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COGNITIVE REAPPRAISAL AND EXPRESSIVE SUPPRESSION: AN EXAMINATION OF THEIR ASSOCIATIONS WITH SEEKING SOCIAL SUPPORT, WELL-BEING AND ACADEMIC PERFORMANCE

by

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Abstract

This thesis examined individual differences regarding two prominent emotion regulation processes - cognitive reappraisal and expressive suppression - and their associations with social functioning, psychological well-being and academic performance. In line with the study of Gross and John (2003), 12 hypotheses were proposed. It was hypothesized that frequent use of cognitive reappraisal is positively correlated with seeking social support, psychological well-being and academic performance, while the chronic use of expressive suppression is negatively associated with the three factors. Additionally, high reappraisers were hypothesized to have higher level of social support, overall well-being and academic performance compared to low reappraisers, while high suppressors will have lower levels in all three factors compared to low suppressors. An online survey was conducted to collect data from 147 university students. Results revealed that habitual use of reappraisal was significantly associated with seeking instrumental social support and enhanced psychological well-being, while the chronic use of suppression was associated with having low social support, impaired well-being and poor academic performance. Moreover, unlike low reappraisers, high reappraisers had better instrumental social support and well-being (i.e. experienced fewer negative feelings, more positive feelings, better affect balance and flourishing). In contrast, high suppressors had less emotional social support, poorer wellbeing and academic performance. These findings inform our understanding of emotion regulation and dysregulation and can be applied in clinical and non-clinical settings.

Keywords: Emotion regulation processes, cognitive reappraisal, suppression, psychological wellbeing, academic performance, seeking social support.