

Chapter 6

Conclusions and Future Directions

ABSTRACT

Chapter 6 contains the lessons learned in the construction, development and evaluation of the visual assessment developed in Chapter 5, which were the application of the concepts presented in Chapters 1-4. Along with the conclusions of that research, ideas for future research to potentially enhance visual assessments are provided. The conclusion of the book details the promise and hope for visual assessments and the need for much more research in this area.

INTRODUCTION

When this project began, it was unknown how well images could generalize across cultures. Hand gestures and facial expressions mean different things in different countries. Colors mean different things in different cultures. Further, research even suggests that we notice different features in different images, and even see colors themselves differently. If this is true, how could it be possible to select images that would elicit the same type of responses across samples of people who live in different cultures? While only one type of personality measure has been examined, a very limited example, the results are promising. In Study 1, of the eight items chosen to represent this construct, five of them generalized across two cultures, and in Study 2, four

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of the seven generalized across the two cultures. This result is promising, especially as the images chosen were chosen with an American audience in mind, and not thinking about how the appearance of the subjects in the pictures would be perceived in another country. The results of this very limited study are promising. Perhaps cultural differences aren't as impenetrable as we sometimes think, and it is possible to find images that people of very different cultures can see in the same way.

While the results of this investigation are quite promising, there is no doubt that it is preliminary. A measure has been constructed that focuses on one aspect of personality: extroversion. It would be foolhardy to generalize these results to any other type of visual assessment. Some constructs will be more difficult to represent pictorially, for example, and some of the images that seem appropriate might be harder to generalize across samples. It is impossible to know without conducting more research to determine how difficult the task will be.

In addition to representing a limited construct, only two cultures were considered in this example. While we did make an effort to choose cultures that might have differences, it is impossible to know if the same images would generalize to other cultures. It may be that the images that generalize across these two cultures are not the same images that would generalize across another two cultures. This is new territory, and more research is required to determine how universal images are across different cultures. There are cultures that are likely more similar than others; many European cultures probably share cultural norms that would make generalizability across those cultures easier, than say generalizing from European to Asian cultures. Determining equivalency across cultures will be an enormous task, however, the task will be relatively straightforward when compared to the task of translating text into multiple languages, still needing to take care of cultural aspects of the text.

This research has definitely just touched the tip of the iceberg in determining how generalizable visual assessments might be. This area of research is still in its infancy. Given the prevalence of these types of "quizzes" on social media, the power of images as compared to words, the ease of producing and administering visual assessments in a way that was just not possible until recently, we believe that these types of assessments will be very valuable and important in the future. As such, research in this area will be quite important as we continue to delve into the world of image-based assessments and their generalizability across cultures.

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