



Datum: 22. Mai 2013
Ort: Binzmühlestrasse 14, Raum BIN 3.D.27
Uhrzeit: 12.30 –13.30Uhr

Titel: An inquiry into humor styles (Talk in English)

Referent: Sonja Heintz

Abstract:

The Humor Styles Questionnaire (HSQ; Martin et al., 2003) measures four humor styles (affiliative, self-enhancing, aggressive, and self-defeating), which are related to various measures of positive psychological functioning and personality. The reliability of the HSQ is well-established, but there is only initial evidence for its construct validity. The aims of the current study were twofold: (1) to explore the construct validity of the HSQ in relation to the theoretical conceptualizations provided by Martin et al. (2003) in a multitrait-multimethod analysis, and (2) to narrow down the significant components in the HSQ items and scales that overlap with positive psychological functioning and personality. In an online study, 326 participants filled in relevant questionnaires and new items derived from the theoretical descriptions of the four humor styles as well as from a decomposition of the HSQ items into components relevant to content (i.e., humor) or context (i.e., non-humorous words and phrases), respectively. Regarding the first aim, results indicated high convergent validity of the HSQ items and scales with the theoretically derived conceptualizations (with the exception of the self-enhancing humor style), but low discriminant validity among the four humor styles. Specifically, the affiliative and self-enhancing humor styles as well as the aggressive and self-defeating humor styles, respectively, had consistently high interrelations within and across methods. Concerning the second aim, context proved to be a better predictor of positive psychological functioning and personality across all four humor styles. The contribution of humor in explaining variance became non-significant in most cases or even showed significant effects in the opposite direction. These results underline the importance of construct validation and proper item wording of tests to avoid misleading interpretations or conclusions. Further implications of the findings will be discussed.