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Laughing at others: How does katagelasticism relates to dark tetrad traits, attitudes towards gossip and tendency to gossip?

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The study presented in this paper examined the enjoyment of laughing at others (i.e., katagelasticism) in relation to the dark tetrad traits (DT), attitudes towards gossip and tendency to gossip. Katagelasticism has been described as including the active search for situations in which one can ridicule and make other people laugh, even at the expense of hurting others. In this study, it was expected to be associated with the DT (especially psychopathy and sadism), positive attitudes towards gossip (i.e., a higher perception of its social value and a lower perception of its moral inappropriateness), and the tendency to gossip. Participants ($N = 383$; 70% female) completed measures of katagelasticism (PhoPhi-Kat-45; Ruch & Proyer, 2009), DT (SD4; Paulhus et al., 2020), attitudes towards gossip (ATGS; Litman & Pezzo, 2005), and tendency to gossip (TGQ; Nevo et al., 1993). All four DTs correlated positively with katagelasticism and made a unique contribution to explaining its variance. Positive attitudes and tendency to gossip correlated positively with katagelasticism, with perceptions of the gossip social value and the gossip tendency being its independent predictors. When the four DTs were included in the latter predictor set, only perception of the gossip social value remained a significant predictor, along with psychopathy and sadism. The present results replicated previous findings on the associations of katagelasticism with DT and provided further insight into how it relates to perceptions of and propensity to gossip, which (presumably) facilitates the chance of enjoying laughing at others and making other people laugh.

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