

Anxiety and stress coping mechanism. The mediating role of emotional intelligence

Noemí Cuartero Monteagudo, Jorge Julio Fernández Garrido & Ana M^a Tur Porcar*

*correspondence: noemi.cuartero@ucv.es; julio.fernandez@uv.es; ana.tur@uv.es

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Introduction

Anxiety is conceptualized as a multidimensional construct of personality that involves perceptual, cognitive, behavioral and affective factors (Görge, Hiller, Witthöft, 2014). Research has proved that there are two forms of anxiety: trait and state. The first one refers to a constant and more permanent personality feature, while state anxiety refers to a temporary and transitional state (Spielberg and Vagg, 1995). With regard to the Emotional Intelligence (EI), it is also understood as two different constructs: trait and capacity (skills) (Petrides, 2011). The present study is focused on the coping approach as a problem solving mechanism (Carlo et al., 2012). This coping mechanism has proved to be productive in the solution to the problem generated by the stress (Hooberman et al., 2010) versus the copying avoidance mechanism based on emotion (Roberts et al., 2012).

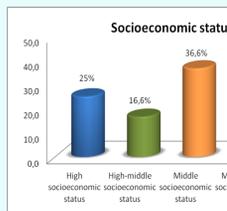
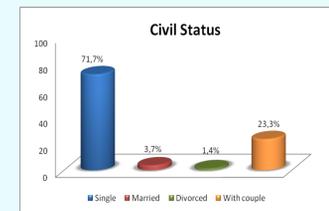
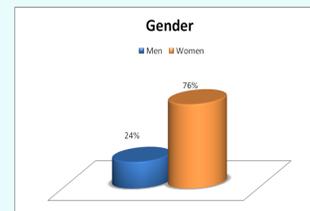
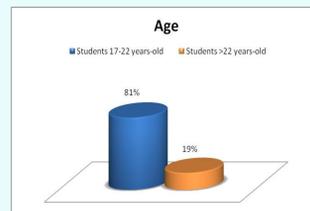
Objectives

The aim of this poster is to analyze the relationships between anxiety, emotional intelligence and coping mechanism when facing stressing situations and to prove the mediating role of emotional intelligence between anxiety and coping mechanism.

Method

Participants

This study comprised 434 Nursing Degree students from Valencia (Spain), 256 students at private universities (59%) and public universities. The population is aged between 18 to 50 years (M=21; SD=.320) (Chart 1), 76% women and 24% men of them are single, 23.3% with partner, 3.7% married and 1.3% divorced (Chart 3). Socioeconomic status level (): 25% high status, 16.6% middle-high socioeconomic status, 36.2% middle socioeconomic status, and 22.2% middle-low socioeconomic status.



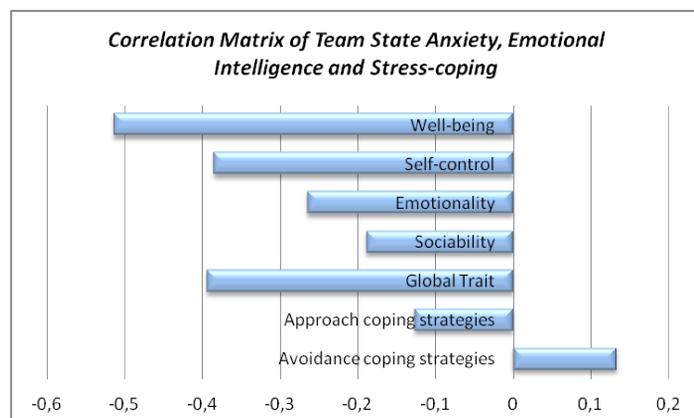
Procedure/Method

A cross-sectional study, based on self reports, and completed by the students themselves has been used. The evaluation was conducted at the educational centers collectively and took approximately an hour. Centers gave their permission and students gave their participation was voluntary and anonymous, and respected the ethical principles for medical research involving human subjects (Declaration of Helsinki).

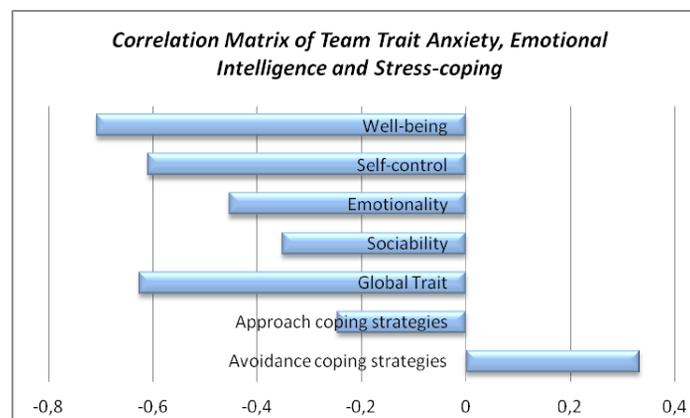
Tools/Instruments

- State-Trait Anxiety (STAI E-R) (Spanish adaptation of Spielberger, Gorsuch, & Lushene, 1982). It uses 40 items to assess how one feels at a particular moment (20 items for state anxiety) and how he/she generally feels (20 items for trait anxiety).
- Emotional Intelligence, Trait Emotional Intelligence Questionnaire (TEIQue-SF) (Cooper & Petrides, 2010), a Spanish adaptation of the TEIQue scale that measures the trait emotional intelligence (trait EI) as well as the dimensions labeled well-being, self-control, emotion regulation, and sociability.
- Coping Responses Inventory- Adult Form (CRI-A) (Moos, 1993), a Spanish adaptation of a multidimensional approach that assesses the way in which people face with stressful situations by coping approach or by avoiding the problem (avoidance coping).

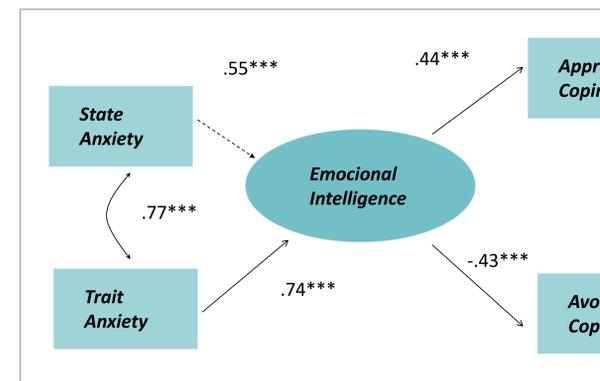
Results



State anxiety is negatively correlated to the five dimensions of intelligence (well-being, self-control, emotionality, sociability and Global Trait), as well as to stress-coping strategies. However, there is a positive relationship between state anxiety and avoidance strategies.



Trait anxiety is negatively related to emotional intelligence in its five dimensions (well-being, self-control, emotionality, sociability and Global Trait). It is negatively related to the stress-coping strategies too. By contrast, trait anxiety is positively related to avoidance coping strategies.



Structural model for state and trait anxiety, emotional intelligence and approach and avoidance coping.

The hypothesized structural model shows the mediating role of emotional intelligence on state-trait anxiety. Emotional intelligence stimulates coping approach whilst negatively impacts on avoidance coping strategies. The latter are dysfunctional ones as do not facilitate the use of strategies to lead to an effective problem solution (Carlo et al., 2000).

Conclusions

We found a negative relationship between both state and trait anxiety and the five main components of emotional intelligence (well-being, self-control, emotionality, sociability and Global Trait). In addition, they are directly related to avoidance coping strategies, but negatively related to coping approach. An anxiety disorder associated to maladaptive coping strategies can induce negative states and health outcomes (Görge et al., 2014).

Regarding emotional intelligence, there is a negative relationship between the five main components of emotional intelligence and coping avoidance, but a positive relationship between emotional intelligence and coping approach. Emotional intelligence is involved in the proper management of emotions and is a determining factor for healthcare, being a good predictor for mental and physical health. It also encourages personal strengthening process making coping with stress easier (Martins, Ramalho and Morin, 2010). Therefore, the mediating role of emotional intelligence in the relationship between state and trait anxiety, and approach and avoidance coping is confirmed. These results have important implications for intervention to promote personal strengthening mechanisms.

Limitations

A limitation of the current study is the transversal research

References