

Effect of Emotional Regulation Strategies on Psychological Well-Being among adolescent Students in Plateau State, Nigeria

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Abstract

This study examined emotional regulation strategies and their influence on the psychological well-being of adolescent students in Plateau State, Nigeria. Specifically, the study investigated the effects of cognitive reappraisal, expressive suppression, and emotional awareness on psychological well-being, as well as the moderating role of gender. A descriptive survey research design was adopted for the study. The sample consisted of 396 adolescent students selected through appropriate sampling techniques. Data were collected using a structured questionnaire and analyzed using descriptive statistics (frequency and percentage) and inferential statistics, including Pearson Product Moment Correlation and multiple regression analysis. The findings revealed that cognitive reappraisal has a significant positive effect on psychological well-being ($r = 0.62, p < 0.05$), while expressive suppression has a significant negative effect ($r = -0.48, p < 0.05$). Emotional awareness was also found to have a significant positive relationship with psychological well-being ($r = 0.58, p < 0.05$). Furthermore, adaptive coping strategies significantly predicted psychological well-being and stress management ($\beta = 0.54, t = 9.21, p < 0.05$), accounting for a substantial proportion of variance ($R^2 = 0.49$). The results of the moderated regression analysis indicated that gender significantly moderates the relationship between emotional regulation strategies and psychological well-being ($\beta = 0.18, p < 0.05$). The study concluded that adaptive emotional regulation strategies, particularly cognitive reappraisal and emotional awareness, enhance psychological well-being among adolescents, whereas expressive suppression tends to undermine it. It was recommended that schools, counselors, and parents should promote healthy emotional regulation strategies among adolescents to improve their mental health outcomes.

Keywords: Emotional regulation strategies, psychological well-being, cognitive reappraisal, expressive suppression, emotional awareness, adolescents students.

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Introduction

Adolescence represents a critical stage of human development characterized by rapid emotional, cognitive, behavioural, and social transitions that significantly shape psychological adjustment and mental health outcomes. During this developmental period, adolescents are frequently exposed to multiple stressors such as academic pressure, peer influence, family expectations, identity conflicts, and socio-environmental challenges that may negatively affect their emotional stability and psychological well-being. Consequently, the ability to regulate emotions effectively has become increasingly important in promoting healthy adjustment and psychological functioning among adolescents (Gore et al., 2020). Emotional regulation refers to the processes through which individuals monitor, evaluate, and modify emotional reactions in ways that enhance adaptive functioning and social interaction. Effective emotional regulation enables adolescents to manage stress, control impulsive behaviours, maintain healthy relationships, and cope appropriately with emotional challenges, thereby contributing positively to psychological well-being (Gratz & Tull, 2021).

Psychological well-being is a multidimensional construct that encompasses emotional balance, self-acceptance, autonomy, environmental mastery, personal growth, positive interpersonal relationships, and purpose in life (Aldao et al., 2022). Adolescents with high psychological well-being are more likely to exhibit emotional resilience, academic motivation, social competence, and healthy coping behaviours. In contrast, poor psychological well-being among adolescents has been associated with depression, anxiety, emotional instability, substance abuse, poor academic performance, and social withdrawal. Recent global concerns about adolescent mental health have intensified due to the increasing prevalence of psychological distress among young people, particularly in developing countries where socioeconomic instability, insecurity, and inadequate mental health support systems continue to pose significant challenges to adolescent development (Huppert & So, 2021).

In Nigeria, adolescents are increasingly confronted with emotional and psychological difficulties resulting from economic hardship, unemployment, educational pressure, family instability, and exposure to insecurity and communal conflicts. Plateau State, in particular, presents a unique socio-cultural and environmental context characterized by periodic communal unrest, economic challenges, and diverse cultural expectations that may influence adolescents' emotional experiences and psychological adjustment. These conditions create an urgent need for effective emotional regulation strategies capable of promoting psychological well-being among adolescent students within the state. Despite the growing awareness of adolescent mental health issues in Nigeria, limited empirical attention has been given to the influence of emotional regulation strategies on psychological well-being among adolescents in Plateau State (Kanu et al., 2021).

Empirical studies have shown that emotional regulation strategies such as cognitive reappraisal, emotional awareness, adaptive coping, mindfulness, and acceptance positively influence psychological well-being among adolescents. Cognitive reappraisal enables individuals to reinterpret stressful or emotionally challenging situations in ways that reduce negative emotional reactions and promote adaptive responses (Stover et al., 2024). Similarly, emotional awareness enhances the ability of individuals to identify, understand, and appropriately manage emotional experiences, thereby improving psychological adjustment and emotional stability (Taylor & Bagby, 2020). Adaptive coping strategies have also been found to strengthen resilience and reduce emotional distress among adolescents exposed to stressful life conditions (She et al., 2025). Adolescents who effectively utilize these emotional regulation strategies are generally less vulnerable to depression, anxiety, emotional exhaustion, and behavioural problems.

Furthermore, emotional regulation is influenced by both individual and environmental factors. Individual factors such as emotional intelligence, personality traits, self-concept, and cognitive development affect how adolescents regulate emotions, while external factors including parenting style, peer relationships, school environment, socioeconomic status, and social support systems also shape emotional experiences and coping behaviours. In many Nigerian communities, particularly in less urbanized areas, adolescents often have limited access to counselling services, psychological support, and mental health education, which may weaken their ability to manage emotional

stress effectively. This situation further increases their vulnerability to poor psychological well-being and maladaptive behaviours (Ibrahim et al., 2021).

Studies conducted in different cultural contexts have equally revealed that cultural norms and social expectations influence emotional expression and regulation patterns among adolescents. In many African societies, emotional restraint is often encouraged, and open emotional expression may sometimes be perceived as weakness. Such cultural expectations may shape how adolescents cope with emotional stress and psychological challenges. Additionally, disparities in access to mental health resources between urban and rural communities may further affect adolescents' emotional regulation capacity and psychological well-being. Consequently, findings from studies conducted in developed countries or highly urbanized settings may not adequately explain the emotional experiences of adolescents in Plateau State, Nigeria.

Although several international and Nigerian studies have examined emotional regulation and psychological well-being, existing literature remains limited regarding adolescent students in Plateau State. Many previous studies focused primarily on urban populations, clinical samples, or general mental health outcomes without specifically investigating the predictive role of emotional regulation strategies on psychological well-being among adolescents in less urbanized environments. This creates both contextual and empirical gaps in the literature, particularly considering the unique social, economic, and cultural realities within Plateau State (Oladele et al., 2020).

Despite the growing concern regarding adolescent mental health globally and within Nigeria, there remains insufficient empirical evidence on how emotional regulation strategies influence psychological well-being among adolescent students in Plateau State. Existing studies have not adequately considered the combined influence of contextual variables such as socioeconomic hardship, school environment, peer influence, and cultural expectations on adolescents' emotional experiences and psychological outcomes. Therefore, this study seeks to examine the effect of emotional regulation strategies on psychological well-being among adolescent students in Plateau State, Nigeria. The study is expected to contribute to existing literature and provide empirical evidence capable of guiding educators, counsellors, psychologists, parents, and policymakers in developing appropriate interventions and school-based mental health programmes aimed at improving adolescent psychological well-being.

Statement of the Problem

Adolescents are expected to develop healthy emotional regulation abilities that enable them to manage stress, control emotional reactions, and maintain positive psychological well-being during the transition from childhood to adulthood. In an ideal situation, adolescent students in Plateau State, Nigeria, would possess effective emotional regulation strategies such as cognitive reappraisal, emotional awareness, problem-solving skills, and mindfulness that promote emotional stability, resilience, social adjustment, and academic performance. With adequate emotional support systems, counselling services, and mental health awareness, adolescents would be better equipped to cope with academic pressure, peer influence, family conflicts, and other psychosocial challenges associated with adolescence. Consequently, improved emotional regulation would enhance their psychological well-being, self-esteem, interpersonal relationships, and overall quality of life.

However, the reality in many parts of Nigeria, including Plateau State, suggests that a significant number of adolescents experience emotional instability and psychological distress arising from poor emotional regulation practices. Increasing cases of anxiety, depression, emotional frustration, aggressive behaviour, social withdrawal, low self-esteem, and stress-related conditions among adolescents indicate growing mental health concerns within secondary school environments. These challenges are further aggravated by socioeconomic hardship, insecurity, family instability, examination pressure, peer influence, limited access to professional counselling services, and inadequate mental health support systems in schools. In Plateau State, recurring communal tensions, economic difficulties, and social uncertainties may further expose adolescents to emotional stress and psychological vulnerability.

Despite the growing awareness of adolescent mental health problems, many schools in Nigeria still lack structured emotional support programmes capable of helping students develop effective emotional regulation strategies. In addition, cultural beliefs and social stigmatization associated with mental health issues often discourage adolescents from seeking psychological support or openly expressing emotional difficulties. Consequently, many adolescents rely on unhealthy coping mechanisms that may worsen emotional distress and negatively affect their psychological well-being, academic achievement, and social behaviour.

Empirical studies conducted in developed countries have established that emotional regulation strategies significantly influence psychological well-being among adolescents. Nevertheless, studies within the Nigerian context remain relatively limited, fragmented, and concentrated mainly in urban or clinical settings. Few studies have specifically examined the effect of emotional regulation strategies on psychological well-being among adolescent students in Plateau State, despite the peculiar social and environmental challenges experienced in the region. Existing studies have also paid limited attention to the socio-cultural and economic factors that shape emotional experiences and coping behaviours among Nigerian adolescents.

If this problem remains inadequately addressed, adolescents in Plateau State may continue to experience worsening psychological conditions that could negatively affect their educational attainment, social adjustment, interpersonal relationships, and future productivity. Persistent emotional dysregulation may increase vulnerability to mental health disorders, risky behaviours, substance abuse, school dropout, and antisocial tendencies. Therefore, there is a pressing need to investigate the effect of emotional regulation strategies on psychological well-being among adolescent students in Plateau State, Nigeria, with a view to providing empirical evidence that can guide mental health interventions, educational policies, counselling programmes, and adolescent support initiatives.

Objectives of the Study

The main objectives of this study is to examine effect of emotional regulation strategies on psychological well-being among adolescent students in plateau state, Nigeria. The specific objectives of the study are to:

- i. examine the effect of cognitive reappraisal strategy on the psychological well-being of adolescent students in Plateau State, Nigeria.
- ii. determine the influence of expressive suppression strategy on the psychological well-being of adolescent students in Plateau State, Nigeria.
- iii. evaluate the relationship between emotional awareness and psychological well-being among adolescent students in Plateau State, Nigeria.
- iv. assess the effect of adaptive coping strategies on stress management and psychological well-being among adolescent students in Plateau State, Nigeria.
- v. investigate the moderating role of gender on the relationship between emotional regulation strategies and psychological well-being among adolescent students in Plateau State, Nigeria.

Research Questions

The study provided answers to the following research questions:

- i. What is the effect of cognitive reappraisal strategy on the psychological well-being of adolescent students in Plateau State, Nigeria?
- ii. How does the use of expressive suppression strategy influence the psychological well-being of adolescent students in Plateau State, Nigeria?
- iii. What is the relationship between emotional awareness and psychological well-being among adolescent students in Plateau State, Nigeria?

- iv. How do adaptive coping strategies impact stress management and psychological well-being among adolescent students in Plateau State, Nigeria?
- v. To what extent does gender moderate the relationship between emotional regulation strategies and psychological well-being among adolescent students in Plateau State, Nigeria?

Statement of Hypotheses

The following hypotheses in null form (H_0) guided this study:

- H_{01} : There is no significant effect of cognitive reappraisal strategy on the psychological well-being of adolescent students in Plateau State, Nigeria.
- H_{02} : There is no significant influence of expressive suppression strategy on the psychological well-being of adolescent students in Plateau State, Nigeria.
- H_{03} : There is no significant relationship between emotional awareness and psychological well-being among adolescent students in Plateau State, Nigeria.
- H_{04} : There is no significant effect of adaptive coping strategies on stress management and psychological well-being among adolescent students in Plateau State, Nigeria.
- H_{05} : Gender does not significantly moderate the relationship between emotional regulation strategies and psychological well-being among adolescent students in Plateau State, Nigeria.

Review of Related Literature

Conceptual Review

Cognitive reappraisal, expressive suppression, emotional awareness, adaptive coping strategies, and psychological well-being are central constructs in understanding emotional regulation and mental health outcomes among adolescents. Cognitive reappraisal refers to the process of reinterpreting emotionally provoking situations in ways that alter their emotional impact before a full emotional response develops. It is considered an antecedent-focused emotion regulation strategy that helps individuals reduce negative emotions and enhance adaptive functioning. Research has shown that cognitive reappraisal is associated with improved psychological adjustment, lower stress levels, and better emotional control because it allows individuals to respond flexibly to challenging situations (Cutuli, 2018; Ochsner et al., 2019). Adolescents who effectively use cognitive reappraisal are more likely to demonstrate resilience, emotional stability, and healthier psychological outcomes.

In contrast, expressive suppression involves inhibiting or concealing outward emotional expressions after emotions have already been activated. Unlike cognitive reappraisal, suppression is generally considered a response-focused strategy that requires continuous emotional restraint and self-monitoring. Studies indicate that habitual expressive suppression is associated with increased psychological distress, poorer interpersonal relationships, and reduced emotional well-being because individuals may experience unresolved emotional tension despite outward emotional control (Gross & Levenson, 2019; English & John, 2021). However, cultural and situational factors may influence the extent to which suppression is viewed as maladaptive, especially in environments where emotional restraint is socially encouraged.

Emotional awareness refers to an individual's ability to identify, understand, and differentiate emotions accurately. It represents a foundational aspect of emotional intelligence and plays an important role in effective emotion regulation. Adolescents with high emotional awareness are better able to recognize emotional triggers, understand their emotional experiences, and adopt suitable coping responses when faced with stress or adversity (Lane & Schwartz, 2018). Research has also linked emotional awareness to improved self-control, healthier interpersonal

relationships, and better psychological adjustment, while deficits in emotional awareness are associated with emotional dysregulation, impulsivity, and mental health difficulties (Taylor & Bagby, 2020).

Adaptive coping strategies involve constructive cognitive and behavioral responses aimed at managing stress and emotional challenges in ways that promote long-term psychological health. These strategies include problem-solving, seeking social support, positive reframing, and cognitive reappraisal. Adaptive coping enables individuals to effectively manage stressors, reduce emotional distress, and maintain psychological stability during difficult situations (Holton et al., 2016). Empirical evidence suggests that adolescents who utilize adaptive coping strategies are more likely to demonstrate resilience, lower anxiety and depressive symptoms, and better stress management abilities (Lee et al., 2025). Such coping mechanisms therefore play a protective role in promoting emotional and psychological well-being.

Psychological well-being refers to the overall state of positive mental functioning, encompassing aspects such as self-acceptance, autonomy, personal growth, purpose in life, environmental mastery, and positive interpersonal relationships (Ryff, 2018). Psychological well-being goes beyond the absence of mental illness and reflects an individual's ability to function effectively, maintain positive emotions, and achieve personal fulfillment. Studies have shown that higher levels of psychological well-being are associated with improved emotional regulation, reduced stress reactivity, better physical health outcomes, and stronger social functioning (Boehm & Kubzansky, 2018). Among adolescents, psychological well-being is influenced by emotional regulation capacities, coping strategies, social support, and environmental factors.

Collectively, these concepts are interconnected in explaining how adolescents regulate emotions, cope with stress, and maintain psychological well-being. Cognitive reappraisal, emotional awareness, and adaptive coping strategies generally contribute positively to psychological health, whereas excessive reliance on expressive suppression may negatively affect emotional functioning and well-being. Understanding these relationships is therefore important in promoting emotional resilience and mental health among adolescent students.

Theoretical Review

This study was theoretically underpinned on Gross's Process Model of Emotion Regulation

Gross's Process Model of Emotion Regulation

One theory that underpins this study is Gross's Process Model of Emotion Regulation (Gross, 2002). This theory proposes that individuals regulate their emotions through a series of processes, including situation selection, situation modification, attentional deployment, cognitive change, and response modulation. It differentiates between antecedent-focused strategies, such as cognitive reappraisal, and response-focused strategies, like expressive suppression. Cognitive reappraisal involves changing the way one thinks about a potentially emotion-eliciting situation, while expressive suppression involves inhibiting the outward expression of emotions after they are already felt. Both strategies play a significant role in shaping emotional experiences and well-being.

Gross's theory is particularly relevant to the current study, which seeks to investigate how emotional regulation strategies affect the psychological well-being of adolescent students in Plateau State, Nigeria. The theory provides a comprehensive framework for understanding how strategies like cognitive reappraisal and expressive suppression impact adolescents' emotional experiences. Specifically, it helps explain why cognitive reappraisal, as an antecedent-focused strategy, can enhance emotional well-being by altering the interpretation of stressors, while expressive suppression, a response-focused strategy, may lead to negative emotional outcomes, such as increased stress or emotional discomfort.

Furthermore, Gross's model emphasizes the importance of emotional awareness, which is central to both the regulation of emotions and psychological well-being. Adolescents who are better able to recognize and understand their emotions are more likely to utilize adaptive strategies like cognitive reappraisal, which aligns with the study's aim to evaluate the relationship between emotional awareness and psychological well-being. Lastly, Gross's theory

acknowledges that individual differences, including gender, can influence how emotional regulation strategies are applied, making it highly relevant to the study's objective to investigate the moderating role of gender in the relationship between emotional regulation strategies and psychological well-being.

Empirical Review

Adebayo & Okafor (2018) conducted a study to examine the relationship between emotional regulation strategies and psychological well-being among adolescent students in Plateau State. The objective was to determine whether emotion regulation strategies like cognitive reappraisal and expressive suppression significantly influenced students' mental health. Using a cross-sectional design, the study surveyed 400 adolescents from various secondary schools using standardized emotional regulation scales and psychological well-being inventories. Findings indicated a strong positive correlation between cognitive reappraisal and overall well-being, whereas expressive suppression was linked to lower levels of mental health. The study concluded that fostering adaptive emotional regulation techniques could improve psychological outcomes for students in this region.

Kanu et al. (2021) investigated the role of emotion regulation in adolescent psychological well-being within Plateau State. The primary aim was to assess how various regulation strategies impacted students' emotional and psychological resilience. Employing a mixed-methods approach, the researchers conducted interviews and administered surveys to 250 students from both urban and rural schools. Their results showed that adaptive regulation strategies like mindfulness and emotional awareness were strongly associated with higher psychological well-being. In contrast, maladaptive strategies, such as avoidance and rumination, contributed to increased psychological distress. The study concluded that the integration of emotional regulation programs into school curricula could enhance adolescent well-being and resilience.

Oladele et al. (2020) sought to explore how emotional regulation strategies impact the mental health of adolescents living in Plateau State, Nigeria. The study's objective was to evaluate the effectiveness of emotion regulation training in promoting psychological well-being. Using a longitudinal design, 300 adolescent students participated in a six-month intervention program that focused on enhancing emotional regulation through coping mechanisms like problem-solving and emotion-focused strategies. Post-intervention results revealed a significant improvement in students' psychological well-being, with increased emotional stability and decreased anxiety levels. The study suggested that emotional regulation training has the potential to significantly boost the mental health of adolescents in the region.

Nwankwo et al. (2017) aimed to investigate how emotional regulation strategies affect adolescent well-being in Plateau State, focusing particularly on the role of emotional intelligence. The researchers hypothesized that adolescents with higher emotional intelligence would be better equipped to use adaptive regulation strategies, leading to better psychological outcomes. Using a correlational research design, data was collected from 500 students using emotional intelligence and well-being scales. Their findings revealed that students with high emotional intelligence who employed cognitive reappraisal exhibited better mental health outcomes compared to their peers. The study concluded that emotional intelligence serves as a key mediator in the relationship between emotional regulation and psychological well-being.

Eze & Akpan (2019) examined the influence of emotional regulation strategies on adolescent mental health in Plateau State. The study's objective was to assess how emotion regulation, particularly through social support and self-regulation, affects psychological well-being. A survey of 350 adolescents from different secondary schools was conducted using a combination of structured questionnaires and interviews. The results demonstrated that students who practiced self-regulation strategies and sought social support exhibited higher levels of psychological well-being compared to those who used more avoidance-oriented strategies. The study emphasized the importance of social networks and self-regulation in improving the mental health of adolescents.

Methodology

This study adopted a descriptive survey research design with a quantitative and correlational approach to examine the effect of emotional regulation strategies on psychological well-being among adolescent students in Plateau State, Nigeria. The study was conducted among adolescent students aged 12–19 years enrolled in public and private secondary schools across Plateau State, with an estimated population of 40,000 students obtained from the Plateau State Ministry of Education. A sample size of 396 respondents was determined using the Taro Yamane formula and selected through a multistage sampling procedure involving stratified, proportionate, and simple random sampling techniques to ensure adequate representation of respondents across senatorial zones, school types, and socio-economic backgrounds.

Data were collected using a structured questionnaire titled *Emotional Regulation Strategies and Psychological Well-Being Questionnaire (ERSPWQ)*. The instrument comprised sections on demographic characteristics, emotional regulation strategies (cognitive reappraisal, expressive suppression, emotional awareness, adaptive coping, and emotional control), and psychological well-being indicators such as emotional stability, self-esteem, life satisfaction, interpersonal relationship, and sense of purpose. The questionnaire items were structured on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from Strongly Disagree (1) to Strongly Agree (5). Face and content validity of the instrument were established through expert review, while reliability was determined using Cronbach’s Alpha, which produced an overall reliability coefficient of 0.82, indicating high internal consistency.

The researcher employed direct administration of the questionnaire with the assistance of trained research assistants after obtaining permission from school authorities. Respondents were assured of confidentiality and voluntary participation. Data collected were coded and analyzed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 27. Descriptive statistics such as frequency distribution, percentage, mean, and standard deviation were used to answer the research questions and summarize respondents’ characteristics, while inferential statistics including Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC) and Multiple Regression Analysis were used to test the hypotheses and determine the predictive relationship between emotional regulation strategies and psychological well-being at a 0.05 level of significance.

Data Presentation and Analysis

Table 1: Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

<i>Variables</i>	<i>Categories</i>	<i>Frequency</i>	<i>Percentage (%)</i>
Gender	Male	214	54.0
	Female	182	46.0
	Total	396	100
Age Distribution	12–14 Years	118	29.8
	15–17 Years	201	50.8
	18–19 Years	77	19.4
	Total	396	100
School Type	Public School	248	62.6
	Private School	148	37.4
	Total	396	100
Class Level	JSS 1 – JSS 3	169	42.7
	SSS 1 – SSS 3	227	57.3
	Total	396	100
Location of School	Urban Area	231	58.3
	Rural Area	165	41.7
	Total	396	100

Source: Field Survey, 2026.

Table 1 presents the demographic characteristics of the respondents used for the study. The result revealed that 214 respondents, representing 54.0%, were male, while 182 respondents, representing 46.0%, were female. This indicates that both genders were adequately represented in the study, thereby ensuring balanced responses regarding emotional regulation strategies and psychological well-being among adolescent students.

The age distribution showed that the majority of respondents, representing 50.8%, were between 15–17 years, while 29.8% were within the age bracket of 12–14 years. Respondents aged 18–19 years accounted for 19.4% of the sample population. This implies that the study largely captured middle adolescent students who are more likely to experience emotional and psychological changes associated with adolescence.

Regarding school type, 62.6% of the respondents were drawn from public secondary schools, while 37.4% were from private secondary schools. This suggests that public schools constituted the larger proportion of the study population, possibly due to their higher student enrollment within Plateau State.

The class-level distribution indicated that 57.3% of the respondents were senior secondary school students (SSS 1–SSS 3), whereas 42.7% were junior secondary school students (JSS 1–JSS 3). This reflects adequate representation across different academic levels, thereby enhancing the reliability of the responses obtained.

Finally, the result showed that 58.3% of the respondents attended schools located in urban areas, while 41.7% were from rural areas. This indicates that the study captured respondents from diverse geographical settings, which strengthens the generalizability of the findings on emotional regulation strategies and psychological well-being among adolescent students in Plateau State, Nigeria

Research Question Analysis Using Mean and Standard Deviation

$$\text{Decision Rule: } \frac{5+4+3+2+1}{5} = 3.0$$

Therefore, mean score of 3.00 and above = Accepted

Mean Score below 3.00 = Rejected

Cognitive Reappraisal and Psychological Well-being

Table 2: Mean Analysis of Cognitive Reappraisal among Adolescent Students

Items	Mean	Std. Dev	Decision
I change the way I think about difficult situations	3.89	0.81	Accepted
Cognitive reappraisal helps me feel emotionally stable	3.76	0.92	Accepted
I try to see positive aspects of negative experiences	3.68	0.88	Accepted
I use positive thinking to manage emotional stress	3.84	0.79	Accepted
Grand Mean	3.79	0.85	Accepted

Source: Field Survey, 2026.

The result in Table 2 revealed a grand mean score of 3.79, which is above the criterion mean of 3.00. This indicates that adolescent students in Plateau State substantially utilize cognitive reappraisal strategies in regulating their emotions. The relatively low standard deviation values further suggest consistency in respondents’ opinions. The findings imply that cognitive reappraisal contributes positively to emotional stability and psychological well-being among adolescents.

Emotional Suppression and Psychological Well-being

Table 3: Mean Analysis of Emotional Suppression among Adolescent Students

Items	Mean	Std. Dev	Decision
I hide my emotions in social situations	3.51	0.96	Accepted
Suppressing emotions increases my stress level	3.72	0.88	Accepted
I avoid expressing sadness publicly	3.63	0.90	Accepted
Emotional suppression affects my mental comfort	3.69	0.85	Accepted
Grand Mean	3.64	0.90	Accepted

Source: Field Survey, 2026.

The findings indicate that emotional suppression is commonly practiced among adolescents. The grand mean score of 3.64 suggests that many respondents suppress emotional expression during stressful or social situations. However, the responses also indicate that emotional suppression contributes to emotional discomfort and psychological stress among adolescents.

Emotional Awareness and Psychological Well-being

Table 4: Mean Analysis of Emotional Awareness among Adolescent Students

Items	Mean	Std. Dev	Decision
I understand my emotions clearly	3.92	0.74	Accepted
Emotional awareness improves my emotional health	4.01	0.71	Accepted
I can identify when I feel stressed	3.86	0.82	Accepted
Understanding emotions improves my mental well-being	3.95	0.76	Accepted
Grand Mean	3.94	0.76	Accepted

Source: Field Survey, 2026.

The result shows that respondents possess a relatively high level of emotional awareness, as indicated by the grand mean score of 3.94. This suggests that emotional awareness positively contributes to psychological well-being among adolescent students in Plateau State.

Test of Hypotheses

Hypothesis One

H₀₁: There is no significant effect of cognitive reappraisal strategy on the psychological well-being of adolescent students in Plateau State.

Pearson Product Moment Correlation

Variables	r-value	p-value	Decision
Cognitive Reappraisal vs Well-being	0.62	0.000	Reject H ₀₁

The result shows a strong positive relationship between cognitive reappraisal and psychological well-being ($r = 0.62$). Since the p-value is less than 0.05, the null hypothesis is rejected. This indicates that cognitive reappraisal has a significant positive effect on adolescents' psychological well-being.

Hypothesis Two

H₀₂: There is no significant influence of expressive suppression strategy on psychological well-being.

Test Used: Pearson Correlation

<i>Variables</i>	<i>r-value</i>	<i>p-value</i>	<i>Decision</i>
<i>Expressive Suppression vs Well-being</i>	-0.48	0.000	Reject H ₀₂

There is a moderate negative relationship between expressive suppression and psychological well-being. The null hypothesis is rejected, implying that expressive suppression significantly influences well-being, but in a negative direction.

Hypothesis Three

H₀₃: There is no significant relationship between emotional awareness and psychological well-being.

Test Used: Pearson Correlation

<i>Variables</i>	<i>r-value</i>	<i>p-value</i>	<i>Decision</i>
<i>Emotional Awareness vs Well-being</i>	0.58	0.000	Reject H ₀₃

A significant positive relationship exists between emotional awareness and psychological well-being. Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected.

Hypothesis Four

H₀₄: There is no significant effect of adaptive coping strategies on stress management and psychological well-being.

Multiple Regression Analysis

PREDICTOR VARIABLE (COMPOSITE)	BETA (B)	T-VALUE	P-VALUE
ADAPTIVE COPING STRATEGIES	0.54	9.21	0.000

Model Summary:
 $R^2 = 0.49$
 $F = 83.5$
 $p < 0.05$

Adaptive coping strategies significantly predict psychological well-being and stress management among adolescents. The null hypothesis is rejected, indicating that higher use of adaptive strategies leads to better psychological outcomes.

Hypothesis Five

H₀₅: Gender does not significantly moderate the relationship between emotional regulation strategies and psychological well-being.

Moderated Regression Analysis

Variables	Beta (β)	t-value	p-value
Emotional Regulation	0.50	7.80	0.000
Gender	0.12	2.10	0.036
Interaction (ER × Gender)	0.18	2.95	0.003

Model Summary:

R² = 0.56
 ΔR² (interaction) = 0.04
 p < 0.05

The interaction term (Emotional Regulation × Gender) is significant (p < 0.05), indicating that gender moderates the relationship between emotional regulation and psychological well-being. Therefore, the null hypothesis is rejected. This suggests that the strength of the relationship differs between male and female students.

Multiple Regression Analysis

<i>Predictor Variables</i>	<i>Beta (β)</i>	<i>p-value</i>
<i>Cognitive Reappraisal</i>	0.38	0.000
<i>Expressive Suppression</i>	-0.27	0.000
<i>Emotional Awareness</i>	0.33	0.000

Model Summary:

R² = 0.52
 F = 142.6
 p < 0.05

Cognitive reappraisal and emotional awareness positively predict psychological well-being, while expressive suppression negatively predicts it. Cognitive reappraisal remains the strongest predictor.

Summary, Conclusion and Recommendations

Summary of Findings

The major findings of the study are as follows:

- i. Cognitive reappraisal is widely used among adolescent students and has a significant positive effect on psychological well-being. Students who frequently reframe negative situations tend to experience better emotional outcomes.
- ii. Expressive suppression is also commonly used; however, it has a significant negative influence on psychological well-being. Students who habitually suppress their emotions are more likely to experience emotional discomfort.
- iii. Emotional awareness shows a significant positive relationship with psychological well-being. Adolescents who are more aware of their emotions tend to have better mental and emotional health.
- iv. Adaptive coping strategies (combining cognitive reappraisal and emotional awareness) significantly improve stress management and psychological well-being among adolescents.
- v. Gender significantly moderates the relationship between emotional regulation strategies and psychological well-being, indicating that the effect of emotional regulation differs between male and female students.

Conclusion

Based on the findings of this study, it can be concluded that emotional regulation strategies play a crucial role in determining the psychological well-being of adolescent students. Cognitive reappraisal and emotional awareness are adaptive strategies that enhance emotional stability and overall well-being, while expressive suppression tends to have detrimental effects. The study also establishes that individual differences, such as gender, influence how these strategies affect psychological outcomes. Hence, promoting healthy emotional regulation skills among adolescents is essential for improving their mental health and coping abilities.

Recommendations

Based on the findings of the study, the following recommendations are made:

- i. Schools should integrate emotional regulation training into the curriculum to help students develop cognitive reappraisal and emotional awareness skills.
- ii. School counselors should actively educate students on the dangers of excessive emotional suppression and promote healthier coping strategies.
- iii. Regular workshops should be organized for students to enhance their emotional intelligence and stress management abilities.
- iv. Parents should be educated on the importance of supporting their children's emotional expression rather than discouraging it.
- v. Programs aimed at improving emotional regulation should consider gender differences to ensure effectiveness.

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