

**ORIGINAL ARTICLE**

**PREDICTIVE RELATIONSHIP OF ACTIVE AND PASSIVE PROCRASTINATION WITH DEPRESSION, ANXIETY, STRESS AND LIFE SATISFACTION**

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# ABSTRACT

**OBJECTIVE**

To explore the extent to which activeand passive procrastination predict depression, anxiety, stress,and life satisfaction among youngpeople.

# STUDY DESIGN

Correlational study design.

# PLACE AND DURATION OF STUDY

The study was carried out in different government educational institutions of Islamabad and Rawalpindi during 2013.

# SUBJECTS ANDMETHODS

Convenient sampling approach was used for selection of 500 participants (52.6% boys, 47.4% girls;M..,.= 15.77 yearsold, SD=1.87:age range= 13-21 years). The respondents' education level was matriculation and intermediate. New active Procrastination Scale, Passive Procrastination Scale, Depression, Anxiety, Stress Scale, and Satisfaction withLifeScale wereusedfor purpose of data collection. To dig out the relationship among variables Pearson correlation and linear regression analysiswasused.

# RESULTS

Findings revealed that category of procrastinators significantly predict the respondents' level of depression, anxiety, stress, and life satisfaction.

# CONCLUSION

Identifying differenttypes of procrastination may help young ones in improving their health and enhancing satisfaction with theirlives.

# KEYWORDS

Active procrastination, Passive procrastination, depression,anxiety, stress,lifesatisfaction.

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# INTRODUCTION

The term procrastinate comes from the Latin word 'procrastinare' and means to put off,or to postpone until another day.'Thephenomenonof procrastination is as old as human history but the term got popularity with theadvent of technology. Initially it was assumed a problem of industrialized societies and agrarian societies were assumed to be not afflicted by thismenace.Procrastinationis an automatic problem habit marked with putting off animportant and timely task to another time, and that has probable consequences too.' Procrastination is not identical to idleness rather it impliesperforming an alternative activity to the intended one.' It is also viewed asan interactive dysfunctional and behavior avoidance process, characterized by the desire to avoid an activity, the promise to get to it later,and the useof excuse making to justify the delay and avoid blame.' Recent researches viewed procrastination with aslightly different perspective and in positive connotation that isactive and passive procrastination.Viewthatdelay due to being unable to manage things timely due to fear of failure, lack of self-efficacy (passive procrastination) is different from intentional postponement of tasks (active procrastination).Passive procrastinationis traditional negative view whereas active procrastination is emergent and nascent construct.'

Both active and passive procrastination have different implications in terms of outcomes such as depression, anxiety, stress, and life satisfaction.•·' Present study intended to explore the relationship of activeand passive procrastination withother study. As active procrastination is a new construct so it was deemed imperative to examine the incremental validity of NAPS to ascertain its unique role in predicting various outcomes. Previously some studies have been carried out in west but with reference to indigenous context the construct has not been explored yet. So the present study was executed to see whether the phenomenon of active and passive procrastinationoperatein samemannerasit doesin West.

# SUBJECTS ANO METHOD

**Participants**

In this phase 525 Pakistani adolescents were initially contacted but out of those 500 youngpeople (52.6% boys, 47.4% girls;Mag,= 15.77 years old, SD= 1.87:age range= 13-21 years) who were selected through convenience sampling volunteered to participate and responded with zeal.The education level of participantsrangedfrom matriculation to graduation.Among them 49.8% were doing matriculation whereas 50.2% were studying in graduate classes. Correlational research design was used to carryout this study.

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***New Active Procrastination Scale:*** the 12 item NAPS has four dimensions and there are four items in each dimension. These dimensions are outcome satisfaction, preference for pressure, intentional decisionto procrastinate, and abilityto meetdeadlines.It is in a Likert-type format that uses 7-point scale asa response format for all the items ranging from 1 (not at all true) to 7 (very true). The score rangeof total NAPS liesin 16to 112 and for eachdimension it is from4 to 28.Cronbach's alpha coefficient of scales assessing the four dimensions ranged between .70 and .83 providing support of acceptable internal consistency whereas alpha coefficient for total NAPS (.80) was also satisfactory. For this part of the research Urdu

translation of NAPS was used.5 Alpha reliability coefficient of Urdu version of NAPS totalwas.82(N*=*80) and it rangedfrom.55to .88for

fourdimensions of the scale.'

***Passive Procrastination Scale:*** Passive Procrastination Scale comprises of sixitemsbelonging fromtwo alreadyexisting measures of procrastination Decisional Procrastination Scale and Academic Procrastination. It was adopted to assess the level of traditional/passive procrastination'. The alpha reliability of the English version of the scale was.82.It isa7-pointscale in a Likert type format.It offers responsecategories ranging from 1"notatalltrue" to 7 "very much true'.The score ranges from 6 to 42. Urdu translation of

PPS was used in this part of the research. Alpha reliability coefficient of Urduversion of PPSis .75 (N=80) which isreasonably satisfactory.'

***Depression, Anxiety, StressScale (DASS):*** TheDASS is a set of three self-report measures of depression, anxiety and stress.' All the DASS scales comprise of 14 items resulting 42 items in total. In present studyshorter Urdu version of DASS (i.e., DASS-21) was used. The alpha reliability coefficient of Urdu version of Depression (.84), Anxiety (.82), Stress (.87) Scale was quite satisfactory. The DASS original and translated version has been widely used in the indigenous context'' . DASS is a four point rating scale. The score ranges fromOto3 whereOstandsfor "did not apply to me at all"and 3 "applied to me very much.There arecut off scores for different levels of depression,anxiety,andstress such asnormal,mild, moderate and severe.

***Satisfaction With Life Scale:*** Satisfaction With Life Scale is a measure of global life satisfaction 1 It provides respondent's overall assessment of their lives. The SWLS consists of 5 items and it is a 5- ponit scale where 1 corresponds to 'strongly disagree' and 5 for 'strongly agree'. For present study Urdu version was used to assess participants' level of life satisfaction.Coefficient alpha for SWLS from present sample was.74.

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**Procedure**

Researcher contacted the headsof different educational institutions for purpose of data collection. Before participation in study participants falling below the age range of 18 years were briefed about nature of study and were asked to seek permission from their parents/guardians. They were told that study is a part of Ph.D research and has been approved by Advance Studies and Research Board, QAU. After seeking verbal permission participants were approached in their respective classes. Each participant completed a consent form, demographic items (e.g., name, age, gender, education level, and institution), two measures of procrastination

and measure of DASS, and SWLS. Participants were informed about the purpose of the research and assured that there is no hidden purpose of this study. Participants were given the opportunity to volunteer for the participation. Those who were not willing to participate due to lack of interest in the study or were not feeling energetic were allowed to leave the room. They were told to clarify any ambiguity that arises in their mind during and after administration. It took participants almost twenty minutes to respond on all the measures. It was ensured that participants attempted all the itemsin eachmeasureand did not select morethan oneresponsecategory on eachitem.Participants wereassuredof the confidentiality of the information provided by them and were acknowledged. Statistical package (PASW. 18) was used for the analysis of results.

**RESULTS**

To explore the nature of relationship between active procrastination and passive procrastination with study variables pearson product

moment correlation coefficient was computed. For this from whole sample (N= 500), active (N = 125) and passive procrastinators (N =

were identified from nonprocrastinators and correlation was computed only for them as study focused on relationship of active and passive procrastination with other variables. Table 1 highlights the pattern of relationship among study variables for active and passiveprocrastinators.

**Table l**

Con-elation Coefficient between passive procrastination and all the Study

Variables for Active Procrastinators (N = 125) and for passive procrastinators (N = 125)

|  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | **Variables** | **Active Procrastinators** | | **Passh•e**  **Procrastinatol'li** | |
|  |  | ***M(SDJ*** | ***r*** | ***M(SDj*** | ***r*** |
| I. | Passive Procrastination | 31.39(4.1J) |  | 31.91(3.90) | - |
| 2. | De1nession | S.24(3.42) | .12• | 10.11(4.91) | \_39•• |
| 3. | Anxiely | S.29(3.53) | .10\*\* | 10.39(4.81) | .34\*\* |
| 4, | Stress | 7.6(3.43) | .08 | 11.44(4.21) | .33\*\* |
| 5. | Life satisfaction | 19.1(3.38) | -.27'\* | 15.48(4.98) | \_34•• |

*\*p* < *.05, \*\*p* < *.OJ.*

For active procrastinators resultsregarding correlation indicate that active procrastinators being low on procrastination experience less depression and anxiety, and are more satisfied with their life. For passive procrastinators results show that as passive procrastinators report high level of passive procrastination they experience greater level of depression,anxiety,and stress and low level oflifesatisfaction (Table 1).

Linear regression analysis was carried out for depression, anxiety, stress,and life satisfaction and procrastination as a predictorvariable. For the purpose of categorization into non procrastinators, active procrastinators, and passive procrastinators, three equal-sized subgroups were formed in a two-step process. In first step an

arbitrary cut-off point which was a median split on Passive Procrastination Scale (Mdn *=* 29) was used to identify



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nonprocrastinators from procrastinators. Those participants who

scored less than 29 were categorized as nonprocrastinators and those who scored above 29were identified as procrastinators,In our

total sample of main study {N = 500), 250 participants were

categorized as nonprocrastinatorsand 250as procrastinators.As the study explored two distinct types of procrastination that is active versus passive so in the next step, 250 procrastinators were further categorized into two groups: active and passive procrastinators, Median split on NAPS(Mdn= 70) was used asa cut-off point such as,

among participants whose score was more than 70 wereconsidered asactive procrastinators (n = 125) and whose score was less than 70

were categorized as passive procrastinators (n = 125). As respondents took both the measures of procrastination so a closer examination of scores revealed that nonprocrastinators were those who were below the median on NAPS and PPS, passive procrastinators were marked as high on PPS and low on NAPS, whereas active procrastinators were those who scored below the

medianpoint on PPS and highon NAPS. Toseethe power of the test with large effect size (i.e,, .35) and prespecified sample size(N=500), post hoc: compute achieved power option was selected for linear

regression analysis. Findings showed that with above mentioned sample size,alpha o,f05, andlarge effect size,power of the test is 1.0 whichindicatesthat thesamplewasquiteadequatefor thisanalysis,

As procrastination was a categorical variable (Le., non­ procrastinators, active procrastinators, and passive procrastinators) sodummy coding was usedwhichisaway of representing groups of people using only zeroes and ones. For this several variables were createdby recoding our grouping variable into dummy variables. As there were three groups;nonprocrastinators, active procrastinators and passive procrastinators so for dummy coding nonpro­ crastinators were chosen as baseline group and rest of two groups werecompared withthisbaselinecategory,

Table 2

Linear Regression Analysis of.Different Groups of Procrastinators as Predictors for Depression (N = 500)

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Model** | ***B*** | **95°/4 Cf** | |
| **LL** | **UL** |
| **Constant** | 6.50\*\* | 5.83 | 7,17 |
| NP vs, AP | -1.26·· | -2.19 | -.32 |
| NP vs, PP | 3.61\*\* | 2.68 | 4.53 |
| *R'* | .19\*\* |  |  |
| *F* | 59,41 |  |  |
| *11R'* | .19 |  |  |

## *Note. \*\*p< .01. NP=11011procras1inators; AP= active procrastinalors;* PP=passive prucrastirwtor,y; Cl= cunfldence imerval

Findings shown in Table 2, 3, 4, and 5 indicate change in level of depression,anxiety,andstressasif an adolescent'scategorychanges from nonprocrastinator to active procrastinator or passive procrastinator.Foractive procrastinatorsthischange issignificant for variable of depression, stress, and life satisfaction but not for anxiety. In case of passive procrastinators the change in category of procrastinator is significant for all the variables that are depression, anxiety,stress,andlifesatisfaction.

### Table3

Linear Regression Analysis of Di!Terent Groups of Procrastinators as Predictors for Anxiety (N = 500)

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  |  | **95°/p Cl** | |
| **Model** | ***B*** | **LL** | **UL** |
| Constant | 5.90\*\* | 5.23 | 6.57 |
| NP VS, AP | -.60 | -1.54 | .32 |
| NP vs. PP | 4.49\*\* | 3.57 | 5.41 |
| *R'* | .22 .. |  |  |
| *F* | 72.45 |  |  |
| *t,R'* | .22 |  |  |

## *Note. NP= 11011procrasti11ators; AP* = *active procras1i11ators;* PP=passive procn1sti11aturs; Cl= confidence interval

**Table4**

Linear Regression Analysis of Different Groups of Procrastinators as Predictors for Stress (N= 500)

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  |  | **95¾ Cl** | |
| **Model** | ***B*** | **LL** | **UL** |
| Constant | 8.66\*\* | 8.05 | 9.28 |
| NP vs. *Al'* | -1.03.. | -1.89 | -.17 |
| Nl'vs. PP | 2.77\*\* | 1.92 | 3.62 |
| *R'* | ,14•• |  |  |
| *F* | 42.63 |  |  |
| *t,R'* | .14 |  |  |

## *Note. NP= 11011procrasti11ators: AP=active procrasriuators;* PP= passive procrastinators; Cl= co11jide11ce i11terval

### Table 5

Linear Regression Analysis of Different Groups of Procrastinators as

Predictors for Life Satisfaction (N = 500)

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  |  | **95o/o CJ** | |
| **Model** | ***8*** | **LL** | **UL** |
| Constant | 18,11° | 17.46 | 18,76 |
| NP vs. AP | 1.07\* | .l6 | 1.98 |
| NP vs. PP | -2.63.. | -3.52 | -L73 |
| *R'* | .12•• |  |  |
| *F* | 35.87 |  |  |
| *!1R'* | .12 |  |  |

*Note. NP= 11011procrastinators: AP= active procrastinators; PP=passive procrasti11ators; Cl= confidence i11terval*

# DISCUSSION

Phenomenon of procrastination is quite widespread in general population.People vary in their tendencies to procrastinate as some procrastinate more than others whereas some declare to be totally free of this nuisance. The view that procrastination is a problem of only technologically advanced countries is negated by the studies conducted in East Asian settings,Findings of these studies revealed that procrastination equally afflicts Asian cultures. The difference between cultures lies in how the time is perceived, the value and significance attached to it, which is purely a subjective experience.





The significance assigned to the related outcomes of dilatory behavior alsodetermine our actions.Earlier, most of the studies were carried out in west and explored the negative effects of procrastination. With reference to Pakistani context very few studies have explored procrastination thoroughly and almost all of them have investigated the negativitiesassociated withit.Keeping in view the cultural milieu current study paved the way to explore the procrastination tendencies of Pakistani youngsters who are constantly under social and cultural pressures that associate their worthwith their achievements.

Present study explored the predictive relationship of active and passive procrastination with depression, anxiety, and stress and life satisfaction. Correlation coefficient of active and passive procrastination with study variables revealed the pattern of relationship for both type of procrastinators differently. Linear regression analysiswasalso run to examine the role of different types of procrastination in predicting various outcomes (i.e., depression, anxiety,stress, and life satisfaction). Resultsshowed that category of procrastinators significantly predict the respondents' level of depression, anxiety, stress, and life satisfaction. These findings highlight that as the respondent's category changes from baseline category (i.e., nonprocrastinator) to active procrastinator his/her level of depression and stress decreases and level of life satisfaction increases. On the other hand if the respondents' category changes from baseline category (i.e., nonprocrastinator) to passive procrastinator his/her level of depression, anxiety, and stress increases whereas level of life satisfaction decreases. These results are in accord to previous studies carried out in Western setting that highlight those who tendto procrastinate passively aremore prone to beanxious,emotional distressed, andin poormood,,..,\_,..

The view that procrastination is a problem of only technologically advanced countries is negated by the studies conducted in East Asian settings. Findings of these studies revealed that procrastination equally afflicts Asian cultures."·" The difference between cultures lies in how the time is perceived, the value and significance attached to it, which is purely a subjective experience. Resultsof currentstudyalsodocument the previousfindingsthat the significance assigned to the related outcomes of dilatory behavior determinesour actions.

Through process of globalization culturesinfluence one another.The impact of globalization has made both Eastern and Western cultures vulnerable towards each others' values and life styles. However, in recent years, the intensity of the connections among different cultures and various parts of the world have dramatically increased due to boom in technological advancement and a rampant increase in economic and financial interdependence. Globalization has played a significant role in the psychological development and psychological makeup of the people of the 21st century specifically generation Z. In past many cultures had deep rooted customs and rituals that were barely influenced by anything global whether Western, or Asian, but now the generation Z (young people bron between 1995-2010) from every part of the world are the most vulnerable segment of societies who are affected by globalization. People belonging to collectivist cultures have number of expectations and demands to meet that keepthem under pressures and at times lead to procrastination tendencies. Youngsters in Asian setting suchasPakistan live withtheir immediate or extended family

wherethey are influenced by family and cultural normsand resulting behavior isthe outcome of interaction betweenmultiple influencers. Theself in collectivist culturessuchas Asian settingsisstrongly fused, enmeshed, interdependent, and linked with its close relations such asfamily and peers, and emphasize on its socially contingent nature. The area of procrastination is yet to be explored in more detail and further research is needed regarding procrastination to understand its complexities and its role in several contexts. Though traditional (passive) procrastination has some short-term benefits for procrastinators such as lessened anxiety and stress but in the longer run the cost one has to pay is greater than its benefits. Future research should continue to find out the more positive aspects of active procrastination and highlight that major difference between the two types (i.e., active vs. passive) might be their degree of adaptiveness". as active procrastinators intentionally procrastinate and do not worry about it due to being confident of their success regardless of their engagement in the task now or later whereas passives are well aware of their being behind the schedule yet they still procrastinate because of feeling incompetent andafraid of being exposed.

# LIMITATIONS OFTHE STUDY

Eventhough resultsof the present studyaremeaningful extension of existing research andare of great theoretical interest, still the study is not free from limitations and is constrained by its reliance on self­ report measures.Measures of procrastination (i.e., NAPS & PPS) were not balanced in terms of negatively phrased items thatmight also be a possible methodological limitation. Data for study was collected only from adolescents in urban and rural areas of Islamabad and Rawalpindi due to which results may not generalize well to other young populations residing in rural areas and different cities of Pakistan. As sample was based on convenience sampling whichmay also havean effect on generalizability offindings.Although thisinitial study of active procrastination in indigenouscontext provides useful opening data on procrastination yet future procrastination research should explore additional variables that are previously shown to be strongly related to procrastination, such as self-efficacy for self­ regulation, self-esteem, parenting styles, impulsiveness, sensation seeking, distractibility,self-control,and task appeal.

# RECOMMENDATIONS

Though for present research power analysis wasrun to seethepower of the test with pre-specified sample size, post hoc compute achieved power was calculated that revealed sample size as reasonably large.Futurestudiesmay run poweranalysisaspriority to computerequired sample sizeto determine the appropriate sample size for the study.Moreover further studiesshouldexplore the role of age,gender, and academic level asmoderators for active and passive procrastinators. In addition there is difference in actual procrastinatory behavior and procrastination tendencies reported by respondents asstudy did not incorporate any behavioral measure of procrastination so including both the measures of procrastination such as,direct behavioral indices and self-reports may enhance the validityoffindings.

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