



## **Adaptive & Maladaptive Emotion Regulation Strategies Associated with Psychological Well-Being**

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### **ABSTRACT**

*In this study, the relationship of adaptive and maladaptive emotion regulation strategies with psychological well-being among adolescents was examined. For this purpose 170 adolescents (43% male and 57% female) were selected from various schools of Meerut city by the purposive sampling method. Psychological well-being, developed by Prof. S.N. Rai, and Cognitive Emotion Regulation Questionnaire (CERQ), developed by Garnefski, Kraaij and, Spinhoven, were used to gather relevant data. Pearson's r was employed to analyze the data. The findings of this demonstrated that greater use of adaptive emotion regulation strategies, such as acceptance, positive refocusing, refocus on planning, positive reappraisal and putting into perspective, are associated with higher level of psychological well-being whereas maladaptive emotion regulation strategies, such as self-blame, other-blame, rumination and catastrophizing are associated with lower level of psychological well-being among recruited adolescents.*

**Keywords:** Psychological Well-being, Adaptive/maladaptive Emotion Regulation, and Adolescents.

### **INTRODUCTION**

The relationship of emotion and well-being has always been the topic of interest in the discipline of philosophy and psychology. In most simple language psychological well-being is all about that life is going well. Psychological well-being refers to how people evaluate their lives. According to Diener (1997), these evaluations may be in the form of cognitions or in the form of affect. The cognitive part is an information based appraisal of one's life that is when a person gives conscious evaluative judgments about one's satisfaction with life as a whole. It can be defined in terms of internal experience of the people and perception of their own lives.

Psychological well-being is the combination of feeling good and functioning effectively. There are certain characteristics of psychological well-being, which are as follow:

- i. Psychological well-being is a complex combination of a person's physical, mental, emotional and social health factors.
- ii. Psychological well-being includes the presence of positive emotions and mood the absence of negative emotions,
- iii. Psychological well-being characterizes the satisfaction with life, fulfillment and positive functioning.
- iv. Psychological well-being depends on good health, positive social relationship and availability and access to basic resources.
- v. Psychological well-being focuses on assets in functioning, including positive emotions and psychological resources as key component.

### **Determinants of Psychological well-being**

There are a number of factors which determines the psychological well-being of any individual. Usually, well-being is dependent upon good health, positive social relationships and availability and access to basic resources. In general some of the determinants of general well-being are as follows:

- i. **Age and Gender:** In general, men and women have similar level of well-being, but this pattern changes with age.
- ii. **Income and work:** The association between income and well-being are stronger for those at lower economics levels. Unemployment negatively affects well-being, both in the short and long-term.
- iii. **Genes and Personality:** Though, at individual level, genetic factors are related to well-being, however, the expression of genetic effects are often influenced by factors in the environment implying that circumstances and social conditions do matter and are actionable from a public policy perspective.
- iv. **Relationships:** Having supportive relationships are also the strongest predictors of psychological well-being.

## **Emotion Regulation and Psychological Well-being**

Emotion regulation refers to controlling the ways we experience and express our emotions, whether positive or negative. In order to have a control over outcome or to respond to the situation effectively, one need to develop skill of using appropriate emotion regulation strategy (Maccoby, 1992). Such cognitive-behavioral strategy can be called as emotion regulation strategy (Gross, 1998). Although this concept of emotion regulation is relatively late addition to the field of emotion which is quiet similar to the self-regulation (Mischel, Shodt and Rodriguez, 1989). Emotion regulation can be considered much more like as emotion focused coping, which is one of two coping strategies problem focused and emotion focused coping. Considering this dimension of coping, emotion regulation can be said as the process which an individual use to manage his or her physiological arousal (Cicchetti et al., 1991). Emotion regulation can be said as the strategy to allow one to handle the behaviors and internal feelings to reach one's goals (Eisenberg & Morris, 2002; Thompson, 1994) or to fulfill the situational demands. Thus, emotion regulation involves components such as emotional states, behavior, and physiological arousal which developed as an interaction between biological maturity and sensitive-responsive caregiving (Diener & Mangelsdorf, 1999; Kopp, 1989; Stifter & Braungart, 1995; Von Salisch, 2001).

### **Factors influencing emotion regulation**

There are many factors, which play important role in the development of emotion regulation, including child temperament, neurophysiology, and cognitive development (Eisenberg & Morris, 2002, Goldsmith & Davidson, 2004).

These are as follow:

1. **Age:** The finding of an experiment in which younger and older adults were compared, demonstrated that older adults were better able to regulate their emotion (Charles and Carstensen, 2008). It means that aging can facilitate in better ability of regulating emotion. Studies demonstrated that parental attempts to facilitate emotion regulation differ with the age of the child (Dix, 1991, Eisenberg, et al. 1999). A significant difference between adolescents and adults with respect to cognitive emotion regulation of male and female adolescents has been revealed by Sachin Kumar and Dr. Kumkum Pareek (2018), in their research.
2. **Gender:** Research suggests that girls are better in regulating emotion than boys, which may be the result of innate differences in reactivity levels (Morris, Silk, et al, 2002). Some

evidence suggests that parents encourage distraction and problem solving strategies more for boys than for girls (Eisenberg et al. 1998).

3. **Parenting:** Parents may influence children's emotion regulation by reacting to their negative and positive emotions in a specific way (Eisenberg et al., 1998). Punitive parenting has been found to be linked with inappropriate emotion regulation strategies, for instance, escape or revenge-seeking.
4. **Parent-child attachment:** Research indicates that securely attached adolescents are higher in emotion regulation (ego resiliency) and lower in anxiety and hostility compared to insecurely (dismissing and preoccupied) adolescents (Kobak & Sceery, 1988). The study of infants' emotions is often used as a measure of the infant-parent relationship (Osofsky, 1992).
5. **Peer group:** As children develop, they tend to rely less on parents to aid in emotion regulation, and often utilize other socialization agents, such as peers (Eisenberg & Morris, 2002, Silk et. al., 2003).
6. **Social context:** Children's expectancies for parental involvement in emotion management in response to anger and sadness changed across adolescence (Zeman and Shipman, 1997). During puberty, children's relationships with their parents show decreased levels of parent-child cohesion (Steinberg, 1988), and increased parent-child conflict.
7. **Values:** Values, which are typically adopted by someone within a social context, can shape the goals and in turn the ways people engage in self-regulation for pleasant and unpleasant emotions (Vastfjall, Garling, & Kleiner, 2001). People engage in self-regulation in expectation of an outcome that they value, where value refers to the abstract of their subjective worth or importance (Higgins, 2006).
8. **Childhood traumas:** Study on 6-12 year old girls by Shipman et al. (2000) demonstrated that due to being sexually abused they reported more emotional dysregulation of sadness and anger, and are expected to have less emotional support from their parents. Maltreated children tend to be more emotionally dysregulated (Maughan & Cicchetti, 2002).
9. **Stress:** Shcherbatykh (2000) conducted an experiment to study the influence of self-regulation on mental and physiological process under exam stress. Results of this experiment suggest that self-regulation is clearly associated with decreased level of stress and higher level of performance.
10. **Emotions:** Positive thinking leads to positive emotional and physical responses to emotion arising stimuli (Gross, 1998), and emotion regulation can well predict the positive and negative affect (Liliana & Nicoleta, 2014). A thesis in psychology by Kaitlin E. Hanley

(2010) demonstrated that trait anxiety significantly predicted choice of suppression as the emotion regulation strategy over avoidance. In one study it has been seen that maladaptive emotion regulation strategies like avoidance and rumination can predict an increase in anxiety symptoms (Blalock & Joiner, 2000). Research suggests that individuals with an anxiety disorder are characterized by dysfunctional emotion regulation strategies (Cisler, Olatunji, Feldner & Forsyth, 2010). Mennin, McLaughlin and Flanagan (2009) found emotion regulation difficulties as associated with generalized anxiety disorder (GAD) and social phobia. Moreover emotion regulation has been shown to play an important role in posttraumatic stress disorder and recovery (Roemer, Litz, Orsillo & Wagner, 2001; Tull & Roemer, 2007).

## OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To test the relationship of Adaptive cognitive emotion regulation strategies with psychological well-being.
2. To test the relationship of maladaptive cognitive emotion regulation strategies with psychological well-being.

## HYPOTHESES OF THE STUDY

1. Adaptive cognitive emotion regulation strategies are positively associated with psychological well-being.
2. Maladaptive cognitive emotion regulation strategies are positively associated with psychological well-being.

## METHOD

**Research Design:** To examine the relationship between cognitive emotion regulation strategies and psychological well-being among adolescents Correlational Research Method was used.

**Participants:** For this study 170 adolescents (43% boys and 57% girls) 13 to 18 years in age, were recruited from various schools of Meerut city. The recruitment of participants was carried out through purposive sampling method.

### Tests/Tools Used

Following tools were used for the data collection:

**1. The Cognitive Emotion Regulation Questionnaire:** A self-report questionnaire, developed by Garnefski, Kraaij and, Spinhoven, was used to identify the cognitive strategies of emotion regulation originally. This questionnaire consists of 36 items. Its internal consistency ranged from .68 to .80, and stability from .48 to .65. Its factorial and construct validity are quite high.

**2. Psychological Well-being Scale:** Psychological Well-being Scale, developed by Prof. S.N. Rai is a tool, consisted of 54 items to assess psychological well-being of people in terms of six important dimensions. The reliability of this scale is .77, which was obtained through test-retest method. The validity of this scale is .75.

## RESULTS & DISCUSSION

Table-1 shows that regarding the relationship of acceptance (Mean =10.73; S.D. = 2.65), positive refocusing (Mean =11.16; S.D. = 3.26), refocus on planning (Mean =10.74; S.D. = 3.36), positive reappraisal (Mean =10.63; S.D. = 3.28) and putting into perspective (Mean =11.05; S.D. = 3.27) is highly significant, as the value of correlation coefficient are .211, .390, .307, .519 and .254, which are significant at .01-level. All the adaptive emotion regulation strategies have been found to be positively associated with psychological well-being. These findings state that as the use of adaptive emotion regulation strategies increase, adolescents are fond to report higher psychological well-being.

**Table-1: r Values for the relationship of Psychological Well-being and Adaptive Emotion Regulation**

Adaptive Emotion Regulation Strategy	Mean	Std. Deviation	N	r (2-tailed)
Acceptance	10.733	2.647	170	.211**
Positive refocusing	11.156	3.263	170	.390**
Refocus on planning	10.745	3.366	170	.307**
Positive Reappraisal	10.635	3.279	170	.719**
Putting into perspective	11.048	3.174	170	.254**

\*\* - Significant at .01-level.

Table-2 exhibits that the relationship of maladaptive emotion regulation strategies, such as self-blame (Mean =9.31; S.D. = 2.74), other-blame (Mean =9.11; S.D. = 2.12), rumination (Mean =9.74; S.D. = 3.00) and catastrophizing (Mean =9.89; S.D. = 3.11) is negatively significant with psychological well-being among adolescents. The values of correlation coefficient for self-blame, other-blame, rumination and catastrophizing respectively are .374, .226, .325, and .377. All r values are significant at .01-level. Thus it can be said that all the maladaptive emotion regulation strategies have been found to be positively associated with psychological well-being. The higher use of maladaptive emotion regulation strategies is associated with lower level of psychological well-being among adolescents.

**Table-2: r Values for the relationship of Psychological Well-being with Maladaptive Emotion Regulation**

<b>Maladaptive Emotion RegulationStrategy</b>	<b>Mean</b>	<b>Std. Deviation</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>r (2-tailed)</b>
<b>Self-blame</b>	9.311	2.736	170	<b>-.374**</b>
<b>Other-blame</b>	9.108	2.122	170	<b>-.226**</b>
<b>Rumination</b>	9.742	3.002	170	<b>-.325**</b>
<b>Catastrophizing</b>	9.886	3.114	170	<b>-.377**</b>

\*\* = Significant at .01-level.

## **CONCLUSION& DISCUSSION**

This studyfinding revealed that adaptive cognitive emotion regulation strategies are positively associated, whereas maladaptive emotion regulation strategies are negatively associated with psychological well-being of adolescents.Previous findings also support, as Quoidbach, et al., (2010) by stating that positive refocusing foster the life satisfaction, whereas being ruminatory thoughts reduce positive affect, and ruminating on negative details reduced the life satisfaction. Though, Seung Hee Yoo (2005) also found emotion regulation to play significant role in adjustment.Self-blame, other-blame and rumination are the significant predictors, which negatively predict psychological well-being of adolescents.One study concluded that the tendency of using self-blame, rumination, and catastrophizing strategies of cognitive emotion regulation highly was found to increase the likelihood of becoming alcoholic (Kumar and Pareek, 2018).Sometime maladaptive emotion regulation strategies like rumination,

can themselves lead to using drug as a way of avoiding negative experience (Kumar and Pareek, 2017). Nikmanesh (2015) found a significant relationship between loneliness and the difficulties in emotion regulation moreover loneliness and emotional self-regulation significantly predict the risk of drug abuse. Christopher J. Wilson (2014) reported the acceptance as an important strategy of reducing physiological symptoms of anxiety. These findings can be said in line with present findings obtained by our research. Parwinder Singh (2013) reported a negatively significant correlation between six types of emotion regulation difficulties and academic performance of the subjects. Higher the difficulty in emotion regulation poorer the academic performance, they reported.

In conclusion following statements can be proposed:

1. Higher use of acceptance is associated with higher psychological well-being.
2. Higher use of positive refocusing is associated with higher psychological well-being.
3. Higher use of refocus o planning is associated with higher psychological well-being.
4. Higher use of positive reappraisal is associated with higher psychological well-being.
5. Higher use of putting into perspective is associated with higher psychological well-being.
6. Higher use of self-blame is associated with poor psychological well-being.
7. Higher use of other-blame is associated with poor psychological well-being.
8. Higher use of rumination is associated with poor psychological well-being.
9. Higher use of catastrophizing is associated with poor psychological well-being.

## **LIMITATIONS& SUGGESTIONS**

1. For this study a simple correlational design was used. For internal validity of the research findings experimental design can be used further.
2. Sample size was small for this study.
3. The role gender and socioeconomic status in psychological well-being and emotion regulation, was not examined in this study.

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