

## 契合度與同步化的雙人舞：親密關係情緒調節模型

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### 摘要

人際情緒調節是目前的新興議題，近期研究多建立在 Gross (1998) 的理論架構，以個體角度出發(Reeck et al., 2016; Christensen & Haynos, 2020; Zaki & Williams, 2013)。然而華人相較於歐美更仰賴以人際關係處理情緒 (Trommsdorff & Rothbaum, 2008)，且看重情緒調節如何影響關係和諧(何文澤等人, 2017)。實證研究亦發現人際情緒調節的效果有不少文化差異 (Ray-Yol et al., 2020)。由此可見，現有的理論並不適合描繪華人的入際情緒調節歷程。研究目的：提出以關係角度建構的入際情緒調節模型，作為後續研究的基礎。研究方法：以質性方法，訪談 24 對在學情侶。研究結果：經以主題分析法分類出華人親密關係入際情緒調節的四階段：情緒覺察、情緒原因同理、調節動機、調節策略。情侶於各階段的契合度高低會影響下階段的契合度，進而影響情緒調節訴求的成敗。契合度低時，情侶會採用同步化方式來提升彼此的契合度。研究結論：本人際情緒調節模型的互動焦點圍繞著契合度與同步化兩大構念，是現有人際情緒調節理論較少提及之處，突顯了以關係角度研究的必要。本研究將其與現有理論、華人人際關係研究比較，提出未來的研究方向與後續應用參考。

**關鍵詞：**人際情緒調節、情緒調節策略、親密關係

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## 壹、緒論

情緒調節一直是心理學熱門主題，吸引了許多學者投入研究。其牽涉範圍之大、影響之深，從日常的幸福感受到引發憂鬱與焦慮心理症狀，都涉及了個人情緒調節的運作。然而綜觀人們生活經驗，無論是親密關係、親子、甚至朋友，人際互動引發的情緒可說是情緒的主要來源。因此，現今情緒調節主題的研究開始從自身（intrapersonal）角度的情緒調節焦點轉向關注人際（interpersonal）情境下的情緒調節，更貼近日常生活經驗。

以自身角度出發的情緒調節理論，多假設個體是受到外界刺激產生情緒，評估後則著手調節自身的情緒。現有的人際情緒調節理論奠基於此，同樣假設個體遭受某一刺激影響，產生了某些負面情緒。互動中的對方則扮演了調節者的角色，可介入個體負面情緒的調節歷程（Reeck et al., 2016; Zaki & Williams, 2013）。此類理論雖能清楚描述擁有負面情緒的個體或調節者的認知與行為歷程，但對雙方如何互相影響，或是對人際情緒調節後之結果的描寫相對較少。

另一方面，近期研究亦發現人際情緒調節歷程有不少的文化差異。相比西方人，華人不僅常使用人際方式調節情緒（Liddell & Williams, 2019），亦更在意有無破壞互動關係（何文澤等人，2017；Trommsdorff & Rothbaum, 2008）。由此可見，華人不僅比西方人更仰賴人際情緒調節，且十分注意互動對關係的影響。目前西方針對人際情緒調節的理論對關係互動著墨較少，實有必要採取關係角度的觀點，發展適用於華人文化的人際情緒調節理論。這不僅可作為未來華人研究的理論基礎，亦能與西方現有理論相互對話，互補不足，朝向更包容文化差異的全人類心理學發展。

## 貳、文獻回顧

### 一、人際情緒調節理論

既往情緒調節文獻的關注焦點一直是自身範疇，不僅其情緒調節策略的內涵甚少涉及與他人的互動，其研究情境也較少使用人際情境（Campos et al., 2011）。近年開始有研究討論情緒調節中的他人可以發揮什麼功能，這就實際的生活經驗來說亦相當合理。傷心難過時，若有親人或朋友的支持陪伴，心情調適較快（Uchino et al., 1996）。當我們情緒激動時，不管是好是壞，常見的反應便是與他人分享（Gable & Reis, 2010）。因此，人際情緒調節其實是相當普遍的現象。而透過他人協助情緒調節，通常會比自身情緒調節更能達到緩和情緒的效果（Horn & Maercker, 2016）。

目前人際情緒調節研究大多立基於過往研究自身情緒調節的脈絡，應用 Gross(1998)的情緒調節歷程為基礎，針對人際情境修改特定的策略內涵(Christensen & Haynos, 2020;

Reeck et al., 2016)。另一方面，人際情緒調節與社會支持、同理心、利他行為等心理學構念多有重疊，像是社會支持研究著重於社會支持的接收者，亦即人際情緒調節的接收者；而同理心與利他行為的研究著重於人際情緒調節的協助者。因此有學者提出整合性觀點（Zaki & Williams, 2013），將上述的相關研究以「由誰發起調節」分類統整。為求行文簡便，以下預設人際情緒調節時，僅有兩方，一方是有負面情緒的人，稱為「情緒者」，另一方則是與情緒者互動的人，稱為「他者」。

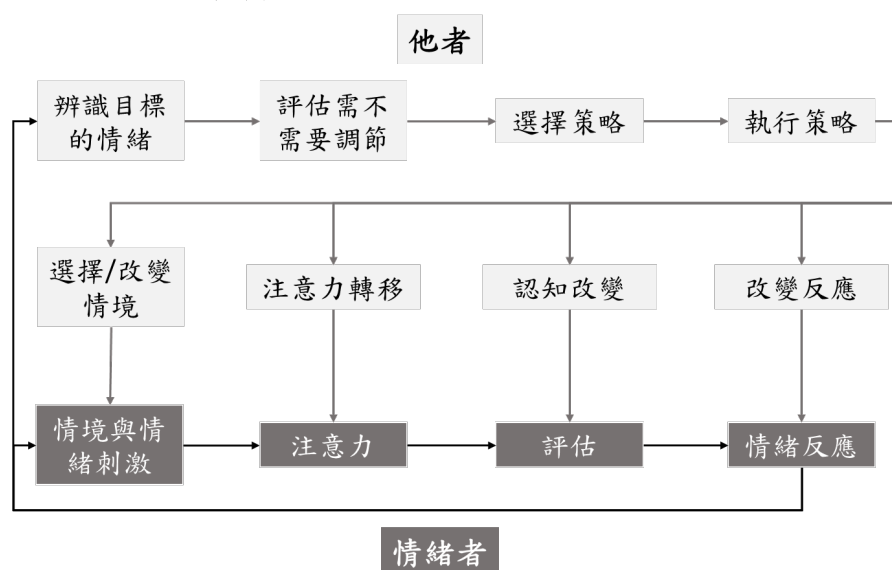
## 二、擴展至人際情境

Gross (1998) 的理論觀點經歷了二十多年，仍十分受到情緒調節研究者的喜愛。他將情緒調節策略按照時間發生的先後分為：選擇情境、改變情境、注意力轉移、認知改變、調整反應五階段，並提出各階段的具體運用策略，編製了情緒調節問卷（emotion regulation questionnaire）。此歷程簡單清楚，不少研究人際情緒調節的學者亦將該歷程擴展到人際情境，思考人際特有的調節策略與編製人際情緒調節量表（例：Austin & O'Donnell, 2013; Hofmann et al., 2016; López-Pérez et al., 2019）。

當中，較具系統化的理論莫過於 Reeck 等人（2016）發展的社會情緒調節（social regulation of emotion）理論。該理論分成兩部分，先描述人際情緒調節中他者如何主動調節情緒的歷程，接著討論情緒者會對他者的調節行為有什麼反應（Reeck et al., 2016）（見圖 1）。

圖 1

### Social regulation of emotion 說明



註：翻譯自 Reeck 等人（2016），頁 51。

以他者來說，其須先覺察情緒者有情緒波動，接著再評估自己是否需要協助情緒者

調節情緒。若他者判斷情緒者的確需要協助，便會選擇合適策略並執行之。而他者的策略選擇，則以 Gross (1998) 的理論觀點分成四階段，分別影響情緒者情緒狀態的不同面向。像是「情境選擇或情境改變」，就是移除引起情緒者不快的刺激；而「認知改變」就是影響情緒者對情緒刺激的評估方式。他者需要預測情緒者對不同策略的反應，才可能選出調節效率較高的策略。

他者四階段的調節策略，會影響情緒者對應的面向，分別是：情境、注意力、評估與情緒反應。以情境而言，「他者出現在眼前」便是新的情緒刺激，但他者的協助也可能導致情緒者需仰賴他者，無法靠自己調節情緒 (Spinrad et al., 2004)；對注意力而言，注意到他者想要協助自己調節情緒也是新的情緒刺激，情緒者有可能從負面角度詮釋他者的協助或心生抗拒 (Levenson et al., 2014)。以評估而言，其分為評估自身效能與他者的動機，當他者出現時，自身效能感通常會隨之提升 (Beckes & Coan, 2011)。但情緒者也可能認為對方的協助隱含著自己的能力不足，因此會讓自己的效能感降低。情緒者對於他者的動機可能有許多解釋，認為對方可能是想操控自己，或認為對方並非出於利他，而是有其他隱藏的目的。最後，情緒者若覺察他者著重於調節其情緒反應時，像是說「放輕鬆一點」或「不要這麼生氣」，通常無助於改善其內在情緒感受，反而會引發更負面的情緒 (Little et al., 2013)。

該理論相當清楚地將他者主動調節的過程分階段敘述，各階段策略皆會影響情緒者的不同面向，而情緒者對他者的調節並非全盤接受，其調節效果會隨著自身的詮釋產生差異。顯現該理論成功將原本限定於自身的情緒調節架構擴展到人際場域，雖然預設是他者先行動、情緒者回應的互動方式，但在理論上已是相當大的貢獻。

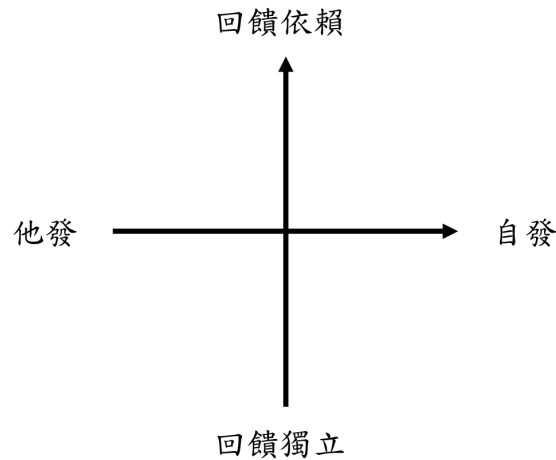
### 三、整合相關構念

人際取向雖是情緒調節近年的研究方向。然而以他人協助調節情緒已出現於許多心理學相關構念中，如社會支持、同理心、依附關係等等。面對過去數十年積累的相關研究，Zaki 與 Williams (2013) 認為上述議題皆與人際情緒調節密切相關，卻因無統一的架構，導致研究分散於不同議題，無法統合。因此提出人際情緒調節架構。此理論的特色是將人際情緒調節以兩個向度來分類，第一是調節行動由誰發起，也就是「自發」(intrinsic) 相對於「他發」(extrinsic)；第二是如何評估調節是否成功，分為「回饋依賴」(response-dependent)

與「回饋獨立」(response-independent) (請見圖 2)。藉此架構，可統整涉及多個領域的研究成果，並提供不同領域學者彼此交流的基礎。以下簡單介紹其分類方式。

圖 2

### Zaki 與 Williams 模型說明



註：資料來源：翻譯自 Zaki 與 Williams (2013)，頁 805。

#### (一) 自發型

自發型代表由情緒者發起整個調節過程，以自身情緒為調節標的。情緒者主動要求他者，請其協助調節情緒。而探討社會支持接收者的相關研究，便可歸屬於此類。

他者的調節可分成回饋依賴與回饋獨立兩種運作模式。顧名思義，前者調節成功與否是需要他者做出某特定行為來決定，例如情緒者收到一個好消息，並向他者分享。若他者開心道賀，情緒者也會更開心；但若他者無動於衷，情緒者的開心會被澆熄，調節失敗。回饋獨立則是強調情緒者的表達、分享行為本身就已確保調節成功，並不需要他者特定的反應。例如情緒者向他者表達自身情緒經驗前，他／她需要辨認與標籤自己的情緒，這有助於情緒者進一步認識自己的情緒狀態，並可降低情緒強度 (Torre & Lieberman, 2018)。而他者回應與否，或回應的內容，對於情緒者的情緒調節成敗影響不大。

#### (二) 他發型

他發型是由他者主動調節情緒者的情緒。肇因是他者察覺到情緒者的情緒狀態，出於利他的動機主動調節其情緒。前段 Reeck 等人 (2016) 提出的社會情緒調節理論即屬於此類。此外，探討個體如何發揮同理心，或進行利他行為的相關研究，亦屬於此類。

此類同樣可分為回饋依賴跟回饋獨立兩種模式。回饋依賴是指他者出於利他動機，立下要改變情緒者情緒狀態的目標。因此，唯有看到情緒者的情緒朝向目標方向改變，調節才算成功。例如見到朋友傷心難過，會主動安慰他、問他有什麼困擾，直到朋友釋懷了才放心。

而回饋獨立則相反，當他者調節情緒者的情緒時，他者並非以情緒者的回饋來判斷情緒調節是否成功。這看似弔詭的情況卻很常發生，因為單單助人行為本身就會對他者自身帶來正向的情緒感受（Andreoni, 1990）。他者容易以自己的感受來判斷調節行為是否成功，而忽略情緒者真實的情緒變化。

此理論將過去的研究清楚區分成兩軸度與四類。相比與前段配合人際情境的研究，雖他者與情緒者的互動描寫較少，但其主要貢獻在統合分散各處的相關構念研究，提供未來研究者良好的分類指引。

#### 四、現有理論之反思

綜觀上述兩個取向與理論，在其著重之處都有獨到見解，亦引發不少後續研究。但若置於華人文化脈絡，仍有待商榷之處。

##### （一）文化差異

目前研究顯示，華人相比於西方人，遇到負面情緒事件時，更常自發使用人際情緒調節（Liddell & Williams, 2019），相當符合獨立我－相依我理論的主張（Markus & Kitayama, 1991）。西方人偏向獨立我，強調自我必須獨立於他人，不受他人影響而遂行自己的目標（Markus & Kitayama, 1991）。其認為個體應當從嬰兒時期仰賴母親調節情緒的方式，發展至依靠自己調節情緒（Trommsdorff & Rothbaum, 2008）。華人偏向相依我，強調自我與他人的連結，重視不應為了自身的目標而破壞人際和諧（Markus & Kitayama, 1991）。相較於獨立我，相依我更看重透過人際關係來調節情緒，也重視調節過程是否會破壞人際關係（Trommsdorff & Rothbaum, 2008）。

不同文化對人際情緒調節的看法不同，亦影響了個人使用人際情緒調節策略後的身心適應。以西方人為主要參與者的研究，發現越常使用人際情緒調節的參與者，其個人身心適應通常較差（Hofmann et al., 2016）。但偏向相依我取向的土耳其人，使用人際情緒調節時卻無負面影響（Ray-Yol et al., 2020）。而華人使用人際情緒調節時，對親子關係與自身的幸福感有良好的效果（何文澤等人，2017）。雖尚無研究針對人際情緒調節傾向進行跨文化比較，但已顯示文化差異可能存在，且影響效果不小。

##### （二）華人文化的關係取向

無論是社會情緒調節理論（Reeck et al., 2016），或是 Zaki 與 Williams（2013）整合架構，皆是從個體觀點出發論述。例如社會情緒調節理論先以他者為主體，闡述其可能的行動，接著說明各行動對情緒者的可能影響，以及情緒者的回饋。而後者則是分成自發（情緒者主導）與他發（他者主導）兩類。此論述方式雖能深入描述個體內在歷程，

但對人際關係或雙方互動歷程相對較少著墨。

華人的入際互動向來深受關係影響 (Hwang, 1987)，關係類型左右了雙方的互動準則。像是情感性關係 (親子、夫妻、密友等) 的互動是以滿足雙方的關愛、安全感等情感需求為目的。因此處於情感性關係的華人，無論是自己或對方有情緒調節的需求時，會自主地使用入際情緒調節。但工具性關係 (例如店員與顧客)，是順從公平交易法則。倘若店員心情不好並不會尋求顧客的協助，而會刻意維持笑容 (Niven, 2016)，以維持店員的正面形象，促使顧客繼續光臨。至於混合性關係 (親戚、師生、同學等) 則是看彼此的人情與面子，雖有一定情感基礎，但無法像情感性關係真誠表達自己的感受，因此也較難使用入際情緒調節。由此推論華人使用入際情緒調節與否會受到關係類型影響。

另一方面，華人使用入際情緒調節時，亦比西方人更在意其對關係的影響效果 (Markus & Kitayama, 1991)。華人的情緒調節目的除了改變情緒外，更追求個人內心的和諧，期望能了解情緒對個人的意義並有所成長 (Frijda & Sundararajan, 2007)。當情緒涉及入際關係時，情緒調節很可能影響雙方的關係。能否順利調節情緒，又促進雙方的和諧進展，便成為這歷程十分重要的目標 (何文澤等, 2017)。例如，華人面對負面情緒常使用忍耐的因應方式，但光是隱忍對個人身心並無益處 (陳依芬等, 2011)。反而是忍耐之後找適當時機與對方溝通、了解彼此的想法，對個人身心與關係品質最有利 (何文澤等, 2017)，且勝過西方現有個人取向的情緒調節策略。

由上述理論與研究可推論，華人的入際情緒調節相較於西方人更受關係脈絡影響，亦更看重互動過程。若現有以個體角度取向出發的理論要應用到華人社會，很可能無法捕捉到上述特性。本研究認為應當以關係角度為主，建構切合華人文化脈絡的理論，更能掌握其入際情緒調節的重要構念。

## 五、以親密關係為研究對象

雖現有理論皆無指明入際情緒調節中的關係類型，但入際關係緊密的程度將會左右調節成效對關係發展的影響。越緊密交流的關係，雙方各自擁有的資源越接近共享，因此雙方的互動方式越接近「一系統內的兩元素」而非兩獨立個體 (Fitzsimons et al., 2015)。而華人的互動尤其受關係類型的影響，如前段所述 (Hwang, 1987)。

從前段所提的情感性、混合性、工具性關係類型中，本研究決定以情感性關係為初始研究對象。因為情感性關係的互動準則以滿足對方情感需求為目的，此關係類型比起其他兩類，使用入際情緒調節的頻率應更高，且影響更大。

情感性關係內有親子、伴侶、密友等關係，過去入際情緒調節研究多以親子或親密伴侶關係為研究對象 (Butler et al., 2007; Horn & Maercker, 2016; Martini & Busseri, 2010)。若比較親子與親密伴侶關係，前者雙方擁有的資源易出現落差，雙方互動較不對等，存

在權力距離。雙方情緒調節的相互影響上，父母影響子女的效果遠大於子女影響父母。父母的情緒調節信念會透過幼年的教導或社會學習等方式，影響子女的情緒調節（Gottman et al., 1996）。另一方面，親密伴侶關係中經驗的正負向情緒強度高於其他人際關係（Ekman & Davidson, 1994），更容易彰顯人際情緒調節之影響作用。

綜上所述，親密伴侶關係不僅雙方互動對等、交流頻繁且情緒強度高。因此本文將以此類關係為建構理論的起點。未來則可考慮其他關係的特性差異後，進一步修正理論應用在其他人際關係中。

## 六、研究目標與設計

為進一步了解人際情緒調節之經驗與建構互動歷程，本文以質性研究建構親密關係情緒調節模型。其目標是深入了解親密關係面對負面情緒的互動經驗，並以關係層次建構人際情緒調節歷程、識別歷程中的重要構念與了解歷程各階段的核心內涵。

設計訪綱時，盡可能了解情緒調節時雙方情緒、認知與對彼此的解讀等等，並從雙方互動角度來了解情緒事件的演變，才能以關係角度捕捉到人際情緒調節歷程發展的重要屬性。

## 參、研究方法

### 一、參與者

本研究之參與者為 24 對情侶，48 位受訪者，如表 1。大多數受訪者花了一小時左右接受訪談。所有的情侶皆是異性戀，年齡平均為 21.4 歲（標準差 1.9 歲）。招募方式使用社群媒體的相關群組作宣傳。請有意願參與者留下聯繫方式後，由研究者致電安排訪談時間。

### 二、研究流程

本研究已取得某國立大學行為與社會科學研究倫理委員會審查許可（案號 201905HS053），確保本研究之設計符合研究倫理與保障參與者權益。

每位參與者皆單獨接受訪談。研究者會說明研究權益、保密原則與可能的風險，並詢問能否接受錄音，且特別強調及保證伴侶並不會知道此次的訪談內容。參與者同意後即開始進行訪談。訪談結束後，研究者詢問參與者有無任何疑惑處，確定完全解惑後，研究者交付參與者訪談費 200 元作為酬謝，訪談結束。



表 1

研究參與者代碼與年齡

性別	代碼	年齡	性別	代碼	年齡
女	A	20	女	M	20
男	A	23	男	M	22
女	B	20	女	N	21
男	B	22	男	N	21
女	C	20	女	O	19
男	C	22	男	O	18
女	D	21	女	P	19
男	D	27	男	P	20
女	E	19	女	Q	20
男	E	21	男	Q	20
女	F	19	女	R	21
男	F	21	男	R	21
女	G	23	女	U	22
男	G	21	男	U	21
女	H	20	女	V	22
男	H	21	男	V	21
女	I	20	女	W	21
男	I	21	男	W	20
女	J	24	女	X	22
男	J	24	男	X	23
女	K	24	女	Y	21
男	K	23	男	Y	20
女	L	23	女	Z	22
男	L	28	男	Z	22

### 三、訪談大綱

由於著重於人際情境下的情緒調節歷程，本研究設定情境為伴侶一方引起另一方的負面情緒時，雙方會如何互動。訪談過程先以蒐集基本資料為起頭進行暖身，包含受訪者年齡、如何認識伴侶以及交往時間。接著請受訪者回憶交往迄今，伴侶惹自己生氣、悲傷或不開心等負面情緒的鮮明經驗，照著時間先後順序描述整段互動經驗。研究者會針對不清楚處進一步追問，釐清雙方互動時對另一方的解讀，以及互動的調節動機、調節策略、互動方式與情緒的變化。俟研究者無疑問後，會簡單整理這段經驗的互動歷程，

向受訪者確定研究者的理解有無出入。待受訪者確認無誤後，研究者會再詢問伴侶還有無令其感受負面情緒的其他段經驗，其進程序亦如前述。

若受訪者回答其他段經驗的互動歷程與之前描述的經驗皆是相似的互動模式，已無其他不同的經驗過程，則訪談會轉換立場，改邀請受訪者描述自己令伴侶感受負面情緒的經驗。同樣照著時間順序描述整段經驗的發展過程，步驟如前述。研究者依然會整理互動的模式後，與受訪者再次核對對事件發生過程的理解有無出入。若受訪者認為其他經驗也是相似的互動過程，已無需要補充處，訪談會進入下一階段。

下一階段的訪談不再將情境限定在情侶的一方引起另一方負面情緒，而是外在的情緒刺激引起自己或伴侶的負面情緒時，雙方又是如何互動。待受訪者描述完畢後，研究者詢問其喜歡或欣賞伴侶的三個原因，以及對目前關係的滿意程度，作答是從 0~10 分量尺做選擇，最後以正向觀點的問題結束訪談。

#### 四、資料分析

本研究以主題分析法（**thematic analysis**）處理訪談逐字稿。此分析法是將原始資料加以分類、組織後，得到資料蘊含的主題與主題間的關係。選用主題分析法的原因是，相較於其他質性研究方法，主題分析法的使用較具彈性，不需要特定的知識論為分析基礎。且可以配合研究者不同的理論觀點，找到資料當中的模式或主題（**Braun & Clarke, 2006**）。

以本研究而言，為了從關係思維角度分析，會將同組情侶的逐字稿視為同份資料，且僅保留情侶雙方皆提到的情緒事件，刪去僅有一方提到的事件，並將同一事件雙方的敘述內容按時間序排列對比。此類方式更易協助本研究找到時間排列的關係互動模式。但此類篩選方式無法分析僅有情侶單方提到的情緒事件，相關研究限制將在後文中討論。

呈現結果時，將盡可能去除可辨識之資訊，或將該資訊調換成其他不影響結果的字詞，例如從事的活動、場所或是爭執的原因等皆會改換。特別是本研究的訪談皆允諾參與者之受訪內容，並不會洩漏給其伴侶知道，因此呈現逐字稿時將盡可能替換訪談稿中提及的具體事例內容。

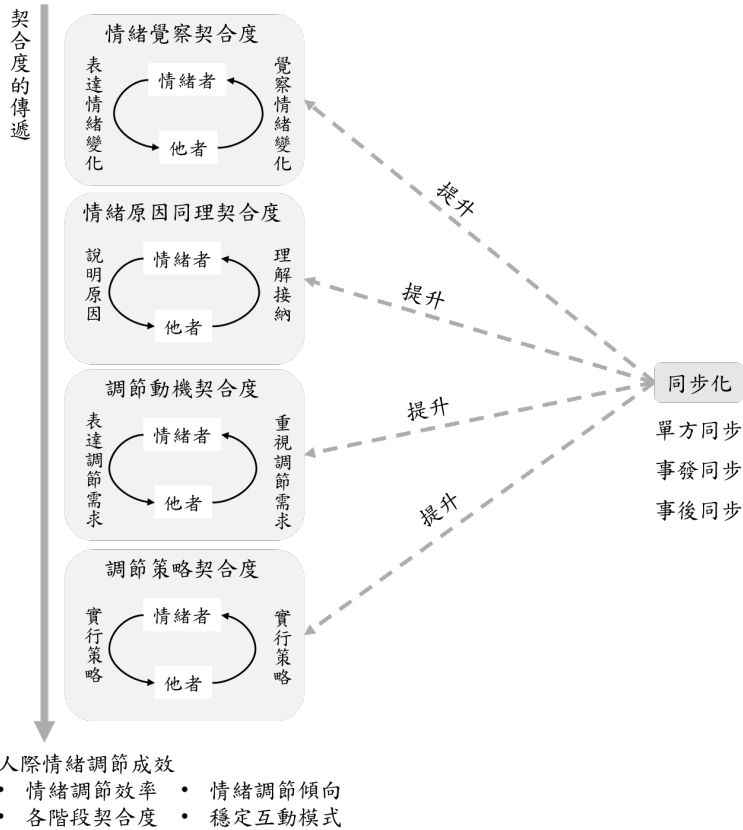
此外，在研究分析結束後已統一寄送簡明的結果報告給各參與者。結果報告並無引用任何逐字稿的內容，而是以不涉及心理學專業術語的方式，描述本研究的質性結果，並感謝參與者的貢獻。期望藉此回饋參與者的付出，並確認其對質性分析結果的認同與否。截至本文投稿之前，並無參與者反應分析結果不妥。

#### 肆、分析結果

參與者之代號以英文字母排序，從 A 到 Z (S、T 組參與者因故取消)。為求敘述方便，以代號+性別稱呼參與者，例如 C 男。另外，以「研」稱呼研究者。參與者多能描述交往中引發負面情緒的事件，且能按照時間先後描述事件的變化。匹配情侶雙方述及的負向情緒事件時，多數情侶大約有 1~4 件雙方皆談到的負面情緒事件。

從雙方對事件的描述內容，本研究分類出三大主題：**四階段歷程**、**同步化**、**人際調節成效**。主題間的關連可見圖 3。四階段歷程是本研究識別人際情緒節的主要階段，分為：情緒覺察、情緒原因同理、調節動機與調節策略。每階段互動的契合度，將會影響下一階段的互動，進而影響人際情緒調節的成敗。同步化則是由一方或雙方試著提高某階段雙方之契合度所做的努力；人際調節成效是雙方在此關係中對調節情緒的效率與偏好傾向的高低，會隨著長期互動的演進發生改變。

圖 3  
人際情緒調節歷程模型



一、四階段歷程

本研究將參與者的互動按時間先後排列，可辨識出參與者的互動歷程有四階段：(1)

情緒覺察：本文探討的主題既然是以人際情緒調節歷程作為研究焦點，其第一個基本要件自然是以互動雙方有人覺察到有負面情緒的產生為起始點，否則就不會有需要進行後續情緒調節相關動作的必要，因此情緒覺察階段自然就成為啟動人際情緒調節歷程的第一個要件；(2) 情緒原因同理：伴隨著覺察到有負面情緒出現之後，互動雙方自動地會對負面情緒產生的原因進行歸因，藉以評估自身是否需要採取調節動作的必要，如果情緒者向他者說明情緒產生原因後，一旦他者對負面情緒產生原因評估為咎由自取，無意協助調節，則人際情緒調節歷程也就只好轉化成為自身取向，而非人際取向的情緒調節歷程；(3) 調節動機：而唯有在他者對於情緒者之負面情緒產生原因能夠同理的前提下，後續的人際情緒調節動作才會有產生的可能性，否則人際情緒調節歷程將會嘎然而止於前一階段。然而當情緒者表達了需要對方安撫與調節負面情緒的請求後，即便他者想要協助他調節，這也需要先立定調節欲達到的目標，亦即所謂的調節動機，否則調節行動將不知如何著手進行；(4) 調節策略：即便他者有了調節動機後，互動雙方也需要對調節策略有些共識，否則將無法保證順利達成期待的目標。

從上述的說明中，可以了解到人際情緒調節歷程的複雜性。因此每對參與者在訪談過程中，並非均能明確提到四階段的互動內容。某些參與者會更著重於互動過程中並不契合的階段，但每對參與者經歷的階段順序大致皆如上所述。若參與者認為前面階段互動不甚理想，則會採取同步化方式，重建上一階段的互動，這會在同步化段落詳述。

綜觀參與者從情緒事件發生至情緒調節結束，雙方在各階段互動的契合度高低一直左右著情緒調節的成敗。此特性在雙方訪談內容按照時間序排列時，更為明顯，上一階段互動的不契合往往會導致下一階段的互動也不契合。

訪談亦見，互動契合並非代表雙方的行為一模一樣，而是雙方對特定事物的認知與價值觀是否相互吻合。畢竟一方是情緒者，另一方是他者，雙方的角色、資源皆有差異。訪談中互動契合的雙方常是做出互補的行動，而非如出一轍的行為。整體歷程可參見圖 3，並按照訪談結果整理出各階段的任務，容後在各階段詳述之。可見在每一階段，情緒者與他者欲達成契合的任務並不相同，當雙方皆能達成任務時，該階段的互動便是契合的。

以下按照時間順序，分別描述情緒覺察、情緒原因同理、調節動機與調節策略四階段的互動。

## 二、情緒覺察階段

描述負面情緒事件時，幾乎所有參與者都會先解釋事件背景，發生什麼事情引發了情緒者的情緒。訪談中，產生負面情緒的情緒者都會先覺察到自己的情緒變化，並表現在與他者互動的語言或非語言訊息。他者則是透過其言語、表情、行為或語氣覺察其情

緒變化。當他者能覺察到對方的情緒變化時，會開始思考自己是否需要協助對方改善情緒。若無法覺察對方的情緒變化，他者便不會協助情緒者調節情緒。由此可見，情緒覺察可說是人際情緒調節歷程的起始點。此外，亦有可能是他者比情緒者更早覺察情緒變化，唯本次訪談中並未遇到此情況。

### (一) 互動高契合

此階段高契合的互動，通常是情緒者以他者能覺察的方式表達情緒，且他者亦覺察其情緒變化並正確判斷其情緒種類。若要達成高契合，兩方需具備的特質與採取的行動並不相同。不少情緒者會直接說出目前的情緒感受，但亦有參與者透過語氣、表情或是肢體動作的前後落差突顯自己的情緒變化。表達方式是否達成契合，端看他者能否捕捉到上述傳達的情緒變化，進而了解其情緒種類。像是 V 女便是用臉部表情傳達，而 V 男也很快發現。

研究者（以下用「研」代表）：他怎麼發現你很難過？

V 女：因為他講話，我都不理他。我是不會隱藏情緒的人，只要不高興就會明顯表現出來，讓他發現到我現在這個人的情緒是這樣，他就察覺到。

（V 情侶，111-112 行）

研：你會先發現她臭臉還是她會先講？

V 男：通常會先發現（她臭臉）。

研：發現她臭臉會做什麼？

V 男：我問她怎麼了，通常她都會講。有時候她可能會故意不講，多問幾次後就會講。

（V 情侶，137-140 行）

或是 K 男因為 K 女說不想跟他講話而難過時，由於女方對男方的表情非常關注，在他未說出口時就發現他的情緒變化。

研：一開始怎麼發現他很難過？

K 女：他都不講話。

研：表情會變嗎？

K 女：有，變得很無辜。

（K 情侶，111-114 行）

研：你聽到她不想理你，你的感覺是？

K 男：我會覺得難過，怎麼會不跟我講話，我也沒有做什麼不好的事（…）。

研：她會很容易發現你的情緒變化？

K 男：她很容易發現我在想什麼，看表情就知道了。

（K 情侶，170-173 行）

## （二）互動低契合

若情緒者表達情緒方式過度隱微，或是他者並無注意情緒者的情緒狀態，導致他者從頭到尾無覺察其情緒變化，或過了許久才覺察到，便是低契合的互動。

特別是情緒者使用非語言表達時，比起語言表達較難被他者覺察。像是 P 女認為自己冷淡對待 P 男時，P 男應該會覺察自己在生氣，只是不確定生氣的原因。但 P 男則是連 P 女生氣都沒發現，遑論猜測生氣的原因。

P 女：之前他做一件事讓我不開心，他靠近我時我就會想要躲開，讓他知道我在生氣，但我之前不會跟他說在氣什麼。

（P 情侶，124-125 行）

P 男：她會回覆得很冷淡，我當下覺得沒什麼。她表現越來越奇怪，我就開始問她怎麼了。她才會特別跟我講她怎麼想。可能是意圖跟我表達她的不滿，但我沒有接收到她的訊息。我覺得要是那時候知道她在生氣就好了。

（P 情侶，157-159 行）

對比此階段的 K 情侶與 P 情侶，情緒者皆使用非語言的表達方式，雙方的互動卻有截然不同的結果。由訪談可見，並非使用特定的情緒表達方式，便能確保他者能順利覺察情緒，需端看雙方當下的狀態與覺察能力。有時是情緒者的表達過於隱微，他者的情緒覺察力有未逮；亦可能是他者正在忙，沒注意到對方的情緒變化；或是他者不熟悉情緒者的表達習慣等等。這顯示互動的契合與否不一定是某方的原因，需同時考量雙方的互動。

## （三）互動低契合之影響

當情緒者有負面情緒，並試著表達後。若他者過久未覺察對方的情緒，契合度持續低落便可能引發情緒者的不滿，進而產生更多的負面情緒。衍生的負面情緒很可能惡化後續階段的互動，並加深情緒調節的難度。例如 C 女為了趕赴約會，只好提早結束與他人的見面。C 男卻不曉得 C 女的犧牲，即使 C 女強調後，仍未覺察女方的負面情緒，情

緒因此逐漸積累而爆發。

研：當你有這些情緒時，你當下是怎麼處理的？

C女：我就馬上跟他說，我為了你改時間。他就沒有聽進我的話，說你幹嘛突然變（時間），沒有說謝謝。我已經跟他說我的用心，但他對這一塊沒有任何的回應。（...）。我走路的時候，（他）就這樣一直講這樣，我覺得他聽不進去，然後我就一直哭。

（C 情侶，35-40 行）

C男：我（當時）還不理解她前面有約，聽她講之後（...）其實我當下沒有想這麼多，因為那天（我）真的心情很糟，在想別的事情。後來才知道她真的蠻不開心的。就是散完步（...），她就開始解釋說到底在幹嘛，解釋說這件事（提早結束與他人的約）對她說，是一個犧牲。

（C 情侶，105-108 行）

### 三、情緒原因同理階段

情緒原因同理是情緒覺察的下一階段，雙方在覺察情緒者的情緒變化後，進一步了解該情緒產生的原因，以進行後續的情緒調節。訪談中，情緒者通常比他者更能了解該情緒產生的原因。研究者推論是因發生在自己身上的情緒，對情緒事件的脈絡較熟悉。他者通常對該情緒的前因後果認識較少，因此較無法立刻理解情緒產生的原因，多仰賴情緒者述說其情緒原因。或許亦有他者比情緒者更了解情緒原因的情境，但本次訪談並無遇到類似的經驗。

#### （一）互動高契合

此階段互動的高契合代表情緒者成功傳達情緒原因，而他者亦能接納或認同該原因的合理性。而且，此階段的契合度對後續的調節動機與調節策略影響甚大。訪談可見，情緒原因的內容會影響雙方的調節動機，以及擬定合適的調節策略。像是 E 女對 E 男的大學同學吃醋，但遲遲不說出口。男方已覺察女生的情緒變化，但不清楚情緒產生的原因。直到雙方見面時，女方才說出口。男方同理了女生的情緒原因，不僅接納女生的情緒原因，也擬定針對該原因的調節策略（跟朋友溝通）。

E女：（與他見面時）我就一直說沒事，後來我也不知道怎麼講的，我還是一直想到這件事，剛好他在我旁邊，所以就哭了。

研：他看到你哭的反應是什麼？

E 女：他就問我怎麼了。後來我就慢慢解釋 (...)。後來我們有再聊到這件事，他其實覺得我哭得很合理，他能理解。

(E 情侶，174-178 行)

研：(看到她哭) 你的反應是什麼？

E 男：暗地裡想說沒這麼嚴重，但在她角度這樣想也是無可厚非。有這樣的情緒表現，應該也是蠻正常。

研：你怎麼跟她講？

E 男：我就說其實她(大學同學)沒這個意思，跟女友保證說我會跟同學說這件事。

(E 情侶，199-203 行)

## (二) 互動低契合與其影響

訪談發現此階段契合度低有兩種情況。第一是他者不知道情緒為何產生，例如情緒者並無明確告知，或是他者疏漏了這項資訊。像是 G 情侶參加課程時，G 女因為 G 男與其他女生距離太近而不滿，卻一直沒說出口。G 男雖發現 G 女不滿，卻不明白為什麼。

G 女：那天我很不爽就都不講話，他就說你怎麼了。他好像沒有發現，以為是上課我哪裡不開心。(…)我(對他)的口氣也是比較冷，但他還是沒有發現我為什麼生氣。

(G 情侶，274-277 行)

G 男：我那時不知道她為什麼難過，是讓我覺得最不知所措一次。(…)因為我們的朋友圈不一樣，所以一開始沒有發現她情緒不好。後來解散之後，送她回家。她心情很不好又不願意說。

(G 情侶，318-322 行)

另一情況是，他者雖了解情緒原因，但無法接納此原因，認為對方是無理取鬧或反應過於情緒化。訪談發現，他者有此類詮釋時，常會影響其後續的調節動機，認為自己沒必要幫助情緒者改善情緒。更甚者會對情緒者產生不滿，衍生負面情緒。無法接納情緒起因，比起不了解情緒原因，更容易降低後續的調節動機契合度導致情緒調節較易失敗。像 F 情侶班級出遊，F 男不滿自己被 F 女冷落而開始生氣。女方當下已理解男方生



氣的原因，但她無法接受男方因此生氣而產生不滿，兩人當天不歡而散。

F 男：(…) 有一次我跟她的朋友去北投，她很多時候不理我。她一直跟她的朋友在一起 (…)。所以我心情就不太好。

(F 情侶，59-61 行)

F 女：(在北投) 我曾經坐下來，幫一個朋友拿水杯。那時候我男朋友坐在我對面，他就生氣，為什麼水杯不是給他，他覺得這個動作代表朋友比他重要。我那時覺得男友生氣很無理，就只是朋友在我身邊而已。

(F 情侶，16-18 行)

#### 四、調節動機階段

調節動機是指雙方對情緒者的情緒進行調節的動機強弱。訪談中，情緒者的調節動機皆是改善自身的負向情緒，並無觀察到其他的動機。他者亦是改善情緒者情緒的動機最常出現，第二常出現的則是改善自身的負向情緒。後者可能是互動時他者也產生負面情緒之故。其餘的調節動機出現次數過於稀少，尚無法進行系統性分類。

##### (一) 互動高契合

此階段的互動契合時，代表情緒者能成功表達自己需要他者協助調節情緒，而他者也認同情緒者的情緒需要改善，願意為此努力。

由於涵蓋的情緒事件原因，都是他者使情緒者不愉快。情緒者表達情緒原因時，能同理原因的他者會意識到自己是情緒的起因，進而認為自己有責任需調節情緒者的情緒。因此除了少數情緒者會直接表明調節的需求之外，多數情緒者表達情緒原因後，他者通常會感受到對方有情緒調節的需求。

例如 L 男在雙方爭吵時，會直接表明自己的調節需求。

L 男：我生氣就會說，我覺得我們可以彼此冷靜一下。

(L 情侶，77 行)

但 I 情侶因為口角吵架時，當 I 女因此生氣時，I 男便認為有義務安撫她，不需由 I 女外顯表達自己的調節需求。

I 女：應該是我一生氣，他就覺得要安撫我。

(I 情侶，10-11 行)

而他者描述調節動機時，則多與調節策略階段一起描述。通常是認同自己引起對方負面情緒時，就想盡力改善對方的情緒。像是 G 男赴約卻忘記帶安全帽，抵達現場時發現 G 女心情不好，知道情緒原因是自己的錯造成，便趕快道歉以改善她的情緒。G 女從 G 男的道歉中感受到其願意幫助自己改善情緒，雙方的調節動機與調節策略都十分契合，因此 G 女的情緒很快就調節成功。

研：如果你今天心情比較好，沒有兇他。他道歉之後，你的心情怎樣？

G 女：(...) 我覺得我有談過，有跟他說我不滿這樣就好了。我覺得我算蠻好哄的女生，他只要跟我道歉示好一下，我就覺得沒關係。

(G 情侶，59-60、78-79 行)

研：為什麼想用道歉的方式？

G 男：她講的我也覺得是我錯 (...)。

(G 情侶，92-94 行)

或是 H 男發現 H 女跟好友的打卡，有點難過女方沒有告知有這位好友。女方了解情緒原因後，也認為責任在己。第一反應是盡量向男方解釋，想讓其安心下來，而解釋前因後果也是男方當下最需要的調節策略。

研：有針對他難過情緒做什麼嗎？

H 女：有安撫他，讓他知道我跟他沒什麼，盡量解釋。第一個想法是讓他安心，讓他知道我没有做什麼不好的事情。

(H 情侶，126-127 行)

H 男：其實就是原諒，但也不能說是原諒，比較像是釋懷。

研：釋懷是因為她解釋清楚了嗎？

H 男：對 (...) 而且她也并不是做了什麼道德上有瑕疵的事情。當下聽了她的解釋，知道她的前因後果就釋懷了。

(H 情侶，177-182 行)

#### (四) 互動低契合

從訪談見到調節動機階段的互動不契合有三種情況，前兩者與之前的階段有關。第一是他者沒有覺察情緒者的調節需求，發生在雙方對情緒覺察不契合時，因此他者不會發覺須協助情緒者。第二則是與情緒原因階段有關，發生在雙方情緒原因同理不契合時，他者不認為該協助情緒者。像是 A 男生氣時，A 女雖即時覺察其情緒，但不認為男方該為此生氣，因此不認為自己須協助調節他的情緒。

研：所以後來你就會比較直接拒絕（A 男的要求），那他反應是？

A 女：他有點鬧彆扭，平常不是會生氣大吵的人。會鬧彆扭，說又不會怎麼樣（…），類似這樣的反應。

研：那你會怎麼辦？

A 女：不理他（…）。你的情緒對我來說不重要。就算你有情緒，我也不能順著你。

（A 情侶，330-335 行）

或是 O 男打工壓力很大時，其實有告訴 O 女。但女方覺得這件事沒那麼嚴重，不太認同其情緒原因，因此調節動機也不契合。

研：什麼時候（對他的煩躁）不做出反應？

O 女：他會說打工壓力好大，我會說「嗯，是哦」之類的。（…）因為我覺得事情沒這麼難（…），他會把它想太困難，對自我要求太高。（…）

研：其實你不太認同他情緒低落的原因，所以不太想理他？

O 女：對（…）

（O 情侶 189-190、193-194、200-201 行）

研：她可能不知道你悶悶的是因為這件事？

O 男：對，她有猜測。但（後來）我有跟她說是因為這個（打工壓力）。她可能覺得這個還好，就沒什麼。

（O 情侶，212-213 行）

第三種情況是雙方都認知到情緒者有調節情緒的需求，但他者並不重視該需求，認為當下有更優先的事。訪談出現兩類原因，一是互動之下，他者也產生了負面情緒，想改善自己的負面情緒。兩類動機競爭之下，因而忽略甚至拒絕情緒者的請求。像是 C 情侶因為一件事意見不合，C 女直接離開現場。C 男也因此不開心，不打算安撫女方。

研：為什麼（不追上去）？

C 男：有時候覺得有點煩，覺得幹嘛生氣，想說讓她自己靜一靜。（…）至少那天一定會再打電話給她，我看到她轉頭離開時，其實我心裡也滿不舒服的。（…）

（C 情侶，200-207 行）

研：不理他的時候，他通常的反應是？

C 女：他會有一點生氣，他會覺得為什麼我要這樣。

（C 情侶，146-147 行）

或是 H 女提議過聖誕節，H 男因為已有約而拒絕。不開心的女方便賭氣離開，男方一開始不想調節女生的情緒，直等到自己氣消了才有辦法好好關心她。

研：你想安撫她的原因是心疼她？

H 男：對，但要等我的情緒過了。一開始會很不爽，過了 10 分鐘、20 分鐘、半小時，氣消了會心疼她，所以她要走（回學校）的時候還要載她回去。

（H 情侶，211-213 行）

第二類原因也是兩類動機的競爭，他者認為現在有比改善情緒者情緒更重要的事。例如 I 情侶爭吵時，女方想要改善自己的情緒，因此想直接離開現場。男方雖認為改善女方情緒很重要，但認為讓女方了解自己的想法更重要。可見雙方採取後續的調節策略不契合。

研：（說想一個人時）他的反應是什麼？

I 女：他會希望我們先處理好，不要吵架就馬上分開。

研：那你覺得呢？

I 女：我會覺得待在一起還是繼續吵，所以先分開會比較好。

（I 情侶，58-61 行）

I 男：如果放她一個人靜一靜，她可能不會想說我當下在想什麼，或是我想要表達什麼。但如果陪她走或是安撫她，她知道我原本想法是什麼。（…）因為她可能誤會我的講話，要解開這個誤會。

（I 情侶，103-106 行）

## 五、調節策略階段

調節策略的使用十分多樣，訪談發現一次負面情緒事件中，通常不只使用一種調節策略。由於雙方角色不同，情緒者與他者使用的調節策略也會有差異。因此，調節策略契合度同樣是指雙方對於欲使用的調節策略是否有一致的認知，並各自採取所需的行動，而非雙方採取一模一樣的行動。在訪談中，多對情侶的某方採用相同的策略，效果卻各有差異，顯示人際情緒調節的成效更看重雙方互動，而非特定策略的效果。

### (一) 互動高契合

訪談發現，當雙方使用了目標一致的策略，互動較容易契合。例如 U 女生氣時，習慣先離開現場，等待 U 男追上來道歉。當男方追上來道歉與說出生氣的原因，就能成功調節女生的情緒。雙方此類互動模式出現不少次，因此也不斷調整，想縮短時間與提高調節效率。

U 女：他講了一句話觸發（我的情緒）後，我臉就垮掉，不理他，開始收東西。我就說快點回家，我要走了。話變很少，語氣比較差，想要加速離開現場。  
（…）

研：如果他沒追上來？

U 女：以前的話，我就先走了。但之前有講過，不能真的跑到對方找不到，我可能會在附近，只要他有出來就沒關係。  
（…）

研：他追上來之後會怎麼安撫？

U 女：會抱我（…）就說對不起，是因為什麼生氣嗎，如果他講對，我就會停住。他就會（…）邊解釋邊安撫，或是說讓我開心的話。

（U 情侶，233-234、238-241、254-257 行）

研：（她跑掉）這時候怎麼辦？

U 男：追她（…）。

（U 情侶，277-278 行）

### (二) 互動低契合

調節策略階段不契合，通常是雙方對於如何調節產生歧見。訪談見到的情況有三，一是雙方上一階段調節動機並不契合，自然會採取不同的策略以滿足各自的動機。此時策略便容易彼此衝突。例如 C 女向 C 男抱怨時，男方卻為她朋友辯護，女方因此更生

氣。因為男方並不認為調節女方的情緒是目前最優先的事，更重要的是溝通雙方想法。

C 女：他可能習慣跟人爭論某些東西，所以他可能不覺得我（跟他爭論）這樣是生氣。因為他可能覺得，我們只是在討論朋友的意見。不知道我（會因此）這麼生氣，但我生氣的點是他不在乎我，反而幫我朋友辯護。

（C 情侶，151-154 行）

研：所以那時候也發現她在生氣，當你發現她生氣時，你會想要怎麼辦？

C 男：我會想跟她講道理，澄清這件事。

研：你會為她生氣特別做什麼嗎？

C 男：應該不會。

研：為什麼？

C 男：我覺得我是在講事情，把我的看法講清楚，為什麼要扯情緒方面的事情。

（C 情侶，181-186 行）

訪談中可見，即使雙方前一階段（調節動機）很契合，也可能選擇不同的策略。研究者猜測是雙方調節情緒的習慣不同所致。例如 J 女與打工同事相處不愉快，想跟 J 男抱怨，男方卻用理性分析的方式跟她討論這件事，試圖帶領女方重新評估該事件。雙方使用的調節策略顯然不契合，因此無法改善女方的情緒。

J 女：我遇到一個很雷的同事，就向他抱怨。他為了安撫我、讓我不要生氣，就說這件事不重要。其實當下我只需要有個人跟我一起罵人，但他這種安撫會讓我更生氣。

（J 情侶，229-232 行）

J 男：(…)我就會試圖跟她說在不同角度之下，也沒有那麼嚴重。她就會說我沒有站在她的角度想 (…)她覺得當下要處理的就是她的情緒。

（J 情侶，330-334 行）

第三種情況則是與當下情境或是個體資源的限制有關，某方雖了解該做出的調節策略，卻無能力實行。例如 U 情侶剛交往時，U 女期待 U 男安撫自己時，能說出她生氣的原因。但剛被女方責罵的男方腦袋一片空白，只能說出對不起。

U 女：他會一直講對不起，之前也因為這件事吵架，他只會一直講對不起。吵

架時你需要多丟一點詞，像是你可能哪邊做錯，你覺得對方為什麼生氣，多講一些話安撫對方的情緒，但他只會講一兩個詞，因為他反應滿慢的。

(U 情侶，46-48 行)

U 男：加上我自己被罵的時候思緒會不清楚，沒辦法想到我要講什麼話，所以通常被罵的時候我都不太會講什麼話。可是她會很不開心，(我)為什麼都不講一些話來安撫她。

(U 情侶，210-211 行)

## 六、雙方互動之互補性

從上述四階段的互動可見，要達到契合時，情緒者與他者要完成的任務不同。從各階段的實例可看到，雖然每個階段雙方的任務不同，但雙方並非獨立完成自己的任務，與對方毫無相干。

例如情緒覺察階段提到的 P 女與 V 女皆是用非語言訊息表達自己的負向情緒，但 P 男無法覺察其情緒變化，V 男則可。研究者認為，這不代表 P 女沒好好表達情緒，或是說 P 男的情緒覺察能力太差，而是雙方互動的產物。從訪談可見，當不同情侶的情緒者以相似的方式表達自己的情緒時，有些他者能即時覺察對方的情緒變化，但有些人則無法發現。同樣的情況也出現於調節策略階段，例如調節策略階段的例子，J 男使用重新評估想調節 J 女情緒，卻與女方期待不同，因此互動很不契合。但 H 女使用重新評估協助 H 男時，卻有非常好的成效。

研：她跟你分享之後，你的情緒是很快就(消失)？

H 男：我覺得她蠻有智慧的，她會幫我整理這件事情我到底可以怎麼做，或是我到底有沒有錯，我都覺得很有道理，很快就了解。因為她是客觀的，我是有情緒的，所以她講的東西應該是比較正確。

(H 情侶，331-334 行)

研：怎麼安慰他(男友)？

H 女：看他是什麼原因，跟他講比較正向的想法，可能是什麼東西申請沒有上，或是表現不好，我就會安慰他，至少這是一個經驗之類的。

(H 情侶，347-349 行)

## 七、契合對後續階段的影響

前段詳述四階段的內涵，可見前一階段的互動契合與否會影響下一階段的互動，甚至會傳遞到更後面的階段。例如在調節動機階段的例子，覺察情緒與同理情緒原因階段的互動皆會影響調節動機契合與否。

研究者推論，當前一階段互動越契合時，下一階段便容易達成契合，反之則否。例如在情緒覺察階段提到的 K 情侶，某段訪談具體而微地包含四階段的歷程。此例是 K 男惹 K 女生氣後，女方便說不想跟他說話。但之後女方很快覺察男方因此難過。她不覺得對方在無理取鬧。反而很快安慰男方，男方的情緒也很快緩解，雙方都認為調節策略十分有效。

K 女：(…) 我就說我暫時不想跟你說話，我就跑去洗澡。我洗完澡出來，他就很難過，我就說你怎麼了，他就說沒有啊，他就開始哭。(…)

研：一開始怎麼發現他很難過？

K 女：他都不講話。

(…)

研：他哭的時候，你的反應是什麼？

K 女：我就笑，覺得他很可愛，然後安慰他

研：看到你笑他有什麼反應嗎？

K 女：他沒有什麼反應。

研：安慰他的時候，他很快就平復下來嗎

K 女：他會想要跟我澄清，他真的不喜歡我說不跟你說話。(…) 我們就開始討論，以後我生氣可以怎麼做。

(K 情侶，107-109、111-112、126-133 行)

研：她如果發現你在委屈？

K 男：她會發現說我剛才是不是講話太激動、太情緒化，她就會跟我說對不起。

研：你聽到她說對不起，你的感覺是？

K 男：我覺得情緒就平復回來。

(K 情侶，174-177 行)

訪談中可見，情侶某階段產生不契合的互動時，常會引發雙方的負面情緒。若負面情緒出現在他者身上，常會引發他者欲調節自身情緒的動機。調節動機階段的段落已提到，這容易與他者想改善情緒者的調節動機相衝突，或共同競爭其有限的調節資源，增



加了調節原有情緒的難度。

像 L 女開始不滿，語氣較不客氣時，L 男被引發的負面情緒多寡便成為後續情緒事件歷程如何發展的關鍵。若男方產生了許多負面情緒，便容易忽略女方的調節需求，導致雙方的調節動機不契合，而導致調節失敗。

研：(…) 他有情緒反應後，怎麼發展？

L 女：如果雙方情緒都好的話，彼此鬥嘴酸個兩句，其中一方會下意識轉移話題，轉移話題後兩人就當沒事。(…) 如果是大吵的話，通常都是在餐廳開始吵架，吵到不行(…) 我可能回家冷靜一下，或許晚上繼續找他把這件事處理完。

(L 情侶，74-79 行)

L 男：這件事情發生過兩三次，每次都不太一樣。如果天氣沒這麼熱，或是事情比較順，我生氣時就會說，我覺得可以彼此冷靜一下(…)。但是到第二階段，就是有人生氣的話，不可理喻的時候，我就會拿她的小缺點跟她講(…)。

(L 情侶，129-131 行)

## 八、不契合之補救：同步化

訪談發現當伴侶一方覺察到不契合時，有時會採取一些方式促使互動更契合，研究者命名為「同步化」。從訪談可見同步化分為三種類型，第一是「單方同步」，改變自己的調節動機或調節策略內容，盡可能與對方在這兩階段達成契合；第二是在調節階段中與對方針對某階段互動溝通後，以不同的形式重新執行雙方在該階段的任務，重新達成契合，稱為「事發同步」；第三則是在調節情緒結束之後，與對方溝通某些階段契合度較低的原因，最後對未來類似事件的調節歷程達成共識，稱為「事後同步」。訪談中單方同步與事發同步的發起者皆是情緒者，研究者推測是因其有調節情緒的需求，更易覺察目前的情緒調節是否契合，能否滿足其調節需求。而事後同步的發起方，則是情緒者與他者皆有。

### (一) 單方同步

單方同步與其餘兩類同步最大差異，是有無涉及雙方溝通。後兩類都是透過雙方溝通、交流彼此對調節歷程某階段的覺察與認知，達成對該階段的共識。但單方同步是不告訴對方，直接改變自己的調節動機或調節策略以順應對方。訪談有些情況是當下不適

宜與對方溝通，僅能先順應對方。像是 B 情侶吵架時，女方希望男方直接道歉，但男方則希望先分析完事情的對錯再道歉。女方雖不情願，也只好先配合男方將事情條列講述完畢。

B 女：那個狀況底下，如果你沒有把事情狀況分析完他有多錯，他就不會了解到他有多錯。所以我就先壓抑下來，先用他的語言分析羅列式的講完他哪裡錯之後（…）。

（B 情侶，229-231 行）

研：她那時候的情緒，你是怎麼回應她的？

B 男：我一直表現出我會跟你道歉，也跟她講清楚為什麼會這樣做。

（B 情侶，294-295 行）

上述可看到女方與男方對調節策略的詮釋落差甚大，男方並無感受到女方刻意改變自己的調節策略。這是因為單方同步是某方順應另一方，而無事先溝通。因此另一方通常不會發現該階段的契合度低，甚至不會覺察對方順應了自己的調節動機或是策略。

研究者亦觀察到另一類情況，是多次互動後，某方發現伴侶不打算改變自己的互動方式，只好改變自己使互動更契合。像是 N 情侶在爭吵時，N 女需要 N 男安撫才能好好講話，但男方堅持先把事情說完。女方起初很不適應，後來只好學著控制自己的情緒，順應對方的互動方式。

N 女：我前期的時候，因為我不知道他會這樣吵架，我一開始情緒會馬上上來，沒辦法控制，就會開始哭。（…）他會要求你說出來，我們就是要理性討論（…）情緒來的時候我需要有人先安撫，我才能慢慢繼續講下去，他不覺得安撫是好事，覺得要把事情解決完。（…）後來慢慢知道他的模式，到最後我會開始武裝自己，一開始會先把情緒控制著，雖然情緒還是在，但我不會輕易顯露出來（…）。

（N 情侶，19-22、25-27、29-31 行）

## （二）事發同步

事發同步可出現在人際情緒調節歷程的各階段，其方式會隨著各階段有些許不同，但都強調針對該階段進一步溝通交流。當雙方更了解彼此對該階段的認知、覺察或期待，能促使雙方改變互動方式，重新執行該階段的任務，進而提高該階段互動的契合度。例如在情緒覺察階段，若他者沒發現情緒者的情緒變化，有些情緒者會改變情緒表達方式，

以更外顯的非語言訊息或是直接說出口，促使他者覺察情緒變化。例如 C 男說錯話卻沒發現 C 女的不滿。之後女方重新表達自己的不滿，男方才覺察她的負向情緒強度比想像得高，自己應該要道歉與安撫她。

C 女：其實我那時候也有婉轉跟他說，我不喜歡你說我臉圓。但他完全沒有感覺，無法抓到我那時候的意思。其實我那時候有試著要表達，但他完全無法接收。(…)

研：希望對方應該要知道，主動安慰你？

C 女：對，安慰我。但好像不太可能，還是要跟他說。

研：那你後來大概是怎麼跟他講？

C 女：我就說你說我臉圓，我聽到你這樣講我很難過。

(C 情侶，275-282 行)

研：所以她很生氣嗎？

C 男：她就整個消沈，那個下午感覺表情不太開心，回家之後也不太理我。我才問她，你很在意那個嗎？她就說對。然後我就傳了訊息跟她道歉(…)。我有跟她解釋我認為(臉圓)這個字沒有帶任何意思。

(C 情侶，305-308 行)

除了情緒覺察階段之外，其他三階段的事發同步，多是在當下重新解釋與表達自身對該階段的認知，以求解開對方的誤會或重新理解。若雙方能達成對該階段的共識，互動自然能十分契合。例如在調節策略階段提到的 J 情侶，J 女直接告訴 J 男他使用的調節策略，並不符合自己的期待。但從男方的回應可見他並沒有特別改變調節策略，顯示同步化不一定會提高互動的契合，須看對方如何回應。

J 女：我就生氣，我就會問他說為什麼你要幫他(同事)說話，這種行為是對的嗎？在溝通的過程當中，他就一直澄清。像是我沒有覺得他是正確的，或是我只是覺得情節不嚴重而已，我就會聽懂他的意思。

(J 情侶，295-297 行)

研：她通常會怎麼說？

J 男：你這樣講法讓我覺得很受傷，怎麼可以這件事情上不站在她的立場？

研：那你會說什麼？

J 男：我會說，但我真的不懂，對面這個立場的人他們怎麼看待這個問題。或

是這種情境其實很常發生，不需要這麼嚴厲的苛責他或批評他。

(J 情侶，343-349 行)

### (三) 事後同步

另一種方式則是事後同步，即是待情緒調節結束後，雙方再討論這次人際情緒調節歷程雙方的認知與情緒，一同思考下次遇到類似事件時，雙方的人際情緒調節要如何調整才能更契合。不同於事發同步著重於當下改善，受訪者事後同步時，更著重於往後類似事件的情緒調節互動品質。像 B 女心情低落時想找 B 男聊聊，但 B 男都打字回覆，對 B 女的情緒幫助較小。雙方討論後便對調節策略達成共識，有效改善女方的情緒。

B 女：如果他覺得(…)沒有辦法講話，就會用文字回覆，說我只能幫你充電。

他意思是說，我現在只能給你這樣的心理支持。(…)

研：所以妳建議他說，當妳需要陪的時候，他就要用行動來陪妳？

B 女：有人建議我們說可以用語音各做各的，這部分因為(語音)打屁的效果還不錯，所以後來就用那個方法。

(B 情侶，69-72、94-96 行)

B 男：對她的話，一開始我也不會特別說用什麼方式對待她。後來她有跟我講，用某些方式可以緩解她當時的問題。所以後來我就變了，一開始就是用文字安慰。她後來就說(…)其實希望有人陪她身邊的感覺，不管那個人有沒有在她身邊。所以我就跟她說，如果之後再發生這樣的狀況，要嘛就是妳可以開視訊，或是講電話。(…)

(B 情侶，109-112 行)

或是 K 男會因為 K 女說「不跟你講話」而難過，經由雙方討論後，不僅男方了解女方習慣如此調節情緒，雙方也逐漸形成彼此都能接受的調節策略互動。

K 女：我還是會不想跟他講話，他就會知道這就是我的行為模式，不是因為我真的不想跟他講話，而是我這個人處理情緒的方式。

研：討論之後是接受妳處理的方式？

K 女：後來應該接受了，後來當我說不想跟他講話的時候，他也不會哭了，知道我只是在處理我的情緒，他可能會牽著我的手，先不要講話，也不會(…)那麼難過。

研：妳覺得他還是會難過嗎？

K 女：應該還是有一點，但沒有這麼難過，他會覺得不舒服，但不會有一種被我丟下的感覺，不會那麼害怕我一生氣就把他丟下。

（K 情侶，135-142 行）

## 九、人際情緒調節成效

經過四階段的人際情緒調節，其效果不僅是當下的情緒變化，亦會影響雙方的長期互動。研究者將對雙方互動的影響命名為「人際情緒調節成效」，並將訪談中所見的影響分成兩層面：人際情緒調節效率與人際情緒調節偏好傾向。前者是指在此段關係中調節負面情緒的效率；後者是個體有負面情緒時，依賴此段關係調節該情緒的傾向。

### （一）情緒調節效率

訪談可見，當情侶互動越來越契合，情緒調節的效率也會升高。隨著經歷的負向情緒事件積累，有些情侶成為彼此可靠的情緒調節資源，能藉著對方的協助，克服原先無法倚靠自己調節的負面情緒。因此，契合度高的伴侶，無論是人際情緒調節效率與偏好傾向都會逐漸升高。像是 O 情侶隨著交往時間，男方觀察到女方的抗壓性升高了，因為女方有了男方這個可靠的情緒調節對象。

研：為什麼（女友）抗壓性變高？

O 男：有一個人可以訴說。（…）好朋友其實都很忙，有時候不知道跟誰說。跟我在一起後就可以跟我說。

（O 情侶，283-285 行）

或是 X 男發覺，交往之後調節自己情緒的效率越來越高。

X 男：另一個比較大的變化，是生活上有人可以幫你分擔一些事。例如以前只有好朋友跟家人可以講，現在多一個對象可以講。有些快樂或是不高興的事情，你的散發會比較快，覺得多一個人可以幫你分擔某些事。我覺得這是最大的變化。

（X 情侶，219-222 行）

### （二）情緒調節傾向

當調節效率升高後，情侶會越來越傾向由對方來調節自己的情緒。即使是情緒的小小波動，也想尋求對方一同調節。例如 P 女提到，男方越來越願意向她訴說自己的情緒。

P 女：他變得越來越做自己，有什麼情緒就會直接跟我講，生活上遇到的各種情緒都會跟我講。

(P 情侶，199-200 行)

而 M 男也有類似的改變，越來越仰賴對方。

M 男：我會比較願意坦白我的感情，不會再這麼理性。剛開始交往時，我希望自己是個 babysitter (保母)，照顧她。到後期我會開始依賴她，把自己的事情跟她講，尋求慰藉。

(M 情侶，307-308 行)

### (三) 四階段互動變化

前段是進行人際情緒調節後對關係的影響，此段則是雙方長期相處，持續進行人際情緒調節後，四階段互動會有什麼變化。從訪談中可見，伴侶剛交往時對彼此尚不熟悉，不了解慣用的情緒表達方式或是喜歡的情緒調節策略等等，因此互動通常較不契合。有些伴侶遇到不契合的互動，會使用同步化，逐漸了解雙方情緒調節各階段的習慣，之後互動便會越來越契合。以情緒覺察階段為例，像是 Q 男提到，隨著交往越久，Q 女更容易覺察自己的情緒。

Q 男：她發現我心情不好的次數變多，如果她發現了 (我心情不好)，我就會跟她說。

(Q 情侶，23-224 行)

或是 M 女發現 M 男能更敏銳發現自己的情緒變化 (情緒覺察)，也知道她為何不開心 (情緒原因同理)，也不用較沒效率的調節策略。

M 女：他比較會發現我對某些事情比較敏感，還有我開始不講話，他就知道發生什麼事情。一開始他很努力想逗我笑，但現在不會。

研：因為發現沒有用？

M 女：對。

(M 情侶，301-304 行)

X 男也提到自己越來越能理解與接納 X 女情緒的原因。

X 男：我以前沒有正式交往過很長一段時間，現在比較能站在女生的角度想，去包容對方。

(X 情侶，215 行)

除了更容易覺察對方的情緒與同理情緒原因外，亦有許多情侶的長期互動改變在調節動機與調節策略階段。像是 H 女提到，H 男交往前後期的應對方式改變很大。經過女方同步化的努力，男方現在可以先重視女生的情緒，待女生情緒改善後，再轉為分享自己的想法。可見雙方在調節動機與調節策略都更契合了。

研：你有負面情緒的時候，對方會怎麼處理？

H 女：前期（他）是講道理，講到後來我跟他說不要跟我講道理。現在他會先安撫我，安撫完之後，他會問我說「你現在還在生氣嗎？不開心嗎？」確定我情緒比較緩和，才會說「好，那我現在跟你說，我剛才覺得怎樣」。

(H 情侶，272-275 行)

H 男：她覺得我比剛交往的時候更有耐心，這是她跟我講的，我也覺得我比單身的時候，更有耐心去陪伴一個人，慢慢聽她講。

(H 情侶，280-282 行)

#### (四) 形成穩定互動模式

如前文所提，每人的人際情緒調節有自己的習慣。當習慣不一致導致互動不契合時，雙方並非憑空迸出一套符合雙方需求的互動方式，而是透過多次同步化，從自身的習慣調整摸索出雙方都能接受的方式。訪談中觀察到相處較久的伴侶，在一方有負面情緒時，會出現一兩種穩定的互動方式。像是 R 男提到一方有負面情緒時，互動方式通常有兩種，一種是一方生悶氣，另一方安撫之後便和好；另一種則是負面情緒較高，因此演變成雙方大吵。

研：除了這兩個方式：一個是持續比較久雙方都有情緒，前一個是你有情緒他當下沒有，有沒有其他不一樣的例子？

R 男：沒有很嚴重的話應該是第一種，不管是誰惹誰生氣，常都是對方發牢騷，鬧一下彆扭就沒事了。有時候會演變成第二種，比較嚴重。第一種也會演變成第二種，如果是我惹她生氣，一開始小小的。我想一下，有時候是我惹她生氣，她覺得很嚴重，就會直接變第二種吵完之後開始冷戰。

(R 情侶，67-72 行)

或是 P 女提到交往一段時間後，當她生氣時，雙方已有穩定的互動方式：

研：當他讓妳不開心時，妳會直接跟他講這件事，妳會跟他說原因，讓雙方都了解彼此生氣的理由，解釋完之後如果是他的錯就會道歉，就會和好？

P 女：嗯。

研：這個方式也跟一開始不太一樣？

P 女：對。

研：還有沒有其他的模式，妳不開心的發展方式跟這個不一樣的？

P 女：感覺每次差不多都是這樣。

(P 情侶，214-220 行)

研究者推論，這些互動方式會穩定出現，並不一定代表雙方能透過此互動快速調節負面情緒，較可能是雙方以自己過去的習慣，經過多次同步化調整後，雙方能接受的結果。至少其能改善情緒者的情緒，且不會破壞關係。當此互動方式確立後，訪談中很少伴侶會嘗試全新的互動方式，較多是思考現有的互動可以改善什麼地方，以使互動更契合。像是 O 女有負面情緒時，通常不會馬上表達，會等 O 男主動覺察情緒。但隨著交往越久，女方會降低不表達的時間，以使情緒覺察階段更契合。

研：前面提到的模式你喜歡嗎？就是（女友）先悶一下，另一方問的時候再分享。

O 男：我覺得可以接受，現在還習慣的，不會有什麼不愉快。

研：會有想要改變的地方嗎？

O 男：我覺得暫時沒有，兩個已經比較接近有話直接說，（女友）悶的時間越來越少，幾乎沒有。

(O 情侶，292-296 行)

或是於前文調節策略階段曾提過的 U 情侶，雖然雙方互動滿契合的，但女方同步化時，想減少調節情緒所需的時間。

U 女：因為這件事太常發生了，（我們）會檢討中間不要拖這麼長，因為大家都很累（…）中間給他多一點引導為什麼生氣，如果他講我生氣的理由不是（我真正的意思），我就說不是（而非生悶氣不告訴他）。



研：所以你們一直想要把這個模式的時間縮短？

U 女：對（…）。

（U 情侶，243-248 行）

研究者認為，此現象顯示人際情緒調節的互動深受雙方特質影響。目前互動是雙方從自己的調節習慣妥協後的產物，是經歷多次互動、同步化後的結果。訪談中有些情侶會因為朋友建議或其他管道認識了其他互動方式，而嘗試使用全新的方式互動。例如事後同步段落提到，B 女聽了朋友的建議，請 B 男捨棄文字回覆的方式，而用語音方式陪伴。訪談看到多數情侶會繼續使用現有的互動方式，逐漸接納並形成雙方人際情緒調節的習慣。像是 E 男很接受目前的互動方式。

研：這樣方式有比較麻煩的地方嗎？

E 男：我覺得這個比較難想，因為沒有其他案例做比較，所以我也想不到缺點是什麼。

研：如果可以改變的話，想要改變嗎？

E 男：其實我覺得這個方式蠻好的，對我來說蠻可以接受。

（E 情侶，223-226 行）

J 男也提到沒試過其他方式，不確定會不會更好。

研：（女友）放你一個人安靜的方式，在你調整你的情緒上，是好是壞？

J 男：我也不知道，因為我沒有試過別的方式。不太知道該怎麼比較。

（J 情侶，130-131 行）

或是 Q 女想改變自己生悶氣的習慣，但她還不確定如何改善。

研：交往到現在有什麼變化嗎？

Q 女：沒有什麼形式上變化，好像一直都是這樣的感覺。我覺得我的部分應該可以更好，覺得情緒管理可以再好一點。

研：你是說不講話的時候嗎？

Q 女：對，希望情緒可以不要拉這麼長，到一個小時才能夠講出來我的情緒。

（Q 情侶，127-129 行）

## 伍、綜合討論

## 一、理論貢獻

在文獻回顧中，本研究認為現有的人際情緒調節研究存在不少文化差異。而華人互動十分看重關係特性，與現有理論的走向並不契合。以下論述本研究之理論架構，並分別討論與現有人際情緒調節理論，以及華人文化相關理論的關連。

### （一）契合度與同步化之對應構念

本研究建構的理論，以四個階段的「互動契合度」以及「同步化」為重要構念。而 Gross 於 2015 年更新其情緒調節歷程，將情緒調節分成四階段：產生情緒、覺察情緒與調節動機、選擇情緒調節策略、執行情緒調節。兩者相較之下多有對應，皆包含了覺察情緒、調節動機與調節策略。但本研究將覺察情緒與調節動機之間加入了情緒原因同理階段，對歷程描述更細膩。而 Gross (2015) 則是更著重描述整體歷程，納入了歷程起點（情緒產生）與終點（實際執行策略）。

細思兩者差異，本研究提出的情緒原因同理階段很可能是人際情境的特有構念。訪談可見，他者常需經由互動試著了解情緒者的情緒起因，才能找出較有效的調節策略。而他者試圖同理情緒者時，也常出現無法同理或了解對方情緒起因的情況，進而不想協助情緒者調節情緒。正因為他者是獨立於情緒者的個體，無法完全了解情緒者的經驗，突顯了此階段對情緒調節的影響，補足過去研究的缺漏。

若與過去同理心研究比對 (Davis, 2018)，覺察情緒與情緒原因同理恰好可對應到情感同理與認知同理。情感同理著重於覺察對方的情緒狀態，而認知同理則是了解對方的思考或感受的原因。針對情感同理的研究顯示，互動時能否準確同理 (empathic accuracy) 對方的情緒不僅是接收者的情感同理傾向，也有賴於傳達者表達情緒的傾向，需雙方共同促成準確同理 (Zaki et al., 2008)。此結果與本研究四階段互動強調的互補性十分一致。

「同步化」顯現了互動是雙方來來回回的過程，與 Bonanno (2013) 提出的調節彈性相呼應。調節彈性認為情緒調節並非只是線性的歷程，有些個體發現情緒調節成效不佳時，會返回情緒調節的前幾階段調整自己的調節動機、策略等等。同步化便展現了人際情境的彈性，由於雙方在各階段皆有自己的任務，因此需調整的不僅是自己，而是雙方對某階段的覺察與認知能否達成共識，並重新執行該階段的任務。契合度與同步化能交織出許多可能的互動歷程，進而預測一段關係較長期的發展。

### （二）與現有人際情緒調節理論對話

西方現有的人際情緒調節理論，如文獻回顧所述，皆較少考量雙方的互動歷程。雖 Reeck 等人 (2016) 與 Zaki 與 William (2013) 皆提及情緒調節雙方的互動，但本研究

的契合度與同步化構念更適宜描述著重華人文化的人際互動與歷程。

首先，Reeck 等人（2016）的理論著重於他者如何調節情緒者。其理論優勢是將他者從覺察情緒、是否需介入調節到使用調節策略的歷程描述得更為清楚，但相對來說對情緒者會如何反應就較為粗糙。特別是他者使用不同策略時，他舉出各種情緒者可能的反應，卻未說明情緒者產生不同反應的關鍵為何。假設情緒者欣然接受他者的調節，情緒調節大抵邁向成功。但若情緒者對他者的調節十分不認同，那雙方會如何回應調節失敗的可能？

事實上，以上的互動關注可以套用本研究提出的契合度涵蓋之。情緒者會對他者調節策略的反應有好有壞，便是取決於雙方調節策略契合度的高低。而調節策略的契合度高低，又可能受到前三階段因素的影響。這就與 Reeck 等人（2016）提出調節策略之前的覺察情緒、評估是否需要介入的探究不謀而合。

其覺察情緒與本研究第一階段的概念一致，而評估是否要介入調節，則與情緒原因同理、調節動機的概念相似。但 Reeck 等人（2016）的覺察情緒或評估是否需介入，僅探討了他者如何詮釋與評估情緒反應者，而忽略了情緒反應者也會視情況改變自己的情緒表達方式或是溝通方式（同步化）。因此，用於更看重人際互動的華人文化時，比起 Reeck 等人（2016）之模型，本研究應更具文化契合性。

若以本研究對比 Zaki 與 William（2013）的模型，可發現後者強調的兩向度（自發—他發、回饋獨立—回饋依賴）在本研究中有不同的發現。

首先，該模型將人際情緒調節以發起者為誰區分成兩類型（自發、他發），然而從研究訪談中，並無觀察到自發型或他發型歷程的明顯差異。無論由情緒者或他者發起，都會經過本文提出的四階段的互動歷程，才能成功達成調節情緒的效果。本研究認為，雖然自發或他發是簡單清楚的分類方式，但對整體互動關係歷程，並沒有產生直接實質的影響作用。

第二則是回饋依賴或是回饋獨立。本研究認為 Zaki 與 William（2013）的回饋依賴或回饋獨立，主要體現在雙方對調節策略互動階段的預期。當某方向對方訴苦時，他／她期待伴侶應該要好好聆聽與回應（回饋依賴），還是認為什麼反應都無所謂（回饋獨立）。伴侶的行動能否吻合他／她的期待，決定了該情緒調節的成敗。這其實與本研究提出的契合度觀點相雷同，亦即不管是回饋依賴或回饋獨立，只要雙方調節策略的互動方式是彼此相互契合的，就能夠促使情緒調節朝成功的方向發展。然而，本研究的契合度能涵蓋之現象遠較回饋依賴／獨立大許多，後者僅談了調節策略，但雙方對彼此互動的預期，亦會體現在情緒覺察、情緒原因同理與調節動機上。相較之下，契合度更適合用來描述人際情緒調節歷程的各階段互動現象，值得未來進一步探討本模型於西方參與者的文化脈絡下的契合性。

### （三）與華人相關理論之關連

於文獻回顧曾提到華人使用情緒調節時，是以情緒精鍊的方式進行，追求自我的和諧（Frijda & Sundararajan, 2007）。後續也有針對親子衝突的研究（何文澤等人，2017），進一步將情緒精鍊理論的和諧範圍擴展到人際和諧，並認為華人追求的和諧除了內心情緒的平衡，亦包含人際關係的和諧。

而情緒精鍊並非是一蹴可及的行動，需透過深度品味情緒、了解情緒的原因，並與自我概念連結，透過多次的沉澱後才能達到和諧的結果（Frijda & Sundararajan, 2007）。本研究建構的互動歷程也體現了情緒精鍊相似的內涵，情侶雙方長期相處之下，經過多次的情緒調節互動，透過同步化逐漸熟悉彼此的習慣與調整成更契合的互動方式，逐漸達到人際的和諧互動。

此理論亦與華人本土心理學關係導向的論述相合，這是華人人際互動歷程深受關係情境的影響（Hwang, 1987）。本研究針對親密關係，受訪者的確體現多數情況皆以對方的福祉為目的，也看到不同情境會產生不同的調節動機，顯現關係情境對華人人際互動歷程的影響力。

近年亦有針對親子與親密關係衝突的關係導向理論（葉光輝，2012；蕭綱玉等人，2018），認為親子衝突時，若雙方能將衝突視為了解彼此差異的契機，或是促使雙方好好溝通的機會，衝突便有可能從破壞關係轉化成加深關係的結果。該理論強調衝突的轉化是雙方互動的產物，某方做了特定行動可提高衝突良性轉化的機率，但實際能否轉化成功取決另一方的回應方式。此理論與本研究的精神相當符合，當情緒事件發生時，雙方能順利調節或是火上加油、不歡而散，實有賴雙方互動同步化或契合度的結果。如本研究顯示，並沒有特定的策略或行為能適用於所有情侶與所有情境，互動能否順利端看雙方的互動是否契合。因此相較於過去研究著重於個體自身的行為或動機，本研究著重於雙方互動方式契合與否，更能貼近華人互動以關係導向的文化本質。

最後，雖本理論是以華人文化、華人參與者為基底建構的，從關係層次探討人際情緒調節歷程也是現有中西情緒調節理論未曾嘗試的方向。特別是本研究的互動契合度與同步化並不見於過去的人際情緒調節理論概念中，但突顯情緒調節深受互動情境的影響則與近年西方研究趨勢相吻合（Aldao, 2013）。

未來本研究不僅能協助解釋人際情緒調節的文化差異，提供非西方文化另一類看待人際情緒調節的角度，亦有潛力與西方相關理論對話互補不足，以個人與關係層次並存的方式更深入了解人際情緒調節歷程的複雜性。

## 二、研究限制

### （一）回憶偏誤

由於訪談是由參與者自由回想最近或是重大的負面情緒事件，參與者的回憶可能有所偏誤。第一是比起契合度低的事件，參與者容易忽略人際情緒調節歷程高契合度的事件。因為非常高契合的歷程，代表雙方運作非常順暢，有效率地改善負面情緒。但不契合的歷程，可能衍生了更多的負面情緒，或是原有的負面情緒透過多次同步化才能調節完成，因此記憶更深刻、更容易被提取。

但本研究認為，各階段互動不契合的事件比起互動契合的事件更值得研究。因為出現不契合時，參與者多會試圖描述從何處開始出現不契合，研究者更易細分情緒調節歷程的各階段。此外，參與者會更深入描述不契合的內涵，以及雙方如何進行同步。亦可從不契合的事件中，了解人際情緒調節失敗與成功的差異。因此本研究認為事件取樣限制的影響作用不大。

## （二）納入分析之標準

第二個取樣限制是本研究僅納入雙方皆談到的情緒事件，刪去僅有一方提到的事件。其優點是能截取同一事件雙方的論述，容易判斷雙方各階段契合與否。而且參與者單獨受訪，可確保其論述不會受到另一方的論述而修正或扭曲。但缺點在於可能忽略情緒覺察不契合的事件。例如某事件對女方意義重大，帶來許多負面情緒，因此女方在訪談中提到此事件。但男方無覺察女方的負面情緒，覺得是小事，男方可能不會在受訪時提及此事件。因此該事件會被剔除於分析之外，無法分析其對女方或雙方關係的情緒調節影響。

這些未說出口的負面情緒對關係亦可能有不小影響，隨著時間的積累形成關係中的未竟之事（*unfinished business*），進而阻礙雙方往後相似事件的互動。或是導致未說出口的一方捨棄人際情緒調節的方式，想僅靠自己調節情緒。未來需特別注意情緒覺察階段不契合的事件，其對關係的影響可能會大於理論預期。

## （三）性別差異

最後一個限制是性別差異。本研究並無系統性比較性別差異，無法肯定人際情緒調節的使用傾向有性別差異存在。雖過去研究指出女性比起男性更常使用人際管道以調節自己的情緒（Nolen-Hoeksema & Aldao, 2011），而男性較常自己調節自己的情緒，不仰賴伴侶調節。但針對華人的研究顯示調節負面情緒時，使用人際管道的傾向並無性別差異（Ding et al., 2021），不過該研究並無指定人際關係的種類。考慮到人際情緒調節亦受到關係特性的影響，很可能指定親密關係、親子關係或友誼關係時會有不一樣的結果，猶待後續研究更系統化驗證之。

## 三、未來發展

### （一）量化契合度

本研究僅是發展關係層次人際情緒調節理論的第一步，未來需思考如何將四階段互動的契合度與同步化等重要構念進行操作化定義，並擬定測量方式，以實際驗證上述構念與親密關係的互動、情緒適應等變項的關係。

如本研究所述，互動契合與否有賴於雙方互動與評估，如何測量這類關係層次的變項將是未來的重大挑戰。建構相關量表時，最好能取得親密關係雙方的資料，結合情緒者與他者的評估以接近互動的全貌。然而，情緒者與他者評估的互動契合度要如何統整，作為該次人際情緒調節的關係指標，仍待後續研究思考。

### （二）情侶與夫妻差異

本研究收取的皆是情侶樣本，因此情侶與夫妻關係對親密關係情緒調節模型的影響差異有待進一步探討，尤其交往時間與互動頻率對親密關係可能產生影響。交往時間會影響伴侶積累的互動契合度，若僅是交往不久的伴侶，契合度還不穩定，單一的負面情緒事件對雙方的影響，會比交往許久的伴侶影響更大。互動頻率則可能左右人際情緒調節對個人身心或關係的效果。即使人際情緒調節失敗了，也可能因為互動不多，而減緩了失敗帶來的負面影響。但互動甚多的伴侶，無論成敗的效果都會放大回饋到個體與關係中。

至於情侶與夫妻間，若扣除交往時間與互動頻率的差異，其最大差異是有無明確的法律承諾關係。有法律承諾存在，是會促使夫妻更願意正視互動不契合的問題，想辦法同步化；抑或認為互動不契合也不會導致關係結束，因此置之不理？這些需未來進一步探究才能得到較明確的推論。

另一方面，本研究的參與者幾乎為學生，訪談的負面情緒事件多是日常互動、學校或人際關係等議題，較少出現經濟、家人關係等議題。新婚夫妻適應婚姻時，常見的影響議題像是原生家庭的規則差異、傳統性別角色或工作與家庭的平衡等等(張思嘉等人，2008)。兩者相比的確有許多不同，議題的差異是否會影響人際情緒調節的歷程，亦需後續研究探討之。

### （三）他者非引發者之情境

於研究方法之訪談大綱提及，訪談問題分成三大部分，第一是伴侶令參與者產生負面情緒；第二則立場互換，參與者令伴侶產生負面情緒；而第三部分則將產生負面情緒的原因限定於外在環境，探討雙方會如何互動。

所有參與者對第一與第二部分的描述較詳細具體，通常能舉出特定的事件。但對第三部分的敘述則較為抽象，且外在環境因素的來源非常多，因而極少出現雙方皆共同提

到的情緒事件。因此本研究的主題分析是以前兩部分為主軸進行，也較能深入探討雙方互動的歷程。

研究者回顧參與者對第三部分情緒調節事件的敘述，認為相較於情緒是因自己或伴侶引發時，有以下數點差異。第一是情緒覺察與情緒原因同理兩階段較難契合，由於情緒並非因雙方互動產生，他者可能渾然未知對方有負面情緒，也較缺乏資訊理解負面情緒的起因。因此非常仰賴情緒者主動表達與說明負面情緒事件；第二是調節動機階段，當情緒是因他者引起，且他者能同理情緒原因時，他者會認為自己有責任調節情緒者的情緒，畢竟自己是始作俑者。但當情緒是外界環境引起時，訪談出現較兩極的結果，體現參與者對情緒調節觀點的差異。有些他者認為自己的情緒是自己的責任，因此伴侶有負面情緒時，也應當自己想辦法處理。但有些參與者則認為伴侶不開心時，自己當然義不容辭要協助對方；第三則是調節策略階段，當情緒是因自己或伴侶引發時，「認錯」或「道歉」策略較常出現，再搭配其他能舒緩負面情緒的策略。而當情緒是外界引發時，則不會出現「認錯」或「道歉」的策略。

綜上所述，研究者認為情緒原因是外界或是關係中的彼此引發，主要影響的是各階段較細緻的內涵，並不影響整體歷程的先後次序或各階段的互動關係。本研究礙於時間有限，對外界引發情緒的事件探討甚少，期待後續研究者能更深入剖析情緒引發原因來源不同對人際情緒調節歷程的可能影響效果。

#### （四）與自身情緒調節比較

若以調節手段區分，情緒調節可分為自身與人際兩大類。過去研究多探討自身情緒調節，以Gross（1998）編列的情緒調節問卷（emotion regulation questionnaire, ERQ）為主要的研究工具。另一方面，亦會呈現實驗室標準化的情緒刺激，評估個體恢復情緒的效率，以測量其情緒調節能力（Bonanno et al., 2004; Gross, 1998）。上述構念皆屬於個體層次的變項，與本文發展的關係層次模型十分不同。

若欲彰顯人際關係中，關係層次與個體層次變項的落差，實可將本文的人際情緒調節契合度變項與ERQ、實驗室測量之情緒調節能力放在同一研究中相互比較。檢驗其在人際情境時，對關係品質、個人身心適應的影響效果。本文預期，契合度變項對關係品質影響效果將強於ERQ或情緒調節能力的作用效果，因為前者是測量雙方情緒調節的相關互動，後者僅測量個體的情緒調節習慣或能力，因此推論對屬於關係層次的關係品質的作用效果自然較強。而且此效果於華人參與者身上會比西方參與者更明顯，因為華人更傾向使用人際情緒調節（Liddell & Williams, 2019）。但預測個人身心適應時，則可能各有勝場。

互動越緊密的關係，人際情緒調節成敗對個人的影響越大（Fitzsimons et al., 2015）。因此，交流越密切的親密關係，其契合度指標對個人身心適應的預測效果，可能強於ERQ

或情緒調節能力。但交流較疏離的親密關係，ERQ或情緒調節能力的預測效果可能強於契合度指標。未來值得進一步進行此一作用效果差異比較研究，這不僅是比較自身與人際情緒調節對關係品質與個人身心適應的預測效果，亦可進一步探討該預測效果是否會隨著不同的關係或情境產生差異效果，進而更了解兩類情緒調節模型的運作機制。

#### (五) 本模型之文化差異

本模型是反思西方現有人際情緒調節理論，將華人文化注重人際互動與關係納入考量後，進行質性研究的成果。相對於西方的理論觀點，本模型應較具華人文化的本土契合性。若運用於西方文化脈絡下探究，可能會有出現文化差異的結果。其中，較大的差異應是偏向獨立我的西方文化，比起強調相依我的華人文化，較少仰賴人際關係來調節情緒 (Liddell & Williams, 2019)。過去研究顯示，偏向西方文化的參與者，使用較多人際情緒調節時，反而對其心理健康產生負面的結果 (Hofmann et al., 2016)。因此，西方文化下的參與者與伴侶的人際情緒調節互動頻率，相較於華人參與者，可能會較低。但由於伴侶間不可能無人際情緒調節互動，因此仍可觀察到所提出的各階段要素是否出現契合的情形。至於四個階段是否存在？出現的順序是否有差異？考量到其與主流人際情緒調節理論 (Gross, 2015) 關注焦點差異不大，推測應會同樣存在且出現順序不會變換。

至於文化造成的差異，主要是體現在契合度對情侶雙方關係與身心適應的影響效果上。如同前段所提，關係中的互動越頻繁密切，人際情緒調節成效對個人身心適應的影響效果就越大 (Fitzsimons et al., 2015)。西方 (獨立我較強) 的情侶，在人際情緒調節的互動模式上，可能不若華人 (相依我較強) 的情侶密切。前者即使在人際情緒調節中失敗，相較於華人，或許仍能保持較佳的身心適應結果。但相對會因為人際情緒調節結果對其影響較小，而削弱個體進行同步化的動機。這些推論都有待後續研究將契合度與同步化概念進行量化，並納入獨立我—相依我構念，檢驗其對人際情緒調節的影響效果。

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## **A Duet between Congruence and Synchronization: Interpersonal Emotion Regulation Model of Romantic Relationships**

Wen-Tso Ho      Kuang-Hui Yeh\*

### **Abstract**

It has been over 20 years since Gross (1998) published a milestone paper of emotion regulation. The focus has shifted to interpersonal context, the primary source of emotion and emotion regulation. The existing theories of interpersonal emotion regulation (IER) emerged from an individual perspective (Reeck et al., 2016; Zaki & Williams, 2013). However, recent researches showed cultural differences in the outcome of IER. Chinese culture emphasizes interpersonal harmony when regulating emotions (Ho et al., 2017; Trommsdorff & Rothbaum, 2008). Research purpose: This study proposed using a relational-focused perspective to construct a new IER model embedded with Chinese culture. Research method: 24 couples were interviewed about their experience regulating negative emotions with their partners. The experiences were analyzed with thematic analysis. Research results: Four stages of IER were identified, which are emotion awareness, empathy of emotion cause, regulation motivation, and regulation strategy by time order. The interaction congruence of each stage influenced the congruence of the next stage and decided the results of IER. When couples interact incongruently, individuals try to synchronize with their partner to promote congruence. Research conclusions: The concept of congruence and synchronization construct an IER process model of intimate relationships. Both concepts are little told in existing IER theories, indicating the value of a relation-focused perspective. This study compares the model with existing theories and researches about Chinese interpersonal relationships, and discusses its future research directions and applications.

*Keywords: emotion regulation strategy, interpersonal emotion regulation, romantic relationship*

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## **I. Introduction**

Emotion regulation has always been a hot topic in psychology, attracting many scholars to invest in research. Its scope is enormous, and its influence is profound. From daily happiness to the psychological symptoms of depression and anxiety, it all involves the operation of personal emotion regulation. However, looking at people's life experiences, whether it is an intimate relationship, parent-child, or even friends, the emotions triggered by interpersonal interactions can be said to be the primary source of emotions. Therefore, the current research on emotion regulation has begun to shift from the focus of emotion regulation from an intrapersonal perspective to emotion regulation in interpersonal situations, which is closer to daily life experience.

The theory of emotion regulation from the perspective of the self mostly assumes that the outside world stimulates individuals to generate emotions and then start to regulate their own emotions after evaluation. The existing theory of interpersonal emotion regulation is based on this, and it also assumes that individuals are affected by a specific stimulus and have certain negative emotions. The other party in the interaction plays the role of a regulator and can intervene in the regulation process of individual negative emotions (Reeck et al., 2016; Zaki & Williams, 2013). Although such theories can clearly describe the cognitive and behavioral processes of individuals with negative emotions or regulators, they have relatively little description of how the two parties affect each other or the results of interpersonal emotion regulation.

On the other hand, recent studies have also found many cultural differences in the process of interpersonal emotion regulation. Compared with Westerners, Chinese people often use interpersonal methods to regulate emotions (Liddell & Williams, 2019) and care more about whether the interaction relationship is damaged (Ho et al., 2017; Trommsdorff & Rothbaum, 2008). It can be seen that the Chinese not only rely more on interpersonal emotion regulation than Westerners but also pay great attention to the impact of interaction on relationships. Western theories on interpersonal emotion regulation pay less attention to relational interactions. Adopting a relationship perspective and developing a theory of interpersonal emotion regulation suitable for Chinese culture is necessary. This can not only serve as the theoretical basis for future Chinese studies but can also dialogue with existing Western theories, complement each other, and move towards developing a human psychology that is more inclusive of cultural differences.

## **II. Literature review**

### **1. The theory of interpersonal emotion regulation**

The focus of previous emotion regulation literature has always been its category. Not only does the connotation of emotion regulation strategies rarely involve interactions with others, but its research context also rarely uses interpersonal situations (Campos et al., 2011). In recent years, research has begun to discuss the functions that others can play in emotional regulation, which is quite reasonable regarding actual life experience. When you are sad, if you have the support of relatives or friends, your mood will adjust faster (Uchino et al., 1996); when we are emotionally aroused, whether good or bad, a typical response is to share it with others (Gable & Reis, 2010). Therefore, interpersonal emotion regulation is a fairly common phenomenon. Helping others to regulate their emotions is usually more effective in alleviating emotions than regulating their own emotions (Horn & Maercker, 2016).

Most of the current research on interpersonal emotion regulation is based on the context of past research on one's emotion regulation, applying Gross's (1998) emotion regulation process as a basis and modifying specific strategic connotations for interpersonal situations (Christensen & Haynos, 2020; Reeck et al., 2016). On the other hand, interpersonal emotion regulation has many overlaps with psychological constructs such as social support, empathy, and altruistic behavior. For example, social support research focuses on the recipients of social support, that is, the recipients of interpersonal emotion regulation, while at the same time, research on rational psychology and altruistic behavior focuses on facilitators of interpersonal emotion regulation. Therefore, some scholars put forward an integrated perspective (Zaki & Williams, 2013), classifying and unifying the above-mentioned related research by "who initiated the adjustment." For the sake of simplicity, it is assumed below that there are only two parties in interpersonal emotion regulation. One party is the person with negative emotions, called the "emotional person," and the other is the person who interacts with the emotional person, called the "other."

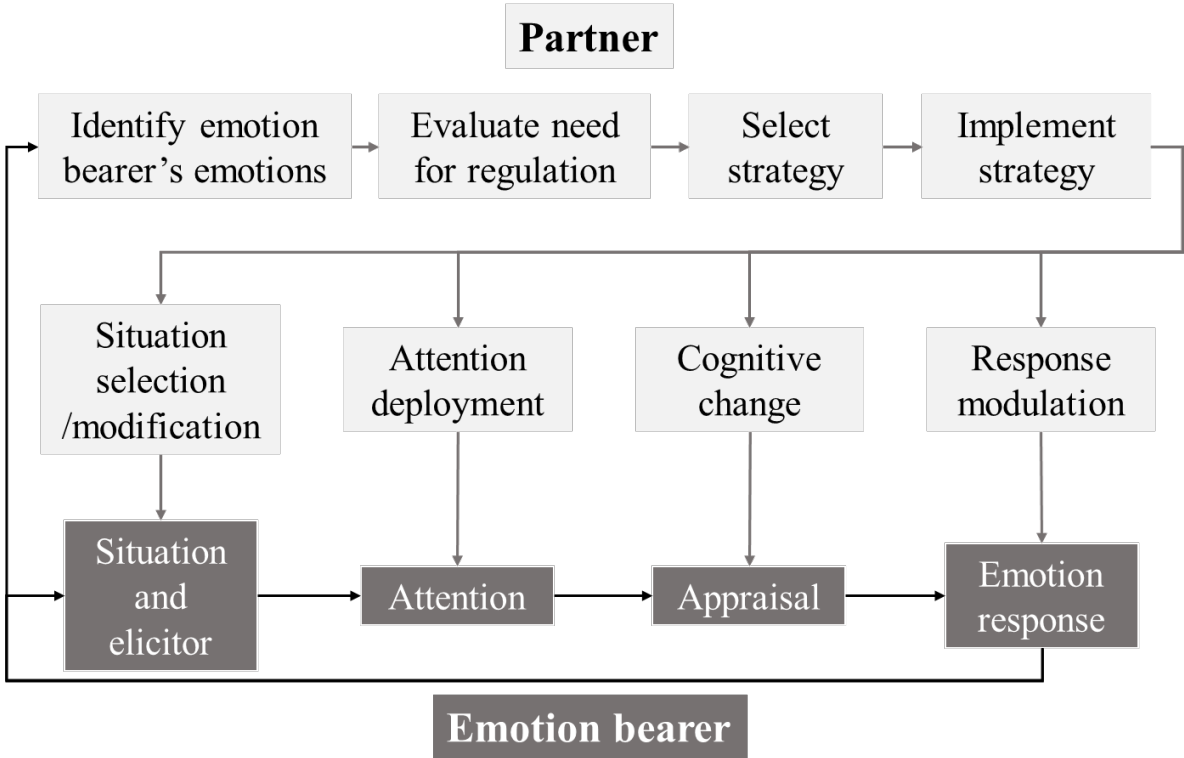
### **2. Expand to interpersonal situations**

After more than two decades, Gross's (1998) theoretical perspective is still very popular among emotion regulation researchers. He divided emotion regulation strategies into five stages according to the time order: selecting situations, changing situations, shifting attention,

cognitive changes, and adjusting responses. He also proposed specific application strategies for each stage and compiled an emotion regulation questionnaire. This process is simple and clear. Many scholars who study interpersonal emotion regulation have also extended this process to interpersonal situations, thinking about interpersonal-specific regulation strategies and developing interpersonal emotion regulation scales (for example, Austin & O'Donnell, 2013; Hofmann et al., 2016; López-Pérez et al., 2019).

Among them, the more systematic theory is the social regulation of emotion theory developed by Reeck et al. (2016). The theory is divided into two parts. It first describes the process of how others actively regulate their emotions in interpersonal emotion regulation and then discusses how the emotional person will respond to the other's regulatory behavior (Reeck et al., 2016) (see Figure 1).

Figure 1  
*Diagram of the model of social regulation of emotion*



Note: Reeck et al., (2016). p. 51.

For others, they must first notice that the emotional person has a mood swing and then evaluate whether they need to help the emotional person regulate their emotions. If the other



judges that the emotional person needs help, he will choose and implement an appropriate strategy. The other strategy selection is divided into four stages based on Gross's (1998) theoretical point of view, which affects different aspects of the emotional state of the emotional person. For example, "situation selection or situation change" removes the stimulus that causes the passionate person to be unhappy, and "cognitive change" affects how the emotional person evaluates emotional triggers. Others need to predict the emotional person's response to different strategies to select a plan with higher regulatory efficiency.

The other four-stage regulation strategy will affect the corresponding aspects of the emotional person, namely situation, attention, evaluation, and emotional response. Concerning concern, "the appearance of others before you" is a new emotional stimulus. Still, the assistance of others may also cause the emotional person to rely on others and be unable to regulate emotions on his own (Spinrad et al., 2004). Attention In terms of ability, noticing that others want to help them regulate their emotions is also a new emotional stimulus. Emotional people may interpret others' assistance from a negative perspective or feel resistance (Levenson et al., 2014). In terms of evaluation, it is divided into evaluating one's efficacy and the motivation of others. When others appear, one's sense of effectiveness usually increases (Beckes & Coan, 2011). However, emotional people may also believe that the other party's assistance implies their incompetence, thus reducing their sense of efficacy. Emotional people may have many explanations for the motivations of others, thinking that the other person may want to manipulate them or that the other person may not be altruistic but have other hidden purposes. Finally, if an emotional person notices that others focus on regulating their emotional reactions, such as saying, "Relax a little" or "Don't be so angry," it usually does not help to improve their inner emotional feelings. Still, it will instead trigger more negative emotions (Little et al., 2013). This theory quite clearly describes the process of active adjustment by others in stages. Strategies at each stage will affect different aspects of the emotional person. However, the emotional person does not fully accept the adjustment of others, and its adjustment effect will be produced according to its own interpretation difference. It shows that this theory has successfully extended the emotion regulation structure originally limited to oneself to the interpersonal field. Although the presupposition is that the other acts first and the emotional person responds to the interaction method, it is already a considerable theoretical contribution.

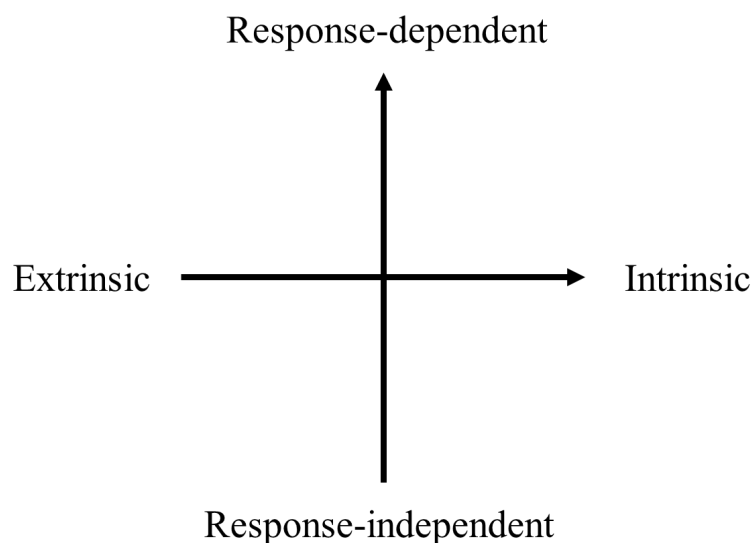
### **3. Integrate related constructs**

Although interpersonal orientation has been a research direction in emotion regulation in

recent years, using others to help regulate emotions has appeared in many psychologically related constructs, such as social support, empathy, attachment relationships, etc. In the face of relevant research accumulated over the past few decades, Zaki and Williams (2013) believe the above topics are closely related to interpersonal emotion regulation. Still, because there is no unified structure, research is scattered on different topics and cannot be integrated. Therefore, a framework for interpersonal emotion regulation is proposed. The characteristic of this theory is that interpersonal emotion regulation is classified into two dimensions. The first is who initiates the regulatory action, "intrinsic" versus "extrinsic"; the second is how to evaluate the regulation. Whether it is successful or not is divided into "response-dependent" and "response-independent" (see Figure 2). This structure can integrate research results involving multiple fields and provide a basis for exchanges between scholars in different fields. The following is a brief introduction to its classification.

Figure 2

*Diagram of the Zaki and Williams model*



Note: Zaki & Williams. (2013). p. 805.

#### (1) Spontaneous type

The spontaneous type means that the emotional person initiates the entire adjustment process and uses their own emotions as the target of adjustment. Emotional people actively ask others to help regulate their emotions. Relevant research that explores recipients of social support can fall into this category.

The regulation of others can be divided into two modes of operation: response-dependent and response-independent. As the name suggests, the success of the former's regulation depends on the other person's specific behavior. For example, the emotional person receives and shares good news with others. The emotional person will be happier if the other is happy to congratulate. Still, if the other is indifferent, the happiness of the emotional person will be extinguished, and the regulation will fail. Response-independent emphasizes that the expression and sharing behavior of the emotional person already ensures the success of regulation and does not require the specific response of the other. For example, before an emotional person expresses their emotional experience to others, they need to identify and label their emotions, which helps the emotional person further understand their emotional state and reduce the intensity of the emotion (Torre & Lieberman, 2018). Whether the other response or not, or the response's content, has little effect on the emotional person's emotional regulation success or failure.

## (2) Initiated by others

Initiated by others is the other's initiative to regulate the person's emotions. The cause is that others are aware of the emotional state of the emotional person and actively regulate their emotions out of altruistic motives. The social emotion regulation theory proposed by Reeck et al. (2016) in the previous paragraph falls into this category. In addition, related research that explores how individuals develop empathy or perform altruistic behaviors also falls into this category.

This type can also be divided into two modes: response-dependence and response-independence. Feedback dependence means that others set the goal of changing the emotional state of the emotional person out of altruistic motives. Therefore, regulation only succeeds if the emotional person's emotions change in the target direction. For example, if you see a friend feeling sad, you will take the initiative to comfort him and ask him what's bothering you. He won't feel relieved until your friend feels relieved.

His hairstyle is the other's initiative to regulate the person's emotions. The cause is that others are aware of the emotional state of the emotional person and actively regulate their emotions out of altruistic motives. The social emotion regulation theory proposed by Reeck et al. (2016) in the previous paragraph falls into this category. In addition, related research that explores how individuals develop empathy or perform altruistic behaviors also falls into this category.

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Response-independent is the opposite. When the other regulates the emotion of the emotional person, the other does not judge whether the emotion regulation is successful based on the response of the emotional person. This seemingly paradoxical situation often occurs because the act of helping others alone will bring positive emotional feelings to others (Andreoni, 1990). Others tend to judge the success of the adjustment behavior based on their own feelings while ignoring the emotional changes of the emotional person.

This theory clearly distinguishes past research into two axis degrees and four categories. Compared with the previous research on matching interpersonal situations, although there are fewer descriptions of the interaction between the other and the emotional person, its main contribution is to integrate the scattered research on related constructs and provide future researchers with good classification guidelines.

#### **4. Reflection on Existing Theories**

The above two orientations and theories have unique insights in their emphasis and have also triggered many follow-up studies. However, if placed in the context of Chinese culture, some areas still need to be discussed.

##### **(1) Cultural differences**

Current research shows that compared with Westerners, Chinese people more often use interpersonal emotion regulation spontaneously when encountering negative emotional events (Liddell & Williams, 2019), which is quite in line with the "independent self — dependent self" theory (Markus & Kitayama, 1991). Westerners prefer the independent self, emphasizing that the self must be independent of others and achieve its own goals without being influenced by others (Markus & Kitayama, 1991). It believes that individuals should develop from relying on their mothers to regulate their emotions as infants to relying on themselves to regulate their emotions (Trommsdorff & Rothbaum, 2008). Chinese tend to be interdependent, emphasize the connection between self and others, and value that interpersonal harmony should not be destroyed for one's own goals (Markus & Kitayama, 1991). Compared with the independent

self, the dependent self pays more attention to regulating emotions through interpersonal relationships, and also pays attention to whether the adjustment process will destroy interpersonal relationships (Trommsdorff & Rothbaum, 2008).

Different cultures have different views on interpersonal emotion regulation, affecting individuals' physical and mental adaptation after using interpersonal emotion regulation strategies. Studies with Westerners as the main participants have found that participants who use interpersonal emotion regulation more often have poorer personal physical and mental adaptation (Hofmann et al., 2016). However, Turkish people who prefer interdependent self-orientation have no negative effects when using interpersonal emotion regulation (Ray-Yol et al., 2020). When Chinese people use interpersonal emotion regulation, they have sound effects on parent-child relationships and their own happiness (He Wenze et al., 2017). Although no research has conducted cross-cultural comparisons on interpersonal emotion regulation tendencies, it has been shown that cultural differences may exist, and the impact is not small.

## (2) Relationship orientation of Chinese culture

Whether it is the theory of social emotion regulation (Reeck et al., 2016) or the integrated framework of Zaki and Williams (2013), they are all discussed from the perspective of individuals. For example, the theory of social emotion regulation first takes others as the main body, expounds on their possible actions, then explains the possible influence of each action on the emotional person and the feedback of the emotional person. The latter is divided into two categories: spontaneous (dominated by the emotional person) and others (led by the other). Although this method of discussion can deeply describe the internal process of individuals, it does not focus on interpersonal relationships or the process of interaction between the two parties.

The interpersonal interaction of Chinese has always been deeply influenced by *guanxi* (Hwang, 1987), and the type of *guanxi* determines the interaction norms of both parties. Interactions such as emotional relationships (parent-child, husband and wife, close friends, etc.) are aimed at satisfying the emotional needs of both parties, such as love and security. Therefore, Chinese in an emotional relationship will use interpersonal emotion regulation autonomously when they or the other party have emotional regulation needs. However, instrumental relationships (such as shop assistants and customers) are subject to the law of fair trade. If the clerk is in a bad mood, he will not seek help from the customer. Still, he will deliberately maintain a smile (Niven, 2016) to maintain a positive image of the clerk and encourage customers to continue to visit. As for mixed relationships (relatives, teachers and students,

classmates, etc.), they are based on mutual favor and face. Although there is a certain emotional foundation, they cannot express their feelings sincerely like emotional relationships, so it is also difficult to use interpersonal emotion regulation. It can be deduced that whether the Chinese use interpersonal emotion regulation will be affected by the type of relationship.

On the other hand, when Chinese use interpersonal emotion regulation, they are more concerned about its impact on relationships than Westerners (Markus & Kitayama, 1991). In addition to changing emotions, Chinese emotion regulation aims to pursue personal inner harmony, hoping to understand the meaning of emotions to individuals and self-grow (Frijda & Sundararajan, 2007). When emotions are involved in relationships, emotion regulation is likely to affect both partners in the relationship. Whether it can smoothly regulate emotions and promote the harmonious development of both parties has become a very important goal in this process (Ho et al., 2017). For example, Chinese people often use patience to cope with negative emotions, but tolerance alone does not benefit the individual's body and mind (Chen et al., 2011). On the contrary, finding the right time to communicate with each other and understand each other's thoughts after being patient is the most beneficial to the individual's physical and mental quality and relationship quality (Ho et al., 2017), and it is better than the existing personal-oriented emotion regulation strategies in the West.

It can be inferred from the above theories and research that Chinese people's interpersonal emotion regulation is more affected by the relationship context than Westerners, and they also pay more attention to the interactive process. If existing theories based on an individual perspective are applied to Chinese society, they may not be able to capture the above characteristics. This study believes that we should focus on the relationship perspective to construct a theory that aligns with the Chinese cultural context and better grasp its important constructs of interpersonal emotion regulation.

## **5. Taking intimate relationships as the research object**

Although existing theories do not specify the type of relationship in interpersonal emotion regulation, the degree of closeness of interpersonal relationships will affect the impact of regulation effectiveness on relationship development. The closer the communication relationship, the closer the resources both parties own are shared. Hence, the interaction between the two parties is closer to "two elements within a system" rather than two independent individuals (Fitzsimons et al., 2015). And Chinese interactions are particularly affected by relationship type, as mentioned in the previous paragraph (Hwang, 1987).

From the emotional, mixed, and instrumental relationship types mentioned in the previous paragraph, this study took emotional relationships as the initial research object. Because the interaction criterion of affective relationships is to meet the emotional needs of the other party, this relationship type should use interpersonal emotion regulation more frequently and with greater impact than the other two types.

Emotional relationships include parent-child, partner, close friend, etc. In the past, most studies on interpersonal emotion regulation focused on parent-child or intimate partner relationships (Butler et al., 2007; Horn & Maercker, 2016; Martini & Busseri, 2010). Comparing parent-child and intimate partner relationships, the resources owned by both parties in the former are prone to gaps, the interaction between the two parties is relatively unequal, and there is a power distance. Regarding the mutual influence of the emotional regulation of the two parties, the effect of parents influencing their children is much greater than that of children influencing their parents. Parents' beliefs about emotion regulation will affect their children's emotion regulation through early teaching or social learning (Gottman et al., 1996). On the other hand, the intensity of positive and negative emotions experienced in intimate partner relationships is higher than that in other interpersonal relationships (Ekman & Davidson, 1994), making it easier to demonstrate the influence of interpersonal emotion regulation.

To sum up, an intimate partnership not only involves reciprocal interactions, frequent exchanges, and high emotional intensity. Therefore, this article will use this relationship as the starting point for constructing the theory. In the future, after considering the differences in the characteristics of other relationships, the theory can be further revised and applied to other interpersonal relationships.

## **6. Research Objectives and Design**

To further understand the interactive process of experience and construction of interpersonal emotion regulation, this article uses qualitative research to construct a model of emotion regulation in intimate relationships. The goal is to gain an in-depth understanding of the interactive experience of close relationships facing negative emotions, to construct the interpersonal emotion regulation process at the relationship level, to identify important constructs in the process, and to understand the core connotations of each stage of the process. When designing interviews, try to understand as much as possible the emotions, cognitions, and interpretations of each other during emotional regulation and understand the evolution of emotional events from the perspective of the interaction between the two parties. Only in this

way can we capture the important attributes of developing interpersonal emotion regulation from a relationship perspective.

### III. Research Methods

#### 1. Participants

For 24 couples, 48 interviewees. Most interviewees spent about an hour being interviewed. All couples were heterosexual, with an average age of 21.4 years (standard deviation 1.9 years). Recruitment methods use relevant groups on social media for publicity. After willing participants are asked to leave their contact information, the researcher will call to arrange an interview time.

Table 1

*Participant codes and ages in the study*

GENDER	CODE	AGE	GENDER	CODE	AGE
Female	A	20	Female	M	20
Male	A	23	Male	M	22
Female	B	20	Female	N	21
Male	B	22	Male	N	21
Female	C	20	Female	O	19
Male	C	22	Male	O	18
Female	D	21	Female	P	19
Male	D	27	Male	P	20
Female	E	19	Female	Q	20
Male	E	21	Male	Q	20
Female	F	19	Female	R	21
Male	F	21	Male	R	21
Female	G	23	Female	U	22
Male	G	21	Male	U	21
Female	H	20	Female	V	22
Male	H	21	Male	V	21
Female	I	20	Female	W	21
Male	I	21	Male	W	20
Female	J	24	Female	X	22
Male	J	24	Male	X	23
Female	K	24	Female	Y	21
Male	K	23	Male	Y	20
Female	L	23	Female	Z	22
Male	L	28	Male	Z	22



## **2. Research process**

This study has obtained review approval from the Behavioral and Social Sciences Research Ethics Committee of a national university (Case No. 201905HS053) to ensure that the design of this study complies with research ethics and protects the rights of participants.

Each participant was interviewed individually. The researcher will explain the research rights, confidentiality principles, and possible risks and ask if the interview can be recorded. It is particularly emphasized and guaranteed that the partner will not know the content of the interview. Interviews began after participants gave their consent. After the interview, the researcher asked the participants if they had any doubts. After confirming that the doubts were completely clarified, the researcher paid the participant an interview fee of 200 yuan as a reward, and the interview ended.

## **3. Interview guide**

Because it focuses on the emotion regulation process in interpersonal situations, this study sets the situation as how two partners interact when one partner induces negative emotions in the other. The interview begins with a warm-up process of collecting basic information, including the interviewee's age, how they met their partner, and how long they dated. The interviewees were then asked to recall the vivid experiences in which their partner made them angry, sad, or unhappy, and other negative emotions so far in their relationship and to describe the entire interaction experience chronologically. The researcher will further investigate the unclear areas to clarify the other party's interpretation when the two parties interact, as well as the adjustment motivation, strategies, interaction methods, and emotional changes of the interaction. Once the researcher has no doubts, he will briefly sort out the interactive process of this experience and ask the interviewees to confirm whether the researcher's understanding is different. After the interviewees confirm they are correct, the researcher will ask the partner if they have any other experiences that made them feel negative emotions. The procedure is the same as above.

Suppose the respondent answers that the interaction process of other experiences is similar to the previously described experience, and there is no other experience process. In that case, the interviewer will change the position and invite the respondent to describe how he made his partner feel negative emotions experience. Also, describe the development process of the entire experience in chronological order, and the steps are as described above. After sorting out the

interaction patterns, the researchers will check with the interviewees again whether there is any discrepancy in their understanding of the event process. If the interviewee believes other experiences are similar to the interactive process, there is no need to add, and the interview will enter the next stage.

In the next stage of the interview, the situation is no longer limited to the negative emotions caused by one partner of the couple but how the two parties interact when external emotional stimuli cause negative emotions in themselves or their partners. After the interviewees finished their descriptions, the researcher asked them three reasons for liking or admiring their partner and their satisfaction with the current relationship. The answer was to choose from a scale of 0 to 10 and finally ended the interview with a positive point of view.

#### **4. Data Analysis**

The verbatim transcripts of the interviews were processed by thematic analysis in this study. This analysis method is to classify and organize the original data to obtain the themes contained in the data and the relationship between the themes. The reason for choosing the thematic analysis method is that compared with other qualitative research methods, the thematic analysis method is more flexible and does not require a specific theory of knowledge as the basis for analysis. It can cooperate with different theoretical viewpoints of researchers to find patterns or themes in the data (Braun & Clarke, 2006).

For this study, to analyze from the perspective of relationship thinking, the verbatim manuscripts of couples in the same group will be regarded as the same data, and only emotional events mentioned by both couples will be retained. Events mentioned by only one party will be deleted. Arrange and compare the narration content of the two sides of the same event chronologically. This method makes finding time-aligned relationship interaction patterns easier for this study. However, this type of screening method cannot analyze emotional events that the couple only mentions unilaterally, and relevant research limitations will be discussed later.

When presenting the results, identifiable information will be removed as much as possible, or the information will be replaced with other words that do not affect the results. For example, the activities, places, or reasons for disputes will be changed. In particular, during the interviews in this study, participants were promised that the content of the interviews would not be disclosed to their friends, so when the verbatim transcripts are presented, specific examples mentioned in the interview transcripts will be replaced as much as possible.

In addition, a concise results report was sent to each participant after the study analysis was completed. The results report does not cite any verbatim manuscripts. Still, it describes the qualitative results of this study in a manner that does not involve psychological jargon and acknowledges the participants' contributions. It is hoped that this will reward the participants for their efforts and confirm whether they agree with the results of the qualitative analysis. As of the time of publication of this article, there were no participant responses that the result was inappropriate analysis.

#### **IV. Analysis Results**

The code names of the participants are sorted by English alphabet, from A to Z (Participants in groups S and T are canceled for some reason). For the convenience of narration, participants are referred to by code name + gender, such as C male. In addition, researchers are referred to as "Researcher". Most of the participants could describe the events that caused negative emotions in the communication, and they could describe the changes in events in chronological order. When matching the negative emotional events mentioned by both couples, most couples have about 1 to 4 negative emotional events that both parties mentioned.

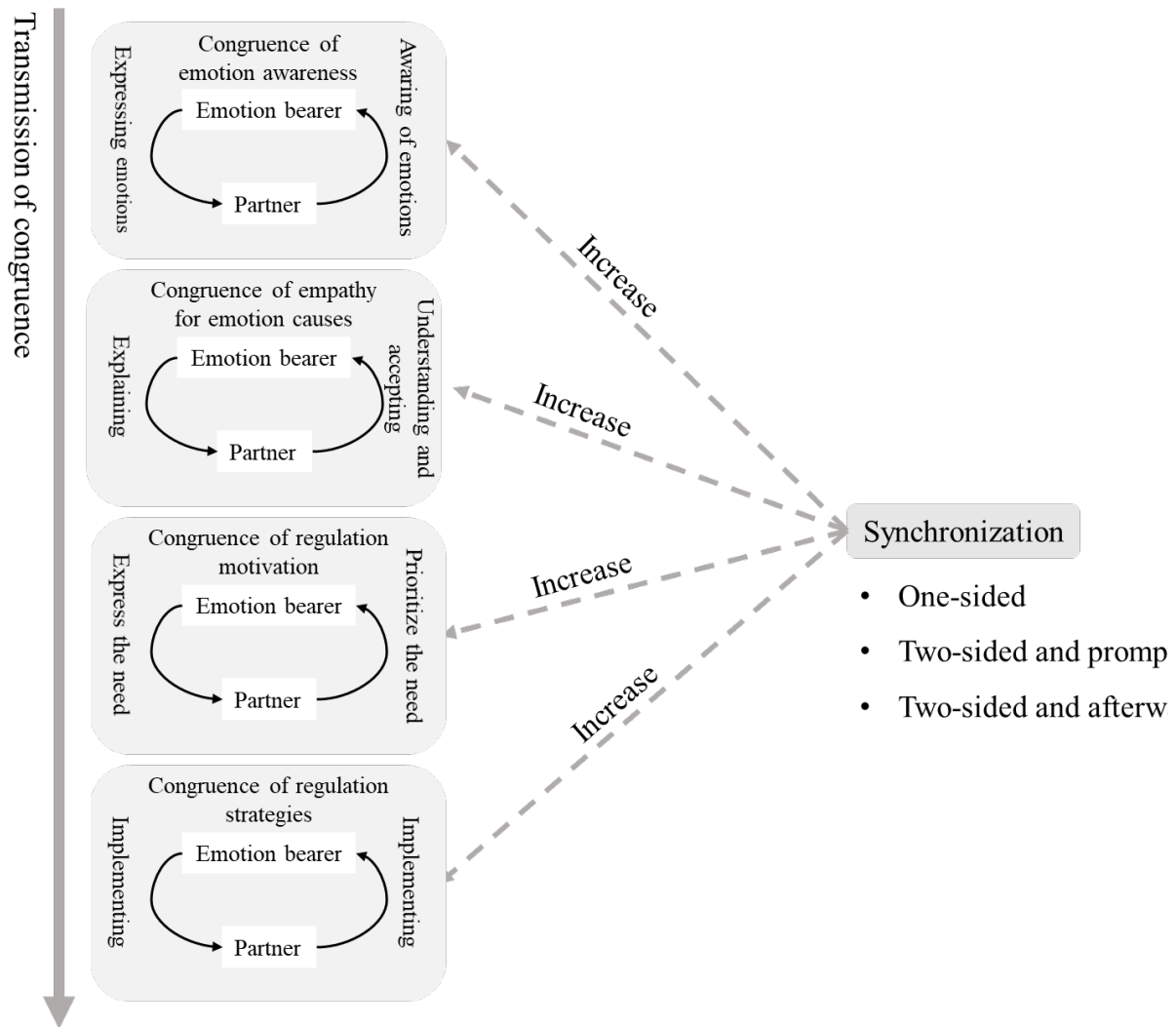
From the content of the descriptions of the events by both parties, this study classified three major themes: the four-stage process, synchronization, and interpersonal adjustment effectiveness. The links among the topics can be seen in Figure 3. The four-stage process is the main stage of identifying interpersonal emotional episodes in this study, which is divided into emotional awareness, empathy for emotional causes, regulatory motivation, and regulatory strategies. The degree of fit in each stage of interaction will affect the next stage of interaction, which in turn will affect the success or failure of interpersonal emotion regulation. Synchronization is the effort made by one party or both parties to try to improve the degree of fit between the two parties at a certain stage; the effectiveness of interpersonal adjustment refers to the level of efficiency and preference of both parties in regulating emotions in this relationship, which will occur with the evolution of long-term interaction change.

##### **1. Four stages of the process**

In this study, the participants' interactions are arranged in chronological order. Four stages of the participants' interaction process can be identified: (1) Emotional awareness: Since the subject of this paper focuses on the process of interpersonal emotion regulation, the first basic

Figure 3

*The model of interpersonal emotion regulation*



Effect of successful interpersonal emotion regulation (IER)

- Increase the effectiveness of IER
- Accumulation of congruences at each stage
- Increase the tendency of using IER
- Forging a stable interaction pattern

essential point is naturally that someone on both sides of the interaction is aware of the generation of negative emotions as the starting point. Otherwise, there will be no need for subsequent actions related to emotional regulation, so the emotional awareness stage naturally becomes the first element of starting the process of interpersonal emotional regulation. (2) The reason for the emotion is the same. After being aware of the emergence of negative emotion, both parties in the interaction will automatically attribute the cause of the negative emotion to evaluate whether it is necessary to take adjustment actions. After the person explains the cause

of the emotion, once the other evaluates the cause of the negative emotion, it is self-inflicted. It has no intention of assisting in regulation, so the interpersonal emotion regulation process has to be transformed into a self-oriented, not interpersonal-oriented emotion regulation process. (3) Motivation for regulation: Only under the premise that the other person can empathize with the cause of the negative emotion of the emotional person does the subsequent interpersonal emotion regulation action have the possibility to occur. Otherwise, the interpersonal emotion regulation process will stop abruptly at the previous stage. However, when the emotional person expresses the need for the other party to comfort and regulate negative emotions, even if the other person wants to assist him in regulating, he must first set the goal he wants to achieve, which is the so-called regulating motivation, otherwise the regulating action will not know what to do. (4) Adjustment strategy: Even if the other has adjustment motivation, both sides of the interaction need to have some consensus on the adjustment strategy. Otherwise, ensuring the smooth achievement of the desired goal will not be possible.

From the above description, we can understand the complexity of the interpersonal emotion regulation process. Therefore, not every pair of participants could clearly mention the content of the four stages of interaction during the interview process. Some participants will focus more on stages of the interaction that do not fit together, but the sequence of stages experienced by each pair will generally be as described above. Suppose participants believe that the interaction in the previous stage was not ideal. In that case, they will adopt a synchronization method to reconstruct the interaction in the previous stage, which will be detailed in the synchronization section.

Looking at the participants from the occurrence of emotional events to the end of emotional regulation, the degree of compatibility of the interaction between the two parties at each stage has always affected the success or failure of emotional regulation. This feature is more obvious when the content of the interviews between the two parties is arranged in chronological order, and the incompatibility of the interaction in the previous stage often leads to the incompatibility of the interaction in the next stage.

Interviews also revealed that interactive fit does not mean that the behavior of both parties is precisely the same, but whether the two parties' understanding and values of specific things are consistent with each other. After all, one party is the emotional one, the other party is the other, and the roles and resources of both parties are different. In interviews, the two parties who interact well often perform complementary actions rather than identical behaviors. The overall process can be seen in Figure 3, and the tasks at each stage are sorted out according to the interview results, which will be detailed in each stage later. It can be seen that at each stage,

the emotional person and the other have different tasks to achieve compatibility. When both parties can accomplish the task, the interaction at this stage is compatible.

The following describes the interaction of the four stages of emotional awareness, emotional cause empathy, regulatory motivation, and regulatory strategies in chronological order.

## **2. Emotional awareness stage**

When describing a negative emotional event, almost all participants first explained the background of the event and what happened to trigger the emotional person's emotion. During the interview, those with negative emotions will first be aware of their own emotional changes, which will be reflected in verbal or non-verbal messages when interacting with others. Others are aware of their emotional changes through words, expressions, actions, or tone of voice. When others are aware of the other person's emotional changes, they will start to think about whether they need to help the other person improve their mood. If the other person cannot detect the emotional changes of the other person, the other person will not help the emotional person regulate their emotions. It can be seen that emotional awareness can be said to be the starting point of the interpersonal emotion regulation process. In addition, it is also possible that the other person is aware of emotional changes earlier than the emotional person, but this situation was not encountered in this interview.

### **(1) High interaction and fit**

In the high-fit interaction at this stage, the emotional person usually expresses emotions in a way that others can perceive, and the other person also perceives their emotional changes and correctly judges their emotional types. The two parties must possess different qualities and take different actions to achieve a high fit. Many emotional people will directly express their current emotional feelings, but there are also participants who highlight their emotional changes through the difference in tone, expression, or body movements. Whether the expression method is consistent depends on whether the other person can capture the emotional changes conveyed above and then understand the type of emotion. For example, V-female uses facial expressions to communicate, and V-male soon discovered.

*Researcher (hereinafter represented by "Researcher"): How did he discover you were sad?*

*V-female: Because he talks, I ignore him. I am not someone who hides my emotions. Whenever I*

*am unhappy, I will show it clearly. He will notice if he realizes my current emotions are like this.*  
(*V lovers, lines 111-112*)

*Researcher: Will you notice her bad face first, or will she talk about it first?*

*V male: Usually, you will find out first (she has a bad face).*

*Yan: What will you do if you find her ugly face?*

*V male: I ask her what's wrong, and she usually tells me. Sometimes, she may not speak purposefully, but she will speak after asking a few more times.*

(*V lovers, lines 137-140*)"

Or when K male was upset because K female said she didn't want to talk to him, she noticed his emotional changes before he said anything because the female paid close attention to the male's expression.

*Researcher: How did you find out that he was sad in the first place?*

*K female: He doesn't even speak,*

*Researcher: Will the expression change?*

*K female: Yes, he became very innocent.*

(*K lovers, lines 111-114*)

*Researcher: How did you feel when you heard she didn't want to talk to you?*

*K male: I feel sad. Why don't you talk to me? I didn't do anything bad (...).*

*Researcher: Will she easily detect your mood changes?*

*K male: It's easy for her to find out what I'm thinking just by looking at my expression.*

(*K lovers, lines 170-173*)

## (2) Low interaction and fit

If the emotional person expresses his emotions in an overly subtle way, or the other person does not pay attention to the emotional state of the emotional person, resulting in the other person not being aware of his emotional changes from beginning to end, or only noticing after a long time, it is a low-compatibility interaction.

Especially when emotional people use non-verbal expressions, it is more difficult for others to detect than verbal expressions. For example, when P female thinks she is treating P male differently, P male will notice that he is angry, but he is unsure of the reason for his anger.

But P male didn't even notice that P female was angry, let alone guess why.

*P female: He did something to make me unhappy before. When he came close to me, I would want to run away and let him know that I was angry, but I would not tell him what I was angry about before.*

*(P lovers, lines 124-125)*

*P male: She would reply very coldly, and I felt it was nothing at the moment. She was acting more and more strangely, and I started asking her what was wrong. She would tell me precisely what she thought. She may have intended to express her dissatisfaction to me, but I did not receive her message. I think it would have been better to know she was angry then.*

*(P lovers, lines 157-159)*

Comparing the K lovers and P lovers at this stage, the emotional ones both use non-verbal expressions, but the interaction between the two parties has completely different results. The interviews show that it is not the use of specific emotional expression methods that can ensure that others can successfully detect emotions. It depends on the current state and awareness ability of both parties. Sometimes, the emotional person's expression is too subtle, and the other person's emotional awareness is insufficient; it may also be that the other person is busy and does not notice the other person's emotional changes, or the other person is not familiar with the emotional person's expression habits, etc. This shows that the compatibility of the interaction is not necessarily the fault of one party, and the interaction of both parties needs to be considered simultaneously.

### (3) The impact of low interaction fit

When the emotional person has negative emotions and tries to express them. Suppose the other person is not aware of the other person's emotions for too long. In that case, the continued low level of compatibility may cause the emotional person to be dissatisfied, leading to more negative emotions. The negative emotions derived are likely to worsen the interaction in subsequent stages and deepen the difficulty of emotion regulation. For example, to rush to the appointment, C female had to end her meeting with others early. C male did not know about C female's sacrifice. Even after C female emphasized it, he was still unaware of the woman's negative emotions. As a result, her emotions gradually accumulated and exploded.



*Researcher: When you have these emotions, how do you deal with them at that time?*

*C female: I immediately told him I had changed the time for your sake. He didn't listen to what I said, asked why you suddenly changed (the time), and didn't say thank you. I told him my intentions for him, but he didn't respond at all. (...). When I was walking, (he) kept talking like this. I felt like he couldn't listen, and then I kept crying.*

*(C lovers, lines 35-40)*

*C male: I didn't understand (at the time) that she had an appointment earlier. After hearing her talk (...), I didn't think about it so much at the moment because (I) was in a bad mood that day and was thinking about other things. Later, I found out that she was really unhappy. Just after the walk (...), she started to explain what she was doing, explaining that this matter (ending the appointment with others early) was a sacrifice for her.*

*(C lovers, lines 105-108)*

### **3. Empathy stage for emotional reasons**

Empathy for emotional causes is the next stage of emotional awareness. After both parties are aware of the emotional changes of the emotional person, they can further understand the reasons for the emotion in order to carry out subsequent emotional regulation. In an interview, the person with the emotion usually understands the reasons for the emotion better than the other person. The researchers theorized that this is because they are more familiar with the context of emotional events because of the emotions that have happened to them. Others usually have less knowledge of the causes and consequences of the emotion, so they are less able to immediately understand the cause of the emotion, and rely more on the emotional person to explain the reasons for their emotion. There may be situations where others understand the causes of emotions better than the emotional person, but we did not encounter similar experiences in this interview.

#### **(1) High interaction and fit**

High agreement in this stage of interaction means that the emotional person has successfully conveyed the reason for the emotion, and the other person can also accept or recognize the rationality of the reason. Moreover, the fit at this stage has a great impact on subsequent adjustment motivations and strategies. It can be seen from the interviews that the content of emotional reasons will affect both parties' adjustment motivations and the

formulation of appropriate adjustment strategies. For example, E girl is jealous of E boy's college classmate, but she has not spoken out yet. The man has noticed the woman's emotional changes, but does not know the cause of the emotions. The woman didn't say anything until the two parties met. The man understands the woman's emotional reasons and not only accepts the woman's emotional reasons, but also formulates an adjustment strategy for the reasons (communicating with friends).

*E female: (When I met him) I kept saying it was okay. I didn't know how to say it later, but I kept thinking about the event, and he just happened to be next to me, so I cried.*

*Researcher: What was his reaction when he saw you crying?*

*E female: He asked me what was wrong. Later, I slowly explained (...). Thereafter, we talked about this matter again, and he actually thought it was reasonable for me to cry, and he could understand it.*

*(E couple, lines 174-178)*

*Researcher: (Seeing her crying) What was your reaction?*

*E male: Secretly, I want to say it's not that serious, but from her point of view, it's understandable. It should be quite normal to have such emotional expressions.*

*Researcher: How do you tell her?*

*E male: I just said that she (a college classmate) didn't mean that, and I promised my girlfriend that I would tell my classmate about it.*

*(E lovers, lines 199-203)*

## (2) Low interaction fit and its impact

The interview found that there are two reasons for low fit at this stage. The first is that the other person does not know why the emotion occurs. For example, the person feeling the emotion does not clearly inform him, or the other person omits this information. For example, when G lovers attended the course, G female was dissatisfied because G male was too close to other girls, but she never said anything. Although G male found that G female was dissatisfied, he did not understand why.

*G female: I was very upset that day and didn't say anything. He just said what's wrong with you. He didn't seem to notice, thinking it was because I was unhappy in class. (...) My tone (toward him) was also relatively cold, but he still didn't find out why I was angry.*

*(G lovers, lines 274-277)*

*G male: I didn't know why she was sad then. It made me feel the most at a loss. (...) Because our friend circles are different, I didn't notice her being in a bad mood initially. Later, after the course was disbanded, I sent her home. She was in a bad mood and didn't want to discuss it.*

*(G lovers, lines 318-322)*

Another situation is that although the other person understands the cause of the emotion, he cannot accept the cause and thinks that the other person is unreasonable or reacts too emotionally. Interviews found that when others have such interpretations, it often affects their subsequent motivation to adjust, and they think that they do not need to help the emotional person improve their mood. Moreover, it will make the emotional person dissatisfied and generate negative emotions. Being unable to accept the causes of emotions is more likely to reduce the motivational fit of subsequent regulation than to understand the causes of emotions, making emotion regulation more likely to fail. For example, on a class outing for lovers F, F male was dissatisfied with being left out by F female and became angry. The F female now understood the reason why the F male was angry, but she could not accept that the man was angry and dissatisfied, and the two broke up unhappy that day.

*F male: (...) One time, I went to Beitou with her friend, who ignored me most of the time. She was always with her friends (...). So, I'm not in a good mood.*

*(F lovers, lines 59-61)*

*F female: (in Beitou) I once sat down and helped a friend get a glass of water. At that time, my boyfriend was sitting across from me, and he was angry. Why was the water glass not given to him? He felt that this action meant my friends were more important than him. At that time, I thought it was unreasonable for my boyfriend to be angry. I do that just because my friend sits by me.*

*(F lovers, lines 16-18)*

#### **4. Adjustment of motivation stage**

Regulation motivation refers to the strength of both parties' motivation to regulate the emotions of the emotional person. During the interviews, the motivation for regulating

emotions was to improve their own negative emotions, and no other motivations were observed. Others are the most common motivation to improve a person's mood, and the second most common motivation is to improve one's negative emotions. The latter may be because the other person has negative emotions during the interaction. The remaining regulatory motives occur too infrequently to allow systematic classification.

#### (1) High interaction and fit

When the interaction at this stage is consistent, the emotional person can successfully express that he needs the help of others to regulate his emotions, and the other person also agrees that the emotional person's mood needs to be improved and is willing to work hard for it.

Because of the emotional events covered, it is the other that makes the emotional person unhappy. When an emotional person expresses the reasons for their emotions, others who can empathize with the grounds will realize that they are the cause of the emotion and then consider themselves responsible for regulating the emotional person's emotions. Therefore, except for a few emotional people who directly express their need for adjustment, after most emotional people express the reasons for their emotions, others will usually feel that the other person needs emotional regulation.

For example, when the two parties quarrel, Mr. L will directly express his need for adjustment.

*L male: I will say when I am angry, we can calm each other down.*

*(L couple, line 77)*

However, when I lovers quarrel because of a verbal conflict, when I female becomes angry, I male feel obliged to appease her, and there is no need for woman I to express her need for adjustment.

*I female: It should be that he wants to appease me whenever I get angry.*

*(I lovers, lines 10-11)*

When others describe adjustment motivation, they often describe it with the adjustment strategy stage. Usually, when you agree that you have caused the other person's negative emotions, you want to try your best to improve the other person's mood. For example, G male

forgot to wear a safety helmet when attending an appointment. When he arrived at the scene, he found that G female was in a bad mood. Knowing that the cause of her mood was his fault, he quickly apologized to improve her mood. From G male's apology, G female felt he was willing to help her improve her mood. Both parties' adjustment motivations and strategies were very consistent, so G female's mood was quickly adjusted successfully.

*Researcher: Don't blame him if you are in a good mood today. How did you feel after he apologized?*

*G female: (...) I think I talked about it and told him I was dissatisfied, and it was fine. I think I'm a pretty easy girl to coax. As long as he apologizes to me and shows his kindness, I think it doesn't matter.*

*(G lovers, lines 59-60, 78-79)*

*Researcher: Why do you want to apologize?*

*G male: I also think what she said was my fault (...).*

*(G lovers, lines 92-94)*

Or maybe Male H discovers that Female H checks in with her friend and is a little sad that the woman didn't tell her about this friend. After the woman understood the emotional reasons, she also believed she was responsible. The first reaction is to try to explain to the man as much as possible to make him feel at ease, and explaining the causes and consequences is also the adjustment strategy that the man needs most at the moment.

*Researcher: Did you do anything to deal with his sadness?*

*Female H: I comforted him, told him I had nothing to do with him, and tried my best to explain.*

*My first thought was to reassure him and let him know I didn't do anything bad.*

*(H lovers, lines 126-127)*

*Male H: Actually, it's forgiveness, but I can't say it's forgiveness; it's more like relief.*

*Yan: Is the relief because she explained it clearly?*

*Male H: Yes (...). And it's not like she did anything morally flawed. After listening to her explanation, I felt relieved knowing her cause and effect.*

*(H lovers, lines 177-182)*

(2) Low interaction and fit

There are three situations in which the interaction in the adjustment motivation stage does not match the interview. The first two are related to the previous stages. The first is that the other person is not aware of the adjustment needs of the emotional person. This occurs when the emotional awareness of the two parties is not consistent, so the other person will not realize that he needs to help the emotional person. The second is related to the emotional stage. It occurs when the emotional reasons of both parties are inconsistent, and the other party does not think it is necessary to help the emotional one. For example, when Male A is angry, although Female A is immediately aware of his emotions, she does not think that the man should be angry, so she does not think that she needs to help regulate his emotions.

*Researcher: So later on, you would refuse (Male A's request) more directly. What was his reaction?*

*Female A: He's a bit awkward, and he's not usually the kind of person who gets angry and makes a fuss. There will be quarrels and reactions like this.*

*Researcher: Then what will you do?*

*Female A: Ignore him (...). Your emotions don't matter to me. Even if you have emotions, I can't follow you.*

*(A lovers, lines 330-335)*

Or when Male O was very stressed at work, he actually told Female O. However, the woman felt that the matter was not serious and did not agree with the emotional reasons, so the adjustment motivation was unsuitable.

*Researcher: When do you not react (to his annoyance)?*

*Female O: He would say that part-time work is very stressful, and I would say, "Yeah, that's right." (...) Because I think things are not that difficult (...), he will think of it as too difficult and have too high demands on himself. (...)*

*Researcher: Actually, you don't quite agree with why he is depressed, so you don't want to talk to him?*

*Female O: Yes (...)*

*(O lovers, lines 189-190, 193-194, 200-201)*

*Researcher: Maybe she doesn't know you're depressed because of this?*

*Female O: Yes, she has a guess. But (later) I told her it was because of this (part-time job pressure). She may think this is okay, but nothing.*

*(O lovers, lines 212-213)*

The third situation is that both parties recognize that the emotional person has a need to regulate their emotions. Still, the other person does not pay attention to this need and thinks that there are higher priorities at the moment. There are two reasons for the interview. One is that during the interaction, others also have negative emotions and want to improve their own negative emotions. The two types of motives compete, thus ignoring or even rejecting the requests of the emotional person. For example, C lovers disagreed over something, and Female C left the scene directly. Male C was also unhappy because of this and had no intention of appeasing the woman.

*Researcher: Why (not to catch up)?*

*Male C: Sometimes I feel a little annoyed and wonder why I am angry. I want to tell her to calm down. (...) At least I will call her again that day. When I saw her turning around and leaving, I actually felt very uncomfortable. (...)*

*(C lovers, lines 200-207)*

*Researcher: What is his usual reaction when you ignore him?*

*Female C: He will be a little angry and wonder why I am doing this.*

*(C lovers, lines 146-147)*

Or maybe Female H proposes to spend Christmas, but Male H refuses because he already has a date. An unhappy woman will leave in anger. The man doesn't want to initially regulate the woman's emotions, but he doesn't care about her properly until his anger subsides.

*Researcher: The reason why you want to comfort her is because you feel sorry for her.*

*Male H: Yes, but I must wait until my emotions are over. It will be very unpleasant at first, but after 10 minutes, 20 minutes, and half an hour, when the anger subsides, I will feel sorry for her, so I have to drive her back when she wants to leave (back to school).*

*(H lovers, lines 211-213)*

The second type of reason is also the competition between the two types of motives. The

other person thinks there are more important things now than improving the person's mood. For example, when a couple is quarreling, the woman wants to improve her mood, so she wants to leave the scene directly. Although the man thinks it is important to improve the woman's mood, he thinks it is more important to let the woman understand his thoughts. It can be seen that the subsequent adjustment strategies adopted by both parties are inconsistent.

*Researcher: (When you say you miss someone) What is his reaction?*

*Female I: He would like us to deal with it first and separate immediately without quarreling.*

*Research: What do you think?*

*Female I: I think it would be better to keep arguing if we stay together, so it would be better to separate first.*

*(I lovers, lines 58-61)*

*Male I: If I leave her alone, she may not want to say what I am thinking at the moment or what I want to express. But if I walk with her or comfort her, she can know what my original thoughts are. (...) Because she may have misunderstood my speech, I need to clear up this misunderstanding.*

*(I lovers, lines 103-106)*

## **5. Regulation strategy stage**

The use of regulation strategies is very diverse. Interviews found that more than one regulation strategy is usually used in a negative emotional event. Due to the different roles of the two parties, the adjustment strategies used by the emotional person and the other person will also be different. Therefore, the fit of adjustment strategies also refers to whether both parties have a consistent understanding of the adjustment strategies they want to use and whether each takes the required actions rather than both parties taking exactly the same actions. In the interviews, one partner of multiple couples used the same strategy. Still, the results were different, indicating that the effectiveness of interpersonal emotion regulation relies more on the interaction between the two parties rather than the effect of a specific strategy.

### **(1) High interaction and fit**

Interviews found that when both parties use strategies with consistent goals, interactions are more likely to be consistent. For example, when a Female U is angry, she is used to leaving



the scene first and waiting for the Male U to catch up and apologize. When the man catches up and apologizes and tells the reason for his anger, he can successfully regulate the woman's emotions. This type of interaction pattern has occurred many times between the two parties, so they are constantly making regulations in order to shorten the time and improve the efficiency of adjustment.

*Female U: After he said something that triggered (my emotions), my face collapsed, I ignored him and started to put away my things. I just said go home quickly, I have to leave. I spoke less, my tone worsened, and I wanted to leave the scene quickly.*

(...)

*Researcher: What if he didn't catch up?*

*Female U: If it were the case before, I would have left first. But as I said before, you can't really run away and find the other person. I may be nearby, and as long as he comes out, it doesn't matter.*

(...)

*Researcher: How will you comfort him after he catches up?*

*Female U: He hugs me (...) and says sorry. Are you angry because of something? If he says it right, I will stop. He would (...) explain and comfort me or say things that made me happy.*

*(U lovers, lines 233-234, 238-241, 254-257)*

*Researcher: (She ran away) What should we do now?*

*Male U: Chase her (...).*

*(U lovers, lines 277-278)*

## (2) Low interaction and fit

Inconsistency in the adjustment strategy stage usually results from disagreements between the two parties on how to adjust. There are three situations seen in the interviews. First, the motivations of the two parties in the previous stage of regulation were not consistent, so they would naturally adopt different strategies to satisfy their respective motivations. At this point, strategies can easily conflict with each other. For example, when Female C complained to Male C, the man defended her friend, which made the woman even more angry. Because the man does not think that regulating the woman's emotions is the top priority at present, and what is more important is to communicate the ideas of both parties.

*Female C: He may be used to arguing with others about certain things, so he may not feel angry when I argue with him. Because he may feel that we are just discussing the opinions of friends. I don't know why I am so angry, but what makes me angry is that he doesn't care about me and instead defends my friend.*

*(C lovers, lines 151-154)*

*Researcher: So you found her angry at that time. When you found her angry, what would you do?*

*Male C: I want to reason with her and clarify the matter.*

*Researcher: Would you do anything particularly if you were angry with her?*

*Male C: Probably not.*

*Researcher: Why?*

*Male C: I think I am talking about things and making my views clear. Why do I have to talk about emotional matters?*

*(C lovers, lines 181-186)*

It can be seen from the interviews that even if the two parties are very consistent in the previous stage (regulation motivation), they may choose different strategies. The researchers speculated that it was due to the different habits of both parties in regulating emotions. For example, Female J was unhappy with her work colleagues. She wanted to complain to Male J. Still, the man discussed the matter with her in a rational and analytical way, trying to lead the woman to re-evaluate the incident. The regulation strategies both parties use clearly do not match and, therefore, fail to improve the woman's mood.

*Female J: When I met a colleague who was very annoying, I complained to him. To appease me and keep me from being angry, he said it was not important. In fact, I just need someone to curse with me at the moment, but his comfort will make me even more angry.*

*(J lovers, lines 229-232)*

*Male J: (...) I will try to tell her that from a different perspective, it is not that serious. She would say that I didn't think from her perspective (...) She felt that what she had to deal with at the moment was her emotions.*

*(J lovers, lines 330-334)*

The third situation is related to the current situation or the limitations of individual resources. Although a certain party understands the adjustment strategy, it is unable to implement it. For example, when U lovers first started dating, Female U expected man U to tell her why she was angry when he comforted her. But the man who had just been scolded by the woman went blank and could only say sorry.

*Female U: He will keep saying sorry. I had a quarrel because of this matter before, so he will just keep saying sorry. When quarreling, you need to throw out a few more words, such as what you may have done wrong, why do you think the other party is angry, and say more words to appease the other party's emotions, but he will only speak one or two words because he is very slow to respond.*

*(U lovers, lines 46-48)*

*Male U: Also, when I am scolded, my thoughts are unclear, and I cannot think of what I want to say, so I usually don't know what to say when I am scolded. But she would be very unhappy. Why didn't (I) say something to appease her?*

*(U lovers, lines 210-211)*

## **6. Complementarity of interaction between the two parties**

From the above four stages of interaction, it can be seen that when it comes to achieving compatibility, the emotional person and the other have different tasks to complete. It can be seen from the examples at each stage that although the tasks of both parties in each stage are different, the two parties do not complete their tasks independently and have nothing to do with the other party.

For example, both P woman and V woman mentioned in the emotional awareness stage use non-verbal messages to express their negative emotions. Still, Male P cannot detect his emotional changes, but Male V can. The researcher believes that this does not mean that the Female P does not express her emotions well or that the Male P's emotional awareness is too poor but is the product of the interaction between the two parties. From the interviews, it can be seen that when the emotional partners of different couples express their emotions in similar ways, some others can immediately detect the emotional changes of the other person, but some people cannot detect them. The same situation also occurs in the adjustment strategy stage. For example, in the adjustment strategy stage, Male J uses reevaluation to regulate Female J's

emotions, but his expectations are different from the woman's, so the interaction is not consistent. But when Female H used re-evaluation to help Male H, she had very good results.

*Researcher: After she shared it with you, did your emotions (disappear) quickly?*

*Male H: I think she is quite wise. She will help me sort out what I can do about this matter or whether I am wrong. I think it makes sense, and I understand it quickly. Because she is objective and I have emotions, what she said should be more correct.*

*(H lovers, lines 331-334)*

*Researchers: How to comfort him (boyfriend)?*

*Female H: I will look at his reasons and tell him more positive thoughts. Maybe he failed to apply for something, or his performance was not good. I will comfort him. At least, this is an experience.*

*(H lovers, lines 347-349)*

## **7. The impact of fit on subsequent stages**

The previous paragraph detailed the connotation of the four stages. It can be seen that whether the interaction in the previous stage is consistent or not will affect the interaction in the next stage and may even be passed on to later stages. For example, in the case of the regulating motivation stage, the interaction between the awareness of emotion and empathizing with the cause of emotion stage will affect whether the regulation motivation is consistent or not.

The researchers theorize that when the interaction in the previous stage is more consistent, it will be easier to achieve agreement in the next stage and vice versa. For example, for the K lovers mentioned in the emotional awareness stage, a certain interview included a four-stage process in detail. In this case, after Male K made Female K angry, the female then said she didn't want to talk to him. But then the woman soon realized that the man was sad because of it. She didn't think the other party was making trouble unreasonably. Instead, he quickly comforted the man, and his mood quickly eased. Both parties believed that the regulation strategy was very effective.

*Female K: (...) I just said I didn't want to talk to you for the time being, and I ran to take a shower. When I came out of the shower, he felt very sad. I asked him what was wrong, and he*

*said no, and he started crying. (…)*

*Researcher: How did you find out that he was sad in the first place?*

*Female K: He doesn't even speak,*

*(…)*

*Researcher: What was your reaction when he cried?*

*Female K: I just laughed, thought he was cute, and then comforted him*

*Researcher: Did he react when he saw you laughing?*

*Female K: He didn't react at all.*

*Researcher: When you comfort him, does he calm down quickly?*

*Female K: He will want to clarify with me that he really doesn't like me saying I won't talk to you. (…)* We started discussing what we can do if I get angry in the future.

*(K lovers, lines 107-109, 111-112, 126-133)*

*Researcher: What if she finds out that you are feeling wronged?*

*Male K: She will find out whether I was too excited or too emotional when I spoke just now, and she will say sorry to me.*

*Researcher: When you heard her say sorry, how did you feel?*

*Male K: I feel like my emotions have calmed down.*

*(K lovers, lines 174-177)*

It can be seen from the interviews that when lovers have inappropriate interactions at a certain stage, it often triggers negative emotions on both sides. If negative emotions appear in others, they will often be motivated to regulate their own emotions. As mentioned in the paragraph on the regulation motivation stage, this can easily conflict with the regulation motivation of others who want to improve their emotions, or compete with them for their limited regulation resources, making it more difficult to regulate original emotions.

For example, when Female L becomes dissatisfied and her tone becomes less polite, the amount of negative emotions aroused by Male L becomes the key to how subsequent emotional events develop. If the man has a lot of negative emotions, he will easily ignore the woman's adjustment needs, leading to a mismatch between the adjustment motivations of both parties, leading to failure of adjustment.

*Researcher: (…)* How does it develop after he has an emotional reaction?

*Female L: If both parties are in a good mood, and they quarrel with each other for a few words,*

*one of them will subconsciously change the topic. After changing the topic, the two of them will pretend that nothing is wrong. (...) If it's a big fight, it usually starts in a restaurant and gets too loud (...). I might go home and calm down, or maybe I'll continue to see him in the evening to finish the matter.*

*(L lovers, lines 74-79)*

*Male L: This happened two or three times, and it was different every time. If the weather was not so hot, or things were going smoothly, I would say when I was angry that I thought we could calm down with each other (...). But in the second stage, when someone is angry and unreasonable, I will talk to her about her shortcomings (...).*

*(L lovers, lines 129-131)*

## **8. Remedy for incompatibility: synchronization**

The interviews revealed that when one partner perceives a lack of compatibility, he or she will sometimes adopt some methods to make the interaction more compatible, which the researchers named "synchronization." From the interviews, it can be seen that synchronization is divided into three types. The first is "unilateral synchronization", which involves changing one's own adjustment motivation or content of adjustment strategies and trying to achieve a fit with the other party in these two stages; the second is "unilateral synchronization" with the other party in the adjustment stage. After a certain stage of interactive communication, re-executing the tasks of both parties at that stage in different forms and re-reaching agreement is called "event synchronization"; the third is to communicate with the other party that the degree of agreement is better at certain stages after regulating emotions. The reason for the low level is finally reached to reach a consensus on the adjustment process of similar events in the future, which is called "post-event synchronization". In the interviews, the initiators of both unilateral synchrony and incident synchronization were all emotional people. The researchers speculated that because they have the need to regulate their emotions, it is easier to detect whether the current emotional regulation is suitable and whether it can meet their regulatory needs. The initiators of post-event synchronization are both the emotional person and the others.

### **(1) Unilateral synchronization**

The biggest difference between unilateral synchronization and the other two types of synchronization is whether there is communication between both parties. The latter two types

are achieved through communication and exchange of each other's awareness and understanding of a certain stage of the adjustment process so as to reach a consensus on that stage. However, unilateral synchronization means directly changing one's own adjustment motivation or adjustment strategy to accommodate the other party without telling the other party. There are some situations in interviews where it is not appropriate to communicate with the other party at the moment, so you can only adapt to the other party first. For example, when couple B quarreled, the woman wanted the man to apologize directly, but the man wanted to analyze the rights and wrongs of the matter before apologizing. Although the woman was reluctant, she had to cooperate with the man to tell the story in detail.

*Female B: In that situation, if you haven't analyzed the situation and how wrong he is, he won't understand how wrong he is. So I suppressed it first and used his language to analyze and list out where he went wrong (···).*

*(B lovers, lines 229-231)*

*Researcher: How did you respond to her emotions at that time?*

*Male B: I have always shown that I will apologize to you and explain to her clearly why I did this.*

*(B lovers, lines 294-295)*

It can be seen from the above that there is a huge gap in the interpretation of regulation strategies between women and men. The man does not feel that the woman has deliberately changed his adjustment strategies. This is because unilateral synchronization means one party adapts to the other without prior communication. Therefore, the other party usually does not notice that the fit at this stage is low or even that the other party complies with its own adjustment motives or strategies.

Researchers have also observed another type of situation, where, after many interactions, one party finds that the partner does not intend to change the way they interact, so they have to change themselves to make the interaction more consistent. For example, when N lovers are quarreling, Female N needs Male N to comfort her before they can talk properly, but the man insists on finishing the matter first. The woman was very uncomfortable with it at first, but later she had to learn to control her emotions and adapt to the other person's way of interacting.

*Female N: In the early stage, because I didn't know he would quarrel like this, my emotions*

*would rise immediately at the beginning, and I couldn't control it, so I would start crying. (...) He will ask you to speak out; we just need to discuss it rationally (...). When emotions arise, I need someone to comfort me before I can continue talking slowly. He doesn't think comforting is a good thing and thinks that the matter needs to be solved. (...) Later, I gradually learned about his pattern, and in the end, I started to arm myself. I would control my emotions at first. Although my emotions were still there, I would not show them easily (...).*

*(N lovers, lines 19-22, 25-27, 29-31)*

## (2) Synchronization of events

Event synchronization can occur at various stages of the interpersonal emotion regulation process, and its methods will be slightly different with each stage. Still, they all emphasize further communication at this stage. When both parties have a better understanding of each other's cognition, awareness, or expectations of this stage, it can prompt both parties to change their interaction methods and re-perform the tasks of this stage, thus improving the compatibility of the interaction at this stage. For example, in the emotional awareness stage, if others do not notice the emotional changes of the emotional person, some emotional people will change how they express their emotions, using more explicit non-verbal messages or speaking directly to make others aware of the emotional changes. For example, Male C said the wrong thing but did not notice the dissatisfaction of Female C. After the woman expressed her dissatisfaction again, the man realized that the intensity of her negative emotions was higher than expected, and he should apologize and comfort her.

*Female C: Actually, I told him tactfully at that time that I didn't like you calling me round-faced. But he had no feeling at all and couldn't grasp what I meant then. In fact, I tried to express it at that time, but he couldn't accept it at all. (...)*

*Researcher: I hope the other party should know and take the initiative to comfort you.*

*Female C: Yes, comfort me. But it seems unlikely, so I still have to tell him.*

*Researcher: Then what did you probably tell him later?*

*Female C: I just said you said I have a round face. I was very sad when I heard you say that.*

*(C lovers, lines 275-282)*

*Researcher: So, she is angry?*

*Male C: She was completely depressed. She felt unhappy that afternoon and ignored me when she got home. I just asked her, do you care about that? She was right. Then I sent her a message*



*to apologize (···). I explained to her that I didn't think the word "round face" meant anything.*

*(C lovers, lines 305-308)*

In addition to the emotional awareness stage, events in the other three stages are synchronized, mostly reinterpreting and expressing one's own understanding of this stage at the moment in order to resolve the other party's misunderstanding or re-understand. If both parties can reach a consensus at this stage, the interaction will naturally fit well. For example, in the regulation strategy stage, the J lovers mentioned that the Female J directly told the Male J that the regulation strategies he used did not meet her expectations. However, it can be seen from the man's response that he has not specifically changed his regulation strategy, indicating that synchronization may not necessarily improve the fit of the interaction. Still, it depends on how the other party responds.

*Female J: I get angry and ask him why you want to speak for him (colleague). Is this behavior right? During the communication process, he kept clarifying. For example, if I don't think he is right, or if I just don't think the situation is serious, I will understand what he means.*

*(J lovers, lines 295-297)*

*Researcher: What does she usually say?*

*Male J: I feel very hurt when you say this. How can I not stand on her side on this matter?*

*Researcher: Then what would you say?*

*Male J: I will say it, but I really don't understand how the people in the opposite position view this issue. Or this situation actually happens very often, and there is no need to reprimand or criticize him so harshly.*

*(J lovers, lines 343-349)*

### (3) Synchronize afterwards

Another way is to synchronize afterward. That is, after the emotional adjustment is completed, the two parties will discuss the cognition and emotions of both parties during this interpersonal emotion adjustment process and think about how the two parties will regulate their interpersonal emotions the next time they encounter a similar incident. Adjustment can make it more suitable. Unlike event synchronization, which focuses on immediate improvement, when interviewees synchronize after the event, they focus more on the quality of emotion-regulating interactions for similar events in the future. For example, when Woman B is feeling depressed, she wants to talk to Man B, but Man B just types out replies, which is less helpful

to Woman B's mood. After discussion, both parties reached a consensus on adjustment strategies to improve the woman's mood effectively.

*Female B: If he feels that (...) he can't speak, he will reply with a text, saying that I can only help you recharge your batteries. What he means is that I can only give you this kind of psychological support now. (...)*

*Researcher: So you suggested to him that when you need company, he should take action to accompany you?*

*Female B: Someone suggested that we can use voice to do our own thing. Partly because (voice) chatting is quite effective, so we used that method later.*

*(B lovers, lines 69-72, 94-96)*

*Male B: As for her, I wouldn't say specifically how to treat her at the beginning. Later, she told me that there were certain ways to alleviate her problems at that time. So, I changed later and used words to comfort me from the beginning. She later said (...) she actually wanted someone to be with her, whether that person was by her side or not. So I told her if this happens again, she can either start a video chat or talk on the phone. (...)*

*(B lovers, lines 109-112)*

Or the Male K will feel sad because the female K said, "I won't talk to you." After discussions between the two parties, not only does the man understand that the woman is used to regulating her emotions in this way, but the two parties also gradually form an interaction with regulatory strategies that are acceptable to both parties.

*Female K: I will still not want to talk to him, and he will know that this is my behavior pattern. It is not because I really don't want to talk to him but how I deal with emotions.*

*Researcher: After the discussion, did you accept your handling of it?*

*Female K: I should have accepted it later. Later, when I said I didn't want to talk to him, he wouldn't cry anymore. He knew that I was just dealing with my emotions. He would probably hold my hand and not talk for now. It would be (...) so sad.*

*Researcher: Do you think he will still be sad?*

*Female K: Probably still a little bit, but not so sad. He will feel uncomfortable, but he won't feel like I have abandoned him, and he won't be so afraid that I will abandon him when I get angry.*

## 9. Effectiveness of interpersonal emotion regulation

After four stages of interpersonal emotion regulation, the effect is not only the immediate emotional changes but also the long-term interaction between the two parties. The researchers named the impact on the interaction between the two parties "interpersonal emotion regulation effectiveness". They divided the impact seen in the interviews into two levels: interpersonal emotion regulation efficiency and interpersonal emotion regulation preference tendency. The former refers to the efficiency of regulating negative emotions in this relationship; the latter refers to the tendency of individuals to rely on this relationship to regulate their emotions when they have negative emotions.

### (1) Emotional regulation efficiency

From the interviews, it can be seen that when the couple's interaction becomes more and more compatible, the efficiency of emotional regulation will also increase. As the negative emotional events they experience accumulate, some couples become each other's reliable emotional regulation resources and can rely on each other's help to overcome negative emotions that were previously unable to be regulated by themselves. Therefore, partners with a high degree of compatibility will gradually increase both their interpersonal emotion regulation efficiency and preference tendencies. For example, as O lovers's relationship lasted, the man observed that the woman's stress resistance increased because the woman had a reliable emotional regulator in the man.

*Researcher: Why (girlfriend) has become more stress-resistant?*

*Male O: There is someone I can talk to. (...) Good friends are actually very busy, and sometimes they don't know who to talk to. You can tell me when you are with me.*

*(O lovers, lines 283-285)*

Or perhaps Male X found that he became more and more efficient in regulating his emotions after dating.

*Male X: Another big change is that there are people in life who can help you share some things. For example, in the past, we could only talk to good friends and family members, but now we*

*have one more person to talk to. Some happy or unhappy things will spread out faster for you, and you feel that one more person can help you share certain things. I think this is the biggest change.*

*(X lovers, lines 219-222)*

## (2) Emotional regulation tendency

When the efficiency of regulation increases, couples will increasingly tend to let each other regulate their emotions. Even if it is a small fluctuation in mood, I still want to seek help from the other person to adjust it. For example, Female P mentioned that her husband is more and more willing to tell her his emotions.

*Female P: He has become more and more himself. He will tell me directly when he feels any emotion, and he will tell me all kinds of emotions he encounters in life.*

*(P lovers, lines 199-200)*

Male M also experienced similar changes and became increasingly dependent on each other.

*Male M: I will be more willing to confess my feelings and will no longer be so rational. When we first started dating, I wished I was a babysitter and took care of her. In the later stage, I will start to rely on her and tell her my own affairs to seek comfort.*

*(M lovers, lines 307-308)*

## (3) Four stages of interactive changes

The first paragraph is about the impact on the relationship after adjusting interpersonal emotions. This paragraph is about the changes in the four-stage interaction after the two parties get along for a long time and continue to adjust interpersonal emotions. It can be seen from the interviews that when the partners first started dating, they were not familiar with each other and did not know their usual ways of expressing emotions or their preferred emotion regulation strategies. Hence, the interactions were usually less consistent. Some couples will use synchronization when they encounter incompatible interactions and gradually understand the habits of both parties at each stage of emotional regulation, and then the interactions will become more and more compatible. Taking the emotional awareness stage as an example, Male Q mentioned that as the relationship lasts longer, Female Q becomes more aware of her

emotions.

*Male Q: She notices that I am in a bad mood more often. If she notices (I am in a bad mood), I will tell her.*

*(Q lovers, lines 23-224)*

Or Female M finds that Male M can detect her emotional changes more keenly (emotional awareness), and also knows why she is unhappy (the same reason for emotions), and does not use less efficient adjustment strategies.

*Female M: He will discover that I am more sensitive to certain things, and when I start not talking, he will know what is happening. At first, he tried hard to make me laugh, but now he can't.*

*Researcher: Because it's useless?*

*Female M: Yes.*

*(M lovers, lines 301-304)*

Male X also mentioned the reason why he is increasingly able to understand and accept Female X's emotions.

*Male X: I haven't had a romantic relationship with a woman for a long time before. Now, I am more able to think from a girl's perspective and be tolerant of others.*

*(X lovers, line 215)*

In addition to being more aware of each other's emotions and empathizing with each other, there are also many lovers whose long-term interactions change during the regulation motivation and regulation strategy stages. For example, Female H mentioned that Male H's coping style changed significantly before and after dating. After the woman's synchronization efforts, the man can now pay attention to the woman's emotions first and then switch to sharing his thoughts after the woman's mood improves. It can be seen that the regulation motivations and strategies of both parties are more consistent.

*Researcher: When you have negative emotions, how will the other party deal with it?*

*Female H: In the early stage (he) was reasonable, but later on, I told him not to be reasonable*

*with me. Now, he will comfort me first. After soothing me, he will ask me, "Are you still angry now? Are you unhappy?" After ensuring my mood is relatively relaxed, he will say, "Okay, let me tell you now what I just said. What do you think?"*

*(H lovers, lines 272-275)*

*Male H: She feels that I am more patient than when we first started dating. This is what she told me. I also feel that I am more patient than when I was single to accompany someone and listen to her slowly.*

*(H lovers, lines 280-282)*

#### (4) Form a stable interaction model

As mentioned earlier, everyone has their own habits for regulating interpersonal emotions. When inconsistent habits lead to incompatible interactions, the two parties do not develop a set of interaction methods out of thin air that meets the needs of both parties. Instead, through multiple synchronizations, they adjust their own habits to find a method that is acceptable to both parties. During the interviews, it was observed that couples who have been together for a long time will have one or two stable ways of interacting when one partner has negative emotions. For example, when Male R mentions that one party has negative emotions, there are usually two ways of interaction. One is that one party gets sulky, and the other party reconciles after being comforted; the other is that the negative emotions are high, so it turns into a big quarrel between the two parties.

*Researcher: In addition to these two methods, one is that both parties are emotional for a long time, and the other is that you are emotional and he is not emotional at the moment, are there any other different examples?*

*Male R: If it's not serious, it's probably the first type. No matter who makes someone angry, it's usually the other person who complains, and it'll be fine after a while. Sometimes it evolves into the second type, which is more serious. The first type may also evolve into the second type. If I make her angry, it will be small at first. I think about it, sometimes I make her angry, and she feels it is serious, so she will directly change to the second type and start a cold war after the quarrel.*

*(R lovers, lines 67-72)*

Or Female P mentioned that after a period of dating, when she got angry, both parties

had a stable way of interacting:

*Researcher: You will tell him directly about it when he makes you unhappy. You will tell him the reason so that both parties understand the reason for each other's anger. After explaining, you will apologize if it is his fault. Will you make peace?*

*Female P: Yeah.*

*Researcher: This method is also different from the beginning.*

*Female P: Yes.*

*Researcher: Are there any other models in which your unhappiness develops differently from this one?*

*Female P: It feels like this almost every time.*

*(P lovers, lines 214-220)*

The researchers deduced that the stable occurrence of these interactive methods does not necessarily mean that both parties can quickly adjust negative emotions through this interaction. It is more likely that the two parties are able to accept the results after many synchronized adjustments based on their past habits. At least it improves the person's mood without ruining the relationship. When this interaction method is established, few couples in the interviews will try a new one. Still, they will often consider what can be improved in the existing interaction to make it more consistent. For example, when Female O has negative emotions, she usually does not express them immediately and waits for Male O to take the initiative to notice the emotion. But as the relationship lasts longer, the woman will reduce the amount of time she spends not expressing herself to make the emotional awareness stage more consistent.

*Researcher: Do you like the model mentioned above? Just keep it quiet for a while (girlfriend), and then share it when the other party asks.*

*Male O: I think it's acceptable. I'm used to it now, so there won't be any unpleasantness.*

*Researcher: Is there anything you want to change?*

*Male O: I don't think so for the time being. The two of us are getting closer and can talk directly. (Girlfriend) has less and less time to be bored, almost none.*

*(O lovers, lines 292-296).*

Or the U lovers mentioned in the previous regulation strategy stage. Although the interaction between the two parties is fully compatible, when the woman synchronizes,

she wants to reduce the time required to regulate her emotions.

*Female U: Because this incident happens too often, (we) will review it and not delay it for so long because everyone is tired(···). Give him more guidance in the middle about why he is angry. If he tells me that the reason for my anger is not (I really mean), I say no (instead of sulking and not telling him).*

*Researcher: So, you have always wanted to shorten the time of this mode?*

*Female U: Yes(···).*

*(U lovers, lines 243-248)*

Researchers believe that this phenomenon shows that the interaction of interpersonal emotion regulation is deeply affected by the characteristics of both parties. The current interaction is the product of compromise between the two parties from their own regulation habits. It is the result of multiple interactions and synchronization. In the interviews, some couples tried to use new ways of interacting because they were introduced to other ways of interaction through suggestions from friends or through other channels. For example, it was mentioned in the post-synchronization paragraph that Female B listened to her friend's suggestion and asked Male B to give up text replies and accompany him by voice. Interviews revealed that most couples will continue to use their existing interaction methods, gradually accepting and forming a habit of regulating interpersonal emotions. For example, Male E is very accepting of the current way of interaction.

*Researcher: Is there any trouble with this method?*

*Male E: this is difficult to think about because there are no other cases to compare with, so I can't think of the shortcomings.*

*Researcher: If you could change, would you like to change?*

*Male E: I think this method is pretty good and quite acceptable to me.*

*(E lovers, lines 223-226)*

Male J also mentioned that he has not tried other methods and is unsure whether it will be better.

*Researcher: (Girlfriend) Is leaving you alone to be quiet good or bad for you to adjust your emotions?*



*Male J: I don't know either because I haven't tried any other way. Don't quite know how to compare.*

*(J lovers, lines 130-131)*

Or Female Q wants to change her sulking habit, but she's unsure how to improve it yet.

*Researcher: Has there been any change since dating?*

*Female Q: There is no formal change. It seems like it has always been this way. I think my part should be better, and I think my emotional management can be a little better.*

*Researcher: Are you talking about when you don't talk?*

*Female Q: Yes, I hope my emotions won't be drawn out for so long. It won't take me until an hour to express my emotions.*

*(Q lovers, lines 127-129)*

## **V. Comprehensive discussion**

### **1. Theoretical contribution**

In the literature review, this study concluded that there are many cultural differences in existing research on interpersonal emotion regulation. However, Chinese interaction attaches great importance to relationship characteristics, which do not fit with the trend of existing theories. The theoretical framework of this study is discussed below, and its connections with existing theories of interpersonal emotion regulation and theories related to Chinese culture are discussed respectively.

#### **(1) Corresponding constructs of fit and synchronization**

The theory constructed in this study takes the four stages of "interaction fit" and "synchronization" as important constructs. Gross updated his emotion regulation process in 2015 and divided emotion regulation into four stages: generating emotions, detecting emotions and regulating motivations, selecting emotion regulation strategies, and executing emotion regulation. There are many similarities between the two, including awareness of emotions, regulation of motivation, and regulation strategies. However, this study added a stage of empathizing with emotional causes between the awareness of emotions and the regulation of

motivations to describe the process in more detail. Gross (2015), on the other hand, focuses more on describing the overall process, including the starting point (the generation of emotions) and the endpoint (the actual implementation of the strategy) of the process.

Considering the differences between the two, the emotional cause empathy stage proposed in this study will likely be a unique construct of interpersonal situations. It can be seen from the interviews that others often need to try to understand the causes of the person's emotions through interaction in order to find more effective adjustment strategies. When others try to empathize with the emotional person, they often fail to empathize or understand the cause of the other person's emotions and thus do not want to help the emotional person regulate their emotions. Precisely because others are individuals independent of the emotional person, they cannot fully understand the emotional person's experience, which highlights the impact of this stage on emotional regulation and fills the gaps in past research.

If compared with past empathy research (Davis, 2018), awareness of emotions and empathy for emotional causes can exactly correspond to emotional empathy and cognitive empathy. Affective empathy focuses on being aware of the other person's emotional state, while cognitive empathy is understanding the reasons for what the other person is thinking or feeling. Research on emotional empathy shows that the ability to empathize with the other party's emotions during interaction accurately is not only dependent on the recipient's emotional empathy tendency but also depends on the communicator's tendency to express emotions, and both parties need to work together to promote accurate empathy (Zaki et al., 2008). This result is very consistent with the complementarity emphasized in the four phases of interaction in this study.

"Synchronization" shows that interaction is a back-and-forth process between both parties, echoing the adjustment flexibility proposed by Bonanno (2013). Regulatory elasticity believes that emotion regulation is not just a linear process. When some individuals find that their emotion regulation is ineffective, they will return to the previous stages of emotion regulation to adjust their regulatory motivations, strategies, etc. Synchronization demonstrates the flexibility of interpersonal situations. Since both parties have their own tasks at each stage, it is not only themselves who need to adjust but whether both parties can reach a consensus on the awareness and cognition of a certain stage and re-execute the stage task. Fit and synchrony can interweave many possible interactions and predict the longer-term development of a relationship.

## (2) Dialogue with existing interpersonal emotion regulation theories

Existing theories of interpersonal emotion regulation in the West, as mentioned in the

literature review, rarely consider the interactive process of both parties. Although Reeck et al. (2016) and Zaki and William (2013) both mentioned the interaction between the two parties in emotion regulation, the constructs of fit and synchronization in this study are more suitable for describing interpersonal interactions and processes focusing on Chinese culture.

First, Reeck et al.'s (2016) theory focuses on how others regulate the emotional person. Its theoretical advantage is that it describes more clearly the process of others' awareness of emotions, whether they need to intervene in regulation and the use of regulation strategies. However, it is relatively rough in how they react to emotions. Especially when others use different strategies, he lists the possible reactions of various emotional persons but does not explain the key to the different reactions of emotional persons. Assuming that the emotional person readily accepts the adjustment of others, emotional regulation will probably be successful. But if the emotional person strongly disagrees with the other's regulation, how will both parties respond to the possibility of failure in regulation?

In fact, the above interactive concerns can be covered by the fit proposed in this study. The emotional person will react well or badly to the other's regulation strategies, depending on the degree of fit between the regulation strategies of both parties. The degree of fit of the adjustment strategy may be affected by factors in the first three stages. This coincides with Reeck et al.'s (2016) exploration of awareness of emotions and evaluation of whether intervention is needed before regulating strategies.

The awareness of emotions is consistent with the concept in the first stage of this study, and the assessment of whether to intervene in regulation is similar to the concepts of emotional causes and regulatory motivation. However, Reeck et al. (2016) only explored how others interpret and evaluate emotional responders when detecting emotions or evaluating whether intervention is needed. They ignored that emotional responders will also change their emotional expression or communication methods depending on the situation (Synchronization). Therefore, when used in Chinese culture, which emphasizes interpersonal interaction, this study should be more culturally appropriate than the model of Reeck et al. (2016).

Suppose this study compares the models of Zaki and William (2013). In that case, it can be found that the two dimensions emphasized by the latter (spontaneous-other-generation, feedback independence-feedback dependence) have different findings in this study.

First, this model divides interpersonal emotion regulation into two types (spontaneous and other-initiated) based on who is the initiator. However, from the research interviews, no obvious differences in the course of spontaneous or other-initiated emotions were observed. Regardless of whether the emotional person or others initiate it, it will go through the four-stage interactive

process proposed in this article to successfully achieve the effect of regulating emotions. This study believes that although spontaneous or separate is a simple and clear classification method, it does not have a direct and substantial impact on the overall interactive relationship process.

The second is feedback dependence or feedback independence. This study believes that Zaki and William's (2013) feedback dependence or feedback independence is mainly reflected in the expectations of both parties in the interaction stage of regulatory strategies. When someone complains to another person, does he/she expect his or her partner to listen and respond well (feedback dependence), or does he/she expect that the partner should listen and respond well (feedback dependence), or does he/she think that any response does not matter (feedback independence)? Whether the partner's actions match his/her expectations determines the success or failure of this emotion regulation. This is actually similar to the fit point of view proposed in this study, that is, whether it is feedback dependence or feedback independence, as long as the interaction between the two parties' regulatory strategies is consistent with each other, it can promote the development of emotion regulation in a successful direction. However, the degree of fit in this study can cover a much wider range of phenomena than feedback dependence/independence. The latter only talks about adjustment strategies, but the expectations of both parties for each other's interaction will also be reflected in emotional awareness, emotional empathy, and regulatory motivation. On. In comparison, fit is more suitable for describing the interaction phenomena at various stages of the interpersonal emotion regulation process. It is worthy of further exploring the fit of this model in the cultural context of Western participants in the future.

### (3) Connection with Chinese-related theories

In the literature review, it was mentioned that when Chinese people use emotion regulation, they do so in an emotional refining manner and pursue self-harmony (Frijda & Sundararajan, 2007). Subsequent research on parent-child conflict (Ho et al., 2017) further expanded the scope of harmony in the emotion refinement theory to interpersonal harmony and believed that the harmony pursued by the Chinese not only includes the balance of inner emotions but also includes the harmony of interpersonal relationships.

Emotional refining is not an action that can be achieved overnight. It requires deeply savoring emotions, understanding the causes of emotions, and connecting with self-concept. Only after multiple precipitations can a harmonious result be achieved (Frijda & Sundararajan, 2007). The interaction process constructed in this study also reflects a similar connotation of emotional refinement. After a long-term relationship, the lovers gradually became familiar with

each other's habits, regulated to a more suitable interaction method through synchronization, and gradually achieved Harmonious interpersonal interaction.

This theory is also consistent with the discussion of the relationship orientation of Chinese indigenous psychology, which is that the relationship situation profoundly affects the process of Chinese interpersonal interaction (Hwang, 1987). This study focuses on intimate relationships. The interviewees indeed stated that, in most cases, the other person's welfare is the purpose. They also saw that different situations would produce different motivations for adjustment, showing the influence of relationship situations on Chinese interpersonal interactions.

In recent years, relationship-oriented theories have also focused on parent-child and intimate relationship conflicts (Ye Guanghui, 2012; Xiao Gangyu et al., 2018). It is believed that when parent-child conflicts occur, both parties can regard the conflict as an opportunity to understand each other's differences or encourage both parties to communicate well. Given the opportunity, conflict may transform from relationship-destroying to relationship-deepening. This theory emphasizes that the transformation of conflict is the product of the interaction between the two parties. Specific actions taken by one party can increase the probability of a positive conflict transformation, but whether the actual transformation can be successful depends on the other party's response. This theory is entirely consistent with the spirit of this study. When an emotional event occurs, whether the two parties can adjust smoothly or add fuel to the flames and break up unhappy depends on the synchronization or compatibility of the interaction between the two parties. As this study shows, no specific strategies or behaviors are suitable for all couples and situations. Whether the exchange can go smoothly depends on whether the interaction between the parties is consistent. Therefore, compared with past research that focused on the individual's behavior or motivations, this study focuses on whether the interaction between the two parties is consistent, which is closer to the relationship-oriented cultural nature of Chinese interaction.

Finally, although this theory is constructed based on Chinese culture and Chinese participants, exploring the process of interpersonal emotion regulation from the relationship level is a direction existing Chinese and Western emotion regulation theories have not attempted. In particular, the interaction fit and synchronization in this study are not found in the theoretical concepts of interpersonal emotion regulation in the past. However, highlighting that emotion regulation is deeply affected by the interaction situation is consistent with the trend of Western research in recent years (Aldao, 2013).

In the future, this study can not only help explain cultural differences in interpersonal

emotion regulation and provide an alternative perspective on interpersonal emotion regulation in non-Western cultures but also has the potential to complement the dialogue with relevant Western theories and gain a deeper understanding of the coexistence of individual and relationship levels—the complexity of interpersonal emotion regulation processes.

## 1. Research limitations

### (1) Recall bias

Because the interview involves participants freely recalling recent or major negative emotional events, participants' recollections may be biased. The first is that participants tend to ignore events with high levels of fit in the interpersonal emotion regulation process compared to events with low levels of fit. Because the process of very high compatibility means that both parties operate very smoothly and effectively improve negative emotions; however, the process of incompatibility may have derived more negative emotions, or the original negative emotions can be adjusted through multiple synchronizations, so the memory is deeper and easier to retrieve.

However, this study believes that events in which interactions at each stage are inconsistent are more worthy of study than events in which interactions are consistent. Because when a mismatch occurs, participants will often try to describe where the mismatch began, making it easier for researchers to break down the stages of the emotion regulation process. In addition, participants will describe in greater depth what mismatch means and how both parties can synchronize. You can also learn about the difference between failure and success in interpersonal emotion regulation from incongruent events. Therefore, this study believes that the impact of event sampling restrictions is insignificant.

### (2) Criteria for inclusion in analysis

The second sampling limitation is that this study only included emotional events that were mentioned by both parties and deleted events that were mentioned by only one party. Its advantage is that it can intercept the discussions of both parties on the same event, and it is easy to judge whether the two parties are consistent at each stage. Participants are interviewed individually to ensure that their narratives are not modified or distorted by another party's narratives. However, the disadvantage is that it may ignore events inconsistent with emotional awareness. For example, a certain event is of great significance to the woman and brings a lot of negative emotions, so the woman mentioned this event in the interview. However, the man is unaware of the woman's negative emotions and thinks it is a trivial matter. He may not

mention this incident during the interview. Therefore, the incident will be excluded from the analysis, and its emotional regulatory impact on the woman or the relationship cannot be analyzed.

These unspoken negative emotions may also have a considerable impact on the relationship. Over time, they will form unfinished business in the relationship, thereby hindering the interaction of similar events in the future. Or it may cause the unspoken party to abandon the method of interpersonal emotional regulation and want to regulate emotions alone. In the future, special attention should be paid to events that do not match the emotional awareness stage, as their impact on the relationship may be greater than theoretical expectations.

### (3) Gender differences

A final limitation is gender differences. This study did not systematically compare gender differences and cannot confirm gender differences in the tendency to use interpersonal emotion regulation. Although past research has pointed out that women use interpersonal channels more often than men to regulate their emotions (Nolen-Hoeksema & Aldao, 2011), men more often regulate their own emotions and do not rely on their partners to regulate them. However, research on Chinese people shows no gender difference in the tendency to use interpersonal channels when regulating negative emotions (Ding et al., 2021). Still, the study did not specify the type of interpersonal relationship. Since interpersonal emotion regulation is also affected by relationship characteristics, there will likely be different results when establishing intimate relationships, parent-child relationships, or friendship relationships. This awaits more systematic verification in subsequent research.

## **3. Future Development**

### (1) Quantitative fit

This study is only the first step in developing a theory of interpersonal emotion regulation at the relationship level. In the future, we need to think about operationalizing essential constructs such as fit and synchronization of four-stage interactions and develop measurement methods to verify the above constructs—relationships with variables such as interaction with close relationships and emotional adaptation.

As stated in this study, whether interaction fits or not depends on the exchange and evaluation of both parties. Measuring such relationship-level variables will be a significant challenge in the future. When constructing relevant scales, it is best to obtain information from

both parties in the close relationship and combine the evaluations of the emotional person and the other to get closer to the complete picture of the interaction. However, integrating the interactive fit between the emotional person and the other's evaluation as a relationship indicator of interpersonal emotion regulation remains to be considered in subsequent research.

## (2) Differences between lovers and couples

The samples collected in this study are all lovers. Therefore, the differences in the impact of lovers and husband-wife relationships on the emotion regulation model of intimate relationships must be further explored, especially the possible effect of contact time and interaction frequency on intimate relationships. The time of dating will affect the accumulated interaction compatibility between partners. The compatibility is still unstable if the partner has only been together briefly. A single negative emotional event will impact both parties more than a partner who has been together for a long time. The frequency of interaction may affect the effect of interpersonal emotion regulation on individuals, bodies and minds, or relationships. Even if interpersonal emotion regulation fails, the negative impact of the failure may be mitigated by the lack of interaction. But for couples who interact a lot, the effects of success or failure will be amplified and fed back to the individual and the relationship.

As for couples and couples, excluding differences in dating time and frequency of interaction, the most significant difference is whether there is a clear legal commitment relationship. Will a legal commitment make couples more willing to face the problem of incompatible interactions and find ways to synchronize them, or will they believe that incompatible interactions will not lead to the end of the relationship and, therefore, ignore them? These require further exploration in the future to obtain more apparent inferences.

On the other hand, most of the participants in this study were students, and the negative emotional events interviewed were mostly about daily interactions, school, or interpersonal relationships, and less about finances, family relationships, and other issues. When newlyweds adjust to marriage, common issues that affect them include differences in rules in the family of origin, traditional gender roles, or the balance between work and family (Chang et al., 2008). There are indeed many differences between the two. Whether the differences in topics will affect the process of interpersonal emotion regulation requires subsequent research to explore.

## (3) Situations in which the other is not the initiator

As mentioned in the interview outline of the research method, the interview questions are divided into three parts. The first part is about the partner causing the participant to have



negative emotions; the second part is about switching positions, the participant makes the partner have negative emotions, and the third part is about the negative emotion. The cause of the emotion is limited to the external environment and explores how the two parties will interact.

All participants described Parts 1 and 2 in more detail and were often able to cite specific events. However, the description of the third part is relatively abstract, and there are many sources of external environmental factors, so there are very few emotional events that both parties mention. Therefore, the thematic analysis of this study is conducted based on the first two parts, which can also provide a more in-depth exploration of the interaction process between the two parties.

The researcher reviewed the participants' narratives of the emotion regulation events in the third part and believed there were the following differences compared to when the emotions were triggered by themselves or their partners. First, it isn't easy to reconcile the two stages of emotional awareness and emotional cause empathy. Since the interaction between the two parties does not generate emotions, the other person may not know that the other party has negative emotions and lacks information to understand the causes of negative emotions. Therefore, we rely heavily on the emotional person to actively express and explain negative emotional events; the second is the motivational adjustment stage. When others and the other person cause the emotion can empathize with the emotional cause, the other person will think that they are responsible for regulating the emotional person's emotions. , after all, he is the initiator. However, when the external environment causes emotions, the results of the interviews are more bipolar, reflecting the differences in participants' views on emotion regulation. Some others believe their emotions are their responsibility, so when their partners have negative emotions, they should also find ways to deal with them. However, some participants felt that when their partner is unhappy, it is their duty to help them; the third stage is the adjustment strategy stage. When the emotions are caused by themselves or their partners, the "admit fault" or "apologize" strategies often appear and match Other strategies to relieve negative emotions. When the outside world triggers emotions, there will be no strategy of "admitting mistakes" or "apologizing."

To sum up, researchers believe that emotional causes are caused by the outside world or each other in relationships. They mainly affect the more detailed connotations of each stage and do not affect the sequence of the overall process or the interactive relationship of each stage. Due to limited time, this study rarely explored external events that trigger emotions. We hope that subsequent researchers can more deeply analyze the possible effects of different sources of emotion triggers on interpersonal emotion regulation.

#### (4) Comparison with own emotional regulation

If differentiated by means of regulation, emotional regulation can be divided into two categories: self and interpersonal. In the past, research mostly explored one's own emotion regulation, using the emotion regulation questionnaire (ERQ) compiled by Gross (1998) as the main research tool. On the other hand, laboratory-standardized emotional stimuli will also be presented to assess the individual's efficiency in restoring emotions to measure their emotion regulation ability (Bonanno et al., 2004; Gross, 1998). The above constructs all belong to individual-level variables, which are very different from the relationship-level model developed in this article.

If you want to highlight the gap between relationship-level and individual-level variables in interpersonal relationships, you can actually compare the interpersonal emotion regulation fit variable in this article with the ERQ and laboratory-measured emotion regulation ability in the same study. Examine its effect on relationship quality and personal physical and mental adaptation in interpersonal situations. This article predicts that the effect of fit variables on relationship quality will be stronger than the effect of ERQ or emotion regulation ability, because the former measures the relevant interaction of emotion regulation between both parties, while the latter only measures the individual's emotion regulation habits or abilities, so it can be inferred that the effect of relationship quality belonging to the relationship level is naturally stronger. Moreover, this effect will be more obvious for Chinese participants than Western participants, because Chinese are more inclined to use interpersonal emotion regulation (Liddell & Williams, 2019). But when it comes to predicting individual physical and mental adaptations, each may have its own winner.

The closer the interactive relationship, the greater the impact of the success or failure of interpersonal emotion regulation on the individual (Fitzsimons et al., 2015). Therefore, in an intimate relationship with closer communication, the fit index may have a stronger predictive effect on personal physical and mental adaptation than ERQ or emotion regulation ability. However, in intimate relationships with relatively distant communication, the predictive effect of ERQ or emotion regulation ability may be stronger than the fit index. In the future, it is worthwhile to conduct further comparative research on the differences in this effect. This is not only to compare the predictive effects of self- and interpersonal emotion regulation on relationship quality and personal physical and mental adaptation but It can also be further explored whether the predictive effect will have different effects with different relationships or situations, so as to better understand the operating mechanism of the two types of emotion

regulation models.

#### (5) Cultural differences in this model

This model is the result of qualitative research after reflecting on the existing Western theories of interpersonal emotion regulation and taking into consideration the Chinese culture's emphasis on interpersonal interaction and relationships. Compared with Western theoretical perspectives, this model should be more suitable for the indigenous Chinese culture. If applied in the context of Western culture, there may be cultural differences in the results. Among them, the biggest difference should be that Western culture, which favors the independent self, relies less on interpersonal relationships to regulate emotions than Chinese culture, which emphasizes interdependence (Liddell & Williams, 2019). Past research has shown that when participants who are biased toward Western cultures use more interpersonal emotion regulation, they will have negative consequences for their mental health (Hofmann et al., 2016). Therefore, participants from Western cultures may have a lower frequency of interpersonal emotion regulation interactions with their partners than Chinese participants. However, since it is impossible for partners to have no interpersonal emotion regulation interaction, it is still possible to observe whether the elements of each stage proposed are consistent. As for whether the four stages exist? Is there a difference in the order in which they appear? Considering that its focus is not much different from that of mainstream interpersonal emotion regulation theory (Gross, 2015), it is speculated that it should exist equally and the order of appearance will not change.

As for the differences caused by culture, they are mainly reflected in the impact of compatibility on the relationship and the physical and mental adaptation of the couple. As mentioned in the previous paragraph, the more frequent and close the interactions in the relationship, the greater the impact of interpersonal emotion regulation effectiveness on individual physical and mental adaptation (Fitzsimons et al., 2015). Western couples (who are more independent) may not be as close as Chinese couples (who are more dependent) in their interaction patterns of interpersonal emotion regulation. Even if the former fail in interpersonal emotion regulation, they may still be able to maintain better physical and mental adaptation results than the Chinese. However, the interpersonal emotion regulation results will have less impact on it, which will weaken the individual's motivation for synchronization. These inferences await subsequent research to quantify the concepts of fit and synchronization, incorporate the independent self-interdependent self-construct, and examine its impact on interpersonal emotion regulation.

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