



Study on Relationship Between Emotional Intelligence and Emotional Regulation Among Young Adults Across Genders

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Abstract: Emotional intelligence plays a significant role in shaping how young adults regulate their emotions during a phase marked by multiple developmental challenges. The present study adopted a cross-sectional design with 200 participants aged 18–26 years to examine the relationship between emotional intelligence and emotion regulation strategies. Emotional intelligence, measured using the Emotional Intelligence Scale (EIS), showed a significant positive correlation with cognitive reappraisal ($r = .227$, $p = .001$), assessed through the Emotion Regulation Questionnaire (ERQ), whereas its relationship with expressive suppression was not statistically significant ($r = .122$, $p = .085$). Regression analysis further indicated that emotional intelligence significantly predicted cognitive reappraisal ($\beta = .227$, $p = .001$) but not expressive suppression. Gender differences revealed that females scored higher than males in emotional intelligence and cognitive reappraisal, with no significant differences observed in expressive suppression. These findings emphasize the role of emotional intelligence in facilitating adaptive emotion regulation among young adults.

Keywords: *Emotional Intelligence, Emotion Regulation, Young Adults, Gender Differences, Mental Well-being*

1. Introduction

Emotional intelligence and emotion regulation have become crucial aspects of psychological functioning, particularly among young adults. It is important for understanding how young adults manage their emotions in daily life. This developmental stage is marked by increased independence, academic and social pressures, and the need to manage complex emotional experiences. Emotional intelligence influences the way individuals perceive, understand, and manage emotions, while emotion regulation determines how these emotions are expressed and controlled in different situations. Together, these constructs play a significant role in shaping behaviour, interpersonal relationships, and overall well-being. Understanding how these elements relate may help explain differences in emotional functioning among young adults.

1.1 *Emotional Intelligence and Emotion Regulation*

This study also examines the relationship between emotional intelligence and emotion regulation strategies, specifically cognitive reappraisal and expressive suppression. Cognitive reappraisal involves changing the way one interprets a situation to alter its emotional impact, whereas expressive suppression refers to inhibiting the outward expression of emotions. Individuals with higher emotional intelligence are more likely to use adaptive strategies like reappraisal, as they are better able to understand and manage their emotions. In contrast, lower emotional intelligence may be associated with greater reliance on suppression, which can limit emotional expression and affect well-being. Hence, the study not only explores the link between emotional intelligence and emotion regulation but also examines how different strategies are used based on levels of emotional intelligence.

1.2 *Conceptual Framework*

The conceptual model suggests that emotional intelligence influences emotion regulation among young adults by shaping how individuals process and respond to emotional experiences. This is supported by Mayer and Salovey's Ability Model, which explains emotional intelligence as a set of abilities related to perceiving, understanding, and managing emotions. Additionally, Gross's Process Model of Emotion Regulation explains how individuals regulate emotions through strategies such as cognitive reappraisal and expressive suppression. In this study, emotional intelligence acts as the predictor variable, while emotion regulation strategies serve as outcome variables. Higher emotional intelligence is expected to increase the use of adaptive strategies like cognitive reappraisal and reduce reliance on less adaptive strategies such as expressive

suppression, thereby explaining how emotional abilities influence emotional behaviour among young adults.

2. Literature Review

Emotional intelligence and emotional regulation have been widely studied in relation to psychological well-being, adjustment, and functioning across different contexts. Raj et al. (2021) highlighted difficulties in emotional management and coping at lower levels of emotional intelligence, while Arias et al. (2022) showed its positive role in academic motivation and engagement. Sangeetha and Nityashree (2022) found no significant gender differences, whereas Charlin and Imran (2023), Kaur (2024), and Regy and Ramesh (2024) emphasized its importance in workplace performance, relationships, and stress reduction.

Research on emotional regulation further highlights its role in shaping emotional and behavioural outcomes. Sheerha and Kumbhare (2021) and Karmakar and Ghosh (2023) examined cultural and personality influences, while Chauhan and Bhatt (2024) and Sabarwal and Tripathi (2024) identified cognitive reappraisal as an adaptive strategy linked to well-being. Studies by Sethi and Kumar (2024), Varma and Bhatt (2024), and Bindu and Vijayan (2025) connected emotional regulation with resilience, communication, and sleep quality.

Further studies by Mohite and Bhansali (2025), Srivastava and Kewalramani (2025), Ye et al. (2024), and Minz et al. (2025) emphasized its role in coping, academic outcomes, and psychological well-being, while Shee et al. (2025) and Doris (2026) linked it to family and organizational contexts. Overall, the literature indicates that emotional intelligence and emotional regulation are essential for effective functioning, though influenced by multiple individual and environmental factors.

2.1 Literature Gap

Current studies have extensively examined Emotional Intelligence (EI) and Emotion Regulation (ER), highlighting their roles in psychological well-being, academic performance, and adjustment. However, a gap remains in understanding how these constructs interact, particularly among young adults. Many studies focus on EI and ER independently or rely on cross-sectional designs, limiting insight into how emotional intelligence influences the use of specific regulation strategies such as cognitive reappraisal and expressive suppression.

Despite the exploration of factors such as personality traits, cultural influences, and coping mechanisms, the direct relationship between EI and ER has not been sufficiently investigated, especially within a single framework. Additionally, research focusing on young adult populations in non-Western contexts, particularly in India, remains limited, with inconsistent findings regarding gender and contextual influences.

This study addresses these gaps by examining the relationship between emotional intelligence and emotion regulation among young adults, providing more contextually relevant insights into emotional functioning.

2.2 Rationale

Emotional intelligence plays a crucial role in how individuals perceive, understand, and manage emotions, while emotion regulation determines how these emotional responses are expressed and controlled. During young adulthood, individuals face increased academic, social, and personal challenges, making effective emotional functioning essential. Individuals with higher emotional intelligence are more likely to adopt adaptive regulation strategies, whereas lower emotional intelligence may lead to maladaptive emotional responses.

Although previous research has explored EI and ER separately, limited studies have examined how emotional intelligence influences emotion regulation strategies, particularly in the Indian context. This study aims to address this gap by exploring the relationship between EI and ER among young adults, with implications for improving emotional well-being and promoting adaptive coping strategies.

3. Method

3.1 Aim

To assess emotional intelligence and emotion regulation (cognitive reappraisal and expressive suppression) among young adults across genders.

3.2 Objectives

- To study the relationship between emotional intelligence and Cognitive Reappraisal.
- To study the relationship between emotional intelligence and Expressive Suppression.
- To examine gender differences in emotional intelligence, cognitive reappraisal, and expressive suppression.

3.3 Hypotheses

H1: Emotional intelligence will be significantly related to the dimensions of emotion regulation (Cognitive Reappraisal and Expressive Suppression) among young adults.

H2: There will be significant gender differences in emotional intelligence and the dimensions of emotion regulation (Cognitive Reappraisal and Expressive Suppression) among young adults

3.4 Research Questions

To what extent is emotional intelligence associated with cognitive reappraisal and expressive suppression among young adults across genders?

3.5 Operational Definitions

Emotional intelligence: Emotional intelligence refers to the ability to understand, manage, and effectively use one's own emotions and the emotions of others.

Emotion regulation: Emotion regulation refers to the processes through which individuals monitor, control, and modify their emotional experiences and expressions.

3.6 Research Design

A quantitative, correlational and comparative study using online and offline survey methods. A correlational research design with a cross-sectional approach was used.

3.7 Sample

The study focused on young adults aged 18–26 years. The total sample consisted of 200 participants. Purposive sampling was used. Participants were recruited through both online and offline methods from networks within the region.

Inclusion Criteria:

1. Participants aged 18–26 years.
2. Participants with basic ability to read.

Exclusion Criteria:

1. Participants with pre-existing psychological conditions.
2. Participants not identifying as male or female.

3.8 Tools Used

1. ***The Emotional Intelligence Scale (EIS)*** developed by Hyde, Pethe, and Dhar (2001). The scale measures emotional intelligence as a multidimensional construct and includes items that assess self-awareness, empathy, emotional stability, self-motivation, managing

relations, integrity, self-development, value orientation, and commitment. The instrument consists of structured statements rated on a 5-point Likert scale. For scoring, responses to items under each domain are summed to obtain subscale scores. Higher scores indicate higher levels of emotional intelligence. The EIS has demonstrated good psychometric properties, with a reported reliability coefficient of approximately 0.88, and its validity has been established through extensive use in previous research.

2. ***The Emotion Regulation Questionnaire (ERQ)*** developed by James J. Gross and Oliver P. John (2003) The ERQ consists of 10 items divided into two subscales: cognitive reappraisal and expressive suppression. Each item is rated on a 7-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree). higher scores indicating a greater tendency to use the respective strategy. The ERQ demonstrates good reliability with coefficients of 0.79 for cognitive reappraisal and 0.73 for expressive suppression.

3.9 Procedure

Participants were for the study using both online and offline methods to obtain a suitable sample. After recruitment, each participant was given a consent form explaining the aim of the study, the voluntary nature of participation, and the confidentiality of their responses. Participants were informed that they could withdraw at any time without any consequences, and only those who provided consent were included in the study. After giving consent, participants completed standardized psychological tools measuring emotional intelligence and emotion regulation. Clear instructions were provided, and participants were encouraged to respond honestly to all items. Once the responses were collected, the data were carefully checked for completeness, accuracy, and any repetitive response patterns. Finally, the data were organized and prepared for statistical analysis in line with the objectives of the study.

3.10 Ethical Considerations

1. **Informed Consent:** Participants were informed about the purpose, procedure, duration, and nature of the study. Consent was obtained before participation.
2. **Voluntary Participation:** Participation was voluntary. Participants could withdraw at any time without negative consequences.
3. **Confidentiality and Anonymity:** Participants' identities and responses were kept confidential. Data was coded to protect personal information.

3.11 Statistical Analysis

Descriptive statistics were first used to summarize the data and give a clear picture of participants' scores on emotional intelligence and emotion regulation. Measures such as mean, standard deviation, skewness, and kurtosis helped in understanding the average scores, how much the scores varied, and how they were distributed. To study the relationship between emotional intelligence and emotion regulation, Pearson correlation analysis was carried out to test the first hypothesis and to see how strongly the two variables were related.

In addition, linear regression analysis was used to check whether emotional intelligence could predict the emotion regulation strategies of cognitive reappraisal and expressive suppression. Independent samples t-tests were also conducted to examine gender differences in emotional intelligence and emotion regulation subscales as part of testing the second hypothesis. For all the analyses, the level of statistical significance was kept at $p < .05$ to determine whether the results were meaningful.

4. Results

Socio-demographic characteristics

Table 1. *Socio-demographic characteristics of participants*

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Age	18–21 years	120	60%
	22–26 years	80	40%
Gender	Female	100	50%
	Male	100	50%
Occupation	Student	136	68%
	Working Professional	56	28%
	Others	8	4%

Table 1 presents the socio-demographic characteristics of the participants included in the study. The table shows the distribution of participants based on age and gender. The participants were within the age range of 18 to 26 years, with the majority belonging to the 18–21 years age group, followed by the 22–26 years age group. The participants were mostly students. The sample

consisted of an equal number of male and female participants. The table provides the frequency and percentage distribution and offers an overview of the characteristics of the study sample.

Descriptive Statistics

Descriptive statistics were computed to summarize the characteristics of the study variables and to provide an overview of participants' responses. Measures of central tendency and dispersion, including mean and standard deviation, were calculated along with skewness and kurtosis to assess the distributional properties of the variables. The variables examined were Cognitive Reappraisal, Expressive Suppression, and Emotional Intelligence.

Table 2. *Descriptive Statistics for Emotional Intelligence (EIS) and Emotion Regulation (ERQ)*

Variables	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Skewness	Kurtosis
Reappraisal	200	4.407	1.0327	0.047	-0.537
Suppressive	200	4.874	1.2186	-0.244	-0.553
EIS	200	126.66	14.595	-0.093	1.001

As shown in *Table 2*, Cognitive Reappraisal recorded a mean score of 4.41 (SD = 1.03), indicating a moderate level of engagement in adaptive emotion regulation strategies among participants. The relatively low standard deviation suggests that participants' responses were fairly consistent, reflecting a comparable tendency to use reappraisal strategies within the sample. Expressive Suppression showed a slightly higher mean score of 4.87 (SD = 1.22), suggesting that participants reported a moderate to high use of suppression strategies. The larger standard deviation indicates greater variability in participants' reliance on suppression, implying individual differences in how emotions are managed behaviorally. Emotional Intelligence had a mean score of 126.66 (SD = 14.60), reflecting substantial individual differences in emotional abilities among participants. The variability observed suggests that the sample included individuals with a wide range of emotional competencies. The skewness values for all variables were close to zero, indicating approximately symmetrical distributions. Similarly, kurtosis values fell within acceptable limits, suggesting that the distributions were reasonably normal without extreme peakedness or flatness. Visual inspection through histograms further supported the absence of extreme outliers. These results indicate that the dataset was appropriate for parametric statistical analysis.

Test of Normality

The assumption of normality was evaluated using skewness and kurtosis statistics. All variables demonstrated values within the acceptable range of -1 to +1, indicating approximate normal distribution. The near-zero skewness values suggest balanced distributions around the mean, while kurtosis values indicate distributions comparable to a normal curve. Meeting the assumption of normality justified the use of parametric statistical procedures, including Pearson correlation, linear regression, and independent samples t-tests. Therefore, further inferential analyses were conducted using parametric methods.

Inferential Statistics

Relationship between Emotional Intelligence and Emotion Regulation

Pearson's product-moment correlation analysis was conducted to examine the relationship between Emotional Intelligence and the two dimensions of emotion regulation: Cognitive Reappraisal and Expressive Suppression.

Table 3. *Pearson's Rho Correlation Between Emotional Intelligence (EIS) and Emotion Regulation (ERQ)*

Variables	(r)	p-value
EIS and Reappraisal	0.227	0.001
EIS and Suppressive	0.122	0.085

The results revealed a statistically significant positive correlation between Emotional Intelligence and Cognitive Reappraisal ($r = .227$, $p = .001$). This indicates that individuals with higher Emotional Intelligence are more likely to use adaptive cognitive strategies to reinterpret emotionally challenging situations. Although the strength of the correlation is modest, it demonstrates a meaningful association between emotional competencies and constructive emotion regulation.

In contrast, the correlation between Emotional Intelligence and Expressive Suppression was not statistically significant ($r = .122$, $p = .085$). This suggests that Emotional Intelligence does not have a reliable association with the tendency to suppress emotional expression. These findings partially support the hypothesis that Emotional Intelligence is related to emotion regulation.

Emotional Intelligence as a Predictor of Cognitive Reappraisal

A simple linear regression analysis was conducted to determine whether Emotional Intelligence significantly predicts Cognitive Reappraisal.

Table 4: *Simple Linear Regression (EIS predicting Reappraisal)*

Criterion	Predictor	β	p-value
Reappraisal	EIS	0.227	0.001
R	0.227		
R Square	0.051		
F(1, 198)	10.716		

The regression model was statistically significant ($p = .001$), indicating that Emotional Intelligence is a significant predictor of Cognitive Reappraisal. The R^2 value of 0.051 shows that Emotional Intelligence accounts for approximately 5.1% of the variance in reappraisal scores. Although the explained variance is relatively small, the findings suggest that Emotional Intelligence contributes meaningfully to the adoption of adaptive emotion regulation strategies. Individuals with higher emotional intelligence appear more capable of reframing situations to regulate their emotional experiences effectively.

Emotional Intelligence as a Predictor of Expressive Suppression

A separate regression analysis examined whether Emotional Intelligence predicts Expressive Suppression.

Table 5: *Simple Linear Regression (EIS predicting Suppressive)*

Criterion	Predictor	β	p-value
Suppressive	EIS	0.122	0.085
R	0.122		
R Square	0.015		
F(1, 198)	3.004		

The regression model was not statistically significant ($p = .085$). Emotional Intelligence explained only 1.5% of the variance in expressive suppression scores. These results indicate that Emotional Intelligence does not significantly predict suppression behaviors, suggesting that

suppression may be influenced by other psychological or situational factors beyond emotional intelligence.

Gender Differences in Emotional Intelligence and Emotion Regulation

Independent samples t-tests were conducted to examine gender differences in Emotional Intelligence and emotion regulation strategies.

Table 6: *Differences in Variables by Gender*

Variable	Gender	N	Mean	SD	t	df	p-value
Cognitive Reappraisal	Female (1)	100	4.618	1.012	2.965	198	0.003
	Male (2)	100	4.191	1.019			
Expressive Suppression	Female (1)	100	4.735	1.214	-1.581	198	0.115
	Male (2)	100	5.008	1.218			
Emotional Intelligence (EIS)	Female (1)	100	129.7	15.322	3.007	198	0.003
	Male (2)	100	123.59	13.282			

The analysis revealed significant gender differences in Cognitive Reappraisal and Emotional Intelligence (EIS). Female participants scored significantly higher than male participants on both variables ($p = .003$ for both), indicating a stronger reported use of adaptive emotion regulation strategies and higher overall emotional intelligence levels among females in this sample. In contrast, no significant gender difference was found in Expressive Suppression ($p = .115$), suggesting that both genders utilize suppression strategies to a comparable extent. These findings support the hypothesis (H2) that gender differences exist in specific emotional competencies, while also highlighting areas of strategic similarity.

5. Discussion

The present study explored the relationship between emotional intelligence and emotion regulation strategies, specifically cognitive reappraisal and expressive suppression, among young

adults aged 18–26 years using a cross-sectional design and statistical analyses including correlation, regression, and t-tests. The findings revealed a weak but significant positive relationship between emotional intelligence and cognitive reappraisal, indicating that individuals with higher emotional intelligence are more likely to use adaptive regulation strategies. However, no significant relationship was found between emotional intelligence and expressive suppression, suggesting that suppression may not be directly influenced by emotional intelligence. Regression analysis further showed that emotional intelligence significantly predicted cognitive reappraisal but not suppression. Gender differences indicated that females scored higher on emotional intelligence and cognitive reappraisal, while no differences were observed in suppression. These findings suggest that emotional intelligence functions as a facilitating factor in adaptive emotion regulation rather than a strong determinant. The results are consistent with the Process Model of Emotion Regulation, which highlights cognitive reappraisal as an adaptive, antecedent-focused strategy, while suppression is more situational and less dependent on emotional competencies.

6. Implications

The study highlights emotional intelligence as an important factor supporting adaptive emotion regulation, particularly through cognitive reappraisal. Practically, the findings suggest that interventions aimed at enhancing emotional intelligence can promote better emotional awareness and healthier coping strategies among young adults. Programs in educational, clinical, and organizational settings can focus on strengthening reappraisal skills to improve psychological well-being, interpersonal functioning, and stress management. The results also emphasize that emotion regulation is influenced by multiple factors beyond emotional intelligence, including cultural norms and situational contexts, indicating the need for holistic approaches to emotional development. Additionally, the findings contribute to the Indian context, where limited research exists on emotional intelligence and emotion regulation among young adults.

7. Conclusion

The study concludes that emotional intelligence is positively associated with adaptive emotion regulation, particularly cognitive reappraisal, but is not related to expressive suppression. This indicates that while emotionally intelligent individuals are more likely to use constructive strategies, emotion regulation is a multifaceted process influenced by various internal and external

factors. The findings contribute to existing literature by highlighting the limited yet significant role of emotional intelligence and emphasizing the importance of developing emotional competencies to enhance psychological adjustment among young adults.

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