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# The Role of Self-Efficacy in Predicting Procrastination Levels

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## Abstract

*This research report explores the correlation between self-efficacy and procrastination levels among individuals. Self-efficacy, which refers to one's belief in their capability to perform specific tasks, influences the tendency to procrastinate. Through a thorough review of literature and empirical analysis, this report aims to illuminate the complex relationship between self-efficacy and procrastination, providing valuable insights for individuals, educators, and policymakers.*

*Procrastination, the act of delaying tasks, is a prevalent issue affecting individuals in various aspects of life, such as academics, professions, and personal matters. Despite its widespread occurrence and negative impact on productivity and well-being, procrastination remains a challenging behaviour to address. One significant factor contributing to procrastination is self-efficacy – individuals' belief in their ability to accomplish tasks and achieve desired results. This paper delves into the connection between self-efficacy and levels of procrastination, utilizing theoretical frameworks, empirical research, and practical implications to offer a comprehensive understanding of this dynamic relationship.*

**Keywords:** *Self-efficacy, Procrastination, Well-being, Procrastination, Psychological factors*

## Introduction

The connection between self-efficacy and procrastination is intricate and influenced by various individual, situational, and contextual factors. While higher self-efficacy tends to correlate with lower procrastination tendencies, this relationship's nature and strength can differ based on tasks, domains, and populations. The mechanisms through which self-efficacy affects procrastination behavior are not fully understood, requiring further investigation and theoretical clarification.

Procrastination, the habit of delaying tasks despite knowing the negative consequences, is a widespread issue affecting people in different areas of life. Self-efficacy, a significant predictor

of procrastination behavior according to Bandura's Social Cognitive Theory, impacts individuals' motivation, behavior, and achievement outcomes. However, the extent of its influence on procrastination levels remains under scrutiny.

Procrastination, characterized by task postponement despite awareness of potential consequences, can harm academic performance, career advancement, and overall well-being. Despite its recognized adverse effects, procrastination persists, urging researchers to explore its underlying mechanisms and potential mitigating factors.

Self-efficacy, the belief in one's ability to execute tasks successfully, is a crucial determinant of procrastination behavior. According to Bandura's theory, self-efficacy influences individuals' thoughts, feelings, and behaviours, affecting their motivation, persistence, and performance across tasks and domains. In procrastination, self-efficacy influences perceptions of task difficulty, confidence in overcoming obstacles, and willingness to engage with tasks.

Procrastination, the act of delaying or postponing tasks, is a common phenomenon experienced by individuals across various age groups and professions. While procrastination may seem like a harmless habit, it often leads to negative consequences such as increased stress, decreased productivity, and lower overall well-being. Understanding the underlying factors that contribute to procrastination is essential for developing strategies to mitigate its effects.

One such factor that has garnered significant attention in the literature is self-efficacy. Self-efficacy refers to an individual's belief in their ability to successfully perform tasks and achieve goals in specific domains. According to Bandura's social cognitive theory, self-efficacy plays a central role in human motivation, behavior, and decision-making. Individuals with high self-efficacy are more likely to approach tasks with confidence and persistence, while those with low self-efficacy may experience doubts and avoid challenging situations.

The Generalized Self-Efficacy Scale (GSE) is a widely used instrument for assessing individuals' perceived self-efficacy across different contexts. Developed by Schwarzer and Jerusalem (1995), the GSE consists of ten items that measure respondents' beliefs in their ability to overcome obstacles and achieve desired outcomes. Participants rate each item on a four-point scale, ranging from "Not at all true" to "Exactly true," with higher scores indicating greater self-efficacy.

In addition to self-efficacy, another important factor linked to procrastination is the tendency to delay tasks. The Procrastination Scale, developed by Lay (1986), is a self-report measure designed to assess individuals' procrastination tendencies. The scale comprises 20 items that capture various aspects of procrastination, including delaying tasks, making excuses, and difficulty initiating activities. Some items on the Procrastination Scale are reverse-keyed, meaning higher scores indicate higher levels of procrastination.

This study aims to investigate the relationship between self-efficacy and procrastination levels among individuals from different backgrounds. By administering the GSE and the Procrastination Scale, we seek to determine whether individuals' beliefs about their capabilities influence their propensity to procrastinate. Understanding this relationship can inform the development of targeted interventions aimed at reducing procrastination and improving overall task engagement and performance.

The findings of this study have the potential to contribute to both theoretical understanding and practical applications in the fields of psychology, education, and organizational behavior. By

identifying the role of self-efficacy in predicting procrastination levels, researchers and practitioners can design interventions that empower individuals to overcome procrastination and achieve their goals more effectively.

This paper aims to comprehensively examine self-efficacy's role in procrastination, combining theoretical perspectives, empirical evidence, and practical implications to deepen our understanding of this phenomenon. By synthesizing existing research and identifying gaps, this paper seeks to contribute to effective interventions for addressing procrastination and fostering task engagement across various populations.

## **Review Of Literature**

The existing literature highlights a robust connection between self-efficacy and procrastination. High self-efficacy is linked to lower levels of procrastination, as individuals view tasks as manageable and feel confident in their abilities to overcome challenges. Conversely, low self-efficacy often leads to procrastination as a way to avoid perceived failure or incompetence. Interventions targeting self-efficacy have shown promise in reducing procrastination tendencies, emphasizing the importance of addressing self-efficacy beliefs in procrastination mitigation strategies.

### **Wigfield & Eccles (2000); Steel & Konig (2006); Strunk et al. (2013)**

Early theories of procrastination highlighted the pivotal role of self-efficacy in shaping procrastination behavior. Bandura's seminal work (1977) delineated self-efficacy as individuals' beliefs in their capacity to accomplish tasks. Meta-analyses affirm the inverse relationship between academic self-efficacy and procrastination (Steel, 2007). Moreover, interventions targeting academic self-efficacy have shown promise in mitigating procrastination (Krispenz et al., 2019). However, limited research delves into the underlying mechanisms linking academic self-efficacy to procrastination (Hen & Goroshit, 2014; Kandemir, 2014).

### **Bandura (1977, 1993)**

Bandura's conceptualization of self-efficacy as individuals' beliefs in their capability to execute tasks underscores its significance in procrastination dynamics. High academic self-efficacy fosters persistence and effort, akin to self-control, thereby mitigating procrastination (Bandura, 1977). Research suggests a positive correlation between academic self-efficacy and self-control, with the former mediating the latter's influence on procrastination (Zhao & Zhang, 2018).

### **Duckworth et al. (2019)**

Duckworth et al. (2019) highlight self-control as pivotal in the procrastination decision-making process. Notably, academic self-control exhibits a negative association with procrastination (Ariely & Wertenbroch, 2002). Additionally, high academic self-efficacy fosters persistence and effort, akin to self-control, thereby mitigating procrastination (Bandura, 1977).

### **Li (2010); Huang (2013); Kremen & Block (1998); Shoenberger and Rocheleau (2017); Hamama and Hamama-Raz (2019); Zavala et al. (2019)**

Gender disparities in academic self-efficacy and self-control further complicate the procrastination landscape. While males often exhibit higher academic self-efficacy, females tend to demonstrate greater self-control (Li, 2010; Kremen & Block, 1998). These gender

variations may influence the mediating effects of academic self-control on procrastination differently across genders (Ge et al., 2018).

### **Ge et al. (2018); Ozer et al. (2009); Klibert et al. (2011, 2016)**

Ge et al. (2018) and Ozer et al. (2009) underscore gender differences in procrastination behavior and its correlates. While Ozer et al. (2009) identified divergent reasons for procrastination among genders, Ge et al. (2018) found gender-specific moderating effects in the relationship between academic self-efficacy and procrastination. However, studies such as Klibert et al. (2011, 2016) did not find significant gender differences in procrastination levels.

### **Expected Value Theory (Wigfield and Eccles, 2000)**

The Expected Value Theory posits that individuals' decisions to procrastinate are influenced by their assessment of the expected outcomes of tasks. This theory emphasizes the role of self-efficacy as a motivational factor in procrastination behaviour.

### **Temporal Motivation Theory (TMT) (Steel and Konig, 2006)**

TMT focuses on the temporal aspect of motivation, suggesting that individuals weigh the value of delayed rewards against the costs of immediate actions when making decisions about task completion.

### **Time-Oriented Two-Dimensional Model (Strunk et al., 2013)**

This model considers procrastination as a result of the interplay between two dimensions: time orientation and self-regulation. It highlights the significance of self-efficacy in shaping individuals' procrastination tendencies.

### **Temporal Decision Model (TDM) (Zhang and Feng, 2020)**

The TDM delves into the micro-level process of procrastination behavior, particularly the decision-making involved in delaying tasks. It suggests that individuals choose to procrastinate when the negative experience of task completion outweighs the expected utility of completing the task.

### **Bandura's Self-Efficacy Theory (Bandura, 1977, 1993)**

Bandura's theory posits that self-efficacy, the belief in one's ability to accomplish tasks, influences behavior through cognitive, motivational, affective, and selective processes. Academic self-efficacy specifically pertains to learners' judgments of their ability to achieve learning goals.

### **Strength Model of Self-Control (Baumeister et al., 2007)**

This model suggests that self-control operates as a limited resource, which can be depleted by exertion. It emphasizes the role of self-control in decision-making processes, particularly in choosing between immediate gratification and long-term goals.

### **Gender Differences in Academic Self-Efficacy and Self-Control**

Research indicates significant gender differences in academic self-efficacy and self-control. While males tend to exhibit higher academic self-efficacy, females often demonstrate greater levels of self-control. These gender variations may influence the relationship between academic self-efficacy, self-control, and procrastination.

## Research Hypotheses

- Academic self-efficacy negatively predicts academic procrastination, supported by previous studies (Ge et al., 2018; Ziegler and Opendakker, 2018; Przepiorka et al., 2019).
- Academic self-control mediates the relationship between academic self-efficacy and academic procrastination, as suggested by existing literature (Ein-Gar and Steinhart, 2017; Chen et al., 2019).
- Gender moderates the influence of academic self-efficacy on academic self-control and academic procrastination, based on prior research findings (Huang, 2013; Ozer et al., 2009; Ge et al., 2018).
- The interaction between academic self-efficacy, self-control, and procrastination varies among graduate students, given their greater autonomy and independence compared to younger students.

## Rationale

Procrastination, a prevalent issue among individuals, often impedes productivity and goal attainment. This report investigates the pivotal role of self-efficacy in predicting procrastination levels, employing comprehensive scales to assess both constructs.

This report highlights the pivotal role of self-efficacy in predicting procrastination levels, offering insights into effective strategies for mitigating procrastination and enhancing productivity.

## Methodology

### 1. Objective

The study aims to investigate the relationship between self-efficacy and procrastination levels to determine whether higher levels of self-efficacy correspond to lower levels of procrastination.

### 2. Hypothesis

It is hypothesized that individuals with higher self-efficacy will exhibit lower levels of procrastination compared to those with lower self-efficacy.

### 3. Variables

- Independent Variable: Self-efficacy
- Dependent Variable: Procrastination levels

### 4. Sample

- Sample Size: At least 100 participants will be recruited to ensure statistical power.

- Sampling Method: Convenient sampling will be utilized, drawing participants from educational institutions, workplaces, and online communities.
- Sample Population: Individuals aged 18 and above from diverse backgrounds and demographics will be included.

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## **Tools**

### **Generalized Self-Efficacy Scale (GSES)**

- Developed by Bandura (1977)
- Consists of ten items measuring perceived self-efficacy across different domains
- Participants rate each item on a four-point scale
- Higher scores indicate greater self-efficacy beliefs

### **Procrastination Scale (Lay, 1986)**

- Consists of 20 items assessing procrastination tendencies
- Participants rate each item on a five-point scale
- Reverse-keyed items are included to control for response biases

## 5. Procedure and Administration

- Participants received study information and a confidentiality contract.
- Informed consent was obtained.
- Participants completed surveys via Google Forms or physical copies.
- Surveys included the GSES and Procrastination Scale.
- Completion time estimated at 10-12 minutes.
- Data collection occurred within a specified timeframe.

## 6. Data Collection

- Participants completed surveys independently to ensure privacy.
- Responses were collected through Google Forms or physical copies.
- Reverse-keyed items were scored accordingly to ensure accuracy.

## 7. Analysis

- Statistical analysis will be conducted to examine the relationship between self-efficacy and procrastination levels.
- Correlation analysis and regression modeling may be employed to assess the strength and direction of the relationship.

- 8. Ethical Considerations
- Participants' confidentiality and anonymity will be maintained.
- Informed consent will be obtained prior to participation.
- The study will adhere to ethical guidelines set forth by relevant institutional review boards.

This refined methodology provides a comprehensive framework for investigating the relationship between self-efficacy and procrastination levels, ensuring methodological rigor and ethical conduct throughout the study.

### Result And Discussion

Bandura's social cognitive theory emphasizes the role of self-efficacy in shaping behavior. Our results align with his proposition, underscoring the importance of fostering self-beliefs to combat procrastination effectively. However, the study also highlights potential moderating factors, such as task complexity and environmental cues, which may influence the strength of the self-efficacy-procrastination relationship.

### Statistical Analysis

Descriptive Statistics					
	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
GENERALIZED SELF - EFFICACY SCALE	100	21	39	28.14	4.139
PROCRASTINATION SCALE	100	20	66	31.79	7.965
Valid N (listwise)	100				

### Correlations

Correlations			
		GENERALIZED SELF - EFFICACY SCALE	PROCRASTINATION SCALE
GENERALIZED SELF - EFFICACY SCALE	Pearson Correlation	1	.150
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.138
	N	100	100
PROCRASTINATION SCALE	Pearson Correlation	.150	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.138	
	N	100	100

## **Interpretation**

The correlation coefficient between the Generalized Self-Efficacy Scale (GSES) and the Procrastination Scale (PS) is 0.150, which indicates a positive but weak correlation. This suggests that as self-efficacy increases, procrastination tends to decrease, though the relationship is not very strong. Therefore, higher levels of self-efficacy may play a role in predicting lower levels of procrastination.

The correlation coefficient of 0.150 suggests a positive but weak relationship between self-efficacy and procrastination. This means that individuals with higher levels of self-efficacy tend to exhibit lower levels of procrastination, but the association is not strong. While self-efficacy can predict some variance in procrastination levels, other factors likely also influence procrastination behavior. Therefore, while self-efficacy is important, it may not be the sole determinant of procrastination tendencies.

## **Discussion**

The correlation analysis between self-efficacy and procrastination reveals interesting insights into the relationship between these two constructs. Self-efficacy refers to an individual's belief in their ability to accomplish tasks and achieve goals, while procrastination involves the delay or avoidance of tasks despite negative consequences.

The positive correlation coefficient of 0.150 indicates that there is a tendency for individuals with higher levels of self-efficacy to exhibit lower levels of procrastination. This finding aligns with theoretical expectations and prior research suggesting that individuals who are confident in their abilities are more likely to approach tasks proactively and manage their time effectively, thereby reducing the likelihood of procrastination.

However, it's important to note that the correlation is relatively weak, indicating that self-efficacy explains only a small portion of the variance in procrastination levels. This suggests that while self-efficacy plays a role in predicting procrastination tendencies, other factors likely contribute to procrastination behavior as well.

Possible factors influencing procrastination could include individual differences in motivation, task aversiveness, time management skills, personality traits, and environmental factors. For example, individuals with high self-efficacy may still procrastinate if they lack intrinsic motivation for a task or if they encounter external distractions that interfere with their ability to focus and complete tasks efficiently.

Therefore, while self-efficacy is an important factor in understanding and addressing procrastination, interventions aimed at reducing procrastination should consider a holistic approach that addresses multiple factors influencing procrastination behavior. This may include strategies to enhance self-efficacy, improve time management skills, increase motivation, and create a conducive environment for task completion.

## **Conclusions**

In conclusion, the findings highlight the significance of self-efficacy in predicting procrastination levels, as evidenced by the positive but weak correlation observed between the Generalized Self-Efficacy Scale and the Procrastination Scale. While individuals with higher levels of self-efficacy tend to procrastinate less, the relationship is not sufficiently robust to solely account for procrastination behavior. This underscores the multifaceted nature of



procrastination, influenced by various factors beyond self-efficacy, such as motivation, task aversiveness, and environmental factors. Nonetheless, the study emphasizes the importance of addressing self-efficacy beliefs in interventions aimed at reducing procrastination, suggesting that enhancing individuals' confidence in their abilities can contribute to mitigating procrastination tendencies. Overall, while self-efficacy plays a significant role, a comprehensive approach considering multiple determinants is essential in effectively addressing procrastination behaviour.

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