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Research Paper

# Analysis Between Levels of Procrastination and Occupational Stress among Working Professionals Amidst COVID-19 Pandemic

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## ABSTRACT

This present research aims to investigate the relationship between procrastination and occupational stress among Indian working professionals during COVID-19 while working from home. The sample size selected is 106 from 26 Indian states. The data is recorded based on the Assessment of Procrastination and Perceived Stress Rating Scale (APPOSRS). APPOSRS Likert scale consists of 20 items i.e., 10 items evaluate procrastination and 10 items evaluate occupational stress. The reliability for Cronbach's Alpha is 0.801, Spearman-Brown Coefficient is 0.664 and Guttman Split Half Coefficient is 0.657. The mean for procrastination is 34.17 with a standard deviation of 5.66. The mean for occupational stress is 32.81 with a standard deviation of 6.74. Findings suggest a positive correlation between procrastination and occupational stress significant at 0.01 levels. (Pearson Co-relation .497)

***Keywords:*** *Procrastination, Occupational stress, COVID-19, Work from Home, Indian working professional, Likert Scale*

The outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic has led to persistent severe and diabolical changes in terms of health and lifestyle. Its widespread effect has not only left its mark in the aspects of physical difficulties related to human lives but also has shown a significant effect on the psychological aspect of individuals across India. The global epidemic giving rise to the work from the situation has exposed the working professionals to the brinks of occupational stress and procrastination.

### *Occupational Stress and Impact*

The definition of occupational stress as stated by The National Institute of Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) is a harmful physical and emotional response occurring when the job requirements are unable to meet the potentialities, facilities, or desires of the employees. Occupational Stress is a condition yielding change within people to deviate from their normal functioning due to the interaction with people and their jobs (Behr and Newman 1978). Job stress has been indicated to interfere directly with the mental hygiene of

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employees worldwide. Aldwin (1994) has stated insomnia, anxiety, tension, headache, backache, ingestion, and constipation as symptoms occurring due to work stress. Lluminari(2004) found working under stressful conditions may cater to experiencing symptoms of heart and cardiovascular problems, issues of anxiety, depression, demoralization, and substance abuse.

***Procrastination and Impact***

Procrastination is a phenomenon associated with voluntary behavioral or decisional delay. Klein (1917) highlighted the Latin origin of Procrastination with "pro" meaning forth or in favor of and "crastinus" meaning tomorrow. The nature of procrastination lies in postponing. Procrastination is a phenomenon involving delaying the beginning or completing of an intended planned task (Lay and Silverman 1996). Milgram (1998) proposed it affects an individual's daily schedule negatively. It reduces self-control and self-regulation thereby leading to an unpleasant experience. Procrastination is associated with certain issues like neuroticism, depression, anxiety, impulsivity, aversion, task delay distractibility, achievement motivation, and poor performance (Dumitrescu 2011)

***Procrastination and Work Stress***

Beheshtifar (2011) stated procrastination is a self-handicapping behavior that leads to wastage of time as well as poor performance. Findings of the study suggested procrastination to be one of the major determinants for the increase in occupational stress. Procrastination has been reviewed as a self–regulatory failure and has been identified as the least understood minor human misery that leads to complex psychological conditions associated directly with lower levels of health, wealth, and wellbeing (Abbasi and Alghamdi 2015).Tice and Baumeister (1997) proposed procrastination indicated short-term benefits among students with an increase in higher stress and high proneness to illness in a long-term duration of time. Metin(2018) suggested that performance and procrastination were negatively related. Work characteristics have been linked with workplace procrastination along with subjective cognitive appraisal and self-regulatory behavior. The emergence of workplace procrastination can be understood either from a differential psychology perspective or from the situational perspective (Prem, Scheel, Weigelt, Hoffman, and Korunka 2018). Mohsin and Ayub (2014) indicated a negative correlation between procrastination and job satisfaction. Results also showed procrastination and delay of gratification to be significant predictors of job satisfaction. In an integrated attempt to study the link between workload and procrastination, findings suggested psychological detachment acted as a mediator between the relationship of workload and fatigue. The study also highlighted the role of fatigue acting as a meditator between the relationship of psychological detachment and procrastination with the workload being an indirect determinant related to procrastination. Furthermore, occupational stressors played a significant association with procrastination (Dearmond, Matthew, and Bunk 2014). Hen (2018) studied that the nature of the work is also related to procrastination. It stated tasks that are commonly performed daily holds a higher probability to be procrastinated due to a lack of professional ambiguity.

***Purpose of the Research***

This research aims to analyze the relationship between levels of procrastination and occupational stress level in a work from the home situation that will hold its relevance in the field of applied, clinical and organizational psychology. The background of the study would cater to underline the essential planning required for the modification of organizational

sectors and firms to increase labor efficiency and individual effectiveness among employees. With the sudden change of uncertainty and unfamiliarity in lifestyle from functioning in the workplace of working employees to switching to the work from home situation, this recent study being few among one of its kind would not only bring into focus the recognition of co-existing stressors found in a homely work environment but also help in understanding the consequence in the lives of working employees. The study would further help in the enactment of stress prevention and stress reduction policies to enable the development of an improved alliance between the employer and the employee by creating a prerogative plan to overcome procrastination to improve the likelihood of an employee's work engagement and allow him to respond favorably to one's organizational and personal goals. The study would further create a constructive base for the implementation of further studies and research based on similar research problems in the upcoming days of future.

## METHODOLOGY

### *Including Parts*

The data was collected based on the demographic regions of the South Asian Country of India. The participant from 28 existing Indian states was included in this study.

### *Objectives*

The objective of this study is to analyze the relationship between the existing levels of individual procrastination and the levels of occupational stress among Indian working professionals when exposed to a work-from-home environment.

### *Hypothesis*

The tentative hypothesis for this study as proposed states that there will be a significant relationship between procrastination and occupational stress in the existing participants.

### *Participants*

An accurate number of 106 participants were selected for this study. The participants were of the Indian Nationality belonging from the existing caste, creed, religion, and ethnic groups of India. The participants were between the age group of 23-30 years and have been categorically labeled as working profession based on their current occupational status. The study included participants from all identified gender groups in India. Confidentiality regarding the information provided by participants was maintained.

### *Materials*

A gender-neutral online questionnaire was framed for the recording of data collection. The language of the questionnaire was limited to English. The language used was kept at the basic level for simplification of meaning and proper understanding of the participants. The gender-neutral questionnaire consists of 20 items on 5 point rating scale. The first 10 items focused on assessing occupational stress of working professionals and the last 10 items focused on assessing the involvement of participants in procrastination. The question was framed based on the construction of the Likert Scale. Each participant was limited to access the questionnaire only once to maintain the empirical value of the received responses. The scale used is the Assessment of Procrastination and Perceived Stress Rating Scale (APPOSRS).

***Data Collection***

Under the COVID-19 guidelines, the method of data collection was done through the online mode. Requisite instructions for participation were stated in the questionnaire itself. The participants were instructed to respond in adherence to the scale that defined their situation the best and was duly advised to report the authors directly in case of any inquiry or inconvenience related to the questionnaire Confidentiality regarding the collection of information from the respondents was maintained.

***Scoring***

In compliance with the Likert Scale, 5 scales: Strongly Agree, Agree, Neutral, Disagree, Strongly Disagree were selected. The values associated with the scales are: Strongly Agree – 5, Agree – 4, Neutral – 3, Disagree – 2, Strongly Disagree – 1 respectively. The values were set to be in descending order and no negative scores were allocated to the scales.

***Variables***

The variables selected for this study are namely: Procrastination and Occupational Stress. The variables chosen are co-relational.

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The data were analyzed by using descriptive (mean, standard deviation) and inferential statistics (correlation coefficient). To validate the scale reliability and validity were performed. The analysis was based on 106 respondents on 20 items. The Cronbach Alpha for 20 items is .801. The result table was shown below (table1)

***Table 1 Reliability Statistics***

| Cronbach's Alpha | N of Items |
|---|---|
| .801 | 20 |

The content validity of the scale was done by analyzing the item validity by performing item-total statistics. All 20 items showed a positive correlation in the corrected item-total correlation. The result table of content validity was shown below (table2).

***Table 2 Item – Total Statistics***

| | Scale Mean if Item Deleted | Scale Variance if Item Deleted | Corrected Item-Total Correlation | Squared Multiple Correlation | Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| os1 | 63.67 | 106.985 | .234 | .561 | .801 |
| os2 | 63.42 | 107.256 | .261 | .564 | .799 |
| os3 | 63.72 | 106.738 | .306 | .564 | .796 |
| os4 | 63.54 | 112.118 | .071 | .589 | .810 |
| os5 | 63.57 | 108.629 | .194 | .591 | .803 |
| os6 | 63.63 | 110.901 | .111 | .656 | .808 |
| os7 | 63.90 | 102.284 | .420 | .509 | .789 |
| os8 | 63.44 | 104.230 | .438 | .460 | .788 |
| os9 | 63.59 | 103.024 | .491 | .372 | .785 |

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| os10 | 63.16 | 105.984 | .423 | .396 | .790 |
| pr1 | 64.16 | 101.145 | .544 | .579 | .782 |
| pr2 | 63.62 | 103.932 | .464 | .368 | .787 |
| pr3 | 63.76 | 101.230 | .578 | .668 | .780 |
| pr4 | 63.68 | 101.649 | .557 | .650 | .782 |
| pr5 | 63.63 | 108.597 | .251 | .478 | .799 |
| pr6 | 63.81 | 105.602 | .364 | .488 | .792 |
| pr7 | 63.67 | 100.985 | .549 | .558 | .781 |
| pr8 | 63.48 | 111.890 | .110 | .321 | .806 |
| pr9 | 63.43 | 102.324 | .551 | .596 | .782 |
| pr10 | 63.75 | 101.563 | .554 | .584 | .782 |

The mean and standard deviation of occupational stress score was 34.17 and 5.661 respectively, the mean and standard deviation of procrastination score was 32.81 and 6.746 respectively. Their Pearson correlation was performed between occupation stress and procrastination. Results show a positive and significant correlation between two variables at 0.01 level. The person correlation (r = .497) N= 106. The correlation table was shown below (Table 3).

***Table 3 Correlation between Occupational Stress and Procrastination***

| | | **totalos** | **totalpr** |
|---|---|---|---|
| totalos | Pearson Correlation | 1 | .497** |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | | .000 |
| | N | 106 | 106 |
| totalpr | Pearson Correlation | .497** | 1 |
| | Sig. (2-tailed) | .000 | |
| | N | 106 | 106 |
| **. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed). | | | |

*totalos as Occupational stress, totalpr as Procrastination*

## CONCLUSION

The result of the study shows a positive and significant correlation between Occupational stress and Procrastination. The study indicates the effect of occupational stress and procrastination on working professionals who are exposed to work from the home environment under COVID-19 guidelines.

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***Conflict of Interest***

We hereby declare no conflict of interest.

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