



Research Article

Emotional abilities and multidimensional self-concept in physical education students of a university in Santiago de Chile

Habilidades emocionales y autoconcepto multidimensional en estudiantes de Educación Física de una universidad de Santiago de Chile

Competências emocionais e autoconceito multidimensional em estudantes de Educação Física de uma universidade em Santiago do Chile

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ABSTRACT

The general objective of this study was to relate emotional skills to the multidimensional self-concept (academic/labor, family, social, physical, and emotional) in physical education students at a university in Santiago, Chile. A total of 131 students from the Physical Education Pedagogy program at a public university in Santiago, Chile, were evaluated. The Emotional Metacognition Trait scale (TMMS-19) and the Self-concept Form 5 scale (AF5) were applied. The results revealed that the three dimensions of emotional skills and multidimensional self-concept correlate positively and at a low level ($r < 0.400$), specifically in the academic, family, and physical dimensions. Regarding sex comparisons, significant differences were observed in the physical and emotional dimensions, with men obtaining higher scores in both factors. For future research, new sociodemographic variables such as gender should be considered. Additionally, other factors such as mental health, stress, and psychological well-being must be taken into account.

Keywords: Self-concept; Emotional abilities; University students; Physical education.

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RESUMEN

El objetivo general del presente estudio fue relacionar las habilidades emocionales con el autoconcepto multidimensional (académico/laboral, familiar, social, físico y emocional) en estudiantes de educación física de una universidad de Santiago de Chile. Se evaluó a 131 estudiantes de Pedagogía en Educación Física de una universidad pública de Santiago de Chile. Se aplicaron la escala de Rasgo de Metaconocimiento Emocional (TMMS-19) y la escala de Autoconcepto Forma 5 (AF5). Los resultados revelaron que las tres dimensiones de las habilidades emocionales y el autoconcepto multidimensional se correlacionan de manera positiva y a un nivel bajo ($r < 0,400$), específicamente en las dimensiones académica, familiar y física. En cuanto a las comparaciones por sexo, se obtuvieron diferencias significativas en las dimensiones física y emocional, siendo los hombres quienes obtuvieron mayor puntaje en ambos factores. Para futuras investigaciones, se deben considerar nuevas variables sociodemográficas, como el género. Además, es importante tener en cuenta otros factores como la salud mental, el estrés y el bienestar psicológico.

Palabras clave: Autoconcepto; Habilidad emocional; Estudiantes universitarios; Educación física.

RESUMO

O objetivo geral do presente estudo foi relacionar as competências emocionais com o autoconceito multidimensional (acadêmico/laboral, familiar, social, físico e emocional) em estudantes de educação física de uma universidade de Santiago do Chile. Foram avaliados 131 estudantes de Pedagogia da Educação Física de uma universidade pública de Santiago do Chile. Foram aplicadas a Trait Meta-Awareness Emotional Scale (TMMS-19) e a Form 5 Self-Concept Scale (AF5). Os resultados revelaram que as três dimensões das competências emocionais e o autoconceito multidimensional se correlacionam positivamente e em um nível baixo ($r < 0,400$), especificamente nas dimensões acadêmica, familiar e física. Em termos de comparação entre gêneros, obtiveram-se diferenças significativas nas dimensões física e emocional, com os homens obtendo maiores pontuações em ambos os fatores. Para futuras investigações, novas variáveis sociodemográficas, como o gênero, devem ser consideradas. Além disso, outros fatores como a saúde mental, o estresse e o bem-estar psicológico devem ser levados em conta.

Palavras-chave: Autoconceito; Capacidade emocional; Estudantes universitários; Educação física.

INTRODUCTION

Emotional skills are understood as the ability to recognize, manage and communicate emotions, their main objective being to guide thoughts and actions (Salovey & Mayer, 1990). Mayer & Salovey (1997) developed the Emotional Skill Model, which is made up of: a) emotional perception and expression, which is understood as the ability to recognize our own emotions and those of others; b) emotional facilitation, which guides thinking towards relevant information that the subject visualizes and perceives from the environment; c) emotional understanding, which is the subject's ability to understand their emotions; and d) emotional regulation, which corresponds to the ability to control one's own emotions and those of others (Mayer & Salovey, 1997; Fernández & Cabello, 2020).

On the other hand, self-concept is defined as the image and perception that each individual has of himself/herself, through a mental construction that involves social, intellectual, attitudinal, physical appearance, among others, assessments (Palacios & Coveñas, 2019). Shavelson et al. (1976) propose the theoretical model of self-concept, which is divided into academic and non-academic self-concept (social, family, physical, and emotional). The physical self-concept corresponds to a mental representation that each person has about his/her body image, including physical features, size, and shape of the body. For García and Musitu (2014), the emotional self-concept includes the individual's general perception of his/her emotional state, for example: "I am nervous," "I scare easily," etc. In addition, it is considered how the person manifests himself/herself in specific situations, that is, how he/she reacts when a superior speaks to him/her, when he/she is asked questions, among others. Academic/professional self-concept refers to the perception that subjects have about their academic and/or work performance. Family self-concept is described as the perception that a subject has of him/herself within the family circle. Finally, social self-concept refers to the perception of the individual within the development of his/her social relationships.

Among the studies on emotional skills and self-concept, we can mention that of Véliz and Apodaca (2012), whose results show that men have a higher level of emotional and physical self-concept, where the older the age, the better the levels of academic, emotional, family and physical self-concept. Álvarez et al. (2015) studied the differences in physical self-concept between regular and non-regular practitioners of physical activity in university students. In all dimensions of physical self-concept and in the general scale of self-concept, those who practice physical activity presented better results, with men obtaining higher levels than women. Estrada et al. (2016) showed that university students have a higher average in the Emotional Repair factor, followed by the Emotional Clarity dimension. When comparing by sex, men had a higher level in the regulation of emotional states.

Taramuel (2017) studied the emotional skills of university students from the Faculty of Philosophy at the Central University of Ecuador. The results show an adequate perception of emotions, where men obtain a higher score in attention to emotions, and women achieve a higher level in emotional regulation. Orejarena (2020) evaluated 145 university psychology students from the Minuto de Dios University Corporation. The results showed an adequate level of emotional intelligence, with a score of 27.29 in emotional perception, 29.58 in understanding feelings, and 31.38 in emotional regulation. Sánchez (2024) analyzed the response of 62 students from the Bachelor of Education at a university in

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Mexico, observing more latent needs in emotional perception and regulation, since this leads to a greater impact on personal and professional life.

Malca-Peralta et al. (2024) studied emotional skills and family stress as predictors of satisfaction in 414 university students, showing that only 27.1% have a high level of emotional skills, while the rest have an average and low level. Emotional skills and family stress predict up to 22.8% of the satisfaction variable. Izaskun et al. (2024) studied the effect of an emotional physical education program on the emotional skills of university pedagogy students. The results showed significant differences in the pretest-posttest values between the experimental group and the control group in the Emotional Charity dimension ($p = 0.001$, $d = 0.166$), demonstrating the effectiveness of the emotional physical education program.

Another research, carried out by Caldera et al. (2018), showed a medium and positive correlation between social skills and self-concept in university students. In addition, significant differences by sex were found in the overall self-concept score and in the emotional, physical, and academic/work dimensions. Sánchez et al. (2022) analyzed the levels of self-concept and emotional skills in Spanish university students. The results revealed that subjects who practice physical activity present higher values in repair, in social and physical self-concept, compared to non-practitioners, in addition to observing a positive correlation between emotional skills and the dimensions of self-concept. Arenas (2022) studied the relationship between academic self-concept and emotional skills in the Systems Engineering degree at the National University of Cañete (Peru). The results show positive correlations between academic self-concept and emotional skills, as well as a significant relationship between academic self-concept and the dimensions of attention, clarity, and emotional repair. Maureira et al. (2023) validated the TMMS scale and described the emotional skills of physical education students from two universities in Santiago de Chile. The results showed an instrument reduced to 19 items, with three factors explaining 56.8% of the total variance, with a Cronbach's alpha of 0.916. Regarding the level of emotional skills, a high level was observed in the sample, with no significant differences in the dimensions of clarity, attention and emotional repair between both sexes.

Therefore, the main objective of this study is to relate emotional skills with the multidimensional self-concept in Physical Education students at a university in Santiago de Chile, in order to understand how these factors influence their academic performance, personal and professional well-being. This study also seeks to provide recommendations for the integration of emotional education and the development of self-concept in the curriculum, with the aim of improving the comprehensive training of students.

METHODS

Sample: The sample was non-random and intentional, and consisted of 131 students of Physical Education Pedagogy from a public university in Santiago de Chile. The minimum age was 18 years and the maximum was 52 years, with a mean of 21.7 ± 3.9 . Of the total, 42 were women (32.1%) and 89 were men (67.9%). A total of 53 students were in their first year of the degree (40.5%), 37 were in their second year (28.2%), 15 were in their third year (11.5%) and 26 were in their fourth year (19.8%).

Instruments: A sociodemographic survey was applied, designed to characterize the sample according to sociodemographic variables such as sex (male or female) and age. The Trait Emotional Meta-Awareness Scale (TMMS) by Salovey et al. (1995) was also applied, validated in Physical Education students in Chile by Maureira et al. (2023). The scale consists of 19 items with a Likert-type response, ranging from 1 = Totally disagree to 5 = Totally agree. The instrument assesses attention to emotions, emotional clarity, and emotional repair in adolescents. The scale presents three factors that explain 56.8% of the total variance, with a Cronbach's alpha of 0.916.

Likewise, the Form 5 Self-Concept Scale (AF 5) by García & Musitu (2014) was applied, validated in Chile by Méndez & Gálvez (2018). It is a multidimensional scale of self-concept that measures five dimensions: academic, social, emotional, family, and physical. The instrument is divided into 30 items, with 6 questions for each dimension, with a response range of 1 (lowest value) to 99 (highest value). The scale presents a two-factor structure that explains 53.7% of the variance of the construct. The Cronbach's alpha value was 0.753 for the perceived performance factor and 0.802 for the academic self-efficacy factor.

Procedure: The application of the Socio Demographic Survey, the Emotional Meta-Knowledge Trait Scale and the Form 5 Self-Concept Scale was carried out in person to the entire sample during the schedules of the subjects of each level. A time of 15 minutes was estimated for the application of the surveys. Regarding the ethical aspects of the research, informed consent was obtained from the participants, considering that the data must remain anonymous.

Data analysis: Data were analyzed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) 27.0 for Windows. A descriptive analysis was performed using mean deviations. Normality tests were also performed using the Kolmogorov-Smirnov (KS) test, which showed a normal distribution of the variables ($p > 0.05$). Therefore, parametric statistics such as independent samples t-tests were used to compare the results by sex, ANOVA tests were used to compare the results between years of the degree, and finally, Pearson's correlation was used to determine the relationship between the variables. A value of $p < 0.05$ was considered significant.

RESULTS

Table 1 shows the mean scores obtained in each of the dimensions of emotional skills, where attention has the highest score, with similar results in clarity and repair. When comparing the sex of the sample, men show a higher score in clarity and emotional repair. Meanwhile, the effect sizes (d) indicate a mean difference ($d < 0.8$) in the two dimensions and in the total score of emotional intelligence. Emotional attention presents similar values between both groups.

Table 1.

Comparison of the dimensions of emotional skills according to the sex of the sample.

	Total (n=131)	Female (n=42)	Male (n=89)	<i>p</i>	<i>d</i>
Emotional attention	3,8±0,8	3,8±0,9	3,9±0,7	0,538	-
Emotional clarity	3,5±0,8	3,2±0,8	3,7±0,7	0,000**	0,66
Emotional repair	3,5±0,7	3,3±0,8	3,6±0,7	0,033*	0,40
Total	3,6±0,6	3,4±0,7	3,7±0,5	0,005**	0,49

*significant difference at the 0.05 level

**significant difference at the 0.01 level

When comparing the scores of each dimension of emotional skills according to the year of study, no significant differences were observed in any of them.

Table 2 presents the mean scores obtained in each of the dimensions of self-concept of the sample, where physical and academic-work self-concept obtain the highest scores. On the contrary, emotional self-concept presents the lowest score. When comparing according to the sex of the sample, women show a higher score in emotional self-concept (59.6 ± 17.5), with an effect size (*d*) that indicates a large difference ($d > 0.8$). On the other hand, men have a higher score in physical self-concept (75.5 ± 17.9), with a medium effect size ($d < 0.8$). In the dimensions of academic-work, social and family self-concept, no significant differences are observed between both sexes.

Table 2.

Comparison of AF-5 dimensions according to sex of the sample.

	Total (n=131)	Female (n=42)	Male (n=89)	<i>p</i>	<i>d</i>
Academic-work	68,1±14,7	66,4±16,5	68,9±13,7	0,355	-
Social	58,9±11,3	58,1±12,6	59,3±10,7	0,591	-
Emotional	47,2±20,2	59,6±17,5	41,3±18,8	0,000**	1,01
Familiar	61,0±11,3	60,4±13,5	61,3±10,1	0,650	-
Physical	71,9±19,3	64,5±20,1	75,5±17,9	0,002**	0,58

**significant difference at the 0.01 level

When comparing the scores of each dimension of self-concept according to the year of study, no significant differences were observed in any of them.

Table 3 presents the Pearson correlations between each dimension of emotional skills and the dimensions of self-concept. The three dimensions and the total score of emotional skills correlate positively and low ($r < 0.400$) with the academic-work self-concept. Clarity, repair, and the total score of emotional skills correlate negatively and low ($r < 0.400$) with the emotional self-concept. Likewise, the three dimensions and the total score of emotional skills correlate positively and low ($r < 0.400$) with the

family self-concept. Finally, the three dimensions and the total score of emotional skills correlate positively and low ($r < 0.400$) with the physical self-concept.

Table 3.

Correlations between the dimensions of emotional skills and the dimensions of self-concept in the total sample.

	Attention	Clarity	Repair	Total
Academic-work	0,272**	0,251**	0,263**	0,339**
Social	0,107	0,130	0,110	0,155
Emotional	-0,017	-0,283**	-0,310**	-0,261**
Familiar	0,301**	0,264**	0,036	0,286**
Physical	0,191*	0,402**	0,242**	0,377**

*significant correlation at the 0.05 level

**significant correlation at the 0.01 level

DISCUSSION

The objective of the present study was to relate emotional skills with physical, emotional, academic, family and social self-concept in physical education students from a university in Santiago de Chile, to subsequently analyze these results based on sex and year of study.

The three dimensions of emotional skills are positively correlated with academic-work self-concept, obtaining a significant, positive and low-level relationship ($r < 0.400$). These results coincide with the research carried out by Sánchez et al. (2022), who show that emotional skills are predictors of academic-work self-concept, highlighting that the university stage is a key period for the emotional learning of university students. The dimensions of clarity and emotional repair obtain a negative correlation of low score ($r < 0.400$) with emotional self-concept. This is because the Trait Emotional Meta-Knowledge Scale (TMMS-19) and the Form 5 Self-Concept Scale (AF5) have a different design; The first presents its items in a positive way, which is why a higher score is associated with greater knowledge and emotional control. For its part, the AF5 presents its items in a negative way, that is, a lower score shows greater emotional control. Due to this, the scores of both instruments are related negatively, although in both cases the sample perceives itself with high emotional management.

As for the three dimensions and the total score of emotional skills, they correlate positively and low ($r < 0.400$) with the family and physical dimensions of self-concept. In the case of family self-concept, the role that each individual plays in family relationships and the emotions that are generated in this area are experiences that define the person in their way of creating bonds in various interpersonal relationships (Sánchez et al., 2022). This could explain why high scores in this area lead to positive scores in emotional skills. On the other hand, in the dimension of physical self-concept, physical education students regularly exercise, both inside and outside their classes, which allows them to have a good self-image and be motivated by physical care, both for aesthetic and health reasons. The scores for emotional skills are also high, which is due to the fact that practicing physical activity has great cognitive and emotional benefits (Maureira, 2018), which is why it is clear that good physical health contributes to a good state of emotional and mental health. These results are similar to those reported

by Álvarez et al. (2015) and Sánchez et al. (2022), who agree that people who practice physical activity tend to have higher values in physical and general self-perception.

When comparing the different dimensions of self-concept, it is observed that physical self-concept has the highest score. This can be justified by the type of sample selected, made up of physical education students, who could have a positive perception regarding their appearance and physical condition. This is because most of the subjects in their curriculum correspond to practical activities and comprehensive personal care. The second dimension with the highest score is the academic-work self-concept, which can be explained because most students perceive themselves and believe that they are seen as good learners by their teachers (García & Musitu, 2014). On the contrary, the emotional dimension obtained the lowest score, which is common today, since students are not always able to handle the situations and emotions that arise in times of stress (García & Musitu, 2014), presenting high levels of mental health problems such as anxiety and depression in adolescents and young people. Studies such as that of Batra et al. (2016) describe how low levels of self-concept would directly affect the mental health of university students.

Regarding gender comparisons of emotional abilities, men perceive themselves with greater clarity and emotional repair than women, that is, men indicate that they have the ability to properly understand their emotions and that, based on this, they could regulate these various emotional states. Similar results have been reported by Sánchez et al. (2022) and Pérez and Velado (2017), who state that men have slightly better emotional regulation than women, having clarity about the feelings through which they constantly fluctuate.

When comparing self-concept according to the sex of the sample, significant differences of medium effect were found in physical self-concept, where men have a higher score than women. This could be mainly explained by the development of qualities that are associated with physical attractiveness, such as elegance, physical capacity, physical skill and/or strength, aspects mentioned in a study by Álvarez et al. (2015). Regarding the other dimensions, emotional self-concept showed that men have a higher score. This result coincides with those of the research carried out by Véliz & Apodaca (2012), who describe that male university students have a higher level of emotional self-concept than women.

Among the limitations of this study, the size of the selected sample stands out, which should be expanded in future research. In addition, the participants belong to a single university institution, so it is not possible to generalize these results to the entire population of Physical Education students in Chile, these results being only attributable to the sample evaluated.

CONCLUSION

The results show that the relationship between the three dimensions of emotional skills and multidimensional self-concept is positive and low-level, specifically in the academic-work, family and physical dimensions. Another finding was that in the total self-concept score, the physical dimension presented one of the highest values. On the contrary, the self-concept in its emotional dimension showed to be one of the lowest values. Significant differences were obtained in the physical and emotional dimensions according to the sex of the sample, with men obtaining a higher score in both factors.

It is important to highlight that emotional skills and multidimensional self-concept are crucial aspects in the training of physical education students at a university in Santiago de Chile. These elements not only influence their academic performance, but also have a significant impact on their personal and professional well-being.

Emotional education and the development of self-concept must be considered in the curriculum to form holistically developed and emotionally competent individuals. Including these aspects in education can help students better manage stress, relate effectively to others, and face life's challenges with resilience and optimism.

In conclusion, it is essential to recognize that attention to these areas will not only benefit students during their college life, but will also prepare them for future challenges in their career and personal life. Therefore, it is imperative that educational institutions place particular emphasis on the development of emotional skills and multidimensional self-concept.

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