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WHY DO PEOPLE ENGAGE IN INTERPERSONAL EMOTION REGULATION AT WORK?

People in organizations often try to change the feelings of those they interact with. Research in this area has to date focused on how people try to regulate others' emotions, with less attention paid to understanding the reasons why. This paper presents a theoretical framework that proposes three overarching dimensions of motivations for interpersonal emotion regulation at work, relating to the extent to which regulation is motivated by autonomy (intrinsic vs. extrinsic), relatedness (prosocial vs. egoistic), and competence (performance- vs. pleasure-oriented). Combining these dimensions suggests eight possible categories of motives that underlie interpersonal emotion regulation. The framework enables new predictions about how motives influence the types of emotions elicited in others, the strategies employed, and the effectiveness of interpersonal emotion regulation in organizations.

Keywords: Interpersonal emotion regulation, emotion regulation, emotion management, motivation, emotional labor, emotion

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Interpersonal emotion regulation is part of the fabric of everyday working life. Retail employees try to induce happiness in their customers by serving with a smile, managers try to enthuse their subordinates by making rousing speeches, teammates try to reduce each other's anxieties by offering support, and envious workers belittle colleagues' successes by making critical comments. Yet while existing literature provides important insights into *how* people manage others' feelings, relatively less is known about *why* people engage in interpersonal emotion regulation at work. This omission is significant because regulatory processes like interpersonal emotion regulation can only be truly understood with reference to the motives that underlie them. The states people want to induce, how they go about inducing them, and the effectiveness of regulation are all strongly affected by the reasons they engage in the process in the first place.

Take the following example: You are working as a server in a busy family-owned restaurant and a customer calls you over and proceeds to complain loudly about the poor service you have given. If you were motivated to care for your customer, you might genuinely want to make the customer feel less angry, for example by trying to find out what the issue really is and offering solutions, which might have the intended effect of calming the customer. However, if you were motivated to be seen to be doing your job well, you might only want to reduce the customer's outward signs of anger, perhaps by pretending to smile and agree with the customer, which might serve to rile the customer further. In contrast, if your motivation was to make yourself feel better, you might want to seek revenge and

make the customer feel bad, for instance by explaining that service is currently slower than usual because of a family tragedy, thus making the customer feel ashamed.

In this paper, I present an Interpersonal Emotion Regulation Motivation (IERM) theory, which identifies the major types of motives that underlie attempts to shape other people's emotions at work. Drawing from self-determination theory (Deci & Ryan, 2000), I propose three fundamental dimensions along which motivations for interpersonal emotion regulation can be distinguished, which combine to suggest eight categories of motives that underlie interpersonal emotion regulation. I then use these dimensions to explain how different motivations influence whether people want to improve or to worsen others' feelings, the strategies they use to do so, and the effectiveness of these regulatory efforts.

The theory contributes to the literature by integrating insights from the organizational and psychological literatures, in order to provide a comprehensive framework of motives for interpersonal emotion regulation. As a theoretically-rooted framework, the IERM theory proposes meaningful distinctions between different types of motives and allows clear predictions about how these motives will influence resulting regulatory behavior.

INTERPERSONAL EMOTION REGULATION

Emotions are short-lasting feeling states about something or someone that influence people's judgments, decisions, and attitudes about their organization, as well as their performance and how they act towards others (Barsade & Gibson, 2007; Totterdell & Niven, 2014). Although popular accounts often refer to emotions as beyond conscious control (*I can't help how I/you feel*), it is well-established that workers can actually actively and strategically shape emotions, via the process of emotion regulation.

While early work in the area broadly viewed emotion regulation as a within-person process that involved exerting influence over one's own feelings (e.g., Gross, 1998), the social nature of the emotion regulation process is increasingly emphasized (e.g., Côte & Hideg, 2011; Van Kleef, Homan, & Cheshin, 2012). As such, researchers now recognize that emotion regulation can also involve deliberate attempts to influence the experienced or expressed feelings of others. Here, I refer to this focal process as *interpersonal emotion regulation* (e.g., Niven, Totterdell, & Holman, 2009; Niven, Totterdell, Stride, & Holman, 2011), but it has also been referred to as interpersonal emotion management (e.g., Lively & Weed, 2014) and extrinsic emotion regulation (e.g., Gross, 2013; Zaki & Williams, 2013).

Clearly differentiated from emotion self-regulation in that the primary target of the process is the emotions of another person rather than one's own emotions, studies have now documented interpersonal emotion regulation as an important part of daily working life across a range of occupational types. For example, studies have been conducted on interpersonal emotion regulation within medical professionals (Locke, 1996; Martínez-Íñigo, Poerio, & Totterdell, 2013), paralegals (Lively, 2000; Pierce, 1999), call center operators (Little, Kluemper, Nelson, & Ward, 2013), debt collectors (Sutton, 1991), prison officers (Niven, Totterdell, & Holman, 2007), and supermarket cashiers (Niven, Holman, & Totterdell, 2012).

The Motivational View of Interpersonal Emotion Regulation

Like all forms of regulation, interpersonal emotion regulation is goal-directed, engaged to minimize the difference between current and desired states. While the proximate goal is to influence the feelings of the intended target towards those desired by the regulator (Gross, 2013), people's goals are hierarchically-nested, such that more abstract, higher-order goals are pursued when people engage in interpersonal

emotion regulation (Carver & Scheier, 1981). These higher-order goals, or motivations, represent people's underlying reasons for acting. As an example, take the manager who tries to calm an anxious subordinate. The proximate goal is to reduce the subordinate's anxiety, but the underlying reason might be that the manager wants to attain a promotion and believes that she can maximize her team's productivity through keeping her subordinates calm.

To date, most research on interpersonal emotion regulation has focused on understanding what behaviors people use to influence others' emotions. But to understand any form of regulation requires an understanding of what motivates it, as this is likely to affect the direction of regulatory action taken, in terms of which states are pursued; the path of regulatory action, in terms of which strategies are used to try to pursue those states; and the effectiveness of regulatory action, in terms of whether attempts are successful in eliciting the desired states.

Within the psychological literature, two theories have explicitly discussed motivations for emotion regulation. Tamir (2009) identifies motivations of hedonism (increasing one's pleasure) and instrumentality (boosting one's goal performance). Koole's (2009) need-oriented and goal-oriented motives directly correspond to hedonism and instrumentality, respectively, while his person-oriented motives add a third motivation relating to promotion of coherence between one's emotions and personality (e.g., being a 'cheerful' person). Although the motives proposed in these theories are intended to specifically refer to emotion self-regulation, it is likely that similar motives could drive interpersonal emotion regulation, i.e., regulating others' feelings to boost one's pleasure or performance, or in line with one's personality (e.g., being the type of person who makes others feel happy).

By identifying motives through focusing on what the regulator stands to gain, both of these theories assume that the function of regulating emotion is to benefit oneself, even though the organizational literature is replete with examples whereby people engage in interpersonal emotion regulation to benefit others more so than themselves (e.g., Kahn's, 1993, work on caring for caregivers). Another assumption shared by these psychological theories is that emotion regulation is engaged as a matter of personal agency, despite the fact that people's actions in organizations may be highly constrained by rules or norms about how to behave (e.g., Hochschild, 1983). Thus, while these theories provide a good starting point, they are unlikely to give a full account of why people try to shape others' emotions in the workplace.

In contrast to psychological theories, organizational theories more fully recognize the role that environmental factors may play in driving emotion regulation. For example, Diefendorff and Gosserand's (2003) theory of emotion regulation in customer service distinguishes motives relating to work (e.g., meeting performance goals) from those relating to personal life (e.g., maintaining a desired self-concept), suggesting that while some motives come from within others are generated by the context. Bolton (2005) further differentiates between four such work-related motives for managing emotions during service: pecuniary (compliance with organizational rules), prescriptive (compliance with norms of the profession), presentational (fitting in with societal norms), and philanthropic (a 'gift' for the intended beneficiary). Finally, von Gilsa and Zapf (2014) proposed motivations for service employees' emotion regulation: pleasure (increasing one's satisfaction), conflict prevention (avoiding hurting or offending customers), and instrumental (according with organizational rules). Like the psychological theories, these motives were proposed by organizational theorists in relation to emotion self-regulation but may well apply to

interpersonal emotion regulation, i.e., regulating others' feelings for the benefit of customers, or in compliance with rules or norms.

These organizational theories extend those offered within the psychological literature by considering motives that do not only come from within and that do not function only to benefit oneself. However, they are still somewhat limited in that they focus primarily on emotion regulation performed during customer service, even though people regulate others' emotions during a range of interactions and relationships (e.g., between coworkers, and between leaders and followers). In any case, the lack of integration in the area has meant that insights across the organizational and psychological literatures have not been combined, meaning that at present no single framework can adequately explain why people regulate others' emotions in the workplace. In addition, there has been a relative lack of consideration given to the underlying theoretical ways in which the types of motivations identified differ. A more comprehensive, theoretically-guided framework could provide a common point of reference for research into why people regulate others' feelings at work and propose meaningful differences to help explain how and why motives influence the direction, path, and effects of interpersonal emotion regulation in organizations.

THE INTERPERSONAL EMOTION REGULATION MOTIVATION (IERM) THEORY

Developing an inclusive framework of motives for interpersonal emotion regulation requires an appropriate theoretical starting point. In this Interpersonal Emotion Regulation Motivation (IERM) theory, I use self-determination theory (Deci & Ryan, 2000) as a basis for theory development. Self-determination theory views motivation as the core of all forms of regulation, and thus can be applied to

understanding motives that drive interpersonal emotion regulation. The theory connects motivation to what it describes as needs; motives are effectively vehicles (whether effective or otherwise) to need fulfilment. In particular, the theory proposes three basic psychological needs that are innate and universal: autonomy, relatedness, and competence. It is thought that most, if not all, other needs can be derived from one or more of this list. Thus, the three needs provide comprehensive and parsimonious coverage of motivational forces that underlie regulatory action. Below, these needs are discussed in more depth, in order to elaborate the proposed ways in which motivations for interpersonal emotion regulation can be distinguished.

Autonomy. Literally meaning 'self-rule', autonomy describes a need to feel that one chooses one's actions and is acting in a volitional, self-directed manner. According to self-determination theory, regulatory action that is most high in autonomy is intrinsically motivated, meaning that it is performed spontaneously when people feel able to follow their inner interests and behave naturally (Deci, 1975). Regulatory action can also be relatively high in autonomy when a person is required or rewarded to act in a particular manner but internalizes or identifies with the behavior and so the act of regulation feels authentic and to some extent chosen (e.g., Ashforth & Humprey, 1993; Eisenberger, Rhoades, & Cameron, 1999). In contrast, regulatory action can be very low in autonomy when it is entirely extrinsically motivated, meaning that it is imposed on a person by some kind of external factor or force (e.g., being told by a manager that you must make your customers feel happy even though you see that action as being disingenuous).

Self-determination theory therefore suggests that motivations for interpersonal emotion regulation can meaningfully vary according to the extent to which they are high (e.g., intrinsic) or low (i.e., extrinsic) in autonomy. An equivalent distinction is

posited by Fischer, Manstead, Evers, Timmers, and Valk (2004) in their chapter about why people regulate emotion. In their work, they explicitly contrast motives, which they describe as personal and self-driven, with norms, which are factors relating to the (work or personal) social environment that prompt regulation. Both motives and norms are seen as reasons for regulating emotions, and the key differentiator is whether they originate inside (motives) or outside (norms) the person. In further support of this distinction, research on emotion regulation in the workplace has commonly recognized differences between regulation that is motivated autonomously versus that which is imposed or obligated (Grandey, Fisk, & Steiner, 2005; Niven, Sprigg, & Armitage, 2013).

Relatedness. Relatedness is the need to feel close to, connected with, and accepted by others. According to Baumeister and Leary (1995), humans have a fundamental need to feel a sense of belonging, whether with other people or in social contexts, such as feeling part of an organization. This idea of relatedness is also fundamental to attachment theory (e.g., Bowlby, 1969), which explains that people engage in regulatory behavior in order to form attachments with close others. Self-determination theory posits that regulatory action that is highly motivated by relatedness is prosocially oriented towards forming strong connections to other social entities and is thus considerate of those others' concerns and goals. In contrast, acts of regulation that are low in relatedness are engaged in a more egoistic manner, with the person's own concerns and goals in mind rather than those of others.

Thus, a second salient way to distinguish between motivations for interpersonal emotion regulation concerns the extent to which motives are high (i.e., prosocial) or low (i.e., egoistic) in relatedness. Further support for this distinction comes from the broader literature on positive interpersonal behavior. For example, Batson's (1995)

theory of helping behavior contrasts self-interested versus altruistic motivations. Behaviors that are self-interested are performed for the purpose of achieving personal benefit, whereas those that are altruistic are performed to benefit someone other than the agent. Similar distinctions can be seen in theories of motivations for citizenship behavior, which contrast being motivated to benefit the self (e.g., by impression management or future reciprocity) and being motivated to benefit others (e.g., by prosocial values or concern for the organization; Bolino, 1999; Rioux & Penner, 2001).

Competence. Competence, also referred to as effectance, is the need to feel effective and skilful and to master challenges. Self-determination theory suggests that regulatory action that is high in competence is motivated towards achieving performance-related goals that will enhance the sense of mastery. However, regulatory behavior that is low in competence is engaged without motivation towards performance concerns and is therefore likely to be oriented simply towards pleasure.

It therefore follows that a third important way in which motivations for interpersonal emotion regulation will vary is based on the extent to which they are high or low in competence, reflecting the degree to which the regulator is concerned with achieving performance-oriented or pleasure-oriented goals. In support of this, Tamir's (2009) theoretical and empirical work on emotion regulation motives explicitly distinguishes hedonic motives, which concern the phenomenological benefits of emotion states, from instrumental motives, which target benefits of emotions other than the purely phenomenological, e.g., relating to performance. The distinction also shares similarity with a distinction proposed by Diefendorff and Gosserand (2003) between work goals, which typically relate to performance (e.g.,

creating positive emotions in customers during customer service) with personal goals, which typically relate to pleasure (e.g., being true to one's feelings).

Eight Motives for Interpersonal Emotion Regulation

The three needs proposed in self-determination theory are considered to be distinct in that each covers a different aspect required for human thriving, yet the needs are not mutually exclusive (e.g., one can have simultaneous needs for autonomy and relatedness). Thus, the three key dimensions that derive from these needs can be considered in combination in order to produce a comprehensive map of the higher-order goals, or motives, that interpersonal emotion regulation is driven towards achieving. Figure 1 illustrates the eight motives for interpersonal emotion regulation that are identified from the various combinations of these needs. Below, each motive is explained further.

'Coaching' Motives. When engaging in interpersonal emotion regulation that is high in motivations for autonomy, relatedness, and competence, a person is acting in an intrinsic, prosocial, performance-oriented manner. The person is therefore authentically trying to benefit someone else's performance, suggesting a higher-order goal of *coaching*.

This kind of motivation is likely to be common in people who hold formal or informal roles that involve leadership or mentoring – where part of the role is to boost others' performance. For example, interpersonal emotion regulation has been shown to be crucial for driving instructors (Holman & Niven, 2013) and teachers (Sutton, Mudrey-Camino, & Knight, 2009) who manage their students' emotions to enhance their students' learning. Importantly, the present theory suggests that interpersonal emotion regulation that is driven by coaching motives (which is either completely self-driven or where the demands of the role have been internalized and integrated)

can be meaningfully differentiated with that engaged purely out of obligation (which, as will be discussed later, is seen as emotional labor). This form of motivation can also be contrasted to interpersonal emotion regulation that is engaged in order to benefit one's own performance more so than the performance of others (e.g., a leader trying to enhance team members' creativity to come up with an idea that will ultimately be attributed to her).

'Compassion' Motives. A further form of interpersonal emotion regulation that is high in motivations for autonomy and relatedness can be differentiated when there is low competence motivation, meaning that interpersonal emotion regulation is oriented towards benefitting others' pleasure rather than their performance. Regulation that is motivated in this way is therefore driven towards achieving the higher-order goal of *compassion*, which describes the desire to help others that originates from feelings of empathy (e.g., Goetz, Keltner, & Simon-Thomas, 2010). This form of motivation maps on to Bolton's (2005) idea of philanthropic emotion management and von Gilsa and Zapf's (2014) notion of prevention of conflict motives in customer service, both of which concern authentic attempts to benefit the well-being of the target of regulation.

Compassion appears to be an important driver of interpersonal emotion regulation in organizations, particularly in stressful work environments where workers are motivated to care for each other (e.g., hospitals, Locke, 1996). Within the broader literature, there is a debate about the extent to which apparently compassionate behavior really is prosocial (e.g., Cropanzano, Goldman, & Folger, 2005). In the case of interpersonal emotion regulation, it may also be that there is some degree of egoism involved (e.g., making one's colleagues feel better might have positive consequences for one's own well-being; Niven, Totterdell, Holman, & Headley,

2012). However, evidence suggests that people do engage in interpersonal emotion regulation with the aim of benefitting others, even when it might incur personal costs, such as exhaustion (Kahn, 1993), suggesting that at least some forms of interpersonal emotion regulation may be truly compassionately motivated.

'Instrumentality' Motives. When high motivations for autonomy and competence are combined with low relatedness, a person is acting in an intrinsic, egoistic, performance-oriented manner, to authentically benefit his or her own goal-pursuit. Thus, the higher-order goal is *instrumentality*.

Instrumentality motives are explained by Tamir (2009), who argues that emotions are functional in the sense that they can serve goal pursuit (Frijda, 1988) and thus people can optimize performance by inducing adaptive emotion states in themselves. The idea that similar motives may also underlie interpersonal emotion regulation is supported by Glasø, Ekerholt, Barman, and Einarsen's (2006) study of leader-follower relations, which reported that leaders often select to induce particular emotions in team members to motivate them to work harder, or to gain control over their subordinates, ultimately to advance their own position (which they termed 'strategic considerations'). Research into building personally-beneficial collaborations (Williams, 2007) and gaining advantage in negotiations (Sinaceur & Tiedens, 2006) further supports the idea that people strategically regulate others' emotions driven by instrumental motives.

'Hedonism' Motives. A similar form of motivation can drive interpersonal emotion regulation when a person is high in autonomy and low in relatedness but also low in competence motivation. In this case, interpersonal emotion regulation is motivated towards benefitting one's own pleasure rather than performance, suggesting an end goal of *hedonism*. This category of motivations therefore maps on to the

hedonistic motives, need-oriented, and pleasure motives proposed in Tamir's (2009), Koole's (2009), and von Gilsa and Zapf's (2014) theories of emotion regulation.

Evidence for hedonistic motives can be seen in Lively's (2000) study of paralegals, wherein interpersonal emotion regulation was engaged with the expectation of future reciprocity. In other words, the paralegals attempted to help their colleagues to cope with their unpleasant emotions primarily in order to secure reciprocal support for themselves in the future. Further evidence for hedonistic motives in interpersonal emotion regulation comes from the social undermining literature, where workers try to make colleagues feel worse in order to make themselves feel better (e.g., Duffy, Scott, Shaw, Tepper, & Aquino, 2012). Interpersonal emotion regulation that is motivated in this way is therefore highly interlinked with the process of emotion self-regulation and differs only in that the means by which a change to one's feelings is achieved is a change in someone else's emotions. Thus, the target of emotion regulation is still another person, consistent with the definition of interpersonal emotion regulation, but the underlying motivation concerns one's own feelings.

'Emotional Labor' Motives. When engaging in interpersonal emotion regulation that is low in motivation for autonomy but high in relatedness and competence, a person is acting in an extrinsic, prosocial, performance-oriented manner, trying to benefit the performance of someone other than the self, due to a sense of obligation. This therefore suggests a higher-order goal of *emotional labor*, a term used to describe management of emotion in compliance with organizational rules or norms about the type of emotion that is considered desirable for organizational performance (Hochschild, 1983). This category thus covers Bolton's (2005) category

of pecuniary emotion management, and von Gilsa and Zapf's (2014) instrumental motives, both of which concern emotion regulation to obey organizational rules.

A recent review summarized evidence for emotional labor motives in interpersonal emotion regulation (Niven, Totterdell, Holman, & Cameron, 2012). The review suggested that rules and norms about interpersonal emotion regulation vary substantially between different types of organizations, for example with retail workers expected to increase customers' enthusiasm in order to secure sales (Lee & Dubinsky, 2003), paralegals are expected to instill calmness in their lawyers in order to maximize work output (Pierce, 1999), and debt collectors expected to induce anxiety in their debtors to secure payments (Sutton, 1991). While it is highly possible for workers to identify with organizational rules and thus integrate them into their personalities (e.g., Ashforth & Humphrey, 1993), emotional labor is the distinctive motive for interpersonal emotion regulation when the worker is acting largely because he or she feels obligated to. For this reason, many workers report feeling inauthentic when engaging in regulation of emotion driven by emotional labor (Sloan, 2007).

'Conformity' Motivation. A related motive operates when interpersonal emotion regulation is low in motivation for autonomy and high in relatedness, but also low in competence. In such cases, a person is acting in an extrinsic and prosocial manner, but the person's concerns are more about others' pleasure than their performance. Thus, the higher-order goal is *conformity*, with regulation driven by the requirement to adhere to social norms, which are shared expectations about how people ought to act that function to enhance the smooth running of social situations (Cialdini & Trost, 1998). This category therefore shares similarities with Bolton's (2005) presentational emotion management, in which workers manage emotions to act in line with informal social scripts about how people ought to behave.

This category of motive is exemplified by Bolton and Boyd's (2003) description of how coworkers will tend to show interest when someone is talking to them by displaying emotions that are appropriate for the topic of conversation (e.g., showing happiness when someone receives good news or anger when someone claims mistreatment). Research further explains that norms relating to interpersonal emotion regulation are highly influenced by cultural factors, whether in a geographical sense (e.g., there are differences between individualistic and collectivistic cultures in norms about the display of emotion in different relationships; Matsumoto, Takeuchi, Kouznetsova, & Krupp, 1998) or a more local organizational sense (concerning 'the way we do things around here'). Such norms may also be influenced by gender; for example, females perceive stronger norms to elicit positive emotions in others compared to males (Graham, Gentry, & Green, 1981).

'Impression Management' Motives. When low autonomy is combined with low relatedness but high competence motivations, a person is driven by forces extrinsic to the self to enhance his or her own performance. In such cases, interpersonal emotion regulation is likely to be motivated towards the higher-order goal of *impression management*, which describes strategic attempts to shape others' impressions of oneself to benefit one's career or reputation (Goffman, 1955). This category therefore captures Bolton's (2005) notion of prescriptive emotion management, in which workers manage emotions in order to adhere to the norms of their professional role.

In support of impression management motives, Johnston and Swanson (2006) argue that people have mental models of what it means to be a good 'leader' or 'professional' that motivate them to regulate others' emotions in order to maintain their public image. For instance, a person might improve the feelings of a coworker because he or she believes that is what a good colleague should be seen to do (Lois,

2013). In such cases, people perceive that others – often those with decision-making power – hold expectations about how they should behave as part of their role (which sociological theories argue are strongly influenced by demographic factors, such as gender or race, Heise, 2007). Thus, rather than being completely natural, impression management is driven by these external expectations and so is a form of acting (the 'presented self'; Goffman, 1955). To some extent, the expectations that underlie impression management may be identified with, suggesting that such motives are not completely devoid of autonomy. However, they are still relatively low in autonomy compared with their intrinsic equivalent (instrumentality motives).

'Identity Construction' Motives. The final category of motives occurs when a person is low in autonomy, relatedness, and competence motivations. Here, the drive to regulate others' emotions comes from extrinsic forces and is oriented towards one's own pleasure, suggesting a higher-order goal of *identity construction* (e.g., Gollwitzer, 1986). Similar to impression management, identity construction is about forming and shaping a desired social identity and may feel like acting because it is motivated by others' expectations (even though over time it can become integrated into one's personality); the difference is that this identity is pursued to achieve a sense of self rather than career success. This motivational category therefore corresponds to Koole's (2009) function of person-orientation, which concerns promotion of coherence between emotion and personality.

Research about emotional identities provides support for identity construction motives in interpersonal emotion regulation. For instance, studies have documented people who reduce others' unpleasant emotions in organizations primarily because they see themselves as the type of person who neutralizes negative environments ('toxin handlers'; Frost & Robinson, 1999), and people who increase others' pleasant

emotions because they see themselves as 'energizers' (Cross, Baker, & Parker, 2003). As with impression management, the identities people construct are likely to be influenced by factors such as gender and race (Heise, 2007). For example, Pierce (1995) described how female paralegals typically took on identities as 'caretakers' and 'cheerleaders' when managing the emotions of their attorneys, whereas their male counterparts usually constructed a more affectively neutral identity.

Comparing the IERM Theory to other Theories of Emotion Regulation Motives

The categories of motivational types proposed in prior theories of emotion regulation motives have been included in Figure 1. Classifying the motives from existing theories suggests the IERM theory to be comprehensive in coverage, not only covering all of the motives previously proposed and thus bridging the gap between psychological and organizational theories, but also proposing an additional motivational category that is not discussed in any other theories ('coaching' motives). Classifying the motives additionally provides support for the distinctions proposed in the IERM theory, in that all of the motives proposed in prior theoretical work fall into different categories in the present work (e.g., each of Bolton's, 2005, four types of emotion management are situated in different categories of the IERM theory). The new theory therefore provides a useful framework for understanding how and why the motives proposed in prior research differ. For example, Bolton's presentational and philanthropic motives differ in their levels of autonomy motivation, while her prescriptive and pecuniary motives differ in their relatedness motivation.

USING THE IERM THEORY TO FURTHER UNDERSTANDING OF INTERPERSONAL EMOTION REGULATION IN ORGANIZATIONS

The IERM theory is useful to researchers in that it not only provides a structural framework for organizing existing and future studies on interpersonal emotion

regulation, but it also offers new predictions about how the motives that underlie interpersonal emotion regulation influence the process of regulation and encourages future research into this topic.

Motives Influence Regulatory Action

Understanding what motivates interpersonal emotion regulation provides insight into the process because motives drive and shape regulatory behavior (Deci & Ryan, 2000). Three aspects of regulatory action are expected to be affected by its underlying motives: direction, path, and effectiveness (see Figure 2).

Direction of Regulation. The direction of regulation concerns what type of state is regulated towards. In the case of interpersonal emotion regulation, motives may therefore affect the type of emotion in other that a person tries to elicit. In particular, the motivational dimensions of competence and relatedness from the IERM theory are likely to affect whether the regulator tries to improve or to worsen the intended target's emotions. Improving others' emotions involves eliciting or increasing the intensity of pleasant emotion, decreasing the intensity of unpleasant emotion, or changing the valence of emotion, e.g., from unpleasant to pleasant, while worsening others' emotions involves eliciting or increasing the intensity of unpleasant emotion, decreasing the intensity of pleasant emotion, or changing the valence of emotion, e.g., from pleasant to unpleasant (Niven et al., 2009).

When the regulator has a low need for competence and a high need for relatedness, he or she will be motivated towards attaining pleasure for others and so will strive to improve others' feelings, in line with research on interpersonal emotion regulation in caregiving roles (e.g., Niven et al., 2011). When a low need for competence is paired with a low need for relatedness, however, the regulator will be motivated towards attaining pleasure for the self. In this case, the direction of

regulation is likely to depend on whether the intended target of regulation is a friend or an adversary. When the target is a friend, for instance a trusted co-worker, the regulator will still seek to improve the target's feelings, because following principles of social exchange and justice (e.g., Cropanzano, Prehar, & Chen, 2002) a friend feeling good will make the regulator feel good (as reflected in the reciprocal coping literature, e.g., Lively, 2000). But when the target is an adversary, for example a rude customer, the same principles suggest that the regulator may seek to worsen the target's feelings, because this will restore the sense of fairness around social exchange and thus make the regulator feel better (in line with research on employee sabotage against customers, e.g., Wang, Liao, Zhan, & Shi, 2011).

When the regulator has a high need for competence and a high need for relatedness, he or she will be motivated towards attaining performance-related goals for others. The regulator will therefore strive to elicit whatever emotion is most functional for those others' performance; if pleasant emotions such as happiness are most useful (e.g., during creative tasks) the regulator will seek to elicit those in the target, whereas if unpleasant emotions such as anger are most useful (e.g., during negotiation tasks) the regulator will try to induce those (in line with results reported by Niven, Henkel, & Hanratty, 2015). However, when a high need for competence is combined with a low need for relatedness, the regulator will be motivated to boost his or her own performance and the direction of regulation will also depend on whether the task is collaborative or competitive in nature. In a collaborative task, the regulator will strive towards whatever emotion is believed to be most useful for the task, because the benefits will be shared by both parties. But in a competitive task (where the regulator will succeed if the target fails, and vice versa), the regulator will seek to worsen the target's feelings if he or she believes that pleasant emotions are more

useful and improve the target's feelings if unpleasant emotions are thought to be more useful (as suggested in Netzer, Van Kleef, & Tamir's, 2015, studies). The IERM theory therefore provides theoretical context to the recent divergent findings reported by Niven and colleagues (2015) and Netzer and colleagues (2015), where participants either improved or worsened their friends' emotions during tasks where pleasant emotions would be useful, highlighting that the key difference is likely to concern the level of relatedness motivation.

Path of Regulation. The path of regulation regards how a desired state is worked towards. Relating to interpersonal emotion regulation, motives may shape the type of regulation strategy used to try to elicit the intended emotion in other. In particular, the autonomy dimension from the IERM theory is expected to affect which of the two main strategies for interpersonal emotion regulation – deep or surface acting – is preferred. Deep acting strategies (also referred to as 'antecedent-focused' in the psychological literature) seek to regulate others' experienced emotion while surface acting ('response-focused') strategies seek only to regulate their emotion expression (Gross, 2013; Little et al., 2013; Williams, 2007).

When acting with high autonomy, regulatory action reflects true interests and values. The proximate regulatory goal (i.e., the goal to induce or change a particular emotion in the target) is therefore endorsed by the self, promoting a sense of ownership and commitment and therefore allowing the regulator "to draw on volitional resources such as the capacity to exert sustained effort" (Koestner, 2008, p. 62). In contrast, when acting with low autonomy, regulatory behavior is engaged due to external pressures or expectations. The proximate regulatory goal is therefore less likely to be personally endorsed or accepted and may cause intrapersonal conflict, leading to less effort being expended (Sheldon & Elliot, 1999). It follows that motives

that are higher in autonomy (i.e., coaching, compassion, instrumentality, hedonism) will be more likely to be pursued through use of deep acting interpersonal emotion regulation strategies, where the regulator expends sustained effort to create an authentic change to the target's felt emotions. In contrast, motives that are lower in autonomy (i.e., emotional labor, conformity, impression management, identity construction) will be more likely to be pursued through use of surface acting strategies, where the regulator merely tries to change the target's displayed emotion and so expends relatively less energy in the process.

There is some support for these propositions with respect to strategies used to regulate one's own emotions. For example, von Gilsa, Zapf, Ohly, Trumpold, and Machowski (2014) report that being motivated by (intrinsic) hedonistic concerns is positively related to deep acting and negatively related to surface acting, while being motivated by (extrinsic) organizational rules is positively related to surface acting during customer service. Intrinsic motivations relating to helping others (e.g., customer orientation) have also been associated with greater use of deep acting and less use of surface acting in emotion self-regulation (e.g., Allen, Pugh, Grandey, & Groth, 2010; Maneotis, Grandey, & Krauss, 2014). However, there is a strong need for future research specifically testing these propositions with relation to interpersonal emotion regulation.

Effectiveness of Regulation. The effectiveness of interpersonal emotion regulation concerns whether or not it produces the desired emotion in the target. To date, there has been a surprising lack of research to date examining reasons why interpersonal emotion regulation attempts might either succeed or lead to unfavorable or unexpected responses (Williams & Emich, 2014). However, the IERM suggests

that both the autonomy and relatedness dimensions of motivation will influence likelihood of regulatory success.

The autonomy dimension of motivation is likely to influence the effectiveness of interpersonal emotion regulation through its influence on the effort put into regulation. As discussed earlier, people will put more effort into interpersonal emotion regulation that is higher in autonomy (e.g., Koestner, 2008), and it is well-established that acts of regulation that are engaged with greater effort typically appear to be more authentic to others and thus receive interpersonal reactions that are consistent with the intentions of the regulator (Côté, 2005; Martínez-Iñigo, Totterdell, Alcover, & Holman, 2007). Thus, interpersonal emotion regulation driven by intrinsic motivations should be more effective than that driven by extrinsic motivations. Given the link already discussed between autonomy and choice of regulation strategies, recent studies of interpersonal emotion regulation showing that deep acting is more effective than surface acting (e.g., Little, Kluemper, Nelson, & Gooty, 2012; Little et al., 2013) provide indirect support for this proposition.

The relatedness dimension of motivation is likely to influence effectiveness through affecting the sensitivity with which interpersonal emotion regulation is engaged. According to theories of interpersonal behavior, acts motivated by the desire to benefit others are typically engaged with greater interpersonal sensitivity (Dix, 1992) because the agent's attention is focused on the target (Bolino, 1999) and the agent will be more likely to adapt his or her interpersonal approach based on the target's needs (Dasborough & Ashkanasy, 2002). Thus, interpersonal emotion regulation driven by prosocial motivations should be more effective than that driven by egoistic motivations, as supported in a study of interpersonal emotion regulation among military leaders and their followers (Niven & Lin, 2015).

It follows that interpersonal emotion regulation that is motivated by high autonomy and relatedness (i.e., motivated towards the higher-order goals of compassion or coaching) may be most likely to have the intended consequences for the target's emotions, because the regulator will put more effort into the regulatory process and select and amend the most appropriate approach based on the target's unique needs and reactions. In contrast, interpersonal emotion regulation that is low in autonomy and relatedness (i.e., motivated towards impression management or identity construction) may be engaged with low effort and sensitivity and so should be relatively more likely to fail.

Future Questions suggested by the IERM Theory

As well as suggesting testable propositions concerning how different motives influence the direction, path, and effectiveness of interpersonal emotion regulation in organizations, the IERM theory also suggests future questions that can inform our understanding of interpersonal emotion regulation. Here, three such questions are considered.

Motivational Conflict. An important question raised by the IERM theory regards the issue of motivational conflict. It is well-established that people often have multiple motives when engaging in goal-directed action, such as interpersonal emotion regulation (e.g., Carver & Scheier, 1981; Diefendorff & Gosserand, 2003). Sometimes these motives may be in synergy, promoting the same course of action. For example, a Disneyland worker would be expected to increase the enjoyment of theme park visitors as part of the job, and may also see himself or herself as the type of person who makes others happy. However, there may also be times when motives are in conflict, causing tension between possible courses of action. For instance, a

debt collector might view himself or herself as the type of person who makes others feel happy, but in the job role would be expected to instill anxiety and fear in debtors.

In cases of motivational conflict, the question that arises is which motive and therefore course of regulatory action will prevail. One potentially important factor in addressing this question is individual differences, given that people vary in their preferences for intrinsic versus extrinsic motivation (e.g., Amabile, Hill, Hennessey, & Tighe, 1994), for acting in an egoistic versus prosocial manner (e.g., Penner, Fritzsche, Craiger, & Freifeld, 1995), and for being driven towards performance or pleasure (e.g., Judge & Ilies, 2002). The consequences associated with fulfilling or ignoring each motivation may also be relevant. For example, if punitive action was taken against debt collectors who transgressed rules about interpersonal emotion regulation towards debtors, this might lead to motivation to comply with these rules overcoming the drive to construct one's social identity.

Regulating Specific Emotions. A further question raised by the IERM theory concerns the regulation of specific emotions. There is a vast array of specific emotion states that people might want to elicit or change in others and theories about emotions are increasingly calling for researchers to go beyond valence and consider specific emotions (e.g., Van Kleef et al., 2012). Within the interpersonal emotion regulation literature so far, the evidence suggests that people make a large distinction between improving and worsening emotions (e.g., Niven et al., 2009), but has stayed relatively silent on the matter of specific emotion states. An important question for future research will therefore be to determine whether different motives prompt regulators to want to elicit specific emotions in others and to consider the contextual factors that are likely to interact with motives to predict the specific direction of regulation.

Motives for Emotion Self-regulation. Although interpersonal emotion regulation and emotion self-regulation are distinct processes which are clearly differentiated by who the target of regulation is (i.e., another person or oneself), there are also overlaps between the two processes. For instance, people can regulate their own emotional display as a means of trying to change someone else's feelings (e.g., exaggerating distress to make a coworker feel guilty; Côté & Hideg, 2011). Likewise, people might regulate others' emotions in order to change how they themselves feel (i.e., hedonism motives). Thus, a question for future research will be whether the same motives proposed here for interpersonal emotion regulation also apply to emotion self-regulation. Given that the motivational dimensions proposed derive from a general motivational theory of regulation (i.e., self-determination theory; Deci & Ryan, 2000) and that several of the motives correspond to those discussed in existing theories of emotion self-regulation (e.g., Bolton, 2005; Tamir, 2009), it seems likely that similar distinctions could be relevant for emotion self-regulation.

Future Challenges

There are at least two important challenges that researchers will face in trying to test the propositions and address the questions that follow from the IERM theory. The first challenge will be to develop a means of assessing motives for interpersonal emotion regulation. Existing measures focus on behaviors, i.e., the strategies people use to regulate others' emotion (e.g., Little et al., 2012; Niven et al., 2011), meaning that there remains a need to establish a reliable and valid means of assessing motives that underlie interpersonal emotion regulation for use in empirical research. The IERM theory offers a meaningful way of differentiating such motives and could be used as the basis of future scale-development.

The second challenge will be to adopt appropriate methods for studying interpersonal emotion regulation motives. Interpersonal emotion regulation is by definition a social process that involves two key parties, and both parties involved in the process (i.e., the regulator and target) are active constituents who have their own goals and situational constraints that motivate their use of regulation (Groth & Grandey, 2012; Niven, Totterdell, Holman, & Cameron, 2012). Thus, it is likely that people's motives adapt and unfold during the course of interactions. Rather than using methods that capture the static perspective of one party only (e.g., surveys), the challenge will be for researchers to adopt techniques, such as dyadic diaries and video-cued recall, in order to capture the dynamics of how one person's motives and subsequent use of interpersonal emotion regulation affect the motives and regulatory behavior of the other party (and so on).

CONCLUSION

In recent years, there has been growing research interest in the role played by interpersonal emotion regulation in organizational life. However, there has been surprisingly little consideration to date of *why* people try to regulate others' emotion, given that to appreciate the direction, path, and effectiveness of regulatory behavior we must understand the underlying motivations. The present attempt to elucidate meaningful differences between motives for interpersonal emotion regulation therefore provides a theoretical framework that scholars can use to gain insight into the process of interpersonal emotion regulation in organizations.

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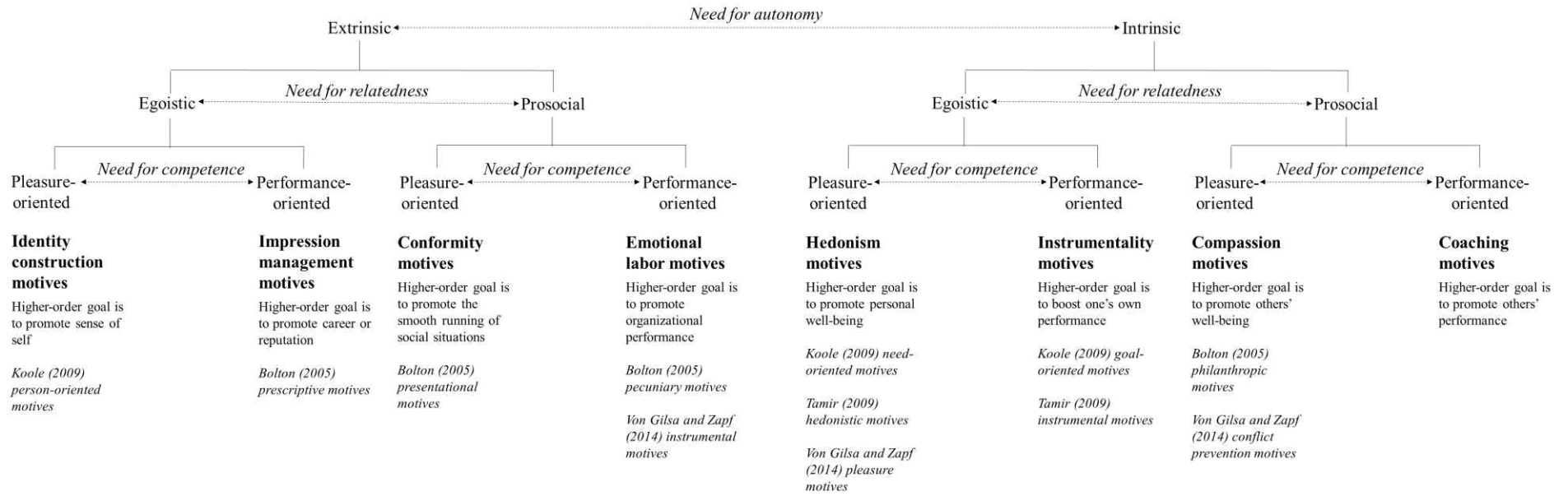Figure 1. *Motives for Interpersonal Emotion Regulation at Work*

Figure 2. *How Motives influence the Direction, Path, and Effectiveness of Interpersonal Emotion Regulation*