

ABSTRACT: Despite of growing interest in the consequences of emotional processes, it is not as often applied to organizational contexts as to other social scenarios. So the aim of this research is to explore the relationship between Emotion Regulation and stress, being evaluated with reliable and valid instruments at the workplace as we meant to. Results revealed covariation between them an significant differences within our sample.

Keyword Emotion regulation, cognitive reappraisal, expressive suppression, job stress and anxiety.

INTRODUCTION

Emotions perform adaptive roles. They activate different response systems when individuals attend to relevant situations for their goals (Gross & Ochsner, 2005). However, sometimes they can harm us when inappropriate types, out of proportions, or long-standing without reason. At such moments, we must regulate them.

With **Emotion Regulation (ER)**, we shape which emotions we have, when we have them, and how we experience or express these emotions (Gross, 1998). The most studied regulatory strategies (Sapolsky, 2006) are reappraisal, modifying how we appraise a situation to alter its emotional meaning; and expressive suppression, focused on inhibiting emotion-expressive behaviors. Researches (2005) found that while suppression limits expressive action of negative emotions not lessening unpleasant experiences or their consequences, cognitive reappraisal neutralizes negative experience fully.

When it comes to **Stress**: psychological factors activate stress response chronically enough to suffer pathology (Sapolsky, 2014), and even initiate it in the absence of physiological stressor.

To sum up, emotions and thoughts makes us ill. That's why their regulation becomes critical for well-being.

PURPOSE

To test the ER-Stress relationship at workplace; & to go deeper in the analysis with few comparisons within the sample.

HYPOTHESIS

- We assume a significant correlation at least in a pair of the construsts' components, being expressive suppression the most likely to be connected with job stress.
- We won't do any presumption in terms of comparisons.

METHODS

Participants

40 females & 40 males randomly selected, from 19 to 40 years old, and working times from 15 to 40 h/ week. Extreme values were removed.



Procedure

Individual online surveys were completed. They included: explanation and description of the research, demographic questions and the scales. Data were collected automatically and treated anonymously.

Instruments

EMOTION REGULATION QUESTIONNAIRE (ERQ, 2013)
Cognitive Reappraisal & Expressive Suppression. 10 items. Spanish version.



JOB STRESS SCALE (JSS, 1983)
Time stress & Anxiety. 9-Items version (1992). Translated into spanish by back process.

RESULTS

Correlation between constructs

Table 1. Pearson correlation coefficient for ERQ and JSS subscales and working week (N=80).

	2	3	4	5	Mean(SD)	Range
Cog. Reap- ERQ	,512**	-,102	-,212	-,069	16,48 (7,79)	1-30
Exp. Sup- ERQ	---	-,241*	-,215	-,157	9,26 (5,58)	0-24
T. Str- JSS		---	,610**	,239*	10,95 (3,31)	4-19
Anx.- JSS			---	,298**	14,34 (4,16)	7-24
Working week				---	30,94 (9,31)	15-40

* p < .05 // ** p < .01
Cog. Reap: Cognitive reappraisal; Exp. Sup: Expressive suppression; T.Str: Time stress; Anx: anxiety

Differences between sexes

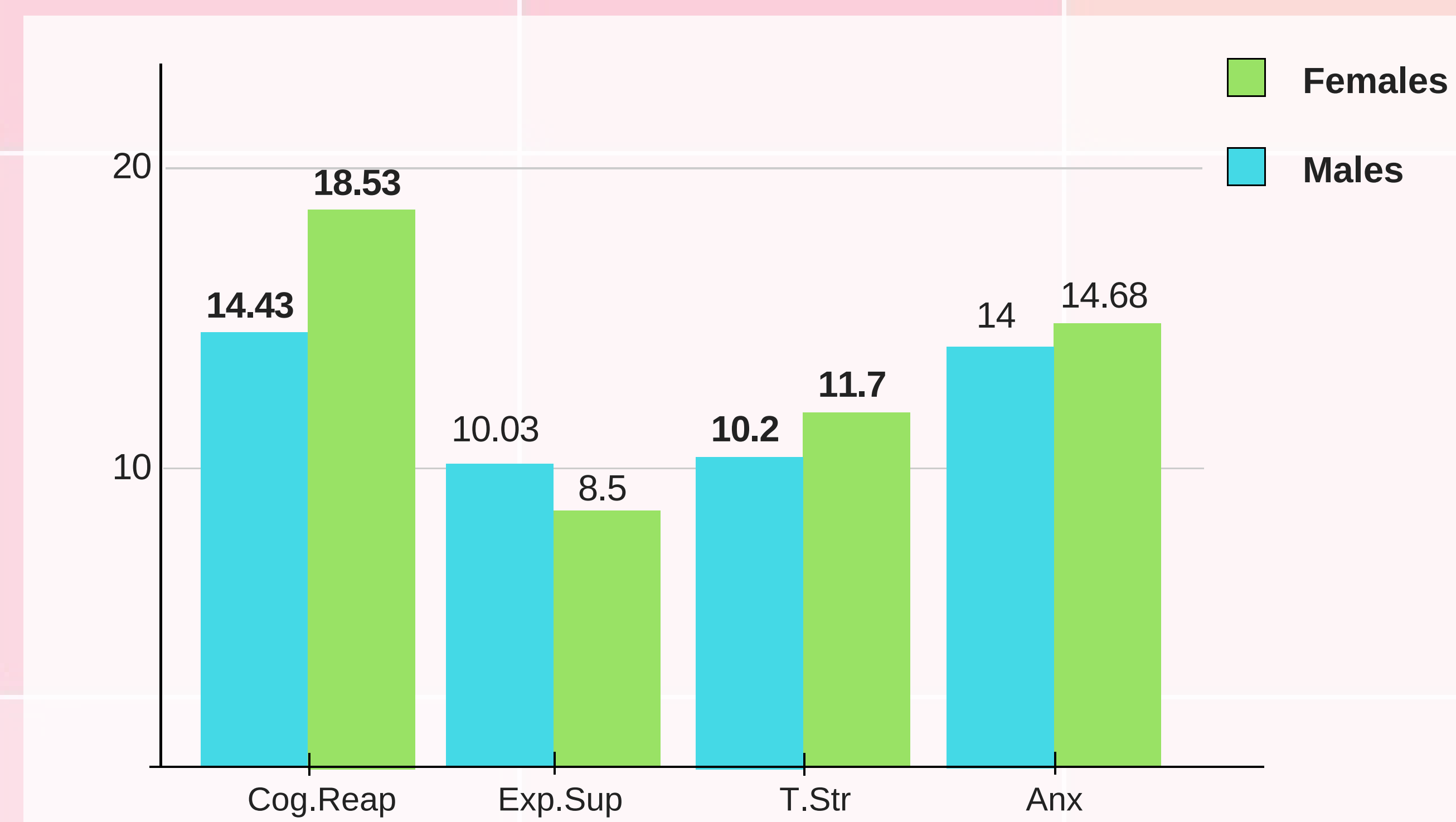


Figure 1. Comparison of means between males and females in the different subscales of ERQ and JSS.

There was a significant difference in the score for women and men in Cognitive Reappraisal, being higher for women (M = 18.53, SD = 7.45) than men (M = 14.43, SD = 7.67); t (78)= 2.42*, p = .018. This difference was maintained in Time stress, showing women a mean of 11.70 (SD = 3.66) versus 10.20 of men (SD = 2.77); t (78)= 2.06, p = .042.

Looking upon the working hours

Here the sample was divided into part-time (< 30h/week) vs full-time work (≥ 30h/week). But, this time none remarkable result was provided by t-test.

ER & JS changes over the years

Table 2. t-test results comparing young and old groups on both Emotion Regulation and Job Stress subscales.

	Young group		Adult group		α	t
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD		
ERQ						
Cog. Reap	17.09	7.88	14.00	7.11	.157	1.43
Exp. Sup	9.45	5.97	8.50	3.74	.431	.80
JSS						
T. Str	11.00	3.30	10.75	3.74	.789	.27
Anx.	13.88	4.15	16.19	3.81	.046	-2.02*

* p < .05
Young group: 19-29 years old; Adult group: 30-40 y.o.

CONCLUSION & DISCUSSION

At the end, statistical results provided evidences supporting our hypothesis. The most remarkable and surprising one is the negative correlation between Expressive Suppression and Time Stress. Such outcome may be explained by context (Gross, 2014), beliefs in time control or the type behavior to be suppress, among others.

Limitations & Difficulties

- Use of correlational study (*correlation doesn't imply causation*).
- Irregular distribution of the sample in comparison of age.
- No inclusion of the labour sector for a wider perspective/ analysis.

Future directions

- To consider last mentioned limitations: experimental design as key aspect.
- Use of evolutive research design since we found a progression of Anxiety along age.
- Attention to different targets when developing programmes about emotional/ coping skills (differences in sex found).

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