

ICEI 2013

4th International Congress on Emotional Intelligence – September 8-10, 2013 – New York City



Emotional regulation and friendship

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Key words: social relationships, positive emotions, re-evaluation.

Psychology of Friendship

DEFINITION:

“Friendship is a psycho-social relationship based on a free affective link between two (or a few) people” (Zaccagnini, 2008).

- The “affective link” includes: To share time, to communicate, to feel close to the other, to trust on the other and to share some commitment on the relationship rules.
- The “freedom” includes: To start, keep and end the relationship freely, and to fix the relationship rules freely (Note that this is different from any other social relationship).

TYPES:

- **Best friends:** (few if any) people we know for long time, and trust 100%.
- **Good Friends:** people we like, and enjoy free time with.
- **Casual friends:** people we interact with because we share time/space (at work, association, living area... *an EI congress...* etc.), and we like and enjoy that relationship.

Introduction

- Friendship: **The Positive Psychology perspective.**
- **Friendship and EI:** The important role of negative (conflict) and positive (love) emotions in friendship.
- **The general hypothesis:** High and straight correlation between EI and friendship is expected.
- The data:
 - ✓ *Very few research on topic.*
 - ✓ *Not too high/clear correlation with both quantity and quality of friends.*

Research Review

- Previous literature has been shown that **EI facilitates the establishment and maintenance of social relations** (Dodge Garber, 1991; Saarni, 1999).
- Paulo N. Lopes, John B. Nezlek, Natalio Extremera, Janine Hertel, 4 Pablo Fernández-Berrocal, Astrid Schuřtz, and Peter Salovey, (2011) found that **emotional regulation (SERA) helps to avoid conflict more than to promote positive affect** (*not very high correlation*).
- Our previous research (Zaccagnini & Ruiz-Aranda, 2011, 2012) shows a **correlation between EI (TMMS and MSCEIT) and positive emotions in friendship** (*not very high correlation*).

Research Objectives

- To **re-analyze** the influence of emotional regulation in friendship, using now Gross y John, (2003) emotional regulation theory (suppression vs reappraisal), on friendship link (intimacy).
- In addition, we examined **the mediating role of positive emotions** in the relationship between the emotional regulation and the level of intimacy with friends.

Method

Participants

- 237
- 122 female
- 115 male
- Mean age=42,60

Mesures

- Emotional Regulation Questionnaire (Cabello, Salguero, Fernández-Berrocal, Gross; 2012)
- Network of Relationships Inventory (Furman & Buhrmester, 1985)
- Positive and Negative Affect Schedule (Sandin, et al., 1999)

Results: correlation analyses (sig)

	EMOTIONAL REAPPRAISAL	EMOTIONAL SUPPRESION	INTIMACY	POSITIVE AFFECT
EMOTIONAL REAPPRAISAL	---			
EMOTIONAL SUPPRESION	-.062	---		
INTIMACY	.169**	-.37**	---	
POSITIVE AFFECT	.187**	-.22**	.294**	---

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EMOTIONAL SUPPRESION	-.062	---		
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Results: Mediation analyses



Results & Discussion

- We find **positive correlation** between good emotional regulation (re-appraisal) and quality of friendship link.
- The results of the study indicate that **positive emotions mediate** the relationship between emotional adjustment and the levels of intimacy that we maintain with our friends.
- These findings suggest that those **people that use a reassessment** as a form of emotional regulation strategy, **generate more positive emotions**, which then impact on a **higher level of intimacy** with his friends.

Limitations and future research

- We keep getting a **low correlation** between Emotional Intelligence dimensions and friendship link.
- May be we should look for **other ways to measure IE** (traits based test, empathy tests...).
- May be friendship links **do not lay** so much on affect regulation.
- ¿Could friendship be supported by an **unconditioned acceptance schema** (i.e. confidence)? Next research.

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