

The way to better living: Psychological flexibility, emotional intelligence and satisfaction with life

Joanna Dudek M. A., Paweł Ostaszewski Ph. D., Stanislaw Malicki M. A

University of Social Sciences and Humanities, Warsaw, Poland



Introduction

- **Well-being** – concept that includes subjective appraisal of satisfaction with life (SWL), and is connected with broad and significant domains of human functioning
- Psychological factors affecting well-being and the methods to improve it are increasingly important domains of current psychology research (Bolier et al., 2013).
- Psychological flexibility (PF) and emotional intelligence (EI) are two factors contributing to well-being that are currently under the focus of scientific investigation.
- **Psychological flexibility (PF)** is the ability to be open to difficult thoughts and feelings while engaging in value-based actions. Enhancement of PF is the therapeutic goal of Acceptance and Commitment Therapy, ACT (Hayes, Luoma, Bond, Masuda, & Lillis, 2006)
- **Emotional Intelligence (IE)** is defined as the ability or tendency to perceive, understand, regulate, and harness emotions adaptively in oneself and in others (Schutte et al., 1998). Enhancing of IE is one of the goals of Functional Analytic Psychotherapy (FAP).

Objectives

Our aim was to investigate the relationship between EI, PF and SWL in order to find out whether one of the two treatments (ACT and FAP) might be considered more useful for certain populations.

Methods

We investigated 160 respondents (age 21-60) using AAQ II (to measure PF), SSEIT (to measure EI) and SWLS (to measure SWL).

Respondents have also answered several discounting and personality questionnaires, yet the analysis of these is beyond the scope of the current study.

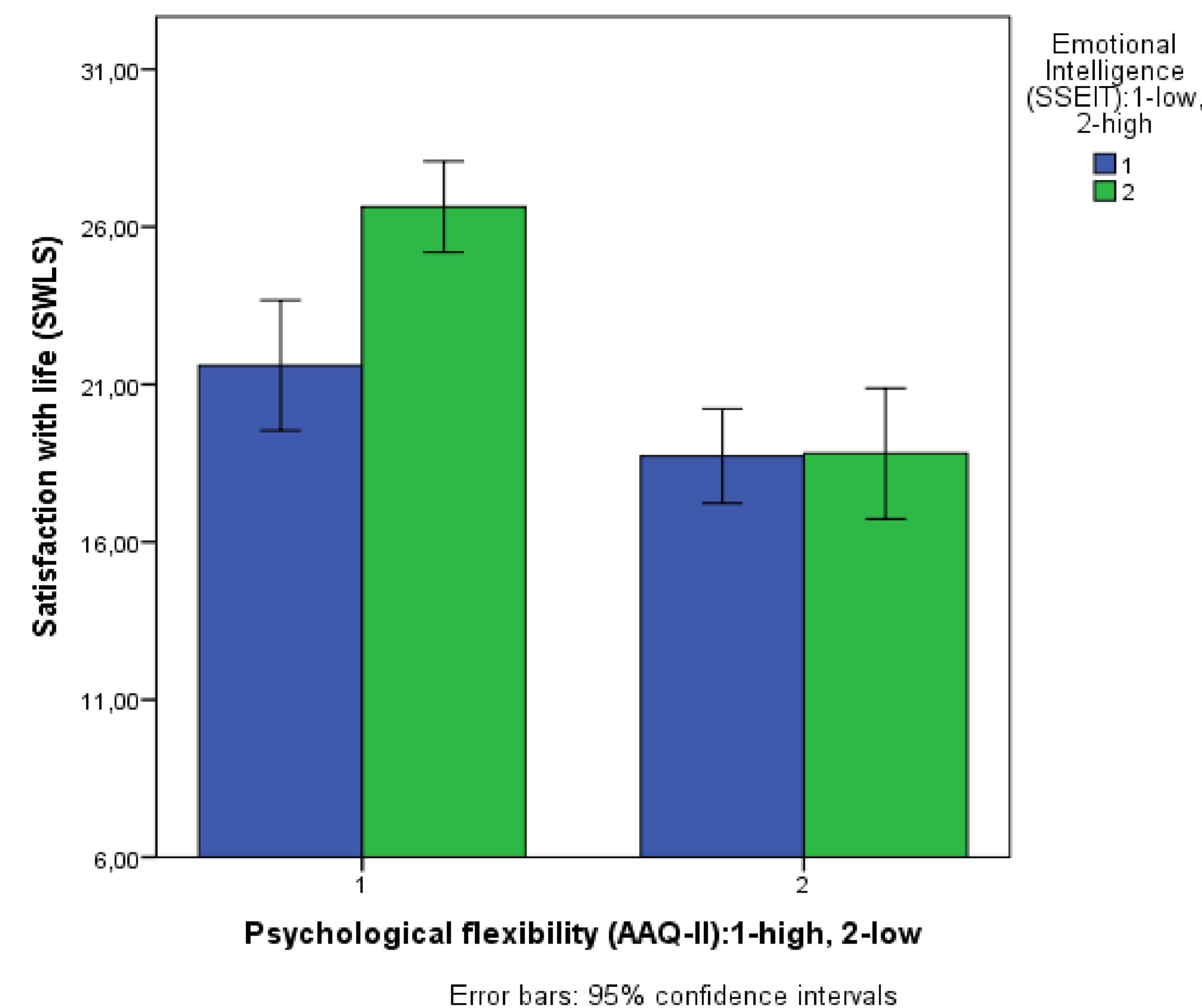


Figure 1. Mean level of satisfaction with life in groups with high and low level of PF and high and low level of EI



Contact: joannaedudek@gmail.com

Results

Two-factor ANOVA in the 2 (low vs high PF) x 2 (low vs high EI) model showed main effect for PF ($F(1,149)=38,604$; $p<0,001$; $\eta_p^2=0,206$) and for EI ($F(1,149)=8,819$; $p=0,003$; $\eta_p^2=0,056$) on SWL of the participants. Higher level of PF and higher level of EI was connected with higher satisfaction with life. Furthermore, interaction effect of PF and EI was statistically significant ($F(1,149)=8,241$; $p=0,005$; $\eta_p^2=0,052$). Post-hoc analyses with t-test for independent samples showed that in the group with lower level of PF, there were no significant differences in life satisfaction between people with higher and with lower levels of EI ($t(74)=-0,069$; $p=0,945$). However in the group with higher PF level, higher EI was connected with even higher life satisfaction ($t(75)=2,342$; $p=0,022$) (Figure 1).

Conclusions

- Higher EI was connected to higher SWL only in the group of participants with higher PF.
- PF is an important factor affecting SWL. It confirms the results of previous research investigating role of PF in well-being and job satisfaction (Donaldso-feilder & Bond, 2004).
- Results suggest that ACT, aimed at enhancing PF, might be considered as a primary intervention for increasing life satisfaction.
- However, for people with low EI and high PF, FAP might be more useful.
- These conclusions, however, need to be tested in further experimental research.

References

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