



# Attachment orientations, emotion goals, and emotion regulation

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## ABSTRACT

While research has linked attachment to emotion regulation (ER), little is known about associations between attachment and what individuals want to feel (i.e., emotion goals), something that has been found to influence ER strategy choice. In this study, we examined the links between attachment, emotion goals, and emotion regulation. A total of 605 participants from the community were included. They filled out self-report scales on attachment, emotion goals, and ER strategies. Data were analyzed using structural equation modeling. Direct effects showed a link between attachment avoidance and fewer pro-hedonic goals, more suppression and fewer emotion communication, and between attachment anxiety and fewer pro-hedonic goals, more pro-social, performance, and impression management goals, and more suppression and rumination. Indirect effects showed that attachment avoidance was associated with less emotion communication and positive reappraisal and more suppression through fewer pro-hedonic goals. Attachment anxiety was associated with more rumination and more suppression through fewer impression management goals; attachment anxiety was also associated with more suppression through fewer pro-hedonic goals and more performance goals. These findings highlight the role of attachment as an important antecedent of emotion goals.

## 1. Introduction

Emotion goals refer to what individuals want to feel and why (Eldesouky & English, 2019; Tamir, 2016). They are of high importance since they shape emotion regulation (ER) (i.e., the process “by which individuals influence which emotions they have, when they have them, and how they experience and express these emotions” (Gross, 1998, p. 275) (Mauss & Tamir, 2014; English et al., 2017)). The identification of emotion goals antecedents is one important direction for future research (Eldesouky & English, 2019; Eldesouky & Gross, 2019). There is some evidence that personality predicts the reasons why people regulate their emotions (Eldesouky & English, 2019), but other factors should be explored. In this study, we explored the role of attachment orientations. While Eldesouky and Gross (2019) theoretically proposed that attachment orientations (that are formed early in life) can influence ER goals later in life, so far, no empirical studies have tested this hypothesis. Additionally, because both attachment orientations and emotion goals have been linked to ER (Eldesouky & English, 2019; Mikulincer & Shaver, 2019; Wilms et al., 2020) we examined the potential mediating role of emotion goals on the link between attachment orientations and

ER.

### 1.1. Emotion goals

When individuals regulate their emotions in a specific way, they want to achieve a desired emotional state (i.e., emotion goals). These goals can be of different nature. They can be related to changing a specific emotion (e.g., dampening negative or positive emotions) or they can be related to reasons underlying ER (e.g., completing a task) (Eldesouky & English, 2019; English et al., 2017). Tamir (2016) has proposed a taxonomy that identifies key classes of motives in ER. This taxonomy includes two types of motives: hedonic motives (i.e., how much individuals want to experience pleasant or unpleasant emotions) and instrumental motives (i.e., why individuals want to experience specific emotions) (Tamir, 2016).

Based on this taxonomy, Eldesouky and English (2019) developed a new self-report measure aiming at assessing emotion regulation goals that included two hedonic goals – pro-hedonic and contra-hedonic goals – and three instrumental goals – performance goals, pro-social goals, and impression management goals. *Pro-hedonic goals* capture the desire to

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feel positively while *contra-hedonic goals* capture the desire to feel negatively. *Performance goals* capture the desire to perform an activity, *pro-social goals* capture the desire to maintain or promote interpersonal relationships, and *impression management goals* capture the desire to appear to others in a certain way (Eldesouky & English, 2019).

The study of the link between emotions goals and ER is recent. Available studies have focused their attention on expressive suppression (i.e., “a form of response modulation that involves inhibiting ongoing emotion-expressive behavior”; Gross & John, 2003, p. 349), and cognitive reappraisal (i.e., “a form of cognitive change that involves construing a potentially emotion-eliciting situation in a way that changes its emotional impact”) (Gross & John, 2003, p. 349). For instance, Eldesouky and English (2019), in three studies with university students and individuals from the community, explored the link between emotion goals and ER strategy use in daily life. They found that pro-hedonic goals and pro-social goals were associated with the use of more antecedent-focused strategies (e.g., cognitive reappraisal), that impression management goals were associated with the use of more suppression, and contra-hedonic goals were associated with the use of less cognitive reappraisal and more suppression in some contexts.

Also, English et al. (2017) explored emotions goals and emotion regulation strategy selection in daily life in a sample of college students. They found that pro-hedonic goals and certain instrumental goals were associated with the use of more cognitive reappraisal; on the contrary, contra-hedonic goals were associated with the use of more suppression, especially in terms of positive emotions. Finally, Wilms et al. (2020) examined what if emotion goals predicted ER choice in daily life in a sample of students. They found that pro-hedonic goals were associated with the use of more cognitive reappraisal while social goals were associated with the use of more suppression. All the results are in line suggesting that emotion goals contribute to shape ER.

However, other ER strategies may be relevant such as emotion communication (i.e., communicate emotions to others), rumination (i.e., to thinking about the feelings and thoughts associated with an event), or positive reappraisal (i.e., thoughts of giving a positive meaning to an event) (Garnefski & Kraaij, 2007; Giese-Davis et al., 2004).

Empirical studies exploring individual differences in ER goals have found that individuals are more likely to pursue pro-hedonic goals (English et al., 2017; Gross et al., 2006; Riediger et al., 2009) and usually regulate their emotions for social reasons (English et al., 2017). However, few studies have explored factors responsible for these individual differences. A recent study explored the role of personality and found that agreeableness was positively linked to pro-hedonic and pro-social goals; openness was positively linked to performance goals; and neuroticism was positively linked to impression management goals; agreeableness and conscientiousness were negatively linked to contra-hedonic goals (Eldesouky & English, 2019). But another potential factor related to individual differences in ER goals may be attachment orientations (Eldesouky & Gross, 2019).

### 1.2. Attachment orientations

Attachment theory posits that people are born with an innate psychological system (i.e., *the attachment behavioral system*) that allows them to seek proximity and support from significant others (i.e., *attachment figures*) and promote affect regulation when facing stressful situations (Bowlby, 1982) influencing ER in adulthood (Girme et al., 2021). When attachment figures are open, sensitive, and responsive to individuals' proximity bids, they develop positive mental representations of self and others (Bowlby, 1973). On the contrary, when attachment figures are not open, available, and receptive to individuals' proximity bids, security is not achieved, and negative models of self and others are formed. Adult attachment orientations have been measured using a dimensional approach including two dimensions: *attachment anxiety* and *attachment avoidance* (Fraley et al., 2015). Attachment anxiety refers to individuals' concerns regarding significant others'

availability and proximity; attachment avoidance reflects the lack of comfort with closeness and emotional intimacy with significant others (Fraley et al., 2015).

More securely attached individuals (i.e., those with lower levels of anxiety and avoidance) can develop comforting relationships and rely on constructive strategies of ER. On the contrary, more insecurely attached individuals tend to experience difficulties in interpersonal relationships and tend to adopt *secondary attachment strategies*. Specifically, more avoidantly attached individuals tend to use deactivating strategies for regulating emotions (e.g., suppression) to maintain emotional distance and independence; more anxiously attached individuals tend to use hyperactivating strategies for regulating emotions (e.g., rumination) to obtain proximity and support from significant others (Girme et al., 2021; Mikulincer & Shaver, 2003, 2012; Mikulincer et al., 2003).

While research on the association between attachment and ER is abundant (Mikulincer & Shaver, 2019) the links between attachment and emotion goals have been rarely examined. As proposed by Pereg and Mikulincer (2004) that explored the underlying overall goals of attachment-related strategies (not emotion goals), more securely attached individuals are more likely to present hedonic goals while more insecurely attached individuals are more likely to pursue other regulatory goals. Specifically, for more anxiously attached individuals their affect-congruent negative cognitions allow them to achieve relational goals by keeping others close and by eliciting others' compassion. For more avoidantly attached individuals their lack of cognitive reactions to negative affect allows them to achieve their goal of being independent and keeping distance from others. However, the authors acknowledge the need for further explore these associations between attachment and goals.

### 1.3. The current investigation

Attachment orientations are expected to shape emotion goals (Eldesouky & Gross, 2019; Pereg & Mikulincer, 2004). Thus, in this study, we hypothesized that more anxiously attached individuals would present more pro-social, performance, and impression management goals since these goals are in accordance with their relational goals of keeping others close, eliciting other's compassion, and maintaining interpersonal relationships by appearing to others in a certain way (Eldesouky & English, 2019; Pereg & Mikulincer, 2004). Also, we hypothesized that more anxiously attached individuals would present less pro-hedonic and more contra-hedonic goals since they tend to experience and express more negative emotions to elicit support from significant others (e.g., Caldwell & Shaver, 2012; Winterheld, 2015).

With regards to more avoidantly attached individuals, we hypothesized that they would present fewer pro-social goals and more impression management goals because they usually want to show others that they are distant and indifferent to keep them away, maintaining independence and autonomy in relationships (e.g., Leary & Allen, 2011; Simpson & Rholes, 2017); and fewer performance goals because they usually have lower expectations to minimize distress from possible loss (e.g., Spielmann et al., 2013). Also, we hypothesized that they would present fewer pro-hedonic and more contra-hedonic goals since they are more likely to council positive emotions and experience low levels of positive emotions and high levels of negative emotions (Feeney, 1999; Mikulincer & Shaver, 2005).

Additionally, several studies have provided evidence for the link between attachment and ER (Mikulincer & Shaver, 2019). Studies have shown that emotion goals are likely to influence ER strategies selection. Specifically, pro-hedonic goals or pro-social goals have been associated with the use of reappraisal while impression management goals, contra-hedonic goals, pro-social goals, or instrumental goals have been associated with the use of suppression (Eldesouky & English, 2019; English et al., 2017; Wilms et al., 2020). Thus, we hypothesized that emotion goals would mediate the link between attachment orientations and

emotion regulation.

## 2. Method

### 2.1. Participants

We included 605 Portuguese adults from the community (77 % women,  $n = 466$ ). In terms of age, participants had a mean age of 30 years ( $M = 30.80$ ;  $SD = 12.17$ ). Most of the participants were involved in a romantic relationship (61 %) ( $M$  length = 10.74 years;  $SD = 11.30$ ). Around 46 % of the participants held a university degree and around 40 % of them were professionally active. Around 39 % of the participants were attending a university degree.

### 2.2. Measures

#### 2.2.1. Attachment

Attachment was measured using the *Experiences in Close Relationships – Relationship Structures Questionnaire* developed by Fraley et al. (2011). The ECR is a self-report questionnaire with 9 items scored on a Likert-type scale ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 7 (*strongly agree*). It measures two dimensions: attachment anxiety with 3 items and attachment avoidance with 6 items. Participants were asked to identify their attachment figure (i.e., a person with whom they have a strong emotional bond) and then rate the items thinking on about that person. Cronbach's alpha in this study was 0.82 for attachment anxiety and 0.82 attachment avoidance.

#### 2.2.2. Emotion goals

Emotion goals were measured using the *Emotion Regulation Goals Scale* (ERGS) developed by Eldesouky and English (2019). The ERGS is a self-report scale with 18 items scored on a Likert-type scale ranging from 1 (*never*) to 7 (*always*). It measures five goals: pro-hedonic, contra-hedonic, performance, pro-social, and impression management goals. In this study, a 16-item version was used (Brandão et al., 2022). Cronbach's alpha for this study was 0.91 for contra-hedonic goals, 0.76 for pro-social goals, and 0.76 for impression management goals. The Spearman-Brown coefficient was 0.67 for pro-hedonic goals and 0.60 for performance goals.

#### 2.2.3. Emotion regulations strategies

*Emotion suppression* was measured with the *Emotion Regulation Questionnaire* (ERQ) developed by Gross and John (2003). It has 10 items that are rated on a Likert scale ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 7 (*strongly agree*). It measures individual differences in two emotion regulation strategies: expressive suppression and cognitive reappraisal. In this study, we used only the expressive suppression subscale (4 items; Cronbach's alpha was 0.80).

*Emotion communication* was measured with the *Stanford Emotional Self-Efficacy Scale* (SESES) created by Giese-Davis et al. (2004). It is composed of 15 items scored on a 10-point scale ranging from 1 (*not at all confident*) to 10 (*completely confident*). In this study, we used only the subscale communicating emotions in relationships (5 items; Cronbach alpha was 0.71).

*Rumination and positive reappraisal* were measured with the *Cognitive Emotion Regulation Questionnaire* (CERQ) developed by Garnefski and Kraaij (2007). The CERQ has 36 items scored on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (*(almost) never*) to 5 (*(almost) always*). It is composed of nine dimensions with four items: Self-blame, Blaming others, Acceptance, Refocusing on planning, Positive refocusing, Rumination, Positive reappraisal, Putting into perspective, and Catastrophizing. In this study, we used only the subscales rumination and positive reappraisal (Cronbach alpha were 0.89 and 0.87, respectively).

### 2.3. Procedure

This study was approved by the Ethical Committee of [removed for blind review]. An online questionnaire was used to collect data. Participants living in Portugal were invited to participate in the study via social media posts (i.e., Facebook, Instagram) and by email (e.g., university mailing list). The post included a link to the survey. The main objectives of the study were presented on the first page; voluntarily and confidentiality were ensured. After participants provided their consent to participate in the study, they were asked to fill out a set of questionnaires. No incentives were offered.

### 2.4. Data analysis

Associations among study variables were examined using Pearson's correlations in SPSS. Path analyzes were used to test our proposed model, with attachment avoidance and attachment anxiety as independent variables, emotion goals as mediators, and emotion regulation strategies as dependent variables. The model was tested using maximum likelihood estimation in AMOS 26. The overall model fit was assessed using the following fit indices: the chi-square/df statistic ( $< 2.0$ ), the comparative fit index (CFI), the goodness of fit index (GFI) ( $> 0.90$ ), the root mean square error of approximation (RMSEA;  $< 0.07$ ), and the standardized root mean square residual (SRMR;  $< 0.06$ ) (Hooper et al., 2008). Indirect effects were examined using a 2,000 bootstrap samples and bias-corrected bootstrap 95 % confidence interval as suggested by MacKinnon et al. (2004) and Preacher and Hayes (2008). They were considered significant if the CI did not include zero.

## 3. Results

### 3.1. Descriptive statistics

Correlations among study variables are presented in Table 1. Attachment anxiety was negatively associated with pro-hedonic goals, emotion communication, and positive reappraisal and positively associated with impression management, pro-social, performance goals, suppression, and rumination. Attachment avoidance was negatively associated with pro-hedonic goals, emotion communication, and positive reappraisal, and positively associated with impression management goals and suppression.

Pro-hedonic goals were positively associated with impression management, pro-social, performance goals, and emotion communication, and positive reappraisal. Contra-hedonic goals were negatively associated with pro-social and performance goals, and with suppression and rumination, and positively associated with impression management goals, and suppression. Impression management goals were positively associated with pro-social and performance goals, and suppression. Pro-social goals were positively associated with performance goals, emotion communication, rumination, and positive. Reappraisal. Performance goals were positively associated with emotion communication.

Finally, suppression was negatively associated with emotion communication and positive reappraisal and positively associated with positive reappraisal. Emotion communication was positively associated with positive reappraisal and negatively associated with rumination. Rumination was positively associated with positive reappraisal.

### 3.2. Mediation model

We report here the most parsimonious model with non-significant paths removed. This model provided a good fit to the data ( $\chi^2(26) = 86.55$ ;  $p < .001$ ;  $\chi^2/df = 3.33$ ; CFI = 0.96; GFI = 0.98; SRMR = 0.05; RMSEA = 0.06,  $p_{close} = 0.079$ , 90 % CI 0.048, 0.077). It accounted for 15 %, 18 %, 19 %, and 13 % of the total variance of individuals' suppression, emotion communication, rumination, and positive reappraisal, respectively (see Fig. 1). Table 2 depicted standardized direct effects and

**Table 1**  
Correlations among study variables (N = 605).

|                   | 1        | 2        | 3       | 4        | 5       | 6       | 7      | 8        | 9        | 10      |
|-------------------|----------|----------|---------|----------|---------|---------|--------|----------|----------|---------|
| 1. Att Anxiety    | –        |          |         |          |         |         |        |          |          |         |
| 2. Att Avoidance  | 0.260**  | –        |         |          |         |         |        |          |          |         |
| 3. Pro-hedonic    | –0.110** | –0.131** | –       |          |         |         |        |          |          |         |
| 4. Contra-hedonic | 0.077    | 0.073    | 0.035   | –        |         |         |        |          |          |         |
| 5. IM             | 0.199**  | 0.102*   | 0.228** | 0.226**  | –       |         |        |          |          |         |
| 6. Pro-social     | 0.123**  | 0.012    | 0.400** | –0.132** | 0.517** | –       |        |          |          |         |
| 7. Performance    | 0.101*   | –0.012   | 0.352** | –0.327** | 0.210** | 0.553** | –      |          |          |         |
| 8. Suppression    | 0.242**  | 0.266**  | –0.061  | 0.238**  | 0.197** | 0.064   | 0.030  | –        |          |         |
| 9. EC             | –0.185** | –0.384** | 0.179** | –0.178** | –0.063  | 0.110** | 0.111* | –0.521** | –        |         |
| 10. Rumination    | 0.192**  | 0.051    | 0.055   | 0.321**  | 0.313** | 0.104*  | –0.064 | 0.153**  | –0.118** | –       |
| 11. PR            | –0.093*  | –0.123** | 0.362** | 0.073    | 0.051   | 0.084*  | 0.044  | –0.131** | 0.204**  | 0.211** |

Note. Att = attachment; IM = impression management goals; EC = emotion communication; PR = positive reappraisal.

\*  $p < .05$ .  
\*\*  $p < .01$ .

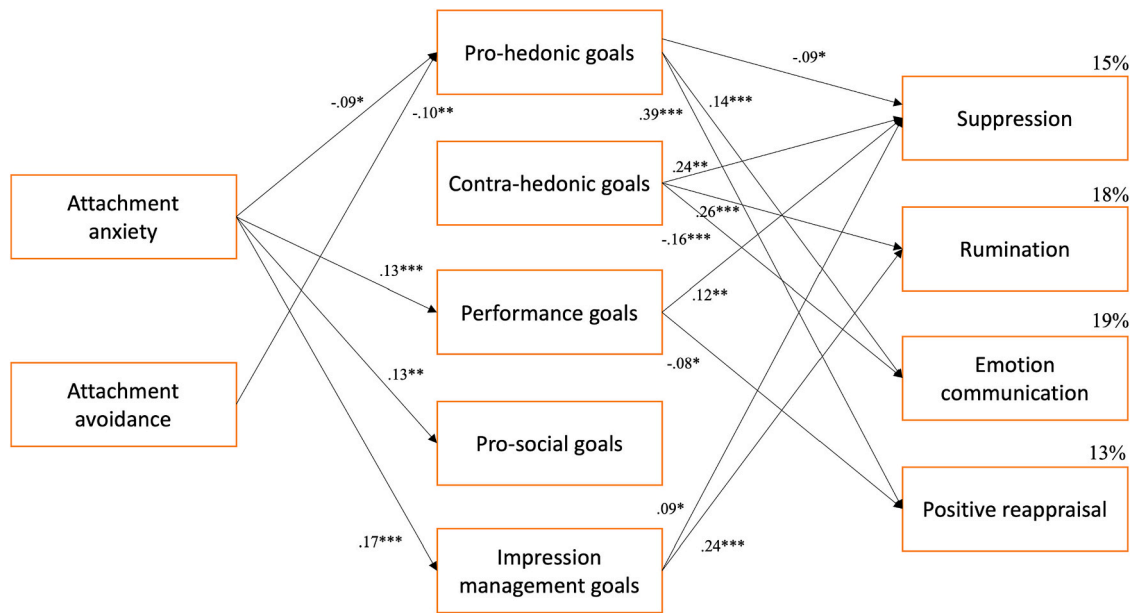


Fig. 1. Mediational model.

Table 3 presented standardized indirect effects.

### 3.2.1. Direct effects

Attachment anxiety had a negative effect on pro-hedonic goals and a positive effect on performance goals, impression management goals, and pro-social goals. It also had a positive effect on suppression and rumination. Attachment avoidance had a negative effect on pro-hedonic goals, and emotion communication, and a positive effect on suppression.

Pro-hedonic goals had a negative effect on suppression but positive effects on emotion communication and positive reappraisal. Contra-hedonic goals had positive effects on suppression and rumination and a negative effect on emotion communication. Performance goals had a positive effect on suppression and a negative effect on positive reappraisal. Impression management goals had positive effects on suppression and rumination.

### 3.2.2. Indirect effect

Attachment avoidance was associated with less emotion communication and positive reappraisal and more suppression through less pro-hedonic goals. Attachment anxiety was associated with more rumination and more suppression through more impression management and performance goals; attachment anxiety was also associated with more suppression through less pro-hedonic goals.

## 4. Discussion

The aim of the present study was to explore the relationship between attachment orientations, emotion goals, and ER in a sample of adults from the community. Furthermore, the mediating role of emotion goals on the association between attachment and ER was examined.

Findings from this study provided some evidence linking attachment orientation to ER. More specifically, attachment anxiety was associated with more suppression and rumination and attachment avoidance was associated with more suppression and less emotion communication. These results are congruent with those found in previous studies (e.g., Brandão et al., 2020; Girme et al., 2021; Winterheld, 2015).

In addition, our findings suggest that attachment orientations may be linked to emotion goals, especially attachment anxiety. As expected, more anxiously attached individuals seemed to present more pro-social, performance, and impression management goals. Probably, these goals allow them to achieve their relational needs since they can keep others close, elicit others' compassion, and maintain interpersonal relationships by appearing to others in a certain way (Eldesouky & English, 2019; Pereg & Mikulincer, 2004).

Also, as expected, they seemed to present less pro-hedonic goals (i.e., they are more likely to not desire to feel positively), a tendency that is described in the literature since they tend to experience and express

**Table 2**  
Significant direct effects between attachment, emotion goals, and emotion regulation (N = 605).

| Effect predictor -> outcome   | B     | SE   | p      |
|-------------------------------|-------|------|--------|
| Att Anxiety -> Pro-hedonic    | -0.09 | 0.03 | 0.038  |
| Att Anxiety -> Performance    | 0.13  | 0.03 | <0.001 |
| Att Anxiety -> IM             | 0.17  | 0.03 | <0.001 |
| Att Anxiety -> Pro-social     | 0.13  | 0.02 | 0.002  |
| Att Anxiety - Suppression     | 0.10  | 0.03 | 0.004  |
| Att Anxiety -> Rumination     | 0.13  | 0.02 | <0.001 |
| Att Avoidance -> Pro-hedonic  | -0.10 | 0.04 | 0.007  |
| Att Avoidance -> Suppression  | 0.20  | 0.05 | <0.001 |
| Att Avoidance -> EC           | -0.36 | 0.04 | <0.001 |
| Pro-hedonic -> Suppression    | -0.09 | 0.05 | 0.024  |
| Pro-hedonic -> EC             | 0.14  | 0.04 | <0.001 |
| Pro-hedonic -> PR             | 0.39  | 0.03 | <0.001 |
| Contra-hedonic -> Suppression | 0.24  | 0.04 | <0.001 |
| Contra-hedonic -> EC          | -0.16 | 0.03 | <0.001 |
| Contra-hedonic -> Rumination  | 0.26  | 0.02 | <0.001 |
| Performance -> Suppression    | 0.12  | 0.05 | 0.003  |
| Performance -> PR             | -0.08 | 0.03 | 0.036  |
| IM -> Suppression             | 0.09  | 0.04 | 0.014  |
| IM -> Rumination              | 0.24  | 0.03 | <0.001 |

Note. Att = attachment; IM = impression management; PR = positive reappraisal; EC = emotion communication; B = Standardized estimate; S = standard error.

more negative emotions to elicit attention and support from significant others (e.g., Caldwell & Shaver, 2012; Winterheld, 2015). Contrary to our expectations, no significant associations were found between attachment anxiety and contra-hedonic goals (i.e., their desire to feel negatively). The utilitarian idea of contra-hedonic motivation (e.g., Tamir et al., 2007) did not seem to apply in our study. It is possible that these individuals do not want to feel positive or experience pleasant emotions to obtain others' support but also do not want to feel negative or experience unpleasant emotions to avoid suffering. However, more studies are needed to better understand the role of attachment on contra-hedonic goals.

With regards to attachment avoidance, we only found a significant association with pro-hedonic goals. As hypothesized, more avoidantly

attached individuals seemed to present less pro-hedonic goals since they are more likely to council positive emotions and experience low levels of positive emotions and high levels of negative emotions (Feeney, 1999; Mikulincer & Shaver, 2005). Also, it is possible that deactivation strategies allow them to dampen not only negative emotions but also positive ones (Diamond & Aspinwall, 2003). Contrary to our hypotheses, attachment avoidance was not related to the remaining emotion goals. It is possible that more avoidantly attached individuals do not have performance or social goals possible due to their tendency to dismiss the importance of others, avoid closeness, and desire emotional independence and self-reliance (e.g., Locke, 2008).

Finally, the mediational model proposed was partially confirmed with some goals explaining the link between attachment and ER. This is an innovative finding since no previous studies have explored this processual hypothesis. We found that attachment anxiety seemed to be associated with more rumination via impression management goals and more suppression via less pro-hedonic goals, performance goals, and impression management goals. It is possible to hypothesize that more anxiously individuals tend to ruminate more about their emotions but also suppress their emotions due to their worries about the impression they want to cause on others or the things they want to achieve. The result regarding suppression is particularly interesting since more anxiously attached individuals are more likely to report and express intensive negative emotions to obtain others' attention (e.g., Overall et al., 2014). However, our findings seem to suggest that when these individuals are worried about the impressions they can cause on others or are worried to finish a task, they may suppress their emotions to avoid the costs of a pattern of exaggerated emotional expression. Also, our findings seemed to suggest that when anxiously attached individuals want to reduce the experience of positive emotions, they may use expressive suppression. Indeed, according to Gross and Levenson (1997), suppression is useful for reducing the experience of positive emotions.

Finally, attachment avoidance seemed to be associated with less positive reappraisal, less emotion communication, and more suppression via less pro-hedonic goals (i.e., the desire to feel positively). This seems to suggest that more avoidantly attached individuals may do not

**Table 3**  
Bootstrap test for indirect effects for the model with attachment as independent variable, emotion goals as mediators, and emotion regulation as outcome (N = 605).

| Effect  | B     | SE   | p     | Bias-corrected 90% CI<br>for mean indirect effect |        |
|---|-------|------|-------|---|--------|
|   |       |      |       | Lower   | Upper  |
| Att Avoidance -> Pro-hedonic goals -> PR          | -0.04 | 0.02 | 0.003 | -0.072  | -0.011 |
| Att Avoidance -> Pro-hedonic goals -> EC          | -0.01 | 0.01 | 0.002 | -0.031  | -0.004 |
| Att Avoidance -> Pro-hedonic goals -> Suppression | 0.01  | 0.01 | 0.022 | 0.001   | 0.025  |
| Att anxiety -> Pro-hedonic goals -> PR            | -0.03 | 0.02 | 0.059 | -0.068  | 0.001  |
| Att anxiety -> Performance goals -> PR            | -0.01 | 0.01 | 0.038 | -0.027  | 0.000  |
| Att anxiety -> Pro-hedonic goals -> EC            | -0.01 | 0.01 | 0.049 | -0.030  | 0.000  |
| Att anxiety -> IM -> Rumination                   | 0.04  | 0.01 | 0.001 | 0.021   | 0.066  |
| Att anxiety -> Pro-hedonic -> Suppression         | 0.01  | 0.01 | 0.026 | 0.001   | 0.025  |
| Att anxiety -> Performance -> Suppression         | 0.01  | 0.01 | 0.005 | 0.004   | 0.034  |
| Att anxiety -> IM -> Suppression                  | 0.02  | 0.01 | 0.016 | 0.003   | 0.034  |

Note. Att = attachment; EC = emotion communication; PR = positive reappraisal; IM = impression management; B = Standardized estimate; S = standard error; p = bootstrap bias corrected p values.

want to feel positively and for that reason may avoid reinterpreting events in a positive way, avoid communicating emotions and suppress their emotions (this late result is similar to the one found for more anxiously attached individuals).

It is important to note that while non-significant in the path analysis, some associations between attachment, emotion goals and ER strategies were significant in the correlation analyses. For instance, correlations suggested that more avoidantly attached individuals seemed to have more impression management goals maybe because they may want to show others that they rely on themselves and do not need others, keeping them away (e.g., Leary & Allen, 2011; Simpson & Rholes, 2017). Thus, more studies are needed to better understand relationships among variables.

#### 4.1. Limitations and future research

There are some limitations that should be noted. This is a cross-sectional study. For this reason, causality among study variables cannot be inferred. Longitudinal studies are needed to better understand the relationship between attachment, emotion goals, and emotion regulation. Second, this study relied only on self-reported measures which can produce some biases in individuals' responses. Other informants or others sources of information should be also considered.

Third, while the size of the sample used in this study is adequate, most of the participants were well-educated women. Studies with a more heterogenous sample should be conducted. Finally, while we were able to explore the role of attachment and emotion goals on emotion regulation choice, the consequences of that choice were not considered in this study.

#### Ethics approval

Approval was obtained from the Ethics Committee of CIP-UAL from Universidade Autónoma de Lisboa. The procedures used in this study adhere to the tenets of the Declaration of Helsinki.

#### Consent

Informed consent was obtained from all individual participants included in the study.

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#### CRedit authorship contribution statement

TB: Conceptualization, Methodology, Formal analysis, Writing-Original draft preparation.

RB: Writing- Reviewing and Editing.

JH: Writing- Reviewing and Editing.

ON: Writing- Reviewing and Editing.

Declarations.

#### Declaration of competing interest

The authors declare they have no financial interests.

#### Data availability

Data is available under reasonable request by emailing the first author.

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