

BEYOND CONTROL: THE CONDITIONAL ROLE OF EMOTIONAL VALENCE IN THE IMPACT OF REGULATION ON EXPRESSIVE BEHAVIOR

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ABSTRACT

Present study examined the moderating effect of positive emotions between emotional regulation and expressive behaviour among young adults of Riphah International University Faisalabad Campus and University of Sargodha. Data was collected from 300 boys and girls through emotional regulation Scale (Gross & John, 2003), positive and negative affect schedule (Waston et al., 1988), and emotional expressivity scale (Barchard, 2001). To achieve objectives multiple statistical analyses were conducted descriptive statistics, reliability analyses, simple regression and Pearson correlation of variables and moderation analysis. The results revealed that all variables are significantly correlated with each other's. Positive emotions moderated between emotional regulation and emotional expressivity. Awareness of emotions helps to manage and regulate the emotions according to situations therefore emotional regulation is play very important role in expressing the positive and negative emotions that are socially acceptable.

Keywords: Emotion regulation, Emotional expressivity, Positive emotions.

INTRODUCTION

There is a pivotal role of emotion in our lives. Emotion is a state in which nervous system response to a specific object is accomplished by the body behavioral and physiological change (Cabanac & Michel, 2002). Emotions are expressed according to situation being faced. The rate at which an individual communicates behavioral experience is the measure of emotional activity. Emotions may be positive or negative one depending upon the specific physiological state. The behavioral and physiological changes are created by emotions. If there are no emotions there will be no imaginations. The emotions play important role in the adoptive behavior that is crucial for the people survival. The huge inner and outside events are expressed by feelings (Schacter et al.,

2011).

The conscious experience attributed by severe mind activity and a high level of displeasure or pleasure The synchronized sets of responses to external or internal events, being very important for the organism termed as emotions (Lazarus, 1993). There are multifarious emotions. Exactly theories from claiming emotions would states from claiming sensation that end in mental Furthermore physical progressions influencing our behavior (Daniel, 2011). Emotion is not an object that results in these body responses Emotions are responses to event like a rude client can exaggerate you or a person like you may be glad on seeing employee on work. You express your emotions when you are happy, angry or afraid of something (Barrett & Russell, 2015).

The facial expressions depict emotions like anger or disgust. The emotions are action-oriented i.e. they may result in an immediate action while moods are cognitive, mean they result in thinking activity. (Ekman & Davidson, 1994). There are many emotions including contempt, anger, enthusiasm, envy, frustration, fear, disgust, disappointment, embarrassment, happiness, hope, hate, jealousy, love, joy, surprise, pride and sadness.

Some researchers conclude that it is ridiculous to think about basic emotions because there are emotions that are experienced very rarely but affect us very most like shock. The study of face expression can identify the basic emotion (Ekman, 2003). The study of face expression cannot identify the complex emotions. The love cannot be expressed by face even it is a basic and universal emotion. There are certain standards and set of rules that determine a certain emotion. Sometime reaction is not as severe as the emotion is experienced. Today there are many companies that offer programs of anger-management for training of people to hide their inner feelings. The intensity of emotions expression is dependent upon inherent ability. The positive emotions and positive moods of extraverts are affected by positive events. People with less emotional stability express negative emotions and negative mood under negative mood under negative condition (Tamir & Robinson, 2004). Near our brain stem there is a structure of walnut size called limbic system that is responsible for emotions. People having relatively inactive limbic system tend to express positive emotions. While people have active limbic system tends to express negative emotions like anger, rage, or guilt. The limbic system of one people is different from other people. The people with more active limbic system are always moderately depressed especially when they come across negative information (Nolte, 2002).

The emotions are more severely expressed by a woman than a man. Women exhibit emotions of both positive and negative type more frequently and more severely expect anger (Brody & Hall, 1993). The negative experiences are recalled more readily than experience off positive event. Moods and emotions also affected by stress like exam phobia is severe before start of exam but student feel no fear

when exams are over the negative and positive emotions are interpreted in the same way throughout this world. The negative feelings like terror, hate and rage are considered destructive and dangerous. The positive feelings like love, joy and happiness are desired and expected by each one of us. In some cultures and civilizations certain type of emotions are valued more than others. Social relationships and interactions are motivated by emotions so the stress system and other phenomenon of physiology related with emotions. Emotions are responsible for bonding agent called oxytocin - attachment system so emotions are connects with anti -stress complex. In social systems of very complex type temperament and emotional phenotype affect fitness and social connectivity. There are some popular theories of emotions. According to the James-Lange theory that physiological reaction is result of external stimuli. The interpretation of physical reactions determines the emotional response (James, 1884). The physical reactions to the events result from nervous system like increased heart beat rate, stomach upset and trembling etc. According to the Cannon-Bard theory both emotion and physiological arousal are experienced simultaneously and thoughts or outward behavior given no attention (Cannon, 1927). The theory of Schachter-Singer argues that physiological arousal occurs first then reason for arousal is identified, after that at the end emotion is experienced. (Schachter & Singer, 1962). According to Lazarus theory a thought comes prior to any physiological arousal and emotion. In other words, before having experience of emotion we have to think about situation (Lazarus, 1993) and the theory of facial feedback tells that changes in facial muscles result in experience of emotion.

To understand what negative & positive emotions are, the theory of Fredrickson on emotions is one of the best. Fredrickson's broaden-and-build theory has been reinforced by a number of empirical evidence; theory has got indirect support number of sub-disciplines of psychology, and also has direct support from her own work on testing of hypotheses derived from the theory. From the point of view of many positive psychologists positive emotions have received very little empirical attention within applied psychology, In comparison to negative

emotions According to this theory joy, love and pride are certain emotions that can be categorized as positive and anxiety, sadness, anger and despair are examples of negative emotions (Fredrickson 2004).

Emotional regulation educated or indicated to the behavioral and intellectual system people utilize or use their experiences to impact their own emotions Regulation of emotion depicts ways that individuals endeavor to control their emotions, for example by denying, escalating, debilitating, abridging, covering, or totally concealing them. Emotion regulation can likewise be portrayed as the procedure in which individuals adjust their emotional responses—the adapting forms that expansion or abatement the force existing apart from everything else (Cai et al., 2020). Regulation of emotions mean how we have them, how we express them, how we experience them. Regulation of emotions role is important in expression of both negative and positive emotions an all these features are inter-related. Accordingly individuals endeavor to hinder unwanted or difficult emotions and improve alluring or lovely emotions. People who constantly stifle negative emotions tend to discover here and now help, however endure longer term wellbeing outcomes, thought concealment and rumination (Miller, 2009).

Emotional expressivity has been characterized as how much an individual effectively communicates emotional experience through verbal or nonverbal practices. Emotional articulations are facial developments, for example, grinning or frowning, or practices like crying or giggling or furious or pitiful or glad or appreciative. Emotional articulations can happen with or without mindfulness (Dorset, 2003). Among scholars and professionals in the fields of brain science, psychiatry, and psychotherapy, it is a typical conviction that individuals' psychological wellness is identified with how they express their emotions (Sloan & Marx, 2004).

Objectives

- To investigate the direction of the relationship among all study variables.
- To examine the psychometric properties of study measures including reliability and validity.
- To investigate the moderating

role of positive emotions between emotional regulation and emotional expressivity among young adults.

Hypothesis

H1. There will be a significant positive correlation between emotional regulation and emotional expressivity among young adults.

H.2 There will be a significant positive correlation between emotional regulation and emotional expressivity among young adults.

H3. Positive emotions will moderate the relationship between emotional regulation and positive emotional expressivity.

Literature Review

In recent years, the relationship between emotional regulation and emotional expression—especially the expression of positive emotions—has gained significant attention in psychological research. Emotional regulation is defined as the capacity to monitor, evaluate, and modify emotional reactions in a way that is adaptive and socially acceptable (Gross, 2015, as cited in Ford & Gross, 2019). It includes strategies such as cognitive reappraisal, attentional deployment, and response modulation.

Studies from the past five years emphasize that individuals who effectively regulate their emotions are more likely to express positive emotions outwardly, contributing to healthier relationships, enhanced well-being, and social approval (Trompeter et al., 2020). Positive emotional expression includes facial, verbal, and non-verbal cues that reflect happiness, gratitude, and affection.

For instance, Hu et al. (2022) found a significant positive correlation between emotion regulation strategies and the expression of positive emotions in workplace settings. Employees who used adaptive regulation techniques such as reappraisal were more likely to maintain a positive emotional tone during interpersonal interactions, leading to higher team satisfaction and cooperation.

The broaden-and-build theory of positive emotions (Fredrickson, 2001), supported by recent empirical evidence, suggests that experiencing positive emotions broadens individuals' thought-action repertoires, encouraging expressive, exploratory, and pro-social behaviors. As a result, the expression of

such emotions serves adaptive social functions, including trust-building and cooperation. Liu et al. (2022), using neurological evidence, demonstrated that positive emotional experiences activate brain regions associated with social communication and expressivity. Participants who experienced higher levels of positive affect showed greater facial activity and emotional responsiveness, confirming the biological basis of the link between emotion and expression.

In a cross-cultural study, Ahmed and Jabeen (2023) found that regardless of cultural context, individuals who reported higher levels of positive emotions also demonstrated more expressive behavior, such as smiling, affirming language, and eye contact. This association held true even in collectivist cultures, where emotional control is often emphasized. Additionally, Cai et al. (2020) emphasized that positive emotion and its expression are mutually reinforcing: expressing positive emotions not only reflects internal states but also enhances those emotions, creating a feedback loop that supports emotional well-being and relational satisfaction.

Park and Naragon-Gainey (2021) explored this relationship and found that positive emotion played a crucial role in determining the visibility of regulated emotional responses in social interactions. For individuals low in positive affect, even well-regulated emotions may not result in overt expression. Conversely, high positive emotion not only fosters greater expressivity but also enhances the social impact of those expressions. According to Zhao et al. (2023), individuals experiencing higher levels of positive emotion are more likely to express those emotions regardless of their regulation style. However, when paired with effective emotional regulation strategies such as cognitive reappraisal, positive emotion significantly enhances outward emotional expressivity. This supports the notion of a moderating effect, where positive emotion strengthens the regulation-expression link.

Method

The present study was based on cross-sectional survey research design. Sample of the present study was consisted of young adolescents (N = 300) from Sargodha university and Riphah

International University Faisalabad Campus. Purposive sampling technique was used to collect the information. Informed consent was obtained from the participants before administering the questionnaires.

Emotional Regulation Scale was developed by Gross and John (2003). It consisted of 10 items and rated on a 7-point Likert type response pattern ranging from strongly disagree = 1 to strongly agree = 7. Individual can minimum obtain 7 scores on this scale whereas maximum scores cannot exceed than 49. Obtained scores on this scale were interpreted in terms of low and high scores rather than cut off scores and he scale has originally alpha reliability of .76.

Positive and Negative Emotion Scale developed by Watson et al. (1988). It consisted of 20 items with 2 subscales, 10 items measure the positive emotions and 10 items measure the negative emotions. Researcher use positive emotions sub scale. Scaled on a 5-point Likert type response pattern ranging from very slightly or not at all = 1 to extremely = 5. Individual can minimum obtain 10 scores on this scale whereas maximum scores cannot exceed than 50. Obtained scores on this scale were interpreted in terms of low and high scores rather than cut off scores.

Emotional Expressivity scale was developed by (Barchard, 2001). It consisted of 20 items with two subscales; positive expressivity has 10 items and negative expressivity have next 10 items. Researcher use positive emotions sub scale. Scale rated on a 5-point Likert type response pattern ranging from very inaccurate = 1 to very accurate = 5. Individual can minimum obtain 10 scores on this scale whereas maximum scores cannot exceed than 50. Obtained scores on this scale were interpreted in terms of low and high scores rather than cut off scores and the positive expressivity scale alpha reliability .78 and negative expressivity scale alpha reliability .74.

Procedure

The researcher was contact the concerned authorities of the universities. After official permission, participants were contact individually in their respective departments. The researcher was raise the participants' morale and

interest in the study by sharing the objectives and importance of the research and informed consent was provide the participants before taking required information. The researcher assures the participants that what information was use for just academic purpose. Questionnaire along with personal information

sheet was given to the participants. The researcher was requesting the participants to give responses honestly and not leave any item un responded. The researcher provided the help when the participant requires clarity in question.

Results

Table 1

Correlation Matrix for all the Variables used In the Study

Variables	M	SD	a	1	2	3
Emotional regulation	43.69	10.88	.83	---	.69***	.81***
Positive emotions	32.79	6.89	.75		---	.49***
Expressive behavior	29.02	6.07	.79			---

Note: N = 300, *** $p < .001$, ** $p < .01$, * $p < .05$

Table 01 shows Pearson correlation among study variables. The findings indicate that emotional regulation have significant positive correlation with positive emotions ($r = .76$, p

$<.001$) and expressive behavior ($r = .86$, $p < .001$). The findings indicate that positive emotions have significant positive correlation with expressive behavior ($r = .53$, $p < .001$).

Table 2

Moderation of Positive Emotions between emotional Regulation and Expressive Behavior

Variables	Model 1			Model 2		
	B	B	SE	B	B	SE
Constant	52.62***		.52	52.84***		.75
Emotional Regulation	8.51***	.51***	1.29	7.24***	.49***	1.21
Positive emotions	6.84***	.35***	1.21	7.67***	.47***	1.41
Emotional regulation x Positive emotions				2.49	.11***	.69
R ²	.794			.794		
ΔR^2				.013		

Note: N = 300 *** $p < .001$, ** $p < .01$, * $p < .05$

Table shows the moderation of positive emotions between emotional regulation and expressive behavior. In model 1, the R² value of .794 revealed that the predictors explained 79.4% variance in the outcome with F (2, 297) = 406.18, $p < .001$. The finding revealed that emotional regulation ($\beta = .51$, $p < .001$) and positive emotions ($\beta = .35$, $p < .001$) positively effect on expressive behavior. In Model 2, the R² value of .807 revealed that the predictors explained 80.7% variance in the outcome with F (3, 296) = 292.17, $p < .001$. The finding revealed that emotional regulation ($\beta = .49$, $p < .001$), positive emotions ($\beta = .47$, $p < .001$) and emotional regulation x positive emotions significantly positive effect on expressive behavior ($\beta = .11$, $p < .001$). The ΔR^2 value of .013 revealed 1.3% change in the variance of model 1 and model 2 with ΔF (1, 296) = 13.75, $p < .001$. Finding show that positive emotions

moderates the relationship between emotional regulation and expressive behavior.

Discussion

All hypotheses were supported in the present study. The hypotheses “Emotional regulation will positively predict emotional expressivity among young adults” and “Emotional regulation will positively predict positively emotional expressivity among young adults” and “Emotional regulation will negatively predict negatively emotional expressivity among young adults” were supported by the results in the present study. A study conducted by Liu et al. (2021) examined emotional regulation among adolescents and concluded that those who practiced mindfulness and regulation strategies demonstrated more frequent and intense expressions of joy and affection, particularly in peer relationships. Their research supports the notion that emotional regulation helps manage

internal states, which in turn enables healthier and more expressive emotional behavior.

Another study by Szczygieł and Mikolajczak (2020) also provide evidence that people who use emotion regulation not only express more positive emotions but are also perceived as more emotionally intelligent and socially competent. Their findings show that positive expression is not only a result of internal emotional control but also a reflection of social awareness and emotional adaptability. Every person expresses their emotions in their daily life according the situations they face. Regulation of emotions ability of individual to regulate, modify and control the emotional reaction. Emotional dysregulation is something that happens to individuals who cannot sway their emotions or change them to the social situation are often more likely to have emotional disorders.

The emotional regulation is positively related with positive emotional expressivity and negatively relate with negative emotional expressivity (Schechter& Coates, 2008). A meta-analysis by Haga et al. (2019) confirmed that adaptive regulation strategies like reappraisal are consistently linked with higher levels of expressed positive emotions across multiple populations. This relationship was observed across different age groups, professions, and cultures, making the correlation widely applicable.

Individuals try to regulate negative emotions, it requires them to shift their attention from negative to positive aspects of a situation and also inhibit impulses to act upon negative emotions. Some time a person is not angry but situation demand that to show some aggression to control the situation it is ability to regulate emotion according to the demand of situation. Emotion regulation is basic to socialization and is reliant on the way of life one lives in and in addition the particular social setting of the circumstance. Regulation of emotion is something that turns into a propensity for the duration of our lives. In any case it is something that is basic to our socialization. Emotional deregulation is something that happens to people who can't influence their emotion or change them to the social circumstances are frequently more inclined to have emotional scatters. Four stages involves regulate emotions to express emotions that is the experience of

emotion, thoughts and reaction to a situation, heart rate, hormonal, and other physiological reaction and then individual express their emotions like facial expression etc(Trompeter et al., 2020).

The hypotheses "Positive emotions will positively predicts positively emotional expressivity among young adults" and "Negative emotions will negatively predicts emotional expressivity among young adults" and "Negative emotions will negatively predicts negative emotional expressivity among young adults" were supported by the results in the present study. According to Zhao et al. (2023), individuals who frequently experience positive emotions are more likely to outwardly express these feelings, contributing to improved social bonds and communication. Their findings suggest that positive internal states naturally drive expressive behavior as a form of emotional sharing and connection-building. Emotions can be characterized as a positive or negative experience that is related with a specific pattern of physiological movement. Emotions convey information about our needs, where negative emotions can signal that a need has not been met and positive emotions signal that it has been meet. In some contexts, conveying this information can have a negative impact on an individual; for example, when others ignore or exploit those needs but Positive emotions have received very little empirical attention within applied psychology, In comparison to negative emotions.

Park and Naragon-Gainey (2021) found that positive emotional experiences predicted more frequent and intense expressions of happiness and kindness in daily life, particularly in social contexts. Their longitudinal study highlighted that people who consistently feel positive emotions also tend to communicate those feelings more effectively and authentically. When Positive or negative emotions arise after an event or situation, sometime you can't express your feelings because situation is not suitable for your expression. If your feelings are positive (joy, happy) your expression also positive and if you feel negative like anger your expression also negative show. Emotions are a strong feelings state in which mental response to a specific object and accomplished by the

behaviorally and physiologically changes in the body.

Limitations

The study was conducted with young adults. There were several limits of present study that are pertinent to be mentioned. Limitation of the study is about data collection tools, although the sample's education related students, but still questionnaire were needed to be translated for better results. And questionnaires are not adapted to our Asian and Pakistani cultures as they were developed and adapted in western countries. The research design only permits association between variables but causal inferences are simply not possible. The sample of the study was homogenous as all participants were the part of same organization with educations, training and dealing with same situations. So the finding of study has limited generalizability. Another limitation of study was as survey research method was used, study inherit all weaknesses and drawbacks of his method such as low internal validity. These are the potential limitations of this research which should be addressed in future studies to make results more valid and applicable.

Conclusion

The study examined the effect of emotional regulation on the emotional expressivity of young adults. More specifically, negative and positive emotional expressivity was targeted in the study. The moderation analysis conducted confirmed the moderating effect of negative and positive emotions on emotional expressivity. The noticeable and important thing is that emotional regulation, positive and negative emotions leads toward positive and negative emotional expressivity. Awareness of emotions helps to manage and regulate the emotions according to situations therefore emotional regulation is play very important role in expressing the positive and negative emotions that are socially acceptable. Negative and positive emotions also effect the expression. The study proves the stance that regulation of emotions is related with emotional expressivity. The study is an insightful contribution on the topic of emotions.

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