EVALUATING THE CONVERGENT VALIDITY OF THE MEASURE OF EMOTIONAL CONNOTATIONS

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ABSTRACT

The Measure of Emotional Connotations (MEC), Barchard, Kirsch, Anderson, Croeh, & Anderson, (2012) is a new test that has been developed to measure the ability to perceive the emotional connotations of written language. To examine its convergent validity, the MEC will be correlated with the two emotion perception tasks on the Mayer-Salovey-Caruso Emotional Intelligence Test (MSCEIT; Mayer, Salovey, Caruso, & Sitarenious, 2003). These MECST tasks are valid tests of emotion perception; thus, strong correlations would provide support for the MEC as a valid test of emotion perception.

INTRODUCTION

Emotion perception is the ability to identify and interpret emotional stimuli, which alters an individual’s emotional state in response to the stimuli (Phillips, DeVos, Rauch, & Lane, 2003). There are two types of tests that examine emotion perception: non-verbal and verbal. Tests using non-verbal stimuli, such as the Diagnostic Analysis of Nonverbal Accuracy (Nowicki & Duke, 1994), measure the ability to perceive and express happiness, sadness, anger and fear. Diagnostic Analysis of Nonverbal Accuracy contains four tests of how well individuals perceive emotions (facial expressions, postures, gestures, and tones of voice) and three tests of how well individuals express emotions (facial expressions, gestures, and tone of voice).

Non-Verbal Tests of Emotion Perception

Verbal Tests of Emotion Perception

Verbal tests, such as the Metaphors Test and Gregory’s Test (Gregory & Waggoner, 1996), ask respondents to identify the emotions conveyed in written language. The MEC was developed to measure the ability to perceive the emotional connotations of written language. The test contains no metaphors and no explicit emotion words, and thus MEC provides an uncontrasted measure of the ability to perceive the emotional connotations of written language.

LITERATURE REVIEW

There are two types of tests that examine emotion perception: non-verbal and verbal. Non-Verbal Tests of Emotion Perception MSCEIT The MSCEIT (Mayer, et al., 2003) is designed to measure four branches of emotional intelligence. One of those branches is Emotion Perception. This branch is measured with two tasks: Faces and Pictures. The MSCEIT is scored using proportion consensus scoring.

Diagnostic Analysis of Nonverbal Accuracy The Diagnostic Analysis of Nonverbal Accuracy (Nowicki & Duke, 1994) measures the ability to perceive and express happiness, sadness, anger and fear. Diagnostic Analysis of Nonverbal Accuracy contains four tests of how well individuals perceive emotions (facial expressions, postures, gestures, and tones of voice) and three tests of how well individuals express emotions (facial expressions, gestures, and tone of voice).

Rating Scales

Two word phrases

Imagine yourself as

A person feels like

How much is each feeling expressed by

How much do you feel each of the following phrases?

Forced Choice

Two word phrases

Imagine yourself as

A person feels like

Stories

Sentences

Rating Scales

Two word phrases

Imagine yourself as

A person feels like

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Sentences

Evaluating the Convergent Validity of the Measure of Emotional Connotations

METHODOLOGY

Participants

A total of 800 undergraduates from the UNLV subject pool (200 in each group) will participate in this study for one credit towards their psychology course. The study will take approximately 3 hours (45 minutes for MECST and 2 hour and 15 for the MEC). Previous research from this subject pool has shown that most participants are between 18 and 22, with slightly more women than men.

MECSIT

The Mayer-Salovey-Caruso Emotional Intelligence Test (MSCERT; Mayer, et al., 2003) is a test of emotional intelligence. Individuals are given a picture and use a five-point scale to indicate to what extent an emotion is being expressed by the face, landscape, or abstract photo. The MECST is scored using proportion consensus scoring.

MEC

Eight hundred participants will use the forced choice or rating scales format for all MEC items. They will be randomly assigned to one of three groups: “two word phrases”, “imagine yourself as”, or “a person feels like they are”. Within that group, the participants will receive all of the 50 phrases per emotion (anger, fear, sadness, and happiness) for forced choice, or 10 for rating scales; thus the first part will total 120 or 40 items respectively. The next task for these participants is the Sentences task. Each participant will be assigned 10 sentences for each emotion, totaling 40 items. Finally, participants will complete the Stories task. The participants will be randomly assigned one of the four paragraphs (anger, happiness, sadness, or fear) for each of the scenarios (such as “the plane is leaving” and “I am going shopping today”). In total, 40 items. MECST Items will be scored using proportion consensus scoring and then scored using verbal scoring.

Procedures

Participants will be recruited through the UNLV Psychology Subject Pool. The study will be advertised using Sona Systems, which will direct interested students to the online materials for the study. Participants will first complete the demographics questionnaire and MECST. Then they will be directed to the MECST website. The participants will be sent a debriefing email as soon as they begin the study, so that they will receive the debriefing regardless of whether they complete all parts of the study.

DATA ANALYSIS

We will correlate the two MECST scores (Faces and Pictures) with the 20 MEC scores (5 tasks, with 2 response scales, with 2 scoring methods). Tables 2 and 3 show an example of how these correlations might look.

CONCLUSION

Conclusion

The MEC (Barchard, et al., 2012) is designed to measure participants’ ability to perceive the emotional connotations of written language. We can see from the results of this study that MECST correlates significantly with MSCEIT emotion perception tasks, and that MECST is a valid test of emotion perception. This suggests MECST is a valid test of emotion perception. If some of the MECST tasks, scoring methods, or response options have been modified in future research, then this means that the ones with higher correlations are more valid for testing emotion perception. This could be critical for companies who wish to recruit employees who will be dealing with emotionally sensitive topics in an online environment.

Table 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Measure of Emotional Connotations Stimuli</th>
<th>Stimulation Type</th>
<th>Example Forced Choice Item</th>
<th>Two word phrases</th>
<th>Example Rating Scale Item</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Select the feeling that is expressed by each of the following phrases:</td>
<td>Fluttering butterfly</td>
<td>Imagine yourself as a fluttering butterfly. How do you feel? A person feels like</td>
<td>A person feels like a fluttering butterfly. How does that person feel?</td>
<td>How much do you feel each of the following feelings?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sentences</td>
<td>Similar to the preceding emotion</td>
<td>Imagine yourself as a fluttering butterfly. How do you feel? A person feels like</td>
<td>A person feels like a fluttering butterfly. How does that person feel?</td>
<td>How much do you feel each of the following feelings?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 2

| Correlations between the MEC and MSCEIT for Proportion Consensus Scoring |
|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Response Format | MEC Item | MSCEIT Task |
| Faces | Pictures |
| Two word phrases | Imagine yourself as | A person feels like |
| Stories | Sentences |

REFERENCES


