

**CITY UNIVERSITY OF HONG KONG**

**Humor Styles, Social Competence and Loneliness:  
A Study among 337 Youngsters in Hong Kong and  
Hangzhou**

A Report Submitted to  
the Department of Applied Social Studies  
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for  
the Bachelor of Social Sciences in Psychology

by

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April, 2010

## **Abstract**

In this study, associations among humor styles, social competence and loneliness were examined among a sample of 159 youngsters (72 males, 87 females) in Hong Kong and 178 youngsters in Hangzhou (74 males, 104 females). The sampled youngsters completed a questionnaire consisting of the Humor Styles Questionnaire (Martin, Puhlik-Doris, Larsen, Gray, & Weir, 2003), the Interpersonal Competence Questionnaire (Buhrmester, Furman, Wittenberg, & Reis, 1988), and the Emotional and Social Loneliness Scales (Wittenberg, 1986). The results showed that youngsters in Hong Kong used more maladaptive humor styles and less adaptive humor styles than did their counterparts in Hangzhou. In regard to gender, males used more maladaptive humor styles than did females. Adaptive styles of humor were positively associated with social competence and were negatively associated with loneliness, while maladaptive styles of humor were negatively associated with social competence and were positively associated with loneliness. Use of affiliative and self-defeating styles partially mediated the relationship between social competence and loneliness. Self-defeating humor served as a moderator to the effect of social competence on loneliness. Implications of these findings for future research are noted.

## **Acknowledgements**

The completion of this Final Year Project would not have been possible without those people who offered their help and support. Therefore, I would like to take this opportunity to express my special thankfulness to them.

First of all, I am grateful to my supervisor, Dr. Yue Xiao Dong, for his ongoing patience and constant guidance throughout the present study. His valuable advice and warm encouragement inspire me to explore further about the topic concerned. Besides from helping me to collect the data from Hangzhou, he also shared meaningful insights about his previous studies.

Moreover, I would like to deliver my hearty gratitude to Ken, who helped me to distribute the questionnaires, analyze the data, and proofread my drafts. His unconditional support helped me to overcome all those frustrations and difficulties encountered in writing the paper. Words could never be enough to describe my gratefulness to him.

Furthermore, I would like to thank my family and friends who served as the source of strength and motivation for me to achieve my goals in life. Especial thanks to Mr. Kong, Dicky, Chiu, Jophie, Cindy, Gigi, and Veronica for all the support and encouragements they have given to me.

Last but not least, I would like to extend my gratitude to all the participants of this study. The time and effort they have spent in completing the questionnaires are much appreciated.

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## Chapter 1 Introduction and Literature Review

*“A person without a sense of humor is like a wagon without springs*

*- jolted by every pebble in the road.”*

*Henry Ward Beecher*

Humor is generally recognized as one of our most significant psychosocial resources, which is beneficial to both individuals and society (Craik & Ware, 1998). We create, seek and experience humor in our daily lives. In fact, we are living in a humorous environment where we can easily find the elements of humors within different media, such as advertisements, cinema, books, internet, television, and magazines. It becomes a ubiquitous human activity that occurs in all kinds of social interactions.

In recent decades, humor is one of the popular topics in various fields of researches, particularly in the disciplines of psychology. Among these researches, many have assumed that a sense of humor is an asset for both physical and psychological well-being. They tend to propose that individuals with greater sense of humor possess a number of other positive characteristics, like being optimistic, higher self-confidence, self-acceptance, and sense of autonomy (Kuiper & Martin, 1998). A common notion in the humor literature is that people who are humorous are believed to be capable to cope with stress more effectively, to enjoy better physical health, to experience less negative emotions, and to have better and healthier relationships with others (Kuiper & Olinger, 1998).

However, humor is not always viewed as a positive and facilitating virtue. Indeed, dating to the earliest theories of laughter, and continuing in some form to the current day, it is perceived by some scholars as a result of sense of superiority obtained from ridiculing other people for their stupidity, weakness, or ugliness (Gruner, 1997), in this

sense, it does not hold much promise for the inclusion of humor as an element of positive psychology. With such conflicting perspectives, we may have to explore further about the conceptualization and function of humor, especially in the process of social interaction.

Moreover, in Chinese society where humor was perceived as a sign of intellectual superficiality and social informality due to cultural influence and traditional values emphasized by Confucius (Yue, 2006), researches on the topic of humor are sparse compared to Western society. Therefore, with the purpose of providing related evidence and implications for the Chinese society, the current study examined the perceptions and forms of humor adopted by youngsters in Hong Kong and Hangzhou, and investigated their relationships with social competence and feeling of loneliness.

## 1.1. Literature Review

### 1.1.1. Defining Humor

When people describe someone as humorous, they usually refer to the behaviours such as telling jokes, giving witty opinions, relating funny stories or sharing an amusing personal experience. This is somehow similar to the definition provided by Simpson and Weiner (1989) in *The Oxford English Dictionary*, which refers humor as “quality of action, speech, or writing which excites amusement; oddity, jocularly, facetiousness, comicality, fun.” It further interprets the term as “the faculty of perceiving what is ludicrous or amusing, or of expressing it in speech, writing, or other composition; jocose imagination or treatment of a subject.” However, the concept of humor has never been that simple, and there is still no precise consensus on the exact meaning of humor. According to Ruch (1998), the term “humor” originated from classic Greek theory of four humors or bodily fluids, i.e. blood, phlegm, black bile, and yellow bile, that were believed to affect all aspects of physical and mental functioning. Later, the word was

used to describe mood, and eventually equated to wittiness, funniness, and laughableness.

A number of researchers and theorists in various perspectives tried to offer a more comprehensive definition for humor, and one of them is Knox. He referred humor as a playful chaos in a serious world, and suggested 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” (Knox, 1951). Henman (2001) defined humor as a playful frame of mind that provides people with a sense of well-being, better thinking skills, and release of pain feeling. Whereas, Ruch (2002) stated that humor represents a cognitive, emotional, and motivational stance toward incongruity, as inherent in amusing artifacts, but as well as in inadvertently interesting situations, the behaviors and attitudes of our fellows, in destiny and life and human nature and existence in general.

#### 1.1.2. Theories of Humor

There are more than a hundred theories have been proposed during the last millennium, to explain what humor really means, how it works, and what is its role in the modern society. However, few of them can provide the whole picture for understanding the concept of humor. Thus, scholars usually combine useful insights from different theories, to obtain a more explicit approach to the study of humor. One of the dominant approaches of humor throughout the history is the superiority theory. According to this approach, humor is an expression of feelings of superiority over somebody else (Morreall, 1997). People laugh due to the feeling of being superior to another person and laughter demonstrates this dominance. Thus, people laugh about others who are, or seem to be, inferior to them (Walte, 2007).

While superiority theories focus on the emotional aspect of humor, the incongruity theories concentrate on the cognitive aspect. It sees humor as a response to an incongruent situation, which includes logical impossibility, inappropriateness, irrelevance, or ambiguity (Morreall, 1989). This approach argues that the perception of incongruity is the crucial indicator of whether or not something is humorous, things that are funny are incongruous, unusual, surprising, peculiar, or out of our expectation (Martin, 2007). On the other hand, the relief theory interprets humor on the basis of psychological mechanisms. It claims that humor is meant as a release trigger for repressed inhibitions due to conventions or laws and explains how tension can be released through laughter (Walte, 2007).

#### 1.1.3. Styles of Humor

Martin and his colleagues (2003) have identified four major styles of humor people adopt in different circumstances. Two of them are considered to be healthy and adaptive, which include the affiliative and self-enhancing humor, and two are considered as unhealthy and maladaptive, which include the aggressive and self-defeating humor.

According to Martin (2007), affiliative humor means using humor to entertain others, reduce interpersonal tensions, and enhances relationships through telling jokes, saying funny things, and involving in spontaneous witty banter. Self-enhancing humor refers to the use of humor as a coping skill, to maintain a humorous perspective on life even in time of stress or difficulty.

In contrast, aggressive humor is the tendency to use humor to criticize or manipulate others, as in sarcasm, teasing, ridicule, derision, or disparagement humor, as well as the use of potentially offensive form of humor. For instance, jeering at somebody's mistake, or mocking at someone's behaviour. It includes the compulsive expression of humor even when it is socially inappropriate.

The fourth style of humor is the self-defeating humor which is defined as the use of excessively self-disparaging humor, doing or saying funny things about oneself in order to entertain others, and laughing along with others when being derided or cheapened. Usually, it is use to gain the attention and approval of others.

#### 1.1.4. Studies of Humor

One of the earliest studies on individual differences in humor was done by Kambouropoulou (1926), who found that extravert people tend to have higher degree of humor appreciation, especially on aggressive jokes. Few decades later, study of Wilson and Patterson (1969) found that their subjects' score on an extraversion assessment was significantly associated with their rating on the hilariousness of sexual jokes. Eysenck (1942) also proposed that introverted individuals preferred nonsexual and complex jokes, while extraverts preferred simple and sexual jokes. These findings indicated the role of personality in affecting the humor appreciation of an individual. While for the role of gender, researchers held different view in its relation to humor. Crawford and Gressley (1991) noted that joke-telling tended to be a characteristic of humor in males, while females tended to relate more on humorous personal experiences. For women, self-directed humor emerged mainly in same-sex interactions as part of a self-disclosing narrative, and in most of time, they were more likely to play the role of appreciative audience than generator of humor. Whereas for men, when they talked in mixed groups, their self-directed humor tended to come in form of exaggerations, aimed to shock or amuse rather than to inform, and might downplay socially unacceptable attitudes, remarks, and behaviours (Lampert & Ervin-Tripp, 1998).

Tannen (1986) tried to explain this difference in gender and stated that, males and females have different conversational goals, in which for males, the primary goal of social conversation is positive self-presentation, whereas for females, it is for the sake

of intimacy. This dissimilitude in goals reflects in the ways they use humor. This is in line with the finding of Martin and his colleagues (2003) that males had higher tendency in using aggressive, self-disparaging, and avoidant forms of humor. However, this gender difference was not found in the study conducted by Chen and Martin (2007) in the Chinese society.

Regarding the cultural aspect, affiliative humor tends to be associated with collectivistic cultures, in which the interdependence of individuals was emphasized. In contrast, individualistic cultures which emphasize independency and individual needs over group needs are associated with aggressive humor style (Martin, 2007). In short, we may expect people who are collectivistic, such as Chinese, to use more affiliative humor, and people who are individualist, such as American, tend to express humor in a more aggressive way.

Moreover, for the general perception of self humor, people tend to have high estimations. For instance, in the study of Gordon Allport (1961), when respondents were asked to assess their own sense of humor, 94% of them rated themselves as either average or above average and 6% as below average. A similar finding was reported by Lefcourt and Martin's (1986) study of humor among university students. For Chinese society, Yue (in press) found that university students in Hong Kong and Huhebot of Inner Mongolia rated themselves significantly lower on self humor compared to the importance of humor. In addition, male participants in his study had a higher rating for their self humor, than the female participants did. Nevertheless, this gender difference was only found in the Hong Kong sample. Furthermore, the study of Yue, Hao, and Goldman (2008) indicated that Mainland undergraduates use more adaptive humor styles and less maladaptive humor styles compared to their Hong Kong counterparts.

#### 1.1.5. Humor and Social Competence

A number of scholars and researchers have argued that humor plays an prominent role in the formation, maintenance, and regulation of close social relationships (e.g., Shiota, Campos, Keltner, & Hertenstein, 2004; Lefcourt, 2001; Ziv & Gadish, 1989). Humor is often linked to various components of social interaction process, and one of these components is social competence. A well-known definition for the term competence was provided by McFall (1982), who suggested that competence reflects someone's evaluation, on the basis of certain criteria, that an individual's performance on some tasks is adequate. Social competence can then be defined, analogously, as competence (i.e., evaluated adequacy) in the interpersonal domain, where competencies are framed in terms of specific interpersonal tasks (Gurtman, 1999). In order to examine these social skills and behaviours in different dimensions, Buhrmester and associates (1988) distinguished five domains of interpersonal functioning, including initiation of interactions and relationships (*Initiation*), assertion of personal rights and discontent with others (*Negative Assertion*), self-disclosure of personal information (*Disclosure*), emotional support of others (*Emotional Support*), and management of interpersonal conflicts that occur in social relationships (*Conflict Management*). Moreover, Weinstein (1969) identified three major elements of social competence which include the ability to define the appropriate task through empathy or role-taking ability, the possession of a response repertoire, and the effective implementation of the most appropriate tactic or response in a given situation.

Among the studies on the relationship between humor and social competence, McGhee (1989) claimed that people who are skillful in generating humor in social context would be more popular and would be able to develop friendship with others easier, and the timely and effective use of humor is a crucial component of social competence. It was found in a study of Mettee, Hrelec, and Wilkins (1971) that speakers

in group settings who used humor effectively were being rated as more competent by the group members. In Sherman's study (1985), ratings of the participants for each other's humor were strongly correlated with their ratings of social distance. The effect remained significant when the humor ratings were longitudinally correlated with the social distance rating in the three previous years. Therefore, Sherman established the position that humorous behaviour is a social skill that facilitates acceptance, and its absence may procure social isolation.

Years ago, Yip and Martin (2006) studied the relationship between humor styles and social competence, and found that social competence is positively correlated with adaptive humor styles, and negatively correlated with maladaptive humor styles. Participants in their study who used affiliative and self-enhancing humor more frequently were more competent in initiating relationships and disclosing personal information, whereas those who used aggressive humor more frequently showed incompetence in providing emotional support and managing conflicts. Nevertheless, they found that participants who engaged in more self-defeating humor showed little competence in negative assertion.

#### 1.1.6. Humor and Loneliness

Even though, like humor, there are various definitions for the concept of loneliness, Peplau and Perlman (1982) stated three main themes underlying all proposed definitions of loneliness. He noted that, by definition, loneliness is caused by deficiencies in the lonely person's social relationships either qualitatively or quantitatively. It is a subjective and internal experience, therefore not identical to physical isolation. Researchers generally agreed that there are more than one qualitatively distinct types of loneliness exist. One typology of loneliness was described by Weiss (1974), which infers that loneliness can be classified into emotional and social loneliness. Emotional



loneliness is caused by the lack of a close, intimate attachment to another person. For instance, people who have been broken up with their partner, divorced, or widowed might experience this kind of loneliness. Social loneliness is caused by the lack of social network in sharing common interests and activities. People who have moved to a new town might experience this kind of loneliness.

Despite the increasing interest in humor-related issues in different disciplines, most studies about the relationship between humor and loneliness were conducted in Western culture. For instance, Hampes (2005) investigated the humor styles and loneliness of students in a community college in Midwestern United States and revealed that, higher affiliative and self-enhancing humors were significantly associated with lower degree of loneliness, while higher self-defeating humor was significantly associated with higher degree of loneliness. Similarly, Çeçen (2007) found in his sample of Turkish undergraduates that affiliative, self-enhancing, and self-defeating humors were significantly associated with loneliness. Until recently, one of the limited studies on the relationship between humor and loneliness in Chinese context was done by Sun, Guo, and Lee (2009), who found in their study with 342 university students from Jiangxi province that, all of the four humor styles were significantly correlated with loneliness, in which higher adaptive humor styles were associated with lower loneliness, and higher maladaptive humors were associated with higher loneliness.

#### 1.1.7. Humor as a Mediator and Moderator

Numerous researches indicated that humor styles were associated with social competence, as well as loneliness. These findings suggest that on one hand, humor styles may be able to explain the causality between social competence and loneliness. On the other hand, the use of humor styles may alter the influence of social competence on loneliness. Nonetheless, studies exploring the mediating and moderating effects

between the variables are relatively rare. One among these was established by Fitts, Sebby, and Zlokovich (2009). Based on the research of Jackson, Fritch, Nagasaka, & Gunderson (2002) who found the role of social skills as a mediator on the shyness-loneliness relationship, Fitts et al. further investigated the model, and took humor styles as the mediators in the relationship between shyness and loneliness. They argued that the association between these two variables could be partially explained by the use of certain humor styles in social interactions. They summarized their findings, and stated that people who are shy tend to use less affiliative humor, and more self-defeating humor, which in turn, lead to greater feeling of loneliness. In addition, as higher shyness was found to be significantly associated with low social competence, humor styles may also play a role in the causal relationship between social competence and loneliness. Taken all these into consideration, the current study would expect to find the mediating effects of humor styles on the relationship between the two mentioned variables.

Apart from its influence in social relationships, humor may also strengthen or weaken the effect of social competence on loneliness. Previous researches have proposed and provided evidence for the moderating role of humor. Most commonly, it was hypothesized that the appropriate use of humor can reduce the impact of stress on one's performance (Davis & Kleiner, 1989). Concerning social context, there have been a number of studies suggesting that humor have a moderating effect on the effect of leaderships on follower outcomes. For instance, Avolio, Howell, and Sosik (1999) found that the use of humor facilitated the effect of transformational leadership, contingent reward leadership, and laissez-faire leadership on follower's performance. Moreover, Huges and Avey (2009) noted the significant associations between transformational leadership and trust, identification, affective organizational

commitment, and job satisfaction. The moderating effect of humor was indicated in associations between transformational leadership and both trust and affective commitment, indicating that followers who saw their transformational leaders as using more humor reported higher rating on these outcomes, compare to those followed low humor leaders. Therefore, it is reasonable to assume that humor can enhance or impair the effects of other interpersonal and communication skills on relationship outcomes in general.

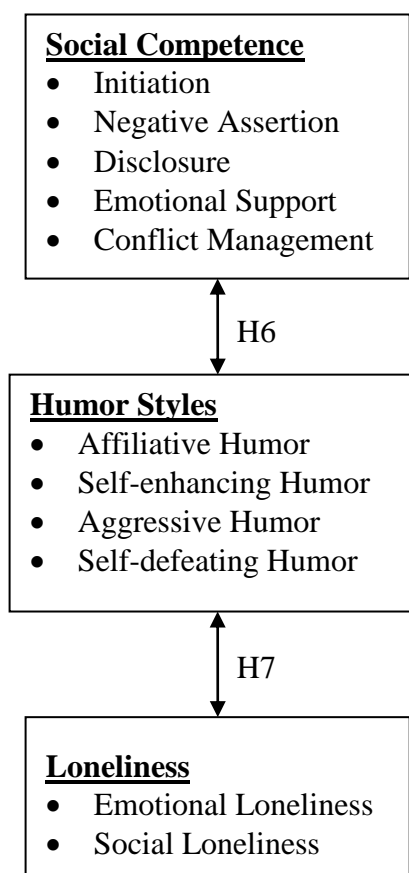
## 1.2. Conceptual Framework and Hypotheses for the Present Study

Based on the reviewed literature above, the present study aimed to investigate the relationships among humor styles, social competence, and loneliness, and to explore the perception of humor and humorous persons among Chinese people. The conceptual framework for this study was illustrated in Figures 1 and 2.

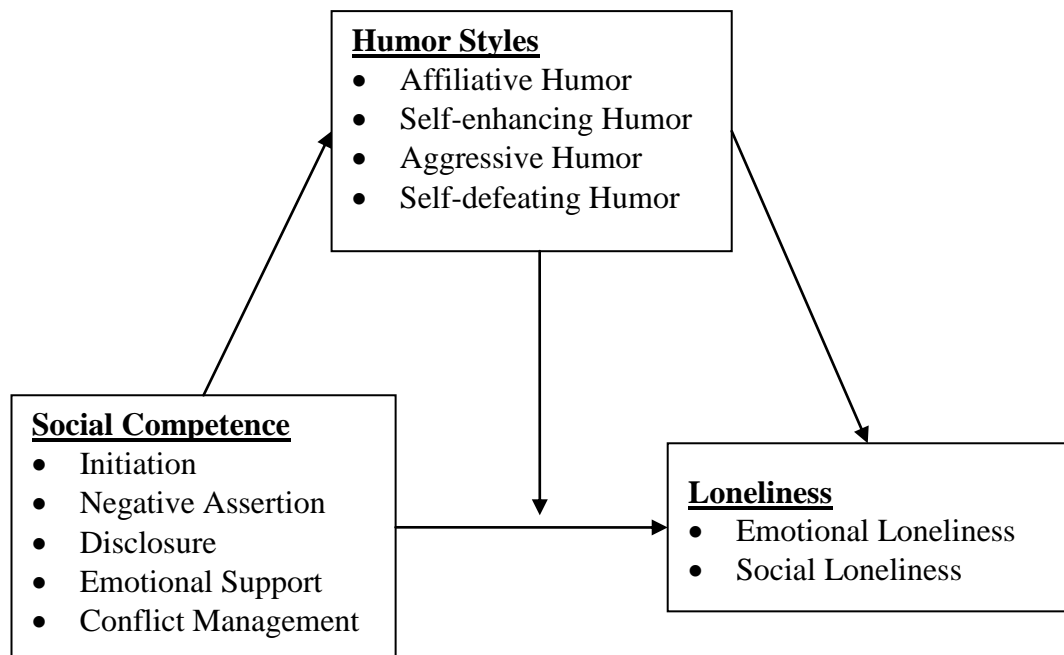
Derived from the literature on individual differences in humor, it is sensible to argue that the perception and the use of humor would differ between males and females and between people in distinct regions. The studies conducted by Yue (in press) and Yue et al. (2008) revealed some differences in the perception of humor and the use of humor styles between Hong Kong and Huhehot Chinese participants. This study attempted to examine whether these differences would also exist between Hong Kong and Hangzhou youngsters.

Premised on the theoretical perspectives and empirical findings on the relationships among humor styles, social competence, and loneliness, it can be hypothesized that adaptive humor styles would be related to higher social competence and lower loneliness, whereas maladaptive humor styles would be related to lower social competence and higher loneliness. In the light of the mediating and moderating effects reported in past investigations, it is reasonable to theorize that socially

competent individuals would tend to use more adaptive humor styles and less maladaptive humor styles to reduce their loneliness. Besides, this study also attempted to test whether the use of adaptive humor styles would enhance the relationship between social competence and loneliness, and whether the use of maladaptive humor styles would diminish this association.



*Figure 1.* The conceptual framework for Hypotheses 6 and 7



*Figure 2.* The conceptual framework for Hypotheses 8 and 9.

In particular, the hypotheses for the present study were formulated as follows:

H1: Youngsters in Hong Kong consider themselves as being more humorous than their counterpart in China.

H2: Males generally consider themselves as being more humorous than females.

H3: Youngsters in both Hong Kong and China rate importance of humor higher than their rating of self humor.

H4: Youngsters in Hong Kong use more maladaptive humor styles than do youngsters in China, youngsters in China use more adaptive humor styles than do youngsters in Hong Kong.

H5: Males use more maladaptive humor styles than do females, females use more adaptive humor styles than do males.

H6: Social competence is positively correlated with adaptive humor styles, and is negatively correlated with maladaptive humor styles.

H7: Loneliness is positively correlated with maladaptive humor styles, and is negatively correlated with adaptive humor styles.

H8: High social competence, via more use of adaptive humor styles and less use of maladaptive humor styles, leads to less loneliness.

H9: Use of adaptive humor strengthens the negative relationship between social competence and loneliness, use of maladaptive humor weakens the negative relationship between social competence and loneliness.

## **Chapter 2 Methodology**

### **2.1. Participants**

In this study, 159 participants (72 males, 87 females) were sampled in Hong Kong, and 178 participants (74 males, 104 females) were sampled in Hangzhou, China. For the Hong Kong sample, they aged between 19 to 30, and the mean age was 22.97; For the Hangzhou sample, they aged from 17 to 23, with a mean age of 19.37. Majority of the samples (88.1%) were undergraduate students in one of the universities in Hong Kong or in Hangzhou. It is noted that youngsters in Hangzhou were sampled from a very good university in Hangzhou whose campus and student population were comparable and compatible to those of the universities in Hong Kong. It is also noted that the University was selected by Dr. Xiaodong YUE, the supervisor of this Final Year Project, who delivered a lecture at the university. As such, Dr. Yue helped me to collect the data from the sampled youngsters.

### **2.2. Instruments**

A self-reported questionnaire was used to collect the data for the current research. It consists of five parts which include the following measures:

In the first part, participants were asked to evaluate several aspects of humor through a 10-point Likert scale (1 = lowest, 10 = highest). These include the rating of importance of humor, their own humor, parents' humor, and humor among Westerners and Chinese. Besides, they were instructed to nominate up to three best humorists they knew of, and ranked the top ten important characteristics of humor.

In the second part, participants were asked to complete the 32-item Humor Style Questionnaire (HSQ) developed by Martin and his colleagues (2003). The HSQ measures the four humor styles, i.e. affiliative humor, self-enhancing humor, aggressive humor, and self-defeating humor, on a 7-point Likert scale (1 = lowest, 7 = highest).

Each style measures eight items. The statements were translated into Chinese by Chen and Martin in 2005.

In part three, participants were asked to complete the 40-item Interpersonal Competence Questionnaire (ICQ) developed by Burhmester, Furman, Wittenberg, and Reis in 1998, which includes the subscales of initiation, negative assertion, conflict management, personal disclosure, and emotional support. Responses were made on a 5-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 as “I’m poor at this” to 5 as “I’m extremely good at this”.

In part four, participants were asked to complete the Emotional and Social Loneliness Scale (Wittenberg, 1986). It contains 10 items which are categorized into two subscales, including the emotional loneliness and social loneliness.

In part five, participants were asked to provide information about their personal particulars. The whole questionnaire took about 20-25 minutes to complete. The questionnaires for the Hangzhou sample were printed in simplified Chinese characters.

### 2.3. Procedure

For data collection in Hong Kong, questionnaires were collected from participants at different university in Hong Kong, including the City University of Hong Kong, the Baptist University, the Hong Kong University, and the Lingnan University. For data collection in Hangzhou, questionnaires were collected at the Chinese Jiliang College. Participants completed the questionnaires first and then attended a talk by Dr. Yue.



### Chapter 3 Results

#### 3.1. Descriptive Statistics and Internal Consistencies of the Scales

Table 1 presents the demographic background of the sampled youngsters, including their region of residence, gender, age, education level, religion, and leadership experience. 159 youngsters were living in Hong Kong, and 178 were living in Hangzhou. Among these youngsters, 146 were male, and 191 were female. Majority of the participants were aged 19 or above (88.7%), and were university students (88.1%). 80.4 % of them did not have any religious beliefs, the rest were Catholics, Christians, Buddhists or other religious believers (19.6%). Moreover, 76.6% of these youngsters had certain leadership experience, while 23.4% of them did not have any leadership experience.

Table 1  
*Demographic Information of the Participants (N = 337)*

		<i>n</i>	Percentage
Region	Hong Kong	159	47.2
	Hangzhou	178	52.8
Gender	Male	146	43.3
	Female	191	56.7
Age	18 or below	38	11.3
	19 – 20	127	37.7
	21 – 22	90	26.7
	23 or above	82	24.3
Education Level	Year 1	157	46.6
	Year 2	65	19.3
	Year 3	75	22.3
	Others	40	11.9
Religion	None	271	80.4
	Buddhist	18	5.3
	Christian	34	10.1
	Catholic	8	2.4
	Others	6	1.8
Leadership	With experience	258	76.6
	Without experience	79	23.4

To assess the internal consistencies of the scales, the reliability coefficients (Cronbach's  $\alpha$ ) were computed. It is the average value of all possible split-half reliability coefficients (Cronbach, 1951). An  $\alpha$  coefficient of .50 or above indicates acceptable reliability (Nunnally, 1967). Table 2 displays the Cronbach's  $\alpha$  for each scale. The values of Cronbach's  $\alpha$  ranged from .65 to .83 for the four subscales of the Humor Style Questionnaire (HSQ), ranged from .61 to .89 for the total and the five subscales of the Interpersonal Competence Questionnaire (ICQ), and ranged from .62 to .76 for the total and the two subscales of the Emotional and Social Loneliness Scale (ESL). These results showed that the scales adapted in the present study were reliable measures.

Table 2  
*Means, Standard Deviations, and Reliabilities of the Variables (N = 337)*

	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	$\alpha$
<i>Humor Styles Questionnaire (HSQ)</i>			
Affiliative Humor (8 items)	39.77	8.57	.83
Self-Enhancing Humor (8 items)	34.40	7.49	.69
Aggressive Humor (8 items)	24.35	6.93	.65
Self-Defeating Humor (8 items)	26.21	7.89	.73
<i>Interpersonal Competence Questionnaire (ICQ)</i>			
Initiation (8 items)	26.89	5.33	.79
Negative Assertion (8 items)	25.65	4.85	.77
Disclosure (8 items)	25.95	4.37	.61
Emotional Support (8 items)	27.78	4.17	.64
Conflict Management (8 items)	31.05	4.77	.83
Total (40 items)	137.32	17.19	.89
<i>Emotional and Social Loneliness Scale (ESL)</i>			
Emotional Loneliness (5 items)	13.19	3.80	.62
Social Loneliness (5 items)	12.36	3.19	.75
Total (10 items)	25.56	6.02	.76

There are only few studies done to analyze the four styles of humor proposed by Rod Martin and his colleagues (2003) within the Chinese society. Thus, a factor analysis was conducted to examine the applicability of the humor styles as well as the psychometric properties of the HSQ in the context of Chinese culture. Through the principal components factor analysis with varimax rotation, a four-factor solution was

Table 3  
*Factor Analysis of the Humor Styles Questionnaire (N = 337)*

	Factor			
	1	2	3	4
<i>Affiliative Humor</i>				
Item 1 <sup>a</sup>	<b>.63</b>	-.18	.12	-.12
Item 5	<b>.54</b>	.16	.41	.03
Item 9 <sup>a</sup>	<b>.61</b>	-.11	.06	.06
Item 13	<b>.59</b>	.08	.18	-.21
Item 17 <sup>a</sup>	<b>.82</b>	-.01	.08	.03
Item 21	<b>.65</b>	.22	.03	-.18
Item 25 <sup>a</sup>	<b>.71</b>	-.03	-.03	-.12
Item 29 <sup>a</sup>	<b>.69</b>	-.19	.15	.15
<i>Self-Enhancing Humor</i>				
Item 2	.17	.08	<b>.70</b>	-.08
Item 6	.16	.21	<b>.55</b>	.12
Item 10	.07	.02	<b>.70</b>	-.07
Item 14	.23	.05	<b>.61</b>	-.05
Item 18	.15	-.06	<b>.68</b>	-.25
Item 22 <sup>a</sup>	-.07	-.24	<b>.38</b>	.24
Item 26	.08	-.12	<b>.42</b>	-.22
Item 30	-.12	.07	<b>.26</b>	.13
<i>Aggressive Humor</i>				
Item 3	.04	.43	-.05	<b>.51</b>
Item 7 <sup>a</sup>	-.16	-.01	-.16	<b>.40</b>
Item 11	-.20	.24	.19	<b>.46</b>
Item 15 <sup>a</sup>	-.11	.00	-.09	<b>.59</b>
Item 19	.14	.36	.19	<b>.21</b>
Item 23 <sup>a</sup>	.18	-.01	-.15	<b>.56</b>
Item 27	-.10	.28	.14	<b>.46</b>
Item 31 <sup>a</sup>	-.05	.06	.03	<b>.61</b>
<i>Self-Defeating Humor</i>				
Item 4	-.06	<b>.61</b>	-.11	.23
Item 8	-.16	<b>.66</b>	.06	.09
Item 12	-.04	<b>.68</b>	.13	-.09
Item 16 <sup>a</sup>	.13	<b>.33</b>	-.01	.42
Item 20	-.16	<b>.62</b>	-.02	.23
Item 24	.03	<b>.56</b>	-.02	.13
Item 28	-.10	<b>.37</b>	.23	-.03
Item 32	.14	<b>.62</b>	-.09	-.03

<sup>a</sup>Reversed items

tested. Table 3 presents the result of the factor analysis for the HSQ. All the eigenvalues of the four factors were greater than 1. Factor 1 represented the affiliative humor style, factor 2 represented the self-enhancing humor, and factor 3 and 4 represented the

aggressive and self-defeating humor respectively. The four factors explained 40.06% of the variance, in which the first factor accounted for 14.87%, the second factor accounted for 12.25%, while the third and the fourth factor accounted for 7.32% and 5.61% respectively. Most of the items had strong loadings on their own factor. Nonetheless, one of the items (item 19) in the aggressive humor scale loaded on the self-defeating humor, whereas one item in the self-defeating humor scale loaded on the factor of aggressive humor. In summary, the HSQ generally had a good factor structure and was able to measure the four humor styles in the Chinese society.

### 3.2. Regional and Gender Differences in the Perception of Humor (H1 & H2)

Hypotheses 1 and 2 predicted the regional and gender difference in the rating of self humor. Table 4 and 5 present the relevant ratings reported by the participants. Independent samples t-tests were ran to compare the difference between youngsters in Hong Kong and in Hangzhou and between males and females. No significant regional difference was found in the rating of self humor ( $t[335] = -1.90, p = .058$ ). However, a significant gender difference was found in the rating of self humor, ( $t[335] = 2.10, p = .037$ ). In particular, males ( $M = 6.39, SD = 1.85$ ) rated their own humor significantly higher than females did ( $M = 5.97, SD = 1.77$ ).

The regional and gender differences in the rating of importance of humor were also explored (see Table 4 and 5). The results of independent samples t-tests revealed that the rating of Hangzhou participants was significantly higher than that of their counterparts in Hong Kong ( $t[335] = -4.25, p < .001$ ). Nevertheless, no significant gender difference was found in the rating of importance of humor ( $t[335] = -.38, p = .703$ ).

Taken together, the present findings offer no support to Hypothesis 1, but provide good support for Hypothesis 2.

Table 4  
*Regional Differences in the Perception of Humor*

	Hong Kong ( <i>n</i> = 159)		Hangzhou ( <i>n</i> = 178)		<i>t</i>
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	
Importance of Humor	7.55	1.81	8.30	1.42	-4.25***
Rating of Self Humor	5.96	1.83	6.33	1.79	-1.90

\*\*\**p* < .001.

Table 5  
*Gender Differences in the Perception of Humor*

	Male ( <i>n</i> = 146)		Female ( <i>n</i> = 191)		<i>t</i>
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	
Importance of Humor	7.90	1.63	7.97	1.68	-.38
Rating of Self Humor	6.39	1.85	5.97	1.77	2.10*

\**p* < .05.

### 3.3. Ratings of Importance of Humor and Self Humor (H3)

Hypothesis 3 assumed that the rating of importance of humor would generally be higher than that of self humor. Paired-samples *t*-tests were run to examine this assumption. As demonstrated in Table 6 and Figure 3, the rating of importance of humor was significantly higher than the rating of self-humor for both genders in both regions. The mean score of the importance of humor for Hong Kong males was significantly higher than that of the self humor ( $t[71] = 5.48, p < .001$ ), and for females, the difference also emerged ( $t[86] = 9.19, p < .001$ ). While in Hangzhou, males perceived the importance of humor as significantly higher than their own humor ( $t[73] = 7.80, p < .001$ ), and a similar finding was obtained from the Hangzhou female sample ( $t[103] = 11.57, p < .001$ ). In other words, Hypothesis 3 was well supported in the present study.

Table 6  
*Regional and Gender Differences in the Perception of Humor*

Hong Kong ( <i>n</i> = 159)	Importance of Humor		Rating of Self Humor		<i>t</i>
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	
Male ( <i>n</i> = 72)	7.64	1.67	6.24	1.90	5.48***
Female ( <i>n</i> = 87)	7.47	1.93	5.72	1.74	9.19***

Hangzhou ( <i>n</i> = 178)	Importance of Humor		Rating of Self Humor		<i>t</i>
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	
Male ( <i>n</i> = 74)	8.16	1.56	6.54	1.81	7.80***
Female ( <i>n</i> = 104)	8.39	1.32	6.18	1.77	11.57***

\*\*\**p* < .001.

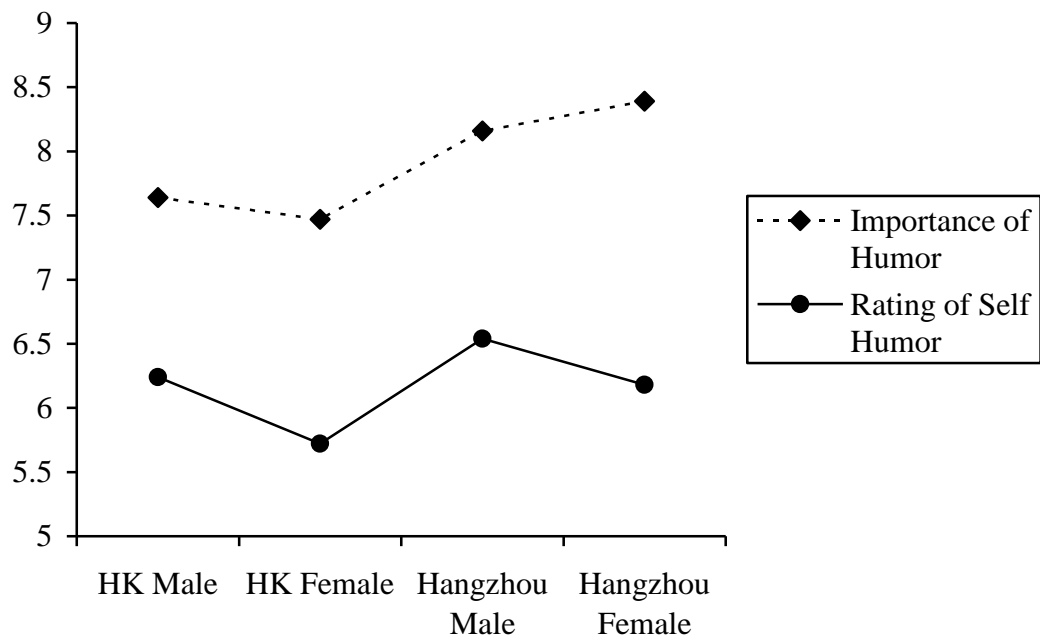


Figure 3. Difference in the perception of humor among Hong Kong and Hangzhou participants.

#### 3.4. Use of Different Humor Styles by Hong Kong and Hangzhou Youngsters (H4)

According to Hypothesis 4, youngsters in Hong Kong would use more maladaptive humor styles and less adaptive humor styles than youngsters in China would. Table 7 and Figure 4 show the regional difference in the way participants used their humor. Through multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA), a significant regional variation in the use of the four humor styles was indicated (Wilks's  $\Lambda = .83$ ,  $F[4, 332] = 16.90$ ,  $p < .001$ ). Follow-up independent samples t-tests demonstrated that respondents from

Hangzhou used more adaptive humor styles, such as affiliative humor ( $t[335] = -3.35, p < .001$ ), and self-enhancing humor ( $t[335] = -4.01, p < .001$ ), than their counterparts in Hong Kong.

Participants in Hong Kong, on the other hand, used significantly more maladaptive styles than did participants in Hangzhou. Specifically, participants in Hong Kong used significantly more aggressive humor ( $t[335] = 6.69, p < .001$ ) and self-defeating humor ( $t[335] = 3.42, p < .001$ ) than Hangzhou participants did. In sum, Hypothesis 4 of this study was well supported as well.

Table 7  
*Regional Differences in the Use of Humor Styles*

	Hong Kong ( $n = 159$ )		Hangzhou ( $n = 178$ )		$t$
	$M$	$SD$	$M$	$SD$	
Affiliative Humor	38.14	7.43	41.23	9.24	-3.35***
Self-Enhancing Humor	32.71	6.68	35.92	7.86	-4.01***
Aggressive Humor	26.86	6.67	22.10	6.39	6.69***
Self-Defeating Humor	27.74	7.87	24.84	7.69	3.42***

\*\*\* $p < .001$ .

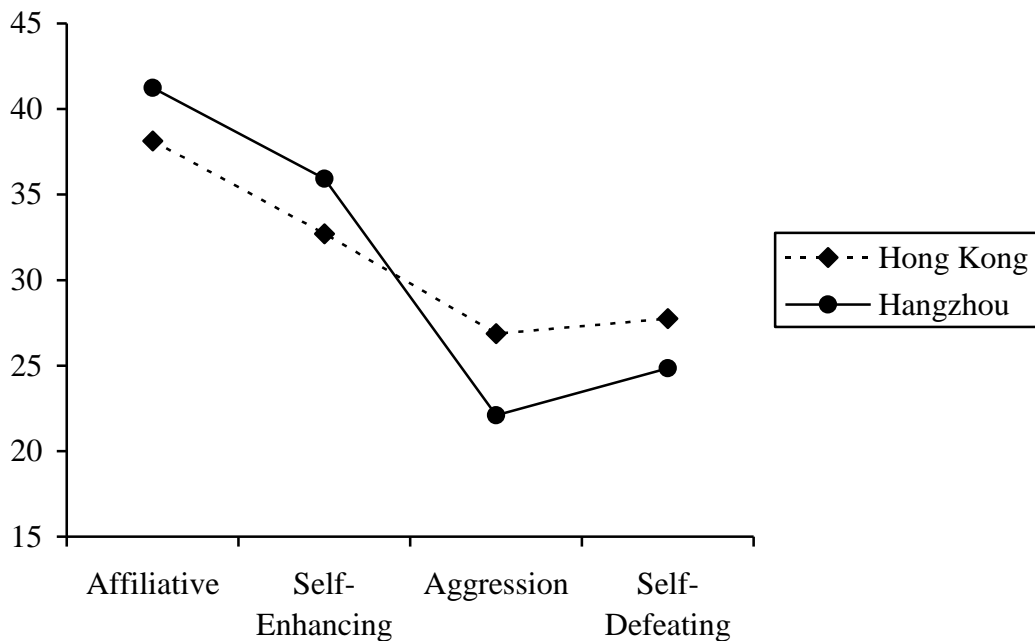


Figure 4. Difference in the use of humor styles among Hong Kong and Hangzhou participants.

### 3.5. Use of Different Humor Styles by Males and Females (H5)

Hypothesis 5 predicted that males tended to use more maladaptive humor styles and less adaptive humor styles than did females. The results of MANOVA indicated a significant gender variation in the use of the humor styles (Wilks's  $\Lambda = .96$ ,  $F[4, 332] = 3.30$ ,  $p = .011$ ). Follow-up independent samples t-tests revealed that male participants used more maladaptive humor styles than female participants, such as aggressive humor ( $t[335] = 2.69$ ,  $p = .007$ ), and self-defeating humor ( $t[335] = 2.05$ ,  $p = .042$ ). However, no significant gender difference was found in the use of the two adaptive humor styles (see Table 8 & Figure 5). Therefore, Hypothesis 5 was partially supported.

Table 8  
Gender Differences in the Use of Humor Styles

	Male ( $n = 146$ )		Female ( $n = 191$ )		$t$
	$M$	$SD$	$M$	$SD$	
Affiliative Humor	38.73	8.61	40.57	8.47	-1.96
Self-Enhancing Humor	34.77	7.26	34.13	7.67	.78
Aggressive Humor	25.50	6.73	23.47	6.97	2.69**
Self-Defeating Humor	27.21	7.95	25.45	7.79	2.05*

\* $p < .05$ , \*\* $p < .01$ .

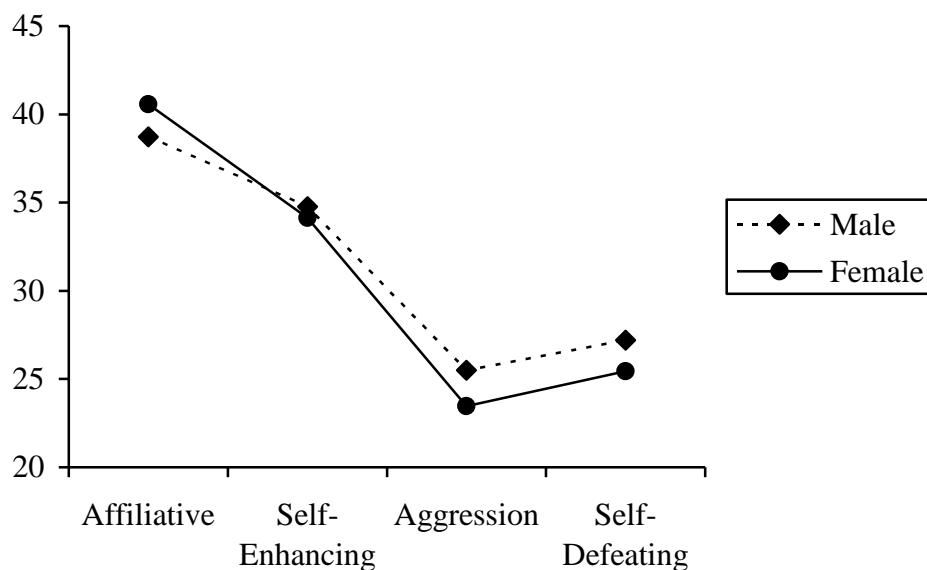


Figure 5. Difference in the use of humor styles between male and female participants.



### 3.6. Relationship among Humor Styles, Social Competence and Loneliness (H6 & H7)

#### 3.6.1. Correlation Analysis

Hypothesis 6 assumed that social competence was positively correlated with adaptive humor styles and negatively correlated with maladaptive humor styles. Table 9 shows the correlation coefficients between them. The results demonstrated that the total ICQ score was positively correlated with the two adaptive humor styles, such as affiliative humor ( $r = .42, p < .01$ ), and self-enhancing humor ( $r = .41, p < .01$ ), while negatively correlated with aggressive humor ( $r = -.20, p < .01$ ), and self-defeating humor ( $r = -.14, p < .05$ ).

Consider next the correlations between the five ICQ subscales with the four humor styles. All of the five domains of social competence were positively correlated with affiliative humor ( $r = .22$  to  $.40, ps < .01$ ) and self-enhancing humor ( $r = .23$  to  $.37, ps < .01$ ). For maladaptive humor styles, both emotional support and conflict management were negatively correlated with aggressive humor ( $r = -.32$  and  $-.28, ps < .01$ ), and self-defeating humor ( $r = -.15$  and  $-.25, ps < .01$ ). Put together, the two adaptive humor styles were positively related to all dimensions of social competence, whereas the two maladaptive humor styles were negatively related to some social competence components. Thus, the correlation analysis was supportive to Hypothesis 6.

Hypothesis 7 assumed that loneliness was positively correlated with maladaptive humor styles and negatively correlated with adaptive humor styles. The results are showed in Table 9. It was found that the total loneliness score was negatively correlated with affiliative humor ( $r = -.33, p < .01$ ), and self-enhancing humor ( $r = -.25, p < .01$ ), while it was positively correlated with aggressive humor ( $r = .15, p < .01$ ), and self-defeating humor ( $r = .22, p < .01$ ). In specific, emotional loneliness and social loneliness were negatively correlated with affiliative and self-enhancing humor ( $r = -.13$

Table 9  
*Correlations between Humor Styles, Social Competence and Loneliness (N = 337)*

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
<i>HSQ</i>													
1. Affiliative Humor	–												
2. Self-Enhancing Humor	.31**	–											
3. Aggressive Humor	-.11*	-.04	–										
4. Self-Defeating Humor	-.06	.05	.41**	–									
<i>ICQ</i>													
5. Initiation	.40**	.37**	-.09	-.06	–								
6. Negative Assertion	.25**	.30**	.00	-.06	.38**	–							
7. Disclosure	.27**	.23**	-.09	.00	.45**	.44**	–						
8. Emotional Support	.22**	.36**	-.32**	-.15**	.38**	.28**	.43**	–					
9. Conflict Management	.35**	.25**	-.28**	-.25**	.47**	.34**	.51**	.50**	–				
10. Total	.42**	.41**	-.20**	-.14*	.75**	.67**	.76**	.69**	.77**	–			
<i>ESL</i>													
11. Emotional Loneliness	-.22**	-.13*	.12*	.18**	-.28**	-.17**	-.31**	-.13*	-.18**	-.29**	–		
12. Social Loneliness	-.36**	-.33**	.14*	.19**	-.43**	-.25**	-.32**	-.28**	-.33**	-.44**	.48**	–	
13. Total	-.33**	-.25**	.15**	.22**	-.40**	-.24**	-.36**	-.23**	-.29**	-.42**	.89**	.83**	–

*Note.* HSQ = Humor Styles Questionnaire, ICQ = Interpersonal Competence Questionnaire, ESL = Emotional and Social Loneliness Scale  
 \* $p < .05$ , \*\* $p < .01$ .

Table 10

*Correlations between Humor Styles, Social Competence and Loneliness for Hong Kong and Hangzhou Participants (N = 337)*

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
<i>HSQ</i>													
1. Affiliative Humor	–	.26**	-.06	-.08	.41**	.23**	.26**	.19*	.36**	.40**	-.20**	-.32**	-.30**
2. Self-Enhancing Humor	.33**	–	-.06	.06	.39**	.33**	.21**	.44**	.24**	.44**	-.16*	-.30**	-.26**
3. Aggressive Humor	-.04	.17*	–	.35**	-.02	.00	-.07	-.28**	-.21**	-.15	.14	.11	.15*
4. Self-Defeating Humor	.04	.14	.40**	–	-.11	-.10	-.02	-.11	-.22**	-.15*	.17*	.17*	.20**
<i>ICQ</i>													
5. Initiation	.35**	.29**	-.04	.06	–	.39**	.41**	.35**	.43**	.72**	-.22**	-.39**	-.35**
6. Negative Assertion	.30**	.30**	-.02	-.04	.39**	–	.45**	.38**	.37**	.72**	-.12	-.24**	-.20**
7. Disclosure	.32**	.28**	-.15	.03	.53**	.42**	–	.44**	.53**	.77**	-.24**	-.28**	-.30**
8. Emotional Support	.22**	.21**	-.29**	-.13	.39**	.18*	.45**	–	.47**	.69**	-.17*	-.26**	-.25**
9. Conflict Management	.31**	.20*	-.26**	-.21**	.47**	.33**	.52**	.51**	–	.76**	-.09	-.25**	-.19*
10. Total	.41**	.35**	-.20*	-.08	.78**	.64**	.78**	.68**	.78**	–	-.23**	-.39**	-.36**
<i>ESL</i>													
11. Emotional Loneliness	-.29**	-.13	.18*	.23**	-.38**	-.22**	-.38**	-.11	-.30**	-.39**	–	.46**	.88**
12. Social Loneliness	-.37**	-.31**	.06	.15	-.43**	-.28**	-.40**	-.26**	-.37**	-.48**	.55**	–	.83**
13. Total	-.37**	-.24**	.14	.22**	-.46**	-.28**	-.44**	-.20*	-.38**	-.49**	.91**	.85**	–

*Note.* Correlations below the diagonal are for Hong Kong participants ( $n = 159$ ), those above the diagonal are for Hangzhou participants ( $n = 178$ ). HSQ = Humor Styles Questionnaire, ICQ = Interpersonal Competence Questionnaire, ESL = Emotional and Social Loneliness Scale

\* $p < .05$ , \*\* $p < .01$ .

to  $-.36, ps < .05$ ). Whereas these two types of loneliness were positively correlated with aggressive and self-defeating humor ( $r = .12$  to  $.19, ps < .05$ ). Thus, Hypothesis 7 was confirmed as well.

Table 10 presents the correlation coefficients for Hong Kong and Hangzhou participants. The patterns of the associations among humor styles, social competence and loneliness were similar in both regions, showing that these relationships were applicable to both Hong Kong and Hangzhou people.

### 3.6.2. Multiple Regression Analysis

Hypotheses 6 and 7 were also tested through multiple regression analyses. As shown in Table 11, using affiliative humor as the dependent variable, the combination of the interpersonal competence subscales had a significant effect ( $R^2 = .20, F[5, 331] = 16.66, p < .001$ ). Both the domains of initiation ( $\beta = .28, t = 4.67, p < .001$ ) and conflict management ( $\beta = .20, t = 3.08, p = .002$ ) were positively related to affiliative humor. The combination of the interpersonal competence domains was significantly associated with self-enhancing humor ( $R^2 = .21, F[5, 331] = 17.89, p < .001$ ). In particular, initiation ( $\beta = .24, t = 4.03, p < .001$ ), negative assertion ( $\beta = .17, t = 3.12, p = .002$ ), and emotional support, ( $\beta = .25, t = 4.27, p < .001$ ) were all significant positive predictors in the present analyses.

In addition, social competence had a significant effect on aggressive humor ( $R^2 = .15, F[5, 331] = 11.19, p < .001$ ) and self-defeating humor ( $R^2 = .09, F[5, 331] = 6.41, p < .001$ ) as well. In relation to aggressive humor, both emotional support ( $\beta = -.28, t = -4.59, p < .001$ ) and conflict management ( $\beta = -.24, t = -3.69, p < .001$ ) were negative predictors. Besides, self-defeating humor was positively associated with disclosure ( $\beta = .19, t = 2.88, p = .004$ ), and was negatively associated with conflict management ( $\beta = -.31, t = -4.57, p < .001$ ).

Taken together, the results of multiple regression analysis suggested that the four humor styles were related to specific domains of social competence. Hypothesis 6 was affirmed.

Table 11  
*Multiple Regression Analyses on Humor Styles (N = 337)*

	Humor Styles			
	Affiliative	Self-Enhancing	Aggressive	Self-Defeating
Initiation	.28***	.24***	.06	.04
Negative Assertion	.07	.17**	.11	-.04
Disclosure	.03	-.06	.08	.19**
Emotional Support	-.01	.25***	-.28***	-.08
Conflict Management	.20**	-.02	-.24***	-.31***
$R^2$	.20***	.21***	.15***	.09***

*Note.* The regression coefficients are standardized.

\*\* $p < .01$ , \*\*\* $p < .001$ .

As the Table 12 demonstrates, the four styles of humor were found to be significantly associated with both emotional loneliness ( $R^2 = .09$ ,  $F[4, 332] = 7.70$ ,  $p < .001$ ), social loneliness ( $R^2 = .22$ ,  $F[4, 332] = 22.72$ ,  $p < .001$ ), as well as the total degree of loneliness ( $R^2 = .18$ ,  $F[4, 332] = 18.07$ ,  $p < .001$ ). More specifically, emotional loneliness was negatively affected by affiliative humor ( $\beta = -.19$ ,  $t = -3.33$ ,  $p = .001$ ), but was positively affected by self-defeating humor ( $\beta = .16$ ,  $t = 2.80$ ,  $p = .005$ ). Social loneliness was negatively influenced by both affiliative ( $\beta = -.27$ ,  $t = -5.18$ ,  $p < .001$ ), and self-enhancing humor ( $\beta = -.25$ ,  $t = -4.89$ ,  $p < .001$ ), but positively influenced by self-defeating humor ( $\beta = .17$ ,  $t = 3.22$ ,  $p = .001$ ). Similarly, the total score of loneliness was negatively influenced by both affiliative ( $\beta = -.26$ ,  $t = -4.91$ ,  $p < .001$ ), and self-enhancing humor ( $\beta = -.18$ ,  $t = -3.43$ ,  $p = .001$ ), but positively influenced by self-defeating humor ( $\beta = .19$ ,  $t = 3.53$ ,  $p < .001$ ).

All these findings indicated differential effects of humor styles on loneliness, offering much support for Hypothesis 7.

Table 12  
*Multiple Regression Analyses on Humor Styles (N = 337)*

	Loneliness		
	Emotional	Social	Total
Affiliative Humor	-.19***	-.27***	-.26***
Self-Enhancing Humor	-.07	-.25***	-.18***
Aggressive Humor	.03	.03	.04
Self-Defeating Humor	.16**	.17**	.19***
$R^2$	.09***	.22***	.18***

*Note.* The regression coefficients are standardized.

\*\* $p < .01$ , \*\*\* $p < .001$

### 3.7. Indirect effect of Social Competence on Loneliness through Humor Styles (H8)

Hypothesis 8 assumed that high social competence would lead to lower loneliness, through its association with more use of adaptive humor styles and less use of maladaptive humor styles. The guideline of Baron and Kenny (1986) was employed to examine the role of humor styles as mediators. In the following analysis, the total ICQ score and the total loneliness score were employed in examining the mediating effect. First, the independent variable (Social Competence) should display a significant effect on the dependent variable (Humor Styles). Regression analysis showed that social competence had a significant negative effect on loneliness ( $\beta = -.42, t = -8.49, p < .001$ ).

Secondly, the independent variable (Social Competence) should show significant effects on the mediators (Humor Styles). The results indicated that, social competence was positively associated with affiliative humor ( $\beta = .42, t = 8.36, p < .001$ ), and self-enhancing humor ( $\beta = .41, t = 8.31, p < .001$ ), but negatively associated with aggressive humor ( $\beta = -.20, t = -3.82, p < .001$ ), and self-defeating humor ( $\beta = -.14, t = -2.58, p = .010$ ).

Thirdly, it is necessary to demonstrate a significant effect of the mediators (Humor Styles) on the dependent variable (Loneliness), while controlling for the independent variable (Social Competence). The results showed that, when the effect of social competence was adjusted, loneliness was negatively affected by affiliative humor ( $\beta =$

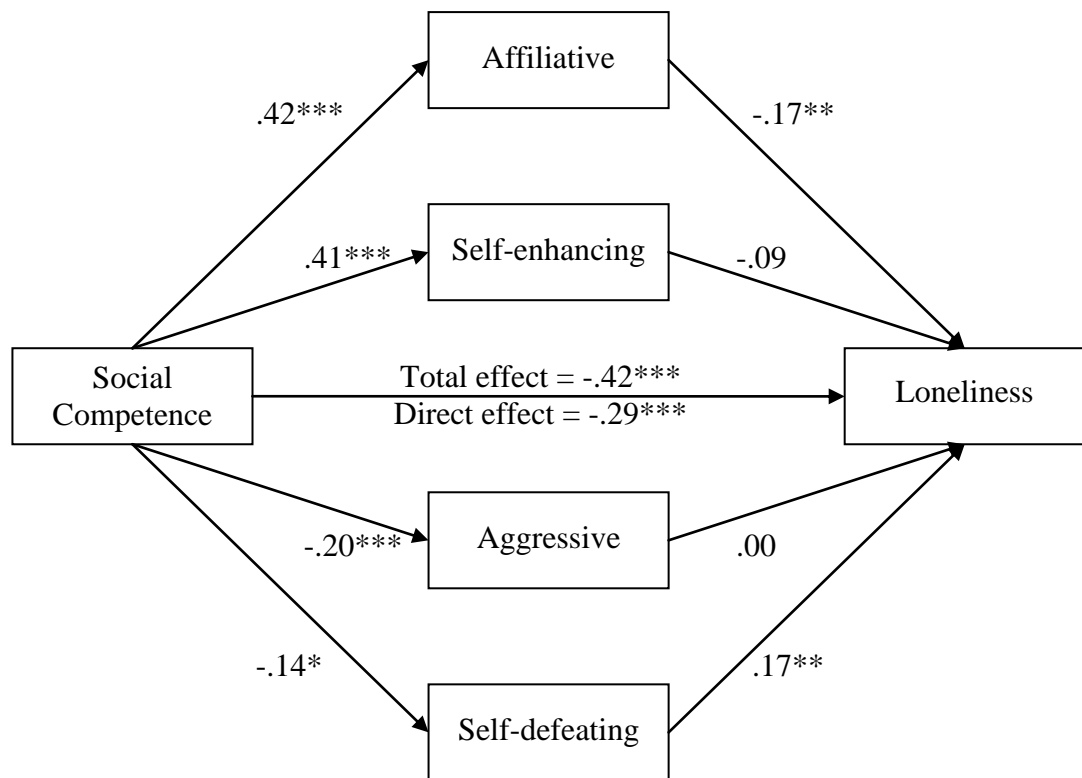


Figure 6. Path model of relations between social competence, humor styles, and loneliness. The coefficients in the figure are standardized.

\* $p < .05$ , \*\* $p < .01$ , \*\*\* $p < .001$ .

-.17,  $t = -2.3$ ,  $p = .001$ ), and positively influenced by self-defeating humor ( $\beta = .17$ ,  $t = 3.18$ ,  $p = .002$ ). The effects of self-enhancing humor ( $\beta = -.09$ ,  $t = -1.63$ ,  $p = .105$ ) and aggressive humor ( $\beta = .00$ ,  $t = .04$ ,  $p = .968$ ) were not significant. Finally, the effect of social competence on loneliness remained significant ( $\beta = -.29$ ,  $t = -5.06$ ,  $p < .001$ ). As a whole, both affiliative and self-defeating humor partially mediated the effect of social competence on loneliness. The results of the relevant regression analyses are summarized in Figure 6.

In addition, Sobel tests (Sobel, 1982) were conducted to investigate the significance of the mediating effects. The results found that the total mediating effect of the four humor styles was significant ( $z = -3.94$ ,  $p < .001$ ). The mediating effect through affiliative ( $z = -3.03$ ,  $p = .002$ ), and self-defeating humor ( $z = -2.01$ ,  $p = .044$ ) were

significant. In short, high social competence would lead to low loneliness through the use of more affiliative humor, and less self-defeating humor. Thus, Hypothesis 8 was only partially supported.

### 3.8. Moderating Effect of Humor Styles on the Social Competence – Loneliness Relationship (H9)

Hypothesis 9 assumed that the use of adaptive humor styles would strengthen the negative relationship between social competence and loneliness, but the use of maladaptive humor styles would weaken the negative relationship between social competence and loneliness. Hierarchical multiple regression analyses were performed to evaluate the role of humor styles as moderators. To obtain the standardized solutions, Aiken and West's (1991) procedures were followed. The dependent variables (total loneliness score), independent variables (total ICQ score), and the moderators (humor styles) were all standardized before the calculation. Each interaction term was calculated by multiplying the standardized independent variable by the standardized moderator.

Table 13 displays the results of the moderation analyses. Consider first the moderating effects of the adaptive humor styles. The Social Competence  $\times$  Affiliative interaction effect ( $\beta = -.01$ ,  $t = -.16$ ,  $p = .874$ ) and the Social Competence  $\times$  Self-enhancing interaction effect ( $\beta = -.01$ ,  $t = -.20$ ,  $p = .842$ ) were found to be non-significant. Consider next the moderating effects of the maladaptive humor styles. The Social Competence  $\times$  Aggressive interaction effect was not significant ( $\beta = -.02$ ,  $t = -.52$ ,  $p = .605$ ). Unexpectedly, self-defeating humor was shown to significantly strengthen the negative association between social competence and loneliness ( $\beta = -.10$ ,  $t = -2.07$ ,  $p = .040$ ).



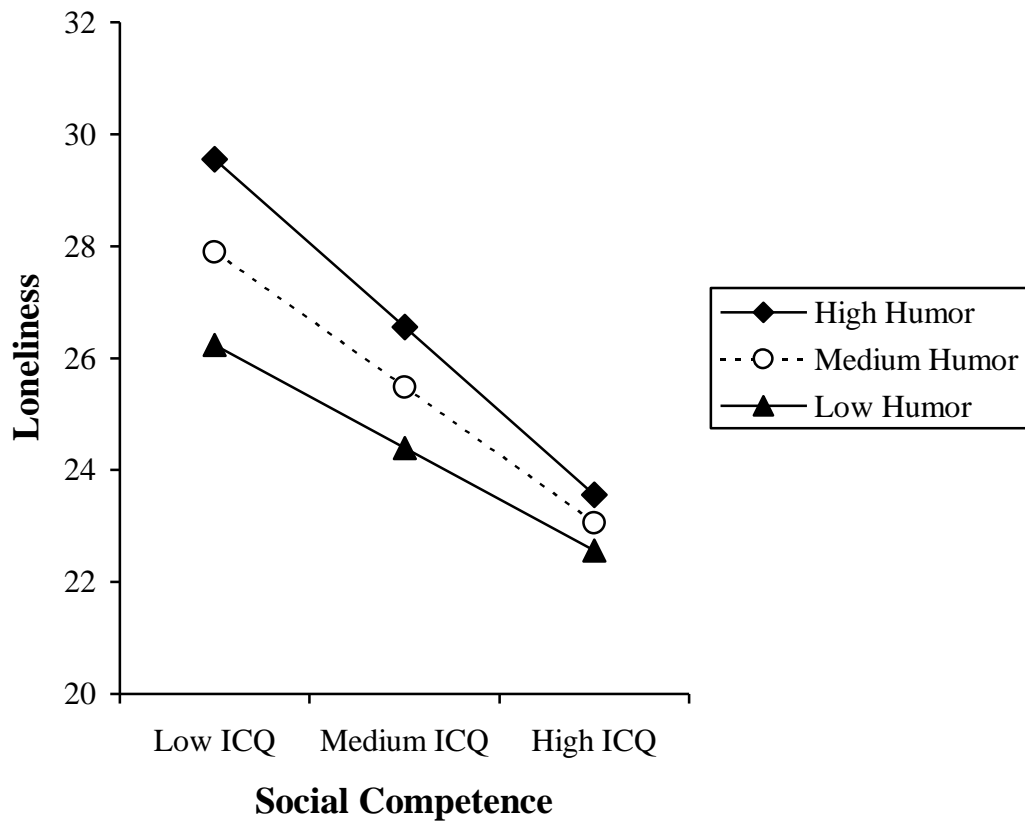
The significant moderating effect of self-defeating humor on the social competence – loneliness relationship was further analyzed through the technique suggested by Cohen, Cohen, West, and Aiken (2003). In this analysis, three values of the moderator were selected, representing a high (one standard deviation above mean), medium (mean), and low (one standard deviation below mean) level of self-defeating humor. When self-defeating humor was in high level, the impact of social competence on loneliness was the strongest ( $\beta = -.50, t = -7.23, p < .001$ ), whereas when it was in medium level, the impact was lower ( $\beta = -.40, t = -8.17, p < .001$ ). Finally, when it was in the low level, the impact then was the weakest ( $\beta = -.30, t = -4.56, p < .001$ ). The results were summarized in Figure 7.

To conclude, while the affiliative, self-enhancing, and aggressive humor styles did not moderate the negative influence of social competence on loneliness, the self-defeating humor was found to enhance the negative effect of social competence instead of weakening that. Thus, the findings were not only unresponsive to the Hypothesis 9, but in some ways contradicted to the assumption.

Table 13  
*Hierarchical Multiple Regression Analyses on Loneliness (N = 337)*

Step	Variable	$\beta$	$R^2$	$\Delta R^2$
1	Social Competence	-.34***	.18***	.18***
2	Affiliative	-.19***	.21***	.03***
3	Social Competence $\times$ Affiliative	-.01	.21***	.00
1	Social Competence	-.38***	.18***	.18***
2	Self-enhancing	-.09	.18***	.01
3	Social Competence $\times$ Self-Enhancing	-.01	.18***	.00
1	Social Competence	-.41***	.18***	.18***
2	Aggressive	.07	.18***	.00
3	Social Competence $\times$ Aggressive	-.02	.18***	.00
1	Social Competence	-.40***	.18***	.18***
2	Self-defeating	.18***	.20***	.03**
3	Social Competence $\times$ Self-Defeating	-.10*	.21***	.01*

*Note.* The regression coefficients are standardized. \* $p < .05$ , \*\* $p < .01$ , \*\*\* $p < .001$ .



*Figure 7.* The regression lines predicting loneliness from social competence at different levels of self-defeating humor.

### 3.9. Nomination of the Best Humorists by Youngsters in Hong Kong and Hangzhou

Tables 14 and 15 display the ten most frequently nominated humorists by the participants in Hong Kong and Hangzhou. Most of the humorists were comedians, DJs, TV host, and actor. More specifically, among the top ten humorous persons nominated by the Hong Kong sample, over half of them were comedians (6 out of 10), three were DJs, and one was TV host, whereas in Hangzhou, there were six comedians, one writer, one politician, one TV host, and one actor. These findings were quite similar to those found by Yue (2008, in press), which showed that Hong Kong participants were more narrow in regard to the occupations of the nominees, and those in Hangzhou were more diverse.

Table 14  
*Ranking of the Top 10 Humorous Persons Nominated by Hong Kong Participants*

Humorous Person	Occupation	Ranking	%	
黃子華	Dayo Wong	Comedian	1	16.8
周星馳	Stephen Chow	Comedian	2	14.3
詹瑞文	Jim	Comedian	3	6.7
林海峰	Jan Lam	DJ	4	6.0
差利卓別靈	Charlie Chaplin	Comedian	5	4.4
森美	Mysam Leung	DJ	6	4.1
曾志偉	Eric Tsang	TV Host	7	3.9
蠶豆先生	Mr. Bean	Comedian	8	3.2
葛文輝	Eric Kot	DJ	9	2.8
占基利	Jim Carrey	Comedian	10	2.3
			Total	64.4

Table 15  
*Ranking of the Top 10 Humorous Persons Nominated by Mainland Participants*

Humorous Person	Occupation	Ranking	%	
差利卓別靈	Charlie Chaplin	Comedian	1	15.4
趙本山	Zhao Ben Shan	Comedian	2	11.5
周星馳	Stephen Chow	Comedian	3	8.0
蠶豆先生	Mr. Bean	Comedian	4	6.8
馮鞏	Feng Gong	Comedian	5	6.0
馬克吐溫	Mark Twain	Writer	6	4.3
周恩來	Zhou An Lai	Politician	7	3.3
小沈陽	Xiao Shen Yang	Comedian	8	2.7
葛優	Ge You	Actor	9	2.5
謝娜	Xie Na	TV Host	10	1.6
			Total	62.0

### 3.10. Occupational Categories of the Nominated Humorists

Table 16 shows the percentage of the occupational categories of the nominated humorous persons by region and by gender. The most frequently nominated occupation was comedian (50.9%), followed by TV host / DJ (11.9%), and actor / actress (9.3%). Two-way chi-square tests were performed to examine the regional and gender differences in the nominations of the most humorous persons. From the results, a significant regional difference was found ( $\chi^2[9] = 63.40, p < .001$ ), yet there was no gender difference found from the sample ( $\chi^2[9] = 12.77, p = .173$ ).

The relevant percentage distribution was examined to interpret the significant regional difference. In specific, 19.1% of the Hong Kong sample nominated TV hosts / DJ as humorous persons, while only 5.5% of the Hangzhou sample did so. Furthermore, 9.4% of the Hangzhou respondents nominated politicians as humorous persons, while only 3.7% of the Hong Kong respondents did.

Table 16

*Percentage Distribution of the Occupational Categories of the Nominated Humorous Persons*

	Total Sample	Region		Gender	
		Hong Kong	Hangzhou	Male	Female
Comedian	50.9	23.7	27.2	22.4	28.5
TV Host / DJ	11.9	9.0	2.9	3.8	8.1
Crosstalker	1.5	.2	1.3	.8	.8
Actor / Actress	9.3	3.5	5.9	4.4	4.9
Singer	2.7	1.8	.9	1.4	1.3
Writer	5.7	2.2	3.6	2.5	3.3
Politician	6.7	1.7	5.0	3.8	2.9
Character	1.2	.4	.8	.5	.7
Businessman	1.4	.5	.9	.8	.7
Others	8.6	4.0	4.6	3.5	5.1
Total	100	47.1	52.9	43.9	56.1
$\chi^2$		63.40***		12.77	

*Note.* Others include friends, family members, participants themselves, and unidentifiable people.

## **Chapter 4 Discussion**

### 4.1. Major Findings of the Present Study

#### 4.1.1. Regional and Gender Differences in the Perception of Humor (H1 & H2)

Hypotheses 1 and 2 assumed regional and gender differences in the ratings of self-humor. The results of independent samples t-tests supported the gender difference, but not the regional difference. Consistent with Yue's (in press) study, male participants in the current study considered themselves as being more humorous than female participants. Yet, both Hong Kong and Mainland participants' rating on self humor were quite similar.

#### 4.1.2. Ratings of Importance of Humor and Self-Humor (H3)

Hypothesis 3 predicted that youngsters in both Hong Kong and Mainland China would rate the importance of humor higher than their self humor. This assumption was well supported by the results. It was illustrated that both youngsters in Hong Kong and Hangzhou considered humor as a very important personality trait, however they perceived themselves as relatively low in sense of humor. This resembled the previous findings that Chinese people highly appreciate humor, but generally consider themselves as being non-humorous (Chen, 2006; Liao, 2001; Yue, Hao, Lan, & Yan, 2006).

#### 4.1.3. Regional and Gender Differences in Use of Humor Styles (H4 & H5)

Hypothesis 4 proposed that youngsters in Hong Kong use more maladaptive humor styles and less adaptive humor styles than youngsters in Mainland China, and that was exactly the case in this study. This kind of regional or cultural differences were found in several studies. For instance, Yue et al. (2008) reported that students in Hong Kong used hostile humor and self-defeating humor more frequently while the Mainland students used affiliative humor and self-enhancing humor more often. A cross-cultural

study of humor found a less frequent use of affiliative humor in Lebanese than in both Canadian and Belgian samples, lower self-enhancing humor in Lebanon than Canada, and lower aggressive humor in Lebanon than Belgium (Kazarian & Martin, 2004). The results were interpreted as a cultural difference in the value placed on the perception and presentation of humor. For North American and European, humor was perceived as a desirable personality trait, while Lebanese and Canadian perceived hostile and disparaging humor more negatively than Belgian.

Indeed, the regional difference in the use of humor found in the present study can be considered as an outcome of cultural-related personality traits. As stated by Martin (2007), cultural orientation of collectivism which emphasizes interdependency, tends to relate with affiliative humor, and individualistic cultural orientation which prioritizes individual needs over group needs, tends to relate with aggressive humor. Therefore, it was expected that youngsters in Hangzhou who ordinarily were collectivist would use more adaptive humor styles, and youngsters in Hong Kong whose culture and values had been influenced by British administration for over a hundred years, would use more maladaptive humor styles.

Hypothesis 5 proposed that males would use more maladaptive humor styles and less adaptive humor styles than would females. The significantly higher preference for maladaptive humor styles in males was found in this study, but there were no significant gender differences on the two types of adaptive humors. The finding was consistent with several previous evidence that men had greater tendency to engage in maladaptive types of humor than did women in both Chinese and Western society (Crawford & Gressley, 1991; Sun, Guo, & Lee, 2009). This phenomenon can be explained by the issue of status hierarchy, in which men used aggressive humor as a mean to facilitate and assert their status at the expense of other people, while self-defeating humor may

served as a technique to promote their status through amusing others at the expense of oneself (Kazarian & Martin, 2004). Moreover, Tannen (1986) suggested that the conversational goals of men and women are quite different from one another, in which women aim at intimacy, whereas men aim at self presentation. These dissimilarities are likely to be reflected in the way they use humor. Women use adaptive humors to enhance interpersonal relationships, while men use maladaptive humors to develop a personal identity. This provides an explanation for the gender differences found in certain types of humor.

#### 4.1.4. Relationship between Humor and Social Competence (H6)

Hypothesis 6 which assumed that social competence would be positively correlated with adaptive humor styles, and would be negatively correlated with maladaptive humor styles, was well supported in this study. This was also supported by the study of Yip and Martin (2006), which stated that using adaptive humors was positively correlated with the measures of high social competence; in contrast, using maladaptive humors was correlated with the dimensions of social competence in an opposite direction.

According to Yip and Martin (2006), affiliative humor and self-enhancing humor styles are beneficial for initiating conversations with strangers, building up relationship with others, and promoting self-disclosure. To deal with embarrassing situations in which personal information is not accepted or conformed by others, people might be able to escape from being mortified by saying "I'm just kidding". Same as in situations which rejections are needed to be expressed, or when conflicts have to be resolved, humor can serve as a flexible and comfortable technique to achieve the goals. Thus, it is not a surprise to have all the domains of social competence being significantly correlate with these two adaptive humor styles.

For the maladaptive humor, people with aggressive traits which might be reflected through their behaviours or communication attitudes, making it difficult for them to express empathy or support for others, and they were less able to manage conflicts effectively. For people who often engage in self-defeating humor, anger might be expressed in passive but aggressive ways, which tend to result in deficits in showing emotional support, as well as ineffective conflict management.

#### 4.1.5. Relationship between Humor and Loneliness (H7)

As hypothesized, loneliness was positively correlated with maladaptive humor styles, and was negatively correlated with adaptive humor styles. This finding was supported by Hampes (2005), who found that people who engaged highly in affiliative and self-enhancing humor tend to feel less lonely, and those who engaged highly in self-defeating humor tend to feel more lonely. Though, no significant relationship between aggressive humor and loneliness was found in his research, the negative association between these two variables was found in the current study.

Dill and Anderson's (1999) presumed that people who are shy tend to fail in social context, thus they may try to escape from this kind of failure by avoiding social interactions. In consequence, they may feel socially isolated and lonely. In light of this illustration, the correlations between loneliness and humor styles found in the present study can be interpreted that, people who use adaptive humor styles frequently are able to develop friendships and intimate relationships more easily, have higher opportunity to be engaged in social activities, and therefore, have less feeling of loneliness. In contrast, people who often use maladaptive humor styles would be less likely to be successful in social situations, find it difficult to develop intimate and close relationships with others, and in turn, report higher loneliness.

#### 4.1.6. The Mediating Effects of Affiliative and Self-Defeating Humor Styles (H8)



Hypothesis 8 stated that high social competence, via more use of adaptive humor styles and less use of maladaptive humor styles, would lead to lower loneliness. The results indicated the relationship between social competence and loneliness could be partially mediated by the use of affiliative and self-defeating humor in social contexts. While other studies (Hampes, 2005; Çeçen, 2007; Sun, Guo, & Lee, 2009) focused on the simple associations between humor styles, social competence and loneliness, the present study was able to demonstrate a causal relationship between these variables, and indicated specific types of humor can effectively mediate the relationship between being socially competent and feeling lonely.

In a related study conducted by Fitts and his colleagues (2009), shy people who used less affiliative humor, and more self-defeating humor, would have greater feeling of loneliness. However, shyness still contributed to a certain level of loneliness directly, even without mediating effects of any types of humor. Likewise, we could interpret the findings as that socially competent individuals tended to use more affiliative humor and less self-defeating humor, through these desirable communication attitudes, they were able to initiate and maintain satisfying personal relationships, thus, leading to lower feeling of loneliness. Oppositely, as socially incompetent people used less affiliative humor and more self-defeating humor, they were likely to experience failures, rejections and isolations in social interactions, in consequence, leading to greater feeling of loneliness. Yet, without the effect of humor, just simply being socially competent could also contribute to lower feeling of loneliness.

#### 4.1.7. The Moderating Effects of the Self-Defeating Humor Style (H9)

Hypothesis 9 proposed that the use of adaptive humor would strengthen the negative relationship between social competence and loneliness, and the use of maladaptive humor would weaken the negative relationship between social competence

and loneliness. Nonetheless, instead of weakening the impact of social competence on loneliness, self-defeating humor was even found to be a facilitator on their relationship.

It was indicated in other studies that humor could be a moderator on the relationship between stressors and moods (Martin & Lefcourt, 1983), anxious attachment style and closeness (Fraley & Aron, 2004), leadership and follower attitudes (Hughes & Avey, 2008). However, there were no studies concerning the humor styles as a moderator on the relationship between social competence and loneliness conducted so far, in particular for the Chinese society. Therefore, the present study was able to provide a meaningful insight in understanding the facilitative effect of specific humor styles on the impact of social competence on feeling of loneliness.

Based on previous humor literatures, excessive use of self-defeating humor was considered as maladaptive. For example, people try to entertain others by doing or saying funny things about themselves in order to be accepted by others. They would hide their negative emotions and deny the problems encountered (Kubie, 1971). This form of humor was found to be related to emotional deprivation, avoidance, low self-esteem, neuroticism, depression, loneliness, relationship dissatisfaction, and other psychological problems (Fabrizi & Pollio, 1987; Martin, 2003). However, Vaillant (1977) argued that even when people are engaged in self-defeating humor, as long as they do not take themselves overly serious, and maintain a sense of self-acceptance; it can be considered as a positive form of humor which enhances social interaction. In this sense, the finding of the current study can be explained as that people with high self-defeating humor and high social competence tend to have better relationship with others, and lower degree of loneliness, as they are able to use self-defeating humor in a more skillful and appropriate way, compared to those who are socially incompetent.

#### 4.1.8. Nomination of the Best Humorists

Apart from the above findings, the diversities in nominating humorous people between the youngsters in Hong Kong and Hangzhou were explored. In Hong Kong, most of the nominated humorists are comedians and DJs. Even though in Hangzhou, comedians were also frequently considered, the nominated occupational categories by the participants in this region seem to be more heterogeneous. One notable difference was that Hong Kong youngsters seldom consider politicians as being humorous, yet it was the third most nominated occupation in Hangzhou youngsters.

This is somehow consistent with Yue's (in press) study which found that both Hong Kong and Mainland Chinese did perceive comedians as highly humorous, and the nominations of humorists in Hong Kong were more homogeneous than the Mainland participants. This can be again explained as a cultural difference in defining humor, in which students in Mainland China would associate humor in different context, with different perception for the contents, and provide different response in various circumstances. While the definition of humor for Hong Kong students seem to be simply associated with funny action and stories.

#### 4.2. Limitations and Suggestions for Future Research

Despite the noticeable findings obtained in the present study, there are several limitations to be addressed.

Firstly, the participants were recruited through convenient sampling method, which would induce sample bias, and might limit the generalization of the findings. Since majority of the participants were aged 19 to 30 in Hong Kong, and 17 to 23 in Hangzhou, the related implications might not be applicable to the population who is out of these age groups. Future research may include participants of different age groups in order to examine the age difference in the humor styles, and the effects on their interpersonal relationships.

Besides, the high educational background of the sample may influence their perception of humor and social competence. Future studies should make control over the confounding variables such as social status, educational background, and religious beliefs. Moreover, the study relied heavily on self-report measures, and participants might answer the questions in a social desirable way, the self-report bias was inevitable. Therefore, future studies should incorporate with more objective measures, or adopt longitudinal designs with multiple methods of data collection in order to establish a more valid relationship.

Furthermore, the mediation analyses were based on the assumption that higher social competent would lead to more frequent use of affiliative humor style and less frequent use of self-defeating humor style, which would result in lower loneliness. However, it is also possible that more frequent use of adaptive humor styles and less frequent use of maladaptive humor styles make a person more socially competent. Therefore, further studies with longitudinal or experimental design would be necessary to examine the exact causal relationships among these variables.

#### 4.3. Conclusion

Even though, people laugh and smile at incongruities as a basic cognitive or physiological process of humor mechanisms regardless of their culture orientation, however, each culture has its own set of values, norms, and unwritten rules about the use of humor which may influence the preferences of the contents and styles of humor. Moreover, humor serves as skills to initiate social interactions, to enhance personal disclosures, to manage conflicts, etc. Yet, negative forms of humor could lead to aversive impact on social relationships.

The significant findings of the present study regarding the relationship of humor, social competence and loneliness can contribute to the empirical evidence for studies in

Chinese context. The causal relationships of social competence and loneliness with the effect of specific types of humor styles found in this research provide useful suggestions for intervention and therapeutic purposes in promoting psychological well-being.

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## Appendix A. Questionnaire

日期：

編號：

### 研究問卷

您好，本人是香港城市大學應用社會科學系的學生。現正進行一項有關年青人的幽默風格、其社交能力及孤獨感的調查研究。您的參與對此項研究非常重要，因此我誠邀您花數分鐘完成問卷。這份問卷**並沒有標準答案**，閣下只要按照真實情況填寫便可。您所提供的資料只會作研究用途，並會保密，請放心填寫。在此先向您的無私合作衷心致謝。

#### 第一部份：請評估

- |  | 十分低         |             |            |   |   |   |   |   |   | 十分高 |
|--|-------------|-------------|------------|---|---|---|---|---|---|-----|
| 1. 請評估幽默的重要程度                                    | 1           | 2           | 3          | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10  |
| 2. 請評估你自己的幽默程度                                   | 1           | 2           | 3          | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10  |
| 3. 請評估你父親的幽默程度                                   | 1           | 2           | 3          | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10  |
| 4. 請評估你母親的幽默程度                                   | 1           | 2           | 3          | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10  |
| 5. 請評估中國人的幽默程度                                   | 1           | 2           | 3          | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10  |
| 6. 請評估西方人的幽默程度                                   | 1           | 2           | 3          | 4 | 5 | 6 | 7 | 8 | 9 | 10  |
| 7. 請舉出三位您認為是幽默的代表人物                              |             |             |            |   |   |   |   |   |   |     |
| 1) _____   |             |             |            |   |   |   |   |   |   |     |
| 2) _____   |             |             |            |   |   |   |   |   |   |     |
| 3) _____   |             |             |            |   |   |   |   |   |   |     |
| 8. 請評估以下幽默主要特質的重要程度（1 =最重要，2 =次等重要，以此類推，排列 1–10） |             |             |            |   |   |   |   |   |   |     |
| _____ 機智   | _____ 想像力豐富 | _____ 富有創造力 | _____ 搞笑   |   |   |   |   |   |   |     |
| _____ 靈活   | _____ 善於表達  | _____ 富有觀察力 | _____ 性格開朗 |   |   |   |   |   |   |     |
| _____ 自信   | _____ 反應靈敏  |             |            |   |   |   |   |   |   |     |

**第二部份：**下列句子描述了人們以不同方式表達或體驗幽默的情況。請細閱每一句子，並圈出對那句子的贊同或不贊同程度。

題號	項目	完 全 不 同 意	中 等 不 同 意	略 微 不 同 意	不 贊 同 也 不 反 對	略 微 同 意	中 等 同 意	完 全 同 意
1	我一般不太愛發笑，或者和其他人一起開玩笑。	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
2	我覺得情緒低落的時候，通常能夠用幽默來振奮自己。	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
3	如果某個人有毛病或者缺點，我經常會取笑他。	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
4	我過分地讓其他人嘲笑或取笑我為樂。	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
5	我不必費太大勁就可以讓別人笑起來-----看來我是一個天生的富有幽默感的人。	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
6	即使我獨自一人，我也經常以生活中的荒謬行為和事情自尋其樂。	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
7	我的幽默感從不使別人感到不愉快或受到傷害。	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	如果這樣做可以使我的家人或朋友發笑，我會經常失去理智的貶低自己。	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
9	我很少通過講述各種各樣的奇聞趣事來讓別人發笑。	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
10	如果我感到難過或不高興，我通常會盡力去想一些與此時景相關的趣事來使我自己感覺好一點。	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
11	在講笑話或趣事的時候，我通常不太關心別人在聽這些笑話或趣事時的感受。	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
12	我經常通過講一些有關我自己的弱點、過失或過錯的趣事來使別人更加喜歡我或接受我。	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
13	我經常和密友一起發笑和開玩笑。	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
14	我的幽默人生觀使得我不會對事情感到過度心煩或沮喪。	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
15	我不喜歡別人將幽默作為一種批評或貶低某人的方式。	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

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16	我不經常講一些趣事來貶低自己。	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
17	我一般不愛講笑話或逗別人開心。	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
18	當我獨自一人並且感到不愉快的時候，我會盡力去想一些趣事來振奮自己。	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
19	有時候我想到一些實在太有趣的事，會情不自禁地說出來，即使在當時的場合這麼做不恰當，我也照樣會說出來。	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
20	在開玩笑或盡力使自己表現得比較詼諧的時候，我經常過份地貶低自己。	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
21	我樂于使別人發笑。	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
22	我感到難過、沮喪或心煩的時候，通常會失去幽默感。	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
23	即使我所有的朋友都在取笑別人，我也不會參與此事。	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
24	我和朋友（或家人）在一起的時候，似乎經常成為別人取笑或開玩笑的對象。	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
25	我不經常和朋友開玩笑。	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
26	據我的經驗，根據當時情景想想某一個與問題有關的有趣方面常常是應對問題的一種行之有效的方法。	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
27	如果我不喜歡一個人，我經常用幽默或揶揄來貶低他。	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
28	如果面臨問題或感到不高興，我會用講笑話的方式來掩蓋它。這樣，即使是最親密的朋友也不知道我真正的感受。	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
29	和別人相處的時候，我經常想不到有什麼機智或詼諧的話可以拿來應對。	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
30	我不需要別人來使自己開心-----即使我獨自一人，我也常常可以找到一些東西來笑樂一番。	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
31	如果會使別人感到不愉快的話，即使有些事對我來說確實很有趣，我也不會發笑或就此開玩笑。	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
32	讓別人笑我是我使朋友或家人保持心情愉快的方法。	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

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**第三部份：**下列句子描述了一般人與人之間相處的情況。請細閱每一句子，並表達這些句子如何適合您的情況。

- 1 - 表示你“做不到，感覺極其不安並且沒有把握，因此盡量逃避開”。
- 2 - 表示你“可以這麼做，但感覺非常不安，並且處理起來有許多困難”。
- 3 - 表示你“能做，不過感覺稍有不妥，並且處理起來有些困難”。
- 4 - 表示你“擅長這麼做，感覺輕鬆，並且能夠處理這類問題”。
- 5 - 表示你“非常擅長這麼做，感覺非常輕鬆，並且能夠處理得非常出色”。

1	邀請陌生人與你共同做某件事，比如，一起參加聚會。	1	2	3	4	5
2	告訴關係密切者，他(她)對待你的某種方式你並不喜歡。	1	2	3	4	5
3	與剛剛結識的人閒聊時，談及自己的隱私。	1	2	3	4	5
4	當與關係密切者之間的意見分歧即將升級為惡戰時，你能夠承認是自己錯了。	1	2	3	4	5
5	幫助關係密切者完成其對重大人生決策的思索和體驗。	1	2	3	4	5
6	願意為那些你感興趣和有吸引力的人做事或提出建議。	1	2	3	4	5
7	熟人或異性朋友讓你做你不想做的某件事時，你會拒絕。	1	2	3	4	5
8	信任新朋友或異性朋友，並向他(她)呈現你比較脆弱、敏感的一面。	1	2	3	4	5
9	與關係密切者發生爭吵時，能夠撇開嫉妒或怨恨的情緒。	1	2	3	4	5
10	能夠耐心而充滿感情地傾聽關係密切者發洩有關他(她)經歷的外在困擾的情緒。	1	2	3	4	5
11	與你想要認識的陌生人主動談話。	1	2	3	4	5
12	拒絕關係密切者的不合理要求。	1	2	3	4	5
13	告訴關係密切者一些與你自己有關的感到羞恥的事。	1	2	3	4	5
14	當與關係密切者有矛盾時，真誠地傾聽他(她)的抱怨，而不試圖“看透”其所思。	1	2	3	4	5
15	幫助關係密切者認清他(她)所面臨的問題的關鍵所在。	1	2	3	4	5
16	我與人初次交往時是一個有趣的、願意分享的人。	1	2	3	4	5
17	當關係密切者忽視或不體諒你時捍衛自己的權利。	1	2	3	4	5



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18	讓新的同伴逐漸認識“真實”的你。	1	2	3	4	5
19	在爭吵中能夠接受關係密切者的意見，並真正理解他(她)的觀點。	1	2	3	4	5
20	幫助關係密切者處理其與家庭成員的問題或室友(工作或住)的關係問題。	1	2	3	4	5
21	向你想要結識(或約會)的人主動做自我介紹。	1	2	3	4	5
22	告訴異性朋友或熟人他(她)正在做的某件事令你感到難堪。	1	2	3	4	5
23	取下你用以自衛的“面具”，信任關係密切者。	1	2	3	4	5
24	避免與關係密切者談論那些可能引起分歧並導致爭吵的話題。	1	2	3	4	5
25	當關係密切者情緒低落時，你是一個全神貫注及善解人意的傾聽者。	1	2	3	4	5
26	打電話給新的異性朋友或熟人商定約會的時間。	1	2	3	4	5
27	當關係密切者違背承諾時，你會當面質問他(她)。	1	2	3	4	5
28	向你的同伴訴說那些令你焦慮或害怕的秘密。	1	2	3	4	5
29	能夠和關係密切者協同解決某個特殊的問題，而不採用慣常的說辭(例如：那本該由你做，與我無關)。	1	2	3	4	5
30	當關係密切者受到羞辱時，你能夠鼓勵並以實際行動支持他(她)。	1	2	3	4	5
31	給那些你希望成為朋友或戀人的人留下好的第一印象。	1	2	3	4	5
32	告訴關係密切者他(她)做的某件事傷害了你。	1	2	3	4	5
33	告訴關係密切者你有多麼欣賞和在乎他(她)。	1	2	3	4	5
34	關係密切者令你生氣時，你能夠接受這樣的看法：他(她)的觀點有合理之處，哪怕你並不同意這個觀點。	1	2	3	4	5
35	當關係密切者需要訴說時(話題可能是你不感興趣的)，你能夠給予真誠的情感關注。	1	2	3	4	5
36	參加陌生人的舞會或聚會以發展新的人際關係。	1	2	3	4	5
37	告訴關係密切者他(她)做的某件事激怒了你。	1	2	3	4	5
38	知道如何推進與異性朋友或熟人的談話，使談話超越泛泛而談而真正促進互相了解。	1	2	3	4	5
39	不對關係密切者發火(即便是合理的)，以免傷害彼此。	1	2	3	4	5
40	當關係密切者需要幫助與支持時，你能夠用他(她)樂於接受的方式提供建議。	1	2	3	4	5

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**第四部份：**下面的問題是有關您對自己的社交關係質量的感覺。請告訴我們您在過去一年中產生如下列每個句子所描述的感覺的時候有多少。

題號	項目	從 沒 有	很 少 有	有 時 有	經 常 有	非 常 頻 繁
1	我周圍的絕大多數人似乎都像是陌生人	1	2	3	4	5
2	我不能從自己參加的社群中得到多少滿足。	1	2	3	4	5
3	我周圍有很多人理解我的觀點和看法。	1	2	3	4	5
4	沒有人可以讓我長期感到親近。	1	2	3	4	5
5	我有一個給我支持和鼓勵的愛侶。	1	2	3	4	5
6	我是一伙朋友中的一分子。	1	2	3	4	5
7	我有一些可以指望發展成伙伴關係的朋友。	1	2	3	4	5
8	我沒有在任何一個人際關係中感到對方是理解我的。	1	2	3	4	5
9	我是另一個人情感健康的一個重要部分。	1	2	3	4	5
10	我沒有一個特別好的愛情關係。	1	2	3	4	5

**第五部份：**請填上相應數字。

- 1 性別: (1) 男 (2) 女 \_\_\_\_\_
- 2 年齡: \_\_\_\_\_
- 3 年級: (1) 一年級 (2) 二年級 (3) 三年級 (4) 其他 \_\_\_\_\_
- 4 專業: (1) 學院商務 (2) 人文科學和社會科學 (3) 法律學院 (4) 科學及工程學院  
(5) 創意媒體學院 (6) 建築科技學部 (7) 其他: \_\_\_\_\_
- 5 戀愛狀況: (1) 單身, 但曾有戀愛經驗 (2) 戀愛中 (3) 從未有戀愛經驗 \_\_\_\_\_
- 6 宗教: (1) 沒有 (2) 佛教 (3) 基督教 (4) 天主教 (5) 其他 \_\_\_\_\_
- 7 擔任過領袖生、班長、社長等要職: (1) 有 (2) 沒有 \_\_\_\_\_

~全卷完，多謝合作~