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## **Procrastination, Fear of Failure and Personality of College Students**

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### ABSTRACT

Procrastination and the fear of failure have been linked to major issues with achievement and health. To forecast how an individual may experience and interpret procrastination and fear of failure, this study attempts to analyse the relationship between procrastination and fear of failure with the big five personality traits. College student's procrastination, fear of failure and personality traits were assessed using the procrastination scale, the PFAI inventory and the Ten Item Personality Inventory (TIPI) respectively. A sample of 176 was selected using the convenience sampling technique. The data collected using google forms were analysed based on a correlational research design. According to the present study, procrastination and fear of failure were found to be highly correlated with the Big Five personality traits. The limitations and suggestions for additional research were discussed.

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Keywords: Big five personality, College students, Fear of failure, Procrastination

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### **1. Introduction**

Fear of failure has been described in a variety of ways from an individual's perspective such as affective inclination, need, and motive. Murray (1938) first described infavoidance as a desire for college-aged guys to avoid failure. By identifying fear of failure as a motive, traditional achievement motivation researchers (Elliot, 1997), continued this strategy to avoid failure (McClelland et al., 1953). The motive to avoid failure is defined as a tendency to experience shame and embarrassment upon failing (Atkinson, 1966) and these researchers were the first to operationalize and incorporate effectively based conceptualizations into their theories by using test anxiety instruments to measure fear of failure (Atkinson & Litwin, 1960). A hierarchical, multidimensional view of fear of failure is emphasised in more recent models of dispositional fear of failure (Schmalt, 1982). Theorists have claimed that failure itself is largely worthless and that its repercussions are genuinely dreaded (Birney et al., 1969).

To delay taking action on one's objectives is to procrastinate. Such procrastination in daily life might take the form of postponing correspondence, sluggish morning rises, and last-minute shopping for necessities. The overall population exhibits procrastination behaviour frequently, with prevalence rates ranging from 15% to 32% (Beutel et al., 2016). Even if it's inevitable, some people seem to have more of a tendency to procrastinate than others. College students are particularly vulnerable, according to academic research, with about half of this cohort experiencing issues related to procrastination (Atalayin et al., 2018). Procrastination is defined as purposely delaying a planned course of action while being aware of the consequences that would follow such a delay (Steel, 2007). Procrastination has been the subject of numerous theories, notably Kuhl's (1984) Action Control Theory. This theory proposes that the successful translation of an intention into action is mediated by control mechanisms that reinforce the goal and suppress opposing action tendencies. Poor motivation and emotional regulation can, therefore, make one more susceptible to being diverted by conflicting action impulses, endangering the successful execution of the targeted action.

Individual's ideas and behaviours are characterised by their personality, which is an interpersonal dynamic structure made up of both physical and psychological systems (Allport, 1961). Extraversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, neuroticism and openness to experience are the Big Five

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personality traits. Extraverted personality traits include things like vitality, chattiness, and assertiveness. People with a high level of openness to new things are those who are innovative, creative, and non-conformist while agreeable people are the ones who are sympathetic and warm; conscientious people are responsible and efficient; neurotic people are those who are emotionally unstable. The purpose of this study is to examine how the Big Five personality traits, procrastination and fear of failure are related to one another.

### **1.1. Hypothesis**

- There will be a significant relationship between fear of failure and big five personality traits
- There will be a significant relationship between procrastination and big five personality traits

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## **2. Methods**

### **2.1. Participants**

176 participants from the emerging adulthood population participated in the survey. It was conducted using google forms and consent from participating individuals was taken before administering the survey. The participants were selected using a convenience sampling method and were allocated 5 to 10 minutes during their leisure time to complete the survey. A socio-demographic sheet was administered to all the participants through the form. Data analysis was done using SPSS- 28.0.1.1 for determining the relationship between procrastination and fear of failure with the Big-Five personality traits. Pearson bivariate correlation was used to find the relationship between the variables.

### **2.2. The Performance Failure Appraisal Inventory (PFAI)**

Performance failure appraisal inventory, a tool for measuring fear of failure on several dimensions developed by Conroy et al. (2002) is a multidimensional assessment of cognitive-motivational-relational assessments connected to fear of failure called the Performance Failure Appraisal Inventory (PFAI). The PFAI identified five negative effects of failure: (a) feeling ashamed and embarrassed; (b) having a low opinion of oneself; (c) having an uncertain future; (d) key others losing interest, and (e) upsetting important others. A reliability of 0.82 and validity was established.

### **2.3. Procrastination Scale**

The procrastination scale developed by Lay (1986) is a 20-item scale where the response of an individual's procrastination was recorded on a five-point Likert scale which ranged from extremely uncharacteristic to extremely characteristic. A reliability of 0.87 and validity was also established.

### **2.4. Ten-Item Personality Inventory**

The Impostor-Profile (IPP31) is a multidimensional, theoretically grounded German questionnaire that can be used in both practice and study. Six factors comprise the questionnaire's 31 total items. The factors that were extracted show the IP's essential components as well as its clearest traits. It displays the pertinent item psychometric characteristics and their factor connection. Competence Doubt, Working Style, Alienation, Other-Self Divergence, Frugality, and Need for Sympathy are the contributing variables. The standardized Cronbach's alpha revealed the internal consistency of the six scales ranging from 0.69 to 0.92. The scale contains five points: 1 for "not at all true," and 5 for "extremely true."

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## **3. Results and Discussion**

By the established objective and hypothesis, the data were evaluated. Procrastination and fear of failure scores for the Big Five personality traits were evaluated using the Pearson bivariate correlation approach.

**Table 1 Bivariate Correlation among Procrastination, Fear of Failure and Big Five Personality Traits**

	<b>Fear of Experiencing Shame</b>	<b>Fear of Devaluing One's Self-Estimate</b>	<b>Fear of Having an Uncertain Future</b>	<b>Fear of Important Others Losing Interest</b>	<b>Procrastination</b>
<b>Extraversion</b>	-0.392**	-0.384**	-0.281**	-0.257**	-0.114
<b>Agreeableness</b>	0.020	-0.045	-0.010	-0.094	-0.173*
<b>Conscientiousness</b>	-0.116	-0.145	-0.142	-0.147	-0.175*
<b>Emotional Stability</b>	-0.327**	-0.261**	-0.309**	-0.167*	-0.181*
<b>Openness to Experience</b>	-0.159*	-0.325**	-0.189*	-0.299**	-0.039

One of the big five personality traits, extraversion and fear of failure were found to be negatively and strongly associated ( $r = -0.392^{**}$ ,  $r = -0.384^{**}$ ,  $r = -0.281^{**}$ ,  $r = -0.257^{**}$ ,  $r = -0.168^{**}$ ). It was discovered that fear of failure ( $r = -0.327^{**}$ ,  $r = -0.261^{**}$ ,  $r = -0.309^{**}$ ,  $r = -0.167^{*}$ ,  $r = -0.228^{**}$ ) was adversely and significantly connected with the emotional stability of the big five personality traits. A negative and significant correlation between fear of failure and openness to experience, one of the big five personality qualities, was discovered ( $r = -0.159^{*}$ ,  $r = -0.325^{**}$ ,  $r = -0.189^{*}$ ,  $r = -0.299^{**}$ ). Only when comparing fear of disappointing important people and conscientiousness ( $r = -0.175^{*}$ ) it was discovered that fear of failure was adversely and significantly connected with conscientiousness. As the majority of the big five personality traits are negatively and significantly correlated with fear of failure, the alternative hypothesis, "There will be a significant relationship between fear of failure and the Big Five personality traits," is therefore accepted.

From the big five personality traits, agreeableness ( $r = -0.173^{*}$ ), conscientiousness ( $r = -0.364^{**}$ ) and emotional stability ( $r = -0.181^{*}$ ) are negatively and significantly correlated with procrastination. Thus, the alternative hypothesis, "There will be a significant relationship between procrastination and the big five personality traits" is partially accepted.

The purpose of the study aims to assess the relationship between the Big Five personality traits, fear of failure and procrastination. Extraverted people are outgoing, assertive, socially interactive (Lounsbury and Gibson, 2009). Excitement, stimulation, and social interaction are frequently favoured for highly extraverted people (Costa & McCrae, 1992). According to the results of the current study, fear of failure is negatively correlated to extraversion of big five personality traits. This implies that as extraversion characteristics increases, the fear of failure decreases. They will not be afraid of feeling humiliation and embarrassment, feels their sense of self-worth, will have a clear view of one's own future, finds more interested to key people, and successfully get their approval in every decision.

Our study shows that fear of failure is negatively and significantly correlated with emotional stability of the Big Five personality traits. Emotional stability or the degree to which emotions are controlled rather than extremely fluctuating is essentially a measure of worry versus well-being (Aleem, 2005). People that are emotionally stable do not experience fear of failure since they are usually calm, composed, and stress resistant. These people will typically exude confidence and won't be quickly angered or demoralised by failures.

The fear of failure will not have a detrimental impact on openness to experience in addition to extraversion and emotional stability. People who prefer to be open to new experiences are those who are willing to try new things and are receptive to them. So fear of failure does not affect people who are high in openness to experience in big five personality traits as intellectually curious, imaginative and creative.

Conscientiousness, one of the big five personality traits, will not have any negative impacts having the fear of upsetting the significant others in the current study. People who are conscientious are organised, systematic, responsible, and have excellent self-control (Barrick & Mount, 1991). High conscientious individuals will be efficient, shows self-discipline, exhibits planned behaviour and will not have any fear of upsetting others.

When proceeding to the relationship between procrastination and the big Five personality traits, it was found that agreeableness, emotional stability, and conscientiousness negatively and are significantly correlated with procrastination. People who are agreeable tend to be warm and compassionate. They are also quite amiable and laid-back. Less agreeable individuals have a propensity for putting things off. Similarly, individuals become excessively concerned or worried and tends to put things off if he is less emotionally stable, as our study's findings show. People who are conscientious typically don't put things off as much; therefore less organised individuals tends to arrive late to social engagements and to be careless with his or her possessions. Recent studies have revealed that characteristic procrastination is unrelated to failure fear (Lay et al., 1995). However, in other studies, procrastination was discovered to be non-linearly associated with neuroticism (McCown et al., 1987).

There were a few limitations to this that must be taken into consideration while interpreting the results. The current study's use of self-report, which may not always be correct, is a potential flaw. The fact that we restricted our research to the emerging population is the second significant constraint. It is unknown whether procrastination, fear of failure, and the big five personality traits are associated the same way in younger and older persons. Thus, it is imperative to conduct further research that includes a varied population. The poll only included 176 participants, thus more research with a bigger sample size has to be done. After a detailed examination of the relationship between personality traits, procrastination, and failure fear in emerging adults, it was shown that there is a significant correlation between these factors. While fear of failure was significantly connected with extraversion, openness to experience, emotional stability, and conscientiousness, procrastination was strongly correlated with agreeableness, conscientiousness, and emotional stability. This study did not find a connection between procrastination and fear of failure. The results of the study have improved our understanding of procrastination and fear of failure based on specific personality traits. This study provided a fresh perspective on how each person's personality affects how they approach procrastination and fear of failure.

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