

PERSONALITY ASSESSMENT AND EMOTION REGULATION

Paola Surcinelli¹, Ornella Montebanocci¹ ¹ Department of Psychology, University of Bologna.

Abstract

Emotion regulation has been conceptualized as strategies through which individuals reduce, maintain or increase either positive or negative emotions in response to environmental demands. Two emotion regulation strategies that received particular attention are cognitive reappraisal (thinking about the situation so as to alter its meaning and emotional impact) and expressive suppression (attempts to inhibit or reduce ongoing emotion-expressive behaviour). Reappraisal and suppression have different implications for affective responding and well-being. In particular, reappraisal is related to greater experience of positive affect and well-being, while suppression is related to greater levels of negative affect and to internalizing disorders such as depression and anxiety. The current study examined whether the use of specific cognitive emotion regulation strategies (reappraisal and suppression) is related to depression, anxiety, somatization, and anger-hostility scores using the SQ. The sample comprised 114 Italian university students (79 female, M age = 23.4 years). Participants completed the Emotion Regulation Questionnaire (ERQ) and the Symptom Questionnaire (SQ). The ERQ subscale reappraisal correlated negatively with the Depression scale of the SQ ($r = -.18, p < .05$), and with the Anger-Hostility scale of the SQ ($r = -.21, p < .05$). The ERQ suppression correlated positively with the Anxiety scale ($r = .22, p < .05$), the Depression scale ($r = .21, p < .05$), and the Somatization scale of the SQ ($r = .19, p < .05$). Consistently with previous results, the use of suppression as emotion regulation strategy is linked with greater levels of anxiety, depression and somatization, while reappraisal is inversely related to depressive mood.