

**UNDERSTANDING THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN FEAR OF FAILURE,
PROCRASTINATION AND SELF-ESTEEM AMONG COMPETITIVE EXAM
ASPIRANTS**

Dissertation submitted to Kerala University

In partial fulfilment of the requirements for the award of the Degree of

M. Sc. Counselling Psychology

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CERTIFICATE



This is to certify that the Dissertation entitled “**Understanding the relationship between fear of failure, procrastination and self – esteem among competitive aspirants**” is an authentic work carried out by Anupama M S, Reg. No. 60422115006 under the guidance of Dr. Ammu Lukose during the fourth semester of M.Sc. Counselling Psychology programme in the academic year 2022- 2024.

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DECLARATION

I, Anupama M S , do hereby declare that the dissertation titled **“Understanding the relationship between fear of failure, procrastination and self – esteem among competitive aspirants”**, submitted to the Department of Counselling Psychology, Loyola College of Social Sciences, Sreekariyam, under the supervision of Dr Ammu Lukose, Assistant professor of the Department of Counselling Psychology, for the award of the degree of Master’s in Science of Counselling Psychology, is a bonafide work carried out by me and no part thereof has been submitted for the award of any other degree in any University.

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to understand the relationships between fear of failure, procrastination and self-esteem among competitive exam aspirants. A total sample of 130 competitive exam aspirants was collected using the convenience sampling method. The sample consists of 40 male and 90 female participants, with ages ranging from 20 to 30 years. The participants are primarily those preparing for professional careers through exams such as the UPSC, bank exams, and SSC exams. The Performance Failure Appraisal Inventory (PFAI), The General Procrastination and Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale were used to collect data. Correlation was performed to investigate the relationship between fear of failure, procrastination and self-esteem.

Results show that Fear of failure has significant positive correlation with procrastination ($r=0.400$, $p<0.01$) and a significant negative correlation with self-esteem ($r= -0.523$, $p<0.01$). Procrastination has significant negative correlation with self-esteem ($r= -0.453$, $p<0.01$). There is a statistically significant gender difference in fear of failure, with female scoring higher than male. There are no statistically significant gender differences in Procrastination and self-esteem. There are no statistically significant differences in Fear of Failure, Procrastination and Self-Esteem among participants preparing for different types of exams.

This study highlights how the fear of failure can negatively impact aspirants' mental health, potentially leading to anxiety, stress, and reduced self-esteem. Recognizing this can help educators and mental health professionals develop targeted interventions to reduce this fear. The relationship between procrastination and low self-esteem suggests that aspirants might delay tasks because they doubt their abilities. This could create a cycle of procrastination, further lowering self-esteem and

increasing fear of failure. Addressing procrastination through counselling or time-management training could be crucial.

Key words: Fear of failure, Procrastination, self-esteem, competitive exam aspirants

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Today we live in a society that emphasizes greatly on achievements and puts down students who fail. Everyone seems to be in a race for being better than other. No student is left out of the competition. Competitive exams have become a ubiquitous part of the education system, particularly in countries like India, where they play a crucial role in determining academic and professional success. While these exams are designed to offer equal opportunities and assess merit, they often contribute to heightened pressure, stress, and anxiety among students(Gull et al,2023). Aspirants commonly face challenges such as fear of failure, procrastination, and low self-esteem, all of which can adversely impact their performance. Understanding the relationship between these psychological factors and their effects on students' outcomes is essential for addressing these issues effectively.

Fear of failure is the avoidant motive which is a disposition to avoid the temporary cognitive, and emotional stimuli threats, and feeling anxiety, shame, or humiliation as a result of failure in achievement contexts (Atkinson & Feather, 1966; Atkinson, 1957; Cacciotti, 2015; Conroy et al, 2003). A person can feel anxiety when they are not able to reach their goals set by themselves. Depending on the particular details of the achievement contexts one's level of fear of failure changes. Fear of failure is an emotional and cognitive reaction often experienced not only in academic settings but in other contexts as well. The primary concern for those experiencing fear of failure is the possibility of failing at a task in the future (Mahone, 1960). This concern is more salient than the desire to potentially approach success.

Self-worth theory provides an interesting perspective on the role of fear of failure. This theory posits individuals' desire for self-acceptance can bring about an approach orientation toward success or an avoidance orientation away from failure. Threats to self-worth are dealt with in primarily two manners: defensive pessimism and self-handicapping. Defensive pessimism signifies holding low expectations for oneself to avoid feelings of anxiety or disappointment whereas self-handicapping signifies devising situations or behaviors counterproductive to a goal in order to later consider these factors excuses should failure occur. The latter strategy is especially relevant to procrastination since the act of procrastination itself can be interpreted as a self-handicapping strategy. Individuals may consciously or unconsciously procrastinate so that, in the event they fail at a task, they can blame their failure on not having committed enough time to prepare for the task rather than on their own abilities. Indeed, cross-cultural research reveals a relationship between fear of failure and maladaptive self-handicapping strategies, such as Procrastination, especially when firm achievement goals are not present (De Castella, Byrne, & Covington, 2013)

Additionally, fear of failure may be understandable in the scope of temporal Motivation theory. This theory posits there are five elements one considers when Pursuing a goal: time, expectancy, value, reinforcement, and punishment. According to This theory, each of these considerations interact with one another. Those goals that lead To the most motivation are those that are temporally near and for which someone has a High chance of success (i.e., expectancy). This is characterized by an outcome that is Valuable and reinforcing (Steel & König, 2006). Temporal motivation theory can be Interpreted as being a theory of motivation for goal-pursuit that balances predicted costs And benefits of pursuit. Fear of failure is considered a factor that adds to the predicted Costs of pursuing a goal because of the personal cost of possibly failing (Zarick

& Stonebraker, 2009). Fear of failure reduces the value and reinforcement-related properties of a goal and adds an immediate sense of punishment when one thinks of or attempts to Pursue a goal. This punishment takes the form of anxiety or fear related to failing and the Intrinsic and extrinsic consequences of failure.

Fear of failure has been suggested as leading to procrastination. Research has Found that procrastination can be predicted on the basis of low self-reported feelings of hope and high fear of failure but not on the basis of low hope and high task-evasiveness (Alexander & Onwuegbuzie, 2007)

Procrastination is extremely prevalent and is Widespread in the general population (Steel, 2007). Virtually all of us dallied with dallying. Several studies have linked procrastination to Individual's performance, with procrastinator Performing poorly overall (Steel et al., 2001) And also to individual's well-being, with the Procrastinator being more miserable in the long term (Lay and Schouwenburg, 1993). Procrastination has also been labelled as a Troubling and dangerous phenomenon (Steel, 2007).

Procrastination is the purposeful delay of the start or completion of a task (Solomon and Rothblum, 1984). Procrastination is even Considered to be an irrational delay of behavior Towards an intended course of action despite Expecting to be worse off caused by the delay. Procrastination is considered a disease and it is Considered to be chronic or dysfunctional when such a behavior disrupts everyday functioning By impinging on ability to work (McCown and Johnson, 1991). Consequently, procrastination May result in psychological and physical Discomfort. There are many reasons associated with Why students procrastinate (Solomon and Rothblum, 1984). Most reasons were related to Fear of failure in relation to performance anxiety, Perfectionism and lack of self confidence, self esteem.

Motivational factors have also been found to contribute to the problem of academic Procrastination. Senecal et al. (1995) have suggested that academic procrastination is a Motivational problem whereby procrastinators are difficult to motivate and are likely to put off doing assignments and studying for exams until at the last minute (Tuckman, 1998). This suggests that the way students regulate their behavior can have a strong effect on academic outcomes. Self regulation concerns the way individual make use of internal and external cues to determine when to initiate, to maintain and to terminate their goal directed action. According to Rakes and Dun (2010) as intrinsic motivation to learn and effort regulation decreases procrastination increases.

Researchers have suggested that procrastination is an outcome that may be associated with self regulation styles in academic domain. Self regulation can have a power effect on academic outcomes such as persistence, performance learning and affect (Senecal et al., 1995; Vallerand et al., 1992).

Self-esteem pertains to an individual's personal assessment of their own value (Rosenberg, 1965). College-based studies have consistently demonstrated a connection between higher levels of procrastination and diminished self-esteem through both correlation and experimental research (Tice & Baumeister, 1997; Ferrari, 2000). Flett et al. (1992) proposed that this association arises from the recurrent failure to meet personal standards due to unnecessary delays, gradually eroding one's self-perception. The inability to accomplish goals promptly despite intentions leads to feelings of inadequacy. Research also suggests a reverse effect, where lower pre-existing self-esteem predicts an increase in procrastination, implying a potential bidirectional relationship (Ferrari, 1991; Burka & Yuen, 2008).

Self-esteem and self-worth take a major hit during the preparation of competitive exams. It can significantly impact an aspirant's Self-esteem and self-worth. Those who can perform well

while preparing will have a boost in their confidence and self-esteem. While people who are not able to meet their expectations may experience a decline in their worth. (Gupta & Cherian, 2024). The degree to which the qualities and characteristics contained in one's self-concept are perceived to be positive. It reflects a person's Physical self-image, view of their accomplishments and capabilities, and values and perceived success in living up to them, as well as the ways in which others view and respond to that person. (APA DICTIONARY). The more positive the cumulative perception of these qualities and characteristics, the higher one's self-esteem. A reasonably high degree of self-esteem is considered an important ingredient of mental health, whereas low self-esteem and feelings of worthlessness are common depressive symptoms (Gupta & Cherian, 2024).

The self-esteem of entrance exam aspirants can be influenced by various factors: The amount of preparation we have for the entrance exam can impact our self-esteem. Aspirants who are prepared have a higher self-esteem that does not feel unprepared, Past academic achievements or failures also affect our self-esteem. Individuals who have a high track record will have a higher self-esteem than people who have a history of academic failure, Supportive family members, peers, teachers positively motivate us which influences our self-esteem. Getting validation, support and reassurance from these individuals can and they do boost our confidence levels, Aspirants often face comparison between their capabilities and their peers, this usually leads to diminished levels of self-esteem, Feeling of immense pressure to excel and fear of failure can affect the aspirant's self-esteem. An aspirant's belief in their own ability to succeed has a major influence on their self-esteem. Higher levels of self-efficacy are associated usually with higher self-esteem (Gupta & Cherian, 2024).

Social comparison theory: It was developed by Leon Festinger in 1954. The theory says that individuals determine Their own worth, be it social and personal worth. Aspirants may

compare their worth and performance to others which can lower Self-esteem. (Kendra Cherry,2022)

Fear of failure and self-esteem can indeed be predictors of academic procrastination. Fear of failure refers to the Apprehension or anxiety individuals experience when faced with the possibility of not meeting their own or others' Expectations. In an academic context, this fear can arise from the fear of receiving a poor grade, disappointing Oneself or others, or experiencing a setback in one's academic goals. When individuals are afraid of failure, they may engage in avoidance behaviors, such as procrastination, as a means to protect themselves from potential failure. Procrastination allows them to delay the task and avoid the risk of failing. In same way self-esteem refers to an Individual's evaluation of their self-worth or personal value. It is closely tied to their beliefs and perceptions about Their capabilities and competence. Low self-esteem can contribute to academic procrastination because individuals May doubt their ability to successfully complete a task or achieve academic success. This self-doubt can lead to a Lack of motivation, increased anxiety, and a tendency to delay tasks, as individuals may believe that they are not Good enough to meet the demands of the task (Begum, 2023).

Fear of failure can lower self-esteem when individuals consistently fear failure or have experienced past Failures, it can negatively impact their self-esteem. They may internalize these failures and develop a belief that They are not capable or competent enough to succeed. This diminished self-esteem can then contribute to academic Procrastination. Low self-esteem can lead to fear of failure and procrastination: Individuals with low self-esteem May constantly worry about their performance and the possibility of failure. This fear of failure can be paralyzing, Causing them to delay tasks or avoid them altogether. Procrastination becomes a coping mechanism to

protect their Self-esteem by avoiding situations that may threaten their perceived competence (Begum, 2023).

This study aims to investigate the relationship between psychological factors such as fear of failure, procrastination, and self-esteem among competitive exam aspirants, and how these factors impact their psychological well-being and academic performance. It aims to explore how fear of failure may lead to increased procrastination, lower self-esteem, and consequently affect an aspirant's mental health and academic outcomes. Understanding these connections can provide insights into how psychological challenges influence performance in high-stakes academic environments and help in developing strategies to improve both well-being and achievement among students.

Need and Significance of the study

This study aims to address important gaps in understanding the relationships between procrastination, self-esteem, and fear of failure among aspirants preparing for competitive exams, particularly those pursuing professional careers. The number of competitive exam aspirants is steadily increasing each year, leading to heightened levels of pressure and stress, especially in exams like the UPSC and other professional career entrance exams. Aspirants commonly face psychological challenges such as fear of failure, procrastination, and low self-esteem, all of which can adversely impact their performance. Despite the prevalence of these issues, there is a significant lack of studies focused specifically on competitive exam aspirants and the challenges they encounter. Addressing these gaps is essential for developing targeted interventions to support students effectively.

Procrastination is a widespread problem among students, and its impact on exam performance is particularly notable. Students often delay their preparation due to various factors, which can lead to suboptimal outcomes. This may shed light on Procrastination dynamics, building on cognitive models that emphasize failure to meet Personal standards (Flett et al., 1992). Additionally, the fear of failure is a common issue that can significantly undermine a student's confidence and motivation. This fear often leads to decreased self-esteem, which can have long-term consequences for both mental health and overall well-being. Understanding how these factors interplay is crucial for identifying ways to lighten their negative effects.

While some research has been conducted on fear of failure, procrastination, and self-esteem, more studies are needed to explore the specific dynamics of these psychological variables among competitive exam aspirants. This study will contribute to the existing body of knowledge by examining the relationships between fear of failure, procrastination, and self-esteem in this unique context.

Statement of the problem

The problem of the present study has been stated as “Understanding the relationships between fear of failure, procrastination and self-esteem among competitive exam aspirants”.

Operational definitions of key terms

Fear of failure

In the present study, fear of failure is the persistent and irrational anxiety about failing to measure up to the standards and goals set by oneself or others.

Procrastination

In the present study, procrastination refers to individuals who tend to delay a particular task even though it has a potential Negative impact.

Self-esteem

In the present study, self-esteem is a subjective assessment of one's own worth based on a collection of thoughts and Feelings.

Competitive Exam aspirants

Students preparing for competitive exams, especially those aiming for professional careers through UPSC, bank exams, and SSC exams.

Objectives of the study**Primary objectives**

- To understand the relationship between fear of failure and procrastination among competitive exam aspirants.
- To understand the relationship between fear of failure and self- esteem among competitive exam aspirants.
- To understand the relationship between procrastination and self-esteem among competitive exam aspirants.

Secondary objectives

- To assess fear of failure among competitive exam aspirants

- To assess procrastination among competitive exam aspirants
- To assess self-esteem among competitive exam aspirants.
- To assess the gender difference on fear of failure, procrastination and self esteem
- To assess the effect of exam type on fear of failure, procrastination and self esteem

Hypothesis of the study

- There will be a significant positive relationship between fear of failure and procrastination among competitive exam aspirants
- There will be a significant negative relationship between self-esteem and fear of failure among competitive exam aspirants
- There will be a significant negative relationship between self-esteem and procrastination among competitive exam aspirants

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

A systematic examination of a body of data already in existence that identifies, assesses, and synthesises for clear presentation is/ referred to as a literature review (Fink, 2010). According to Jesson, et al., (2011), a literature review is a critical analysis and evaluation of a subject. This chapter has been discussed under two major headings i.e. Theoretical Review and Empirical Review of literature. The theoretical review explores various conceptual Frameworks and models of the variables and the empirical review entails various empirical Studies conducted by other researchers which are related to the current research. Therefore, The existing literature has been reviewed to understand the concepts and associations of the Variables of interest.

Theoretical review

To understand the variables it is necessary to review theoretical perspectives associated with the variables. In this section conceptual framework and various theories propounded by researchers in the line of study of the current research variables, are reviewed.

Fear of failure

Fear of failure is an avoidance-based motive disposition in the achievement domain. Specifically, following the pioneering work of Murray (1938) and Atkinson (1957), fear of failure is defined as the dispositional tendency to orient toward and to seek to avoid failure in achievement settings because one feels shame on failure. It is not failure per se that is feared and avoided but the shame that accompanies failure (Atkinson, 1957; Birney et al., 1969). Thus, a clear

understanding of the Fear of failure construct necessitates consideration of the dynamics of the shame experience.

Atkinson's fear of failure theory

Atkinson's Fear of Failure Theory (1964) proposes that fear of failure is a primary motivator for individuals, leading to avoidance behaviours and decreased performance. The theory states that: Fear of failure is a fundamental human motive, equal in importance to the need for achievement, Fear of failure arises from the anxiety or apprehension associated with not meeting expectations, fear of defeat, or fear of not being able to cope, Fear of failure leads to avoidance behaviors, such as procrastination, escape, or withdrawal, to avoid the perceived risk of failure, The strength of the fear of failure motive varies among individuals, with some experiencing intense fear and others little to no fear, Fear of failure can be either facilitative (motivating) or debilitating (hindering), depending on the individual's perceived ability to cope with the task.

Atkinson's theory identifies three types of individuals based on their fear of failure and need for achievement, Success-oriented it is that high need for achievement, low fear of failure (motivated to succeed), Failure-avoidant it is that high fear of failure, low need for achievement (motivated to avoid failure), Failure-acceptant it is That low fear of failure, low need for achievement (indifferent to success or failure). Atkinson's Fear of Failure Theory has implications for that Motivation: Understanding fear of failure can help individuals and organizations promote motivation and performance, Learning: Recognizing fear of failure can aid in developing strategies to enhance learning and skill development, Performance: Addressing fear of failure can improve performance by reducing avoidance behaviours and increasing resilience. By understanding

Atkinson's Fear of Failure Theory, individuals and organizations can develop strategies to manage fear of failure, promote motivation, and enhance performance.

Self-worth theory

The self-worth theory of achievement motivation (Covington & Beery, 1976; Covington, 1984) assumes that the highest human priority is the search for self-acceptance and that "one's worth often comes to depend on the ability to achieve competitively" (Covington, 1998). In our society there is a pervasive tendency to equate accomplishment with human value—put simply, individuals are thought to be only as worthy as their achievements. Because of this, it is understandable that students often confuse ability with worth....In essence, then, self-worth theory holds that, psychologically speaking, school achievement is best understood in terms of maintaining a positive self-image of one's ability, particularly when risking competitive failure. (Covington, 1998).

From Covington's explanation of the interplay between human value and accomplishment we gain the perspective that two factors, achievement and ability, dominate as the ultimate value in the minds of many school children, and that this perspective likely carries into adulthood. The self-worth model emphasizes feelings of worthlessness that arise from "the disclosure of incompetency" (Covington, 1984). The four main elements of this model are (a) ability, (b) effort, (c) performance, and (d) self worth, arranged in a causal structure as shown in Covington (1984). In this model ability represents one's self-perception of ability. His model is a directed graph in which ability, performance and effort are linked to self-worth and ability and effort are also linked to performance.

The model also shows the direct and indirect influences of self perceptions of ability and the expenditure of effort on one's sense of worth. "Mere perception of high ability can sometimes come to imply worthiness, even in the absence of solid accomplishments" (Covington, 1984), however, "it is within [the instrumental linkage of ability -> performance -> worth] that the value of ability ultimately resides, since typically an individual's sense of worth cannot long rest solely on a reputation for intelligence". Thus, what really counts is achievement and "ability is valued as its chief causal agent".

Achievement goal theory

Achievement Goal Theory (AGT), developed by John Nicholls in 1984, explains how individuals' goal orientations influence their motivation, behaviour, and achievement in competitive and challenging situations. Nicholls' AGT proposes two main goal orientations that are task orientation (Mastery Goal), it is focus on learning, improvement, and mastery of a task, emphasize effort, progress, and understanding. And View challenges as opportunities for growth. Ego Orientation (Performance Goal), it is focus on demonstrating ability, competing with others, and achieving high grades or recognition, Emphasize success, achievement, and outperforming others, and View challenges as threats to ego or self-worth.

Nicholls' AGT also identifies two subtypes of ego orientation, High Ego Orientation: High need to demonstrate ability and outperform others, Low Ego Orientation: Low need to demonstrate ability and outperform others. Implications of Nicholls' AGT task orientation leads to Increased intrinsic motivation and interest, Better adaptability and resilience and Improved learning and performance. And Ego orientation can lead to Higher levels of anxiety and stress, Decreased intrinsic motivation and interests and Overemphasis on grades and recognition. By understanding Nicholls' Achievement Goal Theory, educators, coaches, and individuals can Foster a task-oriented

approach to promote deep learning and intrinsic motivation, Emphasize effort and progress over achievement and recognition Encourage a growth mind-set and a love for learning and Reduce anxiety and stress by focusing on mastery and progress.

Procrastination

In terms of early origins, procrastination was first mentioned by ancient Greek philosophers Such as Socrates, but empirical research on the topic was lacking (Steel, 2010). From the 1900s to the 1930s, psychoanalysis connected procrastination to underlying conflicts Between the id and ego (Ferrari et al., 2005. Research during the 1950s and 1960s centred on Procrastination as a result of deficient learning of time management behaviours through Reinforcement called the era of behaviourism. (Solomon & Rothblum, 1984). Starting from the 1970s and 1980s, cognitive models explained procrastination by focusing on issues like Low self-efficacy and irrational beliefs (Ellis & Knaus, 1977; Bandura, 1997; Steel, 2010).

The psychodynamic approach

The psychodynamic approach regards procrastination as an unconscious defence Mechanism in response to suppressed emotions or internal conflicts (Ferrari et al., 1995). This behaviour of postponing tasks allows the individual to temporarily avoid confronting deeper concerns that trigger anxiety or negative emotions (Pychyl & Flett, 2012). The Fundamental elements of the psychodynamic standpoint include:

Procrastination serves as a strategy to handle anxiety and gain a feeling of dominance over threatening situations (Burka & Yuen, 2008). Engaging in certain tasks can lead to performance-related anxiety, self-doubts, or fears of failure, prompting a delay that temporarily reduces this anxiety. It can be an act of rebellion against figures of authority. By Procrastinating tasks imposed by others, the procrastinator asserts their independence and Autonomy (Ferrari, 2010). However, this results in not completing the task as intended.

Procrastination reflects an internal state of uncertainty and conflicts (Blatt & Quinlan, 1967). A part of the individual desires to accomplish the task, while another Unconscious part resists and opposes it. This is similar to the concept of cognitive distortion. The outcome is procrastination. Psychoanalysis endeavours to unearth the unconscious Sources of procrastination through techniques such as free association, dream analysis, and Assessment of defense mechanisms (Ferrari et al., 1995). The objective is to enhance self-awareness Regarding the origins of procrastination. On the whole, the psychodynamic Perspective underscores procrastination as a maladaptive coping mechanism in reaction to underlying emotional stresses and conflicts that demands therapeutic investigation and Resolution.

The temporal motivation theory

The temporal motivation theory is a contemporary and substantial explanation for Procrastination. From this standpoint, procrastination primarily results from difficulties in Effectively managing motivation over time (Steel & Klingsieck, 2016).

Core elements of the temporal motivation theory encompass:

Procrastination is driven by decisions based on timing rather than the inherent value of tasks (Steel, 2007). Procrastinators are more influenced by the closeness of the task than their

overall importance. Individuals who procrastinate face challenges in maintaining motivation across time, often favoring immediate gratification over long-term goals (Sirois & Pychyl, 2013). Procrastination originates from impulsiveness and struggles in delaying rewards. Procrastinators seek instant gratification while struggling to align present actions with future objectives (Gustavson et al., 2014).

An imbalance exists between two systems: the limbic system, which seeks immediate rewards, and the prefrontal cortex, responsible for executive functions such as planning and self-regulation (Sirois & Pychyl, 2016). Interventions based on this theory emphasize enhancing time management, minimizing distractions, using implementation intentions, and Employing commitment strategies to prevent opportunities for procrastination (Rozenal & Carlbring, 2014).

Cognitive Theories of Procrastination

Procrastination arises from adopting irrational beliefs about oneself and the world, including Extreme perfectionism (Ellis & Knaus, 1977). Holding irrational thoughts prompts the avoidance of tasks that induce feelings of inadequacy. (Pychyl & Flett, 2012). Secondly, Procrastination is associated with diminished self-efficacy in terms of task accomplishment (Bandura, 1997). Individuals with low self-efficacy delay task initiation due to doubts about their competence (Ferrari, 1992). Self-esteem and self-efficacy are connected according to some theories (Joy, Kevin & Jayesh, Sanjaly & G., Nimy. (2020). Procrastination roots in chronic indecision and anxiety linked to making accurate choices (Effert & Ferrari, 1989). Procrastinators avoid task execution by postponing decisions on how to proceed.

Procrastinators miscalculate time, underestimating task duration (Buehler et al., 2010). This leads to deferring tasks seen as manageable at a later time. This theoretical notion is similar

to temporal motivation theory. In essence, cognitive viewpoints attribute procrastination to flawed thinking patterns, irrational beliefs, deficient self-efficacy, and imprecise time assessments. The primary focus involves recognizing and rectifying inaccurate cognitions through methods such as cognitive behavioural therapy.

Self esteem

The concept of self-esteem began to emerge during the 1890s in philosophy, as seen in William James' exploration of self-worth (James, 1890). Sigmund Freud introduced the idea that self-esteem is influenced by childhood experiences, particularly parental evaluations and the satisfaction of id-driven urges (Bibring, 1953). During the 1950s and 1960s, humanistic Psychologists, including Carl Rogers, highlighted self-esteem as a fundamental aspect of healthy psychological functioning (Rogers, 1951).

By the 1970s, self-esteem gained prominence as a social concern associated with various issues, prompting empirical investigations (Wells & Marwell, 1976). The development of reliable measurement tools like the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale marked a significant step, enabling quantitative research (Rosenberg, 1965). Current studies delve into the developmental trajectory of self-esteem, its constituent elements, stability, and connections with psychological outcomes (Orth & Robins, 2014)

The terror management theory

This theory suggests that human behavior and culture stem from the Existential necessity to cope with the overwhelming fear triggered by awareness of vulnerability and mortality (Greenberg, Pyszczynski, & Solomon, 1986). Humans employ Self-esteem as tools to alleviate the

anxiety surrounding death by offering significance, value, and a sense of literal or symbolic immortality (Pyszczynski, Greenberg, & Solomon, 1999). Reminders of mortality (mortality salience) enhance the defense of cultural worldviews and the pursuit of self-esteem as mechanisms for managing terror (Burke, Martens, & Faucher, 2010). Terror management contributes to favouritism towards in-groups, bias against outsiders challenging worldviews, and even violence in support of cultural values (Weise et al., 2008). In essence, terror management theory proposes that the distinct human Consciousness of mortality shapes much of human behavior through mechanisms that alleviate terror (Solomon, Greenberg, & Pyszczynski, 2015).

Attachment theory

It suggests that early bonding interactions with primary caregivers play a pivotal role in shaping self-esteem and patterns of relating across an individual's life span (Bowlby, 1988). During childhood, children internalize the responses of their caregivers to their needs, forming mental frameworks of self-worth and expectations of others (Bretherton & Munholland, 2008).

Children who develop secure attachments tend to cultivate higher self-esteem due to caregivers who are responsive and make them feel valued (Cassidy, 1988). Children who have caregivers exhibiting inconsistent, neglectful, or rejecting behaviours face the risk of forming insecure attachments and experiencing diminished self-esteem (Ainsworth, 1979). Insecure attachment patterns established during childhood, such as preoccupied or fearful styles, tend to persist into adulthood and contribute to difficulties in regulating self-esteem (Lee & Hankin, 2009). Changes in state self-esteem mirror the process of attachment figure availability and the restoration of the attachment bond (Gillath et al., 2016).

The Self-Discrepancy Theory

This theory suggests that incongruences among various domains of one's self can result in emotional discomfort and a decrease in self-esteem (Higgins, 1987). The theory distinguishes between the actual self (an individual's perception of their attributes), The ideal self (aspirations and desires), and the ought self (sense of responsibilities and Duties) (Higgins, 1987).

Disparities between the actual and ideal selves signify the absence of positive outcomes, leading to emotions associated with dejection, such as sadness (Higgins, Bond, Klein, & Strauman, 1986). Ought-actual disparities indicate the presence of negative outcomes, triggering emotions related to agitation, such as anxiety (Higgins, 1987).

A greater perceived discrepancy between the actual self and self-guides (ideal/ought) is linked to lower levels of state self-esteem (Hardin & Lakin, 2009). Self-discrepancies are connected to psychological disorders like depression, revealing malfunctioning self-evaluation processes (Fairbrother & Moretti, 1998). In summary, Self-Discrepancy Theory posits that disparities among different aspects of self-concept can detrimentally affect self-esteem and induce psychological distress (Higgins, 1989). Intervention may involve aligning perceptions of the actual self with the ideal/ought self-guides.

Empirical review

Begum (2023) investigated the role of fear of failure and different aspects of self-esteem (positivity, openness, competence, humility, self-worth, and learning orientation) in relation to academic procrastination. The primary data was collected from a sample of 200 students (96 males and 104 females) from St. John's College, Agra. The students were selected using random cluster

multistage sampling, and their age ranged from 17 to 25 years. The study utilized three scales for data collection: the Academic Procrastination Scale by Gupta and Bashir (2018), the Performance Failure Appraisal Inventory by Conroy (2003), and the Self-Esteem Scale by Dhar and Dhar (2015). The collected data was then analyzed using t-tests, Pearson correlations, and linear regression in SPSS-22. The results of the t-tests indicated significant differences between male and female students in terms of academic procrastination, self-worth, and fear of failure. Male students scored higher than female students in Academic procrastination, while female students scored higher in fear of failure and self-worth compared to male students. The Pearson correlation analysis revealed a positive correlation between fear of failure and academic procrastination, and a negative association between the different subscales of self-esteem and academic procrastination. Furthermore, the linear regression analyses indicated that fear of failure and self-worth were predictors of academic procrastination among college students. In summary, this study explored the relationship between fear of failure, self-esteem, and academic procrastination. The findings suggest that fear of failure and low self-worth are associated with higher levels of academic procrastination among college students.

Tan & Prihadi (2021) Conducted study aimed to investigate whether expectancy-value model of achievement choice mediates the relationship between fear of failure (FOF) and academic procrastination (AP) among undergraduate students of Psychology Department at a private university in Malaysia. Based on the Krejcie-Morgan Table and G*Power, 102 undergraduate students (aged 18-24) who enrolled in core subjects were recruited to represent the population via snowball sampling method. PROCESS macro for SPSS was utilized to perform the Bootstrap analysis with 5,000 sampling at 95% confidence interval to test the mediation hypothesis. Results

showed a significant positive total effect of FOF on AP and significant negative direct effect of expectancy-value model on academic procrastination, supporting the hypothesis for path c and path b. However, no significant direct effect was found between FOF and expectancy-value model. Mediation did not occur, therefore FOF is still considered a robust and significant predictor of AP among the population of psychology students in the aforementioned University. Furthermore, the results suggested that the aforementioned link did not significantly occur among the first-year students.

Fatimah & Lukman et. al (2011) Conducted research aimed to look at procrastination in students. A set of questionnaires was distributed to 126 students for data collection. Data were then analysed with t-test to see the difference between the variables in relation to gender and ethnicity. Pearson correlation was used to test the relationship between the variables. Results from the t-test showed no significant differences in all variables among subjects of different gender. However, for ethnicity t-test showed a significant difference in competence expectancy, intrinsic motivation, and fear of failure. Meanwhile there were significant negative correlations between procrastination and competence expectancy and intrinsic motivation. Also, there was a positive significant correlation between procrastination and fear of failure. In conclusion, findings showed that procrastination could be mainly related to fear of failure which can be lessened by their competence expectancy and their intrinsic motivation.

Anoita & Tiatri et. al (2020) conducted study aims to find out whether there is a relationship between fear of failure and student academic achievement, with procrastination as the mediating

variable. The Subjects of this study were 52 people consisting of 37 female subjects (71.2%) and 15 male subjects (28.8%). Used quantitative method in a non-experimental form with survey as data collection technique. This research is a form of quantitative research with correlational research method, because researchers want to see the relationship between variables in research. The variables studied in this study were fear of failure and academic achievement of students mediated by procrastination. Participants in this study have an age range of 20 to 24 years. Based on the results obtained, the most subjects were 21 years old, as many as 26 participants (50%). The results of this study indicate that procrastination does not mediate the relationship between fear of failure and student academic achievement.

Gupta & Cherian (2024) conducted study aims to investigate the relationship between self-esteem, coping mechanisms, and anxiety levels of competitive Exam aspirants among young adults. A random sampling method was employed to select 200 participants aged between 17 to 40 From the Delhi National Capital Region (NCR). The sample comprised 83 males and 116 females, with an average age of 22.7 years. Data collection was conducted using the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (RSES) to assess self-esteem, the Beck Anxiety Inventory (BAI) was used to assess the levels of anxiety and the Brief Cope Scale was used to measure the different levels of coping Mechanisms used. The research design adopted was correlational, employing correlation and t-test to examine the relationships between variables. These findings provide valuable insight about the levels of anxiety the aspirants face, self-esteem issues related to themselves and their ability to believe in themselves, and coping mechanisms employed by aspirants to deal with competitive Examinations.

Pandey et. al (2022) conducted a study on “Relationship between Procrastination and Self-esteem amongst Social Media Users.” The aim of the study is to explore the connection between procrastination and self-esteem among social media users. The sample for the study consists of participants aged 16 to 60 years who are habitual procrastinators. The research employs a qualitative and exploratory approach. The study investigates the hypothesis that there exists an inversely proportional relationship between self-esteem and procrastination. A survey was conducted with 151 respondents, with no gender distinction, primarily drawn from Delhi-NCR, who are regular social media users. The study utilized a closed-ended questionnaire to collect data. The research also considers various media platforms and their influence on social media users. The secondary data is obtained from sources such as research papers, books, articles, and NGO reports. Research finds out that social media has a very strong impact on the self-esteem of individuals and procrastination shows a big impact on individual performance at the workplace.

The study titled "Procrastination, Self-esteem, Academic Performance, and Well-being: A Moderated Mediation Model," authored by Erdinç Duru and Murat Balkis, was published in the International Journal of educational Psychology, Volume 6, Issue 2, in June 2017. The aim of the research was to investigate the interconnected effects of procrastination, self-esteem, and academic performance on well-being in a sample of Turkish undergraduate students (N = 348). The study used a moderated mediation model to examine these relationships. The researchers aimed to understand how procrastination and self-esteem impact well-being, and how academic performance might moderate these effects. The data was collected through surveys and scales, including the Tuckman Procrastination Scale, Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale, Academic Life Satisfaction Scale, and Positive and Negative Affect Schedule. Results confirm prior evidence

suggesting that Procrastination and self-esteem were important predictors of well-being. Results also indicated that both procrastination and academic performance have direct and interactive effects on self-esteem. Self-esteem mediated the relationships between Procrastination and well-being. Furthermore, the indirect effect of procrastination on Well-being via mediation of self-esteem may vary depending on academic Performance.

Pahlavani et. al (2015) studied the relationship between self-esteem with Procrastination and self-efficacy among employers of Professional and technical Organization of Zahedan. This study is a description of correlation which statistical society of this research include all the employers of Professional and technical Organization of Zahedan and the Sample volume was selected to be 217 persons on the basis of Morgan table by the method of random sampling for collecting data, the self-esteem, procrastination, self- efficacy beliefs were used. For analysing data, the pearson correlation factor, step by step regression test used. The result of Pearson correlation factor showed that there is a negative and meaningful correlation between total grades of self-esteem and self-control, organization, advance motivations and total grades of procrastination, but there was a positive and meaningful correlation between self-esteem grades and distraction. But there was not meaningful correlation between impulsivity and self-esteem. Also the correlation between self-esteem and self – efficacy was positive and meaningful. The result of step by step regression showed that self-control subscale amounts to 20.1%, distraction subscale amounting to 3.8% and total grades of procrastination amounting to 2.2% distinguished the variances for self-esteem grades. If the rest of subscales of procrastination do not have conditions for entering the regression equation and deleted from equation. The result of simple

linear regression showed that self-efficacy grades amounting to 34.7% distinguished the variance for self-esteem.

UMMET (2014) Conducted a study to examine college students' self-esteem according to the satisfaction of their basic Psychological needs and some certain variances. The sample of the study consisted of 342 students studying in college. The data was collected through Coopersmith Self Esteem Inventory, Basic Psychological Needs Scale and an information form developed by the researcher. When the obtained data was examined, it was found that the satisfaction of autonomy and relatedness needs of the students significantly predicted their self-esteem, while the satisfaction of competence need did not predict self-esteem. Also, self-esteem of the students showed significant difference as to educational level of mother, income level and perceived parent attitudes by them, whereas educational level of father and gender did not have effect on self-esteem.

Balkis & Duru (2012) Conducted a study to investigate the direct and indirect role of self-esteem and procrastination in the relation between fear of failure and self-worth. The participants were 279 students who study different major fields at the Faculty of Education in Pamukkale University. Age range varied from 19 to 34. In this study, Tuckman Procrastination inventory, Rosenberg Self Esteem Inventory, Activate and Success Based Self Worth Scale, concern over Mistakes Scale and Personal Information Sheet were used to gather data. Results showed that procrastination had partial mediating effect in relation to fear of failure; performance based self worth, and self worth vulnerability. In other words, the effect of fear of failure on the performance

based self worth and self worth vulnerability was decreased when procrastination was added the equation. The results also showed that self esteem had partial mediating role in relation to fear of failure- procrastination, fear of failure- performance based self worth, and self worth vulnerability. In other words, the effect of fear of failure on the procrastination, performance based self worth, and self worth vulnerability was reduced, when self esteem was added the equation. Finally, Results showed that self esteem had full mediating role in the relation to procrastination; Performance based self worth, and self worth vulnerability.

Amjad & Irshad et. al (2018) Conducted a study to determine the relationship between competition anxiety and fear of failure among sportsmen and sportswomen. It was a descriptive observational study, conducted from February 2012 to January 2013, consisting of athletes from public and private sector colleges and universities of District Peshawar, Mardan and Nowshera. Sports competition Anxiety Test (SCAT) and Performance Fear Appraisal Inventory (PFAI) were used. T-test was used to assess the gender differences of competition anxiety and fear of failure. P value <0.05 was considered significant. The sample consisted of 200 athletes, 100 males and 100 females. The mean age of the sample was 22.43 ± 4.82 years. The mean SCAT score in the study was 28.57 ± 5.38 . It was significantly higher in male athletes as compared to female (p value = .004). The mean PFAI score was 70.01 ± 20.58 . Male athletes showed significantly higher values as compared to their female counterparts with p value $<.01$. There was a strong positive correlation between competition anxiety and fear of failure with correlation values ranging from .839 to .985 and P value $<.001$. The study concluded that there was strong positive correlation between competition anxiety and fear of failure. Male athletes have higher competition anxiety and fear of failure as compared to their female counterparts.

Mina Cho et. al (2022) Conducted a study to investigate the effects of medical students' self-oriented perfectionism on academic procrastination: the mediating effect of fear of failure. Based on the logic that self-oriented perfectionism (SOP) is one of the most well-established predictors of academic procrastination (AP), we predicted that fear of failure (FF) would mediate the association between SOP and AP. The purpose of this study is to investigate the mediating effect of FF on the influence of SOP on AP in medical students. A total of 156 undergraduate medical students completed a battery of questionnaires. This study is an analysis of cross-sectional data obtained through an offline survey. The self-report questionnaires assessed demographics and psychological scales, including the Multidimensional Perfectionism Scale, Performance Failure Appraisal Inventory, and Aitken Procrastination Inventory. The data were analysed by descriptive statistics, correlations analysis, and multiple regression analyses using IBM SPSS ver. 22.0 (IBM Corp., Armonk, USA). SOP had a direct negative influence on AP ($\beta=-0.420$, $p<0.001$). Also, SOP had a significant indirect effect on AP through FF ($\beta=0.0393$; 95% confidence interval, 0.040-0.0936). These results indicated that the FF partially mediates the relationship between SOP and AP. Although SOP among medical students might play an adaptive role to lessen AP, in cases FF gets higher, SOP could have opposing effects via the mediating effect of FF, leading to an actual increase in AP. Attempts to deal with the FF among medical students should be made for better academic achievements.

Zarrin & Gracia (2020) was conducted a study aim of investigating on the role of fear of failure and subscale of self-regulation (memory strategy goal-setting, self-evaluation, helping assistance, responsibility, organization) in relation with academic procrastination. Therefore, 198

students from different schools of University of Isfahan in Iran were selected by random cluster multistage sampling. Student's Procrastination Assessment Scale, Performance Failure Appraisal Inventory, and Sevari's Self-regulation Questionnaire were used. Data were analysed by t-test, Pearson correlations and linear regression in SPSS-22. Results of t-test showed significant differences between male and female students in terms of academic procrastination, organizing, and fear of failure. Male students compared to females scored higher in academic procrastination. Females students compared to males scored higher in fear of failure and organizing. Findings of Pearson correlations showed a positive association between fear of failure and academic procrastination, and a negative association between subscales of self-regulation and academic procrastination. Also, linear regression analyses showed that fear of failure and responsibility predict academic procrastination. As a conclusion, in order to reduce procrastination, some interventions can be delivered by handling in students' fear of failure and self-regulation.

Sudirman & Reza et. al (2023) was conducted a study aims to empirically prove the relationship between Perfectionism and fear of failure in academic procrastination. The method used in this research was correlational quantitative with a population of 153 students. The instruments used included academic procrastination, perfectionism, and fear of failure scales. The analysis technique was multiple linear regression. The results showed a positive correlation between perfectionism and fear of failure in academic procrastination, with an F score of 29.133 and a significance value of 0.001. This study also concluded that it is important for students to learn time management strategies, deal with anxiety effectively, and better understand failure and mistakes as part of the learning process. It is also important to emphasize that high standards can

motivate success but must be balanced with good mental and physical health. They must not come at the expense of an Individual's mental well-being

Barutç, & Demir et. al (2019) conducted a study with the purpose of the present study was to examine the predictor role of procrastination, test anxiety, self-esteem, and self-compassion for the variation in university students 'self-handicapping. The sample of the study consisted of 801 undergraduate students with 404 females and 397 males. In order to collect data, Self-Handicapping Scale, Tuckman procrastination Scale, Anxiety Subscale of Academic Emotions Questionnaire, Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale, and Self-Compassion Scale were used. Stepwise regression analysis was conducted, and results showed that all of the predictor variables significantly contributed in explaining self-handicapping. The model explained the 59% of the variance in self-handicapping, whereas semi-partial variance of procrastination, test anxiety, self-esteem, and self-compassion were 17%, 4%, 2%, and 2%, respectively. The results indicated that all of the predictor variables significantly contribute to explaining self-handicapping and procrastination is the most powerful predictor in this study. Self-handicapping increased with increased procrastination.

Alkhazaleh, & Mahasneh (2016) Conducted a study, The primary purpose of this study was to determine the level of FoF among students at The Hashemite University, Jordan. We were also interested in identifying the difference in the level of FOF between the sexes, the academic level, and grade-point average (GPA). A total of 548 students participated in the study by completing the Performance Failure Appraisal Inventory. Descriptive statistics (mean and SD), independent

sample t-test, and one-way analysis of variance were used to analyse the data collected. The results indicated the overall mean FOF to be -0.34 . There were also significant differences between male and female students' level of fear in experiencing shame and embarrassment. Significant differences were found between the four academic level groups in the following fear categories: experiencing shame and embarrassment, important others losing interest, and fear of upsetting important others. The results also showed significant differences between the GPA level groups in the following fear categories: experiencing shame and embarrassment, diminishing of one's self-esteem, having an uncertain future, fear of important others losing interest, and fear of upsetting important others. Concluded that FOF may be an important consideration when trying to understand student behaviour in the university. Moreover, the level of FOF differs between sexes, academic levels, and GPA levels.

Asio (2020) Conducted a study analysed the relationship between academic procrastination and academic performance of freshmen students from a teacher education institution. The researcher used a descriptive-correlational research design for this study. Ninety (90) freshmen students took part in the survey using a convenience sampling technique in the academic year of 2018-2019. This study used an adapted instrument for data gathering through a survey. The study also utilized SPSS 20 to analyse the data. Results showed that the respondents procrastinate in their academic activities. In terms of academic performance, professional education subjects got the lowest rating score and the major subjects got the highest. In addition, the program, scholarship status, and religion of the respondents got significant statistical differences. Furthermore, the study also obtained a low indirect relationship between academic procrastination, general education subjects, and professional education subjects. From the findings

of the study, the researcher provided pertinent recommendations for parents, students, instructors and the Institution.

Conroy & Kaye et.al (2007) conducted a study to investigate links between three forms of perfectionism and beliefs associated with fear of failure (FF). College students (N = 372) enrolled in physical activity classes completed the Multidimensional Perfectionism Scale and Performance Failure Appraisal Inventory in a single session. After controlling for other forms of perfectionism, only socially prescribed perfectionism (SPP) was strongly associated with beliefs that failure led to aversive interpersonal consequences (i.e., important others losing interest, upsetting important others). Other-oriented perfectionism (OOP) exhibited a weak negative relation with beliefs that failure would lead to devaluation of one's self-estimate; individuals who held the highest standards for others' behavior had the weakest beliefs that failure would lead to them devaluing their self-estimate. Self-oriented perfectionism (SOP) was not associated with any beliefs that failure led to aversive consequences; however, when SOP and OOP were simultaneously elevated, they contributed positively to fears of experiencing shame and embarrassment (above and beyond main effects of SPP). Collectively these findings indicated that FF was not ubiquitous with all forms of perfectionism because the specific beliefs about the consequences of failure that underlie different forms of perfectionism varied tremendously.

Research Gap

Many studies have examined fear of failure, procrastination, and self-esteem, focusing on the relationships between these variables, as well as their impact and influence on each other

However, most of these studies focus specifically on students, particularly college students. This study aims to address important gaps in understanding the relationships between procrastination, self-esteem, and fear of failure among aspirants preparing for competitive exams, particularly those pursuing professional careers. The number of competitive exam aspirants is steadily increasing each year, leading to heightened levels of pressure and stress, especially in exams like the UPSC and other professional career entrance exams. Aspirants commonly face psychological challenges such as fear of failure, procrastination, and low self-esteem, all of which can adversely impact their performance. Despite the prevalence of these issues, there is a significant lack of studies focused specifically on competitive exam aspirants and the challenges they encounter. Addressing these gaps is essential for developing targeted interventions to support students effectively.

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

Research methodology is a way to systematically solve the research problem. It may be understood as a science of studying how research is done scientifically. It involves describing, explaining, and predicting phenomena in order to solve a problem. The research methodology comprises aspects such as research designs, target population, sample size and sampling procedure, data collection instruments and data analysis procedure. It is necessary for the researcher to know not only the research methods/techniques but also the methodology. (Kothari, 2004).

Research design

Research design can be considered as the structure of research. It is the “Glue” that holds all of the elements in a research project together. In short, it is a plan of the proposed research work. According to Jahoda, Deutch & Cook (1951) “A research design is the arrangement of conditions for the collection and analysis of data in a manner that aims to combine relevance to the research purpose with economy and procedure”.

The study adopts a quantitative research design to investigate the relationship between fear of failure, procrastination and self-esteem. A quantitative research method deals with quantifying and analysis of variables in order to get results. Williams (2011) remark that quantitative research starts with a statement of a problem, generating of hypothesis or research question, reviewing related literature, and a quantitative analysis of data. Similarly, (Creswell 2003; Williams, 2011)

states, quantitative research “employ strategies of inquiry such as experiments and surveys, and collect data on predetermined instruments that yield statistical data”.

Participants

A total sample of 130 competitive exam aspirants was collected using the convenience sampling method. The sample consists of 40 male and 90 female participants, with ages ranging from 20 to 30 years. The participants are primarily those preparing for professional careers through exams such as the UPSC, bank exams, and SSC exams.

Tools used for data collection

Variables: The variables in the current study are Fear of failure, Procrastination and Self- esteem.

In the present study existing standardized research questionnaires were used to assess Fear of failure, Procrastination and Self esteem. A number of studies have statistically analysed and tested the questionnaires in order to corroborate the reliability and validity.

The Performance Failure Appraisal Inventory (Conroy,2003)

The PFAI measures the strength of individuals’ beliefs in five aversive consequences of Failing. Scores are provided for each of these five lower-order fears of failing: (a) fear of Experiencing shame and embarrassment, (b) fear of devaluing one’s self-estimate, (c) fear of Having an uncertain future, (d) fear of important others losing interest, and (e) fear of upsetting Important others. These scores are moderately- to strongly-correlated with each other and their

Common variance can be modeled with a single higher-order factor representing a general fear of Failure. This general fear of failure can be interpreted as the strength of an individual's belief that Failure is generally associated with aversive consequences.

Scoring

The Performance Failure Appraisal Inventory is a 25-item multidimensional questionnaire of cognitive-emotional relational Appraisals related with fear of failure (Conroy et al., 2002). There are five Aversive consequences mentioned in the inventory: i) fear of experiencing shame and Embarrassment, ii) fear of devaluing one's self-estimate, iii) fear of having an Uncertain future, iv) fear of important others losing interest, and v) fear of upsetting Important others. (Conroy, n.d.). PFAI responses are on a 5-point Likert scale Ranging from "do not believe at all" (-2) to "believe 100% of the time" (+2) (Conroy, n.d.).

Reliability

The tool shows a Cronbach's Alfa coefficient reliability of 0.798 and an index of reliability of 0.893 (Rawat et al., 2019). The reliability values range as follows: Fear of experiencing shame and embarrassment 0.80; fear of devaluing one's selfestimate 0.74; fear of having an uncertain future 0.80; fear of important others losing Interest 0.81; and fear of upsetting important others 0.78 (Conroy et al., 2002)

Validity

The content validity is supported by a comprehensive design that captures all relevant aspects of the construct. Construct validity is confirmed through a robust five-factor structure and significant correlations with related psychological constructs, such as anxiety and self-esteem, while low correlations with unrelated constructs highlight its discriminant validity. Additionally, the PFAI's

ability to predict behaviors like avoidance and performance anxiety underscores its criterion-related validity, ensuring its effectiveness in various contexts.

The General Procrastination scale (Lodha, 2016)

The General Procrastination Scale was developed by Lodha et. (2016). With 23 items in total, the Scale measures procrastination in 4 domains- academic, workplace, medical and civic Responsibilities related procrastination. All items are required to be rated on a 5-point Likert scale Ranging from 1 to 5.

Scoring

The scores reveal a Procrastination Quotient (PQ). Items 5, 8, 12, 16, 18, 21 and 23 are reversed scored. Scores are obtained as a sum of response to Each item and they range from 23 to 115. A higher sum of scores obtained on all items indicates Higher level of procrastination for the individual test taker in term of a higher Procrastination Quotient (P.Q.) obtained.

Reliability

The Split Half Reliability was calculated equivalent to 0.711, which was similarly close to the value of Cronbach's Alpha correlation value, established at 0.714. (Lodha et al. 2019)

Validity

The General Procrastination Scale was observed to be high on construct validity (0.76) when compared with performance on Lay's scale of Procrastination. (Lodha et al. 2019)

Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (1965)

A 10-item scale that measures global self-worth by measuring both positive and Negative feelings about the self. The scale is believed to be uni-dimensional. All items are Answered using a 4-point Likert scale format ranging from strongly agree to strongly Disagree.

Scoring

Items 2, 5, 6, 8, 9 are reverse scored. Give “Strongly Disagree” 1 point, “Disagree” 2 points, “Agree” 3 points, and “Strongly Agree” 4 points. Sum scores for all ten items. Keep scores on a continuous scale. Higher scores indicate higher self-esteem.

Validity and Reliability

The scale has good predictive validity, as well as internal consistency and test–retest Reliability Cronbach coefficient has been shown to be high ($M = 0.81$) supporting the internal Coherence of the scale. Sinclair et al. (2010) suggest that self-esteem scores are highly dependent on temporal affect, and therefore the scale may not capture trait based self-esteem Adequately. Despite this, test-retest reliability over a period of 2 weeks reveals correlations of .85 and .88, indicating excellent stability. The RSES demonstrates a Guttman scale Coefficient of reproducibility of .92, indicating excellent internal consistency. (NovoPsy,2023)

Personal Data Sheet

To collect the sociodemographic details of the participants a personal data sheet was Provided which included the variables such as name, gender, Age, pursuing competitive exams.

Informed Consent Form

An informed consent form which includes the terms of confidentiality and the purpose of the study was given to the participants to ensure their voluntary participation in the study.

Procedure for Data Collection

Data is collected through two methods: direct administration of questionnaires and online data collection using Google Forms. Permission is obtained from Institution authorities to collect responses directly from aspirants in their classrooms. Participants are selected conveniently. Consent is obtained from each participant, and a rapport is established to ensure their voluntary participation.

Participants are provided with the questionnaires and instructed to carefully read the instructions. They are requested to provide honest responses and complete all items of the questionnaires. A time frame of 15-25 minutes is given for completion. After participants finish the questionnaires, they are collected, and gratitude is expressed for their cooperation.

Ethical Considerations

Ethical guidelines will be followed throughout the study to protect the rights and well-being of the participants. Confidentiality of data will be maintained, and participants will be assured that their personal information will remain anonymous and confidential.

Statistical Techniques used for Data Analysis

The collected data underwent rigorous statistical analysis to examine the relationships and associations between the variables. The following statistical techniques were employed to derive meaningful insights: The normality of the data was tested and found that the data was normally distributed.

Descriptive Statistics: Descriptive statistics, including measures such as means, standard deviations, frequencies, and percentages, were calculated to summarize the sociodemographic characteristics of the sample. These statistics provided a comprehensive overview of the gender ratio and pursuing exam ratio of the participants.

Correlation Analysis: Pearson's product-moment correlation analysis was conducted to assess the relationship between fear of failure, procrastination and self-esteem. This analysis quantified the strength and direction of the relationships between these variables, shedding light on their interconnections.

Regression analysis: Linear regression analysis was conducted to examine the influence of Fear of Failure on Procrastination and Self-Esteem, assuming that Fear of Failure is the independent variable and Procrastination and Self-Esteem are the dependent variables.

Independent samples t-test: Independent samples t-test was conducted to examine gender differences in three variables: Fear of Failure, Procrastination, and Self-Esteem.

ANOVA (Analysis of Variance) test: ANOVA test was conducted to examine the effect of different types of exams on three variables: Fear of Failure, Procrastination, and Self-Esteem. The exam types compared include Civil Service, Bank Exams, and SSC (Staff Selection Commission) Exams.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The present study evaluated the relation between fear of failure, procrastination and self-esteem among competitive exam aspirants especially those aiming for professional careers through UPSC, bank exams, and SSC exams. A total of 130 samples were selected and the variables of interest namely fear of failure, procrastination and self-esteem were measured using The Performance Failure Appraisal Inventory (Conroy,2003), The General Procrastination (Lodha, 2016), and Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (1965) respectively. For the purpose of data analysis, descriptive statistical techniques are used. The normality of data analysis was tested. Since the data is normally distributed suitable parametric tests were used for further analysis using appropriate software, ensuring accuracy and reliability.

The results obtained in the study have been presented in the tables and the results are discussed with respect to objectives and hypotheses

Table 4.1: Sociodemographic characteristics of the sample

Variables	Category	N(Percentage)
Gender	Female	90(69.2%)
	Male	40(30.8%)
Exam	Civil Service	107(82.3%)
	Bank Exam	12(9.2%)
	SSC Exams	11(8.5%)
Age	20-30	130 (S D=2.45)

Table 1 indicate the demographic data of sample. Results Indicate that of the total 130 samples, majority of the samples were female with 90(69.2%) and men with 40 (30.8%). All the samples were at between the age of 20- 30 (Mean =23.11, SD=2.45). Most of the samples were pursuing civil service exam with 107 (82.3%) and rest of them pursuing bank exam with 12 (9.2%) and SSC exams with 11(8.5%).

Table 4.2: Description of psychological measures in the study

Scale	Mean	S D	Range (Minimum- Maximum Score)
Performance failure appraisal inventory	-0.30	0.675	-2-1
General Procrastination scale	58.95	9.48	36-81
Rosenberg self-Esteem scale	28.34	4.12	15-38

Table 2 indicate the mean value, standard deviation and range of the three scales in the study. For performance failure appraisal inventory, which used to measure the five dimensions and total general fear of failure, the mean value obtained by the sample is -0.30 with standard deviation of 0.675 and the range of the minimum to maximum score is -2 to 1. For general procrastination scale, which is used to measure the procrastination, the mean value obtained by the sample is 58.95 with standard deviation of 9.48 and the range of the minimum to maximum score is 36 to 81. For

Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale , which is used to measure the self-esteem, the mean value obtained by the sample is 28.34 with standard deviation of 4.12 and the range the minimum to maximum is 15 to 38.

Figure 4.1. Exposure to different dimension of PFAI

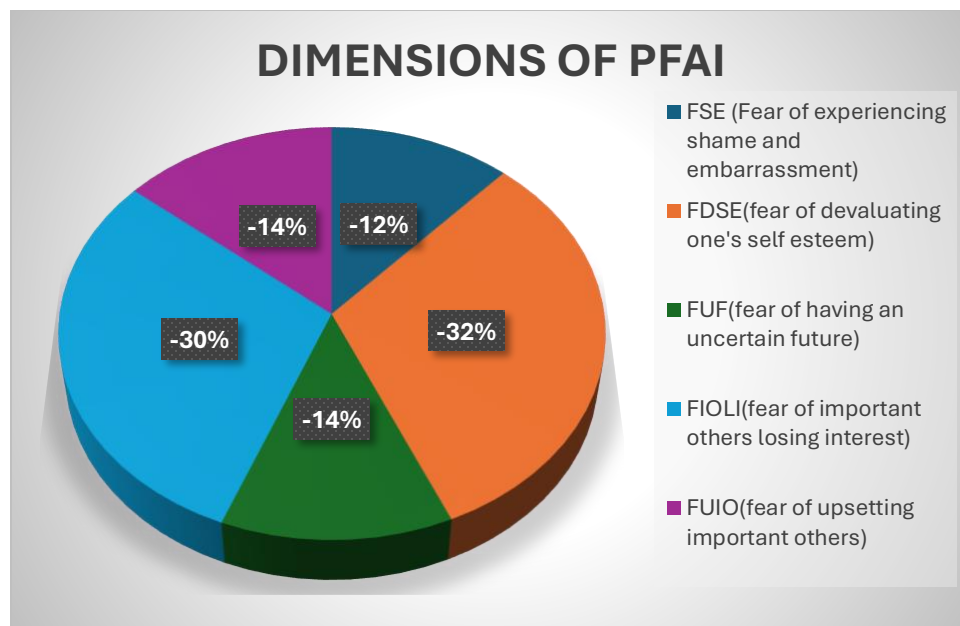


Figure 1 shows that the percentage of different dimensions of performance failure appraisal inventory (PFAI), used for measure general fear of failure. The PFAI, There are five Aversive consequences mentioned in the inventory that are fear of experiencing shame and Embarrassment (FSE), fear of devaluing one's self-estimate (FDSE), fear of having an uncertain future (FUF), fear of important others losing interest (FIOLI), and fear of upsetting Important others (FUIO).

The figure shows that 32% of participants have fear of devaluing one's self-esteem, it is that they have the anxiety or concern that one might do something that could lower their own sense of self-

worth or dignity. This fear often stems from the belief that certain actions, failures, or criticisms might lead to a loss of self-respect or the perception of being less valuable in one's own eyes or in the eyes of others. People with this fear may avoid situations where they feel they could fail or be judged negatively, as they are concerned that such outcomes would damage their self-esteem. The 30% of participants have fear of important others losing interest, it is that they have anxiety or concern that people who are significant in their life such as close friends, family members, or romantic partners might stop caring about them or lose interest in maintaining the relationship with them. This fear often leads to behaviors aimed at preserving these relationships, sometimes resulting in overcompensation, such as trying too hard to please others or avoiding conflicts at the expense of one's own needs. It can stem from a deep-seated need for acceptance and fear of abandonment, and it may cause significant stress and insecurity in relationships.

participants have fear of upsetting important others and fear of having an uncertain future with 14% each, The fear of upsetting important others is the anxiety or concern about causing distress, anger, or disappointment to people who are significant in your life, such as close friends, family members, or romantic partners. This fear often stems from a desire to maintain harmony in relationships and avoid conflict, leading individuals to be overly cautious in their words and actions. They might suppress their own needs, opinions, or feelings to prevent upsetting others, which can result in internal stress and a sense of losing their own identity in an effort to keep others happy. And The fear of having an uncertain future is the anxiety about not knowing what lies ahead in life, whether it pertains to career, relationships, finances, or overall life direction. This fear often arises from a desire for control and stability, as the unknown can feel threatening and overwhelming. People experiencing this fear may worry about potential negative outcomes,

struggle with decision-making, or become paralyzed by the "what ifs" of life. It can lead to stress and anxiety, making it difficult to focus on the present and enjoy life as it unfolds.

The 12% participants have fear of experiencing shame and embarrassment, and it is the least one. The fear of experiencing shame and embarrassment is the deep anxiety about being humiliated or judged negatively by others, often due to perceived failures, mistakes, or socially awkward situations. This fear is driven by the desire to avoid situations where one might be exposed to criticism, ridicule, or rejection, leading to intense discomfort at the thought of being seen as flawed or inadequate. As a result, individuals may avoid taking risks, trying new things, or speaking up in order to protect themselves from the possibility of feeling shame or embarrassment. This fear can significantly limit personal growth and self-expression.

Table 4.3: Correlations Between Fear of failure, procrastination and self – esteem

	Age	Fear of failure	Procrastination	Self esteem
Age	()			
Fear of failure	-0.131	()		
Procrastination	-0.041	0.400**	()	
Self esteem	0.127	-0.523**	-0.453**	()

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

The correlation table presented in the results section examines the relationships between different variables: fear of failure, procrastination and self-esteem. In this the variable fear of failure is significant positively correlated with procrastination with 0.400**. It means that as the fear of failure increases, the procrastination tends to increase as well. In other words participants who are afraid of failing are more likely to delay or avoid tasks or works. Fear of failure often leads to procrastination as a coping mechanism. When individuals fear that they may not succeed, they may avoid starting tasks to delay the potential negative outcomes, such as embarrassment or disappointment. Research suggests that procrastination serves as a way to protect self-esteem by avoiding situations where failure is possible (Steel, 2007). Those who fear failure may also struggle with perfectionism, setting unrealistically high standards for themselves. The fear of not meeting these standards can cause them to delay or avoid starting tasks altogether, leading to procrastination (Flett, Hewitt, & Martin, 1995). Fear of failure can cause individuals to overthink and overanalyze potential outcomes, which leads to "paralysis by analysis." This excessive worry and analysis delay action, contributing to procrastination (Sirois, 2014). The positive correlation suggests that reducing fear of failure could help decrease procrastination. Interventions that build self-confidence, promote a growth mindset, or help individuals manage perfectionism could mitigate the fear of failure, thereby reducing the tendency to procrastinate (Sirois & Pychyl, 2013).

There is significant negative correlation between fear of failure and self-esteem with -0.523**, It means that as fear of failure increases, self-esteem tends to decrease. This relationship has been observed in psychological research and suggests that individuals who are more afraid of failing often have lower self-esteem. Individuals with a high fear of failure often tie their self-worth to their success or performance. When they fear failure, they might perceive themselves as less competent or valuable, leading to lower self-esteem. This fear of not measuring up can erode

their confidence and self-respect (Covington & Omelich, 1991). Fear of failure can lead to negative thinking patterns, such as catastrophizing or all-or-nothing thinking, where any mistake is seen as a total failure. These cognitive distortions contribute to a reduced sense of self-worth, further lowering self-esteem (Beck, 1976). To avoid the negative emotions associated with failure, individuals may avoid challenges or opportunities that could lead to personal growth. This avoidance reinforces a negative self-image and a belief that they are incapable of success, further damaging self-esteem (Conroy, Kaye, & Fifer, 2007). The significant negative correlation suggests that interventions aimed at reducing fear of failure, such as cognitive-behavioral therapy (CBT) or resilience training, could help improve self-esteem. By addressing the underlying fears and changing negative thought patterns, individuals may develop a healthier self-concept and improve their overall well-being.

There is significant negative correlation between procrastination and self-esteem with -0.453^{**} , it means that as procrastination increases, self-esteem tends to decrease. This relationship suggests that individuals who frequently procrastinate often struggle with lower self-esteem. People with low self-esteem may procrastinate as a way to avoid situations where they fear they might fail or be judged negatively. This avoidance behavior, however, often leads to poor outcomes (e.g., missed deadlines, subpar performance), which can further damage their self-esteem. The cycle of procrastination and its consequences reinforces feelings of inadequacy (Burka & Yuen, 2008). Procrastination can create a sense of losing control over one's tasks and responsibilities. When people feel they cannot effectively manage their time or meet expectations, it can diminish their self-confidence and self-worth, contributing to lower self-esteem (Ferrari, 1994). Chronic procrastinators often experience guilt and self-criticism for not completing tasks on time. This internal dialogue can be harsh, leading to a negative self-concept and reduced self-esteem. The

more they procrastinate, the more they criticize themselves, creating a vicious cycle that further lowers self-esteem (Pychyl & Flett, 2012). The significant negative correlation implies that interventions aimed at reducing procrastination could potentially help improve self-esteem. Strategies that focus on time management, overcoming perfectionism, and fostering self-compassion could break the cycle of procrastination and its damaging effects on self-esteem.

The Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed), it indicates that the likelihood of observing this correlation by random chance is less than 1%. This high level of significance suggests a strong statistical relationship between the variables, providing robust evidence against the null hypothesis. In practical terms, this means that there is a very low probability that the observed correlation is due to random variation, reinforcing the reliability of the relationship detected.

From the analysis, the hypotheses were accepted, indicating significant relationships between the variables. Specifically, there is a positive relationship between fear of failure and procrastination, a negative relationship between self-esteem and fear of failure, and a negative relationship between self-esteem and procrastination among competitive exam aspirants as per the hypothesis. These findings suggest that fear of failure contributes to procrastination, while higher self-esteem reduces both fear of failure and procrastination.

Table 4.4: Linear regression results of procrastination from fear of failure

Variable	R	R Square	B Coefficient	Standard error(B)	Beta	T	Significant level
Fear of failure	0.400	0.160	5.621	1.139	0.400	4.935	0.000

The table shows the results of linear regression analysis. The independent variables is fear of failure and the dependent variable is procrastination. The table examines the impact of the independent variables on procrastination. The correlation coefficient ($R = 0.400$) indicates a moderate positive relationship between fear of failure and procrastination. This suggests that as fear of failure increases, procrastination also tends to increase. The R Square value of 0.160 shows that fear of failure accounts for 16% of the variance in procrastination, which demonstrates that while fear of failure has a significant impact, other factors also contribute to procrastination. The F-statistic of 24.353 with a significance level of 0.000 confirms that the regression model is statistically significant, meaning the relationship observed is unlikely to be due to random chance. The B coefficient of 5.621 indicates that for every one-unit increase in fear of failure, procrastination increases by 5.621 units. This highlights the strength of the effect of fear of failure on procrastination. The standard error of the B coefficient is 1.139, suggesting that the estimate of 5.621 is relatively precise but with some degree of variability. The Beta value of 0.400, which is the standardized coefficient, reflects the strength of the relationship between fear of failure and procrastination on a standardized scale. This Beta value aligns with the correlation coefficient, reinforcing the moderate strength of the relationship. The p-value of 0.000 confirms that the relationship is statistically significant, emphasize the strength of these findings. These findings

substantiate the notion that fear of failure can exacerbate procrastination tendencies, likely due to the anxiety and avoidance behaviors that accompany fear of negative evaluation or perceived inability to meet high standards (Elliot & Church, 1997).

Table 4.5: Linear regression results of self-esteem from fear of failure

Variable	R	R square	B Coefficient	Standard error(B)	Beta	T	Significant level
Fear of failure	0.523	0.274	-3.200	0.461	-0.523	-6.945	0.000

The table shows the results of linear regression analysis. The independent variables is fear of failure and the dependent variable is self esteem. The table examines the impact of the independent variables on self esteem. The correlation coefficient ($R = 0.523$) indicates a moderate to strong negative relationship between fear of failure and self-esteem, suggesting that higher fear of failure is associated with lower self-esteem. The R Square value of 0.274 shows that fear of failure explains 27.4% of the variance in self-esteem. This indicates that fear of failure has a substantial effect on self-esteem, though other factors also play a role. The B coefficient of -3.200 suggests that for every one-unit increase in fear of failure, self-esteem decreases by 3.200 units. This negative relationship highlights the detrimental impact of fear of failure on self-esteem. The standard error of the B coefficient is 0.461, indicating that the estimate of -3.200 is relatively precise with a modest degree of variability. The Beta coefficient of -0.523, which is the standardized coefficient, confirms the strength of the relationship on a standardized scale. This

negative Beta value reinforces the negative impact of fear of failure on self-esteem. The t-value of -6.945 and the p-value of 0.000 both indicate that the relationship is statistically significant, demonstrating that the observed effect is unlikely to be due to chance. This substantial negative effect illustrates the detrimental impact of fear of failure on self-esteem, reinforcing the psychological costs associated with fear of negative evaluation and perceived inadequacy (Birney, Burdick, & Teevan, 1969).

Table 4.6: Independent sample t-test results on gender difference in variables

Variable	Gender	N	Mean	S D	T	Sig. (2-tailed)
Fear of failure	Male	40	-0.08	0.638	2.567	0.011
	Female	90	-0.40	0.670		
Procrastination	Male	40	60.05	10.170	0.878	0.382
	Female	90	58.47	9.183		
Self-esteem	Male	40	28.20	4.794	-0.254	0.800
	Female	90	28.40	3.821		

The table shows the results of an independent samples t-test that was conducted to examine gender differences in three variables: Fear of Failure, Procrastination, and Self-Esteem. The analysis involves comparing the means of these variables between male and female participants. Fear of Failure the mean score for males is -0.08 with a standard deviation of 0.638 and the mean score for females is -0.40 with a standard deviation of 0.670 and the p-value is 0.011. Since the p-value is less than 0.05, the difference in Fear of Failure between males and females is statistically significant. This suggests that females may experience a higher level of fear of failure compared to males.

In Procrastination, the mean score for males is 60.05 with a standard deviation of 10.170 and the mean score for females is 58.47 with a standard deviation of 9.183 and the p-value is 0.382. Since the p-value is greater than 0.05, there is no statistically significant difference in procrastination between males and females. In Self-Esteem, the mean score for males is 28.20 with a standard deviation of 4.794 and the mean score for females is 28.40 with a standard deviation of 3.821, and the p-value is 0.800. Similar to procrastination, the p-value indicates that there is no statistically significant difference in self-esteem between males and females.

The independent samples t-test reveals that out of the three variables examined, only Fear of Failure shows a statistically significant difference between genders, with females scoring higher than males. Procrastination and Self-Esteem do not show significant gender differences according to this analysis.

Table 4.7: ANOVA results on the effect of exam types on variables

Variable	Exam type	N	Degrees of freedom	F	Mean square	Sig.
Fear of failure	Civil service	107				
	Bank exams	12	2	0.779	0.356	0.461
	SSC exams	11				
procrastination	Civil service	107				
	Bank exams	12	2	1.163	104.373	0.316
	SSC exams	11				
Self- esteem	Civil service	107				
	Bank exams	12	2	0.986	16.792	0.376
	SSC exams	11				

The table shows the results of an ANOVA (Analysis of Variance) test conducted to examine the effect of different types of exams on three variables: Fear of Failure, Procrastination, and Self-Esteem. The exam types compared include Civil Service, Bank Exams, and SSC (Staff Selection

Commission) Exams. In Fear of Failure the degrees of Freedom is 2, mean Square of 0.356 the F-value is 0.779, and the p-value is 0.461. Since the p-value is greater than 0.05, the difference in Fear of Failure among the different exam types is not statistically significant. This suggests that the type of exam does not significantly influence the level of fear of failure among the participants.

For Procrastination the degrees of Freedom is 2, Mean Square of 104.373, the F-value is 1.163, and the p-value is 0.316. Similarly, since the p-value is greater than 0.05, there is no statistically significant difference in procrastination across the different exam types. This indicates that the type of exam does not have a significant impact on procrastination levels. For Self-Esteem the Degrees of Freedom is 2, Mean Square of 16.792, the F-value is 0.986, and the p-value is 0.376. Again, the p-value is greater than 0.05, showing that there is no statistically significant difference in self-esteem among participants taking different types of exams.

The ANOVA results indicate that there are no significant differences in Fear of Failure, Procrastination, or Self-Esteem based on the type of exam the participants are preparing for. This suggests that the exam type (Civil Service, Bank Exams, SSC Exams) does not significantly affect these psychological variables among the participants.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

The aim of the current study was understanding the relationship between fear of failure, procrastination and self-esteem among competitive exam aspirants especially those aiming for professional careers such as civil service, bank exams and SSC exams. The sample size of the present study was 130 aspirants, both males and females within the age group of 20 to 30 years, selected using the convenience sampling technique. To measure the variables of interest, existing standardized measures are used such as The Performance Failure Appraisal Inventory (Conroy,2003),The General Procrastination (Lodha, 2016)and Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (1965). Informed consent and personal data sheet are also collected from the selected participants. After data analysis, parametric tests such as the t-test, ANOVA, Pearson product- moment correlation method and linear regression analysis are used for the statistical analysis of the data. The results obtained by the analysis are discussed comprehensively with respect to objectives and hypotheses.

The study's findings suggested a number of important outcomes. There is significant positive correlation between fear of failure and procrastination, It means that as the fear of failure increases, the procrastination tends to increase as well. There is significant negative correlation between fear of failure and self-esteem, It means that as fear of failure increases, self-esteem tends to decrease. There is significant negative correlation between procrastination and self-esteem, it means that as procrastination increases, self-esteem tends to decrease. The linear regression results of procrastination from fear of failure shows that a moderate positive relationship between fear of failure and procrastination. And Linear regression results of self-esteem from fear of failure shows

that moderate strong negative relationship between fear of failure and self - esteem. The independent samples t-test reveals that out of the three variables examined, only Fear of Failure shows a statistically significant difference between genders, with females scoring higher than males. Procrastination and Self-Esteem do not show significant gender differences according to this analysis. The ANOVA results indicate that there are no significant differences in Fear of Failure, Procrastination, or Self-Esteem based on the type of exam the participants are preparing for.

Major findings and Conclusions of the Study

- There is significant positive correlation between fear of failure and procrastination ($r=0.400$, $p<0.01$)
- There is significant negative correlation between fear of failure and self- esteem ($r= -523$, $p<0.01$)
- There is significant negative correlation between procrastination and self-esteem ($r= -0.453$, $p<0.01$)
- There is a statistically significant gender difference fear of failure, with female scoring higher than male.
- There are no statistically significant gender differences in Procrastination and self-esteem.
- There are no statistically significant differences in Fear of Failure, Procrastination and Self-Esteem among participants preparing for different types of exams.

Implications of the study

This study highlights how the fear of failure can negatively impact aspirants' mental health, potentially leading to anxiety, stress, and reduced self-esteem. Recognizing this can help educators and mental health professionals develop targeted interventions to reduce this fear. The relationship between procrastination and low self-esteem suggests that aspirants might delay tasks because they doubt their abilities. This could create a cycle of procrastination, further lowering self-esteem and increasing fear of failure. Addressing procrastination through counselling or time-management training could be crucial.

The institutions that competitive exam aspirants study might need to incorporate psychological training that addresses fear of failure and builds self-esteem. Workshops on effective study habits, goal-setting, and time management could help reduce procrastination. Tutors could use the insights from the study to provide personalized support, recognizing that some students might need more encouragement and tools to manage their fear of failure. Institutions preparing students for competitive exams might need to ensure the availability of mental health resources, such as counselling and stress management programs, to help students manage fear and build self-esteem. Aspirants who experience fear of failure, procrastination, and low self-esteem could benefit from participating in motivational interviews. These interviews can help them identify the underlying causes of their fears, address their procrastination habits, and boost their self-esteem.

This study says about the importance of addressing psychological factors like fear of failure procrastination and self esteem in aspirants facing competitive exams. It suggests that by fostering a positive self-esteem and providing appropriate support, students' academic performance and mental well-being could be significantly improved.

Limitations of the study

- The study was conducted on a limited sample of 130 aspirants , which is relatively small compared to the general population.
- The gender ratio in the sample was not proportional.
- The study likely relies on self-reported data, which can introduce bias.
- The data were not collected from participants preparing for other competitive exams, such as NEET etc..
- The distribution of exam types pursued in the sample was not proportional.

Suggestions for future research

- Since the current research is done with only 130 samples, study by widening the sample size may yield more outcomes.
- Conducting longitudinal studies would allow researchers to track changes in fear of failure, procrastination, and self-esteem over time.
- Future research can explore the role of additional psychological factors such as anxiety, depression, perfectionism, or motivation in relation to fear of failure, procrastination, and self-esteem.
- Future research can include data from a range of competitive exams with proportional representation to provide a more comprehensive analysis.

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APPENDICES

INFORMED CONSENT FORM

Hello, I am Anupama M S, currently pursuing Masters in Counselling Psychology at Loyola college of Social Sciences. As part of my course-curriculum, I'm conducting a study on the topic "Understanding the relationship between Fear of failure, procrastination and self-esteem among competitive exam aspirants" under the guidance of Dr. Ammu Lukose, Assistant professor of the Department of Counselling Psychology. In this concern, your opinion is really valuable to proceed with my study. This study requires the completion of questionnaires, which will take roughly 10 to 15 minutes. You are requested to give your honest opinion. The information provided by you will be kept completely confidential and will be used for research purposes only. I am in sincere hope that you will participate in this study and I greatly appreciate your help in assisting me with this research.

I give my voluntary consent to participate in this study.

Yes:

Signature

No:

Socio Demographic Details

Name. :

Age :

Gender :

Name of the institution you're studying :

Which competitive exam are you pursuing? :

How many years have you been preparing for competitive exams? :

Performance Failure Appraisal Inventory (PFAI)

Put the number of the option according to your beliefs about yourself

1 – Do Not Believe At All

2—Believe 25% of the time

3—Believe 50% of the time

4—Believe 75% of the time

5—Believe 100% of the time

_____ 1. When I am failing, it is often because I am not smart enough to perform successfully.-

_____ 2. When I am failing, my future seems uncertain.-

_____ 3. When I am failing, it upsets important others.-

_____ 4. When I am failing, I blame my lack of talent.-

_____ 5. When I am failing, I believe that my future plans will change.-

_____ 6. When I am failing, I expect to be criticized by important others.-

_____ 7. When I am failing, I am afraid that I might not have enough talent.-

_____ 8. When I am failing, it upsets my “plan” for the future.-

_____ 9. When I am failing, I lose the trust of people who are important to me.-

_____ 10. When I am not succeeding, I am less valuable than when I succeed.-

_____ 11. When I am not succeeding, people are less interested in me.-

- _____ 12. When I am failing, I am not worried about it affecting my future plans.-
- _____ 13. When I am not succeeding, people seem to want to help me less.-
- _____ 14. When I am failing, important others are not happy.-
- _____ 15. When I am not succeeding, I get down on myself easily.-
- _____ 16. When I am failing, I hate the fact that I am not in control of the outcome.-
- _____ 17. When I am not succeeding, people tend to leave me alone.-
- _____ 18. When I am failing, it is embarrassing if others are there to see it.-
- _____ 19. When I am failing, important others are disappointed.-
- _____ 20. When I am failing, I believe that everybody knows I am failing.-
- _____ 21. When I am not succeeding, some people are not interested in me anymore.-
- _____ 22. When I am failing, I believe that my doubters feel that they were right about me.-
- _____ 23. When I am not succeeding, my value decreases for some people.-
- _____ 24. When I am failing, I worry about what others think about me.-
- _____ 25. When I am failing, I worry that others may think I am not trying.-

The General Procrastination Scale (GPS)

Place the number corresponding to the option inside the square box according to your preference.

Never 1	Rarely 2	Sometimes 3	Often 4	Always 5
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1. I often try to avoid doing a task that I have little or no interest in.
2. I often delay tasks that are desirable to me.
3. When a task is highly stressful, I'm likely to put in more effort.
4. I think that certain problems can subside or be solved on their own, with a passage of time.
5. I begin work immediately on a task once it has been given to me.
6. I have often had services terminated because of unpaid bills.
7. I often delay attending to medical issues concerning my health.
8. I prefer submitting an assignment before the deadline.
9. I generally don't start working on a project or assignment immediately.
10. I am usually late when I have to go out and meet friends for a movie or dinner or other such plans.
11. I often put off doing tasks until urgency develops.
12. Whenever I make a plan of action, I follow it.
13. I think too much about things I would like to do but rarely get around to doing them.
14. I tend to work at the eleventh hour for a task or project.
15. I postpone my chores to a later time when something more interesting comes up.
16. I prefer planning ahead for tasks and events.
17. I needlessly delay finishing jobs, even when they're important.
18. I prefer working on one assignment at a time.
19. I do not complete tasks until I am insisted to complete them.
20. I am generally late at the workplace or college
21. I try to avoid any backlog of work.
22. I delay the tasks that distress me.
23. I feel guilty when I delay doing tasks

ROSENBERG SELF-ESTEEM SCALE

Instructions

Below is a list of statements dealing with your general feelings about yourself. Please indicate how strongly you agree or disagree with each statement.

1. On the whole, I am satisfied with myself.

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree

2. At times I think I am no good at all.

Strongly Agree. Agree. Disagree. Strongly Disagree

3. I feel that I have a number of good qualities.

Strongly Agree. Agree. Disagree Strongly Disagree

4. I am able to do things as well as most other people.

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree. Strongly Disagree

5. I feel I do not have much to be proud of.

Strongly Agree. Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree

6. I certainly feel useless at times.

Strongly Agree. Agree. Disagree. Strongly Disagree

7. I feel that I'm a person of worth, at least on an equal plane with others.

Strongly Agree. Agree Disagree. Strongly Disagree

8. I wish I could have more respect for myself.

Strongly Agree. Agree. Disagree. Strongly Disagree

9. All in all, I am inclined to feel that I am a failure.

Strongly Agree Agree Disagree Strongly Disagree

10. I take a positive attitude toward myself.

Strongly Agree. Agree Disagree. Strongly Disagree