

Perceived Stress in Relation to Emotional Intelligence Among Emerging Adults

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ABSTRACT

The primary objective of the present study is to analyze perceived stress in relation to emotional intelligence. The study also analyzes the role of gender in emotional intelligence and perceived stress. The study sample consists of 100 emerging adults at age varying from 18-29 from totally different elements of Kerala. The participants were given Perceived stress scale (Cohen et al, 1983) and Emotional Quotient Test (Singh & Chadha, 2001). The results obtained indicated that there is no significant relationship between perceived stress and emotional intelligence among emerging adults. From the results it is also clear that there is no significant difference in the level of emotional intelligence and perceived stress among emerging adults on the basis of their gender. The study on these two variables can be beneficial in the educational planning and empowerment of the emerging adults.

Keywords: *Emerging Adults, Perceived Stress, Emotional Intelligence.*

“Adopting the right attitude can convert a negative stress into a positive one.”-(Selye, 1956)

It is the famous quote of Hans Selye, who is known as the ‘father of stress research’ and the founder of stress theory. This quote also gives an idea that the attitude has an influence in the perception about stress. Perceived stress determines the degree of confidence individuals possess regarding their ability to cope with stressful situations (Jieun Lee, 2016). In this study we study perceived stress in the relation to emotional intelligence among emerging adults. Emerging adults are recognized as a vulnerable population, tormented by anxiety and stress within the covid-19 pandemic scenario. The understanding of the thought of emotional intelligence and strategies of dealing with psychological stress is extremely necessary, since each square measure is extremely important within the success, growth and development of young adults. The primary objective of the study is to analyze perceived stress in relation to emotional intelligence. The study also analyzes the role of gender in emotional intelligence and perceived stress.

Emotional intelligence refers to the capacity of recognizing our own feelings and those of others, for motivating ourselves, and for managing emotions well in us and in our

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relationships (Goleman, 1998). It describes abilities distinct from, but complimentary to, academic intelligence, the purely cognitive capacities measured by Intelligence Quotient (IQ).

Perceived stress is 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. According to Lazarus and Folkman, this primary appraisal i.e., perceived stress determines the degree of confidence individuals possess regarding their ability to cope with stressful situations (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984).

Need and Significance of the Study

Stress can be defined as any type of change that causes physical, emotional, or psychological strain. According to Lazarus and Folkman, this primary appraisal (i.e., perceived stress) determines the degree of confidence individuals possess regarding their ability to cope with stressful situations. Stress produces numerous physical and mental symptoms which vary according to each individual's situational factors. This can include physical health decline as well as depression. The process of stress management is named as one of the keys to a happy and successful life in modern society. Although life provides numerous demands that can prove difficult to handle, stress management provides a number of ways to manage anxiety and maintain overall well-being. Goldman (1998) proposes a solution of self-awareness as a key skill in handling stress, thereby indicating that a lack of emotional intelligence in such an unstable environment means possible failure that can impact on everyone's failure. The primary aim of this research was to determine whether there is a relationship between emotional intelligence and perceived stress.

Definition of Key Terms

Emerging Adulthood is a term used to describe a period of development spanning from about ages 18 to 29, experienced by most people in their twenties in Westernized cultures and perhaps in other parts of the world as well (Arnett, 2000).

According to A C Phillips Perceived stress is 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 (Phillips, 2013).

Emotional intelligence is a person's ability to manage his feelings so that those feelings are expressed appropriately and effectively (Goleman, 1995).

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

A literature review is a comprehensive summary of previous research on a topic.

The literature review surveys scholarly articles, books, and other sources relevant to a particular area of research. The review should enumerate, describe, summarize, objectively evaluate and clarify this previous research (Coffa, 2010).

To widen the understanding and acquire insight into the specified subject under inquiry, a survey of literature relevant to the current study was gathered from published works. Google Scholar, Frontiers, ScienceDirect, Sage Journals, and SpringerLink are some of the online databases that the researcher commonly visits to find published c-journals. The terms "perceived stress" and "emotional intelligence" were used to find papers that already existed.

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The literature review in this study is organized chronologically from 2005 to 2020, with the most current studies appearing first and then the oldest studies appearing last.

In 2020 Jahan investigates the relationship between emotional intelligence and stress on college students. An incidental cum purposive sample of 100 undergraduate college students of Patna town was selected for data collection. Results indicate that there was a significant relationship between emotional intelligence and stress in both male and female students.

Fteiha and Awwad investigated the relationship between emotional intelligence and stress coping style in a group of 265 students, using Goleman's Theory of Emotional Intelligence in 2020. Findings indicated the highest mean value of emotional intelligence for motivation and empathy. Majority students showed active problem and emotional coping behavior; however, a strong, positive correlation between emotional intelligence and stress coping style was found for the domains associated with Active Emotional and Problem Coping ($\alpha \leq 0.05$). It revealed that students are efficient in utilizing stress coping strategies and recommended that professors should provide guidance to students regarding emotional intelligence and stress coping styles.

Ainize, Díaz and Lasarte conducted a study on resilience and emotional intelligence in 2018. The results revealed that emotional intelligence functions as a negative predictor of perceived stress through the mediating variable resilience for the American and Basque students. The findings suggest that university students with better emotional intelligence and resilience present lower perceived stress. Thus, improving emotional intelligence and resilience could prevent students' from suffering perceived stress in higher education. Implications and directions for further research are discussed; in particular, it is highlighted that intervention programs that improve both EI and resilience could be helpful in reducing perceived stress.

Shahid, Stirling and Adams conducted a study on the influence of intelligence training in wellness and stress management in 2018. US physicians are experiencing burnout in alarming numbers. However, doctors with high levels of emotional intelligence (EI) may be immune to burnout, as they possess coping strategies which make them more resilient and better at managing stress. Educating physicians in EI may help prevent burnout and optimize their overall wellness. The purpose of this study was to determine if educational intervention increases the overall EI level of residents; specifically, their stress management and wellness scores.

In 2018 Urquijo, Extremera and Villa investigated the mediating role of perceived stress in the relationship between emotional intelligence and life satisfaction and psychological well-being when controlling for personality traits. The final model revealed a significant path from emotional intelligence through perceived stress to life satisfaction and psychological well-being even controlling for personality traits as coverable. Their findings suggest an underlying process by which high emotional intelligence increases well-being in graduates by reducing the experience of stress. Limitations of the results and implications of these findings for future research is discussed.

Aranda, Extremera and Galan conducted a study on emotional intelligence, life satisfaction and subjective happiness and the mediating effect of perceived stress in 2014. The results of this study suggest that perceived stress mediates the relationship between EI and well-being indicators, specifically life satisfaction and happiness. These findings suggest an underlying

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process by which high emotional intelligence may increase well-being in female students in nursing and allied health sciences by reducing the experience of stress. The implications of these findings for future research and for working with health professions to improve well-being the outcomes are discussed.

Rationale

After reviewing the previous studies it is clear that there are few studies conducted in perceived stress and emotional intelligence in recent years. So that the researcher trying to research on this topic in the hope of finding relevant information. This study can become the link for the connection between previous and future research on this area of study.

Relevance of study

The COVID-19 pandemic could have brought several changes in lifestyle, and with it, at times, uncertainty, altered daily routines, money pressures and social isolation. People will worry regarding obtaining sick, however long the pandemic can last, whether or not your job is going to be affected and what the long run can bring. This may lead to stress, anxiety, fear and loneliness. In this situation, study on the variables perceived stress and emotional intelligence will be useful for collecting detailed information and planning intervention programmes.

METHODOLOGY

Problem: Is there any significant relationship between Emotional Intelligence and perceived stress.

Aim: To study perceived stress in relation to emotional intelligence among emerging adults.

Objectives of the Study

1. To study perceived stress in relation to emotional intelligence among emerging adults.
2. To identify the role of gender in emotional intelligence and perceived stress.

Variables of the Study

Dependent Variable: Perceived stress

Independent Variable: Emotional intelligence

Socio-Demographic Variable: Gender Hypotheses of the Study

Pursuant of the above objectives, three hypotheses are formulated.

H1: There is a significant relationship between Emotional Intelligence and perceived stress.

H2: There is a significant difference in the level of Emotional Intelligence and Perceived Stress among adults on the basis of their gender.

Research Design

The present study is quantitative in nature and the research design adopted is correlational research design. The correlational investigations attempt to compare the level of one variable with those of another to see if a relationship exists between the two (Singh, 2002). Research design is the detailed plan of the investigation.

Selection of the Sample: This study was done on the emerging adults age ranging from 18-29 age. Purposive sampling method was used for this study. The study sample consists of

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100 participants out of which 50 are males and 50 are females. It has been selected from different parts of Kerala.

Inclusion Criteria

1. Willing participants
2. Young adults in Kerala.
3. Age limit 18-29

Exclusion Criteria

1. Those who have physical disabilities.
2. Those who are illiterate.

Tools

Following tools were used for the data collection:

1. Emotional Quotient Test (Dalip Singh and Chadha, 2001). 2. Perceived Stress Scale (Cohen, Kamarck & Mermelstein, 1983). Procedure for Data Collection. The scales were converted into google form and distributed through emails and WhatsApp groups. Purpose of the study was explained to the participant through online and their willingness to participate in the study was ascertained. The participants were initially asked a few personal questions like name, age, gender, job title. They were ensured that the information will be kept confidential and will be used for research purposes only. Participants were encouraged to contact the scholar in case of any doubts that arose while filling out the Questionnaire. Perceived stress scale and emotional quotient test were given to the participant through google form with proper instructions one after the other. The collected data was scored according to the scoring procedures of each of the tools. Data was verified for identifying any omissions. The scoring for both the assessments was done and interpreted according to the manual and was subjected to different statistical analysis.

Analysis of data

The collected data was analyzed using following statistical tests

1. Shapiro-Wilk Test
2. Spearman's Rank Correlation
3. Mann-Whitney U Test

Ethical Issues

1. Data collected has been used only for research purposes.
2. Confidentiality of the obtained information has been maintained throughout the study.
3. Informed consent of each and every participant was acquired and the participant's anonymity was also ensured.
4. Since the data were collected through the online mode, participants were encouraged to contact the researcher in case of any queries and the subject was allowed to leave whenever they wanted.

RESULT

In this study the variables are Perceived stress (Independent variable) and Emotional intelligence (Dependent variable). Stress is a normal reaction the body has when changes occur, resulting in physical, emotional and intellectual responses. Perceived stress is 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.

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Table 1 Relationship Between Perceived Stress and Emotional Intelligence

Variable.	Groups.	SD.	W.	ρ	Sig
Perceived Stress	18.29.	3.694	. 0.971**		
Emotional Intelligence	349.08.	33.246.	0.950.	0.158.	0.117

Note. ** The Shapiro-Wilk test is significant at 0.01 level.

Results of the Shapiro-Wilk test presented in table 2 indicate that the collected data is not normally distributed ($W = 0.971$, $P < 0.05$). Hence Spearman's correlation coefficient was used. The results of Spearman's correlation denote that there is no significant correlation between Perceived Stress and Emotional Intelligence ($\rho = 0.158$, $P > 0.05$). The obtained result indicates that since there is no statistically significant association between perceived stress and emotional intelligence, any change in perceived stress may not affect emotional intelligence among emerging adults.

Table 2 Comparing Perceived Stress on the Basis of Gender

Variable	Gender	N	Mean	U	Sig
Perceived Stress	Female	50	53.63		
	Male	50	47.37	1093.5	0.278

Results of Mann-Whitney U test presented in table 3 indicate that there is no significant difference in the level of Perceived Stress among emerging adults on the basis of their gender ($U = 1093.5$, $P > 0.05$). Results of Mann-Whitney U test denote that Male and female adults perceive stress equally. There is no variation on the basis of gender.

Table 3 Comparing Emotional Intelligence on the Basis of Gender

Variable	Gender	N	Mean	U	Sig
Emotional Intelligence	Female	50	46.37		
	Male	50	54.63	1043.5	0.154

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Results of Mann Whitney U test presented in table 4 indicate that there will be no significant difference in the level of emotional intelligence among emerging adults across their gender ($U = 1043.5, P > 0.05$). The obtained result indicates that there is no significant difference in the level of emotional intelligence among emerging adults across their gender.

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

The present study focuses to investigate perceived stress in relation to emotional intelligence. The present study is quantitative in nature and the research design adopted is correlational research design. The study sample consists of one hundred emerging adults at age varying from 18-29 from totally different elements of Kerala, out of which fifty are going to be males and fifty are going to be females. The sample belongs to totally different gender, non-secular family sort, space of residence. The variables of the study were perceived stress (dependent variable) and emotional intelligence (independent variable). Emotional Quotient Test (Singh & Chandha, 2001) and Perceived Stress Scale (Cohen, Kamarck & Mermelstein, 1983) were used as the tools for the data collection. The statistical analyses were carried out using the statistical package for social science (SPSS) version 26 was used for analysis.

Major Findings

1. There is no significant relationship between Perceived Stress and Emotional Intelligence among emerging adults.
2. There is no significant difference in the level of Perceived Stress among emerging adults across their gender.
3. There is no significant difference in the level of Emotional Intelligence among emerging adults across their gender.

Limitations

1. Sample was only drawn from Kerala and the sample size was very small.
2. Since this study was conducted during COVID19 pandemic situation the physical conditions of the participants may influence the responses in the questionnaire.
3. The data was collected through online mode hence the internal and external distractions can influence the participant's response.
4. The study was only focused on emerging adults, other age groups were excluded.

Implications

The present study contributes to our understanding about the relation between perceived stress and emotional intelligence. As per the findings of the study it is clear that every person will perceive stress. According to Lazarus and Folkman (1984), Psychological stress is a particular relationship between the person and the environment that is appraised by the person as taxing or exceeding his or her resources and endangering his or her well-being. Primary appraisal (i.e., perceived stress) determines the degree of confidence individuals possess regarding their ability to cope with stressful situations (i.e., secondary appraisal) (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). So perceived stress has an influence on one's confidence. Self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy, and social skills are the components of emotional intelligence. Emotional intelligence helps to build relationship, deduce conflicts and also influence job satisfaction. Understanding the concept of emotional intelligence and methods of coping Psychological stress is very important, since both of them are highly influential in the success, growth and development of an individual. The study on these two variables can be beneficial in the educational planning and empowerment of the emerging adults. Young adults were concentrated in this study so that after the study they can be

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benefited to lead a better social life. The results of the study can be helpful to plan some intervention programs for stress management.

Suggestions for Further Research

1. Further research can be done on a large population.
2. Qualitative research methods can be done for in depth study.
3. In further research, data collection can be done in offline mode.

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Conflict of Interest

The author declared no conflict of interest.

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