

INTRODUCTION

- Quality of life (QoL) refers to a subjective evaluation of life in general and is represented through multidimensional measurements associated with overall wellbeing. Notably, QoL is inversely related to psychiatric illness, including feelings of anxiety.¹⁻²
- Emotion processing refers to the ability to detect and respond to emotional triggers, while poor emotion processing is associated with anxiety.

CURRENT STUDY

- The purpose of this study was to test emotion processing as a moderating factor of the relationship between QoL and anxiety.

METHODS

Participants: *N* = 59 participants were recruited

GEFT task:

- Participants completed an emotion identification computer task, the Graded Emotional Face Task (GEFT; **Figure 1**), which consists of emotional stimuli (i.e., fearful and happy faces) that have been morphed with a neutral facial expression to depict varying degrees of emotional intensity (i.e., 20%, 40%, 60%, 80%, and 100%).
- Stimuli were randomly presented, and participants viewed 5 trials of each graded-level and emotion.
- After each face presentation, participants answer a series of questions including asked to indicate which emotion the person is feeling in the picture. Answer options were fixed, displaying one of five basic emotions: fear, sadness, happiness, content, and neutral.
- Accuracy was determined as a binary value of “1” if the correct emotion was selected and “0” if the correct emotion was not selected; scores were averaged within conditions and calculated as a percentage.
- After the task participants completed self-administered questionnaires for the assessment of anxiety and QoL: the General Anxiety Disorder (GAD) questionnaire and The World Health Organization Quality of Life (WHOQOL-Bref); higher scores indicate more anxiety and better QoL

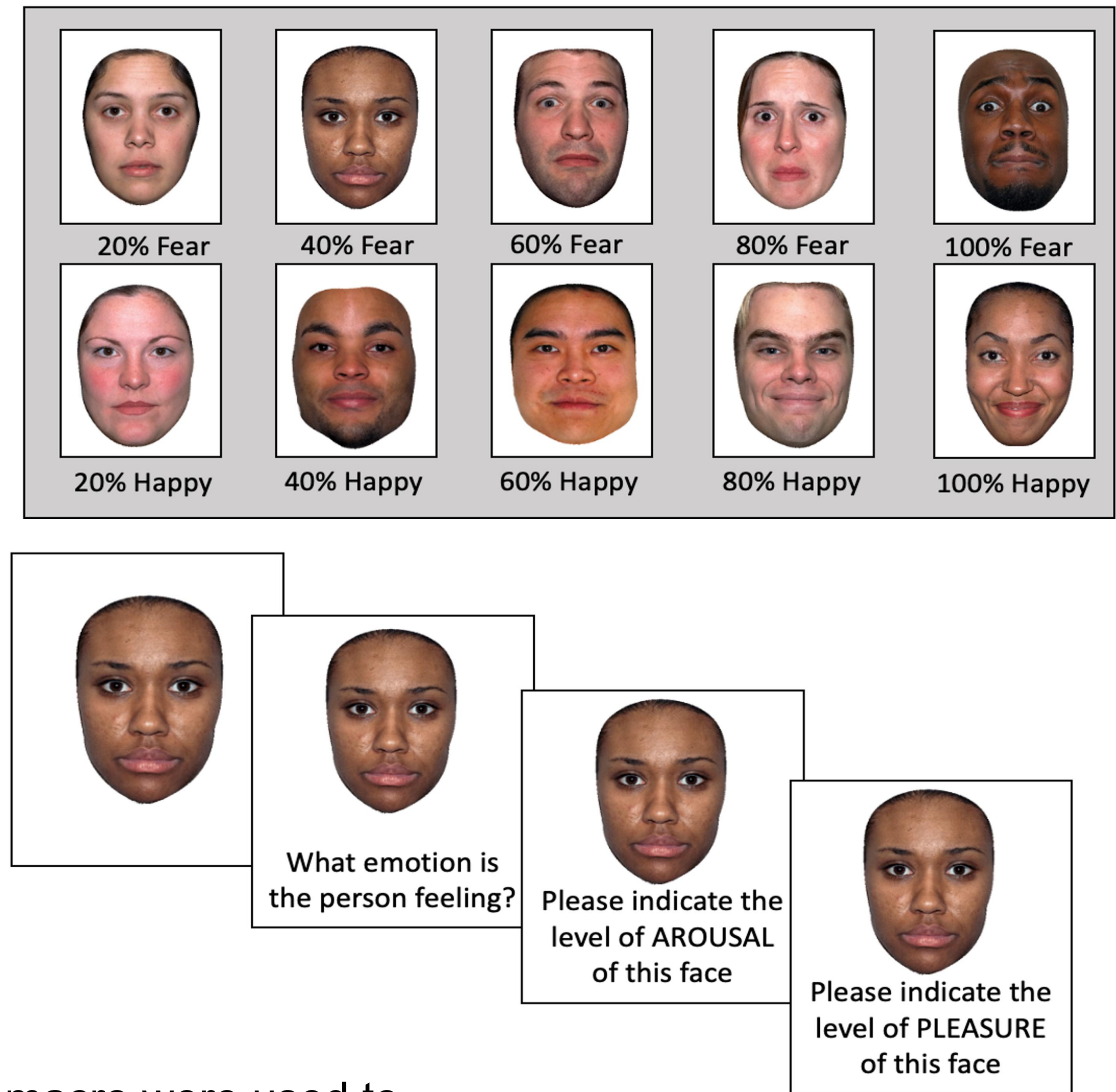
Analyses:

- Moderated linear regressions using the SPSS PROCESS macro were used to test emotion accuracy scores as moderators of the relationship between anxiety symptoms (GAD) and QoL (WHOQOL-Bref).

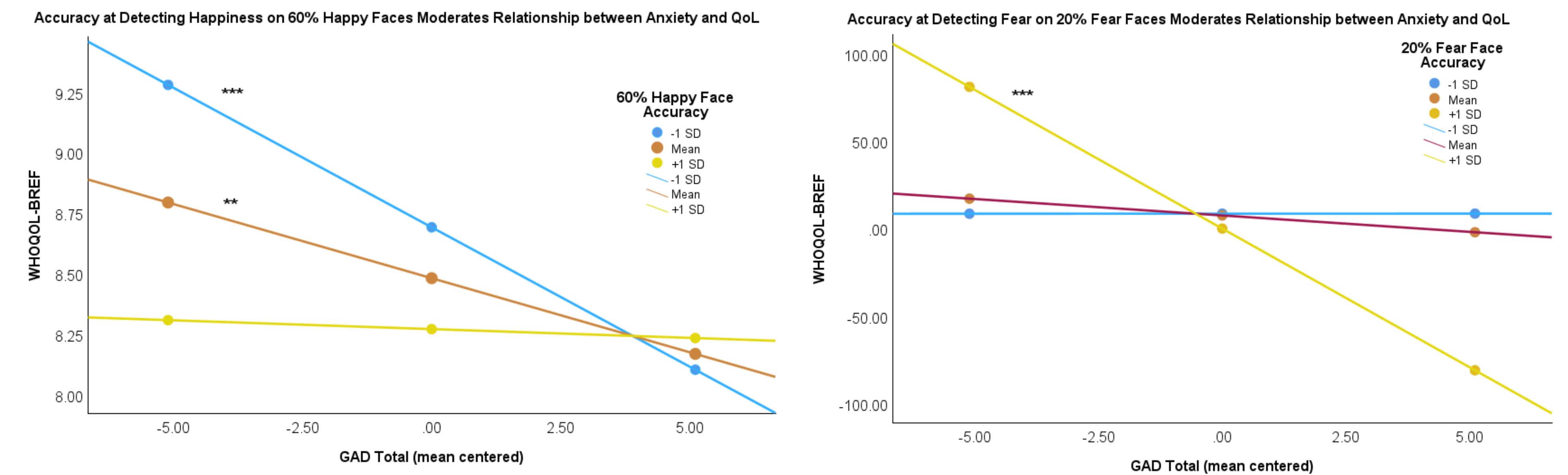
Table 1. Sample Characteristics

Age (M/SD)	19.53 (2.13)
Gender (% Female)	75.0%
Race	
White	57.50%
Black/African-American	10.00%
Asian	27.50%
Unknown	5.00%
Ethnicity (Latino/a)	12.50%

Figure 1. Graded Emotional Face Task



RESULTS



- Accuracy at detecting happy faces at 60% threshold was a significant moderator of the relationship between anxiety and QoL.
- Effects were such that at accuracy scores 1 SD below the mean (20% accuracy; $b = -.52$, $SE = .11$, $p < 0.001$) and at the mean (60% accuracy; $b = -.028$, $SE = .07$, $p = 0.003$), greater anxiety severity was associated with lower quality of life.
- Accuracy at detecting fear faces at 20% threshold was a significant moderator of the relationship between anxiety and QoL, such that at accuracy scores 1 SD above the mean (20% accuracy; $b = -.10$, $SE = .03$, $p = 0.003$), greater anxiety was associated with lower quality of life.

CONCLUSION

- The relationship between anxiety and quality of life may be associated with under-detection of positive emotions and over-detection of negative emotions.
- Data suggest that emotion detection may be an important construct linking mental health with overall quality of life.
- Results underscore that emotional processing may be an important linking variable between anxiety and quality of life.

REFERENCES

- Frajo-Apor, Beatrice, et al. “The Relationship between Emotional Intelligence and Quality of Life in Schizophrenia and Bipolar I Disorder.” *Quality of Life Research : An International Journal of Quality of Life Aspects of Treatment, Care and Rehabilitation*, U.S. National Library of Medicine, Sept. 2021, pmc.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/articles/PMC8405482/.
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