

## Abstract

Individuals often describe objects in their world in terms of perceptual dimensions that span a variety of modalities; the visual (e.g., brightness: dark-bright), the auditory (e.g., loudness: quiet-loud), the gustatory (e.g., taste; sour-sweet), the tactile (e.g., hardness: soft vs. hard) and the kinesthetic (e.g., speed: slow-fast). We ask whether individuals use perceptual dimensions to discriminate emotions from one another. Participants rated the extent to which features anchoring 29 perceptual dimensions (e.g., temperature, pressure, texture, taste) are associated with each of eight emotions (anger, fear, sadness, guilt, contentment, gratitude, pride and excitement). Results revealed that perceptual dimensions *differentiate* positive from negative emotions and high arousal from low arousal emotions. Most critically, they also differentiate *among emotions that are similar in arousal and valence* (e.g., high arousal negative emotions such as anger and fear). Specific features that anchor these dimensions (e.g., hot vs. cold) are also differentially associated with emotions. The implications of the results and novel research questions that stem from them are discussed.

*Keywords:* Emotions, Perceptual Dimensions