

Facial expressions of emotion of sighted and blind



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Facial expressions of emotion are very common in the humane world. Every individual expresses different kinds of facial emotions for diverse situations. Emotions evolved as a rapid and synchronized response system and facial expressions are part of this response system, which allows humans to quickly and expertly respond to events that affect their welfare. The fabrication of spontaneous facial expressions of emotion is not dependent on observational learning but at once demonstrates a learned component to the social management of expressions, even among blind individuals. David Matsumoto and Bob Willingham (2009) discussed how the facial muscles have over forty independent actions that can occur, which results in numerous expressions. Even with this large range of expressions, strong evidence now exists that a small number of specific facial structures are generally and discretely produced when emotions are drawn. According to this paper, the researcher will analyze how facial expressions of emotion can

be spontaneously similar by both sighted and congenitally and noncongenitally blind individuals.

Supporting Research

To support the researcher's argument, Matsumoto and Willingham (2009) introduced how emotions evolved and how facial expressions occurred from the emotions. They distinguished that emotions allow humans to quickly and efficiently respond to events that affect their wellbeing. In their study, they compared the expressions of congenitally, or relating to a condition present at birth, and noncongenitally, or relating to a condition that became present some time in their life, blind athletes in the 2004 Paralympic Games with each other and with those created by sighted athletes in the 2004 Olympic Games. They also examined how expressions change from one situation to another. After discussing how the emotions and facial expressions came to be, they examined four research questions that have important theoretical suggestions for our understanding of emotion and expression. These four research questions resulted in the conclusion of how: there were no differences across the three groups in the amount of times they produced each individual facial muscle movements at the end of the match; that the facial arrangements associated with emotion signaling did arise with the blind individuals; that the types of expressions produced by the blind athletes separated the winners from the defeated athletes at all three time periods, and these were usually the same expressions that sighted athletes expressed; and lastly, that the blind athletes produced the same types of different smiles as sighted athletes did to decide their place finish.

Dario Galati, Klaus R. Scherer, and Pio E. Ricci-Bitti (1997) researched on how congenitally blind persons produced voluntarily facial expressions for numerous emotions compared with that of normally sighted individuals using both objective facial measurement and observer recognition. Results revealed that there were almost no significant differences between blind and sighted individuals with respect to the numerous types of facial action components produced. The descriptions of the blind individuals were significantly more poorly recognized by observers than were those of the sighted individuals, except for happiness. Correspondence analyses of the data showed differences between sighted and blind individuals in the dimensional structure of the expressions, which was based on the similarity among emotions with respect to both objective measurement and judgments. Overall, the data made relative regards to earlier conclusions on the facial expressions of the blind as compared with sighted individuals.

Dario Galati, Renato Miceli, and Barbara Sini (2001) investigated the facial expressions of emotion in very young congenitally blind children to find out whether these are objectively and subjectively recognizable. They also try to see whether the capability of the facial expression of emotions changes as the children get older. They video recorded the facial expressions of ten congenitally blind children and ten sighted children, who are the control group, in seven everyday situations considered as emotion obtainers. The recorded sequences were analyzed and then judged. The results showed that all the subjects, both the blind and the sighted, were able to express their emotions facially, though not always according to the theoretically expected pattern. Recognition of the various expressions was fairly accurate, but some

emotions were steadily confused with others. Their findings on objective and subjective judgments show that there was no decrease in the facial fluency of the blind children in the period of development considered.

Dario Galati, Barbara Sini, Susanne Schmidt, and Carla Tinti (2003) found that the emotional facial expressions of ten congenitally blind and ten sighted children, aged eight to eleven, were similar. However, the frequency of certain facial movements was higher in the blind children than in the sighted children, and social influences were evident only in the expressions of the sighted children, who often masked their negative emotions.

Finally, Anne-Catherine Roch-Levecq (2006) explored that children with congenital blindness are delayed in understanding other people's minds. Her study examined whether this delay was related to a more primitive form of inter-inherently by which infants draw connections between parental mirroring of the infant's display and nerve sensations. Twenty children with congenital blindness and twenty typically-developed sighted children aged between four to twelve years were directed a series of tasks examining false belief and emotion understanding and construction. The blind children scored lower on the false belief tasks and did not express emotions facially to adult observers as correctly as sighted participants. The adults' ratings of the children's expressions were connected with the children's scores on the false belief tasks. It is suggested that understanding people's minds might be secured in primitive personified forms of relatedness.

Strengths and Weaknesses

Strengths

A strength that supports the researcher's thesis statement is that Matsumoto and Willingham (2009) emphasized that their findings on spontaneously produced facial expressions of emotion of blind individuals are the same as those for sighted individuals in the same emotionally suggestive situations and that they function in the same ways. They strongly suggest that the occurrence in emotional expression observed in numerous studies involving adult humans begins from an advanced, potentially inherited source and that all humans, regardless of gender or culture, are born with this ability. They come to this conclusion because the blind athletes, especially those born blind, could not possibly have learned to produce those exact facial patterns from modeling the expressions of others in socio-cultural learning.

Weaknesses

A couple weaknesses that do not support the researcher's thesis statement are that Galati, Scherer, and Ricci-Bitti (1997) concluded that the results reveal a relatively poor performance of lay persons, whether blind or sighted. The facial actions used by all the individuals were in fact not very numerous, and they did not correspond very closely to those that they expected for each emotion. The connection analysis described did not reveal clearly distinct groups of facial actions for each of the seven facial expressions produced by the encoders. Instead, it showed groups of facial actions organized around several emotions. Blind individuals used a smaller number of facial actions, and there was a greater distance between the expressions expected and those produced. In general, however, they found less striking

differences between blind and sighted participants in the production of facial actions regarding each emotion than one might have expected on basis of the literature reported. Galati, Miceli, and Sini's (2001) results seem to support the hypothesis of independence of visual expressive capability from the visual learning, but this conclusion cannot be definitively generalized because of the small number of the blind subjects analyzed in their study. Galati, Sini, Schmidt, and Tinti's (2003) results confirmed that in the specific stage of development considered, some differences between blind and sighted children are present. The findings seem to indicate that blind children use less control over their facial expressions than do sighted children. Finally, Roch-Levecq's (2006) results on the false belief task showed that the blind children, especially the younger ones, had difficulties understanding another person's mind.

Further Research

Matsumoto and Willingham's (2009) purpose of their study was to examine similarities in expressions between congenitally blind, noncongenitally blind, and sighted individuals to connect the source of the expressions. For further research, they can provide evidence that the source of facial expressions comes from evolution, as suggested by their data. It does not unavoidably argue against the behavioral ecology theory, for example, because that theory could possibly be based on biologically sourced expressions, which are produced in social situations. Galati, Scherer, and Ricci-Bitti (1997) purposed that future work is needed to explore the processes underlying the controlled expression of emotion. Their study has shown the issues that are at the center of present emotion psychology by relative analyses of facial

expression in congenitally blind and sighted individuals. Galati, Miceli, and Sini (2001) concurred that further studies are to be assumed with a similar methodology to guarantee a comparison supporting their results. Galati, Sini, Schmidt, and Tinti (2003) agreed that in future studies, it would be of their interest to observe spontaneous facial emotional expressions of adults who are blind during social interactions. And finally, Roch-Levecq (2006) elaborated that how the lack of experience of seeing and being seen affect the quality of everyday interactions would be the next question to examine in further research.

Summary

To summarize, the researcher's concluded that in their findings, they found convincing evidence that spontaneously produced facial expressions of emotion of blind individuals are the same as those for sighted individuals. But in other cases, researcher's could not find the reason if facial expressions of emotions are socially or biologically constructed. The results above only indicate that both the sighted and blind individuals display similar facial expressions of emotion. Further research is instructed in order to determine if facial expressions of emotion rooted from evolution or individuals adapt it from the socio-cultural perspective. Furthermore, their findings involve new ways of understanding the possible mechanisms by which individuals learn to control their emotional displays, which suggests that visual examination may not be necessary for such learning to occur.

Practical Implications

Some implications of the results of this research could be useful in preparing significant educational programs for people who are blind. The plan of these

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programs would be to individualize educational tools to maintain and adapt voluntary facial expressions of emotions in outgoing social circumstances. To achieve this plan, children who are blind have to become aware about their facial movements, the result of these expressions on other people, and the relation of these expressions to their feelings. The researcher assumed that a learning process in which the goal is to develop the awareness and voluntary use of facial movements could improve children's expressive capability in social circumstances. Finally, to consider the importance of facial emotional expressions in interpersonal communications, the researcher believes in offering people who are visually impaired the possibility of using this primary communication guide, which could help their interpersonal relationships and encourage their social combination.