



Investigating the influence of personality traits on emotion regulation strategies among young adults

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Abstract

Various studies have demonstrated the influence of personality on emotion regulation, whereby the "Big Five" traits have notably predicted adaptive strategies like cognitive reappraisal or maladaptive ones like expression suppression. However, while neuroticism and extraversion have shown clear links to specific coping strategies, traits such as agreeableness and openness lack consistency regarding their associations with specific regulation strategies in different demographic groups. Furthermore, there is a "replication crisis" regarding the findings for conscientiousness and openness, which are far less consistent than those for neuroticism across different segments of the population. Therefore, this study aimed to address these research gaps, with a view to corroborating the existing literature in a purposeful manner that adds to the reliability and validity of this field of inquiry. For this purpose, a correlational research design was employed among 411 university students to explore the effect of personality traits (Openness to experience, Conscientiousness, Extraversion, Agreeableness and Neuroticism) on emotion regulation strategies such as cognitive reappraisal and expression suppression. Data were collected by employing the Emotion Regulation Questionnaire and NEO-FFI-3, and a multivariate regression analysis was conducted. The results indicated that 9.2% of the variance in cognitive reappraisal and 1.8% of the variance in expression suppression were explained by the predictor variables used in this study. The study delineated that despite small effect sizes, the trait of Openness to experience had a significant effect on cognitive reappraisal; Conscientiousness had a significant effect on both cognitive reappraisal and expression suppression. However, Extraversion, Agreeableness and Neuroticism did not significantly affect either outcome variable in the specific context of this study. This research facilitated pragmatic insights with regard to the nuanced relationship between personality traits and emotion regulation strategies, with due consideration given to the specific cultural and developmental influences that pave a path for advancement of further investigation into this area of inquiry. Dissemination of such results can be incorporated into targeted interventions among young adults, aimed at alleviating issues related to mental and emotional well-being, while substantiating the existing literature in this area of study.

Keywords: Emotion regulation, personality traits, young adulthood

Introduction

Personality is the distinctive and relatively constant assemblage of psychological characteristics that encompasses individual forms of cognition, emotion, and behaviour, facilitating the differentiation and understanding of human diversity (Yuan, 2020). Extensive research has shown how biological, social, and environmental elements interact to influence individuals' personalities, evident in their interactions with their surroundings and social networks (Bergner, 2019).

The Five-Factor Model (FFM), often referred to as the Big Five, is a widely accepted framework that describes personality along five continuous dimensions: Openness, Conscientiousness, Extraversion, Agreeableness, and Neuroticism. These traits influence an individual's unique adjustment to the environment and impact how they perceive and respond to situations (Barańczuk, 2018; Doménech et al., 2025). However, despite significant advancements in this area of study, ongoing research continues to explore the many dimensions of personality, its temporal evolution, and its impact on behaviour.

A meta-analysis revealed that specific personality characteristics could effectively indicate the tactics individuals used to regulate their emotions. Emotion regulation refers to the processes by which individuals manage and modify their emotional experiences, expressions, and responses to adaptively navigate various situations. (Domic-Siede et al., 2024). Effective emotion regulation is crucial for mental health and overall well-being, especially in the context of the young adult population, who face multiple challenges during this transitional phase, which impedes their capacity for effective self-regulation.

Existing literature with regard to personality traits seen as predictors of emotion regulation strategies indicated that individuals exhibiting high levels of conscientiousness had superior ability in regulating negative emotions and recovering swiftly from stress; conversely, more extraverted individuals often used cognitive reappraisal to maintain their positive emotions. Collectively, these qualities enhanced the individual's capacity for self-regulation and the implementation of effective coping methods (Hasim et al., 2025; Javaras et al., 2012). On the other hand, those with lower extroversion demonstrated difficulty with emotion regulation, indicating a weaker inhibition of their emotional responses (Jasubhai, 2025). Moreover, expression suppression, considered a maladaptive coping strategy, was seen as less common in persons with high extraversion and conscientiousness and is more often associated with increased neuroticism, often leading towards reduced long-term well-being (Barańczuk, 2018).

In conjunction with this, it was observed that high neuroticism was characterised by heightened reliance on suppression, rumination, and avoidance, alongside diminished use of cognitive reappraisal and acceptance (Ode & Robinson, 2007). Most importantly, this association is not only correlational; it is underpinned by specific neurological and physiological processes, whereby longitudinal studies have suggested that neuroticism may predict future increases in emotion dysregulation (Kokkonen & Pulkkinen, 2001). Here, the hierarchical control mechanism between the ventromedial prefrontal cortex and the amygdala is less effective, impeding effective emotion regulation (Yang et al., 2020), negatively impacting the overall well-being of an individual. This conclusion is also corroborated by supplementary neuroimaging studies, which revealed atypical neural activation during implicit negative emotional facial processing in individuals with high neuroticism, highlighting their increased sensitivity to negative information and altered emotional processing, even outside of conscious awareness (Yang et al., 2021). Additionally, studies have suggested that it is not neuroticism itself, but the specific regulating mechanisms used by neurotic persons that directly lead to negative psychological effects [CITE_N]. This mediating effect has been replicated in other situations, including studies on non-suicidal self-injury among college students (Cheng-ju et

al., 2022) and emotional divorce in married women (Amani et al., 2021). Furthermore, it is argued that the predictive ability of neuroticism extends beyond simple strategy use, including broader aspects of emotional dysregulation and vulnerability to mental health issues, with neuroticism positively correlating with negative cognitive bias and maladaptive regulation (Bondy et al., 2021; Chen et al., 2023; Yaztappeh et al., 2023). Overall, it can be concluded that neuroticism serves as a strong and reliable predictor of a regulatory style characterized by increased reactivity, a propensity for suppression over reappraisal, and an augmented risk for diverse negative psychological and possibly physical health outcomes (Singh, 2022).

Another fundamental feature in the Big Five personality framework that influences both adaptive and maladaptive emotional responses is agreeableness (Milojev & Sibley, 2016; Robinson et al., 2024; “‘The next Big Five Inventory (BFI-2): Developing and Assessing a Hierarchical Model with 15 Facets to Enhance Bandwidth, Fidelity, and Predictive Power’: Correction to Soto and John (2016).,” 2017; Vize & Lynam, 2020). Individuals with high agreeableness possess cooperativeness, empathy, and warmth, which positively contribute to enhancing their interpersonal skills (Cortes et al., 2019; Kao & Chiou, 2019; Pisanu et al., 2024) and are favourably associated with the use of cognitive reappraisal, reducing sympathetic activity that is less cognitively taxing over time (Brockbank & Feldon, 2024; Kim et al., 2024; Robinson et al., 2024; Shdaifat et al., 2024; Zhu et al., 2023). Conversely, agreeableness is often inversely associated with maladaptive tactics such as expressive repression (Shdaifat et al., 2024), (Zhu et al., 2023), (Ode & Robinson, 2007), (Pandey et al., 2023). This refers to the inhibition of outward manifestations of an emotion after it has been experienced (Kokkinos & Voulgaridou, 2022), resulting in increased physiological arousal and poor relationship consequences. Additionally, agreeableness is associated with empathy and prosocial actions, which improve people's receptivity and response to emotional events (Cho & Lee, 2023; Robinson et al., 2024; Vecchio et al., 2023; Xu et al., 2023; Yavuz et al., 2024), highlighting its dynamic function in emotion regulation. This has been corroborated by a study suggesting that high agreeableness mitigated the negative health impacts of neuroticism; even if individuals were prone to worry, being agreeable helped them to regulate the resulting negative affect effectively (Ode & Robinson, 2007).

Another key component of the Big Five personality model, openness to experience, is characterized by traits such as intellectual curiosity, inventiveness, aesthetic sensitivity, and a tendency towards novelty and variety (Raya et al., 2023). These characteristics contribute to enhancing individuals' open-mindedness and their readiness to consider other perspectives, which are essential components of cognitive reappraisal (Giancola et al., 2024), (Robinson & Irvin, 2022), (Leeman et al., 2022). Studies have illustrated how the ability to consider diverse viewpoints is linked to trait self-control as well as openness (Tsai & Li, 2023). Here, openness is seen as positively associated with adaptive, antecedent-focused emotion regulation strategies, such as cognitive reappraisal, while often showing a negative correlation with maladaptive, response-focused strategies, such as expressive suppression, reflecting individual variations in psychological well-being and adaptive functioning (Barańczuk, 2018), (Giancola et al., 2024), (Kokkinos & Voulgaridou, 2022), (Zhou et al., 2023), (Robinson & Irvin, 2022). Additionally, studies have revealed how cognitive reappraisal mediated the association between openness to experience and divergent thinking, suggesting that those with high openness used reappraisal to augment creative cognitive processes (Giancola et al., 2024), thereby positively impacting the cognitive and emotional processing of such individuals. Another essential consideration is the association of openness with processes referred to as habitual acceptance, mindfulness, and self-awareness of one's thoughts and emotions that optimise the employment of cognitive reappraisal by fortifying the neural pathways that link the prefrontal cortex to the amygdala (Li et al., 2025), (Zhou et al., 2023), (Joshnloo, 2022).

Additionally, the combination of openness and neuroticism has been shown to modulate the relationship between negative affect and life satisfaction, suggesting that heightened openness may alleviate the detrimental impacts of emotional distress (Joshani, 2022), thereby constructively impacting the psychological well-being of individuals.

However, it is essential to note that the relationship between personality qualities and emotional regulation is not consistently uniform and may be influenced by cultural and environmental factors. This cultural variability indicates that the adaptive or maladaptive nature of a strategy and its relationship with personality is not universal, which contributes to observed differences in emotion regulation strategy usage between Western and East Asian individuals, particularly concerning expressive suppression (Song et al., 2024).

Furthermore, various studies have demonstrated context-dependent effects, indicating that personality traits such as openness may interact with other qualities, such as neuroticism or cultural variables. For example, research on Chinese college students who practiced mindfulness and emotional control employed regulation strategies whereby cognitive reappraisal served as a mediator, whereas neuroticism and openness functioned as moderators (Li et al., 2025). Similarly, the effectiveness of extraversion in emotional regulation may depend on the existence of a social support network, whereas conscientiousness may not consistently predict the "up-regulation" of happy emotions as effectively as extraversion (Javaras et al., 2012).

Additionally, inconsistencies and challenges often associated with the "replication crisis" exist in psychological research regarding the relationship between personality traits and emotion regulation strategies. This crisis, characterized by a lower-than-expected rate of replicating previously published findings, has suggested that many studies may not yield consistent results across different samples or methodologies [CITE_1]. Moreover, certain meta-analyses as well as large-scale replication efforts have also revealed low replicability of trait-regulation associations across samples and methods. This research suggested that personality traits should not be viewed as robust, direct proxies for emotion regulation strategies, and that regulation should be considered as a state-like process moderated by situational, cultural, and methodological factors. This perspective aligns with findings that have highlighted the significance of coping flexibility, which is the ability to select and implement strategies according to situational demands, as a key indicator of psychological resilience (Springstein & English, 2023).

Another significant challenge relates to emotion regulation being postulated as situation-dependent, meaning that associations between personality and regulatory strategies can vary across individuals and conditions. Therefore, failing to account for person-specific variations when generalizing results would limit the credibility of such studies (Springstein & English, 2023).

Rationale for the study:

While there is substantial evidence showing relationships between personality traits (particularly the Big Five) and emotion regulation strategies, the consistency and replicability of these findings are subject to debate due to the replication crisis. Moreover, the complex interplay of individual differences, situational contexts, cultural norms, and methodological approaches further contributes to these inconsistencies. Therefore, advancing research in this area will support corroborating existing literature that elicits the associations between personality traits and emotion regulation strategies to better capture the dynamic and context-dependent nature of emotion regulation, ultimately leading to more robust and generalizable conclusions.

Research Methodology:

The collected data were cleaned, and missing cases were excluded. Considering the types of data collected, a Multivariate Regression Analysis was conducted. The assumptions for this type of regression were verified using the Durbin-Watson test, Variance Inflation Factor (VIF), Mahalanobis Distance, Cook's Distance, Leverage Values, standardised residual scores, their Q-Q plots, and by plotting these standardized residuals against predicted values. Six outliers that significantly influenced the regression equation were identified and removed. These analyses were conducted using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences.

Objective of the study:

To examine the individual and combined effect of the Big Five Personality Traits (Openness, Conscientiousness, Extraversion, Agreeableness, and Neuroticism) on emotion regulation strategies (Cognitive reappraisal and Expression Suppression).

Study Design and Sampling:

A Correlational research design was employed to investigate the effect of predictor variables (the Big 5 personality traits) on the outcome variables (Cognitive reappraisal and Expression Suppression).

Variables under study:

- Dependent variable: (DV1) – Cognitive reappraisal; (DV2) – Expression suppression.
- Independent variable: (IV1) – Openness; (IV2) – Conscientiousness; (IV3) – Extraversion; (IV4) – Agreeableness; (IV5) – Neuroticism.

Hypothesis:

- Null Hypothesis (H₀): The Big Five personality traits (Openness, Conscientiousness, Extraversion, Agreeableness, and Neuroticism) would not have individual and combined effects on emotion regulation strategies—expression suppression and cognitive reappraisal, which means that the Big Five personality traits cannot significantly predict the extent of expression suppression or cognitive reappraisal as adaptive strategies.
- Alternative Hypothesis (H_a): The Big Five personality traits (Openness, Conscientiousness, Extraversion, Agreeableness, and Neuroticism) would have individual and combined effects on emotion regulation strategies—expression suppression and cognitive reappraisal, which means that the Big Five personality traits can significantly predict the extent of expression suppression or cognitive reappraisal as adaptive strategies.

Operational definitions for the Big Five personality traits:

1. Openness to Experience refers to the degree to which an individual is creative, enterprising, explorative, and broad-minded. It incorporates an inclination towards novel encounters and a preference for variety and change (McCrae & Costa, 1997).
2. Conscientiousness is marked by a predisposition to being organized, responsible, goal-oriented, disciplined, and dependable. Individuals high in this trait tend to possess an inclination towards planning and hard work over spontaneity (Barrick & Mount, 1991).
3. Extraversion is a trait in which individuals often seek stimulation and are high in energy. They are predisposed towards being sociable and assertive and enjoy being with others.

4. Agreeableness is the propensity to be empathetic, harmonious, and trusting towards others. Individuals high on this trait are predisposed to being benevolent and prefer for social cohesion and a peaceful coexistence. ("Handbook of Personality Psychology," 1997).
5. Neuroticism describes individuals who have a propensity towards negative emotions such as depression, anxiety, and anger thereby enhancing their levels of emotional distress. Individuals high on neuroticism are usually characterized as emotionally unstable and tend to engage in maladaptive coping strategies, limiting their capacity to effectively regulate themselves (Costa & McCrae, 1980).

Operational definitions for expression suppression and cognitive reappraisal as emotion regulation strategies:

1. Expression Suppression—Expression suppression is a maladaptive emotion regulation strategy whereby individuals make conscious attempts to control their facial expressions, body language, and verbal cues in order to conceal their true feelings from others (Gross, 1998).
2. Cognitive Reappraisal—Cognitive reappraisal is an adaptive emotion regulation strategy that presupposes altering one's thoughts surrounding the situation (cognitive restructuring or modifying) in order to alter its emotional impact (Gross, 2002).

Study Participants (Sample size, sampling method, inclusion and exclusion criteria): Following data cleaning, researchers selected a total sample of 411 participants through purposive sampling.

Inclusion criteria: We selected participants studying graduate and postgraduate courses at the university level, aged 18-23 years, and fluent in the English language for this research.

Exclusion criteria: We excluded participants with a history of any severe physical or psychological disorders from this study.

Data collection tools:

We distributed data collection booklets that constituted the Sociodemographic Questionnaire, Emotion Regulation Questionnaire, and NEO-Five Factor Inventory to all students who provided their consent to participate in the study. Completion of the materials took 20 minutes. We communicated key information relevant to the research study, along with the confidentiality clause, to the participants.

Sociodemographic Sheet: A customised questionnaire was used to collect information regarding participants' name, age, gender, education level, ethnicity, and location.

Emotion Regulation Questionnaire (ERQ): James Gross and Oliver John (2003) developed the ERQ, a 10-item self-report tool, to measure how often people use two specific emotion regulation strategies: cognitive reappraisal and expressive suppression. The authors reported high reliability, with Cronbach's alpha values typically ranging from 0.75 to 0.82 for reappraisal and from 0.68 to 0.76 for suppression across different samples. The test-retest reliability was also reported as 0.69 over three months [CITE_118].

The NEO-Five Factor Inventory (NEO-FFI) is a shorter version of the NEO PI-R called the "Five-Factor Inventory" or "Five-Factor Model" (FFM). This psychometric assessment assesses individuals on the basis of the five main personality traits: Neuroticism, Extraversion, Openness to Experience, Agreeableness, and Conscientiousness. It consists of 60 items (12 per domain). The inventory usually uses a 5-point Likert scale that goes from "Strongly Disagree" to "Strongly Agree." It is self-reported and short, so it can usually be done in 10 to 15 minutes

(Preece et al., 2023). This tool generally has high reliability and validity, with Cronbach's alpha values (internal consistency) often between 0.70 and 0.90. However, the Openness to Experience (O) subscale may have lower reliability (around 0.40-0.60). Test-retest reliability is also strong, which means that the results remain stable over time. Validity is bolstered by consistent correlations with other personality assessments and its capacity to encapsulate the Big Five traits, although some studies have observed variations in factor structure across cultures, particularly regarding Agreeableness and Extraversion (Raju et al., 2025).

Statistical Analysis:

Reliability analysis for the NEO-FFI and Emotion Regulation Questionnaire was calculated using Cronbach's alpha. The NEO-FFI showed good internal consistency ($\alpha = .81$) and the Emotion Regulation Questionnaire had lower, yet still acceptable internal consistency ($\alpha = .75$). This indicates that the data collected are reliable.

A multivariate regression analysis was conducted to understand the relationships between five predictor variables – Openness to Experience, Conscientiousness, Extraversion, Agreeableness, and Neuroticism – and two outcome variables – Cognitive Reappraisal and Emotion Suppression.

To test for the assumptions of this method of analysis, various tests were run. Independence of observations was confirmed using the Durbin-Watson test as the values for both outcome variables were between 1.8 and 2. Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) was examined to check for multicollinearity, and it was found that the values were all between 1 and 1.06, confirming that the data are not multicollinear. Influential observations in the data were identified using Mahalanobis distance, Cook's distance, standardized residuals, and leverage values. The cases chosen violated the upper limits of 3 or more of these values; hence, 6 cases were chosen and deleted due to their undue influence on the regression equation. Homoscedasticity was tested for using scatterplots that plotted standardized predicted values against standardized residual scores for both outcome variables, as seen in Figures 1 and 2. Since no significant pattern is visible in the scatterplots, the data are homoscedastic. Multivariate normality was also checked by examining the Q-Q plots of the standardized residuals for alignment with the diagonal line, as seen in Figures 3 and 4. The plots do not deviate from the diagonal line significantly, so normality is assumed in this case considering the sample size ($n = 408$).

Figure 1

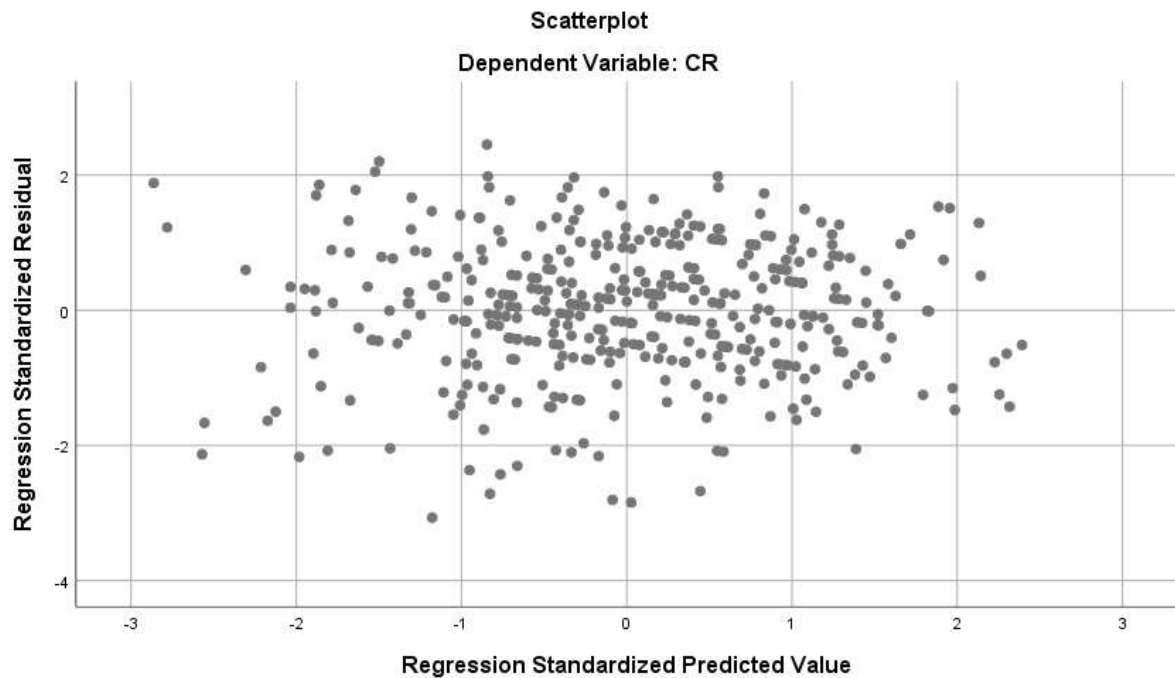


Figure 1 shows the scatterplot for standardized predicted values plotted against standardized residual scores for Cognitive Reappraisal.

Figure 2

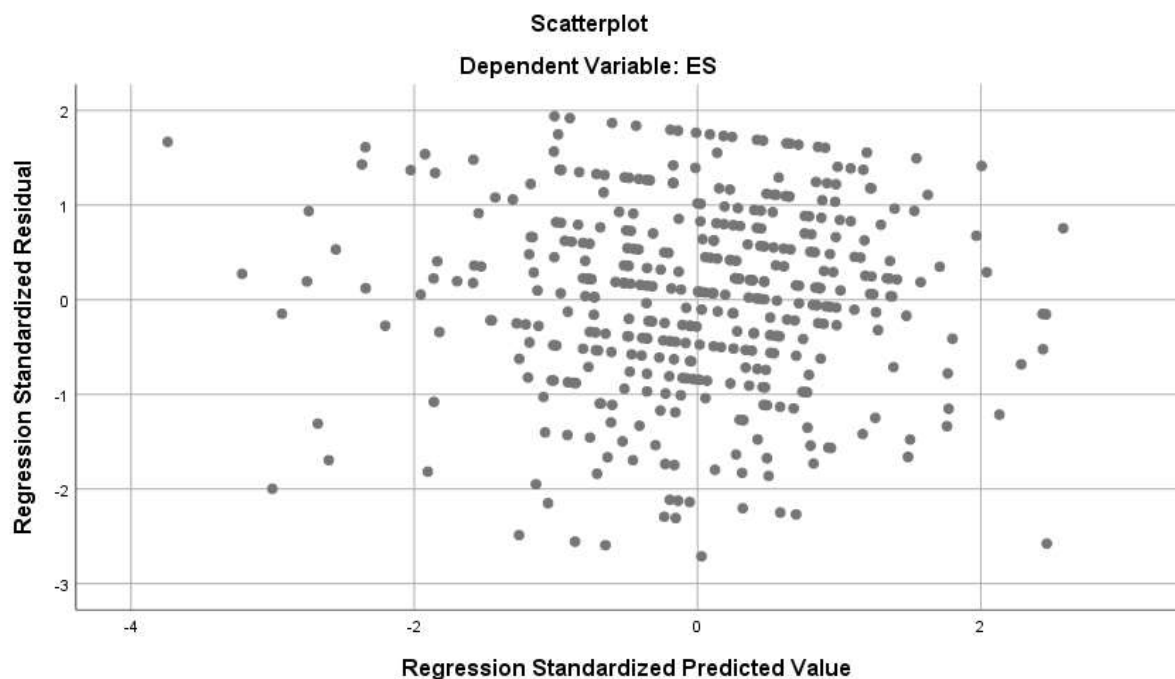


Figure 2 shows the scatterplot for standardized predicted values plotted against standardized residual scores for Expression Suppression.

Figure 3

Figure 3 shows the Q-Q plot for the standardized residual scores for Cognitive Reappraisal.

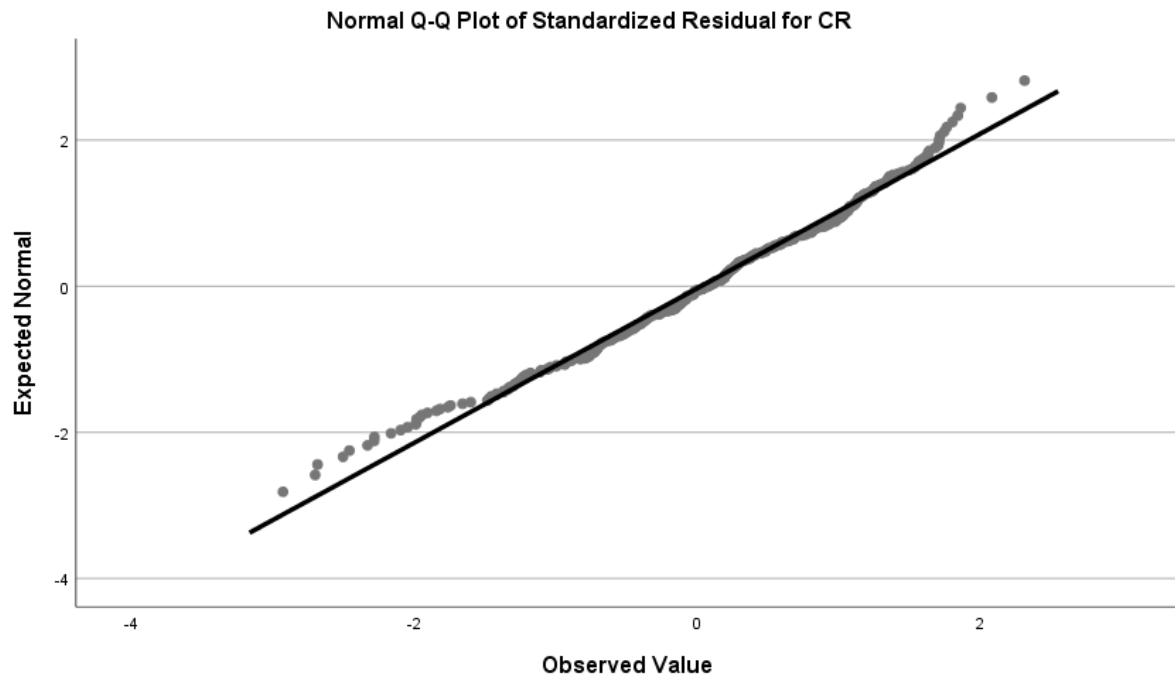
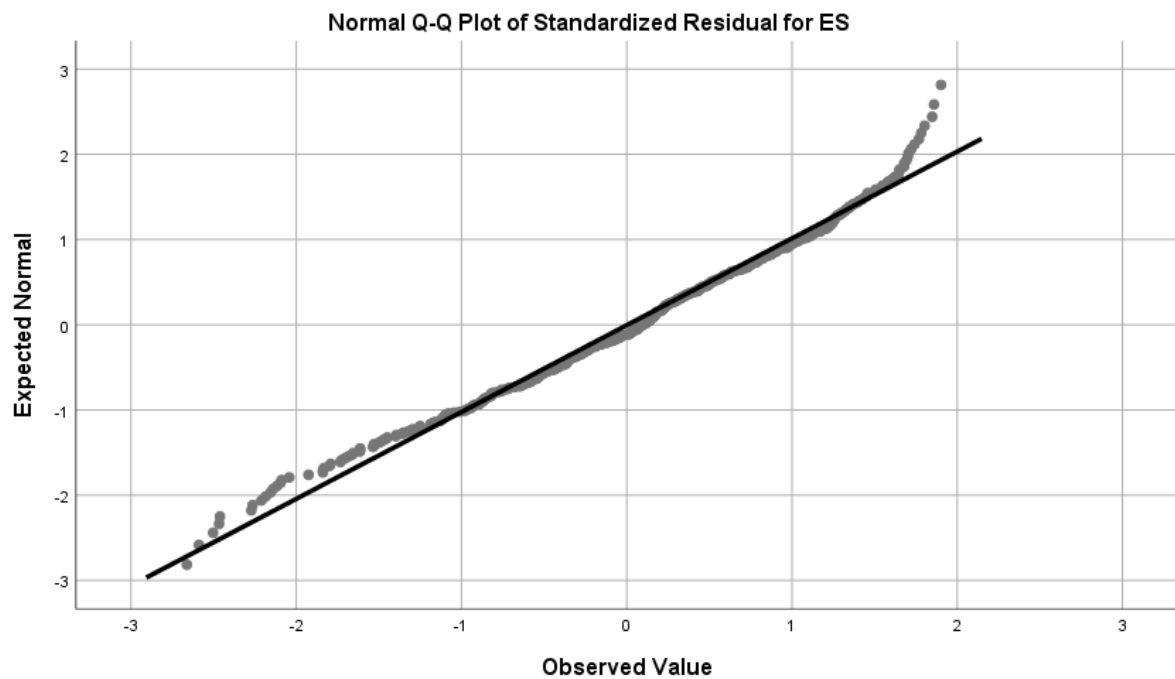


Figure 4

Figure 4 shows the Q-Q plot for the standardized residual scores for Expression Suppression.



Results:

Table 1: “Socio-demographic characteristics of the study participants” (N=411), (Age group-18-23 years)

“Demographic characteristics”		“N”	“ %”
“Gender”	Male	178	43.30%
	Female	233	56.69%
“Education”	Postgraduate	76	18.49%
	Undergraduate	335	81.50%
“Living arrangement”	Hostel	119	28.95%
	Paying guest	127	30.90%
	With parents	165	40.14%
“Domicile”	Rural	109	26.52%
	Urban	302	73.47%
“Stream of Study”	Engineering	155	37.71%
	Non-engineering	256	62.28%
“Household-income”	High income	23	5.59%
	Lower middle	120	29.19%
	Upper middle	268	65.20%
“Parenting style”	Joint parenting	324	78.83%
	Single parenting	87	21.16%

Table 2

Table 2 shows the results of the multivariate regression for the five predictor variables on the two outcome variables.

Effect	Pillai's Trace	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
Intercept	.150	35.252	.000	.150
Openness to Experience	.029	5.977	.003*	.029
Conscientiousness	.062	13.247	.000*	.062
Extraversion	.023	4.800	.009*	.023
Agreeableness	.001	.131	.877	.001
Neuroticism	.001	.138	.871	.001
*Significant after Holm-Bonferroni correction for 5 comparisons.				

As seen in Table 1, Openness to Experience had a significant multivariate effect on the combined outcome variables, Pillai's Trace = .029, $F_{(2, 401)} = 5.977$, $p = .003$, $\eta^2p = .029$. Conscientiousness also had a significant multivariate effect on the outcome variables, Pillai's Trace = .062, $F_{(2, 401)} = 13.247$, $p < .001$, $\eta^2p = .062$. Extraversion also had a significant multivariate effect on the outcome variables, Pillai's Trace = .023, $F_{(2, 401)} = 4.800$, $p = .009$, $\eta^2p = .023$. The multivariate effects for Agreeableness and Neuroticism are statistically insignificant. Despite the statistical significance, it is evident that the size of the effect of the three listed outcome variables is all small, with partial eta squared values of .029, .062, and .023 respectively.

Table 3

Table 3 shows the results of tests of between-subjects effects conducted on the five predictor variables and two outcome variables.

Source	Dependent Variable	Type III Sum of Squares	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
Openness to Experience	CR	12.215	10.762	.001*	.026
	ES	8.380	4.650	.032	.011
Conscientiousness	CR	28.366	24.992	.000*	.059
	ES	14.955	8.299	.004*	.020
Extraversion	CR	6.029	5.312	.022	.013
	ES	2.456	1.363	.244	.003

Agreeableness	CR	.296	.261	.610	.001
	ES	.090	.050	.823	.000
Neuroticism	CR	.233	.206	.650	.001
	ES	.294	.163	.687	.000
*Significant after Holm-Bonferroni correction for 10 comparisons.					

The results indicated that 9.2% of the variance in Cognitive Reappraisal can be explained by the predictor variables in this study (Adjusted $R^2 = 0.092$). However, only 1.8% of the variance in Expression Suppression is explained by the predictor variables (Adjusted $R^2 = 0.018$). As seen in Table 2, Openness to Experience had a significant effect on Cognitive Reappraisal ($F_{(1)} = 10.762$, $p = 0.001$, $\eta^2_p = 0.026$) but not on Expression Suppression. Conscientiousness had a significant effect on Cognitive Reappraisal ($F_{(1)} = 24.992$, $p < 0.001$, $\eta^2_p = 0.059$) and on Expression Suppression ($F_{(1)} = 8.299$, $p = 0.004$, $\eta^2_p = 0.020$). Extraversion, Agreeableness and Neuroticism did not have any significant effects on the outcome variables.

Table 4

Table 4 shows the parameter estimates for the predictor variables based on each outcome variable.

Dependent Variable	Parameter	b	Std. Error	95% CI		t	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
				Lower Bound	Upper Bound			
CR	Openness to Experience	-.036	.011	-.057	-.014	-3.281	.001*	.026
	Conscientiousness	.044	.009	.026	.061	4.999	.000*	.059
	Extraversion	.024	.010	.004	.044	2.305	.022	.013
	Agreeableness	.006	.012	-.017	.029	.510	.610	.001
	Neuroticism	-.004	.009	-.022	.014	-.454	.650	.001
ES	Openness to Experience	-.029	.014	-.056	-.003	-2.156	.032	.011
	Conscientiousness	.032	.011	.010	.053	2.881	.004*	.020
	Extraversion	-.015	.013	-.041	.010	-1.167	.244	.003

	Agreeableness	.003	.015	-.026	.032	.223	.823	.000
	Neuroticism	-.005	.011	-.027	.018	-.404	.687	.000
*Significant after Holm-Bonferroni correction for 10 comparisons.								

As seen in Table 4, Openness to Experience was found to have a slight negative effect on Cognitive Reappraisal ($b = -.036$, $SE = .011$, $p = .001$). Conscientiousness, on the other hand, had a slight positive effect on Cognitive Reappraisal ($b = .044$, $SE = .009$, $p < .001$). Extraversion, Agreeableness and Neuroticism did not seem to have a statistically significant effect on Cognitive Reappraisal.

With regard to Expression Suppression, Conscientiousness had a slight positive effect on Expression Suppression ($b = .032$, $SE = .011$, $p = .004$). The other predictor variables did not have a statistically significant effect on Expression Suppression.

Methods

The collected data were cleaned and missing cases excluded. Cronbach's Alpha was calculated for the data, confirming an acceptable level of internal consistency with regard to ERQ and NEO-FFI instruments employed in this study. Harman's Single-Factor Test was also conducted to check for common-method bias, which showed a variance of 7.71%, thus inferring that common method bias did not influence the data in this study. Considering the data collected, a multivariate multivariable regression analysis was conducted. The assumptions for this type of regression were verified using the Durbin-Watson test, Variance Inflation Factor (VIF), Mahalanobis Distance, Cook's Distance, Leverage Values, standardized residual scores, their Q-Q plots, and by plotting these standardized residuals against predicted values. Six outliers that unduly influenced the regression equation were identified and removed. These analyses were all conducted using Statistical Package for Social Sciences.

Ethical Considerations

Ethical approval for the study was obtained from the Reva Institutional Ethics Committee (RIEC) prior to data collection (Approval No.: 007/2025). The study adhered to the ethical standards outlined by the American Psychological Association (APA, 2017), ensuring participants' rights to anonymity, confidentiality, and voluntary participation. Participants were informed of their right to withdraw at any stage without consequences. Utmost care was taken to minimize potential distress, and participants were provided with contact details for psychological support if needed. The collected data was used solely for research purposes and stored securely in compliance with data protection and privacy standards.

Discussion

The correlation between the Big Five personality traits and emotion regulation strategies is a meticulously chronicled and scientifically validated area of research in personality and affective science. As demonstrated in this study, Openness to Experience had a significant multivariate effect on the combined outcome variables, whereas the between subject effect was obtained with cognitive reappraisal, but not with expression suppression. Here, despite the statistical significance, it was observed that the effect sizes were small with Openness to Experience having a slight negative effect on cognitive reappraisal. The results of this study substantiate results from existing literature that states the association between the trait of

Openness to Experience with cognitive flexibility rather than suppression (Giancola et al., 2024), (Li et al., 2025), (Montoliu et al., 2023), (Forgeard et al., 2022). However, the negative effect of Openness to Experience on cognitive reappraisal can be explained through the current cultural transition that is trending in the Asian regions, influencing the young adults to lean less towards emotion regulation strategies such as reappraisal and suppression and preferring strategies that are inspired by cultural values such as “acceptance”, “mindfulness”, “distraction” and “avoidance”, (L. Qiu et al., 2026), (Hongru Song et al., 2024).

Despite the small effect sizes, Conscientiousness was found to have a significant combined as well as individual effect on both the outcome variables, with a slight positive effect on cognitive reappraisal as well as expression suppression. Substantiating these results, existing evidence has also demonstrated that individuals high in conscientiousness are capable of downregulating negative emotions through the practice of cognitive reappraisal, as reflected in the neural mechanisms responsible for such regulation. The correlation of conscientiousness with structured behaviour and impulse control capacity predisposes the adoption of cognitive restructuring of the stressful event, which enables effective emotional outcomes (Cheng et al., 2018), (Corbeanu, 2023). Additionally, the positive effect of conscientiousness on reappraisal and suppression as delineated in this study could be due to the influence of various contextual and developmental factors such as age, gender, culture, and life experiences that impact the regulatory capacities of individuals during different stages of their lives (Jafary & Ashrafi, 2022; Karmakar & Ghosh, 2023; Musso et al., 2024). Given this, Indian society is largely regarded as a collectivist society, with an emphasis on social cohesion, harmony, and family values over individual desires, where emotional constraint is given primary importance, reflecting the tendency to adopt suppression strategies to conform to social rules, which explains the implicit nuances underlying the employment of both strategies (Mouatsou & Koutra, 2021).

Moving forward, extraversion had a combined multivariate effect on both the outcome variables, however no significant between subject effects on both reappraisal and suppression. Additionally, agreeableness and neuroticism also revealed no significant individual or combined effects on either of the outcome variables. This could fundamentally be due to certain barriers related to the over-reliance on self-report measures, which are susceptible to biases such as social acceptability. The absence of experimental studies also limits the delineation of causal links between this trait and real-time regulatory choices (Preece et al., 2023). Additionally, various other studies have also determined age to be a moderating variable, with emotion regulation mediating the relationship between personality traits and well-being outcomes. Various studies have elicited that with progressing age, an individual’s dependency on active emotion regulation strategies reduces, possibly due to cognitive changes associated with greater emotional maturity (Luo & Huang, 2016), (Kobylińska et al., 2020), (Oriyama et al., 2024). Furthermore, in addition to age, gender is also seen to mediate the relationship between personality traits and emotion regulation strategies, highlighting the significance of developmental factors along with inherent personality traits influencing the choice of adaptive strategy (Gubler et al., 2020; Kokkinos & Voulgaridou, 2022; Oriyama et al., 2024; Zhao et al., 2023)

In summary, the results of this investigation suggest the influence of cultural factors that could have shaped these findings. Existing literature has demonstrated Indian participants utilizing cognitive reappraisal more than the U.S. counterparts (A. Mehta et al., 2017; Fonseca et al., 2018). Conversely, other research delineated a preference for expression suppression among collectivist Asian societies with a higher preference to maintain social harmony as compared to reappraisal which was viewed as a short-term adaptive strategy (S. Keng et al., 2017; Chen et al., 2025). Therefore, even though there is limited investigation carried out in this area of

study, it can be inferred that culture can potentially influence the manner in which individuals choose to regulate themselves.

In conclusion, India is denoted traditionally as a collectivist society based on strong Asian values, with emphasis on social solidarity. The inclination towards employing cognitive reappraisal as well as expression suppression, as seen in this study's results, signifies a “unique juxtaposition” reflecting the co-existence of collectivist values with a rising trend of modern values, reflective of individualistic aspirations, motivated by urbanisation and the growth of nuclear families.

Therefore, to mitigate the ambiguity that persists regarding the relationship between personality traits and emotion regulation strategies, reducing the dependency on cross-sectional data and preferring longitudinal and experience-sampling studies, along with due consideration of socio-cultural and biological factors, could allow for the presentation of better causal inferences, as well as an examination of temporal precedence and within-person processes in daily life (Chen et al., 2025),(Metts et al., 2024). Finally, employing developmental studies that examine the relationships from adolescence into later adulthood would help substantiate better understanding for consolidation of these trait strategies.

Nevertheless, such evidence accentuates the need to develop interventions targeting emotion regulation skills through psychotherapeutic approaches such as Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT), Rational Emotive Behavioural Therapy (REBT) and Dialectical Behaviour Therapy (DBT) that focus on inculcating the skill of cognitive reappraisal in order to reduce the dependency on expression suppression, facilitating adoption of adaptive strategies that accentuate the establishment of optimal psychological well-being. In summary, personality traits can be viewed as significant factors that help determine individual differences in emotion regulation, paving the way for the development of pragmatic implications for mental health and well-being across the lifespan.

Important Consideration

It is essential to note that factors such as differences in students' cross-cultural immersion, social desirability effects, distinct group characteristics, and differential performance metrics could potentially cause context-specific effects. However, Common method bias as well as post hoc tests were conducted to minimize measurement error and the possibility of any Type I errors, thus generating credible results positively contributing to the body of enquiry.

Conclusion & Implications

This line of inquiry signifies the interplay of innate characteristics of an individual's personality with vital regulatory processes, and furnishes a perceptive insight into the study of persisting personality structures that correspond to coping strategies adopted by individuals to effectively regulate themselves at times of emotionally volatile situations. It is essential to note that substantial efforts were made to reduce common method bias by adopting statistical as well as procedural remedies such as introducing time delays between measuring the independent and dependent variables in order to reduce priming; ensuring the respondents' protection of anonymity in order to minimize the effect of social desirability, utilising different Likert scale types and randomising the questionnaire questions in order to prevent response pattern habits.

From a theoretical perspective, such a study appraises and refines the integrative models of personality and emotion, particularly Gross's Process Model of Emotion Regulation, which postulates how antecedent-focused strategies, such as cognitive reappraisal, modify the interpretation of a situation before an emotional response occurs. Cognitive reappraisal is considered an adaptive regulatory strategy, as opposed to the response-focused strategy, such as expressive suppression, which impedes the outward expression of a pre-existing emotion.

In this context, examining personality as a predictor of strategy preference provides insights into essential variables that assist in elucidating individual differences regarding regulatory predispositions. For instance, in this research, traits like Extraversion and Openness were correlated to adaptive regulatory profiles, such as cognitive reappraisal, which supports the mapping of the personality structure that configures an individual's default regulatory mechanism.

Clinically, this research has noteworthy practical applications for the treatment and prevention of mental health issues. Young adulthood is a period dominated by various emotional and mental disorders, including anxiety and depression, both of which are characterised by emotion dysregulation. By identifying specific personality-related susceptibilities, such as in the case of an individual belonging to a profile of high Neuroticism and low conscientiousness, that predict the enduring adoption of expression suppression, can be an important point of consideration for the clinician while developing specific, personalized interventions to address the underlying trait-related tendencies. For example, a young adult with high neuroticism might benefit from mindfulness-based training to enhance their endurance towards negative affect before being educated about the more cognitively demanding skill of reappraisal.

Developmentally, young adulthood represents a period of intense identity formation, social role transitions, and ongoing neural maturation, particularly in the prefrontal cortex—the brain region responsible for top-down cognitive control and reappraisal (Ferschmann et al., 2021). Hitherto, various studies have elucidated the correlation between personality and emotion regulation strategies prevalent during this period which have particularly highlighted the complex interplay of biological constraints (e.g., genetic predispositions to high emotional reactivity) and socio-cognitive learning (e.g., internalizing cultural norms about emotional expression). Here, distinct personality profiles are significantly associated with different patterns of emotion regulation strategies, proposing that it is the configuration of traits, not just individual dimensions, which influences the self-regulatory capacities of individuals (Karababa, 2025). Furthermore, the milieu of young adulthood is characterized by new intimate relationships and professional pressures that provide a unique window to expand understanding of their regulatory strategies. Research has assessed how an authoritative parenting style in childhood predicted greater use of cognitive reappraisal and more prosocial behaviour in young adulthood, illustrating the long-term developmental pathways that connect early environment, personality development, and later regulatory competence (Kang & Guo, 2021). Such insights could prove to be valuable contributions to this body of knowledge.

The implications also extend to the influence of cultural norms that shape both the expression of personality and the social acceptability of different emotion regulation strategies. In atomized societies that desire authenticity and self-expression, expressive suppression is widely negatively recognized and associated with poor well-being. However, in socio-centric societies that give precedence to solidarity, expressive suppression may be seen as a discrete and conscientious move (Klein et al., 2024). Therefore, examining these associations across diverse cultural contexts is necessary to prevent parochial conclusions while supporting the discernment of conditions under which certain personality-regulation links hold true. This insight is also supported by a binational study that compared Chinese and German youth and found noteworthy cultural differences with regard to the chronic use of both cognitive reappraisal and expressive suppression, accentuating the need for culturally sensitive models .

Finally, this research indicates the possibility of a comprehensive social relevance regarding the examination of how discrete personality traits can shape specific emotion regulation strategies that can prime various public health initiatives, improve educational curricula, and

initiate workplace wellness programs, thereby positively impacting the psychological and physical well-being of individuals.

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