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Trait emotional intelligence questionnaire full-form and short-form versions: Links with sport participation frequency and duration and type of sport practiced

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ABSTRACT

The main aim of this paper was to investigate further the relationship between trait emotional intelligence (trait EI) and sport participation, and more particularly its association with the amount of sport participation and the type of sport practiced (individual vs. team). A secondary aim was to investigate whether similar results would be obtained with the full-form (TEIQue-FF) and the short-form (TEIQue-SF) of the trait emotional intelligence questionnaire. A total of 972 athletes were asked to fill out the TEIQue-FF and TEIQue-SF, as well as information related to sport participation. Results showed that almost all dimensions of the TEIQue-FF and TEIQue-SF were significantly positively related to the amount of sport participation (for both frequency and duration). No differences emerged according to the type of sport, suggesting that trait EI plays an equally important role in both individual and team sports. Although large correlations were found between the TEIQue-SF and TEIQue-FF and similar results were obtained with both scales when combined with outcome criteria, the trait EI scores obtained with the TEIQue-SF are systematically higher than those obtained with the TEIQue-FF. Finally, future research should focus on longitudinal studies to investigate further the relationship between trait EI and sport participation.

1. Introduction

Sport participation plays an important role in public health (Haskell et al., 2007), and therefore understanding the factors that trigger sport participation is crucial. Personality factors have been shown to be linked to sport participation in a bi-directional relationship (Allen & Laborde, 2014), suggesting that personality may influence sport participation and sport participation may, in turn, influence personality development (Allen, Magee, Vella, & Laborde, 2016). A relevant theoretical foundation for such a relationship concerns evolutionary benign personality traits, as identified by the general factor of personality (Rushton, Bons, & Hur, 2008). From this perspective, an adaptive personality would be assumed to associate with healthy lifestyle decisions that promote adaptation and surviving (Rushton et al., 2008) and socially adaptive coping (Hengartner, van der Linden, Bohleber, & von Wyl, 2016). In other words, an individual with a healthy personality would be expected to engage in healthy activities. Among the personality traits that may predispose people to engage in healthy activities, trait emotional intelligence (trait EI) has been shown to be related to the way people participate in sport (Laborde, Dosseville, & Allen, 2016). Trait EI represents a constellation of emotional perceptions assessed via questionnaires and rating scales (Petrides, Pita, & Kokkinaki, 2007). Interestingly, people with a high score on the general factor of personality are expected to have higher levels of emotional intelligence (Rushton et al., 2008). To a certain extent, emotional intelligence as a self-reported concept consists of basic personality traits as identified within the big five conceptualization (Petrides et al., 2010), traits which have been found to relate to sport participation (Allen & Laborde, 2014). Two main aspects of sport participation are the amount of time spent participating in sports, in terms of frequency and duration, and the type of sports practiced; although their relationship with trait EI is unclear. Therefore, the main aim of this paper is to clarify the relationship between trait EI and these aspects of sport participation.

Although many operationalizations of trait EI exist, in this paper we focus on the trait EI operationalization by Petrides (2009b) as it has shown the best psychometric properties (Petrides, 2009a) and the most connections to real life outcomes, specifically in the sport domain (Laborde, Dosseville and Allen, 2016). Trait EI is measured by the trait

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emotional intelligence questionnaire (TEIQue; Petrides, 2009b), and is available in short-form (TEIQue-SF) and full-form (TEIQue-FF) versions. Using the short-form of a questionnaire may represent a time economy in research protocols, whilst recent construct and concurrent validity analyses (Laborde, Allen, & Guillén, 2016) have shown that the TEIQue-SF is a viable alternative to the TEIQue-FF. However, no studies currently exist that compare the associations between TEIQue-SF and TEIQue-FF, respectively, and outcome criteria, which represent an important step to further establish the construct validity of the TEIQue. The secondary aim of this study, therefore, was to address this gap.

As shown by a recent review, trait EI has been linked to several aspects of sport performance (Laborde, Dosseville and Allen, 2016). For example, it has been linked to performance satisfaction (Laborde, Dosseville, Guillén, & Chávez, 2014), to the use of more adaptive coping strategies (Laborde, Dosseville, Guillén and Chávez, 2014; Laborde, You, Dosseville, & Salinas, 2012), and to more optimal biological reactions of athletes while facing stress, through heart rate variability (Laborde, Brüll, Weber, & Anders, 2011; Laborde, Lautenbach, & Allen, 2015) and cortisol (Laborde, Lautenbach, Allen, Herbert, & Achtzehn, 2014) measures.

However, further research is needed to clarify the associations between trait EI and both the amount and type of sport participation, as personality, through motivational mechanisms, may influence the tasks and activities individuals engage in as well as how long they persist with those tasks (Mount, Barrick, Scullen, & Rounds, 2005). Regarding the amount of sport participation, it is not the amount of practice in years that is of interest, as this has shown no relationship with trait EI (Laborde, Dosseville, Guillén and Chávez, 2014), but rather the amount of time people actually spend participating in sports, in terms of frequency and duration. To the best of our knowledge, only one study (Guillen & Laborde, 2014) has considered the frequency and duration of sport participation together with personality dimensions, specifically examining the relationship between positive personality variables (i.e., hope, optimism, perseverance and resilience) and both practice frequency (i.e., days per week) and practice duration (i.e., practice time per session in min and practice time per week in min). Guillen and Laborde showed that practice duration, but not practice frequency, had a relationship with the personality variables investigated, specifically that practice time per session was positively linked to hope, persistence, and resilience whilst practice time per week was positively linked to persistence. To the best of our knowledge, the amount of sport practice has not yet been related to trait EI, however, as trait EI possesses conceptual similarities to the dimensions of hope, persistence, and resilience (Petrides, 2009b), we would expect a similar positive relationship between trait EI and the amount of sport practice, in terms of duration but not in terms of frequency (based on Guillen & Laborde, 2014). Moreover, regarding duration, the self-control dimension of trait EI especially would be expected to motivate people to engage longer in training sessions (Audiffren & André, 2015; Petrides, 2009b).

An important distinction in sports is the type of sports practiced, generally conceptualized as either individual or team sports, each with their own diverse psychological requirements (Laborde, Guillén, & Mosley, 2016; Mroczkowska, 1997). An individual sport athlete, for example, has more responsibility for a competitive outcome, whilst his/her actions and decisions can't be compensated by teammates, thus his/her individual personality characteristics play a major role in determining the result. As personality influences behavior through motivational processes, it will influence choices about which tasks and activities to engage in (Mount et al., 2005) and may play a role in determining the type of sport practiced. Certainly, team sport athletes show different personality characteristics in comparison to individual sport athletes, with higher levels of extraversion and lower levels of conscientiousness (Allen, Greenlees, & Jones, 2013). Moreover, research investigating positive personality-trait-like individual differences (PTLID) in competitive athletes involved primarily in one sport has actually shown that athletes involved in individual sports score higher on positive PTLID (i.e., perseverance, positivity, resilience, self-esteem, and self-efficacy) than athletes from team sports (Laborde, Guillén and Mosley, 2016).

A theoretical link can, therefore, be made between sport participation and specific dimensions of the trait EI conceptualization (Petrides, 2009b): As individual athletes are almost entirely responsible for a competitive outcome, they would be expected to be highly capable in their ability to withstand pressure and regulate stress and emotions, which are prominent aspects of the trait EI dimension of self-control. Emotionality and sociability, however, are dimensions related to managing the emotions of others and would be expected to feature highly in participants of team sports. Previous research has shown the type of sport to be unrelated to trait EI (Laborde, Dosseville, Guillén and Chávez, 2014), although individual trait EI dimensions were not considered in the study by Laborde, Dosseville, Guillén and Chávez (2014) and their sample comprised only sport science students. Although sport science students usually have a main sport in which they compete, their studies require participation in different sports. The current study aimed to address this drawback and test athletes who are only involved in one sport, whilst also examining trait EI dimensions alongside overall trait EI scores.

Given the limits identified in previous research, the main aim of this paper was to investigate the links between trait EI and sport participation. In terms of the first aspect, i.e. the amount of sport participation, and based on work focusing on other PTLID (Guillen & Laborde, 2014), it was expected that trait EI and its main factors would positively correlate with the amount of sport participation in terms of duration but not frequency. The second aspect of trait EI and sport participation was to check whether trait EI differs according to the type of sport. We hypothesized that no differences in trait EI scores would be found between individual and team sport athletes, but that individual sports athletes would score higher on self-control than team sports athletes and team sport athletes would score higher on emotionality and sociability, based on the theoretical conceptualization of trait EI (Petrides, 2009b). Finally, a secondary aim of this paper was to investigate whether similar results would be obtained with the TEIQue-FF and the TEIQue-SF. Considering that recent research showed that both versions were equivalent in terms of construct validity (Laborde, Allen and Guillén, 2016), similar results were expected for our two main research questions, based on the TEIQue-FF and TEIQue-SF.

2. Methods

2.1. Participants

A total of 972 athletes (469 women, 503 men; mean age: 21.16 years, age range: 18–36 years; 360 involved in individual sports, and 612 involved in team sports) participated in this study. They were practicing their sports for a mean of 9.2 years ($SD = 4.8$), and were training in average 440 min a week ($SD = 257$ min), with an average session duration of 110 min ($SD = 42$ min). Athletes were involved in 38 individual sports (i.e., aikido, badminton, ballet, bodyboard, boxing, climbing, canarian ball, canarian wrestling, canoeing, crossfit, cycling, dance, fencing, field-hockey, horse-riding, ice-skating, judo, karate, kick boxing, golf, gymnastics, padel, parkour, muaythay, rhythmic gymnastics, running, sailing, skeet shooting, squash, surf, swimming, table tennis, taekwondo, tennis, track and fields, triathlon, weight-lifting, windsurfing) and nine team sports (i.e., baseball, basket-ball, football, futsal handball, roller derby, rugby, synchronized swimming, volleyball, and water-polo). All participants were involved in only one sport competitively.

2.2. Instrument: trait emotional intelligence questionnaire

The Spanish version of the TEIQue was used in this research (Petrides, 2009a). The factor structure of the TEIQue has already been