

South Asian Universities: Effect of Personality Traits on Procrastination of Students at University Level

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ABSTRACT

This study examined the effect of personality traits on procrastination of university students. All the students enrolled in public and private universities of the Punjab were population of the study. Sample was comprised of 500 students which were selected through convenient sampling technique. Due to Covid-19 convenient sampling technique was used. Two instruments were used to measure personality traits and procrastination. Big Five Inventory was used to measure personality traits and 20-item Procrastination Scale was used to measure procrastination. Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) was used to analyze the data. It was found that sample data fit the hypothetical model well. Randomly selected large sample is recommended to further probe the cause-effect relationship of variables under study.

Key Words: Neuroticism, Extraversion, Openness to Experience, Agreeableness, Conscientiousness & Procrastination

Introduction

Most challenging issue for student is low academic achievement. There are many reasons of low academic achievement like self-efficacy, self-esteem and behavioral characteristics, motivation, procrastination, psychological factor, intelligence, personality and many more to name. Though, procrastination is commonly experienced problematic behavior among student behavior that negatively affect academic achievement (Balkis, 2011).

Procrastination is a personality character which means to delay a task while knowing the negative consequences (Steel, 2007; Wazid, Shahnawaz, &Gupta, 2016). It makes students inactive and lazy. Students feel fear or hesitation to start working on any assignment (Hussain & Sultan, 2010). Procrastination is very common among young people. Students commonly tend to request for deadlines extension. It is also noticed that some students study through the academic year and some students start studying only few days before exams (Wazid, Shahnawaz, &Gupta, 2016).

Therefore, it is understandable that personality and procrastination are considered that effect students' achievement in university setting. Those students have high academic achievement who are open, neurotic, conscientious and have a desire to complete the task (Karatat, 2015). Previous researches showed that procrastination had effect on academic achievement (Hussain & Sultan, 2010; Maryam, Kiani, & Dahar, 2016) and personality traits effect academic performance (Hazrati-Viari, Rad, & Torabi, 2012). Many previously conducted studies have explored the link between personality traits and procrastination (Nadeem, Malik, & Javaid, 2016) and some researchers have explored academic procrastination (Afzal & Jami, 2018).

Procrastination, emotional stability and conscientiousness were linked with each other (Choudhry, 2008). There is a negative relationship exists among all personality traits and procrastination is a personality tendency, it is considered as a negative personality trait (Zacks & Hen, 2018; Afzal & Jamil 2018).

Personality can be defined as the traits that control individual behavior, thinking n feelings (McGeown, Putwain, Simpson, Boffey, Markham, & Vince, 2014). It can be a driving force for students to stop striving when they face educational difficulty. Students delay their tasks on purpose or due to their [personality. Whereby, procrastination in terms of personality traits can be captured by the big five personality trait model with following five traits-extraversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, neuroticism and openness to experience (Digman, 1990; Goldberg, 1990; Barrick & Mount, 1991).

In Pakistani context Hussain and Sultan (2010) tried to find out relationship between students' academic performance and procrastination. Population of this study was consisted of students of Islamia University Bahawalpur. It was revealed that significant positive relationship exists between and academic performance. Saleem and Rafique (2012) conducted study on relationship between procrastination and self-esteem at university level. They found negative relationship between these two variables. Nadeem, Malik and Javaid (2016) conducted study on relationship between personality and procrastination as moderated by gender by taking the students of Islamia University Bahawalpur as population. They found positive correlation between personality and procrastination. As far as the knowledge of the researcher is concerned previous researches on procrastination and personality traits delimited their population on only one university (Hussain & Sultan, 2010; Nadeem, Malik, & Javaid, 2016) and no specific research was carried out in this context by taking the sample from other universities from the province of the Punjab. After reviewing the literature and knowing the importance of the study variables current study was designed to explore the effect of personality traits on procrastination at university level.

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Objectives of the study

The objectives of the study were to:

1. Investigate the effect of personality traits on procrastination of the students at university level
2. Find out the effect of university type on the personality of the students.
3. Identify the effect of university type on the procrastination of the students.

Hypotheses

H_{01} : There is no significant effect of personality traits on procrastination of the students at university level

H_{02} : University students' personality is not determined by the type of university in which they are studying.

H_{03} : Procrastination behavior of the student is not effected by the type of university.

Review of related literature

Personality is trait which hold moods, attitudes, interaction with others and opinions. It includes inherent and acquired behaviors which differentiate one person to another (Holzman, 2019). Personality predicts the way of individual's actions and it also includes patterns of behavior, emotions and thoughts (Baumeister, Vohs, & Funder, 2007).

Current literature has an extensive debate on five personality factors and their effects on different outcome variables. Mostly academician and researchers are agreed on these traits: extraversion, neuroticism, and openness to experience, agreeableness and conscientiousness and can be assessed through NEO-PI-R. (Boyle, Matthews & Saklofske, 2008). This academic area has long research history starting from start of the 20th century (John & Srivastava, 1999).

Hazrati-Viaria, Rad and Torabi (2012) conducted a research to investigate how on personality traits effect academic performance along with mediating role of academic motivation at college level. It is revealed that intrinsic and extrinsic motivation can be predicted through conscientiousness. Mediation role academic motivation is significant; academic motivation mediates positively between above mention variables of the study. Another study conducted by Ariani (2013) on expected relationship between personality traits and learning motivations. Results of study after running regression analysis results indicated that five personality traits (Extraversion, Agreeableness, Openness to Experience and Conscientiousness) showed positive relationship intrinsic motivation while neuroticism has positive relationship to extrinsic motivation. Another interesting

finding was that core self-evaluation positive relationship with intrinsic motivation and negatively related to extrinsic motivation.

Kuo and Tang (2014) investigated possible relationships among personality traits, usage of social media, and enjoyment activities at college level in Taiwan. People who are extrovert are more willing to socialize via social media and in real life. Students with low motivation are less open and showed non social behaviour.

Procrastination

Procrastination can be defined as carrying out less important tasks and delaying important task (Schraw, Wadkins, & Olafson, 2007). Steel (2007) defined procrastination as intentionally delaying of course of action.

Researches on procrastination

Hussain and Sultan (2010) identified the factors of procrastination and how they are related to the learning of university students. It was found that procrastinated behaviour has effect on students learning in the classroom, classroom interaction, meeting deadlines for assignments and their achievement motivation. Over all academic performance is linked with procrastination.

Kiamarsi and Abolghasemi (2014) studied relationship of procrastination and self-efficacy with psychological vulnerability in students of Islamic Azad University Ardabil Branch. Data was collected while using three instruments; Psychological Symptoms Inventory, Procrastination Scale and Self-efficacy Scale. It was found that procrastination effect vulnerability that lower down self-efficacy among students.

In this context, Goroshit and Hen (2019) tried to determine relationship between academic procrastination and academic performance with moderating effect of learning disabilities (LD). There was a negative relationship between academic procrastination and GPA, and procrastination negatively related to all variables concerning student's achievement.

Gender plays significant role in students' achievement in different disciplines. Gender role was investigated by Duru and Balkis (2017) in terms of academic procrastination, academic performance and academic life satisfaction. The results of this study are aligned with previous study. Gender plays vital role and male showed more procrastination behaviour than female and resultantly showed academic performance. Same relationship is existed between procrastination and academic life satisfaction.

Maryam, Kiani and Dahar (2016) examined relationship of procrastination with life satisfaction of students. It was alarming that most of the university students both male and female showed procrastinated behavior towards their academic tasks. But interestingly, they are satisfied in their life. Findings contradict the literature discourse where procrastination negatively related with life

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satisfaction. Ismail (2016) found that psychological well-being is linked with two procrastination behaviour

Procrastination is also investigated with various variable relating to child learning. Parenting style and procrastination was studied by Zakeri, Esfahani and Razmjoe (2013). Sample comprised of 395 students University of Shiraz. It was found that procrastination is negatively students' achievements.

Researches on personality and procrastination

Mostly research focused recently shifted to investigate the different personality related factors and procrastination. Spontaneity is considered to be related procrastination (Steel, 2010). Mostly negative traits are positively related to procrastination such as anxiety and irrational behaviour. Positive aspects such high achievement motivation and being a perfectionist has no relationship with procrastination (Lee, Kelly & Edwards, 2006).

Personality traits were studied by Lee, Kelly and Edwards (2006) with two Big Five personality factors, "Neuroticism and Conscientiousness". 24% of the variance was explained when conscientiousness was used as mediator. Mediation effect is playing important role.

Another study conducted by Kim, Fernandez and Terrier (2017) to examine the effects of the five-factor model with the aim to understand which personality traits predict academic procrastination. Sample comprised of 178 university students in Switzerland. Findings of this study revealed that neuroticism and extraversion were related to active procrastination. Active procrastination was better predictor of GPA as compared to five factor model and passive procrastination.

Through literature it was found that personality traits and procrastination are correlated with each other and personality traits are predictor of procrastinatory behavior among students. It was noticed through literature that no specific study was carried out on the relationship between these variables in universities of Lahore and by using SEM.

Methodology

Research design

This research was descriptive in nature because it describes conditions that already exist. The present study employed causal comparative research design in order to find out the effect of personality traits on procrastination among university students.

Hypothetical Model of the Study

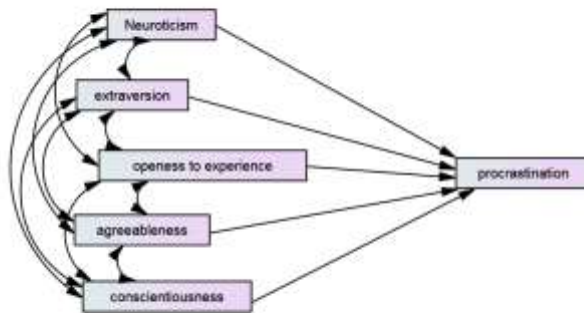


Figure 1 Hypothetical model of the study

Personality traits were independent variables and procrastination was dependent variable. The purpose of the study was to find out causal relationship between personality traits and procrastination. Above model shows all the paths which are tested in this study by using SEM.

Population

Population of the present study was comprised of all undergraduate students in public and private universities in Punjab. According to Pakistan Education Statistics (2016-2017) there were 34 public and 26 private universities in Punjab. Total enrollment number was 310, 591 and 114, 428 in public and private universities respectively.

Sample

Sample for current study was 500 university students which were taken by using convenient sampling technique from both male and female of private and public universities of Lahore. Due to Covid-19 sample was selected through Convenient Sampling Technique.

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Instrumentation

The questionnaire was comprised of three parts. The first part comprised of demographic information, the second part was Big Five Inventory and the third part was procrastination scale.

Big Five Inventory (BFI)

Big Five Inventory by John and Srivastava (1999) was adapted for measuring personality traits. It was based on five- point Likert scale. This instrument measures five domains, and has 44 statements in which 8 items measure neuroticism, 8 items measure extraversion, 10 items measure openness to experience, 9 items measure agreeableness and 9 items measure conscientiousness.

Procrastination scale

The 20-item Procrastination scale by Lay (1986) was adapted to measure the procrastination, it was based on five- point Likert scale. This instrument has 20 statements, 11 statements for active procrastination and 9 statements for passive procrastination.

Results

**Table 1
Correlations Between all Variables**

No.	Variables	N	M	S. D	1	2	3	4	5	6
1.	Neuroticism	50	24.9	4.2	1	-	.163*	.161*	.099*	.232*
		0	3	6		.06	*	*		*
					6					
2.	Extraversion	50	25.2	3.7	1		.156*	.124*	.216*	.157*
		0	4	3			*	*	*	*
3.	Openness to Experience	50	32.6	4.0			1	.204*	.221*	.253*
		0	3	6				*	*	*
4.	Agreeableness	50	28.7	4.1				1	.312*	.319*
		0	3	8					*	*
5.	Conscientious ness	50	28.5	3.9					1	.164*
		0	2	2						*
6.	Procrastinatio n	50	63.8	7.9						1
		0	7	8						

*p<0.05 (Sig. 2-tailed) **p<0.01 (Sig. 2-tailed)

Table 1 shows that all four personality traits (extraversion, openness to experience, agreeableness and conscientiousness) develop a highly positive correlation with each other, Whereas, neuroticism does not show the significant correlation with extraversion. All five personality traits (neuroticism, extraversion, openness to experience, agreeableness and conscientiousness) develop positive correlation with procrastination.

Table 2
Path Estimates for the Model of Effect of Personality Traits on Procrastination

Parameter		Unstandradized Coeff (β)	SE	Standardized Coeff (b)
Neuroticism	→	.324**	.078	.173
Procrastination				
Extraversion	→	.245	.090	.115
Procrastination				
Openness	→	.303**	0.084	.154
Procrastination				
Agreeableness	→	.456**	.083	.239
Procrastination				
Conscientiousness	→	.024	.089	.012
Procrastination				

The path coefficients depicted that among five personality traits only three personality traits (Neuroticism, Openness to experiences and agreeableness) developed a significant causal effect on the procrastination [Neuroticism → Procrastination= .324], [Openness to experiences → Procrastination= .303] and [Agreeableness → Procrastination= .456].

Table 3
Model Fit for the Effect of Personality Traits on Procrastination

χ^2 /df	GFI	CFI	IFI	RMSEA
2.35	0.98	0.93	0.94	0.05

The model fit of current research hypothetical model exhibited an acceptable fit to data according to different goodness of fit indices (χ^2 /df= 2.35, GFI= 0.98, CFI= 0.93, IFI= 0.94, RMSEA= 0.05). So, null hypothesis “There is no significant effect of personality traits on procrastination at university level” is rejected.

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Table 4

University wise Difference of Students regarding Personality Traits (N = 500)

Variables	University	N	M	SD	t	Df	P
Personality Traits	Public	250	137.6	12.80	-4.765	498	.000*
	Private	250	142.4	9.554			

*p<0.05 (Sig. 2-tailed)

Table 4 depicts that students of public and private university are significantly different on personality traits ($t = -4.765$, $P < 0.05$). The table shows that students of public university are having 137.6 mean value and students of private university are having 142.4 mean value. So, the null hypothesis “There is no significant difference of students based on their university type regarding personality” is rejected.

Table 5

University wise Difference of Students regarding Procrastination (N = 500)

Variables	University	N	M	SD	t	Df	P
Procrastination	Public	250	62.212	6.9921	-4.753	498	.000*
	Private	250	65.532	8.5490			

*p<0.05 (Sig. 2-tailed)

Table 5 depicts that students of public and private university are significantly different on procrastination ($t = -4.753$, $P < 0.05$). The table shows that students of public university are having 62.212 mean value and students of private university are having 65.532 mean value. So, the null hypothesis “There is no significant difference of students based on their university type regarding procrastination” is rejected.

Conclusions

Based on the findings of the study, following conclusions were drawn.

1. Majority of the students were of the opinion that they were original and came up with new ideas. Subscale of personality traits “openness to experience” had the highest mean score among all the indicators. Accordingly, it can be concluded that students were open to experiences.
2. On scale of procrastination majority of the students were agreed that if a bill for a small amount came they paid it right away. Accordingly, it can be concluded that majority of the students paid their bill of small amount on time.

3. This study found positive correlation between all personality traits (neuroticism, extraversion, openness to experience, agreeableness and conscientiousness) and procrastination. Hence, it can be concluded that personality traits and procrastination were positively correlated.
4. All indices of model ($\chi^2 / df = 2.35$, GFI= 0.98, CFI= 0.93, IFI= 0.94, RMSEA= 0.05) are confirming that sample data fit the model well. Hence, it can be concluded that personality traits effect procrastination.
5. There was a significant difference between public and private university students on personality traits and procrastination. Therefore, it can be concluded that students of private universities were more agreed on personality traits and procrastination.

Discussion

University students are struggling with academic procrastination because they put off work, delay their submission of assignments and preparation exam. It is important to identify the cause of procrastinatory behavior of students that effects their learning, low grade point average, failing examinations due to delaying of work is resulting in anxiety, depression, sense of dependency, fear of failure and stress ultimately falling behind the class and in the end dropping out. The purpose of current research was to find out the effect of personality traits on procrastination.

This study found that there was significant difference of students regarding personality traits and procrastination based on their university type. Students of private universities were more agreed on personality traits and procrastination. Current study found positive correlation between personality and procrastination. Nadeem, Malik and Javaid (2016) also supported this finding that personality traits were correlated to procrastination. Finding of current study was in line with Johnson and Bloom (1995); Schouwenburg and Lay (1995); Lay, Kovacs and Danto (1998) who found that personality traits were strongly linked to procrastination. In current study SEM was used to test the model in Pakistani context and sample data fit the model well. Hence, it was concluded that personality traits significantly affect procrastination among students.

Recommendations

Future researches may be conducted by using the different sample selection technique to enhance the generalizability. This study may be conducted by taking the sample of other cities and by using qualitative research method.

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