

Habitual Expressive Suppression of Positive Emotions Predicts Worse Mental Health Symptoms for Friends with Relative Lower Social Class

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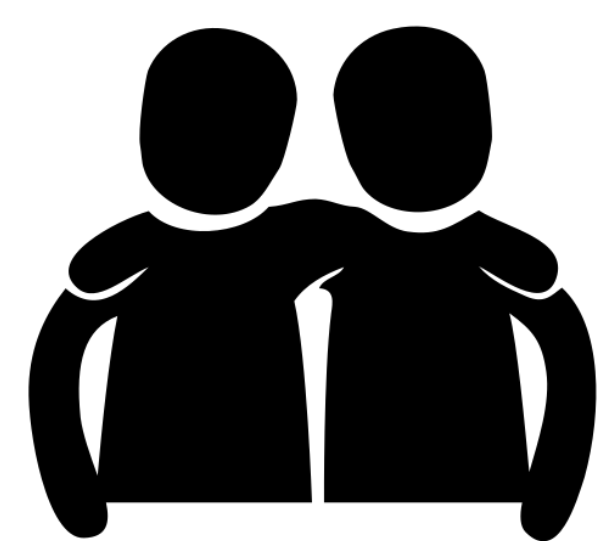


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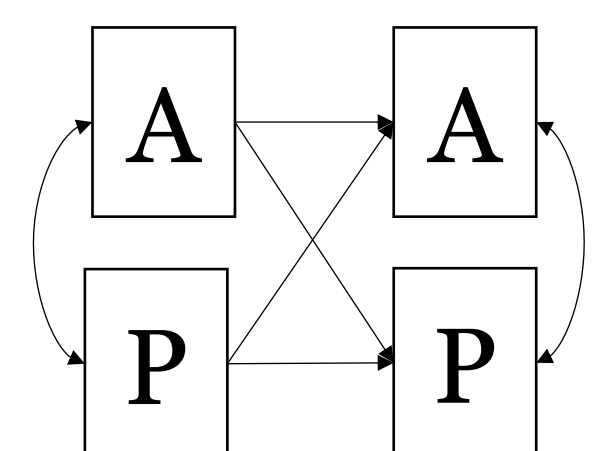
BACKGROUND

- Expressive suppression of positive (but not negative) emotions was found to uniquely predict worse well-being.
- Whether such an effect extends to interpersonal contexts for people with interdependent social ecology is unclear.
- Being in lower social class might amplify the harm of suppression of positive emotions, given that low social class is characterized by interdependent social realities.

METHODS



- 109 friends dyads
- Subjective and objective social class (family income, maternal and paternal education levels)
- ERQ, BDI, BAI



- APIM
- Social class difference (actor - partner) between friends were entered as a moderator

RESULTS

- Significant interactions between expressive suppression of positive emotions and social class difference was found, standardized regression coefs: $-.17 < \beta s < -.12$, $ps < .05$.
- Simple slope analyses showed that when participants' social class was relatively lower than their friends', the more they habitually suppressed their positive emotions, the more severe their mental health symptoms were.
- By contrast, when participants' social class was relatively higher than their friends', their habitual suppression of positive emotions did not predict their mental health.
- Interactions between social class difference and expressive suppression of negative emotions were not significant across all the models.

DISCUSSION

- Because being lower in social class is characterized by interdependent cultural values, the costs of not expression of positive emotions (and perhaps also not connecting with others) might be greater.
- The findings contribute to the burgeoning interests in studying emotion regulation in a contextualized approach (i.e., with specific valence, with specific people, and in social relationships)
- Future research is needed (a) to reveal the underlying mechanisms (e.g., shared positive emotions) (b) to examine the generalizability across age groups and types of relationships.

