

Fear of Negative Evaluation and Procrastination: Exploring the Mediating Role of Self-Efficacy and Self-Esteem in University Students

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Abstract

Students are presumably found to procrastinate more due to the fear that others' might judge them in a certain stereotypical and negative way for how they handle their life circumstances. Either this fear prevails and then effects their overall productivity, performance and growth while acquiring higher education, the researchers tend to pay more attention towards analysing the role of some psycho-social and interpersonal domains such as self-efficacy and self-esteem if they predict or mediate such fearful procrastinated response among students. Therefore, the current study aimed to investigate mediating role of self-esteem and self-efficacy in connection between

procrastination and the fear of negative evaluation among students. The study comprised of 200 university students out of them one hundred ($n=100$) were male and one hundred ($n=100$) were female students. To collect the data, a survey was administered comprising four different scales i.e., The Brief Fear of Negative Evaluation Scale (consisting 12 items), Procrastination Scale (with 20 items), Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (with 10 items) and The General Self-Efficacy Scale (10 items). According to the study's findings, there were significant correlations among all the study variables. It was found through regression analysis that procrastination significantly predicted the fear of negative evaluation. Additionally, the findings revealed that self-efficacy served as a mediating factor, while self-esteem did not.

Keywords: fear of negative evaluation, self-esteem, procrastination, self-efficacy mediation, AMOS

1. Introduction

Adjustment in the lifestyle of a university is a complex advancement since the standards of the university system are determined by the failure or achievement, and the student is required to adjust to a manner of learning that is different from what they are used to, in comparison to what they have studied and what they have experienced at educational institutions (Arias-Chávez et al., 2020). Adults frequently experience a variety of difficulties that are necessary for the adjustment to the environment of university (Solomon & Rothblum, 1984). According to Solomon and Rothblum (1984), this adaptation demands numerous adjustments that the students are unprepared to handle. Therefore, these changes result in situations like anxiety, disorientation, fears, apprehensions, and uncertainty, with the latter bearing special value in educational endeavours. At this time in lifetime, the anxiety of being negatively opinionated about oneself may arise. Fear of negative assessment generally refers to the expectation that society will evaluate an individual

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negatively, apprehension concerning societal negative evaluation, and discomfort about others' negatively evaluating (Watson & Friend, 1969). Thus, a person's fear of negative evaluation negatively impacts self-efficacy, self-confidence, and self-esteem. People often put off doing the task at hand because of such ideas. Tasks are purposefully delayed in procrastination, which is a form of self-regulation failure that may have unfavourable outcomes. Emerging adults are frequently seen acting in this way. They could tend to put off doing their work until the very last minute. Students frequently struggle with procrastination when it comes to academic assignments (Solomon & Rothblum, 1984). Many students admit to waiting until the last minute to study for exams and tests and to submit assignments after the due date has passed. According to the literature, a student who procrastinates either uses poor time management skills to complete academic tasks or, if this is not possible, overestimates the amount of time that is available (Balkis & Erdinç, 2017). The incapacity of a person to successfully manage their time is one of the causes of procrastination (Ferrari et al., 1995). Additionally, a breakdown in mechanisms related to oneself prevents a learner from effectively managing one's time (Balkis & Erdinç, 2017), underestimating their abilities to the extent that they avoid assignments out of fear of failing, which prevents them from reaching their goals.

Although self-esteem is important to psychology, no precise definition exists for it. the individual's perception of themselves is how self-esteem is traditionally understood (Ferkany, 2008). Self-efficacy has been linked with self-esteem as a person's self-efficacy is their confidence in their ability to achieve goals, whereas self-esteem is a person's opinion of themselves (Arias-Chávez et al., 2020). Beliefs about self-efficacy have a direct impact on things like students' perceptions of their capacity to do the necessary tasks, the objectives they choose and set for themselves, and the effort and tenacity with which they pursue those goals. According to Bandura

(2000), self-efficacy promotes the mental processes and joyful feelings that are linked to academic success. Low self-esteem causes people to view themselves adversely in social settings and to worry about judgment from others (Kocovski & Endler, 2000). Fear about having adversity of others' opinion of oneself is related to low self-esteem since it has a connection to anxiousness about social situations (Leary, 1983; Fleming & Courtney, 1984). According to Rosenberg and colleagues (1995), higher levels of self-esteem are associated with greater success in people and are socially acceptable. They can deal with negative situations like receiving a bad review and learn from them, and additionally, they are less likely to develop psychological issues as a result of challenging circumstances in life (Rutter, 1985). "Putting matters aside serves as an armour for their insecure perception of self-worth" for those who procrastinate, according to Burka and Yuen (1982). Low self-esteem is discussed as a corollary of procrastination in several theoretical perspectives, including Ellis and Knaus (1977), similarly, procrastination is caused by illogical beliefs possessed by individuals who associate their self-esteem with how well they perform on tasks. Burka and Yuen's (1983) insight that procrastination is utilized as a protective mechanism by persons with fragile self-esteem. Therefore, a student who has a fear of negative evaluations might be prone to procrastination, self-efficacy and self-esteem may act as a mediator and students with high levels of self-efficacy and self-esteem will be less likely to procrastinate.

1.1 Objectives

1. To investigate the connection between procrastination and self-constructs such as self-efficacy, self-esteem, and fear of negative evaluation.
2. To investigate the relationship between procrastination and the fear of negative evaluation among university students.

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3. To investigate if the self-constructs i.e., self- efficacy or self-esteem influence as mediator(s) between the relationship of the study variables.

1.2 Hypotheses

1. Fear of negative evaluation will have a significant positive impact on procrastination.
2. Self-esteem will significantly mediate the relationship between fear of negative evaluation and procrastination among university students.
3. Self-efficacy will significantly mediate the relationship between fear of negative evaluation and procrastination among university students.

2. Method

2.1 Research design

It is a quantitative type of research, and a correlational research design was used to conduct this research.

2.2 Participants

The sample for this research is comprised of 200 participants, which are further divided into two groups i.e., males and females. Most of the desired population for this research was the students of Bahauddin Zakariya University, Multan. The participants were different in terms of their age, gender, education, and family background. Participants ages range from 17 to 35 years old, and they are enrolled in several disciplines at Bahauddin Zakariya University in Multan, using a convenient sampling strategy. Only students who voluntarily and independently participated in the study met the criteria for inclusion, ensuring a fair and accurate analysis of the data.

2.3 Sampling Technique

To acquire data, a convenient sampling strategy was applied. It is a non-random sampling technique in which the sample is selected by the researcher at his convenience without any specific criteria.

2.4 Instruments

A questionnaire package, consisting of a consent form, a debriefing form, and the following measures were administered:

1. Brief Fear of Negative Evaluation Scale
2. Procrastination Scale
3. Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale
4. The General Self-Efficacy scale

2.4.1 Brief Fear of Negative Evaluation Scale (B-FNE)

The scale B-FNE was developed by Leary (1983), this scale consisted of 12 items, and it is a Likert-type scale. The brief scale exhibits strong inter-item reliability (.97) as well as two-week test-retest reliability (.94). This suggests that the scale's items all assess the same notion and that test scores are consistent across time. In the current study, the reliability coefficient was ($\alpha=.79$) which suggests high reliability.

2.4.2 Procrastination scale

Lay (1986) developed a 20-item general procrastination measure. It evaluates a person's procrastination tendencies and behavioral attributes. The questionnaire contains statements about everyday experiences, and participants must score how well the item describes them. The items of the scale are assessed on a Likert-type scale with five points, with 1 indicating extremely

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uncharacteristic till 5 indicating extremely characteristic. Higher the scores, the greater the proclivity to procrastinate. It has ten reversed items (3, 4, 6, 8, 11, 13, 14, 15, 18, and 20) that were to be recorded before the overall score was calculated. The scale is appropriate for evaluating the student population. Cronbach's internal consistency of .82 was recorded for the scale. The internal consistency reliability of the scale in the current study was ($\alpha=.85$).

2.4.3 Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale

Rosenberg (1965) devised a 10-item scale by assessing positive as well as negative emotions about oneself to assess global self-worth. All items of the questionnaire are graded on a 4-point Likert scale which is ranging from strongly agreeing to strongly disagreeing. Rosenberg Reverse the scoring for elements marked with an (R) (such as 0 scores being equal to 3, 1 being 2, 2 being 1, and 3 being 0). The Rosenberg scale has a typical score of roughly 22, with the majority rating between 15 and 25. A score of fifteen or lower indicates poor self-esteem. The Cronbach's alpha for this scale in the current study was ($\alpha=.79$).

2.4.4 The General Self-Efficacy Scale (GSE-English)

The GSE (English Version) is a 10-item scale (Swhwarzer & Jerusalem, 1995). It assesses an individual's overall feeling of self-efficacy in dealing with stressful events. The scale is intended for the overall adult population. The items on the scale are assessed on a scale consisting of four Likert points, with 1 representing "not at all true" and 4 representing "exactly true." The score spans from 10 to 40 scores, with higher scores suggesting stronger belief in one's capacity to overcome challenging tasks and lower numbers showing less belief in one's abilities. A total score is generated from the responses. Scholz et al. (2002) discovered that GSE has an internal

consistency of the scales that vary in Cronbach's (.81 to.86) in 25 different countries. The current study's internal consistency was ($\alpha = .89$).

2.5 Procedure

The present study was based on quantitative research. After the specification of the area i.e., a public sector university with a variety of research-oriented environments, the researcher contacted the participants from the various Bahauddin Zakariya University, Multan departments. Data were gathered using a convenient sampling method. Participants were briefed about the nature of the study, and the methodology/guidelines for filling out the questionnaire after taking consent and assuring about confidentiality. The data were then analyzed, and the following results were generated.

3. Results

Table 1

Pearson Correlations between all the Variables of the study (N=200)

	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	1	2	3	4
1. Fear of negative evaluation	60.70	6.23	-			
2. Self-efficacy	32.87	8.40	-.46**	-		
3. Self Esteem	15.78	2.98	-.38**	.28**	-	
4. Procrastination	24.35	5.87	.28**	-.25**	-.47**	-

** $p < 0.01$

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Table 1 demonstrates the correlation between study variables. The results revealed that the fear of negative evaluation negatively correlates with self-efficacy, and self-esteem and positively correlates with procrastination. Self-efficacy significantly positively correlates with self-esteem and negatively correlates with procrastination. Self-esteem negatively correlates with procrastination.

Table 2

Regression Analysis showing Fear of Negative Evaluation for Procrastination (N=200)

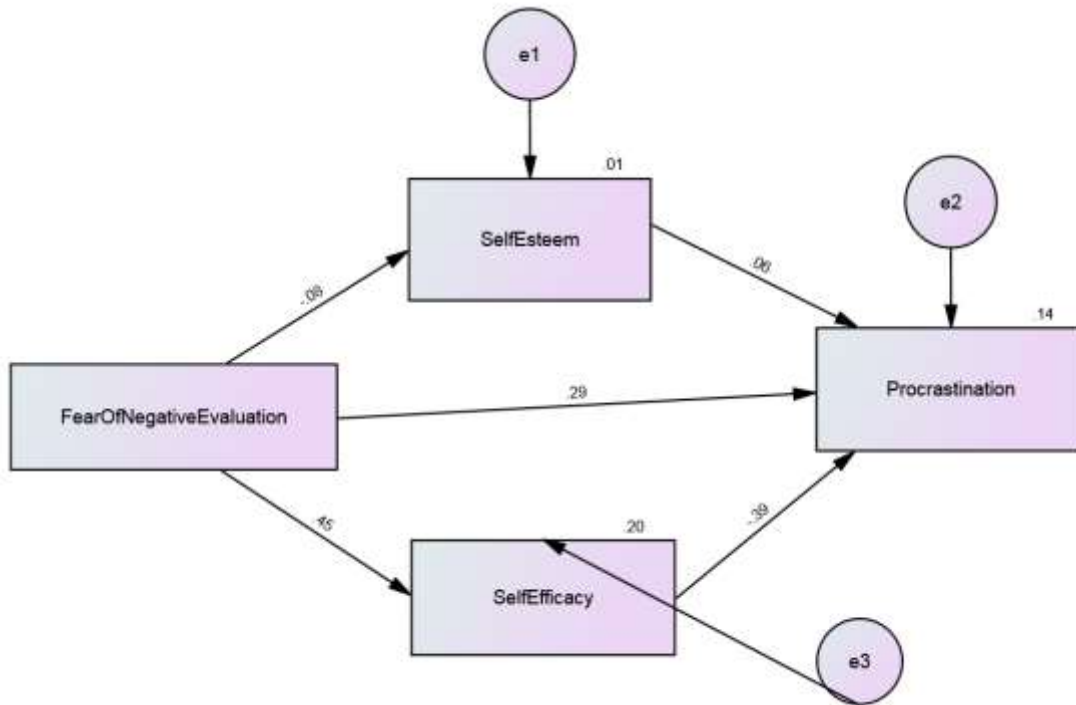
Predictor	<i>B</i>	<i>Std. Error</i>	<i>Beta</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>P</i>
(Constant)	58.059	1.778		32.649	.000***
Fear of Negative Evaluation	.080	.052	.108	1.530	.128

Note. $R^2 = .012$, Adjusted $R^2 = .007$, *** $p < 0.001$ Independent Variable is Fear of Negative Evaluation, Dependent Variable is Procrastination

Table 2 demonstrated that the fear of negative evaluation positively impacts procrastination. Findings depict fear of negative evaluation as strongly associated with procrastination.

Figure 1

Amos Analysis showing a model of mediation



The model shows the mediation analysis, using AMOS, of a dependent variable (Procrastination), mediators (Self-Esteem and Self-Efficacy), and independent variable (Fear of Negative Evaluation). The results show that path a1 is significant while path b1 is not, hence the whole model does not show mediating effect. Similarly, path a2 is non-significant, while path b2 is also non-significant, which shows that the model does not show mediating effect. However, there lie significant total, direct and indirect effects of these variables along the specific pathways.

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Table 3

Standardized regression weights showing mediation

Construct	Path	Construct	Estimate	S.E.	C.R.	<i>p</i>
Self-Esteem	←	Fear Of Negative Evaluation	-.028	.025	-1.136	.256
Self-Efficacy	←	Fear Of Negative Evaluation	.312	.044	7.033	***
Procrastination	←	Self-Esteem	.130	.140	.932	.351
Procrastination	←	Self-Efficacy	-.414	.079	-5.261	***
Procrastination	←	Fear Of Negative Evaluation	.213	.055	3.861	***

Table 3 shows the regression analysis in AMOS. Results show the Impact of Fear of Negative Evaluation on Self-Esteem is non-significant. The impact of Fear of Negative Evaluation on Self-Efficacy is significant ($p < .001$). The impact of Self-Esteem on Procrastination is non-significant. The Impact of Self-Efficacy on Procrastination is significant ($p < .001$). The impact of Fear of Negative Evaluation on Procrastination is significant ($p < .001$).

4. Discussion

The current study aimed to explore the relationship between fear of negative evaluation and procrastination, along with the mediating role of self-constructs i.e., self-esteem and self-efficacy. All study variables are found to be significantly correlated (see Table 1). The results indicated that fear of negative evaluation negatively correlates with self-efficacy, and self-esteem supported by the findings of Sebastian et al. (2022) and Begley & White (2003) respectively, and

positively correlates with procrastination contradicted by the findings of Fee & Tangney (2000). Self-efficacy positively correlates with self-esteem which is consistent with the findings of Lane et al. (2004) and negatively correlates with procrastination which is in line with the findings of Komlao (2016). Self-esteem negatively correlates with procrastination as supported by Kurtovic et al. (2019).

Results showed that fear of negative evaluation has a significant positive impact on procrastination (see Table 2). The results are in line with the findings of Saddler & Buley, (1999). Mediation analyses depict that self-efficacy significantly mediates the impact of fear of negative evaluation on procrastination which is in line with the findings of Farran (2004) who concluded that self-efficacy acts as a moderator in the relationship between depression and academic procrastination. Self-esteem does not significantly play a role of a mediator in the current study, similarly, there is no evidence in the literature review that self-esteem mediates this relationship, rather than that, self-esteem acts as a mediator between the relationship of self-efficacy and procrastination (Tan et al., 2015).

4.1 Conclusion

Because of the fear of being critically evaluated, it can be concluded that students tend to adapt procrastination. Together with the theoretical notions of fear of negative evaluation and the empirical findings from the present study it has been found that constructs such as self-esteem and self-efficacy are prominent influencers in escalating procrastinating behaviour. The study reveals that fear of having unfavourable perception of one's self develops tendencies of procrastinating in students. Self-efficacy acts as a mediator in the relationship between procrastination and fear of being critically perceived. Therefore, it can be concluded that students with higher fear of negative

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apprehensions about the opinions of others possess low self-efficacy incubating the traits of procrastination in their personalities.

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