



Moral Competence Test (MCT)

Description

Formerly known as the Moral Judgement Test, the Moral Competence Test seeks to measure an individual's moral orientations and competence.

Abstract

Unlike other instruments, it measures the *cognitive* aspects of a person's moral judgment, or their moral orientations and competence as shown in patterns of behavior, rather than the *affective* aspects of a person's behavior, such as their moral attitudes, values, ideals or orientations. It has been used across a wide variety of disciplines and for children as young as eight all the way up to graduate students and post-doctoral trainees. The MCT is available in German, English, Spanish, and many other languages.

Home Page: <https://www.uni-konstanz.de/ag-moral/mut/mjt-engl.htm>

Description: First developed in 1976, this validated measure has been revised for over forty years and is widely used across a variety of disciplines. The MCT does not measure Kohlbergian stages of moral development but rather measures moral orientations and moral competencies through two scores participants' get after taking the test: a C-score for moral competence and a score for six moral orientations modeled after Kohlberg's definition of the moral orientations that identify his six stages.

According to the author:

Moral competence is: "The ability to resolve problems and conflicts on the

basis of one's moral principles through deliberation and discussion, instead of through violence and deceit, or through submitting to others.”

Moral orientations is: “The degree of acceptance or rejection of the six moral orientations which Kohlberg uses to define his Stages of Moral Development. Each of these six moral orientations is represented in the test by four arguments (on two dilemma stories and two sides of the decision).” ([MCT Definitions](#), 2018)

The MCT uses the dual-aspect theory developed by Lind as a theoretical reference for moral development, where moral competence and orientation are aspects of moral judgement and where affects and cognition are two aspects of moral behavior.

In the MCT, participants are asked to read two different dilemmas where the main characters are required to make moral decisions. After reading the dilemmas, participants are asked to rate their level of agreement with the main character’s decision on a seven-point Likert scale, and then rate six arguments in favor of the main character’s decision and six arguments opposing the main character’s decision.

What it Measures: The MCT measures an individual’s moral orientations and competence. The MCT has been used to measure the effectiveness of ethics education interventions, research into social and moral behavior in individuals who have suffered neural impairments, and in the moral development of children.

Format: The MCT consists of two fictional dilemmas, each followed by a question asking of the participant agrees with the moral decision made by the main character in each dilemma, and then to rate a series of twelve pro- and contra statements that represent each of the Six Kohlbergian stages of moral development on a seven-point Likert scale from “strongly disagree” to strongly agree.” It can be delivered in paper or electronic format. The measure takes around 15 minutes to complete.

Disciplines it Assesses

- Business and Accounting
- Engineering
- Life and Environmental Sciences

- Social and Behavioral Sciences

Audience: Children the age of eight and over, high school students, undergraduates, and graduate students, post-graduate trainees and practitioners.

Use Notes: Please see the [MCT Home Page](#) for detailed information on how to administer the test and interpret results.

Access/For More Information: Please visit the [MCT Home Page](#) or email the author, Dr. Georg Lind, for more information. The MCT is free for researchers or instructors at public institutions. For commercial use, written permission from the author is required.

Associated References

(A full list of references including the development and use of the MCT can be found at <http://www.uni-konstanz.de/ag-moral/mut/mjt-references.htm>)

Biggs, Donald A., and Robert J. Colesante. 2015. "The Moral Competence Test: An examination of validity for samples in the United States." *Journal of Moral Education* 44 (4): 497-515. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03057240.2015.1087390>.

The Moral Competence Test (MCT) was designed over 30 years ago to provide a resource for educators interested in conducting cross-cultural studies of moral development and education. Since its origin, it has been translated into at least 30 languages and used in hundreds of studies. However, few studies provide evidence to support the use of the test in the US. The test's designer identified three criteria for evaluating the construct validity of the test and its primary scores: do correlations of stage scores reflect a simplex structure, do ratings follow the theoretical order of stages, does the test differentiate preferences and structures of reasoning. We use these criteria and evidence of criterion and content validity to assess the validity of the MCT. The authors present results from two US samples (n = 772). Results analyzing the test author's criteria support the semantic validity of the test, however, evidence of criterion validity raise questions about the C-score as a measure of moral competence. After controlling for stage preferences, the C-score was negatively related to democratic attitudes and positively related to dogmatism.

Lind, Georg. 2016. *How to Teach Moral Competence*. Berlin: Logos. 2nd ed. *This book gives a detailed introduction to Lind's theory of the Dual Aspect model of moral behavior, describes the development and use of the MCT in chapter 4, and goes on to discuss how to effectively foster moral competence through the Konstanz Method of Dilemma Discussion.*

Lind, G. (2013). "[Thirty years of the moral judgment test—support for the dual-aspect theory of moral development.](#)" In C. S. Hutz & L. K. de Souza (Eds.), *Estudos e pesquisas em The Moral Competence Test 515 psicologia do desenvolvimento e da personalidade: uma homenagem a Angela Biaggio* (pp. 143-170). Sao Paulo: Casa do Psicólogo.

The Moral Judgment Test (MJT), which has been renamed "Moral Competence Test" (MCT), is an objective measure of the two essential aspects of moral behavior: moral orientations and moral competence. It measures moral competence as it is manifested in participants' pattern of behavior instead of their explicit moral judgments. It can measure the competence aspect only because it contains a moral task, namely the task to rate arguments supporting and arguments opposing the participants' opinion on a decision made by a protagonist in a dilemma story. Most people find it very difficult, if not impossible, to rate arguments in a discussion according to the moral quality instead of their opinion agreement. More than 40 years of MCT research has clearly confirmed a number of hypotheses by cognitive-developmental theory, above all the hypothesis that moral competence is a powerful predictor of various social behavior. However, this research also clearly refutes the assumption of invariant sequence: moral competence can regress if the

environment offers no opportunities to use it, like in prison and in medical education. Besides the MCT measures also moral orientations which as they are manifested in the same pattern of behavior.

Lind, Georg. 2008. "The meaning and measurement of moral judgment competence revisited - A dual-aspect model." In: D. Fasko & W. Willis, eds., *Contemporary Philosophical and Psychological Perspectives on Moral Development and Education*, pp. 185 - 220. Cresskill, NJ: Hampton Press

The author describes the Moral Competence Test (MCT), formerly called Moral Judgment Test (MJT), which is based on a new innovative measurement methodology: Experimental Questionnaires (Lind 1978; 1982). This allows us to measure internal, structural dispositions in an objective way. There are many methods of measurement and observation which have one or two of these features but not all three of them. Most, if not all, widely used psychometric tests of attitude and ability measurement are certainly objective; but they do not allow the measurement of internal, structural properties of a person's behavior. In contrast, there are many so-called qualitative methods, like clinical interview methods, which attempt to measure internal, structural dispositions but are not objective and, therefore, are received with skepticism. Their application and their scoring rest too much on the researcher's intuitive judgments. These judgments are easily biased by the theoretical assumptions which they should test. The MCT measures people's internal, structural moral competence in a completely objective way. That is, the MCT makes it possible to study moral competence in a scientific way.

Rights

Use of Materials on the OEC

Resource Type

Assessment Tool

Parent Collection

Evaluation Tools

Discipline(s)

Computer, Math, and Physical Sciences

Engineering

Life and Environmental Sciences

Social and Behavioral Sciences

Teaching Ethics in STEM