

Abstract: Evaluating the correspondence between qualitative and quantitative measures to assess interpersonal emotion regulation strategies

## **Background**

Interpersonal emotion regulation (IER) involves influencing others' emotions. Although various methods have been employed to investigate IER strategies, including quantitative questionnaires and qualitative open-ended questions, the correspondence between qualitative and quantitative responses remains unexplored. This is important to understand whether discrepancies observed across studies may be due to the different methods employed. Therefore, our study aims to examine whether there are discrepancies between different methods.

## **Methods**

In this mixed-method study, 279 adults ( $M = 21.82$  years,  $SD = 6.30$ , female = 174) were presented with 9 scenarios depicting different targets experiencing various negative emotions. After each scenario, participants were asked what they would do to make the target feel better (open-ended qualitative questions). In addition, participants were asked to select the strategies they would use from several IER strategies taken from two theoretical models (quantitative questions). Qualitative responses were coded by 3 independent coders into corresponding strategies through thematic analysis, revealing good interrater reliability ( $Ks > .82$ ).

## **Findings**

Regression analyses showed that, for affective engagement (AE), distraction and humour strategies, there was a perfect correspondence between participants' qualitative and quantitative responses. Cognitive engagement (qualitative) was positively linked to participants' quantitative responses of AE. For attention (qualitative), it was not significantly linked to any strategies at the quantitative level.

## **Discussion**

Our findings demonstrate that participants' quantitative responses largely correspond to their qualitative responses in IER. Our results suggest that there are important nuances between IERs. Therefore, this suggest that researchers need to be cautious when selecting the methods to investigate IER strategies.