

# The relationship between self-control and emotion regulation strategies

: Cognitive reappraisal, distraction, and expressive suppression



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## INTRODUCTION

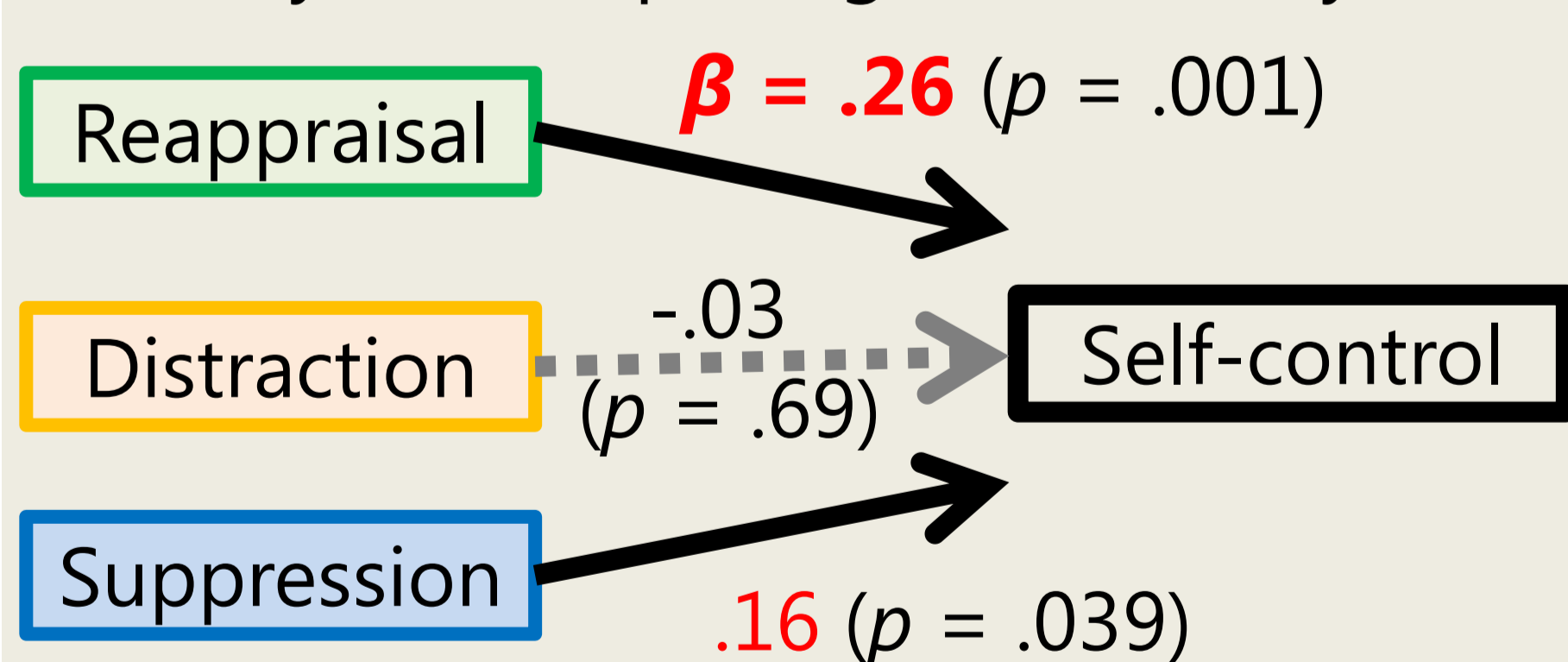
- ◆ **Emotion regulation** is defined as the process of modification of the intensity or duration of emotion as necessary (Gross, 2015). There are three well-known emotion regulation strategies: cognitive reappraisal, distraction, and suppression (Gross, 2013). **Cognitive reappraisal** is defined as reinterpreting a negative emotion, thought, or situation in a way that reduces negative emotion. **Distraction** is defined as shifting attention from negative emotions or thoughts to non-negative contents so as to attenuate negative emotion. **Expressive suppression** is defined as inhibiting emotional facial expressions and behaviors. It has been reported that cognitive reappraisal and distraction are effective to decrease negative emotion. On the other hand, expressive suppression increases negative emotion.
- ◆ **Self-control** is defined as the ability to change one's behavior in response to values, morals, and social expectations and pursue long-term goals (Baumeister et al., 2007). It has been shown that self-control facilitates academic performance, social relationships, and well-being.
- ◆ Previous studies revealed the relationships between emotion regulation and self-control. **There are, however, no studies have specified which strategies of emotion regulation relate to self-control. Therefore, present study examined the relationships between self-control and emotion regulation strategies (Study 1 & 2).** In study 2, we conducted longitudinal survey.

## METHOD

- ◆ Participants: 169 (Study 1) and 145 (Study 2) Japanese undergraduate students.
- ◆ Questionnaire
  - **Nozaki Emotion Regulation Scale** (Nozaki, 2013; e.g., I think that the situation also has its positive sides **【cognitive reappraisal】** / I think about pleasant experiences **【distraction】** / When I am feeling negative emotions, I make sure not to express them **【expressive suppression】**)
  - **Brief Self-Control Scale** (Tangney et al., 2004; e.g., I am good at resisting temptation. / I am able to work effectively toward long-term goals.)
- ◆ Procedure: Participants were asked to complete questionnaire (Study 1 & 2). In addition, they answered same measures 3 months later as TIME2 in Study2.

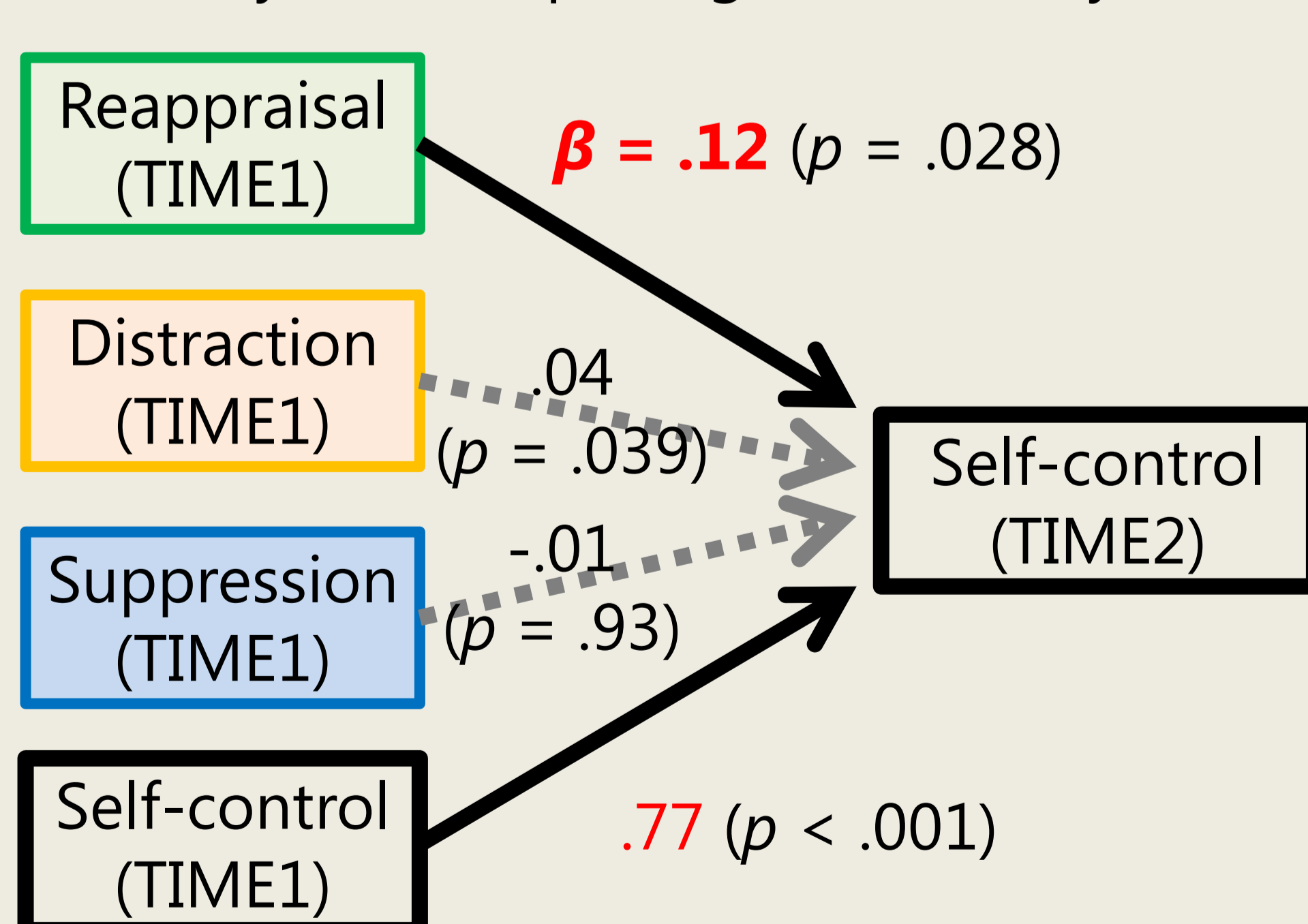
## RESULTS & DISCUSSION

- ◆ Study 1 (Multiple regression analysis)



- ◆ **Employing greater cognitive reappraisal was related to higher self-control.** This result are interpreted from the perspective of negative emotion. Previous research indicated that negative emotions urge the seeking of short-term pleasure and inhibit pursuing long-term goals (Selby et al., 2009). Based on these studies, cognitive reappraisal supports self-control thorough attenuating negative emotions (Webb et al., 2012). Therefore, it can be considered that cognitive reappraisal has a positive effect on self-control.

- ◆ Study 2 (Multiple regression analysis)



- ◆ The longitudinal data in Study 2 indicated **Distraction and expressive suppression were not correlated with self-control.** Previous study showed that the reappraisal decreases more negative emotion than distraction and suppression. This differences of down-regulating effect of its strategies may influence the results.