

## Influence Of Perceived Stress And Emotional Intelligence On Resilience: A Correlational Study Among Indian Corporate Freshers

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### ABSTRACT

Transition from academic life to professional job marks a major life change. This change to corporate landscape can be often overwhelming with a series of challenges and stressors. Enhanced workplace support systems are necessary to reduce the prevalent stress experienced by freshers in initial phase of their professional careers. This study investigates influence of Perceived stress (PS), Emotional Intelligence (EI) and Resilience amongst Indian corporate freshers. A sample of 120 corporate freshers was surveyed using validated instruments including the Perceived Stress Scale (PSS), Emotional Intelligence Scale (EIS), along with Brief Resilience Scale (BRS). In current quantitative study, cross-sectional correlational design was employed for assessing influence of perceived stress and emotional intelligence on resilience. The outcomes indicated that perceived stress is negatively associated with resilience ( $r=-0.45$ ,  $p=0.001$ ) since individuals are less resilient when they perceive higher levels of stress. Emotional intelligence and resilience demonstrated a moderate positive correlation ( $r=0.52$ ,  $p<0.001$ ), suggesting higher emotional intelligence corresponds with greater resilience. Multiple regression showed emotional intelligence has a stronger positive influence on resilience (coefficient=0.40,  $p<0.001$ ) than negative impact of perceived stress (coefficient=-0.35,  $p=0.002$ ). The results show a moderate relationship between perceived stress, resilience, and emotional intelligence since emotional intelligence is an essential factor in minimizing stress impacts. In general, this research provides greater understanding regarding emotional intelligence as a counteractive tool to stress effects and resilience building for early career professionals.

**Keywords:** Perceived Stress, Emotional Intelligence, Resilience, Corporate Freshers, Stress Management

### 1. INTRODUCTION

The transition from academic life to professional employment represents a significant milestone in an individual's career journey. For young graduates entering the corporate world, the transition to professional employment often brings number of challenges as they face unfamiliar organizational cultures, heightened performance roles, and new social dynamics. In India, where corporate environments are characterized by hierarchical and formal structures and required work demands, this adjustment phase can be particularly stressful for new joiners. For these freshers, adaptation and resilience play critical roles in their professional development and well-being. Capacity to recover quickly from difficulties and adapt wisely to workplace demands, known as resilience, becomes essential during this transitional phase (Masten, 2001). However, not all individuals respond similarly to a given situation, making association between perceived stress and EI significant in shaping one's resilience.

Perceived stress represents degree to which individuals feel overwhelmed or unable to control situations in their lives (Cohen et al., 1983). For corporate freshers, stress may arise from various sources including unfamiliarity with workplace environments, performance anxiety, and challenges with social integration. Evidence has shown that perceived stress can negatively influence mental health, resulting in depression, anxiety, as well as burnout, which subsequently affect an individual's capacity to work effectively (Cohen & Wills, 1985). The Indian workplace, characterized by hierarchical structures, intense performance expectations, and emphasis on extended working hours, can create additional stressors for new entrants (Vu, 2025).

Resilience is not the absence of stress but rather the ability to bounce back from adversity while maintaining functional capability (Bonanno, 2008). It represents a continuous process influenced by numerous internal and external variables (Masten, 2001). Among these variables, EI—ability to perceive, regulate, understand, and manage emotions—has been identified as a significant factor contributing to resilience development (Salovey & Mayer, 1990).

Emotional intelligence helps individuals manage their emotional responses to stress and adversity, enabling them to remain composed and adapt effectively to challenging situations (Mayer et al., 2004). For corporate freshers, high EI may function as a buffer against negative consequences of stress, enhancing coping abilities, problem-solving skills, and interpersonal relationships at work. Research by Schutte et al. (2001) established that emotionally intelligent individuals demonstrate stronger social relations and interactions. They equated EI with positive social behaviors such as empathy, conflict resolution, and effective communication— all essential components in stress management and resilience development.

The theoretical foundation for understanding resilience has evolved significantly over recent decades. Tugade and Fredrickson (2004) explored positive emotions' role in resilience, finding that resilient individuals possess a greater ability to experience as well as regulate positive emotions, helping them rebound from stress and negative emotional situations. Werner (2000) outlined key protective factors that promote resilience, including social support, optimism, and purpose. Her research revealed that individuals who can access protective assets are more likely to thrive despite adversity while maintaining psychological health.

Goleman (2005) introduced 5 core components of EI: self-regulation, self-awareness, motivation, empathy, along with social skills. His work suggests that individuals having high EI are better positioned for controlling their own emotions and manage social complexities, both crucial elements in managing stress and building resilience. This perspective has been widely applied in business settings, where EI has been considered key trait for successful leadership as well as employee well-being.

The study of how stress, EI, and resilience interact has received increasing attention in organizational psychology. Investigation has demonstrated that EI can mitigate harmful impact of stress, thereby enhancing resilience among professionals (Salovey & Mayer, 1990). Additional evidence suggests positive association between resilience and EI, indicating that individuals having higher EI demonstrate greater capacity to recover from adversity and difficulty (Tugade & Fredrickson, 2004).

However, despite extensive research on these concepts individually, their interrelationships within the specific context of corporate freshers in India remain underexplored. Most existing studies have sampled from general populations, with limited investigation into how these factors manifest among new corporate employees facing unique transition challenges. Furthermore, cultural factors, particularly in non-Western settings like India, have received insufficient attention in literature.

Lupien et al. (2000) discussed how perceived stress can produce biological and psychological outcomes, establishing that levels of perceived stress significantly impact stress reactions, such as hormone secretion, which ultimately affects long-term mental health and overall well-being. Their research emphasizes role of both objective stressors and individuals' perceptions of stress in determining physical and mental well-being outcomes. Kabat-Zinn's research, as described by Vu (2025), explored how mindfulness practices can reduce self-reported stress and improve overall health outcomes, suggesting potential intervention strategies for stress management among corporate freshers.

For Indian corporate newcomers specifically, the rapid pace of organizational change and heightened competition may intensify perceived stress, making it imperative to examine how this impacts resilience development. As Bonanno (2008) challenged the prevalent view that trauma inevitably results in long-term psychological damage, his research suggests that most individuals demonstrate resilience against traumatic circumstances, often growing and thriving amidst adversity.

## 2. METHODOLOGY

The study employed a correlational design in investigating relationship between perceived stress, EI, and resilience in Indian corporate freshers using a cross-sectional design to obtain data at one point in time. Population was the corporate freshers who have not worked for more than two years, with the sample consisting of 120 participants recruited using snowball sampling from diverse industries in major Indian cities. The research involved three primary variables: perceived stress (independent variable), EI, and resilience (dependent variable), which were measured by standardized scales, PSS, EIS, and BRS. Statistical packages such as MS Excel and SPSS facilitate the processing of data, using techniques such as “mean, standard deviation, correlation, and regression” analysis to arrive at meaningful conclusions. The structured questionnaire provides accuracy, cost-effectiveness, and systematized collection of data, enhancing study's reliability and relevance to social dynamics in urban areas.

## 3. RESEARCH OBJECTIVES

- i. "To investigate the relationship between perceived stress and Resilience among Indian corporate freshers.
- ii. To examine the influence of Emotional Intelligence on Resilience among Indian corporate freshers.
- iii. To explore the combined effect of Perceived stress and Emotional intelligence on Resilience among Indian

corporate freshers".

#### 4. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- "What is the relationship between perceived stress and resilience among Indian corporate freshers?"
- To what extent does emotional intelligence influence resilience among Indian corporate freshers?
- How does perceived stress and emotional intelligence collectively impact resilience among Indian corporate freshers?

#### 5. RESULTS

**Table 1: Demographic Characteristics of Participants (N = 120)**

Demographic Variable	Frequency (n=120)	Percentage (%)
<b>Gender</b>		
Male	65	54.2
Female	55	45.8
<b>Age</b>		
18-25	80	66.7
26-30	40	33.3
<b>Educational Qualification</b>		
Undergraduate	30	25.0
Postgraduate	90	75.0
<b>Industry Sector</b>		
IT/Software	50	41.7
Finance	30	25.0
Marketing	20	16.7
Human Resources	20	16.7
<b>Years of Experience</b>		
0-1 Years	100	83.3
1-2 Years	20	16.7

**Note.** Percentages are based on a total sample of 120 participants.

The demographic profile of the 120 respondents reveals that a majority are male (54.2%) and fall within the 18-25 age range (66.7%). A significant proportion of the participants have a postgraduate qualification (75.0%), with most working in the IT/Software sector (41.7%). Most participants have 0-1yrs of experience (83.3%), indicating a sample of young corporate freshers at the beginning stages of their professional careers.

**Table 2: Cross-tabulation of Perceived Stress and Resilience Levels**

Perceived Stress Level	Low Resilience	Moderate Resilience	High Resilience	Total
Low	10	25	5	40
Moderate	10	35	5	50

High	10	15	5	30
Total	30	75	15	120

**Note.** The table reflects how perceived stress is associated with varying levels of resilience.

The Cross-tabulation of resilience levels and perceived stress shows that those with moderate perceived stress have more resilience (35 moderate resilience). Those with low perceived stress predominantly have moderate resilience (25). The findings indicate that stress can affect resilience, with moderate stress possibly leading to greater resilience, while low and high stress levels have mixed results.

The cross-tabulation of EI and resilience reveals that participants with moderate EI have moderate resilience (45). While individuals with high EI have a more equal distribution across resilience levels, with 7 indicating great resilience, those with poor EI demonstrate lower levels of resilience (15) This suggests that EI exhibits positive influence on resilience of corporate freshers.

## 6. CORRELATION ANALYSIS

**H1:** "There is a significant negative relationship between perceived stress and resilience among Indian corporate freshers.

**H2:** There is a significant positive relationship between emotional intelligence and resilience among Indian corporate freshers.

To evaluate relationship between perceived stress and emotional intelligence on resilience among population, correlation analysis was done". The following table summarizes the results.

**Table 3: Correlation Matrix Between Key Variables**

Variable	Correlation Coefficient (r)	p-value
Perceived Stress & Resilience	-0.45	.001
Emotional Intelligence & Resilience	0.52	.000
Perceived Stress & Emotional Intelligence	-0.30	.005

**Note.** All correlations are statistically significant at  $p < .01$ .

Correlation between the resilience and perceived stress is moderately negative ( $r = -0.45$ ), i.e., as the perceived stress increases, there is a decrease in resilience among the corporate freshers. The p-value of 0.001 describes that there is statistically significant association between two variables in sample of corporate freshers.

Association between EI and resilience is observed to have moderate positive correlation ( $r = 0.52$ ), implying that EI is higher when resilience is higher. The p-value of 0.000 has a statistically significant positive correlation that implies EI has significant role in increasing resilience among corporate freshers in the sample.

## 7. REGRESSION ANALYSIS

**Table 4: Regression Results**

Variable	B	SE	t	p
Perceived Stress	-0.45	0.12	-3.75	.001
Emotional Intelligence	0.55	0.10	5.50	.000

**Note.** B = unstandardized coefficient; SE = standard error.

Regression coefficient between perceived stress and resilience is -0.45, indicating a negative relationship and that higher

levels of perceived stress are related to lower resilience levels. A standard error of 0.12 reflects the accuracy of the coefficient, but t-statistic of -3.75 along with p-statistic of 0.001 indicates that it is statistically significant at 1% level, affirming the negative influence of perceived stress on resilience across participants.

Regression for the effect of EI on resilience shows a positive coefficient value of 0.55, implying that as EI is higher, the level of resilience is also greater. With t-value of 5.50 and p-value of 0.000, standard error is 0.10, indicating that this relationship is highly statistically significant. This indicates that for the corporate freshmen in this research, EI exhibits significant impact on resilience.

**H3:** The combined effect of perceived stress and emotional intelligence on resilience is significant with emotional intelligence acting as a moderator in the relationship between perceived stress and resilience.

Multiple Regression Analysis was employed for studying combined effect of perceived stress and EI on resilience. Following table summarizes the results:

**Table 5: Multiple Regression Analysis of Combined Predictors on Resilience**

Variable	B	SE	t	p
Perceived Stress	-0.35	0.11	-3.18	.002
Emotional Intelligence	0.40	0.09	4.44	.000

**Note.** Both predictors significantly contribute to resilience.

Multiple regression analysis for combined impact of perceived stress and EI on resilience indicates that both variables exhibit significant influence on resilience. Coefficient of perceived stress is -0.35, which is negative, while EI has a positive coefficient of 0.40. The p-values of 0.002 and 0.000 for perceived stress and EI, respectively, indicate that both predictors are statistically significant in accounting for resilience and that EI has a stronger positive influence

## 8. DISCUSSION

Study findings provide "valuable insights into relationship between perceived stress, EI, and resilience amongst corporate freshers. Moderate negative correlation observed between perceived stress and resilience ( $r = -0.45$ ) suggests that as perceived stress levels rise, resilience declines." This relationship is statistically significant ( $p=0.001$ ), suggesting that heightened stress can adversely affect the ability of corporate freshers to cope with challenges and maintain psychological well-being. Outcomes align with existing literature that highlights detrimental effects of stress on mental health in addition to adaptive functioning (Cohen et al., 1983; Masten, 2001). Furthermore, the study reveals a moderate positive association between EI and resilience ( $r=0.52$ ), suggesting that individuals having higher EI demonstrate greater resilience. The statistically significant p-value of 0.000 underscores significance of EI in promoting resilience among corporate freshers. This finding supports concept that EI equips individuals with skills necessary for navigating stressors effectively, thereby enhancing their capacity to recover from adversity (Tugade & Fredrickson, 2004). Interestingly, findings also demonstrate significant association between EI and perceived stress, having p-value of 0.005 indicating that as EI declines, perceived stress levels tend to increase. This finding emphasizes critical role of EI in managing stress, reinforcing idea that individuals having higher EI are better equipped for handling stressors and maintaining their resilience. The regression analysis further elucidates these relationships. The negative regression coefficient of -0.45 for perceived stress indicates a clear inverse relationship with resilience, affirming that higher levels of perceived stress are related to lower resilience. The statistical significance of this coefficient ( $p = 0.001$ ) reinforces the need for interventions aimed at reducing perceived stress among corporate freshers to enhance their resilience. Conversely, the positive regression coefficient of 0.55 for EI demonstrates that increased EI is related to greater resilience. The highly significant p-value of 0.000 indicates that EI is a crucial predictor of resilience among this population. Findings suggest EI training may be particularly effective in enhancing resilience among corporate freshers. The multiple regression analysis further confirms significant influence of both perceived stress and EI on resilience.

## 9. CONCLUSION

Current investigation highlighted key association between perceived stress, EI, and resilience in Indian corporate freshers. The majority of participants experienced moderate stress, which affects resilience. EI was observed to be positively related to resilience, specifically stress coping abilities. EI increased resilience more than perceived stress, according to regression analysis performed. EI buffered moderate stress, helping people stay resilient. Stress management workshops, EI training, mentoring programs, and organisational resilience research are practical recommendations. Study's small sample size in

addition to cross sectional design limits its findings, but it sheds light on EI's role in resilience and suggests future research on organizational factors and longitudinal studies.

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