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FACTORIAL STRUCTURE AND VALIDITY OF THE EMOTIONAL SKILLS AND COMPETENCES QUESTIONNAIRE (ESCQ) IN SPANISH ADOLESCENTS

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Abstract

A growing body of research focuses on the concept and assessment of emotional competence due to the positive impact on positive youth development such as well-being. The Emotional Skills and Competences Questionnaire (ESCQ) has shown good psychometric properties in a cross-cultural setting. This study provides further evidence of the factorial structure of ESCQ using a new short version of 21 items. A total of 1300 students aged 12 to 15 years (*M*= 13.47, *SD*= 1.09) completed the original version of the ESCQ translated into Spanish. Data on emotional intelligence (TMMS-24), satisfaction with life (SWLS) and positive and negative affects (SPANE) were collected. Factor analysis confirmed the trifactorial structure of the reduced version (ESCQ-21), presenting adequate reliability indexes for each factor. Results provided evidence for construct validity and criterion validity. The ESCQ-21 factors were positively associated with the dimensions of TMMS-24, and predict subjective well-being (SWLS and SPANE). The ESCQ-21 appears to be an adequate evaluation tool to understand better how emotional skills may affect adolescent's subjective well-being.

KEY WORDS: *emotional competence, subjective well-being, self-report, adolescence.*

Resumen

Un creciente cuerpo de investigación se centra en el concepto y la evaluación de las competencias emocionales debido al impacto positivo en el desarrollo de los jóvenes. El "Cuestionario de habilidades y competencias emocionales" (ESCQ) ha mostrado buenas propiedades psicométricas en un entorno intercultural. En el presente estudio se demuestra la estructura factorial del ESCQ mediante una nueva versión reducida de 21 ítems. Participaron 1300 adolescentes entre 12 y 15 años (*M*= 13,47; *DT*= 1,09) que completaron la versión original traducida al español del ESCQ. Se recogieron datos sobre

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inteligencia emocional (TMMS-24), satisfacción con la vida (SWLS) y los afectos positivos y negativos (SPANE). Los análisis factoriales confirmaron la estructura trifactorial de la versión reducida (ESCQ-21), presentando coeficientes de fiabilidad adecuados para cada factor. Se obtuvieron evidencias de validez de constructo y referida al criterio. Los factores del ESCQ-21 se asocian positivamente con las dimensiones del TMMS y predicen el bienestar subjetivo (SPANE y SWLS). El ESCQ-21 parece ser un instrumento de evaluación adecuado para entender mejor cómo las habilidades emocionales pueden afectar el bienestar subjetivo de los adolescentes.
PALABRAS CLAVE: *competencia emocional, bienestar subjetivo, autoinforme, adolescencia.*

Introduction

Research on emotional competence (EC) in adolescence is still relevant given the influence it has on positive youth development (Esnaola, Revuelta, Ros, & Sarasa, 2017). Meta-analysis studies indicate that the development of emotional skills may lead to subjective well-being and mental health, as well as good academic performance (Martins, Ramalho, & Morin, 2010; Perera & DiGiacomo, 2013; Sánchez-Álvarez, Extremera, & Fernández-Berrocal, 2016). For this reason, the interest in conceptualizing and measuring EC has been growing in recent years. There is an on-going debate in literature about the distinction between EC and emotional intelligence (EI), as both are closely related but conceptually different. Furthermore, a considerable number of assessment tools have been developed for both constructs (Lau & Wu, 2012). Thus, in this study, we will define both concepts and briefly convey the conceptual differences between them. The main purpose of this research is to provide evidence of the factorial structure and validity of the Emotional Skills and Competencies Questionnaire (ESCQ), which has shown good psychometric properties to assess EC in a cross-cultural setting (Faria, et al., 2006).

Between the two, emotional "intelligence" is the more popular term in psychological research and has been traditionally defined as the ability to perceive, express, understand and manage emotions accurately (Mayer & Salovey, 1997). Psychologists have studied the construct from different approaches, considering EI either as a trait or an ability (Qualter, Gardner, Pope, Hutchinson, & Whiteley, 2012), or even using a mixed model (Bar-On, 2006). The ability model of emotional intelligence emphasizes the stable quality of emotional abilities in the individual (Mayer, Salovey, & Caruso, 2004).

However, the notion of emotional "competence" is gaining more attention, especially in Developmental and Educational Psychology, as it refers to a group of generic emotion-related skills (Garner, 2010). Saarni's (2000) definition of EC focuses on the emotional skills that are developed in the immediate social context responding to personal needs and demands from their environment. The eight skills proposed by Saarni can be summarized in three major components of emotional competence to handle emotion-related situations: 1) identifying and understating personal feelings and those of others; 2) expressing and

communicating emotions; and 3) coping adaptively with negative emotional responses (Buckley & Saarni, 2014).

The main difference between EC and EI is the approach of learning emotions and how to handle them (Buckley, Storino, & Saarni, 2003). EC emphasizes the skills, which a child develops through cultural and contextual socialization or may be acquired through a learning process. In contrast, EI is considered an innate ability or personality trait, which a child is born with. In this study we are using Saarni's definition of EC as the concept applies better to the educational setting, where skills and abilities are developed, rather than underlying a general intelligence that is inherited or in-born. Thus, individuals that are emotionally competent are reacting to their emotional environment with skills, while emotionally intelligent individual are responding with traits residing within themselves (Lau & Wu, 2012).

The developmental outcomes of EI among adolescents have been studied broadly in the national and international context, while the study of the impact of EC has been neglected. For instance, research has shown the direct impact of EI on bullying and victimization behaviours (Beltrán-Catalán, Zych, Ortega-Ruiz, & Llorent, 2018; Peachey, Wenos, & Baller, 2017), self-esteem (Extremera, Quintana-Orts, Mérida-López, & Rey, 2018), subjective well-being (Sánchez-Álvarez et al., 2016; Serrano & Andreu, 2016), satisfaction with life (Reina & Oliva, 2015; Sánchez-Álvarez, Extremera, & Fernández-Berrocal, 2015), positive and negative affects (Di Fabio & Kenny, 2016; Megías, Gómez-Leal, Gutiérrez-Cobo, Cabello, & Fernández-Berrocal, 2018), as well as academic performance (Fernández-Berrocal, Ruiz-Aranda, Martín-Salguero, & Extremera, 2018), in both adolescent's (Fernández-Berrocal & Extremera, 2016) and adult's (Mérida-López, Extremera, & Rey, 2017; Petrides et al., 2016) populations.

Fewer studies have focused on the influence of EC on adolescents' developmental and well-being. There is some evidence that emotional competence enhances self-esteem (Reina & Oliva, 2015), social awareness (Coelho, Marchante, & Sousa, 2015), well-being (Ciarrochi & Scott, 2006), mental health (Mathews, Koehn, Abtahi, & Kerns, 2016) and life-satisfaction (López-Cassá, Pérez-Escoda, & Alegre, 2018). An intervention study showed that the development of emotional competence effectively accounted for better peer relationships in the classroom by reducing cyberbullying behaviour and improving the subjective well-being of adolescents in a Spanish school setting (Schoeps, Villanueva, & Prado-Gascó, 2018). In addition, further studies have shown age and gender-related differences in emotional competences. Females typically present a greater capacity to perceive and understand emotions (Schoeps, Tamarit, & Montoya-Castilla, 2017; Takšić, Mohorić, & Duran, 2009), whereas expression and emotional management do not vary among genders (Costa & Faria, 2016); in both genders, it increases with age (Esnaola et al., 2017).

Regarding the assessment of EC, measurements originally developed for EI have been commonly used, assuming that these instruments are compatible for studying EC. For instance, the Trait-Meta-Mood-Scale (TMMS), developed by Salovey, Mayer, Goldman, Turvey and Palfai (1995) has been the measurement of choice for psychologists to study emotional abilities and skills in a variety of

populations in different cultural contexts (Martins et al., 2010; Sánchez-Álvarez et al., 2016; Vergara, Alonso-Alberca, San-Juan, Aldás, & Vozmediano, 2015). Few measures are available to assess EC in adolescents and their psychometric properties is frequently criticized (Stewart-Brown & Edmunds, 2007). One of them is the Emotional Skills and Competence Questionnaire (ESCQ; Takšić et al., 2009), which was originally validated in a sample of students 14 to 19 years old in the Croatian context and was later validated in other cultural contexts mainly in adult populations (Faria et al., 2006; Faria & Lima-Santos, 2012). One study of the psychometric characteristics of adults was conducted using the Spanish version (Faria et al., 2006). However, the existence of an adaptation with rigorous validation in a young Spanish population is not known. Thus, adapting and validating a reliable measurement of EC, would make an important contribution to theory and developmental process, as well as a useful tool for educators and professionals assessing the impact of social emotional prevention and intervention in the classroom and in clinical settings (Mayer, Caruso, & Salovey, 2016).

This reviewed literature highlights the importance of EC for the development of adolescent's well-being and positive mental health (Esnaola et al., 2017). The ESCQ provides a reliable measure of emotional skills, unlike other assessment tools developed for EI, due to its specificity and the behavioural approach of the items. For this reason, the study of the validity of ESCQ – including construct and criterion validity – makes a meaningful contribution to this field of research. The aim of the present study was to analyse the factorial structure of the ESCQ and provide further evidence for validity in Spanish adolescents. Therefore, the internal consistency was examined and exploratory and confirmatory factor analyses were performed to provide evidence of criterion validity. Based on previous studies, EC is expected to correlate positively with EI (convergent validity), and to explain part of the variance of life satisfaction and positive and negative affects of adolescents (incremental and predictive validity) (Di Fabio & Kenny, 2016; Gomez-Baya, Mendoza, Paino, & De Matos, 2017); gender differences are expected, with higher scores in females (Schoeps et al., 2017).

Method

Participants

For this study, a convenience sample of 1300 students was chosen. The participants were adolescents, 12 to 15 years of age (M= 13.47, SD= 1.09), equally distributed according to gender and age (53.50% girls, n= 321 for 12 year olds, n= 341 for 13 year olds, n= 342 for 14 year olds, n= 296 for 15 year olds). In addition, 46.39% of the participants were enrolled in public secondary schools and 53.61% in four private schools with catholic affiliation; all ten education centres were located in the Valencian Community, Spain.

Instruments

a) *Emotional Skills and Competencies Questionnaire* (ESCQ; Takšić et al., 2009), adapted to Spanish by Extremera and Fernández-Berrocal (Faria et al., 2006). The original ESCQ is composed of 45 items with six alternative responses ranging from 1 (*never*) to 6 (*always*) with higher scores indicating higher emotional competence. The questionnaire is composed of three subscales: 1) Perceive and understanding emotion (PU) assesses the ability to identify and discriminate emotions in one's own feelings, thoughts and behaviours; 2) Express and label emotion (EL) measures the capacity to express one's own emotional states adequately and name them correctly; 3) Manage and regulate emotion (MR) refers to the competence to effectively readjust one's own emotions to attain a desired outcome. The reliability of the subscales has been adequate in previous studies (α= .74-.86) (Faria et al., 2006).
b) *Trait Meta-Mood Scale* (TMMS; Salovey et al., 1995), adapted to Spanish by Fernández-Berrocal and Extremera (2004). This scale evaluates people's meta-knowledge about their emotional abilities and is composed of 24 items, with five alternative responses (1= *very much disagree*; 5= *very much agree*). The three subscales are attention to one's feelings (Attention), emotional clarity (Clarity) and mood repair (Repair). The internal consistency is good (α= .86-.90) (Velasco, Fernández, Páez, & Campos, 2006).
c) *Satisfaction with Life Scale* (SWLS; Diener, Emmons, Larsen, & Griffin, 1985), Spanish version by Atienza, Pons, Balaguer, & García-Merita (2000). The SWLS consists of five items with seven response alternatives ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 7 (strongly *agree*). The scale measures the cognitive component of subjective well-being, thus higher scores indicate a more positive assessment of feelings about one's life. The internal consistency in the present study was excellent (α= .85), as has been confirmed by previous studies (Pavot & Diener, 2008).
d) *Scale of Positive and Negative Experience* (SPANE; Diener et al., 2010), adapted to Spanish by Silva and Caetano (2013). The SPANE is a 12-item scale that assesses desirable (positive affects, six items) and undesirable (negative affects, six items) feelings on a Likert scale from 1 (never) to 5 (always). The balance score was computed by subtracting negative affects from positive affects. The scale has good psychometric properties, with Cronbach's α ranging from .81 to .89 (Diener, 2010).

Procedure

In this study, we used a cross-sectional design to adapt and validate the ESCQ scale. Before data collection, parents of participating students gave their written consent and were informed about the purpose of the investigation. Participation in the study was voluntary and anonymous. All students from 7th to 10th grade were invited to participate in the study, although those without signed parent consent didn't complete the assessment. The data were collected in groups during school

hours in the classrooms and took approximately 50 minutes. The order of the questionnaires was randomly altered in two different versions of the survey. The researchers received permission from the ethics committee of the University of Valencia as well as from the management teams of the educational canters.

The adapted version of the ESCQ hasn't been published neither did the authors of the study described the followed procedure. Therefore, we considered it necessary to carry out a rigorous adaptation of the ESCQ questionnaire, following the guidelines of the International Test Commission (ITC) (Muñiz, Suárez-Álvarez, Pedrosa, Fonseca-Pedrero, & García-Cueto, 2014). The first step was to carry out independent translations by Spanish and English speakers, which were then reviewed by an expert group composed of four qualified people with knowledge of languages and Spanish (1) and Anglo-Saxon (2) culture, of the evolutionary stage of adolescents (3) and of the evaluation processes themselves (4). The consensus version was completed by a pilot sample of 350 adolescents, with the purpose of detecting content or format problems, verifying that the students understood the language, recording the time it took to respond, and noting common uncertainties. Finally, the final version was administered to 1300 adolescents in the presence of the same two psychologists who had been previously trained in the test procedure.

Data analysis

The psychometric properties of the 45 items of the original scale were analyzed with the complete sample using SPSS V.22 (Allen, Bennett, & Heritage, 2014). For purposes of cross-validation, the sample was randomly divided into two subsamples. Sub-sample 1 (n= 650) and sub-sample 2 (n= 650) were statistically independent with composition equivalent by age (one-way ANOVA, p= .22) and gender (χ^2 sample independence test, p= .12). With the first subsample, exploratory factor analysis (EFA) was carried out with the FACTOR 9.2 program using the Unweighted Least-Squares (ULS) method, parallel analysis and direct oblimin rotation (Lloret-Segura, Ferreres-Traver, Hernández-Baeza, & Tomás-Marco, 2014), and with the second sample, confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) was performed using MPlus 7.0 (Muthén & Muthén, 2017). Numbers of latent and observed variables were taken into consideration to estimate the necessary sample size to detect a large effect size (d= 0.50) with a power of 0.80 and an alpha or probability level of .01. A-priori sample size calculator for structural equation models (Soper, 2018) indicates a minimum sample size of 116 participants given the structural complexity of the model; the sample size of the present study is much higher (N= 1300). The fit of the model was estimated using four indices recommended by Hu and Bentler (1999): chi-square test of model fit (χ^2), comparative fit index (CFI), Tucker Lewis index (TLI), and root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA), which is an operationalization of the estimated effect size dimension of model fit, specifically in the context of structural equation models (Kelley & Preacher, 2012). Smaller RMSEA values indicate a better estimated effect size dimension of the model fit, with values $\leq$ .08 considered adequate, while higher IFC and TLI values indicate a better model fit, with values $\geq$ .09 considered

adequate (MacCallum & Austin, 2000). After obtaining the appropriate adjustments in the CFA, the reliability indexes of the new structure (FACTOR) were recalculated. Cronbach's α greater than .70, average variance extracted (AVE) levels above .50 and composite reliability coefficient (CRC) above .70 are considered adequate (Valentini & Damásio, 2016).

The convergent validity was verified to provide empirical evidence on the validity of the construct, and the incremental validity was verified as a method of checking the validity in reference to the criterion. For this, the association with the TMMS-24 was analyzed through Pearson's correlation coefficients (SPSS), and a predictive model of SWLS and SPANE was constructed using hierarchical multiple regressions analysis (Álvarez-García, Núñez, Barreiro-Collazo, & García, 2017). Correlation and regression coefficients are used here as an indicator of the effect size to quantify the strength of the relation with the criterion variable, emotional competence (Hair, Black, Babin, & Anderson, 2010; Kelley & Preacher, 2012). In addition, the square root of the AVE values from ESCQ subscales were calculated. Such values higher than the correlation between pairs of factors or dimensions indicate adequate indexes (Hussy, Schreier, & Echterhoff, 2013).

Finally, a multi-group analysis of structural equation models (multi-group SEM) was carried out in four steps to verify factorial invariance which allows for latent mean comparison (Brown, 2006). All results were reported following the recommendations of the APA Working Group on Quantitative Research Reporting Standards (Appelbaum et al., 2018).

Results

Reliability analysis

The reliability of the questionnaire's original structure was calculated by the mean, standard deviation, item-total correlation and Cronbach's α of each item as well as the reliability coefficients of each scale. The total reliability of the scale is high (Cronbach's α= .94), and the coefficients AVE and CRC of the subscales present adequate values (Cronbach's α= .90; AVE= .46; CRC= .93 for PU, Cronbach's α= .89, AVC= .48, CRC= .93 for EL, and Cronbach's α= .83, AVE= .34, CRC= .89 for MR).

Factorial structure of the ESCQ

The factorial validity was verified through the exploratory and confirmatory analyses of the original ESCQ scale (Table 1). The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin index (KMO= .93) and Bartlett's sphericity test, χ^2= 4765.70; *df*= 210; p< .001, were adequate (Gómez-Ortiz, Romera, Ortega-Ruiz, Cabello, & Fernández-Berrocal, 2016). Exploratory factorial analysis (EFA) was performed with the FACTOR program in the first subsample. The EFA fixed to three factors showed adequate adjustment indexes (RMSEA= .03; GFI= .994). Confirmatory factorial analysis (CFA) with the

second subsample did not present a good fit, χ^2 (*df*)= 5164.742 (945); RMSEA (CI)= .083 (.081-.085); CFI= .47; TLI= .45.

Table 1

Exploratory (EFA) and confirmatory (CFA) factor analysis of the original scale ESCQ-45

Item number	EFA			CFA
	F1	F2	F3	
F1: Perceive and understanding emotions (PU)				
3.	**.596**	.016	.000	.579
6.	**.577**	.018	.084	.634
9.	**.530**	.137	.032	.623
12.	**.582**	-.022	.116	.638
15.	.288	.240	.016	.450
18.	**.651**	.051	.002	.664
21.	**.805**	.015	-.055	.694
24.	**.622**	-.049	.088	.621
27.	**.458**	.039	.041	.463
30.	**.633**	.064	-.024	.638
33.	**.581**	-.068	.075	.609
36.	**.602**	.005	.054	.618
39.	**.665**	-.002	-.000	.672
42.	**.715**	-.095	-.020	.631
44.	.324	.386	-.030	.548
F2: Express and label emotion (EL)				
2.	-.041	.101	**.649**	.661
5.	.151	.012	.167	.273
8.	.249	.249	.132	.478
11.	.249	.249	.132	.771
14.	.043	.019	**.729**	.718
17.	-.111	.084	**.735**	.747
20.	.064	-.011	**.725**	.762
23.	.100	-.058	**.745**	.691
26.	-.019	.103	**.649**	.382
29.	.326	.148	.075	.475
32.	.316	.123	.209	.485
35.	.246	.150	.252	.342
38.	.281	.070	.117	.782
41.	-.027	-.084	**.873**	.734
F3: Manage and regulate emotion (MR)				
1.	-.109	**.531**	.084	.524
4.	-.036	**.506**	.015	.499
7.	.223	.302	.031	.507
10	.196	**.483**	-.056	.535
13.	.170	-.065	.124	.222
16.	.191	.162	.005	.335
19.	.198	**.411**	.021	.599
22.	.238	.233	-.054	.377
25.	.123	**.441**	-.002	.492

Item number	EFA			CFA
	F1	F2	F3	
28.	.263	.280	.114	.528
31.	.360	.227	.040	.516
34.	-.039	**.690**	.098	.639
37.	-.029	.360	.187	.513
40.	.013	.256	.220	.417
43.	.015	**.665**	-.001	.613
45.	.199	.151	.244	.485

Note: EFA= exploratory factor analysis; CFA= confirmatory factor analysis. Items and dimensions are displayed according to the Spanish version ESCQ-45 (Faria et al., 2006). The highest factor loads in each item are shown in bold.

The items that had the worst item-total correlation and factorial saturations below .40 were eliminated; therefore, items 2, 5, 7, 8, 13, 15, 16, 22, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 35, 36, 40, 42, 44 and 45 were eliminated. The final structure (Figure 1), composed of 21 items, had good model fit indices, χ^2 (*df*)= 552.165 (186); RMSEA (CI)= .055 (.05-.06); CFI= .93; TLI= .92, and good internal consistency, which is reflected in Cronbach's α coefficients ranging from .79 to .90., AVE levels between .40 and .58 and CRC levels between .82 and .90 (Table 2).

Table 2
Item and dimension reliability of the Spanish version ESCQ-21

New item number (original)	Item	*M*	*SD*	r_{jx}
Perceive and understanding emotions (α= .84 AVE= .44 CRC= .85)				
1. (3)	When I meet an acquaintance, I immediately notice his/her mood.	4.40	1.22	.47
4. (6)	When I see how someone feels, I usually know what has happened to him/her	4.20	1.16	.50
7. (9)	I am able to tell the difference if my friend is sad or disappointed.	4.81	1.13	.50
10. (12)	I am able to detect my friend's mood changes.	4.73	1.07	.50
13. (18)	If I observe a person in the presence of others, I can determine precisely his/her emotions.	4.19	1.14	.55
16. (21)	I do not have difficulty to notice when somebody feels helpless.	4.68	1.04	.53
19. (39)	I notice when somebody feels down.	4.51	1.11	.49
Express and label emotion (α= .90 AVE= .58 CRC= .90)				
2. (11)	I am capable to list the emotions that I am currently experiencing.	3.94	1.37	.64
5. (14)	I am able to express my emotions well.	4.12	1.39	.59
8. (17)	I am able to express how I feel.	4.22	1.38	.64
11. (20)	I am capable to describe my present emotional state.	4.28	1.33	.65
14. (23)	I can say that I know a lot about my emotional state.	4.42	1.31	.61

New item number (original)	Item	*M*	*SD*	r_{jx}
17. (38)	I can easily name most of my feelings.	3.97	1.36	.65
20. (41)	I can recognize most of my feelings.	4.22	1.28	.63
Manage and regulate emotion (α= .79 AVE= .40 CRC= .82)				
3. (1)	I am able to maintain a good mood even if something bad happens.	4.33	1.25	.47
6. (4)	I can maintain a good mood, even when the people around me are in a bad mood.	4.43	1.24	.42
9. (10)	When somebody praises me, I work with more enthusiasm.	5.02	1.14	.45
12. (19)	When I am in a good mood, every problem seems soluble.	4.70	1.12	.51
15. (34)	I try to control unpleasant emotions, and strengthen positive ones.	4.41	1.28	.56
18. (37)	There is nothing wrong with how I usually feel.	4.21	1.32	.44
21. (43)	I try to keep up a good mood.	4.96	1.13	.51

Notes: CRC= composite reliability coefficients; AVE= average variance extracted. CRC acceptable ≥.70; AVE acceptable ≥.40. Items and dimensions are displayed according to the Spanish version ESCQ-21 (Appendix). Item numbers of the Spanish version ESCQ-45 are shown in parentheses (Faria et al., 2016).

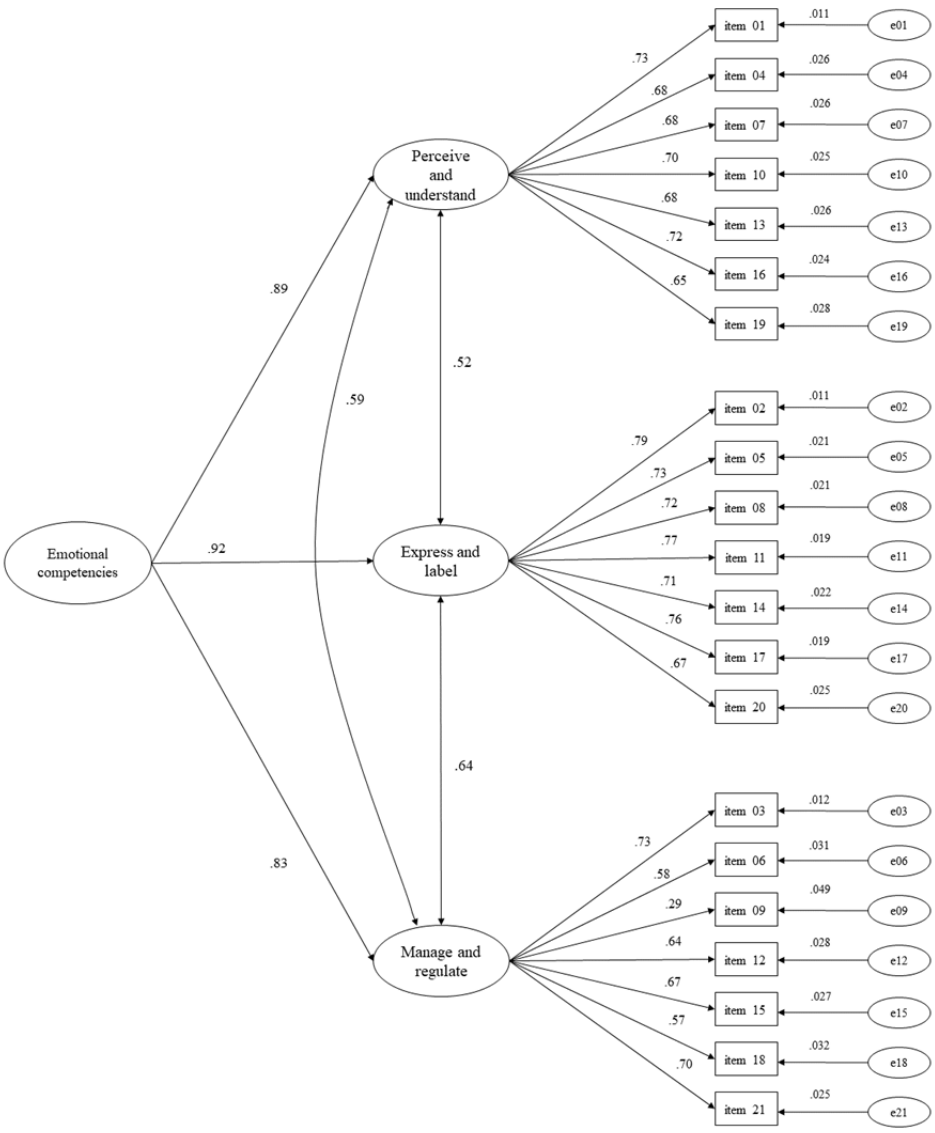
Validity analysis

With regard to convergent validity, the square root of the AVE from ESCQ dimensions, with values higher than the correlation between pairs of factors (Table 3), indicating adequate indexes. The trifactorial structure of the ESCQ-21 shows that factor loads were high and significant (Figure 1); that is, scale factors strongly correlate with the latent variable to be evaluated, emotional competence.

Pearson's correlations were conducted to compare the ESCQ-21 with another instrument (TMMS) measuring emotional intelligence. The correlation coefficients account for a medium-large effect size (*r* between .37 and .61), indicating that the dimensions of both instruments measure similar but different concepts (Table 3).

A hierarchical multiple regression analysis was performed to study the association of ESCQ with subjective well-being. In the first step, demographic variables were entered in order to control the impact of gender and age. In the second step, the three subscale of TMMS-24 were entered, followed by a block of the three emotional competencies (ESCQ-21) in the last step. The results of the regression analysis were very similar for both of the measurements of subjective well-being (SWLS and SPANE). In the third step, emotional competence triggered a significant increase for both models controlled for the other variables, showing a significant and unique contribution of emotional competence in explaining the criteria. Regression coefficients (SWLS: R^2= .32) and (SPANE: R^2= .33) indicated a significant effect on the linear relation between EC and the criterion variable, while holding the demographic variables and EI constant (Table 4).

Figure 1
Factorial structure of the Spanish version of the ESCQ-21



Note: Factor loadings are standardized. Items and dimensions are displayed according to the Spanish version ESCQ-21 (Appendix). Each subscale score is the sum of the corresponding item scores.

Table 3
Correlations among ESCQ-21 dimensions (intercorrelations), correlations with TMMS scales, and square root of the AVE values in the total sample

Variables	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1. PU	(.67)							
2. EL	.45**	(.76)						
3. RM	.50**	.54**	(.63)					
4. AT	.33**	.29**	.19**	-				
5. CL	.37**	.61**	.42**	.37**	-			
6. RE	.30**	.41**	.61**	.26**	.47**	-		
7. SWLS	.23**	.40**	.50**	.07*	.35**	.42**	-	
8. AB	.15**	.36**	.50**	-.02	.32**	.43**	.49**	-
7. Age	-.04	-.09**	-.13**	.07*	-.06*	-.13**	-.16**	-.17**

Notes: PU= perceive and understanding emotions; EL= Express and label emotion; MR= manage and regulate emotion; AT= attention; CL= clarity; RE= repair; SWLS= Satisfaction with Life Scale; AB= Affect balance. AVE square root on the diagonal. *p< .05; **p< .01.

Table 4
Hierarchical multiple regression for variables predicting subjective well-being

Predictor	Satisfaction with life				Balance			
	ΔR^2	ΔF	β	*t*	ΔR^2	ΔF	β	*t*
Step 1	.03	18.13***			.05	33.61***		
Sex			.05	1.57			.15***	5.39***
Age			-.17	-5.81***			-.17***	-6.16***
Step 2	.20	98.52***			.20	111.08***		
AT			-.09	-3.05**			-.17***	-6.21***
CL			.25	7.90***			.20***	7.02***
RE			.32	10.57***			.36***	12.78***
Step 3	.08	45.42***			.08	51.43***		
PU			-.06	-1.85			-.10***	-3.53***
EL			.13	3.59**			.11***	3.39**
MR			.34	9.31***			.35***	10.32***
Total	.32	64.79***			.33	77.80***		

Notes: AT= attention; CL= clarity; RE= repair; PU= perceive and understanding emotions; EL= express and label emotion; MR= manage and regulate emotion. *p< .05; **p< .01; ***p< .001.

Sex differences

The multi-group factorial invariance in the ESCQ-21 scales was calculated in four steps (Brown, 2006): 1) perform the CFA separately for females and for males, with the basic configuration of the model; 2) analyze the invariance in the

groups separately (Model 0); 3) analyze the equivalence of factorial loadings (Model 1); and 4) check the equivalence of intercepts (Model 2). The results (Table 5) confirm the partial scalar invariance of the ESCQ-21, which allows for latent group mean comparisons. Comparisons between the latent means of both genders indicate that females score significantly higher in PU (β= -.43, $p \leq .01$) and lower in MR (β= .013, p= .04) than males.

Table 5
Analysis of factorial multigroup invariance across sexes

Models	χ^2 (*df*)	SB$\Delta\chi^2$ [CFI]	Δdf [RMSEA]	p (> χ^2)
Configural (model 0)	712.01 (372)	[.96]	[.03]	
Loadings (model 1)	778.16 (393)	69.82	21	< .001
Loadings (model 1b)	739.15 (390)	25.98	20	. 17
Intercepts (model 2)	772.08 (408)	32.54	18	< .01
Intercepts (model 2b)	759.85 (406)	17.41	16	.36

Note: SB$\Delta\chi^2$= Satorra-Bentler scaled chi-square, ***df***= degrees of freedom. CFI= Comparative fit index, configural invariance only. RMSEA= Root-mean-square error of approximation, configural invariance only.

Discussion

Given the importance of emotional skills and competence for children and adolescent's personal development and their positive influence on subjective well-being and mental health (Esnaola et al., 2017; López-Cassá et al., 2018; Sánchez-Álvarez et al., 2016), the aim of this research was to provide further evidence about the reliability and validity of the Emotional Skills and Competencies Questionnaire (ESCQ, Takšić et al., 2009) in Spanish adolescents. The ESCQ-21 has good internal consistency, with reliability indexes similar to those of the original scale. The exploratory and confirmatory factorial analyses show that the three-factor model best fits the sample data: 1) Perceive and understand emotion (PU) 2) Express and label emotion (EL), and 3) Manage and regulate emotion (MR). These results correspond to previous studies that propose a trifactorial structure of the original scale (Faria, et al., 2006; Faria & Lima-Santos, 2012; Takšić et al., 2009). Therefore, the abbreviated 21-item questionnaire adapted for the Spanish population has successfully replicated the original structure. The ESCQ-21 model shows good model fit indices because the factorial loads were high and significant and similar to or even higher than those observed in previous validation studies in other cultural contexts (Faria et al., 2006; Faria & Lima-Santos, 2012).

The results indicate that the ESCQ-21 meets the criteria for convergent, predictive and incremental validity: 1) ESCQ-21 was positively related to EI; 2) predicted subjective well-being; 3) showed a significant and unique contribution for manage and regulate emotions. The convergent validity of the ESCQ-21 was analyzed to provide evidence of construct validity. First, the 21 items correlate significantly and highly with the latent variable they intend to evaluate. The intercorrelations between the three scales of the ESCQ-21 have adequate values (Hussy et al., 2013). Second, the results confirm the relationship between the

emotional competence constructs (ESCQ) and EI (TMMS-24), demonstrating that the dimensions of both scales measure similar concepts. These results provide evidence that the ESCQ-21 is a valid measure of emotional abilities.

The incremental validity of the instrument was determined by establishing causal relationships between emotional competences (ESCQ) and the affective and cognitive components of subjective well-being evaluated by SPANE and SWLS. Although all dimensions of the ESCQ-21 are significant predictors of subjective well-being, the competence to manage and regulate emotions is the dimension that best predicts affect and life satisfaction. The competence to perceive and understand emotions has an inverse relationship with subjective well-being (Di Fabio & Kenny, 2016; Gomez-Baya et al., 2017). Theses findings are consistent with a recent review that suggests a greater effect of emotional management on cognitive and affective well-being than the other emotional abilities (Fernández-Berrocal & Extremera, 2016).

Finally, factorial invariance analyses indicate that the structure of the ESCQ-21 shows scalar invariance across gender groups. That is, it is certain that the contents of the items represent the same concepts for both females and males, ruling out the possibility that differences obtained are instrument-related. The gender differences observed in the Spanish version are similar to those of the original scale (Takšić et al., 2009). The results coincide with previous studies that have shown that females score better in perception and comprehension of emotions, while males score better in managing and regulating emotions (Schoeps et al., 2017).

We highlight the original and novel character of this study by offering a psychometric investigation of a new version of the ESCQ reduced to 21 items that was adapted and validated for use in an adolescent Spanish population. The ESCQ-21 presents good reliability and validity indexes, using a large sample that guarantees a large effect size and power of the statistical results. Therefore, it can be considered an adequate evaluation tool for emotional competences. The brevity of the scale also facilitates its application and correction in both school and clinical context.

However, future research should continue the study of reliability by analysing the temporal stability of the data using a longitudinal design. In addition, it would be interesting to study into depth the relationship of ESCQ-21 with other constructs variables related to adolescent's subjective well-being and mental health such as depressive symptoms and perceived stress (Gomez-Baya et al., 2017; Serrano & Andreu, 2016). Thus, both clinical professionals as well as teaching staff would be able to identify students with difficulties to cope with day-to-day problems and teenage patients who are more vulnerable to develop emotional and relational problems (Extremera et al., 2018).

In summary, the ESCQ-21 is a valid and reliable self-report measurement of how Spanish adolescents perceive and identify, understand and label, manage and regulate emotional stimuli. Thus, this questionnaire can serve as a suitable tool for researchers and professionals from different disciplines to evaluate emotional abilities and compare their results with those of studies conducted in different cultures and countries, expanding scientific knowledge internationally. Furthermore, the ESCQ-21 could be useful to assess the effects of social and

emotional learning programs, which aim to improve student's emotional and social abilities.

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Appendix

Cuestionario de habilidades y competencias emocionales (ESCQ-21)

Por favor, lea cada una de las afirmaciones que se presentan a continuación y responda de forma inmediata sin emplear mucho tiempo en cada respuesta. No hay respuestas correctas ni incorrectas, simplemente señala la respuesta que más se aproxime a tu preferencia, usando la siguiente escala.

1	2	3	4	5	6
Nunca	Raramente	Pocas veces	Algunas veces	Frecuentemente	Siempre

1.	Cuando me encuentro alguien conocido, me doy cuenta inmediatamente de su estado de ánimo.	1	2	3	4	5	6
2.	Soy capaz de enumerar las emociones que estoy experimentando ahora mismo.	1	2	3	4	5	6
3.	Soy capaz de mantener el buen humor aunque pase algo malo.	1	2	3	4	5	6
4.	Cuando veo cómo se siente alguien, normalmente sé lo que le ha pasado.	1	2	3	4	5	6
5.	Soy capaz de expresar bien mis emociones.	1	2	3	4	5	6
6.	Puedo mantener el buen humor, aunque las personas de mi alrededor estén de mal humor.	1	2	3	4	5	6
7.	Soy capaz de diferenciar si mi amigo/a está triste o decepcionado/a.	1	2	3	4	5	6
8.	Soy capaz de expresar cómo me siento.	1	2	3	4	5	6
9.	Cuando alguien me alaba, puedo actuar con más entusiasmo.	1	2	3	4	5	6
10.	Soy capaz de detectar los cambios de humor en mis amigos/as.	1	2	3	4	5	6
11.	Soy capaz de describir mi estado emocional actual.	1	2	3	4	5	6
12.	Cuando estoy de buen humor, todos los problemas parecen tener solución.	1	2	3	4	5	6
13.	Al observar a una persona cuando está con otras, puedo determinar de forma precisa sus emociones.	1	2	3	4	5	6
14.	Puedo afirmar que conozco bien mi estado emocional actual.	1	2	3	4	5	6
15.	Intento controlar mis emociones desagradables y potenciar las positivas.	1	2	3	4	5	6
16.	Tengo facilidad para darme cuenta si una persona se siente incapaz.	1	2	3	4	5	6
17.	Puedo nombrar fácilmente la mayoría de mis sentimientos.	1	2	3	4	5	6
18.	No hay nada malo en cómo me siento normalmente.	1	2	3	4	5	6
19.	Percibo cuando alguien se siente desanimado.	1	2	3	4	5	6
20.	Puedo reconocer la mayoría de mis sentimientos.	1	2	3	4	5	6
21.	Intento mantener el buen humor.	1	2	3	4	5	6