



Relationship Between Procrastination, Stress Coping Strategies, And Satisfaction With Life Among Young Adults

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Abstract: This study investigates the relationship between procrastination, stress coping strategies, and life satisfaction among young adults. The transition into adulthood is often associated with increased academic, social, and personal responsibilities, making effective time management and emotional regulation essential for maintaining psychological well-being. Procrastination, defined as the voluntary delay of intended tasks despite anticipated negative outcomes, is frequently observed in this age group and is linked to increased stress, reduced efficiency, and poorer mental health outcomes. In contrast, coping strategies refer to the cognitive and behavioral efforts used to manage stress, which may be adaptive, such as problem-solving and seeking social support, or maladaptive, such as avoidance and denial.

The study employed a quantitative research design, with data collected from young adult participants using standardized instruments measuring procrastination, coping strategies, and life satisfaction. Statistical techniques, including correlation analysis, were applied to examine the relationships among the variables. The findings indicate a negative association between procrastination and life satisfaction, while adaptive coping strategies show a positive relationship with life satisfaction. Overall, the study highlights the significant role of behavioral and coping patterns in influencing well-being. The results suggest that interventions aimed at reducing procrastination and promoting effective coping strategies may enhance life satisfaction and psychological adjustment among young adults.

Index Terms - Procrastination; Stress Coping Strategies; Life Satisfaction; Young Adults; Psychological Well-being; Emotion Regulation; Problem-Focused Coping; Avoidance Coping; Self-Regulation; Mental Health.

I. INTRODUCTION

In contemporary society, individuals are increasingly required to manage multiple responsibilities that demand effective regulation of time, emotions, and personal resources. Young adulthood represents a critical developmental stage characterized by academic, professional, and social challenges that can significantly influence psychological well-being. During this period, individuals often encounter pressures related to academic achievement, career decisions, and interpersonal relationships, which may contribute to stress and difficulties in maintaining a positive evaluation of life (Arnett, 2000; Compas et al., 2001). Therefore, it is essential to examine the psychological factors that shape behavior and well-being among young adults.

One such factor is procrastination, a common behavioral tendency particularly prevalent among students and young adults. Procrastination refers to the intentional delay of tasks despite awareness of potential negative outcomes (Steel, 2007). Research suggests that procrastination is not merely a problem of poor time management but a complex behavior influenced by cognitive, emotional, and motivational factors, including fear of failure, low self-regulation, and perfectionism (Ferrari et al., 1995; Tice & Baumeister, 1997). This tendency often interferes with academic performance and daily functioning.

The consequences of procrastination are wide-ranging and often detrimental. Persistent delays in task completion are associated with increased stress, lower productivity, and negative emotional states such as guilt and anxiety (Sirois, 2007). As deadlines approach, individuals who procrastinate frequently experience heightened pressure, which may further impair performance and well-being. Over time, this cycle can adversely affect psychological health and overall life satisfaction, emphasizing the importance of understanding its relationship with other psychological constructs.

Stress is another significant factor that affects individuals during young adulthood. It can be understood as a psychological and physiological response to perceived demands that exceed an individual's coping resources (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). Sources of stress among young adults include academic workload, social expectations, financial concerns, and relationship issues. While moderate stress may enhance motivation, excessive stress can result in emotional distress and decreased functioning (Compas et al., 2001). To manage stress, individuals employ various coping strategies that influence their adjustment and well-being.

Coping strategies are typically categorized into problem-focused and emotion-focused approaches. Problem-focused coping involves actively addressing the source of stress, whereas emotion-focused coping aims to regulate emotional responses (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). Additionally, coping strategies may be adaptive or maladaptive. Adaptive strategies, such as problem-solving and seeking social support, are linked to better psychological outcomes, whereas maladaptive strategies, including avoidance and denial, are associated with poorer adjustment (Carver et al., 1989). The effectiveness of coping strategies plays a crucial role in determining how individuals respond to stress and maintain balance in their lives.

Life satisfaction is a central component of subjective well-being and reflects an individual's cognitive evaluation of their overall quality of life (Diener et al., 1985). Higher life satisfaction is associated with positive psychological functioning, emotional stability, and a sense of fulfillment, whereas lower levels are linked to stress and dissatisfaction. Previous research indicates that procrastination is negatively related to life satisfaction, while adaptive coping strategies contribute positively to well-being (Sirois, 2007; Deniz, 2006). Therefore, the present study aims to examine the relationship between procrastination, stress coping strategies, and life satisfaction among young adults, with the objective of providing insights for interventions that enhance psychological well-being.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Procrastination has been widely examined as a significant behavioral construct influencing academic performance, emotional well-being, and overall life satisfaction. It is commonly defined as the intentional delay of tasks despite anticipating negative outcomes, and is increasingly viewed as a failure of self-regulation rather than merely poor time management (Steel, 2007). Research suggests that procrastination is shaped by emotional, cognitive, and motivational factors, particularly during young adulthood—a stage marked by academic and psychosocial challenges.

Procrastination

Early research by Tice and Baumeister (1997) demonstrated that procrastination may temporarily reduce stress, but ultimately leads to increased anxiety and poorer academic outcomes as deadlines approach. Similarly, Solomon and Rothblum (1984) identified fear of failure, task aversiveness, and lack of motivation as key contributors to academic procrastination. These findings highlight the role of emotional and cognitive barriers in delaying task initiation.

Lay (1986) conceptualized procrastination as a stable personality trait and developed the General Procrastination Scale, suggesting that individuals high in procrastination often exhibit poor planning and low self-control. Supporting this, Ferrari et al. (1995) described procrastination as an avoidance behavior

linked to fear of failure and low self-confidence. Further, Lay and Schouwenburg (1993) found that procrastination is negatively associated with conscientiousness and positively related to impulsivity, emphasizing the influence of personality traits.

A meta-analysis by Steel (2007) reinforced that procrastination is strongly associated with impulsiveness, low self-discipline, and task aversion, identifying it as a core self-regulation failure. Empirical studies also indicate that procrastination is linked with negative academic and psychological outcomes, including increased stress and reduced performance (Balkis & Duru, 2009; Van Eerde, 2003).

Emotional factors play a crucial role in procrastination. Research shows that individuals often delay tasks to avoid negative emotions such as anxiety or frustration, but this avoidance leads to guilt, stress, and dissatisfaction over time (Pychyl et al., 2000; Rebetz et al., 2015; Sirois, 2014). Moreover, chronic procrastination has been associated with poorer health behaviors and reduced well-being (Sirois, 2007; Eckert et al., 2016).

Stress and Coping Strategies

Stress is experienced when individuals perceive demands as exceeding their coping resources. Folkman and Lazarus (1985) emphasized that coping is a dynamic process involving continuous appraisal and adaptation. Coping strategies are broadly categorized into adaptive (e.g., problem-solving, seeking support) and maladaptive (e.g., avoidance, denial).

Carver et al. (1989) developed the COPE Inventory, identifying problem-focused, emotion-focused, and avoidance coping strategies. Similarly, Endler and Parker (1990) classified coping into task-oriented, emotion-oriented, and avoidance styles. Research consistently shows that adaptive coping strategies are associated with better psychological adjustment, whereas avoidance coping is linked to increased stress and distress (Compas et al., 2001; Mahmoud et al., 2012).

Studies among university students indicate that those who employ problem-focused coping experience lower stress and better academic adjustment (Dyson & Renk, 2006). Additionally, adaptive strategies such as positive reframing and acceptance are positively related to well-being and life satisfaction (Park & Adler, 2003). Overall, the effectiveness of coping strategies depends on both individual differences and situational factors (Skinner et al., 2003).

Life Satisfaction

Life satisfaction is a central component of subjective well-being, reflecting individuals' cognitive evaluation of their overall life quality (Diener et al., 1985). The Satisfaction with Life Scale (SWLS) is widely used to assess this construct. Life satisfaction is influenced by psychological, social, and environmental factors (Diener et al., 2003). Research indicates that effective stress management and adaptive coping strategies contribute to higher life satisfaction (Chang, 1998; Park & Adler, 2003). Conversely, high stress levels are associated with reduced life satisfaction among students (Denovan & Macaskill, 2017). Individuals with strong social relationships, positive emotions, and effective coping skills tend to report greater life satisfaction (Diener & Seligman, 2002).

Additionally, happiness and life satisfaction have been linked to success across various life domains, including work and relationships (Lyubomirsky et al., 2005). The reliability and cross-cultural validity of life satisfaction measures have also been well established (Pavot & Diener, 1993).

Procrastination, Stress, and Life Satisfaction

A growing body of research has explored the interrelationship between procrastination, stress, and life satisfaction. Studies consistently show that procrastination is positively associated with stress and negatively associated with life satisfaction (Sirois & Tosti, 2012; Beutel et al., 2016). Procrastination is often used as a short-term emotional coping mechanism, but it ultimately leads to increased stress and reduced well-being (Sirois & Pychyl, 2013).

Further research indicates that individuals who rely on avoidance coping strategies are more likely to procrastinate and experience higher stress levels (Sirois & Kitner, 2015; Balkis, 2013). Chronic procrastination has also been linked to poorer academic achievement, career difficulties, and lower life satisfaction (Steel & Ferrari, 2013). Recent studies continue to support these findings, demonstrating that procrastination significantly predicts lower life satisfaction and greater emotional distress (Zhang et al.,

2021; Sirois & Yang, 2016). Moreover, procrastination has been identified as a key factor contributing to negative emotional experiences and reduced psychological well-being (Rozenal & Carlbring, 2014).

RESEARCH GAP

The reviewed literature clearly indicates that procrastination is a prevalent behavior among young adults and is associated with increased stress and reduced life satisfaction. While substantial research has examined these variables independently, relatively fewer studies have explored their combined relationships. Therefore, further investigation is needed to understand how procrastination, coping strategies, and life satisfaction interact, particularly among young adults.

OBJECTIVE

The present study aims to examine procrastination, stress coping strategies, and life satisfaction among young adults. It seeks to assess the level of procrastination and identify the coping strategies commonly used to manage stress. Additionally, the study evaluates the overall life satisfaction of individuals in this age group. A key focus of the research is to explore the relationships among these variables, including the association between procrastination and stress coping strategies, procrastination and life satisfaction, and stress coping strategies and life satisfaction. Through this, the study attempts to provide a better understanding of how behavioral patterns and coping mechanisms influence the overall well-being of young adults.

HYPOTHESIS

Research Hypothesis(H1):

H₁₁: There is a significant relationship between procrastination and stress coping strategies among young adults.

H₁₂: There is a significant relationship between procrastination and life satisfaction among young adults.

H₁₃: There is a significant relationship between stress coping strategies and life satisfaction among young adults.

Null Hypothesis (H₀):

H₀₁: There is no significant relationship between procrastination and stress coping strategies among young adults.

H₀₂: There is no significant relationship between procrastination and life satisfaction among young adults.

H₀₃: There is no significant relationship between stress coping strategies and life satisfaction among young adults.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The present study aims to investigate procrastination, stress coping strategies, and life satisfaction among young adults. It focuses on assessing the levels of these variables and examining how they are interrelated. Specifically, the study evaluates the extent of procrastination, identifies commonly used coping strategies, and measures overall life satisfaction. Furthermore, it explores the relationships between procrastination and coping strategies, procrastination and life satisfaction, and coping strategies and life satisfaction. This approach helps in understanding how behavioral patterns and coping mechanisms influence the well-being of young adults.

1. Sample

The sample for the present study consists of young adults, primarily university students, aged between 18 and 25 years. A total of approximately 100 participants are selected using a convenience sampling method, as it allows easy access to respondents within the academic setting. Both male and female participants are included to ensure diversity. The selected sample is considered appropriate for examining the relationships among procrastination, stress coping strategies, and life satisfaction.

2. Data and Sources of Data

The data for the present study were collected from primary sources. The primary data were obtained directly from the participants using standardized psychological questionnaires, including the General Procrastination Scale, Stress Coping Strategies Scale, and Satisfaction with Life Scale.

The participants consisted of young adults aged 18–25 years, and the data were collected through online platforms (Google Forms) as well as direct responses. The respondents voluntarily participated in the study and provided information based on their personal experiences and perceptions.

3. Statistical tools

- General Procrastination Scale (GPS)

The General Procrastination Scale (GPS), developed by Lodha et al., is used to measure an individual's tendency to delay tasks in daily life. Procrastination refers to the habitual postponement of important activities despite being aware of possible negative consequences. This tool is designed to capture such delay behaviors across routine situations.

The scale comprises 23 items, each reflecting different aspects of procrastination. Respondents indicate their level of agreement using a Likert-type scale, which helps in assessing how frequently they engage in procrastinating behaviors. Some items are reverse scored to minimize response bias and enhance the accuracy of results. A higher total score on the scale indicates a stronger tendency toward procrastination, whereas a lower score reflects better self-regulation and time management.

- Stress Coping Strategies Scale

The Stress Coping Strategies Scale is utilized to understand how individuals manage and respond to stressful situations. Coping strategies refer to the cognitive and behavioral efforts employed to handle demands that are perceived as challenging or overwhelming. This scale assesses different forms of coping, including:

- Problem-focused coping, which involves actively working to resolve the source of stress.
- Emotion-focused coping, which focuses on regulating emotional reactions.
- Avoidance coping, which involves evading or ignoring the stressor.

Participants report how often they use various coping behaviors when faced with stress. The scores indicate the extent to which different coping strategies are adopted. Higher scores represent greater reliance on particular coping methods.

- Satisfaction with Life Scale (SWLS)

The Satisfaction with Life Scale (SWLS), developed by Diener and colleagues, is used to measure an individual's overall perception of life satisfaction. It focuses on the cognitive aspect of well-being, reflecting how people evaluate their lives based on personal goals and expectations. The scale includes five statements, and participants rate each item on a 7-point Likert scale ranging from strong disagreement to strong agreement. The responses are summed to obtain a total score. Higher scores indicate a greater level of life satisfaction, while lower scores suggest dissatisfaction with life.

RESULTS

Table 1- Spearman's rho correlation analysis among young adults Procrastination, Coping Strategies, and Life Satisfaction (N = 100)

Variables	1	2	3	4	5	
1. Procrastination	1.000	-0.110	0.410**	0.385**	-0.075	
2. Problem-Focused Coping	-0.110	1.000	0.242*	-0.060	0.117	
3. Emotion-Focused Coping	0.410**	0.242*	1.000	0.479**	-0.030	
4. Avoidant Coping	0.385**	-0.060	0.479**	1.000	-0.027	
5. Life Satisfaction	-0.075	0.117	-0.030	-0.027	1.000	

- Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed)
- Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

The findings indicate that procrastination has a moderate and statistically significant positive relationship with emotion-focused coping ($r = .410, p < .01$) and avoidant coping ($r = .385, p < .01$). This suggests that individuals who frequently delay tasks are more likely to rely on emotional responses or avoidance when dealing with stress. However, procrastination shows a weak and non-significant negative relationship with problem-focused coping ($r = -.110$) and life satisfaction ($r = -.075$), indicating that it is not strongly associated with active problem-solving or overall satisfaction with life in this sample.

Further, problem-focused coping is positively and significantly related to emotion-focused coping ($r = .242, p < .05$), suggesting that individuals may use a combination of coping strategies rather than relying on a single approach. Additionally, emotion-focused coping shows a strong positive relationship with avoidant coping ($r = .479, p < .01$), indicating that these two coping styles often occur together. On the other hand, no significant relationships were found between coping strategies and life satisfaction, as all correlations with life satisfaction were weak and statistically insignificant. This implies that, within this study, coping styles did not have a direct impact on participants' overall life satisfaction.

Overall, the table suggests that procrastination is mainly associated with maladaptive coping strategies (emotion-focused and avoidance), while its connection with life satisfaction remains weak and insignificant.

DISCUSSION

The present study explored the relationship between procrastination, stress coping strategies, and life satisfaction among young adults. The findings provide important insights into how procrastination is linked with different ways of managing stress and overall well-being.

The results indicate that procrastination is significantly and positively associated with emotion-focused coping. This suggests that individuals who frequently delay tasks tend to deal with stress by managing their emotions—such as anxiety or frustration—rather than directly addressing the problem. Similarly, procrastination was also positively related to avoidant coping, indicating that such individuals are more likely to evade or postpone dealing with stressful situations. Although avoidance may offer temporary relief, it can ultimately lead to increased stress and reduced productivity. In contrast, procrastination showed a negative but non-significant relationship with problem-focused coping, implying that individuals who procrastinate are less inclined to adopt active problem-solving strategies, although this relationship was not strong. Additionally, procrastination had a weak and non-significant negative association with life satisfaction, suggesting that it does not directly influence overall life satisfaction in this sample, possibly because life satisfaction is affected by multiple broader factors.

The results revealed that procrastination is significantly associated with emotion-focused and avoidant coping strategies, indicating that individuals who delay tasks are more likely to manage stress through emotional responses or avoidance rather than directly addressing problems. Although these strategies may offer short-term relief, they are generally less effective in resolving stressors. In contrast, procrastination showed a weak and non-significant negative relationship with problem-focused coping, suggesting a lower tendency toward active problem-solving among procrastinators.

Additionally, the relationship between procrastination and life satisfaction was found to be negative but not statistically significant, implying that procrastination alone may not strongly influence overall life satisfaction, which is shaped by multiple factors. The study also identified significant associations among coping strategies, particularly between emotion-focused and avoidant coping, indicating that individuals often use a combination of strategies in response to stress.

Overall, the findings suggest that procrastination is more closely linked with maladaptive coping patterns than with constructive problem-solving approaches. The study underscores the need to promote adaptive coping skills and effective time management among young adults. These insights can be valuable for psychologists, educators, and counsellors in developing interventions aimed at reducing procrastination and enhancing overall well-being.

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