

# Emotion regulation and well-being: A structural equation model



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## Introduction

- Our emotions regularly fluctuate throughout the day, and we must be aware of these changes in order to understand how emotions will affect our behavior.
- A meta-analytic review of the short-term emotions on psychological well-being found that consistent fluctuations over time of positive emotions was associated with flourishing psychological well-being (Houben, Van Den Noortgate, Kuppens, 2015).
- Gross (1998) theorized that well-being most likely occurs when we are aware of our emotional state and can easily regulate our emotions in a variety of ways. Furthermore, related topics, such as emotional intelligences (EQ), are strongly linked to academic success, burnout, and life satisfaction (Cazan & Năstăsă, 2015).
- The present study explores this theory of emotional regulation and emotional intelligence and its relationship to psychological well-being as well as life satisfaction. In line with previous research and theories, we hypothesize that emotion regulation and emotional intelligence will be positively related to psychological well-being, which will predict general life satisfaction.
- To the authors knowledge, this is the first model testing this relationship. Evaluating this relationship can help clinicians know what to focus on in order to help their patients

## Method

- Data were collected from amazon's mechanical Turk and SONA for class participation. Three hundred seventeen participants completed this survey (70% female; age  $M = 25.14$ ,  $SD = 9.98$ ).

### Measures

- GLS was measured with the satisfaction with life scale (Diener et al., 1985). The scale measures individuals' satisfaction with their life with higher scores representing more satisfaction.
- The scale of psychological well-being (SPWB; Ryff, 1995) was used to measure emotional and psychological well being. Higher scores indicate greater psychological well-being.
- To assess participants ability to regulate their emotional experiences the emotion regulation questionnaire (ERQ; Gross & John, 2003) was used.
- Individuals' emotional intelligences was assessed via the emotional intelligence scale (Schutte et al., 1998) with higher numbers corresponding to higher emotional intelligence.

### Procedures

- Individuals completed all scales online (PsychToolKit.org)
- Data analyses were conducted in EQS 6.2

## Results

- An EFA suggested a four factor solution for psychological well-being. However, the full model suggested a linear dependencies and one subfactor was created (see Figure 1).
- The Lagrange Multiplier test suggested the removal of expressive suppression and emotion regulation factor from the hypothesized model. The final model can be seen in Figure 1. Using robust fit indices, the data revealed excellent model fit,  $\chi^2 (11, N = 317) = 22.34$ ,  $p < .05$ ,  $RMSEA = 0.057$  [0.021, 0.091],  $CFI = 0.977$ ,  $NNFI = 0.957$ .
- Taken together, emotional intelligence ( $\beta = .641$ ,  $SE = .007$ ,  $p < .05$ ) and cognitive reappraisal ( $\beta = .217$ ,  $SE = .064$ ,  $p < .05$ ) account for roughly 62% of the variance in psychological well-being,  $R^2 = .617$ .
- In turn, psychological well-being ( $\beta = .313$ ,  $SE = .772$ ,  $p < .05$ ) accounts for 10% of the variance in general life satisfaction,  $R^2 = .103$ .

## Conclusion

- We found that emotional intelligence and one facet of emotion regulation predicts psychological well-being, which predicts general life satisfaction.
- These findings suggest that improving individuals cognitive reappraisal abilities and emotional intelligence can indirectly improve their satisfaction with their life. Because expressive suppression was removed from the hypothesized model, it suggests that clinicians should focus their efforts on improving clients cognitive reappraisal strategies over expressive suppression strategies.
- These findings provide partial support for Gross's (1998) theory. Future research should explore the role of emotional awareness in predicting psychological well-being in combination with emotional intelligence and cognitive reappraisal.

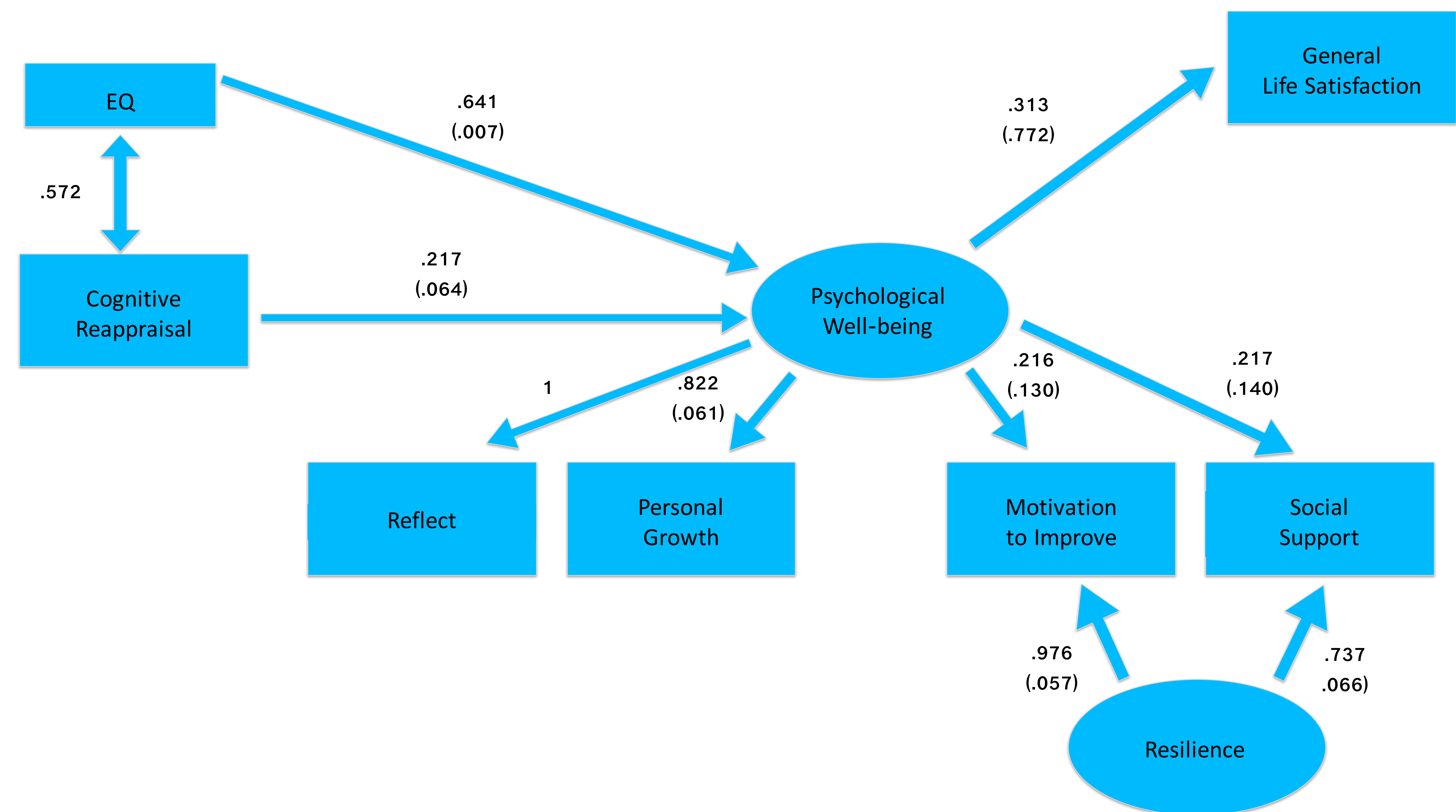


Figure 1. Emotional intelligence and cognitive reappraisal both significantly predict psychological well-being, which predicts life satisfaction. Standardized coefficients are presented with standard errors in parentheses.

