



To Feel Well, It's Not Enough to Have It, You
Need to Use It.

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Abstract

A recent theoretical framework of emotional intelligence proposed that incorporating the role of time and contextual factors, specifically the actual enactment of emotional intelligence in specific situations, to emotional intelligence measures is vital in advancing the understanding of the mechanisms of emotional intelligence. The present exploratory study examines if a new measure incorporating these factors, called emotional performance, is related to subjective well-being. Furthermore, we explored whether the expected positive relationship between emotional performance and subjective well-being was enhanced with higher levels of emotional intelligence. Survey data from a sample of students from the University of Groningen (N=466) showed partial support for the positive relationship between emotional performance and subjective well-being, particularly for the emotional performance subcategory self-regulation. However, we found no reliable evidence for a moderating influence of emotional intelligence. The findings provide empirical evidence for the association between emotional performance and subjective well-being, particularly for the emotional performance subcategory self-regulation. The findings support the value of conceptualizing emotional intelligence as a construct that is enacted in specific performance episodes and suggest that emotional intelligence is used by individuals in specific performance episodes regardless of their level of emotional intelligence.

Keywords: emotions, emotional intelligence, emotional performance, subjective well-being

To Feel Well, It's Not Enough to Have It, You Need to Use It.

Emotional intelligence can be defined as the ability to perceive, understand and manage emotions in oneself and others (Pekaar et al., 2020). It is needed to appraise and regulate internal states as well as successfully navigate the complex demands of work and private relationships, thus allowing adaptive coping in stressful situations (Salovey & Mayer, 1990). Higher levels of emotional intelligence have been shown to be associated with a wide array of benefits, including better health, well-being, and performance (Martins et al., 2010; Sánchez-Álvarez et al., 2016; Sharp et al., 2020). Additionally, it has been found to be trainable (Mattingly & Kraiger, 2019), making it an effective target for interventions. Therefore, understanding emotional intelligence and the factors that are influencing it is essential to improve training programs and help people successfully navigate their inner and outer worlds. Established measures conceive Emotional intelligence as a general trait or ability (Petrides & Furnham, 2001), without incorporating if and how it has been used in specific situations. Aim of the present study is to demonstrate that the enactment of emotional intelligence in specific situations, which is referred to as emotional performance, is related to subjective well-being. Furthermore, we examine if levels of emotional intelligence moderate the relationship between emotional performance and subjective well-being.

Emotional Intelligence

Petrides and Furnham (2001) differentiated trait emotional intelligence as emotional intelligence related “behavioral dispositions and self-perceived abilities” and ability emotional intelligence as “actual abilities”. Trait emotional intelligence is assumed to show typical self-perceived performance and ability emotional intelligence to show actual maximum performance. Both trait and ability emotional intelligence have been well studied and are proven to be useful measures (Martins et al., 2010, Sánchez-Álvarez et al., 2016), but they do not include a key element influencing the benefits of emotional intelligence: In everyday life,

emotional intelligence is used in specific situations, shaping specific behaviors instead of general evaluations or maximum performance tests. The established measures do not take into account if the emotional intelligence is actually successfully applied in everyday life situations. This enactment of emotional intelligence will be the core focus of this study. To further illustrate why this process is important, we're taking a look at the different types of emotions proposed by Baumeister et al. (2007).

Baumeister et al. (2007) argue that there is a distinction between rapid automatized emotional responses not requiring much cognition (such as liking something) and full-blown conscious emotions. Full-blown conscious emotions also induce physiological arousal like rapid emotional responses, but are relatively slow and require conscious cognition. They are about making sense of what is happening and require tuning in with oneself and conscious elaboration of what is happening internally. Their use is to stimulate learning after difficult situations occurred, which in turn guides future behavior. An example of this would be having a fight with a loved one, where one might need to take time after the situation occurred, reflect on it and talk it out. Successfully applying their emotional intelligence, here, means not staying on the level of the fast, automatic response that activated during the fight, but choosing to reflect on it and go the route of the full-blown conscious emotion. One can easily imagine that choosing to actually do the latter leads to better outcomes in the long run. Please note that we do not propose that going the route of full-blown emotions is the only form of enacted emotional intelligence, we rather propose that this is one example of how emotional intelligence can be enacted in everyday life.

In their theoretical framework for emotional intelligence Pekaar et al. (2020) conclude: "We believe that incorporating the role of time, context, and individual and contextual moderators that influence the enactment of emotional intelligence is a promising avenue that may capture the lively nature of emotional processes better than classic and static

emotional intelligence models.” In other words, it is not only needed to have a certain degree of emotional intelligence. To fully benefit from one’s emotional intelligence, it is needed to actually successfully apply the emotional intelligence in specific time periods with a recognizable start and end in everyday life. As Aoyagi and Portenga (2010) state, successful performance requires not only having the knowledge, skills or abilities relating to a task, but also the capability to consistently and reliably deliver them at the time of performance. Hence, Buurma et al. (2023) have developed the Emotional Performance Questionnaire, which will be discussed next.

Emotional Performance

Emotional Performance is defined as the actual use of emotional intelligence in a specific time episode in a specific context (i.e. performance episode) (Buurma et al., 2023) - thus incorporating time and contextual factors into the assessment of the actual use of emotional intelligence. In line with the theoretical framework for emotional processes proposed by Pekaar et al. (2020), emotional performance is divided into the subcategories self-focused (dealing with emotions of the self) and other-focused (dealing with emotions of others). As Pekaar et al. (2020) review, self-focused emotional processes tend to be more related to health outcomes, whereas other-focused emotional processes tend to contribute to social and performance outcomes. Hence, they propose differentiating the two as distinct processes, which is not reflected in most classic trait or ability emotional intelligence measures.

Furthermore, these two categories are each separated into two distinct steps: First, emotion appraisal, which describes how accurately an emotion is recognized and interpreted. Appraising emotions accurately is the foundation to handle them effectively in the self and others: A failure to process emotions in interpersonal relations, for example, may lead to maladaptive emotional patterns that may decrease the quality of social relationships (Snyder

et al., 2003). Second, after emotion appraisal follows emotion regulation, which are regulatory actions aimed at changing the intensity of an emotion in the desired direction (Pekkar et al., 2018). Emotion regulation has been found to influence important outcomes such as job performance, especially for emotionally demanding professions (Joseph & Newman, 2010). Hence, the Emotional Performance Scale replicates this four factor model proposed by Pekaar et al. (2020) and divides emotional experiences into the four subcategories *self-appraisal*, *self-regulation*, *other-appraisal* and *other-regulation*.

Emotional Performance and Subjective Well-Being

Emotional performance is expected to be associated with subjective well-being, which is defined as a self-rated global affective and cognitive assessment of a person's quality of life (Diener et al., 2002). More recently, Pavot and Diener (2008) have proposed to also include domain specific life satisfaction into the definition of subjective well-being, but since that would be beyond the scope of the current research, the basic definition of subjective well-being is used to examine the relationship between emotional performance and subjective well-being. At its root, subjective well-being consists of the three subcategories *presence of positive affect*, *absence of negative affect* and *life satisfaction* (Diener, 1984). Positive affect and negative affect refer to the affective, emotional aspects of the construct, examining the frequency and intensity of both positive and negative emotions, whereas life satisfaction refers to cognitive-judgmental aspects, which is a global self-judgement of one's quality of life (Diener et al., 1985).

Emotional intelligence measured as a general trait or as an ability has robustly been shown to be associated to subjective well-being (Sánchez-Álvarez et al., 2016). For example, highly emotionally intelligent individuals tend to be more resilient through appraising stressful conditions as a challenge rather than a threat (Schneider et al., 2013), which might in turn lead to higher subjective well-being. People with higher emotional intelligence scores

tend to have fewer occurrence and duration of negative emotions that appear as a consequence of stressful events and have higher frequency and better maintenance of positive emotions (Zeidner et al., 2009). Emotional intelligence allows for the use of richer resources, such as seeking appropriate social support, and adaptive coping, leading to long term benefits (Salovey, 2000), Emotionally intelligent individuals score higher on global self ratings for their quality of life (Sánchez-Álvarez et al., 2016).

Emotional performance aims to capture the enactment of one's emotional intelligence in specific performance episodes. Within such performance episodes, the factors making up emotional intelligence, such as appraising stressful situations as a challenge instead of a threat, need to be executed effectively. As a result, they affect the outcomes of these performance episodes (Pekkar et al., 2020). Since successful goal pursuit is associated with subjective well-being (Klug & Maier, 2015), successful emotional performance should be reflected in higher levels of subjective well-being. Based on this hypothesized process and the findings about the positive relationship between trait and ability emotional intelligence and subjective well-being described in the previous paragraph, we also expect to find a positive relationship between emotional performance and subjective well-being. Therefore, we test *Hypothesis 1*: Emotional performance is positively associated with subjective well-being.

Do Trait and Ability Emotional Intelligence moderate?

Emotional performance aims to measure if a person's emotional intelligence was successfully applied in a specific time period and context. In line with Pekkar et al. (2020), we expect levels of emotional intelligence to be a possible moderator for the relationship between emotional performance and subjective well-being. To illustrate the relationship by analogy with a probably more familiar construct, it can be compared to an athlete in a performance situation:

A tennis player might have honed his skills, hitting millions of backhands, forehands and volleys in his lifetime. He embodies the trait of being good at playing tennis and has the ability to play high level tennis. Now, this tennis player is participating in a professional tournament, trying to win it all. Can he successfully apply his tennis skills to translate to actual performance in the tournament? Does he manage to hit high level forehands and backhands during this tournament? Does he successfully apply appropriate tactics? The answers to these questions, among other variables, will determine his actual performance in the tournament. His self-perceived performance should be dependent on both his actual performance and his baseline level of expectations towards himself – a high ability individual would likely expect higher levels of performance of himself to perceive his performance as successful compared to a low ability individual. One can easily imagine that his underlying tennis skills moderate the relationship between his self-perceived performance and the outcome: If an extremely skilled and a far less skilled tennis player both report similar levels of self-perceived performance, the more skilled player is likely to show the higher absolute level of performance due to his higher baseline skill level, resulting in superior outcomes. Based on an association between successful goal pursuit and subjective well-being (Klug & Maier, 2015), doing well at the tournament would likely be associated with higher levels of subjective well-being for the tennis player.

We hypothesize that the same relationship should apply to emotional performance and emotional intelligence: Emotional performance describes the enactment of emotional intelligence in a performance situation, just like the tennis player that applies his underlying tennis skills in the tournament to perform well. Just like tennis related skills may help execute plays effectively during a match, we hypothesize that having higher levels of emotional intelligence helps navigate emotions effectively. An individual with high emotional intelligence may, on average, appraise emotions more accurately and regulate emotions more

effectively (Pekaar et al., 2020). Similar levels of self-perceived performance, therefore, should be associated with superior outcomes for high emotional intelligence individuals. To test our assumption that emotional intelligence does moderate, we test *Hypothesis 2*: The expected positive correlation of emotional performance and well-being is moderated by either trait emotional intelligence or ability emotional intelligence, or both (see Figure 1).

Method

Participants

The Participants were first year students for the Bachelor of Science Psychology programme of the University of Groningen. All data was collected between February 7th, 2023 and May 31st, 2023. We collected 490 filled out questionnaires, of which 17 responses were excluded due to being incomplete. 7 responses were excluded because the participants indicated in a final control question that they did not try to answer truthfully during the study.

Of the remaining 466 valid responses, 355 (76.1%) indicated being Women, 105 (22.5%) Men and 6 (1.3%) “Other”. 215 (46.1%) participants’ age was below 20 years, 247 (53%) between 20 to 30 years and 4 (0.8%) over 30 years. The final number of participants is sufficient for the current research: A power analysis using G*Power 3.1 revealed that 277 participants would be required to achieve a .80 power level for the moderation analysis with $\alpha = .05$ and assuming an effect size of $f^2 = .04$ for the moderation effects.

Research Design and Procedure

Students who completed the study received points that are required to complete the first-year research practicum of the Bachelor of Science Psychology programme at the University of Groningen. The study requires first-year students to participate in a number of psychological studies, but students may voluntarily decide which studies they choose to complete. Participation in this study was anonymous.

Participants filled out a single session online questionnaire on the online platform *Qualtrics*. First, they were asked about their demographics. Then, each participant was asked to fill out the following scales in randomized order. After filling out all scales, participants were asked if they paid attention and tried to answer everything truthfully.

Measures

Emotional Performance Scale (EPS) refers to the active use of one's emotional intelligence in a specific time episode in a specific context (Buurma et al., 2023). Participants were asked to write a short description of their last performance episode and subsequently answered a total of 20 self-report items about the use of their emotional intelligence in that specific situation. The measure comprises 4 sub-scales:

(1) Self-focused emotion appraisal (e.g. *“During the last performance episode, I have deliberately paid attention to how I was feeling”*).

(2) Self-focused emotion regulation (e.g. *“During the last performance episode, I have deliberately used my emotions to achieve something”*)

(3) Other-focused emotion appraisal (e.g. *“During the last performance episode, I have tried to understand the emotions of someone else”*)

(4) Other-focused emotion regulation. (e.g. *“I have effectively changed the emotions of someone else”*)

These items are answered on a 7-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 = *entirely disagree* to 7 = *entirely agree*.

Subjective well-being was assessed with (1) the *Satisfaction With Life Scale (SWLS)*, and (2) the *Positive and Negative Affect Schedule (PANAS)*.

The SWLS is a 5-item questionnaire measuring subjective well-being as a global cognitive and affective assessment of one's life satisfaction (Diener et al., 1985). Example questions are *“in most ways, my life is close to my ideal”* and *“I am satisfied with my life”*.

These items are answered on a 7-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 = *strongly disagree* to 7 = *strongly agree*.

The PANAS is a 20-item questionnaire measuring subjective well-being as the presence of positive and absence of negative affect (Watson et al., 1988). Participants are asked to indicate the extent that they felt certain emotions during the last week. Example emotions indicating positive affect are “*Interested*”, “*Excited*” and “*Strong*”, example emotions for negative affect are “*Distressed*”, “*Upset*” and “*Guilty*”. The scores for positive affect and negative affect can be analyzed independently.

These items are answered on a 5-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 = *very slightly or not at all* to 5 = *extremely*.

Trait Emotional Intelligence Questionnaire–Short Form (TEIQUE-SF) is a 30-item inventory designed to measure emotional intelligence as a global trait (Petrides & Furnham, 2006). Questions are asked along 15 subcategories of emotional intelligence, such as emotion expression (e.g. “*expressing my emotions with words is not a problem for me*”) and empathy (e.g. “*I’m normally able to get into someone’s shoes and experience their emotions*”). The scores are combined to produce a total global trait emotional intelligence score.

These items are answered on a 7-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 = *entirely disagree* to 7 = *entirely agree*.

Situational Test of Emotional Understanding – Brief (STEU-B) is a 19-item questionnaire measuring emotional intelligence as an ability (Allen et al., 2014). Participants are presented with situations that people experience and asked to choose the one correct answer out of five options, indicating which emotion the person is most likely to feel in this situation. For example, “*Xavier completes a difficult task on time and under budget. Xavier is most likely to feel? a) Surprise b) Pride c) Relief d) Hope e) Joy*” and “*If the current situation*

continues, Denise's employer will probably be able to move her job to a location much closer to her home, which she really wants. Denise is most likely to feel? a) Distress b) Joy c) Surprise d) Hope e) Fear". The amount of correct answers gives the score for this test.

Results

Assumption Tests

The assumptions of regression were tested prior to the regression analysis. Visual inspection of the q-q plots and skewness and kurtosis levels (see Appendix) revealed that all dependent variables adequately satisfy the assumption of normal distribution. Cook's distance was below 1 for all study variables' values, indicating that no extreme outliers were present in our sample. A sufficiently linear relation between the independent variables and dependent variables was found using the frequency distributions and scatter plots with a fit line. The *Variance Inflation Factor (VIF)* was below 3 across all variables; hence we concluded no multicollinearity has been found. Visual inspection of scatter plots using the standardized residuals and the standardized predicted values for the DV supported the assumption of homoscedasticity across all dependent variables.

Descriptive Data

As shown in Table 1, all four subcategories of emotional performance showed significant low to moderate levels of correlation with trait emotional intelligence (range of $r = .10$ to $.30$). These correlations suggest that emotional performance and trait emotional intelligence are similar yet not identical constructs. The correlations between the four subcategories of emotional performance and ability emotional intelligence were not significant for three of the four subcategories (range of $r = -.04$ to $.02$) with the sole significant but small correlation being found for other-appraisal ($r = .11$), suggesting that emotional performance and ability emotional intelligence are not similar constructs. Also note

that the correlation between trait and ability emotional intelligence ($r = .13$) is significant but low, suggesting that they are slightly similar constructs.

Hypothesis Testing

Hypothesis 1 was that emotional performance is positively correlated with subjective well-being. Using IBM SPSS, we calculated Pearson correlations for all study variables. Results (see Table 1) of the analysis showed significant zero-order Pearson correlations of 3 of the 4 subcategories of emotional performance (self-appraisal, self-regulation and other-regulation) with subjective well-being measured as a general sense of life satisfaction (Satisfaction With Life Scale). Additionally and in line with the hypothesis, we found significant Pearson correlations for all subcategories of emotional performance with subjective well-being measured as the presence of positive affect (Positive And Negative Affect Schedule – Positive Affect). In contrast, only the subcategory self-appraisal predicted the absence of negative affect (Positive And Negative Affect Schedule – Negative Affect), with the three other subcategories showing no significant Pearson correlation. Altogether, the observed correlation coefficients show that (*H1*) for most subcategories of emotional performance, higher levels of one's emotional performance were associated with higher subjective well-being when assessed with zero-order correlations.

Next, we conducted regression analyses with each index of well-being (SWLS, PANAS-PA, and PANAS-NA) regressed on the four subcategories of emotional performance. Results for the multiple regressions are shown in Table 2. These multiple regression analyses revealed that only one of the four subcategories of emotional performance (self-regulation) explained unique variance of satisfaction with life. With positive affect as the dependent variable, we found that three out of the four subcategories of emotional performance (self-appraisal, self-regulation and other-regulation) explained unique variance of positive affect. For negative affect, we found that a higher level of self-appraisal explained unique variance of

negative affect. Note that we also found one significant main effect that was in contrast to the hypothesis: a higher level of self-regulation was associated with a higher level of negative affect. Altogether, multiple regression analyses revealed that the positive effect of emotional performance on subjective well-being is reduced (and in one case inverted) after controlling for overlap between the emotional performance subcategories, but still showing significant correlations for almost half of all possible combinations with the emotional performance subcategory self-regulation being the main predictor of subjective well-being. It is thus concluded that partial support has been found for *Hypothesis 1*.

Hypothesis 2 was that the predicted positive relation between emotional performance and subjective well-being is moderated by trait emotional intelligence and ability emotional intelligence, respectively. To test this Hypothesis, we conducted moderation analyses using Hayes (2022) model 1.

Specifically, in separate analyses, we used the four emotional performance subcategories (self-appraisal, self-regulation, other-appraisal and other-regulation) as independent variables, the three indices of subjective well-being (SWLS, PANAS-PA and PANAS-NA) as dependent variables, and added either trait or ability emotional intelligence as the moderator into the model, resulting in a total of 24 separate analyses. We examined the R^2 that the interaction effect added to each model and, out of the 24 analyses, only two significant interactions were found. Table 3 shows the two significant results for the interaction effects between (1) emotional performance self-regulation and ability emotional intelligence and (2) emotional performance other-appraisal and ability emotional intelligence.

Simple slope follow-up analyses (see Figure 2) show that for low ability emotional intelligence ($b = .06$, $t(462) = .90$, $p = .37$) there is no significant association between self-regulation on satisfaction with life. For moderate ability emotional intelligence ($b = .15$, $t(462) = 3.73$, $p < .001$) and for high ability emotional intelligence ($b = .24$, $t(462) = 4.12$, $p <$

.001), self-regulation does significantly predict satisfaction with life. However, t-tests comparing the differences between slopes (Cohen et al., 2003, Soper, 2023) only showed significance when comparing low ability with high ability emotional intelligence ($p = .03$), while no significant difference was found when comparing low or high ability emotional intelligence to moderate levels of ability emotional intelligence (both $p \geq .21$). In line with *Hypothesis 2*, these findings indicate that for high levels of ability emotional intelligence, the positive impact of emotional performance self-regulation on satisfaction with life was larger than for low levels of ability emotional intelligence.

Additionally, there was a positive and significant moderating impact of ability emotional intelligence on the relationship between emotional performance other-appraisal and satisfaction with life. Simple slope analysis (see Figure 3) suggests that for low levels of ability emotional intelligence ($b = .17, t(462) = 2.41, p = .02$), there is a significant positive impact of emotional performance other-appraisal on satisfaction with life. For moderate ($b = .07, t(462) = 1.29, p = .20$) or high levels of ability emotional intelligence ($b = -.03, t(462) = -.43, p = .66$), other-appraisal does not significantly predict satisfaction with life, with effect direction even turning negative for high levels of emotional intelligence. T-tests comparing the differences between slopes only showed significance when comparing low ability with high ability emotional intelligence ($p = .05$), while no significant difference was found when comparing low or high ability emotional intelligence to moderate levels of ability emotional intelligence (both $p \geq .25$). In contrast to *Hypothesis 2*, these findings indicate that for low levels of ability emotional intelligence, the positive impact of emotional performance other-appraisal on satisfaction with life was larger than for high levels of ability emotional intelligence.

In summary, only two out of 24 possible interactions showed significance, and only one interaction was in the anticipated direction. On average, for $\alpha = .05$, 24 analyses are

expected to find 1.2 significant correlations based on chance alone. Additionally, the two significant effect sizes were small, barely reached significance and only one of the two was in the anticipated direction. Therefore, we conclude that in the current sample, no empirical support was found for *Hypothesis 2*. That is, we found no reliable evidence that the positive relationship between emotional performance and subjective well-being is moderated by trait or ability emotional intelligence.

Discussion

In an exploratory study, we examined the association between emotional performance and subjective well-being. Specifically, we hypothesized that emotional performance is positively associated with subjective well-being. Furthermore, we hypothesized that the expected positive correlation of emotional performance and subjective well-being is moderated by emotional intelligence (EI), either trait EI or ability EI or both.

As anticipated, we found highly significant correlations with small to medium effect sizes, explaining unique variance for half of the combinations between the emotional performance subcategories and the different indices of subjective well-being (see Table 2). The global cognitive dimension of subjective well-being, satisfaction with life, was related with emotional performance self-regulation. For the affective dimensions of subjective well-being, the presence of positive affect was related with the emotional performance subcategories self-appraisal, self-regulation and other-regulation. The presence of negative affect was related to self-appraisal and self-regulation. These findings are interesting because they support the validity of emotional performance as a construct with clearly distinguishable subcategories and important potential real life-implications (i.e. association to subjective well-being). Furthermore, the findings support the distinction between appraisal- and regulation-processes proposed by Pekaar et al. (2020) and previous frameworks (Joseph & Newman, 2010).

While we found stronger evidence for the self-based subcategories, findings for the other-based subcategories were less clear. The findings suggest that the relationship between emotional performance and subjective well-being is primarily driven by the self-based subcategories of emotional performance. Altogether, the strongest association was found between emotional performance self-regulation and all three indices of subjective well-being. This is interesting because it highlights the importance of successful self-regulation. A strength of the current model is that it differentiates between two distinct emotion regulation processes, namely self-regulation and other-regulation (Pekkar et al., 2020), but further research is needed to establish stronger empirical evidence for the other-based emotional performance subcategories.

Unexpectedly, we also found a positive correlation between self-regulation and negative affect. An explanation may be that individuals who were experiencing negative affect would likely be motivated to engage in self-regulation to downregulate their negative emotions, resulting in a positive association between self-regulation and negative affect. Overall, however, the findings were in line with previous literature on the positive relationship between emotional intelligence and subjective well-being (Sánchez-Álvarez et al., 2016). The correlations we found between emotional performance and subjective well-being were smaller than those usually found between emotional intelligence and subjective well-being, especially for trait emotional intelligence. This may be explained by the fact that emotional performance examines a specific situation, whereas subjective well-being is a global self-rating, formulating an aggregated self-rating over many situations. Trait emotional ability is also measured as a global self-rating, which can be expected to produce higher correlations based on this common measurement method (Karimi & Meyer, 2019).

To test whether the link between emotional performance and subjective well-being was moderated by trait emotional intelligence and ability emotional intelligence, we

conducted 24 separate moderation analyses and only found 2 significant moderation effects (see Table 3). The first of the two significant moderation effects would suggest that having more ability emotional intelligence is associated with improved outcomes and therefore subjective well-being during emotionally demanding performance episodes. In contrast to our reasoning, the second interaction effect we observed suggests that for people with high baseline ability for appraising others emotions, successfully appraising them in a performance episode does not significantly improve their subjective well-being, since it is just normal performance for them. For people with low baseline ability for appraising others emotions, successfully appraising them in a performance episode may significantly improve their subjective well-being since their successful emotion-appraisal performance in this situation was better than their usual level.

However, we conclude that these two significant moderation effects were more likely based on chance and that we found no reliable empirical evidence for a moderating effect of trait or ability emotional intelligence for the relationship between emotional performance and subjective well-being.

Detecting no reliable moderation effect is an interesting finding and we propose that this might stem from the fact that the dependent variable of this study, subjective well-being, is a distal consequence and not a proximal consequence (Pekaar et al., 2020). That is, emotional performance is hypothesized to lead to better episodic performance (proximal consequence), which then leads to subjective well-being (distal consequence). Subjective well-being as a more distal consequence may not be only determined by episodic performance, i.e. goal progress (Klug & Maier, 2015), but also by one's perceived goal progress in relation to their expectations: According to Pomaki et al. (2009), "Individuals who started off with unfavorable goal cognitions but who managed to achieve goal progress reported an increase in well-being, compared with those who had favorable goal cognitions

and similar rates of progress” (p. 1). Individuals with high baseline levels of emotional intelligence may expect favorable outcomes from the beginning, while individuals with low levels may not expect such favorable outcomes. Performing well, then, may not result in higher levels of subjective well-being for high emotional intelligence individuals since they expected to do so from the beginning. This effect may have offset the anticipated moderating role of emotional intelligence for emotional performance and subjective well-being.

Furthermore, as discussed above, we believe that the association between emotional performance and subjective well-being we found is rather small due to comparing a specific episode to a general life evaluation, which made it more difficult to detect a moderation effect.

Theoretical and Practical Implications

In line with Pekaar et al.’s (2020) framework, our findings support the value of Buurma et al.’s (2023) new measure, emotional performance, as a tool to measure the use of emotions in a performance episode. Also, our findings show that emotions are used in specific performance episodes regardless of individuals’ levels of emotional intelligence.

For practice, our research might inspire companies and organization to tailor interventions to improve emotional performance: Specifically, such trainings could involve not only generally training how to apply emotional intelligence, but creating trainings that specifically suit the demands of the corresponding performance domain. For example, a training programme for medical personnel may include training specific emotional requirements such as discussing health-related information with patients sensitively or co-regulating stressed coworkers. Additionally, the emotional performance scale can be administered to assess how individuals who participate in such interventions performed and also examine if they would benefit from training specific dimensions of emotional

performance (i.e. the emotional performance subcategories self-appraisal, self-regulation, other-appraisal and other-regulation).

Limitations and Future Direction

One limitation of the current study is that correlation does not imply causation: While we found significant associations and theorized the mechanisms behind them, the current research was an exploratory correlational research and future experimental research will be needed to establish causality. We proposed that the mechanism through which emotional performance is associated with subjective well-being is that emotional performance shapes episodic performance, i.e. goal progress, which then translates to subjective well-being. While the current research concentrated on finding the general relationship between emotional performance and subjective well-being, future research might involve mediation analyses to examine if evidence for the proposed mechanism is found.

In line with this reasoning, subjective well-being is a general measure that was compared to a specific situation, which limits the depth with which we could examine how these emotional processes work. While we could lay a valuable foundation by establishing that there is a significant correlation between an individual's emotional performance in a specific situation and their general subjective well-being, future research may examine a more proximal outcome such as goal progress as the dependent variable in order to establish more direct associations and find larger effect sizes. This would be especially valuable for the other-based emotional performance subcategories to establish stronger empiric support for these categories. Such research may also establish a meaningful differentiation for differing outcome dimensions associated to the emotional performance subcategories in different situations:

For example, future research focusing more on an individual's goal progress as the dependent variable may find that the self-directed emotional performance subcategories are

more important while effects on relationship satisfaction may be more closely associated with the other-directed emotional performance subcategories. Additionally, there are situations that are driven by all four emotional performance subcategories and their interactions with each other: Successfully performing in a collaborative work project with multiple stakeholders requires performing both self- and other-directed emotion behaviors. Differentiating these subcategories in a situation and making the complex interactions between them visible may inspire exciting future research.

Finally, we proposed that we may have found no evidence because the moderating role of an individual's emotional intelligence on the relationship between emotional performance and subjective well-being may be offset by expectancy effects. Future research may focus on a more proximal dependent variable such as goal progress to examine if a moderating role of emotional intelligence is found in such a setting.

Conclusion

The current study provides empirical evidence for the association between emotional performance and subjective well-being, particularly for the emotional performance subcategory self-regulation. The findings highlight the value of conceptualizing emotional intelligence as a construct that is enacted in specific performance episodes and comprised of the subcategories self-appraisal, self-regulation, other-appraisal and other-regulation. Furthermore, moderation analyses suggest that the relationship between emotional performance and subjective well-being is not moderated by levels of emotional intelligence. This contributes to the conceptual distinction between emotional performance and emotional intelligence and might inspire future research to examine more proximal consequences of emotional performance to better understand its mechanisms. The current findings can be seen as evidence that individuals use their emotions in performance episodes regardless of their level of emotional intelligence

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Table 1*Means, Standard Deviations and Pearson Correlation Coefficients between all Study**Variables*

Variable	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1 EP-SA ^a	21.30	7.38	-							
2 EP-SR ^b	20.78	7.02	.40***	-						
3 EP-OA ^c	27.14	5.43	.36***	.35***	-					
4 EP-OR ^d	20.11	6.63	.31***	.47***	.46***	-				
5 SWLS ^e	24.10	6.11	.10*	.18***	.07	.12*	-			
6 PANAS-PA ^f	32.34	6.91	.23***	.30***	.14**	.30***	.45***	-		
7 PANAS-NA ^g	36.37	7.65	-.12*	.08	-.09	-.05	.35***	.17***	-	
8 TEIQue-SF ^h	144.45	19.91	.10*	.30***	.17***	.19***	.59***	.54***	.46***	-
9 STEU-B ⁱ	12.66	2.29	.02	-.03	.11*	-.04	.01	-.11*	.09	.13**

Note. $N = 466$, * $p < .05$; ** $< .01$; *** $< .001$

^aEP-SA = Emotional Performance - Self Appraisal. ^bEP-SR = Emotional Performance - Self Regulation. ^cEP-OA = Emotional Performance - Other Appraisal. ^dEP-OR = Emotional Performance -Other Regulation. ^eSWLS = Satisfaction With Life Scale. ^fPANAS-PA = Positive And Negative Affect Schedule – Positive Affect. ^gPANAS-NA = Positive And Negative Affect Schedule – Negative Affect. ^hTEIQue-SF = Trait Emotional Intelligence Questionnaire – Short Form. ⁱSTEU-B = Situational Test of Emotional Understanding – Brief

Table 2*Multiple Regression Results for Emotional Performance Regressed on Subjective Well-Being*

Predictor	SWLS ^b		PANAS-PA ^c		PANAS-NA ^d	
	<i>b</i> ^a	<i>SE_b</i>	<i>b</i> ^a	<i>SE_b</i>	<i>b</i> ^a	<i>SE_b</i>
EP-SA ^e	.03	.04	.11*	.05	-.16*	.05
EP-SR ^f	.13**	.05	.18***	.05	.21***	.06
EP-OA ^g	-.02	.06	-.08	.07	-.11	.08
EP-OR ^h	.04	.05	.22***	.06	-.07	.06
Intercept	20.54***	1.49	24.18***	1.60	39.44***	1.86
	<i>R</i> ² =.03		<i>R</i> ² =.13		<i>R</i> ² =.04	
	<i>F</i> (4, 461)=3.96,		<i>F</i> (4, 461)=17.83,		<i>F</i> (4, 461)=5.2,	
	<i>p</i> <.001		<i>p</i> <.001		<i>p</i> <.001	

Note. *N* = 466, **p* < .05; ** < .01; *** < .001

^aUnstandardized regression coefficients are presented

^bSWLS = Satisfaction With Life Scale. ^cPANAS-PA = Positive And Negative Affect

Schedule-Positive Affect. ^dPANAS-NA = Positive And Negative Affect Schedule-Negative

Affect. ^eEP-SA = Emotional Performance - Self Appraisal. ^fEP-SR = Emotional Performance

- Self Regulation. ^gEP-OA = Emotional Performance - Other Appraisal. ^hEP-OR = Emotional

Performance - Other Regulation.

Table 3

Summary of the two (out of 24) significant results of the Moderation Analyses using Hayes (2022) Model 1: Interaction Effects between all subcategories of Emotional Performance and Trait or Ability Emotional Intelligence

Explanatory variable	SWLS ^b		Explanatory variable	SWLS ^b	
	<i>b</i> ^a	<i>SE_b</i>		<i>b</i> ^a	<i>SE_b</i>
EP-SR ^c	.15***	.04	EP-OA ^c	.07	.05
STEU-B ^d	.03	.12	STEU-B	-.04	.13
EP-SR x STEU-B	.04*	.02	EP-OA x STEU-B	-.04*	.02
Intercept	24.12***	.28	Intercept	24.16***	.28
	$R^2 = .04$			$R^2 = .01$	
	$F(3, 462) = 6.37$			$F(3, 462) = 2.03$	
	$p < .001$			$p = .11$	

Note. $N = 466$, * $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$

^aUnstandardized regression coefficients are presented

^bSWLS = Satisfaction With Life Scale. ^cEP-SR = Emotional Performance - Self Regulation.

^dSTEU-B = Situational Test

of Emotional Understanding – Brief ^eEP-OA = Emotional Performance - Other Appraisal.

Figure 1

Conceptual Research Model

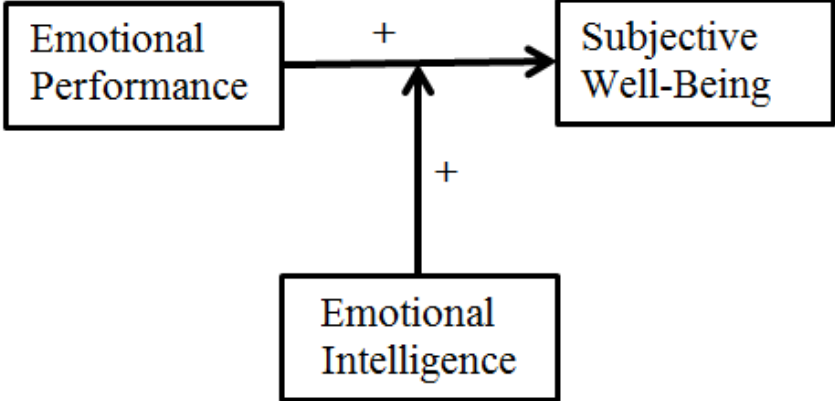


Figure 2

Simple Slopes for Satisfaction With Life on Emotional Performance Self-Regulation at values of Ability Emotional Intelligence.

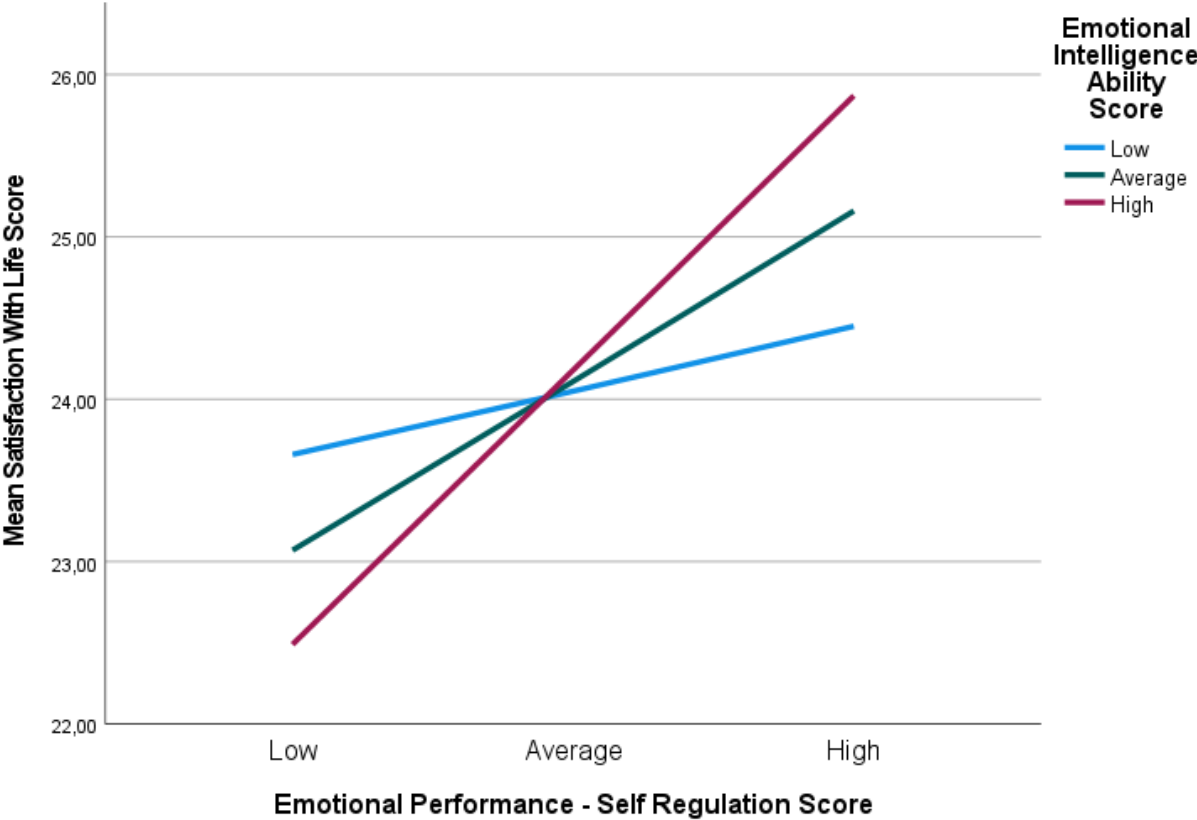
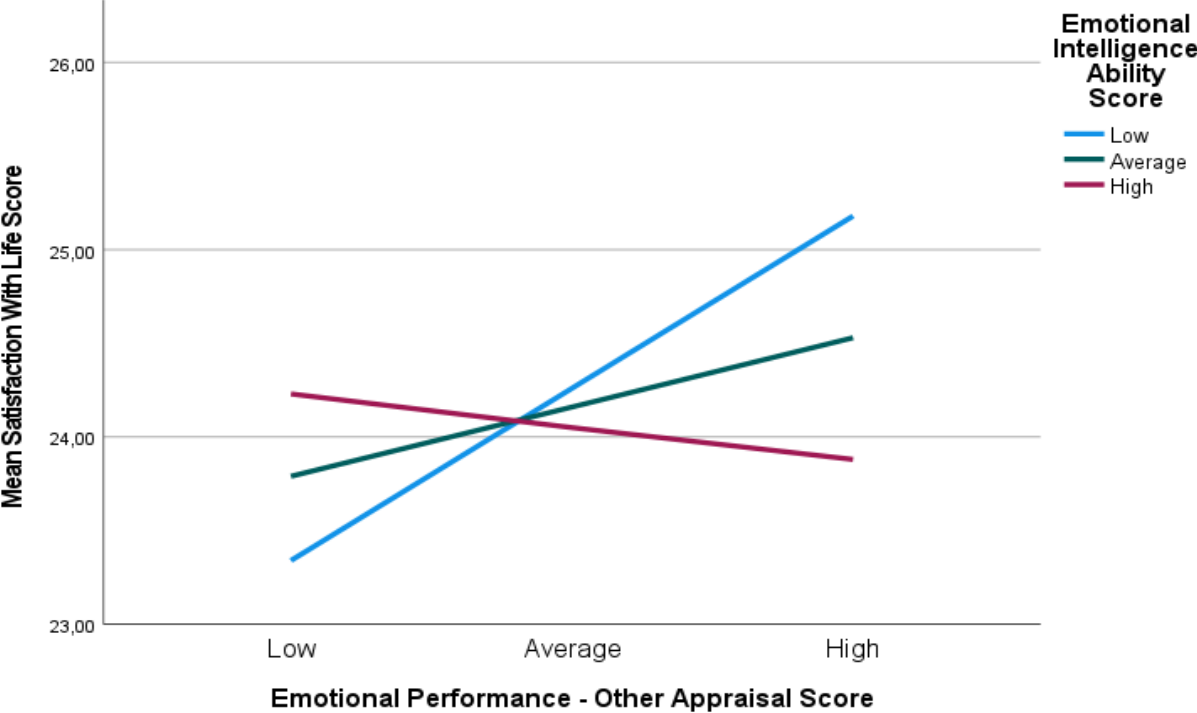


Figure 3

Simple Slopes for Satisfaction With Life on Emotional Performance Other-Appraisal at Values of Ability Emotional Intelligence.



Appendix

Skewness, Standard Error of the Skewness, Kurtosis and Standard Error of the Kurtosis for Satisfaction With Life Scale and Positive and Negative Affect Schedule

	Skewness	SE _{Skewness}	Kurtosis	SE _{Kurtosis}
SWLS ^a	-.60	.11	-.21	.23
PANAS-PA ^b	-.29	.11	-.39	.23
PANAS-NA ^c	-.48	.11	-.45	.23

Note. $N = 466$

^aSWLS = Satisfaction With Life Scale. ^bPANAS-PA = Positive And Negative Affect Schedule-Positive Affect. ^cPANAS-NA = Positive And Negative Affect Schedule-Negative Affect.