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Enthusiasm and enjoyment as two distinct phenomena

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Theoretical Background

Within research on positive emotions, enthusiasm and enjoyment have been assumed to go hand in hand (Kunter, Frenzel, Nagy, Baumert, & Pekrun, 2011; Kunter et al., 2008). However, we propose that enthusiasm and enjoyment are two distinct phenomena that deserve separate conceptualizations.

- Enjoyment is a positive internal *affective* experience and is one of the most prominent emotions experienced by teachers (Frenzel, 2014).
- Enthusiasm has a more *behavioral* aspect that is demonstrated through gestures, facial expressions, varied intonations, movement, and use of humor (Murray, 1983).

Hence, teachers' enthusiasm can be viewed as a behavioral expression of their enjoyment (Kunter et al., 2011). However, enthusiasm is also considered an essential aspect of teaching effectiveness (Long & Hoy, 2006). Consequently, enthusiasm can be considered as a teaching strategy that teachers use in order to increase their teaching effectiveness. From this perspective enthusiasm is not necessarily accompanied by enjoyment. It is plausible that some teachers behave enthusiastically while not experiencing enjoyment, just because they believe this will help them to be more effective. Accordingly, we aimed to develop self-report scales to measure teachers' enjoyment as an internal, positive affective experience and enthusiasm as a behavioral teaching strategy.



Method

Participants. Two different samples of teachers were included in the study.

Sample 1. 266 American high school teachers (65.9 % female, mean age = 43.43 years, $SD = 11.65$) who taught a range of subjects and had on average 14.86 years of teaching experience ($SD = 10.43$).

Sample 2. 193 American elementary school teachers (92.7 % female, mean age = 40.19 years, $SD = 10.92$) who taught a range of subjects and had on average 12.76 years of teaching experience ($SD = 9.64$).

Measures. Teachers were asked to refer to their current class when answering all items, if they taught more than one class they were instructed to refer to their first class on Tuesday mornings. All items were answered on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 0 (*strongly disagree*) to 4 (*strongly agree*).

Enthusiasm. Four items measured teachers' behavioral enthusiasm.

1. I use humor while teaching these students.
2. I try to get the students excited about what I am teaching.
3. I try to convey to the students how fascinating my subject is.
4. In this class I emphasize what I am teaching with my gestures and facial expressions.

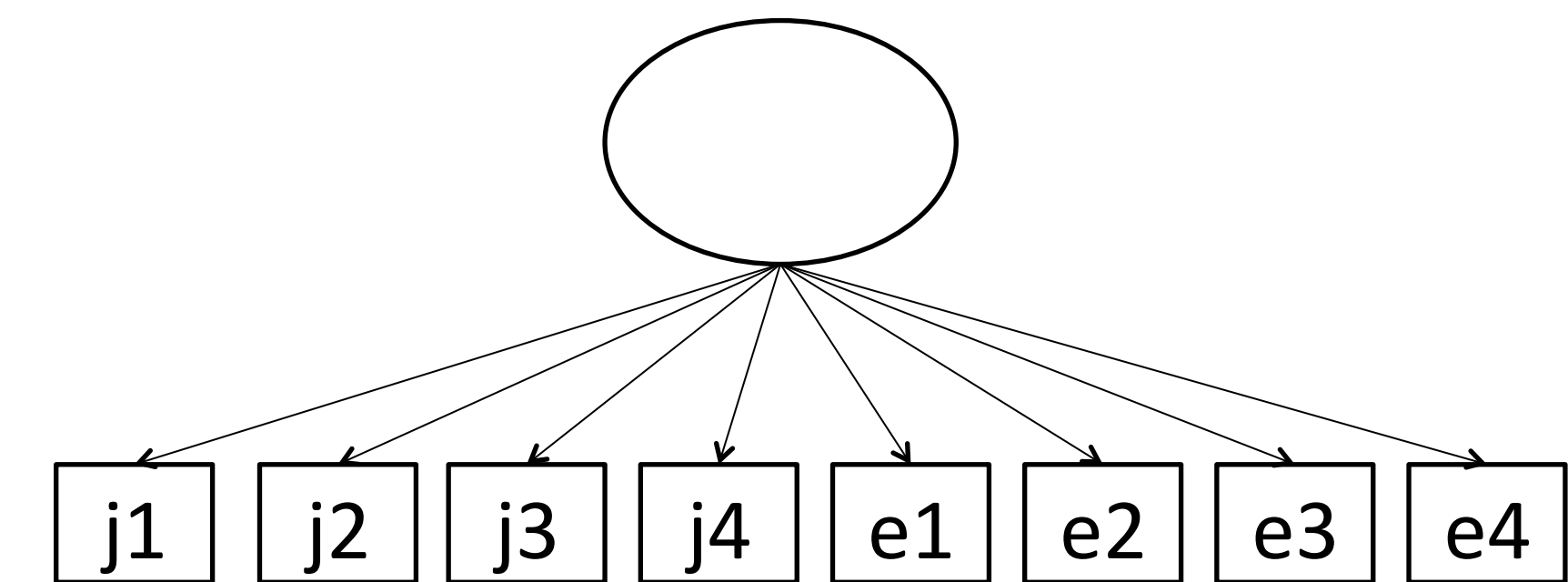
Enjoyment. Four items measured teachers' feelings of joy.

1. I enjoy teaching these students.
2. I often have reasons to be happy while I teach these students.
3. Teaching these students is really fun for me.
4. I typically look forward to teaching these students.

Results

Confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was used to test if enthusiasm and enjoyment are two separate constructs. The fit indices of a two-factor were compared to the fit indices of a one-factor model. Chi-square difference tests revealed that the two-factor model was significantly better than the one factor model for both Sample 1 and 2 ($p < .001$ in both cases). The latent correlations from the two samples also show that enthusiastic behaviors and the subjective experience of enjoyment are two separate, albeit correlated, constructs.

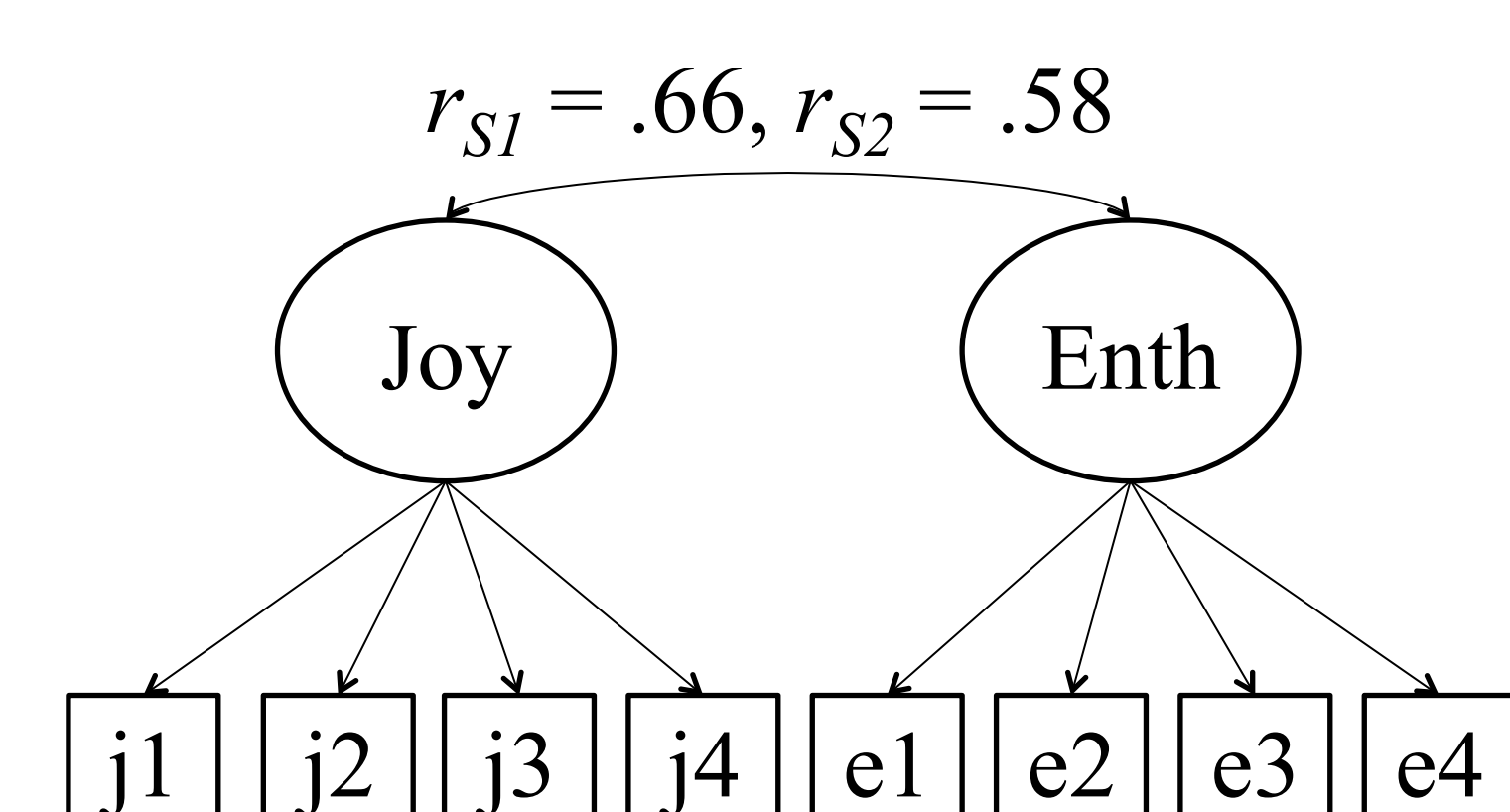
One-factor model



Sample 1: $\chi^2(20) = 105.53, p < .001, CFI = .91, SRMR = .08, RMSEA = .13, AIC = 3921.331, \text{ and } BIC = 4007.334$

Sample 2: $\chi^2(20) = 89.08, p < .001, CFI = .87, SRMR = .08, RMSEA = .14, AIC = 2377.802, \text{ and } BIC = 2455.477$

Two-factor model



Sample 1: $\chi^2(19) = 24.06, p = .19, CFI = .99, SRMR = .03, RMSEA = .03, AIC = 3841.862, \text{ and } BIC = 3931.449$

Sample 2: $\chi^2(19) = 48.07, p < .001, CFI = .95, SRMR = .05, RMSEA = .09, AIC = 2338.795, \text{ and } BIC = 2419.707$

Conclusion

While so far enthusiasm and enjoyment have been assumed to go hand in hand, our results show that enthusiastic behaviors and the experience of enjoyment while teaching are two separate phenomena. This finding highlights the importance of separating these two constructs from one another in future research. While enthusiasm and enjoyment can naturally co-occur, we speculate that due to teachers' beliefs in the effectiveness of behaving enthusiastically that some teachers may display enthusiastic behaviors while not actually experiencing enjoyment. With our scales, which clearly measure enthusiasm and enjoyment as two distinct constructs, future research can explore the implications of displayed enthusiasm in the absence of experienced enjoyment or analyze how effective teachers are who enjoy teaching but do not show enthusiasm.

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