

## RESEARCH ARTICLE

# Managing your feelings at work, for a reason: The role of individual motives in affect regulation for performance-related outcomes at work

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**Summary**

Affect regulation matters in organizations, but research has predominantly focused on *how* employees regulate their feelings. Here, we investigate the motives for *why* employees regulate their feelings. We assess employees' engagement in affect regulation based on distinct motives and investigate their implications for performance-related outcomes. We develop a framework and measure for distinct types of motivated affect regulation at work, comprising *hedonic affect regulation* (motive to feel better), *task-related affect regulation* (motive to reach an achievement-related goal), and *social affect regulation* (motive to get along with others). Study 1 ( $N = 621$  employees) indicated each type of motivated affect regulation was distinct from the others. In Study 2 ( $N = 80$  employees;  $n = 821$  observations), in line with our theorizing, hedonic and task-related affect regulation were both positively associated with performance-related outcomes via perceived affect-regulation success. In addition, the link between task-related affect regulation and perceived affect-regulation success was strongest for those individuals who habitually engage in deep acting. By contrast, social affect regulation did not predict perceived affect-regulation success or performance-related outcomes. Understanding why employees choose to manage their feelings advances insights on individual motives in employee behavior and provides new avenues for improving performance outcomes in organizations.

**KEYWORDS**

affect regulation, diary study, motives in affect regulation, overall job performance, taking charge

## 1 | INTRODUCTION

Given the pervasiveness of affect in organizations (Barsade & Gibson, 2007; Brief & Weiss, 2002; Elfenbein, 2007), understanding how and why individuals manage their feelings in the workplace is important. In this context, affect regulation comprises the process by which individuals aim to change an existing feeling into a desired

feeling (Eisenberg et al., 2000; Gross, 1998).<sup>1</sup> A large body of evidence suggests the relevance of organizational expectations and norms for employees to mainly display positive affect at work (Brotheridge & Lee, 2003; Grandey & Melloy, 2017; Rafaeli & Sutton, 1987), and therefore employees' deliberate efforts to change and improve their affect (Côté, 2005; Grandey & Gabriel, 2015). In this context, research has focused on *how* employees regulate their

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affect. For example, deep acting encompasses employees' efforts to regulate their affect by genuinely experiencing organizationally required feelings (Grandey, 2003). Alternatively, affect regulation via surface acting occurs when employees fake required emotions (Grandey, 2003). Findings indicate these affect-regulation strategies can potentially impact relevant outcomes in organizations, including employee well-being, performance, and the quality of customer-service interactions (Grandey & Gabriel, 2015; Grandey & Melloy, 2017).

However, relatively little is known about the specific reasons *why* individuals engage in affect regulation at work. In this research, we seek to understand the performance-related implications of distinct motives that underpin employees' efforts to improve their feelings in the workplace. Our focus on motives in affect regulation aligns with studies that advocate the importance of employee goals in the context of affect regulation (Esmailikia & Groth, 2019; Grandey et al., 2013), as well as with wider research on how individual motives drive employee behavior in important ways (Barrick et al., 2013; Gagné & Deci, 2005).

Affect regulation is a form of self-regulation in which individuals put in effort to change their mental states or behaviors to achieve a desirable end (Carver & Scheier, 1998). Principles that are important for self-regulation also matter for affect regulation (Tamir, 2009). For instance, different situations activate different desirable ends, or superordinate goals, which in turn stimulate different motives in affect regulation. Although all affect regulation has the goal of changing the feelings one experiences (Gross, 1998), the broader motives that underpin individuals' efforts to change their affect may vary. In this context, research suggests a core underlying motive of individuals to engage in affect regulation is to "feel good" or to "avoid feeling bad" (Higgins, 1997; Parkinson & Totterdell, 1999), resulting in hedonic affect-regulation efforts that are aimed at experiencing pleasant feelings (Augustine et al., 2010; Larsen, 2000a). However, individuals are also motivated to maximize the utility of their feelings, through experiencing affect that helps them achieve a particular goal (Bonanno, 2001; Parrott, 1993). In this context, Tamir (2009) proposes that individuals, in addition to having a *hedonic* motive of affect regulation, may also have *instrumental* reasons for regulating their affect and thus may focus on experiencing useful feelings.<sup>2</sup>

In our research, we similarly distinguish hedonic from instrumental motives in affect regulation in the workplace. Further, with respect to instrumental motives in affect regulation, we draw on a key distinction within the organizational literature—individuals' desire to produce task-related (or achievement) outcomes, as opposed to their desire for social (or belonging-oriented) outcomes. These contrasting instrumental motives are rooted in individuals' core needs and have been shown to drive behavior across a wide range of work contexts (Barrick et al., 2013; Gagné & Deci, 2005). The fundamental separation between task and "social" is also salient within literatures such as leadership (task vs. social leadership roles; Judge et al., 2004), teams (task vs. social team member roles; Stewart et al., 2005), conflict (task vs. relational conflict; de Wit et al., 2012), and work design (task vs. social work characteristics; Barrick et al., 2013; Grant &

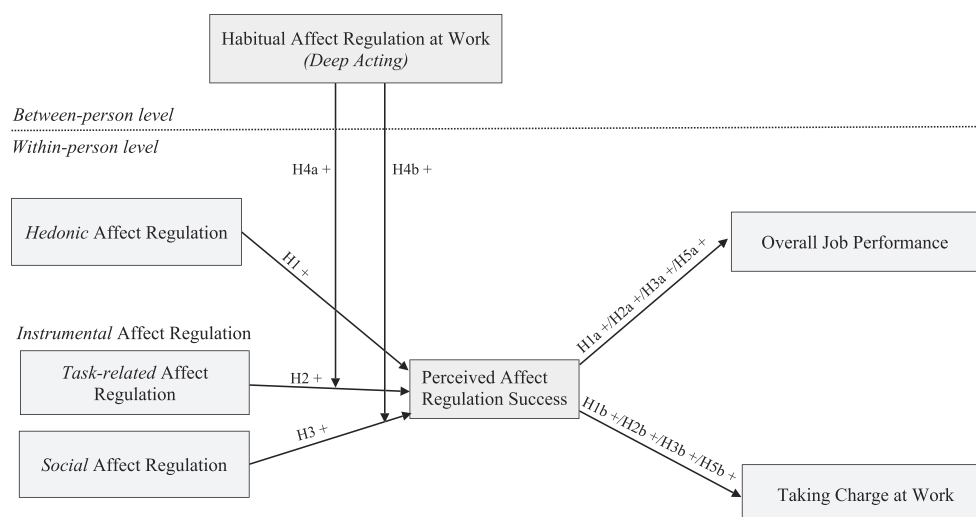
Parker, 2009). We propose that the task-related motive in affect regulation is characterized by employees' desire to manage their feelings to complete their individual work tasks well, for instance, when trying to feel more optimistic about a task that might seem overwhelming. When driven by a social motive, affect regulation is characterized by the inclination to improve feelings so as to maintain or improve social relationships. For example, by trying to be in a better mood when interacting with colleagues, an individual is recognizing the importance of having positive work relationships. Thus, our first research aim is to assess whether the distinct reasons to regulate one's affect (hedonic, task related, and social), which form this proposed framework of motivated affect regulation in the workplace, are indeed distinguishable from one another.

We also investigate how affect-regulation efforts based on these core motives in the workplace shape two key performance outcomes relevant to organizations (see Figure 1 for our full research model). First, we consider the impact of motivated affect regulation on an individual's overall job performance, an employee behavior that is relevant to the accomplishment of organizational goals (Campbell & Wiernik, 2015; Dalal et al., 2020). Overall job performance has predominantly been viewed as incorporating aspects of task performance (complying with core task requirements; Motowidlo, 2003) and organizational citizenship (contributing to the goals of the organization by adding to its social and psychological environment; Rotundo & Sackett, 2002). Evidence suggests employees' efforts to regulate their affect can improve their overall job performance (Grandey & Melloy, 2017), although this research has not considered the individual motives for such affect regulation in the workplace.

Second, we assess the role of different types of motivated affect regulation on proactive performance. The latter construct is considered through the lens of taking charge at work (Morrison & Phelps, 1999), a key indicator of employees' proactive engagement in future-focused and change-oriented behaviors (Parker et al., 2010). Proactivity, although recognized as an important dimension of performance, has not been traditionally incorporated in overall performance frameworks (Dalal et al., 2020). Given the increased unpredictability in work contexts, employees are more frequently being required to self-initiate improvements and actively drive change (Frese & Fay, 2001; Griffin et al., 2007), especially when managers cannot pre-specify how employees should comply (Grant & Ashford, 2008). Because motive-driven affect regulation emphasizes employees' agency at work, we expect motivated affect regulation to shape this active type of performance. Moreover, a considerable body of research has identified the importance of positive affect in driving proactivity (Bindl et al., 2012; Sonnentag & Starzyk, 2015). Therefore, we expect motivated affect regulation to also be important in driving employees to take charge at work.

Further, we investigate the processes and mechanisms through which motivated affect regulation shapes performance-related outcomes. Based on our overarching theorizing of affect regulation as goal-driven action (Carver & Scheier, 1998; Tamir, 2009), we propose employees will seek to achieve specific goals by improving their feelings. Evidence suggests not all affect-regulation efforts at work are

**FIGURE 1** Theorized model: within-person engagement in types of motivated affect regulation (hedonic, task-related, and social) as predictors of overall job performance and taking charge at work (via perceived affect-regulation success), moderated by deep acting. *Note:* Only hypothesized paths are depicted in this figure



effective (Diefendorff & Gosserand, 2003; Grandey & Gabriel, 2015; Grandey & Melloy, 2017). Therefore, we investigate perceived affect-regulation success (Bigman et al., 2016; Gross & John, 2003) as a key goal-related mechanism in explaining the link between motivated-affect-regulation efforts and different performance outcomes at work. In particular, we expect that a greater intensity of individuals' motivated engagement to improve their affect will result in greater perceived success of such affect-regulation efforts. The reason is that motives positively influence both goal commitment (Nenkov & Gollwitzer, 2012) and the persistence and effort directed toward affect-regulation-related actions (Campbell & Pritchard, 1976; Gollwitzer et al., 2012). We also theorize that instrumental affect regulation at work will be most successful when individuals habitually engage in deep acting, because deep acting is aimed at conforming with organizational requirements on how to experience and express one's feelings to complete one's job (Grandey & Gabriel, 2015). In this context, we propose that individuals with deep-acting experience will more easily translate their own goals to improve their feelings for task-related or social reasons into successful affect-regulation outcomes at work (Gollwitzer et al., 2012; Wood & R nger, 2016).

Our research therefore makes the following contributions. First, from the perspective of organizational research, it advances insights into the distinct motives underlying and shaping behavior in organizations. Our focus here aligns with previous research advocating the vital role that employees' goals play in prompting affect regulation (Esmailikia & Groth, 2019; Grandey et al., 2013). In presenting a motivational account of affect regulation in the workplace, we particularly aim to move beyond the predominant focus on "how" employees seek to experience and express organizationally desired feelings (Grandey & Melloy, 2017; Rafaeli & Sutton, 1987) to examining "why" individuals engage in affect regulation at work. Our contribution also includes the development of a novel measure of motivated affect regulation at work that can be used as a basis for future organizational research.

Second, our research investigates the key processes and boundary conditions that shape the performance-related outcomes of

motivated affect regulation at work. We propose that perceived affect-regulation success, defined as employees' judgment that they have reached their underlying goals in affect regulation (Gross & John, 2003), can explain the link between their engagement in motivated affect regulation and their performance. In addition, deep acting (Grandey, 2003) will help translate instrumental-affect-regulation motives into successful affect-regulation outcomes, which can be more challenging to achieve than affect regulation driven by hedonic motives (Higgins, 1997; Larsen, 2000a). Our enhanced focus here is important because organizational research has yet to establish insights into the "black box" of psychological mechanisms (Grandey & Gabriel, 2015) and goal-related processes (Diefendorff & Gosserand, 2003) behind affect regulation and core outcomes at work.

Finally, our research also advances a better understanding of the antecedents of both overall job performance (Dalal et al., 2020) and of taking charge at work (and thus proactive performance; Grant & Ashford, 2008; Morrison & Phelps, 1999). Although affect regulation at work has been linked to overall job performance (Grandey & Melloy, 2017), our framework examines whether and how specific types of motivated affect regulation uniquely predict such performance. We also offer insights on proactivity at work, which has remained an under-researched outcome in the affect-regulation literature (Grandey & Gabriel, 2015). The existing proactivity literature is primarily focused on situational factors (Wu & Wang, 2015) or stable personality traits (Bateman & Crant, 1993) as predictors of proactivity. By contrast, our research sets out to advance insights on the role of employees' motivated management of their feelings in increasing proactivity at work.

## 2 | A FRAMEWORK OF MOTIVATED AFFECT REGULATION AT WORK

We base our framework of motivated affect regulation at work on earlier theorizing about the role of motives in affect regulation.

Motives in affect regulation have been defined as “broad classes of desired outcomes ... that are not necessarily emotional themselves, whose attainment can be promoted by ... [affect] goals” (Tamir, 2016, p. 200). Thus, individuals strive to experience particular affective states to satisfy their superordinate motives in the situation (Elliot & Niesta, 2009; Gollwitzer et al., 2012). We focus especially on improvement-oriented affect regulation whereby individuals seek positive-affect states at work, such as trying to feel more excited, enthusiastic, content, or relaxed (Russell, 2003). Although affect regulation could also include attempts to worsen one's own feelings (Côté et al., 2013), a large body of evidence suggests individuals predominantly seek to increase positive feelings and decrease unpleasant ones (Gross et al., 2006; Larsen, 2000a). Our focus on improvement-oriented affect regulation also corresponds to the predominant expectations for organizational members to display and experience positive affect (Brotheridge & Lee, 2003; Grandey & Melloy, 2017). Such expectations may set the frame for individuals' motivated affect regulation in organizational contexts. We next discuss each of the core underlying motives for improving one's affect at work.

## 2.1 | Hedonic affect regulation at work

A large body of evidence in psychology indicates individuals tend to prefer pleasure to pain (Higgins, 1997; Larsen, 2000a). In this context, affect-regulation research shows individuals typically perceive pleasant feelings as more desirable (Gross et al., 2006). For instance, Larsen and Prizmic (2004, p. 41) suggest one of the overarching purposes of affect regulation is “to maintain a global sense of subjective well-being.” In turn, individuals often choose to actively manage the way they feel, in order to experience more pleasurable, or less unpleasant, affective experiences (Gross, 1998; Parkinson & Totterdell, 1999). In this context, findings by Augustine et al. (2010, p. 142) suggest the goal of such affect improvement, described as simply wishing to “feel good,” accounts for about half of the instances of individuals' overall engagement in affect regulation. Building on this research, we define hedonic affect regulation at work as affect regulation driven by an employee's desire to feel good. An example of this motive is evident when employees engage in efforts to cheer themselves up at work “simply to put themselves in a better mood.”

## 2.2 | Instrumental affect regulation at work

Beyond hedonic affect regulation, individuals may choose to improve their feelings for instrumental reasons, because positive feelings are perceived as being useful in achieving particular goals (Augustine et al., 2010; Bonanno, 2001; Parrott, 1993). In contrast to hedonic motives in affect regulation that are satisfied once the desired positive affect is experienced, instrumental-affect-regulation motives are satisfied once the desired outcome of positive affect has occurred (Tamir, 2009, 2016). In the work context, motivational theories and empirical evidence from across organizational literatures point toward

employees being motivated to achieve task-related and social outcomes that drive their behavior in meaningful ways (Barrick et al., 2013; Gagné & Deci, 2005). For example, research on work teams suggests a distinction between task-related and social patterns of behaviors toward team members as the two core underlying motives in work behavior, both of which are relevant to the overall performance of the team (Stewart et al., 2005). Similarly, leadership research highlights the core distinction between task and social behaviors toward subordinates in enhancing the overall effectiveness of leaders (Judge et al., 2004). With a focus on capturing key instrumental motivations for affect regulation in the workplace, we therefore propose a core distinction between task-related and social-affect-regulation motives that reflect distinct reasons why employees may seek to improve their feelings.

### 2.2.1 | Task-related affect-regulation motive

First, we propose individuals may choose to manage their feelings to achieve better task-related outcomes at work. Individuals have a basic desire to experience competence—either through mastering core tasks or engaging in optimally challenging tasks (Barrick et al., 2013; Gagné & Deci, 2005). In this context, the goal guiding their affect-regulation efforts is to shift to a more positive affective experience to help them achieve their tasks (Gohm, 2003; Tamir et al., 2007). Similarly, because individuals are often judged based on their competence in achieving desirable outcomes (Fiske et al., 2007), they may be motivated to be seen as competent in achieving higher performance outcomes. Indeed, evidence suggests individuals understand what type of feeling will positively affect their performance at a given task and may aim to manage their feelings accordingly (Gohm, 2003; Tamir et al., 2007). As such, we define task-related affect regulation at work as aiming to change one's feelings to improve achievement-related outcomes. For instance, a marketing expert might aim to put themselves in a more upbeat mood before starting work on an advertising campaign.

### 2.2.2 | Social-affect-regulation motive

Second, we identify social affect regulation at work driven by social motives as being characterized by employees' desire to improve their feelings to improve or maintain their interpersonal relationships with others at work. Individuals strive to connect to (Baumeister & Leary, 1995) and experience belongingness with others (Gagné & Deci, 2005). To get along, individuals are motivated to cooperate with others in a friendly and positive way (Barrick et al., 2013; Den Hartog et al., 2007; Fiske et al., 2007). In this context, evidence suggests a social motive in affect regulation in individuals' lives (Erber & Erber, 2000; Goldenberg et al., 2016). For instance, research indicates individuals are motivated to experience positive emotions that they feel will yield desirable relationships (Fischer et al., 2004; Keltner & Haidt, 1999; Niedenthal & Brauer, 2012), and for socially motivated

reasons, individuals will actively pursue the goal to improve their feelings (Erber & Erber, 2000; Goldenberg et al., 2016). Thus, we identify social affect regulation as affect regulation aimed at facilitating social functioning at work. Such affect regulation is evident, for instance, when employees try to cheer themselves up before interacting with others to help maintain or improve relations with these individuals.

Beyond our current theorizing, various theories propose additional motives for affect regulation, such as striving for status (Foult et al., 2019) or for autonomy (Deci & Ryan, 2000). Such motives might plausibly drive affect regulation in specific situations. However, as discussed above, task-related and social motives at work are consistently relevant across a wide range of motivational theories (e.g., Barrick et al., 2013) and empirical evidence (de Wit et al., 2012; Judge et al., 2004; Stewart et al., 2005). In this research, we investigate whether core motives of affect regulation, hedonic and instrumental (task-related vs. social), can be meaningfully distinguished in a work context:

**Research Question:** Can three types of motivated affect regulation at work—hedonic, task-related, and social—be clearly differentiated?

### 3 | IMPLICATIONS OF MOTIVATED AFFECT REGULATION FOR PERFORMANCE OUTCOMES

We now outline our research model (see Figure 1) for how and when employees' engagement in motivated affect regulation relates to positive, performance-related outcomes. We adopt a within-person approach consistent with theorizing that individuals' engagement in affect regulation is driven by distinct motives on a given occasion (Augustine et al., 2010; Koole, 2009; Tamir, 2009, 2016). That is, although employees may differ in their general tendency to have a particular affect-regulation motive at work, different motives may be most salient in driving behavior at different times (e.g., Wolfe et al., 1986). Similarly, evidence suggests the relevance of within-person variability in performance-related outcomes at work (e.g., McCormick et al., 2020). In turn, in the next section, we introduce our theorizing on the process of how within-person changes in hedonic, task-related, and social affect regulation will be associated with key performance-related outcomes on a given occasion.

#### 3.1 | Perceived affect-regulation success as a mediator in the motivated-affect-regulation-performance link

Based on overall theorizing of affect regulation as goal-driven action (Carver & Scheier, 1998; Tamir, 2009, 2016), we conceptualize motivated affect regulation as including employees' deliberate efforts to achieve specific goals, including for hedonic, task-related, or social reasons, by improving their feelings (de Wit et al., 2012; Judge

et al., 2004; Stewart et al., 2005; Tamir, 2009). Not all affect-regulation efforts in the workplace are effective (Grandey & Gabriel, 2015; Grandey & Melloy, 2017). For this reason, considering the underlying processes of affect regulation in the workplace is important (Grandey & Gabriel, 2015), including when changes from a current to a desired feeling are indeed successful (Diefendorff & Gosserand, 2003). We therefore consider the extent to which individuals perceive they have successfully met their affect-regulation goals, that is, perceived affect-regulation success (Bigman et al., 2016; Gross, 2013; Gross & John, 2003). As we discuss next, we propose that perceived affect-regulation success constitutes a key, goal-regulatory mechanism between motivated-affect-regulation efforts and relevant performance outcomes.

##### 3.1.1 | Hedonic-affect-regulation and performance-related outcomes, mediated by perceived affect-regulation success

The underlying motive driving hedonic affect regulation is to feel good (Higgins, 1997; Larsen, 2000a). Thus, employees will perceive affect-regulation success if their efforts to improve their positive affect at work are indeed fruitful. In particular, we expect greater intensity of individuals' hedonic affect regulation to improve their affect at work to positively influence both goal commitment (Nenkov & Gollwitzer, 2012) and the persistence and effort directed toward affect-regulation-related actions (Gollwitzer et al., 2012), thus resulting in greater perceived affect-regulation success. Our theorizing is supported by initial research suggesting perceived affect-regulation success explains the link between individuals' engagement in affect regulation aimed at improving their positive affect and outcomes of affect regulation such as (improved) affective states and well-being (Gross & John, 2003).

Following on from this, we propose that perceived affect regulation success, achieved through engaging in hedonic affect regulation, will be positively associated with performance at work. A large body of organizational research indicates the importance of positive affect in improving overall job performance (Barsade & Gibson, 2007; Brief & Weiss, 2002). This is because positive affect fosters a more positive outlook and promotes one's overall efforts at work (Seo et al., 2004). In addition, research has proposed that positive mood plays a key role in “energizing” employees to take charge and seek to implement improvements at work (Parker et al., 2010). Theoretically speaking, positive mood helps create the energy resources needed to generate better ideas for change, foster perseverance, and sustain the pursuit of proactive action (Clore, 1994; Ilies & Judge, 2005). In line with our arguments, past studies indicate that positive affect, such as feelings of enthusiasm, predicts greater proactivity at work (Bindl et al., 2012; Sonnentag & Starzyk, 2015). In sum, the more intensely employees seek to improve their affect for hedonic reasons, the greater their affect-regulation success is likely to be, in turn positively influencing performance-related outcomes. Thus, we propose:



**Hypothesis 1a.** Hedonic affect regulation is positively associated with overall job performance, via increased perceived affect-regulation success.

**Hypothesis 1b.** Hedonic affect regulation is positively associated with taking charge at work, via increased perceived affect-regulation success.

### 3.1.2 | Instrumental affect-regulation and performance-related outcomes, mediated by perceived affect-regulation success

Employees may choose to improve their feelings in the workplace because they know positive feelings will be useful to achieve particular goals (Elfenbein, 2007; Tamir, 2009, 2016). Instrumental affect regulation thus involves a superordinate goal at work that drives employees to change and improve their affect. Because motivated affect regulation should drive individuals' efforts toward experiencing positive affect that is adaptive for a desired purpose (Frijda, 1988; Levenson, 1999; Scherer, 1984), we expect such affect regulation to improve affect-regulation success, and, in turn, positive performance-related outcomes.

Specifically, we propose task-related affect regulation, which is driven by an achievement-oriented motive (Barrick et al., 2013; Gagné & Deci, 2005), will predict overall job performance, as well as taking charge, because it entails improving one's affect in functional ways with a desire to achieve more positive performance-related outcomes at work. In line with our argument, initial evidence suggests individuals regulate their affect to positively influence their performance at a given task (Gohm, 2003; Tamir et al., 2007). Additionally, achievement-oriented motives at work have been linked to higher effort and, in turn, to a range of positive performance-related outcomes in the workplace (Lang et al., 2012). Particularly, task-related affect regulation should positively predict individuals' perceived affect-regulation success—and, in turn, performance-related outcomes (overall job performance and taking charge)—because of the functional role of positive (rather than negative) affect (Frijda, 1988; Levenson, 1999) in driving efforts to increase overall job performance (Barsade & Gibson, 2007; Brief & Weiss, 2002) as well as taking charge at work (Bindl et al., 2012; Sonnentag & Starzyk, 2015). Thus, we hypothesize the following:

**Hypothesis 2a.** Task-related affect regulation is positively associated with overall job performance, via increased perceived affect-regulation success.

**Hypothesis 2b.** Task-related affect regulation is positively associated with taking charge at work, via increased perceived affect-regulation success.

In addition, we expect instrumental affect regulation driven by social motives, capturing one's desire to improve their feelings with a

view to improving or maintaining their relationships with others, to positively influence overall job performance and taking charge at work. Individuals will aim to improve their feelings to enhance their social functioning (Erber & Erber, 2000; Fischer et al., 2004; Niedenthal & Brauer, 2012). In this context, getting along well with others is seen as a key component of overall job performance (e.g., Ashford & Black, 1996). Similarly, employees' relationships with managers and coworkers will impact their success in taking charge of and implementing new processes and ideas at work (Bindl, 2019; Vough et al., 2017). In this context, we expect employees' efforts to improve their positive affect, due to social motives in the workplace to enhance affect-regulation success, as well as overall job performance and taking charge at work. Thus,

**Hypothesis 3a.** Social-affect regulation is positively associated with overall job performance, via increased perceived affect-regulation success.

**Hypothesis 3b.** Social affect regulation is positively associated with taking charge at work, via increased perceived affect-regulation success.

### 3.2 | Deep acting as a moderator in the link between instrumental affect regulation with perceived affect-regulation success

Thus far, we have hypothesized that individuals engaging in instrumental types of affect regulation perform better because they are successful in improving their affect. Here, we go further to propose some individuals are more effective at achieving instrumental-affect-regulation success than others. Specifically, we identify the moderating role of deep acting as a core strategy of affect regulation, or the “how” of affect regulation at work (Diefendorff & Gosserand, 2003; Grandey, 2000).<sup>3</sup> Deep acting encompasses employees' efforts to regulate their affect by seeking to genuinely experience and express organizationally desirable feelings that are required to achieve positive outcomes in their job (Grandey, 2003). For instance, employees engage in deep acting by attempting to experience more positive feelings in interactions with their customers (Esmaeilikia & Groth, 2019).

We expect individuals who habitually engage in deep acting in their work to be more effective at changing their affect for instrumental (task-related or social) reasons. First, employees who habitually engage in deep acting are used to regulating their feelings in accordance with organizational requirements of how to experience and express one's affect to achieve work outcomes (Grandey, 2003), conforming with normative expectations with regard to affect at work (Brotheridge & Lee, 2003; Grandey & Melloy, 2017). Therefore, individuals who are more experienced deep actors likely better understand how to regulate their affect in ways that are functional and adaptive for the desired purpose of achieving instrumental outcomes at work, such as helping to improve achievement-related outcomes or facilitating social functioning at work (Frijda, 1988; Levenson, 1999;

Scherer, 1984). Habitual action also requires less self-regulatory effort (Wood & R nger, 2016). Habitual deep actors will therefore benefit from being less cognitively distracted and depleted when regulating their affect to achieve instrumental goals (Gollwitzer et al., 2012; Tamir, 2016), making perceived affect-regulation success and thus positive performance outcomes more likely. Our hypotheses therefore are:

**Hypothesis 4a.** The positive relationship between task-related affect regulation and perceived affect-regulation success on a given occasion is moderated by habitual deep acting, such that the relationship is stronger when deep acting is high.

**Hypothesis 4b.** The positive relationship between social affect regulation and perceived affect-regulation success on a given occasion is moderated by habitual deep acting, such that the relationship is stronger when deep acting is high.

**Hypothesis 5a.** The indirect effect of instrumental affect regulation on overall job performance via perceived affect-regulation success is stronger when deep acting is high.

**Hypothesis 5b.** The indirect effect of instrumental affect regulation on taking charge at work via perceived affect-regulation success is stronger when deep acting is high.

By contrast, we do not expect the success of hedonic affect regulation to be contingent on individuals' use of deep acting. The reason is that the underlying goal of hedonic affect regulation is simpler than that of instrumental affect regulation and thus requires less self-regulatory efforts. In this context, the aim of hedonic affect regulation (i.e., to feel happy) is to achieve improved affect for its own sake (Gross et al., 2006; Higgins, 1997) and not to use affect regulation in the service of more complex, superordinate goals in the workplace (Grandey et al., 2013; Rafaeli & Sutton, 1987). Research also suggests individuals will frequently engage in such hedonic affect regulation from an early age (Augustine et al., 2010; Larsen, 2000a). Hedonic affect regulation thus forms a common type of affect regulation that individuals more easily engage in (Buss, 2000; Larsen, 2000b). Therefore, we expect hedonic affect regulation to have an overall positive association with perceived affect regulation success, independent of whether individuals are habitually engaging in deep acting at work.<sup>4</sup>

## 4 | STUDY 1: MEASUREMENT DEVELOPMENT

Because no existing measures capture employees' engagement in affect regulation based on distinct motives, we developed a new

measure of motivated affect regulation in the workplace. Following Hinkin's (1998) recommendations for scale development, we first developed 12 items each for hedonic, task-related, and social affect regulation, with item content based on the theoretical conceptualization of the distinct motives in affect regulation described earlier. We presented these items to five colleagues and students in the field and asked them to assign each item to one of the three different categories based on the definitions of the constructs and to provide feedback on the items. We used this initial expert feedback and classification to further refine our items and selected the eight most highly rated items for each type of motivated affect regulation for the next stage of scale development.<sup>5</sup>

We then conducted exploratory factor analyses (EFA) to investigate whether different types of motivated affect regulation meaningfully factored out into clearly interpretable subscales, and to inform further reduction in the number of items to improve parsimony and minimize participant fatigue (Hinkin, 1998). Second, we conducted confirmatory factor analyses (CFA) for the final set of items identified from the EFA, on a different subsample. We did so to validate the measurement model derived from the EFA (Hinkin, 1998) and to further investigate our research question of whether these affect-regulation motives could indeed be meaningfully differentiated from one another as well as from established affect-regulation strategies that reflect how, rather than why, employees engage in affect regulation.

### 4.1 | Sample

We invited US-based employees across a wide range of professions to take part in a survey, with the help of online panel provider *Studyresponse* ([www.studyresponse.net](http://www.studyresponse.net)). Participants received a US\$7 voucher for an online bookstore. We invited 900 employees to complete a survey that collected data on their demographic and work-related backgrounds, their engagement in motivated affect regulation, and their affect-regulation strategies used at work. Six hundred sixty individuals took part in the survey (73.3%), and after we removed 39 incomplete or invalid responses, the final sample consisted of  $N = 621$  employees. Of this final sample, 52.8% of participants were female, and the mean age was 40.9 years ( $SD = 10.71$ ). Most participants (90.5%) were employed full time, and average hours worked in a typical week were 39.7 ( $SD = 8.78$ ). Average job tenure was 7.8 years ( $SD = 6.84$ ). For measurement-development purposes, we randomly split the dataset into halves to conduct an EFA on one half of the sample ( $N = 304$ ) and a CFA on the other half of the sample ( $N = 317$ ), hence minimizing the risk of over-fitting (Fokkema & Greiff, 2017). For the EFA sample, 52.6% were female, mean age was 41.6 years ( $SD = 11.01$ ), 93.1% were employed full time, weekly hours worked were 40.5 ( $SD = 7.87$ ), and average tenure was 8.1 years ( $SD = 6.81$ ). For the CFA sample, 53.0% were female, mean age was 40.3 years ( $SD = 10.37$ ), 88.6% were employed full time, weekly hours worked were 38.8 ( $SD = 9.51$ ), and average tenure was 7.4 years ( $SD = 6.85$ ).

## 4.2 | Measures

### 4.2.1 | Motivated affect regulation at work

In line with our theorizing, we asked participants to what extent they tried to improve their feelings for hedonic or instrumental (task-related vs. social) reasons (1 = *not at all*, 5 = *a great deal*). Sample items were “At work, I try to improve my feelings ...” “because I like to feel good” (*hedonic affect regulation*,  $\alpha = .95$ ), “to perform well at work” (*task-related affect regulation*,  $\alpha = .92$ ), and “to be accepted by others at work” (*social affect regulation*,  $\alpha = .91$ ). See Table 1 for all final items.

### 4.2.2 | Affect-regulation strategies at work

We used the established, eight-item emotional labor measure, including both *Deep* and *Surface Acting* by Grandey (2003). Respondents were asked to indicate to what extent they engaged in certain behaviors at work (1 = *not at all*, 5 = *a great deal*). Sample items were “I try to actually experience the emotions that I must show” (*deep acting*,  $\alpha = .91$ ) and “I fake a good mood” (*surface acting*,  $\alpha = .93$ ).

Table 2 provides an overview of the descriptives and zero-order correlations of all variables.

## 4.3 | Exploratory factor analyses

We investigated whether our items assessing motivated affect regulation measured multiple distinct factors, and if so, which constructs those factors represented. We performed EFA on the initial 24 affect-regulation-items measure using the first split-sample subset of our dataset ( $n = 304$ ). We applied principal axis factoring as the extraction method and used a scree plot to determine how many factors should

be retained. Additionally, an oblique (oblimin) rotation of the item-factor loading aided interpretation of the retained factors. An initial three-factor solution, with eight items loading on each factor, resulted in the cleanest factor structure (Osborne & Costello, 2009). Loadings suggested the factors corresponded to hedonic, task-related, and social motivated affect regulation, providing a first answer to our research question by demonstrating the meaningful distinction between these three types of motivated affect regulation. However, to enhance parsimony of the scale, and to help reduce future participant fatigue in responding to all items (Hinkin, 1998), we reduced each of the three initial sets of eight items to shorter subscales by inspecting factor loadings, communalities, and item intercorrelations, removing cross-loading and lower-loading items. This approach resulted in three-item scales for each type of motivated affect regulation (see Table 1). This shortened nine-item measure yielded 88.3% of the total item variance explained, versus 79.8% of the explained variance in the initial 24-item measure, indicating an improvement in the final nine-item measure.

## 4.4 | Confirmatory factor analyses

Using the second subset of our split-half sample ( $n = 317$ ), we applied CFA (Mplus version 8, Muthén & Muthén, 1998–2019) to test the fit of the measurement model that had emerged from the EFA (Hinkin, 1998) and to test the meaningful distinction between different types of motivated affect regulation. In our hypothesized measurement model, we included our nine-item measure of different types of motivated affect regulation (hedonic, task-related, and social) as well as two established affect-regulation measures (deep and surface acting). In this five-factor model, items only loaded upon their respective factor, factors were allowed to correlate, and item residual variances were considered independent.

To assess the goodness of fit in our models, we used cut-off criteria by Schermelleh-Engel et al. (2003), who recommend a chi-square ratio (i.e., chi-square divided by degrees of freedom) of 3 or less is used as a guideline for accepting a model, as well as a standardized root-mean-square residual (SRMR) value of less than .10, a root-mean-square error of approximation (RMSEA) value of less than .08, and a comparative fit index (CFI) of .95 or greater (other authors, e.g., Hu & Bentler, 1999, propose similar cut-off values).

The hypothesized five-factor measurement model provided an excellent fit to the data:  $\chi^2 = 213.53$ ,  $df = 109$ ,  $CFI = .98$ ,  $RMSEA = .06$ , and  $SRMR = .03$ . In addition, for each factor, the AVE score was greater than 0.5, supporting internal convergent validity, and exceeded all squared correlations between that factor and any others, thus supporting discriminant validity (Fornell & Larcker, 1981).<sup>6</sup> We also tested the superiority of this model over other plausible models (see Table 3). The five-factor model had a significantly better fit than any of the three competing models: a four-factor model (subsuming task-related and social affect regulation into one “instrumental affect regulation” factor, as well as hedonic affect regulation and deep and surface acting;  $\chi^2 = 407.92$ ,  $df = 113$ ,

**TABLE 1** Study 1: Principal axis factor analysis (Oblimin rotation)

Items	Factor loadings		
	1	2	3
At work, I try to improve my feelings ...			
... Because I like to feel good.	<b>.88</b>	.02	.08
... Because I enjoy feeling good.	<b>.99</b>	.04	.00
... Because I like to be happy.	<b>.87</b>	−.10	−.04
... To reach specific work outcomes.	.06	<b>−.83</b>	.01
... To reach my goals at work.	−.09	<b>−.99</b>	.02
... To perform well at work.	.13	<b>−.75</b>	.01
... To be accepted by others at work.	.01	.06	<b>.89</b>
... To get along with others at work.	.04	−.06	<b>.81</b>
... To be appreciated by others at work.	−.03	−.04	<b>.92</b>

Note: Bold font depicts hypothesized factor loadings.  $N = 304$ .

F1 = Hedonic Affect Regulation, F2 = Task-Related Affect Regulation, F3 = Social Affect Regulation.



**TABLE 2** Study 1: Means, standard deviations and correlations of study variables

Variables	Mean	SD	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.	7.
1. Gender (0 = female, 1 = male)	.47	0.49	—						
2. Age (years)	40.89	10.71	-.09*	—					
3. Affect regulation strategies – Deep acting	2.80	1.12	.07	-.15**	.91				
4. Affect regulation strategies – Surface acting	2.35	1.07	.08*	-.23**	.49**	.93			
5. Task-related affect regulation	3.37	1.02	.03	.01	.38**	.06	.92		
6. Social affect regulation	3.21	1.06	.03	-.04	.39**	.18**	.71**	.91	
7. Hedonic affect regulation	3.60	1.01	-.03	-.02	.39**	.02	.73**	.68**	.95

Note:  $N = 615$ – $619$ . Demographics (gender and age) added for additional information. Internal consistency values (Cronbach's alphas) appear across the diagonal in italics.

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

**TABLE 3** Study 1: Comparison of alternative factor structures for types of motivated affect regulation

Model	Descriptives	$\chi^2$	df	Ratio $\chi^2/df$	$\Delta\chi^2$	$\Delta df$	CFI	RMSEA	SRMR
Model 1	Theorized model. Five factors: Distinct types of motivated affect regulation, as theorized (hedonic, task-related, and social, respectively), deep acting, surface acting	213.53	109	1.96	—	—	.98	.06	.03
Model 2	Four factors: Hedonic affect regulation, instrumental affect regulation (task-related and social combined), deep acting, surface acting	407.92	113	3.61	194.39*	4	.94	.09	.04
Model 3	Three factors: Motivated affect regulation (hedonic, task-related, and social combined), deep acting, surface acting	771.91	116	6.65	558.38*	7	.86	.13	.06
Model 4	One factor: All measures combined (three types of motivated affect regulation and two affect regulation strategies combined)	2530.18	119	21.26	2316.66*	10	.49	.25	.21

Note.  $N = 317$ .

\*Change in model fit of theorized Model 1 versus alternative model significant at  $p < .05$  level.

CFI = .94, RMSEA = .09, and SRMR = .04;  $\Delta\chi^2 = 194.39$ ,  $\Delta df = 4$ ,  $p < .001$ ), a three-factor model (the three types of motivated affect regulation subsumed to one factor, as well as deep and surface acting;  $\chi^2 = 771.91$ ,  $df = 116$ , CFI = .86, RMSEA = .13, and SRMR = .06;  $\Delta\chi^2 = 558.38$ ,  $\Delta df = 7$ ,  $p < .001$ ), and a one-factor model (with all five measures combined;  $\chi^2 = 2530.19$ ,  $df = 119$ , CFI = .49, RMSEA = .25, and SRMR = .21;  $\Delta\chi^2 = 2316.66$ ,  $\Delta df = 10$ ,  $p < .001$ ). Overall, results from this CFA supported the results from the EFA, indicating a meaningful differentiation of types of motivated affect regulation, as well as a differentiation of these from core affect-regulation strategies at work.<sup>7</sup>

## 5 | STUDY 2: MAIN STUDY

In Study 2, we tested our overarching model (see Figure 1). Because we focused on how employees engage in different types of motivated affect regulation at work (hedonic, task-related, and social)—with implications for performance-related outcomes—on different occasions at work, we used an experience-sampling design to investigate our model.

### 5.1 | Sample and procedure

Participants were 96 employed professionals from a broad range of jobs and industries who were enrolled in a part-time executive MBA course and took part in this study in the context of completing a professional development module at a large research university in Western Australia. Executive MBA students took the course split into six smaller cohorts, starting a few weeks apart from one another. At the start of the course, participants completed an online baseline survey that captured demographic characteristics, an assessment of their work environment, and typical work behaviors. One to 3 weeks later, we conducted the focal diary study, in which we assessed the within-person measures of our model. We instructed participants to complete entries twice a day, from Monday to Friday, over two work-weeks. The first of the daily surveys was completed at lunch time and collected participants' experiences at work that morning; the second was completed just before leaving work and assessed their experiences at work that afternoon.

We collected experience-sampling data via a smartphone application that was able to record and store survey entries offline (iSURVEY). We provided employees with training on how to use the

application and asked them to set a personalized alarm clock to remind them to access the application each day at the correct times. For those participants who did not own a suitable smartphone, we provided digital handheld devices that enabled them to complete the surveys and to set individualized alarms for survey completion. We also sent email reminders to all participants at the beginning of each workweek to complete the surveys and to reach out to the research team for any questions. At the beginning of the diary study, we also asked participants to complete a timetable of their expected working times for the next 2 weeks and to inform us about any changes to those times during the study. Based on this information, we checked that morning and afternoon responses for all participants were completed during valid times in the context of their work schedule, and we contacted participants to investigate any major deviations from the schedule in data-collection timings, after the completion of the study.

All 96 participants completed the baseline survey, with 81 (84.4%) taking part in the diary study. These diary participants collectively completed a total of 476 morning surveys and 447 afternoon surveys, giving a total of 923 observations. Because our participants were invited to complete two daily surveys across two workweeks, a perfect response rate would have amounted to 1620 observations. However, some participants had planned vacation days during the study (a total of 15 days, i.e., 30 observations). In addition, part-time employees indicated not working for a total 17 days (34 observations). Finally, three public holidays affected three of our cohorts, resulting in another 45 non-workdays (90 observations). In sum, the maximum number of responses participants could have provided while working during our study was 1466; hence, our 923 observations correspond to an overall response rate of 63.0%. Excluding surveys that were completed at the wrong times (e.g., morning surveys not completed in the morning, afternoon surveys not completed in the afternoon) resulted in the removal of 102 observations and one further participant, resulting in a final sample of 821 valid observations from 80 participants. Of these 80 participants, 63.7% were male, and their mean age was 34.1 years ( $SD = 6.89$ ). Most participants (90%) were employed full time, and their average hours worked per week were 43.2 ( $SD = 8.24$ ). Average organizational tenure was 4.6 years ( $SD = 4.37$ ).

## 5.2 | Measures

### 5.2.1 | Motivated affect regulation at work

We assessed individuals' engagement in motivated affect regulation (for hedonic, task-related, and social reasons) in both morning and afternoon surveys, using the nine-item measure developed in Study 1. The surveys asked participants to what extent they had put effort into improving their feelings at work during the morning/afternoon for different reasons (see Table 1 for a detailed overview of the measure).

### 5.2.2 | Perceived affect-regulation success

We asked participants to rate their success in affect regulation each morning and afternoon, using a measure adapted from Gross and John (2003): "Overall, how successful were you at improving your feelings?" (1 = *very slightly or not at all*, 5 = *extremely*). Because affect-regulation success is a rather narrow construct, we used this one-item measure in our experience-sampling study (Gabriel et al., 2019).

### 5.2.3 | Taking charge at work

We assessed taking charge with the three-item measure of Parker and Collins (2010); adapted from Morrison & Phelps, 1999). An example item was "This morning/afternoon ..." "I tried to bring about improved procedures in my work." Responses were provided on a 5-point scale (1 = *not at all*, 5 = *a great deal*).

### 5.2.4 | Overall job performance

We assessed job performance with a one-item measure by Dalal et al. (2009) that has been shown to effectively capture overall job performance in experience-sampling studies (Dalal et al., 2020): "Overall, how was your job performance this morning/afternoon?" (1 = *very low performance*, 5 = *very high performance*).

### 5.2.5 | Affect-regulation strategies

At the between-person level, we used Grandey's (2003) eight-item emotional labor measure, assessing *Deep* and *Surface Acting*.

### 5.2.6 | Control variables

Because affect-regulation efforts and performance might fluctuate throughout the workday (Gabriel et al., 2019), we controlled for the time of the occasion (morning vs. afternoon) at the within-person level. To assess changes in our outcome variables (i.e., perceived affect-regulation success, overall job performance and taking charge), we controlled for participants' responses on these measures from their preceding survey. Given that time gaps between surveys varied slightly due to missing data, we also controlled for the interaction of the previous response with the time since the most recent survey. At the between-person level, we controlled for the potential influence of age and gender on our moderator (deep acting), in line with recommendations from earlier research (Grandey & Melloy, 2017). Finally, we controlled for any role of surface acting in our model, although our primary focus was on the interaction of motivated affect regulation and deep acting.

### 5.3 | Preliminary analyses

Our key study measures, collected twice daily across 10 workdays, form an inherently multilevel data structure that could have two levels (up to 20 occasions, nested within each person) or three levels (two occasions, i.e., morning and afternoon, within each of 10 days, within each person). We first examined the ICC(1) statistics assuming a three-level structure. We found that across all our dependent variables, occasion-level variation was substantial, but day-level variance accounted for a trivial proportion of each item's total variance (up to 1%). Given these results and in line with earlier research (Oerlemans &

Bakker, 2018), we opted to model a two-level data structure, with up to 20 occasions nested within each person.

We also checked the construct validity of our measures using multilevel CFA (MCFA), following the procedure by Hox (2010). In this model, items only loaded upon a single factor, factors were allowed to correlate, and item residual variances were considered independent. Our theorized model (Model 5, Table 4), which distinguished between four distinct factors at the within-person (i.e., occasion) level (each of the three types of motivated affect regulation, and taking charge), as well as six factors at the between-person level (each of the types of motivated affect regulation, taking charge, and two distinct types of

**TABLE 4** Study 2: Multilevel comparison of alternative factor structures for types of motivated affect regulation

Model	Descriptives	$\chi^2$	df	Ratio $\chi^2/df$	$\Delta\chi^2$	$\Delta df$	CFI	RMSEA	SRMR within	SRMR between
<i>Occasion-level only</i>										
Model 1	Four factors: Types of motivated affect regulation, as theorized (hedonic, task-related, and social), taking charge	127.17	48	2.65	—	—	.99	.05	.02	—
Model 2	Three factors: Hedonic affect regulation, instrumental affect regulation (task-related and social combined), taking charge	1588.02	51	31.14	1460.85*	3	.86	.19	.10	—
Model 3	Two factors: Motivated affect regulation (hedonic, task-related, and social, combined), taking charge	3384.43	53	63.86	3257.26*	5	.69	.28	.13	—
Model 4	One factor: All measures combined	4555.16	54	84.35	427.99*	6	.58	.32	.16	—
<i>Multilevel (occasion and person level)</i>										
Model 5	Theorized model. Occasion-level four factors, as theorized (model 1); person-level six factors, as theorized: Types of motivated affect regulation (hedonic, task-related, and social), taking charge, types of affect regulation strategies (deep acting, surface acting)	346.51	203	1.71	—	—	.98	.03	.04	.05
Model 6	Occasion-level four factors, as theorized (model 1); person-level five factors: Hedonic affect regulation, instrumental affect regulation (task-related and social combined), taking charge, types of affect regulation strategies (deep acting, surface acting)	509.63	208	2.45	163.12*	5	.96	.04	.05	.07
Model 7	Occasion-level four factors, as theorized (model 1); person-level four factors: Motivated affect regulation (hedonic, task-related, and social combined), taking charge, types of affect regulation strategies (deep acting, surface acting)	745.38	212	3.52	398.87*	9	.94	.06	.08	.11
Model 8	Occasion-level four factors, as theorized (model 1); person-level one factor: All measures combined	1305.36	218	5.99	958.85*	15	.87	.08	.09	.22

Note. Occasion level  $n = 821$ ; Person level  $N = 80$ ;

\*Change in model fit of theorized occasion-level-only Measurement Model (1) for occasion-level models and theorized multilevel Measurement Model (5) for multilevel models versus alternative model significant at  $p < .05$  level.

affect-regulation strategies at work), achieved an excellent fit to the data:  $\chi^2 = 346.51$ ,  $df = 203$ ,  $CFI = .98$ ,  $RMSEA = .03$ ,  $SRMR$  within = .04, and  $SRMR$  between = .05 (Schermele-Engel et al., 2003). In addition, for each factor at each level, the AVE score was both greater than 0.5, supporting convergent validity, and exceeded all squared correlations between that factor and any others at its level, thus supporting discriminant validity (Fornell & Larcker, 1981).<sup>8</sup>

Our hypothesized model also offered a significantly better fit than plausible alternative models, including combining task-related and social affect regulation with an instrumental-affect-regulation factor (Models 2 and 6, at within- vs. between-person level, respectively), combining three types of motivated affect regulation into one factor (Models 3 and 7, at within- vs. between-person level), as well as combining all measures into one factor (Models 4 and 8, at within- vs. between-person level; see Table 4). Finally, each of our multilevel measures had high internal consistency: for hedonic affect regulation:  $\alpha$  within = .93 and  $\alpha$  between = .99; for task-related affect regulation:  $\alpha$  within = .90 and  $\alpha$  between = .99; for social affect regulation:  $\alpha$  within = .85 and  $\alpha$  between = .98; and for taking charge:  $\alpha$  within = .80,  $\alpha$  between = .90.

## 5.4 | Results

Table 5 displays descriptive statistics, internal consistencies, and zero-order correlations for all variables. To test our hypothesized model (Figure 1), we conducted multi-level path analyses (Hox, 2010), using composite scores for each construct created by averaging across the respective items measuring it.<sup>9</sup> Specifically, at the within-person level, we examined the hypothesized paths from hedonic, task-related, and social affect regulation to perceived affect-regulation success, and from affect-regulation success to performance-related outcomes (overall job performance and taking charge), as well as direct paths from types of motivated affect regulation to performance-related outcomes. We modeled the paths from types of motivated affect regulation to perceived affect-regulation success as random and tested overall deep acting at work, assessed at the between-person level, as a cross-level moderator. At the within-person level, we controlled for time of the observation (morning vs. afternoon) and for previous levels in all outcome variables, as well as for the interaction of previous levels in the outcome variables with the time elapsed since the previous survey. At the between-person level, we controlled for potential influence of age and gender on deep acting, as well as for

**TABLE 5** Study 2: Means, standard deviations, and correlations of main study variables

Variables	Mean (occasion level/person level)	SD (occasion level/person level)	1.	2.	3.	4.	5.	6.	7.	8.	9.	10.
1. Time of the occasion (0 = morning, 1 = afternoon)	.00/.51	.49/.03	—	-.01	-.08*	-.11**	-.05	-.03	-.02	—	—	—
2. Occasion-level task-related affect regulation	.00/2.80	.70/.75	.17	—	.41**	.47**	.32**	.23**	.20**	—	—	—
3. Occasion-level social affect regulation	.00/2.26	.63/.75	-.01	.70**	—	.45**	.25**	.16**	.18**	—	—	—
4. Occasion-level hedonic affect regulation	.00/2.58	.64/.88	.00	.66**	.71**	—	.41**	.21**	.16**	—	—	—
5. Occasion-level perceived affect-regulation success	.00/2.80	.80/.72	-.02	.64**	.57**	.72**	—	.43**	.36**	—	—	—
6. Occasion-level overall job performance	.00/4.19	.85/.61	.24*	.34**	.27*	.17	.33**	—	.41**	—	—	—
7. Occasion-level taking charge at work	.00/2.37	.78/.72	.18	.57**	.46**	.46**	.42**	.31**	—	—	—	—
8. Age (years)	—/34.11	—/6.85	.03	-.16	-.15	.01	.00	-.05	.17	—	—	—
9. Gender (0 = female, 1 = male)	—/.64	—/.48	.23*	.03	.05	-.07	-.00	.07	.07	.09	—	—
10. Surface acting	—/.2.31	—/.97	.12	.24*	.20	.13	.13	.06	.02	-.09	-.02	—
11. Deep acting	—/.2.70	—/1.07	.15	.40**	.36**	.19	.17	.02	.27*	-.06	-.13	.24*

Note: Below diagonal: Person-level data ( $N = 80$ ). Above diagonal: group-mean-centered occasion-level data ( $n = 821$ ).

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

the potential role of surface acting for the links between types of motivated affect regulation with perceived affect-regulation success. We person-mean-centered all independent day-level variables.

Our hypothesized model was fitted using Mplus version 8 (Muthén & Muthén, 1998–2019), applying maximum-likelihood estimation. To probe the moderator effect of deep acting, we calculated the conditional effects of motivated affect regulation on perceived affect-regulation success at relatively high, medium, and low values (16th, 50th, and 84th percentiles) of the moderator (deep acting). In addition, to assess the significance of conditional indirect effects of different types of motivated affect regulation on overall job performance and taking charge via perceived affect-regulation success, we estimated 95% confidence intervals using Monte Carlo simulation in R (Preacher & Selig, 2012).

Hypothesis 1 proposed a positive relationship between hedonic affect regulation and performance-related outcomes, mediated by perceived affect-regulation success. In support of this hypothesis, hedonic affect regulation predicted higher levels of overall job performance (Hypothesis 1a) and taking charge (Hypothesis 1b), via increased affect-regulation success, at all levels of the moderator (see Table 7, rows 7–9 and 16–18). In support of Hypothesis 2, the associations of task-related affect regulation with overall job performance (Hypothesis 2a) as well as taking charge (Hypothesis 2b) via perceived affect-regulation success were significant (see Table 7, rows 1–3 and 10–12). By contrast, the associations of social affect regulation with overall job performance

(Hypothesis 3a) and taking charge (Hypothesis 3b), via affect-regulation success, were non-significant (see Table 7, rows 4–6, and 13–15). In sum, we found support for hedonic and task-related, albeit not social, affect regulation predicting performance-related outcomes at work via perceived affect-regulation success.

Hypotheses 4a and 4b proposed that habitual deep acting at work moderates the positive relationship between instrumental (task-related and social) affect regulation and perceived affect-regulation success on a given occasion. As shown in Table 6, the interaction effect was supported for task-related affect regulation ( $B = .10$ ,  $SE = .04$ , 95% CI [.011, .235]; see Figure 2 for the display). By contrast, deep acting did not moderate the relationship between social affect regulation and affect-regulation success ( $B = -.01$ ,  $SE = .05$ , 95% CI [−.077, .111]). Thus, we found support for Hypothesis 4a but not for Hypothesis 4b.

Extending from Hypothesis 4a, we also found partial support for Hypotheses 5a and 5b, namely, that the conditional indirect effects of instrumental affect regulation on overall job performance and taking charge at work via perceived affect-regulation success are stronger when deep acting is high. As shown in Table 7 (rows 1–3, 10–12), the positive conditional indirect effects of task-related affect regulation on overall job performance and taking charge via affect-regulation success became stronger with higher levels of deep acting. In sum, we found evidence of a significant moderated mediation effect of instrumental affect regulation on performance-related outcomes via

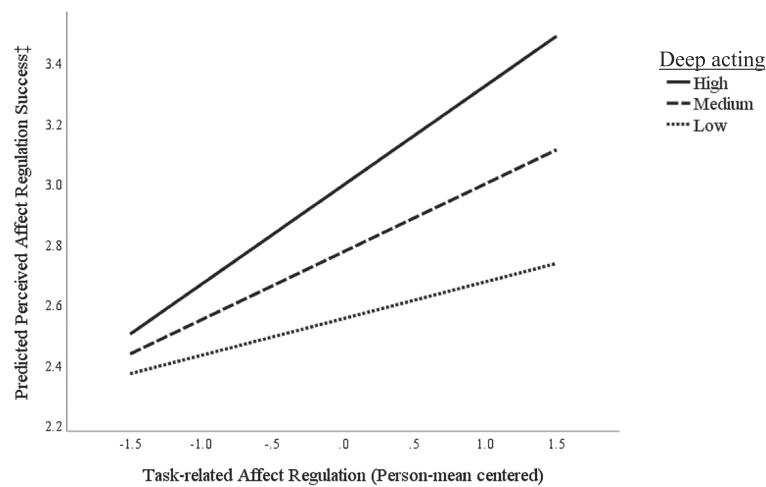
**TABLE 6** Study 2: Unstandardized path coefficients from moderated mediation analyses predicting overall job performance and taking charge at work from types of motivated affect regulation via perceived affect-regulation success, moderated by deep acting (hypothesized model)

Mediator and outcome variables	Affect-regulation success			Overall job performance			Taking charge at work		
	B	SE	p	B	SE	p	B	SE	p
<u>Occasion-level model predictor and mediator variables</u>									
Lagged score (previous response) of respective DV	.05	.04	.229	.10*	.05	.033	.08	.05	.076
Time since previous response	.00	.02	.892	.00	.02	.984	−.04	.03	.138
Lagged score of DV*time since previous response	−.05	.03	.087	−.10**	.03	.002	−.06	.03	.069
Time of the occasion (1 = morning vs. 0 = afternoon)	−.04	.05	.462	−.02	.05	.735	−.06	.06	.295
Task-related affect regulation				.12**	.04	<.001	.13**	.05	.005
Social affect regulation				.02	.04	.695	.14**	.05	.005
Hedonic affect regulation				.04	.05	.372	−.02	.06	.755
Perceived affect-regulation success				.28**	.04	<.001	.19**	.04	<.001
<u>Person-level variables</u>									
Intercept	2.21**	.48	<.001	3.28**	.41	<.001	1.53**	.54	<.001
Gender (1 = male, 0 = female)	.06	.16	.690	.12	.14	.367	.29	.18	.104
Age (years)	−.00	.01	.795	−.01	.01	.521	.01	.01	.543
Deep acting	.21**	.08	.006	.10	.06	.101	.25**	.08	.003
Surface acting	.03	.08	.721	−.03	.07	.663	−.10	.09	.253
Deep acting x task-related affect regulation	.10*	.04	.011						
Deep acting x social affect regulation	−.01	.05	.841						
Deep acting x hedonic affect regulation	−.10	.06	.073						

Note: Occasion level,  $n = 727$ ; Person level,  $N = 78$ .

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





**FIGURE 2** Study 2: moderating effects of deep acting on the relationship between task-related affect regulation and perceived affect-regulation success. *Note:* Relationship between task-related affect regulation and perceived affect-regulation success are at relatively low, medium, and high levels of deep acting at work (16th, 50th, and 84th percentiles). †Adjusted for model covariates

**TABLE 7** Study 2: Theorized model. Test of conditional indirect effects for paths from types of motivated affect regulation to overall job performance and taking charge at work, moderated by deep acting

Indirect effect via affect-regulation success, conditional on deep acting	Level of moderator (deep acting)	Indirect effect	Monte Carlo simulated 95% CI
<b>DV: Overall job performance</b>			
Task-related affect regulation	Low	.03 <sup>a</sup>	[.000, .071] <sup>b</sup>
	Medium	.06 <sup>a</sup>	[.034, .096]
	High	.09 <sup>a</sup>	[.053, .139]
Social affect regulation	Low	.02	[−.024, .060]
	Medium	.02	[−.013, .045]
	High	.01	[−.028, .053]
Hedonic affect regulation	Low	.19 <sup>a</sup>	[.116, .263]
	Medium	.16 <sup>a</sup>	[.101, .216]
	High	.13 <sup>a</sup>	[.072, .189]
<b>DV: Taking charge at work</b>			
Task-related affect regulation	Low	.02 <sup>a</sup>	[.000, .051] <sup>b</sup>
	Medium	.04 <sup>a</sup>	[.023, .068]
	High	.06 <sup>a</sup>	[.034, .098]
Social affect regulation	Low	.01	[−.016, .042]
	Medium	.01	[−.009, .032]
	High	.01	[−.019, .036]
Hedonic affect regulation	Low	.13 <sup>a</sup>	[.074, .188]
	Medium	.11 <sup>a</sup>	[.063, .154]
	High	.09 <sup>a</sup>	[.046, .135]

*Note:* Occasion level,  $n = 727$ ; Person level,  $N = 78$ .

<sup>a</sup>95% CI does not contain 0. Number rounded to 3 decimal places.

<sup>b</sup>Exact value above 0: .0004613 for DV = overall job performance and .0001727 for DV = taking charge at work.

perceived affect-regulation success at higher levels of deep acting regarding task-related, but not social, affect regulation at work.

## 5.5 | Additional analyses

We also conducted several robustness checks. First, missingness in responses often increases with time throughout diary studies

(McLean et al., 2017). In line with this existing evidence, initial analyses in our study indicated participants were indeed slightly more likely to not complete individual surveys as the study progressed ( $r = .11$ ,  $p < .001$ ). Therefore, we reran our model, additionally controlling for observation number, from 1 to 20, in the study. Findings remained unchanged upon adding this additional control. Second, we reran our model, controlling for trait negative affectivity, which captures the extent to which individuals tend to experience negative

emotions across time and situations, hence making them more likely to appraise their environment and their own actions in a negative light (Watson et al., 1988). We included this variable as an additional cross-level moderator to account for potential individual-level variations in how individuals perceive their affect-regulation efforts. Our results were robust to the addition of this control variable. Finally, we also reran our main analyses using Bayesian, rather than maximum likelihood, estimation. Our findings remained robust. Detailed results of all checks are available upon request.

## 6 | DISCUSSION

Although affect regulation is essential in today's organizations (Barsade & Gibson, 2007; Grandey & Melloy, 2017), previous research has provided only limited insights into *why* employees choose to regulate their affect at work. In this paper, we developed a framework of motivated affect regulation that identified hedonic as well as instrumental (task-related and social) motives underpinning employees' efforts to manage their feelings at work. Our findings indicate these core motives in affect regulation in the workplace can be distinguished from each other and that such motivated affect regulation relates to important work outcomes. Below, we discuss how our findings inform theory and practice.

### 6.1 | Introducing a framework of motivated affect regulation at work

Our framework of motivated affect regulation contributes by incorporating individuals' own reasons into the engagement in affect regulation in organizations. Across two independent studies, we found good support for a clear distinction between hedonic, task-related, and socially motivated affect regulation in the workplace. In doing so, we meaningfully advance initial research indicating employees may have distinct motives for regulating their affect in customer-service interactions (Von Gilsa et al., 2014). Specifically, we found that, as hypothesized, hedonic and task-related affect regulation on a given occasion uniquely predicted greater perceived success of affect-regulation efforts, as well as higher levels of overall job performance and taking charge at work.

Identifying the important role of hedonic motives in affect regulation at work is an important contribution because, to date, organizational research has focused predominantly on the impact of organizationally required affect-regulation efforts (Brotheridge & Lee, 2003; Grandey & Melloy, 2017), rather than on the affect regulation that employees engage in for the sake of their own feelings of comfort and pleasure. However, our findings align with wider evidence in social psychology that shows individuals are often motivated to manage their feelings to feel good (Gross et al., 2006; Larsen, 2000a). Likewise, whereas the organizational literature has focused on organization-based requirements for managing one's affect, such as rules to display positive affect to customers

(Brotheridge & Lee, 2003; Grandey & Melloy, 2017), our current research indicates employees do—out of their own desire—strategically seek to manage their own feelings to improve task-related outcomes. To summarize, our findings show individuals may have distinct motives to improve their affect at work. In some cases, the motive is simply to feel happy (i.e., hedonic). In other cases, it's to get themselves into the right frame of mind for achieving their own goals at work (i.e., instrumental)—with indicators across both types of motivated affect regulation positively associated with increased performance at work. Our findings also suggest managing one's feelings at work “to feel good” versus “to achieve task-related outcomes” are not mutually exclusive: although the underlying motives are distinct, they are positively correlated, implying engagement in motivated affect regulation may serve several goals.

We did not find support for the role of social affect regulation in predicting increased affect-regulation success or performance-related outcomes. This result implies trying to change one's affect to get along with others at work is, overall, not a particularly promising approach. Because social affect regulation is characterized by an inherent interpersonal context that may require a positive response from others to be evaluated as successful (Troth et al., 2017), success from affect regulation for social reasons may be harder to achieve than aiming to improve one's affect to accomplish task-related challenges or simply to feel good. Similarly, to the extent that individuals' desire to get along with others is based on external validation, this type of motivated affect regulation may be characterized by controlled, rather than autonomous, motivation. In turn, controlled motivation has previously been linked to overall less positive outcomes (Gagné & Deci, 2005; Koestner et al., 2008). We encourage future research to test these explanations for the role of social affect regulation at work.

### 6.2 | Understanding the processes and boundary conditions of motivated affect at work

A second domain of contribution results from our investigation into how and when motivated affect regulation shapes performance-related outcomes at work. We largely found support for our hypothesized indirect effects of motivated affect regulation on performance-related outcomes via affect-regulation success. Although social psychological research suggests the relevance of identifying whether individuals successfully reach their goals in affect regulation (Bigman et al., 2016; Gross & John, 2003), organizational research has thus far omitted this important, goal-related perspective in investigating affect regulation. Instead, this literature has focused on the overarching links between employees' engagement in affect regulation at work and behavioral outcomes, such as customer satisfaction (Tsai, 2001) and customer-performance ratings (Grandey & Melloy, 2017). Our research advances these insights by offering a goal-related perspective to explain when employees' engagement in affect regulation, driven by individual motives, will indeed yield desirable outcomes. In this context, our findings suggest hedonic and task-related affect

regulation will more likely result in relevant work outcomes than will socially motivated affect regulation, given the greater success individuals experience in improving their affect when they have these motives. In short, our research adds insights into the “black box” of mechanisms that explain the relationship between affect regulation and core work outcomes (Grandey & Gabriel, 2015).

Our findings also contribute to organizational affect-regulation research by establishing how habitual engagement in a core affect-regulation strategy at work—deep acting (Grandey, 2003)—strengthens the relationship between motivated affect regulation on a given occasion and both affect-regulation success and performance-related outcomes. We showed task-related affect regulation was perceived to be more successful and therefore positively associated with performance-related outcomes for those individuals who habitually engage in more deep acting in their work. This finding makes sense because both deep acting and task-related motives have an instrumental focus. It suggests that for employees who are used to improving their feelings in organizationally desirable ways (Morris & Feldman, 1996)—perhaps because they work in an organizational context requiring interaction with customers—task-related affect regulation might be particularly easy to achieve. In sum, our findings advance a meaningful integration and implications of *how* and *why* employees engage in affect regulation in the workplace.

### 6.3 | Practical implications, limitations, and future research

Our research suggests a potential new approach for increasing performance-related outcomes at work, which is to support and encourage employees to engage in affect regulation, driven by their own motives. Given that hedonic affect regulation was positively associated with improved overall performance and taking charge, irrespective of employees' habitual use of deep acting at work, organizations might focus on encouraging this type of motivated affect regulation. In addition, organizations may provide training for engaging in deep acting to enhance the effectiveness of task-related affect regulation. Employees could also be coached or trained in how to more effectively recognize when they need to change their affect at work and on how to improve their feelings. Because affect regulation is likely to consume mental efforts and resources (Gross & John, 2003), a training program could help employees recognize when affect regulation is most important. In addition, if further research supports the possibility of training individuals to take steps to improve their positive affect by enhancing their engagement in motivated affect regulation, the benefits of such interventions are likely to extend well beyond performance-related outcomes at work. For example, positive affect itself is also a defining component of mental health at work, and thus is important to increase and maintain in the workplace (Sonnentag, 2015).

Finally, our research has limitations that suggest potentially useful avenues for future research. First, our theorizing implies causal

relationships of motivated affect regulation with relevant work outcomes. However, although we separated measurements of independent and dependent variables across time, and controlled for previous values in all dependent variables, alternative explanations may still exist. For instance, higher overall job performance and taking charge may evoke more positive affect at work. Similarly, previous performance might prompt individuals to aim to improve their feelings to engage in future performance. Although we cannot fully rule out these interpretations, employees are unlikely to be motivated to improve their positive affect after having performed well. Instead, employees likely experience a stronger need for motivated affect regulation after episodes of low performance. We encourage future research to examine these possibilities.

Similarly, although we showed motivated affect regulation predicted overall job performance and taking charge at work, we did not consider the exact issues at the heart of different motivated-affect-regulation episodes, but rather focused on the overarching association between individuals' engagement in different types of motivated affect regulation, perceived affect-regulation success, and performance-related outcomes. Future research could use our framework to examine performance-related episodes (e.g., Beal et al., 2005; Bindl, 2019) in greater depth, including investigating which types of feelings employees perceive as useful in different phases of such episodes, and therefore which types of affect may be most effective in driving performance in these phases. In this context, although improvement-oriented affect regulation is predominant in the workplace (Brotheridge & Lee, 2003; Grandey & Melloy, 2017), and research indicates positive affect is overall most effective in driving positive performance-related outcomes (Barsade & Gibson, 2007; Brief & Weiss, 2002; Parker et al., 2010), research may also investigate specific occasions when employees choose to worsen rather than improve their affect for instrumental reasons, both in the context of driving performance-related outcomes and when investigating wider organizational outcomes.

Third, a strength of our study design to assess employees across occupations is its contribution to research emphasizing the importance of affect regulation in organizations beyond frontline customer-service contexts (e.g., Ozelik, 2013; Xu et al., 2014). In this context, our research helps establish an overarching framework of motivated affect regulation that matters for performance-related outcomes across a wide range of organizational contexts. However, our research did not focus on an in-depth investigation of any specific jobs or industries. Additional motives at work (e.g., striving for status; Foulk et al., 2019), applied to improving one's feelings (Von Gilsa et al., 2014), may exist. In this context, our research provides evidence of core instrumental motives (beyond hedonic affect regulation) that employees may have for managing their feelings that reflect the distinction between task and social orientations identified as relevant across distinct organizational literatures. In turn, it provides an empirically grounded measurement to capture motivated affect regulation that future research may build from and expand to different work contexts.

## 7 | CONCLUSION

Employees often seek to change and improve their feelings at work. Our findings suggest employees' motivation (hedonic, task-related, and social) to engage in affect regulation at work can be meaningfully differentiated—and that hedonic as well as task-related motives in affect regulation are both related to overall job performance and to taking charge at work. By contrast, aiming to change one's affect to get along with others appears less effective. Our research advances insights for organizations to understand employees' motives in affect regulation, and thus to promote performance in their staff.

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## ENDNOTES

- <sup>1</sup> We refer to affect regulation as an overarching term in this paper, including mood and emotion regulation interchangeably. Whereas mood regulation captures the regulation of feelings that are more diffuse in origin, emotion regulation refers to managing feelings that are more discrete and short lived (Rosenberg, 1998).
- <sup>2</sup> For further developments of Tamir's (2009) framework, see Tamir (2016).
- <sup>3</sup> We focus on deep acting because it is the most established affect-regulation strategy related to positive work outcomes, such as performance and well-being (Hülsheger & Schewe, 2011). By contrast, because surface acting typically is ineffective or even detrimental to affect-regulation outcomes (Grandey & Gabriel, 2015), we do not expect it to strengthen the relationship between motivated affect regulation and affect-regulation success.
- <sup>4</sup> For scrutiny, we also account for an interaction of deep acting with hedonic affect regulation in our analyses.
- <sup>5</sup> An overview of all 24 initial items, and initial factor loadings, is available from the authors upon request.
- <sup>6</sup> Details of all AVE analyses, as well as individual factor loadings in the CFA, are available upon request.
- <sup>7</sup> We also reran our EFA and CFA including negative trait affectivity (Watson et al., 1988) as a control variable. In additional support of the distinction of types of motivated affect regulation, all findings remained robust.
- <sup>8</sup> Details of all AVE analyses, as well as individual factor loadings in the CFA, are available upon request.
- <sup>9</sup> Details on statistical comparison models tested, including the unconditional model, are available upon request.

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