



VARIA

## Investigating the role of emotional regulation in reducing perceived stress among adolescents

*Investigando el papel de la regulación emocional en la reducción del estrés percibido entre adolescentes*

*Investigando o papel da regulação emocional na redução do estresse percebido entre adolescentes*

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**Abstract:** Adolescents go through a lot of emotional and psychological changes at this time, thus emotional regulation is essential to their mental health and the way they handle their emotions can have a big impact on how stressed they feel as they deal with the challenges of relationships, identity, and schoolwork. It is crucial to comprehend how emotional regulation and perceived stress interact in order to create interventions that help teenagers deal with the difficulties they encounter. This investigation clarifies the significance of developing emotional regulation in these early years in order to reduce perceived stress. This study investigates the relationship between emotional regulation and perceived stress among adolescents. A sample of 100 adolescents (50 males and 50 females) was assessed using the Perceived Stress Scale (PSS) and the Emotional Regulation Questionnaire (ERQ). The findings indicate a significant gender difference in emotional regulation and perceived stress; furthermore indicating the negative correlation between emotional regulation strategies and perceived stress levels, suggesting that effective emotional regulation can mitigate stress perceptions in adolescents. These results underscore the importance of emotional regulation in promoting mental health and well-being in this vulnerable population.

**Keywords:** emotional competence; stressors; teenage; evaluation.

**Resumen:** Los adolescentes experimentan numerosos cambios emocionales y psicológicos en esta etapa, por lo que la regulación emocional es esencial para su salud mental. La forma en que gestionan sus emociones puede tener un gran impacto en el nivel de estrés que sienten al afrontar los desafíos de sus relaciones, identidad y estudios. Es crucial comprender cómo interactúan la regulación emocional y el estrés percibido para crear intervenciones que ayuden a los adolescentes a afrontar las dificultades que enfrentan. Esta investigación aclara la importancia de desarrollar la regulación emocional en estos primeros años para reducir el estrés percibido. Este estudio investiga la relación entre la regulación emocional y el estrés percibido en adolescentes. Se evaluó a una muestra de 100 adolescentes (50 hombres y 50 mujeres) mediante la Escala de Estrés Percibido (PSS) y el Cuestionario de Regulación Emocional (ERQ). Los hallazgos indican una diferencia significativa entre los géneros en la regulación emocional y el estrés percibido; además, indican una correlación negativa entre las estrategias de regulación emocional y los niveles de estrés percibido, lo que sugiere que una regulación emocional eficaz puede mitigar la percepción del estrés en los adolescentes. Estos resultados subrayan la importancia de la regulación emocional para promover la salud mental y el bienestar en esta población vulnerable.

**Palabras clave:** competencia emocional; estresores; adolescentes; evaluación.

**Resumo:** Os adolescentes passam por muitas mudanças emocionais e psicológicas nessa fase; portanto, a regulação emocional é essencial para sua saúde



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mental e a maneira como lidam com suas emoções pode ter um grande impacto em seu nível de estresse ao lidar com os desafios de relacionamentos, identidade e trabalho escolar. É crucial compreender como a regulação emocional e o estresse percebido interagem para criar intervenções que ajudem os adolescentes a lidar com as dificuldades que enfrentam. Esta investigação esclarece a importância de desenvolver a regulação emocional nesses primeiros anos para reduzir o estresse percebido. Este estudo investiga a relação entre regulação emocional e estresse percebido entre adolescentes. Uma amostra de 100 adolescentes (50 homens e 50 mulheres) foi avaliada por meio da Escala de Estresse Percebido (ESP) e do Questionário de Regulação Emocional (QRE). Os resultados indicam uma diferença significativa entre os gêneros na regulação emocional e no estresse percebido; além disso, indicam a correlação negativa entre as estratégias de regulação emocional e os níveis de estresse percebido, sugerindo que uma regulação emocional eficaz pode mitigar as percepções de estresse em adolescentes. Esses resultados ressaltam a importância da regulação emocional na promoção da saúde mental e do bem-estar nessa população vulnerável.

**Palavras-chave:** competência emocional; estressores; adolescentes; avaliação.

## 1 Introduction

Adolescence is a critical developmental period characterized by significant physical, emotional, and social changes. During this time, many adolescents experience heightened levels of stress due to academic pressures, social dynamics, and identity formation (Aldao; Nolen; Schweizer, 2010). Perceived stress, defined as the degree to which situations in one's life are appraised as stressful, can have detrimental effects on mental health, leading to anxiety, depression, and other psychological issues (Quatman; Satterwhite; Cummings, 2018).

Emotional regulation, the ability to monitor, evaluate, and modify emotional reactions, has been identified as crucial factors in managing stress (Berking; Whitley, 2014). This study aims to explore the role of emotional regulation in reducing perceived stress among adolescents, hypothesizing that higher levels of emotional regulation will correlate with lower levels of perceived stress.

Adolescents who have trouble in emotional regulation are more likely to report feeling stressed, which might show up as anxiety, sadness, or behavioral problems, according to research done by (Zeman; Garber, 2001); those adolescents

who used maladaptive emotional regulation techniques, such rumination or avoidance, reported higher levels of perceived stress than their peers who used adaptive techniques, including problem-solving and emotional expression. This emphasizes how critical it is to comprehend how emotional regulation affects feelings of stress in this age group.

Additionally, the correlation between perceived stress and emotional regulation is important for mental health on an individual basis, but it also has wider ramifications for social interactions and academic success. Since adolescents deal with particular difficulties, developing strong emotional regulation abilities can help shield them from the negative consequences of stress, which will ultimately increase their resilience and lead to healthier developmental paths (Neff, 2003). Significantly the subjective experiences of patients with mental illnesses has been made easier by the phenomenological method, which is distinguished by the suspension of judgment (epoché). Between the biological positivistic approach, which holds that mental illness symptoms are only the result of brain dysfunctions, and the phenomenological-existential approach, which views the symptoms as significant phenomena of the individual's subjective experience, lies psychiatry, which deals with the human being in all its complexity and uniqueness (Castro, 2021). By examining the complicated relationships between emotional regulation and perceived stress among adolescents; this study hopes to add to the expanding corpus of research emphasizing the value of emotional regulation in negotiating the challenges of adolescence period (Rydell; Thoresen, 2018).

Moreover, a study conducted by Cejudo, Cozar e Cejudo (2025) which highlights emotional regulation and emotional clarity as an important protective agents against negative outcomes like stress and depression in adolescents. The relationship between teenagers' perceived stress and emotional regulation has been the subject of numerous studies. The study "Positive and Negative Emotion Regulation in Adolescence" by

Gross (2015), for example, explores how anxiety and depression in teenagers are exacerbated by a disruption in emotion regulation and had also focused on perceived stress which moderates emotion regulation success; while investigating the relationship between perceived stress and the efficacy of emotion management techniques too. Moreover, the study had focused over examining the mediating role of coping and emotion regulation in stress in adolescents that too emphasizes how stress, coping strategies, and emotional regulation interact with minority adolescents (Keng; Smoski; Robins, 2011).

Keng, Smoski e Robins (2011) had done the analysis of the relationship between affect and method utilization showed that more positive affect ratings were substantially correlated with rumination. Additionally, a noteworthy correlation was found between the use of reinterpretation and instantaneous perceived stress on affect, with reinterpretation being more adaptive in less stressful settings. Furthermore, a systematic review had been done that underscored the crucial role of adaptive strategies as protective factors against anxiety and emotional distress in adolescents, which are in association to perceived stress (Pérez-Rojas *et al.*, 2025).

López-Gómez, Riquelme e Cánovas (2024) conducted the study that directly serves as connection in adaptive strategies used by psychologically resilient adolescents to deal effectively in sustaining emotional balance under daily stressful situations. Verbatim transcriptions of interviews were made, and the material was analyzed using inductive thematic analysis (Hoh; Wong, 2019). Youths in this study used ER methods that were categorized under the following themes: Calling for a timeout, emotional catharsis, positive thinking and reframing, and increasing emotional awareness and acceptance are the first four steps. Emotional regulation is important because, according to young people, it (1) helps with logical thinking and decision-making, (2) deteriorates mental health, (3) gives life stability, and (4) is relevant to the current stage of life and surroundings. The study's conclusions highlight

the importance of ER for young people's healthy functioning and the benefits of enhancing their emotional regulation skills (McLaughlin; Nolen-Hoeksema, 2011).

Zeman e Garber (2001) had provided the empirical data on the evolution of emotion regulation were reviewed and linked to their conceptual underpinnings. We go over their shortcomings and make the case that improving conceptual clarity is crucial for researching emotion regulation. In order to provide readers a better understanding of the topic, we conclude this article by going over new research views. This is because present knowledge on recent notions that arose in adult-based models is still limited and controversial in adolescence. We emphasize that the field's researchers must look at the predictors of emotion regulation as well as its effects, mix various time scales and methodologies, and take a more contextualized and person-oriented approach (Hagger; Chatzisarantis, 2007).

McRae e Gross (2020) had presented the current understanding of the function of disturbed emotion regulation in adolescent anxiety and depression is reviewed in this work, which also describes results from behavioral, self-report, peripheral psychophysiological, and brain assessments. Emotion dysregulation and teenage anxiety and sadness were found to be strongly associated in self-report studies. The results of behavioral and psychophysiological research are conflicting, while some point to particular reappraisal deficiencies in anxiety (Compas; Connor-Smith; Jaser, 2004). A review was done which provided the context on outcomes of emotional dysregulation in adolescents, noting that these challenges often manifest in response to stress and can predict the development of psychopathology (Zanon; Camoirano, 2021).

In conclusion, understanding the interplay between emotional regulation and perceived stress among adolescents is crucial for fostering their mental well-being and resilience. As this study aims to explore the mechanisms through which emotional regulation strategies influence stress perception, it highlights the importance

of equipping young individuals with effective coping skills (Calkins; Hill, 2007). By identifying the factors that contribute to healthy emotional regulation, we can better support adolescents in navigating the challenges of their developmental stage. Ultimately, this research seeks to inform interventions and educational programs that promote emotional intelligence, thereby enhancing the overall psychological health of adolescents in an increasingly complex and demanding world.

## 2 Materials and Methods

### Objectives:

1. To determine the level of Emotional regulation among adolescents.
2. To explore the prevalence of Perceived stress among adolescents.
3. To assess the relationship between Emotional regulation and Perceived stress among adolescents.

### Hypotheses:

**HA1:** There will be a significant gender difference in the Emotional regulation among adolescents.

**HA2:** There will be a significant gender difference in the Perceived stress among adolescents.

**HA3:** There will be a significant relationship between Emotional regulation and Perceived stress among adolescents.

### Sample:

The study sample consisted of 100 adolescents, comprising 50 males and 50 females, aged between 14 to 17 years. Participants were involved from local high schools randomly via

proper Informed consent, which was obtained from both participants and their guardians.

### Instrument used:

**a) Perceived Stress Scale (PSS):** The PSS is a widely used psychological instrument for measuring the perception of stress. It consists of 10 items that assess how unpredictable, uncontrollable, and overloaded respondents find their lives (Cohen et al., 1983). Higher scores indicate greater perceived stress.

**b) Emotional Regulation Questionnaire (ERQ):** The ERQ is a 10-item self-report measure that assesses two primary emotional regulation strategies: cognitive reappraisal and expressive suppression (Gross; John, 2003). Cognitive reappraisal involves changing the way one thinks about a situation to alter its emotional impact, while expressive suppression involves inhibiting emotional expressions. Higher scores in cognitive reappraisal are associated with better emotional regulation.

### Statistical techniques:

For deriving out and interpreting the results, t- test and Karl Pearson's method of correlation had been used effectively with the help of SPSS software.

## 3 Results

After the data had been collected and calculated with the help of SPSS, following results had been derived shown under the **Table-1, 2, 3** respectively.

**TABLE-1** – t-Test showing the significant gender difference in Emotional regulation among adolescents

Groups for Emotional regulation	Total Sample (N=100)	Mean score	Value of (t)	(p) value at 0.05
Male adolescents	50	27.88	5.97	0.03802
Female adolescent	50	34.55		

Source: the authors.

**TABLE-2** – t-Test showing the significant gender difference in Perceived stress among adolescents

Groups for Perceived stress	Total Sample (N=100)	Mean score	Value of (t)	(p) value at 0.05
Male adolescents	50	29.52	7.95	0.0973
Female adolescents	50	21.78		

Source: the authors.

**TABLE-3** – Karl Pearson's method showing the significant Negative correlation between Emotional regulation & Perceived stress among adolescents

Variables for Pearson's correlation	Mean score	Covariance	Correlation value (r)	Coefficient of correlation (r <sup>2</sup> )
Emotional regulation (X)	20.34			
Perceived stress (Y)	39.40	-8.1	-0.368	0.135

Source: the authors.

**\*Abbreviated terms:**

- N= Number of Participants
- t= Student's t test method
- p= Probability value
- r= Correlation value
- r<sup>2</sup>= Coefficient of correlation

**4 Discussion**

Based on the calculations and results, further it can be interpreted that, all the determined hypotheses for the study gets accepted. The study tends to prove that there is a significant gender difference in Emotional regulation among adolescents which further gets proven from **Table-1**, determining the significant difference in the groups taken for study with **(t) value: 5.97**, having the **(p) value at 0.05: 0.38002**. The mean score of Male and Female adolescents are: **27.88** and **34.55** respectively.

Moreover, the present study tends to explore the significant gender difference in the Perceived stress among adolescents which can be determined from **Table-2**, showing the significant difference in the groups taken for study with **(t) value: 7.95**, having the **(p) value at 0.05: 0.0973**. The mean score of Male and Female adolescents are: **29.52** and **21.78** respectively.

Foremost, the present research also aimed

to find out the relationship between Emotional regulation and Perceived stress among adolescents, which can be related from the **Table-3**, that there is a significant negative correlation exists between the Emotional regulation and Perceived stress among adolescents, showing the value of **(r) = - 0.368** and coefficient **(r<sup>2</sup>) = 0.135** respectively.

The findings of the present research study suggest that the Emotional regulation is an important tool in curbing out the levels of Perceived stress in adolescent's lives. The study had proven that high possession of emotional regulation strategies ultimately lowers and affects the perceived stress among adolescents conceptualizing the fact that those adolescents who are having high level of emotional regulation practices tends to have low level of perceived stress; enmarking their subjective personalities according to the available situations over a period of time with respect to allied factors that contributes directly as well indirectly in their lives including personal, psychological, socio- emotional as well financial too.

The outcomes of our study are in line with the already existing theoretical frameworks as well the research existing proving and suggesting that emotional regulation is interconnected with perceived stress in an anonymous way that affects the lives of adolescents with significant variations (Brackett; Mayer, 2003). The study has proven the marked importance of practicing emotional

regulation strategies as like breathing exercises, mediation, yoga, and other psychological resilience based approaches in order to lower the levels of perceived stress with altered situations that can occurs occasionally in adolescent's lives involving the various factors.

The outcomes of this study support the hypothesis that emotional regulation plays a significant role in reducing perceived stress among adolescents. The negative correlation that exists between cognitive reappraisal and perceived stress aligns with previous research indicating that adaptive emotional regulation strategies can buffer against stress (Aldao; Nolen; Schweizer, 2010). In contrast, the positive correlation between expressive suppression and perceived stress suggests that maladaptive emotional regulation strategies may exacerbate stress levels. These results highlight the importance of promoting effective emotional regulation strategies, particularly cognitive reappraisal, in adolescent populations. Interventions aimed at enhancing emotional regulation skills may serve as valuable tools in reducing perceived stress and improving overall mental health among adolescents (Gross, 2015).

## 5 Conclusion

This study can be concluded by stating that the results of study had underscored the critical role of emotional regulation in managing perceived stress among adolescents. By fostering adaptive emotional regulation strategies, such as cognitive reappraisal, mental health professionals can help adolescents navigate the challenges of this developmental stage more effectively (Pomerantz; Wang, 2009). Future research should explore the efficacy of targeted interventions designed to enhance emotional regulation skills in reducing stress and improving mental health outcomes in adolescents.

Hence it can be concluded that, on the basis of determined hypotheses, existing literature; the emotional regulation strategies if actually practiced professionally by the adolescents can helps them in reducing their levels of perceived stress signifying their academic, personal as well

professional growth.

## Implications and Future directions of the research:

The findings of this research can inform the development of targeted interventions aimed at enhancing emotional regulation skills among adolescents.

The research can inform the integration of emotional regulation strategies into existing mental health services for adolescents.

Future research can investigate how cultural and contextual factors influence the relationship between emotional regulation and perceived stress among adolescents.

Longitudinal studies can examine the long-term effects of emotional regulation on stress management and mental health outcomes among adolescents.

The findings of this research can inform the development of digital mental health tools that teach emotional regulation skills to adolescents.

## Declarations:

### - Ethics Approval and Consent to participate:

The study is conducted with the school adolescents and followed every ethical norms prior the conduction of research, keeping the data confidential on informed consent from the end of participants accordingly.

- **Consent for publication:** The Authors gives full consent to publish the manuscript.

- **Availability of data and Materials:** The data is kept confidential but can be produced as per the requirement.

- **Competing interests:** The authors confirm their awareness of this submission and declare no competing interest.

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- **Author's Contributions:** The Main Author had done the original drafting, writing and editing of the present research completing it's methodology and all the related steps and the Co- Author had guided and supervised the work accordingly.

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