

## Emotional Intelligence and Perceived Stress among Working and Non- working Young Adults

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### ABSTRACT

The aim of study was to find the relationship between emotional intelligence (EI) and perceived stress (PS) among working and non- working young adults. The study consisted a sample of 170 young adults, (85 working young adults and 85 non-working young adults). The tool which was used to assess emotional intelligence (EI) was Emotional Intelligence Self-Assessment Tool (Emily A Sterrett,2000) and for perceived stress (PS), Perceived Stress Scale (Sheldon C, Tom K and Robin Mermelstein,1983). The results indicated that there is no significant relationship between emotional intelligence and perceived stress. The findings of the study also showed that emotional intelligence high for working young adults and perceived stress is high for non-working young adults.

**Keywords:** *Emotional Intelligence, Perceived Stress, Working Young Adults, Non- working Young Adults*

Emotional intelligence is a form of social intelligence that includes the ability to detect one's own and as well as others' emotions, to discriminate among them, and to use the information to guide one's thinking and actions, (Salovey & Mayer, 1990). There are five key elements to emotional intelligence, (Daniel Goleman ,1995): Self-awareness: Is the ability to recognize and understand one's own emotions, and also being aware of the effect of one's actions, moods, and feelings on other people. One must be capable of monitoring his or her own emotions, recognizing different emotional reactions and then correctly identifying each particular emotion. Self-regulation: Is to being aware of own emotions and impact one have on others, emotional intelligence requires an individual to be able to regulate and manage his emotions. Motivation refers to the process that directs, initiates and maintains goal-oriented behaviors. There are two types of motivation:1) Extrinsic motivations are people who emerge from outside of the individual and sometimes involve rewards like money, trophies, social recognition, or praise. 2)Intrinsic motivations are people who arise from within the individual, like doing an advanced crossword purely for the personal gratification of solving an issue. Empathy: Empathy is the skill to acknowledge, understand, and share the thoughts and feelings of another person. It is the ability to recognize how others are feeling. Developing empathy is crucial for establishing

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associations and behaving compassionately. It includes experiencing another person's viewpoint, instead of just one's own, and allows prosocial or facilitating behaviors that come from within, instead of being forced. Social skills: is mostly referred to a group of learned abilities that enables one to interact competently and appropriately during a given social context. The most commonly known social skills include assertiveness, coping, communication, problem solving, and also the ability to manage one's thoughts, feelings, and behavior.

Perceived stress (PS) is referred to the feelings or thoughts that one has about how much stress they are under at a given point of time or over a given period of time. Perceived stress incorporates feelings about the uncontrollability and unpredictability of one's life, how often one needs to cope with irritating hassles, how much change is occurring in one's life, confidence in one's ability to cope with problems or difficulties. it is not measuring the kinds or frequencies of stressful events which have happened to an individual, but rather how an individual feel about the overall stressfulness of their ability and their life to handle such stress. People who experience similar negative life events but assess the impact or severity of those to different extents as a result of factors like personality, coping resources, and support. during this way, perceived stress reveals the interaction between an individual and their environment which they appraise as threatening or overwhelming their resources in a way which can disturb one's wellbeing (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984).

Related literature gives us an idea about the relationship between Emotional Intelligence and Perceived Stress among working and non-working young adults. Based on which, we can understand that the study concluded that an inverse relationship between EI and PS. The study also showed that optimism/mood regulation, and gender as independent, significant predictors of PS. Low EI scorers report more Perceived stress (Allan K.H. Pau & Ray Croucher, 2003). Based on another study we can understand that a positive correlation of burnout with perceived stress and a negative correlation with trait emotional intelligence (EI). Perceived stress also showed a negative correlation with trait EI. The study also revealed that perceived stress mediates the effect of trait EI on burnout (M.K. Swami, D.M. Mathur & B.K. Pushp,2013). Since not many studies have been conducted on emotional intelligence (EI) and perceived stress (PS) among working and non-working young adults, in order to increase the understanding of this topic, the present study consists a sample of working and non- working young adults from various parts of India to assess the relationship between their emotional intelligence and perceived stress.

## **METHODOLOGY**

### ***Research Problem***

The research problem is to examine the emotional intelligence and perceived stress among working and non- working young adults.

### ***Objectives***

- To assess the EI and Perceived Stress among working and non-working young adults.
- To assess the EI Self-Awareness and Perceived Stress among working and non-working young adults.
- To assess the EI Self-Management and Perceived Stress among working and non-working young adults.
- To assess the Emotional Intelligence and Perceived Stress between working and non-working young adults.

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### *Hypotheses*

Ho1: There is no significant relationship between EI and Perceived Stress among working and non-working young adults.

Ho2: There is no significant relationship between EI self- awareness and Perceived Stress among working and non-working young adults.

Ho3: There is no significant relationship between EI self-management and perceived stress among working and non-working young adults.

Ho4: There is no significant difference between Emotional Intelligence and Perceived Stress among working and non-working young adults.

### *Participants*

The sample size is 170 participants that is 85 working and 85 non-working young adults between the age range of the sample ranges from 19 to 30 years residing over various parts of India has been selected for the study based on the exclusion and inclusion criteria of the study. Convenience sampling technique was used for the study.

### *Tool used for the study*

- **Emotional Intelligence Self-Assessment Tool (Emily A Sterrett,2000):** The tool includes 20 items that measures the four domains of emotional intelligence namely Self Awareness, Self-Management, Social Awareness, Relationship Management. The scoring is based on the 5 Point-Likert scale. Each item has response category from 1 to 5 in terms of “Never” to “Always”. Item scores are summed for a total score, which ranges from 20 to 100, with higher scores reflecting more emotional intelligence.
- **Perceived Stress Scale (Sheldon C, Tom K and Robin Mermelstein,1983):** The PSS consist of 10 items to measure the degree to which situations in one’s life are considered as stressful. The scoring is based on the 5 Point-Likert scale. Each item has response category from 0 to 4 in terms of “Never” to “Very Often”. Item scores are summed for a total score, which ranges from 10 to 40, with higher scores reflecting more stress. Perceived Stress Scale has a good internal consistency with an alpha of .78. No data on stability were reported. The Perceived Stress Scale has established good construct validity. The Perceived Stress Scale was significantly correlated with the Life Satisfaction Scale and with measures of help seeking behaviors.

### *Procedure*

The participants in the study were selected based on the inclusion and exclusion criteria. The participant was given a consent form before collecting a data. The questionnaires were made available to the participants through Google form including demographic data sheet which comprised details of the participant. They were given the assurance based on the ethical guidelines. The questionnaires were completed by the participants and the responses were scored for further interpretation.

## **RESULTS**

The data collected was analyzed using SPSS. The data was tested for mean and standard deviation and then Spearman’s Correlation test and Mann-Whitney U test was used to evaluate the data.

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**Table 1: Spearman’s correlation test results showing the relationship between EI and perceived stress among working and non-working young adults.**

	<i>N</i>	<i>r</i>	<i>p</i>
EI And Perceived stress	170	-.143	.063

**Table 2 Spearman’s correlation test results showing the relationship between EI self-awareness and perceived stress among working and non-working young adults.**

	<i>N</i>	<i>r</i>	<i>p</i>
EI self- awareness And Perceived stress	170	-.196	.010

**Table 3 Spearman’s correlation test results showing the relationship between EI self-management and perceived stress among working and non-working young adults.**

	<i>N</i>	<i>r</i>	<i>p</i>
EI self- management And Perceived stress	170	-.133	.085

**Table 4 Mann-Whitney U test results showing the significant difference between working and non-working young adults in Emotional Intelligence and Perceived stress.**

	<i>Occupation</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>Mean Rank</i>	<i>Sig. value</i>	<i>Mann-Whitney U</i>
EI	Working	85	98.61	.001	2498.500
	Non-working	85	72.39		
EI self-awareness	Working	85	98.00	.001	2550.000
	Non-working	85	73.00		
EI self-management	Working	85	98.13	.001	2539.000
	Non-working	85	72.87		
EI social awareness	Working	85	94.64	.015	2836.000
	Non-working	85	76.36		
EI relationship management	Working	85	94.69	.014	2831.000
	Non-working	85	76.31		
PS	Working	85	74.42	.003	2670.500
	Non-working	85	96.58		
	Total	170			

- There was no significant positive or negative correlation between emotional intelligence and perceived stress among working and non- working young adults.
- There is no significant relationship between EI self-awareness and perceived stress among working and non- working young adults.
- There is no significant relationship between EI self-management and perceived stress among working and non- working young adults.
- There is a significant difference in perceived stress, emotional intelligence, EI self-awareness and EI self-management among working and non- working young adults.
- There is no significant difference in EI social awareness and EI relationship management based on working and non-working young adults.

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- It is seen that working young adults tend to have high emotional intelligence than non-working young adults, and non-working young adults tend to have more perceived stress than working young adults.

### **DISCUSSION**

The overall purpose of this study was to assess the relationship between emotional intelligence and perceived stress. The study found that there is no significant relationship between EI and perceived stress. The study also revealed that EI self-awareness and perceived stress has no significant relationship between them. The study also shows that there is no significant relationship between EI self-management and perceived stress among working and non- working young adults. The study indicates that working young adults have more emotional intelligence, EI self-awareness and EI self-management than non-working young adults and non- working young adults tend to have more perceived stress compared to working young adults. Similar to this finding, the results of a study found scores for three of the four EI factors and the EI total scale in the present study had significant inverse correlations with PSS-10 scores, supporting the hypothesis that high EI scorers experience less perceived stress (Allan K.H & Ray Croucher,2003). In the present study there was no significant positive or negative relationship between perceived stress and all the dimensions of emotional intelligence. Thus, the only difference between this study and the previous literature is that there is no significant relationship between perceived stress and all the dimensions of emotional intelligence.

However, it is found from the responses that majority of the working young adults scored high in emotional intelligence compared to the non-working young adults as there are 21 working young adults who scored 80 and above and 11 non-working young adults who scored the same in that range, which considered as high emotional intelligence. But this does not certainly imply that the non- working young adults are low on emotional intelligence as the responses can be biased by the respondents. The results of a study found EI as a possible factor in mediating stress. (Yvonne Birks et al., 2009). From the responses, it is understood that non-working young adults have more perceived stress than working young adults, as there are 34 non-working young adults who scored between 25 – 40 which is considered as greater levels of perceived stress and 18 working young adults who scored in that range. However, this does not certainly prove that non-working young adults have more perceived stress than working young adults. A detailed research study is required to prove this aspect and on a larger sample size.

### **CONCLUSION**

According to the findings of this study there is a significant difference in perceived stress, emotional intelligence, EI self-awareness and EI self-management and no significant difference in EI social awareness and EI relationship management among working and non-working young adults. The study also showed that there is no significant positive or negative correlation between emotional intelligence and perceived stress, EI self-awareness and perceived stress and EI self-management and perceived stress among working and non-working young adults. The study consists of the following limitations, the sample size for the study is small, thus limiting the generalization of the results and the study did not include gender difference among sample. The participants had to fill the questionnaire online, this might have affected the concentration of the participants which led to less precision in responses. In case of statistical techniques, the research has only used spearman correlation analysis and Mann Whitney test to study the relationship between emotional intelligence and perceived stress of working and non-working young adults. Hence the results of the study

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could have some drawbacks due to the limited statistical techniques used. Further studies can also focus on the factors affecting these variables among this population. To improve emotional intelligence and reduce perceived stress among non-working young adults, further research is required to build strategies for allowing the effective use of emotional skills.

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### **Conflict of Interest**

The author(s) declared no conflict of interest.

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