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DEVELOPING EMOTIONAL REGULATION SKILLS AS A STRATEGY FOR STRENGTHENING STRESS RESILIENCE OF TEACHERS

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Abstract. The teaching profession is characterized by intensive interpersonal interaction, high emotional demands, professional responsibility, workload, and the need to respond effectively to unpredictable classroom situations. These conditions may increase teachers' vulnerability to stress, emotional exhaustion, and professional burnout. In this context, emotional regulation represents an important psychological resource that can contribute to teachers' stress resilience and professional well-being. This article examines the theoretical and psychological foundations of developing emotional regulation skills as a strategy for strengthening teachers' stress resilience. The analysis focuses on the relationship between emotional awareness, cognitive reappraisal, emotional control, coping strategies, self-efficacy, and resilience.
Keywords: emotional regulation, stress resilience, teachers, psychological well-being, burnout, cognitive reappraisal, coping strategies, emotional intelligence, teacher development.

Introduction. Teaching is an emotionally demanding profession in which professional effectiveness depends not only on pedagogical knowledge and instructional competence but also on the ability to manage emotions in complex interpersonal situations. Teachers regularly interact with students, parents, colleagues, administrators, and other members of the educational community. These interactions may involve conflict, uncertainty, excessive workload, behavioral problems, time pressure, evaluation, and high expectations concerning students' academic and social outcomes.

Consequently, occupational stress has become an important psychological and educational issue. Persistent stress may negatively influence teachers' psychological well-being, job satisfaction, professional engagement, and quality of interaction with students. It may also contribute to emotional exhaustion and burnout. Recent research demonstrates that teachers' emotional experiences and their ability to regulate emotions are closely related to stress, well-being, and burnout. In a 2024 study of 165 STEM teachers, Farhi and Rubinsten found that difficulties in emotion regulation were related to higher stress and burnout and lower well-being; their structural model indicated that emotion-regulation difficulties mediated the relationship between stress and well-being.

These findings make emotional regulation particularly important in discussions of teacher resilience. Stress resilience can be understood as the capacity to maintain or restore psychological functioning when facing professional challenges, pressure, and adverse circumstances. A recent systematic review of teacher resilience organized the literature using the Job Demands–Resources framework and emphasized the importance of considering both occupational demands and personal and contextual resources in understanding teacher resilience.

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Therefore, the development of emotional regulation skills may serve as one of the psychological mechanisms for strengthening teachers' capacity to cope with stress. The purpose of this article is to analyze the psychological foundations of emotional regulation and to substantiate its potential as a strategy for strengthening teachers' stress resilience.

Literature review. Emotional regulation refers to the processes through which individuals influence the intensity, duration, expression, and interpretation of their emotional experiences. In educational settings, emotional regulation is particularly important because teachers are required to respond to emotionally challenging situations while maintaining professional behavior.

Teachers cannot eliminate all stressful situations from their professional environment. However, they can develop skills that influence how they interpret and respond to such situations. This distinction is important because the same external event may produce different psychological responses depending on an individual's appraisal, emotional awareness, coping resources, and regulation strategies.

A systematic review of research on teacher emotion regulation identified a substantial growth of empirical research in this area. The review of 176 studies noted that quantitative and advanced statistical approaches dominate the field, while longitudinal and experimental research remains comparatively less common. The authors also emphasized the need for greater methodological diversity and more attention to interactional and contextual perspectives.

This observation is important for teacher education because emotional regulation should not be viewed exclusively as an internal individual characteristic. Teachers' emotional experiences are influenced by classroom conditions, relationships with students and colleagues, leadership, organizational support, workload, and professional expectations.

Emotional regulation and teacher stress. Stress involves a complex interaction between external demands and individual psychological appraisal. Teachers may experience stress when perceived professional demands exceed their perceived resources for coping with those demands.

Emotional regulation can influence this process at several levels. First, emotional awareness allows teachers to recognize emerging emotional reactions before they become overwhelming. Second, cognitive reappraisal can help teachers reinterpret stressful events in a less threatening and more constructive manner. Third, response regulation allows teachers to control behavioral manifestations of strong emotions and maintain professional communication.

Farhi and Rubinsten's research provides empirical support for this relationship. Their study showed significant relationships between emotion-regulation difficulties, stress, burnout, and well-being among STEM teachers. Greater difficulties in emotion regulation were associated with greater stress and burnout and lower well-being.

Similarly, research among Chinese EFL teachers has demonstrated a relationship between emotion regulation, well-being, and burnout. Ma and Liu examined 398 teachers and found that emotion regulation and well-being contributed to lower levels of teacher burnout.

A meta-analytic review of foreign-language teachers also reported a significant negative relationship between emotion regulation and burnout across 14 studies involving 3,812 participants. The findings further indicated that contextual variables such as country, educational setting, and educational stage can influence these relationships.

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Research methodology. The present article uses a theoretical and analytical research design based on the review and synthesis of contemporary psychological and pedagogical literature concerning teacher stress, emotional regulation, resilience, well-being, and burnout.

The literature analysis focused on several conceptual dimensions:

1. emotional awareness and identification of emotional states;
2. cognitive reappraisal and interpretation of stressful events;
3. emotional control and behavioral self-regulation;
4. coping strategies;
5. teacher self-efficacy;
6. social and organizational support;
7. psychological well-being;
8. stress resilience and burnout prevention.

Recent empirical studies and systematic reviews were examined to identify common theoretical relationships and practical implications for teacher professional development.

Cognitive reappraisal is one of the most important adaptive emotional regulation strategies. It involves changing the interpretation of an emotionally significant situation in order to modify its emotional impact.

For teachers, cognitive reappraisal may involve replacing automatic interpretations such as “This student is deliberately challenging me” with more constructive interpretations such as “The student may be experiencing a learning or emotional difficulty that requires a different pedagogical response.”

Such cognitive restructuring does not mean ignoring real problems. Rather, it enables teachers to evaluate stressful situations more flexibly and select more constructive behavioral responses.

Recent evidence further supports the relevance of cognitive reappraisal to teacher resilience. A 2026 study examining teachers exposed to war-related stress found that cognitive reappraisal was negatively associated with burnout and moderated the relationship between war exposure and burnout. The authors interpreted cognitive reappraisal as a potentially protective factor in highly stressful conditions.

Resilience and burnout represent related but distinct psychological concepts. Resilience refers to the capacity to adapt to adversity and maintain or restore functioning, whereas burnout is associated with prolonged occupational stress and can include emotional exhaustion and reduced professional functioning.

Research has increasingly examined resilience as a resource that may protect teachers from negative consequences of occupational stress. A study involving 638 Chinese EFL teachers examined teacher self-efficacy, resilience, emotion regulation, and burnout within one model, demonstrating the relevance of these variables to teachers’ psychological functioning.

This suggests that stress resilience should not be developed through a single technique. Instead, it should be approached as a multidimensional capacity involving emotional regulation, self-efficacy, adaptive coping, social support, professional competence, and reflective practice.

Results and discussion. Emotional regulation as a component of teacher stress resilience. The theoretical analysis indicates that emotional regulation can be considered an important component of teachers’ stress resilience. However, resilience should not be reduced to emotional control alone. A resilient teacher is not necessarily a person who never experiences negative emotions. Rather,

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resilience involves the ability to recognize emotional reactions, understand their causes, regulate their intensity, maintain professional functioning, and recover after stressful experiences.

Based on the reviewed literature, the relationship can be conceptually represented as follows:

Professional stressors → Cognitive appraisal → Emotional response → Emotional regulation → Coping behavior → Adaptation → Stress resilience

This process is dynamic rather than linear. Social support, professional competence, self-efficacy, organizational climate, and previous experience can influence each stage.

A conceptual model for developing emotional regulation. Based on the literature, a teacher stress-resilience development model can include five interconnected stages:

Stage	Main objective	Recommended activities
Emotional awareness	Recognizing emotional states	Emotion diaries, self-monitoring, reflection
Cognitive regulation	Reinterpreting stressful situations	Cognitive restructuring, reappraisal exercises
Behavioral regulation	Managing immediate reactions	Breathing techniques, response delay, communication practice
Coping development	Selecting adaptive responses	Problem-solving, time management, coping training
Resilience strengthening	Maintaining professional functioning	Reflection, social support, peer consultation, psychological training

Such a model corresponds to the contemporary understanding that teacher resilience emerges through interaction between individual resources and contextual conditions.

Emotional regulation should not be developed exclusively through individual psychological exercises. The social environment of the teacher is also important. Support from colleagues, school administrators, mentors, family, and professional communities may reduce the psychological burden associated with occupational stress.

Consequently, teacher resilience programs should combine individual skills training with supportive organizational practices.

Practical strategies for developing emotional regulation

Teacher professional development programs can incorporate the following psychological and pedagogical activities:

- identification of personal stress triggers;
- emotion-monitoring diaries;
- cognitive reappraisal exercises;
- mindfulness and attention-regulation exercises;
- breathing and relaxation techniques;
- role-playing of difficult classroom situations;
- conflict-management training;
- reflective teaching journals;
- peer consultation groups;
- mentoring and supervision;

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- problem-focused coping training;
- development of professional self-efficacy;
- techniques for preventing emotional exhaustion.

These activities should be practiced systematically rather than presented as isolated psychological techniques.

Implications for teacher education. The development of emotional regulation should begin during initial teacher education rather than only after teachers enter professional practice. Student teachers may face academic stress, assessment anxiety, public speaking challenges, teaching-practice difficulties, interpersonal conflicts, and uncertainty about their professional identity.

Therefore, teacher education institutions can introduce emotional regulation modules into pedagogical and psychological preparation. Such modules could include theoretical knowledge, self-assessment, practical exercises, supervised reflection, and simulated classroom situations.

The objective should not be to eliminate stress completely. A more realistic objective is to develop students' capacity to recognize stress, regulate emotional reactions, select adaptive coping strategies, seek appropriate social support, and maintain professional functioning.

Effective intervention requires appropriate assessment. Teachers' emotional regulation and stress resilience can be evaluated using a combination of standardized questionnaires, observation, interviews, reflective tasks, and behavioral simulations.

The assessment framework may include the following dimensions:

- Emotional awareness – ability to identify and understand emotional states;
- Emotional control – ability to regulate strong emotional reactions;
- Cognitive reappraisal – ability to reinterpret stressful situations;
- Impulse control – ability to prevent inappropriate immediate responses;
- Coping flexibility – ability to select appropriate coping strategies;
- Self-efficacy – belief in one's capacity to manage professional challenges;
- Social support – perceived availability and effectiveness of interpersonal support;
- Stress resilience – capacity to maintain functioning under pressure;
- Psychological recovery – ability to restore emotional balance after stressful events.

A multidimensional assessment is preferable to relying on a single stress score because stress resilience represents a complex interaction of emotional, cognitive, behavioral, social, and contextual factors. The systematic review literature also points to an overreliance on cross-sectional self-report designs and highlights the need for more diverse methodologies in teacher emotion-regulation research.

Conclusion. Emotional regulation represents an important psychological resource for strengthening teachers' stress resilience. The literature reviewed in this article demonstrates that difficulties in emotional regulation are associated with increased stress and burnout and reduced psychological well-being, whereas adaptive regulation processes, particularly cognitive reappraisal, are associated with more favorable psychological outcomes.

The development of teachers' stress resilience should therefore include systematic development of emotional awareness, cognitive reappraisal, behavioral self-regulation, adaptive coping, self-efficacy, and psychological recovery skills. At the same time, emotional regulation should not be treated exclusively as an individual responsibility. Organizational climate, administrative support,

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collegial relationships, mentoring, workload, and professional conditions can significantly influence teachers' ability to regulate emotions and maintain resilience.

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