

Personality Correlates of Procrastination and Perfectionism among Adolescents

*Payal Kanwar Chandel, ** Aneetha Rifa, ***Kumari Manju Phogat

*Professor, ** Postgraduate Student, ***Research Scholar

Department of Psychology, Central University of Haryana

Correspondence author: Kumari Manju Phogat

Abstract :-

Background: The time bounded life of modern era has forced people to execute work and tasks in a timely manner with stipulated deadlines for everything. In this environment of constant tension, competition and multitasking there may have this desire or need delay completion of work given for later. This tendency of delaying work until the last moments of the deadline is called 'Procrastination'. This subjective change in procrastination is ought to study through this research on the basis of the five-factor model of personality. This behaviour of striving for perfectionism is different among people and hence this study also focuses on perfectionism among different personality domains.

Method:

SAMPLE

N = 158

Male = 67

Females =86

Research Design: The design used in the study is correlational research design to see if there is any relationship between the variables; procrastination, personality and perfectionism without controlling or manipulating any of them.

Tools:

- General Procrastination Scale (GPS)
- NEO Five-Factor Inventory (Costa & McCrae, 1992).
- The Frost Multidimensional Perfectionism Scale (1990)

Result: The correlational findings of the study indicate that the variable procrastination has a significant ($P < 0.01$) positive correlation with personality factors neuroticism and conscientiousness. Our study also suggests that there is a significant ($P < 0.01$) negative correlation between procrastination and extroversion, which has no consistency with previous studies reviewed. According to this study, perfectionism has a significant ($P < 0.01$) and positive relationship with conscientiousness. Another major finding of the study is that there is a significant ($P < 0.01$) negative correlation between perfectionism and the agreeableness factor.

The implication of the study: The study examines the investigation of personality correlates of procrastination and perfectionism among adolescents. The finding of the study may be helpful in teaching and school counselling areas to introduce different student development

interventions relating to procrastination among adolescent students.

Keywords:- Procrastination, adolescents, perfectionism, personality, school counselling, training.

I. INTRODUCTION

The time bounded life of modern era has forced people to execute work and tasks in a timely manner with stipulated deadlines for everything. In this environment of constant tension, competition and multitasking there may have this desire or need to postpone the completion of tasks for later. This tendency of delaying tasks until the last moments of the deadline is called 'Procrastination'. The act of procrastination is different among different people depending on many factors. This subjective change in procrastination is ought to study through this research on the basis of the five-factor model of personality. Also, people tend to procrastinate as they strive for getting a perfect result in the end by using the lagging time and pressure as a motivation to complete the task. Understanding clearly the correlation of each personality trait with procrastination will directly give us the chance to recognize if a person is prone to procrastination or not. It will help the teachers and school counsellors to foresee the behaviour of adolescents in accordance with their personality traits in completing the tasks effectively.

This behaviour of striving for perfectionism is different among people and hence this study also focuses on perfectionism among different personality domains. According to Klassen, Krawchuk, and Rajani (2008, p. 916), "procrastination consists of the intentional delay of an intended course of action, in spite of an awareness of negative outcomes." Steel (2007) defines the term as the tendency "to voluntarily delay an intended course of action despite expecting to be worse off for the delay". Procrastination involves unnecessary and unwanted delay, be it decisional, implemental, or lack of timeliness (McCown et al., 1989; Mann et al., 1997). The term 'procrastinate' is derived from the Latin word *procrastinus*, in which the prefix *pro* means 'forward' and *crastinus* means 'of tomorrow'. The concept of procrastination indicates postponing or delaying action or an act of taking resolutions. Procrastination occurs when the person values doing something else other than current work. According to Steel procrastination is self-harm and in the words of Sirois (2017), it is essentially irrational.

There are mainly two types of procrastination; active and passive. Active procrastination refers to postponing an action deliberately in order to use the last time pressure as a motivation to get things done effectively which leads to getting better end results like higher academic performance. Hence this type of procrastination is considered positive. Hsin Chu and Choi (2005) propose that active procrastination can lead to desirable outcomes and passive procrastination can lead to undesirable outcomes. Whereas, the passive type of procrastination refers to postponing a task due to the inability to complete it on time. Hence it leads to negative results including low academic achievement and high stress.

The most prevalent personality theory based on the aspects of traits is the Big Five, also known as the five-factor model of personality which expands the major five traits- Openness, Conscientiousness, Extroversion, Agreeableness, Neuroticism. Beginning with the research of Fiske (1949), the big five-factor theory of personality was later expanded upon by other researchers including Norman (1967), Smith (1967), Goldberg (1981), and McCrae and Costa (1987).

Neuroticism describes how emotionally unstable, nervous, distressful and fearful a person is. People's behaviour when it comes to procrastination is subjective in nature. Personality possesses a very significant relation with procrastination according to previous studies happened in the area. Studies show that some personality traits like low conscientiousness and high neuroticism are common among procrastinators. According to the majority of researchers, the trait of conscientiousness reports a very significant negative correlation with procrastination whereas neuroticism marks a relatively lower significant positive relation with the same. While other factors of personality including openness, extroversion and agreeableness show mixed up findings (Zhou 2018; Pathak 2020; Irfan 2015; Golub 2019). Though some studies found no significant relation between both dimensions. Perfectionism is a multidimensional personality trait characterized by overly high personal standards, critical evaluations of oneself and others, and strivings for flawlessness (Frost et al., 1990; Hewitt and Flett, 1991b). Perfectionism can lead an individual to greater accomplishments and also acts as a motivating factor when an individual faces obstacles and criticism. It leads an individual to pay greater attention to the minuscule details, which are at the centre of every scientific investigation. But too much emphasis on being "perfect" proves to be damaging for the individual by making creating negative self-images, thoughts and corresponding behaviours which may lead to low functioning. It may also cause stress, anxiety, depression, and other mental health issues.

In the *Corsini Encyclopaedia of Psychology (Volume 3)*, Hewitt and Flett explain that "Perfectionism is a broad and multifaceted personality construct that involves the requirement of perfection or the appearance of perfection for the self or for others". It is defined generally as the tendency to strive toward personal improvement and set high

standards for oneself (Short and Mazmanian, 2013). Another definition for the concept of perfectionism is "striving for flawlessness and setting exceedingly high standards for performance, accompanied by tendencies for overly critical evaluations" (Stoeber, 2011, p. 128).

Hewitt and Flett (1991) explained three types of perfectionism by their Multidimensional Perfectionism Scale:

- Socially prescribed perfectionist
- Other-Oriented Perfectionists
- Self-Oriented Perfectionists

Procrastination is often a symptom of perfectionism. A reason is that, as perfectionists care for completing a task perfectly, they tend to put it off as long as possible which may turn into an incubation period to make the task result better. Because perfectionists fear being unable to complete a task perfectly, they put it off as long as possible. Much of the previous research conducted on personality and procrastination reveals a visible association between both. The majority of studies including Jadidi (2011), Capan (2010), Kagan (2010), Gosh and Roy (2017) etc. confirmed that there is a significant positive relation between procrastination and perfectionism dimensions, though a few researchers object to this finding stating the negative association between them. Also, it is marked in many studies that there is a significant correlation between perfectionism and personality especially a significant positive relation between perfectionism the conscientiousness.

II. METHOD

A. Statement of the Problem

Personality correlates of Procrastination and Perfectionism in adolescents.

B. Objectives

- To find out the relationship between procrastination and personality.
- To find out the relationship between perfectionism and personality.
- To find out the relationship between procrastination and perfectionism.

C. Hypothesis

- H1- There is a significant relationship between procrastination and personality.
- H2- There is a significant relationship between perfectionism and personality.
- H3- There is a significant positive relationship between procrastination and perfectionism

D. Sample

The sample consists of 153 adolescents, aged between 14-19. Among these 86 are females and 67 are males.

E. Sampling Procedure

The participants are collected through the method of purposive sampling.

F. Research Design

The design used in the study is correlational research design to see if there is any relationship between the variables; procrastination, personality and perfectionism without controlling or manipulating any of them.

G. Measures Used

- Procrastination Scale (Lay, 1986)
- Five-Factor Inventory (Costa & McCrae, 1992).
- The Frost Multidimensional Perfectionism Scale (1990)

H. Statistical Analysis

Karl Pearson's correlation coefficient is used to statistically analyze the data in the present study. This method is used in order to see if there is a linear relationship between the quantitative variables that are continuous. Pearson's linear correlation falls in the value range of -1 to +1. Also, descriptive statistics including Mean, S.D, Skewness and Kurtosis were also used to analyze the

collected data.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The goal of the study was to investigate the relationship between personality, procrastination and perfectionism among the adolescent population. To achieve this goal, the present study enrolled a total of 153 adolescent students from Kerala, Haryana, Gujarat, Tamil Nadu, Uttar Pradesh, Bihar, Madhya Pradesh, West Bengal and Karnataka. Karl Person correlation and descriptive statistics were used to analyze the data. The obtained data was analyzed using SPSS and the obtained results are tabulated below. The table-1 shows the description along with the coding of the variables included in the present study;

Sr. No.	Variables	Coding	Description
1	Neuroticism	N	Neuroticism, a factor of FFM
2	Extraversion	E	Extraversion, a factor of FFM
3	Openness to experience	O	Openness to experience, a factor of FFM
4	Agreeableness	A	Agreeableness, a factor of FFM
5	Conscientiousness	C	Conscientiousness, a factor of FFM
6	Procrastination	PROC	Procrastination
7	Perfectionism	PERF	Perfectionism

Table 1: Description of Variables Included in the Study

A. Descriptive Statistics

Considering the mean value of N, E, O, A and C is 27.01, 27.68, 28.09, 26.16 and 27.67 respectively. For the same dimensions the values of S. D are 5.69, 5.70, 5.79, 5.97 and

6.46. Now considering the mean value of PROC and PERF as 59.67 and 118.82 respectively, the corresponding S. D are 8.77 and 18.30.

Variables	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Skewness	Kurtosis
PROC	153	59.673	8.775	0.435	1.171
PERF	153	118.823	18.306	-0.243	1.246
E	153	27.686	5.70	-0.171	0.176
N	153	27.013	5.699	-0.072	0.183
A	153	26.169	5.971	0.103	-0.045
C	153	27.673	6.469	0.090	0.313
O	153	28.091	5.799	0.336	1.036

Table 2: Summary of Descriptive Statistics

B. Correlation Analysis

To identify the relationship between personality, procrastination and perfectionism, a total number of 7 variables (personality-5, procrastination and perfectionism)

were analyzed by applying Pearson's Product Moment Correlation.

The following tables(3, 4 & 5) shows the summary of Pearson Product Moment Correlation of Personality, Procrastination and Perfectionism;

Variables	E	N	A	C	O	PROC
E	1	-.071	.044	.303**	.112	-.217**
N		1	.070	-.061	.137	.298**
A			1	-.033	.351**	-.014
C				1	.034	.383**
O					1	.114
PROC						1

Table 3: Correlation matrix of personality factors and procrastination

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

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

The obtained results depicted that all the variables shared their variance with each other. Procrastination is the deliberate postponement or delay of an intended course of action, either due to the inability to complete things on time or with an intention of using that pressure as a motivation to do the task before the deadline effectively. As can be seen in the above table, the personality factor E (extroversion) is negatively correlated with procrastination ($r = -.271, P < 0.01$). Hence the alternate hypothesis H1 (a) is rejected. According to this finding people who score higher on extroversion tend to procrastinate lesser. It can be analyzed from the table that the factor A (agreeableness) is negatively correlated with procrastination which is not significant ($r = -.014$). Hence the hypothesis H1 (b) is rejected. It depicts that more agreeable people are having lesser chances to procrastinate their works. The factor O (openness to

experience) is seen as positively correlated with procrastination which is not significant ($r = .114$) which leads to rejection of the hypothesis H1 (c). It means that those who are more open to new experiences and seek sensations are more likely to procrastinate. The factor N (neuroticism) is positively correlated with procrastination ($r = .298, P < 0.01$) which is significant. Hence the alternate hypothesis H1 (d) is accepted. This finding reveals the fact that more neurotic people are having higher chances to procrastinate. The personality factor C (conscientiousness) is observed as having a significant positive correlation with procrastination ($r = .383, P < 0.01$). Hence the hypothesis H1 (e) is rejected. According to this finding of the study, more conscientious people are more likely to procrastinate their works.

Variables	E	N	A	C	O	PERF
E	1	-.071	.044	.303**	.112	.142
N		1	.070	-.061	.137	.096
A			1	-.033	.351**	-.242**
C				1	.034	.346**
O					1	-.072
PERF						1

Table 4: Correlation matrix of personality factors and perfectionism

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

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

The obtained results depicted that all the variables shared their variance with each other. Perfectionism is a personality style characterized by highest standard of excellence and striving for flawlessness accompanied by critical self-evaluations and concerns regarding others' evaluations. The correlation analysis of personality and perfectionism resulted that the factor E (extroversion) is positively correlated with perfectionism which is not significant ($r = .142$). Hence the hypothesis H2 (a) is rejected. This finding means that people who score higher on extroversion are more likely to strive for perfectionism. The personality factor A (agreeableness) is seen as having a negative significant correlation with perfectionism ($r = -.242, P < 0.01$). Hence the hypothesis H2 (b) is accepted. This depicts that more agreeable people are having lesser

tendencies to make their works more perfect. The factor O (openness to experience) is found negatively correlated with perfectionism ($r = -.072$) which is not significant. Hence the hypothesis is rejected. According to this finding, those who score high on openness factor are less likely to exhibit perfectionism. The factor N (neuroticism) is positively correlated with perfectionism which is not significant ($r = .096, P < 0.01$). Hence the hypothesis H2 (d) is rejected. This reveals that neurotic people are having higher chances to perfect their works. Finally the factor C (conscientiousness) is positively correlated with perfectionism which is significant ($r = .346, P < 0.01$). Hence the hypothesis H2 (e) is accepted. This finding states that more conscientious people are more likely to strive for excellence and flawlessness in their works.

Variables	PROC	PERF
PROC	1	-.098
PERF	-.098	1

Table 5: Correlation matrix of procrastination and perfectionism

The obtained results depicted that all the variables shared their variance with each other. It is observed from the correlation analysis that perfectionism is negatively correlated with procrastination ($r = -.098$). Hence the hypothesis H3 is rejected. According to this finding of the

study, the people who strive for perfectionism in their works are more likely to procrastinate it as possible.

IV. IMPLICATION OF THE STUDY

The study provides the investigation on personality correlates of procrastination and perfectionism among adolescents. The finding of the study may be helpful in teaching and school counselling areas to introduce different student development interventions relating with procrastination among adolescent students. The study results will help the teachers and school counsellors to assess and relate the students' personality traits with chances exhibiting procrastination in their academic works. The study will help us to advance our understanding of procrastination and personality of adolescents and develop effective strategies and programs in order to reduce the negative outcomes out of it.

V. CONCLUSION

The main aim of the study was to find out the relationship between personality, procrastination and perfectionism among adolescents. The results derived from correlation analysis indicate a significant correlation between some variables while others exhibit non-significant correlations.

The correlational findings of the study indicate that the variable procrastination has a significant ($P < 0.01$) positive correlation with personality factors neuroticism and conscientiousness. This finding is consistent with the previous studies (Bushra and Suneel, 2021; Pathak, 2020; Nadeem et al., 2014). Our study also suggests that there is a significant ($P < 0.01$) negative correlation between procrastination and extroversion, which has no consistency with previous studies reviewed. According to this study, perfectionism has significant ($P < 0.01$) and positive relationships with conscientiousness. Many studies conducted in the area correspond with this finding (Kondal et al., 2021; Permyakova and Sheveleva, 2021; Walton et al., 2020; Smith et al., 2019; Stricker et al., 2019). Another major finding of the study is that there is a significant ($P < 0.01$) negative correlation between perfectionism and the agreeableness factor. This finding is consistent with the results of many previous studies (Smith et al., 2019; Stricker et al., 2019; Gurgova, 2011).

A. Limitations of the Study

- The sample was collected randomly from only a few states.
- Only a small sample size is used for the study.
- Research conducted in a limited time period.
- For data collection, only self report measures were used. Though they are standard approaches, use of other complementary methods such as interviews, observations etc can add to the richness of information.
- People who are suffering from mental disorders are excluded from the study.

B. Suggestions

- Further research could be done including whole areas of India instead of limiting into a few states only.
- For more generalization of findings, large scale studies are required.
- Instead of taking procrastination as a single factor, differentiating it into active and passive procrastination will be more efficient.

REFERENCES

- [1.] Akpur, U., & Yurtseven, N. (2019). Structural relationships between academic motivation, procrastination and perfectionism: A modelling study. *Cumhuriyet International Journal of Education*. <https://doi.org/10.30703/cije.452633>.
- [2.] Athulya, J. Sudhir, P. & Philip, M. (2016). Procrastination, perfectionism, coping and their relation to distress and self-esteem in college students. *Journal of the Indian Academy of Applied Psychology*. 42(1):82-91.
- [3.] Bai, M. (2015). A study of academic procrastination Academic stress and aggression in Relation to personality locus of Control and some demographic variables. *Maharshi Dayanand University*. <http://hdl.handle.net/10603/302544>
- [4.] Bushra, K. & Suneel, I. (2021). Big Five Personality Traits, Gender, Academic level and Academic Procrastination among Pakistani Undergraduate Students. *Pakistan Journal of Professional Psychology: Research and Practice*. 12(1).
- [5.] Çapan, B. E. (2010). Relationship among perfectionism, academic procrastination and life satisfaction of university students. *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 5, 1665–1671. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.sbspro.2010.07.342>
- [6.] Chang, H. K., (2014). Perfectionism, Anxiety and Academic Procrastination: The Role of Intrinsic Motivation in College Students. *Electronic Theses, Projects, and Dissertations*. 28. <https://scholarworks.lib.csusb.edu/etd/28>
- [7.] Fowler, S. A., Davis, L. L., Both, L. E., & Best L. A., (2018). Personality and perfectionism as predictors of life satisfaction: The unique contribution of having high standards for others. *FACETS*. 3(1): 227-241. <https://doi.org/10.1139/facets-2017-0084>.
- [8.] Ghosh, R. & Roy, S. (2017). Relating multidimensional perfectionism and academic procrastination among Indian university students: Is there any gender divide? *Gender in Management*, 32(8), 518-534.
- [9.] Golub, L. T., Petričević, E., & Rován, D. (2019). The role of personality in motivational regulation and academic procrastination. *Educational Psychology*, 39(4), 550–568.
- [10.] Gurgova, B. Z., (2011). Perfectionism and personality. *Grant Journal I*.
- [11.] Irfan, S., Khizar, U., Murtaza, S., Iftakhar, I. (2015). Relationship among personality traits, procrastination and coping strategies. *International Journal of Advanced Research*. 3, 184-193.

- [12.] Jadidi, F., Mohammadkhani, S., &Tajrishi, K. Z. (2011). Perfectionism and Academic Procrastination. *Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences*, 30, 534–537. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.sbspro.2011.10.104>
- [13.] Kader, F. A. H. A., &Eissa, M. A. (2015). Academic Procrastination and Five Factor Personality Traits among College Students. *Psycho-Educational Research Reviews*, 4(2), 10–15.
- [14.] Kağan, M., Çakır, O., İlhan, T., Kandemir, M., (2010). The explanation of the academic procrastination behaviour of university students with perfectionism, obsessive-compulsive and five factor personality traits. *Procedia-Social and Behavioral Sciences* 2 (2), 2121-2125.
- [15.] Kaur, J.(2016). A Comparative study of Motivational Factors and Personality Traits in Academic and Non-academic Procrastinators. *Thapar University. Patiala*.
- [16.] Kondal, S.(2021). A Study of Perfectionism in relation to Personality, Stress, Coping and Well-being among College Students. *Panjab University*.
- [17.] Kurtovic, A.Vrdoljak,G.,&Idzanovic, A.(2019).Predicting Procrastination: The Role of Academic Achievement, Self-efficacy and Perfectionism. *International Journal of Educational Psychology*. 8(1),1-26.
- [18.] Lai, C. S., Badayai, A. R. A., Chandrasekaran, K., Lee, S. Y., &Kulasingam, R.(2015). An Exploratory Study on Personality Traits and Procrastination Among University Students. *American Journal of Applied Psychology. Special Issue: Psychology of University Students*. 4(3-1). 21-26. doi: 10.11648/j.ajap.s.2015040301.14
- [19.] Lewis, E. G., & Cardwell, J. M. (2020). The big five personality traits, perfectionism and their association with mental health among UK students on professional degree programmes. *BMC psychology* 8 (1), 1-10, 2020.
- [20.] Nadeem, M., Malik, A. A.&Javaid,F.(2014). Link between Personality Traits and Procrastination among University Students. *Journal of Educational Research; Bahawalpur*. 19(2). 92-104.
- [21.] Permyakova, T. M., &Sheveleva, M. S., (2021). Relationship between perfectionism and personality traits among russian students. *Психологическоездоровьеличности: теория и практика*, 389-391.
- [22.] Rakes, G. & Dunn, K. (2014). The Influence of Perfectionism on Procrastination in Online Graduate Education Students. In M. Searson& M. Ochoa (Eds.), *Proceedings of SITE 2014--Society for Information Technology & Teacher Education International Conference*. 799-803.
- [23.] Rice, K. G., Richardson, C. M. E., & Clark, D. (2012). Perfectionism, procrastination, and psychological distress. *Journal of Counseling Psychology*, 59(2), 288–302. <https://doi.org/10.1037/a0026643>
- [24.] Sandhya&Gopinath, T., (2019). A Study of Relationship between Big Five Factors Of Personality and Procrastination among Adult." *IOSR Journal of Humanities and Social Science (IOSR-JHSS)*. 24 (08) 44-55.
- [25.] Sirois, F. M., Molnar, D. M., & Hirsch, J. K. (2017). A meta-analytic and conceptual update on the associations between procrastination and multidimensional perfectionism. *European Journal of Personality*. 31(2). 137-159. ISSN 0890-2070.
- [26.] Smith, M. M., Sherry, S. B., Vidovic, V., Saklofske, D. H., Stoeber, J., & Benoit, A. (2019). Perfectionism and the five-factor model of personality: A meta-analytic review. *Personality and Social Psychology Review* 23 (4), 367-390.
- [27.] Stricker, J., Buecker, S., Schneider, M., &Preckel, F., (2019). Multidimensional Perfectionism and the big five personality traits: a meta-analysis. *European Journal of Personality* 33 (2), 176-196.
- [28.] Træen, B., Finstad, K. S., Røysamb, E. (2019). Perfect riders: Personality, perfectionism, and mental health in Norwegian competition riders. *Journal of equine veterinary science* 75, 82-89.
- [29.] Walton, G. E., Hibbard, D. R., Coughlin, C., &Coyle-Shepherd D. D., (2020). Parenting, personality, and culture as predictors of perfectionism. *Current Psychology* 39 (2), 681-693.
- [30.] Zhou, M. (2018). Gender differences in procrastination: The role of personality traits. *Current Psychology*, 39(4), 1445–1453. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12144-018-9851-5>.