

Understanding The Cognitive Distortions and Emotional Regulation: The Systematic Review of Psychological Strategies

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ABSTRACT

Cognitive distortions and emotional regulation play a crucial role in psychological well-being, particularly among individuals suffering from mental health issues such as anxiety, depression, and disorders like polycystic ovarian syndrome (PCOS). According to William Knaus (2014) describes cognitive distortions as "patterns of illogical and irrational thinking that lead to negative emotions and reinforce dysfunctional behavior." According to Gross, J. J. (2015) Emotional regulation involves the "strategies individuals use to influence their emotional experience, including the timing of emotion generation, intensity, and the way emotions are experienced and expressed. This study synthesizes various studies that explore the relationship between cognitive distortions, emotional regulation, resilience, and therapeutic interventions such as cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT) and mindfulness. The findings highlight that cognitive distortions significantly impact emotional regulation, life satisfaction, and social relationships. Furthermore, interventions like CBT, mindfulness, and resilience training have been found effective in mitigating negative cognitive biases and improving emotional regulation. This review provides a theoretical foundation for the application of therapeutic approaches in addressing cognitive distortions and enhancing emotional regulation across different populations, including children, adolescents, and women with PCOS.

Keywords: *Cognitive Distortions, Emotional Regulations, CBT techniques*

Cognitive distortions refer to irrational and negative thought patterns that contribute to emotional distress and maladaptive behaviors. Emotional regulation, on the other hand, is the ability to manage and respond to emotional experiences effectively. These two constructs are intricately linked, as cognitive biases influence how individuals process emotions and cope with stressors. Various psychological interventions, particularly CBT, have been developed to address cognitive distortions and enhance emotional regulation. This study reviews contemporary research examining the impact of cognitive distortions on emotional regulation, the role of mindfulness, resilience, and CBT in mitigating these effects, and the implications for different populations. Cognitive distortions and emotional regulation are critical aspects of psychological well-being that influence how individuals perceive, interpret, and respond to various life events. These two constructs are

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deeply intertwined, with cognitive distortions exacerbating emotional dysregulation and maladaptive emotional regulation strategies reinforcing distorted cognitive patterns. Understanding their interaction is crucial for developing effective psychological interventions, particularly for individuals experiencing chronic emotional distress, anxiety, depression, and other mental health conditions.

Cognitive Distortions

Cognitive distortions, first introduced by Aaron Beck (1967) within the framework of cognitive therapy, refer to systematically biased patterns of thinking that lead to irrational beliefs and maladaptive emotional responses. These distortions contribute to the development and maintenance of psychological disorders, particularly depression and anxiety (Beck, 1976). Some common cognitive distortions include:

- **Catastrophizing:** Exaggerating the severity of an event or expecting the worst possible outcome.
- **Overgeneralization:** Drawing broad, negative conclusions based on limited evidence.
- **Personalization:** Assuming excessive responsibility for external events, often leading to feelings of guilt or inadequacy.
- **Black-and-White Thinking:** Viewing situations in extremes, with no middle ground or nuance.

These cognitive errors create a negative feedback loop in which distorted thoughts reinforce emotional distress, which in turn reinforces further cognitive distortions (Joormann & Vanderlind, 2014).

Emotional Regulation

Emotional regulation is essential for mental health, as poor regulation strategies have been linked to a range of psychological difficulties, including mood disorders, impulsivity, and interpersonal conflicts (Gross & Jazaieri, 2014).

There are two broad categories of emotional regulation strategies:

- **Cognitive Reappraisal:** Reinterpreting a situation to reduce its emotional impact.
- **Problem-Solving:** Addressing the root cause of distress.
- **Mindfulness and Acceptance:** Cultivating awareness and nonjudgmental acceptance of emotions.
- **Rumination:** Repetitive dwelling on negative thoughts and feelings.
- **Avoidance:** Ignoring or escaping distressing emotions rather than addressing them.
- **Suppression:** Inhibiting emotional expression, which can lead to increased physiological stress (Gross, 2002).

Maladaptive emotion regulation strategies are frequently observed in individuals experiencing cognitive distortions. For example, rumination is strongly associated with depression, as it involves persistent negative thought patterns that reinforce feelings of helplessness and sadness (Nolen-Hoeksema, Wisco, & Lyubomirsky, 2008).

The Interplay Between Cognitive Distortions and Emotional Regulation

Research has consistently demonstrated that cognitive distortions contribute to emotional dysregulation. Negative cognitive biases, such as attentional bias toward threats and memory biases for negative information, have been observed in individuals with high levels of

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neuroticism (Chen et al., 2023). These biases lead to increased emotional reactivity and difficulty in regulating negative emotions.

Conversely, individuals who struggle with emotional regulation are more likely to engage in cognitive distortions. For instance, a person who habitually suppresses emotions may be prone to black-and-white thinking, interpreting emotional situations in extreme terms (Aldao, Nolen-Hoeksema, & Schweizer, 2010).

Cognitive-Behavioral Therapy (CBT) as an Intervention

Cognitive-behavioral therapy (CBT) is one of the most effective interventions for addressing cognitive distortions and improving emotional regulation. CBT aims to help individuals identify and modify maladaptive thought patterns while developing healthier emotional regulation strategies (Hofmann et al., 2012). A meta-analysis by Tang et al. (2022) found that CBT significantly improved anxiety, compliance, and pregnancy outcomes among women with Polycystic Ovarian Syndrome (PCOS), highlighting its effectiveness in diverse populations.

Additionally, mindfulness-based cognitive therapy (MBCT) has gained popularity as an integrated approach that combines traditional CBT techniques with mindfulness practices (Segal, Williams, & Teasdale, 2012). MBCT has been particularly effective in reducing negative cognitive biases and promoting adaptive emotional regulation strategies.

Need for Further Research

Despite extensive research on cognitive distortions and emotional regulation, several gaps remain. Many studies have been conducted on Western populations, necessitating further exploration in non-Western cultures to understand cultural variations in emotional regulation (Simsek et al., 2021). Additionally, while CBT and MBCT have shown promise, there is a need for more randomized controlled trials to assess their long-term efficacy, particularly in populations with chronic psychological conditions.

Research Context

Research on cognitive distortions and emotional regulation has been conducted across diverse populations, including neurotic individuals, children, adolescents, and individuals with PCOS. Studies have explored the impact of mindfulness, resilience, and CBT on mitigating cognitive distortions and improving emotional regulation. This study synthesizes these studies to provide a comprehensive understanding of the relationship between cognitive distortions and emotional regulation, as well as the efficacy of therapeutic interventions.

Objectives of the Study

- To explore the relationship between cognitive distortions and emotional regulation.
- To examine the impact of cognitive biases on mental health and social relationships
- To evaluate the effectiveness of CBT, mindfulness, and resilience training in mitigating cognitive distortions and enhancing emotional regulation.
- To analyze the implications of these interventions for different populations, including neurotic individuals, children, adolescents, and women with PCOS.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

A literature review done to clarify this previous research of journal, articles, scholarly books and source of research. The review may also include a discussion of methodological issues and suggestions for future research. Conducting a literature review should enable a researcher to find out what research has already been done and identify what is unknown within the researcher's topic. So, the studies of already literature place a vital role in the field of research in psychology. Literature review as a critical description and appraisal of a topic (Jesson,2011).

Marta Sancho, Céline Bonnaire, Silvia Costa, Gemma Casalé-Salayet, Javier Vera-Igual, Rita Cristina Rodríguez, Santiago Duran-Sindreu and Joan Trujols (2021) Conducted the study on impulsivity, Emotional regulations, Cognitive distortions and attentional bias in a Spanish sample of Gambling Disorder patients comparison between online and land based Gambling. The sample consisted of 88 treatment-seeking patients from the Behavioral Addictions Unit at the Hospital, Barcelona (Spain). Patients were divided into two groups by considering their main type of gambling, i.e., online ($n = 26$) and land-based gambling ($n = 62$). Online gamblers were younger, more often employed, with a higher educational level than land-based gamblers. Regarding the rest of the variables, statistically significant differences were only found in Positive Urgency, one of the UPPS-P subscales, in which the land-based gambling group scored higher than the online gambling group. In this exploratory study, individuals with online and land-based GD phenotypes did not differ either in difficulties in emotion regulation or in attentional and cognitive biases. However, land-based GD patients showed a higher tendency to succumb to strong impulses under the influence of positive emotions. These preliminary findings warrant the need to continue investigating GD phenotypes in larger patient samples.

Ali Taheri, Hojatollah Javidi, Hossein Bagholi, Ali Firoozabadi (2021) provides to investigating the mediating role of cognitive emotion regulation and cognitive distortion strategies between attachment styles and dissociative experiences among students. This study was descriptive and used a correlation design. The statistical population consisted of all students of Islamic Azad University of Marvdasht. Using convenience sampling, 329 students (187 girls and 142 boys) were selected as the sample of the study. For accomplishing the research, the dissociative experiences (Bernstein and Putnam, 1986), attachment styles (Bartolomio and Horowitz, 1991), cognitive distortion (Hammachi and Ozturk, 2004), and emotion regulation (Garnefski, Kraaij, Spinhoven, 2001) questionnaires, were used. The results showed that the direct effect of safe style, isolation avoidance, and fearful style on dissociative experiences was equal to -0.15, 0.17, 0.21 which was significant. The direct effect of preoccupied style was not significant. The indirect effect of safe and fearful style on dissociative experiences were equal to -0.12 and 0.33 which was significant. The indirect effect of avoidance/detachment style and preoccupation style was not significant. Considering the negative effect of secure style and the positive effect of insecure style on dissociative experiences, the importance of secure style and insecure style should be given more attention in treatment.

Maria Ciccarelli, Giovanna Nigro, Francesca D'Olimpio, Mark D.Griffths, Marina Cosenza (2020) identify the studies have investigated the relationship between cognitive distortions and emotion regulation among adolescent gamblers, demonstrating the exacerbating role of alcohol consumption when co-occurring with gambling problems. An important construct, that to daing Questionnaire (RFQ-8), the Diffculties in Emotion

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Regulation Scale (DERS), the Gambling Related Cognitions Scale (GRCS), and the Alcohol Use Disorders Identification Test (AUDIT). Regression analysis showed that, along with male gender, the best predictors of adolescent gambling were scores on two GRCS subscales, the RFQ-8's 'uncertainty about mental states' dimension, and the DERS 'impulse control difficulties factor, with the overall model explaining more than one-third of the total variance. The results clearly indicated that, along with gambling-related cognitive distortions, uncertainty about mental states, and difficulties remaining in control of one's behavior when experiencing negative emotions contributed significantly to problematic gambling among adolescents.

Khadijah Siddiqui (2024) conducted the study aims to compare the emotional regulation and life quality between two groups of women that women diagnosed with PCOS and the control group including non- PCOS women. The major goal of this study is to identify the significant differences in emotional regulation and quality of life in both groups and provide support strategies. A total of 104 participants are included in the study with the age range of (18-29) consisting of 52 participants who are clinically diagnosed with PCOS and 52 participants without the condition (control group). The variables are measured using the Emotional Regulation Questionnaire (ERQ) top assess emotional regulation and World Health Organization Quality of life Scale (WHOQOL-BREF) to measure quality of life. Independent sample t test was used to find out the variations in both groups. The results revealed that there is a significant difference in both domains of emotional regulation between both groups of women. Women with PCOS exhibit decreased levels of emotional regulation when compared with the control group. In terms of quality of life, there was a significant difference in all domains where women without PCOS scored high in quality of life when compared to women with PCOS. Findings indicate that PCOS has a negative impact on emotional regulation and quality of life in women diagnosed with it which can lead to long term consequences.

Roghayeh. Yahyavi Gargari, Farnaz. Farshbaf Maneisefat, Mahin. Etemadnia (2024) conducted the study aimed to compare the effectiveness of mindfulness-based cognitive-behavioral therapy and reality therapy on emotional regulation and self-efficacy among couples seeking divorce. The study was a quasi-experimental study with a pre-test, post-test, and follow-up design, including a control group. The population consisted of all couples seeking divorce referred by the judiciary to the psychodynamic center of Jolfa city from spring to winter 2021. The sample comprised 60 individuals chosen through purposive sampling and randomly assigned to three groups of 20. Following sampling, two experimental groups received either group mindfulness-based cognitive-behavioral therapy in eight 90-minute sessions (weekly) or group reality therapy in 90-minute sessions (weekly). Data were collected using the Garnefski and Kraaij Cognitive Emotion Regulation Questionnaire (CERQ-P-short) and the Sherer Self-Efficacy Questionnaire (DCI-SF). Data analysis was performed using mixed repeated measures ANOVA and Bonferroni post-hoc tests with SPSS version 24. The findings indicated that there was a significant difference between the overall means of emotional regulation and self-efficacy in both the mindfulness-based cognitive-behavioral therapy and reality therapy groups, with mindfulness-based cognitive-behavioral therapy having a greater impact on emotional regulation and self-efficacy.

Masoumeh Alimirzaei, Mahmoud Borjali, Nader Monirpour (2024) identified the study was to investigate the effectiveness of cognitive restructuring training on emotional

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regulation of teenage girls suffering from self-injury. The semi-experimental research method was pre-test-post-test and follow-up with a control group. The statistical population of this research was all female students suffering from self-injury, age range 15-18 years old in Baharestan schools in 2022. The number of 54 people who had self-injury in the last 6 months and had visited the counseling clinics were selected, and they were randomly assigned to the experimental and control groups by accessible sampling method. The research tools included the Cognitive Emotion Regulation Questionnaire (CERQ) and the ISAS self-injury test. The subjects of the experimental group underwent eight 90-minute sessions of cognitive restructuring training, and the control group did not receive any intervention, and a follow-up was done after one month. Multivariate covariance analysis was used to analyze the data. After examining the presuppositions of the multivariate covariance analysis, the test results showed that there was a significance difference between the two groups in emotion regulation strategies ($p < 0.01$). According to the findings of the research, it can be concluded that cognitive reconstruction is effective and has improved the emotion regulation strategies of adolescent girls suffering from self-injury.

Eslam Abdelfattah Abdelhamid, Heba Abdel-Hamid Hammad, Omima Mohamed Ibrahim Morsy (2024) provide the study aims to investigate the predictive effects of cognitive distortions and impulsive sensation seeking on relapse probability among clients with SUDs. A descriptive correlational analytical design was used. A convenience sample of clients with SUDs who met the selection criteria. Four tools were used for data collection: socio-demographic and clinical data, the cognitive distortion scale (CDS), impulse sensation seeking (ImpSS), and the AWARE Questionnaire (The Advance Warning of Relapse). Results indicated a high prevalence of cognitive distortions, impulsive sensation seeking, and the risk of relapse within the sample. Furthermore, there are significant positive correlations between cognitive distortions and both impulsive sensation seeking and relapse probability. Similarly, impulsive sensation seeking and relapse probability were significantly positively correlated. Collectively, the present study identified cognitive distortions and impulsive sensation seeking as significant predictors of relapse probability.

D. Walaa Badawy Mohamed Badawy (2024) conducted the study aimed to investigate the relationships between psychosocial factors, cognitive distortions, and quality of Life in individuals with IBS and the mediating role of cognitive distortions. Participants were 200 female students of king Khalid University with IBS who completed self-report measures of psychosocial factors, cognitive distortions, and quality of Life and The Rome III Diagnostic Questionnaire for Irritable Bowel Syndrome (Rome III). Results showed that perceived stress, anxiety, depression, and cognitive distortions were negatively associated with quality of Life. Furthermore, cognitive distortions partially mediated the relationships between psychosocial factors and quality of Life. These findings highlight the importance of addressing psychosocial factors and cognitive distortions in treating IBS. Cognitive behavioral therapy may be an effective treatment approach for reducing stress, anxiety, and depression and challenging cognitive distortions in IBS patients.

Chinelo Helen, Caleb, Paul Ajeibi, Kaatyo Isaac (2024) provides the study to examined how students' perception of their body image and cognitive distortions affect their interpersonal communication at Benue State University, Makurdi. A cross-sectional survey was conducted among 200 participants from the same university, selected through a simple random sampling technique. The Interpersonal Communication Scale (ICS), Body-Image Questionnaire (BIQ), and Cognitive Distortions Questionnaire (CD-Quest) were utilized to

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gather data. Three hypotheses were tested using linear and multiple regression analysis. The first hypothesis indicated that body image perception did not significantly impact students' interpersonal communication [$f(1,198) = 1.294$; $p > .081$ and $R^2 = .006$]. The second hypothesis demonstrated that cognitive distortions significantly influenced students' interpersonal communication. The third hypothesis indicated that both body image perception and cognitive distortions collectively affected students' interpersonal communication. Based on these findings, it is recommended that students be encouraged to enhance their verbal and non-verbal skills and be mindful of their body language as both are crucial for effective communication. Additionally, it is suggested that professionals like therapists and coaches, who are adept at helping individuals modify unhelpful thought patterns, should be made accessible in educational institutions, whether secondary or tertiary. If the cost of individual treatment is prohibitive, other resources such as mindfulness apps, cognitive behavioral therapy, mutual support groups, group therapy or coaching, student assistance programs through school work, or online communities could be explored. This area, which has been largely neglected, is mentalizing to investigate the relative contribution of mentalization, emotional dysregulation, cognitive distortions, and alcohol consumption among adolescent gamblers. A total of 396 students from secondary schools in Southern Italy. Assessment measures included the South Oaks Gambling Screen Revised for Adolescents (SOGS-RA), the Reflective Function.

METHODS

This study synthesizes findings from multiple empirical studies conducted on cognitive distortions, emotional regulation, and related interventions. The studies included various methodologies, such as correlational analysis, structural modeling, behavioral experiments, meta-analyses, and intervention studies. The populations studied ranged from children and adolescents to adults with PCOS, providing a broad perspective on the impact of cognitive distortions and therapeutic interventions.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The synthesis of research findings indicates that cognitive distortions have a profound impact on emotional regulation, mental health, and social relationships. Studies consistently found that neurotic individuals and those with high levels of cognitive biases exhibited poorer emotional regulation. Mindfulness and CBT were found to be effective in reducing negative cognitive biases and enhancing emotional regulation across various populations.

For instance, mindfulness-based cognitive therapy (MBCT) was shown to mediate the effects of cognitive distortions, reducing anxiety and improving life satisfaction. Similarly, CBT interventions targeting individuals with PCOS led to significant improvements in anxiety, quality of life, and compliance with treatment. Resilience training was found to play a crucial role in adolescent well-being by mediating the effects of cognitive distortions on psychological health.

Among children, emotion regulation was positively correlated with peer relationships, suggesting that early interventions to improve emotional regulation could enhance social competence. Studies on smartphone addiction among preschoolers also highlighted the impact of cognitive distortions on emotional regulation, emphasizing the need for interventions to mitigate negative cognitive biases at an early age.

CONCLUSION

Cognitive distortions and emotional regulation are fundamental psychological constructs that significantly influence mental health, well-being, and overall quality of life. This review has provided an in-depth examination of their interplay, emphasizing their impact on various populations, including individuals with neurotic tendencies, adolescents, women with PCOS, and those suffering from addiction-related behaviors. The findings from the reviewed studies strongly suggest that cognitive distortions contribute to emotional dysregulation, reinforcing maladaptive behaviors and increasing vulnerability to anxiety, depression, and interpersonal difficulties. Cognitive distortions such as catastrophizing, overgeneralization, and black-and-white thinking amplify emotional dysregulation, particularly in individuals experiencing psychological distress. Conversely, maladaptive emotional regulation strategies like rumination and suppression sustain negative cognitive patterns, creating a cycle of distorted thinking and emotional instability.

The reviewed literature highlights the critical role of psychological interventions in breaking this cycle. Cognitive Behavioral Therapy (CBT) has emerged as one of the most effective approaches for addressing cognitive distortions and enhancing emotional regulation. Studies, such as the one by Tang et al. (2022), demonstrate that CBT significantly improves anxiety levels, treatment compliance, and pregnancy outcomes in women with PCOS, underscoring its effectiveness in clinical populations. Similarly, mindfulness-based cognitive therapy (MBCT) has shown promise in reducing negative cognitive biases and improving emotional regulation. Research by Segal, Williams, and Teasdale (2012) indicates that integrating mindfulness techniques into cognitive therapy leads to sustained improvements in emotional well-being. Additionally, resilience training has been found to mitigate cognitive distortions by equipping individuals with adaptive coping strategies. Studies on individuals with gambling disorders, such as those by Sancho et al. (2021), reveal that resilience-based interventions enhance impulse control and emotional regulation, further supporting the importance of psychological resilience in cognitive-emotional functioning.

A comparative analysis of the reviewed studies reveals several key trends. Firstly, across diverse populations, cognitive distortions and emotional dysregulation appear to be universal psychological phenomena, though their manifestation and severity vary. Secondly, evidence consistently supports the effectiveness of CBT, MBCT, and resilience training in reducing cognitive distortions and improving emotional regulation. Finally, individual differences, such as personality traits and cultural backgrounds, influence the success of these interventions, emphasizing the need for personalized treatment approaches.

Despite the extensive research on this topic, several areas require further investigation. Future studies should explore cultural variations in cognitive distortions, as most existing research has been conducted in Western contexts. Longitudinal studies assessing the long-term efficacy of psychological interventions would provide valuable insights into their sustained benefits. Additionally, with the rise of digital mental health interventions, exploring the effectiveness of online CBT, mindfulness applications, and AI-driven therapeutic tools could enhance accessibility to psychological support. Given the significant findings related to PCOS, further research should investigate the interplay between hormonal fluctuations, cognitive distortions, and emotional regulation, potentially integrating endocrinological perspectives with psychological interventions.

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In conclusion, cognitive distortions and emotional regulation are deeply interconnected, forming the basis of various psychological disorders. Addressing cognitive biases through evidence-based interventions such as CBT, MBCT, and resilience training can significantly enhance emotional regulation and mental well-being. Given these findings, integrating psychological interventions into routine clinical practice can improve psychological resilience and overall quality of life. Moving forward, refining and expanding these interventions to cater to diverse populations will be essential in ensuring their effectiveness and accessibility.

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Conflict of Interest

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