

Emotional Regulation Strategies as Predictors of Academic Performance

Dr. Abhishek Kumar^{1*}

ABSTRACT

The present study aimed to examine the relationship between university students' academic achievement and emotion regulation strategies, specifically cognitive reappraisal and expressive suppression. Using a quantitative correlational research design, a sample of 220 undergraduate and postgraduate students of both genders was selected through a two-stage sampling technique from a public sector institution in India. Emotion regulation was assessed using the Emotion Regulation Questionnaire (ERQ), while academic achievement was measured using the percentage of marks obtained in the most recent semester or degree. Pearson's product-moment correlation and multiple regression analyses were employed for data analysis. The findings revealed a significant positive correlation between cognitive reappraisal and academic achievement, indicating that students who frequently use adaptive cognitive strategies tend to perform better academically. In contrast, expressive suppression showed a significant negative correlation with academic achievement, suggesting that excessive emotional suppression may hinder academic performance. Regression analysis further demonstrated that both cognitive reappraisal and expressive suppression were significant predictors of academic achievement. Additionally, gender-based analyses indicated minor differences in the strength of these relationships, with emotion regulation strategies exerting a slightly stronger influence on the academic performance of female students. The findings underscore the importance of adaptive emotion regulation strategies in promoting academic success and have important implications for counselors, mental health professionals, university administrators, and educational policymakers. Recommendations for future research are discussed in light of the present findings.

Keywords: *Academic Performance, Predictors, Emotional Regulation, Strategies, Students*

Higher education is essential in developing people into proficient professionals and accountable members of society. University students are anticipated to develop both academic knowledge and psychological and emotional skills that equip them to manage academic obstacles, interpersonal obligations, and future professional duties. Academic performance is often seen as a principal measure of students' achievement in higher education and is frequently associated with long-term job prospects, socioeconomic advancement, and national human capital development [1]. Notwithstanding the proliferation of higher education institutions and enhanced accessibility to university

¹Dept. of Psychology, T.M.B. University, Bhagalpur

*Corresponding Author

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education globally, apprehensions about students' academic underperformance, emotional turmoil, and diminishing involvement persist. [2]

Cognitive capacity, intrinsic drive, learning style, character quirks, and external variables like school resources and instructor effectiveness all play a role in students' overall academic performance. Nevertheless, educational psychologists are paying more and more attention to emotional processes as a result of their significant impact on learning, motivation, and performance, in addition to cognitive and environmental factors. During class, tests, and assessments, college students may feel a variety of emotions, such as excitement, pleasure, worry, boredom, and hopelessness [3]. How well kids are able to control their emotions determines how much of an impact these events have on their academic performance.

Students' attention, memory, problem-solving, and decision-making skills are greatly influenced by their emotions, which are an integral aspect of learning. A complex psychological condition including subjective sentiments, physiological arousal, and behavioral manifestations was once considered to represent emotions according to early theoretical viewpoints [4]. Emotions impact students' engagement, perseverance, and performance results; they are more than just responses to academic events, according to recent study [5]. As an example, although a little bit of academic worry may actually make you more awake and motivated, a lot of anxiety can make it hard to focus, mess with your working memory, and make you do worse on tests [6]. As a result, being able to control one's emotions has become an important component of academic achievement.

A greater sense of autonomy, higher academic pressure, increased social adjustment, and increased uncertainty about the future are all characteristics of the transitory period that is university life. When students are asked to handle large workloads, competitive settings, performance expectations, and personal duties all at the same time, they often face complex challenges. Students may suffer emotional dysregulation, which may result in stress, burnout, procrastination, and decreased academic engagement [7]. This occurs when the emotional demands placed on them exceed the resources available to them for dealing with them. Therefore, it is vital to have a knowledge of the processes that students use to manage their emotions in order to promote adaptive functioning and academic accomplishment in environments that are associated with higher education.

Emotion Regulation and Academic Functioning: Emotion regulation involves monitoring, assessing, and changing emotions to attain objectives or meet needs. According to Gross's Process Model of Emotion Regulation, emotions develop throughout time and may be managed at scenario selection, attentional deployment, modification, cognitive change, and response modulation. These regulating techniques affect emotion strength, duration, and expression intentionally or subconsciously. Effective emotion regulation is a key psychological resource that improves well-being, social functioning, and success in many areas, including education [8]. Emotionally stable students are more likely to concentrate on schoolwork, adopt effective learning techniques, and overcome obstacles [9]. Emotion regulation issues are linked to maladaptive coping, psychological suffering, and poor academic performance [10].

Emotion management methods like cognitive reappraisal and expressive suppression have garnered empirical interest owing to their different psychological effects. To change the emotional effect of a stressful or emotionally stimulating circumstance, cognitive reappraisal is used [11]. An approaching test may be seen as a chance to show learning rather than a

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threat. Conversely, expressive suppression includes hiding feelings after they've been formed, such as nervousness before a presentation or test.

On the Process Model of Emotion Regulation, antecedent-focused methods like cognitive reappraisal are more adaptive than response-focused ones like expressive suppression. Cognitive reappraisal earlier in the emotion-generating process reduces negative affect, improves cognitive flexibility, and improves interpersonal functioning [12]. Students who often utilize cognitive reappraisal report decreased academic stress, more intrinsic motivation, and higher academic engagement [13].

While expressive repression may be socially beneficial in the short term, it generally leads to psychological problems. Suppression demands self-monitoring and uses cognitive resources, which may impair learning-related attention and memory. Habitual expressive repression is linked to physiological stress, emotional tiredness, diminished social support, and scholastic impairment [14]. Suppression-dependent students may look emotionally stable but suffer from internal anguish that impairs academic achievement. Objective metrics like GPA, test results, and academic accomplishment are used to evaluate academic performance [15]. These results demonstrate pupils' academic management and intelligence. Research demonstrates that emotion control mechanisms impact academic success beyond cognitive variables [16]. Adaptive regulation tactics help students handle test anxiety, stay motivated, and work hard in school, improving performance.

Research on the relationship between ER and academic performance is scant, even though the importance of this skill in the classroom is well-established. This is especially true in developing and non-Western nations, where students' emotional experiences may be more influenced by societal expectations, educational systems, and cultural norms. Gaining a better understanding of these connections is crucial for realizing the potential of counseling services, educational policies, and focused psychological treatments to improve students' emotional abilities and academic performance.

Objectives

- To examine the relationship between emotion regulation strategies and academic performance.
- To assess the predictive role of emotion regulation strategies on academic performance.
- To explore gender differences in emotion regulation and academic achievement.

Hypothesis

- **H1:** To examine whether there is a significant relationship between emotion regulation strategies and academic performance among university students.
- **H2:** To determine whether cognitive reappraisal is positively related and expressive suppression is negatively related to academic performance.
- **H3:** To analyze whether emotion regulation strategies significantly predict academic performance among university students.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

In order to investigate the connection between university students' academic achievement and emotional control techniques, the current study used a quantitative correlational research methodology. Because it makes it possible to evaluate the degree and direction of

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correlations between variables without changing them, this design was deemed suitable. Academic performance was the outcome variable, whereas cognitive reappraisal and expressive suppression were the predictor factors. The research was cross-sectional in nature since the data were gathered all at once.

Sample size

A two-stage sampling strategy was used in this correlational study. Using basic random selection, one Indian public university was chosen for the first phase. Stratified random sampling was used in the second step to choose a total sample of 220 students. To guarantee proportionate representation, students were chosen from undergraduate (UG) and graduate (PG) programs, with each academic year acting as a separate stratum. The research comprised both male and female students participating in the chosen undergraduate and graduate programs. Students from other institutions and those enrolled in programs other than the chosen degree programs were not included in the research.

Procedure

Formal consent was acquired from the appropriate university authorities prior to data collection. The sample process outlined above was used to choose the participants, who were also briefed about the nature and goal of the research. All participants gave written informed permission after being given guarantees of anonymity, confidentiality, and the freedom to leave the research at any moment without incurring any fees. After then, the participants were given the study tools, and it took them around twenty to thirty minutes to finish. After finishing, participants received gratitude for their volunteer involvement. The SPSS, Version 25 was used to analyze the gathered data.

Instruments

- 1. Emotion Regulation Questionnaire:** The Process Model of ER-based Emotion Control Questionnaire (ERQ) assessed students' emotion management skills. The 10-item self-report ERQ assesses expressive suppression (4 items; "I keep my emotions to myself") and cognitive reappraisal (6 items). A seven-point Likert scale, with 1 meaning "strongly disagree" and 7 meaning "strongly agree," scores replies. Higher scores suggest more emotion regulation. The ERQ has high internal consistency and reliability, with Cronbach's alpha values of $\alpha = .90$ for cognitive reappraisal and $\alpha = .76-.80$ for expressive suppression.
- 2. Academic Performance:** Students' academic achievement was evaluated based on the proportion of marks they received in their most recent semester or, if appropriate, in their most recent degree that they had finished. Within the context of the Indian higher education system, this metric served as an objective assessment of the academic success of students.

Data Analysis

SPSS Version 25 was used to code and analyze the data. Before main analysis, assumptions of normality, outliers, and missing values were examined. The study variables and participant demographics were described using means, frequencies, standard deviations, and percentages. Pearson's product-moment correlation study examined academic success and emotion control techniques (expressive suppression and cognitive reappraisal). Multiple regression analysis was used to determine if emotion management practices predict academic success. The statistical significance criterion was set at $p < .05$, and analyses were done to assess study hypotheses.

RESULTS

The current study showed that there are substantial connections between the ways that university students use to regulate their emotions and their academic achievement. In contrast, expressive suppression was shown to have a strong negative connection with academic achievement, whereas cognitive reappraisal was found to have a favorable association with academic success. Furthermore, the results of the regression analysis demonstrated that both techniques for emotion management had a significant role in predicting academic achievement. Additionally, substantial gender differences were seen in the techniques for emotion management and academic accomplishment, with female students displaying superior academic performance than male students. As students proceeded through higher levels of study, there was a general increase in their academic performance, as shown by the comparison of their academic performance over different academic years, which showed substantial variances.

Table 1: Reliability Analysis of the ER Questionnaire

Measure	Number of Items	Cronbach's α
Emotion Regulation Questionnaire	10	.83
Cognitive Reappraisal	6	.89
Expressive Suppression	4	.78

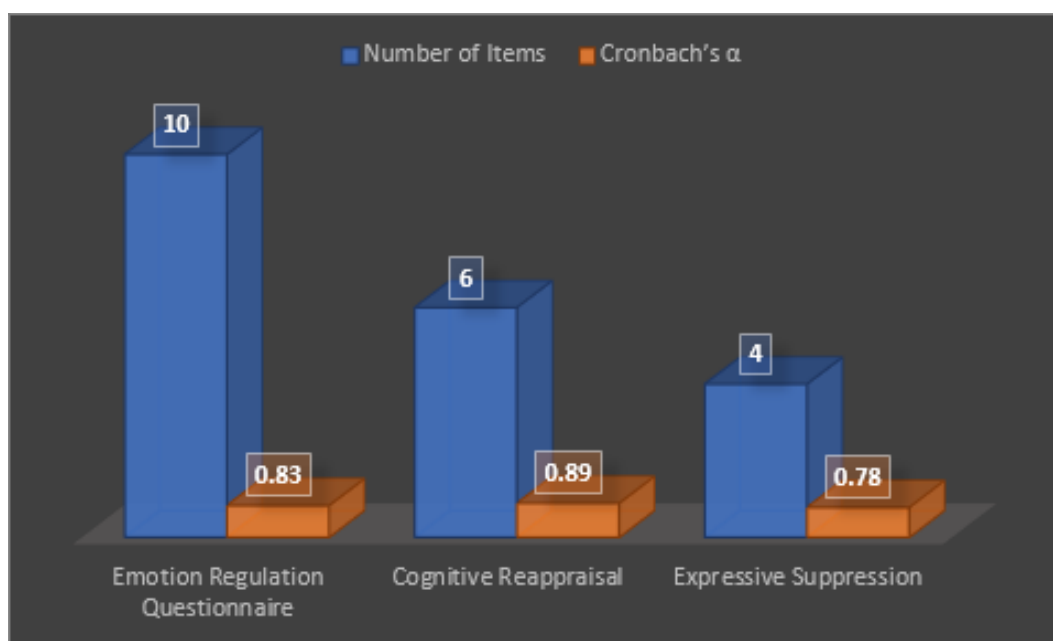


Figure 1: Reliability Analysis of the ER Questionnaire

In the following table, the internal consistency reliability of the ERQ and its subscales is shown for the current sample of 220 college students. In terms of dependability, the total ERQ exhibited a high level of reliability ($\alpha = .83$), showing that the scale is a reliable instrument for assessing techniques for emotion regulation. Both the expressive suppression subscale and the cognitive reappraisal subscale displayed adequate reliability, with the former demonstrating high internal consistency ($\alpha = .89$) and the latter demonstrating acceptable reliability ($\alpha = .78$). According to these results, the ERQ is a reliable tool from a psychometric standpoint for evaluating the manner in which Indian university students

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regulate their emotions, thereby supporting Hypothesis 1 by confirming the reliability of the measures used to examine emotion regulation strategies.

Table 2: Description and Interrelationships of Study Variables

Variables	Mean	SD	1	2	3
1. Cognitive Reappraisal	26.24	6.32	—		
2. Expressive Suppression	19.41	6.08	-.28**	—	
3. Academic Performance (%)	71.62	8.21	.46***	-.51***	—

Note: $p < .01$, $p < .001$.

The table presents the descriptive statistics as well as the inter correlations that exist between academic achievement, expressive suppression, and cognitive reappraisal. Based on the findings, it can be concluded that cognitive reappraisal has a noteworthy positive association with academic performance ($r = .46$, $p < .001$), which supports Hypothesis 2 by indicating that adaptive emotion regulation strategies are positively related to academic achievement. This implies that students who regularly use cognitive reappraisal have a tendency to attain better academic scores. In contrast, it is worth noting that there is a substantial negative correlation between expressive suppression and academic performance ($r = -.51$, $p < .001$). This suggests that a greater use of expressive suppression is linked to a lower level of academic achievement. Additionally, it was revealed that there is a noteworthy negative association between cognitive reappraisal and expressive suppression ($r = -.28$, $p < .01$). This indicates that students who use adaptive methods are less likely to depend on maladaptive tactics.

Table 3: Multiple Regression Analysis Predicting Academic Performance from Emotion Regulation Strategies

Predictor	B	SE	β	t	p
Cognitive Reappraisal	0.37	0.05	.38	7.54	.001
Expressive Suppression	-0.45	0.06	-.41	-7.21	.001

Note: $R = .62$, $R^2 = .38$, $F(2, 217) = 66.31$, $p < .001$. Academic performance was treated as the criterion variable.

The following table provides the findings of a multiple regression study that investigated the predictive influence that techniques for emotion control have on individual academic achievement. In line with Hypothesis 3, the analysis examines whether emotion regulation strategies significantly predict academic performance. The statistical significance of the regression model was shown by the fact that it accounted for 38% of the variation in academic achievement ($R^2 = .38$, $F(2, 217) = 66.31$, $p < .001$). The cognitive reappraisal method was shown to be a significant positive predictor ($\beta = .38$, $p < .001$), showing that higher use of this strategy leads to improved academic achievement. On the other hand, it was discovered that expressive suppression was a significant negative predictor ($\beta = -.41$, $p < .001$), indicating that the act of concealing emotions had a detrimental impact on academic accomplishment. The significance of the role that methods for emotion management play in predicting the academic achievement of pupils is brought into focus by these results.

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Table 4: Gender Differences on Emotion Regulation Strategies and Academic Performance

Variable	Gender	Mean	SD	t	p
Cognitive Reappraisal	Male (n=104)	27.10	6.08	2.18	.030
	Female (n=116)	25.52	6.41		
Expressive Suppression	Male (n=104)	18.86	6.14	2.05	.042
	Female (n=116)	19.91	6.02		
Academic Performance (%)	Male (n=104)	69.88	7.96	3.36	.001
	Female (n=116)	73.17	8.29		

The following table presents a comparison of the ways in which men and women regulate their emotions and their academic achievement. For the purpose of cognitive reappraisal, the findings indicate that male students exhibited a substantially greater level of performance compared to female students ($t = 2.18, p < .05$). On the contrary, it was shown that female students reported considerably greater levels of expressive repression compared to male students ($t = 2.05, p < .05$). With regard to academic achievement, it was observed that female students exhibited a considerably higher level of success compared to male students ($t = 3.36, p < .01$). These results provide evidence that there are gender-based disparities in the manner in which emotions are regulated and academic achievements are achieved among students attending universities in India.

Table 5: One-Way ANOVA of Academic Performance across Academic Years Descriptive Statistics

Academic Year	N	Mean	SD
UG Year 1	36	68.21	7.18
UG Year 2	38	69.74	7.63
UG Year 3	40	71.56	8.02
UG Year 4	42	73.04	8.35
PG Year 1	34	72.11	8.57
PG Year 2	30	74.02	8.91

ANOVA Summary

Source	SS	df	MS	F	p
Between Groups	1284.60	5	256.92	4.18	.002
Within Groups	13203.40	214	61.69		
Total	14488.00	219			

In the following table, the findings of a one-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) that investigated the variations in academic performance across different academic years are shown. The findings of the analysis of variance (ANOVA) show that there is a statistically significant variation in the academic performance of students who are located in various academic years ($F(5, 214) = 4.18, p = .002$). The descriptive statistics show that there is a general rising trend in academic performance over higher academic years, with the greatest mean scores being shown by students in their second year of postgraduate study. The LSD test was used for post-hoc analysis, and the results showed that students in their final year of school fared much better academically than students in previous years of students' academic

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careers. Based on this study, it seems that students' academic performance tends to increase as they proceed through their university education.

Table 6: Correlation Matrix for Male and Female Students Separately

Variables	Gender	1	2	3
1. Cognitive Reappraisal	Male (n = 104)	—		
	Female (n = 116)	—		
2. Expressive Suppression	Male	-.31**	—	
	Female	-.26**	—	
3. Academic Performance	Male	.43***	-.49***	—
	Female	.48***	-.53***	—

The table displays the correlation matrix for both male and female students independently, illustrating the connections between methods for controlling emotions and academic achievement. It appears that students who actively reinterpret challenging academic situations in a positive and adaptive way have better academic outcomes. The results show that cognitive reappraisal is positively and significantly correlated with academic performance for both male and female students. On the other hand, there is a strong negative link between expressive suppression and academic performance in both sexes. This suggests that when people often repress their emotions, it reflects in their grades. It seems that emotion management tactics may have a more significant impact on academic achievement for females, since the correlation coefficients show that these correlations are somewhat greater among female students compared to male students. Taken together, these results show how adaptive emotion management techniques may boost academic performance and how their effects vary somewhat across the sexes.

Table 7: Gender-Based Emotion Regulation Strategies and Academic Performance

11	Gender	N	Mean	SD
Cognitive Reappraisal	Male	104	27.10	6.08
	Female	116	25.52	6.41
Expressive Suppression	Male	104	18.86	6.14
	Female	116	19.91	6.02
Academic Performance (%)	Male	104	69.88	7.96
	Female	116	73.17	8.29

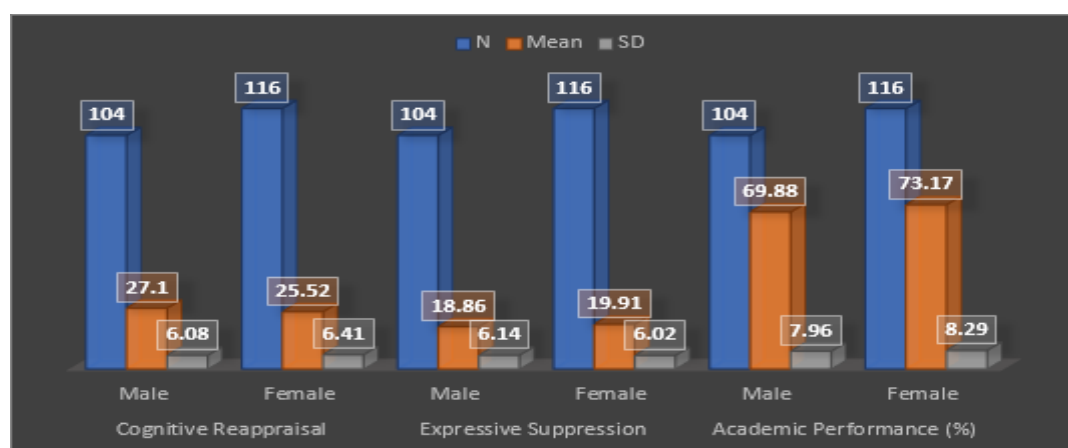


Figure 2: Gender-Based Emotion Regulation Strategies and Academic Performance

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In the following table, descriptive data on the techniques for emotion management and academic success are shown separately for male and female students attending universities. Based on the findings, there are discernible gender-based variations across all of the factors that were investigated. The fact that male students reported a higher mean score on cognitive reappraisal might be seen as an indication that they have a tendency to use adaptive cognitive methods somewhat more often than female students. On the other hand, female students had somewhat higher mean scores on expressive suppression, which indicates a stronger inclination to repress emotional expression. Compared to male students, female students displayed a greater mean percentage of marks in terms of their academic performance, which is indicative of a higher level of overall academic accomplishment. These descriptive data provide some preliminary insight into gender differences in the patterns of emotion regulation and academic outcomes, which are then investigated further using inferential analysis.

Table 8: Hierarchical regression analysis shows emotion regulation strategies improve academic performance incrementally

Model	Predictor	ΔR^2	R^2	R	F	β	t	p
Model 1	Gender	—	.08	.29	18.94	.29	4.35	.001
Model 2	Gender	.30	.38	.62	66.31	.18	3.12	.002
	Cognitive Reappraisal					.38	7.54	.001
	Expressive Suppression					-.41	-7.21	.001

The findings of a hierarchical regression study that looked at how emotion control methods contributed to predicting academic success beyond gender are shown in the table. Gender had a small but statistically significant impact on students' academic achievements, because it explained 8% of the variation in performance in Model 1. Adding expressive suppression and cognitive reappraisal to Model 2 brought the explained variation up to 38%, showing that emotion control methods contributed an extra 30%. Results showed that cognitive reappraisal was a strong predictor of academic success, suggesting that students who used adaptive cognitive methods did better in school. The results showed that expressive suppression was a strong negative predictor, indicating that academic performance is negatively impacted by the frequent repression of emotions. These results show that, independent of demographic variables, emotion control mechanisms have a significant effect in academic achievement.

University students' academic performance is significantly impacted by their ability to regulate their emotions, according to the current study's results. Researchers discovered a favorable correlation between cognitive reappraisal and academic achievement, suggesting that students who actively find constructive ways to reframe challenging academic circumstances often outperform their peers. On the other hand, there was a strong inverse correlation between expressive repression and academic achievement, which might mean that repressing feelings hinders learning and participation in the classroom. A positive correlation between cognitive reappraisal and academic success and a negative correlation between expressive suppression and academic performance were both verified by multiple regression analysis. According to gender-based assessments, female students outperformed their male counterparts in the classroom, and there was a somewhat higher correlation between the use of techniques to control one's emotions and improved grades. Also, there were noticeable changes from one academic year to the next; students at higher levels

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performed better overall, suggesting that students' academic accomplishments improved as they moved through university.

DISCUSSION

In this research, cognitive reappraisal was favorably related with academic achievement in university students, whereas expressive suppression was adversely associated. Recent study shows that adaptive emotion control tactics boost motivation, engagement, and academic performance, but maladaptive strategies hurt them. [17] Cognitive reappraisal helps students reframe academic pressures in a positive way, lowering emotional discomfort and improving coping, focus, and perseverance. [18] Comparatively, expressive repression increases cognitive burden, reduces emotional clarity, and lowers psychological well-being, which may affect academic performance. [19] The regression results indicated that cognitive reappraisal positively predicted academic performance and expressive suppression negatively predicted it, validating modern theories that emphasize emotional self-regulation in academic achievement. [20] The study also found gender differences, with female students performing better academically and having slightly stronger emotion–performance associations, supporting recent findings that female students are more academically and emotionally aware. [21] The considerable increase in academic performance during higher academic years supports findings indicating students gain greater coping abilities and academic adjustment as they advance through university. [22] The results recommend promoting adaptive emotion management practices in higher education to improve students' academic and emotional well-being.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the current research offers empirical data that emphasizes the significance of emotion management mechanisms in contributing to the formation of academic performance among college students. The findings highlight the fact that adaptive methods, such as cognitive reappraisal, contribute favorably to academic performance, but maladaptive tactics, such as expressive repression, may harm the academic progress of students. The outcomes of this study highlight the need of educational institutions providing counseling services, student development programs, and mental health treatments in order to foster emotional awareness and the ability to regulate emotions in an active and adaptive manner. For the purpose of assisting students in more successfully managing the stress associated with their academic work and improving their overall academic achievements, educational institutions may help students by encouraging effective practices for emotion regulation. In further study, it may be possible to expand these results by adopting longitudinal designs, different populations, and other psychological factors in order to get a deeper understanding of the processes that relate emotion control and academic success.

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Conflict of Interest

The author(s) declared no conflict of interest.

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