

Emotional expressivity, emotional control and emotional differentiation in old age:

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Background

- Emotional life as a psychological phenomena is subject to change through life span
- If emotions are viewed as important adaptation and surviving tools, there are several reasons for study them in old age
 - Is true that this important set of surviving tools are impaired in any way?
 - In its expressivity?
 - In its regulation?
 - In its control?

Goals

- A) Describe emotional expressivity, emotional control, emotional regulation and emotional repertoire and differentiation of older adults
- B) Explore ways by which emotional experience is organized in old age

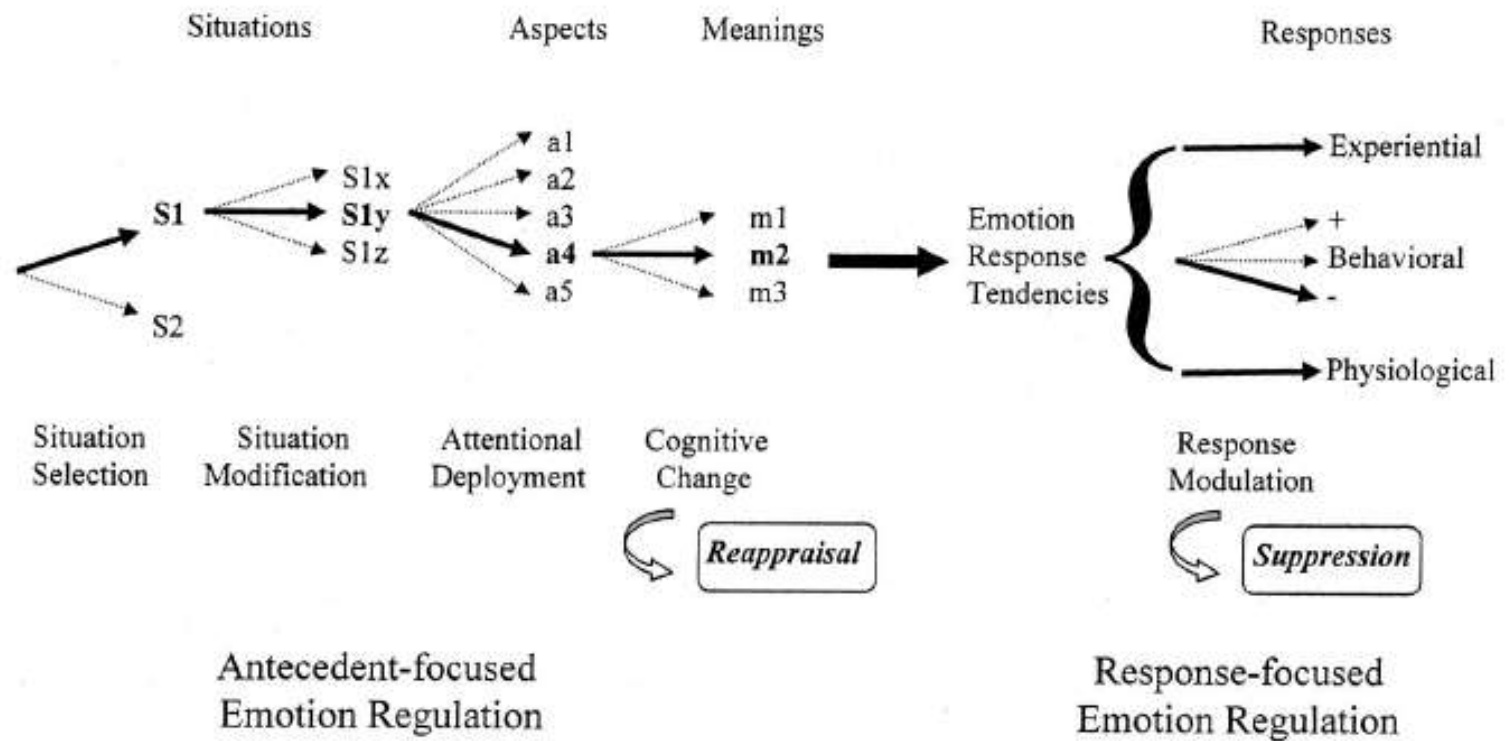
Hypothesis

- Lower scores of emotional expressivity associated with higher scores of expressive suppression (or emotional suppression) and higher scores on emotional control.
- Cognitive reappraisal will be associated with lower negative expressivity
- Emotional suppression will be associated with negative expressivity and positive expressivity

Method

- 57 older adults recruited in residential facilities and day care centers, 44 female and 12 male, age range 65-91, mean age: 78,3 years old, $sd= 7,6$, 26 participants had less than 4 years of schooling and 17 just four years, 2 participants had 9 years, 7 had 12 years of schooling and only 5 had a high level education. 33 were widowed, 10 single and 11 married and just 3 divorced
- Instruments: a) Mini-Cog (Borson, S., et al, 2000).The Mini-Cog exam is composed of three item recall and a Clock Drawing Test (CDT). It was used as a measure to screen cognitive impairment; b) Socio Demographic Questionnaire; c) Berkeley Expressivity Questionnaire (Gross & John, 1995 - version of the research of Mariana Machado & J. Ferreira-Alves, 2010); The Berkeley Expressivity Questionnaire is a 16-item self reported questionnaire that assesses individual differences in emotional expressivity. In addition to a total score, the Berkeley Expressivity Questionnaire provides three subscales; Negative (Berkeley Expressivity Questionnaire-Negative) and Positive (Berkeley Expressivity Questionnaire- Positive) expressivity, and Impulse Strength; d) Courtauld Emotional Control Scale (Watson & Greer, 1983 – version of the research of Mariana Machado & J. Ferreira-Alves, 2010); The Courtauld Emotional Control Scale (CECS) is a 21 item self report questionnaire designed to determine the extent to which patients showed a tendency to control feelings of anger, anxiety and depression.; e) Emotion Regulation Questionnaire (Gross & John, 2003 – adapted for the Portuguese population by Filipa Machado Vaz & Carla Martins, 2008). Gross and John developed the Emotion Regulation Questionnaire (ERQ) with the aim of creating a method of evaluation for emotional regulation and understanding of individual differences in using these strategies; f) Range and Differentiation of Emotional Experience Scale (Kang & Shaver, 2004 - adapted for the Portuguese population by Filipa Machado Vaz & Carla Martins, 2008). It is a self-report measure with 14 items which was developed in order to evaluate the range of acknowledged emotions

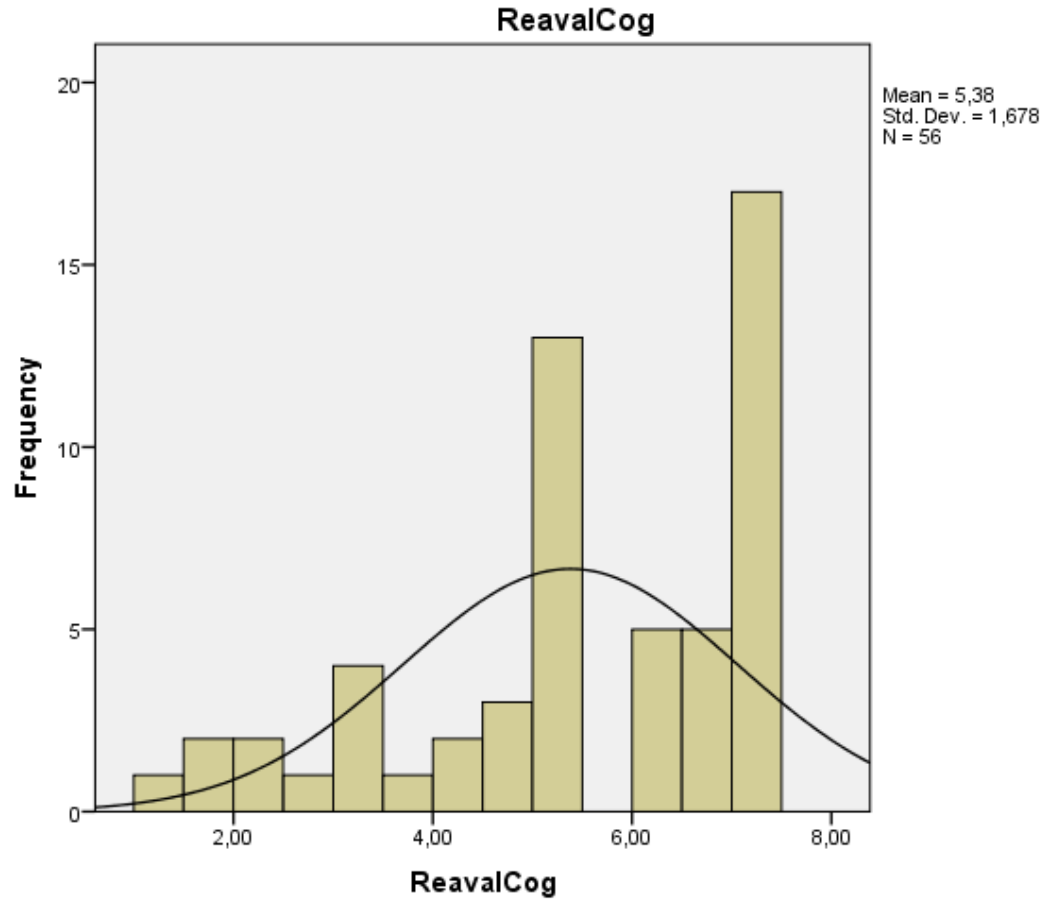
A process model of emotion regulation (Gross, 2001; Gross & John, 2003)



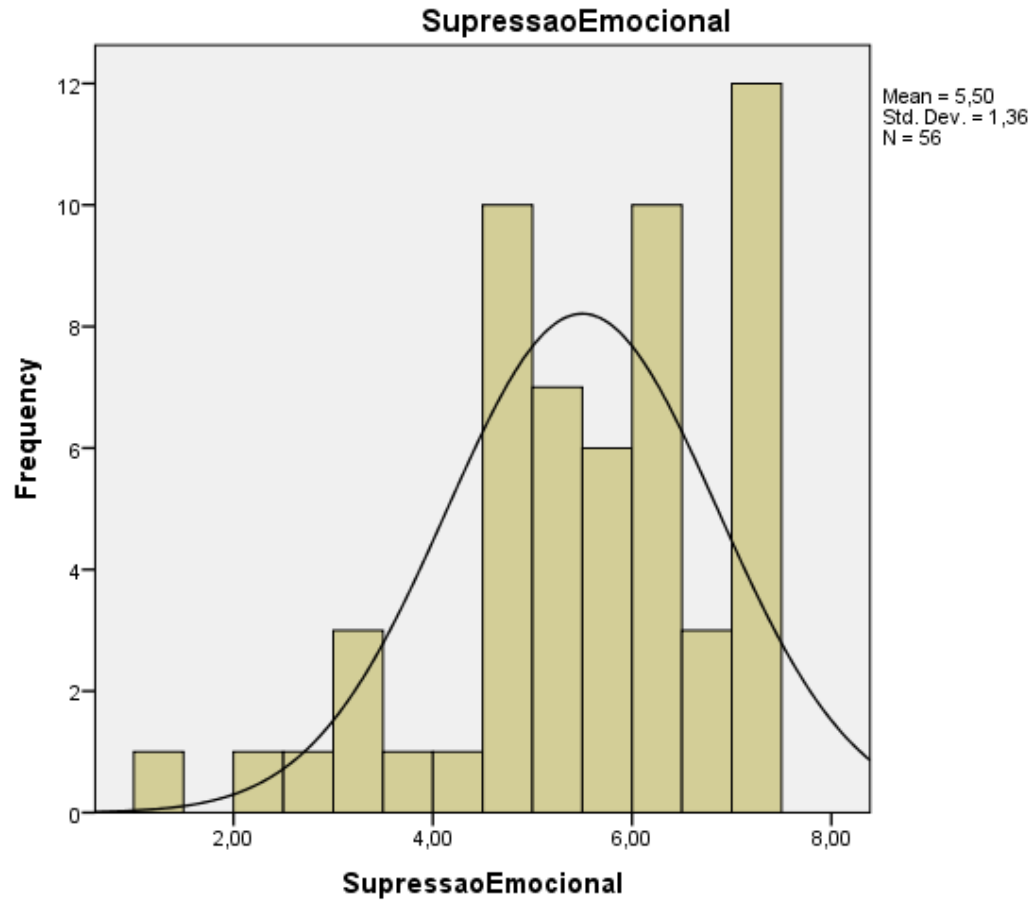
Descriptive Statistics

	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
DiferenciacaoEmocional	4,5821	1,44500	55
ReportorioEmocional	2,7794	1,41204	55
ReavalCog	5,3795	1,67787	56
SupressaoEmocional	5,5009	1,36030	56
Expressividadetotal	13,9094	2,94748	57
Expressividadenegativa	3,5322	1,00785	57
Expressividadepositiva	5,3596	1,46674	57
Forcaimpulso	5,0175	1,37642	57
SubescalaRaiva	2,8276	,75481	56
SubescalaHumor Deprimido	3,0514	,69065	57
SubescalaAnsiedade	2,8977	,73584	57

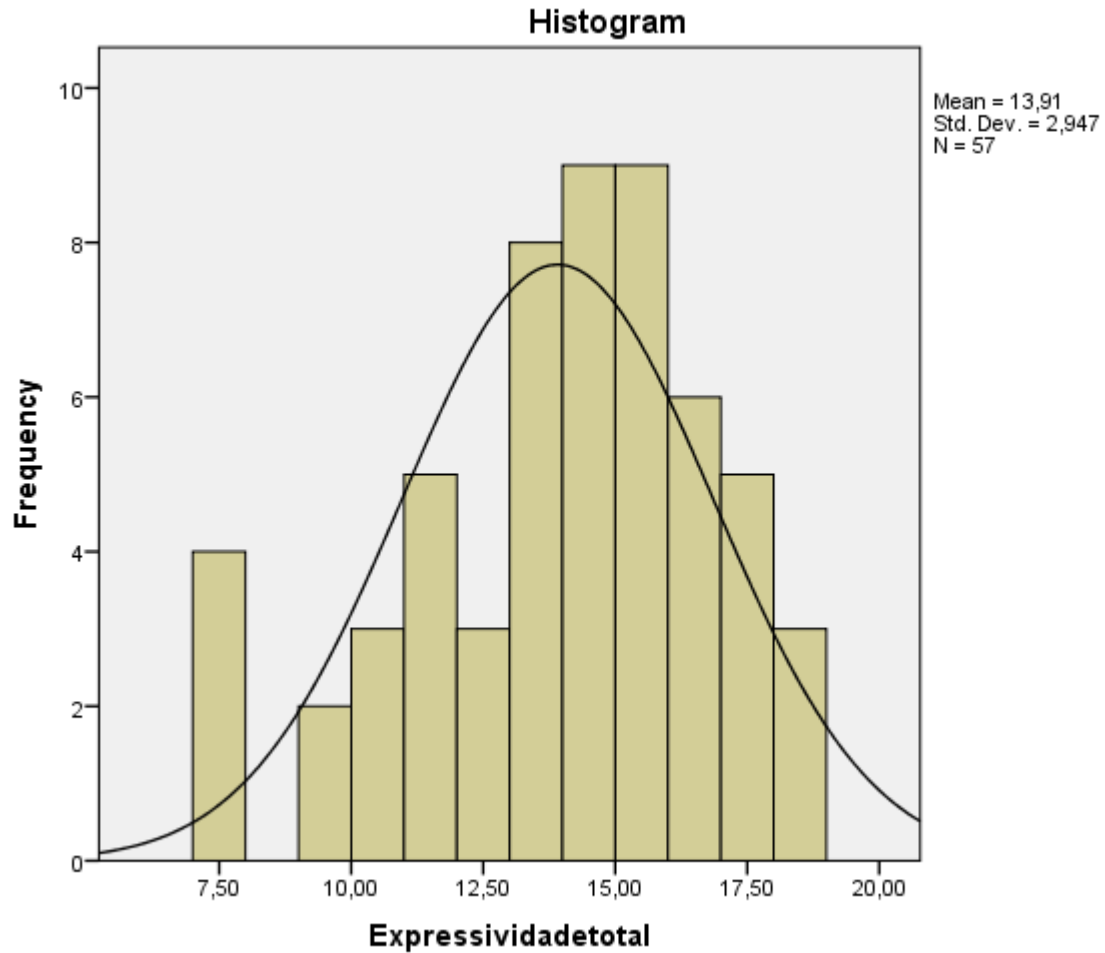
Cognitive reappraisal distribution



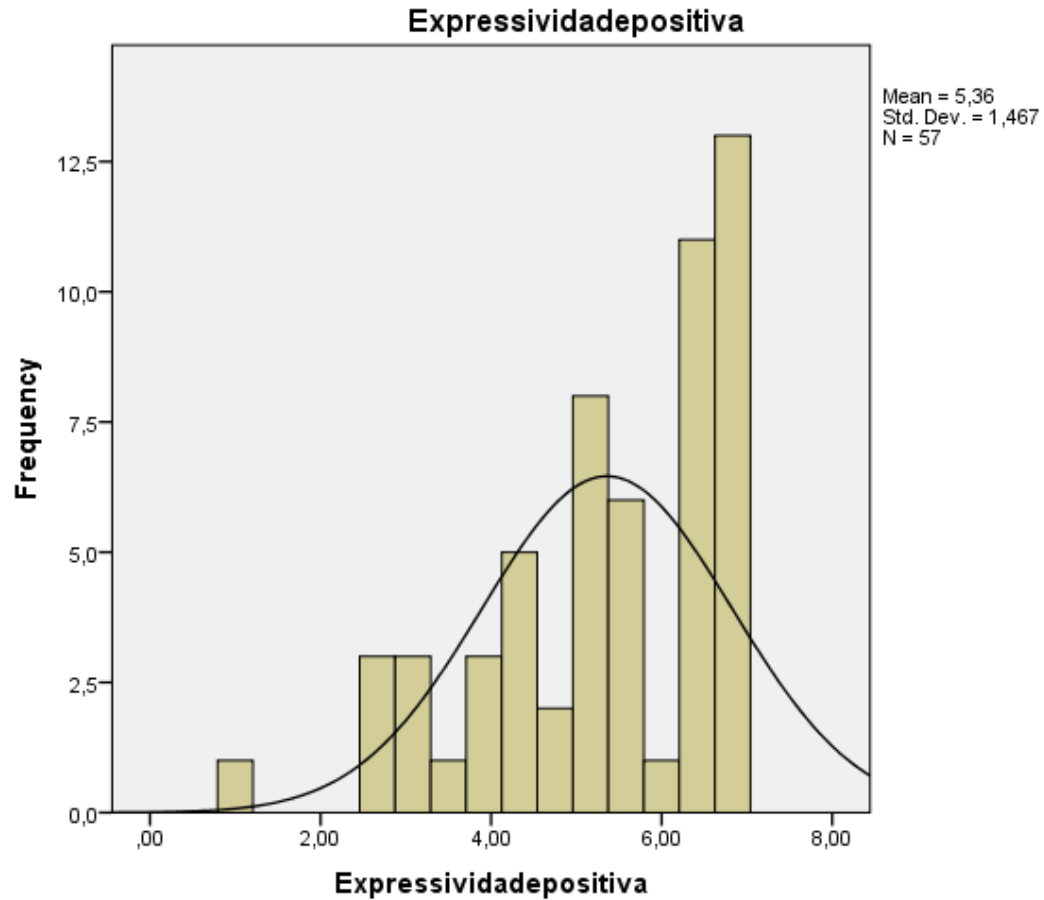
Emotional suppression distribution

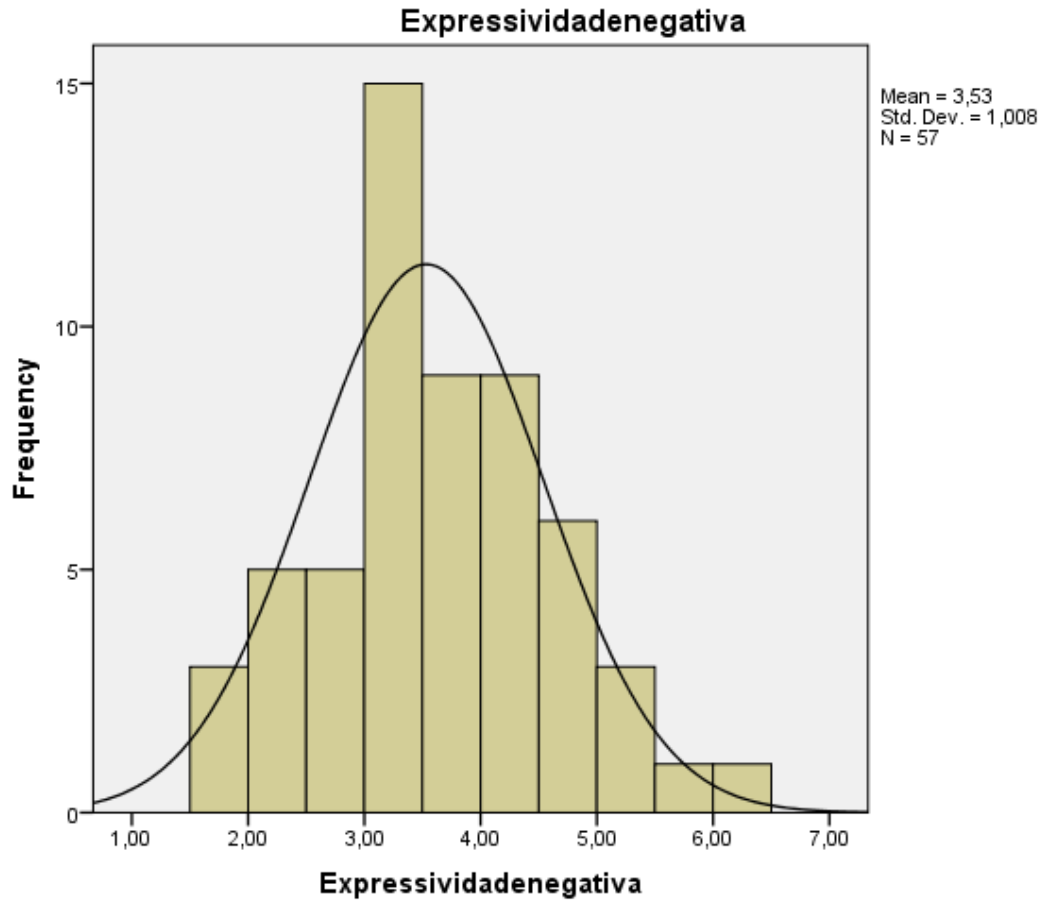


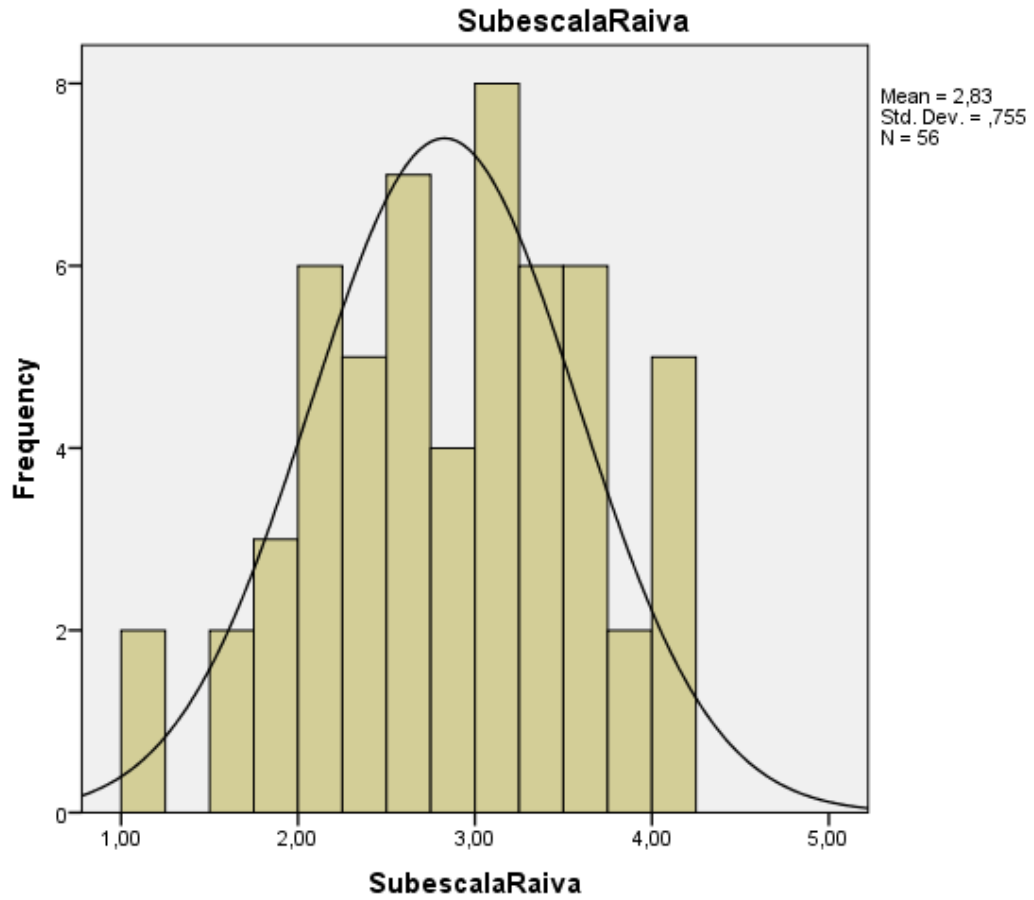
Expressivity total

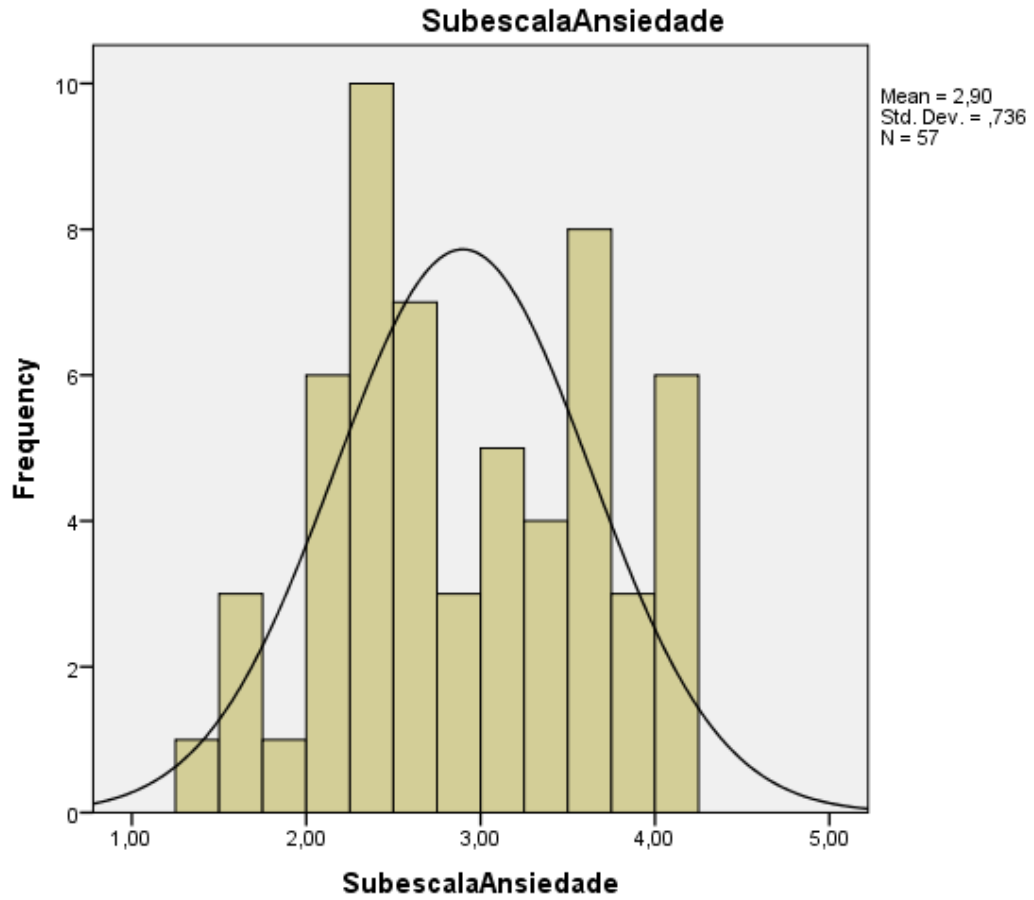


Positive expressivity

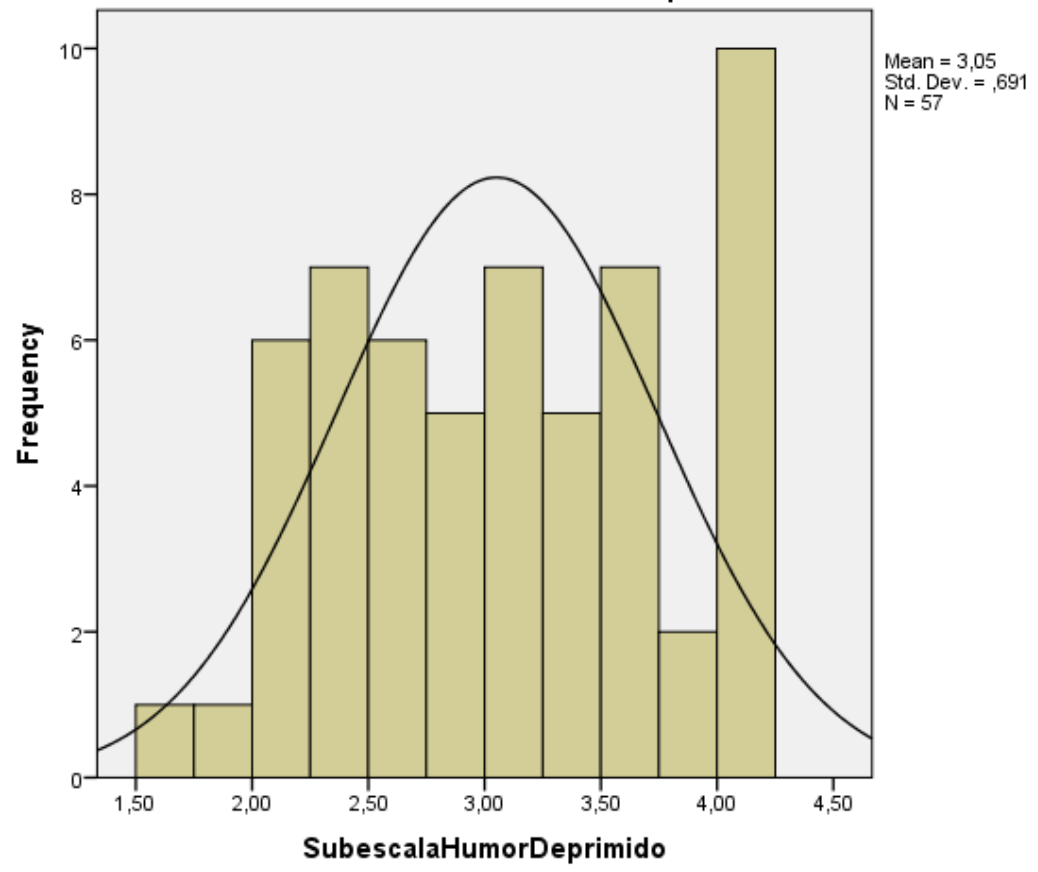


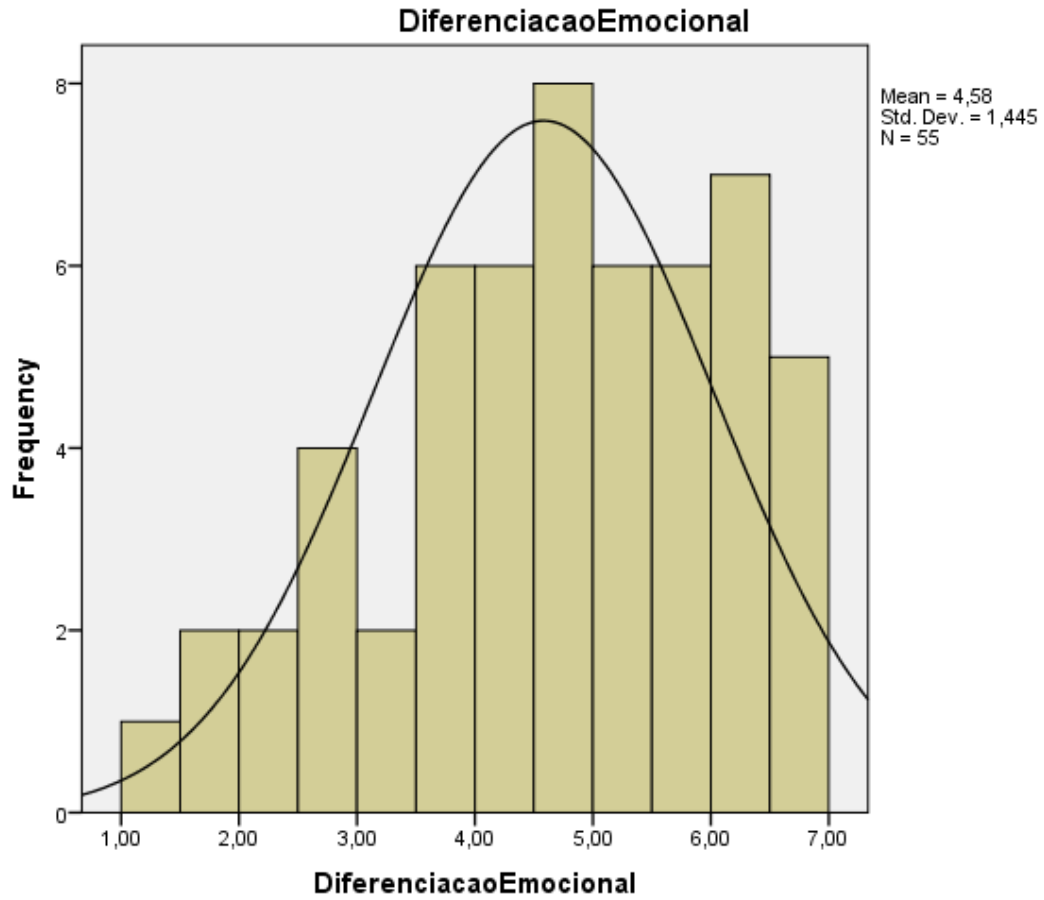




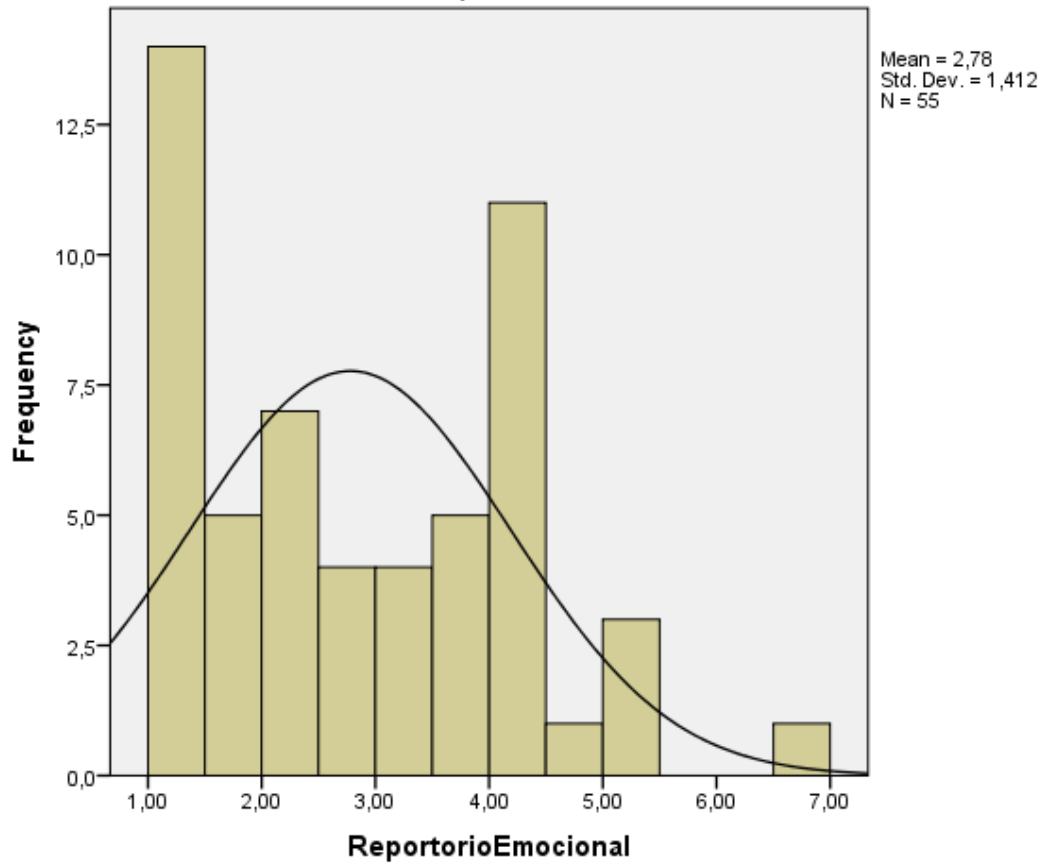


SubescalaHumorDeprimido

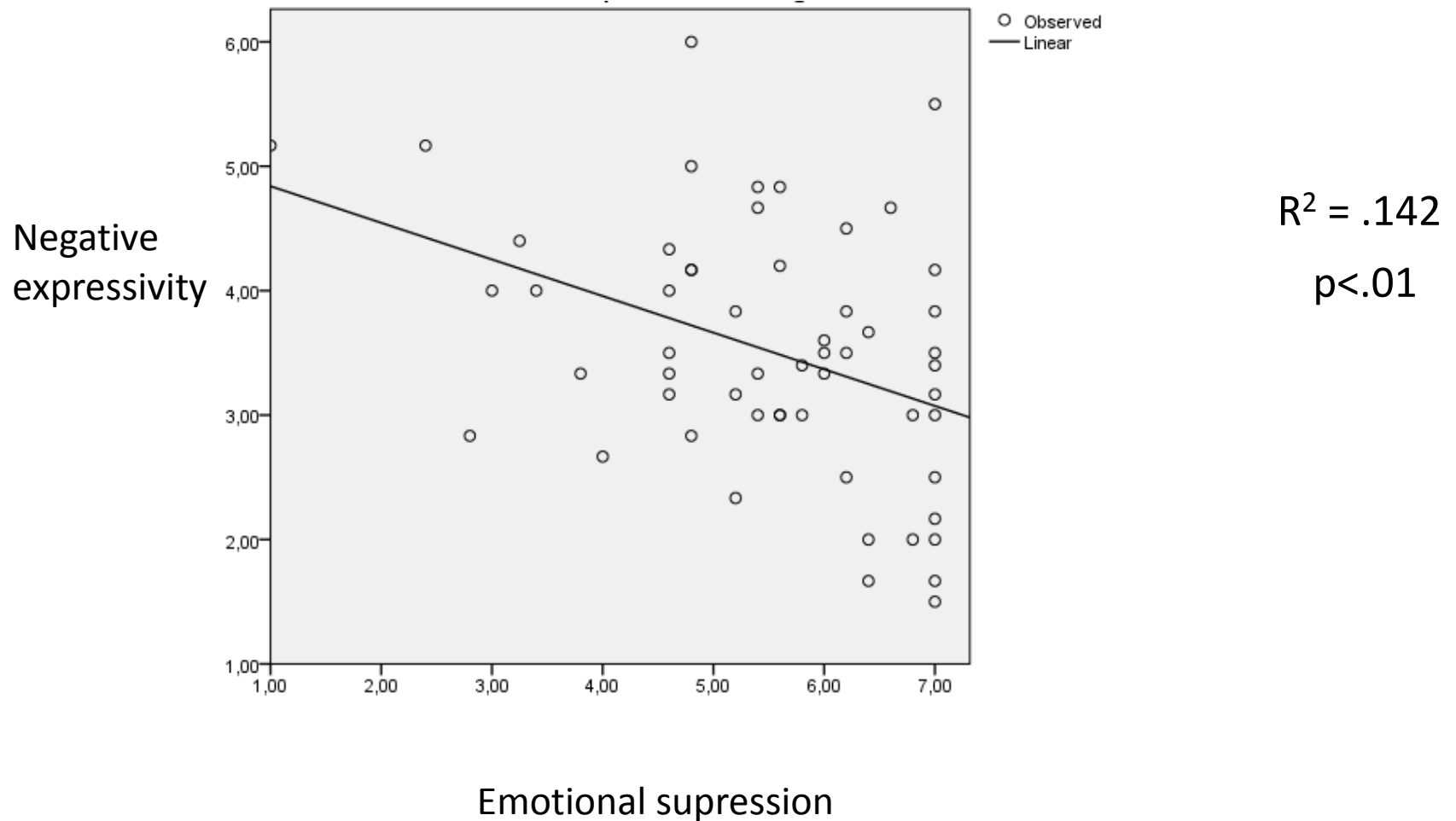




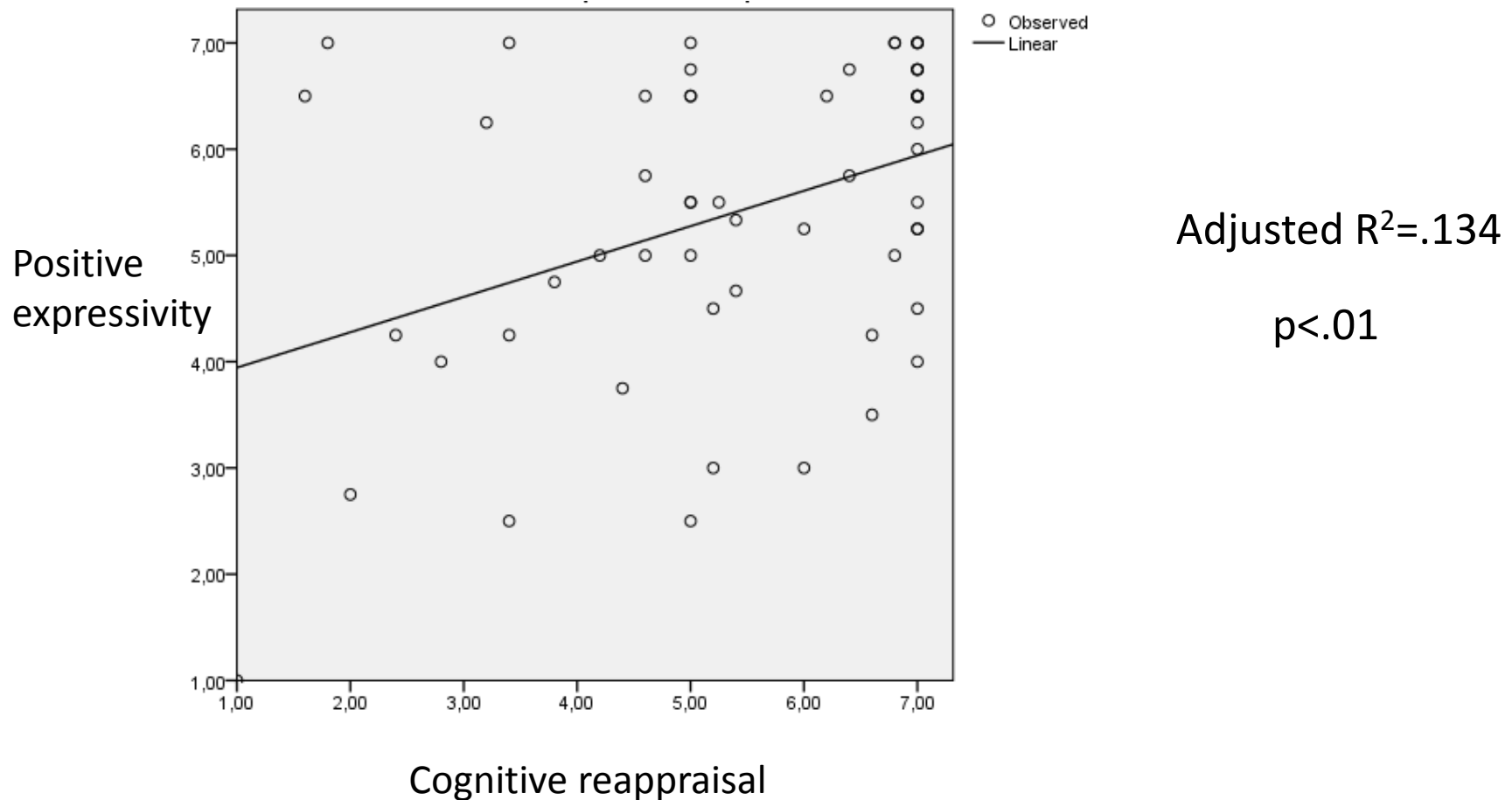
ReportorioEmocional



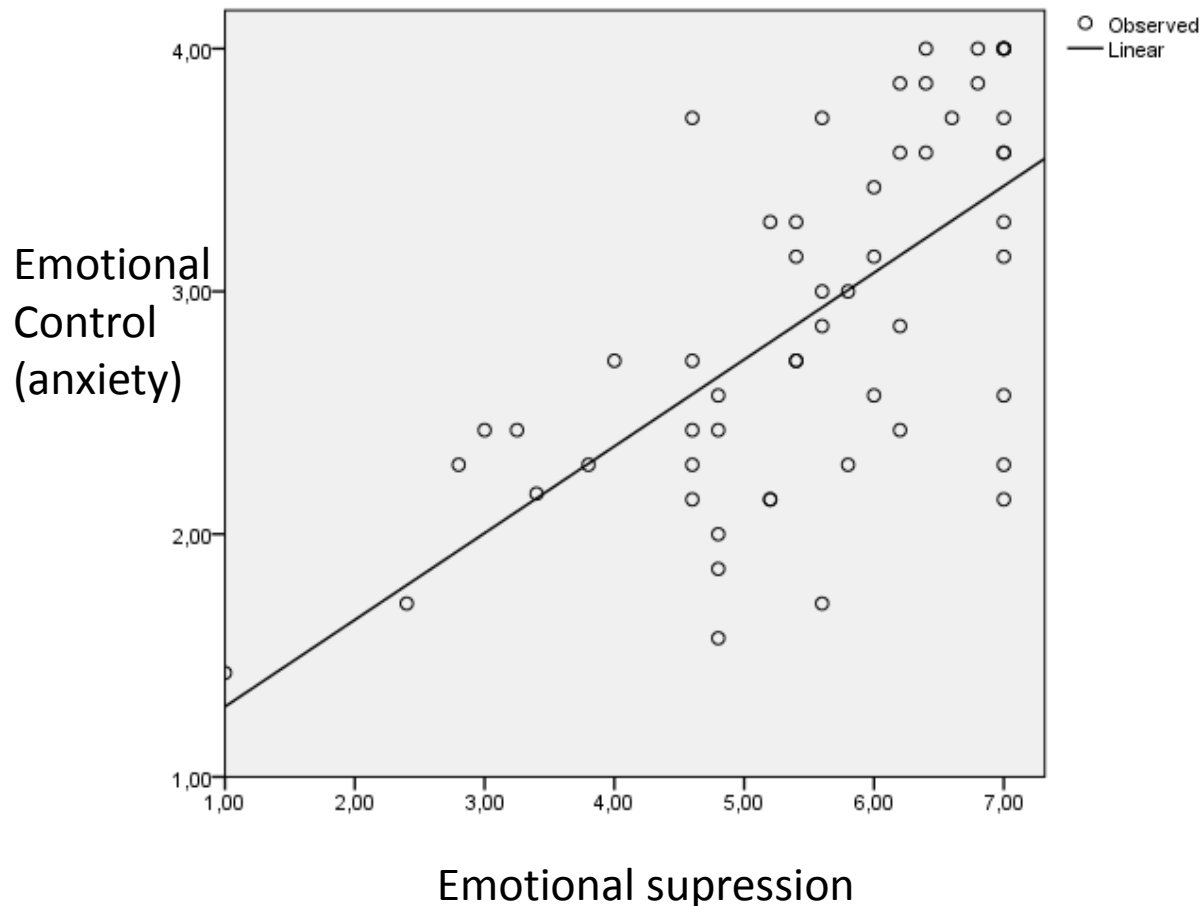
Relationship between the self-report of emotional suppression and self-report of negative expressivity



Relationship between the self-report of cognitive reappraisal and self-report of positive expressivity



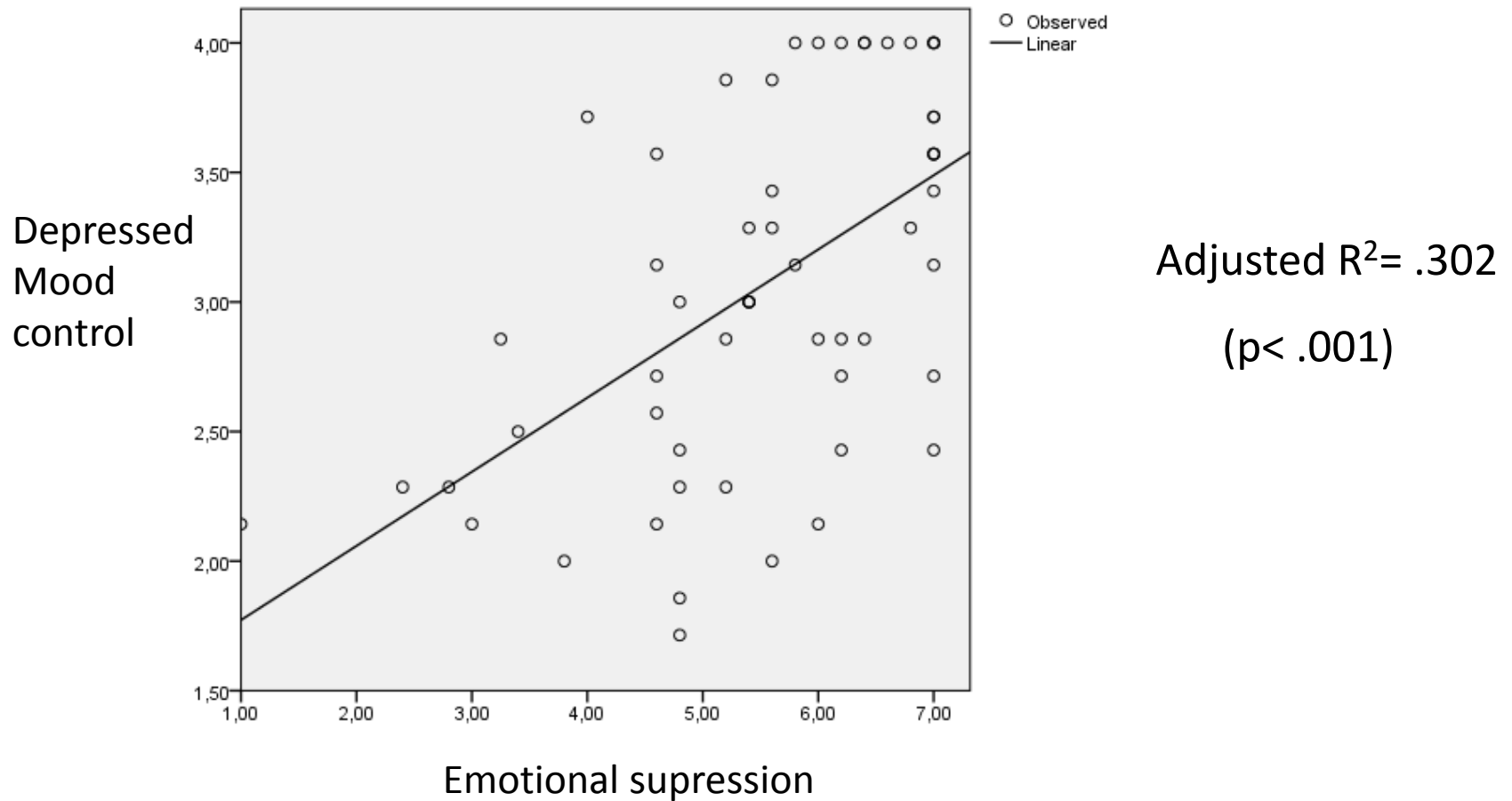
Relationship between the self-report of emotional suppression and self-report of anxiety control



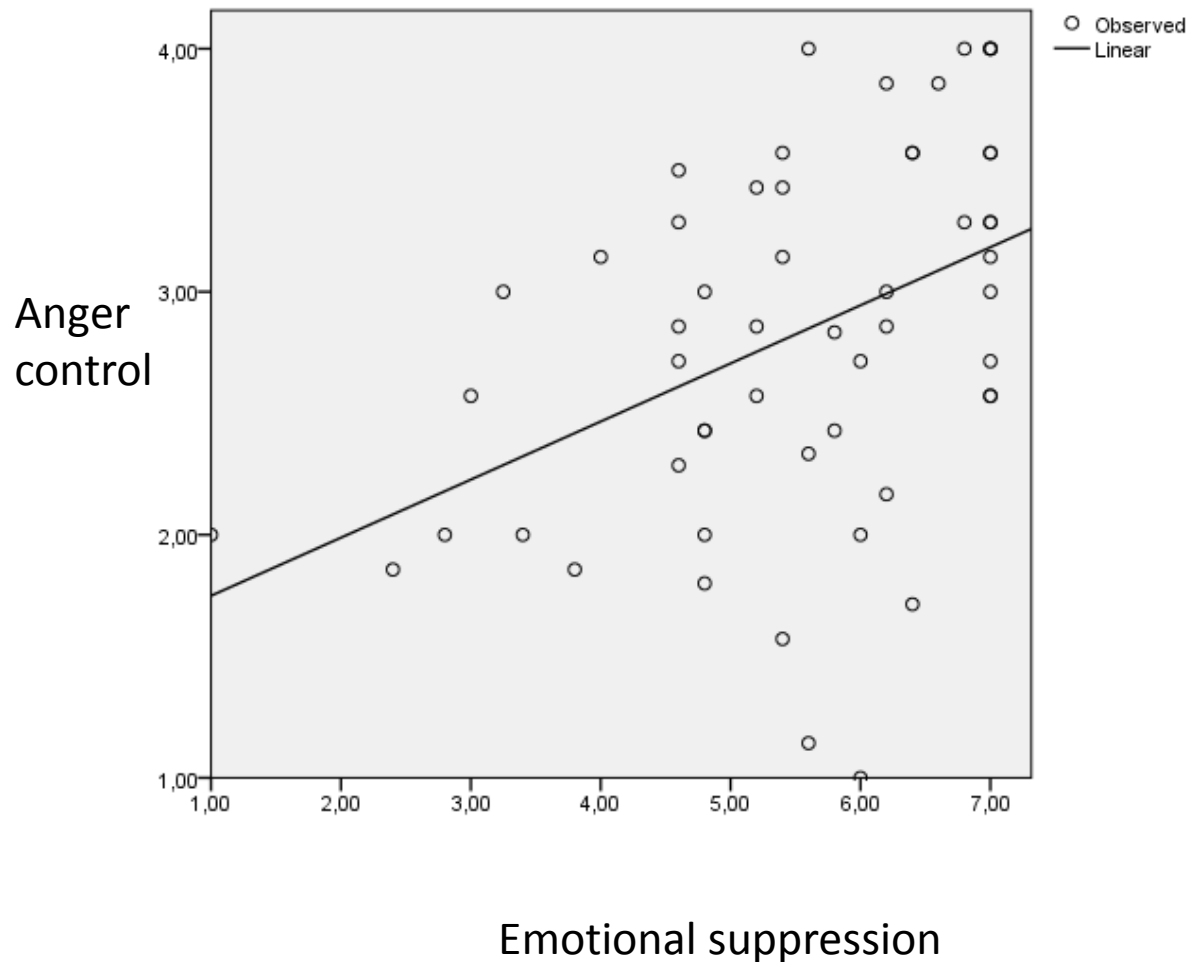
Adjusted $R^2 = .418$

$P < .001$

Relationship between the self-report of emotional suppression and self-report of depressed mood control



Relationship between the self-report of emotional suppression and self-report of anger control



Adjusted R2 = .170

$p < .01$

- Negative expressivity was the only variable with a normal distribution. We found that emotional regulation of older adults is made with high values of emotional suppression as well as high values of cognitive reappraisal. Emotional suppression was inversely related with the self-report of negative expressivity and positively related with the self-report of depressed mood, anger and mainly with anxiety. Cognitive reappraisal was just related moderately with positive expressivity. These data contrasted with those found by Gross & John, where they found a positive relationship between emotional suppression and the experience of more negative emotions. We will discuss these data and this contrast pointing to a different way of regulating emotional life in old age.

