Your Photo is so Funny that I don’t Mind Violating Your Privacy by Sharing it: Individual Humor Styles and Photo-sharing Behaviors

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Research goal
Sharing other people’s (including strangers’) photos online, often with additional captions (e.g., memes), harm their personal, social, and professional persona and threaten their privacy. Here we study how individual humor style (i.e., how much people use humor either to entertain themselves or other people to advance social relationships) predicts photo-sharing behaviors. Our ultimate goal is to assist in developing personalized interventions to reduce the sharing of privacy-sensitive photos online.

Method
In an online study, participants saw photo-memes† and provided the likelihood of them sharing the memes on social media. They also answered questions about real-life photo-sharing history:
- Q1. Have you ever shared an embarrassing photo of someone else you know?
- Q2. Have you ever shared an embarrassing photo of a stranger?
- Q3. Have you ever posted a photo of a stranger which may have violated their privacy?

Data about humor styles was collected using the Humor Style Questionnaire.[1]

† The memes were grouped based on their valence:[2] how positively or negatively they portray the people appearing in them.

Findings
1. Participants were clustered based on their scores along the four dimensions of humor (Table 1). During the study, humor endorsers (people in cluster 1) were significantly more likely than others to share photos that portrayed the subjects negatively (Fig. 1).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dimension</th>
<th>Humor endorsers</th>
<th>Humor deniers</th>
<th>Self-enhancers</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Affiliative</td>
<td>0.31</td>
<td>-1.16</td>
<td>0.52</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-enhancing</td>
<td>0.25</td>
<td>-1.12</td>
<td>0.55</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Self-defeating</td>
<td>0.75</td>
<td>-0.40</td>
<td>-0.59</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Aggressive</td>
<td>0.74</td>
<td>-0.17</td>
<td>-0.79</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2. Humor types were also significantly associated with past history of sharing others’ photos in real life. Humor endorsers shared embarrassing and privacy-violating photos of other people more than expected (Fig. 2).

Figure 1

Figure 2