

## Influence of emotional maturity on emotional regulation and perceived stress among corporate workers

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### ABSTRACT

**Background:** Emotions are central to one's life to perceive, experience and express himself to others and to communicate about themselves and their feelings to others ; every person has the ability to experience, express and control one's emotion, but how a person does this depends upon the level of emotional maturity he or she possess. Research studies reveal that people with higher emotional maturity tend to handle their emotions efficiently and are found to experience less stress or perceive a situation to be less stressful. **Aim:** The aim of the present study is to find out the influence of emotional maturity on emotional regulation and perceived stress among corporate workers. **Methods and Materials:** 60 corporate workers of both genders, within the age group of 24-40, with at least minimum of 1 year work experience, were selected using purposive sampling method. Emotional Maturity Scale (EMS) Singh and Bhargava (1990), Emotional Regulation Scale (ERQ) Gross,J.J.,& John.,O.P.(2003) and Perceived Stress Scale (PSS) Cohen (1983) were administered. **Results and conclusion:** Results indicated that there is a relationship between emotional maturity, emotional regulation and perceived stress. It also indicated that there is influence of emotional maturity on emotional regulation and perceived stress; however, this needs to be established further in the upcoming research studies.

**Keywords:** Emotional Maturity, Emotional Regulation, Perceived Stress, Corporate workers.

According to Sternberg (1998), an emotion is a feeling comprising physiological and behavioural (and possibly cognitive) reactions to internal and external events. Emotions plays a significant role in one's day to day life. The emotional aspect of maturity is the most important factor in the development of the comprehensive mature personality, which is the strength to actualize individual abilities within the frame of social demands.

According to Walter D. Smitson (1974) emotional maturity is a process in which the personality is continuously striving for greater sense of emotional health, both intra physically and intra-personally. Kaplan and Baron elaborate the characteristics of an emotionally mature person, says that emotionally mature person has the capacity to withstand

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delay in satisfaction of needs. He has the ability to tolerate a reasonable amount of frustration. He has belief in long-term planning and is capable of delaying or revising his expectations in terms of demands of situations. But maturity means not merely the capacity for such attitude and functioning but also the ability to enjoy them fully. During the 1970s, psychologist Paul Eckman identified six basic emotions that he suggested were universally experienced in all human cultures. The emotions he identified were happiness, sadness, disgust, fear, surprise, and anger. He later expanded his list of basic emotions to include such things as pride, shame, embarrassment, and excitement.

Human beings not only experience emotions but also try to manage the emotions they undergo based on the needs and demands of situations they are in. The process through which a person tries to manage one's own emotions is known as emotional regulation. The process of emotional regulation could be both implicit and explicit. According to the process model, our feelings are created through a series of five events- the situation, our attention, our interpretation, our emotional response, and our actions.

Different emotional regulation skills let us change what we do at different points in that process. Some of the emotional regulation skills are labelling the emotions, appraising and reappraising the emotions, mindfulness, CBT (STOPP technique) & DBT (distress tolerance and interpersonal effectiveness). Hans Selye (1976) defined stress as the "response of the body to any demand, whether it is caused by, or results in, pleasant or unpleasant conditions". The human body is designed to experience stress and react to it. Stress can be positive, by keeping us alert, motivated, and prepare us to avoid danger. Stress that continues without relief can lead to a condition called distress – a negative stress reaction. This can lead to many physiological and psychological problems.

In the modern era, people not only undergo stress but also anticipate about being stressed in the mere future. One such concept is Perceived stress, i.e., the feelings or thoughts that an individual has about how much stress they are under at a given point in time or over a given time period. Perceived stress incorporates feelings about the uncontrollability and unpredictability of one's life, how often one has to deal with irritating hassles, how much change is occurring in one's life, and confidence in one's ability to deal with problems or difficulties. Stress and perceived is experienced by everyone employed at every profession at some point of their work life. A study conducted was by 1to1Help.net, a professional counselling company, on 'The Mental Health Status of Employees in Corporate India, in which the results indicated that 85% of the respondents, exhibited symptoms of anxiety, and 55 percent with symptoms of depression. The study observed that the number of people who came with the risk for suicidal behaviour has gone up from 2.1 out of 10 (2008) to 8.21 (July 2016). Prolonged ongoing stress due to personal and work contexts was identified as the triggers. Several research studies have been conducted to find the relationship between employee job satisfaction and burn out, emotional intelligence and coping, emotional maturity and subjective wellbeing. Research studies pertaining to emotional maturity were mostly carried out in the population such as school children, college students, medical and paramedical professions, which has paved way for the present study to find the influence of emotional maturity on emotional regulation and perceived stress among corporate workers.

Jain and pasrija (2014) conducted a study to find the level of emotional maturity and adjustment of sen. sec. school students in relation to type of schools (Govt. and private) and gender. A sample of 140 sen. sec. school students has been selected through random

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sampling technique. Emotional Maturity Scale” by Yasvir Singh and Mahesh Bhargava (1984) and Bell Adjustment Inventory by S.M. Mohsin and Shamshad Hussain was used to measure the emotional maturity and adjustment of students respectively. No significant difference was found in Emotional Maturity and Adjustment level of Sen. Sec. School students in relation to type of schools (Govt. And Private school) and gender (boys and girls). Guruprakash, Mehta, Atul, Prakash, Divinakumar, Khan, Patra (2018) conducted a study to assess the relation between perceived stress, coping pattern, burnout, and general psychopathology among the postgraduate medical students. Results indicated that Perceived stress was associated with higher scores on general psychopathology and burnout. Postgraduate students who displayed positive coping strategies had lesser perceived stress. Females had higher scores on perceived stress and psychopathology.

### **METHODOLOGY**

#### ***Aim***

The aim of the present study is to find out the influence of emotional maturity on emotional regulation and perceived stress among corporate workers.

#### ***Objectives***

1. To find the relationship between emotional maturity, emotional regulation and perceived stress among corporate workers.
2. To find out the influence of emotional maturity on emotional regulation and perceived stress among corporate workers.

#### ***Hypothesis***

- H<sub>1</sub> There is an influence of emotional maturity on emotional regulation and perceived stress.
- H<sub>0</sub> There is no influence of emotional maturity on emotional regulation and perceived stress.

#### ***Sample***

60 subjects were selected using purposive sampling method. This was done based on their age, job description and years of experience at work. The inclusion and exclusion criteria are as follows.

#### ***Inclusion criteria***

1. Aged between 24 to 40 years
2. Both the gender male and female.
3. Participants employed in corporate sectors.
4. Employees with at least a year of experience.
5. Employed at employee level.
6. Comprehend the English language

#### ***Exclusion criteria***

1. Below the age range of 24 and above the age range of 40 years.
2. Participants employed at other fields such as medical, paramedical, professors.
3. Employees with work experience below one year.
4. Employers (Team Leader, managers, HR, managing Director, CEO) from corporate
5. Those who haven't signed the informed consent form.
6. Neurological or any health problem which interfered the administered the test

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### ***Tools***

1. Socio Demographic data sheet
2. Emotional Maturity Scale (EMS).
3. Emotional Regulation Scale (ERQ). and
4. Perceived Stress Scale (PSS).

### ***Description of Tools***

**Socio-demographic data sheet:** This proforma is intended to gather information regarding the name of the participant, age, gender, education, designation and year of experience at work.

**Emotional Maturity Scale (EMS):** The Emotional Maturity Scale (EMS ) was developed by Singh and Bhargava (1990). This scale measures a list of five broad factors of Emotional Immaturity-Emotional Unstability, Emotional regression, social maladjustment, personality disintegration, lack of independence. It is a self reporting five point scale. Reliability of the scale was determined by test retest reliability which was 0.75 and internal consistency for various factors ranged from .42-.86. The scale was validated against external criteria, i.e. ., the (d) area of the adjustment inventory for college students by Sinha and Singh (1995).

**Emotional Regulation Scale (ERQ):** The Emotional Regulation Scale (ERQ) was developed by Gross,J.J.,& John.,O.P (2003). It is a 10-item scale designed to measure respondents' tendency to regulate their emotions in two ways: (1) Cognitive Reappraisal and (2) Expressive Suppression. Respondents answer each item on a 7-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree). Alpha reliabilities averaged .79 for Reappraisal and .73 for Suppression. Test–retest reliability across 3 months was .69 for both scales.

**Perceived Stress Scale (PSS):** Perceived Stress Scale (PSS) was developed by Cohen (1983). The PSS is a 10-item questionnaire to measure the self-reported level of stress in the respondents by assessing feelings and thoughts during the last month. Each item is scored from 0 (never) to 5 (very often). Kamarck & Mermelstein (1983) reported Cronbach's between .84-.86 for the PSS. Test-Retest reliability for the PSS was .85. Construct Validity measure in terms of correlation of the PSS to other measures of similar symptoms ranges between .52 - .76 (Cohen et al, 1983).

### ***Procedure***

#### **Step 1: Data collection**

60 subjects of both the gender male and female between the age range 24 years to 40 years meeting the inclusion and exclusion criteria were selected after obtaining their informed consent. Subjects who refused to participate were asked to provide with minimal socio-demographic details and reason for nonparticipation for the same. Socio-demographic data sheet, Emotional Maturity Scale (EMS), Emotional Regulation Scale (ERQ) and Perceived Stress Scale (PSS) were administered for all 60 subjects.

#### **Step 2: Data analysis**

Data was coded for IBM SPSS.20 analysis. Data was analysed using Pearson product moment correlation and regression analysis.

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### *Ethical Considerations*

1. Informed consent was obtained from each participant.
2. Participants had the option to leave the study at any point of time, if they had wished to.
3. Confidentiality and anonymity of the participants were assured and maintained.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

*Table 1 shows correlation between emotional maturity, emotional regulation and perceived stress*

CORRELATION		N=60
	Cognitive appraisal	Perceived stress
<b>Emotional maturity</b>	-2.88*	.407**
<b>Sig. (2-tailed)</b>	.026	.001

\*\* Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

\*Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

*Table 2 shows correlation between dimension of emotional maturity and perceived stress*

Correlations			N=60		
	Emotional instability	Emotional regulation	social maladjustment	Personality disintegration	Lack of independence
<b>Perceived stress</b>	.405**	.439**	.112	.337**	.224
<b>Sig. (2-tailed)</b>	.001	.000	.394	.009	.086

\*\*Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

*Table 3 shows regression analysis between emotional maturity, emotional regulation and perceived stress*

Regression		N=60
	Cognitive appraisal	Perceived stress
<b>Emotional maturity</b>	.30	.39
<b>R square</b>		

*p*<0.01

The present study was carried out to examine the influence of emotional maturity on emotional regulation and perceived stress. Relationship between emotional maturity, emotional regulation and perceived stress were also explored.

It is evident from table 1 that there exists a relationship between emotional maturity and emotional regulation. Lower the score on emotional maturity scale indicates greater the emotional maturity and greater the people use the type of emotional regulation known as cognitive appraisal. According to the process model of emotion regulation (Gross & John, 1998) it outlines two emotion regulation strategies, cognitive reappraisal and expressive suppression. Cognitive reappraisal aims to reduce negative emotions by changing the interpretation or appraisal of affective stimuli. Ochsner, Silvers, & Buhle, 2012 found that Cognitive reappraisal is considered to be a more effective method to regulate emotion and physiological arousal, because it requires fewer cognitive and physiological resources

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compared to that of expressive suppression. Thus an emotionally mature individual might engage in reducing the negative emotion by changing the interpretation of the affective stimuli, which might enable a person to control their own emotional state as well as best account of others. It is also evident from the table that lesser the emotional maturity greater is the perceived stress. According to Fred McKinney emotionally immature individuals might experience difficulty in appreciation of attitude and behavior of others, tendency to adopt the attitudes and habits of others and capacity to delay his own responses. It might also be difficult for them to make an effective adjustment with himself, members of his family and his peers at work, society and culture, which in turn might increase the feelings about the uncontrollability and unpredictability of one's life leading to increased amount of perceived stress in an individual.

It is also evident from the table 2 that people who has greater scores on the dimensions such as emotional instability, emotional regression and personality disintegration tend to experience higher amount of perceived stress. Here emotional instability represents lack of capacity to dispose of problems, irritability, needs, constant help for one's day to day work, vulnerability and temper tantrum, whereas emotional regression represents feeling of inferiority, restlessness, aggressiveness and self-centeredness and personality disintegration represents pessimism, immorality. Kausar (2010) conducted a study to examine perceived stress, Academic Workloads and Use of Coping Strategies by University Students.

Results indicated that Academic workloads predicted perceived stress among students. Here since the population involves individuals working in a corporate set up their work load at work might contribute to perceived stress. When individuals exhibit lower emotional maturity especially on aspects such as emotional instability, emotional regression and personality disintegration it might make them experience immense workload at work and when it exceeds the person's ability to exert control over it, it leads to increased amount of perceived stress.

From table 3 it is evident that Emotional maturity accounts for 30 % variability for emotional regulation and 39% variability for perceived stress. In the present study it is found that there is a minimal influence of emotional maturity on emotional regulation and perceived stress. However, this further needs to be established with a larger sample size and this present study has laid a groundwork to explore the influence of these variables for the future researchers.

### **CONCLUSION**

The present research indicates that there is a relationship between emotional maturity, emotional regulation and perceived stress. It also indicates that there is influence of emotional maturity on emotional regulation and perceived stress, however this needs to be established further in the upcoming research studies.

#### ***Limitations***

1. The sample size for the study was only 60.
2. The study involved only corporate employees.

#### ***Future Implications***

1. The study can be further extended with larger sample size.
2. A comparative study between two genders could be carried out.
3. A comparative study between employers and employees could be carried out.

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4. A comparative study between different professionals could be carried out.
5. Therapeutic intervention for interested individuals could be Carried out, which can further be proposed as a pre and post intervention study.

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### Conflict of Interest

The author declared no conflict of interest.

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