Emotional Intelligence and Day-To-Day Emotion Regulation Processes: Examining Motives for Social Sharing

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Abstract: *There is growing interest in the emotion regulation processes that underle the adaptive functioning of emotionally intelligent individuals. This study uses experience sampling to examine whether the emotional intelligence (EL) of undergraduate students (N=84) relates to their day-to-day use of five emotion regulation processes over a five-day period. We also test whether EI predict motives for one of the emotion regulation processes (social sharing). We measure both ability EI (the brief Situational Test of motion Management) and self-rated El (the Self-Rated motional inteligence Scale) Self-rated El significantly predict more social sharing, direct situation modification and reappraisal. Ability El does not significantly predict any of the five regulation processes. Both ability and self-rated El are significantly related to greater bonding and relief motives for social sharing Self-rated El is also reated to recovery motives. These results suggest that it is the self-beliefs about one's emotional abilities, rather than emotion knowledge, which influence the emotion regulation processes people use in daily life.*

Keywords: *Emotional intelligence, Emotion regulation, Social sharing, Experience sampling.*

INTRODUCTION

Emotional intelligence (EI) and emotion regulation are two conceptually related approaches to understanding the emotional experiences people have. El describes individual differences in the abilities and traits involved in perceiving, using, understanding, and managing emotions (Mayer et al. , 2016) whereas emotion regulation describes the processes by which people control which emotions they have and when they have them (Gross, 1999). We know that some emotion regulation processes are more effective than others in controlling negative emotions (eg, perspective taking is generally effective whereas ruminating is generally ineffective; Bushman, 2002; Aldao, Nolen-Hoeksema, & Schweizer, 2010) and that emotionally intelligent people experience fewer negative emotions (Sanchez Alvarez et al. , 2016). What is still largely unclear is whether individual differences in El relate to differences in the emotion regulation processes people use. The current research proposes to ad dress this by examining whether ability and self-rated El predict the use of five different emotion regulation processes in daily life. We also examine whether El predicts differences in people's motivations for socially sharing their emotions. Given the importance of both El and emotion regulation to mental health and wellbeing outcomes, our research is relevant for understanding the mechanisms by which person attributes (EI) translate into behaviours (regulation) known to increase such outcomes.

Emotional intelligence

While some researchers define El as a broad set of trait-like variables related to emotion, motivation and social functioning, the current paper uses the commonly accepted Four-Branch Ability Model of EI (Mayer et al, 2016). These four ability branches are: (1) accurate perception of emotion in oneself and others (perception); (2) use of emotions to facilitate problem-solving or task completion (facilitation); (3) understanding how emotions combine and change over time (understanding); and (4) successful regulation of one's own and others emotions (management). This model forns the theoretical lasis for both: (a) ability EI, where test-takers must process emotion-related information to answer a question (e-g., judge which of several responses would be most effective in regulating the emotion in a specific sitution); and (b) self-rated EI, where test-takers rate how well they think they perceive, use, understand, or manage emotions (e.g., "I know how to keep calm in difficult or stressful situations" (Brackett et al., 2006). In the current study, we examine both self-rated El and ability El as predictors of the regulation processes people use in daily life. Our ability El task measures emotion management, as this skill set is the most complex (requiring skills from the other branches) and most conceptually relevant to emotion regulation (Mayer et al., 2016).

Emotion regulation

Gross (1999) identifies five families of emotion regulation processes which occur at different points in the emotion-generation process situation selection, situation modification, attentional deployment, cognitive change, and response modulation. The current study examines five specific regulation proceses drawn from four of these families: direct situation modification (taking practical actions to make a direct impact on an emotion eliciting situation), distraction (directing attention away from the emotion-eliciting features of a situation), rumination (directing attention to negative thoughts and feelings, and the causes of these), reappraisal (changing one's interpretation of an emotion-eliciting situation), and social sharing (recounting an emotional episode to others). Direct situation modification is drawn from situation mod ification, distraction and rumination from emotional deployment, reappraisal from cognitive change, and social sharing from response modulation. In the current study, we use experience sampling to me sure emotion regulation (where people report their experiences in the moment), thus avoiding the memory biases that can occur in questionnaire research (Csikszentmihalyi and Larson, 1967).

El and emotion regulation

Many of the abilities required to engage in specific emotion regulation processes are named by Mayer et al. (2016) as critical elements of El. For example, all types of attention deployment processes logically involve the ability to "prioritize thinking by directing attention" (Mayer et al., 2016 p. 294), which is an element of emotion facilitation ability. Both distraction and positive reappraisal require that a person identify the emotion-eliciting element of the situation (so as to divert attention away from it, or re-appraise it), which would require emotion understanding ability. Moreover, using effective regulation processes requires that one plan, monitor and evaluate the processes one is using (so as to use the effective ones more, and ineffective ones less), which are core elements of emotion management ability (Mayer et al., 2016). However, the driver of emotion regulation behaviours may not necessarily be the ability to regulate (ability EI) but also the belief that one has the ability. That is, people do things not just because they can, but because they think they can.

There is surprisingly little research on ability El and regulation. In Pena-Sarrionandia. Mikolajczak, and Gross (2015) recent summary of the literature linking El to different emotion regulation strategies: (1) few studies use ability EI (80% of the findings are based on self-reported El; most summaries of ability El rely on the findings of a single study); (2) no studies examine the relationship between El and social sharing; and (3) no studies examine the El/emotion regulation relationship using experience sampling to measure regulation in daily life. It is for these reasons that we designed our study to examine both ability and self-rated El, to use experience sampling, and to focus on social sharing and the motives for it.

Existing research suggests that EI should relate to higher situation modification, reappraisal and distraction but lower rumination. Specifically, Pena-Sarrionandia et al. (2015) reported that both self-rated and ability El related to less rumination. Selfrated El ako related to greater direct situation modification,

positive reappraisal and greater distraction (there was no research reported for ability El and these regulation strategies). The largest effect was for reappraisal and the smallest for distraction. Other research has shown that ability El relates to greater task-focused coping, which is conceptually equivalent to direct situation modification (Davis and Humphrey, 2012; MacCann et al., 2011; Zeidner and Hadar, 2014). Ability EI also shows a small positive relationship with positive reappraisal (Gohm et al., 2005; Mestre et al., 2017). While there is no known research on ability El and distraction, Pena Sarrionandia et al (2015) predict positive relationships based on the regulatory advantages of this strategy. There is also no research on social sharing for either self-rated or ability El, yet Peña Sarrionandia et al. (2015) posit a negative relationship. They argue that social sharing occurs late in the emotion regulation process (during response modulation), and that people with high El should have less need for sharing as they use strategies that influence earlier points in the emotional trajectory. However, people with high El have greater perceived social support (Lopes et al., 2003). They therefore have more opportunities to socially share, given the greater availability of a social network to share with. More over, El relates to seeling social support for both instrumental and emotional reasons (Gohm et al., 2005; Goldenberg et al., 2006). Seeking social support plausibly often involves sharing one's feelings about a situation with others to acquire their support. We therefore hypothesize that higher EI would be linked with greater social sharing, counter to Pena-Sarrionandia et al. (2015).

Different types of social sharing
One reason it is difficult to predict the EI/social sharing relationship is the complex nature of social sharing. Rimé (2009) proposed a twomode theory of social sharing. The cognitive mode helps the sharer progress towards emotional recovery whereas the socio-affective mode brings only a sense of temporary relief. Recovery is more likely when the sharing partner helps the sharer see things from a new perspective. Relief results from the sharing partner providing validation, comfort and support. Sharing most commonly develops in the socio-affective mode and the cognitive mode occurs much more rarely (Rimé, 2007). Measuring the mode of social sharing is difficult as it relies on the sharing partner as well as the sharer. However, the sharer's motivations should play a key role in which mode is used. In the current study, we consider three types of motivation recovery motives (sharing to gain new perspectives or advice); relief motives (sharing to vent or arouse empathy) and bonding motives (sharing to strengthen social bonds) (Duprez et al., 2015). Recovery motives and relief motives conceptually link to the cognitive and socioaffective modes of social sharing respectively. As relief motives are frequently reported (Duprez et al., 2015; Rimé, 2007) and feeling understood is a basic need (Kennedy-Moore & Watson, 1999), we do not believe relief motives will relate to El Recovery motives, while used rarely, are more adaptive and might therefore be used more often by emotionally intelligent people Bonding motives were considered im portant for inclusion in the current study because high El people may socially share in order to maintain their intimate relationships (Lopes et al., 2003), rather than for regulatory purposes alone.

Study hypotheses
Hypothesis 1. El will be significantly related to emotion regulation processes, showing a positive relationship with direct modification distraction, reappraisal and social sharing, and a negative relationship with rumination. These relationships will hold for both ability EI (Hypothesis la) and self-rated EI (Hypothesis 1b).
Hypothesis 2. EI will be significantly positively related to bonding and recovery motives for social sharing but not significantly related to relief motives. These relationships will hold for both ability EI (Hypothesis 2a) and self-rated EI (Hypothesis 2b).

Method

Particians
Participants were 84 undergraduate psychology students (62 female, Mean age = 19.7, SD = 4.9), who volunteered to participate for course credit after reading the study advertisement on the university's

participant recruitment system. Reported ethnicities were White (62%), Asian (31%) and Other/unspecified (7%). An additional 36 participants were recruited but not included in the final study as (a) experience sampling and questionnaire data couldn't be matched (n = 4); (b) a low (z < -0.3) outlier score on the ability El test (n = 1); or (c) participants reported they could not speak English very well' (n = 31; this group scored significantly lower on the ability El test, indicating that the test was likely not an accurate measure of El due to difficulties in English language comprehension).

Procedure

Participants first came to a lab session where they registered their smartphone details in the survey distribution system SurveySignal, then completed the test battery below (measures were randomly ordered). The following week, participants received 15 SMS messages from Survey Signal (3 per day). Each contained a link to a 2-minute minisurvey (described below) to complete on a smartphone. After com pleting the experience samples, participants were granted course credit and emailed a debrief statement Participants completed between 4 and 18 mini surveys (median = 11; 4 participants completed > 15 surveys due to answering the same SMS message more than once).

Masures

- ### Test battery

  Danographic questionnaire. Participants reported their date of birth, gender, country of birth, ethnicity and English-speaking ability.

  Situational Test of Emotion Management - Brief (STEM-B; Allen et al. 2015; 18 items). This maximum performance test of emotion management used consensus scoring. Example item Clayton has been overseas for a long time and returns to visit his family. So much has changed that daytont feels left out. What action would be the most effective for Clayton? (a) Nothing - it will sort itself out soon enough. (b) Tell his family he feels left out (c) Spend time listening and getting involved again. (d) Reflect that relationships can change with time.

  Self-rated Emotional Intelligence Scale (SRES; Brackett et al, 2006; 19 items). Participants rate how accurately 19 statements describe them from 'very inaccurate' (1) to 'very accurate' (5) (e-g "I konow how to keep calm in difficult or stressful situations").

Experience sampling survey All items were rated from 1 (Not at all) to 6 (Very much).

  Regulatory processes (10 items). Participants were asked "Since the last survey, how much have you done the following in response to your feelings?" Items represented direct situation modification ("changed something in your environment?", "taken steps to change the situation you were in?"), distraction ("engaged in activities to distract yourself from your feelings?", "diverted your attention away from your fedings?"), rumination ("rumental or dwelled on your emotions or what caused them", "been unable to stop thinking about your feelings?"), reappraisal ("looked at thing from a different perspective?", "changal the way you were thinking about what caused your feding?"), and social sharing ("talked to others about your fedings or the situation that caused them?", "tectal, emailed or used social media to communicate how you feel with others?"). Items were taken from Brans, Koval, Verduyn, Lim, and Kuppens (2013) and Haines et al. (2016), modified slightly for consistency across items.

  Sodial sharing motives (10 items) Social Sharing motives items were presented after the regulatory processes items, beginning with 'I discussed my feelings to...'. There were four recovery items (e.g., "get an outside perspective"); four relief items (eg, "let off steam") and two bonding motives (e.g., "stay in

touch with others"). Items were taken from Duprez et al. (2015) and Carver, Scheier, and Kumari Weintraub (1989). Supplementary material provides warding of all items[1].

Results

Multi-level correlations were performed in Mplus, clustering experience samples within participants (Level 2 N = 84; Level 1 N = 956; average cluster size 11.4).

Descriptive statistics and reliabilities
Descriptive statistics and Cronbach's alpha reliability estimates for all level 2 variables are reported in Table 1. Reliability ranged from 0.66 (STEM-B) to 0.98 (Level 2 recovery motives).

Hypothesis 1 (ET will reate to anotion regulation processes)
Correlations of all Level 2 variables are given in Table 1. Because reliability was low for the STEM-B, we calculated the El/regulation and EI/motives correlations correcting for reliability (Spearman, 1904; corrected results in parentheses). We test hypotheses with respect to the corrected estimates. The STEM-B was not significantly correlated with any emotion regulation process, such that Hypothesis 1a was not supported SREIS scores were significantly and positively correlated with direct modification, reappraisal and social sharing but not significantly related to rumination or distraction. The correlation between the SREIS and social sharing was of medium to large effect size, whereas the correlations of the SRES with both direct modification and reappraisal were small to medium in size. Results provide partial support for Hypothesis lb.

Hypothesis 2 (EI will predict social sharing motives)
SREIS scores were significantly associated with all three motives for social sharing and STEM-B scores were significantly associated with relief and bonding motives. This result provided mixed support for Hypothesis 2, as we expected significant correlations with bonding and recovery motives, but not relief motives.

Discussion

Results show that self-rated El predicted emotion regulation processes in daily life but ability EI did not supporting Hypothesis 1b but not la. The largest effect was found for social sharing, where self-rated El predicted greater sharing Both self-rated and ability El predicted motives for social sharing Self-rated El predicted all three motives (recovery, bonding, and relief, with the strongest effect for recovery) whereas ability El predicted greater bonding and relief motives, but not recovery motives.

Table 1: Descriptive statistics, reliability, and Pearson correlations among study variables (correlations in parentheses correct for unreliability).

	α (L2)[a]	M	SD (L2)	SD (L1)	IGG	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
EI															
1.STEM	0.66	0.61	0.08	-											
2. SREIS Experience sampling variables Emotion regulation	0.83	3.66	0.48	-		0.36** (0.49**)									

3.Direct Modification	0.87	2.63	0.83	1.09	0.33	0.01 (0.01)	0.24* (0.28**)	-	0.40**	0.25**	0.47**	0.34**	0.25**	0.19**	0.21**
4.Distraction	0.92	2.90	0.92	1.16	0.35	0.03 (0.04)	0.03 (0.03)	0.64**	-	0.29**	0.35**	0.29**	0.24**	0.27**	0.09**
5.Rumination	0.79	2.43	0.75	1.06	0.29	0.02 (0.03)	0.14 (0.17)	0.54**	0.53**	-	0.37**	0.44**	0.33**	0.37**	0.06**
6.Reappraisal	0.89	2.54	0.83	1.02	0.36	-0.01 (-0.01)	0.25* (0.29**)	0.82**	0.55**	0.66**	-	0.40**	0.50**	0.37**	0.22**
7.Social Sharing Motives for social sharing	0.80	2.27	0.81	1.19	0.26	0.15 (0.21)	0.48** (0.59**)	0.59**	0.29**	0.54**	0.65**	-	0.49**	0.53**	0.37**
8.Recovery	0.98	2.66	1.14	1.06	0.47	0.07 (0.09)	0.31** (0.34**)	0.49**	0.22**	0.56**	0.68**	0.82**	-	0.68**	0.36**
9.Relief	0.92	2.41	0.96	0.97	0.42	0.17 (0.22*)	0.20 (0.23*)	0.48**	0.30**	0.62**	0.60**	0.72**	0.79**	-	0.30**
10. Bonding	0.96	2.45	1.09	1.05	0.48	0.30** (0.038**)	0.20 (0.22*)	0.45**	0.34**	0.39**	0.48**	0.59**	0.51**	0.56**	-

Note. IGG = intraclass correlation. Within-person correlation above diagonal, between-person correlation below diagonal. [a] Gronbach's alpha for the Level 2 experience sampling variables was calculated in SPSS using the average value of eche item across all experience samples.

* $p < 0/5$.

** $P < 0/1$.

El and emotion regulation processes

The present finding show no evidence of a relationship between ability EI and emotion regulation in daily life. Only self-rated EI was related to emotion regulation. This is consistent with the results of Peña-Sarrionandia et al.'s (2015) review, where emotion regulation was more strongly related to El rating scales than to ability EL.

While emotion knowledge is important researchers acknowledge that other factors are needed to motivate emotion regulation (Mayer et al., 2016). Various researchers have stressed that belief in one's emotional abilities can determine whether or not one uses these abil. ities (Kirk et al., 2008). Our research supports this idea-emotion regulation behaviours were more strongly linked to selfperceptions of emotional abilities than to actual emotional abilities. For emotion regulation, knowing what to do appears less important than believing one can do it. Self-rated El is sometimes referred to as "emotional self-efficacy' (Petrides et al., 2007). Given well-known theory that self-efficacy determines the initiation and persistence with coping behaviour (Bandura, 1977), it is not surprising that emotional self-efficacy determines how much emotion regulation activity is engaged in.

Our results may help to explain the consistent meta-analytic find ings that self-rated El has stronger prediction than ability El across a range of positive outcomes, including job performance, health, and wellbeing (Joseph and Newman, 2010; Martins et al., 2010; Sanchez-Alvarez et al., 2016). One of the possible mechanisms by which El translates into positive outcomes is that high El enables better emotion regulation (e.g., people who can better regulate their emotions at work will perform better as their anxiety or stress does not impede their performance). If self-rated El (but not ability ET) is a determining factor in the emotion regulation processes people use, this would explain why self-rated EI shows stronger prediction of positive outcomes. However, it is also true that most outcome measures are based on rating-scales (either self-ratings or employer ratings), such that the stronger prediction from self-rated El than ability El may represent shared method variance.

The strong association between self-rated El and social sharing is plausibly a bidirectional relationship. Believing one's emotional abil ities are high would provide confidence to use them (such that higher EI causes greater social sharing). However, people may gain confidence in their emotional abilities by sharing their emotions with others more in their daily lives (such that greater social sharing increases self-rated EI).

The positive relationships found between self-rated El and both si tuation modification and reappraisal are in line with previous research (Goldenberg et al., 2006). The non-significant relationship between El and rumination is surprising as rumination is known to intensify ne gative emotions (Bushman, 2002) and is characteristic of a number of mental disorders (Aldao et al., 2010). Distraction was expected to share a positive relationship with El as it can be an easy and effective way of managing negative emotions so that one can stay on task (Brans et al, 2013). However, it may be that because distraction is an easy way of dealing with emotions, higher levels of El are not required to use this (Brans et al., 2013).

Emotional intelligence and motives for social sharing

Results provided mixed support for Hypothesis 2 (the El/social sharing motives relationship). While self-rated EI was significantly as sociated with both recovery and bonding motives (as hypothesized) and ability El was significantly associated with bonding motives (as hy pothesized), both self-rated and ability EI were also significantly related to relief motives (which was not hypothesized) and ability EI was not related to recovery motives. All relationships with motives were small to moderate.

The recovery motive items used in the current study relate to gaining advice or a new perspective on an emotion-eliciting situation. The fact that ability El was not related to recovery motives, may indicate that high ability El individuals already have knowledge of what to do, such that they do not have any greater motivation to gain advice On the other hand, people with high self-rated El were motivated by recovery motives, as well as by relief and bonding motives.

Ability El was most strongly associated with bonding motives for social sharing. Willingness to share emotions is related to a greater number of more intimate relationships (Graham et al., 2008) and the present findings suggest that people with higher ability El are more aware of these social benefits. Social Sharing could partially explain why those higher in El have been found to report more satisfying relationships than those lower in El (Lopes et al, 2003). Future research could test social sharing as a mediator of these outcomes.

The unexpected positive relationships between El and relief motives may be explained by high El people being more aware of their basic need to feel understood (Kennedy-Moore and Watson, 1999). That is, rather than people with higher El actually having greater relief motives for social sharing they may just be more aware of these underlying motives than those lower in EI.

Limitations and future directions

There were some limitations with the current data set that precluded more complex analyses. We had a relatively small sample size after exclusion criteria, and a possible ceiling effect on the STEM-B which may have compromised reliability (although we attempted to account for this by correcting for attenuated reliability). The small within-person N (a median of 11 data points per person) ako meant that there was not enough power to look at cross level moderation with confidence (e.g., whether El predicted the relationship between social sharing motivations and the amount of social sharing engaged in).

This study relied on self-ratings of emotion regulation processes and motives for social sharing, as well as the self-report measure of EL. As such, stronger correlations with emotion regulation for self-rated El (as compared to ability EI) may represent a method effect. However, our ability El task measured emotion management only whereas our selfreport El scale measured all four branches. It is quite likely that the other branches relate to emotion regulation proces. For example, understanding the causes of negative emotions (the understanding branch) may make people less likely to engage in processes that may cause or prolong negative affect, such as rumination or venting. As such, it is possible that a difference in construct breadth (rather than method of measurement) may explain difference between selfreart and ability El in this study. Follow-up studies should be conducted with a more comprehensive ability-based assessment of EI.

Using self-reports in the experience sampling survey may have in troduced response biases such as social desirability, cognitive biases, and cultural norms in reporting emotion regulation and motives for social sharing. (Scollon, Kim-Prieto and Diener, 2003). In addition, it meant that only conscious emotion regulation processes were captured. There is a growing interest in unconscious emotion regulation (Hopp et al., 2011)

and in the more unconscious processes under lying El (Fiori, 2009). A challenge for future research will be to explore the relationship between El and automatic emotion regulatory processes.

Conclution

The current study examined the relationship between EI and the amount that five emotion regulation processes are used in daily life. While both self-rated and ability El were important in determining motives for social sharing the degree to which emotion regulation processes were used seemed clearly linked to having belief in one's emotional abilities rather than having knowledge of effective emotion regulation processes.

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Non.

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