Are affective factors related to individual differences in facial expression recognition?

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\textbf{BACKGROUND}

Palermo et al. (Palermo et al. 2018 J. Exp. Psychol. Hum. Percept. Perform. 44, 503–517) reported that individuals who scored lower in anxiety performed significantly better on two measures of facial-expression recognition (emotion-matching and emotion-labelling tasks), but not a third measure (the multimodal emotion recognition test). By contrast, facial-expression recognition was not significantly correlated with measures of depression, positive or negative affect, empathy, or autistic-like traits.

\textbf{METHODS}

![Emotion-matching task](image1.png)

![Emotion-labelling task](image2.png)

![Multimodal emotion recognition test](image3.png)

![Affective factors questionnaires](image4.png)

![Social anxiety (BFNE, SIAS, SPS)](image5.png)

\textbf{RESULTS}

- Scores on the \textbf{emotion matching task} and the \textbf{DASS anxiety subscale} were not significantly correlated ($r = -0.117$, 95% CI $[-0.269, 0.041]$, $p = 0.147$).

- Scores on the \textbf{emotion labelling task} and the \textbf{DASS anxiety subscale} were significantly negatively correlated ($r = -0.175$, 95% CI $[-0.323, -0.018]$, $p = 0.029$).

\textbf{CONCLUSIONS}

We found that general emotion recognition was negatively correlated with scores on the DASS anxiety subscale, replicating Palermo et al.’s results. However, by contrast with Palermo et al.’s results, we found that other affective factors, most notably those related to empathy (e.g. the EQ) also appeared to predict general emotion recognition. Collectively, these results support the proposal that affective factors predict individual differences in emotion recognition, but that these correlations are not necessarily specific to measures of general anxiety, such as the DASS anxiety subscale, and may also extend to measures of empathy.

![Table 1](image6.png)

![Table 2](image7.png)