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Tools used for diagnosing humor states and traits

Ruch, Willibald

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Appendix: Humor measurement tools

WILLIBALD RUCH

The appendix contains lists of historic and current instruments for the assessment of humor traits and states in children and adults as well as the variables measured by these instruments. The lists were compiled to provide an orientation to the variables that have been the focus of research so far, and what measurement approaches were taken. They are not comprehensive, as I did not include instruments that were created for use in only one study, as frequently happened in studies of personality and humor appreciation. I do not mean to imply that the tools listed here are all recommended for use. The reader is referred to the sources where the instruments were presented. A well-documented test will contain information on the nature of the concepts to be measured (e.g., how sparse vs. elaborated the variable definition is and whether or not it is based on a theory), the type of construction procedure employed (e.g., factor analytic, empirical, rational), how elaborate the construction stage was (e.g., how were the items generated, how many samples were used, was there an analysis of items) and psychometric properties, such as reliability, validity, objectivity, norms, etc.

An evaluation of the instruments was not undertaken for several reasons. First, a recent special issue of HUMOR was devoted entirely to "Measurement approaches to the sense of humor" (Ruch 1996). Second, appraisals of current instruments were undertaken at different places (Köhler & Ruch 1996; Ruch 1994b). Third, while we already have spent much energy on creating many instruments during the past 15 years, there are reasons for predicting that a new round of test construction will take place with a stronger emphasis on theory-based approaches. As is obvious from the present volume, future research will be further directed towards developing new concepts, and these will be accompanied by new instruments. Also, historic accounts of the sense of humor might be revived, and to test hypotheses associated with them one needs appropriate assessment tools. Finally, in recent years much emphasis has been placed on the development of questionnaires at the expense of other approaches (see Ruch 1996); this will need to be corrected as it is obvious that the choice of measurement approach should depend on the type of humor trait (e.g., ability, attitude, style) measured. Thus, if the field continues to flourish, the list of assessment tools in a few years from now will be very much more comprehensive.

This appendix lists the different tools used for diagnosing humor-related states and traits. From this list we can draw some conclusions:

(1) "Sense of humor" is the favorite label for the instruments. By far the most numerous instruments are aimed at measuring globally the sense of humor either in the form of questionnaires or as jokes/cartoons tests.

(2) Many concepts might be idiosyncratic as they are assessed by one scale only. These concepts have not yet attained wide acceptance or interest and are specific to certain researchers or research groups.

(3) Scales sharing the same label may measure different constructs. For example, *nonsense* is used to denote "harmless", nontendentious humor, but also refers to residual incongruity. Likewise, humor appreciation has been conceptualized as stimulus-oriented, referring to the profile of humor stimuli liked or disliked, but also as response-oriented, referring to individual differences in the intensity of the response. Furthermore, humor creation can subsume only wit (i.e., the ability to produce a comic effect), but also at times involves joke-telling, joke-reproduction, and liking to entertain. In the end, cartoon and questionnaire measures of sense of humor probably don't overlap at all.

(4) Scales having different labels are less different than their names suggest. A great variety of names have been proposed to measure humor traits; however, factor analyses of selected measures have shown that the dimensions involved in these instruments are rather limited. While there is no general factor, typically between two and five factors have been extracted (e.g., Köhler & Ruch 1996; Korotkov 1991; Ruch 1994b). However, no comprehensive analyses of assessment approaches (involving cartoon tests *and* questionnaires) have been undertaken yet.

(5) While until the 1980's joke and cartoon tests were most frequent, today questionnaire approaches are the most prominent. Little effort has been invested in peer-evaluation techniques or experimental assessments. Also, most instruments are for adults and few are applicable to children. Many instruments are trait-oriented and thus not well suited for measuring change (e.g., as needed in intervention studies).

(6) There has been little interest in multiple operationalizations of the same construct to determine convergent validity. There are exceptions: Ziv (1979), for example studied humor appreciation and creation together with behavioral measures. While one multitrait-multimethod matrix analysis of sense of humor has been carried out (Koppel & Sechrest 1970), it did not include standard instruments. Therefore, it is not known how much of the variance in current instruments is due to content and how much to method variance.

(7) Few of the scales were formally published (outside of journals). Questionnaire measures were typically listed in the appendix of the article but the items of cartoon tests most often are not listed. This might be due to space restrictions but also to copyright laws. However, scales need to be accessible to the research community.

Clearly, measurement issues will become important again once we have achieved progress in *what* we want to measure, as accumulation of research findings is contingent on using instruments that are comparable. Until then, this list may serve as a quick reference for those who want to include humor measures in their studies.

Tools used for diagnosing humor states and traits

I. Informal surveys, joke telling techniques, or diary method

- Favorite-Joke technique *Goldsmith (1979); Zwerling (1955)*
Traits to be measured: Favorite joke.
- Humor Assessment (HUMA) *Ruxton & Hester (1987)*
- Humor diary *Kambouroplou (1926)*
Traits to be measured: Sense of humor.
- Humor Initiation Scale *Bell, McGhee & Duffey (1986)*
Traits to be measured: Humor initiation.
- Laughter Questionnaire *Rubinstein (1983)*
- [Untitled] *Scott (1989)*
- [Untitled] *Hall & Allin (1897)*
- [Untitled] *Heymans & Wiersma (1908)*

II. Joke and cartoon tests

- 3 WD Humor Test *Ruch (1983, 1992)*
Traits to be measured: Funniness of incongruity-resolution humor (INC-RES_f), funniness of nonsense humor (NON_f), funniness of sexual humor (SEX_f), total funniness of humor, aversiveness of incongruity-resolution humor (INC-RES_a), aversiveness of nonsense humor (NON_a), aversiveness of sexual humor (SEX_a), total aversiveness of humor, structure preference, appreciation of sexual content.
- Antioch Humor Test *Mindess, Miller, Turek, Bender, & Corbin (1985)*
Traits to be measured: Nonsense, philosophical, sexual, scatological, social satire, hostile, demeaning to men, demeaning to women, ethnic, sick, quantity and nature of humor production.
- Cartoon Measure of Perspective-Taking Humor (CMPTH) *Lefcourt & Shepherd (1995)*
Traits to be measured: Perspective-taking humor, humor appreciation (cartoon measure of funniness), humor comprehension (cartoon measure of perspective taking).

- **Cartoon Punch line Production Test (CPPT)** *Köhler & Ruch (1996)*
Traits to be measured: Wit, quality and quantity of cartoon punch line production.
- **Humor appreciation scale** *Johnson (1992)*
Traits to be measured: General humor appreciation, nonsense vs. aggressive, not funny, irreverence vs. diseased disparagement, cute sex vs. racist, sick vs. silly, word play vs. role reversal, justice vs. puns.
- **Humor Cognition Test (HCT) / Humor Perceptiveness Test (HPT)** *Feingold (1983); Feingold & Mazzella (1993)*
Traits to be measured: Humor cognition/humor perceptiveness: humor motivation, humor cognition, humor communication.
- **Humor Information Test Kit: Characters, Humorists, Titles, Humor Analogies Test** *Feingold & Mazzella (1991)*
Traits to be measured: Humor information (memory).
- **Humor Motivation Test (HMT)** *Feingold & Mazzella (1993)*
Trait to be measured: Humor motivation.
- **Humor Reasoning Test Kit: Cartoon Reasoning Test (CRT), Joke Reasoning Test (JRT); Make-A-Joke-Test (MAJT)** *Feingold & Mazzella (1991)*
Trait to be measured: Humor reasoning.
- **Humor Response Scale (HRS)** *Lowis & Nieuwoudt (1995)*
Trait to be measured: Appreciation of cartoon humor.
- **Humor Test** *Eysenck & Wilson (1976)*
Traits to be measured: Nonsense humor, satire, sexual humor, aggressive humor.
- **IPAT Humor Test of Personality** *Cattell & Tollefson (1966)*
Traits to be measured: Introversiön vs. extroversiön, dry wit vs. good-natured play, compensation vs. tough self-composure, flirtatious playfulness vs. gruesomeness, urbane pleasantness vs. hostile derogation, high anxiety (with defiance) vs. low anxiety (resigned adjustment), theatricalism vs. cold realism, neat, light-hearted wit vs. ponderous humor, damaging retort vs. unexpected, "off-beat" humor, cheerful independence vs. mistreatment humor, anxious concern vs. evasion of responsibility, rebound against feminine aggression vs. scorn of ineffectual male, dullness vs. general intelligence.
- **Joke Comprehension Test** *Feingold & Mazzella (1991)*
Traits to be measured: Joke comprehension.
- **Mirth Response Test (MRT)** *Redlich, Levine, & Sohler (1951)*
Traits to be measured: Humor response in sorting (like, dislike cartoons or indifference), free expression (mirth spectrum), inquiry.

- O'Connell's Story Test O'Connell (1964)
Traits to be measured: Resignation, humor, wit.
- Sense of Humor Test Almack (1928)
Traits to be measured: Sense of humor.
- Sense of Humor Test Roback (1943)
Traits to be measured: Sense of humor.
- Wit and Humor Appreciation Test (WHAT) O'Connell (1960)
Traits to be measured: Hostile wit, nonsense wit, humor.

III. Questionnaires, self-report scales

- Coping Humor Scale (CHS) Martin & Lefcourt (1983)
Trait to be measured: Sense of humor in coping.
- Humor creativity and appreciation questionnaire Ziv (1979)
Traits to be measured: Sense of humor, humor creativity, humor appreciation.
- Humorous Behavior Q-Sort Deck (HBQD) Craik, Lampert, & Nelson (1996)
Traits (humor styles) to be measured: Socially warm vs. cold humorous style, reflective vs. boorish humorous style, competent vs. inept humorous style, earthy vs. repressed humorous style, benign vs. mean-spirited humorous style.
- Humor Use in Multiple Ongoing Relationships (HUMOR) Manke, Dunn, & Plomin (1997)
Trait to be measured: Frequency with which person uses various humor behaviors.
- Multidimensional Sense of Humor Scale (MSHS) Thorson & Powell (1993)
Traits to be measured: Sense of humor (humor creativity, coping, and appreciation).
- Self-report questionnaire Bizi, Keinan, & Beit-Hallahmi (1988)
Traits to be measured: General humor by self-report; self-directed and productive humor, other-directed and productive humor, reactions to self-directed humor from others, reactions to other-directed humor.
- Sense of Humor Scale Herzog & Bush (1994)
Traits to be measured: Sense of humor.
- Sense of Humor Scale (SHS) McGhee (1994, 1996)
Traits to be measured: Enjoyment of humor, seriousness and negative mood, playfulness and positive mood, laughter, verbal humor, finding humor in everyday life, laughing at yourself, humor under stress, sense of humor.

- Sense of Humor Scale (SHQ) *Svebak (1974b)*
Traits to be measured: Sense of humor, metamessage sensitivity (SHQ M), personal liking of humor (SHQ L), emotional expressiveness (SHQ E).
- Sense of Humor Scale (SHQ-6) *Svebak (1996)*
Traits to be measured: Sense of humor
- Situational Humor Response Questionnaire (SHRQ) *Martin & Lefcourt (1984)*
Trait to be measured: Sense of humor (defined as the tendency to smile and laugh in a wide variety of situations).
- State-Trait-Cheerfulness-Inventory – trait part (STCI-T) *Ruch, Köhler, & van Thriel (1996)*
Traits to be measured: Trait cheerfulness (T-CH), trait seriousness (T-SE), trait bad mood (T-BM).
- The Uses of Humor Index (UHI) *Graham, Papa, & Brooks (1992)*
Traits to be measured: Use/functions of humor in conversation: Positive use of humor, negative use of humor, expressive use of humor.
- Vitulli's Humor Rating Scale (VHRS) *Vitulli & Tyler (1988)*
Traits to be measured: Male oriented humor (M), female-oriented humor (F), differentiation of gender humor (D), general humor appreciation (G).

IV. Peer-reports

- Company-wide peer rating questionnaire *Bizi, Keinan, & Beit-Hallahmi (1988)*
Traits to be measured: General humor by peer-rating
- Crew peer rating questionnaire *Bizi, Keinan, & Beit-Hallahmi (1988)*
Traits to be measured: reactive humor, productive humor.
Types to be classified: Self-directed in humor, other-directed in humor.
- Humor Categories Report *Babad (1974)*
Traits to be measured: Appreciator, producer, reproducer, nonhumorous.
- State-Trait-Cheerfulness-Inventory – Peer trait version
(STCI-T<peer>) *Ruch, Köhler, & van Thriel (1996)*
Traits to be measured: Trait cheerfulness (T-CH), trait seriousness (T-SE), trait bad mood (T-BM).
- Test of the Sociometry of Humor *Ziv (1984)*
Traits to be measured: Sense of humor, humor creativity, humor appreciation.
- [Untitled] *Koppel & Sechrest (1970)*
Traits to be measured: Humor appreciation, humor creation.

V. State measures

- State-Trait-Cheerfulness-Inventory – state part (STCI-S)
Ruch, Köhler, & van Thriel (1997)
States to be measured: State cheerfulness (S-CH), state seriousness (S-SE), state bad mood (S-BM), (instructions for different time spans: now, last week, last month).

VI. Children humor tests

- Children's humor test
King & King (1973)
Traits to be measured: Choice of nonsensical vs hostile-aggressive humor.
- Children's Mirth Response Test (CMRT) *Zigler, Levine, & Gould (1966b)*
Traits to be measured: Facial mirth, funny-not funny score, comprehension score.
- Children's Nonverbal Humor Test
Allen & Zigler (1986)
Traits to be measured: Humor comprehension.
- Raley Cartoon Test
Raley (1942)
Traits to be measured: Sense of humor.
- [Untitled] *Bird (1925)*
Traits to be measured: Sense of humor.

VII. Humor scales in general instruments

- Children's Playfulness Scale (CPS) *Barnett (1990)*
Traits to be measured: Sense of humor.
- COPE *Carver, Scheier, & Weintraub (1989)*
Traits to be measured: Humor (as a coping device).
- Harter's self-perception profile *Neemann & Harter (1986); Messer & Harter (1986)*
Traits to be measured: Humor competence, humor importance.
- Marital Interaction Coding System (MICS)
Heyman, Eddy, Weiss, & Vivian (1995)
Traits to be measured: Humor.
- Objective-Analytic (OA) Personality Factor Batteries
Cattell & Wartburton (1967); Hundleby, Pawlik, & Cattell (1965)
Traits to be measured: Criticalness on humor (T40), jokes: amount of laughter (T141), practical jokes (T182), humor test (T379), proof reading: impairment through reading of jokes (T356); joke ratings (T385); cartoon evaluation (T393).

- Objective-Analytic Test Battery (OATB) *Cattell & Schuerger (1978)*
Traits to be measured: Preference for outright rather than subtle humor (subtest UI24.1 of factor "anxiety to achieve"), liking of practical jokes (UI24.5).

VIII. Miscellaneous and unclassified

- Healy-Fernald Picture Completion Test *Walker & Washburn (1925)*
Traits to be measured: Perception of the comic.
- Humor comprehension measure *Rouff (1975)*
Traits to be measured: Comprehension of humor.
- Kalias Humour Test *Verma (1981)*
Traits to be measured: Sense of humor.
- Test of Humorous Phrases (THP) *Boldyreva (1984)*
Traits to be measured: unknown.
- Wit Selection Measure *Clabby (1980)*
Traits to be measured: Wit.
- Wittiness Questionnaire *Turner (1990)*
Traits to be measured: Wittiness.
- [Untitled] *Khoury (1978)*
Traits to be measured: Enjoyment of disparate five types of jokes.