

Reflections on Mood: Four Factors Underlying the Meta-Mood Experience

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Introduction

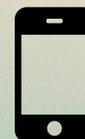
- How we perceive our moods and the degree to which we pay attention to, identify, and repair our emotions is part of the meta-mood experience (Salovey, Mayer, Goldman, Turvey, & Palfai, 1995).
- The Trait Meta-Mood Scale (TMMS) is a 30-item measure designed to gauge the meta-mood experience along three factors: Attention, Clarity, and Repair (Salovey et al., 1995; Salovey, Stroud, Woolery, & Epel, 2002).
- Attention is the ability to notice and pay attention to emotions. Clarity is the ability to recognize moods and differentiate them from other moods. Repair is the ability to control and alter one's own moods (Salovey et al., 2002).
- In addition, the TMMS assess emotional intelligence. Emotional intelligence is the ability to recognize, understand, process, and regulate emotions efficiently in oneself and others (Pekaar, Bakker, Born, & van der Linden, 2018).
- An understanding of the dimensions of the meta-mood experience is important because some of the dimensions, such as emotional repair, have been linked to increased life satisfaction and reduced anxiety (Wong et al., 2007).
- The purpose of the current study is to identify the dimensions of the meta-mood experience.

Method

- There were 217 participants, 68 (31.34%) males and 149 (68.66%) females.
- 127 participants identified as White (58.53%), 33 as Asian (15.06%), 22 as African American (10.05%), 20 as Hispanic (9.13%), one as Native American (0.46%), and 14 individuals identified as "Other" (6.39%).
- Age ranged from 18 to 49 years old with a mean age of 22.62 (SD = 6.23).
- The TMMS has 30 items measuring three subscales: Attention (13 items), Clarity (11 items), and Repair (6 items). These items are rated using a five-point scale where 1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Neutral, 4 = Agree, and 5 = Strongly Agree. (Salovey et al., 1995).
- We performed a principal components analysis with multiple factors.
- We considered four criteria to determine the number of factors: the scree plot (Cattell, 1966), the Kaiser-Guttman rule (Cliff, 1988; Velicer, Eaton, & Fava, 2000), parallel analysis (Horn, 1965; Cota, Longman, Holden, & Rekken, 1993), and Velicer's minimum average partial (MAP) test (Velicer, 1976).
- Kaiser-Guttman suggested six factors, scree and parallel analysis five, MAP test three. Because these latter three methods are usually accurate to within one factor (Zwick & Velicer, 1986; Velicer et al., 2000), we concluded there are four factors.
- We selected the direct oblimin rotation because it had the lowest number of complex variables (3), a high number of hyperplanar coefficients (50), and moderate inter-factor correlations (maximum correlation of 0.37, average correlation of 0.18).

The meta-mood experience consists of four dimensions:

Clarity, Attention, Repair, and Receptiveness.



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Results

- Factor 1 seemed to capture how well a person understood their feelings. For these reasons, we named the first factor Clarity.
- We reverse scored factor 2, which captured a willingness to notice mood. We named the second factor Attention.
- Factor 3 captured how well a person was able to adjust their mood when faced with negative emotions. We named the third factor Repair.
- Factor 4 captured an openness to feel emotions and use mood to guide one's actions. We named the fourth factor Receptiveness.
- See Table 1.

Table 1

Factor Analysis Results for Rotated Factors

Item	Factor				h ²
	1	2	3	4	
30. I almost always know exactly how I am feeling.	0.79	-0.10	0.07	0.06	0.63
6. I am rarely confused about how I feel.	0.76	-0.16	-0.04	0.05	0.51
25. I am usually very clear about my feelings.	0.76	-0.09	0.03	0.04	0.55
16. I am usually confused about how I feel.	-0.76	-0.19	0.03	0.14	0.70
28. I usually know my feelings about a matter.	0.69	0.03	0.00	0.07	0.48
11. I can never tell how I feel.	-0.63	-0.24	0.01	0.00	0.53
20. I feel at ease about my emotions.	0.62	0.02	0.10	0.12	0.45
15. I am often aware of my feelings on a matter.	0.59	0.06	0.02	0.08	0.38
5. Sometimes I can't tell what my feelings are.	-0.56	0.02	-0.10	0.20	0.41
22. I can't make sense out of my feelings.	-0.55	-0.09	-0.03	0.15	0.39
4. I don't usually care much about what I'm feeling.	-0.03	-0.73	0.05	0.09	0.53
29. It is usually a waste of time to think about your emotions.	-0.08	-0.69	-0.05	0.01	0.54
3. I don't think it's worth paying attention to your emotions or moods.	-0.06	-0.64	0.04	0.20	0.46
17. One should never be guided by emotions.	-0.03	-0.58	0.04	-0.19	0.38
27. Feelings are a weakness humans have.	0.01	-0.57	-0.11	0.18	0.39
23. I don't pay much attention to my feelings.	0.00	-0.54	-0.28	-0.08	0.48
18. I never give in to my emotions.	0.08	-0.54	0.15	-0.28	0.35
2. People would be better off if they felt less and thought more.	-0.03	-0.46	0.11	-0.04	0.20
21. I pay a lot of attention to how I feel.	0.01	0.44	0.27	0.37	0.50
24. I often think about my feelings.	-0.28	0.35	0.23	0.29	0.30
1. I try to think good thoughts no matter how badly I feel.	-0.05	-0.11	0.85	-0.04	0.65
26. No matter how badly I feel, I try to think about pleasant things.	0.07	-0.04	0.78	0.08	0.64
13. When I become upset I remind myself of all the pleasures in life.	0.06	-0.00	0.69	0.13	0.53
8. Although I am sometimes sad, I have a mostly optimistic outlook.	0.10	0.07	0.64	-0.06	0.50
19. Although I am sometimes happy, I have a mostly pessimistic outlook.	0.01	-0.25	-0.57	0.22	0.49
12. The best way for me to handle my feelings is to experience them to the fullest.	0.18	0.04	0.11	0.62	0.45
14. My beliefs and opinions always seem to change depending on how I feel.	-0.28	-0.22	-0.08	0.52	0.47
9. When I am upset I realize that the "good things in life" are illusions.	-0.20	-0.26	-0.29	0.44	0.50
10. I believe in acting from the heart.	0.17	0.41	-0.02	0.44	0.43
7. Feelings give direction to life.	0.13	0.32	0.13	0.37	0.34
Factor Intercorrelations					
	1	2	3	4	
Factor 1					
Factor 2	0.29				
Factor 3	0.37	0.29			
Factor 4	-0.07	0.05	0.03		

Note. Salient factor pattern matrix coefficients > |0.3| are in bold face. h² = communality. Items were not reverse coded prior to statistical analysis. Factor 2 was reverse scored. Factor 1 = Clarity. Factor 2 = Attention. Factor 3 = Repair. Factor 4 = Receptiveness.

Discussion

- Clarity, Attention, and Repair match Salovey and Mayer's (1995) original three factors; however, we found a novel fourth factor: Receptiveness.
- Receptiveness captures the ability to see emotions in a positive light and be actively open to experiencing them. It also suggests how emotions can influence a person's beliefs and drive their actions. For example, someone who scores high in Receptiveness may use emotion to guide their actions, and changes in mood may be highly impactful on that person's thoughts and behavior.
- If emotional intelligence is about understanding, processing, and regulating emotions (Pekaar et al., 2018), then emotional intelligence relates to the factors Clarity and Repair, but not necessarily Attention and Receptiveness. Receptiveness may not be in the domain of emotional intelligence; however, it is a part of the meta-mood experience, which involves associations and attitudes about emotions (Mayer & Gaschke, 1988).
- Researchers looking to create new tests of meta-mood can include Receptiveness to gauge a person's openness to experiencing emotions and to gauge how mood influences a person's thoughts and behaviors.
- Future research can look into how Receptiveness relates to subjective well-being, life satisfaction, and physiological reactions related to stress because Receptiveness may differ in how it relates to these and other constructs.