



Contents lists available at ScienceDirect

Personality and Individual Differences

journal homepage: www.elsevier.com/locate/paid

The moderating effect of trait meta-mood and perceived stress on life satisfaction

Natalio Extremera*, Auxiliadora Durán, Lourdes Rey

University of Málaga, Faculty of Psychology, Campus de Teatinos s/n. 29071, Málaga, Spain

ARTICLE INFO

Article history:

Received 26 August 2008

Received in revised form 10 February 2009

Accepted 14 February 2009

Available online 24 March 2009

Keywords:

Trait meta-mood

Perceived stress

Life satisfaction

Optimism

Perceived emotional intelligence

ABSTRACT

The current study examined the moderating effect of meta-mood skills, and perceived stress on life satisfaction after controlling for dispositional optimism. Three-hundred and nine undergraduate students were asked to complete the trait meta-mood scale (TMMS), the perceived stress scale (PSS), the revised life orientation test (LOT-R), and the satisfaction with life scale (SWLS). Results revealed a positive correlation between dispositional optimism and life satisfaction. Also scores on the meta-mood skills were significantly related in the expected direction to scores on perceived stress and life satisfaction and showed additive value in predicting these constructs even after controlling for optimism and stress. Moreover, findings from hierarchical regression analyses indicated an interactive effect of mood clarity and stress in predicting life satisfaction after controlling for confounding effects. When students reported a high level of perceived stress, those with high mood clarity reported higher scores in life satisfaction than those with low mood clarity. However, there were no differences in life satisfaction between high and low clarity groups when perceived stress was low. Implications of these findings for future research on perceived emotional intelligence construct and for working with distressed people are discussed.

© 2009 Elsevier Ltd. All rights reserved.

1. Introduction

Over the last decades a substantial body of research has demonstrated a positive relationship between stress and a wide range of maladaptive outcomes (Cooper & Payne, 1991; Lazarus, 1999). Different acute or chronic stressful situations such as illness, life events, impose demands that people are unable to cope. Such experiences are considered to put individuals at risk for psychological and physical problems (Dohrenwend, 1998). Nevertheless, various studies indicate that the magnitude of this correlation is low to moderate, suggesting the possibility that different personal resources play a role in moderating the effects of stress on psychological adjustment (Alloy & Riskind, 2005). Some researchers have begun to consider the role of cognitive–affective variables which would facilitate coping with these demands and consequently be protective (Skodol, 1998). These personal resources will ameliorate the potentially negative influences of stress events. Dispositional optimism and trait meta-mood might be considered two of these personal resources.

According to Scheier, Carver, and Bridges (2001), optimism is a dispositional tendency of an individual to hold generalized positive expectancies even when people confront adversity or difficulty in their lives. These generalized expectancies apply to the individual's entire life domain. Consistent with this vision, optimism has been

found to be positively associated with greater life satisfaction (Chang, 1998, 2002) and less symptoms of depression (Chang & Sanna, 2003). Research has also shown optimism to have a moderating effect on how people handle new or difficult situations. When faced with difficult situations, optimists are also more likely to have positive emotional reactions and expectations. In this line, previous studies have reported significant direct and moderating effects between dispositional optimism and stress in predicting life satisfaction and depressive symptoms (Chang, 1998, 2002; Chang & Sanna, 2003). However, as Chang (1998) stated, it is necessary to investigate a number of other potential personal predictors which might be significant in understanding the relationship between life stress and adjustment.

Another important individual difference variable that might moderate the effect of stress on psychological adjustment is trait meta-mood. Mayer and Gaschke (1988) suggested that the experience of mood has at least two components: the direct experience of one's moods and the meta-experience of these moods. They are called meta-mood experiences because they pertain not to the immediate experience of feeling states but to their aloof and reflective experience instead involving thoughts and feelings about one's moods (Mayer & Stevens, 1994). This reflective process is particularly relevant to understanding individual differences in how people experience their feelings, and how they feel and regulate their emotions (Mayer & Gaschke, 1988; Mayer & Stevens, 1994). From this perspective, the way people attend to moods, discriminate between feelings and regulate emotions helps to determine coping behaviors and are essential for adaptive coping with stress over

* Corresponding author. Tel.: +34 952 137063.

E-mail address: nextremera@uma.es (N. Extremera).

their life span (Mayer & Stevens, 1994; Salovey, Bedell, Detweiler, & Mayer, 1999). Although Mayer et al., were earlier concerned with transient meta-mood experiences (Mayer & Stevens, 1994), more recently their research group have been interested in the awareness of experience of mood as relatively stable by means of the trait meta-mood scale (TMMS, Salovey, Mayer, Goldman, Turvey, & Palfai, 1995). Since its introduction in 1995, the TMMS has been heavily used as a measure to assess stable individual differences in people's abilities to attend, discriminate, and regulate their moods and emotions. Thus, this self-report measure is considered to provide a proxy for perceived emotional intelligence given that it evaluates people's attitudes toward emotional experiences and their perceptions of their own emotional intelligence (Extremera & Fernández-Berrocal, 2005; Salovey, Stroud, Woolery, & Epel, 2002; Thompson, Waltz, Croyle, & Pepper, 2007).

Scores on the TMMS have been shown to correlate with a huge range of measures of psychological adjustment and to be predictive of coping behaviors (Gohm & Clore, 2002). In short, individuals with higher scores in meta-mood skills reported greater decline in ruminative thoughts (Salovey et al., 1995), less negative emotional responses and intrusive thoughts after an acute stressor (Ramos-Díaz, Fernández-Berrocal, & Extremera, 2007), fewer visits to a health center in a stressful period (Goldman, Kraemer, & Salovey, 1996), and lower symptoms reporting, anxiety and depression (Extremera & Fernández-Berrocal, 2006; Thompson et al., 2007). Thus, meta-mood experiences have also been involved in the appearance and/or maintenance of several emotional disorders such as schizotypy (Kerns, 2005), eating disorders (Gilboa-Schechtman, Avnon, Zubery, & Jeczmiem, 2006) and psychopathy (Malterer, Glass, & Newman, 2008). Finally, in terms of the specific relation of TMMS dimensions on life satisfaction, while some studies have found that emotional repair is uniquely related to well-being (Thompson et al., 2007), others have found that mood clarity is the most significant predictor of life satisfaction when positive and negative affect are controlled for statistically (Palmer, Donaldson, & Stough, 2002). Similarly, mood clarity was also found to be the best predictor of life satisfaction independently from well-known mood state constructs and personality traits in adults (Extremera & Fernández-Berrocal, 2005). These findings are in line with previous work on the TMMS in mood induction experimental studies which underline the importance of mood clarity in recovering from a negative laboratory stressor in a healthy population (Salovey et al., 1995) and less diminution in positive affect following a distressing stimulus in an Osteoarthritis sample (DeVellis, Carl, DeVellis, Blalock, & Patterson, 1998). According to the literature review, these findings suggest that there are subtle individual differences in meta-mood experiences, specifically in the ability to clearly discriminate one's emotions, that could have important implications for psychological adjustment under conditions of coping.

However, beyond direct influences of meta-mood dimensions on psychological adjustment, some authors have pointed out that these emotional skills dimensions might interact significantly with stress in the prediction of adjustment (Gohm, Corser, & Dalsky, 2005). Very few researches have actually examined the association between the TMMS dimensions and life satisfaction considering stress as an interacting variable. It might be hypothesized that individuals with higher scores on trait meta-mood and experiencing a high level of stress, will be better adjusted than their unemotionally intelligent counterparts. Theoretically, individuals with high relative to low meta-mood skills might tend to exacerbate or worsen the influence of stress on psychological adjustment, and hence, lack of emotional abilities might operate as a vulnerability factor in the link between stress and adjustment (Goldman et al., 1996; Salovey et al., 1999). Accordingly, one might expect that, given that mood clarity is the most significant predictor in

explaining life satisfaction (Extremera & Fernández-Berrocal, 2005; Palmer et al., 2002), people who are generally inclined to openly acknowledge their positive and negative emotions under conditions of stress will be more likely to engage in better life satisfaction than people who deny these emotions.

Moreover, this study also seeks to address the issue related to construct validity of TMMS dimensions. Some authors have raised concerns about the dimension of TMMS since they might overlap with other classic constructs (Extremera & Fernández-Berrocal, 2005; Palmer et al., 2002; Shulman & Hemenover, 2006). In this respect, Mayer and Salovey (1995) stated that the self-report of a clear mood may be a function of factors other than a clear differentiation of feelings. For example, mood clarity might reflect an optimistic willingness to overlook nuances of one's feelings rather than a real expertise at deciphering them (Mayer & Salovey, 1995). Similarly, Extremera, Durán, and Rey (2007) found that some TMMS dimensions (clarity and repair) and optimism were significantly related to each other, obtaining correlation indexes with life satisfaction and perceived stress very similar in direction and magnitude. Correlations between TMMS dimensions and optimism were at least moderate, suggesting that the two constructs overlap but are not identical (Extremera et al., 2007). However, since optimism is a well-documented predictor of psychological adjustment (Chang, Chang, Sanna, & Hatcher, 2008), it is conceivable that any relationship between trait meta-mood and life satisfaction may reflect joint association with optimism. To address this concern, we also sought to examine the individual and moderating effects of the TMMS dimensions and stress on life satisfaction controlling for both direct and moderating effects of optimism and stress.

Given the above concerns, the purpose of the present study was threefold. The first purpose was to examine the relations between dispositional optimism, meta-mood dimensions, perceived stress and life satisfaction. Second, to determine the extent to which meta-mood dimensions account for life satisfaction beyond what is accounted for by the influence of dispositional optimism and stress. Third, we sought to determine whether there is a significant interactive model involving meta-mood dimensions and stress for predicting life satisfaction beyond what is accounted for by direct and interactive effects of dispositional optimism and stress. Given previous research on the TMMS, high levels of clarity and repair were expected to be significantly associated with less perceived stress and more life satisfaction. On the other hand, attention to moods was expected to be associated with more appraised stress and less life satisfaction. In addition, greater optimism should be significantly related to less appraised stress and more life satisfaction. Besides, consistent with our expectation for additive effects, we predicted that meta-mood dimensions would add significant incremental validity beyond what is accounted for by dispositional optimism and stress. Finally, consistent with the formulated interactive model, we hypothesized a significant meta-mood skills–perceived stress interaction in predicting levels of life satisfaction.

2. Method

2.1. Participants and procedure

Participants in the present study were drawn from two southern universities of Spain who participated voluntarily and anonymously in the study. The sample consisted of 349 undergraduate students (females = 284; males = 64; gender unidentified = 1). The participants come from a variety of disciplines, including psychology, nursing, social work, social education and primary education. Ages ranged from 18 to 56 years ($M = 21.85$, $SD = 5.72$).

متن کامل مقاله

دریافت فوری ←

ISIArticles

مرجع مقالات تخصصی ایران

- ✓ امکان دانلود نسخه تمام متن مقالات انگلیسی
- ✓ امکان دانلود نسخه ترجمه شده مقالات
- ✓ پذیرش سفارش ترجمه تخصصی
- ✓ امکان جستجو در آرشیو جامعی از صدها موضوع و هزاران مقاله
- ✓ امکان دانلود رایگان ۲ صفحه اول هر مقاله
- ✓ امکان پرداخت اینترنتی با کلیه کارت های عضو شتاب
- ✓ دانلود فوری مقاله پس از پرداخت آنلاین
- ✓ پشتیبانی کامل خرید با بهره مندی از سیستم هوشمند رهگیری سفارشات