THE IMPORTANCE OF EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE, WELL-BEING AND HAPPINESS IN COLLEGE STUDENTS

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ABSTRACT:

The university has been going through a long process of change resulting from institutional crises, hegemony and legitimacy. There is intense mobilization of this institution, subjected to strong pressure from the globalization process, making it necessary to discuss its role today especially due to the psychological changes induced by the pandemic of the Coronavirus Disease 2019 - COVID-19. Studies investigating the COVID-19 pandemic from an academic standpoint focus on psychological distress.
The reality is that the COVID-19 pandemic has prompted universities to introduce lockdown, which has led to significant changes in students' lives. In-person classes were replaced by online classes, students had to return home and forego a series of programs and events they held with their peers. Academic life as it was, has become a mirage during this time of the pandemic. Not only were academic habits altered, but the entire family and social dynamics were shaken, compromising emotional and financial stability. In this sense and as a way to survive these difficult times it has become imperative to use emotional intelligence in the pursuit of well-being and happiness, a state desired by many individuals in all fields of their life.

KEYWORDS: Emocional Inteligence; Well being; Hapiness;College Students.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Thinking about the profile of the university student today leads us to rethink the models of university education and the context in which higher education finds itself and what it provides for those who entered these institutions during the COVID-19 pandemic. The lockdown significantly changed the lives of students, with the replacement of in-person classes, students had to return home and forego a number of programs and events they held with their peers. Academic life as it was, became a mirage during the Covid-19 years.

The literature has shown a strong relationship between emotional intelligence, happiness, and well-being [3] [6]. It should be reiterated that all involve a panoply of emotional skills that effectively use the information of emotions, allowing individuals to use adaptive copping strategies in stressful life events. Thus, a good use of emotional aptitudes allows to experience high levels of positive states, and reduce the levels of negative states, creating a feeling of well-being and happiness in general [3] [4] [6]. That is, in a concrete way, this means that the perception that individuals have of their ability to process emotional information is associated with their subjective well-being and hapiness.

Given this relationship, it is possible that the link between Emotional Intelligence and levels of happiness and general well-being is explained by engagement. Thus, the state of involvement with university life can prevent the individual from focusing on negative events, creating a state of positive affect. This effect is known as the Spillover Effect, which emphasizes that positive and negative experiences lived in one domain can be transferred to another domain [3] [6].

That is, experiences lived in the professional/academic field can affect the quality or lack thereof in other areas of life.

2. EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE, WELL-BEING AND HAPPINESS

Emotional intelligence is most often defined as the ability to perceive, use, understand, manage, and handle emotions. People with high emotional intelligence can recognize their own emotions and those of others, use emotional information to guide thinking and behavior, discern between different feelings and label them appropriately, and adjust emotions to adapt to environments. The term Emotional Intelligence became known in the 90's by the work of Goleman [8] [9] entitled "Emotional Intelligence". Soon after the release of this book, the term was quickly disseminated in various segments of society.

Well-being, or wellbeing, also known as wellness, prudential value, prosperity or quality of life, refers to what is intrinsically valuable relative to someone. So, the well-being of a person is what is ultimately good for this person, what is in the self-interest of this person. In the other hand Well-being is a state desired by many individuals, and for this reason it has been increasingly studied [4]. It is a complex concept that has been developed according to different conceptualizations, which highlight different aspects of what constitutes it, and what influences it.

And finally, the term happiness has been moving towards the concept of well-being [5], and for this reason, happiness has been used as a term that concerns physical and psychological well-being [3] [6]. believes that happiness is a primary goal in the lives of human beings and thus, the achievement of this is a goal common to all people. Happiness is a positive and pleasant emotion, ranging from contentment to intense joy. Moments of happiness may be triggered by positive life experiences or thoughts, but sometimes it may arise from no obvious cause. The level of happiness for longer periods of time is more strongly correlated with levels of life satisfaction, subjective well-being, flourishing and eudaimonia. In common usage, the word happy can be an appraisal of those measures themselves or as a shorthand for a "source" of happiness (for example, "find happiness in life" as in finding the meaning in life). As with any emotion, the precise definition of happiness has been a perennial debate in philosophy.

3. RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE, HAPPINESS AND WELL-BEING

The literature has shown a strong relationship between emotional intelligence, happiness and well-being in college students. Happiness is a basic emotion characterized by a positive emotional state, with feelings of well-being and pleasure, associated with the perception of success and a coherent and lucid understanding of the world. In recent years, several researchers have been concerned with unraveling the relationships between happiness and mental health.

It should be noted that the variables under study involve a panoply of emotional aptitudes that effectively use the information of emotions, allowing individuals to use adaptive coping strategies in stressful life events. Thus, a good use of emotional aptitudes, allows to experience high levels of positive statesand hapiness and reduce the levels of negative states, creating a feeling of general well-being. Given this relationship, it is possible that the link between Emotional Intelligence and levels of general well-being such as happiness is explained by engagement. Thus, the state of involvement with university life. It can prevent the individual from focusing on negative events, creating a state of positive affect.

4. METHOD

Taking into account the intention to carry out an approximation to the phenomenon, with the final objective of knowing its different characteristics, it was considered that the most appropriate methodological approach to use in this research would be the quantitative one [5].

This study was based on the application of a questionnaire survey, with closed questions, which was disseminated on social networks, by our contacts, using the Snowball sampling technique. It was circulating between March and July 2023. The sample collected consists of 570 university students, mostly women, in a ratio of 69% to 31%, with an average age of 20 years. Data were analyzed using the statistical program SPSS Statistics.

The data collection instruments used were MHC-SF – Mental health continuum and WLEIS-P - Wong and Law Emotional Intelligence Scale.
Descriptive statistics (frequency, percentage, mean and standard deviation) were used to characterize the sample, and inferential statistics to evaluate the relationship between scale variables, using Pearson's Linear Correlation test ($p<0.05$).

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(All variables used do not follow a normal distribution, which is one of the prerequisites for using Pearson's test). Pearson's correlation coefficient test, which is a test that measures the statistical relationship between two continuous variables. If the association between the elements is not linear, the coefficient is not adequately represented. Pearson's correlation coefficient can have a range of values from +1 to -1. A value of 0 indicates that there is no association between the two variables. A value greater than 0 indicates a positive association. That is, as the value of one variable increases, so does the value of the other variable. A value less than 0 indicates a negative association. That is, as the value of one variable increases, the value of the other decreases.

5. RESULTS

With regard to age, it is possible to verify that the sample is mostly composed of students up to the age of 20 (366 respondents, which corresponds to 64% of the respondents). In general, it can be stated that, with increasing age, the number of students decreases, as can be seen by the following age groups with 27% and 2% of the total population of the sample, respectively. However, it is also possible to notice that from the age of 27 there is a slight increase in the number of students, which is in line with the study conducted by the authors [1] [2].

(N=570) Variable	Frequency	Percentage
Age		
Up to 20 years	366	64,30%
21 to 24 years	151	26,50%
25 to 26 years	9	1,60%
More than 26	37	6,50%
Missing age	3	

Table 1 – Age
Own source

With regard to gender, of the 570 individuals present in the sample, there is a balance relationship between the genders.

(N=570) Variable	Frequency	Percentage
Gender		
Female	395	69,30%
Male	175	30,70%
Others	0%	0%

Table 2 – Gender
Own source

Regarding the sociodemographic characterization of the sample, it seems important to understand its origin at the level of marital status. Thus, it is possible to verify that 93% of the sample is composed of single individuals and all other results are residual (married 4%, de facto union 2% and divorced 0.5%).

Also, in demographic terms, it was possible to notice that of the 570 university students who responded to the survey under investigation, only 6% have children. As a way to complete the sociodemographic characterization, it is also important to evaluate the geographical origin of the sample. Thus, it is possible to verify that the sample in question is composed of individuals from the North of Portugal in a total of 85% of the sample. The center of Portugal presents itself with 8%, metropolitan area of Lisbon with 6%, and the South presentation with a residual value of 0.40%, and finally the islands also appear with only 0.40%. The analysis of the area where the

study is carried out shows that the North has the maximum number of respondents, 467 representing 82% of the total sample.

A residual divergence between the housing area and the study area is presented here (19 respondents). This may imply a possible relocation of the city for reasons of studies. These residual oscillations occur in almost all zones. To check, for example, the metropolitan area of Lisbon with 5 respondents or the center with 9 respondents. In terms of the study cycle attended in 2021/22 it is verified that the sample is mostly composed of students of the 1st Cycle (bachelor's degree) with 457 respondents representing 80% of the sample, followed by 57 respondents enrolled in master's degree with a percentage of 10%. It is also verified that most of the respondents are in the 1st year of the 1st Cycle (bachelor's degree) with 278 respondents, representing 59% of the sample, followed by the 2nd year and the 3rd with 24% and 21% respectively.

In a residual form arise all the other grais of university education namely master's, doctorate and postgraduate or specializations. Regarding the areas of study, it is verified that the areas of Commerce, Social Sciences and Law appear as a strong trend, since 38% of the respondents opted for these areas. Then comes the area of Health and Civil Protection with 18% of the sample, Science, Mathematics and Informatics with 15% and the area of Arts and Humanities with 11% and all other areas are residual and values below 10%. Finally, it was possible to verify that the line that separates the public and private institutions in this sample is very thin. It should be noted that the majority falls to private institutions only by 13 percentage points.

With regard to Descriptive Statistics, it can be stated that it is a branch of statistics that applies various techniques to describe and summarize a set of data. It differs from inferential statistics, or inductive statistics, by the objective: to organize, summarize data rather than using the data in learning about the population. This principle makes descriptive statistics an independent discipline.

Descriptive Statistics (n=570)				
	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Standard Deviation
Evaluation of one's own emotions	4,00	20,00	13,7579	3,13957
Evaluation of the emotions of others	4,00	20,00	15,6070	2,67448
Use of emotions	4,00	20,00	13,4456	3,58448
Regulation of emotions	4,00	20,00	12,6544	3,71973
Emotional well-being	0,00	15,00	9,8860	3,29765
Psychological well-being	0,00	30,00	18,9737	6,69005
Welfare	0,00	25,00	11,1316	5,54818

Table 3 - Descriptive Statistics
Own source

Some measures that are typically used to describe a data set are measures of central tendency and measures of variability or dispersion. Measures of central tendency include mean, median, and mode. Measures of variability include standard deviation, variance, the maximum and minimum value, obliquity, and kurtosis.

In this specific case, it is possible to verify the minimum and maximum values of the variables under study. Thus, and in the case of the variables: Evaluation of one's own emotions; Evaluation of the emotions of others; use of emotions and Regulation of emotions: the minimums presented are the 4 and the maximums the 20. The minimum and maximum are the values at the "extremes" of an ordered data set: that is, the smallest and the highest value. For emotional well-being the minimum is 0.00

and the maximum is 15.00. Being that the psychological well-being is between the minimum value of 0.00 and the maximum of 30.00 while the social well-being presents a minimum of 0.00 and a maximum of 25.00.

The reality is that it does not seem pertinent to analyze in detail the maximum and minimum values, but rather the averages of any value range.

In this way, it is possible to perceive that the concentration of the data of the distribution or mean: - Evaluation of the own emotions is situated in the 13.75 with a standard deviation, which is a measure of dispersion around the population mean of a variable of 0.3. In this case, the standard deviation is considerably low, indicating that the data points tend to be close to the mean. Note that the closer to 0 the standard deviation is, the more homogeneous the data are.

On the other side, with regard to the - Evaluation of the emotions of others the average is at 15.6. Presenting a standard deviation of 0.27. It is, therefore, visible that the mean is a little higher and, therefore, closer to the maximum values, on the other hand, the standard deviation is presented with a value of 0.27 indicating, that the points of the data tend, once again, to be close to the mean.

When checking the - Use of emotions it can be understood that the mean is also within the 13 values, with a standard deviation of 0.36. Once again there is an average close to the values considered as maximum and the points very close to the mean. The Regulator of emotions point has mean values of 12.6. Value slightly lower than the previous ones and a standard deviation of 0.37, slightly higher than those evaluated so far. Which may indicate more dispersed points and not so close to the average.

On the other hand, and with respect to - Emotional well-being the mean is 9.9, an average close to the maxima with a standard deviation of 0.32. The variable - Psychological well-being presents a mean value of 18.9 and a high standard deviation (6.7). It should be reiterated that a high standard deviation indicates that the data points are spread over a wide range of values

Finally, social welfare was evaluated with an average of 11 out of a maximum total of 25. A mean closer to the lows than the highs with a considerably higher standard deviation of 0.55.

6. DISCUSSION

In general, the research in question and the averages assessed through the sample in question show that most individuals are concerned with the evaluation of their own emotions. This fact was also verified during the bibliographic review.

It should be noted that some authors [3] [4] states that individuals, in general, are concerned and value their ability to know, evaluate and use their emotions appropriately in various situations and contexts. On the other hand, with regard to the evaluation of the emotions of others, the media achieved is also in line with the literature. According to authors most individuals tend to evaluate the emotions of others, with the ultimate goal of creating empathy more easily.

Pearson's linear correlation	Sig.	R
Evaluation and expression of one's own emotions		
Emotional Well-Being	<0.001	0.369
Psychological Well-Being	<0.001	0.399
Welfare	<0.001	0.395
Evaluation and recognition of the emotions of others		
Emotional Well-Being	0.325	0.041
Psychological Well-Being	<0.001	0.249
Welfare	<0.001	0.139
Regulation of one's own emotions		
Emotional Well-Being	<0.001	0.295
Psychological Well-Being	<0.001	0.331
Welfare	<0.001	0.334
Using emotions to facilitate performance		
Emotional Well-Being	<0.001	0.484
Psychological Well-Being	<0.001	0.518
Welfare	<0.001	0.434

Table 4 - Pearson's linear correlation
Own source

With regard to the Use of emotions it can be understood that the average found meets the author's specific point the point Regulator of emotions presents lower mean values demonstrating some inability on the part of the respondents to regulate their emotions. This factor is at odds with what has been analyzed in the literature. It should be remembered that some authors [3] [6]. state that in their daily experience, individuals are able to influence the type of emotions they have, when they have them and how they experience and express them. It should be reiterated that a good use of emotional aptitudes allows to experience high levels of positive states, and reduce the levels of negative states, creating a feeling of general well-being [3] [6].

With regard to the averages of emotional well-being, the average is close to the maximums demonstrating that individuals effectively seek to be well at the emotional level as stated by the authors [1] [2].

The variable Psychological well-being presents the mean value relatively close to the maximums, but with a higher standard deviation and close to 1. Factors that when analyzed demonstrate that although individuals seek this type of well-being [3] [4] [6] sometimes it's tricky to get there.

Finally, Social welfare was evaluated with an average of 11 out of a maximum total of 25. A mean closer to the lows than the highs with a considerably high standard deviation of 0.55. This factor is at odds with what has been analyzed in the literature. To verify that the ultimate goal of individuals is always to create empathy more easily with individuals who belong to the surrounding environment and therefore create social well-being [3] [4].

In general, the research in question allows us to conclude that there is a relationship between Emotional Intelligence and Well-being in all dimensions, except between the evaluation and recognition of the emotions of others and emotional well-being, where no relationship has been confirmed. In more detail, it allowed us to conclude that there is an average relationship with regard to the relationship between the evaluation and expression of one's own emotions and emotional well-being/ to the relationship between the evaluation and expression of one's own emotions and psychological well-being/ to the relationship between the evaluation and expression of one's emotions own emotions and social well-being. In the light of these ideas and in

the context of a bibliographic review, it was possible to perceive that the author [1] [2]. also affirms the existence of such a relationship, adding that as the subject's ability to know, evaluate and use his emotions properly in various situations and contexts increases, so does the well-being of the subject, to the extent that he has the ability to adapt his emotions to the various circumstances.

Also according to the author [8] [9]. a good knowledge and use of emotional aptitudes, allows to experience high levels of positive states, and reduce the levels of negative states, creating a feeling of general well-being.

5. CONCLUSION

The results also show that there is no relationship between evaluation and recognition of the emotions of others and emotional well-being, that there is a weak relationship between evaluation and recognition of the emotions of others and psychological well-being, and that there is a relationship between evaluation and recognition of the emotions of others and social well-being, and this relationship is weak.

According to some authors, the ability to recognize emotions in other people allows a better interaction, being able to change the communication according to the information that is received. The ultimate goal is always to create empathy more easily with people who belong to the surrounding environment [4]. Thus, the ability to evaluate and recognize emotions, when well worked, favors the good relationship between people, allowing a greater understanding in personal relationships, and better interaction (and communication) for example in a university context. In a subliminal way it is understood that this fact favors social, psychological and even emotional well-being, which goes against the results collected which, possibly, can be explained as one of the most damaging effects of the social isolation brought on by mandatory lockdowns and isolation in this pandemic period.

We can still perceive that there is a relationship between the regulation of one's own emotions and emotional well-being, however, this relationship is weak. There is a relationship between the regulation of one's own emotions and psychological well-being, and this relationship is media.
According to the author [3] [4]. well-being results from positive perceptions in relation to the characteristics of oneself, one's professional life, and one's action in the world.

According to the research conducted by the author [3] [6]. emotional regulation strategies correlate significantly with most positive psychological variables, namely that cognitive reappraisal correlates positively with all positive psychological variables, with its greatest influence exerted on the level of psychological well-being and that emotional suppression correlates negatively with all positive psychological variables, its biggest impact on life satisfaction.

Finally, regarding the use of emotions to facilitate performance, there is a relationship with the emotional well-being, as well as with psychological well-being and social well-being, and for all these dimensions the relationship is media.
With regard to this theme, it is common knowledge, that individuals are not passive agents who simply experience emotions [8] [9]. In their daily experience they are able

to influence what kind of emotions they have, when they have them and how they experience and express them (GROSS; RICHARDS; John, 2006).

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According to the author [3] [4]. well-being results from positive perceptions in relation to the characteristics of oneself, one's professional life, and one's action in the world.Once again it seems important to reiterate that a good use of emotional aptitudes, allows to experience high levels of positive states, and reduce the levels of negative states, creating a feeling of general well-being [8] [9].

Not everything that goes on in this pandemic period is bad. One of the positives that covid has brought has been a different, more attentive look at the psychological and emotional issues of everyone, those suffering again from the direct influence of this pandemic, but also those who were clearly showing signs of suffering and were not receiving help. Realizing then that the indices of pseudo-pathology and pathology are transversal in society and we must be attentive to each other.

The results are worrisome and suggest the need for future studies in order to follow the course of evolution or regression of this condition. Also, because this study is still taking place in times of pandemic and it will be necessary some distance in time so that we can more scientifically attest to the data now obtained, preferably expanding the number of participants in the sample.

Taking into account an in-depth analysis of our results and correlating them with the literature review, it is easy to understand that knowledge, self-knowledge, the ability to manipulate and use emotions facilitate general performance and social, psychological and even emotional well-being, making individuals more functional and adapted to the different conditions we face, throughout the life cycle.

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