variables respectively, results were nonsignificant. ($p>.5$)

4.2 Implications

Effect of Chinese Culture on Humor –

Cultural Bias against humor

One of the fundamental and major reasons why students in the present study do *not* perceive themselves humorous, even though they think it is important; and they do *not* value “humorous” as an important trait for creativity and ideal personality is because they are under

the great influence of the Traditional Chinese Culture, of which they might *not* consciously realize it since Chinese ways of thinking have rooted firmly down in their minds; perhaps since birth; while internalization took place progressively, in pace with the long-standing socialization practices adored by the Chinese parents or society at large. According to Yue (2007), “Culture is *internalized* in the form of a loose network of domain-specific knowledge structures, such as categories and implicit theories. (Bruner, 1990; D’Andrade, 1984; Shore, 1996; Strauss, 1992) while Cultural knowledge is like a contact lens that affects the *individual’s perceptions* of the visual stimuli all of the time.” (Hong Morris, Chiu, Benet-Martinez, 2000) Therefore, to understand the underlying reasons behind one’s thoughts, feelings, perceptions and behaviors, to look deep into culture is – a must.

First of all, one possible way to explain why students in the present study think they are comparatively “humorless”, self-rating themselves as “not so humorous” (Result 3.1) and do *not* value “humorous” as an important trait for both ideal personality and creativity (Result 3.4) is, have to trace back to the development of Humor throughout history in China. Humor was first documented around 2,500 BC in China and over thousands years, it has evolved greatly. Therefore, we cannot simply say that people do not value “humor” is because it was not existed before. Yue (2007) pointed out that “Humor has *not* been valued in Chinese society compared with the Western as there has been a cultural bias against humor.” He further illustrated that “Humor has been traditionally given little respect in Chinese culture mainly due to (1) The Confucian emphasis on keeping proper manners of social interactions (2) Humor is often considered a show of intellectual and political shallowness, and is equated with social informality, improperness, and immaturity, and (3) Chinese humor has been mostly characterized by joke-telling and funny show-performing, but satire has *never* been

popular.” Therefore, according to Confucianism, humor is despised as it sets *no* standards for proper behaviors. And it has profoundly influenced how later generations of Confucianists valued humor, for instance, they all tried to despise humor as it was regarded as an act of uneducated man. Similarly, students in the present study, who may long be incorporated and internalized the traditional Confucius values and beliefs by the socialization of their Chinese parents, would then try to keep proper manners all the time, avoid being immature and improperness, and to act serious all the time.

Besides, all along the historical development, from “Characters’ Imprisonment”, (literally means “characters’ jail” meaning to imprison writers for having used or abused characters for expressing negative or hostile political, ethical or ideological implication) to “moral purity” in late 1930s, for which humor was under tighter political scrutiny and news censoring for maintaining moral purity in Chinese society, to the anti-right movement, and to the Cultural Revolution, all showed that there is prejudice against humor in China; thus, it is not uncommon to see that from then till now, Chinese have been inclined to be “humorless” and shows no interest in humor. Apart from the humor research carried out by Yue, Hao, Lan, and Yan (2006), several empirical investigations have confirmed the cultural bias against humor: Liao (1998, 2001) reported that in Taiwan, university students generally considered themselves to be non-humorous compared with Americans; Ho and Lin (2001) found a significant stress-moderating effect of sense of humor to perceived life stress and physical mental health among Taiwanese student; Chen and Martin (2005) reported that Chinese students were generally less humorous than their Canadian counterparts and used less humor to cope with stress and Yue found that Chinese undergraduates in mainland China, Hong Kong and Taiwan did not value humor as an important contributing factor to creativity.

(Rudowicz, 2003; Rudowicz & Yue, 2000, 2003) etc. All these research findings do confirm with the above literatures regarding humor studies in Asia.

4.3 Contributions and Limitations

As regards the current study, a lot of different findings regarding humor of Hong Kong People were derived, for example, the information to which Hong Kong students do not value “humor” as important traits for creativity and ideal personality, the significant difference between perception of importance of humor in life and the self-rating of humor by the students, the 10 top humorous persons suggested by Hong Kong students, etc.

While concerning the limitations, firstly, the sampling size of 103 of the current research maybe too small to generate accurate results; secondly, the questionnaire contained too many questions, some students were not so willing to fill in the questionnaire with 8 pages length. Besides, it is recommended that the current research of investigating the relationships among the 4 humor styles (HSQ) and variables of creativity (CPAI-2) will be repeated and further investigate in order to generate more knowledge which is culturally-specific.

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