International Journal of Research Studies in Education
2026 Volume 15 Number 24, 17-37

Self-differentiation, adult attachment, and difficulties in emotion regulation among undergraduate nursing students



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ISSN: 2243-7703
Online ISSN: 2243-7711

OPEN ACCESS

Received: 29 September 2026 **Revised**: 9 November 2026 **Accepted**: 10 November 2026
Available Online: 11 November 2026 **DOI**: 10.5861/ijrse.2026.26616

Abstract

This study examined self-differentiation, adult attachment, and difficulties in emotion regulation among undergraduate nursing students in China and identified significant differences, relationships, and predictive influences among the variables to inform the development of a university-based mental health education program. A descriptive-correlational research design was employed involving 500 undergraduate nursing students selected through stratified random sampling. Data were gathered using the Differentiation of Self Inventory-Revised (DSI-R), Adult Attachment Scale-Revised (AAS-R), and Difficulties in Emotion Regulation Scale (DERS). Statistical analyses included descriptive statistics, an independent-samples t-test, a one-way ANOVA, a Pearson correlation, and a multiple regression analysis. Findings revealed that the respondents demonstrated a lower level of differentiation of self, a moderate level of adult attachment, and a high level of difficulties in emotion regulation. Significant differences were observed in differentiation of self and emotion regulation by place of origin, whereas adult attachment differed significantly by year level. Pearson correlation analysis indicated no significant relationship between differentiation of self and adult attachment. However, differentiation of self-exhibited a significant weak negative relationship with difficulties in emotion regulation, whereas adult attachment showed a significant weak positive relationship with difficulties in emotion regulation. Multiple regression analysis further revealed that the overall model significantly predicted difficulties in emotion regulation, accounting for 6.7% of the variance. Among the predictors, emotional reactivity and emotional cutoff emerged as the only significant predictors, while self-position, fusion with others, close attachment, and overall adult attachment did not significantly predict emotion regulation difficulties. Based on these findings, a psychological intervention program was proposed to strengthen self-differentiation, promote attachment security, and develop adaptive emotion regulation skills, thereby enhancing the psychological well-being and interpersonal functioning of undergraduate nursing students.

Keywords: self-differentiation, adult attachment, difficulties in emotion regulation, undergraduate nursing, interpersonal functioning, psychological intervention program

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1. Introduction

Nurses undergo various psychological and academic developmental processes such as forming professional identity, acquiring clinical skills, establishing relationships in healthcare organizations, and experiencing emotionally challenging learning conditions. Individual self-differentiation, the capacity to strike a balance between emotion and reason while remaining relationally connected and autonomous, is seen as an important basis for psychological well-being, as well as for work and clinical success. Nevertheless, low levels of self-differentiation among nursing practitioners are strongly correlated with difficulties in emotion regulation. Such conditions can lead to poor emotion regulation when dealing with various kinds of stressors such as work pressure, exposure to clinical practice, and stress caused by patients (Aryuwat et al. 2024). As a result, nursing students may experience psychological problems and adopt maladaptive coping strategies. From this perspective, adult attachment, as an extension of early relationship patterns, may significantly influence the correlation between self-differentiation and emotion regulation problems among nursing students.

Although existing studies have explored the links between self-differentiation, adult attachment, and emotion regulation issues (Hu & Jia, 2022; Gao, 2020), all previous studies focus exclusively on a single variable as a predictor or consider only adult attachment as a predictor or mediator. It is necessary to further explore the mechanisms by which adult attachment moderates the link between self-differentiation and emotion regulation problems. Hence, this study will explore the impact of self-differentiation on emotion regulation problems and the moderating effect of adult attachment on this relationship.

Self-Differentiation refers to having a distinct identity while remaining emotionally close to others. This is achieved by striking a balance between thought and emotion, making individual decisions based on one's own values, and maintaining good relationships without dependence or disengagement (Ji, 2024). It means that self-differentiation is the ability to remain true to oneself while maintaining close, healthy relationships with others. Self-differentiated people can handle emotions so they do not interfere with decision-making, think independently in line with their beliefs and values, and maintain emotional ties with friends, relatives, or partners without becoming overly dependent or distant. In other words, self-differentiation is the ability to combine individuality and emotional intimacy. Such people can share their views and make decisions independently without losing their individuality or becoming emotionally overwhelmed by others. Self-differentiation and adult attachment have much in common, as both relate to a person's ability to regulate emotions and to establish close personal relationships. Those with high self-differentiation can successfully sustain emotional intimacy while preserving their independence, which is typical of the secure attachment style. People who have low self-differentiation can find themselves emotionally dependent, afraid of being rejected, or emotionally distant, which makes them prone to developing insecure attachment styles.

Adult attachment is defined as an ongoing emotional connection that adults form with significant individuals by adults (Sagone et al., 2023). Adult attachment is usually assessed using measures of anxiety and avoidance (Sagone et al., 2023). This definition implies that the term adult attachment refers to a long-lasting emotional bond that an adult develops with someone important in their life, such as a romantic partner, friend, or family member. Emotional bonds influence how individuals view intimacy, trust others, seek support, and respond to distance and proximity in their relationships. Adult attachment is strongly linked to emotion regulation problems, as attachment style influences how people perceive, express, and manage their emotions in relationships. People with secure attachment have effective emotion regulation, use social support appropriately, and manage stress in a healthy manner. On the contrary, people who have insecure attachment, especially if they have high attachment anxiety or avoidance, are more likely to face problems regarding emotion regulation. They get overwhelmed by their negative

emotions, suppress their emotions, and cannot deal properly with stress.

Difficulties in emotion regulation are defined as a person's failure to manage their emotional responses effectively, thereby promoting adaptive behaviors and actions (Atta et al., 2024). Problems in emotion regulation include poor emotional awareness, lack of emotional clarity, difficulty accepting emotional reactions, inability to control impulsive behaviors in distress, limited access to effective emotion regulation techniques, and difficulty engaging in goal-directed behaviors during negative emotions. In other words, problems with emotion regulation occur when an individual finds it difficult to understand, regulate, or respond to their emotions, especially under emotionally challenging or stressful situations. Rather than regulating emotions effectively, the individual is likely to feel overwhelmed, behave impulsively, avoid emotions, or fail to regain emotional equilibrium. As one of the core contributors to numerous emotional disorders, difficulties in emotion regulation are prevalent among nursing students. Nevertheless, other than serving as a risk factor for certain mental conditions, it has been linked with harmful actions, including self-injury and substance abuse disorders (Xu et al., 2025). Inadequate emotional regulation is viewed as a mediator between history, and the psychological issues students are experiencing (Wang et al., 2023).

At present, empirical studies on the association among self-differentiation, adult attachment, and difficulties in emotion regulation among undergraduate nursing students have been rarely done. Nevertheless, there is already ample evidence to guide us in this respect. On the one hand, poor self-differentiation is a strong predictor of emotion regulation problems (Guo et al., 2021). On the other hand, the pattern of one's adult attachment may serve to either strengthen or attenuate the risk. More precisely, although the increased emotional sensitivity and relational insecurity of those people who are insecurely attached may be the reason for the combination of poor self-differentiation, including the combination between emotions and mind, and the absence of an independent position within the self, this may also lead to difficulties with emotion regulation (Wang et al., 2023). This is why the assumption that attachment style moderates the association between self-differentiation and emotion regulation is sound and warrants empirical testing.

The outcome of this research will provide deeper insight into the complex relationships among self-differentiation, adult attachment, and difficulties in emotion regulation among university students. In addition, the results of this research will be an evidence base for conducting mental health education and intervention programs to improve emotion regulation skills in universities. It will be possible to understand how each person's attachment and self-differentiation affect their emotion regulation, thereby enabling adjustment to these processes. As for practitioners working in university mental health care, this research is helpful in designing group and individual intervention programs for students with specific attachment styles, with a focus on developing self-differentiation and emotion regulation skills (Gao, 2020). For scientists, investigating the moderating role of attachment in Chinese culture will be an opportunity to expand the theoretical framework related to self-differentiation and emotion regulation.

From this research, it is expected that the moderating effect of adult attachment on the relationship between self-differentiation and difficulties in emotion regulation was revealed. At the same time, this research provided a full understanding of the status quo of the three factors. The outcomes of this research supported the hypothesis that insecure adult attachment increases the adverse effects of low self-differentiation on emotion regulation difficulties. Moreover, there were differences in these factors by gender and grade. This served as the foundation for more tailored mental health activities.

Objectives of the study - This study aimed to systematically explore the relationships among self-differentiation, adult attachment, and emotion regulation difficulties in undergraduate nursing students in Henan Province. Specifically, it described the demographic profile of the respondents in terms of sex, place of origin, year level, and civil status; measured their actual levels of self-differentiation, adult attachment, and emotion regulation difficulties; examined whether there were differences among the variables when grouped based on their profile; analyzed the correlations among the variables; predicted the effect of self-differentiation and adult

attachment on difficulties of emotion regulation; and proposed a psychological program for undergraduate nursing students.

2. Methods

Research Design - To gather quantitative data, a survey was used. Structured questionnaires were distributed to a sample of respondents to systematically gather information on variables that would provide an objective description of the sample and explore relationships among them. This survey method was both effective and cost-efficient and is widely used in psychological studies involving Chinese undergraduate nursing students (Li et al., 2023). Standardized questionnaires were used in gathering quantitative data on three key variables: self-differentiation, adult attachment, and emotion regulation difficulties. There were many reasons this research design was appropriate. First, large samples were collected using this technique in a shorter period because standardized questionnaires made cross-participant comparisons easy (Ahmed, 2024). Second, the psychological constructs were quantified, facilitating an objective analysis of their status and associations (De Boeck et al., 2023). Third, the research design conformed to the core objective of this study, which is to investigate correlational relationships. This makes it easy to identify the risk factors for emotion regulation problems (Aslam et al., 2026).

Participants - The subjects were nursing undergraduate students at a university in a province in China's central region. Approximately 5,600 participants comprise the target population. Convenience sampling technique will be employed. The researcher strove to recruit 560 students, considering the estimated 15% invalidity rate of questionnaires. After excluding all questionnaires that lacked validity (excessively short answer times), 500 valid questionnaires were left. Inclusion criteria were: (1) full-time undergraduate nursing student aged 18 years or older; (2) voluntary participation and provision of informed consent; (3) ability to complete questionnaires independently with no history of cognitive impairment or psychiatric disorder. Demographic data including gender, grade, and major were collected for subsequent statistical analyses.

Measures

Demographic Questionnaire. The Demographic Questionnaire was created to provide researchers with basic demographic and educational details about undergraduate university students participating in the study. Information collected through the questions relates to gender, place of origin, whether one was an only child, and present year level in the college or university. It was a completely anonymous survey in which any information obtained was used strictly for academic purposes and remained confidential.

Differentiation of Self Inventory-Revised (DSI-R). The tool was initially developed by Skowron and Schmitt (2003), then translated into Chinese and modified for use with university students by Wu and Wang (2010). The measure contains 27 items that can be classified into four factors: emotional reactivity, position, emotional cutoff, and fusion with others, measured using a 6-point Likert scale where respondents rate each item on a range of 1 (completely untrue) to 6 (completely true), and higher scores represent higher self-differentiation. The validation study of the measure among 453 university students reported good psychometric properties, including a four-factor structure comparable to the original, a Cronbach's α of 0.856 for the whole scale, split-half reliability of 0.830, subscale reliabilities ranging from 0.630 to 0.766, and four-week test-retest reliability of 0.768. The validity of the scale was established by conducting correlation analyses between the scale and the State-Trait Anxiety Inventory (STAI), the Family Adaptability and Cohesiveness Evaluation Scales (FACES II-CV) (Guo et al., 2021), and the Experiences in Close Relationships and Resilience scales (Ji, 2024).

Adult Attachment Scale - Revised (AAS-R). This is the instrument developed by Collins & Read (1990) and later translated into Chinese by Wu et al. (2004). This scale contains 18 items and has three scales named closeness, dependence, and anxiety, each having a Likert scale of 1 to 5, where 1 means totally false and 5 means totally true. The scales of closeness and dependence are used in the formation of attachment avoidance, while the Anxiety scale measures attachment anxiety. The Chinese translation of the instrument turned out to be reliable, since Cronbach's α coefficients of the three scales were 0.719, 0.785, and 0.720, respectively. The validity of the instrument was

proven through correlations with the Connor-Davidson Resilience Scale (CD-RISC) and Reflective Functioning Questionnaire for Youth (RFQY) (Wang et al., 2023), as well as the Self-Esteem Scale (SES), Meaning in Life Questionnaire (MLQ), and Self-Rating Depression Scale (SDS) (Shen et al., 2024).

Difficulties in Emotion Regulation Scale (DERS). It was designed by Gratz and Roemer (2004) based on the theory of emotion regulation functionalism and later translated into Chinese by Wang et al. (2007). This measure comprises 36 items and six factors: emotional unawareness, emotional inability, nonacceptance of emotional responses, impulsivity, difficulties with goal-directed behavior, and lack of access to emotion-regulation strategies. It uses a 5-point Likert-type scale, where 1 means almost never and 5 means almost always, with higher scores indicating difficulties with emotion regulation. It was found that the Chinese version is highly reliable and valid: Cronbach's alpha for the whole scale is 0.89, and reliability ranges from 0.79 to 0.88 across subscales; the test-retest reliability after 3 weeks is 0.86. The validity of this scale was confirmed by correlating it with the Adult Attachment Scale (AAS) and General Food Cravings Questionnaire-Trait (GFCQ-T) (Wang et al., 2023) and EPSI-Identity Confusion, Interpersonal Alienation Scale, and NSSI scales (Gu et al., 2025).

Data Gathering Procedure - The descriptive survey study was carried out in three successive phases: preparatory, implementation, and data processing. In the preparatory phase, variables significant to the study were identified, an extensive literature review was conducted, and the research structure was determined. Scales that were reliable and valid in the measurement of self-differentiation, adult attachment, and difficulties in emotion regulation were chosen. After obtaining approval from the scale authors, the research plan was finalized and submitted to the institution's ethics committee. For the implementation, the electronic questionnaires were developed using Wenjuanxing (Questionnaire Star) and included three lie questions to assess data validity. The questionnaires were circulated among students across various classes through the campus learning platform, ensuring anonymity during completion. An email account was provided for answering any queries from participants. During data processing, questionnaires were first screened, valid responses were selected, and data analysis was prepared. Notes collected from the research were organized in detail in preparation for statistical analysis and writing the research report.

During data collection, members of the psychological committee in the class shared the questionnaire link via class notice groups with all Year 1 to Year 4 undergraduate nursing students. Specific guidelines were provided on the survey's objective and instructions for completing it to ensure uniformity of responses. Data collection strictly adhered to the principles of anonymity and voluntariness, which were essential prerequisites, by obtaining informed consent electronically. After data collection, data cleaning and screening took place. Data collected from invalid forms were discarded based on factors such as overly quick responses, incorrect answers to lie questions, and insufficient content. Reverse scores were re-scored properly. The valid data were entered into Excel to form a database, and all data were stored encrypted to ensure security. Privacy was maintained throughout the process to prevent any information leakage.

Data Analysis - The analysis utilized SPSS. First, the descriptive statistics used included frequencies and percentages to describe the demographic data, including gender, year level, single or non-single child, and place of origin; means and standard deviations were also provided for every demographic group. Secondly, independent samples t-tests were carried out to compare self-differentiation, adult attachment, and difficulties with emotion regulation across gender and single or non-single child groups. Thirdly, Spearman’s rho correlation analyses were used to assess the relationship between self-differentiation, adult attachment, and difficulties with emotion regulation. Fourthly, regression analyses were conducted to further analyze the effects of self-differentiation and adult attachment on difficulties with emotion regulation.

Ethical Consideration - The present investigation adhered to all ethical standards in academia. It was submitted to and received clearance from the Lyceum University Ethics Committee. The questionnaire was anonymous and was distributed online. Before data collection, the informed consent statement was clearly displayed on the platform, and participants voluntarily agreed to participate after fully understanding the study

purpose, procedures, and rights. No identifying personal information was collected, and all data were used only for group-level analysis. The online system automatically checked the completeness and format of responses to ensure valid data entry. Strict confidentiality was maintained throughout data processing and analysis to protect participants' rights and privacy.

3. Results and discussion

Table 1
Profile Distribution of the Respondents

Profile	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Sex		
Male	236	47.2
Female	264	52.8
Place of Origin		
City	234	46.8
Townships and rural areas	266	53.2
Grade Level		
1	43	8.6
2	130	26.0
3	199	39.8
4	128	25.6
Civil Statis (Only Child)		
Yes	232	46.4
No	268	53.6
Sex		
Male	236	47.2
No	264	52.8

Table 1 presents the distribution of profiles among the 500 respondents. This includes the distribution by sex, place of origin, only child status, and year level. With respect to sex, there is a greater number of females than males (264 or 52.8%) participants. This suggests that females comprised the majority of nursing undergraduate students in the current study. Such a sex distribution reflects the conventional gender ratio in nursing programs in the past, where female students have outnumbered male students due to societal perception that nursing is a woman-dominated profession. Even though there is no significant difference between the sexes, nursing education has a similar demographic profile across the globe, including in China. The prevalence of women nursing students in the current research is supported by Prosen and Cekada (2025), who found that nursing remains a stereotypically female profession despite several initiatives to ensure gender diversity in the healthcare workforce. They emphasized that gender stereotypes still play an important role in choosing a career and registering for a course in nursing. This explains the current result showing more women than men among students in the study.

Regarding place of origin, most respondents come from townships and rural areas (266, or 53.2%). This shows that most of the nursing students hail from non-urban settings. From the above statistics, one can deduce that nursing education is popular among people from diverse geographical backgrounds, particularly those from non-urban areas. The fact that most respondents were from townships and rural areas is further supported by Odahowski et al. (2020), who found that a considerable number of registered nurses hailed from rural areas, underscoring the importance of such areas in developing the nursing profession. Research shows that individuals from rural settings do consider pursuing nursing education, regardless of differences in educational quality, which supports the present finding on the availability of nursing.

Regarding grade level, most respondents are third-year students (199, 39.8%). This indicates that those in the middle stage of the nursing course constitute most of the sample. Third-year students already have more academic knowledge and clinical experience than students in lower years but are still developing. The number of third-year nursing students in the present study is consistent with the findings of Mirzanezam et al. (2024), which show that students at the middle stage of the nursing course have become actively involved in both theoretical and clinical training. Since they already have sufficient experience in clinical education, third-year nursing students possess the knowledge and skills appropriate for the profession. Regarding whether they were only children, most

participants were not (268, 53.6%). This indicates that most respondents had at least one other sibling. This implies that there was some kind of interaction between siblings amongst the participants. It was also found that most respondents were not children. This can be linked to the research by Jia et al. (2022), which examined differences between only children and non-only children in China, as well as the impact of siblings on child development and education. The above result suggests that most respondents may have had frequent interactions with their siblings.

Table 2

Respondents Level of Self-Differentiation

Variable	Weighted Mean	Std. Dev	Rank	Interpretation
Emotional Reactivity	37.3040	3.66749	1	Lower Self-Differentiation
Self-Position	17.1260	3.02397	3	Lower Self-Differentiation
Emotional Cutoff	16.1140	2.83073	4	Lower Self-Differentiation
Fusion with Others	24.2280	4.16109	2	Lower Self-Differentiation

Legend: 27–94.49 (Lower Self-Differentiation); 94.50–162 (Higher Self-Differentiation)

Table 2 displays the assessment of respondents' level of self-differentiation. This variable includes emotional reactivity, self-position, emotion cutoff, and fusion with others as sub-variables. The respondents reflected a composite mean of 23.6930 (lower self-differentiation) with an SD of 3.42082. Given this finding, it is likely that the participants encounter challenges in maintaining self-differentiation amid the emotional intimacy and autonomy in their relationships. The standard deviation is low, indicating that the respondents have quite similar scores on self-differentiation. This implies that the trait is quite prevalent among participants rather than restricted to a few people.

Of the four measures, emotional reactivity showed the highest weighted mean (M = 37.3040, SD = 3.66749). However, it still falls within the lower range of the self-differentiation measure. This suggests that people may have strong reactions to emotional events and find it difficult to control their feelings during interpersonal conflicts. This can result in their inability to make sound decisions in difficult situations and can harm their mental state and interpersonal relationships. This result aligns with Yeung (2025), who explained that the degree of self-differentiation affects not only people's well-being and interpersonal relationships but also the functioning of emotions in families, given its intergenerational transmission. Second was fusion with others, with a weighted mean score of 24.2280 (SD = 4.16109), and this is also understood as lower self-differentiation. This means that respondents tend to rely on their significant others for decision-making, seeking their approval or emotional support. The standard deviation of this dimension is relatively high as compared to the other dimensions; hence, there is high variability among the respondents. This finding is consistent with Dolz-Del-Castellar and Oliver (2021), who highlighted that an individual's levels of differentiation and trust are influenced by those around them, including family members, friends, relatives, and significant others.

For self-position, the weighted mean obtained was 17.1260 (SD = 3.02397), which is considered as lower self-differentiation. This may mean that respondents cannot sustain their own ideas, values, and decisions in the face of others' pressure. People with low self-position would rather sacrifice their own opinions to keep their relationships intact. This result supports the claims of Hu (2022) that individuals having low self-differentiation is due to shyness in core self-evaluation. This means that people who are timid and unable to impose themselves easily conform to the majority's decisions. Finally, emotional cutoff had the lowest weighted mean (M = 16.1140, SD = 2.83073) but also belongs to the category of lower self-differentiation. The results suggest that the subjects cope with their emotional unease by distancing themselves from others or by avoiding emotionally challenging situations, rather than addressing interpersonal conflicts effectively. Despite this variable's low rating, its significance remains evident in its interpretation. In line with the findings of the study conducted by Ji (2024), there is a significant connection between childhood relationship experiences and attachment style and self-differentiation. Ji (2024) revealed that people who have an insecure attachment style, especially the anxious or avoidant type, display poor self-differentiation. The current finding that respondents have a low score on differentiation on the emotional cutoff dimension can be linked to the above conclusion, as this suggests that respondents would prefer to avoid emotional problems or other people rather than resolve interpersonal problems.

Table 3
Respondents' Level of Adult Attachment

Variable	Weighted Mean	Std. Dev.	Rank	Interpretation
Close	20.8720	2.47626	1	Moderate
Depend	18.2280	2.56069	2.5	Moderate
Anxiety	18.2280	2.56069	2.5	Moderate
Adult Attachment	19.1093	2.53255		Moderate

Legend: 25.21-30.00 (High);20.41-25.20 (Moderate)

Table 3 presents the respondents' levels of adult attachment across the three dimensions of the Adult Attachment Scale-Revised (AAS-R): closeness, dependence, and anxiety. In total, the respondents have achieved a weighted mean score of 19.1093 (SD = 2.53255). The result indicates a Moderate Adult Attachment. The above information indicates that the respondents demonstrate an adequate level of attachment. The respondents can form relationships and become emotionally close to others, but they might have difficulty trusting others or forming attachments. Among the three dimensions, closeness obtained the highest weighted mean of 20.8720 (SD = 2.47626) and is interpreted as moderate. Such a result means that the respondents are comfortable with emotional intimacy and are ready to form intimate interpersonal connections. Emotional intimacy is usually important to them, and there is an inclination to form affectionate relationships with others, though not necessarily in every case. The relatively low standard deviation indicates that these perceptions are consistent among the respondents. Also, this finding is consistent with Zhang et al. (2022), who found that parental emotional warmth supports secure attachment, whereas parental rejection and overprotection lead to insecure attachment. Thus, the supportive family atmosphere in which people feel loved and safe enables them to develop comfort with emotional closeness, which may explain the high scores on the close dimension among respondents.

On the other hand, dependence had a weighted mean of 18.2280 (SD = 2.56069), which falls within the moderate range. From this result, we can deduce that although the respondents are somewhat ready to depend on and trust others, they may also be hesitant to rely on others when they find themselves in emotionally difficult situations. Their readiness to seek help may also depend on the situation they are in. The finding is reinforced by research by Shen et al. (2024) on securely attached individuals, defined as those with self-confidence and the ability to depend on others without losing their independence. In such a case, secure attachment should be defined as one in which people can seek help without losing their independence. The results for the dependence dimension indicate that participants' scores are moderate and, therefore, they can exhibit this balance. In the above case, the participants trust others to some extent but remain cautious due to the emotionally difficult situations they might face.

Similarly, anxiety received a weighted mean score of 18.2280 (SD = 2.56069), indicating a Moderate level. This means that the participants experience moderate levels of fear regarding rejection, abandonment, or the stability of their significant relationships. Though the participants do not show high levels of attachment anxiety, there is a possibility for them to feel concerned about the accessibility and responsiveness of significant others in their lives at times. This conclusion aligns with research by Jeong et al. (2023), who found that signs of attachment anxiety include fear of abandonment, worries about receiving inadequate affection, and heightened sensitivity to their partners' responsiveness. Based on the results obtained, one can conclude that the respondents do have some attachment anxiety, meaning that sometimes they feel concerned, but they are able to remain emotionally stable in their relationships. It means that even though the respondents do have some relational security, it can still be improved.

Table 4
Respondents' Level of Difficulties in Emotion Regulation

Variable	Weighted Mean	Std. Dev.	Rank	Interpretation
Difficulty in Emotional Awareness	15.5400	2.68082	6	Low Difficulty
Difficulty in Emotional Clarity	16.8820	2.49329	5	Moderate Difficulty
Difficulty in Emotional Acceptance	29.7700	2.92064	1	Very High Difficulty
Difficulty in Impulse Control	23.0080	2.64233	3	High Difficulty

Legend: 6.00 – 15.60 (Low Difficulty); 15.61 – 20.40 (Moderate Difficulty); 20.41 – 25.20 (High Difficulty); 25.21 – 30.00 (Very High Difficulty)

Table 4 shows the difficulty experienced by the respondents in emotional regulation on six variables: difficulty in emotional awareness, difficulty in emotional clarity, difficulty in emotional acceptance, difficulty in impulse control, difficulty in goal-directed behavior, and lack of emotional regulation strategies. Overall, the respondents achieved a weighted mean score of 21.1947 (SD = 2.58385), indicating that their difficulty with emotion regulation was classified as high. The result suggests that the respondents struggled with emotion regulation and management. This might imply that the respondents have difficulty understanding and controlling their emotions, especially in stressful situations. The lower standard deviation suggests that there was consistency in emotion regulation difficulties among the respondents.

Of the six dimensions, difficulty in emotional acceptance received the highest weighted mean of 29.7700 (SD = 2.92064), indicating very great difficulty. The above results suggest that the respondents find it extremely difficult to accept their emotions. Instead of recognizing them as normal emotional reactions, the respondents may be inclined to judge or reject their emotions or even become distressed by them. In this way, this may impede emotional adaptation and predispose one to emotional distress. The standard deviation suggests only a small amount of variability in the respondents' experiences. Furthermore, Coutinho et al. (2021) provide empirical support for the above-mentioned findings, reporting a statistically significant relationship between insecure attachment and difficulties with emotional regulation, particularly non-acceptance of emotions. The researchers concluded that people who experience emotional regulation problems usually have problems with acceptance of their emotions and are at risk of emotional distress. In accordance with this, the current study revealed that the participants had great difficulty with emotional acceptance, meaning they were accustomed to rejecting or not accepting their emotional states rather than accepting them as normal.

The second-highest dimension is difficulty with impulse control, with a weighted mean score of 23.0080 (SD = 2.64233), indicating that this dimension is particularly difficult. This implies that the respondents may have difficulty controlling themselves and engaging in impulsive behavior when they experience strong emotions. Emotional problems could hinder them from making rational judgments and decisions, thus leading them to be emotionally controlled in actions and thoughts. This finding is further supported by Wallace et al. (2021), which reveals that individuals who struggle to regulate their emotions tend to act impulsively and engage in risky behavior due to poor emotion regulation skills. Based on Wallace et al., an individual who struggles with emotion regulation tends to exhibit impulsive rather than thoughtful behavior in emotionally charged situations. The current study is consistent with this study's results, as its participants had trouble regulating impulses and therefore could not inhibit impulsive actions.

Likewise, the lack of emotional regulation strategies had a weighted mean score of 24.1980 (SD = 2.58460), indicating a high level of difficulty. This suggests that the respondents see themselves as lacking the tools that can help them cope with or minimize their emotional distress. Whenever they face difficult emotions, they feel unsure how to deal with them or see little they can do about their emotional situation. The low standard deviation indicates that the perceptions are consistent among the respondents. The current result is corroborated by research conducted by Coutinho et al. (2021), who established a strong link between insecure attachment and difficulties with emotion regulation, particularly limited access to emotion regulation strategies. According to the results of their study, people who have more problems with emotion regulation tend to see themselves as not having any effective methods of dealing with their emotions, thus becoming psychologically unadjusted. The same result is observed in the current study, where respondents had difficulty accessing emotion-regulation strategies and were often unsure how to manage their negative emotions under stress.

In contrast, difficulty in goal-directed behavior got a weighted mean score of 17.7700 (SD = 2.18143) and is classified as moderate difficulty. Essentially, this means that there are challenges that the respondents encounter when trying to concentrate and accomplish tasks while being emotionally distraught. Although the experience of emotions could occasionally hinder their focus on their goals, it does not appear that they face particularly difficult problems in overcoming these obstacles. This finding is supported by de la Fuente et al.'s (2022) research, which

found that deficits in self-regulation and executive function are strongly correlated with greater difficulties in emotion regulation. It means that when people have some emotional problems, poor cognitive control may prevent them from sustaining attention and organizing their thoughts. This can explain the current finding that participants exhibited moderate difficulty with goal-directed actions; it means that even though emotional disturbance sometimes prevents them from focusing and performing actions, they are still able to pursue their objectives.

Similarly, the score for difficulty in emotional clarity is 16.8820 (SD = 2.49329), indicating moderate difficulty. This means that sometimes it is difficult for the respondents to recognize the emotions that they experience. There is some confusion about the emotions they experience, so they may not respond appropriately in certain situations. Moreover, this finding has also been validated by Xu (2023), who indicated that individuals who suffered from emotional neglect experienced difficulties in the management of their emotions along with issues concerning the processing of their emotions. Similarly, Wei et al. (2024) have suggested that emotional neglect causes changes in the brain and in cognitive reappraisal, which can affect individuals' ability to understand and control their emotions. However, it should be kept in mind that difficulty recognizing one's emotions does not imply inability to manage them, as the difficulty is only moderate.

Out of the six dimensions, difficulty in emotional awareness scored 15.5400 (SD = 2.68082) on the weighted mean scale, which means there is Low Difficulty in this dimension. This implies that respondents are aware of their emotions and can identify them under various circumstances. The low difficulty score indicates that most respondents understand their emotions well, thereby becoming aware of them. However, the standard deviation indicates variation in respondents' answers, suggesting that although most respondents have little difficulty recognizing their emotions, some still find it challenging. The present study is also supported by Xu (2023) in that those who experienced emotional neglect were found to have greater difficulties in regulating their emotions in relation to emotional awareness and emotional processing. In turn, according to Guss and Starker (2023), emotional awareness is one component of emotion regulation, along with emotional acceptance, impulse control, goal-directed behavior, emotional clarity, and the availability of regulation strategies. In this regard, the present study is supported by the above-mentioned findings: despite possessing the necessary skills to recognize their emotions, the participants may benefit from developing their emotional awareness.

Table 5

Comparison on Fear of Negative Evaluation when grouped according to Profile

Profile Variables	*F/t*	p-Value	Interpretation
Sex			
Emotional Reactivity	-0.995	0.320	Not Significant
Self-Position	-0.051	0.959	Not Significant
Emotional Cutoff	0.003	0.998	Not Significant
Fusion with Others	1.882	0.060	Not Significant
Differentiation of Self	0.523	0.601	Not Significant
Place of Origin			
Emotional Reactivity	1.982	0.048	Significant
Self-Position	-0.340	0.734	Not Significant
Emotional Cutoff	2.268	0.024	Significant
Fusion with Others	1.091	0.276	Not Significant
Differentiation of Self	2.246	0.025	Significant
Year Level			
Emotional Reactivity	0.353	0.787	Not Significant
Self-Position	0.857	0.463	Not Significant
Emotional Cutoff	2.572	0.054	Not Significant
Fusion with Others	0.956	0.413	Not Significant
Differentiation of Self	0.673	0.569	Not Significant
Only Child			
Emotional Reactivity	-0.624	0.533	Not Significant
Self-Position	0.319	0.750	Not Significant
Emotional Cutoff	0.112	0.911	Not Significant
Fusion with Others	0.024	0.981	Not Significant
Differentiation of Self	-0.118	0.906	Not Significant
Sex			

Legend: p-value <0.05 (Significant)

Table 5 presents the difference in self-differentiation when grouped by profile. From the comparison of the respondents' self-differentiation based on their place of origin, significant differences were found in terms of emotional reactivity (F/t=1.982, p = 0.048), emotional cutoff (F/t=2.268, p = 0.024), and overall self-differentiation (F/t=2.246, p = 0.025). Since the calculated p-values are less than the 0.05 significance level, the null hypothesis is rejected for these variables. This means that the respondents' place of origin is a significant factor in their differentiation of self. In other words, students from different backgrounds differ in their capacity to control their emotions, be emotionally independent, and balance intimacy with autonomy in interpersonal interactions. It can be assumed that the environment in which the respondents grew up, including their family environment, values, culture, and community, may have played a role in shaping their level of self-differentiation. Thus, depending on respondents' place of origin, they may differ in how they cope with emotional distress and interpersonal conflicts. This study is corroborated by research conducted by Narayanan and Sriram (2025), which showed that self-differentiation depends on one's cultural orientation and sociodemographic factors. Specifically, they claimed that people living in distinct social and cultural settings acquire different levels of differentiation of self because cultural values influence emotional autonomy, interpersonal relations, and self-regulation. This finding that people from different places of origin showed distinct patterns of self-differentiation suggests that cultural norms, social factors, and community environments might play a role in the process of self-differentiation.

In particular, the statistically significant difference in emotional reactivity reveals that people from different places of origin differ in their reactions to emotionally stressful circumstances. This means that the environment and sociocultural context of the community in which a person was raised may affect a person's ability to respond emotionally during interpersonal communication. This observation is consistent with the findings of Narayanan and Sriram (2025), who report that culture and sociodemographic variables significantly influence the differentiation of self. This evidence suggests that variations in social and cultural environments affect people's emotionality and interpersonal interactions. Likewise, Yeung (2025) stressed the importance of developing differentiation of self within a family as an emotional entity. In this context, the experience gained through interactions within the family environment is important for an individual's emotional maturation and regulation.

Similarly, the major difference observed in emotional cutoff indicates that respondents' ability to emotionally detach during conflicts with others varies by origin. This goes to show that people from different backgrounds adopt different coping mechanisms when dealing with emotional issues in relationships. This may be as a result of cultural values surrounding emotions, family connections, or simply communication skills. This study's findings also align with the work of Yeung (2025), who emphasized that self-differentiation develops within the family as an emotional unit through ongoing interactions and processes. Similarly, Dolz-Del-Castellar and Oliver (2021) noted that family functioning plays a role in self-differentiation; hence, dysfunctional families can negatively affect emotional well-being and coping mechanisms. The present study's findings are also consistent with this research and suggest that differentiating factors related to the family and sociocultural settings of the respondent's origin may affect their tendency toward emotional distancing.

Table 6

Comparison between Adult Attachment when grouped according to Profile

Profile Variables	*F/t*	p-Value	Interpretation
Sex			
Close	0.008	0.994	Not Significant
Depend	1.127	0.260	Not Significant
Anxiety	1.127	0.260	Not Significant
Adult Attachment	0.977	0.329	Not Significant
Place of Origin			
Close	0.794	0.427	Not Significant
Depend	-1.168	0.243	Not Significant
Anxiety	-1.168	0.243	Not Significant
Adult Attachment	-0.677	0.499	Not Significant

Year Level			
Close	5.249	0.001	Significant
Depend	1.952	0.120	Not Significant
Anxiety	4.156	0.006	Significant
Adult Attachment	-0.834	0.404	Not Significant
Only Child			
Close	-0.192	0.848	Not Significant
Depend	-0.872	0.384	Not Significant
Anxiety	-0.872	0.384	Not Significant
Adult Attachment	-0.834	0.404	Not Significant
Sex			
Close	0.008	0.994	Not Significant
Depend	1.127	0.260	Not Significant
Anxiety	1.127	0.260	Not Significant
Adult Attachment	0.977	0.329	Not Significant

Legend: p-value <0.05 (Significant)

Table 6 illustrates differences in adult attachment when grouped by profile. The comparison of respondents' level of adult attachment by year level showed significant differences in the closeness dimension ($F = 5.249$, $p = 0.001$) and anxiety ($F = 4.156$, $p = 0.006$). Because the computed p-values are lower than the significance level of 0.05, the null hypothesis can be rejected for these two variables. Hence, the respondents differ significantly in their levels of adult attachment.

To be more precise, the key distinction in the closeness dimension is that students' comfort with emotional intimacy and closeness may vary by year level. Therefore, people at different year levels may differ in their ability to trust others and form closer emotional connections. These features may be influenced by students' experiences not only within educational institutions but also at home, particularly their relationships with parents and family members. The degree of emotional support, trust, communication, and safety in such interactions may affect how they form close relationships with others. Throughout their college years, students' interactions with others, exposure to different social environments, and ongoing relationships with family members may influence their perceptions of intimacy and trust. However, the findings do not indicate that year level influences these differences. On the contrary, they show a relationship between grade level and differences in closeness. This assertion is consistent with the study by Shen et al. (2024), which found that those with secure attachment are characterized by self-confidence in themselves and others and, therefore, can form good relationships while retaining a sense of appropriate independence. Similarly, Lampis et al. (2025) stated that the attachment behaviors developed in childhood continue to affect an individual's self-differentiation and interpersonal relationships into adulthood, although these attachment behaviors can also improve.

The same is true for the dimension of anxiety, which exhibits statistical significance, indicating that respondents' attachment-related anxiety differs depending on their grade. This dimension refers to people's feelings of worry about rejection, abandonment, or the inability of important individuals in their lives to provide the emotional support they need. Students at different levels may demonstrate varying attitudes towards managing these feelings, shaped by their interpersonal experiences and their relationships with parents, family members, relatives, and friends. However, these aspects are possible explanations rather than conclusions drawn from the statistical data. The conclusion is that there is a significant difference among different year levels, but no conclusions can be drawn regarding who has higher and who has lower levels of attachment-related anxiety. The current result is like that reported by Shen et al. (2024), who defined adult attachment as a construct characterized by confidence, emotional security, and the ability to maintain healthy relationships. Moreover, Liao and Shi (2020) found that the dimensions of adult attachment are positively related to individuals' level of security, implying that anything that enhances emotional security will influence the development of attachment as well. The result was therefore supported by the implication that experiences of different year levels may affect attachment.

Table 7 presents differences in emotion regulation difficulties across profiles. The comparisons made on difficulties in emotion regulation of the respondents based on their place of origin showed significant differences in goal-directed behavior ($F/t = 3.355$, $p = 0.001$), lack of emotional regulation strategies ($F/t = 2.181$, $p = 0.030$),

and difficulties in emotion regulation in general (F/t = 1.984, p = 0.048). As such, since the p-values obtained are below the 0.05 significance level, the null hypothesis is rejected. This implies that the respondents from different places of origin differ significantly in some aspects of emotion regulation.

Table 7

Comparison between Difficulties in Emotion Regulation when grouped according to Profile

Profile Variables	*F/t*	p-Value	Interpretation
Sex			
Difficulty in Emotional Awareness	0.586	0.558	Not Significant
Difficulty in Emotional Clarity	-0.364	0.716	Not Significant
Difficulty in Emotional Acceptance	-0.574	0.566	Not Significant
Difficulty in Impulse Control	0.309	0.758	Not Significant
Difficulty in Goal-Directed Behavior	1.285	0.199	Not Significant
Lack of Emotional Regulation Strategies	1.711	0.088	Not Significant
Difficulties in Emotion Regulation	1.071	0.285	Not Significant
Place of Origin			
Difficulty in Emotional Awareness	-0.079	0.937	Not Significant
Difficulty in Emotional Clarity	0.417	0.677	Not Significant
Difficulty in Emotional Acceptance	-1.234	0.218	Not Significant
Difficulty in Impulse Control	1.090	0.276	Not Significant
Difficulty in Goal-Directed Behavior	3.355	0.001	Significant
Lack of Emotional Regulation Strategies	2.181	0.030	Significant
Difficulties in Emotion Regulation	1.984	0.048	Significant
Year Level			
Difficulty in Emotional Awareness	0.212	0.888	Not Significant
Difficulty in Emotional Clarity	1.254	0.290	Not Significant
Difficulty in Emotional Acceptance	0.348	0.791	Not Significant
Difficulty in Impulse Control	1.894	0.130	Not Significant
Difficulty in Goal-Directed Behavior	3.479	0.016	Significant
Lack of Emotional Regulation Strategies	3.510	0.015	Significant
Difficulties in Emotion Regulation	0.615	0.605	Not Significant

Legend: p-value <0.05 (Significant)

It means that there is an inherent difference in the difficulty of engaging in goal-directed actions, since individuals from different backgrounds vary in their ability to focus, remain motivated, and attain their goals, even when they are emotionally disturbed. In addition, it means that certain sociocultural and environmental influences in individuals' backgrounds shape their ability to manage emotions as they pursue various responsibilities. Variations in family support, cultural attitudes toward emotions, the availability of psychosocial factors, and experience in coping with stressful situations may explain these differences. For nursing undergraduate students, this aspect could be especially significant, as undertaking academic activities and clinical duties requires concentration, sound judgment, and task completion despite emotional strain. However, the variation demonstrated does not imply that the origin causes any problems with goal-directed behavior. It is in line with de la Fuente et al.'s (2022) research, which suggested that an inability to self-regulate and control executive functions results in increased difficulty performing goal-directed activities when emotional regulation is disrupted.

In addition, there is statistical significance in terms of the lack of emotional regulation when grouped by place of origin. This implies that respondents' ability to use appropriate emotion regulation strategies varies by place of origin. This result implies that people from different sociocultural backgrounds may have varying levels of exposure to emotional support and coping skills. It could mean that respondents might come from different types of families, have different attitudes towards emotions, react differently to stressful situations, and experience different conditions that make it easier for them to use emotion regulation techniques. For nursing students, the variables may affect their ability to cope with emotional problems arising from educational, work-related, and interpersonal stressors. People who did not have enough opportunities to develop appropriate coping strategies might find it difficult to choose an adequate way to regulate their emotions. However, these statements must be made carefully because the differences noted above are only associations between respondents' origins and emotion regulation skills, not causal links. The same point is made by Coutinho et al. (2021) in a study in which they found that people with greater difficulties in emotion regulation perceived themselves as having less access to effective coping mechanisms.

Moreover, the statistically significant difference in general difficulties with emotion regulation indicates that respondents exhibit distinct patterns in emotion regulation about their place of origin. It becomes apparent that, in this case, it is crucial to consider the family, sociocultural, and environmental contexts in which students have learned to respond emotionally and cope with various challenges. Family dynamics, cultural norms and expectations regarding emotional reactions, availability of social support, and stressful experiences may help explain differences in emotional awareness, impulse control, and effective management of distress. As far as the nursing students are concerned, it might explain how they react to academic challenges, stressful clinical practice, and difficult interpersonal interactions. Depending on their experiences, the students may reveal discrepancies in emotional regulation and adjustment. Nevertheless, the place of origin should not be considered a decisive factor, as individual differences and other contextual variables may also play a role. The results obtained are consistent with Gratz and Roemer (2004), who stated that emotion regulation occurs through various psychological processes and is influenced by the environment. This result also supports the findings of Xu (2023), who found that environmental experiences, including emotional neglect, lead to difficulty with emotion regulation.

Also, the comparison by year level showed statistically significant differences in difficulty with goal-directed behavior ($F/t = 3.479$, $p = 0.016$) and in the lack of emotional regulation strategies ($F/t = 3.510$, $p = 0.015$). Because the obtained p-values are below 0.05, the null hypothesis should be rejected for the dimensions. It can be concluded that respondents of various year levels differ in emotion regulation in certain dimensions. In particular, the significant differences in the difficulties associated with goal-directed behavior imply that students' ability to concentrate on their academic and personal goals, even in the presence of negative emotions, is affected by year level. As nursing students progress through different years of their nursing education, they face varying academic pressures, increased clinical responsibilities, and different interpersonal experiences. This could result in differences in their ability to regulate their emotions and pursue their goals. The differences between year levels may also be attributed to students' different experiences, coping mechanisms, and adaptations to the demands of nursing education. For example, students in higher year levels have more clinical responsibilities than those in lower year levels, who are still getting used to the academic environment of nursing education. Nonetheless, the possibilities should be approached with caution because the observed differences do not establish causality between year levels and difficulty in goal-directed behavior. It is crucial to understand that the findings underscore the importance of developmental support for nursing students experiencing emotional distress in staying focused on their goals. This claim has been supported by the results of the research conducted by de la Fuente et al. (2022).

In the same vein, the significant difference in the use of emotion regulation strategies when grouped by year level implies that students' ability to regulate emotional experiences and employ effective coping techniques varies by year level. This finding suggests that students at different year levels within the nursing program may vary in their recognition, choice, and use of emotion regulation strategies. The reasons for the differences can include various academic experiences, experience from the clinical field, interaction with peers and educators, and development of adaptation skills to cope with stress, anxiety, and other negative emotions. Advanced nursing students may have varying academic and clinical demands that impact their ways of dealing with stress, anxiety, and other negative emotions. While nursing students in the early years of their studies may still be developing coping strategies, those in the final years of their program may have accumulated more experience in coping with academic and clinical challenges. However, it is important not to draw hasty conclusions, as the year level does not guarantee any cause of these differences. However, in their study, Coutinho et al. (2021) found that restricted access to adaptive emotion regulation methods results in emotion regulation problems. On the other hand, as Gratz & Roemer (2004) state, the development of effective emotion regulation methods is required for individuals' adaptive functioning.

Table 8 presents the correlational analysis between self-differentiation, adult attachment, and difficulties in emotion regulation. As shown in the table, there is a weak negative correlation (-0.041) between differentiation of self and adult attachment. The computed Pearson correlation coefficient is -0.041 with a p-value of 0.358, which indicates no statistically significant correlation between these variables. Because the p-value exceeds the significance level (0.05), the null hypothesis is not rejected. This means that there is no statistically significant

association between respondents' differentiation of self and adult attachment. In other words, variations in respondents' level of differentiation of self are not associated with their adult attachment features. Despite the negative correlation, its magnitude is too small to establish a meaningful relationship between the two variables. Consistent with this finding, Yue (2024) studied emotional regulation in relation to attachment style but makes no mention of a correlation between the two constructs, only of theoretical consistency.

Table 8

Correlational Matrix of the Three Variables

Variables		Adult Attachment	Difficulties in Emotion Regulation
Self-Differentiation	Pearson Correlation Coefficient	-0.041	-0.168***
	Sig. (2-talied)	0.358	0.000
	Interpretation	Weak Correlation	Strong Negative Correlation
Adult Attachment	Pearson Correlation Coefficient		0.118***
	Sig. (2-talied)		0.008
	Interpretation		Strong Positive Correlation

On the other hand, self-differentiation and difficulties in emotion regulation have been found to correlate at -0.168 ($p = 0.000$), indicating a statistically significant negative association. Given that the calculated p-value is smaller than the threshold of 0.05, the null hypothesis is to be rejected. These results reveal that participants with higher self-differentiation scores exhibit fewer difficulties regulating their emotions. On the contrary, low levels of self-differentiation are associated with greater difficulty regulating emotions. The negative nature of the association means that as one increases his/her ability to balance emotions and rational thought while maintaining healthy interpersonal relationships, he/she becomes better at regulating emotions. Although the calculated correlation coefficient indicates a relatively small effect size, it remains statistically significant, confirming the theoretical claim that Differentiation of Self is a protective factor against emotional dysregulation. This is illustrated by research by Yavuz Güler and Karaca (2021), which showed that high levels of self-differentiation predicted fewer difficulties in emotion regulation and explained a large proportion of the variance in emotion regulation.

Similarly, the correlation test between adult attachment and difficulties in emotion regulation revealed a Pearson correlation coefficient of 0.118 and a p-value of 0.008. Therefore, there is a statistically significant positive relationship between the two variables. Since the value of p is less than the 0.05 level of significance, the null hypothesis is rejected. The above result indicates a statistically significant positive relationship between the two variables: higher adult attachment scores are associated with greater difficulties in emotion regulation among participants. The positive correlation indicates that changes in attachment variables are associated with changes in emotion regulation difficulties. Although the correlation is quite low, the statistically significant relationship indicates that attachment-related factors are associated with emotion regulation abilities among individuals. This finding is supported by Jeong et al. (2023), who state that insecure attachment styles refer to an individual's inclination to respond to stressors with hyperactivation or deactivation of emotional reactions, thereby affecting emotion regulation processes. The former type of reaction is characterized by exaggerated emotional responses, worries, and a great need for reassurance, while the latter involves emotional withdrawal, suppression, and avoidance. It might be difficult for people with such reactions to regulate their emotions and establish healthy interpersonal relationships. For undergraduate nursing students, insecure attachment patterns might, to some extent, affect their responses to academic pressure, clinical practice difficulties, and interpersonal conflict.

Table 9 presents the multiple regression analysis conducted to investigate the role of different dimensions of differentiation of self and adult attachment in difficulties with emotion regulation. The total regression model was statistically significant, $F(6, 493) = 5.914$, $p < .001$. This means that the independent variables taken together have accounted for a statistically significant amount of the variance in difficulties in emotion regulation. The regression model yielded an R value of .259 and an R^2 of .067 (adjusted $R^2 = .056$). This indicates that about 6.7% of the variance in emotion regulation difficulties can be attributed to the independent variables.

Table 9

Predictors of Difficulties in Emotion Regulation

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics: R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change
1	.259[a]	0.067	0.056	6.36845	0.067	5.914	6	493	0.000

a. Predictors: (Constant), Adult Attachment, Fusion with Others, Emotional Cutoff, Emotional Reactivity, Self-Position, Close

Coefficients[a]

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients: B	Unstandardized Coefficients: Std. Error	Standardized Coefficients: Beta	t	Sig.
1	(Constant)	136.151	4.838		28.143	0.000
	Emotional Reactivity	-0.292	0.079	-0.163	-3.715	0.000
	Self-Position	0.081	0.096	0.037	0.837	0.403
	Emotional Cutoff	-0.357	0.102	-0.154	-3.499	0.001
	Fusion with Others	-0.040	0.069	-0.026	-0.583	0.560
	Close	0.094	0.134	0.036	0.703	0.482
	Adult Attachment	0.092	0.056	0.083	1.644	0.101

a. Dependent Variable: Difficulties in Emotion Regulation

Excluded Variables[a]

Model		Beta In	t	Sig.	Partial Correlation	Collinearity Statistics: Tolerance
1	Self-Differentiation	.[b]				0.000
	Depend	.[b]				0.000
	Anxiety	.[b]				0.000

a. Dependent Variable: Difficulties in Emotion Regulation

b. Predictors in the Model: (Constant), Adult Attachment, Fusion with Others, Emotional Cutoff, Emotional Reactivity, Self-Position, Close

Of all the predictors, the two measures that emerged as significant predictors of difficulties in emotion regulation were emotional reactivity ($\beta = –0.163$, $t = –3.715$, $p < .001$) and emotional cutoff ($\beta = –0.154$, $t = –3.499$, $p = .001$). This suggests that the two dimensions of self-differentiation played significant, unique roles in predicting difficulties in emotion regulation. This is supported by the research done by Peleg and Peleg (2023), which found that people with low self-differentiation and those who exhibit emotional cutoff in their coping style use emotional loneliness as a form of handling stress. However, in regard to self-position ($\beta = .037$, $p = .403$), fusion with others ($\beta = –.026$, $p = .560$), closeness ($\beta = .036$, $p = .482$), and adult attachment ($\beta = .083$, $p = .101$), the probability value was above the .05 level of significance and hence failed to predict difficulties in emotional regulation. This suggests that, after controlling for all other factors in the regression model, these predictors did not make a statistically significant contribution to the variation in respondents' difficulties with emotion regulation. While both adult attachment and some aspects of self-differentiation have been found to be related to emotion regulation in other correlational studies, the predictive effect of these two factors was not significant in the current study, implying that their contribution might have been mediated by other factors.

Table 10 presents the proposed psychological intervention program for undergraduate nursing students. To improve the low level of self-differentiation among undergraduate nursing students, the proposed psychological intervention program includes four strategies.

Self-awareness and Identity Development Workshops. These are strategies expected to help students become aware of their personal identity, emotions, and strengths. By engaging in self-reflection exercises, students are expected to attain a better understanding of their values, beliefs, and personal goals. These workshops are designed to help build self-confidence, self-control, and self-respect, enabling students to make independent decisions and maintain good relationships with others.

Assertiveness and Decision-Making Training. This will help boost the individual's confidence in voicing opinions and thoughts, setting boundaries, and making independent decisions. Students are supposed to learn assertive skills through communication activities, role-playing, and problem-solving activities. In addition, this approach will help the student develop a high level of self-confidence and make their own decisions without relying on anyone else.

Table 10
Proposed Psychological Intervention Program for Undergraduate Nursing Students

Key Results Area	Objectives	Strategies	Responsible Persons	Timeline	Success Indicators
Low Self-Differentiation	Enhance students' self-differentiation by strengthening self-awareness, emotional regulation, personal identity, and autonomous decision-making.	Self-awareness and identity development workshops Assertiveness and decision-making training Reflective journaling and guided self-reflection sessions Values clarification seminars	Guidance Counselor, Psychologist, Students	Every Semester	At least 85% of participants demonstrate improve self-confidence, emotional stability, and autonomous decision-making based on post-assessment scores; 100% Increased participation in self-development activities; 80% reduced emotional dependency and interpersonal conflicts
High Difficulties in Emotion Regulation	Improve students' emotion regulation skills by enhancing emotional awareness, emotional acceptance, impulse control, and adaptive coping strategies	Cognitive reappraisal and cognitive restructuring workshops Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction (MBSR) sessions	Guidance Counselor, Psychologist, Students	Quarterly	At least **85%** of participants demonstrate improved emotional regulation, emotional acceptance, impulse control, and adaptive coping skills based on validated
		Stress management and relaxation training Emotion identification and emotional intelligence workshops			assessment tools; 80 % decreased reports of emotional distress and maladaptive coping behaviors;90% Increased utilization of healthy coping strategies during academic and clinical training
Moderate Adult Attachment	Support healthy attachment patterns through increasing interpersonal trust, security, communication, and the ability to have balance in relationships while becoming independent	Seminars on healthy attachments and relationships. Communication training and interpersonal skills training.	Guidance Counselor, Psychologist, Nursing Faculty, Students	Every semester	There is at least an 85% improvement in interpersonal communication skills, boundaries and awareness in relationships according to post assessment; there is at least an 80% improvement in confidence about maintaining healthy relationships and issues related to attachment; and at least an 85% improvement in help-seeking skills and peer support techniques.

Reflective Journaling and Guided Self-Reflection Sessions. Through reflective journaling and guided self-reflection sessions, the learners will have the opportunity to analyze and reflect on their experiences, feelings, thinking processes, and behaviors through writing and discussion. Through self-reflection, learners will be able to identify their emotional triggers and develop better ways to manage their emotions. This method is likely to

increase self-awareness and emotional regulation skills and contribute towards personal growth, better understanding of themselves, and better interpersonal relations.

Value Clarification Seminars. The seminars on value clarification will enable students to identify and analyze their own values, beliefs, and life goals. The students are supposed to act in ways that are important to them while respecting others' views. This approach allows one to be a good individual and an autonomous decision-maker without losing one's identity.

Additionally, to address elevated difficulties with emotion regulation among undergraduate nursing students, the proposed psychological intervention program includes four strategies.

Cognitive Reappraisal and Cognitive Restructuring Workshops. The workshops on cognitive reappraisal and cognitive restructuring will help students recognize, challenge, and change their negative or irrational thought patterns that contribute to their emotional problems. Students will learn how to reframe their perception of stressful situations arising in academic, clinical, and personal domains through cognitive behavioral exercises. The goal of this intervention is to foster better emotion regulation and increase resilience in the face of stressors.

Mindfulness-Based Stress Reduction (MBSR) Sessions. The MBSR strategy will introduce students to mindfulness skills, including mindful breathing, body scanning, meditation, and other mindfulness exercises. The strategy will be useful to students, as it will better position them to cope with stress and regulate their emotions through mindfulness skills that foster acceptance of their thoughts and feelings in the present moment.

Stress Management and Relaxation Training. This stress management and relaxation therapy will equip students with practical skills for coping with their educational, professional, and personal stresses. Exercises that will be conducted through deep breathing, progressive muscle relaxation, visualization, and time management will help learners reduce stress, cultivate positive emotions, and develop a healthy way of coping with stress.

Emotion Identification and Emotional Intelligence Workshops. This workshop will enable students to identify, understand, and express emotions effectively, as well as develop empathy and good interpersonal skills. Students will be able to understand the emotional triggers and manage emotions through interactive activities, case studies, and role-playing. It is believed that this approach will increase emotional intelligence, interpersonal effectiveness, and adaptive coping.

Seminars on Healthy Attachments and Relationships. The seminars have been designed to help undergraduate nursing students appreciate the need to establish healthy, balanced relationships. In these seminars, the topics covered include attachment patterns, emotional security, trust, respect, personal boundaries, and emotional independence. The students will be taught how their attachment styles may affect their relationships with their family, friends, fellow students, romantic interests, and clinical associates. They will be able to recognize unhealthy relationship patterns and learn how to handle such situations.

Communication Training and Interpersonal Skills Training. This intervention aims to improve communication skills and to develop and maintain good relationships with others. During the training, students will be taught active listening, assertive communication, empathy, conflict resolution, constructive criticism, and appropriate expression of themselves and their needs. This will be facilitated through role-play, teamwork, and appropriate responses to misunderstandings, conflict, and interpersonal challenges. Communication and interpersonal skills are very important in the nursing profession because students must work with peers, teachers, and patients.

4. Conclusions

Most of the respondents were female, lived in townships and villages, were not only children, and were third-year students in the nursing program. This indicates that the study participants were primarily nursing undergraduates from diverse family and geographic backgrounds. The respondents showed lower differentiation

of self, had a moderate level of adult attachment, and experienced significant difficulties with emotion regulation. Only place of origin and year level produced significant differences in self-differentiation, adult attachment, and some aspects of emotion regulation among undergraduate nursing students. The variable self-differentiation showed a significant negative association with difficulties in emotion regulation, whereas adult attachment showed a significant positive association. The regression model analysis proved significant for predicting emotion regulation difficulty, explaining 6.7% of the variance. The variables in the predictor that proved significant in predicting emotion regulation difficulties included emotional reactivity and emotional cutoff, while self-position, fusion with others, closeness, and adult attachment did not prove significant. Theoretical references and intervention ideas for mental health education work in universities is proposed.

Recommendations - Nursing education may be accompanied by activities that foster self-differentiation and emotion regulation through existing programs for developing students, including reflective journals, emotional awareness techniques, assertiveness training, and conflict resolution classes, especially in the first three years of the nursing program. Mental health activities may be planned by guidance counselors and student affairs officers to take into account variations related to profile variables such as place of origin and year level, as these have been found to affect self-differentiation, adult attachment, and certain components of emotion regulation. The teachers who teach nursing may incorporate emotionally supportive teaching practices in both classroom and clinical settings through debriefing, constructive feedback, and creating a space for students to discuss their emotionally challenging classroom and clinical experiences. The students may participate in various university-run mental health programs that foster emotion regulation, coping skills, and healthy interpersonal relationships to avoid problems related to emotion regulation. Further research on this topic may consider other variables that could influence the ability to regulate emotions, beyond the 6.7% variance found in this study. These other variables may include perceived stress, resilience, emotional intelligence, family functioning, social support, and coping mechanisms. These may be considered through longitudinal or mixed methods. The university administration may adopt the proposed intervention program for mental health education of undergraduate nursing students by focusing more on reducing emotional reactivity and emotional cutoff, since these two constructs had significant predictive power for emotion regulation problems.

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