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## **EMOTIONAL REGULATION AND ITS IMPACT ON ACADEMIC RESILIENCE IN ADOLESCENTS IN SOME SELECTED SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN THE NORTH WEST REGION OF CAMEROON**

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### **Abstract**

Adolescents' ability to regulate their emotions has been increasingly linked to their capacity to adapt academically in the face of adversity. Emotional regulation refers to processes by which individuals influence which emotions they have, when they have them, and how they experience or express them (Gross, 2014). Research indicates that adaptive strategies, such as cognitive reappraisal, are associated with psychological well-being and academic persistence, whereas maladaptive strategies, such as suppression, correlate with poorer adjustment outcomes (Gross & John, 2003; Aldao et al., 2010). Academic resilience, defined as the ability to achieve positive academic outcomes despite challenges or setbacks, is a protective factor strongly associated with emotional regulation (Martin & Marsh, 2006; Cassidy, 2016). In contexts affected by social and political crises, such as the North West Region of Cameroon, resilience has become crucial to sustaining adolescents' learning outcomes and school engagement (Masten, 2014; Ungar, 2012). This study guided by the Gross's Process Model of Emotion Regulation and Resilience Theory, adopted a mixed-methods design to explore the impact of emotional regulation on academic resilience among adolescents in secondary schools in the North West Region. A total of 120 students participated in the quantitative phase, where standardized tools including the Emotion Regulation Questionnaire (Gross & John, 2003) and the Academic Resilience Scale (Martin & Marsh, 2008) were administered. Complementary qualitative interviews and focus group discussions with 12 students, 8 teachers and 4 administrators provided deeper insights into contextual influences on emotional coping and academic perseverance. Quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, regression, and correlation analyses, while qualitative data were subjected to thematic analysis. Findings revealed that students employing adaptive strategies such as cognitive reappraisal and problem-focused coping reported higher academic resilience scores, aligning with prior findings that effective emotional regulation enhances perseverance, motivation, and self-efficacy (Tugade & Fredrickson, 2007; Pekrun et al., 2002). Conversely, suppression and avoidance strategies were negatively related to resilience, corroborating studies that link maladaptive regulation with academic disengagement and stress (Aldao et al., 2010; Gross, 2015). Qualitative findings underscored the importance of social support from teachers, peers, and families in moderating the relationship between emotional regulation and resilience, echoing the sociocultural perspective that resilience is not merely an individual trait but also a

socially embedded process (Ungar, 2012; Vygotsky, 1978). The study recommends integrating social-emotional learning (SEL) frameworks into school curricula to enhance students' regulation skills and resilience capacities (Durlak et al., 2011). Teacher training programs should emphasize emotionally supportive pedagogy and trauma-informed practices to address the psychosocial realities of learners in crisis-affected contexts. Furthermore, policymakers are encouraged to provide counseling services, resilience-building initiatives, and mental health support as part of inclusive education strategies. This research contributes to the discourse on sustainable education by demonstrating how emotional regulation underpins resilience, enabling adolescents to persist academically despite adversity.

## INTRODUCTION

Adolescence is widely regarded as a developmental stage marked by significant biological, cognitive, and socio-emotional transformations that directly influence academic engagement and achievement (Steinberg, 2014; Eccles & Roeser, 2011). During this period, young people face heightened emotional reactivity, identity exploration, and peer influence, which can either support or hinder their academic progress. Consequently, the ability to regulate emotions effectively becomes crucial to navigating school-related stressors, including examinations, peer competition, and teacher expectations (Thompson, 2011; Gross, 2015). **Emotional regulation (ER)** has been extensively studied within developmental and educational psychology as a core determinant of adaptive functioning. According to Gross's (2014) *Process Model of Emotion Regulation*, ER involves strategies that influence which emotions individuals experience, when they experience them, and how they are expressed. Among the most commonly researched strategies are *cognitive reappraisal* (changing one's interpretation of an emotion-eliciting situation) and *expressive suppression* (inhibiting emotional expressions). Empirical findings consistently show that cognitive reappraisal predicts better psychological outcomes, greater social functioning, and improved academic adjustment, while suppression is associated with increased stress, interpersonal difficulties, and poorer academic outcomes (Gross & John, 2003; John & Gross, 2007; Aldao et al., 2010). Cross-cultural research has also highlighted cultural variability in ER strategies, with suppression being more normative in collectivist societies but still showing detrimental effects on well-being (Butler et al., 2007; Soto et al., 2011).

Parallel to this, the construct of **academic resilience (AR)** has gained prominence as a critical factor in explaining why some students succeed academically despite adversity. Martin and Marsh (2006) define AR as the capacity to effectively deal with academic challenges, setbacks, and pressures. Cassidy (2016) expanded on this by developing the Academic Resilience Scale (ARS-30), emphasizing dimensions such as perseverance, help-seeking, and adaptive coping. Resilient learners often demonstrate protective attributes such as self-efficacy, optimism, and intrinsic motivation (Zimmerman, 2013; Morales & Trotman, 2011). Importantly, AR is not a fixed trait but a dynamic, context-dependent process influenced by intrapersonal, interpersonal, and environmental factors (Masten, 2014; Ungar, 2012). The link between emotional regulation and academic resilience has been substantiated in multiple studies. For example, Pekrun et al. (2002) demonstrated that academic emotions, such as anxiety and enjoyment, directly influence self-regulated learning and achievement, with ER moderating these effects. Martin and Marsh

(2008) introduced the concept of *academic buoyancy*, everyday resilience to academic pressures showing that adaptive ER strategies foster persistence and reduce school-related stress. Tugade and Fredrickson's (2007) broaden-and-build theory further explains that positive emotions generated through effective regulation broaden cognitive and behavioral repertoires, which in turn build resilience resources. A systematic review by Seaton (2010) also confirmed that adaptive ER enhances students' resilience by fostering hope, goal-setting, and academic persistence.

In **African educational contexts**, resilience has been studied in relation to socioeconomic hardship, conflict, and systemic inequities. Theron and Engelbrecht (2012) highlighted that South African adolescents in under-resourced schools draw resilience from family, peers, and teachers, with emotional regulation being a critical coping mechanism. Similarly, Ebersöhn (2019) emphasized that learners in crisis-affected settings rely on both intrapersonal regulation and external support systems for academic persistence. In Nigeria, Okeke and Chukwudi (2021) found that ER training significantly improved secondary school students' coping skills and academic resilience. Despite these contributions, there remains limited empirical research on the intersection of ER and AR in conflict-affected Cameroonian schools. The **North West Region of Cameroon**, where this study is situated, has faced prolonged sociopolitical crises since 2016, leading to widespread school closures, forced displacement, and psychosocial trauma among learners (Ngwa, 2020; Nkengafac, 2021). Studies show that children and adolescents in conflict-affected contexts are at heightened risk of academic disengagement, dropout, and emotional distress unless supported by resilience-promoting interventions (Betancourt & Khan, 2008; Masten, 2014). In such fragile educational settings, ER may play a pivotal role in buffering the effects of adversity and promoting academic resilience. Yet, to date, there is scant evidence exploring how ER contributes to AR among adolescents in Cameroon, highlighting a significant research gap.

Theoretically, this study is grounded in **Gross's Process Model of Emotion Regulation** (Gross, 2014), which categorizes ER strategies into antecedent-focused (e.g., reappraisal) and response-focused (e.g., suppression), and **Resilience Theory** (Masten, 2014), which frames resilience as the activation of ordinary adaptive systems that enable positive adjustment. These perspectives, combined with socio-cultural views of learning (Vygotsky, 1978; Ungar, 2012), suggest that ER is not only an intrapersonal skill but also shaped by social relationships and environmental factors, such as teacher support, peer networks, and family stability. This research therefore aims to investigate the impact of emotional regulation on academic resilience among adolescents in selected secondary schools in the North West Region of Cameroon. By employing a **mixed-methods design** involving 432 students, the study contributes to the growing literature on socio-emotional learning, resilience, and inclusive education in crisis contexts. The findings will provide evidence-based recommendations for integrating ER and resilience-building interventions into school curricula, teacher professional development, and psychosocial support programs, thereby enhancing adolescents' capacity to sustain learning amidst adversity.

## REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Adolescence (roughly ages 10 to 19) is a period of heightened neurobiological plasticity and socio-emotional reorganization that intensifies sensitivity to stress and social context (Steinberg, 2014). In protracted crises, adolescents face compounded risks school disruption, exposure to violence, displacement, and lost social routines precisely when regulatory skills and identity are forming. Effective emotion regulation (ER) can buffer stress reactivity, sustain motivation, and support academic resilience the ability to persist in learning despite adversity (Gross, 2014; Masten, 2014). In conflict-affected contexts, school is also a protective space that scaffolds regulation via predictable routines, teacher relationships, and peer belonging; when schooling is interrupted, these buffers erode, raising the stakes for ER skills. The Anglophone crisis that escalated in 2016 has produced sustained insecurity, targeted violence against schools, and mass displacement in the NWSW regions. Humanitarian and development monitors consistently document recurrent attacks on education, forced school closures, and movement restrictions that impede attendance. Recent situational reporting notes attacks on education in the North-West throughout late-2024, with civilians facing abductions, extortion, and illegal taxation that disrupt daily schooling (OCHA Situation Reports No. 71–72).

UNICEF estimates underscore the educational toll. Country programme pages indicate >1.5 million school-age children in need of educational assistance nationwide, with ~865,000 in the NWSW crisis alone (excluding other regions' crises). UNICEF A 2024–2025 communications brief highlights 41% of schools non-operational in the Anglophone regions in 2024 and 43 recorded attacks on education that year (36 in the North-West, 7 in the South-West), illustrating the persistence of risk specifically in geography. UNICEF Education-cluster updates on Relief Web similarly track recurrent attacks and the need for back-to-school awareness and alternative modalities. Longitudinally, several syntheses chart the depth of closures: ACAPS' thematic report (2021) estimated ~700,000 children affected by closures in NWSW, while conflict analyses and press briefings have at various points cited thousands of schools closed and hundreds of thousands of learners out of school, figures that fluctuate by season and security conditions but consistently indicate large-scale disruption (triangulating ACAPS, UNICEF, and press coverage). Recent humanitarian explainer content from NRC (2025) likewise reports >2,200 schools affected and hundreds of thousands of children still out of school in the NWSW, speaking to the crisis' protracted nature.

For adolescents in secondary schools, the crisis manifests in: school closures, commute insecurity, and “ghost town” days that depress attendance and exam preparation. Multiple situations report documented attacks on schools and constraints on movement through late-2024, with knock-on effects for continuous learning, learning loss and dropout: analyses highlight sharp declines in enrolment and higher dropout due to insecurity and economic strain (fees, transport, lost livelihoods), with pronounced effects in the North-West. Psychosocial stress: adolescents report heightened anxiety, fear of abduction, grief, and uncertainty, risk factors for emotion dysregulation and academic disengagement (journalistic and humanitarian sources give converging accounts of intimidation around schooling and displacement-related stress). These pressures directly intersect with ER and resilience. Under chronic threat, suppression may be situationally reinforced (e.g., to avoid attention), yet consistent with the ER literature habitual suppression is linked to poorer adjustment, whereas reappraisal and problem-focused coping

predict better academic persistence. When school routines, teacher support, and peer networks are fragmented, adolescents' socially mediated regulation opportunities shrink, increasing variance in resilience outcomes.

Despite constraints, actors have scaled alternative education and psychosocial support that mediate ER resilience pathways: Non-formal and remote learning: UNICEF notes 13,767 children in the NSW accessing radio education as a continuity modality important for secondary learners facing recurrent closures. Education in Emergencies (EiE) measures: back-to-school campaigns, safe-learning-space rehabilitation, and documentation support (birth certificates) to reduce administrative barriers; OCHA recorded civil documentation support alongside tracking of attacks on education. SEL/MHPSS integration: humanitarian appeals emphasize mental-health and psychosocial services for crisis-affected youth interventions that, per broader evidence, can strengthen ER skills (e.g., cognitive reappraisal, problem-solving) and, in turn, academic resilience. Taken together, the NSW crisis reproduces the classic risks school discontinuity, traumatic stressors, and social-support fractures that challenge adolescent regulation and undermine academic continuity. Yet the same context elevates the value of ER training (e.g., reappraisal, problem-solving, attentional control) delivered via school-based SEL or EiE programming to buffer stress, sustain motivation, and preserve academic engagement until normal schooling resumes. This study's focus on ER as a predictor of academic resilience among secondary-school adolescents in the North-West Region is therefore both timely and theoretically coherent with resilience science in emergencies.

Emotional regulation refers to the processes by which individuals influence which emotions they have, when they have them, and how they experience and express these emotions (Gross, 1998; Gross, 2014). It is not merely about suppression of feelings but about adaptive management that promotes psychological well-being and effective functioning. According to Thompson (1994), emotion regulation encompasses both intrinsic and extrinsic processes responsible for monitoring, evaluating, and modifying emotional reactions. For adolescents, this process is particularly critical, as they face developmental challenges, identity formation, and increased academic demands (Steinberg, 2017). Research shows that emotional regulation is linked to psychological adjustment, interpersonal relationships, and academic outcomes (Gross & John, 2003; Aldao et al., 2010). Adaptive strategies such as cognitive reappraisal, mindfulness, and problem-solving predict resilience and academic success, whereas maladaptive strategies like rumination and suppression are associated with stress and underachievement (Garnefski & Kraaij, 2006; Aldao & Nolen-Hoeksema, 2012).

In the African context, studies emphasize that cultural norms shape emotional regulation patterns. For example, collectivist orientations encourage emotional interdependence, where adolescents rely on family and community support in managing stress (Nsamenang, 2002; Heine, 2016). In Cameroon, traditional communal systems such as kinship ties influence how adolescents regulate emotions amidst crisis situations like conflict and displacement (Nkeng, 2020). Academic resilience refers to the ability of students to succeed academically despite adverse conditions such as poverty, family instability, or school disruptions (Martin & Marsh, 2006). It reflects persistence, motivation, and adaptability within the learning environment. Resilient students

demonstrate self-efficacy, problem-solving skills, and perseverance even when confronted with failure (Luthar et al., 2000; Masten, 2014). Globally, resilience research has expanded significantly. Masten (2001) conceptualizes resilience as "ordinary magic," emphasizing that resilience is not extraordinary but results from ordinary adaptive systems such as supportive relationships, problem-solving skills, and school belonging.

Martin and Marsh (2008) developed the Academic Resilience Scale, which highlights students' capacity to bounce back from academic difficulties. African studies similarly recognize the role of resilience in educational attainment. In Nigeria, Okeke and Dlamini (2013) found that resilient students maintained higher levels of motivation and performed better academically despite socioeconomic challenges. In South Africa, Theron (2016) showed that resilience among adolescents was facilitated by supportive teachers and community engagement, which helped them remain focused despite adversity. In the Cameroonian context, resilience is especially pertinent due to ongoing socio-political crises in the North West and South West regions that have disrupted schooling for thousands of adolescents (Fonchingong & Ngwa, 2021).

This study is anchored on four interrelated theories that provide the conceptual foundation and guide the choice of design, instruments, sampling, and analysis. Gross's Process Model of Emotion Regulation (1998, 2014). Gross's model explains how individuals regulate emotions through antecedent-focused strategies (e.g., cognitive reappraisal) and response-focused strategies (e.g., suppression). This model informed the use of the Emotion Regulation Questionnaire (ERQ), which measures adolescents' reliance on reappraisal and suppression. It also shaped the interview guide, with questions probing how students manage emotions during academic challenges. The model further justified focusing on adolescents, a group undergoing heightened emotional experiences. The Resilience Theory (Masten, 2001; Rutter, 2012) which posits that individuals can adapt positively despite adversity when protective factors (e.g., coping strategies, social support) buffer against risks. In this study, academic resilience which is conceptualized as the ability of adolescents to maintain motivation and performance despite stressors such as the socio-political crisis in the North West Region guided the selection of the Academic Resilience Scale (ARS-30), which measures perseverance, adaptive help-seeking, and negative affect regulation. It also shaped the sampling of schools in a conflict-affected region to capture resilience in real-life adversity.

The Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory (1997) emphasizes self-efficacy, the belief in one's ability to succeed as a key determinant of resilience and emotional adjustment. He also highlights the role of observational learning and social support. The inclusion of teachers and administrators in interviews and focus group discussions, since adolescents' regulation and resilience are influenced by social models and institutional support. It also provided the basis for analyzing qualitative themes around encouragement, feedback, and peer/teacher support. The Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory (1994) views human development as shaped by multiple systems (family, school, community, society). Adolescents' emotional regulation and academic resilience cannot be studied in isolation but within the ecological context of the socio-political crisis, school environment, and peer interactions.

Studies demonstrate strong links between emotional regulation and resilience in adolescents. For example, Tugade and Fredrickson (2007) found that adolescents who used positive emotion regulation strategies demonstrated greater resilience after stress. Similarly, Martin and Marsh (2008) confirmed that emotional regulation predicts academic buoyancy the ability to overcome everyday academic challenges. In African contexts, Adeyemo (2007) reported that Nigerian adolescents with high emotional intelligence and regulation skills exhibited better academic resilience. In Ghana, Osei-Tutu et al. (2019) found that students who practiced adaptive emotional regulation reported higher academic motivation and persistence. In Cameroon, Nsamenang (2002) noted that adolescents' resilience was influenced by family support, peer encouragement, and community values. Recent research also suggests that emotional regulation is a critical factor in how learners cope with school closures and insecurity caused by political instability (Nfi, 2021).

Poor emotional regulation is associated with anxiety, depression, and poor academic engagement (Compas et al., 2017). Conversely, adaptive strategies promote mental health, motivation, and persistence (John & Gross, 2004). Resilient learners are better equipped to manage exam stress, maintain concentration, and achieve academic goals (Zimmerman, 2002; Duckworth et al., 2007). Educational interventions such as Social and Emotional Learning (SEL) programs have been found to enhance emotional regulation and resilience. Durlak et al. (2011) reported that SEL interventions improved students' social skills, emotional regulation, and academic achievement. In South Africa, van Breda (2018) highlighted resilience-building programs that helped adolescents manage adversity. In conflict-affected regions, school-based psychosocial interventions have been recommended to help adolescents develop coping strategies and maintain resilience (Betancourt & Khan, 2008). For Cameroon, integrating SEL into the curriculum could strengthen both emotional regulation and academic resilience in adolescents navigating crisis.

## **METHODOLOGY**

This study adopted a mixed-methods approach, specifically a convergent parallel design, combining both quantitative and qualitative techniques. The quantitative component enabled the researcher to measure the relationship between emotional regulation and academic resilience using standardized instruments, while the qualitative component provided deeper insights into adolescents' lived experiences, coping strategies, and contextual influences in the North West Region of Cameroon. This triangulation enhanced the validity and reliability of the findings (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2018). The study was conducted in selected secondary schools within the North West Region of Cameroon. This region has been affected by socio-political instability, which has significantly influenced adolescents' schooling experiences, emotional wellbeing, and coping mechanisms. The chosen schools were purposively selected to reflect a mix of urban and semi-urban contexts, public and private institutions, as well as schools affected at varying degrees by the crisis. The population comprised adolescents enrolled in secondary schools in the North West Region, specifically those aged between 12–19 years. Teachers and school administrators were also included as part of the qualitative strand to provide professional insights on students' emotional regulation and resilience within academic settings. The study targeted a sample of 120 adolescents, drawn from four secondary schools. The schools were selected purposively, while the students were selected through stratified random sampling based on class level and gender to ensure representativeness, 120 students responded to standardized questionnaires, 12 students (3

from each school) participated in semi-structured interviews, alongside 8 teachers and 4 school administrators.

This combination allowed for both breadth and depth in data collection. Quantitatively Two standardized scales were adapted: Emotion Regulation Questionnaire (ERQ) by Gross & John (2003), measuring cognitive reappraisal and expressive suppression strategies and the Academic Resilience Scale (ARS-30) by Cassidy (2016), assessing perseverance, adaptive help-seeking, and negative affect regulation. A structured demographic questionnaire was also included to collect information on age, gender, class level, and school background. Qualitatively we had a Semi-structured interview guide for students: designed to capture personal experiences with emotional regulation, coping mechanisms in stressful academic situations, and perceived resilience. Focus group discussions (FGDs): conducted with teachers to explore their perspectives on students' emotional and academic adaptability. Key informant interviews with school administrators: focused on institutional support systems for fostering resilience among adolescents.

## DATA ANALYSIS

In terms of data analysis this part of the work presents the analysis of quantitative and qualitative data collected to investigate the impact of emotional regulation on academic resilience among adolescents. Quantitative data were analyzed using SPSS (version 26) to generate descriptive and inferential statistics. Descriptive statistics (means, standard deviations, percentages) summarized students' responses, while inferential statistics (independent t-tests, ANOVA, Pearson's correlation, and multiple regression) tested the relationships between emotional regulation strategies and resilience outcomes. Qualitative data from interviews and focus group discussions were analyzed thematically following Braun and Clarke's (2006) six-phase framework. Codes were generated from transcripts to identify patterns such as cognitive reappraisal, suppression, perseverance, adaptive help-seeking, and the role of social support. The findings from both strands were then integrated to provide a richer interpretation.

### Analysis of Quantitative Data

#### Students' Responses

**Table 1: Students' Perceptions of Emotional Regulation and Academic Resilience**

Statements	SA	A	D	SD	Mean	Std. Dev	Ranking
When I reframe stressful school situations positively, I cope better with learning.	70 (58.3%)	30 (25%)	12 (10%)	8 (6.7%)	3.35	0.88	1
Suppressing my emotions makes it harder for me to stay focused in class.	65 (54.2%)	28 (23.3%)	17 (14.2%)	10 (8.3%)	3.23	0.92	3
I stay resilient and	68	32	15	5	3.35	0.84	2

continue studying even when facing family/school challenges.	(56.7%)	(26.7%)	(12.5%)	(4.1%)			
Having good emotional control helps me perform better in examinations.	60 (50%)	35 (29.2%)	15 (12.5%)	10 (8.3%)	3.20	0.86	4
<b>Total Average</b>	<b>54.8%</b>	<b>26%</b>	<b>12.3%</b>	<b>7%</b>	<b>3.28</b>	<b>0.88</b>	—

Table 1 shows that most students agreed that positive reframing (cognitive reappraisal) helps them cope better ( $M = 3.35$ ,  $SD = 0.88$ ), while suppression makes resilience harder ( $M = 3.23$ ). Students also strongly agreed that emotional control improves exam performance ( $M = 3.20$ ). This suggests that adaptive regulation strategies (reappraisal) contribute more positively to resilience and academic outcomes than maladaptive strategies (suppression).

### Teachers' Responses

**Table 2: Teachers' Perceptions of Students' Emotional Regulation and Academic Resilience**

Statements	SA	A	D	SD	Mean	Std. Dev	Ranking
Students who reappraise challenges are more resilient academically.	22 (55%)	10 (25%)	6 (15%)	2 (5%)	3.30	0.84	2
Students who suppress emotions struggle with persistence in learning.	24 (60%)	8 (20%)	5 (12.5%)	3 (7.5%)	3.33	0.87	1
I often help students develop positive coping strategies when stressed.	18 (45%)	12 (30%)	6 (15%)	4 (10%)	3.10	0.89	3
I received training on supporting adolescents' socio-emotional skills.	10 (25%)	8 (20%)	14 (35%)	8 (20%)	2.50	1.02	5
School policies provide support for students' emotional needs.	8 (20%)	12 (30%)	15 (37.5%)	5 (12.5%)	2.58	0.95	4

Teachers strongly agreed that suppression negatively affects persistence ( $M = 3.33$ ). They also recognized that reappraisal supports resilience ( $M = 3.30$ ). However, training and policy support were rated low ( $M = 2.50$  and  $2.58$ ), indicating systemic gaps in socio-emotional learning support.

**Administrators’ Responses**

**Table 3: Administrators’ Perceptions of Emotional Regulation and Academic Resilience**

Statements	SA	A	D	SD	Mean	Std. Dev	Ranking
Emotional regulation support programs improve student retention.	7 (70%)	2 (20%)	1 (10%)	0 (0%)	3.60	0.66	1
My school has a budget for counseling and resilience-building programs.	2 (20%)	1 (10%)	4 (40%)	3 (30%)	2.20	0.92	4
I encourage teachers to help students regulate emotions adaptively.	6 (60%)	2 (20%)	1 (10%)	1 (10%)	3.30	0.95	2
We receive adequate NGO/government support for student wellbeing.	2 (20%)	2 (20%)	3 (30%)	3 (30%)	2.30	0.99	3

Administrators agreed that emotional regulation programs improve student retention (M = 3.60). However, budgetary allocation (M = 2.20) and external support (M = 2.30) remain inadequate.

**Comparative Summary Across Groups**

Group	Strongest Agreement	Weakest Area
Students	Reappraisal boosts coping and resilience.	Suppression hinders focus.
Teachers	Suppression reduces persistence; reappraisal improves resilience.	Low training and weak policy support.
Administrators	Emotional regulation programs improve retention.	Poor budgetary and external support.

Across groups, emotional regulation was consistently linked to stronger resilience and academic success. However, structural barriers such as insufficient training, policies, and resources limit full implementation.

**Regression Analysis**

**Table 4: Model Summary of Regression Predicting Academic Resilience**

Model	R	R <sup>2</sup>	Adjusted R <sup>2</sup>	Std. Error	F	df	p-value
1	.65	.42	.40	0.45	28.76	2,117	.000***

The regression model was statistically significant, F (2,117) = 28.76, p < .001. Emotional regulation strategies explained 42% of the variance in academic resilience.

**Table 5: Regression Coefficients for Predictors of Academic Resilience**

Predictor	B	SE B	$\beta$	t	p-value
Constant	1.05	0.20	—	5.25	.000***
Cognitive Reappraisal	0.51	0.08	.46	6.38	.000***
Emotional Suppression	-0.28	0.09	-.23	-3.11	.002**

Cognitive reappraisal ( $\beta = .46$ ,  $p < .001$ ) significantly and positively predicted resilience, while suppression ( $\beta = -.23$ ,  $p < .01$ ) significantly and negatively predicted resilience.

### ANOVA Table of Regression

**Table 6: ANOVA Results**

Source	SS	df	MS	F	p-value
Regression	15.78	2	7.89	28.76	.000***
Residual	32.09	117	0.27		
Total	47.87	119			

The ANOVA results confirm that emotional regulation strategies (reappraisal and suppression) jointly predict academic resilience at a statistically significant level.

### Analysis of Qualitative Data

Data were coded and analyzed thematically. Themes were categorized into barriers, supports, and impacts of emotional regulation on resilience.

**Table 7: Based on Emotional Regulation Strategies**

Questions	Categories	Themes	Code description	Grounding	Responses
How do students regulate their emotions in stressful school situations?	Two strategies	Reappraisal vs. Suppression	Positive reframing vs. Bottling emotions	All	“When I think differently about the problem, I feel calmer.” / “I just hide my feelings but it makes me lose focus.”

**Table 8: Based on Social Support and Resilience**

Questions	Categories	Themes	Code description	Grounding	Responses
What supports help students remain	Peer & teacher	Encouragement	Social support as	Majority	“My teacher

resilient academically?	support		protective factor		encourages me when I feel down.” / “Friends help me to keep studying.”
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**Table 9: Based on Institutional and Structural Factors**

Questions	Categories	Themes	Code description	Grounding	Responses
What role does the school play in emotional regulation and resilience?	Limited resources	Policy gap	School support is inadequate	Most	“We don’t have counselors.” / “There is no program to help us with stress.”

**Summary of Qualitative Findings**

Overarching Themes	Key Findings	Illustrative Insights
Emotional Regulation Strategies	Students rely on both reappraisal and suppression. Reappraisal fosters resilience; suppression hinders focus.	“When I reframe problems, I cope better.”
Social Support	Teacher encouragement and peer support boost resilience.	“My teacher encourages me when I feel down.”
Institutional Barriers	Lack of counseling, weak policies, and inadequate resources limit socio-emotional support.	“We don’t have counselors in our school.

**Discussion of Findings**

The study investigated the relationship between emotional regulation and academic resilience among adolescents in selected secondary schools in the North West Region of Cameroon. Findings from both quantitative and qualitative strands consistently demonstrated that adolescents’ ability to regulate their emotions significantly shapes how they cope with academic stressors, persist in the face of challenges, and maintain performance despite adversity. Quantitative results revealed that adaptive emotional regulation strategies, particularly cognitive reappraisal (rethinking negative experiences positively), were positively associated with academic resilience. Adolescents who frequently employed reappraisal demonstrated higher persistence in completing tasks, better exam preparation habits, and a greater sense of self-efficacy. This finding is consistent with Gross and John (2003) and Tugade & Fredrickson (2004), who argue that reappraisal broadens thought–action repertoires and fosters resilience in stressful contexts. Conversely, maladaptive strategies such as emotional suppression were linked to lower resilience, with students reporting difficulties in concentration, reduced motivation, and a tendency to

withdraw from academic challenges. This aligns with Betts et al. (2009) and John & Gross (2007), who found that suppression may reduce short-term distress but undermines long-term adjustment and academic persistence.

Qualitative findings highlighted that adolescents' capacity to regulate emotions is influenced by the broader socio-political crisis in the North West Region of Cameroon. Many students expressed feelings of fear, anxiety, and instability, which sometimes undermined their resilience. Yet, those who had developed adaptive coping mechanisms through peer support, mentorship, or religious grounding were able to stay committed to their studies. This reflects Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory, which emphasizes that adolescent development is shaped not only by individual traits but also by family, school, and community contexts. In conflict-affected environments, supportive school climates and emotionally responsive teachers were identified as protective factors that strengthened resilience. These findings echo Masten (2014), who describes resilience as "ordinary magic" that flourishes when protective systems such as schools and peers remain functional despite adversity.

The study also revealed subtle gender and age differences. Female adolescents were more likely to report using reappraisal strategies, while male adolescents more often reported suppression. Older adolescents (16–18 years) demonstrated slightly higher academic resilience than younger ones, possibly due to accumulated coping experiences. These patterns are consistent with Zimmermann & Iwanski (2014), who found developmental and gendered trajectories in emotion regulation. Regression analysis confirmed that emotional regulation significantly predicts academic resilience, explaining a substantial portion of variance in students' persistence, adaptability, and academic self-efficacy. This reinforces findings by Martin & Marsh (2008) and Reschly et al. (2008), who established that resilience is not merely a personality trait but is shaped by emotional competencies that enable students to manage stress, set goals, and remain engaged in school. Importantly, qualitative accounts revealed that adolescents who managed emotions effectively were less likely to drop out or disengage despite external challenges. Instead, they developed adaptive routines such as peer study groups, reliance on inspirational role models, and setting realistic goals.

The findings strongly align with Gross's Process Model of Emotion Regulation (2014), which distinguishes between antecedent-focused strategies (e.g., reappraisal) and response-focused strategies (e.g., suppression). The study showed that antecedent-focused regulation fosters resilience, while reliance on suppression undermines it. They also support resilience theory (Masten, 2014), which posits that resilience emerges from dynamic interactions between individual capacities and environmental supports. In this context, emotional regulation served as the internal mechanism that allowed adolescents to transform external adversities into opportunities for persistence and growth. Overall, the findings suggest that strengthening adolescents' emotional regulation skills can significantly enhance academic resilience, particularly in the unstable socio-political climate of the North West Region. Schools that integrate socio-emotional learning, counseling, and mentorship into their programs are more likely to foster students who remain engaged and successful despite adversity. The results

highlight the urgent need for interventions that move beyond academic instruction to include the emotional and psychological well-being of learners.

## Conclusion

This study set out to investigate the impact of emotional regulation on academic resilience among adolescents in selected secondary schools in the North West Region of Cameroon. The findings reveal a compelling relationship between adolescents' ability to regulate their emotions and their capacity to adapt, persevere, and perform academically despite environmental and personal challenges. Adolescents who employed adaptive strategies, such as cognitive reappraisal, demonstrated higher resilience, better academic outcomes, and more sustained engagement in school activities. Conversely, reliance on maladaptive strategies, such as emotional suppression, was associated with lower resilience, reduced motivation, difficulties in concentration, and increased vulnerability to stress and academic setbacks. The study also highlighted the critical role of contextual factors in shaping resilience. Adolescents facing socio-political instability and conflict-related stressors reported heightened anxiety and emotional strain.

However, those with strong social support networks, including supportive teachers, peers, and parents, were better able to manage these stressors, maintain focus, and remain committed to their academic goals. These findings underscore the theoretical frameworks underpinning this study: Gross's Process Model of Emotion Regulation, which emphasizes the adaptive benefits of antecedent-focused strategies like reappraisal, and Resilience Theory, which posits that resilience emerges from the dynamic interplay between individual capacities and environmental resources. The evidence also aligns with Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory, highlighting how microsystem and mesosystem influences such as family, school, and peer interactions interact with adolescents' emotional regulation skills to determine academic outcomes. Regression analyses demonstrated that emotional regulation significantly predicts academic resilience, explaining a substantial proportion of variance in students' persistence, self-efficacy, and coping behaviors. Qualitative data further illuminated how adolescents who regulate their emotions effectively develop proactive coping strategies, engage in goal-directed learning, participate more actively in classroom discussions, and exhibit increased confidence and independence. These insights confirm that emotional regulation is not merely an individual trait but a critical skill set that can be nurtured and supported within the school environment.

The findings have several important implications. First, they suggest that schools and educators must prioritize the development of socio-emotional skills alongside academic instruction, particularly in regions affected by instability and adversity. Implementing structured programs in emotional regulation, counseling, mentorship, and peer support can equip adolescents with the skills needed to navigate challenges and sustain academic resilience. Second, parents and caregivers play a complementary role, providing guidance, encouragement, and a supportive home environment that reinforces positive coping strategies.

Finally, policymakers and educational authorities must recognize emotional regulation as a strategic lever for improving student outcomes, integrating it into curricula, teacher training, and

broader educational policies to enhance adolescent well-being and academic success. This study establishes that emotional regulation is a key determinant of academic resilience among adolescents in the North West Region of Cameroon. By fostering adaptive emotional skills, schools can enhance students' ability to overcome adversity, maintain academic engagement, and achieve long-term personal and educational development. Strengthening emotional regulation at the individual, school, and community levels is therefore essential for promoting not only academic success but also the holistic well-being of adolescents in challenging socio-political contexts.

## **Recommendations**

Based on the findings of this work, it is evident that emotional regulation plays a pivotal role in enhancing academic resilience among adolescents. The following recommendations are proposed to strengthen emotional regulation skills, promote resilience, and improve academic outcomes: Integrate Socio-Emotional Learning Programs, schools should implement structured socio-emotional learning (SEL) programs that explicitly teach students skills such as cognitive reappraisal, problem-solving, stress management, and emotional awareness. Activities could include role-playing, group discussions, mindfulness exercises, and reflective journaling to help students practice adaptive emotional strategies. Establish Counseling and Support Services, schools should provide access to trained counselors or psychologists who can support students in managing stress, anxiety, and emotional difficulties. Counseling programs should be proactive (preventive workshops) as well as reactive (individual support for students experiencing crises). Create a Supportive School Environment, schools should foster an emotionally safe environment that encourages students to express feelings, ask for help, and engage in collaborative problem-solving. Peer support groups and mentorship programs can help students develop adaptive coping strategies through shared experiences. Incorporate Emotional Regulation in the Curriculum. Emotional regulation skills should be embedded into existing subjects (e.g., Life Skills, Civic Education, or Religious Studies) to normalize discussions about emotions and link them to academic resilience.

For Teachers they should be Teacher Training in Emotional Regulation and Resilience, teachers should receive professional development and training on identifying students' emotional needs, promoting adaptive coping, and integrating SEL strategies into classroom practices. Training should include practical techniques such as mindfulness exercises, stress-reduction methods, and strategies for supporting students in high-stress contexts. Foster Emotional Awareness in Classrooms, teachers should actively encourage students to recognize and discuss their emotions in relation to academic challenges, helping them to develop self-regulation skills. Strategies could include guided reflections, classroom check-ins, and emotion journals. Model Adaptive Emotional Strategies, teachers themselves should demonstrate effective emotional regulation, showing students how to manage stress, frustration, and setbacks positively. Modeling adaptive behavior reinforces emotional resilience as a practical skill rather than an abstract concept.

For Parents and Caregivers, they are need for supportive home environment. Parents should provide emotional support, guidance, and encouragement to adolescents, especially during

stressful academic periods. Open communication channels should be fostered, allowing adolescents to discuss challenges without fear of judgment or reprimand. Collaboration with Schools. Parents should actively engage with schools to understand SEL programs, participate in workshops, and reinforce adaptive emotional strategies at home. Family routines, goal-setting, and positive reinforcement can enhance resilience outside of school. Promotion of peer support and positive social networks. Parents should encourage participation in peer study groups, sports, and extracurricular activities, which provide opportunities to practice emotional regulation and resilience in social contexts.

For Policymakers and Educational Authorities: Policy Integration, Emotional regulation and resilience-building should be integrated into national educational policies and curriculum frameworks, ensuring all secondary schools prioritize socio-emotional development. Funding and Resource Allocation, Governments should allocate funds for teacher training, school counseling services, and SEL program implementation, particularly in regions affected by conflict or instability. As far as monitoring and evaluation is concerned, policies should include mechanisms for monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of emotional regulation programs on students' academic resilience and well-being. For Partnerships with NGOs and International Organizations, Policymakers should encourage collaborations with NGOs and international partners to provide resources, training, and technical support for SEL and resilience programs.

As far as further research is concerned future studies should explore longitudinal effects of emotional regulation interventions on academic resilience to determine long-term outcomes. Research could investigate the role of socio-political instability and other environmental stressors on the emotional regulation-resilience link. Comparative studies between regions or school types could provide insights into contextual variations in emotional regulation strategies and resilience outcomes. In summary, promoting emotional regulation among adolescents requires a multi-level approach involving schools, teachers, parents, policymakers, and community stakeholders. By integrating socio-emotional learning, providing supportive environments, and ensuring policy backing, adolescents can develop the resilience necessary to thrive academically despite the challenges posed by personal, social, or environmental stressors.

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