

Emotional Regulation and Subjective Well-Being in Adolescents: A Systematic Review

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Abstract

Introduction: Emotional regulation and its relationship with subjective well-being are relevant phenomena to study, especially during adolescence, a critical period marked by significant changes in mental health and social development. These antecedents underscore the importance of studying how emotional regulation can act as a protective factor for adolescents' subjective well-being.

Purpose: The purpose of this systematic review was to investigate the impact of emotional regulation on adolescents' subjective well-being.

Methodology: The search was conducted following the PRISMA methodology in the Web of Science, Scopus, PubMed, and Scielo databases, and the methodological quality was also assessed using the Newcastle-Ottawa Scale (NOS).

Results: A total of 16 studies met the inclusion criteria, highlighting that adaptive emotional regulation strategies, particularly cognitive reappraisal and acceptance, are consistently associated with higher levels of life satisfaction, happiness, and self-esteem. Moreover, these strategies act as protective factors against depression, anxiety, and emotional distress. Studies employing longitudinal designs suggest that emotional regulation fosters resilience and improves adolescents' long-term well-being. Conversely, maladaptive strategies such as rumination and suppression were linked to lower subjective well-being and increased psychological distress.

Conclusions: The findings underscore the critical role of emotional regulation in fostering adolescent well-being. Specifically, interventions that promote cognitive reappraisal and acceptance may enhance psychological resilience and overall life satisfaction. Future research should explore the long-term effects of emotional regulation training and its integration into educational and clinical settings to support adolescent mental health.

Keywords: Mental Health, Emotional Regulation, Subjective Well-being, Adolescents

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Introduction

Emotional regulation, understood as the use of various strategies to modify or influence our emotional state (McRae & Gross, 2020), is essential for mental and psychosocial well-being (Gross,

2015). Adequate emotion management is fundamental for healthy coping. It directly impacts individuals' capacity to manage and recover from stress (Jentsch & Wolf, 2020). Specific strategies, such as cognitive reappraisal and acceptance, are positively associated with well-being indicators such as life satisfaction, positive affect, and

happiness, while negatively correlating with depression and anxiety (Shum et al., 2024). Subjective well-being (SWB), a key concept in positive psychology, refers to individuals' cognitive and emotional evaluations of their own lives, including life satisfaction, positive emotions, and low levels of distress (Ryff & Singer, 2008). Specifically, Diener's (1984) framework defines SWB as a construct composed of life satisfaction, positive affect, and negative affect, emphasizing the importance of cognitive and emotional evaluations. Additionally, Ryff's (1989) psychological well-being theory incorporates dimensions such as self-acceptance, personal growth, and autonomy, providing a broader perspective on how emotional regulation may influence adolescent well-being. Integrating these models allows for a deeper understanding of the underlying mechanisms in the relationship between emotional regulation and SWB. Furthermore, the ability to regulate emotions plays a crucial role in shaping individuals' quality of life and subjective well-being across different developmental stages (Riediger & Bellingier, 2022). Consequently, emotional regulation has gained increasing attention in psychology due to its direct implications for mental health, particularly in challenging or vulnerable contexts (Doré et al., 2016). However, various theoretical perspectives suggest that the effectiveness and impact of these strategies on well-being may differ depending on the stage of life in which they are applied (De France & Hollenstein, 2019).

In this sense, emotional regulation strategies are particularly relevant in treating various emotional and behavioral disorders, especially during childhood and adolescence (Sanchis-Sanchis et al., 2020). During adolescence, effective emotional regulation is considered a fundamental pillar for psychosocial functioning and mental health, as emotional skills are refined during this stage (Lennarz et al., 2019). However, the implementation of maladaptive coping strategies and difficulties in mood regulation have been linked to an increased risk of suicide among young people (Ong & Thompson, 2019). Moreover, deficits in emotional regulation have also been linked to non-suicidal self-injury and suicidal ideation and behavior (Brausch & Woods, 2019). Given that adolescence is a transitional period characterized by increased emotional reactivity and heightened sensitivity to social experiences, understanding how emotional regulation influences SWB in this stage is essential for identifying protective factors that enhance adolescent mental health. However, despite the growing body of research on emotion regulation, the direct mechanisms by which these strategies influence SWB in adolescents remain

underexplored. As such, developing emotional regulation skills is crucial during this transitional phase, where the lack of effective strategies can have significant negative effects on overall well-being.

Adolescence is characterized as a period of growth involving significant changes in reasoning, emotions, and social interactions. This developmental stage increases sensitivity to social responses, making adolescents particularly vulnerable to victimization and exclusion by peers (Herd & Kim-Spoon, 2021). To address these challenges, preventive and therapeutic strategies should focus on improving the quality of parent-child relationships, perceived social support, and emotion management while minimizing psychiatric symptoms in adolescents (Karaer & Akdemir, 2019). Parents play a fundamental role in this process by modeling how adolescents process, react to, and control their emotions (Eisenberg et al., 1998; Tan et al., 2020). Furthermore, adolescents learn about emotions through interactions with both parents and friends (Miller-Slough & Dunsmore, 2019). Another relevant factor is child abuse, which is associated with both physical and mental health issues, highlighting the need to identify risk and resilience processes for prevention (Gruhn & Compas, 2020). In this context, recent studies suggest that social environments, including family and peer relationships, can significantly mediate the link between emotional regulation and SWB, either reinforcing positive coping mechanisms or exacerbating emotional distress (Shields et al., 2022). Despite these insights, a systematic synthesis of how these social influences interact with emotional regulation to shape SWB in adolescents is still lacking.

Deficits in emotional regulation have also been linked to non-suicidal self-injury and suicidal ideation and behavior (Brausch & Woods, 2019). The prevalence of social media use among youth has made difficulties in emotion management increasingly relevant to understanding psychological stress (Wartberg et al., 2021). Similarly, major depressive disorder, which begins to develop in early adolescence and causes significant impairment, including suicidal tendencies, has been linked to problems in emotional control (Gonçalves et al., 2019). According to the World Health Organization (2023), one in seven young people suffers from a mental disorder, and in the post-pandemic context, an increase in mental health issues has been observed among adolescents. While previous studies have explored emotional regulation in adolescence, few have systematically reviewed its direct impact on SWB. This review synthesizes recent evidence to identify

key strategies that enhance SWB and mitigate psychological distress, providing a foundation for future interventions. By addressing this gap, we aim to offer a clearer understanding of how emotion regulation contributes to adolescent mental health beyond traditional psychopathology-focused approaches. These statistics underscore the importance of studying how emotional regulation can act as a protective factor for adolescents' subjective well-being.

Purpose

The purpose of this systematic review is to analyze the available academic literature to determine the influence of emotional regulation on subjective well-being in adolescents. More specifically, this review seeks to (i) identify the most effective emotional regulation strategies associated with greater SWB, (ii) examine their role as protective factors against psychological distress, and (iii) explore their implications for intervention programs in clinical and educational settings. In doing so, this review aims to bridge the gap between emotion regulation research and applied interventions, providing insights for psychologists, educators, and policymakers. Understanding this relationship is essential for developing effective interventions and support strategies that enhance the overall mental health and quality of life of young individuals during this pivotal stage of development.

Methodology

Sources of Information

A systematic analysis was conducted, where articles published in the Web of Science, Scopus, PubMed and Scielo databases from January 2018 to December 2023, written in English and Spanish, were detected. The decision to focus on the last five years was based on the significant psychosocial and cultural transformations during this period, particularly the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on adolescent mental health, increased digital interactions, and evolving social dynamics affecting emotional well-being (WHO, 2023).

Search Strategies

The search of bibliographic references was carried out following the preferred reporting protocol for systematic reviews and meta-analyses, PRISMA (Page et al., 2020). Searches were performed in the title, abstract and keyword search fields in each of the databases. The following keywords combined with Boolean operators (OR/AND) were used: ["Emotional regulation" OR "Emotion regulation" OR "Emotion

self-regulation" OR "Emotional self-regulation" OR] AND ("Subjective well-being" OR "Subjective wellbeing" OR "Subjective wellness") AND ("adolescents" OR "Adolescence" OR "Teenagers"). The search strategy for the choice of studies is depicted in Figure 1.

Eligibility Criteria

Before examining the full content of each article, titles and abstracts were reviewed to assess their relevance. Studies were considered eligible if they met the following criteria: 1) applied a cross-sectional or longitudinal research design; 2) focused on an adolescent population; 3) utilized both clinical and non-clinical tools; 4) included both positive and negative results; and 5) were written in English or Spanish. The following exclusion criteria were established: 1) participants were not adolescents; 2) the study did not include the variables of emotional regulation, emotional self-regulation, or emotion management; and 3) the variable of subjective well-being was not considered in the study.

Data Extraction Process

A data extraction form was used to include relevant information: (1) Author(s), (2) Country, (3) Year, (4) Study Design, (5) Sample Size, (6) Measurement Instrument, (7) Influence of Emotional Regulation on Well-being.

Quality Assessment

The Newcastle-Ottawa Scale (NOS), adapted for cross-sectional research, was used to assess study quality (Epstein et al., 2018). The NOS judges quality based on content, structure and interpretation with high reliability and validity, outperforming other scales. The three dimensions of the scale include selection, comparability and outcome. There are seven categories that determine the representativeness of the sample, justification of the sample size, comparability between respondents and non-respondents, exposure estimates, comparability based on study design or analysis, evaluation of results, and adequacy of statistical analysis. If the study meets the requirements, up to nine stars in total can be awarded. If the study meets certain criteria, it can receive a maximum of nine stars. For each dimension, at least four stars can be assigned for the selection dimension, two stars for the comparability dimension and three stars for the outcome dimension (Epstein et al., 2018). However, it is worth noting that the use of the NOS has certain limitations, as it was originally developed for observational studies, and its applicability to different study designs may introduce subjectivity in quality assessment. To mitigate this, the evaluation process was

conducted independently by two researchers to ensure consistency and reduce bias.

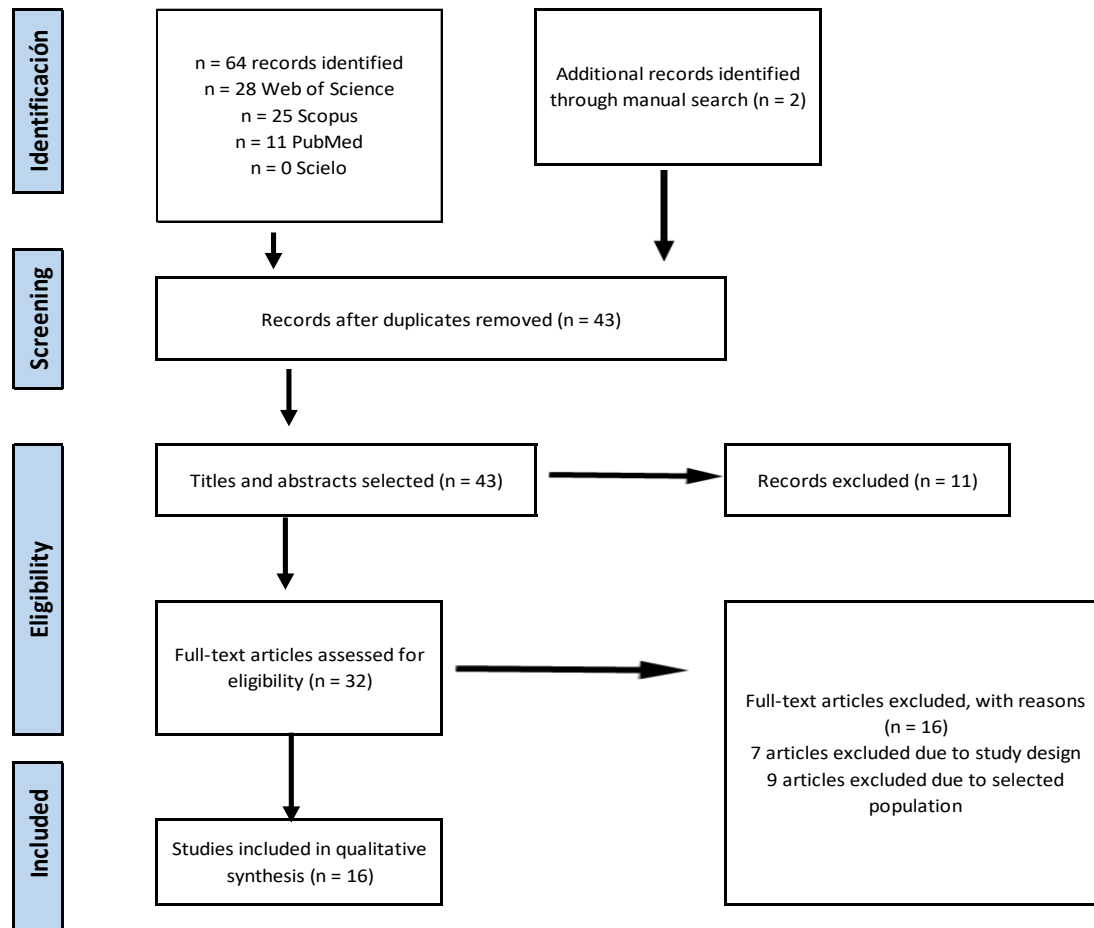
Results

Search Results

We found 66 papers related to the topic of how emotional regulation affects subjective well-being

in adolescents. However, 21 of these were discarded as duplicates. In addition, 11 papers were excluded after reading their title and abstract, and 16 more after reading the full paper. Thus, 16 papers that met the inclusion criteria were selected for the systematic review.

Figure 1. Search strategy for the selection of studies



Characteristics of the Studies

The details of the studies and the results of this review are recapitulated in supplementary material 1 (<http://dx.doi.org/10.6084/m9.figshare.28439747>). Sample sizes in the 16 papers ranged from 107 to 13,500 participants, totaling 35,798 adolescents. All studies adopted a cross-sectional design for their investigations. The 16 studies were conducted in various countries around the world, China (n=4), Spain (n=3), Australia (n=1), Chile (n=1), Croatia (n=1), Hungary (n=1), England (n=1), Mexico (n=1), Serbia (n=1), Turkey (n=1), Germany (n=1) and Switzerland (n=1).

Methodological Quality Assessment

Supplementary material 2 (<http://dx.doi.org/10.6084/m9.figshare.28439747>) shows the result of the assessment of the methodological quality of the studies. The overall quality of the included studies was of medium level, with a total of 6 to 7 stars. There were 16 studies with seven stars (Akyüz Uçar & Saviç; Azpiazu Izaguirre et al.; Castañós-Cervantes & Aguilar-Villalobos; Džida et al.; Fonseca-Pedrero et al.; Fuentealba-Urra et al.; Jiang et al.; Lereya et al.; Li et al.; Morrish et al.; Petrović et al.; Reinhardt et al.; Schunk et al.; Tejada-Gallardo et al.; Wang et al.; Zou et al.) and there were no studies with less than six stars. Although the reviewed studies

include populations from various countries (China, Spain, Mexico, Turkey, among others), the analysis of cross-cultural differences in the relationship between emotional regulation and SWB remains limited. It is observed that in collectivist cultures such as China and Mexico, strategies like emotional suppression may be more socially accepted and may not necessarily negatively impact well-being. In contrast, in individualistic societies such as European countries, strategies like cognitive reappraisal tend to be more closely aligned with positive psychological well-being (Matsumoto et al., 2008). Specifically, it has been shown that the individualistic cultures tend to favor emotional expression, collectivistic cultures often emphasize suppression to maintain social harmony (Ramzan & Amjad, 2017). These differences suggest the need for further studies to explore how sociocultural contexts influence the effectiveness of emotional regulation strategies.

Measurement Tools

Among the studies found, several scales and questionnaires were used, which can be seen in supplementary material 3 (<http://dx.doi.org/10.6084/m9.figshare.28439747>).

Synthesis Results

Influence of Emotional Regulation on Adolescents' Subjective Well-being

Among the reported elements related or associated with emotional regulation that positively influence the relationship with subjective well-being of adolescents, we find: emotional regulation (n=9), cognitive reappraisal (n=3), emotional regulation skills (n=1), functional emotion regulation strategies (n=1), dysfunctional emotion regulation strategies (n=1), expressive suppression (n=1), cognitive emotional regulation strategies (n=1), adaptive emotional regulation (n=1), reflection (n=1), acceptance (n=1).

In effects, adolescents who manage their emotions effectively tend to experience higher levels of life satisfaction, happiness, and self-esteem. For example, in studies such as Akyüz Uçar & Saviç (2020), it was highlighted that effective emotional regulation had a positive impact on adolescents' subjective life perception, including satisfaction and happiness. This relationship is also found in studies by Azpiazu Izaguirre et al. (2021) and Fuentealba-Urra et al. (2023), which reported a significant correlation between emotional regulation and life satisfaction in diverse country contexts. In addition, it is important to note that the studies included in this review used cross-sectional designs, which limit the ability to make causal inferences.

Relationship Between Other Variables

Within the findings there are other elements or concepts declared to be related or associated with each other in the relationship between emotional regulation and subjective well-being of adolescents, we find: gender(n=2), anxiety symptoms (n=2), resilience (n=2), negative affect (n=2), optimism (n=2), social support (n=1), family support (n=1), teacher support (n=1), depressive symptoms (n=1), emotional clarity (n=1), prosocial behavior (n=1), mental health difficulties (n=1), physical activity habits (n=1), perseverance (n=1), connectedness (n=1), positive indicators of mental health (n=1), cybervictimization (n=1), general emotional intelligence (n=1), pessimism (n=1), positive academic emotion (n=1), level of grief (n=1), assertiveness (n=1), age (n=1), emotional skills (n=1), suicidal behavior (n=1), positive affect (n=1), self-esteem (n=1), perceived stress (n=1), prosocial behavior (n=1), happiness (n=1), self-blame (n=1), negative academic emotion (n=1), depression (n=1).

Specifically, several factors influence the relationship between emotional regulation and subjective well-being, such as social support (family, friends, and teachers) and resilience. In Li et al. (2021), emotional regulation predicted higher levels of resilience, which in turn predicted higher happiness and lower anxiety. Similarly, Fonseca-Pedrero et al. (2020) indicated that protective factors (such as prosocial behavior and emotional regulation) were more closely related to subjective well-being than risk factors, such as peer conflict or emotional symptoms. This finding is particularly relevant to understanding how adolescents with strong social support systems may benefit more from emotional regulation strategies.

Accordingly, emotional regulation not only positively impacts subjective well-being but also plays a crucial role in preventing mental health problems. Petrović et al. (2020) found that emotional regulation strategies such as cognitive reappraisal and planning were associated with greater positive mental health (lower levels of depression and anxiety) and better subjective well-being. In Reinhardt et al. (2019), adolescents with better emotional regulation skills and lower levels of perfectionism showed higher levels of emotional, psychological, and social well-being. However, it is essential to note that the cross-sectional nature of the studies limits our ability to draw definitive conclusions about causality.

Discussion

Influence of Emotional Regulation on the Subjective Well-being of Adolescents

The subjective well-being of adolescents can be conceptualized as a multifaceted construct where emotional regulation plays a pivotal role. This relationship is not merely an academic consideration; it has direct implications for mental health, social adaptation, and psychological development. Research has demonstrated a strong connection between emotional regulation competencies adolescents', engagement in risky behaviors, and their subjective well-being (Akyüz Uçar & Savi, 2020). Adolescents who struggle with emotional regulation often develop maladaptive coping mechanisms, increasing their vulnerability to adverse experiences and negatively affecting their mental health.

For instance, adolescents who struggle with emotional regulation are often more susceptible to engaging in high-risk activities, leading to detrimental effects on their mental health. The existing literature reveals a consistent pattern: adolescents with poor emotional management skills exhibit a higher propensity for risk behaviors (Siener & Kerns, 2012; Svaldi et al., 2012). This evidence underscores the urgent need to foster effective emotional regulation strategies as a preventive measure against risk-taking behaviors and as a means to enhance subjective well-being.

Protective Factors: Emotional Regulation, Resilience, and Family Support

Effective emotional management is essential for adolescents' adaptability, as it reduces negative emotions, and strengthens mental resilience. Emotionally competent adolescents are better equipped to regulate their affective experiences, leading to higher levels of life satisfaction and overall psychological well-being (Tkach & Lyubomirsky, 2006). In this context, family dynamics are crucial in shaping adolescents' emotional regulation abilities and resilience. Research has extensively documented the impact of family support on life satisfaction and emotional outcomes (Azpiazu Izaguirre et al., 2021). A strong, nurturing home environment can buffer the effects of poor emotional regulation, reinforcing the need for family-centered intervention programs. While previous studies indicate that family is the primary source of support for adolescents (Rodríguez-Fernández et al., 2016; Fernández-Lasarte et al., 2019), it is important to highlight that emotional regulation itself remains an independent predictor of subjective well-being, regardless of family support (Ng et al., 2018). Moreover, resilience plays a key role in moderating the effects of

emotional regulation on well-being. Adolescents with higher resilience are better able to leverage their emotional regulation skills to cope with stress and adversity, ultimately promoting better psychological outcomes (Ramos-Díaz et al., 2019).

As you can see, one of the key findings of this review is the intricate interplay between emotional regulation, resilience, and family support in shaping adolescent SWB. Resilience not only acts as a buffer against psychological distress but also amplifies the benefits of adaptive emotional regulation strategies such as cognitive reappraisal. Adolescents with high resilience levels are more likely to reframe negative experiences, maintaining emotional stability in challenging situations (Li et al., 2021). This aligns with previous research suggesting that resilience mediates the link between emotional regulation and mental health outcomes, providing adolescents with tools to cope effectively with stressors (Ramos-Díaz et al., 2019).

Moreover, family support plays a critical role in reinforcing adolescents' ability to regulate emotions. Studies indicate that parental responsiveness and validation of emotions enhance adolescents' capacity to manage distress, leading to higher levels of SWB (Eisenberg et al., 1998). However, the quality and consistency of family support can significantly alter this dynamic. For example, while emotionally supportive families can facilitate the development of positive coping strategies, inconsistent or overly controlling parental behaviors may lead to maladaptive regulation patterns, such as emotional suppression or avoidance (Tan et al., 2020). This suggests that interventions should not only focus on adolescents' emotional regulation skills but also consider the family environment as a key factor in promoting well-being.

Furthermore, cross-cultural differences in emotional regulation should be acknowledged, as these influence the effectiveness of specific strategies. In collectivist cultures, where social harmony is prioritized, adolescents may rely more on suppression without experiencing significant negative effects on their SWB (Matsumoto et al., 2008). In contrast, in individualistic cultures, cognitive reappraisal is often encouraged to maintain psychological autonomy and emotional stability (Ford & Mauss, 2015). Understanding these cultural variations is essential for tailoring interventions that align with adolescents' sociocultural contexts, ensuring that emotional regulation strategies are both effective and culturally appropriate.

Impact of Depression and Maladaptive Regulation Strategies on Well-being

A critical aspect to consider is the negative impact of depressive symptoms and ineffective emotional regulation strategies on subjective well-being. Numerous studies have identified a strong association between depression and lower subjective well-being, highlighting the need for early interventions aimed at improving emotional management (Castaños-Cervantes & Aguilar-Villalobos, 2019). Adolescents with depressive symptoms frequently struggle with emotional regulation, exacerbating their distress and reinforcing maladaptive emotional patterns. Furthermore, research demonstrates that the implementation of effective emotional management techniques can enhance subjective well-being, suggesting that teaching adolescents these skills may be an effective strategy for promoting mental health.

The Top-down Theory of Subjective Well-being, proposed by Diener (1984), posits that both cognitive and emotional characteristics significantly influence well-being, within this framework, emotional clarity—defined as the ability to recognize and differentiate one’s emotions—has been identified as a strong predictor of subjective well-being (Džida et al., 2023). Greater emotional clarity enables more effective emotional regulation, fostering a more positive assessment of life experiences. This emerges as a vital factor for enhancing subjective well-being. Research indicates that emotional clarity not only facilitates better emotional regulation but also contributes to a more positive assessment of life experiences (Lischetzke & Eid, 2017). Notably, some evidence of these connections exists in adolescent populations, further emphasizing the need for targeted emotional education in this demographic (Sánchez-Álvarez et al., 2015).

The Role of Adaptive Emotional Regulation Strategies in Enhancing Well-being

Following the discussion on the negative effects of maladaptive emotional regulation, it is equally important to highlight the protective role of adaptive regulation strategies in fostering subjective well-being. Research consistently demonstrates that the effective management of emotions can significantly enhance adolescents' psychological resilience, social adjustment, and life satisfaction.

A key protective factor is physical activity, which has been extensively linked to improved emotional regulation, well-being, and overall mental health, particularly through a reduction in the levels of certain psychosocial disorders. Research has identified a positive correlation

between regular physical exercise, emotional self-regulation, and subjective well-being, indicating that physical activity acts as a natural enhancer of emotional control, thereby promoting better mental health (Barahona-Fuentes et al., 2021; Barahona-Fuentes et al., 2023; Delgado-Floody et al., 2024; Fuentelba-Urra et al., 2023). This relationship is further supported by cross-sectional research (Garcia et al., 2015) and meta-analyses (Rodriguez et al., 2022), which highlight the role of action-oriented emotional control strategies in fostering well-being. Longitudinal research also indicates that adolescents who develop effective emotional regulation strategies over time experience significant improvements in emotional self-management and psychological resilience (Morosanova et al., 2022).

Among these strategies, cognitive reappraisal stands out as a major predictor of subjective well-being. Adolescents who frequently engage in cognitive reappraisal tend to experience greater emotional stability and life satisfaction, while those who rely on expressive suppression encounter more complex emotional consequences (Jiang et al., 2023). Interestingly, research suggests that the effectiveness of cognitive reappraisal is consistent across different adolescent groups, a finding that aligns with prior literature (Hu et al., 2014). However, further investigation is needed to explore potential cultural and developmental variations in its application.

Beyond individual psychological benefits, emotional regulation is strongly tied to broader mental health outcomes. Deficits in emotional management are associated with higher rates of psychological distress, depression, and anxiety in adolescents (Lereya et al., 2022). School-based interventions that integrate emotional regulation training have been effective both as preventive measures and as therapeutic strategies for adolescents at risk (Frey et al., 2000). Additionally, emotional self-regulation has been found to enhance resilience, social connectedness, and happiness while simultaneously reducing symptoms of depression and anxiety (Li et al., 2021). These findings reinforce the need to prioritize the development of emotional regulation skills in both educational and community settings as a protective mechanism against mental health challenges.

Cognitive-emotional management strategies, such as positive reframing, planning, and positive refocusing, have also been linked to greater subjective well-being, lower negative affect, and increased life satisfaction (Petrović et al., 2020). Adolescents who actively employ these adaptive strategies tend to report greater psychological stability and overall well-being. (Garnefski et al., 2017).

Interestingly, studies on high-performing athletes suggest that strong emotional regulation is associated with higher levels of emotional, psychological, and social well-being (Reinhardt et al., 2019). This observation underscores the notion that individuals can employ a variety of deliberate cognitive and behavioral strategies to manage their emotions effectively (Garnefski et al., 2001). This underscores the importance of structured activities, such as competitive sports, in developing self-regulatory capacities. Adjusted perfectionists, for instance, tend to employ problem-focused coping mechanisms (Burns & Fedewa, 2005) and cognitive reappraisal techniques, such as situational reappraisal, to maintain psychological balance (Aldea & Rice, 2006).

Furthermore, the role of digital experiences in adolescent well-being warrants special attention, particularly in the context of cybervictimization. Research indicates that cybervictimization negatively affects adolescent well-being primarily through increased rumination rather than through suppression or reappraisal (Schunk et al., 2022). This suggests that interventions targeting excessive rumination—rather than solely promoting cognitive reappraisal—could be more effective in mitigating the psychological effects of online harassment.

Finally, emotional intelligence, emotional regulation, and subjective well-being are deeply interconnected. Emotional intelligence, which includes both emotional awareness and regulatory capacities, has been identified as a strong determinant of happiness and optimism in adolescents (Tejada-Gallardo et al., 2022). Breaking down the affective and cognitive processes behind happiness provides deeper insights into how individuals experience life satisfaction (Lyubomirsky, 2001). These findings are consistent with prior research demonstrating that emotional intelligence significantly contributes to overall adolescent well-being (Extremera & Fernández-Berrocal, 2014).

In summary, emotional regulation plays a fundamental role in shaping adolescent subjective well-being. The positive correlations between cognitive reappraisal, emotional regulation, and academic emotions highlight the need for schools to integrate emotional education into their curricula (Wang et al., 2022). These findings align with previous research (Gratz et al., 2015), which indicate that adolescents who consistently use cognitive reappraisal are more likely to regulate their emotions effectively and perceive stressful events in a more optimistic light.

Ultimately, prioritizing the development of emotional regulation skills in adolescence is crucial for fostering resilience and enhancing

mental health. Given the increasing prevalence of adolescent mental health issues (Martínez-Líbano & Yeomans-Cabrera, 2024), implementing targeted interventions to support well-being is more urgent than ever.

Strengths and Limitations

Limitations of the study

This study has certain restrictions that must be taken into account. Among them, we highlight that the selected studies are cross-sectional in nature. Although this represents a benefit in terms of the number of subjects surveyed, it also entails certain difficulties, such as the inability to examine long-term phenomena, as could be done in longitudinal studies. Similarly, we cannot infer causation. Additionally, self-report measures and questionnaires may not always capture the full complexity of emotional experiences. Future studies should incorporate qualitative and experimental methodologies to provide a more nuanced understanding of these constructs.

Strengths of the study

This systematic review article analyses and synthesizes the existing literature on the impact of emotional regulation on subjective well-being in adolescents. The findings confirm a robust positive correlation between emotional regulation and well-being, highlighting key protective factors such as resilience and family support.

Practical/Social value

With the systematic review conducted, we plan to carry out a field study that delves deeper into the topic of emotional regulation in subjective well-being in Chilean adolescents. This is important because the suicide rate among young people in Chile is estimated to be 7.8 per 100,000 adolescents, an alarming figure that underscores the urgent need for effective actions and support in the area of mental health (World Health Organization, 2023). This situation may be aggravated by the high rates of mental health problems observed in young Chileans after the pandemic (Martínez-Líbano et al., 2023). Therefore, the review shows that most of the research does not focus on Latin America and not existent cross-sectional research during the selection period.

Conclusions

The configuration of subjective well-being (SWB) in adolescents is a complex interplay where emotion regulation plays a central role.

Dysfunctional emotion regulation is strongly associated with risk behaviors, whereas adaptive strategies, such as cognitive reappraisal and emotional clarity, promote well-being by reducing anxiety and depression. Family support and resilience emerge as key protective factors, directly influencing life satisfaction and indirectly shaping SWB through emotional regulation. Additionally, digital experiences, including cyber-victimization, can impact well-being by increasing emotional distress. However, digital environments may act as both risk and resilience factors, depending on whether they reinforce maladaptive strategies (e.g., rumination) or foster adaptive coping mechanisms (e.g., reappraisal). Future research should explore how online interactions shape adolescents' emotional regulation processes and whether they contribute to long-term psychological adjustment.

Longitudinal studies are needed to clarify the directionality of the relationship between emotion regulation and SWB. While cross-sectional studies highlight significant associations, it remains unclear whether adaptive regulation enhances well-being over time or whether higher well-being facilitates better regulation. Examining these dynamics over extended periods would offer deeper insights into causal mechanisms. Another critical area for future research is the role of gender differences in emotion regulation. While studies suggest that females are more likely to use expressive suppression and reappraisal than males, the psychological implications of these differences remain underexplored. Understanding whether gender-specific interventions are necessary could enhance the effectiveness of emotion regulation training.

Furthermore, socioeconomic disparities in emotional regulation warrant further investigation. Adolescents from lower-income backgrounds may face additional stressors that hinder their ability to regulate emotions effectively. Developing equitable interventions that account for these challenges could help ensure that emotion regulation strategies are accessible and beneficial for all adolescents, regardless of socioeconomic status. In conclusion, emotion regulation is fundamental to adolescent adjustment, behavior, and mental health. Strengthening family support and implementing effective emotion regulation strategies are crucial steps in enhancing life satisfaction and reducing risky behaviors. Future research should continue to explore these mechanisms, particularly within the evolving digital landscape.

Data Availability Statement

Supplementary material available at <http://dx.doi.org/10.6084/m9.figshare.28439747>

Conflict of interest

The authors declare no conflict of interest.

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