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Why women have greater intimacy in their friendship relationships

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Psychology of Friendship

DEFINITION:

"Friendship is a psycho-social relationship based on a free affective link between two (or a few) people" (Zaccagnini, 2008).

- The "affective link" includes: To share time, to communicate, to feel close to the other, to trust on the other and to share some commitment on the relationship rules.
- The "freedom" includes: To start, keep and end the relationship freely, and to fix the relationship rules freely (Note that this is different from any other social relationship).

TYPES:

- **Best friends:** (few if any) people we know for long time, and trust 100%.
- **Good Friends:** people we like, and enjoy free time with.
- **Casual friends:** people we interact with because we share time/space (at work, association, living area... *an EI congress...* etc.), and we like and enjoy that relationship.

Introduction

- Friendship: **The Positive Psychology perspective.**
- **Friendship and EI:** The important role of negative (conflict) and positive (love) emotions in friendship.
- **The general hypothesis:** High and straight correlation between EI and friendship is expected.
- The data:
 - ✓ Very *few research* on topic.
 - ✓ *Not too high/clear correlation* with both quantity and quality of friends.

Research Review

- Previous literature has been shown that **EI facilitates the establishment and maintenance of social relations** (Dodge Garber, 1991; Saarni, 1999).
- Paulo N. Lopes, John B. Nezlek, Natalio Extremera, Janine Hertel, 4 Pablo Fernández-Berrocal, Astrid Schütz, and Peter Salovey, (2011) found that **emotional regulation (SERA) helps to avoid conflict more than to promote positive affect** (*not very high correlation*).
- Our previous research (Zaccagnini & Ruiz-Aranda, 2011, 2012) shows a **correlation between EI (TMMS and MSCEIT) and positive emotions in friendship** (*not very high correlation*).

Research Objectives

- To **re-analyze** the influence of emotional regulation in **friendship**, using now Gross y John, (2003) emotional regulation theory (suppression vs reappraisal), on friendship link (intimacy).
- To **analyze gender differences** in the quality of interpersonal relationships.
- In addition, discussed the contribution of emotional regulation (Gross y John, 2003) as a **predictor** of these dimensions.

Method

Participants

- 237
 - 122 female
 - 115 male
- Mean age=42,60

Mesures

- Emotional Regulation Questionnaire (Cabello, Salguero, Fernández-Berrocal, Gross; 2012)
- Network of Relationships Inventory (Furman & Buhrmester, 1985)

Results: Gender differences in relationship

	MALE Mean(SD)	FEMALE Mean(SD)	p
Intimacy	19.49 (5.57)	20.97 (5.31)	.037
Comradeship	18.75 (5.33)	19.15 (5.00)	.551
Alliance	21.81 (5.49)	22.55 (5.77)	.274
Affect with friends	21.20 (4.94)	22.24 (4.21)	.084
Conflict with friends	9.79 (5.32)	9.22 (5.25)	.913
Antagonism	8.8 (5.28)	9.16 (5.64)	.608

Results: Gender differences: emotional regulation

	MALE Mean(SD)	FEMALE Mean(SD)	p
Emotional Reappraisal	4.66 (1.05)	4.86 (1.05)	.154
Emotional Suppression	3.87 (1.23)	3.25 (1.26)	.000

Results: Emotional regulation and friendship: Male

Correlaciones ^a		Reevaluación	Supresión emocional
Nivel intimidad amigos	Correlación de Pearson	,191*	-,376**
	Sig. (bilateral)	,042	,000
	N	114	113
Nivel compañerismo amigos	Correlación de Pearson	,109	-,322**
	Sig. (bilateral)	,250	,000
	N	114	113
Nivel Alianza amigos	Correlación de Pearson	,224*	-,206*
	Sig. (bilateral)	,017	,029
	N	114	113
Nivel Afecto amigos	Correlación de Pearson	,217*	-,286**
	Sig. (bilateral)	,021	,002
	N	114	113
Nivel Conflicto amigos	Correlación de Pearson	-,031	-,038
	Sig. (bilateral)	,745	,693
	N	114	113
Nivel Antagonismo amigos	Correlación de Pearson	-,007	,053
	Sig. (bilateral)	,939	,580
	N	114	113

*. La correlación es significativa al nivel 0,05 (bilateral).

** La correlación es significativa al nivel 0,01 (bilateral).

a. Sx = hombre

Emotional regulation and friendship: Female

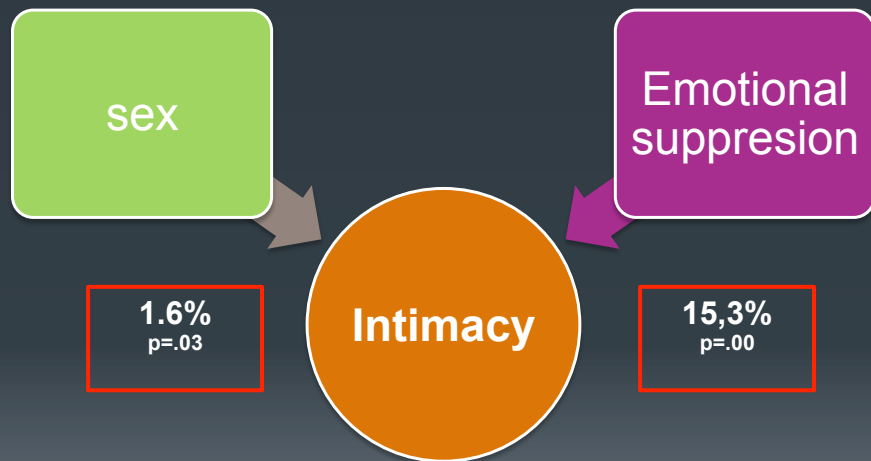
Correlaciones ^a		Reevaluación	Supresión emocional
Nivel intimidad amigos	Correlación de Pearson	,127	-,327**
	Sig. (bilateral)	,162	,000
	N	122	122
Nivel compañerismo amigos	Correlación de Pearson	,149	-,209*
	Sig. (bilateral)	,101	,021
	N	122	122
Nivel Alianza amigos	Correlación de Pearson	,061	-,149
	Sig. (bilateral)	,505	,102
	N	122	122
Nivel Afecto amigos	Correlación de Pearson	,151	-,329**
	Sig. (bilateral)	,098	,000
	N	122	122
Nivel Conflicto amigos	Correlación de Pearson	,046	-,086
	Sig. (bilateral)	,615	,345
	N	122	122
Nivel Antagonismo amigos	Correlación de Pearson	-,030	,091
	Sig. (bilateral)	,742	,317
	N	122	122

** La correlación es significativa al nivel 0,01 (bilateral).

*. La correlación es significativa al nivel 0,05 (bilateral).

a. Sx = mujer

Results



Results & Discussion

- The results of the study indicate that women have a higher quality of social relationships than men, and that this is related to the ability to regulate emotions.
- These findings suggest that women used to a lesser extent than men emotional suppression strategies which creates a more intimate relationship in their social relations.
- Our findings suggest that emotional regulation skills predict better positive interactions.

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