



ACADEMIC SELF-EFFICACY, PROCRASTINATION AND STRESS AMONG PSYCHOLOGY STUDENTS

¹Mountbattan Preetha Athisaya, ²Paulraj Soniya

III BSc Psychology, Assistant Professor,

Department of Psychology, Rathinam College of Arts and Science, Coimbatore, Tamil Nadu, India

Abstract

Procrastination has become a significant concern in higher education due to its impact on students' academic performance and psychological wellbeing. The present study aimed to examine the levels of Procrastination, Stress, and academic self-efficacy, and to explore the relationships among these variables among psychology students. A quantitative correlational research design was employed, and data were collected from a sample of 100 psychology students using standardized measures of procrastination, perceived stress, and self-efficacy. The results indicated that psychology students experienced moderate levels of Procrastination and Stress, while academic self-efficacy was relatively high. Correlation analysis revealed a significant positive relationship between Procrastination and Stress, and significant negative relationships between Procrastination and academic self-efficacy, as well as between Stress and academic self-efficacy. Gender differences were also observed across the study variables. The findings highlight the role of Stress and self-efficacy in understanding procrastination and underscore the need for interventions focusing on stress reduction and enhancement of self-efficacy among psychology students.

Index Terms - Procrastination, Stress, academic self-efficacy, psychology students, gender differences

Introduction

Academic life at the college level places significant cognitive, emotional, and motivational demands on students, often requiring them to manage multiple academic tasks within limited time frames. One of the most common challenges faced by students in this context is Procrastination, which refers to the tendency to delay academic tasks such as assignments, examination preparation, and project work despite awareness of potential negative consequences. Research has consistently shown that Procrastination is highly prevalent among college students and is associated with adverse academic and psychological outcomes, including poor performance, increased stress, and reduced wellbeing.

Among college populations, psychology students face unique academic demands due to the theoretical intensity of coursework, continuous assessments, research-related activities, and applied learning requirements. These demands can contribute to heightened levels of Stress, which in turn may influence students' academic behaviors. Stress refers to the pressure experienced by students in response to academic workload, performance expectations, examinations, and time constraints. When Stress exceeds students' coping capacity, it may lead to avoidance behaviors such as procrastination.

Another important factor closely linked to Procrastination and Stress is academic self-efficacy. Academic self-efficacy reflects students' beliefs in their ability to successfully organize, manage, and complete academic tasks. Students with high academic self-efficacy are more likely to approach academic challenges with confidence, persist in the face of difficulties, and regulate their learning behaviors effectively. In contrast, students with low self-efficacy may doubt their abilities, experience higher stress, and engage in procrastination as a means of avoiding perceived failure.

Previous research suggests that Procrastination is not merely a problem of poor time management, but a complex psychological phenomenon influenced by emotional factors such as stress and motivational factors such as self-efficacy. Studies have reported that Stress is positively related to procrastination, whereas academic self-efficacy shows a negative relationship with both stress and procrastination. However, there remains a need for focused empirical investigation of these relationships within specific academic populations, such as psychology students, to better understand how these variables interact in real academic settings.

Therefore, the present study aims to examine the levels of Procrastination, Stress, and academic self-efficacy among psychology students, as well as the relationships among these variables and gender differences. Understanding these relationships may provide valuable insights for designing academic interventions, counseling strategies, and support programs aimed at reducing procrastination, managing stress, and enhancing self-efficacy among psychology students, ultimately promoting better academic performance and psychological wellbeing.

Methodology

Objectives of the Study

1. To assess the levels of Procrastination, Stress, and academic self-efficacy among psychology students.
2. To examine the relationship between Procrastination, Stress, and academic self-efficacy among psychology students.
3. To study the gender differences in Procrastination, Stress, and academic self-efficacy among psychology students.

Hypotheses of the Study

H₁: There is a significant relationship Procrastination, Stress, and academic self-efficacy among psychology students.

H₂: There is a significant difference between male and female psychology students in Procrastination, Stress, and academic self-efficacy among psychology students.

Research Design

The present study employed a quantitative correlational research design to understand the relationship between Procrastination, Stress, and academic self-efficacy among psychology students. This design was appropriate for examining the direction and strength of relationships among the study variables using statistical techniques.

Sample and Population

The sample comprised 100 psychology students selected from affiliated colleges of a recognized university. The participants were aged between 17 and 25 years and included both male and female students enrolled in undergraduate psychology programs. A purposive sampling technique was adopted to select participants who met the inclusion criteria, namely regular enrollment in psychology courses and willingness to participate in the study.

Description of the tools

Procrastination Scale: Procrastination was measured using the General Procrastination Scale developed by Lay (1986). The scale consists of 20 items designed to assess individuals' tendency to delay tasks unnecessarily. Responses are recorded on a Likert-type scale, with higher scores indicating greater levels of procrastination. The scale has been widely used in research and has demonstrated satisfactory reliability and validity.

General Self-Efficacy Scale: Academic self-efficacy was assessed using the General Self-Efficacy Scale developed by Schwarzer and Jerusalem (1995). This scale consists of 10 items that measure individuals' beliefs in their ability to cope with difficult demands and handle challenging situations effectively. Higher scores reflect stronger self-efficacy beliefs. The scale has shown good psychometric properties across diverse populations.

Perceived Stress Scale: Stress was measured using the Perceived Stress Scale (PSS) developed by Cohen, Kamarck, and Mermelstein (1983). The scale assesses the degree to which individuals perceive situations in their life as stressful. It evaluates feelings of unpredictability, overload, and lack of control. Higher scores indicate higher levels of perceived stress. The PSS is a widely used and validated measure of stress.

Data Analysis

The collected data were analyzed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). Descriptive statistics (mean and standard deviation) were computed, followed by Pearson's product-moment correlation and multiple regression analysis to examine relationships and predictive effects among the variables. Statistical significance was set at $p < .05$.

Ethical Considerations

Ethical principles were strictly followed throughout the study. Participation was voluntary, and respondents were free to withdraw at any stage. The data were used solely for academic and research purposes.

Results**Table 3.1 : Shows the Descriptive Statistics of the study variables**

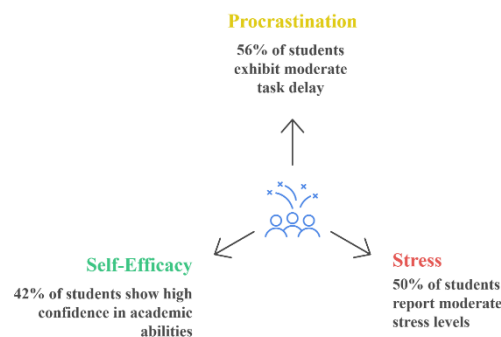
Study Variables	Mean	SD
1. Procrastination	65.422	10.381
2. Stress	58.762	9.852
3. Academic Self-Efficacy	72.151	11.201

Table 3.1 presents the descriptive statistics of the study variables among psychology students. The mean score for Procrastination ($M = 65.42$, $SD = 10.38$) indicates a moderate level of procrastination among psychology students. Stress also showed a moderate mean score ($M = 58.76$, $SD = 9.85$), suggesting that psychology students experience noticeable academic pressure related to workload and performance demands. In contrast, academic self-efficacy recorded a relatively higher mean score ($M = 72.15$, $SD = 11.20$), indicating that psychology students generally possess a fair level of confidence in their academic abilities.

Table 3.2 : Shows the frequency and percentage of study variables

Study Variables	Level	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Procrastination	Low	22	22.0
	Moderate	56	56.0
	High	22	22.0
Stress	Low	25	25.0
	Moderate	50	50.0
	High	25	25.0
Academic Self-Efficacy	Low	20	20.0
	Moderate	38	38.0
	High	42	42.0

Table 3.2 shows the distribution of psychology students across low, moderate, and high levels of the study variables. More than half of the psychology students (56%) fell in the moderate category of Procrastination, confirming that task delay is a common academic behavior within this group. Similarly, 50% of the psychology students reported moderate Stress, while equal proportions (25%) experienced low and high levels of stress. In the case of academic self-efficacy, a higher percentage of psychology students (42%) reported high self-efficacy, suggesting that despite experiencing Stress and procrastination, many psychology students maintain confidence in their academic capabilities.

*Figure 1: Shows the Percentage Distribution among Psychology Students***Table 3.3 :Shows the relationship between Procrastination, Stress, and Academic Self-Efficacy**

Study Variables	Procrastination	Stress	Academic Self-Efficacy
Procrastination	1	.521**	-.464**
Stress	.521**	1	-.392**
Academic Self-Efficacy	-.464**	-.392**	1

*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

Table 3.3 indicates the relationships among Procrastination, Stress, and academic self-efficacy among psychology students. A significant positive correlation was found between Procrastination and Stress ($r = .521$, $p < .01$), indicating that psychology students with higher levels of Stress tend to procrastinate more.

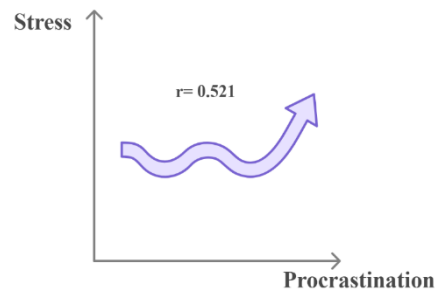


Figure 2 : Correlation between Procrastination and Stress among Psychology Students

A significant negative correlation was observed between Procrastination and academic self-efficacy ($r = -.464$, $p < .01$), suggesting that higher academic self-efficacy is associated with lower levels of procrastination among psychology students.

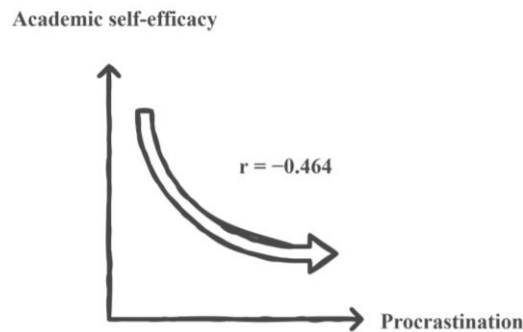


Figure 3: Negative Relationship between Academic Self-Efficacy and Procrastination

Additionally, Stress showed a significant negative relationship with academic self-efficacy ($r = -.392$, $p < .01$), indicating that increased confidence in academic abilities reduces perceived stress in this population.

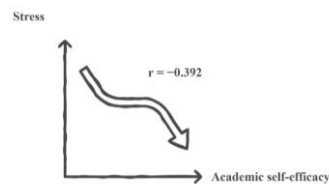


Figure 4 : Negative Relationship between Academic Self-Efficacy and Stress among Psychology Students

Table 3.4 : Shows the gender difference based on the measures of Procrastination, Stress, and Academic Self-Efficacy

Variable	Gender	N	Mean	SD	t	df	p
Procrastination	Male	50	67.84	10.123	2.412	98	.018
	Female	50	63.02	10.542			
Stress	Male	50	60.95	9.481	2.085	98	.040
	Female	50	56.57	10.011			
Academic Self-Efficacy	Male	50	69.18	11.365	-2.766	98	.007
	Female	50	75.12	10.842			

Note: $p < 0.05$

Table 3.4 presents the results of the independent samples t-test examining gender differences among psychology students. Male psychology students reported significantly higher levels of Procrastination ($t = 2.412$, $p < .05$) and Stress ($t = 2.085$, $p < .05$) than female psychology students. Conversely, female psychology students demonstrated significantly higher academic self-efficacy than their male counterparts ($t = -2.766$, $p < .01$). These findings suggest that gender plays a significant role in academic behaviors and psychological experiences among psychology students, with males being more vulnerable to Stress and procrastination, while females exhibit stronger academic confidence.

Discussion of the Study

The present study examined Procrastination, Stress, and academic self-efficacy among psychology students, with particular emphasis on their levels, interrelationships, and gender differences. The findings indicate that Procrastination is a common behavioral pattern among psychology students and is closely associated with psychological stress and motivational beliefs, thereby supporting existing theoretical and empirical literature.

The descriptive results revealed that psychology students experienced moderate levels of Procrastination and Stress, while their academic self-efficacy was relatively high. This pattern is consistent with earlier research suggesting that procrastination is prevalent among college students, including those in psychology-related disciplines, and often coexists with academic pressure (O'Brien, 2002; Ferrari, Johnson, & McCown, 1995). The moderate stress levels observed align with findings by Bisht (1980) and Anderson (2006), who identified examinations, workload, and time pressure as major sources of Stress in higher education.

Correlation analysis demonstrated a significant positive relationship between Stress and Procrastination, indicating that psychology students experiencing higher Stress are more likely to delay academic tasks. This finding supports previous research suggesting that procrastination often functions as an avoidance strategy in response to overwhelming academic demands (Tjia Siu Fong, 2012; Rahardjo, Juneman, & Setiani, 2013). Similar outcomes were reported by Susan et al. (2001) and Kandemir et al. (2014), who found that increased stress significantly predicts procrastination and negatively impacts academic functioning.

The study also revealed a significant negative relationship between academic self-efficacy and Procrastination, suggesting that psychology students with stronger confidence in their academic abilities tend to procrastinate less. This finding is strongly supported by Bandura's (1977, 1993) self-efficacy theory, which emphasizes that individuals with high efficacy beliefs show greater persistence and self-regulation. Empirical studies by Ferrari et al. (1992), Haycock, McCarthy, and Skay (1998), and Wolters (2003) similarly reported that higher academic self-efficacy is associated with lower levels of procrastination.

Furthermore, academic self-efficacy was found to be negatively correlated with Stress, indicating that psychology students with higher self-efficacy experience lower stress levels. This result supports earlier findings that self-efficacy acts as a buffer against stress by enhancing coping strategies and reducing anxiety (Bandura, 1993; Hen & Goroshit, 2014). Psychology students, who are frequently exposed to theoretical and applied coursework, may particularly benefit from strong self-efficacy in managing academic challenges.

Gender difference analysis showed that male psychology students reported significantly higher levels of Procrastination and Stress, whereas female psychology students demonstrated higher academic self-efficacy. These findings are consistent with previous studies reporting higher procrastination and stress among males and stronger self-regulatory beliefs among females (Klassen & Kuzucu, 2008; Kandemir et al., 2014). Differences in socialization patterns, coping styles, and academic motivation may explain these variations.

Therefore, the findings support a multidimensional understanding of Procrastination among psychology students, influenced by emotional strain and motivational beliefs rather than simple time-management difficulties (Saddler & Bulley, 1999). The results highlight the importance of addressing Stress and enhancing academic self-efficacy through counseling, stress-management programs, and self-regulation training to improve academic outcomes and psychological wellbeing among psychology students.

Conclusion

The present study concludes that Procrastination is a prevalent behavior among psychology students and is significantly influenced by Stress and academic self-efficacy. Psychology students experiencing higher levels of Stress tend to procrastinate more, whereas those with stronger academic self-efficacy report lower levels of procrastination and stress. The findings indicate that Procrastination among psychology students is not merely a time-management issue but a psychological outcome shaped by emotional pressure and self-beliefs. Strengthening academic self-efficacy and reducing Stress through targeted academic and psychological interventions may help minimize procrastination and enhance academic performance and overall wellbeing among psychology students.

Limitations

1. The study relied on self-report measures, which may be influenced by social desirability and response bias.
2. The correlational research design limits the ability to establish causal relationships among the variables.
3. The sample was restricted to psychology students, which may limit the generalizability of the findings to students from other academic disciplines.

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