

LOCUS OF CONTROL AND PROCRASTINATION AMONG STUDENTS: A COMPARATIVE STUDY

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Abstract

Every single human being irrespective of their education, working status has to complete numerous tasks during a day for an effective performance, but for certain reasons completion of these required tasks is often delayed. This general tendency of delaying or postponing different task is referred as procrastination. The present study aimed to find whether undergraduates and postgraduates students may differ in terms of their locus of control and procrastination related behaviours. Considering the purpose, a sample of 100 students (50 undergraduates and 50 postgraduate) aged 18 to 25 years; currently pursuing any academic course were selected for present study. For analysing the data Mean, SD and 't' test were used as a prominent statistical technique. The results revealed that the undergraduate students had significantly higher level of external locus of control and had significantly high levels of procrastination as compared to post graduate students. From the present study it may be concluded that undergraduate students had a tendency of higher attributions to external control as compare with post graduate students which might lead to higher degree of procrastination behaviours.

Keywords: *Undergraduates; Postgraduates; Locus of control; Procrastination.*

Introduction

In this twenty first century, youth require developing skills and competence to cope with external demands of everyday life. Every individual irrespective of their education, working status has to complete numerous tasks during a day for an effective performance, but for certain

reasons completion of these required tasks is often delayed. Procrastination and locus of control are most significant factors to play an important role in promoting or declining academic achievement in student's life.

Rotter in his social learning theory introduced the term 'locus of control'. The expectancy value theory is the foundation of locus of control, stated that an individual's engagement in a behaviour is determined by what he expects from the behaviour and the value his expectations have. Locus of control includes two parts: external, and internal. An individual with "internally oriented" tends to feel control over the reinforcements received.

Procrastination is a widespread problem related to self-regulation and can be described as deferral of the beginning and completing the important, necessary assignments without being aware of the fact that this will bring about certain negative consequences such as anxiety and depression, regarding the personality (Howell et al 2007).

A study conducted by Simpson et al in 2011, suggested that person who are "externally oriented" to perceive no control of reinforcers and tend to feel that their life events are being control by external force like luck, chance or fate, where individuals who were internally oriented perceive a connection between their behaviour and its consequences and may tend to have more control over their experience which made them less vulnerable to procrastinate than externally oriented individuals.

Rational of the study:

Researches has shown that psychological factors such as procrastination and locus of control play an important role to promote or decline academic achievement in student's life. Considering present scenario, it is imperative to identify students who are at risk for procrastination and their locus of control style, making this study relevant.

Material and Methods

Present Study Objectives:

The present study has the following aims:

- ❖ To study the difference in terms of the level of locus of control among a group of undergraduates and postgraduate students.
- ❖ To study the difference in terms of the level of procrastination among a group of undergraduates and postgraduate students.

Hypothesis:

- H1: There will be no significant difference between the undergraduates and postgraduate students in terms of their locus of control.
- H2: There will be no significant difference between the undergraduates and postgraduate students in terms of their procrastination.

Study Areas and Subjects:

100 participants [50 Under Graduate and 50 Post Graduates] were recruited as subjects in the present study based on the following inclusion exclusion criteria.

Inclusion Criteria:

- Age range :18-25 Years
- Sex: Both male and Female
- Educational qualification: Currently studying at Under graduation and Postgraduation level.
- Family type: Both joint and nuclear.
- Marital Status: Both married and unmarried
- Nationality: Indian.

Exclusion Criteria:

- Age range: Below 18 and upper 25
- Educational qualification: Completed or Higher Post Graduation courses
- Any physical/psychological illness.

Measures:

Tools	Developed by:	Year	Reliability	Validity
Locus of control scale	Rotter	1966	0.61 (Test-Retest reliability)	0.82 (construct validity)
Procrastination Scale	Lay	1986	0.714 (split half method)	0.76 (Content Validity)

Procedure:

During the administration process data was taken after selecting the participant according to the inclusion and exclusion criteria and confidentiality was assured to all. Followed by instruction was given to the participants and getting the questionnaires filled after taking the informed consent from the participants. Data collection procedure was done in online mode. The obtained data was analysed by using the appropriate statistical technique [Mean, SD and ‘t’ test] with the help of IBM SPSS version 20.0.

Results:

Table 1: Indicating a summary of the ‘Frequency’ and valid ‘Percentages’ of the socio-demographic characteristic of participants.

Socio Demographic Data	Undergraduate Students		Post Graduate Students	
	f	%	f	%
Gender				
I. Male				
II. Female	18	36	27	54
	32	64	23	46
Family Type				
I. Joint	12	24	20	40
II. Nuclear	38	76	30	60
Marital Status				
I. Married	8	16	15	30
II. Unmarried	42	84	35	70

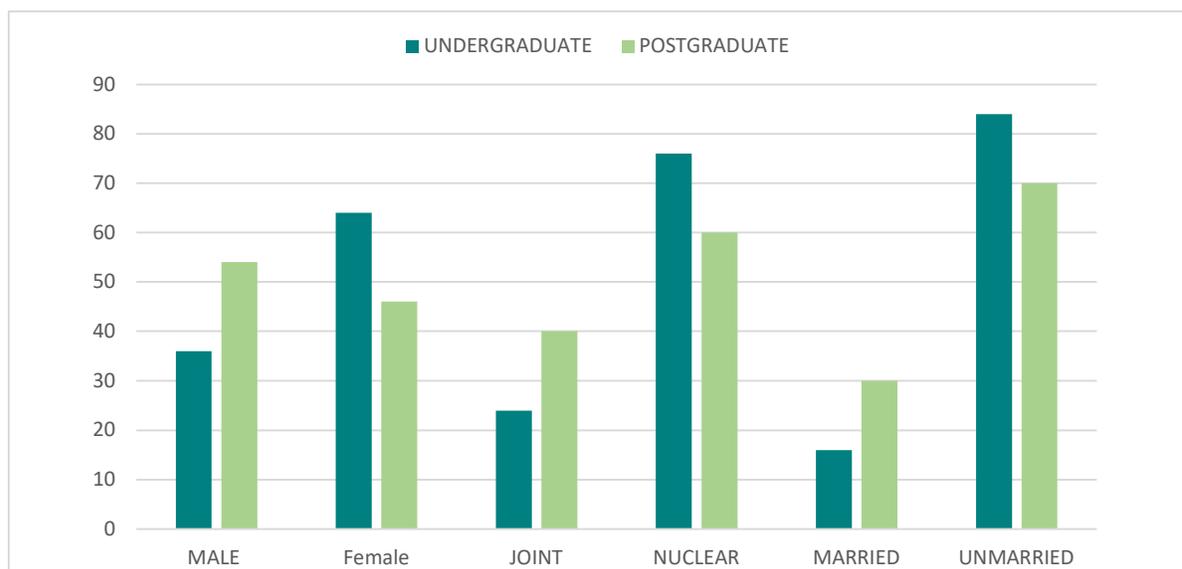


Figure 1: Diagrammatic presentation of sociodemographic percentage of undergraduate and postgraduate students.

Table 2: Indicating the comparison between Undergraduates and Postgraduates students in terms of locus of control.

Variable	Category	Mean	Standard deviation	Standard error of mean	t- value
Locus of Control	Undergraduate students	14.180	3.236	0.457	6.172**
	Postgraduate students	10.600	3.063	0.433	

$P > 0.01^{**}$

Data from 'Table 2' showed that undergraduates students had significantly higher level of external locus of control compared to post graduate students. Thus, the Hypothesis I 'There will be no significant difference between the undergraduates and postgraduate students in terms of their locus of control' is rejected here.

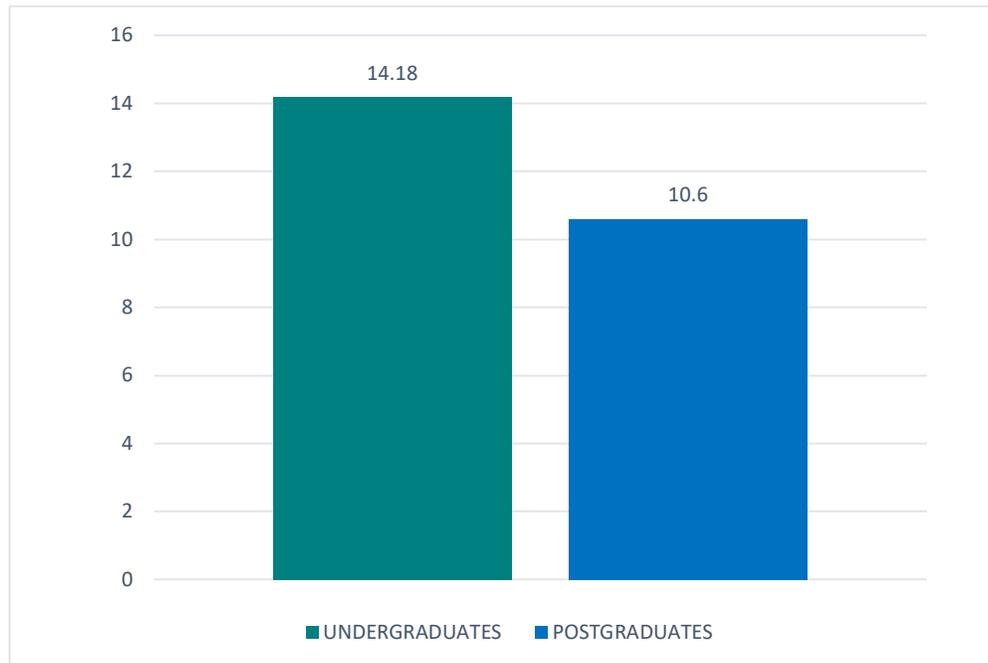


Figure 2: Diagrammatic presentation of mean of locus of control of undergraduate and postgraduate students.

Table 3: Showing the comparison between Undergraduates and Postgraduates students in terms of procrastination.

Variable	Category	Mean	Standard deviation	Standard error of mean	t-value
Procrastination	Undergraduate students	59.220	7.343	1.038	5.343**
	Postgraduate students	48.780	14.424	2.039	

P>0.01**

Data from ‘Table 3’ suggests that undergraduates students scored significantly in procrastination related behaviour as compared to post graduate students. Thus, the Hypothesis

II ‘There exists no significant difference between the undergraduates and postgraduate students with respect to procrastination’ is rejected here.

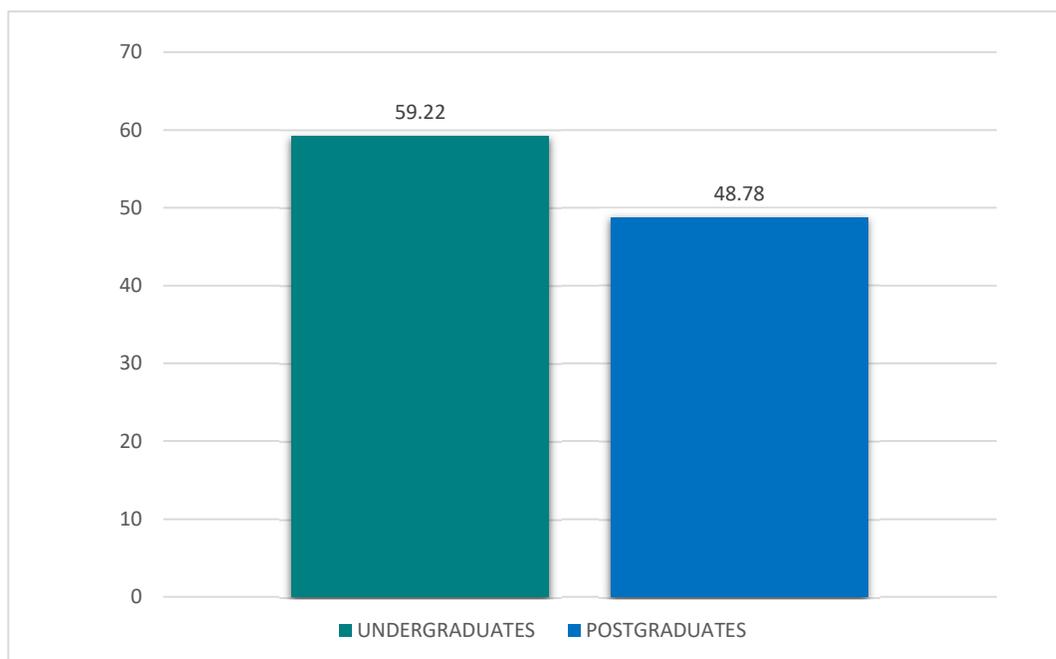


Figure 3: Diagrammatic presentation of mean of procrastination of undergraduate and postgraduate students.

Discussion:

Now a days procrastination has emerged as a rising phenomenon among all levels of academic students. In western countries the focus of researchers has been on academic procrastination in graduate students of different levels and the rising incidence has been of serious concern for the researchers.

In the present study, results revealed that the undergraduate students had significantly higher level of external locus of control which exhibited high levels of procrastination as compared to postgraduate students. The results were consistent with the study done by Gargari, et al (2011) on similar variables, found that students who attributed their successes to internal factors like their hard work etc, expressed a lower degree of procrastination than those who procrastinated more tends to have a tendency of higher attributions to external control.

The research of Carden, et al (2004) on procrastination, locus of control and academic anxiety revealed that students with internal locus of control expressed lower scores on academic procrastination than those who had external locus of control, was consistent with the present test findings.

Here, comparing the locus of control and procrastination scores of the undergraduate and postgraduate students, it found that, postgraduate students have internal locus of control which make them aware of their academic success depending on their intense work and the efforts they put in. They pay attention to every piece of information that could help them get closer to their academic goals. They plan and manage time wisely.

The result of the present study matches with the result of Beck et al (2000), in which he suggested that students whose locus of control are internally oriented showed less academic procrastination and they complete their tasks earlier than externally oriented. Thus, it can be said that locus of control appeared to be an important factor of procrastination.

Conclusion:

Procrastinating behaviour is a common and prevalent phenomenon which is interestingly survived itself throughout the history and even today it casts its shadow on mankind. From the present study it can be concluded that undergraduate students had a tendency of higher attributions to external control as compared with postgraduate students which might leads to higher degree of procrastination behaviours.

Implications and Future Directions:

As procrastinating behaviours has a significant negative consequence on academic performance, it is very crucial to identify students who are at risk for procrastination. The results from this preliminary analysis should be of interest to academic advisors, counsellors, and educators and designed of an appropriate intervention program to assist struggling students and to reduce procrastination would be beneficial.

The research on procrastination should be ongoing. This current study only assesses the student at a one-time point. Moreover, in-depth analysis of longitudinal studies should be applied in the future research to provide a meaningful empirical understanding to the literature.

Research on procrastination should be done on gender bases and extended to other groups of the population, such as children and working professionals. In addition, research studies should focus on different reasons of procrastinating including fear of failure and task aversion.

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Nil.

Conflicts of interest

There are no conflicts of interest.

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