Perceived emotional intelligence and life satisfaction among university teachers

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This study examined the relationship between Perceived Emotional Intelligence (PEI) and Life Satisfaction in university teachers. To assess the nature of these relationships and to predict the factors implied on life satisfaction, positive and negative affect, work satisfaction and alexithymia measures were used. 52 university teachers (30 men and 22 women) completed the Spanish version of the Trait Meta-Mood Scale for emotional intelligence (TMMS, Fernández-Berrocal, Extremera & Ramos, 2004). Alexithymia was measured by the spanish version of the TAS-20 (Martínez-Sánchez, 1996), and life satisfaction was measured by SWLS (Díaz Morales, 2001). Also, Work Satisfaction Scale was used (JWS, Grajales & Araya, 2001). Our results yield a strong correlation between life satisfaction and TMMS subscales (emotional Clarity and emotional Repair), TAS-20 subscales (difficulty to describe emotions and external oriented thinking), and Work Satisfaction Scale. Further analyses show that the life satisfaction most significant predictors were positive and negative affect and emotional Clarity. These results support the incremental validity of self-report measures, as the TMMS, and the capacity of constructs related to emotional intelligence to explain the differences on life satisfaction independently from personality traits and mood states constructs.

Inteligencia emocional percibida y satisfacción vital en profesores universitarios. Este estudio examinó la relación entre la Inteligencia Emocional Percibida (IEP) y la Satisfacción Vital en profesores de universidad. Para evaluar la naturaleza de estas relaciones y predecir los factores implicados en la satisfacción vital, se utilizaron medidas para evaluar el estado de ánimo positivo y negativo, la satisfacción con el trabajo y la alexitimia. 52 profesores universitarios (30 hombres y 22 mujeres) completaron la versión española del Trait Meta-Mood Scale para inteligencia emocional (TMMS, Fernández-Berrocal, Extremera y Ramos, 2004). La alexitimia fue evaluada con la versión española del TAS-20 (Martínez-Sánchez, 1996), y la satisfacción vital con el SWSL (Díaz Morales, 2001). Además, se utilizó la Escala de Satisfacción con el trabajo (JWS, Grajales y Araya, 2001). Nuestros resultados indicaron una fuerte correlación entre satisfacción vital y las subscalas del TMMS (claridad emocional y reparación emocional), las subscalas del TAS-20 (dificultad para comunicar sentimientos a otros y pensamiento orientado a lo externo) y la escala de satisfacción con el trabajo. Los análisis posteriores muestran que los predictores más significativos de la satisfacción vital fueron el ánimo positivo y negativo y la claridad emocional. Estos resultados apoyan la validez incremental de las medidas de autoinforme como el TMMS, y la capacidad de los constructos relacionados con la inteligencia emocional para explicar las diferencias en satisfacción vital independientemente de los rasgos de personalidad y del constructo estado de ánimo.

A large number of studies have explored the relationship between emotional intelligence (EI) and life satisfaction by self-report and performance instruments finding significant evidence for EI as an important predictor for real-life outcomes (Charbonneu & Nicol, 2002; Ciarrochi, Deane, & Anderson, 2002).

However, other theories and measures have to be into account when EI is assesed. Specifically, there are two predominant

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models: ability models and mixed models. Ability models (Mayer, Salovey, & Caruso, 2000) are the result of an adaptative interaction between emotions and cognition, they include the ability that people have to perceive, comprehend, manage and express emotions; whereas mixed models have been well known for their inclusion of a high number of traits and dispositional behaviours, that is, they combine mental abilities and personality characteristics as enthusiasm, motivation, optimism (Petrides & Furham, 2000, 2003). These two models use different emotional intelligence instruments, so that the ability model bases on the instruments proposed by Mayer and Salovey's (1997) theory. Specifically, the Trait Meta-Mood Scale (TMMS) is one of the most widely used instrument and was developed by Salovey, Mayer, Goldman, Turvery and Palfai (1995). Among mixed model

measures the Emotional Quotient Inventory (EQ-i) developed by Bar-On (1997) stands out.

In the present study we examine the predictive validity of TMMS, this self-report measure fits into the term Perceived Emotional Intelligence (PEI), and refers to the knowledge individuals have about their own emotional abilities rather than their actual ability (Mayer, Caruso, & Salovey, 2000; Salovey, Woolery, & Mayer, 2001; Salovey, Stroud, Woolery, & Epel, 2002). TMMS provides an estimation for reflexive elements of our emotional experience. It is compound by three key dimensions (subscales) of the intrapersonal emotional intelligence: 1) Emotional Attention («I think about my mood state continuously») 2) Emotional Clarity («I usually fail to understand my feelings») and 3) Emotional Repair («Although sometimes I feel sad, I usually have an optimist vision»).

A wide corpus of research have examined the relationship between TMMS subscales and real-life responses (Durán, Extremera, Rey, Fernández-Berrocal, & Montalbán, 2006; Salovey et al., 1995; Goldman, Kraemer, & Salovey, 1996; Fernández-Berrocal & Extremera, 2005; Fernández-Berrocal & Extremera, 2006).

Emotional intelligence and alexithymia

Alexithymia (ethimologicaly, absence of words to express emotions) is a multidimensional hypotethical construct formulated in the seventies by Nemiah and Sifneos (1970) to describe a complex phenomenon of cognitive- affective manifestations observed in people affected by psychosomatic illness. Alexithymics individuals are not characterized by for their incapacity to feel or experience emotional states and to express them, but for their difficulty to differenciate and verbalize them. One of the most used scales to measure alexithymia has been Twenty-Item Toronto Alexithymia Scale (TAS-20; Bagby, Parker and Taylor, 1994). Researches carried out with this scale have shown a factorial map compound by three factors: 1) the first one refers to difficulties to identify emotions and to differentiate them from corporal or physiological feelings that go with the emotional activation; 2) the second refers to the difficulty to describe others feelings, and finally, 3) the third refers to the external oriented thinking style. So that, we could deduce that emotional intelligence represents the opposite pole of alexithymia. Several studies have examined the relationship between Alexithymia and Emotional Intelligence. The relationship between Emotional Intelligence measured by Bar-On Emotional Quotient Inventory (EQ-i) and Alexithymia measured by TAS-20 have yield empirical evidence of a strong negative correlation between scales (Dawda & Hart, 2000; Parker, Taylor, & Bagby, 2001), so that, as Páez and Velasco (2001) assert, the Emotional Intelligence concept could be considered as the opposite of Alexithymia and we think that the use of the TMMS could allows us to make more precise these results. Aditionally, factorial analyses studies both for the TMMS and the TAS-20 point out that emotional clarity (TMMS subscale) and difficulties to identify feelings and difficulties to describe emotions (TAS-20 scales) cluster together, as well as emotional attention and external oriented thinking (Coffey, Barenbaum, & Kerns, 2003; Velasco, Fernández, Páez, & Campos, 2006). Meanwhile, Gohm and Clorer's (2002) study indicates the absence of relationship between external oriented thinking and emotional Repair.

Emotional intelligence and life satisfaction

Life satisfaction concept has been analysed from different approaches: an affective or emotional approach considers this concept as a balance between positive and negative affect (Bradburn, 1969); the cognitive approach focus on the way an individual makes an appraisal about his general life or about some aspects of his life (for example, family, health, work, free time) (Diener, 1984). During the last quarter of the XXth century substantial developments on the study of subjective well- being have turned up (Diener, Suh, Lucas and Smith, 1999). First works from a sociological approach studied the influence of demographic variables (age, sex and marital status) on the prediction of life satisfaction. Results showed that demographic variables explain a scarce percentage of the well-being variance (Wilson, 1967). Later on, from a psychological approach the relationship between «internal» characteristics of an individual as the main predictors for life satisfaction has been analysed (Costa & McCrae, 1980). Results showed that relationships between personality stable characteristics and life satisfaction are very relevant, moreover extraversion and neuroticism allowed to predict life satisfaction level a person may have after fifteen years (Costa & McCrae, 1984).

To predict to what extent Emotional Intelligence explain an important part of an individual life satisfaction variance, several studies have undertaken this question using self- report measures and have found slight significant correlations. The work carried out by Martínez-Pons (1997) using TMMS found that high scores on this instrument are related to low depression, high life satisfaction and a good task performance.

The work of Palmer, Donaldson and Stough's (2002) examined the predictive validity of components of perceived emotional intelligence to predict life satisfaction over and above both positive and negative affect using TMMS. To determine the nature of these relationships, they also measured well- known personality constructs as positive affect and negative affect. Results found that only the Clarity subscale accounted for further variance in life satisfaction not accounted for neither positive nor negative affect, supporting the hypothesis that emotional intelligence construct components explain part of the life satisfaction variance that could not be attributed to personality traits.

A recent study carried out by Extremera and Fernández-Berrocal (2005) about the relationship between Perceived Emotional Intelligence measured by TMMS and Life Satisfaction found evidence supporting that emotional Clarity adds significant variance to the prediction of life satisfaction beyond transient mood states and personality traits. These results have provided empirical evidence for incremental validity for the TMMS and to the hypothesis of independence of the contribution for emotional Clarity to Life satisfaction.

Differently from previous studies, our research analyse the relationship between TMMS and Life Satisfaction among working people and not students, so that our results' external validity is increased. Specifically, our study tries to clarify the role that life satisfaction has on the variance differently accounted (controlling other constructs, as affection, work satisfaction …) for the abilities measured by TMMS (attention, clarity and repair). In other words, our aim is to analyse whether the measurement of Perceived Emotional Intelligence contributes differently to predict Life Satisfaction.

Method

Participants

52 teachers from a southern University of Spain (30 men and 22 female) participated in this study. Their mean age was 36.04 (age range from 25 to 55). Regarding their marital status 32 participants were married and 20 were single. With regard to their professional life, the range individuals have been on the position was: 15 participants have been teaching since 1-5 years ago; 24 participants about 6-10 years; 10 individuals about 11-15 years; and 3 individuals more than 15 years. Finally, regarding their contractual relationship with the university, 20 teachers were full professors and 32 were assistant professors.

Instruments

Working socio-demographic questionnaire

We sought to examine possible variables related to coping stress. So that, we included the following variables: sex, age and marital status. To measure the working variable we used descriptive aspects of the working position. Specifically, we asked for time people was performing at the university; contractual relationship with the university (full professor, associated, assistant, collaborator) and degree of the teacher (doctor, high degree).

Toronto Alexithymia Scale (TAS-20)

On a 5- point scale (from totally agree to totally disagree) participants completed this 20-Item scale. The range of scores that an individual may obtain is from 20 to 100 points, an individual whose score is 61 or higher is considered as «alexithymic».

This scale is compound by three factors: 1) Difficulty to identify feelings and to differentiate them from corporal or physiological feelings that go with emotional activation (DIF); 2) Difficulties to describe others feelings (DDF); and 3) External oriented thinking style (EOT). Several studies have shown proper psychometric characteristics of this instrument (Bagby, Parker, & Taylor, 1994; Loas, Freamux, & Marchand, 1995; Martínez-Sanchez, 1996; Páez & Casulo, 2001). The alfa of Cronbach for the Spanish version is 0.81.

Trait Meta-Mood Scale (Salovey, Mayer, Goldman, Turvey, & Palfai, 1995) (TMMS)

On a 5- point scale participants completed 24 items that assess Perceived Emotional Intelligence, that is, the meta- knowledge that people have about their own emotional abilities. This scale is compound by three interpersonal factors with 8 items each: Emotional attention, emotional clarity and emotional repair. The Spanish version was carried out by Fernández-Berrocal, Extremera and Ramos (2004). Alfa of Cronbach for each component is 0.86 for Attention, 0.90 for Clarity and 0.86 for Emotional repair.

Positive and negative-affect scale (PNA) (Warr, Barter, & Brownbrigde, 1983)

Bradburn's positive and negative affect scale (PNA) measures, on a 4- point scale (from never to all the time), the subjective well-being level. Participants fill up 18 items about last month events. Half of the items refer to positive affect shown by the individual and the other half to negative affect. Positive affect is strongly related to no anxiety and no depression. On the other hand, negative affect is strongly related to anxiety and depression. The Spanish validation for the scale was carried out by Vergara, Yárnoz, Carbonero, Romor and Martínez (1989), with an Alfa of Cronbach= 0.74.

Life Satifaction Scale (SWLS) (Diener, Emmons, Larsen and Griffin, 1985)

On a 7- point scale (from totally desagree to totally agree), participants completed 5 items to assess life satisfaction considered as an affective component of subjective well being. The Spanish version was adapted by Díaz Morales (2001) and has an alfa of Cronbach= 0.87.

Work Satisfaction Scale (JWS) (Grajales & Araya, 2001)

This scale assesses the satisfaction degree that a person feels about his/her job, both at a global level and at a multifaceted level. On a 5-point scale, participants rated 22 items related to their satisfaction about their job. This instrument is compound by six factors: professional development, relationship with the manager, relationship with colleagues, performance, staying at the position and physical conditions. Values range from 22 to 110, the higher the score the higher the work satisfaction. The global Cronbach alpha coefficient is 0.86.

Procedure

Firstly, each participant filled out the whole SWLS to avoid the influence of their responses to this scale on their responses on the other scales. Afterwards, they filled the JWS, PNA, TAS-20 instruments, and finally the TMMS.

Results

Table 1 shows means, standard deviations and internal consistency index (alpha coeficient) for all the instruments.

Means Pearson correlations are shown on table 2. Our results yield a positive correlation between SWLS and PNA- positive and a negative correlation with the negative form of PNA-neg. Similarly, the correlation between SWLS and TAS-20 is negative. Looking through the TMMS and SWLS subscales the correlations are only found about two out of the three subscales: Emotional Clarity and Emotional Repair. Regarding TAS-20 subscales we find negative correlations between DDF and EOT with SWLS. Emotional Clarity and Emotional repair (TMMS subscales) correlate significantly with positive affect and Attention and Emotional repair with negative affect. The difficulty to identify, difficulty to describe emotions and external oriented thinking (TAS-20 subscales) yield significant correlations with negative affect but only the difficulty to describe feelings subscale correlates with positive affect.

To examine whether these variables explained independently the variance in «Life Satisfaction» we carried out a multiple steps regression analyses with this variable as dependent. These analyses show that: the first step introduces sex and age as

Table 1
Means, standard deviations and alpha of Cronbach for the instruments

Measures	Men (n= 30)		Women (n= 22)		TOTAL (n= 52)		
	M	S.D.	M	S.D.	M	S.D.	Alpha
SWLS	5.38	1.22	5.41	0.95	5.40	1.10	0.87
PNApost	2.70	0.43	2.78	0.54	2.74	0.48	0.88
PNAneg	2.03	0.49	2.07	0.60	2.04	0.53	0.86
Attention	3.38	0.49	3.30	0.43	3.35	0.46	0.69
Clarity	3.42	0.51	3.32	0.47	3.38	0.49	0.76
Repair	3.24	0.44	3.21	0.42	3.23	0.43	0.80
TAS-20	41.06	9.11	41.33	10.06	41.18	9.42	0.82
DIF	12.83	5.08	12.45	4.67	12.67	4.86	0.84
DDF	10.70	2.84	11.19	3.40	10.90	3.06	0.78
EOT	17.90	3.73	17.36	4.12	17.67	3.87	0.50
JWS	86.21	8.23	85.55	8.85	85.92	8.42	0.86

Note: SWLS, Life Satisfaction Scale; PNA-: Negative affect scale; PNA+: Positive affect scale; TMMS: Trait meta-mood scale for emotional intelligence; Att: Attention subscale; Clar, emotional Clarity subscale; Rep: Repair subscale; TAS-20: Alexythimia Scale; DIF, Difficulty to identify emotions; DDE: Difficulty to describe emotions; EOT: External oriented thinking; SWS: Scale of Job satisfaction

Table 3
Hierarchical multiple regression predicting life satisfaction

	R^2	F	ß	P	R^2
Step 1: Covariante	0.33	0.77			0.33
1. Sex			0.10	0.52	
2. Age			0.19	0.22	
Step 2: Bradburn Affect	0.46	9.23			0.13**
PNA-post			0.45	0.00**	
PNA-Neg			-0.22	0.00**	
Step 3: TAS-20 Subscales	0.54	6.79			0.08**
DIF			0.06	0.05*	
DDF			0.00	0.00**	
EOT			-0.30	0.00**	
Step 4: TMMS Subscales	0.55	4.62			0.01**
Attention			0.04	0.61	
Clarity			0.13	0.01**	
Repair			0.03	0.04*	
Step 5: Job satisfaction	0.68	7.04			0.13**
JWS			0.41	0.01**	

Note: ** $p < 0.01$, * $p\ 0.05$

Table 2
Correlations between measures

	SWLS	PNA+	PNA-	Att	Clar	Rep	TAS-20	DIF	DDF	EOT	JWS
SWL	1.00										
PNA+	0.56**	1.00									
PNA-	-0.43**	-0.24	1.00								
Att	0.08	0.12	0.28*	1.00							
Clar	0.49**	0.47**	-0.26	0.42	1.00						
Rep	0.32*	0.36**	-0.33*	-0.12	0.46**	1.00					
TAS-20	-0.46**	-0.29*	0.59**	0.00	-0.41**	-0.35*					
DIF	-0.24	-0.20	0.54**	0.27	-0.28	-0.34*	0.87**	1.00			
DDF	-0.35*	-0.37**	0.47**	-0.15	-0.41**	-0.19	0.79**	0.59**	1.00		
EOT	-0.43**	-0.20	0.41**	-0.21	-0.34*	-0.27	0.74**	0.40**	0.42**	1.00	
JWS	0.52**	0.11	-0.31*	0.08	0.15	0.11	-0.38**	-0.36*	-0.24	-0.20	1.00

Note: SWLS, Life Satisfaction Scale; PNA-: Negative affect scale; PNA+: Positive affect scale; TMMS: Trait meta-mood scale for emotional intelligence; Att: Attention subscale; Clar, emotional Clarity subscale; Rep: Repair subscale; TAS-20: Alexythimia Scale; DIF, Difficulty to identify emotions; DDE: Difficulty to describe emotions; EOT: External oriented thinking; SWS: Scale of Job satisfaction

covariants. The second step introduces PNA- pos and PNA- neg as possible predictors, yielding that both PNA- post (ß= 0.45 p≤0.000) and PNA- neg (ß= -0.22 p≤0.000) were predictors for the life quality, 13% of the variance was explained by these two variables. The third step introduces the three TAS- 20 subscales as predictors: DIF, DDF, EOT. In this case, the DIF (ß= 0.06 p≤0.050) and DDF (ß= 0.00 p≤0.000) appear as predictors, also the EOT (ß= -0.30 p≤0.000) is shown as a negative predictor for the life satisfaction, explaining the 8% of the variance. On the fourth step the three TMMS subscales are introduced as predictors. Emotional clarity (ß= 0.13 p≤0.01) and Emotional repair show to be predictors for life satisfaction, 1% of the variance is explained by this variable. Finally, in the fifth step job satisfaction is introduced as a predictor and the result yields that it

is a predictor for life satisfaction (ß= 0.41 p≤0.01), explaining 13% of the variance.

Discussion

Our results are consistent with those obtained by previous researchers (Palmer, Donaldson, & Stough, 2002) showing that positive and negative affect are strong predictors for individuals life satisfaction. We have to take into account that positive affect is shown by positive feelings toward oneself and the world around.

Work Satisfaction appears as a second predictor for Life Satisfaction. Emotional Intelligence components «Emotions clarity» and «Emotional Repair» explain a little percentage of the variance (1%) not accounted by other constructs. This fact points

out that Emotional Intelligence makes a little contribution to life satisfaction further than mood states contribution.

These results allow us to make two important assertions. Firstly, if we take into account that positive affect is strongly related both to absence of anxiety and absence of depression whereas negative affect is strongly related to anxiety and depression, people with high scores on positive affect would have high scores on life satisfaction whereas people with high scores on negative affect would inform about a lower life satisfaction. Secondly, our results confirm the validity of our hypothesis: Emotional Intelligence measured by TMMS makes a little contribution to life satisfaction, further than mood states. Of

special significance is the variance explained by «work satisfaction» variable. The relationship between work satisfaction and life satisfaction has actually received several empirical support (Heller, Judge, & Watson, 2002; Pavot and Diener, 1993), but relationship between personality traits, Emotional Intelligence and work satisfaction (Gannon & Ranzijn, 2004) are a field to be explored on future research.

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