

Expression of positive feeling in the context

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Abstract: suppressing the expression of positive emotions is generally considered socially undesirable. However, previous studies have not been able to examine the role of social context in manipulating proper emotional regulation. Consider contexts that may be more appropriate to suppress than express positive emotions, and express positive emotions if the expressed emotional valence (i.e. positive) does not match the context's valence. There was assumed to be considered inappropriate (i.e. negative).

Keywords: emotion, positive feeling, context, regulation, expressing.

INTRODUCTION

Context matters in how people produce, interpret, and respond to emotions. This is the principle underlying the concept of display rules (Ekman & Friesen, 1975), which are guides for understanding how to manage the expression or inhibition of emotion in a given situation (Matsumoto, Yoo, Hirayama, & Petrova, 2005). The theory underlying the rules of presentation means that emotional expression elements need to be adjusted in a context-dependent manner. However, little research has been done on the role of context in mitigating the social effects of emotional regulation. Studies comparing the effects of emotional expression on different social situations are relatively rare. (Van Kleef, De Dreu, & Manstead, 2010), and almost no research compares the effects of emotion regulation strategies, including suppression, across contexts. This is surprising because emotional adjustments are often required to meet the emotional demands of changing situations. Researchers are increasingly aware of this gap and are seeking work to investigate how contextual factors affect emotional regulation. (Aldao, 2013; Bonanno & Burton, 2013). *“Your smile is a messenger of goodwill. Your smile brightens the lives of all who see it. . . . As I leave for my office, I greet the elevator operator in the apartment house with a ‘Good morning’ and a smile, I greet the doorman with a smile. I smile at the cashier in the subway booth when I ask for change. As I stand on the floor of the Stock Exchange, I smile at people who until recently never saw me smile.”* (Carnegie, 1936) Emotional regulation theory, in principle, recognizes the mitigation effects of changing contextual requirements, but these researchers say that our empirical research has led to a more rigorous conceptualization of useful and costly strategies. In this study, emotional regulation strategies tend to be categorized into "camps" of health and maladaptation, adaptation and maladaptation, and function and dysfunction. Bonanno

and Burton (2013) describes it as a fallacy of uniform effectiveness. In this predominantly context-independent literature, expressive repression is considered a particularly costly strategy.

EMOTION-CONTEXT MISMATCH

To this characterization of expressiveness, we argue that in certain situations it may actually be a socially beneficial strategy. In particular, studies have shown that positive emotional expressions are socially punished when expressed in contexts that are usually associated with negative emotional experiences. Direct evidence for this effect comes from the work of Szczurek, Monin, and Gross (2012). In this study, participants showed goals that express positive, negative, or neutral emotions, and those goals were said to respond to a series of positive, negative, or neutral images. The researchers found that targets who violated affective norms by expressing affect incongruent with the stimuli (e.g., positive affect in response to negative images), or neutral affect (i.e., no response to the stimuli), were judged more harshly than those displaying congruent affect, and participants responded to these incongruent targets with greater moral outrage. Most importantly for current research, this effect was mitigated by valence. The feelings of disagreement were more strongly punished when the stimulus was negative than when it was positive. In other words, showing positive emotions in response to negative stimuli resulted in a particularly severe penalty compared to showing negative emotions in response to positive stimuli.

Increasingly, researchers are calling for a better understanding of context in emotion regulation research (Aldao, 2013; Bonanno & Burton, 2013), but thus far empirical work that includes contextual factors has been limited. Emotion regulation is a relatively young but rapidly growing field (Gross, 2015). The new challenge in the literature is to go beyond the generality and general statement of which regulatory strategies are adaptive and maladaptive, to gain a more subtle understanding of whether a particular strategy is beneficial. This task begins by examining the important role of context in emotional regulation and provides concrete evidence that repression is not necessarily a socially maladaptive emotional regulation strategy.

CONCLUSION

Overall, in situations where emotions are out of context, it is considered more appropriate to suppress them than to express them. In this study, minor manipulations of contextual valence completely changed the ratings of expressers reversing the established social effects of positive expression and restraint. These results show that Dale Carnegie's advice is not always worth following. Your smile is not necessarily a well-meaning messenger, and a smile is not a strategy used indiscriminately. Rather, it is important to respond appropriately to the situation, even when it is necessary to suppress the expression of emotions.

Reference

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