

Abstract

Prior work has shown that promotion and prevention regulatory focus, two kinds of individual's self-regulation and motivational orientation, are important predictor of health behaviors and abundant of psychological outcomes (e.g., self-efficient, academic engagement, emotional functions) and has shown that higher promotion focus is more positively correlated with better psychological outcomes and higher prevention focus is more positively correlated with worse psychological outcomes. However, few of the studies have been conducted among adolescents in Chinese context. The current study examined whether promotion and prevention regulatory focus predicted emotional functioning over time among high school students in Mainland China, and whether students' residency in urban vs. rural settings moderated this association. Data were collected from a sample of 10th grade students in Chengdu, China ($N=581$, 350 female, 362 rural residency, mean age = 16.25) who completed self-report surveys assessing regulatory focus and multiple dimensions of emotional functioning (i.e., life satisfaction, self-esteem, positive and negative emotions, and depression) at two timepoints approximately 4 months apart. Results for two concurrent analyses both showed significant positive associations between promotion regulatory focus and emotional well-being (life satisfaction, self-esteem, and positive emotions) and negative associations between prevention regulatory focus and emotional ill-being (negative emotions and depression). For prospective analysis, similar associations were only found in predicting the emotion well-being, but no in predicting emotional ill-being. For longitudinal analyses, no significant associations were found between regulatory focus and emotional functioning. Additionally, students' residency did not significantly moderate any of these associations.

Keywords: promotion and prevention regulatory focus, emotional functioning, urban, rural