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Investigation the Relationship of Emotional Intelligence and Life Satisfaction between Physically Active and Non Active Adults

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Abstract: The concept of EI is becoming increasingly important in the field of physical activity, since it is connected to better spiritual, psychological and physical health. The purpose of this study was to investigate the relationship between emotional intelligence and life satisfaction regarding people who participated in recreational activities and people who were physically inactive and to explore any differences in relation to the above parameters. The sample of the research consisted of 318 healthy adults aged from 30 to 50 (M= 42.3; SD = ± 6.84). In order to conduct the study the following instruments were used: the Greek Scale of Emotional Intelligence (GEIS; Tsaousis, 2008) which consisted of 52 items grouped into four factors: use of emotion, caring and empathy, control of emotion and expression and recognition; and the Satisfaction with Life Scale (Grob et al., 1996). The reliability analysis showed that indicators of internal cohesion of subscales in both instruments were at satisfactory levels. The correlation analysis revealed that there is a statistically significant positive relation between life satisfaction and the factors of EI. The Multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) showed that the participants in traditional dance activities presented higher values in life satisfaction and scored significantly higher in the four factors of EI. Consequently, this study confirms that participating in recreational activities enhances spiritual health and contributes to the management of E.I.
Keywords: use of emotion, life satisfaction, traditional dance activities, sedentary life.

1. Introduction

Nowadays, it is widely accepted that adopting an active way of life is an important element for spiritual, physical and psychological health (Hogan, Mata, & Carstensen, 2013). Scientific studies have supported that systematic participation in organized programs of exercise, health and recreation are connected to the prevention of many chronic diseases (Lee, Shiroma, Lobelo, Puska, Blair, Katzmarzyk, 2012) and the lower incidence of clinical depression (Cooney, Dwan, Mead, 2014). In addition, participating in physical activity (PA) programs has a positive influence on both the cognitive functions and the fortification of psychological health (Sin & Lyubomirsky, 2009). Nevertheless, despite the recorded benefits deriving from participating in physical activity programs, a great number of people keep exercising sporadically, preferring a sedentary way of life (WHO, 2004). Less than 60% of people worldwide achieve the minimal suggestion of exercising 30 minutes daily with a moderate intensity.

PA is also important for the enhancement of emotional health. Emotions are an indispensible aspect of human nature, as they influence the way of thinking and they are a motivating force often dominating human behavior (Mayer, Salovey, Caruso, & Cherkasskiy, 2011). The concept of Emotional Intelligence (EI) has instigated the interest of the scientific community in the last decades. Its popularity reached its pick in the mid nineties, when the expressions EI and EQ were voted as the most popular by the American Dialect Society (Mayer, Salovey, & Carouso, 2000). In 1990, Salovey and Mayer (1990) described EI as "the ability to engage in sophisticated information processing about one's own and others' emotions and the ability to use this

information as a guide to thinking and behavior" (Mayer & Salovey, 1993). According to this model, managing one's emotions and the emotions of others can contribute to the improvement of spiritual, physical and psychological health (Mayer et al., 2000). On the other hand, there are models defining EI as "a constellation of emotion-related self-perceptions and dispositions located at the lower levels of personality" (Petrides et al., 2007; Bar-On, 1997). Still, the various EI models are not competitive but rather complementary and useful to the definition of this complex conceptual construction (Warwick & Nettelbeck, 2004).

The concept of EI has developed in many research fields, mainly because of its ability to influence human achievements and relations in every ambient (Stough, Saklofske, & Parker, 2009). Scientific studies have recorded that EI can induce social and academic performances (MacCann, Fogarty, Zeidner, & Roberts, 2011; Mestre, Guil, Lopes, Salovey, Gil-Olarte, 2006) and perceived parental warmth (Ciarrochi, Chan, & Caputi, 2000) in children and adolescents. As concerns work environment, EI induces a greater effectiveness, especially when this environment is characterized by high management standards (Farh, Seo & Tesluk, 2012), and facilitates success in jobs requiring creativeness, leadership, sales and psycho-therapy (Salminen & Ravaja, 2017; Palmer, Walls, Burgess, & Stough, 2001).

Theoretically, EI is related to many significant human values such as quality of inter-personal relationships, higher satisfaction from life, better life quality and psychological health (Delhom, Gutierrez, Lucas-Molina & Meléndez, 2017; Extremera & Rey, 2016; Zeidner et al., 2012).

Recent scientific studies have focused on the connection between EI and the psychological well being which brings satisfaction out of life, as concerns various groups of people (Carmeli, Yitzhak-Halevy, Weisberg, 2009). Psychological well being is a multi-dimensional structure, related to subjective happiness, positive thinking, optimistic mood, satisfaction out of life (Diener, Suh, Lucas, & Smith,1999), autonomy, positive and creative relationships with others, achievement of goals (Ryan & Deci, 2001) as well as other factors such as self-acceptance, self-esteem and a meaningful life (Sin et al., 2009; Seligman, 2008). Satisfaction out of life is defined as the cognitive part of the subjective welfare, referring to cognitive and emotional judgments in relation to factors closer to one's personal intentions (Peterson, Park, & Seligman, 2005a). Various studies have shown that high levels of EI can become a significant factor in enhancing satisfaction out of life (Delhom et al., 2017) and have recorded that emotionally intelligent people experience a higher level of psychological health and welfare, since they are able to maintain positive spiritual situations due to managing emotions and regulating actions (Carmeli et al., 2009; Mayer et al., 1997).

In a research carried out by Extremera and Rey (2016) on the relation between EI and satisfaction out of life, the researchers used a sample of 721 people (206 men & 512 women) who were Spanish students with a mean age 21.81 years. The data were collected using the Mayer-Salovey-Caruso (MSCEIT) EI scale and the Life Satisfaction Scale. The results showed that EI has a significant connection to life satisfaction, in a positive way. The researchers recorded that people with high EI can be satisfied with their lives, since the often experience pleasant or positive emotions or because they rarely face unpleasant or negative emotions, concluding thus that high EI can lead to an increased satisfaction out of life. Sánchez-Álvarez end co-authors (2015), using a sample of 269 High School students (145 girls and 124 boys) who filled in the Perceived Emotional Intelligence scale (PEI) concerning life satisfaction, noted that students with high PEI tended to have more positive than negative experiences, which contributes to more life satisfaction. There were no differences between boys and girls, which signifies that the provoking relations are similar for both genders. Palomera and Brackett (2006), also confirmed that life satisfaction is positively connected to emotional clarity ($r = 0.29$) and emotion repair ($r = 0.25$). EI can be a necessary condition for the adaptive control of emotions and mood and thus a defining factor for life satisfaction Salovey, Mayer, Goldman, Turvey and Palfai (1995).

The concept of EI is becoming increasingly important in the field of exercise and sports, since it is connected to better spiritual, psychological and physical health (Martins, Ramalho & Morin, 2010). EI has been found to correlate with measures of mental, psychosomatic and physical health (Zeidner, Matthews, & Roberts, 2009; Schutte et al., 2007) and based on these health outcomes, we can predict that EI will have a positive association with physical activity.

As concerns competitive sports, the presence of high levels of EI in athletes has been associated with the successful use of psychological skills, better athletic performances and low levels of anxiety (Arribas-Galarragas et al., 2017; Laborde, Dosseville, & Allen, 2015; Crombie, Lombard, & Noakes, 2009). In other words, the presence of high levels of EI has been connected to pleasant emotional situations, before the achievement of a successful performance by an athlete (Lane et al., 2010). Also, Costarelli and Stamou (2009), after studying international Tae-kwondo and Judo athletes, confirmed that they had higher levels of emotional intelligence and a healthier body image, compared to non athletes. Likewise, Szabo and Urbán (2014) – observing Judo and Box athletes– showed that athletes have higher EI scores than non athletes, probably due to constant training during which athletes have to recognize and control their emotions, read and correspond to the emotions of their co-athletes and react to their coaches' instructions (Zizzi et al., 2003). Laborde et al. (2015), in

a review of relative publications, traced few studies which evaluated EI as a skill in the context of physical activity and supported that EI, as a skill or characteristic of personality, is connected to regular participation in physical activity and a generally positive attitude towards exercise.

Participating in physical activities on a regular basis for either health or recreational reasons requires high motivation levels (Kodama et al., 2013), and presupposes a certain degree of personal interaction e.g. towards other trainees, dancers, coaches or trainers. In any case, behavior is –at least partly– guided by emotional intelligence (Petrides & Furnham, 2003). Nevertheless, there are no significant studies concerning the relation between PA and EI. Taymoori and Lubans (2008) suggested that the lack of knowledge regarding the mechanisms responsible for the change of behavior could explain the low levels of effectiveness in PA interventional programs among various population groups.

Bhochhibhoya, Branscum, Taylor and Hofford (2014) investigated the relation between physical activity and spiritual health, with a sample of 438 university students. The results showed that those who had higher levels of PA presented significantly higher levels of global EI and spiritual health, compared to those with lower levels of PA. The findings of a Li, Lu and Wang (2009) study showed that the most active students whose time of participation reached the suggested levels had higher scores of EI, compared to students with low participation in PE and those with no participation at all. The research of Solanki and Lane (2010), with a sample of 315 people of mean age 26.77 years, coming from health and fitness clubs in the Birmingham area of the UK, showed that the use of physical activities for the regulation of mood is positively connected to emotional intelligence. Such physical activities should not be competitive or predictable, they should have duration of about 20-30 minutes and they should be of moderate intensity (Lane et al., 2005).

Nowadays, traditional dance is one of the most popular activities in Greece as concerns exercise, health and recreation, since in addition to preserving tradition for the next generations it improves the life quality of the participants (Zisi, Gianni, Bougiesi, Pollatou, & Michalopoulou, 2014) and their physical, spiritual and psychological health (Goulimaris, Mavridis, Genti, & Rokka, 2014; Olvera, 2008). It is a pleasant kind of group physical activity, since the accompanying music creates positive emotions and promotes relaxation, recreation and escape from daily routine (Andrijasevic, 2010). Dancing creates a way to express feelings, high levels of creativity and sociability and lowers the levels of stress and depression (Alpert, 2011). According to Cesarz (2007), dance becomes a therapeutic exercise. It is an occupation which contributes to the relief of psychological tension and enriches one's internal life, promoting health and life quality (Kriska, Hanley, Harris, & Zinman, 2001).

Still, scientific research concerning the investigation about emotional intelligence and life satisfaction is a scarce in Greece, especially in connection to Greek traditional dance programs, in order to attract people who lead a sedentary life.

The purpose of this study was to investigate the relationship between emotional intelligence and life satisfaction between people who participated in traditional dance activities and people who were physically inactive and to explore any differences in relation to the above parameters.

2. Materials and Methods

2.1. Participants

The sample of the research consisted of 318 healthy adults (114 men & 204 women), aged from 30 to 50 (M= 42.3; SD = ± 6.84). Of these, 246 (84 men and 162 women) participated in organized programs with an average participation in organized Greek dance programs 3.5 years (SD = ± 1.2), carried out by cultural societies of non profitable nature. The participants attended one hour dance learning classes, three times a week, under the guidance of either experienced dance teachers or physical education teachers. The rest 72 (30 men and 42 women) did not participate in any physical activity, leading a sedentary way of life.

2.2. Procedure

The data collection was carried out with the method of answering anonymous questionnaires, which were filled in by the participants in place, after the end of the class, having been given explanations such as: a. the participation in the research was optional, b. they had to give truthful answers, c. there were no right or wrong answers and d. the research data would be exclusively used for the needs of the research. At the same time, anonymous questionnaires were filled in by the physically inactive adults.

This study was approved and carried out in accordance with the Ethical Rules of Ethics of the Department of Physical Education and Sport Sciences at Democritus University of Thrace.

2.3. Measurement instruments

In order to conduct the study the following instruments were used:

Emotional intelligence was measured using the Greek Scale of Emotional Intelligence (GEIS; Tsaousis, 2008). The GEIS is a self-report measure and is based on the theoretical framework proposed by Mayer and Salovey (1997) designed exclusively for the measurement of Emotional Intelligence, as a skill of the Greek population. The GEIS contains 52 items, equally divided into four factors: a) Use of Emotion for Facilitating Thinking (UF); the fifteen items that compose this factor are related to the ability of the individual to control their emotions in order to solve problems via optimism and self-assurance, two emotional states that facilitate inductive reasoning and creativity, e.g., «*I easily adapt myself by reacting creatively to any inconveniences*», b) Caring and Empathy (CE); this factor consists of fifteen items that are related to the willingness of the individual to help other people and his/her ability to comprehend another's feelings and to re-experience them, e.g., «*I can easily understand what the other person feels in his position*», c) Control of Emotion (CE); it consists of twelve items that are related to the ability of the individual to control and regulate emotions in themselves and others, e.g., «*I usually check my anger*» and d) Expression and Recognition (ER); the ten items that compose this factor are related to the ability of the individual to express and recognize accurately their own emotional reactions, e.g., «*I easily reveal my feelings to others*». The issues were answered on a five-point Likert-type scale from 1= *not representative* το 5= *very representative*. Extensive research evidence regarding the psychometric properties of the GEIS supports its feasibility to measure trait emotional intelligence in the Greek population (Tsaousis, 2013; Tsaousis, 2008). In the present study, reliability analysis showed that indicators of internal cohesion of the four factors were at satisfactory levels (Cronbach's a from .79 to .91).

To measure life satisfaction, the Satisfaction with Life Scale developed by Grob, Wearing, Little and Wanner (1996) was used, to assess participants' life satisfaction according to his or her self-chosen criteria. This questionnaire was translated and normed for the Greek population (Kouli, 2000). It is composed of eight items (e.g., "I enjoy my life" or "I am happy to live") that measure one factor. Responses were provided on a five-point Likert scale, from 1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree).

Statistical analysis

For the statistical analysis of the data, the method used was the descriptive analysis, reliability analysis and the Pearson correlations analysis. The multidimensional analysis of variance (MANOVA) was also used in order to determine whether any of the factors were related to gender (male-female) and the two groups (traditional dancers - physically inactive). The level of statistical significance was set at $p< .05$.

3. Results

The internal consistency of the two scales measured with Cronbach's alpha. The results showed that in the present study reliability analyses supported the psychometric properties of these instruments and results indicated that all factors showed acceptable internal consistency since Cronbach's a was higher than .70 (Table 1).

To examine the relation between the life satisfaction and the four factors of EI, Pearson correlation analysis was conducted (Table 1). The correlations analysis among all the factors of the two questionnaires confirmed that life satisfaction has a statistically significant relation with the "use of emotions" ($r= .410$; $p<.01$), "caring and empathy" ($r= .338$; $p<.01$), "control of emotions" ($r= .344$; $p<.01$), and "expression and recognition" ($r= .296$; $p<.01$) as hypothesized.

Table 1
About here

The Multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) was used, to testify if there were statistically important differences between the independent variables 'gender' (men-women) and 'group' (traditional dancers - physically inactive) and the dependent variables which were the factors of the two measurement instruments. The statistical treatment of the results showed that there was no statistically important interaction between the variables 'gender' and 'group' [Wilks' Lambda =.979, $F_{(5,310)}=1.32$; Sig=253], though there was a main influence of the variable 'group' [Wilks' Lambda =.845, $F_{(5, 310)}=11.34$; $p<.001$].

The separate analyses of variance that followed, showed statistically important differences, concerning the variable 'traditional dancers - physically inactive' and 'Satisfaction" ($F_{(1,317)} = 24,67$; $p<.001$), 'Use of Emotion' ($F_{(1,317)} = 21,99$; $p<.001$), 'Caring & Empathy' ($F_{(1,317)} = 23,83$; $p<.001$), 'Control of emotion'($F_{(1,317)} = 14,27$; $p<.001$) and 'Expression & Recognize' ($F_{(1,317)} = 39,74$; $p<.001$), with the participants in traditional dance activities scoring higher than the physically inactive (Table 2). It was found that the participants in traditional dance activities presented higher values in satisfaction from life (M. = 4.09 vs M. = 3.79) and scored significantly higher in ability: use of emotion (M. = 3.94 vs M. = 3.64), caring & empathy (M. = 4.10 vs M. = 3.79), control of emotion (M. = 3.74 vs M. = 3.46) and expression & recognize (M. = 3.69 vs M. = 3.24) on a five degree answer scale of the GEIS questionnaire. There were no statistically significant differences between men and women both in the group of traditional dancers and in the physically inactive group (Table 2).

Table 2.
About here

4. Discussion

The aim of the study was to investigate the relationship between emotional intelligence and life satisfaction among people who participated in recreational dance activities and people who were physically inactive and to explore any differences in relation to the above parameters.

Oι Burrus, Betancourt, Holtzman, Minsky, MacCann and Roberts (2012), highlighted that most researches that investigated the relation between E.I. and life satisfaction mainly used the MSCEIT scale (MSCEIT; Mayer et al., 2002). The present study, in order to investigate the above relation and produce credible results, considered appropriate to use an additional measurement instrument constructed especially for the Greek population. The results of the reliability analysis showed satisfactory values of the factors for both measurement instruments.

The results accredited that there is a statistically significant positive relation between life satisfaction and the four factors of E.I., as it was investigated with the use of the GEIS questionnaire (Tsaousis, 2008). More specifically, life satisfaction is statistically significant positive relation with the use of emotion (r .41), caring and empathy (.33), control of emotion (r .34) and expression and recognize (r. 29). Likewise, Palomera and Brackett (2006) also confirmed that life satisfaction is positively connected to emotional clarity (r = 0.29) and emotion repair (r = 0.25). Later studies supported that E.I. could become a major factor for the prediction of life satisfaction possibly because emotionally intelligent people are able to maintain positive spiritual conditions, due to their ability to manage their emotions. Carmeli et al. (2009) found a positive association between E.I. and the components of psychological well-being (self-esteem, life satisfaction, and self-acceptance). In a study with undergraduate students, Brackett and Mayer (2003) also found positive relationships between the Mayer-Salovey-Caruso Emotional Intelligence Test (MSCEIT; Mayer et al., 2001) and Ryff's psychological well-being scale. Correspondingly, Sánchez-Álvarez et al. (2015) showed that clarity and repair were positively correlated with life satisfaction, indicating that high E.I. tends to result in more positive experiences and fewer negative ones. Tolulope and Donald (2015), with a sample of people working in the health field, supported that those who presented high levels of emotional intelligence had greater life satisfaction. Extremera and Rey (2016), who investigated the relation between E.I. and life satisfaction, showed that E.I. is an ability positively connected to life satisfaction and recorded that people with high E.I. seem to be satisfied in life since they are able to experience pleasant or positive emotions and rarely unpleasant or negative ones. More recently, Delhom et al. (2017), with a sample of 215 adult women over 60 years old, confirmed a significant connection between E.I. and life satisfaction and noted that there should be interventional programs which develop E.I., as it can promote psychological health/well being. E.I. can be a pre-condition for the adaptive control of emotions and psychological mood and thus a crucial factor for life satisfaction (Salovey et al., 1995).

Emotionally intelligent people have better spiritual health (Martins et al., 2010) and better general health/well being. Tsaousis and Nikolaou (2005) supported that E.I. can predict the behavior which is connected to good health, has a negative relation with smoking and alcohol and a positive relation with participating in physical activities. To confirm the above, the results of the present study showed that those who participated in the traditional dance learning program presented higher scores in all four factors of E.I. than non participants and significantly higher means in life satisfaction. Participating in various kinds of physical activity contributes to the development of E.I. as it was recorded by Saklofske et al., (2007). Accordingly, the results of a research by Li, Lu and Wang (2009), showed that the most active college students tend to have a higher E.I. in comparison to non active students and they supported that participating in exercise can be an effective way to improve and manage E.I. Also, Sundblad, Jansson, Saartok, Renstrom and Engstrom (2008) found that physically inactive students had low self-esteem, confidence and higher levels of stress. Participating in physical activity seems to be connected with a better management of stress and higher levels of E.I., as supported by Al Sudani and Budzynska (2015). In addition, various researches in the field of sports showed that athletes have higher scores in E.I. than non athletes (Costarelli et al., 2009; Szabo et al., 2014), which is probably due to athletic training or participation in games during which athletes must recognize and control their emotions and understand the emotions of their rivals and co-athletes (Zizzi et al., 2003).

In the present study, active people with regular participation in physical activities (three times per week) such as traditional dance programs had better levels of E.I. than non participants. Sevimli (2010) presented similar results, according to which people with a sedentary way of life had lower levels of E.I. than those who participated in programs of dance aerobic exercise. People who are physically inactive present lower levels of Expression and Recognition of Emotions, as supported by Saklofske et al. (2013), according to whom exercising is positively connected to E.I.

Dance is a pleasant means of exercising, with beneficial results as concerns the improvement of the emotional condition of the participants and their quality of life (Sibel, Karapolat, Durmaz, Ibisglu, & Cakir,

2009). An important element of dance which can improve the mood and influence participants spiritually is music and singing (Alpert, 2011), as well as cooperation among participants. In order to cooperate, a person has to share his/her internal emotional condition with the rest of the participants, which is a communicational skill that, in combination with music, gives all the participants the experience to develop understanding, intuition and control of their emotions. Medicomm and Inorporation (2004) highlighted that dance helps adults to overcome the tension, anger, confusion or disappointment they may feel and to be happier and more satisfied in life, as their cognitive ability and memory are enhanced.

Nowadays, traditional dance is one of the most popular recreational activities in Greece. The fact that there are no relative researches evaluating similar results, renders the interpretation of the results more difficult but it also shows the innovative intervention of the present study. Nonetheless, those who participated in traditional dance programs presented higher levels of E.I. and higher life satisfaction, compared to non participants. Consequently, this study confirms that participating in physical activities enhances spiritual health and contributes to the management of E.I.

5. Conclusion

In conclusion, the present study further demonstrates the significance of the newly established structure of EI, in the field of physical activity and psychological health. Especially if, as the literature indicates, EI can be developed (e.g. Dulewicz & Higgs, 2004) the consequences for the individual might be remarkable. However, longitudinal research designs are necessary in order to explore the long-term effects of EI development on health and personal lifestyle.

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Table 1. Means (M), Standard deviation (SD) - Cronbach's alpha and Pearson Correlation coefficients for each factor

Factors	**M.**	SD	**alpha**	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.
1. Satisfaction	4.02	.43	.84	**1.00**				
2. Use of Emotion	3.87	.45	.83	.410**	**1.00**			
3. Caring & Empathy	4.01	.53	.79	.338**	.491**	**1.00**		
4. Control of Emotion	3.68	.56	.91	.344**	.523**	.354**	**1.00**	
5.Expression & Recognition	3.59	.54	.79	.296**	.465**	.382**	.423**	**1.00**

*Note: ** Correlation is significant at the p<.01 level and * Correlation is significant at the p< .05*

Table 2. Statistical important differences among the factors of the two questionnaires

Factors	**traditional dancers**			**physically inactive**		
	Men	Women	Total	Men	Women	Total
	M. S.D	M. S.D	M. S.D	M. S.D	M. S.D	M. S.D
1. Satisfaction	4.07 (.46)	4.10 (.33)	4.09 (.33)***	3.72(.65)	3.88(.77)	3.79(.77)
2. Use of Emotion	3.91(.48)	3.95 (.34)	3.94 (.34)***	3.58(.67)	3.72(.80)	3.64(.80)
3. Caring & Empathy	4.03 (.58)	4.13 (.42)	4.10 (.42)***	3.66(.83)	3.79(.78)	3.79(.78)
4. Control of Emotion	3.79 (.57)	3.72 (.41)	3.74 (.41)***	3.37(.61)	3.60(.96)	3.46(.96)
5. Expression & Recognition	3.67 (.56)	3.69 (.40)	3.69 (.40)***	3.26(.80)	3.21(.94)	3.24(.94)

Note 1: M. =Mean Prices, S.D. =Standard Deviations of the factors in relation to gender and group
Note 2: significant *** p<. 001, ** p<. 01, * p<. 05.