

Predictors of sense of quality of life and the moderating role of stage experience in a group of illusionists

BACKGROUND

The sense of the quality of life is an important variable, especially in the context of the profession; therefore it seems essential to capture the variables that predict this construct. The aim of the article was to show how self-esteem, emotional intelligence and social competences explain the sense of quality of life in a group of illusionists ($N = 53$).

PARTICIPANTS AND PROCEDURE

The aim of the article was to show how self-esteem, emotional intelligence and social competences explain the sense of quality of life in a group of illusionists ($N = 53$). Moreover, the moderating role of the stage experience of relationships between predictors and the explained variable was checked. Polish tools were used in the study: the Popular Questionnaire of Emotional Intelligence, the Questionnaire of Social Competences and the Sense of Quality of Life Questionnaire.

RESULTS

Among the predictors that explained the sense of quality of life to the greatest extent (in the psychosocial, subjective and metaphysical spheres) were the acceptance of emotions and social competences. Stage experience turned out to be a moderator of the relation between emotional intelligence and the subjective sphere of the sense of quality of life.

CONCLUSIONS

The conducted research may constitute the basis for changing the approach to everyday functioning in order to improve the sense of quality of life.

KEY WORDS

sense of quality of life; self-esteem; social competences; emotional intelligence; art of magic

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AUTHORS' CONTRIBUTIONS – A: Study design · B: Data collection · C: Statistical analysis · D: Data interpretation · E: Manuscript preparation · F: Literature search · G: Funds collection

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BACKGROUND

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The sense of the quality of life and the factors that determine it are increasingly becoming the interest of researchers in the field of psychology. While the quality of life depends on objective factors such as social status, possessed goods or education, its subjective approach is connected with a personal assessment of life and its individual spheres and satisfaction with them (Mróz, 2011). Therefore, what may be decisive by various individuals in the context of the sense of quality of life may not matter to others (Sękowski, 2006). The analysis of the literature shows that the area of research on the quality of life is becoming wider and research is done on different groups, including people with disabilities (Dębska, 2006), employed and unemployed (Bańka, 1995), materialist-oriented (Płodowska & Sękowski, 2019), artistically gifted (Cichy-Jasiocha & Sękowski, 2016) or managers and supervisors (Mróz, 2011). Quality of life is of concern in the context of health psychology by showing, for example, the link between quality of life and positive psychological resources in cancer patients (Zhao et al., 2022) or the effect of acceptance of disease on quality of life in patients with chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (Olek et al., 2014). In the field, the study conducted by Denisiuk (2020) concerned the comparison of illusionists and rehabilitators in terms of quality of life – the result did not reveal any significant differences in terms of the overall quality of life between those two groups.

The question about the relationship between psychological features and the sense of quality of life depends on the specificity of the functioning of the respondents. The aim of this article is to identify predictors of the sense of quality of life in the group of artists of the art of illusion – magicians.

The art of illusion and illusionists are increasingly becoming the subject of research in psychology. However, there is a tendency in research focusing mainly on cognitive psychology (Barnhart, 2010; Beth & Ekroll, 2014; Kuhn, 2019; Macknik & Martinez-Conde, 2010). There is less published research which focuses on the link between magic and well-being (Wiseman & Watt, 2018) or personality and internal resources of magicians (Napora & Sękowski, 2020; Napora, 2021). The motivation of the research is the willingness to provide new knowledge about the functioning of illusionists in terms of their sense of quality of life. Psychosocial, subjective and metaphysical spheres of quality of life seem to be the most related to everyday functioning by the artists – according to this, three out of four spheres will be analyzed. The issues of the functioning of this group of stage artists as well as the role of stage experience moderating these relationships will also be discussed. It could reveal how the relationships between variables change along with gaining stage experience as a performing artist.

Emotional intelligence is a factor of great importance in the functioning of artists of the art of illusion. This construct is being defined as the ability to properly perceive, evaluate and express emotions, the ability to access feelings, the ability to generate them at moments when they can support thinking, the ability to understand emotions and emotional knowledge, and the ability to regulate emotions so as to support emotional development (Mayer & Salovey, 1997). Emotional intelligence is an important aspect of the functioning of artists not only in the context of interpersonal relations, but also in the practice of an illusionist. The ability to evoke emotions through the presentation of illusionistic effects is the basis for a positive perception of the illusionist by the audience. The impact of the magic effect is directly proportional to the degree to which it engages the viewer's emotions (Ortiz, 2013). Moreover, the illusionist should conduct his performance in such a way that the viewer does not perceive it as a challenge to the intellect, in order to find an answer to what the individual magical effects consist of, and instead the spectacle should evoke the emotional charm of delight (Reynolds, 2013). Emotional intelligence components are related to acting skills so that the performer is able to introduce the appropriate emotional part to the performance. Landman (2013) emphasizes the essence of the aspect of managing emotions, not only for self, but also for the audience, pointing out that an important aspect of performances is the emotional aspect and the influence on the audience by the person of the illusionist, not only during the performance, but also after its end. Emotions should be incorporated into the process of presenting tricks so that the viewer can feel that what is happening is an extraordinary experience. The performer should make every effort to ensure that the entire performance is perceived as a pleasant, extraordinary and captivating experience. As shown by Napora and Sękowski (2020), artists (including magicians) have a higher level of emotional intelligence than non-performers.

Due to the high level of emotional intelligence, the individual functions better in work, is able to solve many problems, and acquires new knowledge and skills. On a professional basis, such people are helpful, sensitive to the emotions of others, and treat people with due respect (Goleman, 2005). Research conducted in the field of psychology indicates a positive relationship between emotional intelligence and quality of life (Aptel & Khandagle, 2016; Manhas & Manisha, 2015).

Social competences are another set of certain factors that determine the effective functioning of illusionists. Those competences refer to maintaining relationships that are satisfactory not only for the individual, but also for the people with whom they enter into these relationships. The social context of

functioning sometimes forces the need for the individual to have those competences, so that they are adequate to the requirements. It is important to achieve personal goals, reconcile one's own interests with others, while respecting social norms. According to Matczak and Jaworowska (2001, p. 7), social competences are "complex skills conditioning the effectiveness of coping with certain types of social situations, acquired by an individual in social training situations". A high level of social competence refers to being a better employee, getting promotions, maintaining high-quality interpersonal contacts, being able to cooperate, resolving conflicts, and finding a job faster when losing a job (Smółka, 2008). They testify to the ability to find oneself in unusual situations, determine success on a professional basis, make them attractive to the employer, and make such an individual able to find themselves in almost any situation (Welskop, 2015). With regard to the social functioning of artists in the art of illusion, social competences are related to communicative competences – e.g. during a performance; with the ability to establish contact with the audience, the ability to function effectively in a situation of social exposure. As shown by Napora and Sękowski (2020), performing artists have better developed social competences than non-performers. Another manifestation of developed social competences is inducing certain behaviors in the audience – illusionists use social attention to direct their look where they want. Common attention is a mechanism that develops in the course of human social development – seeing the direction of another person's eyesight, we start to look in the same direction; when the interlocutor wants to look at his face, he will look at the person with whom he is talking (Moore & Dunham, 1995).

During performances, illusionists emphasize establishing a good relationship with the audience; they try to maintain an atmosphere of wonder. The purpose of the illusionist is to build trust between himself and the audience – this reduces suspicion during the performance (Nardi, 1984). For this reason, illusionists rely on humor and kindness in building relationships with the audience. Sometimes they deliberately pretend to be helpless, pretending that the trick has failed them, in order to build trust (Macknik & Martinez-Conde, 2010). Social competences are related to the sense of quality of life – Skrzypek (2001) states that the better communication there is between people, the greater is the chance of improving interpersonal relations and the quality of life. Social competences are about maintaining high-quality and mutually satisfactory interpersonal relationships and avoiding negative influences from other people (Argyle, 2002). This, in turn, is related to the predominance of positive experiences over negative ones, and these affect the sense of quality of life (Stecler, 2001).

Self-esteem is an important element in the functioning of artists. This construct refers to a positive or negative evaluation of a person's worth (Rosenberg, 1965). It is related to some aspects of intrapersonal and interpersonal functioning, and has an impact on motivation and achieving goals (Hepper, 2016). For performing artists, the level of self-esteem is important because then the situation of the performance is perceived as a positive experience, confirmation of self-worth and is not perceived in terms of risk (Sękowski, 1989). Napora (2019) in his research done on a group of illusionists found that this group of stage artists is characterized by a higher level of this variable than people who are not performers. Huycke (2014), conducting research among elderly people living in social welfare centers, found that learning illusionistic effects, as well as presenting them in front of peers, has a positive effect on the level of self-esteem. Self-esteem is also related to the sense of quality of life. Cummins (1997) states that self-esteem is one of the determinants of the sense of quality of life. Derbis (2000) notes that the level of self-esteem influences the subjective assessment of the quality of life, and the research of Robinson (2000) also confirms this. The level of self-esteem influences the strategies people use to create a positive self-image. People with a high level of self-esteem use many cognitive strategies for this purpose and process the incoming information in such a way as to further increase its level (Kenrick et al., 2002). Self-esteem of professional magicians in dependent – inter alia – on self-efficacy and life optimism (Napora, 2021).

The concept of sense of quality of life which is used in the article is Straś-Romanowska's (1992) personalistic-existential concept of the quality of life. It is a holistic concept that embraces 4 dimensions (spheres) and applies to every individual. This concept assumes that human life operates in the following dimensions: psychophysical, psychosocial, subjective and metaphysical. The first relates to satisfaction with the biological functioning of the organism, the second relates to satisfaction with fulfilled social roles, satisfying interpersonal relationships. The third, subjective dimension concerns being distinguished from the social background, and the fourth, metaphysical one is related to experiencing timeless values and orientation towards another human being. Due to the fact that for the artistic functioning of illusionists (which seems to be less related to the biological sphere of human life) the psychophysical sphere will not be included in the analyses. Thus, it can be concluded that subjective quality of life refers to the way of life and the problems that an individual encounters and which are differentiated according to the dimensions in which the individual functions. The discussed concept, by its holistic approach, ensures its universality. Despite the diversity

and individuality of individuals, the concept is useful regardless of this (Mróz, 2011).

The aim of the research was to show how selected psychological variables related to the functioning of artists of the art of illusion explain the sense of quality of life. Moreover, the aim of the study is to show whether the stage experience moderates these relationships. The aim of the research was to answer the following research questions:

1. Do self-esteem, emotional intelligence and social competences explain the sense of quality of life in a group of illusionists?
2. Does the stage experience moderate the dependencies between explanatory variables and the sense of quality of life in a group of illusionists? (The question is exploratory).

Based on theoretical findings, the following hypothesis was formulated:

Hypothesis 1: Self-esteem, emotional intelligence and social competences are predictors of a sense of quality of life in a group of illusionists.

PARTICIPANTS AND PROCEDURE

PARTICIPANTS

The research was carried out all over Poland, 53 illusionists took part in them – they were all men. In Poland, men dominate the profession of an illusionist. It is worth pointing out that in the art of magic, dominance of men is commonly noticeable (Jay, 2021). The author contacted 60 illusionists. Those who agreed to participate in the study learned the purpose of the study, were informed about the possibility of withdrawing at any time, were assured of anonymity and that the study was conducted without a fee. The youngest artist was 16 years old, the oldest 70 ($M = 29.30$, $SD = 11.20$). Respondents were obtained by informing about the study at meetings, conferences and workshops dedicated to magicians, such as: Warsaw Magic Conference, Kraków Magic Session, Meetings at the Magic Studio Arsene Lupin and during Częstochowa Meetings with Magic. Magicians interested in participating in the research received a set of questionnaires in person or by post, then returned them by post or in person at the next event integrating the community of Polish illusionists. All methods used in the research were Polish.

MEASURES

The Popular Emotional Intelligence Questionnaire. The study used the Popular Emotional Intelligence Questionnaire by Jaworowska and Matczak (2005), which examines emotional intelligence not only in general terms, but also in the context of accepting

emotions, understanding them, empathy and control. It consists of 94 items and has satisfactory reliability indicators at the level of $\alpha = .80$ (Jaworowska & Matczak, 2005). In the present study, the reliability for the scales was as follows: Acceptance of Emotions $\alpha = .74$; Empathy $\alpha = .87$; Emotional Control $\alpha = .73$; Understanding Emotions $\alpha = .69$. The respondent answers on a 5-point Likert scale. Example item: “I can easily see someone’s sadness”.

The Social Competence Questionnaire. Another tool was the Social Competence Questionnaire by Matczak and Jaworowska (2001), which enables the measurement of competences related to functioning in situations requiring assertiveness, situations of social exposure and in intimate situations. The respondent answers on a 4-point Likert scale. It consists of 100 items and possesses satisfactory reliability indicators at the level of $\alpha = .93-.95$ (Matczak & Jaworowska, 2001). In the present study, the reliability was at the level of $\alpha = .83$ for the Intimacy scale; $\alpha = .92$ for the Social Exposure scale and $\alpha = .85$ for the Assertiveness scale. Example item: “How well would you do if you were to publicly recite the poem?”.

The Sense of Quality of Life Questionnaire. The next tool used in the study was the Sense of Quality of Life Questionnaire by Straś-Romanowska et al. (2004). It consists of 60 statements and, in addition to the general subjective quality of life, it provides information on the sense of quality of life in the following spheres: psychophysical, psychosocial, subjective, metaphysical. The reliability of the tool ranges from $\alpha = .65$ to $\alpha = .70$ (Frąckowiak, 2004). In the present study, the reliability was at the level of $\alpha = .67$ for the psychosocial sphere; the subjective sphere was at the level $\alpha = .77$ and the metaphysical sphere was at the level $\alpha = .71$. The respondent answers on a 4-point Likert scale. Example items: “There are more successes than failures in my life”; “Sometimes I find it difficult to describe my feelings”.

The Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale. The Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (SES) consists of 10 statements. The examined person indicates to what extent he agrees with each of them by taking a position on a four-point Likert scale. The tool examines global self-esteem in relation to positive and negative feelings towards oneself. All items are diagnostic, and the result can vary from 10 to 40 points. Reliability is at a satisfactory level: $\alpha = .82$ (Łąguna et al., 2007). In the present study, the reliability was at the level of $\alpha = .76$. Example item: “On the whole, I am satisfied with myself”.

RESULTS

Table 1 presents descriptive statistics for the Popular Emotional Intelligence Questionnaire, Self-Esteem Scale, Social Competence Questionnaire and Sense of Quality of Life Questionnaire

PSYCHOLOGICAL PREDICTORS
OF THE PSYCHOSOCIAL SPHERE
OF THE QUALITY OF LIFE

To test the extent to which independent variables explain the psychosocial sphere, a stepwise regression analysis was performed. For the psychosocial sphere of the sense of quality of life, two models were established using stepwise regression, each of which is significant. Model 1 explains 18% of the variability in this sphere of the sense of quality of life ($R^2 = .18$). Model 2 significantly increases the explained variance to 22% (Table 2).

The second model explains the largest part of the variance of the variable explained by two predictors: acceptance of emotions (positively and moderately strongly) and understanding emotions (positively and weakly) influencing the variance of the psychosocial sphere of the sense of quality of life.

Regression analysis showed that the greatest contribution to the regression equation was made by emotional acceptance ($\beta = .30, p = .035$). This means that along with the increase in the acceptance of experienced emotions, the assessment of the psychosocial aspect of the sense of quality of life increases. The second significant predictor was ability to understand emotions – the higher the level of this emotional component, the higher is the psychosocial aspect of the sense of quality of life.

PSYCHOLOGICAL PREDICTORS
OF THE SUBJECTIVE SPHERE
OF THE QUALITY OF LIFE

To test the extent to which independent variables explain the subjective sphere, a stepwise regression analysis was performed. For the subjective sphere of the sense of quality of life, two models were established using the stepwise regression method. Each of them is significant. Model 1 explains 31% of subjective variation in quality of life ($R^2 = .31$). Model 2 significantly increases the explained variance to 40% (Table 3).

Model 2 explains the largest part of the variance of the variable explained by two predictors: emotional acceptance and self-esteem, which positively and moderately strongly affect the explained variable.

Table 1

Descriptive statistics

| | <i>M</i> | <i>SD</i> | <i>Min</i> | <i>Max</i> |
|--|----------|-----------|------------|------------|
| Popular Emotional Intelligence Questionnaire | | | | |
| Acceptance of emotions | 54.96 | 7.11 | 39 | 72 |
| Empathy | 68.77 | 8.97 | 45 | 88 |
| Emotional control | 34.87 | 6.44 | 22 | 47 |
| Understanding emotions | 29.28 | 5.19 | 20 | 40 |
| Total score | 340.32 | 32.87 | 266 | 420 |
| Self-Esteem Scale | 32.98 | 3.91 | 24 | 40 |
| Social Competence Questionnaire | | | | |
| Intimacy | 44.26 | 5.23 | 29 | 57 |
| Social exposure | 62.81 | 6.69 | 47 | 72 |
| Assertiveness | 52.66 | 6.49 | 43 | 65 |
| Total score | 159.74 | 15.74 | 129 | 190 |
| Sense of Quality of Life Questionnaire | | | | |
| Psychosocial sphere | 48.45 | 5.03 | 34 | 57 |
| Subjective sphere | 51.70 | 4.73 | 33 | 60 |
| Metaphysical sphere | 48.25 | 5.15 | 35 | 59 |
| Total score | 196.42 | 14.77 | 166 | 224 |

Predictors of sense of quality of life

Table 2

Regression coefficients and the explained variability for the psychosocial sphere of the Sense of Quality of Life Questionnaire in the group of illusionists using the stepwise method

| Model | | <i>B</i> | <i>SE</i> | β | <i>t</i> | R^2 | ΔR^2 | <i>F</i> change |
|-------|-------------------------------|----------|-----------|---------|----------|-------|--------------|-----------------|
| 1 | (Const.) | 31.91 | 4.96 | | 6.43** | .18 | .17 | 11.29** |
| | Acceptance of emotions (PEIQ) | .30 | .09 | .43 | 3.36** | | | |
| 2 | (Const.) | 28.75 | 5.04 | | 5.71** | .25 | .22 | 4.40* |
| | Acceptance of emotions (PEIQ) | .21 | .10 | .30 | 2.17* | | | |
| | Understanding emotions (PEIQ) | .28 | .13 | .28 | 2.10* | | | |

Note. PEIQ – Popular Emotional Intelligence Questionnaire; * $p < .05$, ** $p < .001$.

Table 3

Regression coefficients and the explained variability for the subjective sphere of the Sense of Quality of Life Questionnaire in the group of illusionists using the stepwise method

| Model | | <i>B</i> | <i>SE</i> | β | <i>t</i> | <i>R</i> ² | ΔR^2 | <i>F</i> change |
|-------|-------------------------------|----------|-----------|---------|----------|-----------------------|--------------|-----------------|
| 1 | (Const.) | 31.28 | 4.28 | | 7.31** | .31 | .30 | 23.17** |
| | Acceptance of emotions (PEIQ) | .37 | .08 | .56 | 4.81** | | | |
| 2 | (Const.) | 22.16 | 4.89 | | 4.53** | .43 | .40 | 9.96** |
| | Acceptance of emotions (PEIQ) | .27 | .08 | .40 | 3.42** | | | |
| | Self-esteem (SES) | .45 | .14 | .37 | 3.16** | | | |

Note. PEIQ – Popular Emotional Intelligence Questionnaire; SES – Self-Esteem Scale; **p* < .05, ***p* < .001.

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Table 4

Regression coefficients and the explained variability for the metaphysical sphere of the Sense of Quality of Life Questionnaire in the group of illusionists using the stepwise method

| Model | | <i>B</i> | <i>SE</i> | β | <i>t</i> | <i>R</i> ² | ΔR^2 | <i>F</i> change |
|-------|-----------------|----------|-----------|---------|----------|-----------------------|--------------|-----------------|
| 1 | (Const.) | 28.16 | 5.46 | | 5.16** | .21 | .20 | 13.75** |
| | Intimacy (PEIQ) | .45 | .12 | .46 | 3.71** | | | |
| 2 | (Const.) | 20.00 | 6.48 | | 3.09** | .28 | .25 | 4.67* |
| | Intimacy (PEIQ) | .40 | .12 | .41 | 3.33** | | | |
| | Empathy (PEIQ) | .15 | .07 | .27 | 2.16* | | | |

Note. PEIQ – Popular Emotional Intelligence Questionnaire; **p* < .05, ***p* < .001.

The strongest predictor in the discussed model turned out to be the acceptance of emotions ($\beta = .40$, $p < .001$) – with its increase, satisfaction with the subjective sphere of the sense of quality of life increases. The second predictor identified in the regression model was self-esteem – satisfaction with the subjective sense of quality of life increases with a more positive self-perception.

PSYCHOLOGICAL PREDICTORS OF THE METAPHYSICAL SPHERE OF THE QUALITY OF LIFE

To test the extent to which independent variables explain the metaphysical sphere, a stepwise regression analysis was performed. Two models have been established for the metaphysical sphere of the sense of quality of life. Each of them is significant. Model 1 explains 21% of the metaphysical variation in quality of life ($R^2 = .21$). Model 2 significantly increases the explained variance to 25% (Table 4).

The second model explains the largest part of the variance of the variable explained by two predictors: social competences manifested in intimate situations, which positively and moderately strongly influenc-

es the explained variable, and empathy, influencing positively and weakly.

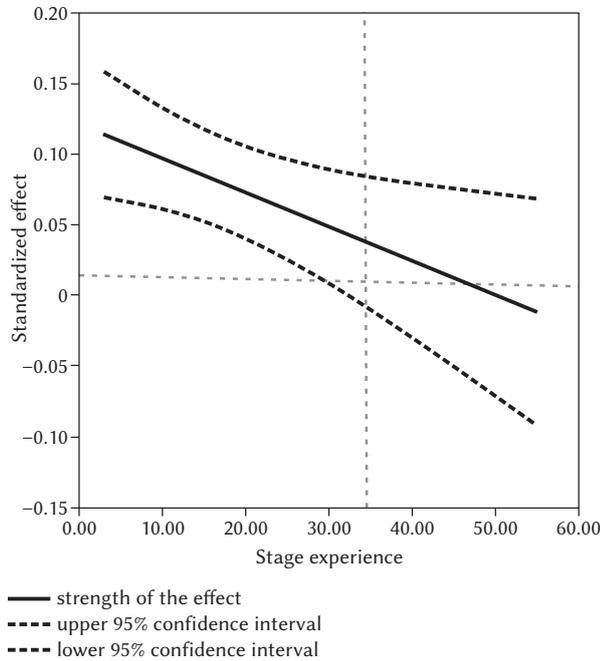
In the metaphysical sphere of the sense of quality of life, the greatest contribution to its explanation is made by competences related to functioning in intimate situations ($\beta = .41$, $p < .001$). Increased satisfaction with this area of interpersonal contacts is associated with an increase in satisfaction with the metaphysical area of an individual's life. The second significant predictor was empathy – along with the ability to sympathize with others, satisfaction with the metaphysical dimensions of the sense of quality of life increases.

SENSE OF QUALITY OF LIFE MODERATORS – MODERATION ANALYSIS

In order to indicate under what conditions the regression relationships connecting the variables occur, a moderation analysis was performed. The existence of a potential moderator was assumed: stage experience (given in years). Stage experience was divided by the per percentile breakdown. It was the 16th, 50th and 84th percentiles. In the group of illusionists, the exact values for the nomenclature of low, medium,

Figure 1

Results of the moderation analysis of the relationship between the general score of the Popular Emotional Intelligence Questionnaire and the subjective sphere of the Sense of Quality of Life Questionnaire through stage experience in a group of illusionists



and large were respectively: 3, 6 and 14.36 (years) of stage experience. The analyses were performed using the IBM SPSS Statistics version 25 package and the PROCESS macro (Hayes, 2013). The number of samples in the bootstrap method was 5000, and the 95% confidence interval was used.

STAGE EXPERIENCE AS A MODERATOR OF THE INFLUENCE OF EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE ON THE SUBJECTIVE SPHERE OF THE SENSE OF QUALITY OF LIFE

The results of moderation analysis showed that stage experience modifies the influence of emotional intelligence (in the general sense) on the subjective sphere of the sense of quality of life in the group of illusionists. The interactive component turned out to be significant and increased the range of the explained variance in the assessment of the subjective sphere of the sense of quality of life by 8% (R^2 changes = .80, $p = .041$). The model with the interaction term was well fitted to the data $F(3, 49) = 9.66, p < .001$ and explained 37% of the variation. Based on the results presented in Table 4 and Figure 1, it can be concluded that with gaining stage experience, the relationship between emotional intelligence and satisfaction with the sense of quality of life in the subjective sphere

Table 5

The size of the effect depending on the level of the moderator – stage experience

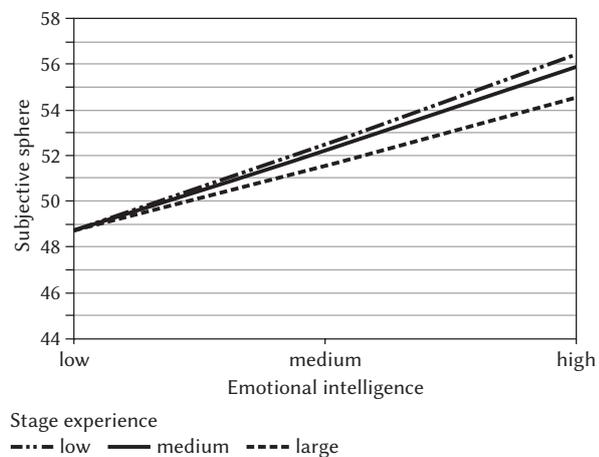
| Stage experience | Strength of the effect | Boot SE | Boot LLCI | Boot ULCI |
|------------------|------------------------|---------|-----------|-----------|
| Low* | .11 | .02 | .07 | .16 |
| Medium* | .11 | .02 | .07 | .15 |
| Large* | .09 | .02 | .05 | .12 |

Note. *Levels designated by the 16th, 50th and 84th percentiles.

Predictors of sense of quality of life

Figure 2

Graphical presentation of the interaction effect using Johnson-Neyman significance regions



weakens. In magicians with low stage experience, this relationship is stronger than in people with medium and large stage experience.

The strength of the moderation effect was checked for three levels of the explanatory variable (Table 5). On its basis, it can be stated that the effect is significant for all moderator levels, because the bootstrap confidence intervals differ significantly from zero. The moderation effect is also similar at all moderator levels.

The Johnson-Neyman method (Figure 2) was used to illustrate the significant interaction effect of the stage experience of emotional intelligence as a predictor of the subjective sphere of the sense of quality of life. The dashed lines mark the Johnson-Neyman point (32.24) above which the strength of the effect is significant at the level of $p < .05$. It has been shown that the strength of the interaction effect presented in Table 4 results from the fact that the relationship between emotional intelligence and the subjective sphere is significant for the low and medium level of the moderator. The moderation effect is no longer relevant for the moderator above the value of 32.24.

Figure 2 also shows that on a significant part of the moderator's scale the moderating effect is negative and the stronger the lower the moderator's value.

DISCUSSION

The aim of the present study was to investigate whether variables such as self-esteem, social competences and emotional intelligence explain the sense of quality of life in the group of artists of the art of magic. We also checked the moderating role of stage experience.

In the psychosocial sphere of the sense of quality of life in this group of respondents, the acceptance of emotions turned out to be the strongest predictor. Stone (2008) states that in situations of performances in front of an audience and at the preparation stage, experienced negative emotions should be accepted – the individual should not try to reject them. The analysis showed that as the acceptance of emotions increases, the sense of satisfaction with the professional role, social value and stability increases. Ability to understand one's own emotions turned out to be the second predictor of the psychosocial sphere. Understanding and controlling emotions make a person aware of their own influence on affective state and behavior. It is expressed, *inter alia*, in the fact that the individual looks for situations that will provide him with emotions of a positive value (Doliński & Błaszczak, 2011). For the group of illusionists, emotional competences are important in terms of social functioning and functioning in the context of the artist (Napora & Sękowski, 2020).

The importance of emotional intelligence in the proper functioning in society is emphasized by Matczak and Knopp (2013). With the increase in emotional intelligence, the quality of functioning in society improves and the specific abilities of an individual in terms of socio-emotional functioning increase. This determines the success of actions taken in social situations, and affects the type and intensity of activity and satisfaction with the psychosocial area of an individual's life.

Acceptance of emotions also turned out to be the strongest predictor in the subjective sphere of the sense of quality of life. Characteristic for the subjective sphere is the desire to stand out from the social background, a sense of being different. It can be achieved through the use of emotions in action and their expression. These activities related to emotions are important in the situation of public appearances and due to this, the artist can feel unique. The increase in the acceptance of emotions is accompanied by the fulfillment of specific human needs, such as the need for freedom or individuality. Activity in life and choosing a profession may be an expression of people's individuality (Drewulska, 2020). According

to this, the individual is aware of experiencing his life as an extraordinary event (Straś-Romanowska, 1992). This individuality also may manifest in practicing an uncommon profession – illusionists “believe that life as a magician is relatively free in nature without rigid daily routines” (Rissanen et al., 2014). Magicians are a social group perceived as having exceptional abilities to represent inexplicable phenomena. They achieve this by having the ability to direct the attention of the audience, the ability of the hand, the construction of props. Acceptance of experienced emotional states has a large impact on perceiving one's own life as unique, because it can be assumed that being a professional illusionist is associated with the desire to be perceived as someone special (Frith & Walker, 1983). Self-esteem also has impact on this sphere – the more favorable the perception of self, the more satisfied with this area of sense of quality of life. In the context of the art of illusion, self-esteem and the subjective sphere seem to have common aspects – both constructs are related to the desire to feel like someone valuable, special and individual at the same time. Illusionists present phenomena that the audience cannot do, which makes this group of artists feel extraordinary (Wiseman & Watt, 2018).

In the metaphysical sphere of the sense of quality of life, the skills related to functioning in intimate situations explained it to the greatest extent. In relation to the functioning in the metaphysical sphere of the sense of quality of life, the individual focuses on values such as good, trust and being oriented towards the other person (Straś-Romanowska, 1992). Trust, sharing experiences, entering into close relationships – these human behaviors are characteristic of competences revealed in intimate situations. The increase in the level of this type of social competence may be associated with the ability to exceed one's limitations as well as direct the individual to values such as good and truth. Empathy – as the second predictor – has an impact on the metaphysical dimension of the sense of quality of life. It allows one to focus on other people due to the ability to empathize with others. Empathy is an indispensable competence of illusionists, because it allows them to feel the same emotions as audience do, while performing magic, and finally provides them an extraordinary experience. “Most people have intellectual resistance to believing in the impossible while at the same time having an emotional desire to believe in the impossible. It is this tension at the heart of the human spirit that strong magic evokes. The result is the wonder and awe that magic always generates” (Ortiz, 2013, p. 257).

Moreover, in this group of respondents, the overall emotional intelligence significantly influences the subjective sphere of the sense of quality of life – taking into account the stage experience as a moderator. It has been shown that in the youngest experience of illusionists – at the beginning of their career as a stage

performer – the relationship between emotional intelligence and the subjective sphere of the sense of quality of life is the strongest. The more experience one has in performances, the smaller the connection between emotional intelligence and the subjective sphere of the sense of quality of life becomes. Among magicians with more experience, this relationship is weaker, because the performances and the known conjuring techniques are not as new for them as for people with limited stage experience. Artists of the illusion art at the beginning of their career related to performances are characterized by a very high commitment to learning new techniques crucial for presenting illusionistic effects. They are fascinated by the secrets that this branch of art offers. It is connected with experiencing many positive emotions, but also when presenting their skills in public, they acquire appropriate emotional competences that are important for the performers. Seeing the surprise in the audience, it evokes euphoria in them and the positive emotions associated with it, which weaken with the experience, as the magician gets used to it. The subjective sphere of the sense of quality of life is related to the sense of autonomy, the creation of one's own independence and will, and this dimension being characterized by the fact that the individual derives a sense of strength and satisfaction mainly from emphasizing one's "self", separating it from the social background. Satisfaction from this sphere of sense of quality of life is based on one's individuality and uniqueness (Straś-Romanowska, 1992). It can therefore be concluded that people at the beginning of their illusionist career feel this uniqueness more clearly, due to the fact that they are engaged in a profession that is considered mysterious, unusual and rarely performed. They usually experience something for the first time that they have not experienced before.

LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The limitation of the study may seem to be the size of the group – 53 people were surveyed, which is a rather small sample. On the other hand, recruiting a larger group seems difficult due to the small population of the Polish illusionist group. Another limitation is the lack of a control group – comparing sense of quality of life with a group which is not related with a public performance profession could deliver interesting results according to analyzed variables. In further research, it is worth paying attention to other factors explaining the sense of quality of life in magicians.

DISCLOSURE

The author declares no conflict of interest.

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