

A Short Form of the Levels of Emotional Awareness Scale

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Abstract

The Levels of Emotional Awareness Scale (LEAS; Lane, Quinlan, Schwartz, Walker, & Zeitlan, 1990) is an open-ended measure of the depth and breadth of knowledge of emotion words. Each of the 20 items presents a scenario that is designed to elicit one of four emotions (anger, sadness, fear, happiness). The respondent is asked to describe how they would feel in that situation. The LEAS takes a long time to complete and to score. The purpose of this research is to create a short form of the LEAS. First, to examine the concurrent validity of the 20 LEAS items, each item was correlated with total scores on the Mayer-Salovey-Caruso Emotional Intelligence Test V2.0 (Mayer, Salovey, Caruso, & Sitarenios, 2001) in a sample of 869 undergraduates. Then, to determine which items to put on the LEAS short form, we considered the concurrent validity of each item (obtained in this study), the inter-rater reliability of each item (from Noland, Nearhood, & Barchard, 2005), and the item-level factor structure (from Noland, Mackey, & Barchard, 2005). An 8-item short form was created, which contains items that cover all four of the emotions from the full-length LEAS. Future research should examine the reliability and validity of the LEAS short form in a new sample.

Introduction

Emotional Awareness is the ability of an individual to recognize and describe emotions in oneself and others (Ciarrochi, Caputi, & Mayer, 2003). The Levels of Emotional Awareness Scale (LEAS; Lane, Quinlan, Schwartz, Walker, & Zeitlan, 1990) is an open-ended test of Emotional Awareness, in which participants describe the emotions of themselves and the emotions of another person in 20 emotionally evocative situations (Lane et al, 1990). Responses are scored based on structural characteristics (Lane & Schwartz, 1987).

Unfortunately, the LEAS is very time consuming for both the participant and the scorer. It takes a lot of time for the participant to respond to the questions. The test is long enough that it is possible that fatigue reduces the length of responses and that this reduces test scores. Scoring the LEAS is also very time-consuming (Barchard & Leaf, 2006). Participant responses must be read in full and then scored according to the *LEAS Scoring Manual and Glossary* (Lane, 1991).

With a short form of the LEAS, more participants could complete the study in less time and less time would be needed to score their responses. Therefore, we sought to create a short form of the LEAS. We used new and existing research to determine which items are necessary to retain the essence of the LEAS. We planned to select ten or fewer items that still retain the validity and reliability of the full-length LEAS.

Method

Participants

The study included 869 (315 male, 554 female) university students. Ages ranged from 18-65 with a mean of 20.63 and a standard deviation of 5.17. The breakdown of ethnicity is as follows: 60.9 % White, 12.2% Asian, 10.7% Hispanic, 7.6% Black, 0.7% Native, and 7.8% other.

Measures

The Levels of Emotional Awareness Scale (LEAS; Lane et al, 1990) is a 20-item open-ended test of the depth and breadth of knowledge of emotion words. The participant is given a different scenario at the top of each of the twenty pages, and asked to describe how they would feel in that situation and how the other person in that situation would feel. . The scenarios are designed to elicit one of four different emotions (fear, anger, sadness, and happiness). The responses are scored based on structural criteria: participants who describe their emotions more fully and in greater detail receive higher scores (Lane & Swartz, 1987).

The Mayer-Salovey-Caruso Emotional Intelligence Test V2.0 (MSCEIT; Mayer et al., 2001) is a 141-item measure of Emotional Intelligence (Mayer et al., 2003). Total scores on the MSCEIT are calculated based upon the scores on four branches: Understanding Emotions, Perceiving Emotions, Facilitating Thought, and Managing Emotions.

Results

We correlated each of the 20 items on the LEAS with total scores on the MSCEIT. Five LEAS items have correlations that are significant at the .01 level, and 11 items have correlations that are significant at the .05 level. See Table 1.

Conclusions

The purpose of this project was to create a short form for the LEAS, using new and existing research. First, we examined the correlations of the 20 items on the LEAS with total scores on the MSCEIT. Eleven items (2, 3, 4, 6, 7, 8, 11, 15, 16, 17, and 19) had significant correlations. We then compared these new findings with the results of two previous studies (see Table 1). Noland, Mackey, and Barchard (2005) conducted a factor analysis of the LEAS items. They found that the LEAS measures three main areas: Conflicting Emotions, Frustration, and Compassion. All 20 items had salient coefficients on at least one of the three factors, and items 6 and 12 were salient on two factors. Noland et al. recommend that a short form include items from each of the three factors. Noland, Nearhood, and Barchard (2005) examined the inter-rater reliability of the LEAS items.

They found five items (2, 3, 5, 7, and 9) had poor inter-rater reliability, and recommended these items be removed. In addition to considering this previous research, we also took into account the structure of the original LEAS. Lane et al. (1990) wrote five items to measure each of four emotions (fear, anger, sadness, and happiness). It would therefore be desirable for the short form to include at least one item for each of these four emotions, to maintain the content breadth of the original LEAS.

To design the short form, we started by eliminating the five items that Noland, Nearhood, and Barchard (2005) found had low inter-rater reliability. Next we eliminated the items that did not have significant correlations with the MSCEIT (1, 10, 12, 13, 14, 18, 20). This left us with eight items (4, 6, 8, 11, 15, 16, 17, 19) which cover all four of the emotions, and all three of the factors found by Noland, Mackey, and Barchard (2005). We should note that only three of these items were associated with the Frustration and Compassion factors; five items were associated with the Conflicting Emotions factor. Future research should collect new data using the 8-item short form, to examine its reliability and validity and to compare its reliability and validity to that of the original LEAS. That research will determine whether or not the short-form can be substituted for the full-length LEAS when assessing Emotional Awareness.

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Table 1
Correlation of LEAS Items with MSCEIT total scores, Item-Level Factor Analysis of the LEAS, and Inter-Rater Reliability of the LEAS items

LEAS Item	Correlation with MSCEIT	Factor ^{a,b}			Inter-rater reliability ^c
		1	2	3	
1	.08	.46	.08	-.14	.99**
2	.13*	-.24	.64	.24	.79**
3	.13*	-.15	.23	.64	.84**
4	.11*	.16	.48	.02	.95**
5	.05	.09	.50	-.12	.86**
6	.12*	-.02	.31	.53	.90**
7	.23**	.27	-.09	.59	.83**
8	.13**	.37	.12	.18	.95**
9	.03	.23	.42	-.11	.83**
10	.03	.15	-.12	.67	.94**
11	.16**	.41	.03	.14	.92**
12	.05	.44	-.29	.49	.95**
13	.03	.05	.53	.02	.94**
14	.01	.26	.42	.13	.91**
15	.13**	.40	.14	.02	.96**
16	.10*	.66	-.07	.07	.97**
17	.11*	.66	.00	.12	.90**
18	.05	.73	.07	-.27	.94**
19	.20**	.59	.06	.17	.97**
20	.10	.33	.28	.15	.95**

* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$.

a. Factor 1, Conflicting Emotions; Factor 2, Frustration; Factor 3, Compassion. Salient rotated factor pattern coefficients are in bold.

b. Reproduced from Noland, Mackey, and Barchard (2005) with their permission.

c. Reproduced from Noland, Nearhood, and Barchard (2005) with their permission.