

# Interpersonal Emotion Regulation Facilitates Relationship Satisfaction with Friends : An Actor-Partner Interdependence Model Study



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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). Previous research of emotion regulation have been focused on intrinsic process (e.g., James regulates their own emotions). In recent years, on the other hand, extrinsic process (e.g., James regulates Sarah's emotions) is drawing attention.
- ◆ **Interpersonal emotion regulation (IER) is regulating other's negative emotions (i.e., extrinsic process of emotion regulation).** Some research showed that interpersonal emotion regulation attenuates others' negative emotions in many aspects of daily life (e.g., Lisi, 2016).
- ◆ Although interpersonal emotion regulation influences "other's" emotion, **there are few studies about the effect of interpersonal emotion regulation on interpersonal relationships.** Based on the evidence that interpersonal emotion regulation decreases negative emotion of others, it can be assumed that interpersonal emotion regulation has a positive effect on relationship satisfaction in friendship. However, this possibility is not examined.

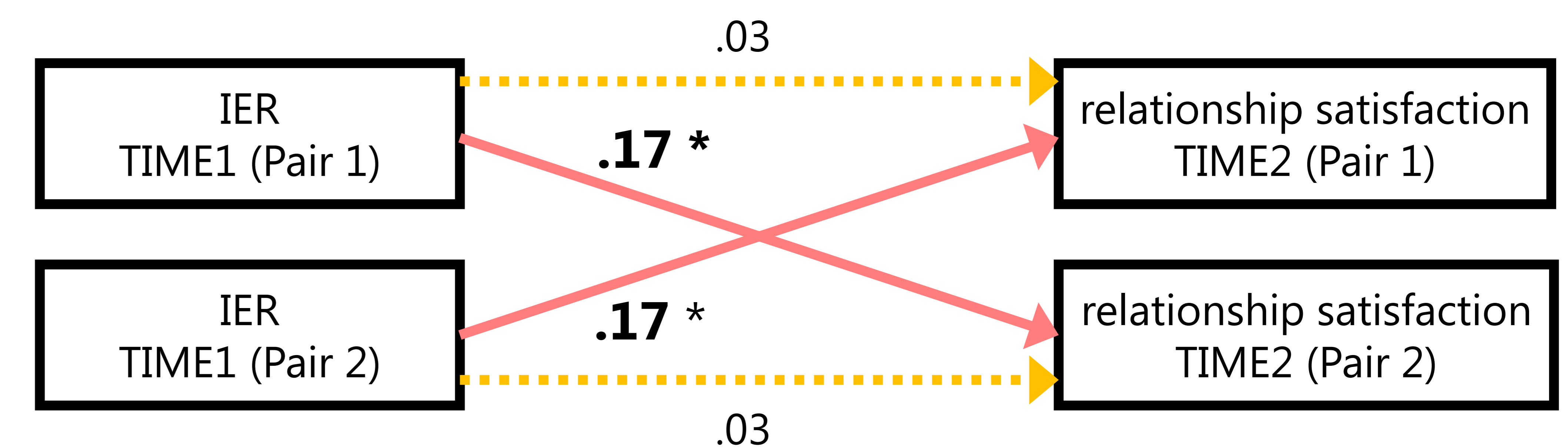
Therefore, We examined whether interpersonal emotion regulation facilitates relationship satisfaction with friends by using pair data analysis method (i.e., Actor-partner interdependence model).

## Method

- ◆ Participants: Seventy-three same-gender friend pairs (undergraduate and graduate students; Mean age = 19,  $SD = 1.46$ ) participated in this study.
- ◆ Procedure: Participants were asked to complete bellow mentioned questionnaire as **TIME1**. In addition, they answered same measures 3 months later as **TIME2**.
- ◆ Questionnaire:
  - interpersonal emotion regulation scales** (Nozaki, 2013; e.g., "In order to attenuate another person's negative emotion, I tell him/her that the situation also has its positive sides.")
  - satisfaction with the relationship between the pair** (e.g., "How satisfied are you with the pair's relationship?")

## Results

- ◆ We conducted the **actor-partner interdependence model (APIM)** to analyze the our pair (and longitudinal) data. APIM is superior in testing interpersonal effect. APIM estimates "**Actor effect** (i.e., within-person effect)  $\cdots\rightarrow$ " and "**Partner effect** (i.e., between-person effect)  $\rightarrow$ ". Actor effects mean the effect of individual's explanatory variable on individual's objective variable. Partner effects capture the effect of individual's explanatory variable on individual's partner's objective variable.



- IER: Interpersonal Emotion Regulation
- Path coefficient shows standard partial regression coefficient (i.e.,  $\beta$ ).
- The effect of relationship satisfaction (TIME1) was controlled. \*  $p < .05$

## Discussion

- ◆ Although the APIM did not show a significant actor effect ( $\beta = .03$ ), **the partner effect was significant ( $\beta = .17, p = .016$ ).** **This partner effect indicated that frequency uses of inter personal emotion regulation increases pairs' relationship satisfaction.** It can be assumed that this effect of interpersonal emotion regulation on pair's satisfaction with relationship may be mediated by regulating pair's negative emotion.
- ◆ Non significant actor effect implies that higher use of interpersonal emotion regulation does not influence own satisfaction with relationships.
- ◆ These results suggested that interpersonal emotion regulation contributes to maintain the relationships with friends. On the other hand, participants were already friends when present study was conducted. Thus, it is unclear whether interpersonal emotion regulation supports building up trustful relations. This point should be examined in the future studies.

Present study showed that interpersonal emotion regulation facilitates relationships satisfaction with friends.