



Effect Of Procrastination On Work Load And Work Performance Among Working Individuals In India

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ABSTRACT

The present study examined the relationship between workplace procrastination, work load and work performance among working individuals in India; the difference in procrastination, work load and work performance between males and females along with understanding the impact of procrastination on work load and work performance. The data was collected in hybrid mode within the age group of 20- 40 years from 202 working individuals employed in IT sector and involved in software development domain, residing in India using Procrastination at Workplace scale, Quantitative Workload Inventory and Individual Work performance Questionnaire. Statistical analysis of correlation, independent sample t test and linear regression was done to test the hypothesis. The results indicated that the variables, procrastination, workload and work performance were correlated to each other; independent variable procrastination influenced the dependent variables work load and work performance; and these variables do not have difference among males and females and different age bracket. Implications, limitations and futuresuggestions of the study were also stated.

Keywords: *Workplace Procrastination, Work load, Work performance, Working Individuals*

Procrastination could be defined as anything that causes delay in working of the tasks. Procrastinating once a while could be seen as relaxation activity but adapting this behavior in daily life may impact individual's productivity across various domains of life. Procrastination can be defined as the delay that is due to the avoidance of the implementation of an intention (Van Eerde, 2000, p.375). Procrastination sometimes rarely involves doing nothing but sometimes, doing wrong thing for that particular moment of time. In the recent times procrastination has become topic of interest among many individuals and they want to have more productivity in daily routine. However sometimes the task become tedious, or they find to associate it with boredom. Lack of interest in doing those activities also leads to procrastinating behavior. Even though it is one of the common factor associated with human behavior, the degree to which people procrastinate differ among individuals and domains. Chu and Choi (2005) distinguish between two sorts of procrastination behaviors. Passive procrastinators are paralyzed by their indecision and as a result fail to complete tasks on time, so this is certainly an unfavorable behavior. However, active procrastinators prefer to work under pressure and make deliberate decisions to procrastinate tasks, nevertheless, they usually complete their tasks on time (Gafni & Ger, 2010).

At workplace, procrastination refers to a purposely delaying of task or tasks without any harmful intend to organization or industry or any other aspect. This kind of behavior may cause delay in the deliverables and thus impact the goals of the organization to certain aspect, despite the fact that there is no such intention of an employee. There could be many underlying reason behind such delaying of the tasks. Some of them might include:

Lack of motivation, feeling overwhelmed, fear of failure or having trouble with identifying where to start. Eventually, this may lead to decreased in the productivity, missing of the deadlines and sometimes increased in the stress level among an employee or across the team.

According to Spector and Jex (1998), Workload simply represents the sheer volume of work required by an employee. A broad definition is that it is “an all-encompassing term that includes any variable reflecting the amount or difficulty of one’s work” (Bowling & Kirkendall, 2012, p. 222).) Quantitative workload is the label for the amount of work done, and qualitative workload is the label for the difficulty of work (Bowling & Kirkendall, 2012).

At workplace, workload refers to the amount of work that an individual is responsible for to finish within a given timeline. Anything that comes under the roles and responsibilities of an employee, as an example, the projects, assignments, meetings, may counted as the workload they have. While there could be a certain number of tasks an individual have to carry out in their regular day at work, addition of some more tasks may be perceived as quantitative workload. Sometimes, an employee keep avoiding their regular task for the last moment and with the arrival of some new task, a disturbance in perception of quantity of work is observed among the employee of an organization. Sometimes, because an employee is unable to understand the tasks, they may find it difficult to deliver the quality and hence struggle with the workload which could be termed under qualitative workload. Anyway whatever the nature of the workload is, it might result in stress, burnout and workplace dissatisfaction of the person.

Performance is the term which is always looked with respect to the good expectation of an individual about something. For example, someone who is planning to buy a new mobile phone that has been launched recently might want to know how it is doing in the market. Is it worth to purchase? These all factors are determined by the performance of the product among different domains like battery time, RAM performance etc. Similarly, performance at workplace or work performance is related to how an employee is performing in his job, whether he is able to successfully fulfill all the roles and responsibilities that come with the position that he is hired for and if they align with the goals of the organization.

Individual Work performance as defined by Campbell is the behaviors and actions that are relevant to the goals of the organization. Campbell (1990, p. 704). It is one of the crucial determinant that define the work behavior of an employee from the perspective of an employer and how the organization is, whether it is well suited or the parameters that defines the organization is good one to work with from an employee’s perspective. So it becomes a mutual construct between an employer and an individual. Poor work performance might lead to constant increase in the stress level and thus the rush for career switch, job change and less job satisfaction.

The common aspect between the workplace procrastination, workload and the work performance is increase in the stress level, poor job performance, and less job satisfaction along with other psychological disturbances. With this research, the authors are trying to find a statistical correlation between these three aspects and are analyzing how they are interrelated.

Workplace procrastination, workload and work performance were not studied together so far. Also the relationship among these variables wasn’t studied among specifically individuals employed in software development. Workplace procrastination and work performance have been studied altogether with job satisfaction, stress level and other parameters but no study have been focused to analyze the influence of procrastination on work performance. Moreover, very few studies focused on studying one or two variables among working population in IT in Indian context. Based on this study, interventions revolving around increasing productivity in reference to procrastinating behavior can be developed to help people to achieve better job satisfaction and good work performance. However, it is important to identify the relationship among variables, difference between genders and the influence of procrastination on work load and work performance.

METHOD

Convenience sampling, a non-probability sampling technique and quantitative research design including both descriptive and inferential statistics was used to understand the relationship between procrastination, workload and work performance among working individuals.

Objectives of the study

- To study the relationship between procrastination and work load among working professionals in Indian context
- To study the relationship between procrastination and work performance among working professionals in Indian context.

Hypotheses

H1: Procrastination will be positively related to workload.

H2: Procrastination will be negatively related to work performance.

The sample taken for the purpose of the study were (n=202) working IT professionals who work in the software domain across India and belonging to age group 20-40 years. Convenience sampling technique was used in order to collect the data. The majority of the participants were working on MNC in software development/consultancy domain. The others were the sample of individual who are working in IT but not in a very well-known recognized firm. The individuals who work in IT firms but do not involve working as software engineers and its hierarchical base have been excluded from the research.

Inclusion Criteria

- Individuals belonging to the age group of 20-40 years.
- Individuals who are currently employed in IT sector in software domain.
- Individuals who are working in India

Exclusion Criteria

- Individuals who do not fall in the given age bracket.
- Individuals who are not employed currently.
- Individuals who are employed but working under different hierarchy or roles other than software development.

Tools for the Study

The scales used in the study to assess the variables were Procrastination at work scale given by Metin et al. in 2016 for measuring the procrastination, Quantitative Workload Inventory given by Spector and Jex in 1998 for measuring Workload and Individual work performance Questionnaire given by Koopman et al. in 2012 for measuring the work performance of an individual. The scale constitutes of total of 64 items. Apart from the items of the scale, demographic details age, gender and current organization were also included.

Description of the tool

Procrastination at work scale (PAWS) by Metin et al. (2016) (English version) is 12 item scale designed to measure workplace procrastination. On a 7 point Likert scale, participant indicates how often they are involved with the given statements. Scoring is done by summing up all the scores for each item. The scores can range from 12 to 84. With lower score signifying low on procrastination and higher scores associated with high level of procrastination. The test showed cronbach's alpha coefficient of 0.90 for soldiering and 0.86 for cyber-slacking, for the Chinese version. The component of soldiering and cyber-slacking were determined among the items. Soldiering refers to the type of workplace procrastination mainly involves doing non work related activities without no intention of harm, such as taking long tea breaks. However, cyber-slacking is basically the utilization of the internet for personal use during work hours. This involves browsing social media or online shopping during the work hours.

Quantitative work load inventory (QWI) by Spector and Jex (1998) was used to measure the Quantitative workload among the participants. It consist of the 5 item, on a 5 point Likert scale a participant can indicate how much they are occupied with their job, in terms of a day, week, month. 1 is given for Less than once per month or never 2 for one or twice per month, 3 for once or twice per week, 4 for once or twice per day and 5 for several times per day. The score is calculated by summing up scores of all items. The score could range from 5 to 25. Low level indicates less work load and higher number indicate more work load. The cronbach alpha for quantitative work load inventory was reported as .82 across 15 studies.

Individual work performance questionnaire (IWPQ) by Koopman et al. (2012) is a 47 item scale designed to measure work performance of an individual across dimensions task performance, contextual performance, adaptive performance and counterproductive work behavior. On a 5 likert scale the participant have to select the most relevant for them in 3 months. The scoring is done by summing up of all the items. The score can range from 47 to 235. In the task performance, certain items are negatively scored and in the counterproductive work behavior the items are negatively scored. Higher score indicates good work performance and lower scores indicate poor work performance. The person separation index (PSI) estimates the internal consistency of a scale. PSI is similar to Cronbach's α (Cronbach, 1951), only it uses the logit scale estimates as opposed to the raw scores. It is interpreted in a similar manner, that is, a minimum value of 0.70 is required for group use and 0.85 for individual use (Tennant and Conaghan, 2007).

Statistical Analysis

Pearson correlation was used to evaluate the relationship between the variables procrastination, workload and work performance. Linear regression is used to access the strength of the relationship of variables procrastination and workload and procrastination and work performance. Independent sample t-test was used to identify the differences between age groups 20-30 and 30-40 and gender male and female. IBM SPSS statistics 21 was used to analyze data and interpret the results of this study.

RESULTS

The sample constitutes of 202 IT employees, 107 male and 95 female. 151 sample of the population belong to age group 20-30 years however other 51 belongs to 30-40 years. The mean and standard deviation are listed as in the below table.

Table 1: Mean and Standard Deviation

Variable	N	M	SD
Procrastination	202	37.19	15.13
Work Load	202	14.98	4.83
Work Performance	202	175.17	29.31

The mean of the sample for procrastination is 37.19 and standard deviation is 15.13, for work load mean is 14.98 and standard deviation is 4.83 and mean value of work performance is 175.17 and standard deviation is 29.13.

Table 2: Pearson correlation coefficient

Variable	N	M	SD	1	2	3
Procrastination	202	37.19	15.13	-	-	-
Work Load	202	14.98	4.83	0.129	-	-
Work Performance	202	175.17	29.31	-0.575**	-0.054	-

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

The above table discusses the correlation between the variables. The correlation between procrastination and work load is positive value of 0.129 and between procrastination and work performance is -0.575. Work load and work performance are related as -0.54.

Table 3: Linear regression procrastination as predictor for and work performance as work load

Variable	Procrastination					
	β	Standard Error	t	p	r ²	Δr^2
Work Performance	216.58	4.498	48.15	0	0.331	0.327
Work Load	13.45	0.899	14.95	0.067	0.017	0.012

In the table above linear regression has been assigned to check how strong or weak relationship exists among the variables. Linear regression has been performed in order to predict the value of work performance with respect to procrastination. It shows the correlation of 0.575 and is significant at 0.0005. Further, linear regression was also used to predict the workload with the varying degree of procrastination. The correlation is 0.129, and is significant at 0.05 as seen from the below table. To check if the results vary based on age and gender independent sample t-test was used. The results show not much of difference exists while considering age or gender as grouping parameter as represented below.

Table 4: Independent sample T-test based on Age.

	20-30			30-40			t	Sig
	N	M	SD	N	M	SD		
	Procrastination	151	36.94	15.86	51	37.92		
Work Load	151	14.95	5.086	51	15.08	4.04	0.167	0.867
Work Performance	151	177.75	29.992	51	167.53	26	2.712	0.031

Table 5: Independent sample T-test based on Gender

	Male			Female			t	Sig
	N	M	SD	N	M	SD		
Procrastination	107	36.85	13.93	95	37.95	16.44	-0.336	0.737
Work Load	107	14.97	4.98	95	14.99	4.68	-0.026	0.098
Work Performance	107	176.65	27.68	95	173.79	31.107	0.764	0.446

Overall, result shows that there is a significant correlation between procrastination and work load. Procrastination is the significant predictor or the work load and work performance. No gender or age differences have been found in the affecting variables

DISCUSSION AND SUMMARY

The form constitutes of three scales, Procrastination at work place (PAWS), Quantitative work load inventory (QWI) and Individual work performance questionnaire (IWPQ), and forms the total of 64 items. The result indicates no gender or age difference among the variable exists i.e., gender and age does not produce any significant impact on the variables.

Workload could be determined by procrastination. The significant positive correlation of 0.129 ($r=0.129$) has been observed in procrastination and work load. While linear regression shows that the prediction of workload by procrastination holds true as $\text{workload} = 13.5 + (0.05 * \text{procrastination})$. This equation supports the first hypothesis proposed H1: Procrastination is directly related to workload.

Procrastination could also be seen as a strong predictor of work performance. The correlation $r = -0.575$ has been recorded between procrastination and work performance. According to the liner regression, the equation which is achieved work performance = $217 - (1.5 * \text{procrastination})$. This implies if there is an increase in the procrastination, the work performance will be reduced. Thus, this proves the hypothesis H2: Procrastination is directly related to poor work performance.

Thus both the hypotheses provided holds true.

On an introspective report by participants, it was observed more an individual procrastinates and waits for the deadline to approach, the more they struggle with the amount of the task and the quality of their work thus making it difficult to deliver the quality product at the set time leading to poorer work performance. Some individuals supported that as the work load increases they tend to procrastinate more and eventually stressing themselves out at the last minute and again impacting the work performance.

Overall, the positive relationship between procrastination, work load and poor work performance has been established.

CONCLUSION

- The objective of this research was to study the relationship between procrastination, work load and work performance with respect to individuals working in IT industry in software development domain in India. It also aimed to analyze if any differences between the variables, namely procrastination, work load and work performance exists among the gender and age wise. Two hypotheses were generated to study the objectives of this study. Correlational analysis was done to assess the relationship between the variables. Additionally the differences between variables, workplace procrastination, quantitative workload and individual work performance of IT employees in terms of gender and age were also analyzed. According to the results of this study, both the hypotheses have been accepted. A positive relationship was found between workplace procrastination and workload and poor work performance. Individual work performance is the strong determinant of the job satisfaction. If the person's performance is poor, they might have less job satisfaction since the parameters that assess the individual work performance includes creativity, initiative, excitement, completing job tasks etc. If a person is satisfied with his job, they tend to be high achieving in these parameters.
- Workload also plays important part in work performance. If the quantitative workload is more, the individual may struggle with time management and focus on the task which ultimately impacts the performance of an individual. However, procrastinating behavior acts as a catalyst to these. Procrastination leads to increase in work load as the tendency to do the task at last minute leads induce stress to finish the work and thus resulting to los of focus, poor product delivery, stressing over little thing and so on. The goal of the research was to establish relationship between three variables, workplace procrastination, quantitative workload and individual work performance. From the study this goal has been achieved. No significant difference found for this relationship for gender and age. Further research is needed to be done with a larger sample size to strengthen the findings of this study.

Implications of the Study

- Time management and stress management techniques can be used to increase productivity among employees which occur as a result of procrastination behavior.

Limitations

- The data was collected in a hybrid mode because of which online responses could have been inaccurate due to participants' lack of attention and concentration or external factors.
- The sample was small in size hence may not represent whole population of the country.

Suggestions for Future Studies

- Studies could further be conducted to get reasons of procrastination and working on them particularly.
- Other factors that lead to job performance could also be considered.

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