Knowledge and Perception of the Present Moment and Emotions

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Knowledge and Perception of the Present Moment and Emotions
Camila Polanco & LeeAnn Cardaciotto, Ph.D.
La Salle University

Introduction
- Emotional intelligence (EI):
  - The ability to understand and regulate emotions and to precisely perceive and think about emotions (Mayer et al., 2001)
  - Relates to many characteristics of emotional experience, including higher empathy and identification of emotions (Kang & Shaver, 2005)

Mindfulness:
- Kabat-Zinn (2012) defines mindfulness as “paying attention in a sustained and particular way: on purpose, in the present moment, and non-judgmentally”
- Two main components: present moment awareness and acceptance
- Related to positive effects on psychological health (Keng, Smoski, & Robins, 2011)

Previous research has found a positive relationship between EI and mindfulness:
- Those who scored high on mindfulness have lower levels of emotional reactivity and less emotional lability (Hill & Updegraff, 2012)
- Mindfulness related to better emotional regulation and higher levels of emotion differentiation (Hill & Updegraff, 2012)
- Greater awareness is associated with better ability to describe emotional experiences (Mandal, Arya, & Pandey, 2014)
- To date, all research examining the relationship between mindfulness and EI have only used self-report measures of EI

The current study will build upon existing research by utilizing two behavioral measures of EI measuring emotion differentiation and emotional range

Research Question/Hypothesis
- This study investigated whether students with higher mindfulness will have higher levels of EI
- Higher scores on both behavioral measures of EI will be related to higher mindfulness scores
- Higher scores on the self-report measure of EI will be related to higher mindfulness scores

Measures
- EI Measures: Behavioral
  - Emotional Range Test (Sonnens, 1981)
  - Emotion Differentiation Card-Sorting task (Shaver et al., 1987)
- EI Measures: Self-Report
  - Assessing Emotions Scale (AES; Schutte et al., 1998)
  - Philadelphia Mindfulness Scale (PHLMS; Cardaciotto et al., 2008)
- Mindfulness
  - Philadelphia Mindfulness Scale (PHLMS; Cardaciotto et al., 2008)

Participants & Procedure
- Participants were students recruited from undergraduate psychology courses
- Participants completed the self-report and behavioral measures on Qualtrics
- Received extra credit in one psychology course as compensation
- 128 individuals participated; only 85 completed all four measures and were included in data analyses (Mean Age=21.91 [6.30])

Results
- Means, Standard Deviations (SD), and Published Norms of Measures

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Measures</th>
<th>MEAN</th>
<th>SD</th>
<th>NORMS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>PHLMS Total Score</td>
<td>63.31</td>
<td>16.71</td>
<td>Means not reported for this scale</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PHLMS Awareness</td>
<td>36.77</td>
<td>5.69</td>
<td>Mean = 36.05 (SD = 4.91)***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PHLMS Acceptance</td>
<td>27.72</td>
<td>6.45</td>
<td>Mean = 30.19 (SD = 5.84)*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Emotional Range</td>
<td>4.35</td>
<td>2.39</td>
<td>Mean = 2.19 (SD = 0.85)**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Card Sort Total</td>
<td>9.75</td>
<td>8.54</td>
<td>Mean = 10.93 (SD = 14.61)***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AES Total</td>
<td>128.29</td>
<td>14.62</td>
<td>Mean = 120.46 (SD = 14.21)***</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AES Perception of Emotions</td>
<td>98.13</td>
<td>4.81</td>
<td>Means not reported for this scale</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AES Managing Own Emotions</td>
<td>14.90</td>
<td>6.18</td>
<td>Means not reported for this scale</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AES Managing Others' Emotions</td>
<td>11.60</td>
<td>4.88</td>
<td>Means not reported for this scale</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AES Utilization of Emotions</td>
<td>22.90</td>
<td>3.41</td>
<td>Means not reported for this scale</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Cardaciotto et al., 2008; **Iacono et al., 1999
***Kang & Shaver, 2005; ****Van Rooy et al., 2005

Correlations between PHLMS and AEs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Measures</th>
<th>PHLMS Total</th>
<th>PHLMS Acceptance</th>
<th>PHLMS Awareness</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AES Total</td>
<td>.59**</td>
<td>.31</td>
<td>.41**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AES Perception of Emotions</td>
<td>.65**</td>
<td>.28**</td>
<td>.41**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AES Managing Own Emotions</td>
<td>.51**</td>
<td>.19</td>
<td>.28**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AES Managing Others' Emotions</td>
<td>.27**</td>
<td>.14</td>
<td>.31**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AES Utilization of Emotions</td>
<td>.20</td>
<td>.003</td>
<td>.31**</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*p < .05, **p < .01

Discussion
- Higher mindfulness was related to higher self-reported EI
- Participants who scored higher on the PHLMS Acceptance subscale had a lower emotional range score
- The PHLMS acceptance subscale focuses on the non-judgmental state where one experiences events with openness—there is no attempt to change, avoid, or escape a situation (Cardaciotto et al., 2008)
- Suggests that participants who experience events openly tend to label emotional experiences less
- Higher PHLMS Awareness and PHLMS Acceptance subscale scores were related to higher perception
- This supports previous research that focused on mindfulness and the emotions perception subset of EI
- The significant relationship between the PHLMS Awareness subscale and the AES can be attributed to the idea that these measures are similar in terms of measuring awareness of one’s experiences
- The AES did not correlate with the EI behavioral measures, suggesting a lack of correspondence between EI self-report and behavioral measures

Limitations/Future Directions
- Sampling an undergraduate population from a private, catholic university and from psychology courses limits generalizability of results
- Future research should utilize newer EI behavioral measures with tested psychometric properties to further examine its relationship with mindfulness

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