EVALUATING THE CONVERGENT VALIDITY OF THE MEASURE OF EMOTIONAL CONNOTATIONS

Daniel N. Erosa, McNair Scholar, Psychology and Sociology Major
Dr. Kimberly Barchard, Faculty Mentor, Psychology Department

ABSTRACT
The Measure of Emotional Connotations (MEC), Barchard, Kirsch, Anderson, Crook, & 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, & Stanisiewicz, 2003). These MEC 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, Devonset, 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 Mayer-Salovey Caruso Emotional Intelligence Test (MSCEIT) (Mayer, Salovey, Caruso, & Stanisiewicz, 2003) or the Diagnostic Analysis of Nonverbal Accuracy (Nowicki & Duke, 1994) use a variety of stimuli to measure emotion perception. These tests have been proven as valid tests for emotion perception (Mayer, Salovey, Caruso, & Stanisiewicz, 2003; Nowicki & Duke, 1994). 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 provides an uncontaminated 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

MEC
The MEC (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 MEC 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, posture, gestures, and tones of voice) and three tests of how well individuals express emotions (facial expressions, gestures, and tone of voice).

Verbal Tests of Emotion Perception

Emotional Accuracy Research Scale
The Emotional Accuracy Research Scale uses thought samples (descriptions of specific situations) from eight individuals. Test takers read the thought sample, and from each par they choose the response that indicates how the individual felt. The Emotional Accuracy Research Scale allows researchers to calculate both target and consensus scores (Mayer & Gable, 1996).

Multifactor Emotional Intelligence Scale
The Stories Task includes six stories that were created by having fifteen people report on situations or thoughts affecting their mood. Respondents were then asked to record their moods on a 30-item mood-adjective checklist using a five point scale (Mayer & Geher, 1996).

METHODOLOGY
Participants
A total of 800 undergraduates from the UNLV subject pool (200 in each group) will participate in this study for 1 credit towards their psychology course. The study will take approximately 3 hours (45 minutes for MSCEIT and 2 hours 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.

MEASURES

MEC

The Mayer-Salovey Caruso Emotional Intelligence Test (MSCEIT; Mayer et al., 2003) is a test of emotional intelligence. Individuals are given a picture and a five point scale to indicate the extent to which an emotion is being expressed by the face, landscape, or abstract photo. The MEC 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 other 50 phrases per emotion (anger, fear, sadness, and happiness) for forced choice, or 15 or 30 rating scales (thus the first part will total 120 or 40 items respectively). The next task for these participants is the Stories 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 landing” and “I am going shopping today”), totaling 40 items. MEC 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 participants to the online materials for the study. Participants will first complete the demographics questionnaire and MEC. Then they will be directed to the MSCEIT 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 MEC 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 measure participants’ ability to perceive the emotional connotations of written language. IFFMCC scores correlate with MEC emotion perception tasks, this suggests MEC is a valid test of emotion perception. If some of the MEC tests, scoring methods, or response options have lower scores, 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.

REFERENCES