

Procrastination and Locus of Control among Postgraduate Students

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ABSTRACT

The present study attempts to assess the relationship between procrastination and locus of control among college students of Karnataka. The data was collected using the Procrastination scale and Rotter's Locus of control scale from a sample of 150 college students doing various postgraduate courses between the age- range of 21 to 29. The study found that there was significant relationship between their level of procrastination and locus of control and the correlation was found to be positive. The implications of reducing procrastination and improving one's locus of control among college students are discussed.

Keywords: Procrastination, Locus of Control

Time provides equal opportunity for all by giving the same number of hours, minutes and seconds to each one of us. It is our choice whether to use it wisely or keep delaying our activities. We all are aware of the saying, "Never put off for tomorrow what you can do today" still we delay our activities saying, "I can do it tomorrow, have a lot of time." The process of delaying or postponing an activity is termed as procrastination. As it is the time of pandemic all over, the students are subject to online mode of education which might lead to increased tendency for procrastination. As they have enough time available, they might take it for granted and delay it intentionally or unintentionally.

Procrastination

Procrastination refers to the act of needlessly delaying a task until the point of some discomfort – a behavior problem that many adults experience on a regular basis (Janssen, Carton, 1999; Ferrari, Johnson & McCown, 1995).

According to Klein, the word procrastination is derived from a Latin word in which 'pro' means, "forward, forth or in favor of" and 'crastinus' means, "of tomorrow" (Steel, 2007, p. 66). Procrastination can also be defined as an irrational delay of behavior, where one delays beginning and/or completing tasks, intentionally postpones things though knowing that nothing good comes from it (Steel, 2007; Dervishalijaj, Xhelili, 2014). According to Noran (2000), procrastination is the avoidance of something that a person has to do. People tend to

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choose leisure over work and end up postponing the activity. The procrastinator knows exactly what he should be doing, he is capable of doing it, he is trying to do it, and yet he can't get it done. He wastes time engaging himself on activities that are less important or more entertaining than the job he has to do. It may be that the procrastinator does not evaluate and organize time in a rationale way (Noran 2000; Dervishaliaj, Xhelili, 2014).

The focus of many research studies are on the level of academic procrastination among students. The focus of present research is the level of procrastination among postgraduate students. Ellis & Knaus (1977) found that 70% of students procrastinate regularly, while Solomon & Rothblum (1984) found that 50% of students who procrastinate do it at least half of the time, (Dervishaliaj & Xhelili, 2014; Janssen & Carton, 1999). Research findings indicate that the longer the students are in college, the more they tend to procrastinate (Semb, Glick & Spencer, 1979; Janssen & Carton, 1999), although most students perceive such behavior as a problem that they would like to eliminate (Solomon & Rothblum, 1984; Janssen & Carton, 1999). According to O'Brien 80-90% of students procrastinate (as cited by Steel, p. 65) and Day et al. estimated that 50% of students procrastinate consistently and problematically (as cited by Steel, p. 65). In general people are aware that procrastinating is wrong and harmful to them, and according to O'Brien 95% of procrastinators wish to reduce it (as cited by Steel, p. 65). Procrastinating has negative effects on students. High levels of academic procrastination among students are related to low academic achievements (Beck, Koons & Migram, 2000; Dervishaliaj & Xhelili, 2014).

Studies have associated procrastination with different variables, like low self-esteem, inability to complete a task, time management difficulties, difficulties in postponing gratification (Ferrari & Emmons 1995; Ferrari & Emmons 1994; Effert & Ferrari, 1989), high levels of anxiety and fear related to failure (Popoola, 2005), low self-efficacy, high levels of self-consciousness, self-critics and perfectionism (Effert & Ferrari, 1989; Noran 2000), and difficulties in self-regulation (Lee 2005; Senecal et al 1995). Solomon and Rothblum (1984) associated procrastination with irrational fear of success or failure, which, according to them, leads to neurotic avoidance of the situation (Dervishaliaj & Xhelili, 2014). . People who procrastinate are easily distracted emotionally, they are anxious, don't prefer cognitive complexity in tasks, 3 and tend to make external, unstable attribution (Solomon & Rothblum 1984). Other studies associate procrastination with personality traits. Steel (2007) explains that procrastination has a certain cross-temporal and situational stability. Milgram and Tenne (2000) studied personality traits related to task avoidant procrastination, and found that specifically the personality trait of locus of control affects how much a person procrastinates.

Locus of Control

Locus of control refers to the degree to which people believe that they, as opposed to external forces beyond their influence, have control over events in their lives. The concept was put forward by Julian B. Rotter in 1954. A person's locus is considered either internal- belief that one can control one's own life or external- belief that life is controlled by factors outside. The expectancy value theory is the base of locus of control. According to the theory, an individual's engagement in a behavior depends on what he expects from the behavior and the value his expectations have. Researches show that students tend to have an internal locus of control when it comes to academic achievements, and they tend to have an external locus of control when they face failure or lack of achievements (Garden et. al. 2004; Ferrari et.al. 1992; Dervishaliaj & Xhelili, 2014). , Researches have also associated academic achievements with locus of control. Students who have high levels of internal locus of

control have also a better academic performance than students who have high levels of external locus of control (Judge et.al 2001; Ferrari et.al. 1992; Dervishalij & Xhelili, 2014). The purpose of this study is to find the relation between procrastination and locus of control among postgraduate students. Here procrastination is not limited to academics but also other activities.

OVERVIEW OF LITERATURE

Eileen Debra Rudnick conducted a study on the effect of locus of control on the procrastination behavior of college students in 1990. Two aspects of procrastination—delaying of a task and psychological distress that result from that behaviour, and locus of control in terms of internal or external generalized belief were investigated. The sample included 267 undergraduate students between the age ranges of 17 to 48 at Pittsburg State University. The tools used were The Adult Nowicki- Duke locus of control scale and procrastination assessment scale. The analysis of data was done using Pearson correlation and an analysis of variance. The results indicate that individuals with external locus of control self-report higher degree of procrastination and higher degree of psychological distress due to the behavior than individuals with internal locus of control.

A study was conducted on Academic Procrastination: Personality correlates with Myers-Briggs Types, Self-efficacy and Academic Locus of control in 1992 by Joseph R. Ferrari, James T. Parker and Carolyn B. Ware. A sample of 319 students doing degree programs at a small college were asked to complete the Myer-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI), measures of academic procrastination, self-efficacy and locus of control. Task aversiveness was also negatively related to general self-efficacy. Multiple regression analyses showed that only general self-efficacy was predictive of procrastination frequency, reasons and task aversiveness. Results suggested that among traditional age academically disadvantaged students procrastination tendencies may not be identified using MBTI or locus of control.

Tracy Janssen and John S. Carton had conducted a study on effects of locus of control and task difficulty on procrastination in the year 1999. The research was done on forty-two college students who were administered an academic locus of control scale and a task that was similar to a college homework assignment. The students were randomly given 1 of 2 task difficulty level. The results regarding the task difficulty was not much significant but results relating to locus of control were significant. The analysis indicated that students with internal locus of control expectancies began to work on their assignments sooner than the students who had external locus of control expectancies. Also students with internal locus of control submitted their work before the one's with external locus of control. These results are based on J.B. Rotter's social learning theory.

An investigation of academic procrastination, locus of control and emotional intelligence was done by M. Engin DENİZ, Zeliha TRAŞ, Didem AYDOĞAN in the year 2009. The focus of this study was to understand the effect of emotional intelligence on the academic procrastination and locus of control tendencies of a group of university students. The sample included 435 university students with 273 female students and 162 male students who were randomly selected from the population of Selçuk University students. The age range considered was 17-21 years. The tools used included a personal information form, the Emotional intelligence scale, the Academic procrastination scale and the Locus of Control scale. The results showed that the sub-scales of Emotional intelligence scale, adaptability and coping with stress, are highly correlated with the student's academic procrastination tendency scores. Also it was found that two sub-scales of Emotional intelligence scale,

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adaptability and general mood, could significantly predict the student's locus of control scores. Lastly, a negative correlation was found between emotional intelligence skills and both academic procrastination and locus of control.

Figen Akça conducted an investigation into the self-handicapping behaviors of undergraduates in terms of academic procrastination, the locus of control and academic success. The aim of the study was to investigate the relationship between self-handicapping, academic procrastination, locus of control and academic success and to determine whether these variables predicted self-handicapping behavior. The sample consisted of 263 undergraduates studying in different departments of the Faculty of Education at Uludağ University. The Self-Handicapping Scale (Akın, 2012), Academic Procrastination Scale (Çakıcı, 2003), and Locus of Control Scale (Dağ, 1991) were used as data collection tools. Pearson correlation analysis and multi linear regression were used to analyze the data. A positively significant relationship was determined between self-handicapping, the external locus of control and academic procrastination. After regression analysis, it was concluded that academic procrastination, the locus of control and academic success predicted self-handicapping behavior.

METHODOLOGY

The study of procrastination and locus of control among postgraduate students is a correlational study. It's a quantitative study that establishes the relationship between variables in the study. The study checks the relationship between procrastination and locus of control.

Aim

The study aims to find the relationship between procrastination and locus of control among postgraduate students.

Objectives

1. To understand the relationship between procrastination and locus of control.
2. To know whether internal or external locus of control is more in students.

Hypothesis

There is a significant relationship between procrastination and locus of control among post graduate students of Karnataka.

Design of the study

The correlational design as the focus of the study is to find the relationship between procrastination and locus of control.

Sample

The sample taken for the study includes postgraduate students doing their course under any of the disciplines. It consists of 140 students (N=140) aged between 21-29 years. The students included both male and female postgraduate students attending online classes during the pandemic from various colleges of Karnataka.

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Tools used

Variables	Tools	Developer	Likert Type	Validity/ Reliability
Procrastination	Procrastination scale	Bruce W Tuckman (1991)	4-point scale	Alpha score of 0.90 Concurrent validity
Locus of control	Rotter's Locus of Control scale	Julian Rotter (1966)		Test- retest: 0.55-0.83 Internal consistency- 0.65-0.79

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The collected data were scored, tabulated using SPSS. In turn, the outcomes or results were interpreted based on the hypothesis with the help of inferential statistics. The results obtained are presented as well as discussed as follows

Table 1: Frequency table

Locus of control	n
External	27
Both external & internal	95
Internal	18

Table 1 shows the number of participants under each condition of locus of control i.e 27 of them have external locus of control. 95 have both internal and external locus of control and 18 have internal locus of control.

H1: There is significant relationship between procrastination and locus of control.

Table 2: Scores of correlations between procrastination and locus of control

Variable	N	m	SD	r	p
PCTN	140	86.657	11.270	0.185	0.029
LOC	140	11.414	3.562	0.185	0.029

*Note: PCTN-Procrastination; LOC- Locus of control; *p < 0.05*

The result for the current research suggests a significant and positive correlation between the variables, procrastination and locus of control. These findings show that level of procrastination is high in people who have external locus of control.

The study done by Milgram & Tenne (2000) explains that people with external locus Procrastination and Locus of Control of control are more likely to procrastinate than those with internal locus of control. People with external locus of control tend to believe that their success depends on external factors rather than their effort. Thus, they tend to postpone their efforts and engagements for later. According to the study, the two variables have low level of correlation between them. This may be due to the various limitations of the study. The population may not adequately be represented by the sample in the study, number of participants was limited, and only one sample was employed. Comparison between men and women, different postgraduate courses would provide different findings. Other variables that might affect locus of control could be studied along with the same. Most of the participants

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reported both external and internal levels of locus of control. No previous studies have shown any relation of this with procrastination. Participants would have found most of the situations appropriate or would have found the questions difficult to understand. Procrastination is a common phenomenon among students. During the time, when we are facing the pandemic, the tendency for procrastination is more as the entire education is happening online and that would lead to delayed response to academic activities. Students with external locus of control have high level of procrastination as they relate everything to external sources rather considering their efforts. Thus, the hypothesis, there is significant relationship between procrastination and locus of control and that it's more in people with external locus of control is proved.

CONCLUSION

- There is significant relationship between procrastination and locus of control among postgraduate students.
- The number of post graduate students having both internal and external locus of control is high.

Limitation

The study is not without any limitations. Taking a broad universe into the study, the size of the sample limits the extent to which the results can be generalized. The population is not adequately represented in the study. Gender study was not conducted and only one geographical area was focused.

Implication

It was found that people with external locus of control have high level of procrastination as they attribute all that happens to the external environment. Due to this issue most of their work is delayed. People can focus on changing such a behavior through internal motivation and setting short term goals that could be completed daily.

Suggestions for further research

Hence, it can be suggested to expand the geographical area of the study. The population to be studied can be changed to get a wider perspective. More variables can be added on to the present study. Experimental approach can be used to study the area.

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Conflict of Interest

The author(s) declared no conflict of interest.

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