

Research Paper

Understanding the Relationship Between Emotional Regulation and Coping Strategies Among Psychology Students

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ABSTRACT

The present study examines whether coping strategies (problem-focused, emotion-focused, and avoidant) mediate the relationship between emotion regulation strategies, specifically cognitive reappraisal and expressive suppression, in psychology students. The sample includes 109 undergraduate, postgraduate, and MPhil students from various Indian universities, aged 18 to 27 years. Emotion Regulation Questionnaire (ERQ) and Brief-COPE assess coping and emotion regulation strategies. Results show a strong positive relationship between emotion-focused coping and cognitive reappraisal. Cognitive reappraisal acts as a protective factor against avoidant coping, which is linked to higher stress. The findings suggest that adaptive emotion regulation strategies help manage stress. The chief conclusion is that cognitive reappraisal reduces reliance on avoidant coping.

Keywords: *Emotional Regulation, Coping Strategies, Psychology Students*

Emotional regulation (ER) is a process by which individuals influence which emotions they have, when they have them and how they experience and express them (Gross, 1998). It includes the behaviors, strategies, and skills by which one monitors, evaluates, modulates, inhibits, and enhances emotional experience and expression in a goal-oriented way (Gross & Thompson, 2009; Thompson & Meyer, 2009).

Study of emotional regulation strategies concerns how individuals influence which emotions they experience and how they experience these (Gross, 1998). At the broadest level, the regulation of emotion can be divided into categories of antecedent-focused and response-focused strategies. Antecedent-focused strategies refer to what an individual does before emotional responses are activated and change one's behavior. Response-focused strategies refer to what an individual does once an emotion is being experienced following the generation of response tendencies (Gross, 2001). These strategies are those commonly used in life (Gross & John, 2003). Therefore, it was decided to investigate two strategies, Cognitive Reappraisal and Suppression. Cognitive Reappraisal is a form of cognitive change that involves construing a situation which could elicit emotion in a way that changes its emotional effect. It is an antecedent-focused strategy (Lazarus & Alfert, 1964). By contrast, Suppression is a response-focused strategy that involves inhibiting emotionally expressive

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behavior (Gross, 1998). To elaborate further, Cognitive reappraisal refers to thinking about a situation in a manner that can alter its emotional response. Expressive suppression occurs when an individual attempts to inhibit the behavior of emotional expression (Gross, 1998).

Gross and Thompson's (2009) ER process model outline various approaches to influence the onset of emotions or manage them once they have been experienced. These approaches include avoiding the situation (Situation Selection) or modifying it (Situation Modification). Within the situation, individuals can shift their focus to non-emotional aspects (Attentional Deployment). ER can also be achieved by altering the meaning or significance of the situation (Cognitive Reappraisal). Additionally, response tendencies can be changed, encompassing experiential, physiological, and behavioral components (Response Modulation). The behavioral facet of response modulation involves physical activation, suppression, seeking social support, comfort eating, or psycho-substance use.

Among these ER strategies, certain ones, like reappraisal, are considered more effective due to their positive associations with well-being (John & Gross, 2009), self-esteem, and social support (Gross & John, 2003), and their negative connections with psychopathology (Aldao, Nolen-Hoeksema, & Schweizer, 2010). Conversely, some ER strategies, such as suppression, are deemed less efficient as they are negatively linked to well-being (John & Gross, 2009; Karademas, Tsalikou, & Tellarou, 2010) and social functioning (Gross & John, 2003), and positively associated with psychopathology (Aldao et al., 2010; Gross, 1998).

As adolescence concludes, individuals assume increased responsibility for regulating their emotions, employing more adaptable ER strategies that align with specific sociocultural contexts and personal objectives (Thompson & Meyer, 2009). Nevertheless, the development of ER skills may persist throughout one's lifetime (Diamond & Aspinwall, 2003). Given ER's significant impact on various psychological processes, including social relationships (Lopes, Salovey, Cote, & Beers, 2005), it holds particular importance for professionals in human relations.

Coping has been defined as “constantly changing cognitive and behavioral efforts to manage specific external and/or internal demands that are appraised as taxing or exceeding the resources of the person” (Folkman, Lazarus, Gruen, & DeLongis, 1986). Coping strategies may be problem-focused, emotion-focused or avoidant coping (Folkman et al., 1986). The Lazarus and Folkman model incorporates two broad types of coping that differ based on the focus and goals of coping efforts: problem-focused coping (i.e., efforts to resolve the source of stress, including problem solving) and emotion-focused coping (i.e., efforts to palliate one's emotions, including seeking social support and escape/avoidance) (e.g., Folkman & Moskowitz, 2004).

The Compas et al. (2001) definition is linked to a control-based model of coping that includes primary control coping (i.e., efforts to directly act on the source of stress or one's emotions, including problem solving and emotional expression), secondary control coping (i.e., efforts to adapt to the source of stress, including acceptance and cognitive reappraisal), and disengagement coping (i.e., efforts to orient away from the source of stress or one's emotions, including avoidance or denial) (e.g., Compas, Jaser, Dunn, & Rodriguez, 2012; Rudolph, Dennig, & Weisz, 1995; Weisz, McCabe, & Dennig, 1994). Further, the scope of the construct of coping has broadened since the earlier work of Lazarus and Folkman (1984), with a growing emphasis on coping as the regulation of a wider range of functions in

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response to stress, including emotion, behavior, cognitions, physiology, and the environment (e.g., Compas et al., 2001; Eisenberg, Fabes, & Guthrie, 1997; Kopp, 1989).

Moreover, Páez et al. (Company, Oriol, Oberst, & Páez, 2015; Páez, Martínez-Sánchez, Sevillano, Mendiburo, & Campos, 2012; Páez, Martínez-Sánchez, Mendiburo, Bobowik, & Sevillano, 2013) have devised a 7-item scale, known as the Functionality Scale, which gauges the appropriateness of various coping styles. This tool prompts participants to rate on a 10-point scale their belief in how well the different coping strategies used have helped them achieve various adaptive objectives. (Becker, E. S., Goetz, T., Morger, V., and Ranellucci, J., 2014) These objectives encompass, for example, reducing the intensity of certain emotions, effectively decreasing activation levels to attain calmness and relaxation; diminishing displeasure or irritation while enhancing feelings of pleasure and contentment; and enhancing interpersonal relationships.

Therefore, the aim of this study is to investigate and understand the relationship between emotional regulation and coping strategies. Both the variables are closely connected to internal representations of self and others (Bartholomew & Horowitz, 1991) as these representations influence the individual's regulatory capacities (Fonagy, Steele, & Steele, 1991; Skinner & Zimmer-Gembeck, 2007). The psychology students in this study will be mental health professionals, working with various groups of people. Being sensitive, trustworthy, and cooperative in interpersonal relationships are therefore important competencies they should strive to have.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Emotional Regulation

Research has shown that individuals' beliefs about emotions are linked to a wide spectrum of emotional, interpersonal, and clinical outcomes (Ford & Gross, 2019). These beliefs also shape how people respond to various opportunities and challenges (Becerra et al., 2020). These beliefs, which encompass how individuals assess specific emotions and whether they perceive emotions as controllable or desirable, have been examined under various terms, such as beliefs about emotions, attitudes toward emotions, and meta-emotions (Goodman et al., 2021). Ford and Gross (2019) introduced a framework that outlines two overarching categories of beliefs concerning emotions: beliefs about the manageability of emotions and the desirability of emotions (Ford & Gross, 2019; Hong & Kangas, 2021; Becerra et al., 2020). Researchers have focused on these two belief categories because they are fundamental in understanding how individuals conceptualize emotions and carry significant implications for people's abilities in regulating their emotions (Ford & Gross, 2019; Becerra et al., 2020).

Research findings suggest that the predictability of beliefs concerning the manageability of specific emotions can differ. For instance, individuals who believe they have limited control over their anxiety often report more symptoms of anxiety and depression, as well as more interpersonal difficulties (Gutentag et al., 2022). However, among patients undergoing acute psychiatric treatment, those who express beliefs that their anxiety is beyond their control predict experiencing fewer anxiety symptoms after their discharge from the treatment facility (Blair, C., and Raver, C., 2015). These outcomes might reflect situations in which individuals who perceive certain emotions as uncontrollable may find themselves in reinforcing circumstances that further solidify these beliefs. As an example, individuals who frequently experience intense anger may come to believe that anger is beyond their control,

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subsequently making fewer attempts to regulate their anger (Gutentag et al., 2022). The specific subordinate or subsumed belief at the core of this issue varies from person to person (Ford & Gross, 2019). Some individuals possess more detailed insights into their emotions, resulting in a nuanced and distinct set of beliefs about their emotions. Certain subordinate aspects may hold greater sway or intertwine with other subordinate aspects, creating an intricate and intricate web of beliefs concerning emotions (Ford & Gross, 2019). For instance, an individual may believe that, with sufficient time, it is possible to learn to control any emotion. An overlap of subordinate beliefs could signify the belief that anger can be controlled for a brief period, but that the emotion will inevitably erupt in the future (Ford & Gross, 2019).

Ford and Gross (2019) have proposed that emotion regulation stands as one of the most crucial mechanisms that connect beliefs about emotions with emotional outcomes (Zerwas et al., 2022). In everyday life, individuals commonly employ three primary types of emotion regulation strategies: expressive suppression, cognitive reappraisal, and acceptance (Zerwas et al., 2022). While there are numerous other strategies for regulating emotions, these three have garnered the most attention in research (Vuillier et al., 2021). Expressive suppression involves the ability to restrain emotional behavior and is often linked with challenges in interpersonal relationships, making it a potential risk factor for the development of psychological disorders. Cognitive reappraisal, on the other hand, centers on the capacity to reframe a situation to alter its emotional impact. It is considered an adaptive regulation strategy associated with more effective social interactions and improved psychological well-being (De Castella et al., 2013; Vuillier et al., 2021). Chronic use of cognitive reappraisal is linked to higher levels of positive emotional outcomes, reduced negative affect, improved self-esteem, greater life satisfaction, and enhanced interpersonal functioning (De Castella et al., 2013). Lastly, acceptance refers to the ability to experience emotions without judgment and is associated with better psychological health. It plays a crucial role in shaping the trajectory of emotional experiences (Zerwas et al., 2022).

Coping Strategies

Studies have revealed that when individuals hold the belief that emotions are beyond their control, they are less inclined to consciously employ cognitive strategies, such as cognitive reappraisal, to manage their emotions (Vuillier et al., 2021). Those who perceive emotions as uncontrollable are less likely to consider the modification or regulation of their emotions as a viable option. Consequently, they lack the motivation to use adaptive strategies (Vuillier et al., 2021; Becerra et al., 2020), and they are more likely to prematurely abandon ongoing efforts to regulate their emotions (Becerra et al., 2020). In contrast, stronger convictions that negative emotions can be managed are consistently linked to a heightened engagement in active emotion regulation strategies. These include a greater tendency to use cognitive reappraisal, problem-solving, seeking support, adopting acceptance coping methods, setting task-oriented goals, and expressing a stronger desire for personal growth (Hong & Kangas, 2021).

In 2020, Alina Schäfer, Fabian Pels, and Jens Kleinert conducted a study aiming to explore the impact of emotion-regulation abilities on coping and, consequently, perceived stress. The findings revealed that evasive coping strategies partially play a negative mediating role in the connection between emotion-regulation abilities and perceived stress. On the contrary, focus on positives, support coping strategies, and active coping strategies did not act as mediators. Individuals perceiving low emotion regulation skills and high emotion resilience

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skills tended to resort to evasive coping strategies, which were subsequently linked to heightened perceived stress. This mediation aligns with the transactional model of stress (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). The observed phenomenon can be elucidated by the characteristics of evasive coping, encompassing behaviors like avoidance and emotional venting. It can be inferred that individuals feeling competent in regulating and enduring potentially adverse emotions are less inclined to employ evasive coping, as they perceive no necessity to evade stressful situations. Such individuals are more likely to confront themselves in challenging situations, reflecting their ability to navigate stress.

Veilleux et al. (2021) conducted a study to investigate the connections between beliefs about emotions, psychopathological symptoms, trait-based emotional competencies, perceptions of belief stability, and strategies for regulating emotions. The results of the study revealed several important correlations. Beliefs suggesting that emotions are inherently negative were associated with an overall difficulty in regulating emotions and lower emotional intelligence. Additionally, beliefs indicating that emotions are beyond one's control were linked to withdrawal and avoidance behaviors (E., Thomsen, A. H., and Saltzman, H., 2000). On the other hand, individuals who held strong beliefs that emotions should be controlled and that logic should prevail over emotional reactions displayed poorer interpersonal emotional skills and behaviors (Freire, C., Ferradás, M. D. M., Valle, A., Núñez, J. C., & Vallejo, G., 2016). These individuals were less inclined to share their emotions with others, exhibited lower emotional intelligence, and were less likely to seek external support when confronted with distressing emotions. Furthermore, those who reported a stronger conviction that emotions are long-lasting were less inclined to employ distraction as an emotion regulation strategy. They also exhibited more pronounced withdrawal behaviors and a greater degree of emotional dysregulation.

Interconnected Dynamics

In a more recent study conducted by Deplancke and colleagues (2022), an investigation was carried out to explore the connections among beliefs regarding the controllability of emotions, emotion regulation, and the presence of symptoms related to anxiety and depression. Deplancke et al. (2022) made a significant discovery in their research. They found that individuals who held the belief that emotions can be controlled tended to report fewer symptoms of anxiety and depression. Moreover, the belief in the controllability of emotions was positively correlated with a higher utilization of cognitive reappraisal as an emotion regulation strategy (Karademas, E. C., Tsalikou, C., & Tellarou, M.-C., 2010). These findings align with the principles of the process model of emotion regulation theory (Gross, 2015), which posits that individuals who have confidence in their ability to control and regulate their emotions are more inclined to employ proactive regulation strategies, such as cognitive reappraisal. However, an alternate perspective on emotion regulation suggests that the inclination to employ overly active strategies to regulate emotions and the fear of losing control over emotions are pivotal factors in the development of anxiety symptoms (Chang, M.-L., 2013). In this context, the belief that emotions may be beyond one's control might be more beneficial for individuals who are susceptible to anxiety. This is because it diminishes the propensity to engage in overly aggressive control attempts, which are typically associated with expressive suppression (Deplancke et al., 2022).

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This study used a correlational design to examine the relationships coping strategies and emotional regulation among psychology students 18 to 27 years. A correlational design is appropriate as it allows us to explore the associations between these variables without manipulating any of them.

Approach

The research approach employed in this study is quantitative. This approach involved the systematic collection and analysis of numerical data to understand patterns, relationships, and effects among the variables of interest. By using validated scales and standardized questionnaires, the study aimed to quantify the extent relationships coping strategies and emotional regulation among psychology. Statistical methods were employed to analyse the data.

Research Statement

The purpose of the study is to explore the relationship between emotional regulation and coping strategies among psychology students. It also aims to identify which of the coping strategies are most commonly employed by psychology students and further assess their effectiveness in managing stress and emotions. Furthermore, to understand how well are psychology students are able to handle their emotions when faced with negative situations.

Variables

- i) Emotional Regulation
- ii) Coping strategies

Operational Definitions

Emotional Regulation: Emotional regulation is a person's ability to effectively manage and respond to an emotional experience.

Coping Strategy: Coping strategies are either directed at reducing the threats and losses of the illness or directed at reducing the negative emotional consequences or neglecting the situation completely.

Hypothesis

The hypothesis was that cognitive reappraisal will be positively related to emotion focused coping strategy (H1) (that is, social support and humor/turning to religion), that is, it was expected that the students would make use of emotion focused coping strategies more than problem focused coping and avoidant coping; cognitive reappraisal will be positively related to problem focused coping (H1a); cognitive reappraisal will be positively correlated to avoidant coping strategy (H1b)

Furthermore, the hypothesis is that expressive suppression will be negatively related to problem focused coping (H0) (that is, problem solving and positive reinterpretation), that is, it was expected that the students who tend to suppress their emotions have a hard time facing their problems head on; expressive suppression will be positively associated to emotion focused coping strategy (H0a); expressive suppression will be positively associated to avoidant coping strategy (H0b).

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Participants

The data collected for this research study included individuals, both males and females of Indian nationality falling between the age group 18-27 years. The individuals were currently pursuing graduation, post-graduation or doctorate degree in psychology. Purposive method of sampling was employed to obtain a sample size of 109. The obtained data from total N = 531 respondents were entered into SPSS (Statistical Package for Social Sciences) and was analysed with the help of statistical techniques.

Sample Size

The sample consisted of 109 Indian university students (89 girls and 20 boys) recruited from the courses of Bachelors in psychology (n=35, 32%), Masters in psychology (n=63, 58%) and MPhil in psychology (n=11, 10%) from various universities in India. Demographic information was collected as well. Participants were chosen with a purposive sampling method as the study solely focused on psychology students. The age of students ranged from 18 to 27 years (M=21.6, SD=1.7).

Measures

- **Emotion Regulation Questionnaire (ERQ):** To measure the cognitive reappraisal and expressive suppression, the components of emotion regulation, participants will be administered with the 10-item Emotion Regulation Questionnaire (ERQ) (Gross & John, 2003). The questionnaire includes questions about situations a person would face in their emotional life, in particular how a person regulates and manages their emotions. The questionnaire has six items measuring cognitive reappraisal and four items measuring expressive suppression. The items were scored on a 7-point Likert scale ranging from 1 being “strongly disagree” to 7 being “strongly agree”. In a study by, Olalde-Mathieu, V. E., LiceaHaquet, G., Reyes-Aguilar, A., & Barrios, F. A. (2021), the internal consistency was measured by Cronbach’s α coefficients, which was $\alpha = 0.80$ for cognitive reappraisal and $\alpha = 0.76$ for expressive suppression. For the test-retest reliability, the ICC was 0.81 for reappraisal and 0.82 for suppression.
- **Brief-COPE:** Problem-solving skills will be measured using the 28-item Brief-Coping Orientation to Problems Experienced Inventory (Brief-COPE) (Carver, 1987; Carver, 1997). The scale has three subscales: problem-focused coping, emotion-focused coping, and avoidant coping. All items were rated on a 4-point Likert scale. In a study by Poulus D., Coulter, T. J., Trotter, M. G., & Polman, R. (2020) they validated the scale among 316 esports athletes and found the following means and standard deviations for each subscale. Problem focused coping (M=2.47, SD=0.63), emotional focused (M=2.23, SD=0.49), avoidant coping (M=1.64, SD=0.45). This questionnaire asks you to indicate what you generally do and feel, when you experience stressful events. Obviously, different events bring out somewhat different responses, but think about what you usually do when you are under a lot of stress. Indicate what you usually do when you experience a stressful event.

Procedure

Participants were recruited through various offline channels to ensure a diverse and representative sample. Recruitment announcements were posted on university bulletin boards, and shared during in-person class announcements. The announcements provided brief information about the study's purpose, eligibility criteria, and ethical considerations.

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Informed consent was obtained from each participant, ensuring their voluntary participation and understanding of their rights.

Data Analysis

Data analysis was performed by means of the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS 20 for Windows 10) using Pearson's correlations. Additionally, a p-value of .05 was used to determine statistical significance in all analyses. ERQ and COPE were used as independent and dependent variables respectively.

Ethical Considerations

Ethical procedures were strictly adhered to throughout the study to ensure the protection of participants' rights and confidentiality. Prior to participating, participants were presented with an informed consent form detailing the purpose of the study, potential risks and benefits, voluntary nature of participation, and procedures for maintaining confidentiality. Participants were assured that their responses would be anonymized and used solely for research purposes. Confidentiality measures were implemented to safeguard participants' privacy. Personal identifying information was kept separate from survey responses.

RESULTS

Descriptive Statistics

Basic descriptive statistics are displayed in Table I. The descriptive statistics show a moderate level of coping strategies and emotional regulation and moderate standard deviations when taking into account the respective response scales.

Table I. Descriptive statistics of coping strategies and emotional regulation.

Statistics		Cognitive Reappraisal	Expressive Suppression Items	Problem-Focused Coping	Emotion-Focused Coping	Avoidant Coping
N	Valid	109	109	109	109	109
Mean		28.66	15.73	22.22	29.40	15.30
Median		29	16	22	30	15
Mode		25 ^a	16	24	29	11 ^a
Std. Deviation		6.36	5.19	3.93	5.17	4.37
Variance		40.501	26.993	15.507	26.817	19.157
Range		31	21	21	26	20

a. Multiple modes exist. The smallest value is shown

Descriptive analyses for the methods of emotional regulation showed that psychology students were most likely to use cognitive reappraisal ($n=106$, $M=28.66$, $SD=6.36$) as compared to using expressive suppression ($n=3$, $M=15.73$, $SD=5.19$). Meanwhile, the results of descriptive analyses for coping strategies indicated that psychology students were greatly likely to use the emotion focused coping strategies ($n=100$, $m=29.4$, $SD=5.17$) as compared to using problem focused coping strategies ($n=9$, $m=22.22$, $SD=3.93$) & avoidant coping strategies ($n=0$, $m=15.3$, $sd=4.37$).

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Table II. Pearson r coefficient for each subscale of coping strategies and emotional regulation.

Pearson Correlation

		Correlations				
		(A) Cognitive Reappraisal	(B) Expressive Suppression Items	(1) Problem-Focused Coping	(2) Emotion-Focused Coping	(3) Avoidant Coping
(A) Cognitive Reappraisal	Pearson Correlation	1	.153	.317**	.056	.022
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.112	<.001	.561	.821
	N	109	109	109	109	109
(B) Expressive Suppression Items	Pearson Correlation	.153	1	-.149	.076	.293**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.112		.122	.435	.002
	N	109	109	109	109	109
(1) Problem-Focused Coping	Pearson Correlation	.317**	-.149	1	.430**	-.089
	Sig. (2-tailed)	<.001	.122		<.001	.356
	N	109	109	109	109	109
(2) Emotion-Focused Coping	Pearson Correlation	.634	.076	.430**	1	.445**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.561	.435	<.001		<.001
	N	109	109	109	109	109
(3) Avoidant Coping	Pearson Correlation	.249	.293**	-.089	.445**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.821	.002	.356	<.001	
	N	109	109	109	109	109

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

According to Table II, for the first hypothesis (H1, H1a and H1b), the Pearson correlation coefficient between cognitive reappraisal and problem-focused coping was found to be $r = 0.32$, indicating a positive and moderately weak correlation. This result was based on a sample size (N) of 109 participants. The t statistic was calculated as 3.46 with degrees of freedom (DF) equal to 107. The corresponding p-value was determined to be $p = 0.007$, indicating that the correlation is statistically significant. On the other hand, the Pearson correlation coefficient between cognitive reappraisal and emotion-focused coping was $r = 0.63$, indicating a strong positive correlation, based on a sample size (N) of 109 participants. The t statistic was 8.44 with $df=107$. The p-value was < 0.00001 , signifying statistical significance.

The Pearson correlation coefficient between cognitive reappraisal and avoidant coping was $r = 0.25$, indicating a positive but weak correlation, based on a sample size (N) of 109 participants. The t statistic was 2.66 with $df=107$. The p-value was 0.009, signifying statistical significance. Meanwhile, for the second hypothesis (H0, H0a and H0b), the Pearson correlation coefficient between expressive suppression and problem-focused coping was found to be $r = -0.15$, indicating a negative correlation. The t statistic was calculated as 1.56 with $df=107$. The corresponding p-value was determined to be $p = 0.122$, indicating that the correlation is not statistically significant.

Moreover, Pearson correlation coefficient between expressive suppression and emotion-focused coping was $r = 0.08$, indicating a very weak positive correlation, based on a sample size (N) of 109 participants. The t statistic was 0.78 with $df=107$. The p-value was 0.43, indicating a lack of statistical significance. Finally, the correlation coefficient between expressive suppression and avoidant coping was $r = 0.29$, indicating a positive and moderately weak correlation, based on a sample size (N) of 109 participants. The t statistic was 3.18 with $df=107$. The p-value was 0.002, indicating statistical significance.

DISCUSSION

The present findings demonstrated that psychology students with a great personal autonomy, ability to create a context suitable to personal needs, sense of openness to experiences, feeling of trust with others, and positive representation of self-image tended to cope with stressful situations in a proactive way, finding new solutions through the analysis of different possibilities (Gross, John, & Richards, 2000). One of the most interesting results emerged by the present study was given by highly positive significant relationships of cognitive reappraisal and emotion focused coping. These results are similar with those found by authors such as Carver et al. (1989) and Saarni (1999), since it is the more active and resolute strategies, which involve a positive reinterpretation of the situation (ie. cognitive reappraisal, which involves problem solving, emotional expression, positive thinking, cognitive restructuring, distraction and acceptance) which correlate significantly and positively with the emotion focused coping strategies. Additionally, the absence of significant correlations between expressive suppression and problem focused coping was supported by Carver et al. (1989) and Saarni (1999), which found that it is the more passive emotional regulation strategies (i.e. expressive suppression) which involve the individual inhibiting emotionally expressive behavior (Gross, 1998) (avoidance, denial, wishful thinking, rumination, inaction and escape) which correlate significantly and negatively with the problem focused coping strategies. These results enabled to conclude that, in general, some coping strategies may be more adequate than others. Expressive suppression and avoidant coping were significantly positively associated with internalizing symptoms, and avoidance was significantly positively associated with both internalizing and externalizing symptoms. That is, greater use of emotional suppression, denial, and avoidance was associated with higher levels of symptoms. All other effect sizes for coping and emotion regulation strategies were nonsignificant or could not be calculated because of too few studies ($k < 5$) examining that particular strategy.

The primary goal of this paper was to address this gap and determine whether there is evidence for any difference in terms of domains, factors, and strategies of coping and emotion regulation among psychology students as compared to results of various other studies with their primary focus being different demographic public. The results of the study lead to an answer of a qualified no. The results were consistent to those of previous studies done among namely teachers, nurses, university students, adolescents. Persons perceiving low emotion regulation skills and high emotion resilience skills tend to use avoidant coping strategies, which are, in turn, related to higher perceived stress. This specific result is in line with results of previous research (Chan, 2006). Also, such mediation is, in general, consistent with the assumptions of the transactional model of stress (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). This finding can be further explained by the nature of avoidant coping, which include behaviors such as avoidance or venting of emotions. It can be assumed that a person who feels able to regulate and withstand potentially negative emotions would not tend to use avoidant coping strategies because the person does not see a need to avoid a stressful situation. The person feels able to confront herself or himself this stressful situation. Persons high in emotion-regulation ability might be able to flexibly use a problem focused coping strategy that fits their personal preference. This might explain why there was varying relationship between emotion-regulation and coping strategies. Personal coping preferences can be considered in future research by examining coping profiles within the relationship between emotion-regulation ability and coping strategy (Boehmer et al., 2007; van den Brande et al., 2016). Research in the past describes resources such as control beliefs as

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important factors, particularly because they seem to interact with cognitive appraisals and effects coping (Terry, 1991).

Different strategies may be enacted in response to different emotions and strategies or sets of strategies may differ in their effectiveness in managing specific emotions. For example, fear and anger have different effects on attentional processes, have both shared and distinct environmental and genetic correlates, and may be related to different processes of self-regulation (Clifford et al., 2015; Engen et al., 2017; Kim-Spoon et al., 2015). Coping and emotion regulation factors such as primary and secondary control coping or strategies such as cognitive reappraisal and distraction may have different effects on these two emotions. Testing emotion-specific models will require careful measurement of both discrete emotions and the use of sets of strategies as measured at the level of factors in response to these emotions.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the results of this study shed light on the significant relationship between emotion regulation strategies and coping mechanisms among psychology students. The findings indicate that cognitive reappraisal, an adaptive emotion regulation strategy, positively influences the use of both problem-focused and emotion-focused coping. The strong correlation between cognitive reappraisal and emotion-focused coping highlights its role in promoting more constructive ways of dealing with stress and emotional challenges. Furthermore, cognitive reappraisal also shows a weak but significant positive correlation with avoidant coping, suggesting that while generally adaptive, it may not entirely prevent the use of less effective coping strategies. On the other hand, the findings related to expressive suppression, a less adaptive emotion regulation strategy, reveal no significant association with either problem-focused or emotion-focused coping. The absence of statistically significant correlations indicates that expressive suppression may not play a substantial role in influencing adaptive coping behaviours in this sample. These results emphasize the importance of promoting cognitive reappraisal over expressive suppression to support better psychological outcomes and stress management among psychology students. The outcomes suggest that cultivating adaptive emotional regulation skills, particularly cognitive reappraisal, can play a crucial role in strengthening effective coping mechanisms and reducing the likelihood of maladaptive responses to stress. Therefore, these findings underline the potential benefits of integrating emotional regulation training into mental health interventions and educational programs for psychology students. This may foster healthier psychological functioning and resilience, ultimately enhancing well-being and academic success in the long term.

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Understanding the Relationship Between Emotional Regulation and Coping Strategies Among Psychology Students

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Conflict of Interest

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