

Research Paper

The Impact of Procrastination and Stress on the Well-Being of Postgraduate Students

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ABSTRACT

The impact of procrastination and perceived stress on quality of life among postgraduate students has become an increasingly important area of academic inquiry. Procrastination is a widespread behavioral tendency among students, particularly at the postgraduate level, where academic, personal, and professional responsibilities often intersect. This study investigates the relationships between procrastination, perceived stress, and quality of life in a postgraduate student population. Employing a quantitative research design, data were collected from 150 postgraduate students across various academic disciplines using standardized instruments: the Procrastination Scale, the Perceived Stress Scale (PSS), and the WHOQOL-BREF quality of life questionnaire. Results revealed a significant positive correlation between procrastination and perceived stress, indicating that higher levels of procrastination are associated with increased stress. Furthermore, both procrastination and stress demonstrated negative correlations with quality of life, suggesting that these variables negatively affect physical health, psychological well-being, social relationships, and environmental satisfaction. Regression analysis confirmed that procrastination significantly predicts stress levels, and together, these factors influence overall quality of life. The findings emphasize the need for targeted university interventions—such as time management training and mental health support services—to help postgraduate students manage procrastination and stress, ultimately enhancing their well-being and academic performance.

Keywords: *Procrastination, Perceived Stress, Quality of Life, Postgraduate Students*

Postgraduate education represents a critical stage in academic and professional development. It is characterized by increased autonomy, academic rigor, and heightened expectations, which often require students to balance multiple responsibilities such as coursework, research, employment, family commitments, and social relationships. These demands can lead to elevated levels of psychological stress and impact students' mental health and well-being. One behavioral response to these challenges is procrastination, a phenomenon defined as the voluntary delay of an intended action despite expecting to be worse off for the delay (Steel, 2007). While often dismissed as a minor time-management issue, procrastination is increasingly recognized as a maladaptive coping strategy that can result in poor academic performance, emotional distress, and long-term

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psychological consequences. Stress, particularly when it is chronic or poorly managed, is one of the most common outcomes associated with academic procrastination. Postgraduate students frequently report high levels of stress due to the pressure to meet academic deadlines, manage complex research projects, and maintain performance standards. Persistent stress can impair cognitive functioning, decrease motivation, and contribute to burnout, anxiety, and depression.

In parallel, the quality of life (QoL) of postgraduate students—defined broadly by the World Health Organization as individuals' perceptions of their position in life in the context of the culture and value systems in which they live—can be significantly affected. Poor mental health, lack of time for recreation or social interaction, and overwhelming academic obligations can all diminish students' overall life satisfaction and well-being.

Despite the extensive literature on stress and procrastination in undergraduate populations, there is comparatively limited research that specifically examines how these factors interact within postgraduate students. This population often experiences unique stressors such as thesis writing, academic publishing, and career uncertainty, making them particularly vulnerable to the negative effects of procrastination.

Purpose of the Study

This study seeks to fill that gap by:

1. Investigating the prevalence and patterns of procrastination among postgraduate students;
2. Examining the relationship between procrastination and perceived stress;
3. Exploring how procrastination and stress together affect students' perceived quality of life.

Understanding these relationships is crucial for designing effective academic and psychological support systems within higher education institutions. By addressing procrastination and stress proactively, universities can enhance students' academic performance, reduce the incidence of mental health issues, and improve their overall quality of life.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Steel, (2007), Procrastination is a complex psychological behavior that involves the intentional delay of tasks despite knowing there will be negative consequences.

Ferrari, (2001), It is a self-regulatory failure linked to poor time management, lack of motivation, fear of failure, perfectionism, and low self-efficacy.

Solomon & Rothblum, (1984), Among university students, procrastination is highly prevalent, with studies indicating that up to 70–90% of students procrastinate at some point, and nearly 50% do so consistently.

Tice and Baumeister, (1997), found that while procrastinators may initially experience reduced stress and higher well-being, this is temporary. Over time, procrastination leads to increased stress, poor performance, and decreased physical and mental health. In postgraduate students, the consequences may be even more severe due to the self-directed nature of their studies and the long-term nature of their academic goals.

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Cohen, (1983), Stress is defined as the body's reaction to any demand or challenge and can be both positive and negative. The Perceived Stress Scale (PSS), is one of the most widely used tools to measure perceived stress levels.

Hyun, (2006), Postgraduate students are particularly vulnerable to stress due to academic pressure, lack of financial stability, research demands, role conflict, and uncertainty about career prospects.

Misra & McKean, (2000), Chronic stress has been linked to poor academic performance, mental health issues such as anxiety and depression, and even physical health problems such as sleep disturbances and weakened immunity (Misra & McKean, 2000).

Sirois and Tosti, (2012), Several studies have explored the link between procrastination and stress, suggesting a strong positive correlation. For example, found that procrastination can lead to high stress levels due to increased time pressure and guilt. This stress often impairs cognitive functioning, further exacerbating delays and decreasing productivity.

Balkis and Duru, (2016) found that academic procrastination not only increased stress but also mediated its effects on life satisfaction and mental health. Similarly,

Flett, (2016) noted that procrastinators often experience shame, guilt, and dissatisfaction, all of which lower QoL.

Key Gaps in the Literature

- Limited research focuses specifically on postgraduate populations.
- Few studies examine the combined impact of procrastination and stress on QoL.
- Most existing research is cross-sectional and lacks context-specific insights.

This study aims to address these gaps by providing a holistic understanding of how procrastination contributes to stress and, in turn, influences quality of life among postgraduate students.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This study employed a quantitative, correlational research design to examine the relationship between procrastination, perceived stress, and quality of life among postgraduate students. The aim was to determine the extent to which procrastination predicts stress and how both variables impact quality of life.

Population and Sample

The target population for this study consisted of postgraduate students enrolled in master's and doctoral programs at universities in Dr. Babasaheb Ambedkar Marathwada university. A sample of 150 postgraduate students was selected using stratified random sampling to ensure representation across various academic disciplines (e.g., humanities, sciences, engineering, social sciences).

- Currently enrolled in a postgraduate (PG) program,
- Aged 21 or above,
- Willing to voluntarily participate in the stud

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Data Collection Procedure

- An online questionnaire (Google Forms/Microsoft Forms) was distributed via university mailing lists, WhatsApp groups, and social media platforms commonly used by students.
- Participants were informed about the purpose of the study, assured of confidentiality, and required to provide informed consent.
- Data was collected over a period of four weeks.

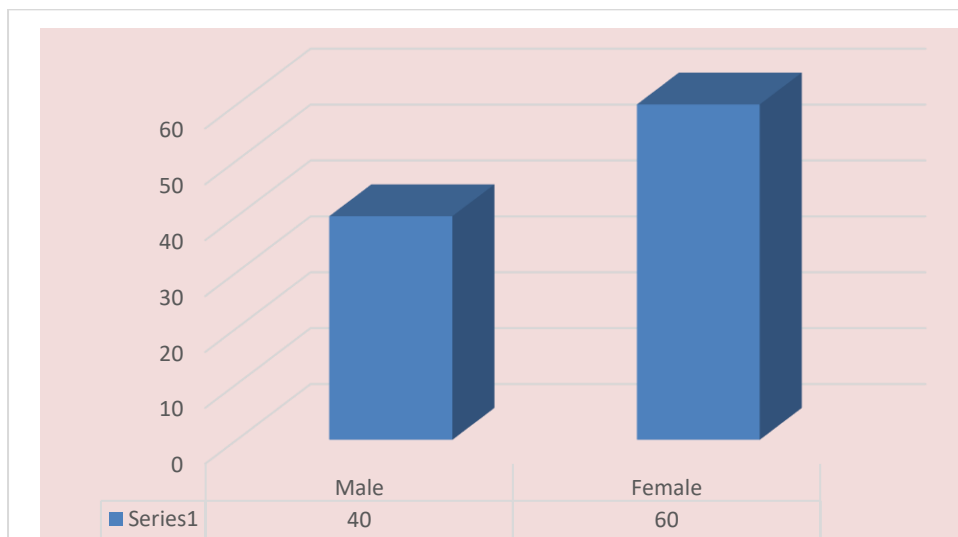
RESULTS

This section presents the statistical analysis of data collected to examine the relationships between procrastination, perceived stress, and quality of life among postgraduate students.

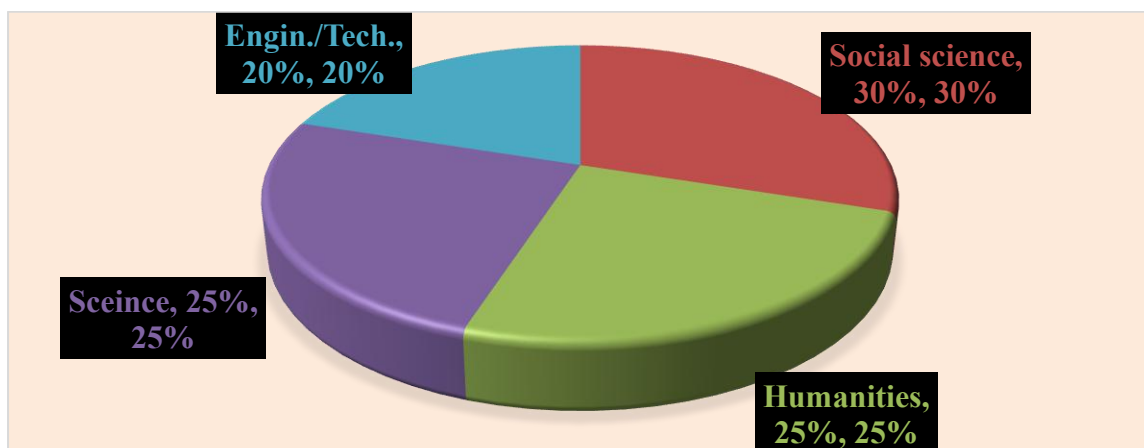
Descriptive Statistics

The sample consisted of 150 postgraduate students, with the following demographics:

- **Gender:** 60% female, 40% male
- **Age Range:** 21–35 years
- **Program:** 60% Master's, 40% PhD
- **Fields of Study:** 30% Social Sciences, 25% Humanities, 25% Sciences, 20% Engineering/Technology



Graph no. 1 Gender wise



Graph no.2 field wise study

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Mean scores for key variables:

Variable	Mean	SD	Minimum	Maximum
Procrastination Score	3.52	0.71	1.9	4.9
Perceived Stress Score (PSS)	2.98	0.65	1.6	4.4
Quality of Life Score (WHOQOL-BREF composite)	3.21	0.68	2	4.7

Correlation Analysis

Pearson correlation coefficients were computed to examine the relationships between the three main variables.

Variables	1. Procrastination	2. Perceived Stress	3. Quality of Life
1. Procrastination	1		
2. Perceived Stress	0.68 ($p < 0.01$)	1	
3. Quality of Life	-0.59 ($p < 0.01$)	-0.65 ($p < 0.01$)	1

- A strong positive correlation was found between procrastination and perceived stress ($r = 0.68$), indicating that students who procrastinate more also experience higher stress levels.
- A strong negative correlation was found between stress and quality of life ($r = -0.65$), suggesting that stress significantly lowers students' perceived well-being.
- Procrastination was also negatively correlated with quality of life ($r = -0.59$), though slightly weaker than the stress-QoL relationship.

Summary of Findings

1. Procrastination is prevalent among postgraduate students and is positively linked with higher stress.
2. Both procrastination and stress are negatively associated with quality of life.
3. Perceived stress is the strongest predictor of diminished quality of life.
4. The regression model suggests that addressing procrastination and stress could significantly improve students' well-being.

CONCLUSION

This study explored the relationship between procrastination, perceived stress, and quality of life among postgraduate students. The findings revealed that procrastination is a prevalent behavior that significantly contributes to increased stress levels. In turn, both procrastination and stress negatively impact students' perceived quality of life, particularly in the domains of psychological well-being and physical health.

The strong positive correlation between procrastination and stress, and the significant negative correlation between both of these factors with quality of life, underscore the importance of addressing these issues in postgraduate education. Stress was found to be the strongest predictor of diminished quality of life, indicating that psychological support systems should be a key component of postgraduate student services.

Universities and higher education institutions must consider implementing interventions such as time management training, cognitive-behavioral workshops, stress management programs, and accessible counseling services. Promoting awareness of procrastination and its long-term effects can help students develop healthier academic behaviors and improve their overall well-being.

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Future research could benefit from longitudinal designs, qualitative insights, and cross-cultural comparisons to deepen the understanding of how procrastination and stress evolve over time and affect different student populations.

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Conflict of Interest

The author(s) declared no conflict of interest.

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