



# Relationship between Perceived Stress, Anxiety, Procrastination, Coping Self-efficacy, and Self-regulation among people working in the Service Sector of India

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## ABSTRACT

**Aims:** To study the relationship between perceived stress, anxiety, procrastination, coping self-efficacy, and self-regulation in adults working in the service sector of India.

**Methods:** The hypotheses were formulated, the tools were administered through random sampling on 130 adults working in the service sector between the age range of 21-40 years old and the results were statistically analyzed through Mean, Standard deviation, Pearson's correlation, and Regression.

**Results:** There is a significant correlation found between perceived stress and self-regulation, anxiety and self-regulation, procrastination and self-regulation as well as coping self-efficacy and self-regulation. Perceived stress and procrastination were found to be significant negative predictors of self-regulation, coping self-efficacy was found to be significant positive predictor of self-regulation while anxiety was found not to be a significant predictor of self-regulation.

**Index terms:** Perceived stress, Anxiety, Procrastination, Coping self-efficacy, Self-regulation, Service sector.

## INTRODUCTION

Perceived stress can be defined as the thoughts or feelings about the amount of stress one is currently under or went through at a given point of time or period of time. It is more about how one feels about having a lack of control and unpredictability rather than the actual stressor.

It can cause:

- Tension, headaches, pain and fatigue.
- Digestive issues
- Stomach problems
- Anger
- Lack of focus
- Lack of motivation
- Depression
- Eating disorders
- Substance abuse
- Sleep disorders

Feelings about the unpredictability and uncontrollability of one's life, how often one needs to deal with bothersome hassles, how much change is occurring in one's life, and confidence in one's ability to deal with problems or challenges are all factors that contribute to perceived stress. It does not assess the sorts or frequency of stressful events that have occurred in a person's life, but rather how they feel about how stressful their life is in general and their capacity to cope with it.

Individuals may experience comparable terrible life events, but may assess the impact or severity of these events differently depending on personality, coping resources, and support. In this way, perceived stress reflects the interaction between an individual and their environment which they appraise as threatening or overwhelming their resources in a way which will affect their well-being (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984).

Anxiety is a state of mind marked by tense feelings, concerned thoughts, and physical changes such as elevated blood pressure. Anxiety disorders are characterised by recurrent intrusive thoughts or concerns. They may avoid certain situations because they are concerned.

It is a normal emotion. This is how your brain responds to stress and reminds you of the potential dangers ahead. Everyone feels anxious from time to time. For example, you may be worried before you encounter problems at work, take an exam, or make an important decision.

In any given year, the estimated percentage of US adults with various anxiety disorders are:

Specific phobia: 8%-12%, Social Anxiety Disorder: 7%, Panic disorder: 2%-3%, Agoraphobia: 1-2.9% in adults and adolescents, Generalized Anxiety disorder: 2%, Separation Anxiety disorder: 0.9% - 1.9%

Women are more likely to experience anxiety related issues as compared to men. Occasional anxiety is an expected part of life. You may feel anxious before you encounter problems at work, take an exam, or make important decisions. But anxiety disorders involve more than temporary worries or fears. For people with anxiety disorders, anxiety will not go away, and it will get worse

over time. Symptoms can interfere with daily activities, such as work performance, school work, and relationships.

Procrastination refers to the act of postponing a task to the last minute or exceeding the deadline. Some researchers define procrastination as "a form of self-regulation failure characterized by an unreasonable delay in a task, although it may have negative consequences."

Procrastination is the core of psychology research for goal achievement. In order to achieve the goal, people must have the appropriate motivation and ability to perform the necessary actions involved in achieving the goal. In an industrialized culture, procrastination is especially important, and maintaining a timetable is highly valued.

Philip DeSimone has shown that as society becomes more industrialized, procrastination becomes a more prominent concept. It is a common difficulty in daily life for mentally healthy people. As many as 20% of non-clinical adult men and women report prolonged delays. Although procrastination can allow people to take a short break before the upcoming deadline, the consequences of procrastination are almost always negative.

Benight and Bandura (2004) explore the relevance of self-efficacy beliefs in the context of trauma and coping using the Social Cognitive Theory comprehensive framework. Coping self-efficacy (CSE) beliefs, or the perceived ability to handle the demands of coping with catastrophic life experiences, are regarded to be essential to the human reaction to traumatic experiences (Benight & Bandura, 2004) and provide a framework for understanding resilience in the context of trauma (Benight & Cieslak, 2011). CSE beliefs emerge from self-regulatory processes that involve the ability to organize and employ available resources to handle posttraumatic recovery demands. As a result, the human response to trauma is regarded as more than a reaction within the confines of a pure diathesis-stress model.

Coping self-efficacy, defined as confidence in one's ability to successfully cope (Bandura, 1977) is a commonly studied concept in coping and stress-related research.

Self-regulation refers to the ability to monitor and manage your energy state, emotions, thoughts, and behaviors in an acceptable way and produce positive results such as happiness, loving relationships, and learning.

Self-regulation (SR), is essential to success and human health. Self-regulatory ability has been shown to predict better health, more wealth, lower levels of criminal behavior (Moffitt, et al., 2011). Self-regulation is the general process of managing feelings, thoughts, and behaviors so that general personal goals and standards are met (Fujita, 2011)

This is a skill that allows people to manage their emotions, behaviors, and physical movements in the face of difficulties. It also allows them to do so while maintaining focus and attention.

## Literature review

Bouckenooghe, Raja, and Abbas (2014) conducted a study on How does self-regulation of emotions impact employee work engagement: the mediating role of social resources on 296 IT Professionals from 4 IT firms based in Ukraine. It was found that self-regulation of emotions



affected the work engagement positively but it wasn't the case when the role of social resources (trust in the supervisor, colleague interaction, work engagement, etc.) mediated.

Clayton Brock (2016) studied the relationship between self-regulation, stress, sleep, and behavioural health on 89 participants from a high-risk high school in the Midwest. Self-regulation was found to be significantly related to sleep quality, self-reported stress, and behavioural and emotional functionality. In general, increased attentional control, effortful control, and inhibitory control are negatively correlated with increased sleep problems. This makes logical sense in the context of the literature. Self-regulation is frequently framed in terms of making a decision now that may entail foregoing a tangible reward in exchange for a larger reward later. (Fujita, K., 2011)

Elaina Vivian, Hellen Oduor, Sharina R. Arceneaux, Jasmine A. Flores, Allison Vo, and Barbara Madson Madden conducted a cross-sectional study on perceived stress, mindfulness, emotional self-regulation, and self-care habits in Registered Nurses A at a Tertiary Care Medical Center. The study took place over a four-week period. In this study, a cross-sectional volunteer sampling design was used to poll a total of 340 nurses. The survey used instruments that had previously been created and verified. SAS v. 9.4 was used for statistical analysis. It was also seen that there were significant differences in average patient satisfaction scored by perceived stress. This information can be utilized by hospital staff, administrations, etc to have a better priority management and also use mindfulness-based intervention for the nursing staff in their organizations

Another study by Johnson, Machowski, Holdsqoeth, Kern, and Zapf on Age, emotion regulation strategies, burnout, and engagement in the service sector: Advantages of older workers (2017). Analyses of data from 444 service employees in Germany indicated that age is negatively directly connected to exhaustion and cynicism, but positively directly related to professional efficacy and engagement. Furthermore, through the application of the emotion regulation mechanisms surface acting and anticipative deep acting, age predicts less burnout and more engagement. This contradicts the general deficit hypothesis of ageing, which assumes that employee skills and capacities deteriorate with age. We found no indication that older workers are less productive than younger workers, with older workers utilising positive emotion management mechanisms, being more engaged, and having less burnout symptoms.

Self-control and self-regulation play an essential role in determining the nature of procrastination, according to numerous research. People with low self-control and self-regulation are prone to distraction and pleasurable environmental stimuli. As a result, people with low self-control and self-regulation are more likely to deliberately delay tasks for short-term and desirable rewards, despite being aware of the negative consequences. This could be due to the fact that when people are confronted with difficult and unpleasant duties, their desire to pursue alternate hobbies increases rapidly. People with inadequate self-control and self-regulation also procrastinate because they have trouble managing objectives and abandoning rewarding activities, according to new research. Despite the fact that poor self-regulation and self-control have serious health effects, little research has been done in this area. It is critical that interventions and treatments aimed at improving procrastination include components of self-control and self-regulation in their therapy.

The role of coping self-efficacy in emotion regulation and frequency of NSSI in young adult college students Melanie F. Midkiff<sup>1</sup>, Cynthia R. Lindsey<sup>1</sup> and Elizabeth A. Meadows. Non-suicidal self-injury (NSSI) is a prevalent emotional regulation (ER) or coping mechanism among young adults.

The majority of studies have aimed to clarify the function of self-injury as a coping method, and while this study is critical to understanding persons who self-injure, factors that influence coping behaviors may have an impact on treatment and prevention efforts. This study evaluated the role of coping self-efficacy (CSE) in mediating the relationship between emotion dysregulation and the frequency of NSSI. The sample consisted of 187 self-injuring university students between the ages of 18 and 26, with a predominance of female (76.5 percent) and Caucasian individuals (67.4 percent).

### OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY:

The aim of the study is to investigate the relationship between perceived stress, anxiety, procrastination, coping self-efficacy, and self-regulation among the people working in the Indian service sector.

### METHODOLOGY

**Sample:** The present study includes a total of 130 people working in the service sector of India.

The sample includes adults working in the service sector between the age-range of 21-40 years and excludes adults working in the other sectors and not falling in the age range of 21-40 years.

**Data collection:** Data has been collected from adults (21-40 years) working in the Service sector of India with the help of 5 questionnaires through the online mode.

### Description of the tools used

The study was conducted by using the following tools:

Perceived Stress – Perceived Stress Scaled (PSS) by Sheldon Cohen was used to study the perceived stress and respondents were asked to mark their responses according to how they felt and thought during the last month.

Anxiety – Beck Anxiety Inventory (BAI) by Aaron T. Beck and colleagues is a self-report measure to understand anxiety levels in adults and adolescents.

Procrastination – Irrational Procrastination Scale (IPS) by Piers Steel, Ph.D. was used to understand the attribute of procrastination.

Coping Self-efficacy –Coping self-efficacy scale (CSES) by Dr. Margaret Chesney was used to measure the confidence of the person in performing coping related behaviours.

Self-regulation – Self-regulation questionnaire (Brown, Miller & Lawendowski, 1999) was used to study the self-regulation in the sample.



## RESULTS

Table 1: Table showing Correlations between all the variables.

		Correlations Table				
		SELF REGULA TION	PERC EIVE D STRE SS	ANXIE TY	PROCRA STINATI ON	COPING SELF- EFFICA CY
Pearson Correlati on	SELF REGULATION	1.000	-.459	-.326	-.486	.561
	PERCEIVED STRESS	-.459	1.000	.558	.485	-.372
	ANXIETY	-.326	.558	1.000	.367	-.258
	PROCRASTINAT ION	-.486	.485	.367	1.000	-.314
	COPING SELF- EFFICACY	.561	-.372	-.258	-.314	1.000
Sig. (1- tailed)	SELF REGULATION	.	.000	.000	.000	.000
	PERCEIVED STRESS	.000	.	.000	.000	.000
	ANXIETY	.000	.000	.	.000	.002
	PROCRASTINAT ION	.000	.000	.000	.	.000
	COPING SELF- EFFICACY	.000	.000	.002	.000	.
N	SELF REGULATION	130	130	130	130	130
	PERCEIVED STRESS	130	130	130	130	130
	ANXIETY	130	130	130	130	130
	PROCRASTINAT ION	130	130	130	130	130
	COPING SELF- EFFICACY	130	130	130	130	130

**Table 2: Model Summary Table****Model Summary<sup>b</sup>**

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Change Statistics					Durbin-Watson
					R Square Change	F Change	df1	df2	Sig. F Change	
1	.666 <sup>a</sup>	.444	.426	17.657	.444	24.933	4	125	.000	2.020

a. Predictors: (Constant), COPING SELF-EFFICACY, ANXIETY, PROCRASTINATION, PERCEIVED STRESS

b. Dependent Variable: SELF REGULATION

	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
SELF REGULATION	216.42	23.305	130
PERCEIVED STRESS	19.86	6.951	130
ANXIETY	17.15	12.619	130
PROCRASTINATION	25.39	5.947	130
COPING SELF-EFFICACY	179.13	42.167	130

**Table 3: Descriptive Statistics**



## DISCUSSION:

The correlation between perceived stress and self-regulation was found to be -0.459 which shows there is a significant negative correlation between perceived stress and self-regulation.

These results can be corroborated by the results of another study that was done to study the relationships among perceived stress, emotional eating, and dietary intake in college students: Eating self-regulation as a mediator by Nagwan R. Zahry and Jiying Ling as the results showed a negative correlation of -0.40 between perceived stress and eating self-regulation.

Another study done on high school students by Romana Kadzikowska-Wrzosek to study the moderating effects of self-regulation competences in perceived stress, emotional ill-being and psychosomatic symptoms (2012) which shows us higher levels of perceived stress influences psychological well-being but it seems to be moderated by self-regulation competences. The study concluded that relationship between perceived stress and mental health problems varied as a function of self-regulation competences.

Anxiety and self-regulation showed a correlation of -0.326 which shows significant negative correlation between the two variables.

It can be said that the results have found that the correlation value between procrastination and self-regulation -.486 which shows that there is a significant negative correlation between these two.

The correlation between coping self-efficacy was found to be 0.561 which shows that there is a significant positive correlation between coping self-efficacy and self-regulation

It has been found that all the factors are negative predictors of self-regulation, among which there is perceived stress, procrastination were found to be significant negative predictors of self-regulation while coping self-efficacy was found to be positive and significant predictors of self-regulation while anxiety was found to be not a significant predictor of self-regulation.

The model summary table 2 shows the adjusted R square and it can be said all the variables (perceived stress, procrastination, anxiety, and coping self-efficacy) together could explain 42.6 % of the variants for self-regulation and the other depends upon the variables that are not accounted in the study

The descriptive statistics table shows us the mean, and standard deviation for the tests that were administered among 130 people working in the service sector of India between the age range of 21-40 years.

## IMPLICATIONS

- A better understanding of all these factors and how they affect the self-regulation skills can help us to incorporate stress management modules in schools, workplaces, etc. so as to help students, teachers, employees, managers, etc to effectively manage their stress and utilize their self-regulation skills.
- Anxiety management modules can also be a helpful too to help people in managing their anxiety and properly using their self-regulation skills.
- We can try to also help students, employees, entrepreneurs, service providers, and everyone to manage and come over procrastination so as to be better with their studies, work, or anything an individual is into doing. It is a very common misconception that procrastination is a form of self-regulation but as we saw in the study that procrastination does not help with self-regulation and it is negatively correlated to it.
- There can be self-regulation skills training incorporated in employee wellness programs to help them build these skills as well as put these skills to use in times of need.
- Furthermore, longitudinal studies related to self-regulation can pave the way to understanding it much better with other variables that might be influencing self-regulation.
- If we can establish a connection between self-regulation and resilience then we can create better training programs, skill development modules to create more resilient people as the entire human population has been through a lot and self-regulation and resilience has sailed us through these tough times during a global pandemic.

## Conclusion

The independent variables taken into account have been found to have significant correlations with the dependent variable, i.e., self-regulation and this can help us to inculcate self-regulation modules and training programs from early on so as to help people providing services as their profession as well as people working in any other field with respect to self-regulation skills so they can handle themselves better and be able to self-regulate and take care of their holistic health and promote well-being. Since we have been through tough times during the global pandemic, self-regulation skills are the need of the hour

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