The Satisfaction With Migration Life Scale

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ABSTRACT

This article introduces the Satisfaction With Migration Life Scale (SWMLS) which was devised to evaluate a person's global judgment of migration satisfaction, and reports data from two studies establishing its reliability and validity. Data were collected from Portuguese migrants living in Switzerland via paper-pencil and online questionnaires. The results from the two studies showed that the SWMLS has favorable psychometric characteristics. Exploratory and confirmatory factor analyses of the SWMLS resulted in a unidimensional factor structure. Cronbach's α was excellent. Evidence of validity was also found between scores on the SWMLS and other indicators of well-being and acculturation. The findings suggested a brief and viable tool to assess satisfaction with migration life. Potential uses of the scale for research are discussed.

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1. Introduction

In an effort to identify and understand factors implicated in the quality of migration life, acculturation scholars have focused on measures related to the broad category of psychological adaptation. Diverse constructs have been used to measure psychological adaptation such as self-esteem, life satisfaction, mental health (Ward, Bochner, & Furnham, 2001). The present study introduces a new tool to measure psychological adaptation, the Satisfaction With Migration Life Scale (SWMLS).

1.1. Satisfaction with migration life

In the recent decades the research on subjective well-being (SWB) has grown dramatically (Diener, 2013). SWB represents the way we think and feel about ourselves (Diener, Oishi, & Lucas, 2003) and contains three fundamental components: positive affect, negative affect and satisfaction with life. Satisfaction with life is a cognitive evaluation of one's life satisfaction either globally or with respect to specific life domains, such as love, sex, safety, health, and so on. Domain satisfaction is an under-investigated topic in SWB (Bardo & Yamashita, 2014; Cummins, 1996). The focus of the present research is one domain satisfaction, satisfaction with migration life. So in this line satisfaction with migration life represents a specific domain of life satisfaction, and SWB more generally. We consider as migrant a non-national person who moves into a country for the purpose of settlement (World Migration Report, 2015).

Shin and Johnson (1978) have inspired many approaches to life satisfaction. They defined life satisfaction as "global assessment of person's quality of life according to chosen criteria" (p. 478). In this vein, Satisfaction with Migration Life can be defined as a global cognitive evaluation by the migrant of his or her migrant life in which the criteria for the judgment are up to the individual. The present definition of satisfaction with migration life takes into account the global satisfaction

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with one's migration life which differs from the satisfaction of the foci of migrant life, such as job, accommodation, school and so on. Another nuclear feature of this definition is that satisfaction with life is judged by the migrants own perspective. Migrants construct a standard for themselves and compare the achievements and expectations of one's migration life as a whole to that standard.

At our knowledge no multi-item scale has been developed to measure satisfaction with migration life. Therefore, there is neediness for a multi-item tool to evaluate satisfaction with migration life as a cognitive-judgmental process. The current work approaches the development and initial validation of the Satisfaction with Migration Life Scale (SWMLS).

1.2. Objectives of the present research

The SWMLS was developed from the original Satisfaction With Life Scale (SWLS; Diener et al., 1985) in a straightforward process. The original SWLS has five items to assess global life satisfaction. For example, the following item is included in the scale: "I am satisfied with my life". In order to assess migration life satisfaction, the terms "migrant life" replaced the term "life" in all original items. So five analogous statements were established, such as "I am satisfied with my migrant life". Following this line, the theoretical framework of the SWMLS is based essentially on the research of the SWLS.

The aims of the current work were three-fold.

Objective 1

The first objective was to analyse the internal structure of the SWMLS, and this examination will concern item analyses, exploratory and confirmatory factor analyses. Factor analysis has been closely associated with the evaluation of the construct validity of scores from scales (Thompson & Borrello, 1992). Furthermore we will analyse the item interrelationships. It is expected that scores from the SWMLS would show one factor structure, comparable with that of the original scale (Diener et al., 1985; Neto, 1993).

Objective 2

The second objective, in order to analyse the psychometric properties of the SWMLS, it was the analysis of the Cronbach's alpha, a coefficient used to assess the reliability of a measurement scale (Cronbach & Shavelson, 2004). According to Kline (2000), the reliability between 0.70 and 0.90 is good, and between 0.91 and 0.99 excellent.

Objective 3

The third objective was to scrutinize the validity evidence based on relations to other variables. For this purpose, it was analyzed the relation between scores on the Satisfaction with Migration Life Scale with other well-being (self-esteem, loneliness, satisfaction with life), acculturation, and sociocultural adaptation constructs in order to evaluate the convergent, the divergent, and the discriminant validity of the SWMLS. This set of constructs was chosen given that they are conceptually connected with life satisfaction.

Strong positive correlations were found between life satisfaction and other SWB scales (Diener et al., 1985). In this vein, it is expected to evince significant associations between migration satisfaction, and self-esteem and loneliness. Past research has also shown that satisfaction in the domains of life was associated with life satisfaction (Pavot & Diener, 2008).

Length of stay, language proficiency, acculturation attitudes, cultural identity, and social contact are generally seen as core measures of acculturation and related to satisfaction with life (Berry, Phinney, Sam, & Vedder, 2006). Length of residence influences the psychological well-being of immigrants (Ward et al., 2001). So we expected to find that a longer stay would be associated positively migration satisfaction. Sociocultural adaptation refers to "intercultural competence with emphasis on behavioral domains" (Ward & Kennedy, 1999; p. 662). Past investigation suggests that fewer adaptation difficulties occur among migrants who make transitions to more comfortable cultural settings (Ward & Kennedy, 1999).

2. Study 1

In order to achieve these three objectives two studies were conducted. The first study aimed at examining the internal structure of the SWMLS, the reliability, and the relationship with other well-being measures (self-esteem, loneliness, and life satisfaction).

2.1. Method

2.1.1. Participants

The participants were 154 migrants (81 females and 73 males). The migrants were between 18 and 60 years old (*M* = 37.82; *SD* = 8.59). The mean length of sojourn was 14.9 years (*SD* = 10.3). Other characteristics of the sample can be seen in Table 1.

2.1.2. Material

2.1.2.1. Demographics. Respondents had to report on their age, gender, place of birth, age of arrival in Switzerland, marital status, education, and occupation. All scales used in the current work were previously adapted to the Portuguese population (Neto, 1992, 1993, 1996), but the SWMLS. For this research we used the responses on a 5-point scale (1 = *strongly disagree* and 5 = *strongly agree*), but the ULS-6.