Studying the Relationship of Self-regulation and Emotion Regulation Strategies with Repaired Affections

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ABSTRACT

The present paper aimed to study the relationship of self-regulation and emotion regulation strategies with repaired negative affections in students. This study was a correlation survey. The subjects were selected by simple random sampling method and the required data were collected using three questionnaires of self-regulation, emotion regulation strategies, and repaired negative affections. Data were analyzed by Pearson correlation coefficient, regression test, and t-test. The results showed that self-regulation and some components of emotion regulation strategies have a significant correlation with some components of repaired negative affections and no significant difference was observed between two sexes. According to the findings of this study, it can be concluded that self-regulation and emotion regulation strategies can predict the repaired negative affections.

KEYWORDS: Self-regulation; Emotion regulation strategies; Negative affections; Adolescents

1- INTRODUCTION

Extreme emotions lead to incompatibility, aggression, anger, hatred, and anxiety that uncontrollably and seriously put the emotional and mental health of people at risk (Linely& Joseph, 2009). Self-regulation is defined as a person's efforts to change his/her thoughts, emotions, impulses, desires, behaviors, and emotional processes. Self-regulation is a multidimensional variable which involves cognitive, motivational-emotional, social, and psychological processes affecting the active control of targeted actions (Besharat, 2012). In self-regulation model, several mechanisms are involved, one of which is emotion regulation strategies. The use of emotion regulation strategies, as a form of self-regulation (Tees and Bratslasky, 2000), refers to processes and practices that are responsible for evaluation, change, and adjustment of emotions (Thompson, 1994).

Emotion regulation can be defined as processes through which people can control their emotions and the time and the way of expressing them. Emotion regulation means the efforts of a person to affect the type, time, and way of expressing and experiencing, duration, and intensity of behavioral, empirical, and physical processes of emotions that is done automatically or controllably, consciously or unconsciously through emotion regulation strategies such as reappraisal, rumination, self-expression, avoidance, and restraint (Gross, 1998).

Emotion regulation is defined as the process of initiating, maintaining, modifying, or altering the incidence, intensity, or persistence of inner feelings and emotions in association with social-psychological and physical processes in achieving a person's objectives (Vimz& Pina, 2010). Emotion regulation, as one of the psychological variables, has attracted the attention of many researchers (Goleman, 1995, Schutte*et al*., 1998; Mayer *et al*., 1999). Emotions are of high quality and can cause positive or negative reactions in individuals. If emotions are appropriate to the situation, they would lead to positive reactions, otherwise they would cause negative reactions. So, when emotions are intense, prolonged or incompatible with the conditions, they need to be regulated (Gross, 1998). Several pieces of evidence suggest that emotion regulation is associated with success or failure in various aspects of life (Schutte, Mallow, Torstenson, Boolar, and Rok, 2007; Jacobs *et al*., 2008). Emotion regulation plays an important role in coping with life's stressful events (Eisenberg, Fabs, Gasser, and Riser, 2000).

Individual differences should be also taken into account in the use of emotion regulation strategies. Individuals are different in the ability of paying attention, precise detection, and processing of emotions. These differences can be observed in the desire to experience and express emotions, flexibility in adoption of the regulation strategies that are appropriate to the circumstances, and the capacity to recognize the effectiveness of these strategies and making the necessary changes (Kashdan, 2007). Individual differences are of special importance in the use of emotion regulation strategies (John & Gross, 2007). For example, a person may normally avoid situations that cause negative emotions (cognitive reappraisal), while another one may overlook the disturbing elements of that situation to reduce negative emotions (suppression) (John & Gross, 2007). In the proposed model of emotion regulation, response integration strategies act as inhibitors of emotion expression. It has been reported that those who apply reappraisal strategy exhibit higher positive affections, lower negative affections, and higher psychological well-being (John & Gross, 2007; Difendorff & Gosrand, 2003; Gross &John, 2003; Gross *et al*., 2006).

Emotion regulation involves all conscious and unconscious strategies that are applied to increase, maintain, or reduce the emotional, cognitive, and behavioral components of an emotional response (Gross, 2003) and refers to the ability to understand the emotions and adjusting the way of experiencing and expressing them (Gross, 1998). The

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results of studying the effect of emotion regulation on affection and mood indicate that negative emotion regulation strategies are predictors of negative affections, low satisfaction, and low positive affections, while positive emotion regulation strategies are predictors of low negative affections (Martin, 2010). In addition, emotion regulation strategies are associated with reduction in negative emotions and emotional events, and focusing on positive emotion regulation strategies can increase individuals' understanding of the management of emotions.

The hypotheses of the present study are as follows:

- Self-regulation and emotion regulation strategies have a significant relationship with the repaired negative affections.
- Self-regulation and emotion regulation strategies can predict the negative affections.

2- METHODOLOGY

The present study was a descriptive-correlation survey. Statistical population included all students of Second Intermediate Period in Iranshahr in academic year 2013-2014. A sample of 411 respondent (237 girls and 173 boys) was selected by simple random sampling. The required data were collected by handing out three questionnaires among the respondents. The obtained data were analyzed by Pearson correlation coefficient, regression test, and t-test in SPSS 16 software.

3- Research tools:

Self-regulation Questionnaire (SRQ): This questionnaire, developed by Brown (1998), consists of 31 questions on a Likert's five-item scale (totally disagree, disagree, sometimes disagree, agree, and totally agree). This questionnaire has an excellent reliability and a very high inner consistency. It was also normalized by Beshart (2012) (Reliability and reappraisal (r=87%) and inner consistency (a=93%)). In the present study, Cronbach's alpha of this questionnaire was obtained equal to 0.87.

Emotion Regulation Strategies Questionnaire (ERQ): This questionnaire was designed by Gross & John (2003) and measures the strategies of emotion regulation. The original version of this questionnaire contains 16 questions with a Cronbach's alpha of 0.86. The modified and revised version consists of 10 questions and measures the individual differences in cognitive reappraisal (6 items) and suppression (4 items). Matsumoto *et al.* (2005a) reported a moderate cultural difference from both versions of this questionnaire. This questionnaire is based on a Likert's 7-item scale (from fully disagree to fully agree).

Negative Affect Repair Questionnaire (NARQ): This questionnaire consists of 24 items in 4 scales (cognitive regulation strategies, relaxation and strategies for distraction, social regulation strategies, and externalization strategies). Scherer *et al.* (2013) reported that retest and Cronbach's alpha of this questionnaire are equal to 78% and 82%, respectively. In this study, Cronbach's alpha of this questionnaire was obtained 71%.

4- Findings:

Descriptive indices of two groups of girls and boys in emotion regulation strategies (reappraisal and suppression), repaired negative affections (cognitive regulation strategies, relaxation and strategies for distraction, social regulation strategies, and externalization strategies), and self-regulation are shown in Table 1.

Table 1: Descriptive statistics of the studied variables in two groups of girls and boys

Girls		Boys		Variable	Number
Standard deviation	Mean	Standard deviation	Mean		
1/25	3/71	1/27	3/68	Reappraisal	**1**
1/12	3/45	1/18	3/52	Suppression	**2**
0/50	3/15	0/59	3/04	Self-regulation	**3**
0/46	2/71	0/58	2/75	Cognitive regulation strategy	**4**
0/52	2/44	0/59	2/68	Relaxation	**5**
0/59	2/30	0/61	2/40	Social regulation strategy	**6**
0/43	1/43	0/54	1/51	Externalization strategy	**7**
0/33	2/23	0/40	2/33	Total score of negative affects	**8**

Emotion regulation strategy, self-regulation, repaired negative affections, and strategies of coping were compared between girls and boys. The relationship between these variables and the question that whether they can predict negative affections or not were surveyed.

Pearson correlation coefficient was used to study the relationship of repaired negative affections with emotion regulation strategies and self-regulation (Table 2). The results showed that self-regulation, reappraisal, and suppression have a significant relationship with repaired negative affections. However, no significant relationship was observed between externalization strategy and variables such as self-regulation, reappraisal, and suppression.

Table 2: Correlation matrix between repaired negative affections and self-regulation and emotion regulation strategy

8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	Variable	Number
								Cognitive regulation strategy	**1**
							-0/48*	Relaxation	**2**
						0/44*	-0/39*	Social regulation strategy	**3**

					0/14**	0/11**	0/02	Externalization strategy	4
				0/07	-0/21*	-0/21*	0/20*	Self-regulation	5
			0/33*	0/01	-0/12*	-0/22*	0/20*	Reappraisal	6
		-0/69*	0/38*	0/00	0/13*	0/21*	-0/16*	Suppression	7

P<0/01* & p<0/05** n=411

Pearson correlation coefficient was used to study the relationship of repaired negative affections with emotion regulation strategies and self-regulation. The results of correlation coefficients for boys are shown in the bottom right hand of matrix and the results of girls are presented at the top left of the matrix.

The results of Pearson correlation coefficient in boys and girls groups showed that the components of repaired negative affections have a significant relationship with components of emotion regulation strategies and self-regulation. Also, externalization strategy showed no significant relationship with self-regulation, reappraisal, and suppression.

Table 3: Correlation matrix between the studied variable in two groups of boys (bottom right hand of matrix) and girls (the top left of the matrix)

9	8	7	6	5	4	3	2	1	Variable	Number
-0/18*	0/43*	-0/020*	0/30*	-0/21*	0/05	-0/31*	-0/33*		Cognitive regulation strategy	1
0.13*	-0/28*	0/20*	-0/21*	0/16*	0/15*	0/34*		-063*	Relaxation	2
0/23*	-0/45*	0/13*	-0/14**	0/16*	0/16*		0/56*	-0/48*	Social regulation strategy	3
0/27*	0/01	0/08	0/02	0/04		0/10	0/50	0/01	Externalization strategy	4
0/07	0/17*	-0/34*	0/31*		0/12**	0/28*	0/31*	-0/20*	Self-regulation	5
0/05	-0/29*	-0/70*		0/36*	0/04	0/08	026*	0/09	Reappraisal	6
0/00	0/21*		-0/67*	-0/44*	0/08	0/12*	022*	-0/11**	Suppression	7

P<01/0* & p<05/0** n1=174 n2=237

Multivariate analysis of variance was used to study the differences in emotion regulation strategies between girls and boys. M-Box test, with a value of 1.85 and F-value of 0.61 at a significance level of 0.66, suggested that variance-covariance matrix is homogeneous.

Homogeneity of variance (Levin) test also indicated that dispersion is equal in two groups of boys and girls for reappraisal and suppression.

Table 4: Homogeneity of variance (Levin) test between the components of emotion regulation strategies

Level of significance	df_2	df_1	F	Variable	Number
0/49	411	1	0/16	Reappraisal	1
0/45	411	1	0/58	Suppression	2

Independent t-test was used to survey the differences between boys and girls in self-regulation strategies. He results indicated that there is a significant difference between these two groups and girls obtained higher scores than boys in self-regulation strategies.

Table 5: Independent t-test between the two groups of boys and girls in self-regulation strategies

			Boys		Girls	
Level of significance	df	T-value	Standard deviation	Mean	Standard deviation	Mean
0/04	411	2/07	0/50	3/15	0/59	3/04

Stepwise multiple regression was applied to study the capability of self-regulation and emotion regulation strategies for predicting the repaired negative affections. The results showed that self-regulation in the first step and emotion regulation strategies in the second step, respectively, can predict 2% and 3% of the variance of repaired negative affections.

Table 5: A summary of stepwise multiple regression

se		Adjusted R^2	R^2	R	Variables	Step
0/32		0/25	0/25	0/50	self-regulation	1
0/31		0/27	0/27	0/52	emotion regulation strategy	2

5- Conclusion:

According to the results of the analysis of research data, evidence indicates that there is a significant relationship between some components of negative affections and self-regulation and emotion regulation strategies. In addition, emotion regulation strategy has a negative and significant correlation with relaxation, strategies for distraction, social regulation strategies. Also, no significant relationship was observed between self-regulation and emotion regulation strategy with externalization strategy. These results are consistent with the findings of Judge *et al*. (1999) on positive and negative emotions, Kammeyer *et al*. (2009) on coping processes, and Piccolo *et al*.(2000) on happiness. The

findings of the present study suggested no significant difference between girls and boys. The results showed that emotion regulation strategies can predict negative emotions and the consequences of negative emotions can be reduced by training and promoting the emotion regulation strategies. Given that emotion regulation strategies are learned in childhood and at the end of adolescence almost become an auto-cognitive style of a person and is fixed, it is recommended that training of using positive and adaptive strategies to be started by parents from childhood and to be completed by training the skills of emotion regulation strategies and self-regulation. Training the students and teachers of primary and secondary school on emotions and emotions regulation strategies is recommended to be considered as part of educational goals and applications.

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