



Emotional Regulation And Life Satisfaction Among Homemakers In Lower Socioeconomic Status

Ms. Pavithra. S and Ms. Akshara

Coach and Mentor in HR(L&OD) & Psychology, Assistant Professor

Department of Psychology - PG Studies

Jain (Deemed-to-be University), Centre for Distance and Online Education, Bengaluru, India

Abstract:

The present study investigates the relationship between emotional regulation strategies and life satisfaction among homemakers from lower socioeconomic backgrounds. The primary aim is to examine the effects of two key emotional regulation strategies, such as emotional suppression and cognitive reappraisal, on life satisfaction. A quantitative research design was employed, utilizing a sample of 200 homemakers selected through random sampling to ensure the representation of individuals from lower socioeconomic backgrounds. Participants completed the Emotion Regulation Questionnaire (ERQ) and the Satisfaction with Life Scale (SWLS). Descriptive statistics, including mean and standard deviation, were calculated for emotional suppression, cognitive reappraisal, and life satisfaction scores. Pearson's correlation coefficient was used to assess the relationship between these variables. The results revealed a significant positive correlation between emotional regulation strategies and life satisfaction ($r = 0.21$) and statistically significant ($p = 0.001967$, $\alpha = 0.05$), suggesting that effective emotional regulation may enhance life satisfaction among homemakers in lower socioeconomic settings. Future research could investigate how various factors influence the connection between emotional regulation and life satisfaction. Additionally, intervention studies aimed at strengthening cognitive reappraisal skills could be designed and evaluated, as such programs may enhance emotional well-being and overall life satisfaction within this target group.

Keywords: *Emotions, Emotional Regulation, Life Satisfaction, Cognitive Reappraisal, Emotional Suppression, Homemakers, Lower socioeconomic status.*

INTRODUCTION

Emotions:

Emotions are real words to describe a normal part of life that affects how we perceive the world, make decisions, relationships, and love. Human behavior, decision-making, and day-to-day life are deeply influenced by emotions, which can brighten our world with laughter and happiness or tear it apart during moments of separation. According to Paul Ekman (1992), emotions are brief, intense, and specific responses to particular stimuli. For example, when you suddenly hear a loud noise, your fear puts you through the evaluation process immediately. However, we must respond to these emotions in a quick way to control our emotions during anger, fear, sadness, and so on. The term cognitive appraisal was first introduced by Richard Lazarus (1991), who argues that our reaction to emotions depends on what we make of a situation. Two identical events can give rise to very different reactions of two people. Cognitive appraisal is broken down into primary and secondary appraisal. Determining whether an event is a threat, challenge, or nonissue and then determining what resources we have to cope with that one is involved. The

strategies of mindfulness, cognitive restructuring, and a variety of strategies aimed at emotional regulation can be used by people to cope with any such kind of feelings as fear, sadness, and anger. Gross and John (2003) identified two primary emotional regulation strategies: emotional suppression and cognitive reappraisal. Emotional suppression is more generally related to worse psychological outcomes, while cognitive reappraisal, which reinterprets situations, is linked to better emotional well-being and cognitive flexibility. Suppressing emotions can increase stress, decrease social interactions, and make it more difficult to work out depression and anxiety problems. Some of these maladaptive coping mechanisms contribute to depression or anxiety (Aldao, Nolen-Hoeksema, and Schweizer, 2010), while this struggle with emotional management leads to rerouting into maladaptive coping mechanisms like rumination or avoidance of emotions. People who have difficulty controlling their emotions may be too committed to them, making it that much harder to deal with everyday stressors (Linehan, 1993).

Emotional regulation:

Emotional regulation refers to the processes individuals use to manage their emotional responses to both internal and external stimuli. According to Gross (1998), emotional regulation encompasses a range of strategies that either enhance or diminish emotional responses and identifies two primary strategies:

1. **Cognitive Reappraisal:** This involves reinterpreting or reframing a situation to alter its emotional impact.
2. **Emotional Suppression:** This strategy pertains to the inhibition of the outward expression of emotions. Research has shown that, on average, cognitive reappraisal is associated with positive psychological outcomes, such as improved psychological well-being and resilience. In contrast, emotional suppression is linked to negative outcomes, including increased levels of anxiety and depression.

Emotional regulation is an important aspect of mental health, just as emotional dysregulation is significant in understanding psychological issues. According to John and Gross (2004) found that individuals who frequently use cognitive reappraisal, an emotion regulation strategy, tend to experience more positive emotions, greater life satisfaction, and overall well-being. Supporting this, Garnefski and Kraaij (2007) provided evidence that cognitive reappraisal contributes to greater psychological resilience and higher life satisfaction, particularly among those facing stress. Nezlek and Kuppens (2008) also noted that cognitive reappraisal can enhance emotional stability and life satisfaction during challenging situations.

Further research by Aldao, Nolen-Hoeksema, and Schweizer (2010) revealed that the effectiveness of emotional regulation strategies varies depending on context and individual differences, such as personality traits and social support. They found that individuals who use adaptive strategies, like cognitive reappraisal, are often better equipped to handle stressful situations. In contrast, those who rely on maladaptive strategies, such as avoidance or rumination, tend to experience significantly higher levels of emotional distress and psychological problems. McRae et al. (2012) demonstrated that cognitive reappraisal not only alleviates negative experiences but also enhances overall life satisfaction.

Cognitive Reappraisal:

Academic literature has extensively discussed the field of cognitive reappraisal, a key emotion regulation technique. James J. Gross (1998) laid the foundation for a seminal work in the cognitive reappraisal process model of emotion regulation. Gross offers a thorough explanation of the cognitive reappraisal strategy, which is the change of thought of an emotion-provoking situation to change the resulting emotional response. Further work in this area has been conducted by Kevin N. Ochsner (Ochsner & Gross, 2005), who has examined the neural mechanisms, especially in the prefrontal cortex, for cognitive reappraisal. John D. Creswell (2017) continues to expand on this topic, speculating on the uses of cognitive reappraisal in the clinical setting and how it might be used to manage trauma and improve overall wellness. Together, then, these researchers' contributions help to illuminate the role that cognitive reappraisal plays in emotion regulation and the development of emotional resilience.

Emotional Suppression:

A commonly deployed emotion regulation strategy called emotional suppression has been widely studied by many researchers. In his process model of emotion regulation, James J. Gross (1998) distinguishes cognitive reappraisal from emotional suppression, the two primary techniques that he names. Although behavioral suppression may decrease the outward expression of emotional content, Gross and Levenson (1997) show that this may have adverse psychosocial and physiologic outcomes; behavioral suppression

is correlated with increased stress and increased sympathetic activation. Richard Lazarus (1991) was a pioneer of emotion and coping theories and has proposed that emotional suppression can prevent the use of opportunistic emotional coping mechanisms, thus leading to diminished emotional well-being. They also report that the social costs of suppression are lower relationship satisfaction and poor communication (Philippot and Feldman, 2004). Together, these researchers have made a significant contribution to our understanding of the 'win' of short-term emotional suppression as short-term but 'losing' down the line emotionally and relationally. This highlights the intricate balance between managing one's emotions at the moment and fostering healthy long-term relationships. Ultimately, acknowledging and expressing emotions may lead to more fulfilling interactions and enhanced emotional resilience over time.

Mittal and Roohi (2020) found that emotional regulation strategies, particularly emotional suppression and cognitive reappraisal, are effective for life satisfaction. The outcomes showed a strong positive correlation of .78 between effective emotional regulation and higher levels of life satisfaction. This indicates that those who are better at managing their emotions through cognitive reappraisal, that is, reframing negative situations as more positive, tend to have higher general life satisfaction.

Khattak et al. (2024) found a strong positive link between emotional regulation and life satisfaction, with effective regulation reducing stress and enhancing well-being. The study revealed gender differences, as men reported higher use of cognitive reappraisal, which is associated with better outcomes than emotional suppression. These differences may stem from societal norms, highlighting the need for further research into how gender influences emotional regulation and well-being.

Life satisfaction:

Life satisfaction is the first key element about life satisfaction which is an individual's subjective well-being; it is the one's opinion about how much he likes his life. According to Diener (1984), the concept of life satisfaction measures the number of various facts of life, relating to relationships, jobs, health, and financial stability. In Diener et al. (1985), they extended to say that life satisfaction was not only about happiness but also about psychological health and resilience. In their results from 1996, they revealed that people's social and environmental conditions do have an impact on their total life satisfaction. Those who had more social support connections were more satisfied with life. Additionally, it was determined that psychological well-being included elements of happiness, positive growth, as well as the meaning of life, and positive relationships (Ryff and Keyes, 1995). Research by Gonzalez et al. (2016) indicated that emotional regulation can increase life satisfaction in low socioeconomic status (SES) homemakers.

Bansod (2023) found that life satisfaction among urban elderly in India is shaped by both health and socio-demographic factors. Good self-rated health, functional ability, and positive mental health contribute to higher life satisfaction, while depressive symptoms and impairments reduce it. Income, education, gender, and marital status also influence well-being by affecting access to resources and social support.

Homemakers:

Low socioeconomic status, day-to-day homemakers end up having a high possibility of emotional adversities. Stress from basic needs, such as housing and food, and educating their children, is a big source of anxiety in the ongoing. This constant pressure makes it hard for them to keep up with households as it feels like they will never stop and start to affect them emotionally and physically. Matters about life satisfaction can improve mental health to the extent that a lack of it will bring about depression or anxiety. However, research shows homemakers can be fierce survivors, living with dignity after marriage and in the face of the family and surrounding countryside. Family structure and social dynamics are valued by them, and they are essential in their families and society. Bianchi et al. (2000) find variance in experiences according to socioeconomic and cultural factors but clarify that homemakers aspire to satisfy household and community care. People in stressful, low-income environments often feel their inadequacy and feel worse online, in turn. Duncan and Smith (2002) observe that many low and middle-class women are accruing high debt to their families, forcing them to forego their own goals to the detriment of their well-being. The level of social exclusion is magnified because many homemakers cannot access critical networks and community services, which implies isolation (Wang et al., 2019). For example, Cohen et al. (2006) found that involvement in community activity increases emotional well-being. The presence of a strong social network increases life satisfaction and emotional stability. Cognitive reappraisal and related emotional regulation strategies increase or promote resilience (Gonzalez et al., 2016). The need for designing community interventions that suit homemaker experiences is absolute.

Socioeconomic status:

It is the social position of an individual or a family in a given society, which may also have some relationship with education, income, occupation, experience of work, and resource availability. Adler et al. (1994) stated that poor health and higher levels of distress have a consistent relationship with lower socioeconomic status. Economically disadvantaged people are hard to access health, education, and jobs. Also, Cutuli (2014) points out that in lower socioeconomic classes, people have to experience financial responsibilities and lose the social support of people in higher classes. In reality, all of these things can make your existing emotional and psychological problems worse. Also (Gallo & Matthews 2003) points out that this exposure to stressors is progressive because of economic hardship and social discrimination such exposure can progressively subject a person, an individual to further stress, which is, such situating to having anxiety and depression and such also can adversely affect a person's well-being. It is so far spread, and so clear that socioeconomic status is such a determining factor in the different aspects of one's life. Lack of service of qualified services; social isolation; and financial insecurity. They might also disrupt their emotional regulation and life satisfaction, as well. However, research shows that people from lower socioeconomic groups are more likely to have stress, anxiety, and depression. This could be used to contribute to the knowledge of the relationship between emotional regulation and life satisfaction in this group and provide new evidence on the relationship to the development of mental health and social policies and intervention programs.

Hypothesis:

- There is no significant correlation between emotional regulation strategies (cognitive reappraisal and emotional suppression) and life satisfaction among homemakers in lower SES.
- There is a significant correlation between emotional regulation strategies (cognitive reappraisal and emotional suppression) and life satisfaction among homemakers in lower SES.

NEED AND SIGNIFICANCE:

This research is significant because it highlights how emotional regulation affects life satisfaction among homemakers in lower SES. Understanding this relationship can lead to targeted interventions that improve emotional well-being and overall quality of life. The study's findings can guide the development of practical emotional regulation strategies for homemakers to enhance their life satisfaction. Techniques like cognitive reappraisal can help them manage emotions and reduce stress. These strategies can be integrated into programs to improve their overall well-being.

Research Gaps

- This study aims to investigate the correlation between emotional regulation and life satisfaction among homemakers of lower socioeconomic status. The findings of this research can provide valuable insights to support these women in enhancing their emotional well-being and overall life satisfaction.
- While extensive research has been conducted on the impact of emotional regulation and life satisfaction among housewives from average or higher socioeconomic strata, there is a notable gap regarding those in lower socioeconomic circumstances.

Statement of the Research Problem

Homemakers from lower socioeconomic status often face emotional and life challenges, such as financial instability, limited access to services, and reduced social support, all of which can impact their emotional regulation and overall life satisfaction. Studying this group helps to understand the specific challenges they encounter. Many research shows that people living in these lower backgrounds are more vulnerable to stress, anxiety, and depression due to constant socioeconomic pressures. Focusing on homemakers in this group could provide insight into how they manage their emotional well-being in such situations. Studying emotional regulation and life satisfaction among homemakers can provide insights to inform social policies and intervention programs that are aimed at improving their mental health support and overall quality of life.

Research Objectives

1. To investigate the correlation between emotional regulation strategies (cognitive reappraisal and emotional suppression) and life satisfaction among homemakers of lower socio-economic status.
2. To promote awareness about the challenges faced by homemakers from lower socioeconomic backgrounds and to emphasize the role of emotional regulation in enhancing their quality of life.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Variables under study:

Independent variable: Emotional Regulation

Emotional regulation refers to how individuals manage and modify their emotional responses. Two primary strategies are considered:

1. **Cognitive Reappraisal:** Changing the way one thinks about a situation to alter its emotional impact. It is often linked to positive outcomes like improved well-being and reduced stress.
2. **Emotional Suppression:** Involves holding back or controlling the outward expression of emotions. This can lead to negative effects, such as increased anxiety and lower life satisfaction.

Dependent Variable: Life Satisfaction

1. Life satisfaction measures an individual's overall assessment of their well-being and happiness. It reflects contentment with various aspects of life, including emotional, social, and financial factors. The study examines how different emotional regulation strategies impact homemakers' life satisfaction, particularly those of lower socioeconomic status.

TOOLS EMPLOYED FOR DATA COLLECTION

SAMPLE CRITERIA

Included Sample:

- Economic Status: Individuals who belong to a lower socioeconomic status.

Excluded Sample:

- Mental Health Conditions: Participants with diagnosed mental health disorders that may affect emotional regulation (e.g., severe depression, anxiety disorders).
- Economic Status: Individuals with higher and middle socioeconomic status are excluded.

Sampling Technique:

- Random sampling, where every individual in a population has an equal chance of being selected for the study.

Sampling Size:

A total of 200 homemakers from lower socioeconomic status in North Bengaluru were selected for the study. Participants were identified based on their living conditions, such as housing quality, neighborhood environment, and limited access to healthcare and education for their children. Many rely on daily earnings and work in low-paying jobs like domestic work, street vending, construction labor, and laundry services.

Measures:

For data collection, standardized questionnaires were utilized to maintain the reliability and validity of the tools employed. The Emotion Regulation Questionnaire (ERQ) was specifically used to measure the emotional regulation strategies of participants, emphasizing cognitive reappraisal and emotional suppression. This self-report measure consists of multiple items rated by participants on a Likert scale, offering valuable insights into their emotional regulation strategies. Furthermore, the Satisfaction with Life Scale (SWLS) was employed to assess the overall life satisfaction of the homemakers. This scale includes a set of statements that participants respond to, thereby reflecting their subjective well-being. These well-

established instruments ensured a reliable and robust framework for collecting meaningful data from homemakers in lower socioeconomic groups.

Emotion Regulation Questionnaire (ERQ) by Gross, J.J., & John, O.P. (2003) The Emotional Regulation Questionnaire is a 10-item scale designed by Gross & John (2003) used to measure respondents' tendency to regulate their emotions in two ways: (1) Cognitive Reappraisal (6 items) and (2) Expressive Suppression (4 items). Participants score each item on a 7-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree).

Satisfaction With Life Scale (SWLS) by Diener, E., Emmons, R. A., Larsen, R. J., & Griffin, S. (1985). The Satisfaction with Life Scale is a 5-item scale designed to assess one's life satisfaction by a measure of their global cognitive judgment. Respondents answer each item on a 7-point Likert-type scale ranging from 7 (strongly agree) to 1 (strongly disagree).

Statistical Assessment:

For data analysis, descriptive statistics were used to summarize and organize the data, providing key measures such as the mean and standard deviation for emotional regulation and life satisfaction scores. This offered an overview of the participants' emotional regulation strategies and life satisfaction levels. Pearson's correlation coefficient was applied to evaluate the strength and direction of the relationship between emotional regulation and life satisfaction. P-values were used to determine whether the observed correlation between these variables was statistically significant.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS:

Descriptive Statistics:

- The mean and standard deviation (SD) were calculated for the key variables: Cognitive Reappraisal, Emotional Suppression, and Life Satisfaction.
- Table 1 shows the overall mean and SD of the emotional regulation strategies (ERQ) and life satisfaction (SWLS).

Table 1: Descriptive Statistics for Emotional Regulation and Life Satisfaction

Variable	Mean	SD
Emotional Regulation	40.38	2.25
Life Satisfaction	20.61	1.46

Table 1 presents the mean and standard deviation (SD) of the overall emotional regulation strategies and life satisfaction. The mean score for emotional regulation is 40.38, with a standard deviation of 2.25. This suggests that, on average, homemakers of lower socioeconomic status reported moderate levels of emotional regulation. The relatively small standard deviation indicates little variability in emotional regulation strategies among these individuals, suggesting that most participants used similar levels of emotional regulation.

The life satisfaction score, with a mean of 20.61 and an SD of 1.46, is comparatively lower. This points to a generally low level of life satisfaction among homemakers, with minimal variation across the sample. The lower life satisfaction scores compared to the higher emotional regulation scores suggest that while homemakers use emotional regulation strategies, these may not fully translate into higher life satisfaction. This could indicate the impact of other factors or stressors in their environment that affect their overall well-being.

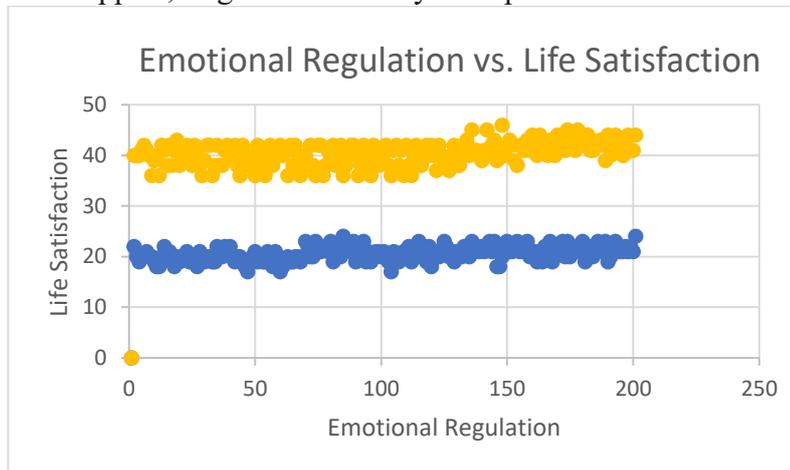
Correlation Analysis:

- Pearson's correlation coefficient was calculated to examine the relationship between emotional regulation strategies and life satisfaction.
- Table 2 shows the correlation between emotional suppression, cognitive reappraisal, and life satisfaction.

Table 2: Pearson Correlation Coefficient Between Variables

Variable	Correlation (r)
Emotional Regulation	0.21
Life Satisfaction	

Table 2 presents the correlation coefficient ($r = 0.21$) between emotional regulation and life satisfaction. The positive correlation suggests that as emotional regulation improves, life satisfaction also tends to increase, although the strength of this relationship is weak. While emotional regulation contributes to enhancing life satisfaction, the low correlation value ($r = 0.21$) implies that emotional regulation alone is not sufficient to account for significant changes in life satisfaction. This finding emphasizes that while emotional regulation strategies may be beneficial, additional factors or interventions, such as mental health and socioeconomic support, might be necessary to improve life satisfaction substantially.



This figure illustrates the relationship between emotional regulation and life satisfaction among homemakers of lower socioeconomic status. Each point on the scatter plot represents an individual's scores for emotional regulation (x-axis) and life satisfaction (y-axis). The plot displays multiple series, indicating different groups within the sample. Overall, the data reveals a weak positive correlation between emotional regulation and life satisfaction, suggesting that higher levels of emotional regulation do not significantly correspond to increased life satisfaction in this population. Most data points cluster in a limited range for life satisfaction, highlighting potential factors that may contribute to low life satisfaction regardless of emotional regulation levels.

The correlation between emotional regulation and life satisfaction was positive ($r = 0.21$) with a p-value of 0.001967. This means the relationship is statistically significant at a 5% significance level ($p < 0.05$), suggesting that emotional regulation strategies like cognitive reappraisal and emotional suppression are related to life satisfaction among homemakers of lower socioeconomic status. This suggests that while promoting emotional regulation, especially cognitive reappraisal could be a part of interventions aimed at improving well-being, addressing broader structural and contextual factors is equally important. Interventions should target both individual emotional strategies and the external stressors faced by this population. Mental health services, financial support, and community-based programs can complement emotional regulation training to improve life satisfaction among homemakers in lower SES.

LIMITATIONS:

This study has some limitations. The limitations are as follows:

- The sample size may limit the generalizability of the findings.
- Other influencing factors like mental health and social support were not included, which could also impact life satisfaction.

The results may show stronger relationships between emotional regulation and life satisfaction. It also provides a more comprehensive understanding of what influences life satisfaction among homemakers of lower economic status.

IMPLICATIONS:

The study highlights the need for emotional regulation training, particularly cognitive reappraisal, to improve life satisfaction among homemakers of lower socio-economic status. It suggests that intervention programs focused on emotional well-being could enhance their overall quality of life. By equipping homemakers with better emotional regulation strategies, such programs may help alleviate some of the challenges they face, potentially leading to improved life satisfaction and overall well-being.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

Future research should explore additional factors such as mental health and social support that provide a more comprehensive understanding of life satisfaction among homemakers of lower socioeconomic status. It would be beneficial to conduct workshops that teach effective strategies like cognitive reappraisal and reduce reliance on emotional suppression, as these skills can help homemakers manage stress and improve emotional resilience. Providing counseling services and access to mental health professionals for early detection and treatment of emotional distress, anxiety, or depression is also crucial. Establishing community-based support groups where homemakers can share experiences, build social connections, and offer mutual support would help reduce social isolation. Additionally, offering life-skills training, such as problem-solving and communication skills along with stress management techniques, would empower homemakers to handle daily challenges more effectively. Raising awareness about the importance of emotional regulation and mental health through community education programs can reduce stigma and promote healthy coping strategies. Promoting self-care activities such as mindfulness and relaxation techniques, would help homemakers prioritize their emotional well-being. Lastly, future research should examine diverse populations to understand varying influences on emotional regulation, while ongoing evaluation of intervention effectiveness is essential for continuous improvement. Awareness campaigns can further educate homemakers about the significance of emotional regulation in enhancing life satisfaction.

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