

Emotion regulation, dyadic coping and marital satisfaction

Petruța Rusu¹
Guy Bodenmann²

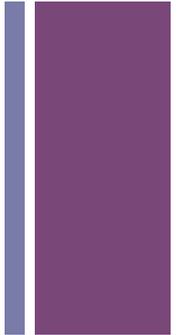
¹Department of Education Sciences, University of Suceava, Romania

²Department of Psychology, University of Zurich Switzerland

- 2nd of September 2016 -

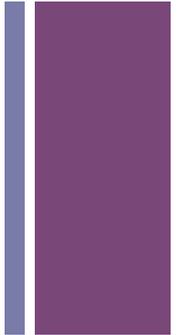
***8th Congress of the European Society on Family Relations (ESFR)
TU Dortmund University***

+ Emotion regulation

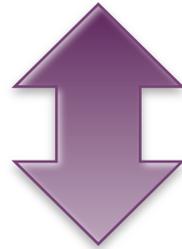


“the process by which individuals influence

- *which emotions they have,*
- *when they have them and*
- *how they experience and express these emotions”* (Gross, 1998, p. 275).



Emotion regulation

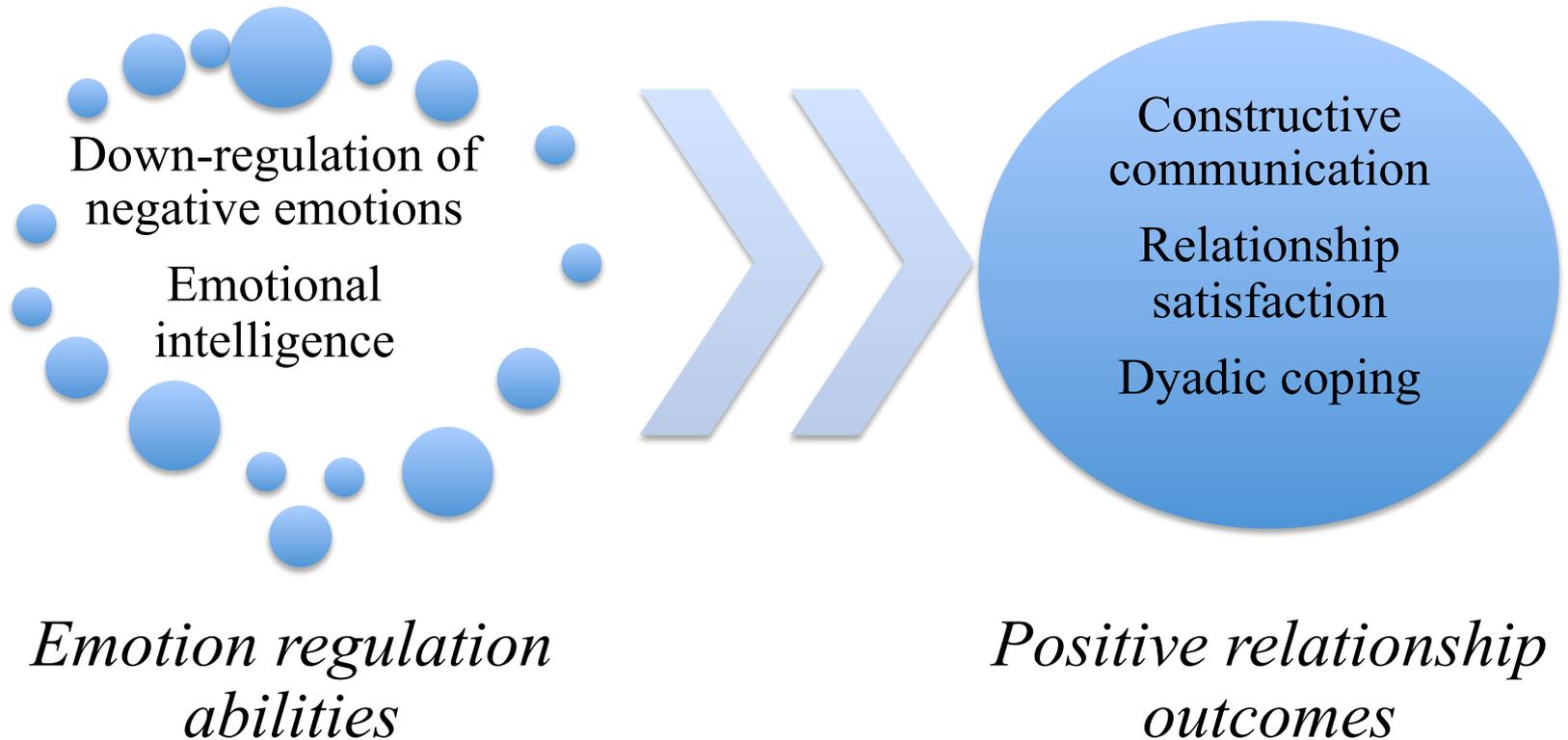


well-being, less depression, less anxiety and social relationships quality

(Garnefski, Kraaij, & Spinhoven, 2001; John & Gross, 2004; Lopes, Salovey, Côté, & Beers, 2005; Martin & Dahlen, 2005)

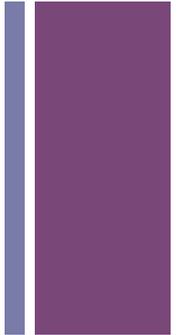
- ✧ couple research in this area is still limited.
- ✧ more research on emotion regulation in intimate relationships is needed (Haase, 2014)

Emotion regulation and relationship outcomes



(Bloch, Haase, & Levenson, 2014; Papp & Witt, 2010; Zeidner & Kloda, 2013).

+ Emotion regulation in couples



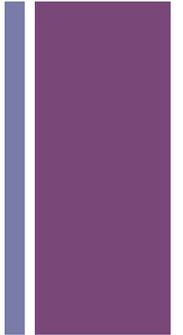
- future studies should focus on the consequences of emotion regulation on different couple outcomes (Haase, 2014);
- addressing different aspects of emotion regulation (e.g. cognitive conscious emotion regulation strategies);

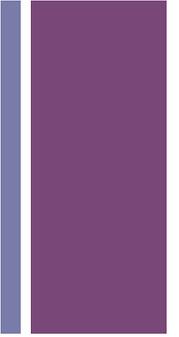
+ The aim of our study

- The present study examines whether husbands and wives' **cognitive conscious emotion regulation strategies**

- are associated with **positive dyadic coping behaviors** and

- ultimately affect their **marital satisfaction**.





Emotion regulation and dyadic coping

Dyadic coping

Dyadic stress

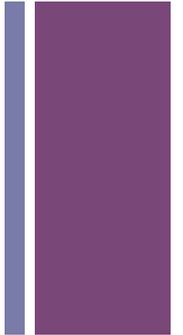


joint, **dyadic appraisals** in addition to individual appraisals of the stressful situation – ***we-stress***



dyadic coping (joint coping efforts of the couples, ***cooperative use of common resources*** (Bodenmann, 2005)).

+ Dyadic coping



- Partner-oriented behaviors (SDC, DDC)
- Couple-oriented behaviors (CDC)

+ Forms of dyadic coping

Positive dyadic coping

- *supportive dyadic coping*
- *common dyadic*
- *delegated dyadic coping*

Negative dyadic coping

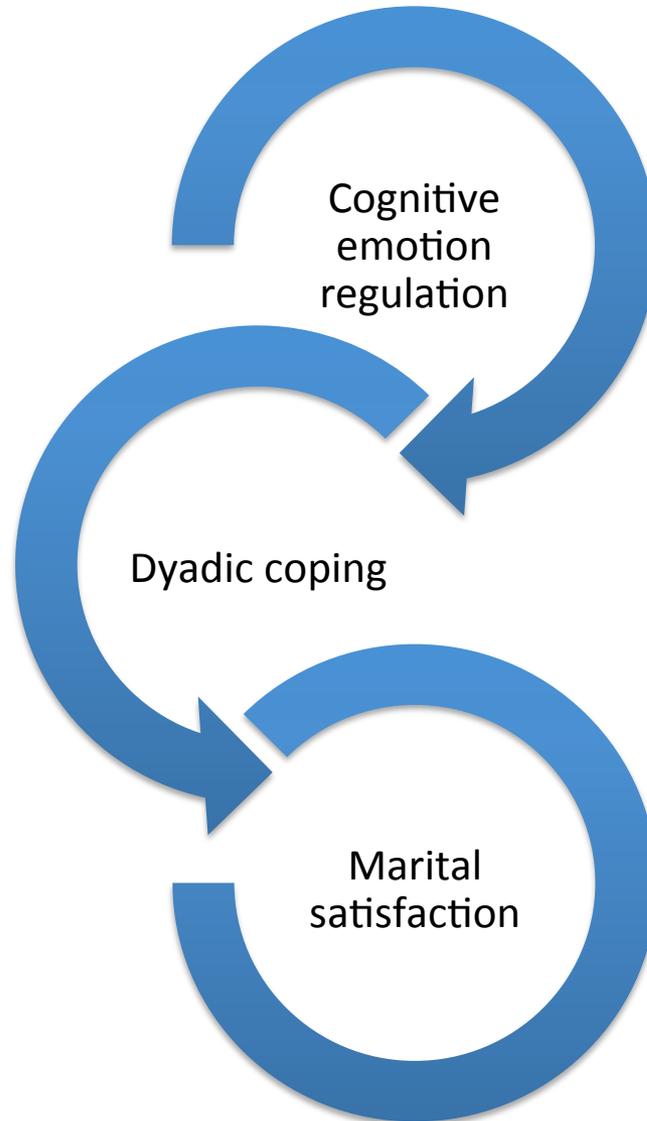
- *hostile dyadic coping*
- *ambivalent dyadic coping*
- *superficial dyadic coping*

Emotion regulation and dyadic coping

partners' *negative emotional expression* was *negatively associated with their own supportive dyadic coping and common dyadic coping* (Bodenmann, Charvoz, Widmer, & Bradbury, 2004).

both male and female *partners' ability to control negative emotions* was *positively related to their own positive dyadic coping and negatively related to their own negative dyadic coping* (Papp & Witt, 2010)

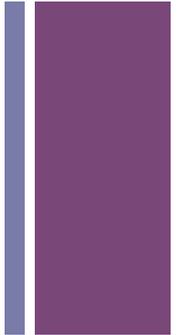
The current study



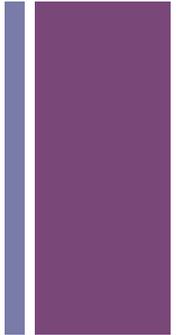
Cognitions in regulating emotions

- Emotions could be regulated through cognitions - **cognitive emotion regulation** (CER, Garnefski et al., 2001);
- **adaptive CER strategies**: planning refocusing, positive refocusing, positive reappraisal and putting into perspective;
- **maladaptive CER strategies**: self-blame, other-blame, rumination and catastrophizing.

+ Adaptive CER strategies



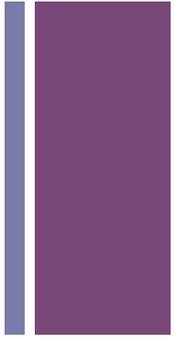
- *Planning refocusing* (thoughts about next steps to take for managing the stressful situation);
- *Positive refocusing* (thoughts about other positive and joyful experiences);
- *Positive reappraisal* (according a positive meaning to the stressful event);
- *Putting into perspective* (thoughts involving decreasing the value of the stressful experience when compared to other negative situations).



The current study focuses on the extent to which

- the use of these **cognitions in regulating emotions** is related to the reporting of more **positive dyadic coping** behaviors, which will increase **marital satisfaction** in married couples.

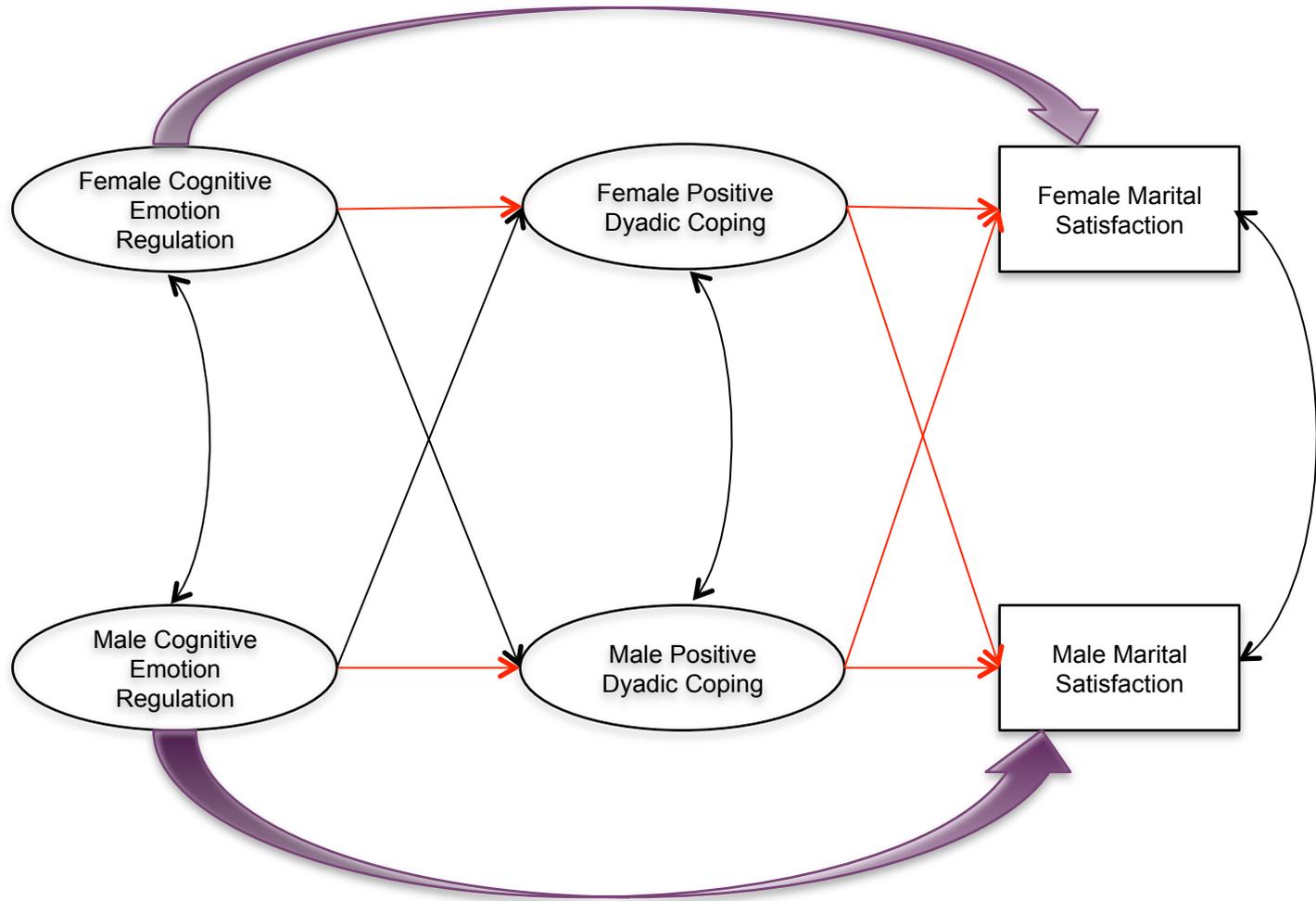
+ Hypotheses



H1: each partner adaptive CER strategies will be positively associated with one's own positive dyadic coping (H1.1) and with one's own marital satisfaction (H1.2).

H2: each partner positive dyadic coping will be positively associated with one's own marital satisfaction (H2.1) and with one's partner's marital satisfaction (H2.2).

H3: each partner positive dyadic coping will mediate the association between each partner's CER strategies and his/her own marital satisfaction (H3.1) and between each partner's CER strategies and his/her partner marital satisfaction (H3.2).



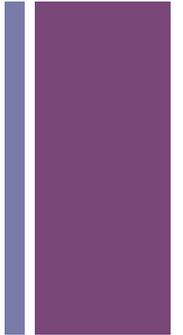
+ Sample

295 married couples;

Men - mean age: 39.30 (SD = 9.35);

Women - mean age: 36.14 years (SD = 9.37);

- range = 20-64.
- marriage duration: 13.05 years ($SD = 9.30$; range = 0.25-40 years)
- Couples had on average 1.43 children ($SD = 1.14$, range = 0-8)



Measures

- *Emotion regulation*: Cognitive Emotion Regulation Questionnaire (CERQ; Garnefski, Kraaij, & Spinhoven, 2002)
- *Positive dyadic coping*: Dyadic Coping Inventory (DCI; Bodenmann, 2008)
- *Marital satisfaction*: Couples-Satisfaction Index (CSI 32; Funk & Rogge, 2007)

Results

Correlations among Path Model Variables

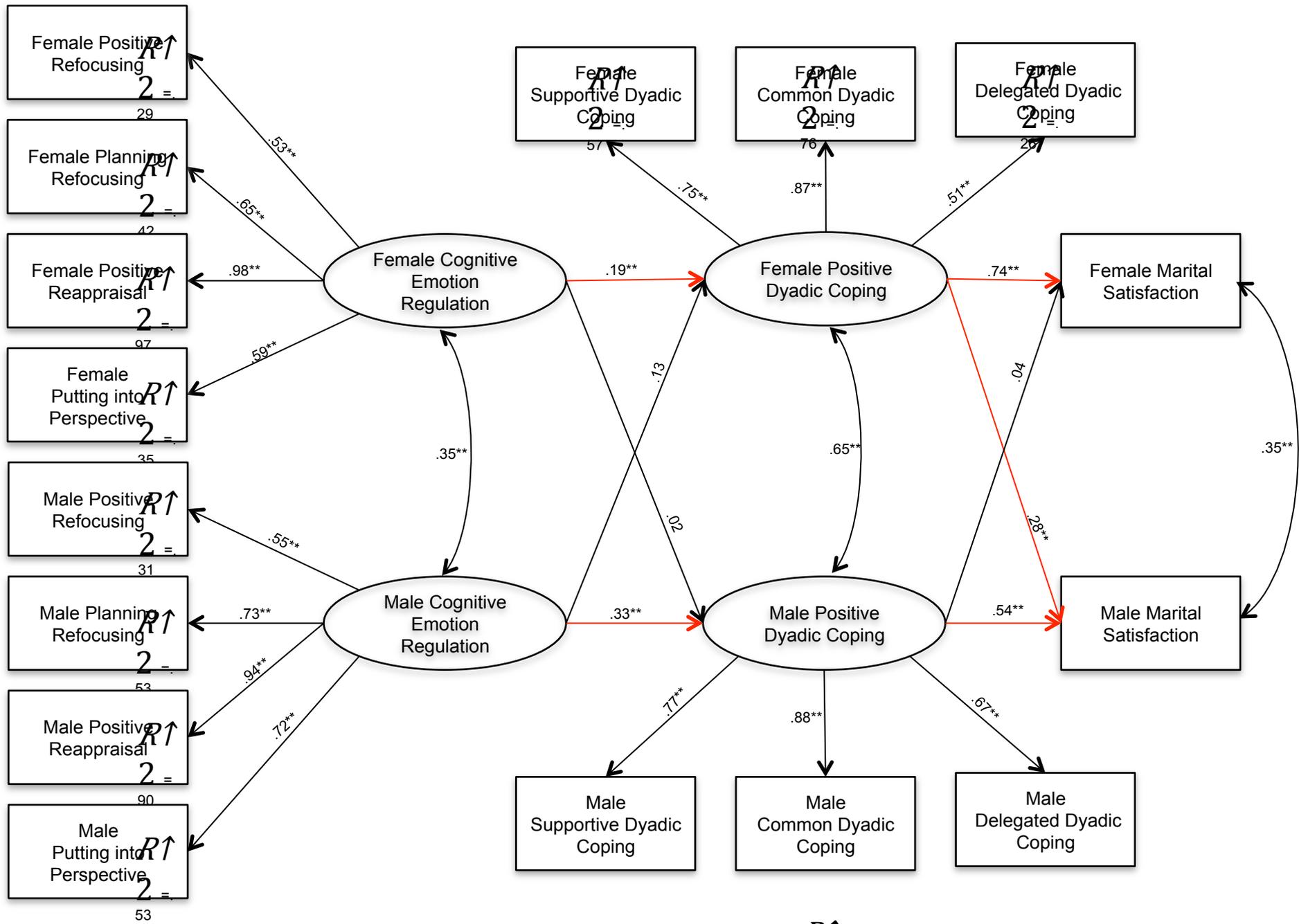


	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1. Positive refocusing	.25**	.32**	.53**	.43**	.15**	.13*	.12*	.06
2. Planning refocusing	.35**	.26**	.64**	.34**	.19**	.19**	.19**	.08
3. Positive reappraisal	.52**	.70**	.31**	.61**	.26**	.20**	.20**	.11
4. Putting into perspective	.51**	.51**	.69**	.41**	.22**	.12*	.12*	.10
5. SDCO	.26**	.32**	.37**	.23**	.49**	.73**	.52**	.63**
6. CDC	.19**	.25**	.30**	.14*	.74**	.66**	.45**	.69**
7. DDCO	.21**	.24**	.27**	.24**	.66**	.61**	.36**	.32**
8. Marital satisfaction	.09	.22**	.18**	.07	.55**	.69**	.37**	.67**

- Intercorrelations for women are shown above the diagonal and for men below the diagonal.
- Intercorrelations between spouses are presented in italics.

Results

- all adaptive cognitive emotion-regulation strategies were significantly positively correlated with dyadic coping behavior;
- all positive dyadic coping strategies were significantly positively correlated with marital satisfaction, for both husbands and wives;
- planning refocusing and positive reappraisal among men were significantly positively correlated with their own marital satisfaction. For women, their adaptive cognitive emotion regulation strategies were not correlated with their marital satisfaction.



Results H1

- male and female adaptive cognitive emotion regulation had a significant direct effect on their own positive dyadic coping ($\beta_{\text{Wives}} = .19$, $\beta_{\text{Husbands}} = .33$), supporting **H1.1**.
- The direct paths from CER strategies to marital satisfaction were statistically insignificant in the structural model. **H1.2** was not supported.

Results H2

- female and male positive dyadic coping were significantly positively related to their own marital satisfaction ($\beta_{\text{Wives}} = .74$, $\beta_{\text{Husbands}} = .54$), as a support for **H2.1**.
- there were significant partner effects with wives' positive dyadic coping having a significant positive effect on husbands' marital satisfaction ($\beta_{\text{Wives}} = .28$), as a partial support for **H2.2**.

Results H3

- Both female and male cognitive emotion regulation had a significant indirect effect on their own marital satisfaction ($\beta_{\text{Wives}} = .14$, $\beta_{\text{Husbands}} = .18$). **H3.1** was supported.
- female cognitive emotion regulation strategies had an indirect effect on male marital satisfaction through female positive dyadic coping ($\beta_{\text{Wives}} = .05$), as a partial support of **H 3.2**.

Discussion

- the present study furthers our understanding of how **dyadic coping strategies mediate the effect of one's own emotion regulation on their own marital satisfaction and their partner's marital satisfaction.**

Discussion

- The positive association between **individual adaptive cognitive emotion regulation and positive dyadic coping** - consistent with previous research that has shown a **positive association between individual and dyadic coping strategies** (Bodenmann et al., 2004; Papp & Witt, 2010).
- our results converge with prior studies showing that **emotion regulation abilities are associated with positive relationship outcomes** (Zeidner et al., 2013; Bloch et al., 2014).

Discussion

- wives and husbands who could **downregulate their negative emotions** through cognitions



were better able to use **positive dyadic coping** (supportive, common and delegated coping)



in consequence will be more satisfied with their marriage.

Implications for therapy

- Couples therapists may want to assess each partner's cognitive emotion regulation strategies to determine if an intervention is needed **to address dysfunctional cognitions before implementing dyadic interventions**;
- interventions targeting cognitions contributing to maladaptive emotion regulation: Rational-emotive couple therapy (Ellis, 1986);
- Through **cognitive restructuring, cognitive reframing and cognitive distraction**, partners could improve their individual coping skills in confronting with family stress.

Limitations

- **cross-sectional design**, which does not allow us to make causal assumptions and does not permit us to know if the mediation effect is stable over time
- **self-report measures**, which increases the subjectivity and social desirability.

Future research

- daily diary and longitudinal designs;
- experimental, observational studies;
- research on *highly distressed couples*.

