

Procrastination and Its Hold on Gen Z

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Abstract: *The present study, "Procrastination and Its Hold on Gen-Z", explores procrastination among Gen Z participants, with particular attention to academic stress and digital distractions. Procrastination refers to voluntarily delaying an intended task despite anticipating negative consequences. The study considers common procrastinated activities, reported reasons for delay, emotional experiences, digital-media distractions and perceived effects on academic or work performance. The document reports an illustrative sample of 100 participants and uses descriptive percentages to present response patterns. The reported findings suggest that procrastination is common, particularly for academic/work-related tasks, and is associated with social-media distraction, low motivation, boredom, task-related overwhelm and difficulty initiating tasks. Stress, guilt and anxiety were common reported experiences, while some participants described temporary relief after postponement. The study highlights that procrastination is multidimensional and may be addressed through realistic planning, task breakdown, emotional awareness and healthier digital habits.*

Keywords: Procrastination, Generation Z, academic stress, digital distraction, self-regulation, academic performance.

1. Introduction

Procrastination is the voluntary postponement of an intended task despite awareness that delay may lead to undesirable consequences. It is more complex than poor time management: individuals may intend to complete a task but avoid it when it feels difficult, boring, uncertain or emotionally uncomfortable. Avoidance may offer short-term relief, yet often increases pressure as deadlines approach.

Academic procrastination is common in student life, where assignments, examinations and projects require planning and sustained effort. Generation Z has grown up with widespread smartphone access, social media and continuous digital connectivity. These tools support learning and communication, but notifications and online entertainment can compete with sustained attention. Academic demands, fear of failure, perfectionism and low motivation may further contribute to task delay.

The present study examines procrastination as an interaction of behavioural, emotional, motivational and environmental factors. Steel (2007) describes procrastination as a self-regulatory failure, while Sirois and Pychyl (2013) explain how delaying a task may serve short-term mood repair. These perspectives help explain why immediate comfort can take priority over long-term goals.

2. Review of Literature

Steel (2007), in a meta-analytic and theoretical review, identified procrastination as a self-regulation problem linked to difficulties translating intentions into action. Tice and Baumeister (1997) examined procrastination over time and highlighted its relationship with performance and stress. Sirois and Pychyl (2013) proposed that procrastination can function as short-term mood regulation: people avoid an uncomfortable task to feel better immediately, even when the delay creates later difficulties. Steel and König (2006), through Temporal Motivation Theory, described motivation as influenced by expectancy, value, impulsiveness and delay;

tasks with distant rewards may be postponed in favour of immediately rewarding activities.

Together, these perspectives suggest that procrastination cannot be explained by laziness alone. Digital distractions, task aversion, low motivation, fear of failure, perfectionism and emotional avoidance may interact. The present study focuses on these factors in the everyday experiences of Generation Z. A limitation in the wider literature noted in the source document is the need for more context-specific research that examines psychological and digital influences together.

3. Aim, Objectives and Hypotheses

Aim

To examine procrastination among Generation Z and explore its association with academic stress and digital distractions.

Objectives

- 1) Assess reported levels of procrastination.
- 2) Identify commonly postponed activities and reasons for delay.
- 3) Examine the role of digital distractions.
- 4) Describe emotional experiences associated with procrastination.
- 5) Summarise perceived effects on academic/work performance.

Hypotheses

Hypotheses stated in the full project: academic procrastination will be significantly related to academic stress and digital distractions; these factors will significantly predict procrastination; and procrastination may differ across selected demographic groups such as gender and year of study. The descriptive results presented in the project do not provide inferential tests to establish these hypotheses.

4. Methodology

Research design: Quantitative, questionnaire-based descriptive approach, as described in the project. The report presents response frequencies and percentages to summarise participants' experiences.

Participants: The analysis chapter describes an illustrative sample of 100 Gen Z participants. The reported age distribution was 18–20 years (38%), 21–23 years (42%) and 24–26 years (20%). Because the original document labels this sample illustrative, these figures should not be presented as verified empirical data unless confirmed against the actual dataset.

Measures: The methodology chapter describes researcher-developed questionnaires: the Academic Procrastination Scale (APS-GZ), Academic Stress Scale (ASS-GZ), and Digital Distraction Scale (DDS-GZ), alongside demographic questions. The project outlines informed consent, voluntary participation, confidentiality, anonymity and secure data handling as ethical safeguards.

Analysis: Descriptive frequencies and percentages are used in the results chapter. Although the methodology discusses correlation, regression, t-tests, ANOVA and reliability analysis, numerical outputs for those inferential tests are not presented in the concise results section; therefore, no inferential conclusions are drawn here.

5. Results and Findings

Table 1: Reported overall level of procrastination

Level	Frequency	Percentage
Low	14	14%
Moderate	46	46%
High	32	32%
Very high	8	8%
Total	100	100%

The report indicates that 86% of the illustrative sample reported moderate, high or very high procrastination. Moderate procrastination was the largest category (46%).

Table 2: Commonly reported reasons for procrastination

Reason	Percentage
Social media/digital distractions	76%
Lack of motivation	68%
Task perceived as boring	67%
Feeling overwhelmed	61%
Difficulty initiating the task	59%
Poor time management	56%
Fear of failure	48%
Perfectionistic tendencies	43%

Digital distractions were the most frequently reported reason, followed by lack of motivation and boredom. Feeling overwhelmed and difficulty starting tasks were also prominent, suggesting that procrastination may involve emotional and motivational barriers as well as planning difficulties.

Table 3: Selected patterns and perceived consequences

Indicator	Reported result
Academic/work-related tasks postponed	72%
Frequently or sometimes distracted by social media while working	83%
Reported stress after procrastinating	71%
Reported guilt after procrastinating	64%
Reported anxiety after procrastinating	59%
Reported temporary relief after postponing a task	47%
Procrastination frequently or sometimes affected performance	77%
Sometimes or frequently worked at the last minute	86%

Academic/work-related tasks were the most commonly postponed activities. Many participants reported social-media distraction, last-minute work and perceived effects on performance. Stress, guilt and anxiety were common, while temporary relief may help maintain the avoidance cycle.

6. Discussion

The reported patterns are consistent with the view that procrastination is multidimensional. Social-media distraction may interrupt attention, while boredom, low motivation and task overwhelm can make starting difficult. These are self-reported associations and do not demonstrate that digital media directly causes procrastination.

The emotional findings are compatible with the short-term mood-regulation perspective described by Sirois and Pychyl (2013). Postponing a difficult task may briefly reduce discomfort; however, approaching deadlines can bring increased stress, guilt and rushed work. The reported impact on academic/work performance highlights the practical importance of supporting task initiation and sustained effort.

The results should be interpreted cautiously because the analysis chapter describes the sample as illustrative and reports mainly descriptive percentages. The findings cannot be generalised to all members of Generation Z, and causal claims or claims of statistical significance are not supported by the displayed results.

7. Conclusion

The concise review of the project suggests that procrastination among the Gen Z participants described in the report is associated with digital distraction, low motivation, boredom, feeling overwhelmed and difficulty initiating tasks. It is also linked in participants' reports with stress, guilt, anxiety, last-minute work and perceived effects on performance. Procrastination should therefore not be reduced to laziness or poor discipline alone. Understanding the emotional and contextual reasons for delay may help students develop more effective self-regulation.

8. Limitations and Implications

8.1 Limitations

The report presents an illustrative sample of 100 participants; the sample and percentages should be verified against original

collected data before formal submission. The results rely on self-report and descriptive summaries. The displayed analysis does not include inferential statistics needed to confirm relationships, prediction or group differences. The sample may not represent the wider Gen Z population.

8.2 Implications and Recommendations

Students can break large tasks into smaller steps, use a five-minute start, create realistic schedules and identify emotions that trigger avoidance. Disabling unnecessary notifications, keeping phones away during focused study and setting planned social-media breaks may reduce interruptions. Counsellors and educational institutions can address fear of failure, perfectionism, motivation and emotional regulation alongside study skills. Supportive, realistic expectations from families may also help.

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