

Procrastination and Life Satisfaction Among Young Adults: A Multicultural Perspective (India, UK, USA)

Nishtha Nagpal^{1*}

ABSTRACT

The purpose of the present study was to analyze the relationship between procrastination and life satisfaction among young adults from a multicultural perspective. For this, a sample of 90 young adults was collected with an even ratio of 30 individuals each from India, UK and USA respectively. The tools employed for the purpose of data collection were: Lay's General Procrastination Scale (1986), and Satisfaction with Life Scale (1985). The findings indicate a negative relationship between procrastination and life satisfaction in all the three countries, with no significant relationship being found between the two variables in India and the UK. Whereas, in the USA, a significant relationship was found to exist between procrastination and life satisfaction. Further statistical analysis also indicates a difference on the level of life satisfaction among young adults in all the three countries, with no significant difference on the level of procrastination in the same.

Keywords: Procrastination, Life Satisfaction, Young Adults, Multicultural, India, UK, USA

Life satisfaction The term 'Life Satisfaction' is widely used in the field of Positive Psychology. It is also often used synonymously with other widely used terms, such as: Happiness, Wellbeing, and Quality of Life.

Individuals acquainted with the works produced by various researchers and theorists in the area of Positive Psychology might be able to point out the slight differences in these terms, but for the most part, they are used synonymously.

Life satisfaction and Happiness

The term 'Happiness' is often used in a more transient sense as it is often defined as a transitory or 'fleeting' experience. A person might experience the feeling of 'happiness' because of various reasons, for e.g.- when they get the job they always wanted, or when they achieve a long-desired goal. But that feeling of -what we refer to as- happiness is often fleeting and not permanent. Although, it is undeniably important to experience a sense of happiness as it contributes to a more positive life experience and invariably leads to a better sense of subjective satisfaction with one's life. We can say that life satisfaction is less of a

¹Psychologist, Amity Institute of Psychology and Allied Sciences, Noida

*Corresponding Author

Received: September 10, 2022; Revision Received: February 27, 2023; Accepted: March 03, 2023

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transitory and more of a consistent experience which can arise out of a sum of transient feelings.

Life satisfaction and Quality of Life

Quality of Life is both an objective as well as subjective evaluation of one's life circumstances. It might include evaluating a person's living conditions, environment, physical health, etc. Whereas Life Satisfaction can be said to be a purely subjective evaluation and perception of one's own feelings towards their life and its circumstances. It is not necessary that a person with a better quality of life will have a high level of life satisfaction.

Life satisfaction and Wellbeing

Wellbeing can be said to be an assessment of a person's overall state of wellness. PERMA model given by Martin Seligman stated five factors which might help determine a person's wellbeing. These factors do not leave any scope for other subjective values that a person might hold in more importance when it comes to determining their satisfaction with life. On the other hand, Ed Diener developed the concept of 'subjective well-being', of which Life Satisfaction is one of the key components in determining a person's state of SWB. Subjective well-being encompasses feelings of happiness, quality of life, and life satisfaction, in order to determine an overall sense of well-being of an individual.

Therefore, keeping in mind the minute differences, we can say that- *Life Satisfaction can be said to be an individual's consistent and continuous cognitive judgement about their quality of life as a whole, on the basis of the values that they hold important to themselves.*

Many researchers have debated whether life satisfaction is a result of satisfaction in various important spheres of life, or whether the overall life satisfaction results in satisfaction in these domains.

This debate has led to the development of two theories which attempt to clarify the causal relationship between overall life satisfaction and satisfaction in various aspects of life.

- 1. Bottom-up Theory-** This theory posits that we experience overall life satisfaction as a result of experiencing satisfaction in various spheres of life, such as: relationships, employment, education, physical health and fitness, etc. Meaning, we might be satisfied in different aspects of our lives, if one is a student, one can be satisfied with their grades and personal life, and if one is an employee, they might be satisfied with their job, family life and health. And as a result of experiencing satisfaction in these domains of life, they might experience overall life satisfaction.
- 2. Top-down Theory-** This theory counters the 'bottom-up' assumption and posits that we experience satisfaction in different important domains in our life as a result of experiencing overall life satisfaction. According to this, experiencing a sense of overall life satisfaction leads to the feeling of satisfaction in other aspects of life.

Procrastination

The term 'procrastination', like many words of the English language, has Latin roots which, in literal sense, translates into- '*in favor of tomorrow*'

From its Latin derivation itself one can conjecture what the word, in its completion, stands for.

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Procrastination can be said to be a tendency or a behavior, in which a person delays/puts off a task(s) *in favor of* doing it later.

A procrastinator is a person who, even after knowing and completely being aware of the probable detrimental consequences of their action(s), makes use of avoidance strategies in order to put off performing a task or an action.

Types of Procrastinators

Procrastinators can be broadly classified into two categories-

1. Behavioral procrastinators
2. Decisional procrastinators

Behavioral procrastinators are often found with issues related to their self-esteem and have a chronic tendency of self-doubt. Their thoughts revolve around placing too much importance on being judged according to one's abilities. Hence, since they almost always develop insecurity about their own abilities, for them procrastination develops as a self-defeating habit so that their inability or failure to perform gets blamed on the lack of effort from their side rather than on their abilities. For example, if a student delays working on an assignment even though the deadline is approaching and he ends up scoring less, he can easily shift the blame of the score on the lack of availability of time rather than his abilities. In this manner, he protects himself from any judgement on his ability.

Decisional procrastinators are often found to be perfectionists who are, more often than not, afraid to make mistakes. If or when faced with many choices or dilemmas, they would rather bide their time trying to research about topics and their alternatives, and by doing so, put off making any decision(s). They seem to have a hard time making a final decision because of their tendency of focusing so much on all the alternatives that they develop a fear of choosing an alternative which might be less than perfect. By doing so they, almost invariably and often successfully, end up delaying making any decision.

The most widely accepted theory of procrastination in the field of psychology is called *Temporal Motivation Theory* which can also be called- The Procrastination Equation.

Temporal Motivation Theory helps us give a reasoning, in the form of an equation, behind people's tendency of performing selective tasks i.e., why do people choose to perform one task/action and ignore the other. The equation is: $\text{Motivation} = \frac{\text{Expectancy} \times \text{Value}}{\text{Impulsiveness} \times \text{Delay}}$.

In this equation, we have four variables/attributes- Expectancy, Value, Impulsiveness, and Delay. In the numerator, we have expectancy and value. Expectancy tells us what are the chances of occurrence of a particular outcome, and Value tells us how rewarding the said outcome would be.

In the denominator, we have the attributes of Impulsiveness and delay. Impulsiveness refers to the ability every person has to wait for the fulfillment or gratification of their wishes; the more impulsive a person is, the less likely they are to wait for the gratification of their reward. Whereas, delay refers to the waiting period that comes when expecting a reward. The more a person would have to wait, the more likely they are to feel less motivated.

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This theory relates to procrastination as choosing to avoid or delay doing some tasks in favor of procrastinating by performing some other, more commonly a more pleasurable activity, is a course of action we all commonly take. Every day most of us make choices to perform a certain task and avoid another. We make this choice by weighing the amount of reward/pleasure we will attain by performing a certain task as compared to the other. Invariably, it is in the nature of human beings to choose to perform a task which provides the most pleasure and, most likely, procrastinate doing the less pleasurable activity.

We also tend to procrastinate performing an activity if the reward we are seeking is not immediate and is perceived to be delayed or expected to happen in a distant future.

So, in conclusion, Temporal Motivation Theory gives out an equation which holds the ability to explain what task a person will be motivated to perform, and what task they'll be inclined to procrastinate performing.

Culture

The word 'culture' can be defined through many perspectives, such as sociological, anthropological, or psychological. When we talk about 'culture' in our everyday life, it usually refers to the traditions or customs unique to a particular group or society; it can be a religious group, an ethnic group or even a nation.

From a humanities perspective, culture can be said to be a set of values, art and traditions, carried forward, passed on and upheld through generations. There are many diverse cultures across the world, so many that it can become hard to study the influence that 'culture' plays on our personality and decision-making. Even if we try to study the impact of it, it can be difficult to take into account all the sub-cultures that exist within a particular culture, which can also influence the psyche of an individual.

The attributes that comprise a particular culture are learned through social interaction with an individual's environment. When a child is introduced to an environment, or is brought up in a new environment, they learn to observe and assimilate how the society around them functions, what are the cultural norms that exist in the society that they should follow.

Cultural norms prove to be guidelines for acceptable behavior for a particular society, it guides an individual about how they should dress, in what language they should speak, how they should present themselves in a situation.

Anthropology, in a literal sense, translates into- a study of human beings. Culture, cultural norms and cultural universals are a central concept in anthropology. Cultural universals refer to the commonalities that exist within every culture- such as forms of expressions that include art, technology, music, religion etc. All of these play a role in forming a person's values and ideologies.

It has been known that the ideologies and values an individual holds, influence how they experience the outside world as well as their inner feelings and emotions. In the early 1990s, psychology researchers began to research more and more about aspects of cultural psychology and challenged the previously held views of cultural universality in general psychology.

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Researchers such as Miyahara Akira studied the difference in how Japanese people experienced their emotions as compared to their American counterparts. In a study published by him in the American Communication Journal, it was found that as compared to American people, Japanese people have a tendency to suppress their positive emotions. This sheds light on how cultural differences might impact how we experience and express positive as well as negative emotions.

In a study done by Heine et al. (2001) which aimed to study how cultural differences influenced self-evaluation of an individual, a comparison was made between the Western and East-Asian population with regard to factors that motivate people. It was found that while the East-Asian population seemed to be motivated through avoiding their failures, their Western counterparts seemed to be motivated largely through their success rather than the failures. This observation is, again, important in understanding the cross-cultural perspective of the experience of human emotions.

The above-mentioned researches all shed light on a broader category of differences between-collectivistic and non-collectivistic cultures. These categories of culture, again, hold many sub-cultures. For example, in collectivistic culture, we have East-Asian, South-Asian, Southeast Asian societies, which don't only have their own set of cultural norms that are different from each other (intercultural), but they also have various intra-cultural differences, based on varying religions, regional traditions etc.

So, when cross-cultural research is being carried out, it is important to keep in mind all the intra-cultural differences before generalizing the result to a population.

Even after being carried out and passed on for generations, culture is dynamic. If not entirely, parts of it keep on changing and evolving through changes in the environment. Occurrences such as interracial unions, colonization, assimilation etc. bring about changes in a culture through the introduction of new traditions, values and ideologies brought on by new people. Acculturation is the term which refers to when the traits and characteristics of a culture are replaced by that of another culture. For example, many indigenous tribes and peoples across the world have faced a cultural replacement due to colonization by outsiders.

In conclusion, there are many diverse cultures across the globe and they seem to have an impact on how people experience and express varying kinds of emotions as shown in various researches. There can be intercultural as well as intracultural differences which should be taken into consideration while carrying out researches.

Young adults

Young adults, as defined by the World Health Organization, are people falling in the age range of 15-24 years. The age range in which young adults can be categorized into varies from one perspective to another. Some definitions categorize them as people from 18-30 years of age while others categorize them differently.

The reason for such wide variation is due to the reasoning that is taken into account by different people and organizations while defining this population. Young adults can be categorized on the basis of developmental stages, such as Erik Erikson's theories of adulthood, they can also be defined on the basis of sexual and emotional development, legal guidelines, maturation, etc.

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With changing times as well as individual and social variations, and with cultural differences taken into consideration, the basis for defining young adults and young adulthood has become very flexible. But despite all the flexibility and variations it is widely agreed upon that the term young adulthood refers to people in their twenties and thirties.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Çikrikçi & Erzen (2020) conducted a study on adolescents to determine the nature of relationship between life satisfaction, school attachment and procrastination in an academic setting. The study found a significant relationship between the three variables and also found academic procrastination to be having a partly mediating effect on the relationship between life satisfaction and school attachment. The results also depicted that school attachment helps in increasing the level of one's satisfaction with life and lowering academic procrastination.

Balkis & Duru (2017) researched on four hundred and forty-one Turkish undergraduate college students in order to determine the role that gender plays in correlation with academic procrastination, performance and life-satisfaction. It was found that procrastination in an academic setting has a negative relationship with academic performance and life-satisfaction. It was also determined that gender seemed to have a moderating effect on the association between procrastination, performance and life satisfaction, since male students, as compared to female students, were found to have a high level of academic procrastination with lesser level of academic performance and life satisfaction.

Beutel et al. (2016) assessed across life-span, procrastination and its relationship with life satisfaction and distress. The sample consisted of German population with the age range of 14- 95 years. It was found that those in the age range of 14-29 years had the highest level of procrastination among all the ages, and that in this age range, males are seen to be procrastinating more than females. Procrastination was also associated with high levels of distress and low level of life satisfaction.

Balkis & Duru (2016) studied on 328 Turkish undergraduate students and found that the tendency of procrastinatory behavior is significantly affected by the lack of self-regulatory skills in college students. They also found that procrastination has a negative relationship with the emotional wellbeing of students and also negatively impacts their academic domain of life satisfaction.

Maryam, Kiani & Dahar (2016) assessed two-hundred university students in order to determine if there existed any correlation between procrastination and life satisfaction in students. The study determined that more than half i.e., 50% of the students tend to procrastinate doing work; with male students showing the tendency to procrastinate more than their female counterparts. The study also found a significant and negative correlation between the two variables; meaning- a person is more likely to have lesser life satisfaction the more he/she procrastinates.

Kandemir (2014) assessed how variables such as life satisfaction affect the tendency of academic-procrastination. It was found that experiencing higher or increasing levels of life satisfaction lowers the academic procrastinatory behavior. The happier or more satisfied a person is, the less likely he/she is to perform said behavior.

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Savithri (2014) studied the relationship between procrastination in an academic setting, performance, and life satisfaction on one hundred and sixty-seven college students. She, through her study, although found a significant relationship between academic procrastination and performance, it was also found that procrastination in an academic setting is not an indicator of low life satisfaction, and that students showing this behavior need not necessarily be unsatisfied with their college life.

Balkis (2013) studied the mediatory role of rational beliefs about studying on academically-oriented procrastination, achievement, and life satisfaction. The study also found that academic life satisfaction has a mediatory effect on the relationship between academic procrastination and achievement.

Ozer & Sackes (2011) assessed Three hundred and fourteen college students in order to determine and analyze the impact of academic-procrastination on the life satisfaction of students. The study found that male students are seen to be more frequent procrastinators than female students, and that 38% of the students in the sample took part in frequent procrastinating behavior. Those who procrastinated were found to have lesser life-satisfaction than those who did not procrastinate.

Rationale for the study

Since young adulthood is a crucial time for an individual's personal development, it is important to know what behavior(s) may or may not impact a person's level of life satisfaction. After going through past studies and research, it was found that there was a dearth of studies on the relationship between procrastination and life satisfaction among young adults, especially in the Indian context. The impact of culture on how a person experiences procrastination and life satisfaction is also not adequately studied. Hence, this research aimed to assess the relationship between the two variables from a multicultural perspective.

METHODOLOGY

Aim

To assess the relationship between Procrastination and Life Satisfaction Among Young Adults of different cultures and demographical backgrounds.

Objectives

1. To find out the difference on the level of procrastination among young adults (India, USA and UK)
2. To measure the difference on the level of life satisfaction among young adults (India, USA and UK)
3. To study the relationship between procrastination and life satisfaction among young adults (India, USA, UK)

Hypotheses

H1. There will be significant difference on the level of procrastination among young adults (India, USA and UK)

H2. There will be significant difference on the level of life satisfaction among young adults (India, USA and UK)

H3. There will be significant relationship between procrastination and life satisfaction among young adults (India)

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H4. There will be significant relationship between procrastination and life satisfaction among young adults (UK)

H5. There will be significant relationship between procrastination and life satisfaction among young adults (USA)

Sample

The sample for this study was taken from 90 young adults of 18-25 years of age. Since, the study was to be conducted from a multicultural perspective, a sample size of 30 young adults was taken each from India, the UK, and the USA.

Instruments

The following two tools were used to collect the data from the sample and pursue the goal of this research:

S.No	Name of the Tool	Author and year	No. of Items	Reliability and Validity
1.	Lay's General Procrastination Scale	Lay, 1986	20	Cronbach alpha=0.82, And Construct Validity established.
2.	Satisfaction with Life Scale	Ed Diener, 1985	5	Cronbach alpha= 0.87, And construct validity

Description of the Tools

1. Lay's General Procrastination Scale (Lay, 1986):

The General Procrastination Scale was developed by Lay in 1986. It consists of 20 items which aim to measure a person's chronic procrastinatory tendencies. The higher a person scores on this scale, the more tendency he has to procrastinate. It is rated on a 5-point Likert scale and has a coefficient alpha of 0.82. Construct validity is established.

2. Satisfaction with Life Scale (Diener, 1985):

The Satisfaction with Life Scale was developed by Ed Diener in 1985. It is a small 5 item self-report questionnaire, which aims to measure a person's overall satisfaction with their life. The scale is rated on a 7-point Likert scale and has a coefficient alpha of 0.87. Construct validity has been established.

Procedure

In order to study the relationship of procrastination and life satisfaction among young adults from a multicultural perspective, first the sample was determined of 90 young adults, which was balanced into an equal ratio of 30 from each country. Previous studies were read through and studied before forming the objectives and hypotheses for this study. Then the questionnaires were decided upon and sent to the desired sample population through the medium of Google Forms. Participants were properly made aware about the purpose of the study and adequate consent was taken before proceeding further. Participation was entirely voluntary and confidentiality was also maintained. After that, the responses were transferred and scored in an excel sheet, following which the scores were transferred to SPSS (vers.21) for further statistical analyses.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The data was analyzed using One-Way ANOVA, Mean, and Correlation:

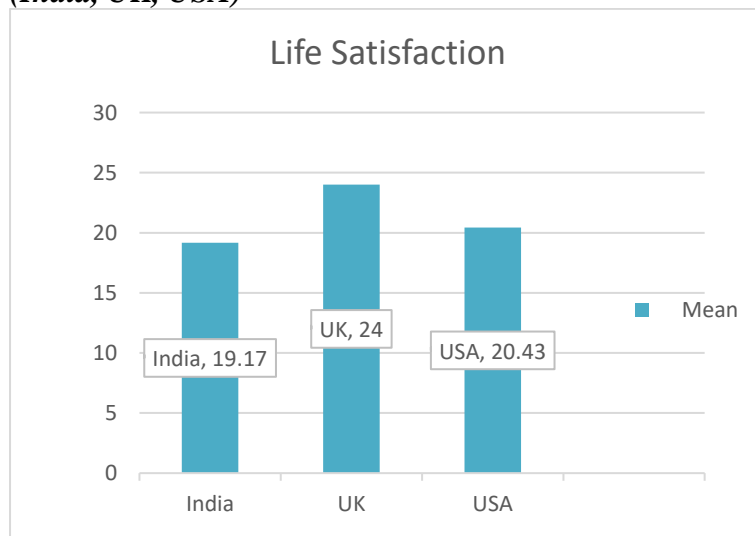
Table 4.1 One-way ANOVA values for Level of Life Satisfaction among young adults in India, UK and USA

Source	df	SS	MS	F	p
Between Groups	2	376.87	188.43	3.56	sig*
Within Groups	87	4607.53	52.96		
Total	89	4984.40			

Significant at 0.05 level

From the above table it can be seen that $p=.05$ which indicates significance at the 0.05 level. Hence, there is a statistically significant difference in the Life Satisfaction scores of young adults between the three groups- India, UK, USA.

Fig. 1 Graphical representation of Mean for Level of Life Satisfaction among young adults (India, UK, USA)



Post Hoc comparison was done using Tukey HSD test which indicated that mean score for India (19.17) was significantly different from that of UK (24.00) as represented in the above figure.

Table 4.2 One-way ANOVA values for Level of Procrastination among young adults in India, UK and USA

Source	df	SS	MS	F	p
Between Groups	2	523.75	261.87	1.46	Insig
Within Groups	87	15530.03	178.50		
Total	89	16053.78			

Insignificant at both 0.05 and 0.01 levels

The above table indicates Insignificant difference at both 0.05 level and 0.01 level. Therefore, there is no significant difference in the procrastination scores between the groups- India, UK, and USA.

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Table 4.3 Correlation between Procrastination and Life Satisfaction among young adults in India

Variables	N	r	P
Procrastination	30	-.25	Insig
Life Satisfaction	30		

Insignificant at both 0.05 and 0.01 levels.

In the above table, the correlation value (-.25) is statistically insignificant at both 0.05 and 0.01 levels. The value indicates a negative but statistically insignificant correlation between procrastination and life satisfaction among Indian young adults.

Table 4.4 Correlation between Procrastination and Life satisfaction among young adults in the UK

Variables	N	r	P
Procrastination	30	-.16	Insig
Life Satisfaction	30		

Insignificant at both 0.05 and 0.01 levels

In the above table, the correlation value (-.16) clearly indicates a negative but statistically insignificant relationship between procrastination and life satisfaction among young adults in the UK at both 0.05 and 0.01 levels.

Table 4.5 Correlation between Procrastination and Life Satisfaction among young adults in USA

Variables	N	r	P
Procrastination	30	-.47	Sig*
Life Satisfaction	30		

Significant at 0.05 level

In the above table the correlational value (-.47) is found to be significant at the 0.05 level. This indicates a negative and statistically significant relationship between procrastination and life satisfaction among young adults in USA.

Hypotheses Testing

The first hypothesis stated that there will be a significant difference on the level of procrastination among young adults (India, USA and UK). This hypothesis is rejected, as a statistically insignificant difference between the level of procrastination of the three groups was found. The second hypothesis- that there will be a significant difference in the level of life satisfaction among young adults in India, UK and USA is accepted as a statistically significant difference was found through statistical analysis between the scores of the three groups. The third hypothesis ‘there will be a significant relationship between procrastination and life satisfaction among young adults in India’ is rejected as no significant relationship was determined between the two variables. The fourth hypothesis that there will be a significant relationship between procrastination and life satisfaction among young adults in the UK is also rejected as a statistically insignificant relationship was found after correlating

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the two variables. The fifth hypothesis- there will be a significant relationship between procrastination and life satisfaction among young adults in the USA is accepted as through statistical analysis of the scores, a significant relationship was found between the two variables.

CONCLUSION

Findings

1. A significant difference is found on the level of life satisfaction among young adults in- India, UK and USA.
2. No significant difference is found in the level of procrastination among young adults (India, UK and USA)
3. No significant relationship is determined between procrastination and life satisfaction among young adults in India.
4. An insignificant relationship is determined between procrastination and life satisfaction among young adults in the UK.
5. A negative and significant relationship is found to exist between procrastination and life satisfaction among young adults in the USA.

Limitations

1. **Sample Size:** The sample collected for this research was inadequate in order to generalize the results obtained. A larger sample should be acquired in order to understand the relationship between the two variables in depth and apply the results obtained to a generalized population.
2. **Tools:** Since the tools were used on Indian population with non-native English speakers, language barrier could have come into play while understanding and answering the questionnaires, which can negatively affect the results.

Future research recommendations

Researchers who choose to study more about this topic in the future should aim to do it on a considerably larger sample which will help them to clearly identify the role of culture in impacting the relationship between procrastination and life satisfaction among young adults. A larger sample would also help to generalize the results that are obtained.

Further, they should aim to take in account the intracultural aspect of the population alongside the intercultural one so that a more detailed finding can be obtained upon the role of culture in how one experiences procrastination and life satisfaction.

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Acknowledgement

To my research guide whose knowledge and guidance was invaluable to the completion of this research paper.

Conflict of Interest

The author(s) declared no conflict of interest.

How to cite this article: Nagpal, N. (2023). Procrastination and Life Satisfaction Among Young Adults: A Multicultural Perspective (India, UK, USA). *International Journal of Indian Psychology*, 11(1), 1216-1227. DIP:18.01.123.20231101, DOI:10.25215/1101.123