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Research Paper

Procrastination, Study Habits and Optimistic Attitude among College Students

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ABSTRACT

Procrastination has been an impediment to academic success on college students because it decreases the quality and quantity of learning while increasing the severity of success and negative outcomes in student's lives (Howel & Watson, 2007). (Husain, 2000) stresses that lack of effective or positive study habits is a critical study problem among students at all levels. Optimism also plays a major role among college students and most of them tend to do unnecessary postponing or avoiding tasks that must be completed. This study aims to understand the relation between procrastination, study habits and optimistic attitude among college students. This study also looked into study the difference on procrastination, study habits and optimistic attitude among college students based on gender. The procrastination, study habits and optimism were analyzed among college students using Procrastination Scale (Lay, 1986), Palsane and Sharma Study habits Inventory (PSSHI), Life Orientation Test Revised (LOT-R) and also demographic sheet for getting a general information. Convenience sampling method was used and 223 samples were analyzed. The results revealed that there is a significant correlation between procrastination and study habits and also with study habits and optimism. But there is no correlation between procrastination and optimism. Also, this study implies that there is a significant difference in gender for study habits and optimism but for procrastination gender difference doesn't exist. By understanding the relationship between procrastination, study habits and optimism an overview about the performance of college students can be analyzed and different workshops and cognitive therapy can be included to avoid procrastinating tendencies and also to improve study habits.

Keywords: Procrastination, Study habits, Optimism

Procrastination is the common habit of avoiding or postponing multiple activities. Even though procrastination is a global problem, it has a negative effect on people's everyday lives (Letham, 2004; Hoover, 2005). Procrastination, according to Milgram (1991), is characterised as a series of delays or postponements of one task due to the existence of a more important or satisfying task, resulting in an unfinished behavioural product and emotional upset. Academic procrastination is the most common type seen in academic environments, but it pervades all facets of behaviour and action. Academic

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procrastination may contribute to an individual's inability to achieve educational targets on time, resulting in psychological distress. According to Firouzeh and Jalil (2011), procrastination is a personality defect that leads to low self-esteem. It can also be described as a practise of postponing the start or completion of a task despite the fact that the implications are known. Overall, we procrastinate because negative causes such as anxiety and the fear of disappointment outweigh our self-control and motivation, which could be hindered by factors such as fatigue and a lack of instant gratification.

Students from both Western and non-Western societies have been shown to indulge in academic procrastination for a number of reasons. Students from Western societies procrastinate in order to prevent doing less than they can or struggling to figure out the full amount they should have, while students from non-Western cultures procrastinate in order to avoid being inept or displaying a lack of competence in front of their peers. Willpower is frequently blamed for procrastination, but it is our intrinsic motivation that allows us to break the habit of procrastinating on a daily basis.

Study habits are the behaviours that people engage in when studying for exams or learning new material. A "study habit" refers to the amount and styles of studying habits that a student employs during a normal cycle of study in a favourable setting. Study habits are one of the most important learning influences that have a major impact on college students' academic success. The most popular obstacle to students' performance in all ramifications is a lack of successful or constructive learning habits. According to Husain (2000), a key learning issue among students at all levels is a lack of successful or constructive study habits. Proper learning patterns will help you conquer procrastination, and they are the secret to better training. The most critical study habit is to be organised and complete everyday rituals. Developing healthy study habits will lead to results, as a student would be able to perform more effectively while still facing less stress. When anyone first started studying, effective time management meant achieving goals without wasting time. One of the most significant issues with research patterns is a lack of expertise in good time control (Glenn, 2003). Cusimano (1999) stresses the importance of good time control in achieving fulfilment. According to research, taking good notes enhances students' academic results (Austin, Lee & Carr, 2003; Bretzing et al., 1987). However, many of the scholars like better to take the notes of their friends (Wolff, 2001).

Among college students, having a positive outlook is important. Clearly, getting a college diploma may have a huge effect on a person's life. As a result, it is important for college students to maintain a positive mind set in order to be competitive. College students who have a positive outlook on life are more able to cope with their everyday struggles. The term derives from the Latin word optimum, which means "highest." Optimism, in the common context, refers to predicting the best possible outcome from any particular situation. Despite the inevitable failures and disappointments, there is a deep confidence that events and experiences will finally turn out well. Optimism is a term used to describe a positive mentality which is a component of positive psychology. Optimism is a mental mind-set that reflects the expectation or desire that the result of a single undertaking, or the outcome of all efforts, will be good, favourable, and attractive. Optimism is a personal difference predictor that tests a person's optimism about the future. Higher levels of satisfaction have been attributed to greater subjective well-being in times of adversity or struggle.

Optimism is described as a reasonably constant, generalised belief that good outcomes will occur through essential life realms. Chomsky (1995) wrote, "Optimism is a plan for creating

a better future." And you're unable to intensify and take responsibility for making the longer term better until you feel it is." Optimism are often hope, confidence, positive thinking, think outside the box and adjustment, it's a belief system with three major components: first, the assumption in your own power to form your life and your future better; second, the belief that negative events in your life are not permanent, personal or pervasive; and third, the assumption that positive events in your life are permanent, personal and pervasive. Methods to assess optimism have been developed using both theoretical and empirical systems, such as different versions of the Life Orientation Test and the Attributional Type Questionnaire, which assesses optimism in terms of explanatory style.

Research Problem
What is the nature of relationship between the variable's procrastination, study habits and optimistic attitude among college students?

Objectives
- To study the relationship between procrastination and study habits among college students.
- To study the relationship between procrastination and optimistic attitude among college students.
- To study the relationship between study habits and optimistic attitude among college students.
- To study the difference on procrastination, study habits and optimistic attitude among college students based on gender.

Hypothesis
- There will be no significant relationship between the variable's procrastination and study habits among college students.
- There will be no significant relationship between the variable's procrastination and optimism among college students.
- There will be no significant relationship between the variable's study habits and optimism among college students.
- There will be no significant difference on procrastination among college students based on gender.
- There will be no significant difference on study habits among college students based on gender.
- There will be no significant difference on optimistic attitude among college students based on gender

Sample and Sampling
A sample of 223 college students (n=223), 67 males and 156 females between the age range of 18-26 was taken for the study based on the exclusion and inclusion criteria of the study. The sample was collected using convenience sampling, which is a method of non-probability sampling in which a sample is taken from a portion of the population that is close to hand.

Inclusion Criteria
- College students who are residing in the Ernakulum district.
- College students within the age range of 18 to 26 years will be taken as the sample.

Exclusion Criteria
- People who have major mental illness.
- People who have no sufficient knowledge about English language cannot be considered.
- People with serious health issues.
- People who are taking medication for long time.

Tools
- **Informed consent form**: Informed consent form contains details of the study and consent form of the participant. Consent form will be given to the participant and he/she has to ensure the participation with free will.
- **Socio-demographic data sheet**: The socio-demographic data sheet includes information such as gender, age and domicile.
- **Procrastination Scale (Lay, 1986)**: This questionnaire contains 20 items and it measures the procrastination of the individual. Points are given based on five points where 1 means extremely uncharacteristic and 5 states extremely characteristics. Reversed key items are 3, 4, 6, 8, 11, 13, 14, 15, 18 and 20. The reliability of the scale is 0.82.
- **Palsane and Sharma Study Habits Inventory (PSSHI) (Plasane M.N, Sharma 1990)**: This inventory comprises 45 statements in total which pertain to the study habits of students. The study habits of the individual covers mainly the reading habits, learning techniques, time schedule, physical conditions, examination, evaluation etc. The scoring is done as follows: For "Always" or "Mostly" responses score of 2 is awarded, whereas 1 and 0 are to be given for "Sometimes" or "Never" responses respectively. In case of statement No's 6, 9, 13, 15, 24, 26, 34, 36, 37, and 42 the weightage of scoring is reversed and it as 0,1 and 2 for "Always", "Sometimes" and "Never" responses respectively. The score range of the questionnaire is between 0 and 90, and a score of 60 and above reflects a desirable level of study habits, a score of 31-60 indicates relatively good or moderate level of study habits, and a score of 30 or below refers to an undesirable level of study habits. Higher score indicates good study habits. The reliability of the scale is 0.88.
- **Revised Life Orientation Test (LOT-R) (Scheier & colleagues, 1994)**: This scale contains 10 items and it measures the optimistic nature of a person. This scale contains 4 fillers (2, 5, 6 and 8th questions) and third, seventh and ninth questions are reversely scored. Higher the score, then the person will be more optimistic. Each item is scored 0-4. The possible score range is 6-24. If the score of the participant in between 19-24, then high optimism is noted, between 14-18 moderate optimism and between 0-13 low optimism. The reliability of the scale is 0.072.

Procedure
The participants in this study were selected based on the inclusion-exclusion criteria. Informed consent was obtained from all the respondents before collecting the data. Three questionnaires regarding procrastination, study habits and optimism were administered to them along with the socio-demographic data sheet. The scale was administered to the participants through Google Forms. The respondents were given assurance based on the ethical guidelines of this study as well.

Data Analysis
The data obtained included responses from 223 college students, 67 males and 156 females. The data was the processed in Microsoft Excel and the statistical analysis was done using IBM SPSS. The first step for the analysis was to eliminate any sort of data that did not meet the criteria for inclusion. Non genuine data was not considered for the study. The Shapiro-Wilk test was used to determine the data's normality, and non-parametric tests were used for further data processing based on the quality of the data.

The process of data analysis was then done in 2 sections where the first section was used to find the frequency distributions and measures of central tendency based on the data from the socio-demographic data sheet which included age, gender and domicile. The second section included descriptive statistics to provide information regarding the variables chosen. It includes Spearman's correlation test to describe the relationship among the variables. Along with Spearman's correlation test, Mann-Whitney U test and independent sample t-test was also used to find out if there was any significant difference in the responses given by male and female participants of the study.

RESULT
The results of the data analysis that was used to describe the sample and address the research questions and associated hypotheses are presented in this chapter.

Sample Description
Table 1 Information related to the gender of the participants

Gender	Frequency	Percent
Female	156	70.0
Male	67	30.0
Total	223	100.0

Table 1 shows the result from the socio-demographic data sheet corresponding to gender. The total included 223 respondents out of which 156 were female respondents and 67 were male respondents.

Table 2 Information related to the age of the participants

Age	Frequency	Percent
18-20	181	81.2
21-23	37	16.6
24-26	5	2.2
Total	223	100

Table 2 shows the result from the socio-demographic data sheet corresponding to the age of the respondents. Majority of the respondents are of 18-20 age range which is followed by 21-23 age range. The least number of responses was obtained from 24-26 age ranged respondents.

Table 3 Information related to domicile of the participants

Domicile	Frequency	Percent
Rural	58	26.0
Semi-urban	101	45.3
Urban	64	28.7
Total	223	100.0

Table 3 shows the result from the socio-demographic data sheet corresponding to domicile. The total included 223 respondents out of which 58 were rural, 101 were semi-urban and 64 were urban. Majority of the respondents are from semi-urban domicile. The percentage of rural, semi-urban and urban is 26.0, 45.3 and 28.7 respectively.

Table 4 Reliability of all the scales used

Variable	Cronbach's Alpha	No of Items
Procrastination	.644	20
Study habits	.809	45
Optimism	.620	6

Table 4 shows the reliability of all the scales used in this study. For the study habits variable, the reliability score is 0.809 which indicates high reliability. The reliability of procrastination is .644 which indicates average level of reliability. For the variable optimism reliability is .620 which also shows average level of reliability. Among three variables study habits has the highest reliability while comparing the other two.

Table 5 Normality test for Procrastination

	Shapiro-Wilk		
	Statistic	df	Sig.
Procrastination scale total	.916	223	.000

a. Lilliefors Significance Correction

Table 5 shows results of normality scores using Shapiro-Wilk test for procrastination which is 0.000 and it indicates that the data is not normally distributed as it falls below 0.05.

Table 6 Normality test for Study Habits

	Shapiro-Wilk		
	Statistic	df	Sig.
PSSHI total	.993	223	.376

a. Lilliefors Significance Correction

Table 6 shows the results of normality using Shapiro-Wilk test for Study habits which is 0.376 and it indicates that the data is normally distributed.

Table 7 Normality test for Optimism

	Shapiro-Wilk		
	Statistic	df	Sig.
LOT-R total	.982	223	.006

a. Lilliefors Significance Correction

Table 7 shows results of normality scores using Shapiro-Wilk test of optimism which is 0.006 and it indicates that the data is not normally distributed.

Table 8 Mean and standard deviation for Procrastination, Study habits and Optimism

Variable	Mean	Std Deviation
Procrastination	58.543	7.294
Study Habits	49.193	9.865
Optimism	13.583	2.540

Table 8 shows the mean and standard deviation scores of each scale. According to the results of the descriptive statistics, the sample has scored an average of 58.543, 49.193 and 13.583 for procrastination, study habits and optimism. For Study habits scale i.e., Palsane and Sharma Study Habits Inventory (PSSHI), the maximum score that can be obtained by an individual is 90. However, the mean score obtained by the population is 49.19 which means that there is relatively good or moderate level of study habits in the population. The mean score of procrastination scale (Lay, 1986) is 58.54 which indicate a moderate level in the population. For the Optimism scale i.e. Revised Life Orientation Test (LOT-R) the maximum score that can be obtained by an individual is 24 and, in this population, the mean score obtained for this scale is 13.583 which indicates a fairly moderate level of optimism.

H1: There will be no significant relationship between the variable's procrastination and study habits among college students.

Table 9 Spearman's rank correlation between the variables Procrastination and Study Habits.

Variable	Procrastination
Study habits	-.294**

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table 9 shows the results of spearman's rank correlation between procrastination and study habits. The results indicate that there is a strong negative correlation between procrastination and study habits (-.294**) at 0.01 level. This means that as the procrastination level increases, the study habits decreases. Thus, the hypothesis i.e., there will be no significant relationship between the variables procrastination and study habits among college students is rejected.

H2: There will be no significant relationship between the variable's procrastination and optimism among college students.

Table 10 Spearman's correlation between the variables Procrastination and Optimism

Variable	Procrastination
Optimism	-.101

Table 10 shows the correlation using spearman's rank correlation between procrastination and optimism among college students. The results indicate that there is no significant correlation between procrastination and optimism (r= -.101). Thus the hypothesis i.e. there will be no significant relationship between the variables procrastination and optimism among college students is accepted.

H3: There will be no significant relationship between the variable's study habits and optimism among college students.

Table 11 Spearman's correlation between the variables Study Habits and Optimism.

Variable	Study habits
Optimism	.221**

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table 11 shows spearman's rank correlation between study habits and optimism. The results indicate that there is a significant strong positive correlation between study habits and

optimism (r= .221**) at 0.01 level. This means that as the level of study habits increases in an individual then the optimistic attitude also increases, it goes hand in hand. Thus the hypothesis i.e. there will be no significant relationship between the variables study habits and optimism among college students is rejected.

H4: There will be no significant difference on procrastination among college students based on gender.

Table 12 Gender differences using Mann-Whitney U Test for Procrastination.

Variable	Group	N	Mean rank	U	Sig.
Procrastination	Female	156	109.70	4867.500	.415
	Male	67	117.35		

Table 12 shows that there is no gender difference in the mean scores for procrastination. The significance level is .415 thus it indicates that there is no significant difference between two genders. Hence the hypothesis that is there will be no significant difference on procrastination based on gender is accepted.

H5: There will be no significant difference on study habits among college students based on gender.

Table 13 Gender differences using independent sample t-test for Study Habits.

	Group	Mean	t	df	Sig.(2 tailed)
Study habits	Female	50.987	4.305	221	.000
	Male	45.015			

Table 13 shows that there is significant difference in the mean scores of study habits. As the significance level falls down below 0.05 (here sig= .000), we can say that there is a significant difference between two genders. Females have a higher mean score than males. Hence the hypothesis that is there will be no significant difference on study habits based on gender is rejected.

H6: There will be no significant difference on optimistic attitude among college students based on gender.

Table 14 Gender differences using Mann-Whitney U Test for Optimism.

a	Group	N	Mean rank	U	Sig.
Optimism	Female	156	118.46	4218.500	.021
	Male	67	96.96		

The Mann-Whitney U test for optimism shows that there is a significant difference between the two genders. The significance level is 0.021, as it falls below 0.05 it indicates that significant difference exists. Here, females have higher mean score than males. Hence the hypothesis that is there will be no significant difference on optimism based on gender is rejected.

DISCUSSION

The aim of the study was to understand the relation between the variables procrastination, study habits and optimism among college students and to see if the level of study habits and optimism had an effect on the level of procrastination that was being used by the sample.

This study included 223 participants where 67 of them were male respondents and 156 of them were female respondents. . Majority of the respondents are of 18-20 age range which is followed by 21-23 age range. The least number of responses was obtained from 24-26 age ranged respondents. Majority of the respondents are from semi-urban domicile. Spearman's rank correlation, Mann-Whitney U Test and independent sample t-test were used to test the hypothesis and the significant correlations were taken in account.

The reliability scores for the various scales were obtained. For the study habits variable, the reliability score is 0.809 which indicates high reliability. The reliability of procrastination is .644 which indicates average level of reliability. For the variable optimism reliability is .620 which also shows average level of reliability. Among three variables study habits has the highest reliability while comparing the other two.

The test for normality using Shapiro-Wilk test was done for all the three scales. The normality score for procrastination is 0.000 and it indicates that the data is not normally distributed as it falls below 0.05. The normality score for Study habits is 0.092 and it indicates that the data is normally distributed. For optimism it is 0.006 and it indicates that the data is not normally distributed.

Procrastination is the unnecessary postponing or avoiding tasks that must be completed. Study habits according to (Hussain,2000) is broad, as it combines nearly all other sub-concepts such as study attitude, study methods and study skills, on academic achievement and good study pattern. Optimism is an individual difference variable that reflects the extent to which people hold generalized favourable expectancies for their future. The results noticed that academic procrastination had a negative correlation.

In order to find out the frequency of variables procrastination, study habits and optimism descriptive statistics was used. According to the results of the descriptive statistics obtained, the participants showed relatively good or moderate level of study habits in the population for Study habits scale i.e. (PSSHI). The mean score of procrastination scale (Lay, 1986) indicates a moderate level in the population. For the Optimism scale i.e. (LOT-R) the mean score indicates a fairly moderate level of optimism.

To find the correlation between the variables procrastination, study habits and optimism spearman's rank correlation was used. Spearman's rank correlation is a non-parametric test that is used to measure the degree of association between the two variables. It is a technique which can be used to summarise the strength and direction (negative or positive) of a relationship between two variables. Here the results of correlation between procrastination and study habits show that there is a negative correlation. Whereas the relationship between study habits and optimism showed a significant positive correlation, and for procrastination and optimism no correlation was found out. Mann-Whitney U Test and independent sample t test were used to find out the significant difference between genders.

The first hypothesis states that there will be no significant relationship between the variables procrastination and study habits among college students. Spearman's test was used for correlation. The test by using spearman's rank correlation indicated that among the variables procrastination and study habits there is a strong negative correlation. This means that as the procrastination level increases, the study habits decrease. Thus, the hypothesis that is there will be no significant relationship between the variables procrastination and study habits is rejected. A study conducted by Balkis (2013) showed that academic procrastination was

negatively related to rational beliefs of studying, academic life satisfaction and academic achievement. The finding of this study for procrastination and study habits goes in accordance with the findings of the former study by Balkis.

The second hypothesis states that there will be no significant relationship between the variables procrastination and optimism among college students. Spearman's test was used for correlation and the results indicate that there is no significant correlation between procrastination and optimism. Thus, the hypothesis that is there will be no significant relationship between the variables procrastination and optimism is accepted. There are not much research finding regarding the variables procrastination and optimism. There was no relevant research among these variables in the Indian settings. A study conducted by Khanbabayi, Mirmazaheri and Dorosti (2018) showed the relationship between procrastination and optimism in undergraduate nursing students of medical sciences universities of Northwest Iran. It was observed that an increase in optimism led to the neglect of the student's study that is negative significant relationship was identified. Thus in Indian settings the result may change due to culture difference, difference in the school or college setting and training provided etc.

The third hypothesis states that there will be no significant relationship between the variables study habits and optimism among college students. Spearman's test was used for correlation. The test by using spearman's rank correlation indicated that among the variables procrastination and study habits there is a strong positive correlation which means that the tendency of using both these variables go hand in hand. This means that as the level of study habits increases in an individual then the optimistic attitude also increases. Thus, the hypothesis that is there will be no significant relationship between the variables study habits and optimism is rejected. This finding is similar to the results of previous studies.

The fourth hypothesis states that there will be no significant difference on procrastination among college students based on gender. To test this hypothesis, Mann-Whitney U test was used. The result shows that there is no significant gender difference in the mean scores of procrastination. Hence the hypothesis that is there will be no significant difference on procrastination based on gender is accepted.

The fifth hypothesis states that there will be no significant difference on study habits among college students based on gender. Independent sample t-test was used to test this hypothesis. As the significance level falls down below 0.05, we can say that there is a significant difference between the two genders. Females have a higher mean score than males. The findings of this study for study habits goes in accordance with the findings of the former study by Illahi and Khandai (2015) and it has been found that study habits of college female students are slightly higher than the male. Thus, the hypothesis that is there will be no significant difference on study habits based on gender is rejected.

The sixth hypothesis states that there will be no significant difference on optimism among college students based on gender. To test this hypothesis, Mann-Whitney U test was used. The result indicates that significant difference exists. Here females tend to have higher mean scores than males. Thus, the hypothesis that is there will be no significant difference on optimism based on gender is rejected. The findings of this study for optimism goes in accordance with the findings of the former study by Jacobsen et al. (2014) where males tend to use more optimism, in the Indian setting, a difference in optimism is seen where females use more of this optimistic attitude.

CONCLUSION

Procrastination is a common occurrence in college students all over the world, with alarmingly high rates. Procrastination is depicted in a variety of ways by the majority of them. Procrastination is the unnecessary postponing or avoiding tasks that must be completed. Study habits are the behaviours used when preparing for tests or learning academic material. Study habits according to (Hussain,2000) is broad, as it combines nearly all other sub- concepts such as study attitude, study methods and study skills, on academic achievement and good study pattern. The term optimism refers to an emotional and psychological perspective of life. A kind of favourable expectancy among college students makes them more comfortable to deal their daily challenges. The aim of this study is to understand the relation between procrastination, study habits and optimistic attitude among college students.

The study concluded that there is a significant correlation between procrastination and study habits and also with study habits and optimism. But there is no correlation between procrastination and optimism. Also, this study implies that there is a significant difference in gender for study habits and optimism but for procrastination gender difference doesn't exist. By understanding the relationship between procrastination, study habits and optimism overall performance of a student can be analysed i.e., whether it is positive or negative. Thereafter more support and different workshops can be conducted to avoid procrastinating tendencies and cognitive behaviour therapy for procrastination is effective treatment for eliminating procrastination and getting on track to achieve ones goals.

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Conflict of Interest
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