



A Study on Fear of Failure and Academic Procrastination among College Students

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Abstract

Fear of Failure and Academic Procrastination are two psychological problems which in the current era is affecting the mental health, academic performance and personal development of the students. These two issues are correlated. The current research was conducted on Fear of Failure and Procrastination among college students. A sample of 30 college students was taken and The Performance Failure Appraisal Inventory (PFAI) (Conroy, 2001) was used to administer the level of Fear of Failure. The PFAI consisted of 5 subscales, Fear of experiencing shame and

embarrassment (FSE), Fear of devaluing one's self- estimate (FDSE), Fear of having uncertain future (FUF), Fear of important others losing interest (FIOLI), Fear of upsetting important others (FUIO). For Academic Procrastination the General Procrastination Scale (GPS) (Lodha et al., 2016) was used. The results found a significantly positive correlation between Academic Procrastination and Fear of experiencing shame and embarrassment (FSE), ($r=0.432$, $p<0.05$). The results also showed a significantly positive correlation between Academic Procrastination and Fear of devaluing one's self- estimate (FDSE), ($r=0.386$, $p<0.05$), further it was also found that Fear of having Uncertain Future (FUF) and Academic Procrastination showed a significantly positive correlation ($r=0.465$, $p<0.01$). In conclusion a positive correlation was indicated between Fear of Failure and Procrastination.

Keywords: *Fear of Failure, Procrastination, Fear of experiencing shame and embarrassment, Fear of devaluing one's self-estimate*

Introduction

In today's world the well-being of college students has become crucial with the increasing academic stress and pressure which affects the personal development of the students. There are many factors in control of the development and well-being of the students consisting of academic satisfaction, work productivity, and reliable future. However, with the increasing expectations and competitions, stress and fear of failing develops in the mind of the students. With fear of failure, comes procrastination. Fear of failure and procrastination are two psychological issues which are interrelated that not only affect the academic life but also the social and mental development of the students.

Fear of failure is defined as a motivational behavior identified as a motivation to avoid failure, not success. It prevents individuals from taking risks or trying new things, causing them to feel stressed or anxious about the possibility of failing. Students being afraid of failure experience low self-esteem, fear of losing interest and fear of an uncertain future. Students with fear of failure may experience emotional and behavioral symptoms, as well as physical symptoms like rapid heart rate, chest tightness, and sweating. Additionally, they also experience fear of shame and embarrassment. This overall affects the social and mental abilities of the students. Fear of failure results in lowering academic performance and overall development of college students. The fear of failure might relate to being a perfectionist. Perfectionists have such high expectations of themselves and the tasks they do that they may experience fear. The fear of failure causes people to avoid trying altogether as they are afraid that they will try and will not succeed. Therefore, they decide not to try to prevent pain and embarrassment.

Procrastination is the act of delaying or postponing a task or set of tasks, even when negative consequences are known. It is also defined as a weakness of will. Procrastination is often considered a negative trait because it is associated with low self-esteem, guilt, and depression. However, it can also be a response to certain situations, such as when waiting for new information or when a task could have negative outcomes. Procrastination is a common problem among college students, and has negative consequences such as poor academic performance, poor mental well-being, and added stress. Procrastination among college students can be caused by several factors, including perfectionism, lack of motivation, and fear of failure. Students who procrastinate tend to have low grades. Procrastination can lead to poor mental health and stress. It can also lead to physical issues like tension, stomach issues, and sleep issues. Procrastination can take up a considerable amount of time and occupies a third of their daily activities in the form of behaviors

like sleeping, watching TV, or playing games. In students' academic performance, procrastination leads to low exam scores and failure. Procrastination also affects students' emotional well-being and mental and physical health.

Fear of Failure

Fear of failure (FOF) is described as a “dispositional tendency to avoid failure in achievement settings because the humiliation and embarrassment of failure are perceived to be overwhelming” (Conroy & Elliot, 2004). According to Elliot and Sheldon (1997) fear of failure was defined “as two different motivational behaviors: the first one is identified as the motivation to seek success, and the other one is the desire to escape.”

According to Alkhazaleh and Mahasneh (2016), a study was conducted to determine the level of fear of failure among 548 students at The Hashemite University, Jordan by completing the Performance Failure Appraisal Inventory. Descriptive statistics, independent sample t-test, and one-way analysis of variance were used to analyze the data collected. The results indicated an overall mean fear of failure of (-0.34) and showed significant differences between male and female students' levels of fear of experiencing shame and embarrassment. Further, the analysis showed significant differences between the GPA level groups in the following fear categories: experiencing shame, low self-esteem, fear of losing interest, and fear of an uncertain future.

According to Alabduljabbar et al. (2022) a cross-sectional observational study was conducted using a stratified random sampling method to measure fear of failure among 455 medical students at King Saud University. All medical students completed the Performance Failure Appraisal Inventory during the academic year 2019. The results showed that the mean of fear of failure was (-0.3117). The higher level of fear of loss of self-esteem were seen in women, and higher levels of fear of important other interests were seen in men. Higher levels of FOF were seen

in those who had a GPA below 3.5 and a GPA greater than 4.9. Additionally, it was high in students who were not interested in studying medicine.

Procrastination

According to Johnson and Bloom (1995) procrastination is defined “as the postponement of completion of a task or the failure to meet deadlines, even though the individual would meet adverse outcomes and feel uncomfortable as a result.” According to Solomon and Rothblum (1984) procrastination is defined “as delay in conjunction with subjective discomfort.”

According to Ozer and Sackes (2011) a study was conducted to examine the effect of procrastination on students’ life satisfaction among 314 college students. Tuckman Procrastination Scale and Satisfaction with Life Scale were administered to the students. The average age of the participants was 20.76 (SD= 1.97) with an age range between 17 and 27. The results showed that 38% (119) of the students claimed to be frequent procrastinators, with male students being the more frequent Procrastinators than the female students.

According to Clark and Hill Jr (1994) a study was conducted to examine the reason for Procrastination among 184 African American college students. The Procrastination Assessment Scale-Students of Solomon and Rothblum was administered to American college students. This scale measured the frequency of procrastination on a variety of academic tasks. A high number of subjects reported nearly always or always procrastinating on studying for examinations (n = 52), writing a term paper (n = 55), and reading weekly assignments (n =66). The reasons for procrastination on writing a term paper identified two primary factors: Evaluation Anxiety and Task Aversiveness.

Purpose

The purpose is to study fear of failure and Procrastination among college students of ages 18- 30 years.

Hypothesis

There will be a significant positive correlation between fear of failure and procrastination.

Method***Sample***

A sample of 30 college students in the age of 18- 30 years was taken from Amity University, Mohali.

Measures

The Performance Failure Appraisal Inventory (PFAI): The Performance Failure Appraisal Inventory (Conroy, 2001) is a 25 item self- report measure. The PFAI contains 5 subscales, Fear of experiencing shame and embarrassment (FSE), Fear of devaluing one's self- estimate (FDSE), Fear of having uncertain future (FUF), Fear of important others losing interest (FIOLI), Fear of upsetting important others (FUIO). Respondents were asked to rate each item on a 5-point scale ranging from 1(strongly disagree) to 5(strongly agree).

General Procrastination Scale (GPS): The General Procrastination Scale (Lodha et al. ,2016) is developed by 23 items. The scale measures procrastinating in 4 domains- academic, workplace, medical and civic responsibilities. Respondents were asked to rate items on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1(Never) to 5(Always).

Procedures

The participants were informed about the purpose of the research, and the consent were taken. The questionnaires were filled through offline mode, each participant was thanked for their cooperation. Standardized psychological tests were administered to the participants.

Analysis of Data

Results

Table1: *N, Mean and Standard Deviation*

	FSE	FDSE	FUF	FIOLI	FUIO	AP
N	30	30	30	30	30	30
Mean	21.3	11.5	11.7	12.7	13.4	63.8
Standard deviation	6.14	4.20	3.22	4.37	4.37	10.3

Table 2: *Correlation between FSE, FDSE, FUF, FIOLI, FUIO and AP*

	FSE	FDSE	FUF	FIOLI	FUIO	AP
FSE	—					
FDSE	0.684***	—				
FUF	0.543**	0.496**	—			
FIOLI	0.588***	0.556**	0.540**	—		
FUIO	0.230	0.485**	0.189	0.407*	—	
AP	0.432*	0.386*	0.465**	0.361	0.105	—
Note. * p < .05, ** p < .01, *** p < .001						

Note: *Academic Procrastination (AP), Fear of experiencing shame and embarrassment (FSE), Fear of devaluating one's self- estimate (FDSE), Fear of having uncertain future (FUF), Fear of important others losing interest(FIOLI), Fear of upsetting important others(FUIO).*

Discussion of Results

The results showed a significantly positive correlation between Academic Procrastination and Fear of experiencing shame and embarrassment (FSE), ($r=0.432$, $p<0.05$). The results suggests that college students who procrastinate academically are more likely to experience higher levels of fear related to shame and embarrassment.

The results also indicated a significantly positive correlation between Academic Procrastination and Fear of devaluating one's self- estimate (FDSE), ($r=0.386$, $p<0.05$). This suggests that the college students who engage in academic procrastination might do so to protect their self-esteem, by delaying tasks they avoid confronting situations where their perceived abilities might be judged unfavorably.

Fear of having Uncertain Future (FUF) and Academic Procrastination also showed a significantly positive correlation ($r=0.465$, $p<0.01$). The result suggests that procrastination is related to concerns about an uncertain future, and this may lead the college students who procrastinate tend to worry about long term outcomes or lack of clear vision of their goals, thus, leading to delay in action.

According to Zarrin, Gracia, and Paixao (2020) a study was conducted on Fear of Failure and Procrastination among 198 students from different schools of University of Isfahan in Iran. Student's Procrastination Assessment Scale, Performance Failure Appraisal Inventory, and Sevari's Self-regulation Questionnaire were used. The analysis was done through t-test, Pearson correlation and linear regression in SPSS-22. The result of the t-test showed significant differences between male and female in terms of procrastination and fear of failure. Male students scored higher in Procrastination whereas females students scored higher in fear of failure. The results of Pearson correlation showed a positive relationship between procrastination and fear of failure, and

negative between self-regulation and academic procrastination. Also, linear regression analyses showed that fear of failure and responsibility predict academic procrastination.

The research is supported by a previous study by Parlade and Karayigit (2022). The researchers in their study examined the relationship between fear of failure and procrastination and gender. A sample of 310 university students was taken. Performance Failure Appraisal Inventory (PFAI) and Pure Procrastination Scale (PPS) were used to administer the data. The correlation analysis was used to explore the relationship between procrastination and fear of failure and an independent t- test was used to explore the relationship between fear of failure and gender. Results showed a moderate positive relationship between forms of failure and procrastination. Further, it was also found that women had higher levels of different forms of fear of failure.

Conclusion

The study concluded with results showing a significantly positive correlation between Fear of Failure and Procrastination among college students. The students having a higher level of Fear of Failure also showed a higher value in Academic Procrastination.

The findings highlight that fear-based emotions are linked to academic procrastination, indicating that long term insecurities might be the primary driver for procrastinatory behavior in academics. The results also suggests that there is a pattern of avoidance behavior where college students delay academic tasks to shield themselves from perceived negative outcomes (shame and embarrassment), internal (low self-esteem) or long term (uncertain future).

Stress, feelings of what others will think and succeeding in the future are some factors that contribute to FOF and Procrastination. Through the examination of figure of completion of work, considering levels of procrastination and the relationship between procrastination, FOF and the

general development of the students, the research emphasized the role of FOF in procrastination and productivity of students to do work. The discoveries highlight the importance of a fit, healthy and stress-free environment for studying for the students to alleviate the levels of procrastination and fear of failure. Help from peers and teachers can lead to improvement and binding to completion of tasks on time can lead to improvement. Moreover, importance to physical as well as mental exercise should be given importance for a stress-free habitat.

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