



New Trends  
in Psychology

## Emotion Regulation, Stress, and Well-Being Investigated Through Life Experiences

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**Abstract:** Emotion regulation, stress, and well-being are crucial aspects of mental health that deeply influence our daily lives. This article explores how these factors are connected, specifically focusing on how the way we manage emotions affects our experience of stress and overall well-being. By looking at different emotional strategies, the article highlights how certain approaches can either protect or hinder mental health. It also examines how life experiences, such as personal challenges and trauma, shape our emotional responses and contribute to our resilience or vulnerability. Drawing on both research and practical examples, this work aims to provide a clearer understanding of the complex relationship between emotion regulation, stress, and well-being, with important implications for clinical practice and future research.

**Keywords:** emotion regulation; well being; life experiences; vulnerability; clinical practice

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## 1. Introduction

**“Between stimulus and response there is a space. In that space is our power to choose our response. In our response lies our growth and our freedom.”**

**Viktor E. Frankl**

The relationship between emotion regulation, stress, and well-being is a cornerstone of psychological research, given their profound influence on mental health and overall quality of life. Across the span of everyday experiences, individuals are constantly faced with emotional challenges—whether it is navigating personal stress, coping with adversity, or managing complex and conflicting emotions. The ways in which individuals regulate these emotions play a pivotal role in shaping their psychological resilience, influencing their ability to manage stress, and ultimately maintaining their well-being. Effectively managing emotions is associated with reduced levels of stress, greater emotional stability, and the capacity to thrive in the face of life’s challenges.

However, emotion regulation is far from a straightforward process. It varies significantly from one person to another and is shaped by numerous factors, including personality traits, cultural background, social contexts, and past experiences. Life experiences, in particular—whether positive or traumatic—often shape how individuals manage stress and perceive emotional triggers. For example, individuals who have encountered significant trauma may develop maladaptive coping mechanisms, which can hinder their emotional regulation capacity, while those with positive life experiences may develop more adaptive strategies. This complexity highlights that emotion regulation is not merely about suppressing negative emotions but involves cultivating an ability to respond to emotional experiences in a healthy and adaptive way, ultimately enhancing one’s emotional well-being.

As research in this area deepens, it becomes clear that effective emotion regulation plays a key role in fostering emotional intelligence and promoting adaptive coping strategies, thereby enhancing psychological well-being. Effective emotional regulation strategies have been linked to numerous positive outcomes, such as reduced stress, improved mental health, and greater life satisfaction. These strategies can serve as protective factors against the negative effects of stress, particularly in high-pressure or trauma-laden contexts. Furthermore, the ability to regulate one’s

emotions enhances resilience, helping individuals navigate through adversity while preserving their mental and emotional health.

This article seeks to explore the dynamic interplay between emotion regulation, stress, and well-being, with a particular focus on how individuals' life experiences—both positive and negative—shape their emotional responses and overall mental health. Through this exploration, the article aims to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the role of emotion regulation in fostering psychological flourishing and resilience, offering valuable insights for both clinical practice and future research. The findings underscore the importance of emotional awareness and regulation as critical elements in managing stress, promoting mental well-being, and enhancing overall quality of life.

## **2. Regulating Emotions: The Influence of Life Experiences**

Emotion regulation refers to how individuals manage and adjust their emotional responses, whether to external events or internal thoughts. This process involves both deliberate and automatic efforts to control the intensity, duration, and expression of emotions. The ways in which people regulate their emotions are heavily influenced by their life experiences.

For example, individuals who face early-life trauma or ongoing stress may develop maladaptive emotional regulation strategies, such as suppressing their emotions or avoiding them altogether. These strategies, while protective in the short term, can lead to long-term emotional challenges. On the other hand, those who experience supportive and positive life events may develop healthier emotional regulation strategies, such as rethinking a situation in a more positive light (cognitive reappraisal) or expressing their emotions openly, both of which foster emotional balance and resilience. Cultural and social factors also play a key role in how emotions are regulated. While some cultures emphasize emotional control and restraint, others encourage emotional expression and openness. Ultimately, life experiences shape how individuals develop and apply emotion regulation strategies, impacting their ability to navigate emotional challenges in diverse situations.

### **3. The Role of Life Experiences in Stress Responses**

Stress is both a physiological and psychological reaction to situations that challenge or threaten an individual. When faced with stressors, the body triggers a fight-or-flight response, preparing us to either confront the challenge or escape from it. While stress can be adaptive in short bursts, chronic or unmanageable stress can significantly impact mental and physical health. Yet, the way stress is experienced and managed is deeply influenced by an individual's life experiences.

For those who have encountered significant challenges—such as trauma, loss, or ongoing adversity—stress can trigger more intense and prolonged reactions. These individuals may become more sensitive to stress, often perceiving even minor everyday challenges as overwhelming. For example, those who grew up in abusive or neglectful environments may find it harder to cope with stress, as their emotional systems may be more sensitized to threats. Conversely, individuals who have had positive, supportive life experiences—whether through nurturing relationships, a stable environment, or past successes in overcoming obstacles—often develop greater resilience. This resilience allows them to face stress in healthier ways, using coping mechanisms that promote emotional well-being. Furthermore, social support plays a critical role in shaping how stress is managed. Having strong relationships and networks of support can buffer the impact of stress, helping individuals feel less isolated and more capable of navigating stressful situations.

Ultimately, life experiences—both positive and negative—profoundly shape how individuals react to stress and the strategies they develop to cope with it. People who have learned to manage stress effectively tend to have better mental health outcomes, even in the face of adversity. In contrast, those who have faced chronic stress without adequate coping strategies may be more vulnerable to mental health issues such as anxiety, depression, or physical ailments. Thus, understanding the link between life experiences and stress responses is key to promoting resilience and supporting mental well-being.

### **4. How Life Experiences Shape Overall Well-Being**

Well-being is a broad concept that encompasses emotional, psychological, and social aspects of life satisfaction. It reflects an individual's overall sense of happiness, contentment, and their ability to cope with life's ups and downs. The experiences we go through in life—especially those related to relationships, health, and personal

accomplishments—play a significant role in shaping how we perceive our overall well-being.

Positive life experiences, such as supportive relationships, achievements in education or career, and good physical health, tend to enhance well-being, fostering feelings of satisfaction and purpose. In contrast, negative experiences, such as trauma, chronic stress, or ongoing adversity, can undermine well-being, often leading to feelings of helplessness or disillusionment.

Moreover, individuals who have developed strong emotional regulation skills are generally better equipped to maintain their well-being. By effectively managing stress and emotions, they are able to maintain a positive outlook even when faced with challenges. This relationship between well-being and emotion regulation is reciprocal—good emotional health fosters the development of adaptive emotion regulation, while effective emotional regulation in turn supports and enhances overall well-being. In essence, the ability to manage one's emotions and navigate stress plays a fundamental role in achieving and sustaining a fulfilling and balanced life.

## **5. The Impact of Life Experiences on Emotion Regulation, Stress Coping, and Overall Well-Being**

Life experiences play a critical role in shaping how individuals manage their emotions, cope with stress, and ultimately maintain their well-being. From early childhood, the environments and circumstances we encounter influence the way we process and regulate emotions. Positive early life experiences, such as nurturing relationships, stability, and support, foster the development of adaptive emotional regulation strategies, allowing individuals to manage their emotions in a balanced way throughout life.

Conversely, those who face adversity or trauma, such as neglect or abuse, may develop maladaptive emotional responses, like emotional suppression or avoidance, which can make it difficult to effectively manage emotions later on. Similarly, how one reacts to stress is shaped by life experiences. Those who grow up in unstable or threatening environments may have a heightened sensitivity to stress, perceiving even minor challenges as overwhelming. In contrast, individuals who experience supportive, positive environments tend to develop healthier stress responses, seeing difficulties as challenges to overcome rather than threats to their safety. These

adaptive coping strategies—such as problem-solving, seeking social support, or reframing negative thoughts—help individuals navigate stress in ways that promote emotional well-being.

The cumulative effect of these emotional and stress responses is crucial in determining an individual's overall well-being, which encompasses emotional, psychological, and social health. Positive life experiences—such as strong relationships, career success, and good health—contribute to a stronger sense of life satisfaction and well-being, while prolonged exposure to stress or trauma can undermine well-being, leading to mental health issues like anxiety or depression. The relationship between life experiences and well-being is cyclical: positive experiences strengthen emotional regulation and resilience, leading to greater well-being, while those who struggle to manage emotions and stress may experience a decline in overall life satisfaction.

Furthermore, resilience—often shaped by one's life history—plays a key role in overall well-being. Resilient individuals tend to cope better with challenges, drawing on the emotional and psychological tools they have developed through their life experiences, resulting in a stronger sense of well-being and an enhanced ability to thrive, even in adversity.

## **6. Methodology. Theoretical Approach Adapted to the Romanian Population**

This article adopts a theoretical approach to examining the relationship between emotion regulation, stress management, and well-being, with a particular focus on Romanian society. The methodology is based on an in-depth analysis and synthesis of existing literature, integrating psychological, cultural, and social perspectives to explore how these constructs manifest in the Romanian population. The diverse socio-cultural influences on emotional experiences and stress responses make it crucial to understand how local cultural norms, societal structures, and historical contexts shape emotion regulation and coping mechanisms. Given the unique dynamics of Romanian culture, it is important to examine how these factors influence individuals' emotional responses, stress management strategies, and overall well-being.

The theoretical framework for this article integrates research findings from both international and local studies on emotion regulation, stress, and well-being,

adapting them to the specific characteristics of Romanian society. One key area of focus is the role of familial relationships, which are deeply embedded in Romanian culture and have significant implications for emotional development and regulation. Familial bonds and the concept of “family first” are central to the Romanian psyche, often shaping how individuals express emotions, manage stress, and perceive their well-being. In addition, societal expectations—such as the role of gender, social class, and educational background—play an important role in the way emotions are regulated. Cultural norms regarding emotional expression vary significantly, with some regions encouraging emotional restraint while others may embrace more expressive displays of emotion.

Another critical aspect of the methodology is the examination of historical factors that have shaped Romanian emotional experiences and stress responses. The socio-political history of Romania, including periods of dictatorship, revolution, and post-communist transition, has created distinct psychological profiles in the population. These historical events have influenced emotional regulation patterns, with many individuals relying on adaptive coping mechanisms to navigate political and social upheaval. However, the psychological scars left by past trauma, economic instability, and systemic uncertainty may also result in maladaptive coping strategies, such as emotional withdrawal or heightened stress responses.

The literature review includes psychological studies, cultural anthropology, and cross-cultural psychology, drawing from a wide array of international and local sources. These studies highlight how Romanian individuals approach emotional challenges and manage stress, considering factors such as early childhood experiences, socio-political changes, and economic transitions. The review emphasizes how these life experiences—both positive and negative—have shaped emotional regulation strategies over time. The societal emphasis on collectivism and community support often leads to stronger social ties, which can buffer the effects of stress. However, the individualistic pressures and modern societal demands create new challenges for emotional regulation and stress management, particularly among younger generations.

This theoretical approach aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of how emotion regulation, stress management, and well-being are interlinked within the Romanian cultural and societal context. By synthesizing existing research, this article offers valuable insights into how Romanian individuals experience and manage emotions, navigate stress, and maintain psychological health. The findings

contribute to the broader understanding of emotion regulation and well-being, with particular attention to how cultural and historical factors influence the way individuals cope with emotional challenges in Romania.

Prof. Daniel David's research provides a nuanced understanding of the Romanian psychological profile, emphasizing how historical, cultural, and societal factors have shaped the emotional and psychological landscape of the population. His work highlights that the Romanian psyche is characterized by a complex blend of resilience and vulnerability, influenced by centuries of socio-political upheavals and cultural shifts.

In the realm of emotion regulation, Romanians often exhibit a dichotomy in emotional expression—balancing between emotional restraint and expressive openness. This duality is reflective of the broader cultural context, where collectivist values coexist with individualistic tendencies, leading to unique patterns in emotional processing and regulation.

Regarding stress management, the research indicates that Romanians have developed adaptive coping mechanisms rooted in familial bonds, religious practices, and community support. However, these strategies are sometimes challenged by modern societal pressures, necessitating a reevaluation of traditional coping methods in the face of contemporary stressors.

Lastly, the concept of well-being in the Romanian context is multifaceted, encompassing not only individual happiness but also communal harmony and cultural identity. Prof. David's work underscores the importance of understanding these cultural dimensions to fully grasp the determinants of well-being among Romanians.

## **7. Discussion**

The findings of this theoretical exploration highlight the importance of understanding emotion regulation, stress management, and well-being within the Romanian socio-cultural context. One key insight is the dynamic interplay between traditional collectivist values and the pressures of modern individualistic society. On one hand, strong family ties and community support remain protective factors that buffer the impact of stress and promote emotional resilience. On the other hand, societal transitions and economic instability introduce stressors that often



overwhelm traditional coping strategies, particularly among younger generations who must balance cultural expectations with contemporary demands.

The role of historical experiences in shaping emotional responses cannot be overstated. Romania's history of authoritarian rule and abrupt socio-political changes has cultivated a population that is both resilient and cautious, displaying a tendency toward emotional restraint. This pattern, while adaptive in the past, may limit emotional openness and the use of healthy coping mechanisms in the present. Thus, understanding these historical imprints is crucial for designing interventions that foster emotional expression and adaptive stress management.

## **8. Recommendations**

Based on the synthesis of the literature, several recommendations can be made to improve emotional well-being in the Romanian population. First, emotional education programs should be promoted in schools and universities, integrating curricula that teach emotional awareness, regulation strategies, and stress management techniques from an early age. Strengthening community-based interventions is equally important, as local networks and peer-support programs can enhance collective resilience, particularly in rural areas where mental health services are limited. Public health policies should also focus on increasing access to affordable and culturally sensitive psychological services, including counseling and psychotherapy. Furthermore, encouraging intergenerational dialogue can create opportunities for younger and older generations to share coping strategies, facilitating the integration of traditional and modern approaches to emotional well-being. Finally, future research should employ longitudinal designs to examine how emotion regulation and stress management strategies evolve over time and across diverse socio-economic contexts, offering deeper insight into the determinants of psychological health.

## **9. General Conclusions**

This article underscores the significance of situating psychological constructs such as emotion regulation, stress, and well-being within their cultural and historical frameworks. For the Romanian population, the intersection between collectivist

traditions, socio-political history, and modern societal challenges creates a unique emotional landscape.

The analysis suggests that while Romanians display strong coping mechanisms rooted in familial and communal bonds, these are increasingly tested by contemporary stressors. A balanced approach that values traditional sources of resilience while promoting adaptive, evidence-based psychological interventions is essential.

Ultimately, enhancing well-being in Romania requires a multidimensional strategy—one that integrates education, public health initiatives, and policy-level interventions. Such an approach will not only improve individual quality of life but also foster a healthier and more resilient society.

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