

Proceeding Paper

Emotional Intelligence and Life Satisfaction in a Sample of Adult Victims and Non-Victims of Violence [†]

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Abstract: Individuals who have higher emotional intelligence show higher levels of life satisfaction. This study analyzed the impact of emotional intelligence on life satisfaction in a sample of 144 individuals aged between 18 and 77 years ($M = 36.97$, $SD = 15.87$), comparing victims and non-victims of violence. Participants answered an online protocol comprising a sociodemographic questionnaire, the Wong and Law Emotional Intelligence Scale (WLEIS), and the Satisfaction with Life Scale (SLWS). Age and emotional intelligence impact life satisfaction, and victims showed low emotional intelligence and satisfaction scores. As emotional intelligence is an essential skill in emotional evaluation and regulation, its relationship with life satisfaction should also affect quality of life.

Keywords: emotional intelligence; life satisfaction; victims; non-victims



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1. Introduction

Emotional intelligence is the ability to understand, control, and regulate emotions in oneself and others [1]. It can be explained by the influence of subjective well-being on the subject's life [2]. On the other hand, life satisfaction is a person's assessment of their overall quality of life [3]. Positive mental health outcomes and longevity are essential for good life satisfaction [4]. Emotional intelligence focuses on emotional problem-solving, is related to life satisfaction, and can be a protective factor for mental health [5]. Therefore, emotional intelligence is responsible for individual differences in life satisfaction [6], and emotions are the source of emotional intelligence [7].

Individuals who suffered victimization experiences show more vulnerability and have lower emotional intelligence. They present difficulties in evaluating, regulating, and using emotions (they experience more negative emotions than positive ones), increasing stress and dissatisfaction with life [4]. Therefore, the main objective of this study is as follows: to identify the relationship between emotional intelligence and life satisfaction; to compare a sample of victims and non-victims of violence in adulthood and a sample of men and women regarding emotional intelligence and life satisfaction; to analyze the variables that explain the variance of satisfaction with life in a sample of the Portuguese population.

2. Materials and Methods

This study comprised a sample of 144 individuals aged between 18 and 77 years ($M = 36.97$, $SD = 15.87$). Of the participants, 41 were men (28.47%), and 103 (71.53%) were

women. Nearly half of the sample ($n = 66$, 45.8%) reported being victims of violence in adulthood. The study design is cross-sectional with a non-probabilistic sample. Participant recruitment was conducted by disseminating the study through personal and social contact networks. Participants answered online the sociodemographic questionnaire, the Wong and Law Emotional Intelligence Scale (WLEIS) [8], and the Satisfaction with Life Scale (SLWS) [9]. The WLEIS [8] measures emotional intelligence in four areas: self-emotion appraisal, others' emotion appraisal, use of emotion, regulation of emotion. The SLWS [9] evaluates several components of subjective well-being, assessing overall satisfaction with life. All participants granted their consent to participate in this study. The study followed the ethical principles outlined in the Declaration of Helsinki [10] and was approved by the Egas Moniz Ethics Committee.

3. Results

3.1. Correlation Analyses

The results show statistically significant positive correlations between satisfaction with life and emotional intelligence ($r = 0.541$, $p < 0.001$), self-emotion appraisal ($r = 0.428$, $p < 0.001$), others' emotion appraisal ($r = 0.363$, $p < 0.001$), regulation of emotion ($r = 0.364$, $p < 0.001$) and use of emotion ($r = 0.511$, $p < 0.001$).

3.2. Comparison Analyses

Victims of violence in adulthood show lower scores than non-victims on self-emotion appraisal ($M = 14.167$, $SD = 3.317$) [$F(1,142) = 4.668$, $p = 0.032$], use of emotion ($M = 13.803$, $SD = 3.892$) [$F(1,142) = 5.837$, $p = 0.017$], regulation of emotion ($M = 13.542$, $SD = 3.633$) [$F(1,142) = 6.855$, $p = 0.010$], emotional intelligence ($M = 56.727$, $SD = 10.051$) [$F(1,142) = 5.204$, $p = 0.024$], and satisfaction with life ($M = 17.182$, $SD = 4.543$) [$F(1,142) = 5.046$, $p = 0.026$]. Women show higher scores on the emotional intelligence assessment of others' emotions compared to men ($M = 16.204$, $SD = 2.374$) [$F(1,142) = 4.152$, $p = 0.043$].

3.3. Regression Analyses

The explanatory model of satisfaction with life, created using a Multiple Linear Regression, showed that the model is significant. Durbin–Watson was 2.17, and VIF was < 3 . Sex, regulation of emotion, and others' emotion appraisal are not significant. We performed a new model only with significant paths. The model is significant ($F(3,140) = 22.89$, $p < 0.001$) and explains 33% of the variance in satisfaction with life. Age ($\beta = -0.19$, $p = 0.01$), self-emotion appraisal ($\beta = 0.28$, $p = 0.001$), and use of emotion ($\beta = 0.39$, $p < 0.001$) are significant predictors of satisfaction with life.

4. Discussion

The results show that emotional intelligence is related to life satisfaction. When emotional intelligence increases, life satisfaction also increases. Those outcomes align with other studies [6,11], which showed that individuals with higher emotional intelligence are more satisfied with their lives and are more able to understand and pay attention to their emotions, leading to greater personal fulfillment and achievement. Thus, emotional intelligence is necessary to control emotions and determine life satisfaction [12].

The regression analysis verified that age, self-emotion appraisal, and use of emotion are predictors of satisfaction with life. Increasing age predicts a decreased perception of satisfaction with life. The results corroborate Garcia et al.'s [13] study, which found a negative association between life satisfaction and age. On the other hand, an increase in self-emotion appraisal and use of emotion explains the higher scores for satisfaction with life. That is, individuals with high levels of self-emotion appraisal can understand and express their emotions, and individuals with higher levels of use of emotion can use their emotions in productive activities and personal performance, leading to higher levels of satisfaction with life. Our results align with other studies indicating that emotional intelligence skills impact satisfaction with life [14]. The literature reports that subjects with high emotional

intelligence competencies demonstrate a good adaptive capacity, as they understand and regulate their emotions and those of others, which allows them to solve social problems beneficially [15]. Previous studies showed that emotional intelligence influences social skills and relationships, e.g., [16]. Therefore, subjects with high emotional intelligence, who can associate others' emotions along with their own, have good satisfaction with life, a consequence of each individual's assessment of their life according to their past and present [17]. Other variables not studied in this research, such as job satisfaction, financial situation, compassion fatigue, and education, should also explain life satisfaction [18].

The results heightened the significant differences between victims and non-victims of violence in adulthood regarding satisfaction with life and emotional intelligence. In the study of Mannarini et al. [19], victims also reported lower life satisfaction. High emotional intelligence makes individuals more motivated, allowing them to solve problems and achieve goals using their emotions. Thus, victims with higher emotional intelligence may be able to get through abusive situations and feel less anxiety and fear. Victims with higher emotional intelligence exhibit less negative humor when coping with traumatic experiences [20].

Furthermore, differences were found between men and women when evaluating other people's emotions, with women showing higher scores. This is corroborated by studies that reported that women show better emotional intelligence skills [18], can better recognize their own and others' emotions, and show greater levels of perception and empathy than men [21].

In short, the results reinforce previous studies in which emotional intelligence is directly related to life satisfaction; this is associated with individuals' ability to understand, access, and regulate their emotions, allowing them to adapt to different contexts.

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Data Availability Statement: The data presented in this study are available on request from the corresponding author. The data are not publicly available due to ethical, local reasons.

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