

Senses of Humor:

The Development of a Multi-factor Scale in Relationship to Moving Image Utility

by

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Abstract

In the construction of a conceptual framework for understanding human responses to potentially humorous stimuli, a number of propositions are forwarded. These include the postulate that all people have some type of humor appreciation--i.e., that there is no such thing as "no sense of humor." Also forwarded is the notion that humor appreciation is a multidimensional construct, and that single and multiple humor preferences are possible. These sense of humor profiles are posited to relate to preferences for particular mass media stimuli, notably television programs and films. Data from two surveys--a pilot study of college students and a probability survey of an urban population--are examined within this framework. Results indicate that (1) sense of humor may properly be viewed as multidimensional, encompassing dimensions of both social and individual-level humor appreciation with some robustness across populations, (2) a multi-factor scaling of the "senses of humor" is fruitful for clustering individuals into groupings with singular and multiple humor preferences, (3) emergent humor dimensions and clusters may be validated with significant differences in preferences for particular television and film types and exemplars, and (4) there exists a cluster of individuals who indeed express low humor appreciation across dimensions--a "low" if not "no" sense of humor group. Results are interpreted in light of existing psychology and communication theory and research on the utility of human comedy activity.

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Introduction

Generally, social and behavioral researchers have demonstrated commitment to individualized conceptual definitions of the appreciation of humor. Berlyne (1972) stated that because humor could be aroused in a single person, the “primary significance [is not] a social one” (p. 51). On the other hand, Fine (1983) argued that humor *must* be considered in its social context, as a part of a social relationship. Zillmann and Cantor (1972) noted that *disparagement* is a key variable in determining whether humor is appreciated or not. Scogin and Pollio (1980) showed that most humor is “directed at some specific person” with a “*deprecating* tone” (Pollio, 1983, p. 219). For Bateson (1953) and Koestler (1964), humor resulted from the rapid transfer of a logical pattern from one *cognitive framing* to another. These particularized presentations sometimes have bordered on the pedantic, with little acknowledgment of alternative conceptual definitions.

Indeed, one laudatory attempt at conceptualizing and operationalizing sense of humor as a *multidimensional* construct has limited its view to the realm of social humor only, and almost entirely to the case of the individual as *source* of humorous communication (as opposed to responder to potentially humorous stimuli) (Thorson & Powell, 1993a; Thorson & Powell, 1993b). Few other sources have demonstrated an attempt to incorporate multiple functions for humor appreciation or multiple types of humorous stimuli. McCullough (1993) began her cross-cultural examination of humor with a two-dimensional typology of humor as resident in the stimulus (i.e., ten television commercials presented to college students in the U.S. and in Finland). She concluded that the two dimensions extracted from previous work--aggressive/sexual humor and nonsense humor--were “too simplistic” and did not “fully represent the humor perceptions of the students of either nationality” (p. 1280). McCullough’s factor analytic approach added the dimensions of “gentle make fun” and “less aggressive/surprise” to the

original two for the U.S. sample.

Ziv (1984) acknowledged that “those who enjoy humor . . . have certain preferences While some enjoy aggressive or sexual humor, others prefer intellectual humor” (p. 109). He identified five primary “functions” of humor (aggressive, sexual, social, defense mechanism, and intellectual) and developed a model to describe how personality traits (e.g., stable, emotional, introvert, extrovert) determine preferences for the various functions. Thus, according to Ziv’s model, “emotional extroverts” are likely to appreciate humor with aggressive functions, while “stable introverts” are likely to prefer humor with intellectual functions. Ziv neglected to empirically test these assumptions, however, though his overall work is commendable. Eshleman and Neuendorf (1993) reported a fairly comprehensive review of humor literature, identifying two types of humor appreciation with an individual-level locus, and four types of humor appreciation within social contexts. They declined to attempt a typology of humorous stimuli, rather casting their conceptualization in terms of templates via which the individual might view a stimulus with humor potential. This leaves open the possibility of individuals holding diverse “senses” of humor, consisting of profiles varying the degree to which the templates are employed.

Based on these works and a thorough examination of the literature on humor, a likely set of such humor “templates” could be forwarded: (1) cognitive bisociation, an appreciation of the humor in stimuli via dual framing (as in puns, double entendres, and absurd visual juxtapositions; Bateson, 1953; Freud, 1960; Schultz, 1976), which is dependent on a close understanding of the culturally determined multiple meanings of symbols; (2) physiological arousal and response, which situates the humor appreciation either at a pleasant level of arousal with concurrent physical response (“arousal boost,” Berlyne, 1969; Berlyne, 1972), or at the resolution following an unpleasantly high level of arousal which is given release in a punchline or catharsis (“arousal jag,” Maase, Fink, & Kaplowitz, 1985); (3) social/functional, which examines the role of humor as a social currency for the creation and maintenance of social relationships

and the regulation of distance in those relationships (Chapman, 1983; Lamaster, 1975); this includes humor as a mechanism in reference group affiliation (Pollio, 1983); and (4) disparagement, where humor is used either as a source of social power in the establishment of a “pecking order” (Fry, 1963) or as an attack to situate the target in a “one-down” position (Zillmann & Cantor, 1976). The first two conceptual categories correspond basically to humor appreciated at the “individual level,” while the latter two describe humor that demands appreciation in a social context (even if that social context is the vicarious experience of watching fictional social interactions in a film or sitcom, for example; Eshleman & Neuendorf, 1989).

There is an inherent mismatch in the clear documentation (and occasional acknowledgment; e.g., Ruch & Hehl, 1983) of humor as a multifaceted construct, and repeated attempts at *measuring* a singular “sense of humor.” Despite his recognition that individuals who enjoy humor prefer certain types, Ziv’s (1984) humor appreciation scale taps fondness for humor “in general,” through measures such as “I find many situations funny” and “Comparing myself with my friends, I enjoy more the jokes I hear” (p. 112). It fails to account for specific humor types (e.g., aggressive, sexual, intellectual). Martin and Lefcourt’s (1984) Situational Humor Response Questionnaire is a 21-item index that measures propensity to laugh. Their Coping Humor Scale is a seven-item scale measuring relative value placed on humor as an adaptive mechanism; Zillmann, Rockwell, Schweitzer, and Sundar’s (1993) adaptation of the CHS expands the set to 18 items. Svebak’s (1974) Sense of Humor Questionnaire, designed to measure two constructs, the ability to perceive humor and the value placed on humor by the individual, is evaluated by others as actually measuring an “anti-humor” response (Thorson & Powell, 1993a). Thorson and Powell (1993b) have distinguished between humor generation and humor appreciation, although they focus almost exclusively on the former, attempting only humor appreciation indicators that relate to appreciation of comics and comedians. Other efforts to measure sense of humor have relied on a unidimensional,

normative approach--i.e., efforts to tap a “good” sense of humor (Craik, Lampert, & Nelson, 1996; Herzog & Karafa, 1998). These unidimensional measures are likely to result in data skewed toward the “high end” of the scale—in other words, people are very likely to agree with *all* such statements. As Crawford and Gressley (1991) point out, most people consider themselves to be *above average* in sense of humor because of the value placed on sense of humor in society. Therefore, singular humor measures do little to advance our understanding of humor appreciation.

The research reported upon in this manuscript attempts to bring to bear a wider variety of humor appreciation and humor preference types in the measurement of the sense of humor--or rather, the “senses” of humor. It also attempts to validate this multidimensional approach to sense of humor by linking particular preferences with attraction toward specific film and television exemplars. The research is informed by a set of propositions derived from a grounded theory approach, exhaustively examining the humor literature (a 400-entry bibliography is available from the authors) and developing constructs via in-depth interviewing and observations in mass media settings. This **conceptual framework for understanding multidimensional humor appreciation** has a number of propositions:

Proposition 1. Sense of humor is not singular, but in fact multidimensional “senses of humor” exist. These multiple dimensions of humor appreciation may be orthogonal, representing quite different and separable orientations toward a potentially humorous stimulus. These senses of humor are relatively stable and enduring in the individual (a trait, individual-differences perspective).

Proposition 2. There is no such thing as the individual who has “no sense of humor.” All humans possess some type of humor appreciation, and anecdotal claims of observing an individual with “no sense of humor” are actually instances where the sense of humor profiles of the participants have little overlap. The humor appreciation

profile of the observed goes unnoticed by the observer.

Proposition 3. Single-dimension and multiple-dimension humor preference profiles are possible for a given individual.

Proposition 4. These profiles will predict preferences for stimuli with potential for humor response, including TV and film content.

Proposition 5. A stimulus with humor potential (e.g., a joke, a television program, a film) may evoke single-dimension or multiple-dimension humor responses in the aggregate audience.

Proposition 6. The extent to which two individuals' humor profiles match will be a strong determinant of their interpersonal relationship potential--how well they will get along, work effectively together, etc.

Proposition 7. A stimulus with strong potential for evoking multiple-dimension humor responses is likely to be more sought-after (popular) by audience members.

A full test of all seven propositions is beyond the scope of this initial investigation. The current research asks whether the framework outlined above has merit for the systematic investigation of humor appreciation and the utility of film and television content in fulfilling humor needs and preferences. We offer the research question:

RQ: To what extent do Propositions 1-5 of the conceptual framework for a multidimensional approach to sense of humor (above) hold for student and general population samples?

Methods

The analyses reported in this paper are based on two data collections: (1) a pilot study of college students conducted in the early 1990's (for which other analyses are reported elsewhere; McGoun & Neuendorf, 1995), and (2) a general population survey of adults conducted in 1999. As suggested by

Zillmann (1977), a general population sample (instead of college student sample) is especially important in humor studies, since “humor which holds appeal for large audiences . . . is far less complex and sophisticated than would be concluded from investigations of subjects with an atypically high level of education” (p. 292). There are also age and (presumably) maturity differences between college students and the general public that may influence humor preference, thus further necessitating a more externally valid general population sample. **Study 1--a pilot study of a student sample.**

The student sample consisted of 249 respondents enrolled in introductory classes in communication. The sample was 48.8% female, with a median household income of \$25,000 to \$34,999 and a mean age of 21.5 years.

The pilot questionnaire presented to the student sample a wide variety of measures, including 23 items measuring **responses to various types of humorous stimuli** (based primarily on the multidimensional approach suggested by Eshleman & Neuendorf (1993)). After careful examination of the variable distributions (including their ranges, variances, and skews) and intercorrelations (identifying extreme redundancies), the pool was reduced to a set of 14 items. Generally, those items attempting to tap the generic “good sense of humor” (e.g., “I have a good sense of humor,” “I laugh a lot,” “I like to tell jokes to others”) suffered from extremely low variance and severe negative skews.

The instrument included an exhaustive **roster of television comedies** available via broadcast or cable at the time the survey was distributed, either in rerun or first run. Respondents gave an indication for each of how much they enjoyed the program, using a 0-10 scale (where 0=do not like at all and 10=like very much).

Study 2--general population survey.

In the spring of 1999, a probability sample of residents of a major metropolitan area in the U.S. Midwest responded to an omnibus CATI survey. The sample of 321 adults was 60% female, with a

median household income of \$20,000 to \$30,000 and a mean age of 41.6 years, and was composed of 32.3% college graduates, 45% Democrats (or “leaning” toward Democrat), 24% Republicans (or “leaning” toward Republican), 30% self-designated “liberals,” and 32% self-designated “conservatives.”

Included in the instrument were measures for a wide variety of **social categories**: Age (in years), marital status, level of education achieved, racial/ethnic background (dummy coded for non-white status), political affiliation (a 5-point scale ranging from “strong democrat” to “strong republican”), liberalism/conservatism (a 5-point scale ranging from “strongly conservative” to “strongly liberal”), household income, and gender (dummy coded for femaleness).

A set of 11-point Likert-type items tapped the respondents’ multifaceted **senses of humor**. These 17 items were primarily culled from earlier work (McGoun & Neuendorf, 1995; Neuendorf, Skalski, Jeffres and Atkin, 1999), constituting the 14 items retained from the pilot survey instrument, supplemented with several items added specifically to tap social humor functions not well measured in previous attempts.

To measure the respondents’ levels of state **depression**, the 20-item CESD Scale (Center for Epidemiologic Studies Depression Scale; Robinson, Shaver, & Wrightsman, 1991) was utilized. The standard technique of straight additive index construction was employed, with a resultant Cronbach’s alpha of .85.

Based on previous research (Neuendorf, 1998), ten items were included that measure the construct of **wallowing**, the tendency to seek mood-congruent, sad media content (e.g., weepies or melodramas) under conditions of state depression. A summative index of the ten items was constructed.

Standard measures of **media exposure** were included in the survey--hours of television watched yesterday, hours of radio listening yesterday, newspaper readership during the last week (in days), number of magazines read regularly, number of books read in the past six months, number of videos viewed in the

past month, number of movies watched at the theater in the past month. Measures of adoption of a number of **newer media technologies** were also included--frequency of email usage in the last week, hours of Internet use in the last week, and home access to each of the following: a VCR, a CD player, a DVD player, a laserdisc player, a camcorder, cable TV, a satellite dish, a cell phone, and a computer. Open-ended items tapped respondents' **favorite TV show and movie** of all time, each of which was coded for whether the content was comedy or not, a weepy/melodrama or not, and containing graphic violence, "light" violence, or no violence. Two additional open-ended items asked for respondents to indicate the funniest movie or TV show they had ever seen, and to describe their "favorite type of humor."

Two questions tapped the respondents' **orientations toward Digital Television**: (1) "In your own words, can you tell me--what do you know about DTV, that is, Digital Television?"--Responses to this open-ended query were coded in the following manner: 0=Does not know, 1=Knows at least some correct information, -1=Reports incorrect information; and (2) "On a scale from 0 to 10, where 0 means not at all, and 10 means a great deal, how eager are you to get DTV?"

Results

Comparing student and general population factor structures.

For comparative purposes, the 14 sense of humor items that were common between the student and general population instruments were submitted to identical factor analyses (principal component, orthogonal rotation, latent root criterion). The results are displayed in Tables 1 and 2, as are the exact wordings of the Likert-type questionnaire items. (Note that a number of items underwent some rewording from the pilot study to the general population survey. The major changes are: "Something is funny if it is crude" became "I like sick humor;" "I like humor about death or violence" became "I like humor about death;" and "I enjoy visual humor" became "I like sight gags.")

For the pilot (student) sample, the four factors account for 55.7% of the pooled variance. For the

general population sample, this figure is 58.3%. The results of the two factor analyses reveal patterns that are surprisingly robust. In each analysis, the first factor is a measure of enjoyment of “mean-spirited humor” with four of the five primary-loading variables constant. Items tapping attraction to absurd humor, visual humor/sight gags, and jokes involving wordplay form the common core of the second factors, which are both labeled “incongruous humor”--although it must be noted that two other items in each second factor are not consistent between the two samples. The third factors are quite different from one another, sharing no variables. For the pilot (student) sample, the factor is labeled “stupid/blooper humor” appreciation; for the general population sample, it’s a “satire/death humor” factor. This contrast is perhaps indicative of a generational difference, with the younger student sample more appreciative of sophomoric humor and more likely to treat it as a true humor “type” rather than a mere level of sophistication. The fourth factor in each sample has a lone primary loader--a proclivity to find things funnier when they occur realistically.

Television comedy exemplars from the pilot study.

In order to begin the process of validating these factor-based indexes of divergent “senses of humor,” the indexes for the four sense of humor dimensions extracted for the student/pilot data set were used in correlational analyses with the 11-point enjoyment indicators for the roster of TV comedies. Significant zero-order correlations are indicated in Table 3. We see a wide variety of confirmatory results for the emergent factor structure for students.

The first factor, preference for “mean-spirited humor,” is related to an attraction toward a host of television programs featuring the types of humor represented in the factor--sexist (*Benny Hill*, *Hogan’s Heroes*, *All in the Family*), racist (*All in the Family*), crude (*Married with Children*, *The Simpsons*, *The Three Stooges*, *Benny Hill*), sexual (*Evening at the Improv*, *Married with Children*, *Benny Hill*), emphasizing death/violence (*The Munsters*, *The Addams Family*, *Monty Python’s Flying Circus*) and in

general displaying a mean sort of comedy (*David Letterman*). The second factor, preference for “incongruous humor,” is related to a preference for a number of TV comedies featuring the components of that factor--satire (*Garry Shandling, Tracey Ullman, David Letterman, The Simpsons, Saturday Night Live, Monty Python’s Flying Circus, Sledge Hammer!*), wordplay (*Monty Python’s Flying Circus*), slapstick (*The Three Stooges, Monty Python*), absurdity (*The Simpsons, David Letterman, Monty Python, Sledge Hammer!*), and visual (*The Three Stooges, Monty Python, Tracey Ullman*). The third factor, indicating a preference for humor that involves “stupid” activities and “bloopers,” is related to greater enjoyment of a number of television shows that clearly represent the elements of the factor--accidental events and bloopers (*Totally Hidden Video, America’s Funniest Home Videos, TV’s Bloopers and Practical Jokes*), and people exhibiting “stupid” behavior (*Super Dave, David Letterman, Saturday Night Live, I Love Lucy, Three’s Company*). The final factor, essentially a single item measuring preference for humor within a realistic situation, is not positively correlated with any TV comedy preferences; rather, it is associated with an *avoidance* of just a few programs--*Chico and the Man, The Little Rascals/Our Gang, and Benny Hill*.

It should be noted that several very popular and/or enduring programs appear in more than one list--enjoyment ratings of *David Letterman* and *The Simpsons* are significantly related to three of the four senses of humor. Preference for *Monty Python’s Flying Circus* is related to two types of humor. One likely interpretation of this pattern is that such programs are multi-faceted in their humor, attracting audiences on multiple bases, and/or attracting diverse audiences by appealing to their various senses of humor.

Refining the indexes measuring “senses of humor.”

For further factor analyses on the sense of humor items in the general population data set, one item--“Something is funny to me only if I find the situation realistic”--was dropped due to its failure to

load with other items in both analyses and its poor performance in providing TV comedy exemplars in the correlational analysis of the pilot data set (Table 3). Thus, with the addition of the three new “social humor” items (i.e., “I like to give my friends a hard time by joking,” “I use humor to lighten things up,” and “I use humor to get to know people better”), a final set of 16 sense of humor items from the general population survey was submitted to a principal components factor analysis using the latent root criterion with orthogonal rotation. (Oblique rotation resulted in very similar findings, and so a judgment was made to retain the orthogonal solution for the sake of parsimony.) Five factors resulted, capturing 63% of the total variance of the pooled items, as displayed in Table 4. Indexes of these five independent dimensions, or “senses of humor,” were constructed via factor scores. The five resultant indexes are: (1) Mean-spirited humor, with primary loadings for measures of appreciation for sexist, racist, sexual, and sick humor; (2) Visual/verbal humor, an index tapping appreciation for humor in symbolic (nonverbal and verbal) stimuli, with primary loadings for measures of affinity for sight gags, slapstick, bloopers, and jokes that involve wordplay; (3) Stupid/absurd humor, with primary loadings for measures of appreciation for the humor in absurdity, stupidity, and accidental events; (4) Social humor, with primary loadings for the items “I use humor to lighten things up” and “I use humor to get to know people better;” and (5) Satire/death humor, with primary loadings for items measuring liking of satire and humor about death.

At this point, it is important to notice that the five dimensions include humor appreciation types that are situated primarily within the individual (visual/verbal, stupid/absurd, and satire/death factors) as well as types that are dependent on the context of social relationships (mean-spirited and social factors).

Profiling sense of humor clusters.

Using the five factor-based indexes of the senses of humor, an agglomerative cluster analysis was conducted, using Ward’s method and squared Euclidean distances. Based on a scree-type visual analysis of distances used in the agglomeration schedule, an eight-cluster solution was selected. Differentiated

significantly by all five senses of humor, these **sense of humor clusters** successfully differentiated many other variables--social locators, media habits and new technology adoption measures, and psychological variables such as state depression. The results of this profiling process (as recommended by Hair, Anderson, Tatham, & Black, 1995) are shown in Table 5.

While many demographic, media, and mood-related variables were significantly discriminated by humor clusters, non-significant differences obtained for the following variables: Income, liberalism/conservatism, political affiliation, daily TV viewing, daily radio listening, magazine readership, book readership, theatrical movie attendance, Internet use, home access to certain technologies (VCR, CD player, cable TV, cell phone, computer), knowledge level about DTV, favorite movie is a comedy, and violence in favorite TV show. The following sections describe each cluster in terms of humor preference and other significant variables displayed in Table 5.

• **Cluster 1--“Low” Humor.** Cluster 1 is a relatively small group of 20 individuals. This cluster has negative means on *all five humor appreciation dimensions*, suggesting a very low (or no) sense of humor. Across all clusters, Cluster 1 is third lowest on both social and satire/death humor, second lowest on absurd/stupid humor, and lowest on visual/verbal humor--more than twice as low, in fact, as the next closest cluster. The sense of humor that this group is highest on, mean-spirited humor, still has a negative mean. Based on these findings, cluster 1 will be referred to as the “low humor” cluster.

The low humor cluster shows significant differences on several additional variables. Individuals in the low humor cluster are the most likely to be non-white and are also likely to be female. They are the least likely to own a camcorder and are least eager to get digital television (DTV). In terms of media content preferences, the low humor group enjoys TV comedy the least.

Cluster 2--“Middle of the Road” Humor. Cluster 2 consists of 44 individuals. This cluster has negative means on four out of the five humor dimensions. Compared to other clusters, this group is

lowest on absurd/stupid humor and close to the middle (near fourth or fifth) on the other four types of humor. Thus, this group will be called the “middle of the road humor” cluster.

Across all clusters on other significant variables, individuals in the “middle of the road” humor cluster are more likely to be female and most likely to be white. They watch few videos and are least likely to have a laserdisc player or a satellite dish.

Cluster 3–“Sick” Humor. Cluster 3 is the largest of the eight groups, with an n of 71. Compared to other clusters, individuals in Cluster 3 enjoy mean-spirited humor the most and satire/death humor the second most. They fall near the middle on the other three humor dimensions. Since this group likes both mean humor and humor about death, it will be referred to as the “sick” humor group.

The “sick” humor cluster, compared to other clusters, is the second youngest, most likely to be male, and second most likely to be white (a non-significant difference). Thus, this cluster reflects the humor and other preferences of young, white men. When it comes to favorite movies, this group likes weepies/melodramas the least and violent films the most.

Cluster 4–“Social Levels” of Humor. Cluster 4 is comprised of 66 individuals. Across all clusters, Cluster 4 appreciates mean-spirited the second most and social humor the most (more than twice as much as the next nearest cluster). This group does not like satire/death humor (second lowest mean), and only moderately enjoys visual/verbal and absurd/stupid humor. Thus, the group seems to be primarily into mean-spirited and social humor. In light of the four humor “templates” described earlier in this paper, Cluster 4 seems to exemplify the two social-context categories of humor: *social/functional* humor corresponds to the “general” social humor factor and its component variables, and *disparagement* humor parallels most of the variables in the mean-spirited humor factor. In particular, the item “I like to give my friends a hard time by joking” (see Table 4) is an example of disparagement; other examples include racial/ethnic joke and sexist jokes, which are types of humor designed to put certain groups “in their

place.” Since this cluster overlaps with the social level humor template posited earlier, it will be called the “social levels of humor” group.

Compared to other clusters on significantly different variables, Group 4 is lowest of all groups in age and education and is least likely to be married. Individuals in this group read newspapers the least number of days and watch the most videos. They are most likely to own *all of the technologies* with significant differences in ownership (DVD player, laserdisc player, satellite dish, and camcorder). They are also the most eager to get DTV. Clearly, this a group heavily into video technology, which is shown both in their video viewing habits and hardware ownership. Interestingly, this group is the *most depressed* of all groups. As for content preferences, this group likes violent movies the second most.

Cluster 5–“Individual Levels” of Humor. Cluster 5 consists of 20 individuals. Compared to the other clusters, this group favors both visual/verbal humor and absurd/stupid humor second most, and is highest in appreciation of satire/death humor. The group somewhat enjoys social humor and dislikes mean spirited humor the second most. Essentially, this group heavily favors three types of humor: visual/verbal humor, absurd/stupid humor, and satire/death humor. In light of the four humor templates forwarded earlier, the preferences of this group coincide with the two types of *individual-level* humor: The dimensions *cognitive bisociation* and *physiological arousal and response*. Visual/ Verbal humor can be both bisociation (e.g., puns) and arousal (e.g., slapstick). Absurd/stupid humor and satire/death humor can be both individual types of humor as well: there can be absurd visual juxtapositions that cause bisociation, for example, as well as outrageous satire that causes arousal. Given the wide-range of individual humor types this cluster encompasses, it will be called the “individual levels of humor” group.

Looking at the eight clusters in terms of other significantly different variables, the “individual levels” group reads the newspaper more days than any other group. Individuals in this group are also the most likely to cite a comedy as their favorite television show.

Cluster 6–“Not Mean Spirited” Humor. Cluster 6 is comprised of 52 individuals. Compared with the other clusters, this group likes both absurd/stupid humor and satire/death humor the third most and somewhat likes social humor. The group does not like visual/verbal humor (second overall in dislike) and dislikes mean-spirited humor more than any other group. Thus, this cluster will be called the “not mean-spirited humor” group.

Among the other significantly different variables across clusters, the “not mean-spirited group” is the most educated and second most likely to be female. Individuals in this group are least likely to have a DVD player. They also like violent films the least. Overall, they seem to be the “most sensitive” of the eight clusters.

Cluster 7–“Absurd/Stupid” Humor. Cluster 7 is the smallest of the eight groups, with an n of 16. The group dislikes social humor and satire/death humor more than any other group and moderately dislikes mean-spirited humor. The group somewhat likes visual/verbal humor and enjoys absurd/stupid humor more than any other group. Thus, this cluster will be called the “absurd/stupid humor” group.

Compared to the other clusters, the “absurd/stupid humor” group is the most female. When media content choice is examined, this group prefers weepies/ melodramas on film–they have the high mean in that category).

Cluster 8–“Visual/Verbal” Humor. Cluster 8 consists of 32 individuals. This group heavily dislikes social humor and somewhat dislikes mean-spirited and absurd/stupid humor. The group somewhat appreciates satire death humor and enjoys visual/verbal humor more than any of the other seven clusters. This, this group will be called the “visual/verbal humor” group.

Across all clusters, this group is the oldest and most likely to be married. Individuals in this group are also the *least* depressed of all eight clusters. Thus, this group seems to have a rather happy mood state/temperament.

Qualitative Cluster Summaries. In a more qualitative addendum to the quantitative profiling documented in Table 5, responses to key open-ended questions were examined for each of the eight clusters. Summaries of these examinations are displayed in Table 6.

As the table shows, Cluster 1, the “low humor” cluster, gave a disproportionately high number of “don’t know” answers. Of particular note, 40% of respondents in this cluster did not recall a funniest movie or TV show, and 35% could not name a favorite kind of humor. In fact, when asked to name their favorite kind of humor, 15% of respondents in this cluster said “none.” This suggests that there may indeed be a small group of individuals with a low or perhaps *no* sense of humor. In addition, only 20% of the favorite TV shows of this group are comedies, a statistically significant low. This further validates the notion that this group has a “low” appreciation of humor.

Cluster 2, dubbed the “middle-of-the-road” cluster, cited “clean humor” as their favorite type (13.6%). An examination of open-ended responses confirms a preference for “clean” media fare, as illustrated by favorite shows like *7th Heaven* and *Touched by an Angel* (each mentioned by 4.5% of respondents) and the favorite film *Gone with the Wind* (cited by 13.6%).

Cluster 3, called the “sick” humor cluster, said “sarcasm” was their favorite type of humor (11.3%). By definition, sarcasm can be a type of humor designed to inflict pain, so this would fit the profile of a person with a “sick” sense of humor. Other profile-fitting mentions for favorite type of comedy include sexual/raunchy/off-color (4.2%), sick/twisted/sadistic (4.2%), stand-up (4.2%), dark/black (2.8%) and satire (2.8%). As for moving image exemplars, several fit the “sick” humor profile. The favorite show *Seinfeld* featured off-color humor in several episodes, and the fourth-place favorite film *Army of Darkness* is a dark comedy with non-stop humor about death and violence. This particular film is also an example of the statistically significant high level of violent films cited by the group as favorites. The two funniest films cited by this group also fit the “sick” profile—*Friday* is an inner city comedy

featuring coarse language and putdowns, while *There's Something About Mary* includes several scenes of gross-out humor with body parts and fluids.

Cluster 4, the social levels of humor cluster, cited *Friends* as their favorite TV show (9.1%). This makes sense, given that *Friends* is a sitcom about social relationships. In line with the propositions advanced by Eshleman and Neuendorf (1989), a high 63% of favorite TV shows cited by this group are sitcoms, a key “social humor” mass media exemplar. In addition, only 6.1% of respondents in this cluster could *not* cite a favorite TV show, suggesting that this group is confident about which shows are their favorites. The top types of humor mentioned by this cluster include sarcasm again (like the sick humor group), along with comedy and dry humor (9.1% each). The meaning of the frequently mentioned “dry humor” (see below) is unclear and deserves further exploration in future studies.

Cluster 5 seems even more certain of their favorites than Cluster 4—no one in Cluster 5 failed to name a favorite TV show, and only one failed to name a favorite movie. Like Cluster 4, Cluster 5 cited a high proportion of comedies as favorite TV shows (90%, the highest among the eight clusters). The high preference for comedy makes sense when one considers that Cluster 5 was the *only* cluster to have positive means on more than three sense of humor factors (all but mean-spirited humor were positive). This group’s sense of humor spans many levels, and this may lead to a strong appreciation for comedy shows on television. As for favorite kinds of humor, this group again cited dry humor (as did the previous cluster) as well as subtle humor (15% each). An example of subtle humor could be the character-driven film *As Good As It Gets*, most frequently cited as funniest by this group.

Cluster 6, the *not* mean spirited humor cluster, also mentioned dry as their favorite type of humor (15.4%), along with clean (11.5%). This group seems to appreciate humor that’s clean and nice, for the most part. Oddly, the funniest TV show and movie cited by this group, *Seinfeld* and *There's Something About Mary*, were also cited by the “sick” humor group. This suggests that individuals with different

senses of humor can enjoy the same films and shows, since many films and TV shows do not fit neatly into one category of humor. Rather, films and shows like *There's Something About Mary* and *Seinfeld* contain many types of humor, ranging from gross-out, high arousal humor to sweet, romantic comedy. This broad appeal probably explains their immense popularity, and it supports Proposition 7 above.

Cluster 7, the absurd/stupid humor cluster, cited clean humor as their favorite (12.5%). Some profile-fitting funniest shows mentioned include *The Cosby Show*, *The Golden Girls*, *Grumpy Old Men*, *Home Alone*, *I Love Lucy*, *Laugh In*, and *National Lampoon's Vacation*.

Cluster 8, the visual/verbal humor cluster, cited slapstick as their favorite kind of humor (a high 21.9%). As Table 4 shows, slapstick is an integral component of the visual/verbal humor factor, and this importance seems to extend to the visual/verbal humor cluster profile also. The most frequently mentioned funny show/movie was again *Seinfeld* and *There's Something About Mary*, further confirming the broad appeal of these two examples. Interestingly, sketch comedy shows were cited frequently as funniest of all time. Shows mentioned include *Saturday Night Live*, *SCTV*, *Laugh In* and *In Living Color*. Sketch comedy programs account for 20% of all funny shows/movies mentioned in Cluster 8, the highest proportion of any cluster. The visual and verbal variety of these sketch comedy shows seems to be particularly appealing to individuals in this group.

Discussion

The process outlined in this paper, with its reliance on a grounded-theory approach to developing in-depth understanding of the humor appreciation process as it applies to moving image content, has been successful in confirming the notion that an expanded view of the human "sense of humor" is both valid and fruitful for predicting behaviors, including media habits and preferences. The process as executed meets the spirit of the *original* 1970's "uses and gratifications" notion of the active audience; in its original form, the perspective demanded emergent constructs and operationalizations, rather than standard

scales across needs and applications. The constructs developed here--and their measures--are peculiar to the realm of humor appreciation and are therefore rich in detail.

Five propositions were employed as framings for this investigation. Proposition 1 stated that “Sense of humor is not singular, but in fact multidimensional ‘senses of humor’ exist. These multiple dimensions of humor appreciation may be orthogonal, representing quite different and separable orientations toward a potentially humorous stimulus.” This proposition has received modest support. Factor analyses from two data sets found relatively consistent factor structures with a respectable amount of variance accounted for. Orthogonal solutions proved to be appropriate and robust.

Proposition 2 stated, “There is no such thing as the individual who has ‘no sense of humor.’ All humans possess some type of humor appreciation, and anecdotal claims of observing an individual with ‘no sense of humor’ are actually instances where the sense of humor profiles of the participants have little overlap.” This proposition is clearly refuted. Evidence from the general population sample indicates that there may exist individuals who are not highly aroused by or attracted to any humor type as measured. These individuals are profiled as heavily minority, female, and not well educated. They are attracted to sad media content, and seem downright uninterested in most overtly humorous media content. Given their aggregate backgrounds, it is quite possible that rather than their “lack” of a sense of humor being innate, their situational constraints have suppressed their humor response. Future research might fruitfully target this relatively small but distinct group.

Proposition 3 indicated that “Single-dimension and multiple-dimension humor preference profiles are possible for a given individual.” This proposition has received clear support. Given that an orthogonal factor structure emerged as the best fitting solution, there seems to be no compelling reason to expect humor profiles that include preferences for more than one type. Yet, a number of combinations did become apparent in the cluster analysis, with considerable face validity. These combinations confirm a

distinction between humor appreciated at the individual level, and humor appreciated in a social context.

Proposition 4 proposed that “These profiles will predict preferences for stimuli with potential for humor response, including TV and film content.” The cluster profiling of individuals according to their humor preference templates proved more successful than expected. Many demographic, media, and mood-related variables were significantly discriminated by the clustering. This clustering extends beyond simple description, with compelling insights into people’s divergent lives and emotional orientations. Future research may assess how individuals from different clusters relate to one another in interpersonal interaction, and in selecting and using media content.

Proposition 5 stated “A stimulus with humor potential (e.g., a joke, a television program, a film) may evoke single-dimension or multiple-dimension humor responses in the aggregate audience.” Both data sets revealed important cases of moving image stimuli that evoked single, or multiple, humor affiliations. And, although this research did not conduct a formal test of Proposition 7 (“A stimulus with strong potential for evoking multiple-dimension humor responses is likely to be more sought-after (popular) by audience members.”), several anecdotal examples point toward the validity of the proposition (see Table 3). We can observe multi-faceted humor patterns for such popular programs as *David Letterman* and *The Simpsons*.

Inevitably, as a new conceptual framework is developed and allowed to evolve, the issue of falsifiability arises. In the case of the perspective presented here, it is true that the emergent patterns are only one set of results among many possibilities that would satisfy the research goals. But several things support our ability to refine and forward the framework. First, one proposition of the original framework of multidimensional “senses of humor” has received a blow, compelling us to reject it--there does seem to be a segment of the population that does not have a strong humor orientation, a group that comes close to having “no sense of humor.” Supported by open-ended responses, this finding encourages us to explore

more fully the lives of those who do not subscribe to any of the major senses of humor reported here.

The senses of humor did not by necessity delineate preferences for certain moving image content, but many such clear delineations emerged. Clusters based on senses of humor did not necessarily have to be discriminated by so many important media and non-media variables, but they were. Although perhaps “not yet ready for prime time” theory testing, the framework presented here is supported sufficiently to allow hypotheses to be developed for future survey and experimental work.

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Table 1: Orthogonal Factor Analysis of 14 Common Sense of Humor Measures–Pilot Study, Students

	----- Loadings -----				Comm.
	Factor 1 Mean-Spirited humor	Factor 2 Incongruous humor	Factor 3 Stupid/Blooper humor	Factor 4 Realistic humor	
“I like sexist humor”	.83	.02	.06	-.17	.67
“Something is funny if it ridicules certain racial or ethnic groups”	.75	.04	-.02	.07	.61
“Something is funny if it is crude”	.71	.14	.10	.16	.57
“I like sexual humor”	.68	.05	.27	-.16	.54
“I like humor about death or violence”	.53	.40	-.38	.05	.61
“I enjoy satire”	.09	.69	.03	.30	.57
“I like jokes that involve wordplay”	-.07	.69	-.06	-.24	.53
“I enjoy slapstick”	.06	.62	.13	-.02	.40
“I find things funny if they are absurd”	.30	.54	.22	-.02	.43
“I enjoy visual humor”	.12	.47	.43	-.30	.51
“Something is especially funny if it happens accidentally”	.16	.18	.73	.22	.63
“I find bloopers especially funny”	-.11	-.04	.65	-.32	.54
“I find it funny when people do stupid things”	.38	.21	.57	.06	.52
“Something is funny to me only if I find the situation realistic”	-.05	-.06	-.02	.82	.68
Eigenvalue	3.52	1.76	1.44	1.08	
% of total variance	25.1%	12.6%	10.3%	7.7%	

Table 2: Orthogonal Factor Analysis of 14 Common Sense of Humor Measures—General Pop. Sample

	----- Loadings -----				Comm.
	Factor 1 Mean- Spirited humor	Factor 2 Incon- gruous humor	Factor 3 Satire/ Death humor	Factor 4 Realistic humor	
“I like sexist humor”	.82	.03	.03	.03	.66
“I like sick humor”	.77	.05	.20	-.05	.64
“Something is funny if it ridicules certain racial or ethnic groups”	.76	-.09	.20	-.01	.62
“I like sexual humor”	.69	.30	.09	.11	.58
“I find it funny when people do stupid things”	.58	.40	-.20	-.23	.59
“I find bloopers especially funny”	-.07	.74	-.07	-.13	.57
“I like sight gags”	.22	.62	.28	-.08	.51
“I like jokes that involve wordplay”	.08	.58	.35	.02	.47
“Something is especially funny if it happens accidentally”	.06	.57	.13	.33	.45
“I find absurd things funny”	.29	.40	.36	-.36	.50
“I enjoy satire”	-.02	.24	.79	.08	.69
“I like humor about death”	.45	-.16	.66	-.08	.66
“I enjoy slapstick”	.12	.35	.52	-.16	.44
“Something is funny only when I find the situation realistic”	.03	-.02	-.06	.88	.79
Eigenvalue	3.99	1.88	1.18	1.11	
% of total variance	28.5%	13.4%	8.5%	7.9%	

Table 3: Television Show Exemplars Related to the Senses of Humor–Pilot Study, Student Sample.

Factor 1–Mean-Spirited Humor	
Individuals high on this factor are significantly ($p \leq .05$) more likely to enjoy...	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Married with Children • The Simpsons • Super Dave • David Letterman • Hogan’s Heroes • SCTV • Sanford and Son • Monty Python’s Flying Circus 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Get Smart • All in the Family • The Munsters • The Addams Family • The Three Stooges • The Benny Hill Show • Evening at the Improv
...and significantly ($p \leq .05$) less likely to enjoy:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Golden Girls • Full House 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 227 • Murphy Brown
Factor 2–Incongruous Humor	
Individuals high on this factor are significantly ($p \leq .05$) more likely to enjoy...	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Garry Shandling Show • The Tracey Ullman Show • The Simpsons • David Letterman 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Saturday Night Live • Monty Python’s Flying Circus • Sledge Hammer! • The Three Stooges
...and significantly ($p \leq .05$) less likely to enjoy:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Cosby Show • Alice • Make Room For Daddy 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Diff’rent Strokes • Mama’s Family • Gimme a Break!
Factor 3–Stupid/Blooper Humor	
Individuals high on this factor are significantly ($p \leq .05$) more likely to enjoy...	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Cosby Show • The Simpsons • Totally Hidden Video • America’s Funniest Home Videos • Super Dave • TV’s Bloopers and Practical Jokes • David Letterman 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Saturday Night Live • The Brady Bunch • I Dream of Jeannie • I Love Lucy • Three’s Company • The Partridge Family
...and significantly ($p \leq .05$) less likely to enjoy:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ozzie and Harriet 	
Factor 4–Realistic Humor	
Individuals high on this factor are significantly ($p \leq .05$) less likely to enjoy:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chico and the Man • Little Rascals/Our Gang 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Benny Hill

Table 4: Orthogonal Factor Analysis of 16 Sense of Humor Measures—General Population Sample.

	----- Loadings -----					
	Factor 1	Factor 2	Factor 3	Factor 4	Factor 5	
	Mean- Spirited humor	Visual/ Verbal humor	Stupid/ Absurd humor	Social humor	Satire/ Death humor	Comm.
“I like sexist humor”	.83	.10	.02	.02	.02	.72
“Something is funny if it ridicules certain racial or ethnic groups”	.75	.10	.00	-.12	.24	.65
“I like sexual humor”	.71	.31	.06	.17	.01	.63
“I like sick humor”	.68	-.08	.26	.22	.01	.63
“I like to give my friends a hard time by joking”	.53	-.02	.34	.49	.21	.64
“I like sight gags”	.24	.74	.17	.05	.03	.63
“I enjoy slapstick”	.19	.62	-.06	.13	.32	.54
“I find bloopers especially funny”	-.09	.59	.33	.21	.37	.56
“I like jokes that involve wordplay”	-.02	.50	.48	.07	.12	.50
“I find absurd things funny”	.20	.06	.66	.11	.37	.63
“I find it funny when people do stupid things”	.45	.03	.65	.18	-.11	.67
“Something is especially funny if it happens accidentally”	-.01	.26	.61	.07	.05	.45
“I use humor to lighten things up”	.11	.11	.12	.83	.03	.72
“I use humor to get to know people better”	.18	.21	.08	.76	.23	.72
“I like humor about death”	.35	-.06	.02	.03	.74	.69
“I enjoy satire”	.08	.30	.34	.34	.68	.69
Eigenvalue	4.90	1.87	1.20	1.10	1.02	
% of total variance	30.6%	11.7%	7.5%	6.9%	6.4%	

Table 5: General Population Cluster Profiling.

Variable	Cluster (n)								F	Sig.
	1 (20)	2 (44)	3 (71)	4 (66)	5 (20)	6 (52)	7 (16)	8 (32)		
Mean-spirited humor	-.14 ^c	-.57 ^c	1.10 ^a	.61 ^b	-.72 ^c	-.94 ^d	-.54 ^{c,d}	-.38 ^c	55.61	.000
Visual/Verbal humor	-1.69 ^a	-.04 ^d	-.10 ^d	.24 ^d	1.01 ^b	-.65 ^c	.44 ^{b,c,d}	1.04 ^b	36.45	.000
Absurd/Stupid humor	-.63 ^{a,b}	-1.11 ^a	-.30 ^b	.41 ^c	.86 ^c	.75 ^c	.94 ^c	-.38 ^b	33.46	.000
Social humor	-.78 ^{a,c}	.29 ^b	-.21 ^{c,d}	.75 ^b	.35 ^{b,d}	.31 ^b	-1.20 ^a	-1.12 ^a	29.46	.000
Satire/Death humor	-.71 ^{a,b}	-.37 ^{b,d}	.69 ^{c,e}	-.79 ^{a,d}	1.05 ^c	.45 ^c	-1.26 ^a	.30 ^e	40.92	.000
Age	45.0 ^{a,b}	46.0 ^a	34.5 ^{b,c,d}	32.0 ^d	48.5 ^a	48.4 ^a	48.4 ^{a,c}	49.4 ^a	8.50	.000
Gender (female)	.75 ^a	.68 ^a	.32 ^b	.62 ^a	.45 ^{a,b}	.77 ^a	.88 ^a	.66 ^a	6.25	.000
Education	3.7 ^{a,b}	3.9 ^{a,b}	4.1 ^a	3.5 ^b	4.2 ^{a,b}	4.2 ^a	3.9 ^{a,b}	4.1 ^{a,b}	2.47	.018
Race (non-white)	.42 ^a	.09 ^b	.14 ^{a,b}	.23 ^{a,b}	.15 ^{a,b}	.19 ^{a,b}	.38 ^{a,b}	.16 ^{a,b}	2.20	.034
Marital status (marry)	.45 ^{a,b}	.48 ^{a,b}	.41 ^{a,b}	.21 ^a	.45 ^{a,b}	.48 ^{a,b}	.38 ^{a,b}	.53 ^b	2.18	.036
Days read newspaper	3.6 ^{a,b}	4.6 ^{a,b}	3.9 ^{a,b}	3.2 ^a	5.5 ^b	4.1 ^{a,b}	3.6 ^{a,b}	4.1 ^{a,b}	2.11	.042
Num. videos watched	3.5 ^{a,b}	3.9 ^a	6.1 ^{a,b}	9.5 ^b	7.7 ^{a,b}	5.0 ^{a,b}	3.5 ^{a,b}	3.6 ^{a,b}	2.39	.021
Have DVD player	.15 ^{a,b}	.07 ^{a,b}	.13 ^{a,b}	.25 ^a	.11 ^{a,b}	.00 ^b	.25 ^{a,b}	.06 ^{a,b}	3.20	.003
Have laserdisc player	.05 ^{a,b}	.02 ^a	.10 ^{a,b}	.20 ^b	.11 ^{a,b}	.04 ^{a,b}	.19 ^{a,b}	.06 ^{a,b}	2.13	.040
Have camcorder	.15 ^a	.36 ^{a,b}	.56 ^b	.58 ^b	.37 ^{a,b}	.40 ^{a,b}	.63 ^{a,b}	.34 ^{a,b}	3.12	.003
Have satellite dish	.10 ^{a,b}	.00 ^a	.04 ^{a,b}	.17 ^b	.05 ^{a,b}	.06 ^{a,b}	.13 ^{a,b}	.00 ^a	2.51	.016
How eager for DTV	0.8 ^a	2.1 ^{a,b}	3.0 ^{a,b}	3.3 ^b	1.5 ^{a,b}	1.7 ^{a,b}	2.3 ^{a,b}	2.1 ^{a,b}	2.43	.020
Depression index	34.6 ^{a,b}	27.7 ^{a,b}	31.5 ^{a,b}	39.0 ^a	22.4 ^{a,b}	27.2 ^{a,b}	26.2 ^{a,b}	19.4 ^b	3.28	.001
Wallowing index	29.7 ^a	27.3 ^a	33.1 ^a	33.4 ^a	29.3 ^a	34.9 ^a	26.9 ^a	26.9 ^a	2.25	.030
Favorite TV show is comedy	.27 ^a	.44 ^{a,b}	.63 ^{a,b}	.63 ^{a,b}	.83 ^b	.46 ^{a,b}	.64 ^{a,b}	.57 ^{a,b}	2.60	.013
Favorite TV show is weepy/melodrama	.47 ^a	.31 ^a	.15 ^a	.11 ^a	.11 ^a	.11 ^a	.07 ^a	.19 ^a	2.13	.041
Favorite movie is weepy/melodrama	1.2 ^{a,b}	0.8 ^{a,b}	0.4 ^a	0.7 ^{a,b}	0.9 ^{a,b}	0.9 ^{a,b}	1.5 ^b	0.9 ^{a,b}	3.41	.002
Violence in favorite movie (graphic)	.46 ^{a,b}	.63 ^{a,b}	1.07 ^a	1.00 ^a	.68 ^{a,b}	.36 ^b	.58 ^{a,b}	.74 ^{a,b}	3.69	.001

Means that do not share a superscript are significantly different at $p < .05$ using Tukey's HSD post hoc test. Red = statistically significant high; Blue = statistically significant low.

Table 6: General Population Cluster Summaries

Cluster 1: Low Humor
<p>⇒ Favorite TV Show of All Time: <i>ER</i> (15%)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Only 20% name a comedy as favorite show (statistically significant low—see Table 5). • 40% of mentioned shows are melodramas (statistically significant high—see Table 5). • 5 out of 15 mentioned shows are daytime television (e.g., <i>All My Children</i>, <i>General Hospital</i>). • 25% don't know.
<p>⇒ Favorite Movies of All Time</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No repeated answers. • 64% of mentioned films are weepies/melodramas (e.g., <i>Imitation of Life</i>, <i>Terms of Endearment</i>). • 30% don't know.
<p>⇒ Funniest Movie or TV Show Ever Seen: <i>Rush Hour</i> (10%)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 42% cite sitcoms as funniest. • 40% don't know.
<p>⇒ Favorite Kinds of Humor: none (15%) and jokes (15%)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Other mentions: clean (10%) and sarcasm (10%). • 20% don't know. • None + don't know = 35%

Table 6: General Population Cluster Summaries continued

Cluster 2: “Middle-of-the-Road” Humor
<p>⇒ Favorite TV Show of All Time: <i>Friends</i> (9.1%)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Other shows cited several times: <i>ER</i>, <i>Frasier</i>, <i>Seinfeld</i>, <i>Seventh Heaven</i>, <i>Touched by an Angel</i>. • 50% of mentioned shows are comedies. • 27.3% don't know.
<p>⇒ Favorite Movie of All Time: <i>Gone with the Wind</i> (13.6%)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Other popular movies: <i>ET the Extra Terrestrial</i> and <i>Titanic</i>. • 25% don't know
<p>⇒ Funniest Movie or TV Show Ever Seen</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Many single mentions. • Don't know = 22.7%.
<p>⇒ Favorite Kind of Humor: clean (13.6%)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Other favorites include: slapstick (11.4%) and realistic (9.1%). • 18.2% don't know.

Table 6: General Population Cluster Summaries continued

<p>Cluster 3: “Sick” Humor</p> <p>⇒ Favorite TV Show of All Time: <i>Seinfeld</i> (16.9%)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Other frequent mentions: <i>Law and Order</i>, <i>M*A*S*H</i>, <i>the Simpsons</i>. • 8.5% don’t know.
<p>⇒ Favorite Movie of All Time: <i>Star Wars</i> (9.9%)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Other movies mentioned more than once: <i>Gone with the Wind</i>, <i>The Color Purple</i>, <i>Army of Darkness</i>, <i>Ben Hur</i>, <i>Goodfellas</i>, <i>Titanic</i>. • The most violent films are cited by this group (statistically significant difference—see Table 5). • Only 5.6% don’t know.
<p>⇒ Funniest Movie or TV Show Ever Seen</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Top Four (4.2% each): <i>Friday</i>, <i>MASH</i>, <i>Seinfeld</i>, <i>There’s Something About Mary</i>. • 11.3% don’t know.
<p>⇒ Favorite Kind of Humor: sarcasm (11.3%)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A close second: slapstick/people falling (9.9%) • Profile-fitting mentions include: sexual/raunchy/off-color (4.2%), sick/twisted/sadistic (4.2%), dark/black (2.8%), and satire (2.8%). • 8.5% don’t know.

Table 6: General Population Cluster Summaries continued

Cluster 4: Social Levels of Humor
<p>⇒ Favorite TV Show of All Time: <i>Friends</i> (9.1%)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A close second: <i>Seinfeld</i> (7.6%). • Other top mentions (4.5% each): <i>Andy Griffith</i>, <i>The Cosby Show</i>, <i>ER</i>, <i>I Love Lucy</i>. • 63% of mentioned shows (and 5 out of 6 top shows) are sitcoms. • Only 6.1% don't know.
<p>⇒ Favorite Movie of All Time: <i>Titanic</i> (7.6%)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Other movies mentioned more than once: <i>Gone with the Wind</i>, <i>Ghost</i>, <i>Die Hard</i>, <i>Goodfellas</i>, <i>Star Wars</i>. • Violence level among all favorite films is second highest. • 7.6% don't know.
<p>⇒ Funniest Movie or TV Show Ever Seen: <i>Seinfeld</i> (7.6%)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Second-place mentions (4.5% each): <i>There's Something About Mary</i> and <i>The Waterboy</i>. • 7.6% don't know.
<p>⇒ Favorite Kinds of Humor: dry, sarcasm, and comedy (9.1% each)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 15.2% cite "other," unclassifiable types of humor. • 9.1% don't know.

Table 6: General Population Cluster Summaries continued

Cluster 5: Individual Level Humor
<p>⇒ Favorite TV Shows of All Time: <i>Frasier</i> (15%) and <i>Friends</i> (15%)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A close second: <i>The Simpsons</i> (10%). • 90% name a comedy as favorite show (statistically significant high—see Table 5). • Every respondent gave an answer (<u>no</u> don't know)
<p>⇒ Favorite Movie of All Time: <i>Gone with the Wind</i> (15%)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rest are single mentions. • Only 21% of favorite movies are comedies. • Only 1 don't know response.
<p>⇒ Funniest Movie or TV Show Ever Seen: <i>As Good As It Gets</i> (10%)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rest are single mentions. • 20% don't know.
<p>⇒ Favorite Kinds of Humor: <i>dry</i> (15%) and <i>subtle</i> (15%)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Slapstick/people falling also mentioned (10%). • Everyone gave a type (no don't know, again)

Table 6: General Population Cluster Summaries continued

Cluster 6: Not Mean-Spirited humor
<p>⇒ Favorite TV Show of All Time: <i>Seinfeld</i> (9.6%)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A close second: <i>M*A*S*H</i> (7.7%) and third: <i>The X-Files</i> (5.8%) • 11.5% don't know.
<p>⇒ Favorite Movie of All Time: <i>Gone with the Wind</i> (17.3%)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Other top mentions: <i>Titanic</i> (5.8%) and <i>Casablanca</i> (3.8%) • Violence level among all films is lowest (statistically significant low—see Table 5). • 13.5% don't know.
<p>⇒ Funniest Movie and TV Show Ever Seen: <i>There's Something About Mary</i> and <i>Seinfeld</i> (5.8% each)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Other top mentions: <i>Mary Tyler Moore</i> and <i>What About Bob?</i> (3.8% each). • 21.2% don't know.
<p>⇒ Favorite Kind of Humor: dry (15.4%)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A close second: clean (11.5%) and third: realistic/true-to-life (7.7). • 5.8% don't know.

Table 6: General Population Cluster Summaries continued

Cluster 7: Absurd/Stupid humor
<p>↔ Favorite TV Show of All Time</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All single mentions. • 12.5% don't know.
<p>↔ Favorite Movie of All Time: <i>Gone with the Wind</i> (18.8%)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rest are single mentions. • 75% of mentioned films are weepies/melodramas (statistically significant high—see Table 5). • 25% don't know.
<p>↔ Funniest Movie or TV Show Ever Seen.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All single mentions. • Absurd/Stupid moving image examples: <i>Booby Call</i>, <i>Home Alone</i>, <i>I Love Lucy</i>, <i>Laugh In</i>. • 25% don't know.
<p>↔ Favorite Kind of Humor: clean (12.5%)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 18.8% cite “other,” unclassifiable types of humor. • 5.8% don't know.

Table 6: General Population Cluster Summaries continued

Cluster 8: Visual/Verbal humor
<p>⇒ Favorite TV Show of All Time: <i>Seinfeld</i> (12.5%)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Second-place mentions: <i>The Drew Carey Show</i> and <i>M*A*S*H</i> (6.3% each). • 12.5% don't know.
<p>⇒ Favorite Movie of All Time: <i>Gone with the Wind</i> (18.8%)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Another top mention: <i>The Sound of Music</i> (6.3%). • Only 3.1% don't know.
<p>⇒ Funniest Movie and TV Show Ever Seen: <i>Seinfeld</i> and <i>There's Something About Mary</i> (both 6.3%)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 20% sketch comedy (highest). • 25% don't know.
<p>⇒ Favorite Kind of Humor: slapstick (21.9%)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Other top mentions: subtle (9.4%) and comedy (9.4%). • 6.3% don't know.