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Mindfulness and self-compassion as predictors of humor styles in US and Russia

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Mindfulness and self-compassion are increasingly coming into mainstream psychological research in the Western world as they correlate with and predict various aspects of mental health and positivity. However, little is known about their relationship to another construct that is also associated with well-being, that is, humor. The unique contribution of the present study is in exploring whether mindfulness and self-compassion would predict the use of adaptive and maladaptive humor styles and whether this prediction will be the same across cultures. 90 U.S. and 106 Russian college students responded to a survey consisting of three measures: Mindfulness Attention Awareness Scale (MAAS; Brown & Ryan, 2003), Self-Compassion Scale-Short Form (SCS-SF; Raes, Pommier, Neff, & Van Gucht, 2011), and Humor Styles Questionnaire (HSQ; Martin, Puhlik-Doris, Larsen, Gray, & Weir, 2003). Our findings suggest that mindfulness and self-compassion can serve as predictors of humor styles, that is, more mindful and self-compassionate participants tended to use more adaptive humor styles and less maladaptive styles. However, the contribution of these two variables to the variance in humor styles depended on the culture.

Keywords*: mindfulness, self-compassion, humor styles, cross-cultural research, Russian and US samples, positive psychology.*

Since positive psychology was founded as a discipline that focuses on human strengths and potential [40], there has been a renewed interest in studying topics related to psychological well-being. Research areas such as humor are not new in psychology, whereas mindfulness and self-compassion have been recently introduced into

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mainstream research and clinical practice. The current study explores the three constructs (i.e., humor, mindfulness, and self-compassion) and their relationships cross culturally. Further, it investigates whether the use of humor styles can be predicted from mindfulness and self-compassion.

This study expands upon a previous Turkish study that demonstrated a positive relationship between mindfulness and the types of humor use [35]. It was found that more mindful Turkish college students were more likely to choose benign and healthy humor styles and less likely to use humor that is self-defeating and detrimental to relationships. Because of the close relationship between mindfulness and self-compassion [30], we proposed that self-compassion will be related to humor use in a similar fashion.

Compared to mindfulness and self-compassion, humor has been a more traditional topic of investigation in psychology [10; 29]. Yet, it is a complex and broad construct that is difficult to define as it relates to "all laughter-related phenomena" [26, p. 314] and may include such various traits as a humorous stimulus, mental processes involved in perceiving humor, or responses to humor (e.g., amusement or smiling).

It was demonstrated that humor relates to happiness, life satisfaction, and resilience [9]. It has been described as a mature defense mechanism associated with personal adjustment and mental health [26]. There is some evidence that it may be related to physical health as well [25]. A sense of humor, or playfulness, was included as one of the 24 entries in the classification of character strengths and virtues by Peterson and Seligman [36].

Whether treated as a uni-dimensional [46] or as a multidimensional construct (e.g., Multidimensional Sense of Humor Scale; [49]), it has been traditionally considered a positive characteristic highly valued in interpersonal relationships.

A more recent conceptualization of humor questioned whether all types of humor could be considered positive and healthy [28]. Martin et al. suggested that it was important to differentiate between positive and negative forms of humor, which was reflected in their scale, the Humor Styles Questionnaire (HSQ). The scale was based on the following dimensions: (1) adaptive versus maladaptive humor and (2) humor as an intra- or interpersonal process. Thus, four types of humor uses emerged from this classification based on a factor analysis: benign uses of humor to enhance oneself (Self-enhancing) and to strengthen relationships with others (Affiliative) versus maladaptive uses directed at oneself (Self-defeating) and directed at others (Aggressive). Martin et al. demonstrated that the two benign, or adaptive, types of humor were similar to the sense of humor measured by previously existing scales. However, the two maladaptive types did not overlap with the other scales, for example, they did not correlate with the Situational Humor Response Questionnaire (SHRQ; [27]). Additionally, based on their research, Martin et al. stated that their findings support the view that "Affiliative and Self-enhancing humor involve benign uses of humor that are positively associated with psychological health and well-being, whereas Aggressive and Self-defeating humor are negatively related to well-being, and, as such, may represent more detrimental and potentially unhealthy uses of humor" [28].

The HSQ has been translated into several languages. However, there has not been sufficient validation of the HSQ across cultures, and the results of the studies conducted in non-Western countries were inconsistent. For example, Liu [23] found a relationship between adaptive humor, self-

esteem, and subjective happiness in Hong Kong, whereas Taher, Kazarian, and Martin [47] stated that the four humor styles were not as strong predictors of psychological well-being in the Lebanese culture as they were in the West.

The HSQ has been adapted for Russian culture with some minor changes in the wording of the items [13]. The Russian version of HSQ demonstrated good validity and reliability. However, some significant cultural differences emerged. The differences were primarily related to aggressive and self-defeating humor, as it was found that they were unrelated to any measures of psychological well-being. For example, self-defeating humor did not correlate with negative self-esteem or with other measures of negative psychological characteristics as was demonstrated by research conducted in the US [28]. As a result, the authors questioned whether the distinction between adaptive and maladaptive types of humor can be considered universal. They suggested that, depending on the culture, aggressive and self-defeating humor styles may be interpreted as neutral or acceptable forms of humors.

Further research [12] compared the results derived from a Canadian sample [28] with the Russian sample used to validate the Russian HSQ [13]. Some cultural differences and similarities in the mean values for the humor types as well as in the intercorrelations between humor styles were found.

Thus, even though the use of humor is a universal human behavior, it is "by and large culture based" [1, p. 16]. One purpose of the current study is to investigate whether there are differences between Russian and US cultures in terms of perceptions of humor styles as being positive and acceptable or negative and unacceptable.

Mindfulness is currently a very common topic of research in psychology because it was found to significantly contribute to psychological well-being (see [19; 41]). It relaxes and reduces stress and rumination [44], decreases chronic pain [17], and fosters forgiveness [34]. It can also alleviate such conditions as posttraumatic stress disorder in veterans [18].

The popularity of mindfulness as regular practice and as an intervention is growing fast (see [2], for review), as evidenced by the success of Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction (MSBR; [14]) and other training programs, such as Mindfulness-Based Cognitive Therapy (MBCT; [48]). It enters the mainstream through a recently published lifestyle magazine "Mindful" and various internet sites, for example, the Mindful Schools' website (http://www.mindfulschools.org/).

Mindfulness is a natural human capacity and a skill that can be cultivated [16]. It is commonly defined as a non-judgmental awareness of one's thoughts and feelings. It involves paying attention to what is happening in the present moment and cultivating the attitude of non-striving [15]. This definition corresponds to the two-component model proposed by Bishop et al. [5] where the first component relates to the self-regulation of attention and the second component involves a particular attitude toward one's experiences characterized by curiosity, openness, and acceptance. However, for the purposes of the current study we will focus only on the first component of the above model, which is considered to be the foundation of mindfulness according to Brown and Ryan [7].

Self-compassion is a more recent concept in psychological research compared to mindfulness (see [32], for a review) but research in this area is rapidly expanding, and educational programs and therapies such as Compassion Cultivation Training (CCT; [50]) attract more and more people.

Neff [30] defines self-compassion as caring and kindness toward oneself when facing difficulties and experiencing suffering, and believes that mindfulness is an integral part of and one of the components of self-compassion. The other two components are self-kindness and common humanity (i.e., recognizing our similarity with other human beings who also fail and suffer). Each of these components has an opposite (i.e., self-judgment, isolation, and over-identification). The three pairs of opposing aspects are typically assessed by the Self-Compassion Scale [31]. However, in this operational definition of self-compassion, mindfulness corresponds more to the second component of the model described above [5], that is, a non-judgmental attitude toward oneself.

As emerging literature on mindfulness and self-compassion suggests, they are closely interrelated and enhance each other [3; 5]. As a result, they are often studied together (see [38], for review). MBSR interventions were found to increase self-compassion [42; 43]. Both self-compassion and mindfulness were described as mediators of intervention effects of MBSR [20].

To date, there is only limited cross-cultural research involving mindfulness and self-compassion in non-Western and non-English speaking countries (e.g., [33]). It appears that there are no original empirical studies on these two constructs published in Russia. The only two publications we could find were a review of literature on mindfulness based on research conducted outside of Russia [37] and a publication presenting the Russian adaptation of MAAS [11]. There are even no formally accepted and agreed upon Russian equivalents of what constitutes mindfulness and self-compassion. Mindfulness has been translated in different ways, for example, as *osoznanost'* (i.e., awareness) or *osoznannoe vnimanie* (i.e., conscious attention). In spite of the lack of empirical research in Russia, there is interest in practicing mindfulness, or meditation, as a technique to reduce stress and achieve other positive states, as evidenced by some Russian websites (e.g., realmindfulness.ru). These websites are based on translated materials and cite research published mostly in English-speaking countries. As for self-compassion, this construct is virtually unknown in Russia. The best translation we can suggest for it is *samosochuvstvie,* a word that barely exists.

The purpose of the present research is threefold. First, this study examines cultural differences and similarities between Russia and the US regarding mindfulness, self-compassion, and humor. Second, it explores cultural variability relationships between the above constructs and finally, it investigates whether culture, mindfulness, and self-compassion predict humor styles.

Hypotheses

Hypothesis 1: There will be differences between Russia and the US regarding mindfulness, self-compassion, and humor styles. This hypothesis is based on previous research and on the differences in political and economic systems and in religious and cultural backgrounds.

Hypothesis 2: Mindfulness and self-compassion will positively correlate with the two healthy humor styles and negatively correlate with the unhealthy styles. Culture will account for the difference in the strengths of these correlations.

Hypothesis 3: Mindfulness, self-compassion, and culture will predict humor styles independently and additively.

Method

Participants

The US sample consisted of undergraduate students enrolled in psychology courses at a Mid-South University in the US. The total number of participants in this sample was 90 (56 females and 33 males) with the average age of 24.08 (SD=7.33).

The Russian sample consisted of undergraduate students enrolled in psychology courses at a university located in the Ural region of Russia. The total number of participants in this sample was 106 (93 females and 13 males) with the average age of 21.40 (SD=2.82).

Measurement/Instruments

The instruments consisted of three scales originally published in English, Mindfulness Attention Awareness Scale (MAAS; [7]), Self-Compassion Scale-Short Form (SCS-SF; [39]), and Humor Styles Questionnaire (HSQ; [28]).

Mindfulness was assessed by the 15-item self-report instrument (trait version of MAAS) that measures one's attention to the present moment in daily activities [7]. Participants indicate how often they have a particular experience based on a Likert scale that ranges from 0 (almost always) to 6 (almost never). Because the items are formulated to reflect "mindless" experiences (e.g., "I snack without being aware that I'm eating"), a higher score indicates a higher level of mindfulness. Internal consistency for this scale ranges from .80 to .90 (Cronbach's alphas).

The Russian version of MAAS was graciously provided by Dr. Leontiev in personal communication in 2011 [22]. We did not use Golubev's [11] adaptation because it was not available to us at the time of data collection.

Self-compassion was measured by the 12-item instrument the Self-Compassion Scale- Short Form [39], with an internal consistency of about .86. Participants were asked to indicate how often they behave in the stated manner using a Likert scale (from 1=almost never to 5= almost always). The scale consists of 6 subscales assessing self-kindness, self-judgment, common humanity, isolation, mindfulness, and over-identification. However, the author of the instrument does not recommend using the subscales with the short form because they are less reliable than in the long version. SCS was translated into Russian by qualified bilinguals.

The third instrument was the HSQ scale [28]. It assesses four humor styles, two adaptive (affiliative and self-enhancing) and two maladaptive (aggressive and self-defeating). Affiliative humor fosters interpersonal relations and eases tensions between people (e.g., "I laugh and joke a lot with my closest friends"). Self-enhancing humor allows one to cope with negativity and serves as a healthy defense mechanism ("If I am feeling depressed, I can usually cheer myself up with humor"). Aggressive humor is used to make oneself feel better at the expense of others by diminishing or humiliating them ("If someone makes a mistake, I will often tease them about it"). Self-defeating humor puts oneself down and allows others to laugh ("I let people laugh at me or make fun at my expense more than I should"). The internal consistency of this scale, as reported by Martin et al., ranges from .77 to .81.

Participants respond to the 32 HSQ statements by indicating the degree of their agreement or disagreement from 1 (totally disagree) to 7 (totally agree). Martin et al. recommend summing across the 8 items for each humor style subscale. However, for the easier conceptualization and to be consistent with other scales used in this study

that calculate the mean of item responses, we chose to derive the mean scores for this scale as well. The Russian adaptation of HSQ used in the study was developed by Ivanova et al. [13]. Its internal consistency of .80 was comparable to Cronbach's alphas of the original scale by Martin et al. [28].

Additionally, two demographic items (i.e., age and gender) were included in the instrument.

Reliability

The reliability coefficients for the three scales in this study ranged from acceptable to excellent and were a little higher for the US sample than for the Russian sample. The internal consistencies in both samples for the fifteen items of the MAAS were excellent (US Cronbach's alpha= 0.86 and Russia alpha= 0.81). The reliability coefficient for the SCS for the US sample was 0.86, whereas for the Russian sample it was 0.71. The reliability coefficients for the four subscales of HSQ for the US sample ranged from 0.63 to point 0.85, whereas for the Russian sample the range was from 0.60 to 0.79. In both samples, the aggressive humor subscale was the least reliable and the most reliable was the affiliative humor subscale.

Procedure

In both countries, the instruments were administered in university classrooms under anonymous and voluntary conditions in May 2014. Participants were assessed in a group setting and took 20—30 minutes to complete the instruments. The study was approved by the Human Subjects Review Board of the first author's institution.

Results

Hypothesis 1

As was expected, there were statistically significant cultural differences for all variables except aggressive humor based on the results of *t*-tests presented in Table 1. Russian participants were higher on mindfulness and self-defeating humor, whereas US participants were higher on self-compassion, affiliative, and self-enhancing humor styles. Interestingly, if the humor style means are ranked, the means for the affiliative humor style are the highest for both samples followed by the means for the self-enhancing style.

Table 1

Cross-cultural Comparisons of Mindfulness, Self-compassion, and Humor Styles

Comparison	USA		Russia		T-test		95% CI	
Variable	M	SD	M	SD	t(194)	p	LL	UL
MAAS	3.60	.80	4.03	.67	-4.20	<.001	-.65	-.23
Self-compassion	3.21	.70	2.93	.54	3.12	.002	.10	.45
Humor styles								
Affiliative	5.72	.98	4.35	.99	9.71	<.001	1.09	1.65
Self-enhancing	4.72	1.00	3.91	.81	6.29	<.001	.56	1.07
Aggressive	3.50	.94	3.38	.79	1.05	.30	-.11	.37
Self-defeating	3.41	.99	3.72	.95	-2.24	.03	-.59	-.04

Note. *CI* = confidence interval; *LL* = lower limit; *UL* = upper limit.

Hypothesis 2

Mindfulness and self-compassion were significantly correlated with the four humor styles as was expected, and significant cross-cultural differences were found. For both samples mindfulness and self-compassion were significantly associated, with a slightly stronger relationship being found for the US group (see Table 2).

In the US sample, significant correlations were found between MAAS and all humor styles. As predicted, MAAS was positively related to the two healthy styles and negatively related to the two unhealthy styles. However, for the Russian sample, only self-defeating humor was inversely related to mindfulness.

Self-compassion was associated with all but affiliative humor style for US and to all but self-defeating humor for Russia.

All correlations between mindfulness and humor styles and between self-compassion and humor styles went in the predicted direction; that is, positive for healthy humor and negative for unhealthy humor styles.

Additionally, although our primary interest in this article was prediction of humor styles from mindfulness and self-compassion, we also assessed the relationships between mindfulness and self-compassion as well as intercorrelations among the four humor styles. In both samples, there were positive intercorrelations between the two healthy humor styles. In the US sample but not in the Russian sample, the two unhealthy styles were significantly associated. In the Russian sample, affiliative humor was positively associated with aggressive humor and self-enhancing humor was positively related to self-defeating humor.

Hypothesis 3

Hypothesis 3 was overall confirmed as the multiple regression analyses demonstrated that mindfulness, self-compassion, and culture predicted humor styles (Table 3). However, there were differences in their individual contributions depending on the humor style.

Mindfulness significantly contributed only to the prediction of self-defeating humor, country contributed to all but aggressive humor, and self-compassion to all but self-defeating humor. This indicates that individuals scoring higher on self-compassion and belonging to the US culture are more likely to use positive humor styles, that is, affiliative and self-enhancing humor. As for the aggressive humor, only self-compassion negatively predicted its use.

Table 2

Correlations between the Scores on MAAS, SCS, and HSQ Subscales

Measure	1	2	3	4	5	6
1. MAAS	-	.23*	.07	.03	-.02	-.25*
2. SCS	.31**	-	.23*	.27**	-.25*	-.10
3. Affiliative humor	.25*	.18	-	.39**	.23*	.15
4. Self-enhancing humor	.33**	.42*	.60**	-	.03	.25*
5. Aggressive humor	-.23*	-.23*	.02	-.10	-	.11
6. Self-defeating humor	-.36**	-.33**	.08	-.07	.36**	-

Note. Intercorrelations for Russian participants (n = 106) are presented above the diagonal, and intercorrelations for US participants (n = 90) are presented below the diagonal.
*$p < .05$. ** $p < .01$

Self-defeating humor was the only one that was negatively predicted by mindfulness. It was also predicted by the country, that is, Russians in our sample were more likely to use it compared to US participants.

As can be seen in Table 3, in the first steps of hierarchical multiple regression analyses gender and age were entered because these variables were found to be significantly different by culture, that is, the US group was significantly older than the Russian group which consisted of significantly more females than the US group. These models were statistically significant as predictors for the affiliative and self-enhancing humor styles. However, the addition of mindfulness, self-compassion, and country in step 2 covaried age and gender out with R^2 changes being significant for all four analyses ($p<.000$ for affiliative, self-enhancing and self-defeating humor styles and $p<.005$ for aggressive humor). In other words, the three predictor variables of mindfulness, self-compassion, and country made significant contribution to all humor styles.

Table 3

Hierarchical Multiple Regression Model Predicting Humor Styles

Affiliative Humor Style					
Variables	R^2	B (S.E.)	β	*t*	*p*
Step 1	.071*				
Gender		.70 (.20)	.25	3.52	.001
Age		.02 (.02)	.10	1.48	.141
Step 2	.371*				
MAAS		.13 (.10)	.08	1.32	.190
SCS		.29 (.12)	.15	2.46	.015
Country		.67 (.08)	.56	8.21	.000
Self-enhancing Humor Style					
Variables	R^2	B (S.E.)	β	*t*	*p*
Step 1	.052*				
Gender		.41 (.17)	.18	2.49	.014
Age		.03 (.01)	.14	2.03	.043
Step 2	.282*				
MAAS		.10 (.09)	.08	1.14	.254
SCS		.49 (.10)	.31	4.69	.000
Country		.34 (.07)	.35	4.80	.000
Aggressive Humor Style					
Variables	R^2	B (S.E.)	β	*t*	*p*
Step 1	.021				
Gender		.24 (.15)	.12	1.61	.108
Age		-.01 (.01)	-.09	-1.20	.234
Step 2	.085*				
MAAS		-.08 (.09)	-.07	-.96	.340
SCS		-.30 (.10)	-.22	-2.88	.004
Country		.08 (.07)	.10	1.20	.233

Self-defeating Humor Style					
Variables	R^2	B (S.E.)	β	*t*	*p*
Step 1	.031				
Gender		.02 (.16)	.01	.11	.913
Age		-.03 (.01)	-.18	-2.45	.015
Step 2	.150*				
MAAS		-.36 (.09)	-.28	-3.85	.000
SCS		-.19 (.11)	-.12	-1.69	.093
Country		-.20 (.08)	-.20	-2.54	.012

Note. * $p < .01$.

Discussion

The main purpose of cross-cultural research is to determine the universality or uniqueness of phenomena under investigation. As most psychological research continue to be conducted in the Western world and predominantly published in the English language, it is important to establish psychological universals versus cultural specifics of those phenomena.

This exploratory study investigated cross-cultural differences and similarities between Russia and the US regarding mindfulness, self-compassion, and humor uses. According to literature cited earlier, these three constructs relate to psychological well-being yet remain largely unexplored by cross-cultural research. There are no empirical studies comparing mindfulness and self-compassion between Russia and US, as both of these characteristics are relatively new in psychology in general and almost unknown in Russia, even though both are universal characteristics. The sense of humor is not a new research topic in cross-cultural psychology. Yet the contribution of the current study lies in approaching humor as a multidimensional construct that includes maladaptive, or unhealthy types of humor. This conceptualization of humor suggested by Martin et al. [28] allows to differentiate between adaptive styles of humor, which have been traditionally associated with a sense of humor and with its positive outcomes, and maladaptive styles, which do not necessarily provide psychological benefits.

In terms of cross-cultural differences between the variables, the Russian students in our study were found to be significantly higher in mindfulness, whereas the US students were higher in self-compassion. We can only speculate that one of the reasons for the Russians being more mindful lies in a stricter and more traditional educational system [21] that requires Russian students to pay more attention to what is going on in the classroom and to be more focused on the process of studying. As for the difference in self-compassion, based on our informal personal observations of the two cultures, Russians are more critical and judgmental than the Americans. Further research is needed to explain these differences by using more detailed instruments that allow the measurement of each of the components of this construct. For example, the Five Facet Mindfulness Questionnaire (FFMQ) by Baer, Smith, Hopkins, Krietemeyer, and Toney [4] assesses mindfulness as a construct consisting of the following aspects: observing, describing, acting with

awareness, non-judging, and non-reactivity. As for self-compassion, a long version of the self-compassion scale [31] consisting of six subscales can be used to make comparisons between the construct's components of self-kindness, self-judgment, common humanity, isolation, mindfulness, and over-identification. It is possible that more sensitive instruments would reveal the nature of cross-cultural differences regarding mindfulness and self-compassion.

The study revealed certain similar patterns of humor use between the two cultures. The adaptive styles of humor were used the most by both samples compared to the maladaptive humor. However, there were cultural differences in the mean values in all but aggressive humor styles: the US participants were significantly higher in both adaptive styles and lower in self-defeating style even though for self-defeating humor the difference was not very large.

The cross-cultural differences and similarities found for humor styles are overall very similar to the results from previous studies conducted in Canada [28] and in Russia [13]. Even though the comparison of the results obtained from two separate studies cannot show statistical significance, it can be noted that the means for the two adaptive humor styles were higher among Canadians whereas the means for maladaptive humor styles were very close in value in both samples. This is similar to the results of this study where the maladaptive style means were lower than the adaptive humor means in both samples.

In sum, in spite of some statistically significant cross-cultural differences, there were more similarities between the countries in the use of humor. Both groups indicated that they use adaptive humor more often than maladaptive humor with the affiliative style being more commonly used than the self-enhancing style. Additionally, the means for aggressive and self-defeating styles were very close in value between themselves and between cultures. This result is not surprising as in an earlier study Khramtsova [21] using different humor scales also demonstrated certain commonalities in sense of humor and attitudes toward humor between Russian and US students (e.g., there was no statistically significant difference in Multidimensional Sense of Humor Scale scores).

The correlational coefficients for the majority of variables were as anticipated, with some exceptions. As expected, in both samples there was a positive relationship between mindfulness and self-compassion. In the US sample, mindfulness and self-compassion were positively related to both adaptive humor styles and negatively related to maladaptive styles (even though the relationship between self-compassion and affiliative style was not significant). In contrast, in the Russian sample self-compassion was related to both adaptive styles and aggressive humor whereas mindfulness was significantly related only to self-defeating humor.

As for the intercorrelations between humor styles, the two adaptive humor styles were interrelated for both samples. However, the two maladaptive styles were interrelated in the US sample but not in the Russian sample. These relationships correspond to the original conceptualization of humor consisting of "healthy" and "unhealthy" types [28]. Interestingly, in the Russian sample, there were significant positive correlations between the aggressive humor style and affiliative style and also between the self-defeating and self-enhancing styles. In other words, for the Russians there was relationship between the two other-oriented humor styles and the two self-referent styles. These results suggest that cultures may perceive

aggressive and self-defeating humor differently, that is, not all cultures view maladaptive humor styles as negative or politically incorrect. For example, Ivanova et al. [12] questioned the applicability of Martin et al.'s classification of humor for certain cultures such as Russia. Their study demonstrated significant positive relationship between the self-defeating style and the affiliative one. Ivanova et al. explain this difference by the potentially unique attitude towards self-defeating humor in Russian society. One explanation provided was related to the nature of Orthodox Christianity where self-criticism and self-humiliation were viewed as spiritual virtues that bring one closer to God. Even though religion was almost banned and the majority of the Soviet citizens identified as atheists after the revolution of 1917, self-criticism and laughing at oneself were still considered as desirable attributes of an intelligent person. The same trend continues in the post-Soviet era.

The results of our multiple regression analyses suggest that mindfulness and self-compassion, as well as culture can predict humor styles but they do so differently depending on the humor style. The predictive ability of the above variables is the strongest for the two healthy humor types. For the two unhealthy styles it is significant but weak. The most robust predictors of the healthy humor were found to be self-compassion and culture. Mindfulness significantly contributed only to the prediction of the self-defeating humor. Our results differ somewhat from the study conducted in Turkey [35] that found mindfulness to be a significant predictor of all humor styles. The Turkish results are more similar to our findings for the US participants as mindfulness significantly related to all humor styles for them. Because our study is only exploratory, more research is necessary to explain the reasons for these notable differences between the samples.

The premise for the current study was partially based on previous research that demonstrated that both mindfulness and self-compassion serve as predictors of psychological health [3; 6; 45]. Yet, in some studies self-compassion was the more robust predictor of well-being. For example, Van Dam, Sheppard, Forsyth, and Earleywine [51] concluded that self-compassion, as measured by the SCS, may be a better predictor of psychological health and quality of life than mindfulness, as measured by MAAS. However, this study focused on individuals who exhibited high levels of anxiety and therefore their findings cannot be generalized to general population.

As was noted previously, cross-cultural research investigating the constructs used in the current study is scarce and primarily limited to Western countries. The question arises whether the scales developed in English-speaking cultures would apply to cultures in which the predominant language is not English. Some previous studies have demonstrated the validity of translated scales, for example, the validity of MAAS and SCS scales for Greek-speaking populations [24]. In contrast, Christopher, Charoensuk, Gilbert, Neary, and Pearce [8] suggested that mindfulness cannot be properly operationalized in the MAAS at least for Buddhist cultures. As far as the Russian versions of the instruments used in this study are concerned, Ivanova et al. [13] validated the HSQ but we were unable to locate any other empirical studies that used the Russian translation of the HSQ or the Russian MAAS and SCS.

Although the study found some important cross-cultural differences in the predictability of humor styles from mindfulness and self-compassion, the relatively small

sizes of our samples could have influenced the results. Both samples consisted primarily of young people. In addition, there were more women participants. This was particularly the situation in the Russian sample. Future studies could benefit from a larger and more gender- and age-balanced sample.

Another limitation typical in cross-cultural studies based on surveys is the equivalency between the original instruments and their translated versions. Whereas the translation process followed the translation protocol, equivalency of the instruments is always a concern in cross-cultural studies.

The results of our study may raise more questions than give the answers; first, because of limited or non-existent previous research in this area which makes it difficult to interpret our results, and second, because of the limitations of the current study listed above. However, this study enriches the field of positive psychology by adding cross-cultural research on mindfulness, self-compassion, and humor styles. The results suggest that people who are more mindful and self-compassionate tend to choose humor styles that are considered healthier in intra- and interpersonal processes rather than maladaptive humor styles, even though the conceptualization of humor types may be influenced by the culture. As the popularity of mindfulness and compassion training courses grow in the West, it is worth keeping in mind that one of the less studied "side effects" of these programs may relate to changes in one's humor choices with preference given to the healthy styles rather than aggressive or self-defeating humor styles. Additional research is needed to determine whether self-compassion may be a more robust predictor of humor styles than mindfulness.

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Осознанное внимание и сочувствие к себе как предикторы стилей юмора

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Такие конструкты, как осознанное внимание (mindfulness) и сочувствие к себе (self-compassion) все больше привлекают внимание исследователей из западных стран, так как обусловливают различные аспекты душевного здоровья и позитивного настроя человека и коррелируют с данными показателями. В то же время недостаточно исследованными являются связи этих конструктов со стилями юмора, которые также связаны с эмоциональным благополучием. Задачей настоящего исследования являлось изучение того, связаны ли осознанное внимание и сочувствие к себе с использованием адаптивных и дезадаптивных стилей юмора и изменяются ли эти связи под влиянием культурного фактора. В исследовании приняли участие 90 студентов из США и 106 — из России. Им были предложены опросники: шкала осознанного внимания (MAAS; Brown, Ryan, 2003), краткий вариант шкалы на сочувствие к себе (SCS-SF; Raes, Pommier, Neff, Van Gucht, 2011) и опросник стилей юмора (HSQ; Martin, Puhlik-Doris, Larsen, Gray, Weir, 2003). Наши результаты показали, что осознанное внимание и сочувствие к себе коррелируют со стилями юмора: при относительно высокой выраженности этих характеристик респонденты в большей степени склонны использовать адаптивные стили юмора и менее склонны к использованию неадаптивных стилей. В то же время, корреляции этих двух характеристик с выбором стилей юмора в определенной мере обусловлены фактором культуры.

***Ключевые слова**: осознанное внимание, сочувствие к себе, стили юмора, кросс-культурные исследования, российские и американские респонденты, позитивная психология.*

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