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The Relationship between Emotional Regulation and Anxiety among Yarmouk University Students

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Abstract

Objectives: This study investigated the relationship between emotional regulation and anxiety (state and trait anxiety) among students at Yarmouk University. It also examined whether differences in emotional regulation and anxiety levels exist based on gender, educational level, and academic major.

Methods: The Emotional Regulation Scale developed by Gross and John (2003) and the Anxiety Scale developed by Mikha'il (2003) were used. The sample consisted of 550 male and female students selected through convenience sampling. Data were analyzed to determine correlations and group differences according to the study variables.

Results: The findings revealed a negative correlation between emotional regulation and anxiety. No statistically significant differences in emotional regulation were found based on gender or major. However, significant differences were observed according to educational level, favoring undergraduate students. Anxiety levels (state and trait) showed no significant differences based on gender or major at the undergraduate level. In contrast, postgraduate students and those in scientific majors exhibited significantly higher anxiety levels, with state anxiety exceeding trait anxiety.

Conclusions: The study contributes to the limited research on emotional regulation and anxiety within higher education in the Arab context, particularly in Jordan. The findings support the development of targeted psychological support programs and educational strategies aimed at enhancing students' emotional well-being and academic performance.

Keywords: Emotional regulation, state anxiety, trait anxiety, Yarmouk University students, Jordan

مستوى تنظيم الانفعالات وعلاقته بالقلق لدى طلبة جامعة اليرموك

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ملخّص

الأهداف: هدفت هذه الدراسة إلى استقصاء العلاقة بين مستوى تنظيم الانفعال والقلق (كحالة - وسمة) لدى طلبة جامعة اليرموك. كما سعت إلى تحديد ما إذا كانت هناك فروق في مستوى تنظيم الانفعال، ومستويات القلق، تعزى إلى متغيرات الجنس، والمرحلة التعليمية، والتخصص.

المنهجية: استخدم الباحثون مقياس تنظيم الانفعالات الذي طوره Gross & John (2003) ، ومقياس القلق الذي طوره Mikha'il(2003) وتألفت عينة الدراسة من 550 طالبًا وطالبة من جامعة اليرموك، تم اختيارهم من خلال أسلوب أخذ العينات الميسرة؛ لتحقيق أهداف الدراسة.

النتائج: أظهرت نتائج الدراسة وجود علاقة سلبية بين تنظيم الانفعال والقلق. كما بينت النتائج عدم وجود فروق دالة إحصائياً في تنظيم الانفعال تُعزى إلى الجنس أو التخصص، في حين وُجدت فروق دالة إحصائياً في تنظيم الانفعال تعزى إلى المرحلة التعليمية لصالح طلبة مرحلة البكالوريوس. وأشارت النتائج أيضاً إلى عدم وجود فروق دالة إحصائياً في مستويات القلق (كحالة - وسمة) تعزى إلى الجنس، أو مرحلة البكالوريوس، أو التخصصات الإنسانية. في المقابل، كشفت النتائج عن وجود فروق دالة إحصائياً في مستويات القلق مرتبطة بمرحلة الدراسات العليا، والتخصصات العلمية، وذلك لصالح القلق كحالة.

الخلاصة: تسهم هذه الدراسة في إثراء الأدبيات المحدودة حول تنظيم الانفعال والقلق في سياق التعليم العالي في الأردن. وتتميز بأصالتها من خلال تناولها للتفاعل بين الانفعالات والتحصيل الأكاديمي لدى طلبة الجامعات. كما يمكن الاستفادة من نتائجها في تطوير برامج نفسية موجهة، واستراتيجيات تعليمية تهدف إلى تعزيز الصحة الانفعالية، والأداء الأكاديمي للطلبة.

الكلمات الدالة: تنظيم الانفعال، قلق الحالة، قلق السمة، طلبة جامعة اليرموك، الأردن.

1. Introduction

University transition is one of the most crucial developmental processes, which is usually accompanied by both academic and social demands that may severely affect the emotional health of a student. Poor ability to effectively deal with or control negative emotions, either before or during these stressors, is often manifested in the form of psychological anxiety, which is an active state undermining personal adaptation as well as academic performance (Benítez-Agudelo et al., 2025; Mastrokoukou et al., 2024). Recent crises have worsened the prevalence of these mental health issues globally; in the case of a study by Eisenberg et al. (2020), the prevalence of the mentioned factors, such as stress and anxiety, in university students during the COVID-19 pandemic was reported to have increased significantly, especially in students in their advanced years of study.

This trend is observed in the local setting in Jordan, where mental health issues among the student body are a burning problem (AlSamhori et al., 2024). Local research shows that a significant number, about 30–40 percent, of college students are moderate- to high-anxiety individuals, and this adversely affects their academic and mental well-being (Alqudah et al., 2021). This underscores the necessity of undertaking research that aims to identify protective factors and useful intervention strategies in the system of regional higher education. The regulation of emotions is generally known to be a critical component in lessening the occurrence and intensity of anxiety among learners. Studies consistently show that the lack of skills focused on emotional regulation is highly intertwined with increased rates of anxiety and depression among the university population (ElBarazi, 2025; Özdemir & Eryılmaz, 2024). Moreover, investigations grounded in context, such as a study conducted in Jordan by Al-Wardat et al. (2024), have found that there is a positive relationship between maladaptive strategies, including expressive suppression, and higher levels of anxiety, which upholds the importance of adaptive management of emotions in enhancing mental health. Although there has been clear evidence at both international and local levels showing that emotional regulation is associated with psychological well-being, there is a substantial knowledge gap in relation to the specific interaction between anxiety and emotional regulation skills in the Jordanian university setting (Xu, Jaffri, & Yang, 2024).

This drawback does not allow for the development of culturally sensitive and empirically based support mechanisms. Considering this critical gap, the proposed study will attempt to understand the nature of the relationship between emotional regulation and anxiety (state and trait) among Yarmouk University students (Dwekat, Al-Amer, Al-Daraawi, & Saleh, 2023; Xu, Jaffri, & Yang, 2024). In particular, the proposed study primarily aims to establish the correlation between the degree of emotional control and anxiety (state and trait) in students and whether statistically significant variations in the degree of emotional control and anxiety exist depending on demographic factors, such as gender, level of education, and major.

Targeting Yarmouk University, the proposed research will add original data to the existing literature related to the topic in the Arab region, as it will yield results accounting for the specifics of the social, economic, and cultural contexts that define the experience of studying in Jordan (Dwekat et al., 2023; Xu, Jaffri, & Yang, 2024). The results will be used as an empirical basis for building specific psychological assistance programs and educational strategies to ensure the emotional health of students and improve the level of their academic achievement.

2. Literature Review

Anxiety has become one of the most common psychological conditions recently, due to the complexity of an individual's roles and diverse responsibilities. This complexity is reflected in increased fears and worries about the future. Generally, anxiety causes vague and distracting feelings of discomfort, distress, and inner tension, which play a crucial role in triggering conflicts and challenges in life.

2.1 Anxiety

Generalized Anxiety Disorder (GAD) is a condition of overwhelming and persistent anxiety that affects normal functioning and performance in social life over a duration of at least six months (American Psychiatric Association, 2013). The concept of anxiety is normally understood as a multidimensional psychological state that comprises cognitive,

emotional, and behavioral states, including worry, emotional tension, and avoidance behaviors. These traits underline the psychological construct of anxiety that should be of particular concern in academic and social settings, such as in the case of a university (Grupe and Nitschke, 2019; Beesdo et al., 2010).

According to Spielberger (1982), his model identifies two basic types of anxiety, state and trait anxiety. State anxiety is a temporary affective state that occurs in response to particular situations that one considers to be threatening and changes depending on circumstances. On the contrary, trait anxiety is a comparatively consistent tendency to develop anxiety in a broad context. This difference is theoretically based on the study of individual differences in anxiety and is directly connected with the variables under study in the current research.

2.2 Emotional Regulation

Emotional management is one of the fundamental elements for the effective execution of social and emotional roles. It entails the application of cognitive or behavioral manipulative measures to alter the context of the occurrence of emotions to influence the experience and the expression of emotions (Gross, 2002; Gross and Thompson, 2007; Thompson, 1994). Such emotions usually occur when one considers an event as something important in his or her life, which causes physiological, behavioral, and cognitive effects. Such reactions can then be controlled to produce individual objectives.

The process model proposed by Gross (2007) calls for five stages of emotional regulation: situation selection, situation modification, attentional deployment, cognitive change, and response modulation. The strategies can be either antecedent-focused, which interfere with the activation of the emotion before it becomes full, or response-focused, which change the emotion once it is aroused (Gross & Thompson, 2007; Kobylińska & Kusev, 2019).

Emotional Regulation Strategies:

There are two major strategies; they are known to be:

Antecedent-based approach, e.g., cognitive reappraisal, i.e., reinterpreting an emotion-inducing situation to have a smaller negative effect. This plan is related to less physiological arousal and improved emotional results (Gross and John, 2003).

Response-oriented tactic, e.g., expressive suppression, the strategy aims at preventing outward expression of emotions. This is not usually effective and is associated with increased physiological arousal and undesirable psychological consequences (Gross, 2015).

According to a more recent study, the aspect of strategy use, which is flexible, is of importance. When people adjust their regulation strategies according to various contexts, they are less likely to be anxious and have poorer psychological adjustment (Aldao and Nolen-Hoeksema, 2012; Aldao, Sheppes, and Gross, 2015; Webb et al., 2012). Maladaptive strategies such as rumination and expressive suppression are always linked with an increase in anxiety and depressive symptoms, but adaptive ones, in particular cognitive reappraisal, are related to the maintenance of mental health and emotional resilience (Aldao, Nolen-Hoeksema, and Schweizer, 2010; Bonanno and Burton, 2013).

2.3 The Relationship Between Emotional regulation and Anxiety

Barlow, Allen, and Choat (2004) indicated that individuals who repeatedly fail to regulate their emotions according to the situation are more prone to internalizing symptoms. When individuals perceive a situation as uncontrollable or experience a strong, undesired emotion, they are prompted to engage in emotional regulation. If this regulation is ineffective, it leads to an increase in unwanted feelings and emotions, which may cause psychological distress and poor attempts at regulation. Over time, this can develop into anxiety and depressive disorders, as repeated failure to regulate unwanted emotions increases the occurrence of disorders and anxiety symptoms. Therefore, it is essential to understand the influencing factors and the relationship between anxiety symptoms and emotional regulation (Loevaas et al., 2018; Nesayan, Hosseini, & Gandomani, 2017; Mari'e et al., 2024).

1. Significance of the Study

The significance of this study lies in identifying the level of emotional regulation among students at Yarmouk University according to their gender, educational level, and major. It also aims to determine the level of anxiety based on

these variables and to explore the nature of the relationship between the level of emotional regulation and anxiety among the students.

2. Research Questions

The problem of the study was framed by understanding the relationship between emotional regulation and anxiety among students at Yarmouk University through answering the following questions:

1. Does the level of emotional regulation differ according to the student's gender, educational level, and major?
2. Does the level of anxiety differ according to the student's gender, educational level, and major?
3. Is there a statistically significant correlation (at $\alpha = 0.05$) between emotional regulation and anxiety (both state and trait)?

3. Methodology

5.1 Research design

The study utilized a correlational descriptive design, as it best fits the objectives and nature of this study. This methodology is useful for exploring the associations and relationships among variables, since no interventions are required. For example, the correlational descriptive design helped researchers analyze both the degree and direction of emotional regulation in relation to anxiety among students at Yarmouk University. It also helped assess differences in emotional regulation and anxiety levels across demographic variables such as age, gender, educational level, and academic major. This approach provides valuable information regarding the coexistence and variation of these psychological constructs within a non-experimental framework among university students.

5.2 Study Population

The study population consists of all students enrolled at Yarmouk University during the summer academic year 2024/2025, totalling 32,224 male and female students. According to official records from the Admission and Registration Department at Yarmouk University, the population is divided by gender into 11,887 male students and 20,337 female students.

5.3 Study Sample

The study sample consisted of 505 male and female students from Yarmouk University, from various scientific and humanities colleges. They were selected using convenience sampling. Table (1) shows the distribution of study sample members according to study variables.

Table (1): Frequencies and Percentages According to the Study Variables

	Category	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	200	39.6
	Female	305	60.4
Academic Level	Bachelor	269	53.3
	Graduate Studies	236	46.7
Major	Humanities	279	55.2
	Sciences	226	44.8
	Total	505	100.0

5.4 Study Instruments

The researchers utilized the Michail (2003) Anxiety Scale and the Gross and John (2003) Emotional Regulation Scale (translated into Arabic) in order to reach the study objectives. The items included in the Anxiety Scale (40 items) and the Emotional Regulation Scale (10 items) are used to measure state and trait anxiety and cognitive reappraisal and expressive suppression, respectively.

Validity and Reliability

A pilot sample was used to ensure the content and construct validity of both scales through expert review and a pilot sample not included in the main study. Cronbach alpha and test-retest reliability were established to ensure that all domains of both tools were found to be satisfactorily internally consistent and stable, as shown in Table (2) and Table (3).

Table (2): Cronbach's Alpha Internal Consistency Coefficients and Test-Retest Reliability for the Domains and the Total Score

Domain	Test-Retest Reliability	Internal Consistency (Cronbach's Alpha)
State Anxiety	0.87	0.74
Trait Anxiety	0.89	0.76
Anxiety	0.86	0.81

Table (3) provides the reliability coefficients of the Emotional Regulation Scale, which includes internal consistency, measured by Cronbach's alpha, and time-related stability, determined by test-retest reliability. The findings show that both subdomains, cognitive reappraisal and expressive suppression, and the overall emotional regulation score are showing good reliability. Particularly, Cronbach's alpha coefficients were between 0.79 and 0.81, which showed good to acceptable internal consistency, and test-retest reliability coefficients were between 0.83 and 0.88, which showed high levels of temporal stability. These results demonstrate that the Emotional Regulation Scale is a well-founded and internally consistent tool that helps measure emotional regulation among the research participants.

Table (3) Cronbach's alpha internal consistency coefficient and test-retest reliability for the domains and the total score

Field	Test-Retest Reliability	Internal Consistency
Cognitive Reappraisal	0.88	0.81
Expressive Suppression	0.83	0.79
Emotional regulation	0.87	0.85

Scoring

The rating of items of anxiety was within a five-point Likert scale (1–5), whereas the Emotional Regulation items were rated within a seven-point Likert scale (1–7), with overall scores calculated per scale and subdomain.

Study Procedures

The sample of 550 students was selected after the preparation of the instruments, at which time the scales were administered by the researchers in the academic year 2024–2025. The coded responses were inputted to be analysed based on the research queries.

6. Results and Findings

- To answer the first question, means and standard deviations were calculated.
- To answer the second question, means and standard deviations were calculated.
- To answer the third question, the Pearson correlation coefficient was extracted.

Results and Discussion for Research Question One:

Are there statistically significant differences ($\alpha = 0.05$) in the level of anxiety attributed to gender, educational level, and specialization?

To answer this question, the arithmetic means and standard deviations of the anxiety level were extracted according to

the variables of gender, educational level, and specialization. To show the statistical differences between the arithmetic means, the t test was used, and the tables below illustrate this.

First: Gender

Table (4): Means, Standard Deviations, and t-Test for the Effect of Gender on Anxiety Level

		Number	Mean	Standard Deviation	t-value	Degrees of Freedom	Significance (p-value)
State Anxiety	Male	200	3.22	.354	-.493	503	.622
	Female	305	3.24	.338			
Trait Anxiety	Male	200	3.08	.389	.421	503	.674
	Female	305	3.07	.382			
Anxiety	Male	200	3.15	.336	-.012	503	.990
	Female	305	3.15	.322			

Table (4) shows that there are no statistically significant differences ($\alpha = 0.05$) attributed to the effect of gender in all domains and in the total score.

Second: Educational Level

Table (5): Means, Standard Deviations, and t-Test for the Effect of Educational Level on Anxiety Level

		Number	Mean	Standard Deviation	t-value	Degrees of Freedom	Significance (p-value)
State Anxiety	Bachelor's Degree	269	3.20	.337	-2.136	503	.033
	Postgraduate Studies	236	3.27	.350			
Trait Anxiety	Bachelor's Degree	269	3.06	.373	-.754	503	.451
	Postgraduate Studies	236	3.09	.397			
Anxiety	Bachelor's Degree	269	3.13	.318	-1.565	503	.118
	Postgraduate Studies	236	3.18	.337			

Table (5) shows the means, standard deviations, and independent-samples t-test data that have been used to investigate the differences in the level of anxiety based on the educational level. The findings reveal that bachelor's and postgraduate students do not have statistically significant differences in trait anxiety ($p = .451$) or general anxiety ($p = .118$). However, statistical significance is observed in state anxiety ($t = -2.136$, $p = .033$), whereby postgraduate students reported a higher mean state anxiety ($M = 3.27$, $SD = 0.35$) than bachelor students ($M = 3.20$, $SD = 0.34$). This result indicates that postgraduate students are more likely to have situational anxiety during the measurement period, without necessarily having causal and preference structures associated with postgraduate studies.

Third: Academic Specialization

Table (6): Means, Standard Deviations, and t-Test for the Effect of Specialization on Anxiety Level

		Number	Mean	Standard Deviation	t-value	Degrees of Freedom	Significance (p-value)
State Anxiety	**Humanities**	279	3.20	.311	-2.225	503	.027
	Scientific	226	3.27	.378			
Trait Anxiety	**Humanities**	279	3.06	.375	-1.245	503	.214
	Scientific	226	3.10	.396			
Anxiety	**Humanities**	279	3.13	.303	-1.902	503	.058
	Scientific	226	3.18	.353			

The t-test outcomes, means, and standard deviations of the impact of specialization on anxiety levels are presented in Table 6. The outcomes suggest that there are no significant variations between students in humanities and scientific specializations regarding trait anxiety ($p = .214$) or overall anxiety ($p = .058$). Nevertheless, there was a statistically significant difference in state anxiety ($t = -2.225$, $p = .027$), as students in scientific specializations had higher mean state anxiety scores ($M = 3.27$, $SD = 0.38$) than students in humanities specializations ($M = 3.20$, $SD = 0.31$). This observation indicates a situational anxiety difference between the two groups at the moment of measurement, not causal or preference-based differences related to academic specialization.

Results and Discussion for Research Question Two:

Are there statistically significant differences ($\alpha = 0.05$) in the level of emotional regulation attributed to gender, educational level, and specialization?

To answer this question, arithmetic means and standard deviations of emotional regulation levels were calculated according to the variables of gender, educational level, and specialization. To determine the statistical differences between the means, the independent samples t-test was used. The tables below illustrate these results.

First: Gender

Table (7): Means, Standard Deviations, and t-Test for the Effect of Gender on Emotional Regulation Level

		Number	Mean	Standard Deviation	t-value	Degrees of Freedom	Significance (p-value)
Cognitive Reappraisal	**Male**	200	4.84	1.275	-.895	503	.371
	Female	305	4.94	1.154			
Expressive Suppression	**Male**	200	4.40	1.375	1.731	503	.084
	Female	305	4.19	1.325			
Emotional regulation	**Male**	200	4.66	1.102	.279	503	.780
	Female	305	4.64	.963			

Table (7) shows that there are no statistically significant differences ($\alpha = 0.05$) attributed to the effect of gender in all domains and in the total score.

Second: Educational Level

Table (8): Means, Standard Deviations, and t-Test for the Effect of Educational Level on Emotional Regulation Level

		Number	Mean	Standard Deviation	t-value	Degrees of Freedom	Significance (p-value)
Cognitive Reappraisal	Bachelor's Degree	269	4.98	1.151	1.742	503	.082
	Postgraduate Studies	236	4.80	1.255			
Expressive Suppression	Bachelor's Degree	269	4.35	1.298	1.435	503	.152
	Postgraduate Studies	236	4.18	1.400			
Emotional regulation	Bachelor's Degree	269	4.73	.974	1.995	503	.047
	Postgraduate Studies	236	4.55	1.063			

Table (8) shows that there are no statistically significant differences ($\alpha = 0.05$) attributed to the effect of educational level in all domains, except that there are statistically significant differences ($\alpha = 0.05$) in overall emotional regulation, with the differences favoring the bachelor's degree group.

Third: Specialization

Table (9): Means, Standard Deviations, and t-Test for the Effect of Specialization on Emotional Regulation Level

		Number	Mean	Standard Deviation	t-value	Degrees of Freedom	Significance (p-value)
Cognitive Reappraisal	**Humanities**	279	4.94	1.092	.879	503	.380
	Scientific	226	4.84	1.328			
Expressive Suppression	**Humanities**	279	4.22	1.303	-.883	503	.378
	Scientific	226	4.33	1.401			
Emotional regulation	**Humanities**	279	4.65	.934	.155	503	.877
	Scientific	226	4.64	1.117			

Table (9) shows that there are no statistically significant differences ($\alpha = 0.05$) attributed to the effect of specialization in all domains and in the total score.

Results and Discussion for Research Question Three:

Is there a statistically significant correlation at the 0.05 level ($\alpha \leq 0.05$) between anxiety level and emotional regulation level?

To answer this question, the Pearson correlation coefficient was calculated between the levels of anxiety and emotional regulation. Table (10) presents these results.

Table (10): Pearson Correlation Coefficient for the Relationship Between Emotional Regulation and Anxiety

		Cognitive Reappraisal	Expressive Suppression	Emotional regulation
State Anxiety	Correlation Coefficient (r)	-.128(**)	-.257(**)	-.136(**)
	Statistical Significance	.004	.000	.002
	Number	505	505	505
Trait Anxiety	Correlation Coefficient (r)	-.194(**)	-.244(**)	-.169(**)
	Statistical Significance	.000	.000	.000
	Number	505	505	505
Anxiety	Correlation Coefficient (r)	-.181(**)	-.270(**)	-.171(**)
	Statistical Significance	.000	.000	.000
	Number	505	505	505

* The result is statistically significant at the 0.05 significance level ($\alpha = 0.05$)

** The result is statistically significant at the 0.01 significance level ($\alpha = 0.01$)

Table (10) shows a statistically significant negative correlation between emotional regulation level and anxiety level.

5. Discussion

The present study examined differences in anxiety and emotional regulation among Yarmouk University students according to respondents' gender, educational level, and area of study, as well as the association of emotional regulation with anxiety (Misra & McKean, 2000). The findings suggest that demographic variables have little explanatory power regarding anxiety and emotional regulation, with educational level and area of study being more pertinent in some situations.

Findings showed that there are no significant differences in either of the two types of anxiety (state or trait) as a result of the respondents' gender, undergraduate category, or humanities specialization. This indicates that the anxiety experienced by students may be the result of common academic and institutional factors rather than gender differences, which is consistent with recent studies indicating no significant gender differences in anxiety levels in higher education (Naceanceno, 2021; Beiter, 2015). In the university context, students, regardless of gender, face similar academic demands and evaluative situations, which could account for the anxiety.

In comparing state anxiety levels among postgraduate students and undergraduate students, it could be observed that postgraduate students had more anxiety than undergraduate students, and it is possible this is due to postgraduate students having more research obligations, having to publish, having to complete a thesis, and the overall complexity that comes with determining academic or professional futures after completing a postgraduate course. Many studies, including Evans et al. (2018) and Satinsky et al. (2021), pointed out that postgraduate students have more anxiety than undergraduates, and that is because postgraduate students have more academic responsibilities and more is expected of them. It is interesting that state anxiety was the factor that was different, rather than trait anxiety. This shows that postgraduate students have anxiety that is tied to situational contexts instead of being more dispositional.

Furthermore, students who are taking science-based courses have higher state anxiety than students in the humanities. This is probably due to the specific demands of scientific courses that are known to create a high level of stress and anxiety (Duffy, Twenge, & Joiner, 2019; Levecque et al., 2017). This shows that it is not about personal characteristics, but the demands of the discipline that create high state anxiety.

Regarding emotional regulation, the study found no significant differences based on gender or specialization, suggesting that emotional regulation skills appear to be homogeneous across these demographic categories. However,

differences were significant concerning educational level, and this was in favor of undergraduate students. This may be because of the more structured academic environment and expectations that tend to be more straightforward at the undergraduate level. In contrast, postgraduate students face an intricate and multilayered set of academic, professional, and personal challenges that may overwhelm their emotional regulation capacities (Misra & Castillo, 2004; Levecque et al., 2017). These patterns correspond to perspectives supporting the notion that emotional regulation has more to do with contextual stressors and less with demographic attributes such as age or gender (Gross, 2015).

Finally, the study found that emotional regulation and anxiety had a significant negative relationship. Namely, the higher the level of emotional regulation, the lower the level of anxiety, both state and trait. This finding has been documented and indicates that emotional regulation is a protective factor for anxiety, as it enables coping with stressors, academically and emotionally, in a more flexible manner (Schäfer et al., 2017; Aldao, 2010; Webb, 2012). In the context of university, students who perceive their emotional responses as being under control may reduce their anxiety in chronic situations through more effective management of the emotional responses contributing to evaluative pressure and uncertainty. Overall, the results highlight the need for postgraduate students and students in more demanding disciplines to strengthen emotion regulation skills in order to reduce anxiety and improve mental well-being.

Theoretical and Practical Contributions

This study deepens the theoretical exploration of how emotional regulation interfaces with both state and trait anxiety in Jordanian higher education, an arena that has received scant attention in the current literature. By assessing how gender, year of study, and academic discipline shape these psychological variables, the analysis lends fresh empirical weight to Gross's process model of emotional regulation within a non-Western setting. In doing so, the work reinforces earlier global findings that link cognitive and behavioral coping strategies to anxiety outcomes while highlighting the idiosyncratic ways those links manifest in Arab university life. Collectively, these insights broaden cross-cultural validation of established psychological frameworks and signal the need for research that accounts for region-specific cultural dynamics.

The research points to an immediate need for universities to offer focused mental health resources, with postgraduate researchers and students in the sciences appearing especially vulnerable to spikes in situational anxiety. Incorporating short workshops on cognitive reappraisal and similar emotion regulation techniques into existing counselling and learning support channels could, according to the data, lower anxiety levels and boost exam performance. In the longer term, campus leaders might consider rolling out preventive programs that teach emotional literacy, stress control exercises, and practical coping tools so that all undergraduates and graduate students adapt more smoothly to university life. Faculty, residence staff, and counselling personnel, therefore, should find these recommendations useful as they redesign curricula, orientation sessions, and co-curricular activities to build a more psychologically resilient campus culture.

Recommendations and Future Studies

In conclusion, the study's findings provided important insights into the nature of the relationship between emotional regulation and anxiety levels among students at Yarmouk University. A statistically significant negative correlation was found between emotional regulation and anxiety, indicating that students with higher emotional regulation skills are less likely to experience anxiety. The results also revealed no statistically significant differences in emotional regulation levels attributed to gender or academic specialization, whereas significant differences were found related to educational level, favouring undergraduate students. Regarding anxiety (both state and trait), the findings showed no significant differences attributable to gender, humanities specializations, or the undergraduate stage. However, significant differences were observed in anxiety levels among postgraduate students and students in scientific specializations, particularly in state anxiety.

These results highlight the importance of developing emotional regulation skills as an effective preventive approach to reduce anxiety levels, especially among students enrolled in scientific specializations or academic programs with high cognitive demands and pressures. Furthermore, the findings underscore the need for psychological and counselling interventions aimed at building emotional competence among university students. Therefore, the practical recommendations are as follows.

- It is essential to develop counselling programs aimed at reducing anxiety resulting from academic or general life pressures by integrating evidence-based methods focused on effective emotional regulation.
- Emphasize the importance of implementing awareness campaigns and programs within the university campus that focus on enhancing students' awareness of emotional regulation strategies and encouraging their use in diverse and adaptive ways suited to various life situations.

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