

Music-Based Mood Regulation and Emotion Regulation Difficulties as Predictors of Emotional Eating

Swati Datta

Amity Institute of Psychology & Allied Sciences, Amity University Uttar Pradesh, Noida, India

Dr. Anjali Sahai

Amity Institute of Psychology & Allied Sciences, Amity University Uttar Pradesh, Noida, India

Abstract

Emerging adulthood includes the distinct developmental period between ages 18 to 29 marked by identity exploration, instability, and emotional sensitivity. Emotional regulation processes begin maturing during this period, making it particularly relevant for establishing future well-being. Following a quantitative, cross-sectional design, the present study examined the relationships between music-based mood regulation strategies, difficulties in emotion regulation, and emotional eating in response to happiness, sadness, anger, and anxiety among Indian emerging adults. Data was collected from a sample of 135 participants (44.4% male, 55.6% female) aged 18–25 ($M=21.01$, $SD=1.55$) using a survey containing the B-MMR Scale, DERS-SF, and SEES. Pearson's correlation and multiple regression analyses were conducted using Jamovi (version 2.7.18). Results indicated that emotion regulation difficulties were significantly positively correlated with several music-based regulation strategies, particularly discharge ($r=.420$, $p<.001$), and with emotional eating across all affective states, with sadness ($r=.377$, $p<.001$) and anxiety ($r=.301$, $p<.001$) showing the strongest associations. Emotion regulation difficulties emerged as the strongest predictor of emotional eating, particularly for sadness-related eating ($R^2=.252$). Among music-based strategies, Solace positively ($B=.489$, $p=.004$) and Diversion negatively ($B=-.292$, $p=.042$) predicted sadness-related emotional eating. Given the deep cultural embeddedness of music in the Indian context, these findings highlight the potential of music-based strategies as accessible between-session counselling interventions supporting adaptive coping and emotion regulation skill-building among emerging adults.

Index Terms

Emerging Adulthood, Emotion Regulation Difficulties, Music-Based Mood Regulation, Emotional Eating