

Investigating Emotion Regulation, School Connectedness, and Perceived Social Support in Relation to Retaliatory Attitudes in Junior High School Students

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Date Submitted:
September 05, 2026

Date Accepted:
October 01, 2026

Date Published:
October 23, 2026

DOI:
10.5281/zenodo.23599922

ABSTRACT

This study investigated the levels of emotion regulation (cognitive reappraisal and expressive suppression), school connectedness, perceived social support, and retaliatory attitudes among junior high school students, as well as the relationships among these psychosocial variables. Utilizing a quantitative descriptive-correlational research design, data were collected using standardized assessment instruments and analyzed through descriptive statistics and Pearson product-moment correlation. Findings revealed that students possessed high capacities for cognitive reappraisal ($M = 4.8$, $SD = 1.01$) and expressive suppression ($M = 4.7$, $SD = 1.28$), alongside moderate perceived social support ($M = 4.7$, $SD = 1.21$). However, a critical 53.1% of respondents reported a low sense of

school connectedness ($M = 3.3$, $SD = 0.63$). While retaliatory attitudes averaged at a neutral baseline ($M = 3.0$, $SD = 0.94$), the sample demonstrated an exact 50–50 split between forgiving and revenge-oriented tendencies. Bivariate analysis indicated significant positive inter-correlations among emotion regulation, perceived social support, and school connectedness ($p < .001$), but weak, statistically non-significant relationships between these psychosocial factors and retaliatory attitudes ($p > .05$), leading to the acceptance of the null hypothesis. The study concludes that emotion regulation, school connectedness, and perceived social support do not directly suppress retaliatory attitudes. Also emotion regulation and perceived social support do not guarantee school connectedness. Consequently, school administrators and guidance counselors should implement targeted restorative justice programs and structured inclusion initiatives to directly address retaliatory attitudes and enhance students' school connectedness.

Keywords: *Emotion Regulation, Cognitive Reappraisal, Expressive Suppression, School Connectedness, Perceived Social Support, Retaliatory Attitudes, Adolescents, Junior High School.*

INTRODUCTION

Adolescence is a developmental period characterized by substantial changes in social relationships, emotional functioning, identity formation, and an increasing orientation toward peers. During this stage, relationships with classmates and friends become vital sources of belonging, validation, and social identity. Simultaneously, adolescents become particularly sensitive to social evaluation, rejection, and interpersonal conflict. Positive peer relationships contribute significantly to psychological well-being and social-emotional competence, whereas negative peer experiences undermine adolescents' sense of safety, belonging, and overall adjustment (World Health Organization [WHO], 2020; Capella & Tezler, 2024;

Venticinque et al., 2024). Understanding how adolescents evaluate and respond to interpersonal difficulties within the school environment is therefore critical, particularly when these experiences involve aggression, peer victimization, or school violence.

Peer victimization, defined as young people being subjected to harmful physical, verbal, relational, or cyber behaviors by peers remains a widespread international concern. Using data across 83 countries, Biswas et al. (2020) found that approximately 30.5% of adolescents experienced bullying at least once within a 30-day period. Cross-national findings from the Health Behaviour in School-aged Children study across 44 regions similarly indicate that roughly 11% of school-aged adolescents experience school bullying two to three times per month (Cosma et al., 2024). UNICEF (2026) likewise estimates that one in three adolescents aged 13–15 worldwide experiences peer bullying.

This challenge is equally pronounced in the Philippine educational context. Data from the Programme for International Student Assessment (PISA) 2022 revealed that 43% of Filipino female students and 53% of Filipino male students reported being bullied at least a few times a month (Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development [OECD], 2023). Recent policy reports from the Second Congressional Commission on Education (EDCOM II, 2026) further emphasize that bullying and school violence remain persistent systemic hurdles in Philippine schools. These empirical trends show that peer victimization is not an isolated interpersonal occurrence, but rather a phenomenon embedded in broader social environments that shape how adolescents perceive and address conflict.

The impact of victimization extends far beyond immediate harm. Research links peer victimization to deficits in academic functioning, emotional health, and interpersonal adjustment. A meta-analysis by Samara et al. (2021) demonstrated that bullying involvement correlates with lower academic motivation and performance. In the Philippines, Abrigo et al. (2024) noted marked academic achievement gaps tied to bullying exposure, while Herrin et al. (2025) found that physical bullying by peers significantly predicted higher absenteeism and lower grades among Filipino children.

Psychologically, peer victimization is associated with elevated internalizing distress and lower self-esteem (Mullan et al., 2023), alongside long-term decrements in friendship satisfaction (Gini et al., 2024). Locally, Alipasa and Alipasa (2025) highlighted fear, silenced voices, and coping struggles among bullied Filipino youth, while also identifying family, teachers, and peers as essential protective pillars.

While the emotional distress and academic repercussions of victimization are widely documented, a crucial yet understudied dimension involves how adolescents evaluate retaliation following interpersonal harm. Retaliatory attitudes refer to the cognitive acceptability, normative justification, or perceived appropriateness of responding to wrongdoing with revenge or aggressive behaviors. Crucially, retaliatory attitudes are distinct from reactive aggression or overt retaliatory behavior; an adolescent may approve of retaliation normatively without acting upon it, or conversely, feel intense anger yet reject revenge as morally acceptable. Examining retaliatory attitudes isolated from behavioral execution isolates the cognitive and normative mechanisms that precede or sustain cycles of violence.

Adolescents' responses to interpersonal harm are heavily influenced by social cognitive appraisals of justice and aggression. Gerlsma and Lugtmeyer (2018) noted that adolescents process offenses through varying lenses of revenge, avoidance, or benevolent responses. Marlow et al. (2023) observed that adolescent judgments regarding the acceptability of victim revenge vary depending on whether the bullying was physical or relational. Similarly, Zhao and Zheng (2024) demonstrated that peer victimization positively associated with revenge through mechanisms like hostile attribution bias and rumination.

A critical landmark by Shu and Luo (2021) identified retaliatory normative beliefs as a key mechanism linking peer victimization to reactive aggression, demonstrating that self-distancing can weaken these retaliatory beliefs. However, focus on retaliatory attitudes as a distinct outcome variable remains scarce compared to the expansive literature on overt bullying and aggression. Furthermore, an adolescent's evaluation of retaliation does not happen in a vacuum; it is continuously shaped by individual self-regulatory capacities and contextual social buffers.

Emotion Regulation

Emotion regulation involves the cognitive and behavioral processes through which individuals monitor, evaluate, and modify emotional responses to function adaptively. In early-to-mid adolescence, emotion regulation becomes crucial as emotional intensity peaks alongside developing self-regulatory brain structures. Deficits in emotion regulation render adolescents vulnerable to impulsive cognitive appraisals when provoked.

Adverse peer interactions directly strain emotional regulation capacities (Herd & Kim-Spoon, 2021; Riley et al., 2019). Among Filipino adolescents, adaptive strategies such as cognitive reappraisal and mindfulness correlate positively with academic engagement and psychological well-being (Datu et al., 2023). Experimental work confirms that targeted emotion-regulation training reduces reactive aggression and emotional distress among high schoolers (Adrian et al., 2019; Akdemir & Gündüz, 2022). Examining specific regulatory dimensions (e.g., Cognitive Reappraisal vs. Expressive Suppression) provides insight into whether inner emotional control buffers against the endorsement of revenge.

School Connectedness

School connectedness represents an institutional and relational dimension of adolescent development, referring to the extent to which students feel accepted, valued, and safe within their school community. It is conceptually distinct from interpersonal social support; a student may possess strong peer friendships while feeling alienated from the school as an institution, or vice versa.

Peer victimization consistently degrades students' sense of school belonging (Gowing, 2019; Aslan & Kudrnáč, 2026). Longitudinal evidence indicates that higher school connectedness shields junior high school students against depression following bullying incidents (Ajibewa et al., 2025; Han & Chen, 2026). In the Philippines, Susan and Magallanes (2020) highlighted that sense of belonging among Junior High School (JHS) learners relies heavily on positive school-based relationships. However, despite its established protective role against depression and dropout, school connectedness has rarely been evaluated as a prospective buffer against retaliatory mindsets.

Perceived Social Support

Perceived social support reflects an adolescent's cognitive appraisal of available care and assistance across key microsystems: family, peers, and teachers/significant others. Social support provides key coping resources during stressful developmental transitions.

Local studies consistently document the protective nature of social support against stress, anxiety, and depression among Filipino youth (Sabellano et al., 2024; Serrano et al., 2023). Studies across Philippine secondary schools further highlight how teacher support and family cohesion foster resilience across diverse learning tracks (Betco et al., 2024; Camarines et al., 2024). Although research has established social support as a vital buffer against internalizing problems (such as depression or stress), its relationship with externalizing cognitive norms such as retaliatory attitudes remains insufficiently explored in Junior High School contexts.

While Philippine studies extensively document bullying prevalence (OECD, 2023; EDCOM II, 2026) and its psychological symptoms (Alipasa & Alipasa, 2025), no empirical study to date has examined the psychosocial determinants of retaliatory attitudes among Filipino Junior High School students. Early-to-mid adolescence (JHS) represents a developmental window characterized by heightened susceptibility to peer influence and evolving moral reasoning regarding fairness and justice. Identifying whether internal self-regulation (Emotion Regulation), institutional belonging (School Connectedness), and relational networks (Perceived Social Support) predict or mitigate retaliatory attitudes provides vital empirical baseline data for anti-bullying interventions and school climate policies.

Theoretical Framework

This study is grounded in an integration of Bronfenbrenner's Ecological Systems Theory (1979), the Social Information Processing (SIP) Theory (Crick & Dodge, 1994), and the General Aggression Model (GAM; Anderson & Bushman, 2002).

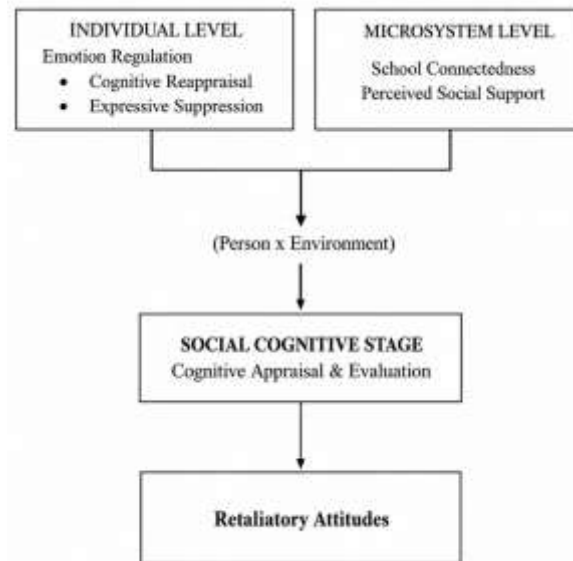


Figure 1. *Theoretical Framework*

Ecological Systems Theory frames the adolescent's environment into nested systems. Emotion Regulation operates at the individual/ontogenic level as an internal psychological capacity. School Connectedness and Perceived Social Support represent microsystemic resources (school, family, peer networks). The interaction between individual capacities and microsystemic environments constitutes the mesosystemic dynamic shaping student attitudes.

Social Information Processing (SIP) & GAM Frameworks explain how personal factors (Emotion Regulation) and environmental inputs (Social Support, School Connectedness) feed into an individual's present internal state. In the SIP model, when adolescents process interpersonal conflict, their internal regulation and external support systems influence their database of social schemas and normative beliefs ultimately determining whether retaliatory responses are evaluated as acceptable, justified, or functional.

Statement of the Problem

This study aimed to investigate the relationships between psychosocial factors specifically, emotion regulation, school connectedness, and perceived social support, and retaliatory attitudes among Junior High School students.

Specifically, this sought to answer the following questions:

1. What is the level of psychosocial factors among the respondents in terms of:
 - 1.1 Emotion Regulation (Cognitive Reappraisal and Expressive Suppression);
 - 1.2 School Connectedness; and
 - 1.3 Perceived Social Support?
2. What is the level of Retaliatory Attitudes among the respondents?
3. Is there a significant relationship between Emotion Regulation, Perceived Social Support, School Connectedness, as psychosocial factors and Retaliatory Attitudes?

METHODS

Research Design

This study employed a descriptive-quantitative-correlational research design. The descriptive component was appropriate to systematically assess the respondents' levels of psychosocial factors specifically, emotion regulation, school connectedness, and perceived social support, as well as their retaliatory attitudes, while the correlational component helped determine the significant relationships among the study's variables.

Research Locale

The study was conducted at the University of Luzon, a private higher education institution in Dagupan City, Pangasinan, Philippines. The locale was selected because it provided direct access to junior high school students enrolled in a diverse, urban educational setting, making it well-suited for examining the interaction between psychosocial factors and retaliatory attitudes within a local adolescent context. Conducting the research at this institution offers valuable insights into the specific psychosocial dynamics and behavioral tendencies of junior high school students in Dagupan City, providing locally tailored data that can inform school-based interventions and guidance programs. Additionally, the administration's willingness to participate and the institution's overall accessibility greatly facilitated data collection and the successful completion of the study.

Participants and Sampling Technique

Table 1. *Distribution of Respondents According to Age*

Age	Frequency	Percentage
12	12	13%
13	28	29%
14	26	27%
15	26	27%
16	4	4%
Total	96	100%

The target population of this study comprised of all 124 Junior High School students enrolled during the academic year 2026-2027. The study utilized a total population sampling, a non- probability purposive sampling technique wherein the entire available population is invited to participate due to its manageable size.

Out of the 124 eligible students, a total of N = 96 Junior High School students successfully obtained signed parental consent and provided individual student assent in compliance with ethical standards. This yielded a final participation rate of 77.42%. Students who were unable to secure parental consent, declined assent, or were absent during data collection were excluded from the final sample.

From the sample, 12 out of 96 respondents (13%) were 12 years old, 28 out of 96 respondents (29%), 26 out of 96 respondents (27%) were 14 years old, 26 out of 96 respondents (27%) were 15 years old, while 4 out of 96 respondents (4%) were 16 years old.

Table 2. *Distribution of Respondents According to Sex*

Sex	Frequency	Percentage
Male	39	40.62%
Female	57	59.38%
Total	96	100%

The respondents of the study were distributed according to sex where 39 out of 96 (40.62%) were male while the majority, 57 out of 96 respondents (59.38%) were female.

Instrumentation

Data were collected using standardized psychometric instruments measuring emotion regulation (cognitive reappraisal and expressive suppression), school connectedness, perceived social support, and retaliatory attitudes. The instruments were adopted in their original form and underwent a review by the University's Ethics Review Committee prior to administration.

Emotion Regulation Questionnaire (ERQ)

This 10-item Emotion Regulation Questionnaire (ERQ) was developed by Gross and John (2003) to evaluate two distinct internal processes: Cognitive Reappraisal (6 items) and Expressive Suppression (4 items). In this study, it will be used to assess how participants cognitively reframe conflicts or inhibit outward expressions to determine whether adaptive strategies reduce retaliatory attitudes propensity. The ERQ demonstrates strong psychometric reliability, yielding typical Cronbach's alpha (α) values between .75 and .85 for reappraisal and .70 and .80 for suppression. Its structural validity in youth populations is well-supported by Wang et al. (2022), who evaluated 397 migrant adolescents ($M_{age} = 16.78$, $SD = 1.92$) using exploratory factor analysis (EFA) which confirmed the stable two-factor structure of the original 10-item model, validating its psychometric application for assessing adolescent cognitive dimensions.

Psychological Sense of School Membership (PSSM)

The variable school connectedness will be measured using the 18-item Psychological Sense of School Membership (PSSM) developed by Goodenow (1993). This is designed to assess adolescent's subjective feelings of belonging, acceptance, safety, and respect within an academic environment. The PSSM exhibits high internal consistency, demonstrating Cronbach's alpha values between .80 and .88. Li et al. (2020) confirmed its construct and criterion-related validity in a sample of 1,223 junior high school students in the United States ($M_{age} = 13.51$, $SD = 0.98$), reporting high internal reliability ($\alpha = 0.88$).

Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support (MSPSS)

This 12-item Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support (MSPSS) was developed by Zimet et al. (1988) to measure perceptions of emotional support across three social domains: family, friends, and significant others. The MSPSS demonstrates excellent internal reliability across subscales ($\alpha \geq .88$).

Transgression-Related Interpersonal Motivations Scale - Revenge Subscale (TRIM-12)

This subscale by McCullough et al. (1998), the Revenge Subscale of the Transgression-Related Interpersonal Motivations Scale (TRIM-12) evaluates cognitive and emotional motivations to seek retribution following interpersonal harm. In this study, higher scores reflect a stronger desire for retribution, providing a critical secondary measure to validate and complement primary metrics of retaliatory propensity. The subscale displays robust internal consistency ($\alpha \geq .85$) across young adult cohorts. Its construct validity in youth populations is further established by a systematic review conducted by Quintana-Orts et al. (2021) across 27 empirical studies ($N = 18,348$ adolescents).

Data Gathering Procedure

Following the approval of the study by the University's Ethics Review Committee, the researchers sought permission from the principal of the laboratory school to conduct the study. Once approved, the researchers secured the official list of currently enrolled Junior High School students from the school registrar's office. The list was screened according to the established inclusion criteria, specifically: (1)

current enrollment in the Junior High School of the University of Luzon Laboratory School, and (2) an age range of 12 to 18 years.

Qualified respondents were invited to participate and were provided with the necessary information regarding the study, including its purpose, procedures, voluntary nature of participation, potential risks and benefits, confidentiality measures, and their right to decline or withdraw from participation at any time without penalty. Informed parental consent and student assent were successfully obtained prior to data collection.

The adopted research instruments were administered during schedules approved by the principal to minimize disruption to regular academic activities. Before administration, the researchers provided standardized instructions with the facilitation of a guidance designate and clarified the proper procedure for answering the questionnaires. Participants were informed that there were no right or wrong answers and were encouraged to provide responses that accurately reflected their experiences and perceptions. The researchers and the guidance designate remained available throughout the administration to clarify procedural questions and provided debriefing sessions immediately afterward.

Ethics Approval and Institutional Permission

Prior to the commencement of data collection, the researchers secured formal ethical clearance from the University of Luzon's Ethics Review Committee. The researchers likewise obtained written permission from the principal of the University of Luzon Laboratory School to conduct the study among eligible Junior High School students. Data collection commenced only after all required ethical and institutional approvals had been obtained.

The study strictly adhered to established ethical principles governing research involving human participants. Written parental consent and student assent were secured for all participants prior to their inclusion in the study. Participation was entirely voluntary, and respondents were informed of their right to decline participation or withdraw from the study at any time without penalty or adverse consequences.

To protect participant confidentiality and privacy, respondents' names and student identification numbers were neither recorded nor presented in the study; instead, unique numerical identification codes were assigned to each participant's questionnaire. All research data were securely stored and handled in accordance with Republic Act No. 10173, also known as the Data Privacy Act of 2012, and applicable institutional data protection policies. Access to the collected data was restricted exclusively to authorized members of the research team. Throughout the research process, the researchers maintained a commitment to upholding academic integrity, responsible research practices, and the ethical standards applicable to the conduct, analysis, and reporting of the study.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Level of Psychosocial Factors in terms of Emotion Regulation using the Emotion Regulation Questionnaire (ERQ)

Table 3. *Level of Psychosocial Factors in terms of Emotion Regulation (Cognitive Appraisal Facet) of Junior High School Students*

Score	Descriptive Equivalent	Frequency	Percentage
0 - 3.5	Low	10	10.42%
3.6 - 7	High	86	89.58%
Total		96	100%

The respondents obtained a mean score of 4.8 (SD = 1.01), which corresponds to a high descriptive equivalent. Specifically, 10 respondents (10.42%) were low in the cognitive reappraisal facet of emotion

regulation, whereas an overwhelming majority of 86 respondents (89.58%) scored high. This result is aligned with the findings of Datu et al. (2023) that cognitive reappraisal is a widely adopted adaptive coping mechanism among Filipino high school students that promotes positive emotional functioning. Moreover, cognitive reframing and self-distancing are common components of adolescents' self-regulation (Shu and Luo, 2021; Akdemir and Gündüz, 2022). This indicates that junior high school students tend to use cognitive reappraisal, a strategy that involves changing how they interpret a situation to manage their emotional responses constructively, demonstrating a major internal self-regulatory strength and adaptive cognitive coping capacity among them.

Table 4. *Level of Psychosocial Factors in terms of Emotion Regulation (Expressive Suppression Facet) of Junior High School Students*

Score	Descriptive Equivalent	Frequency	Percentage
0 - 3.5	Low	19	19.8%
3.6 - 7	High	77	80.2%
Total		96	100%

The respondents obtained a mean score of 4.7 (SD = 1.28), which corresponds to a high descriptive equivalent. Specifically, 19 respondents (19.8%) were low in the expressive suppression facet of emotion regulation, while a substantial majority of 77 respondents (80.2%) demonstrated high expressive suppression. This finding is aligned with Riley et al., (2019), study which emphasized emotional awareness and control as core aspects of adolescent emotional development. This indicates that a vast majority of students possess the capacity to inhibit immediate outward displays of negative affect during challenging situations, serving as a possible individual self-regulatory protective buffer that supports emotional control within academic environments.

Level of Psychosocial Factors in terms of School Connectedness using the Psychological Sense of School Membership (PSSM)

Table 5. *Level of Psychosocial Factors in terms of School Connectedness of Junior High School Students*

Score	Descriptive Equivalent	Frequency	Percentage
1.0 - 2.9	Low Sense of Belonging	51	53.1%
3.0 - 3.9	Moderate/ Average Sense of Belonging	30	31.3%
4.0 - 5.0	High Sense of Belonging	15	15.6%
Total		96	100%

The respondents obtained a mean score of 3.3 (SD = 0.63), which corresponds to a moderate/average sense of belonging descriptive equivalent. Specifically, 51 respondents (53.1%) showed a low sense of belonging, while 30 respondents (31.3%) demonstrated a moderate/average sense of belonging and 15 respondents (15.6%) exhibited a high sense of belonging. The predominant cluster of students experiencing low institutional connection aligns with recent findings by Aslan and Kudrnáč (2026), who highlighted that exposure to peer victimization, relational friction, and modern academic stressors can significantly erode adolescents' sense of institutional bonding. Conversely, the finding that a majority of students feel disconnected diverges from previous local and international studies that observed generally high baseline levels of school connectedness among junior high school learners (Suan & Magallanes, 2020; Han & Chen, 2026). Prior research emphasizes that a strong, pervasive sense of school belonging serves as a primary protective resource that directly buffers adolescents against psychological distress and promotes adaptive emotional functioning (Ajibewa et al., 2025; Han & Chen, 2026).

The present findings indicate that despite a moderate sample mean, a critical majority (53.1%) of the Junior High School respondents operate under a vulnerable or diminished connection to their school community. This structural gap suggests an urgent need for targeted institutional interventions, anti-bullying safeguards, and school climate enhancements to cultivate a safer, more inclusive environment where all students feel valued and supported.

Level of Psychosocial Factors in terms of Perceived Social Support using the Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support (MSPSS)

Table 4. *Level of Psychosocial Factors in terms of Social Support of Junior High School Students*

Score	Descriptive Equivalent	Frequency	Percentage
1.0 - 2.9	Low perceived support	8	8.3%
3.0 - 5.0	Medium perceived support	43	44.8
5.1 - 7.0	High perceived support	45	46.9
Total		96	100%

The respondents obtained a mean score of 4.7 (SD = 1.21), which corresponds to a medium perceived support descriptive equivalent. Specifically, only 8 respondents (8.3%) reported low perceived support, whereas 43 respondents (44.8%) reported medium perceived support and 45 respondents (46.9%) perceived high social support from their network.

This finding aligns directly with local adolescent literature in the Philippines, including studies by Sabellano et al. (2024) and Serrano et al. (2023), which demonstrated that strong perceived social support across family, peer, and teacher networks serves as a protective psychological buffer during adolescent transitions. Similarly, Parabuc (2024) confirmed that interpersonal support significantly fosters positive psychological adaptation among Filipino youth. Taken together, these results indicate that an overwhelming majority of the respondents (91.7%) perceive accessible relational resources within their microsystems and mesosystems. This widespread availability of social support provides essential emotional security, interpersonal stability, and adaptive coping mechanisms as Junior High School students navigate school stressors and interpersonal conflict.

Level of Retaliatory Attitudes using the Transgression-Related Interpersonal Motivations Scale - Revenge Subscale (TRIM-12)

Table 6. *Level of Retaliatory Attitudes of Junior High School Students*

Score	Descriptive Equivalent	Frequency	Percentage
1.0 - 1.9	Very Low Unforgiveness (High Forgiveness)	12	12.5%
2.0 - 2.9	Low to Moderate Forgiveness	36	37.5%
3.0	Neutral	0	0%
3.1 - 3.9	Moderate Unforgiveness	32	33.3%
4.0 - 5.0	Severe Unforgiveness	16	16.7%
Total		96	100%

The respondents obtained a mean score of 3.0 (SD = 0.94), which corresponds to a neutral descriptive equivalent. Specifically, 12 respondents (12.5%) exhibited very low unforgiveness (high forgiveness), 36 respondents (37.5%) demonstrated low to moderate forgiveness, 32 respondents (33.3%) showed moderate unforgiveness, and 16 respondents (16.7%) exhibited severe unforgiveness.

These findings align with the theoretical foundation of McCullough et al. (1998) and the meta-analytic evidence from Quintana-Orts et al. (2021), which documented widespread variability in how adolescents navigate post-transgression motivations. Furthermore, the presence of distinct retaliatory

mindsets supports the work of Marlow et al. (2023) and Zhao and Zheng (2024), who emphasized that adolescent evaluations of revenge are governed by complex social-cognitive judgments, attribution biases, and normative beliefs regarding justice. While exactly half of the student sample (50.0%) leans toward non-aggressive processing and forgiving tendencies, the remaining half (50.0%) harbors moderate to severe retaliatory attitudes when evaluating interpersonal offenses. This substantial proportion of students approving retaliatory responses indicates a critical vulnerability for potential conflict escalation and reactive aggression. Consequently, these results emphasize the need for targeted institutional intervention programs such as restorative justice practices, social-emotional learning, and empathy cultivation to help lower retaliatory norms and foster constructive conflict-resolution strategies among Junior High School learners.

Relationship between Emotion Regulation, Perceived Social Support, School Connectedness, as psychosocial factors and Retaliatory Attitudes

Table 7. *Relationship between Emotion Regulation (Cognitive Reappraisal and Expression Suppression), Perceived Social Support, School Connectedness, as psychosocial factors and Retaliatory Attitudes*

Psychosocial Factor	Pearson Correlation (r)	p-value (Sig. 2-tailed)	Decision on H_0	Interpretation
Emotion Regulation (CR)	-.058	.577	Failed to Reject	Not Significant
Emotion Regulation (ES)	-.130	.207	Failed to Reject	Not Significant
School Connectedness	-.160	.120	Failed to Reject	Not Significant
Perceived Social Support	-.153	.138	Failed to Reject	Not Significant

To determine whether a significant relationship exists between the identified psychosocial factors: Emotion Regulation (Cognitive Reappraisal and Expression Suppression), School Connectedness, and Perceived Social Support, and Retaliatory Attitudes among Junior High School students, Pearson product-moment correlation coefficients (r) were computed. Prior to evaluating the main objective regarding retaliatory attitudes, the inter-correlations among the three independent variables were analyzed. The data revealed statistically significant positive relationships among all three psychosocial factors. Specifically, School Connectedness and Perceived Social Support exhibited a strong, positive, and statistically significant correlation ($r = .688$, $p < .001$). In addition, Emotion Regulation (Cognitive Reappraisal and Expression Suppression) demonstrated moderate, positive, and statistically significant correlations with both Perceived Social Support ($r = .405$, $p < .001$) and School Connectedness ($r = .351$, $p < .001$). These significant inter-correlations align with Bronfenbrenner's (1979) Ecological Systems Theory, which posits that individual-level capacities and microsystemic environments operate in a mutually reinforcing capacity. Students who perceive robust relational backing from family, peers, and teachers are systematically more likely to feel institutional belonging and develop adaptive emotional regulation strategies (Datu et al., 2023; Aslan & Kudrnáč, 2026). Contrary to initial expectations, the bivariate analysis between each psychosocial factor and retaliatory attitudes yielded non-significant results across all dimensions. For Emotion Regulation (Cognitive Reappraisal and Expression Suppression), the correlation analysis revealed a very weak negative relationship with retaliatory attitudes ($r = -.058$, $p = .577$) and ($r = -.130$, $p = .207$) respectively. Because the p-value exceeds the established significance threshold ($\alpha = .05$), the null hypothesis failed to be rejected, indicating that an individual's level of cognitive reappraisal is not directly or significantly associated with their acceptance of retaliatory norms. Similarly, School Connectedness demonstrated a weak negative correlation with retaliatory attitudes ($r = -.160$, $p = .120$). Although the direction of the relationship aligns with theoretical assumptions, indicating that higher school belonging

slightly trends toward lower retaliatory approval, the association did not reach statistical significance. Likewise, Perceived Social Support showed a weak negative correlation with retaliatory attitudes ($r = -.153$, $p = .138$), which was also statistically non-significant at $\alpha = .05$ level.

CONCLUSION

Based on the empirical findings of the study, the following conclusions are drawn:

1. Adolescents Possess Adaptive Emotion Regulation (Cognitive Reappraisal and Expression Suppression) and Perceived Social Support, but face School Connectedness deficits. Junior High School students demonstrate strong individual coping capacities (high cognitive reappraisal and expression suppression) alongside accessible relational support from family, peers, and teachers. However, these personal and interpersonal strengths do not automatically translate into institutional bonding, as a majority of students feel a low sense of belonging within the school community.
2. Retaliatory Attitudes represent an under-the-radar cognitive risk. While overall retaliatory attitudes average at a neutral baseline, the equal division between forgiving and revenge-oriented mindsets indicates that a substantial portion of the student population approves of retribution following interpersonal harm. This suggests that endorsement of revenge exists independently of general emotional stability.
3. Psychosocial factors such as Emotion Regulation, School Connectedness, and Perceived Social Support do not directly dictate retaliatory norms. The non-significant correlations demonstrate that possessing high emotion regulation, strong social support, or school belonging is insufficient on its own to directly suppress retaliatory attitudes. In line with Social Information Processing (SIP) and the General Aggression Model (GAM), retaliatory mindsets are likely governed by more specific social-cognitive mechanisms, such as moral disengagement, hostile attribution bias, rumination, or explicit exposure to peer victimization, rather than general protective buffers alone.

Recommendations and Practical Implications

1. Implement School-Wide Climate Enhancements and Belonging Initiatives. Given that 53.1% of students report a low sense of school belonging, the school administration and guidance center should establish structured peer-mentorship programs, inclusive extracurricular activities, and advisory circles to strengthen institutional connection and student inclusion.
2. Adopt Restorative Justice and Social-Emotional Learning (SEL) Programs. To address the 50% of students harboring moderate-to-severe retaliatory mindsets, guidance counselors should move beyond general support and incorporate targeted restorative justice practices. Anti-bullying initiatives should explicitly address cognitive norms regarding revenge, teaching conflict de-escalation, empathy cultivation, and perspective-taking.
3. Include Mediating and Moderating Variables. Future studies should investigate specific cognitive mechanisms such as hostile attribution bias, rumination, moral disengagement, and actual exposure to bullying, to uncover the indirect pathways influencing retaliatory attitudes.

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