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RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PROCRASTINATION, SELF-ESTEEM AND SELF-EFFICACY AMONG YOUNG ADULTS

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Abstract: The present study aims to investigates the interrelationship between procrastination, self-esteem, and self-efficacy among young adults. Although numerous studies have investigated procrastination, only a limited number have explored its association with both self-esteem and self-efficacy. The sample for this study comprised 200 participants, aged 18 to 25 years, drawn from in and around Villupuram. Participants included both males and females. A convenience sampling technique was employed to select individuals most relevant to the research objectives. The tools used to assess procrastination, self-esteem, and self-efficacy were: Tuckman's Procrastination Scale (1991), Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (1965), and the General Self-Efficacy Scale (GSE), along with demographic details. Statistical analysis was carried out using IBM SPSS Version 23. Descriptive statistics provided an overview of the data, while inferential techniques such as the Mann–Whitney U test, Kruskal–Wallis test, and Spearman's Correlation Coefficient were applied for further statistical analysis. Results indicated a significant negative correlation between procrastination, self-esteem, and self-efficacy, whereas self-esteem and self-efficacy demonstrated a significant positive relationship. Demographic details such as gender showed a significant difference in self-esteem and self-efficacy, while social gatherings showed a significant difference in procrastination. For future consideration, intervention strategies and awareness programs are recommended to cultivate healthier time management skills and strengthen coping mechanisms among young adults.

Index Terms - Procrastination, Self – Esteem, Self – Efficacy, Young Adults.

I. INTRODUCTION

Procrastination, a pervasive behavior characterized by the voluntary delay of intended tasks despite expecting negative consequences, is a significant challenge among college students, often impacting academic performance and psychological well-being (Steel, 2007). This behavior is common and can manifest in various forms, such as putting off work assignments until the last minute or avoiding important responsibilities altogether. While occasional procrastination might seem harmless, it often stems from factors like fear of failure, perfectionism, or emotional regulation issues, and it can become a habitual pattern that disrupts productivity and well-being. Experts view it as a self-defeating behavior that provides short-term relief (e.g., avoiding immediate discomfort) but incurs long-term costs, such as increased stress or missed opportunities. This phenomenon is particularly prevalent in the college environment, where students face demanding academic schedules, complex tasks, and increased autonomy. Understanding the psychological factors that contribute to procrastination, such as self-esteem and self-efficacy, is crucial for developing interventions to enhance student success.

Self-esteem, defined as an individual's overall evaluation of their worth (Rosenberg, 1965), and self-efficacy, the belief in one's ability to succeed in specific tasks (Bandura, 1977), are critical psychological constructs that may influence procrastination tendencies. In the academic domain, students with high self-

esteem are often more confident in their abilities, resilient in the face of challenges, and motivated to engage in tasks proactively. Conversely low self-esteem may contribute to avoidance behaviors such as procrastination, as students may doubt their capacity to perform well or fear failure. Self-efficacy, as conceptualized by Bandura (1977), is "the belief in one's capabilities to organize and execute the courses of action required to produce given attainments." It is task-specific and directly influences how individuals set goals, exert effort, and cope with challenges. In the academic setting, high self-efficacy is linked to proactive learning behaviors, while low self-efficacy often correlates with avoidance, reduced effort, and greater susceptibility to procrastination.

Procrastination can significantly erode self-esteem among young adults, who are often navigating high-pressure environments like college, early career stages, or personal development milestones. Studies on undergraduate students, for instance, have shown a clear negative correlation between procrastination and self-esteem, where chronic procrastinators report lower self-esteem due to the cycle of avoidance leading to self-criticism and emotional distress. Similarly, procrastination adversely affects self-efficacy—the belief in one's ability to execute tasks and achieve goals—in young adults. Research indicates a strong negative relationship, where higher procrastination levels correlate with reduced self-efficacy, as young adults begin to doubt their capacity for self-regulation and timely accomplishment. For example, in academic settings, procrastinators often perceive study tasks as more aversive or difficult, leading to attrition intentions and further erosion of belief in their capabilities. Numerous studies have demonstrated that higher levels of procrastination are negatively associated with both self-esteem and self-efficacy. More recent findings suggest that procrastination undermines self-esteem through heightened self-criticism and feelings of guilt, while it weakens self-efficacy by diminishing confidence in self-regulation, particularly within academic settings.

II. RESEARCH QUESTIONS

1.Do variations in demographic factors contribute to differences in procrastination, self-esteem, and self-efficacy among young adults?

2.Does any correlation exist between procrastination, self-esteem, and self-efficacy among young adults?

III. OBJECTIVES:

- To address differences in procrastination, self – esteem and self – efficacy with respect to various demographic factors such as gender, social gatherings.
- To investigate the relationship between procrastination, self – esteem and self – efficacy.

This study aims to understand the interrelationship between procrastination, self-esteem and self – efficacy among young adults. Despite extensive research on procrastination, fewer studies have explored its combined relationship with self-esteem and self-efficacy (Brando – Garrido, C., 2023; Turki, M., 2023; Jehansher, Z., 2025; Arias-Chávez, D., 2020; Zhang, Y., 2018, Tan, J., 2015; Hajloo, N., 2014). Since these two psychological constructs are crucial in shaping motivation, confidence, and achievement, it becomes necessary to study them alongside procrastination to better understand the underlying dynamics. The findings may contribute to the development of targeted interventions, awareness programs, and educational or professional strategies that foster self – regulation, enhance self-belief, and reduce procrastination, ultimately supporting young adult's success and psychological well-being.

IV. METHOD

The present study included a total of 200 young adults, comprising students, working individuals, and unemployed individuals in and around Villupuram District. The sample encompassed both male and female participants within the age range of 18 to 25 years. A convenient sampling technique was employed to select individuals most relevant to the study's objectives. Data were collected using a structured questionnaire consisting of four key sections: demographic information, Tuckman's Procrastination Scale (TPS), Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (RSES), and the General Self-Efficacy Scale (GSE). Prior to administration, the purpose of the study was explained to each participant, informed consent was obtained, and rapport was established. Ethical considerations were strictly followed, including maintaining the confidentiality of participant information, ensuring anonymity of responses, and respecting participants' convenience throughout the study. After data collection, responses were scored according to the standard procedures prescribed for each scale.

4.1 TOOL DESCRIPTION

The description of the scales used to measure Procrastination, Self-esteem and Self-efficacy is given below; The original Tuckman Procrastination Scale (TPS) was developed by Bruce W. Tuckman (1991) to assess the general tendency of individuals to procrastinate, particularly in academic and everyday tasks. The most widely used version is the 16-item scale, a shortened form of the original 72- and 35-item versions and has been widely used due to its conciseness and reliability. All items are scored in the same direction, with higher scores indicating greater levels of procrastination. The TPS is unidimensional, measuring a single construct of procrastination. The TPS has consistently shown high reliability, with Cronbach's alpha values reported around .86 for the 16-item version, indicating strong internal consistency.

The original Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (RSES) was developed by Morris Rosenberg (1965). The scale was designed as a 10-item Likert-type self-report measure to assess global self-esteem, reflecting an individual's overall evaluation of their self-worth. Responses are rated on a four-point scale ranging from 1 = "Strongly Disagree" to 4 = "Strongly Agree." The scale consists of 10 items, of which five are positively worded and five are negatively worded; the negatively worded items are reverse-scored. A low score indicates low self-esteem, whereas a high score indicates high self-esteem. The Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (RSES) has demonstrated adequate internal reliability, with Cronbach's alpha values typically ranging from 0.77 to 0.88, and its test-retest correlation has been found to be satisfactory over time.

The General Self-Efficacy Scale (GSES) was developed by Ralf Schwarzer and Matthias Jerusalem (1995). The scale was designed as a 10-item Likert-type self-report measure to assess an individual's belief in their ability to cope with a variety of challenging situations and to successfully perform tasks. Responses are rated on a four-point scale ranging from 1 = "Not at all true" to 4 = "Exactly true." All items are scored in the same direction, with higher scores indicating higher levels of general self-efficacy, and the scale does not include reverse-scored items. The GSES has shown good internal consistency, with Cronbach's alpha values ranging from 0.76 to 0.90, and demonstrates satisfactory test-retest reliability over time.

v. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The obtained data were analyzed using the statistical software IBM SPSS version 23 and the inferential statistics was run based on the normal distribution of the data collected. In order to determine whether the data had a normal distribution or not, Shapiro-Wilk Test & Kolmogorov-Smirnov test was employed, based on the results the inferential statistics like Mann-Whitney, Kruskal Wallis, Spearman Correlation Coefficient and descriptive statistics were used and analyzed clearly. The significant value was kept at 0.05 level of significant ($p \leq 0.05$). The results are as follows;

Results of Study Variables

Table 5.1: *Examine the result of Mann – Whitney U test for Self – Esteem based on Gender.*

Variable	Sub Variable	N	Mean Rank	*Z* Value	*U* Statistic	*p* value
Self – Esteem	Female	100	113.32	3.141	3718.000	0.002
	Male	100	87.69			

Note: $p < 0.05$ (Significant)

The table presents the result of Mann – Whitney U test for Self – Esteem based on gender. The analysis revealed that there is a significant difference in the respondent's level of procrastination based on gender, as shown in Table 1. According to the findings, the mean rank of females was (113.32), while the mean rank for males was (87.69). This difference indicates that females tend to have higher level of self – esteem compared to males. The corresponding test result was U (200) = 3718.000, Z = 3.141, and $p < 0.05$. This result indicates that "There is a significant difference in self – esteem among young adults based on gender". Therefore, the alternative hypothesis is accepted.

Table 5.2**:** *Examine the result of Mann – Whitney U test for Self – Efficacy based on Gender.*

Variable	Sub Variable	N	Mean Rank	*Z* Value	*U* Statistic	*p* value
Self – Efficacy	Female	100	108.56	1.971	4194.500	0.049
	Male	100	92.45			

Note: $p < 0.05$ (Significant)

The table presents the result of Mann – Whitney U test for Self – Efficacy based on gender. The analysis revealed a significant difference in the respondent's self – efficacy based on gender, as shown in Table 2. According to the findings, the mean rank of females was (108.56), while the mean rank for males was (92.45). This difference indicates that males had lower level of self – efficacy compared to females. The

corresponding test result was U (200) = 4194.500, Z = 1.971, and $p < 0.05$. This result indicates that "There is a significant difference in self – efficacy among young adults based on gender". Therefore, the alternative hypothesis is accepted.

Table 5.3**:** *Examine the result of Kruskal Wallis test for Procrastination based on Social Gatherings*.

Variable	Sub Variable	N	Mean Rank	χ^2	*df*	*p* value
Procrastination	Frequently	30	85.88	8.544	3	0.036
	Never	25	78.28			
	Often	39	99.87			
	Rarely	106	110.11			

Note: $p < 0.05$ (Significant)

The table presents the result of Kruskal Walli's test for Procrastination based on social gathering. The analysis revealed a significant difference in the respondent's level of procrastination based on frequency of social gatherings as shown in Table 3. According to the findings, the mean rank of respondent who frequently engaged in social gatherings was (85.88), mean rank of respondent who never engaged in social gatherings was (78.28), mean rank of respondent who often engaged in social gatherings was (99.87), and mean rank of respondent who rarely engaged in social gatherings was (110.11).

This difference implies that individuals who engaged in rarely in social gatherings had higher procrastination tendencies compared to others. The corresponding test result was χ^2 (3) = 8.544, and $p < 0.05$. This result indicates that "There is a significant difference in procrastination among young adults based on social gathering". Therefore, the alternative hypothesis is accepted.

Table 5.4: *Examine the result of Spearman's rho Correlation Coefficient between Procrastination, Self – Esteem and Self – Efficacy among young adults.*

Variables	Procrastination	Self – Esteem	Self - Efficacy
Procrastination	-	- 0.216**	- 0.315**
Self – Esteem	- 0.216**	-	0.374**
Self - Efficacy	- 0.315**	0.374**	-

Note: **Correlation is significant at 0.01 (Sig.2 tailed)

Spearman's correlation was employed to examine the interrelation between the independent and dependent variables. Table 4 shows that a significant negative association was found between procrastination and both self-esteem and self-efficacy. Specifically, the results indicate a significant negative correlation between procrastination and self-esteem (r = – 0.216**, $p < 0.01$), as well as between procrastination and self-efficacy (r = – 0.315**, $p < 0.01$). This suggests that individuals who procrastinate frequently are more likely to report lower levels of self-esteem and self-efficacy. Furthermore, the findings reveal a significant positive correlation between self-esteem and self-efficacy (r = 0.374**, $p < 0.01$). This indicates that individuals with higher self-esteem tend to exhibit higher self-efficacy, and vice versa.

A negative coefficient of correlation implies that as one variable increases, the other decreases. Accordingly, individuals who engage more in procrastination are likely to experience lower self-esteem and self-efficacy respectively. Conversely, a positive coefficient of correlation indicates that as one variable increases, the other also increases, means that individuals with high self-esteem are likely to have high self-efficacy. These results emphasize the interrelationships among procrastination, self-esteem, and self-efficacy, and they are consistent with previous research findings (Brando – Garrido, C., 2023; Turki, M., 2023; Jehansher, Z., 2025; Arias-Chávez, D., 2020; Zhang, Y., 2018, Tan, J., 2015; Hajloo, N., 2014). Therefore, the stated hypothesis. "There will be a significant relationship between procrastination, self-esteem, and self-efficacy among young adults" is accepted.

VI. CONCLUSION

The results indicate that the Spearman's correlation coefficient analysis concluded that procrastination has a significant negative relationship with self-esteem (r = -0.216**) as well as with self-efficacy (r = -0.315**) among young adults. Furthermore, the findings reveal a significant positive correlation between self-esteem and self-efficacy (r = 0.374**, $p < 0.01$). The current study used the Mann-Whitney U test and Kruskal-Wallis test to find the differences in procrastination, self-esteem, and self-efficacy based on demographic factors. Gender was found to has a significant difference in self-esteem and self-efficacy among young adults based on the findings; however, social gatherings was found to have a significant difference only in procrastination. Such a conclusion is consistent with previous studies (Brando – Garrido, C., 2023; Turki, M., 2023; Jehansher, Z., 2025; Arias-Chávez, D., 2020; Zhang, Y., 2018; Tan, J., 2015; Hajloo, N., 2014). These findings further

reinforce the view that procrastination is significantly associated with lower self-esteem and self-efficacy, while self-esteem and self-efficacy are positively interrelated. Therefore, the present research findings support the assumption that procrastination has significant association with self-esteem and self-efficacy, highlighting the need for targeted interventions to reduce procrastination and enhance psychological well-being among young adults.

VII. LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH DIRECTION:

Though the present study provides meaningful insights into the relationship among procrastination, self-esteem, and self-efficacy, certain limitations must be acknowledged. The sample size was limited to 200 young adults drawn from in and around Villupuram District, which restricts the generalizability of the findings to other regions and populations. Additionally, the study focused exclusively on the 18–25 age group, thereby excluding other developmental stages in which procrastination and self-related constructs may manifest differently. The use of self-report measures may have been influenced by response bias or participants' reluctance to provide completely honest responses. The adoption of a convenience sampling technique further limits representativeness and may not adequately capture population diversity. Moreover, the statistical analyses were confined to non-parametric tests and correlation methods, restricting deeper causal interpretations. The study also considered only a limited set of demographic variables, overlooking other important influencing factors such as family environment, academic stress, personality traits, and coping styles. Cultural and contextual factors specific to Villupuram District may also limit the applicability of the findings to other settings.

Despite these limitations, the study contributes valuable insights into the interplay between procrastination, self-esteem, and self-efficacy among young adults and holds important implications for practice. The findings highlight the psychological consequences of procrastination and underscore the need for awareness and intervention programs aimed at enhancing self-esteem and self-efficacy. Counsellors, educators, and mental health professionals can incorporate cognitive-behavioral strategies, time-management training, and self-regulation techniques in academic and therapeutic contexts, while educational institutions may establish workshops, peer mentoring systems, and counselling services to promote self-confidence and goal setting. Educators and policymakers can utilize these findings to design structured academic environments to address procrastination as a significant academic and mental health concern. Future research is encouraged to include larger and more diverse samples across different age groups, regions, and cultural contexts, explore mediating and moderating variables such as motivation, perfectionism, academic stress, and digital distractions, and employ longitudinal and intervention-based designs to better understand causal relationships and long-term outcomes related to procrastination, self-esteem, and self-efficacy.

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