The Relationship Between Emotion Regulation and Self-Verification
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Introduction

Self-verification (SV) refers to a preference for feedback that is consistent with existing self-views (Swann & Read, 1991). SV reinforces existing beliefs about the self:
• SV of negative beliefs has been linked to affective disorders such as depression (Swann et al., 1992).
• However, SV can reinforce positive beliefs and improve self-esteem (North & Swann, 2009).

Why do people self-verify?
• SV may have adaptive regulatory function to maintain coherent, stable self-view (Swann & Buhmester, 2011) or to avoid distress caused by disconfirming feedback that challenges self-views (Swann & Read, 1981).
• Most recent literature has primarily focused on its negative impact among people with negative self-views, leaving it unclear how self-verification contributes to the promotion of positive emotion and self-esteem.

As SV has been shown to relate to affective disorders and is believed to contribute to the relationship between ER strategies and SV has not yet been directly investigated.

RQ: Is self-verification associated with habitual emotion regulation strategies?

Current Study
- Designed a simulated interview task to assess preference for confirmatory feedback about the self
- Included two measures for SV: Choice of feedback (Giesler et al., 1996) and accuracy ratings (Szumowska et al., 2022).
- Self-reported survey questions to assess habitual ER strategy use

H1a: Self-verification of negative information will relate negatively with the use of the emotion regulation strategies of acceptance, problem solving, and reappraisal.

H1b: Self-verification of negative information will relate positively with rumination and avoidance.

Did participants self-verify?

Feedback Choice
- Confirmatory feedback was chosen more often after giving a weak rating (for both self and peer) versus overall bias toward selecting negative feedback
- Proportion of self-verifying choices was not significantly different between self-relevant and peer-relevant feedback

Accuracy Rating
- Self-evaluation on Self-Attributes Questionnaire (SAQ; Pelham & Swann, 1992) correlated with self-esteem (Rosenberg 1992) and rate SV of negative beliefs has been linked to affective disorders such as depression (Swann et al., 1992).
- People with positive self-views rated weak feedback as less accurate compared to the strong feedback

Was self-verification related to emotion regulation strategies?

Reappraisal scores were higher among people who self-verified, for both negative and positive self-ratings:

Positive refocusing scores were higher among people who self-verified, but only for positive self-ratings:

Discussion

For feedback choice, self-verification was more likely among participants with negative self-views ("weak" self-ratings), but overall pattern was consistent with a general preference to learn about negative feedback. For rating the accuracy of feedback, participants with positive self views rated negative ("weak") feedback as less accurate than positive ("strong") feedback, while people with more negative self-views perceived weak and strong feedback as equally accurate.

Choice of self-verifying feedback was associated with use of reappraisal and positive refocusing. These strategies may lead to preference for favorable feedback (positive refocusing) or reassessing disconfirming feedback as unimportant or lacking in credibility (reappraisal).

Future research will aim to better understand how emotion regulation strategies are used in the task context when choosing among possible sources of feedback and when viewing detailed evaluations.

Our results suggest that emotion regulation plays a role in choice of self-verification evaluations, but not the evaluation of detailed feedback. Promoting adaptive emotion regulation strategies when choosing sources of feedback may support positive emotions and self-esteem.