

**EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE, PERSONALITY TRAITS
AND PROCRASTINATION AMONG STUDENTS AND
EMPLOYEES OF KHYBER PAKHTUNKHWA**

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ABSTRACT

The present study investigated the predictive relationship between emotional intelligence, personality traits i.e., introversion and neuroticism and procrastination among students and employees. It also explored the differences on emotional intelligence and procrastination between students and employees and across gender. Sample comprised of university students (n=60) and employees (n=60) working in various public and private organizations. The Schutte Self Report Emotional Intelligence Test (Schutte et al., 1998), Pure Procrastination Scale (Steel, 2010) and Introversion Scale (McCroskey, 1998) were used. Results of Linear Regression Analysis revealed emotional intelligence and personality traits i.e., introversion and neuroticism as significant predictors of procrastination. Personality traits i.e., introversion and neuroticism also predicted emotional intelligence. No significant gender differences were evident in emotional intelligence while males scored higher than females in their level of procrastination. Results also showed that students are more emotionally intelligent than employees while there were no significant differences in degree of procrastination of both groups. The study has implications in daily life, education and for work place.

Keywords: *EI, Procrastination, Personality, Traits*

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INTRODUCTION

With the recent importance given to emotional intelligence (EI) in attaining success in daily lives, academic performance and careers of an individual, this study attempts to explain the phenomenon of emotional intelligence with respect to the several other factors that might influence individuals' interpersonal relation, performance at work or academic life. Emotional intelligence skills are required to better understand, identify with and negotiate with other people particularly at work environment. So, knowledge of the factors that might hinder or strengthen emotional intelligence is important in enhancing emotional intelligence.

Emotional intelligence or Emotional Quotient (EQ) is an emotional and social competency of an individual to identify emotional expressions in oneself and others (Goleman, 2001). It is the ability to perceive, control, and evaluate emotions (Cherry, 2018) and to engage in information processing about one's own and others' emotions and to use this information as a guide to thinking and behavior (Mayer & Salovey, 1990). EQ is an ability to perceive, understand and manage feelings and emotions play an important role in an individual's life (Chignell, 2018). As Goleman (1998) suggested that human actions are mostly based on their emotions and it involves self-regulatory processes. This aspect suggests a significant linkage between emotional intelligence and procrastination that is a failure in an individual self-regulation process to perform activities on their time and hence engage in unnecessary delay of tasks or activities regardless of the expectation of negative consequences of this behavior (Klingsieck, 2013; Steel, 2007).

The ability to evaluate, control, and use emotions is an emotional self-regulation tendency that has been linked to a number of positive outcomes, including jobs and academic success (Boyatzis, 2006). Those with high self-regulation capability are more able to manage their time; but some other researchers suggested that procrastination involves not only failure in time management but also comprises of emotional, cognitive and behavioral factors (Rebetez et al., 2015). These findings suggest that procrastination and emotional intelligence are linked in some respects and there exists negative relationship between emotional intelligence and decisional procrastination (Pychyl, 2009; Sheybani et al., 2017). Students with lower level of emotional intelligence tend to procrastinate more (Chow, 2011).

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Research indicates that the phenomenon of emotional intelligence is significantly linked with dimensions of personality (Chen & Lai, 2015). Neuroticism is one's tendency towards nervousness, self-doubt, anxiety, despair, hostility, low self-esteem and other similar negative feelings (McCrae & John, 1992). Several studies reported that emotional intelligence is negatively related with neuroticism while positive and significant relationship existed between emotional intelligence and extraversion (Chen et al., 2015; Sheybani et al., 2017). Introverted individuals are more inclined towards the inner world of thoughts and feelings rather than towards the outer world. Moreover, their behaviors and feelings and are relatively more reserved, quiet, conscious and prefer to work independently (APA, n. d). Furthermore, research findings also suggest that there is no significant difference in emotional intelligence between extrovert and introvert students (Devi, 2017) while some other work supported that there exists a significant negative relation between EI and introversion (Dhani & Sharma, 2017).

A large amount of research work reported that neuroticism and procrastination are positively related with each other (Di Fabio, 2006; Karataş & Bademcioglu, 2015; Lee et al., 2006; Watson, 2001), which may be due to the fact that with irrational beliefs one may distrust their ability and interpret events pessimistically. Further, studies showed that introvert students have a tendency to procrastinate more than extrovert students (Catrunada, & Puspitawati, 2008). While Steel and Klingsieck (2016) suggested that except conscientiousness no other personality trait incrementally predicts procrastination.

Mixed views are available about the gender influence on emotional intelligence some studies suggest that girls outperform their counterpart in emotional intelligence which may be due to the fact that girls are appreciated from the start of their maturity to take care of their family members i.e., parents, siblings etc. which may help to some extent in their recognition and understanding of emotions and feelings of their own as well others. Several studies suggested that there exist significant differences across gender in emotional intelligence with girls scoring higher than boys (Lankashini et al., 2017; Naghavi & Redzuan, 2011). Females with high EI show high vocabulary knowledge in comparison with males (Asadollahfam et al., 2012). Some other researchers suggest that men and women possess the equal ability to understand and express one's own emotions and that of others. According to Nasir and Masrur (2010), male and female students have equal amount of EQ-I tendency. While still other work supported the view that male possess high level of

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emotional intelligence than females as noted by Devi (2017) boys are more emotionally intelligent than girls.

The recent work on gender differences with respect to procrastination suggesting that there exists significant difference in male and female such as reported by Mandap (2016) that male students procrastinate more than female students in Philippines sample. Men procrastinate more than women (Balkis & Erdinç, 2017) and this difference in procrastination might be responsible for women's improved performance in academics and in the workforce (Steel & Klingsieck, 2015).

Several studies examined the phenomenon of EI in employees and students but little knowledge is available about the EI differences in both groups so the current study is an attempt to explore this difference. Goleman (1998) argued that it is emotional intelligence, not intelligence quotient that predicts employee's success and who transpires as a leader. Elfenbein and Ambady (2002) found that peer ratings about the volubility in the organization were high for those who were more able to recognize others' facial expressions and understand subtle meanings about their emotions. Similarly, EI is widely studied in student population suggesting its importance with respect to several domains of human's life. Mohzan and associates (2013) studied the EI in students and suggested a significant linkage between EI and academic achievement.

Several scholars reported that students and employees equally exhibit procrastination tendencies they may vary in the type of procrastination but they do engage in procrastination at different occasions. As reported by Steel (2007), not only college students but one in every five adults engage in chronic procrastination and consider themselves as procrastinators. During their working hours employees spend about 90-180 minutes in their personal activities which may be counted in procrastination (Paulsen, 2015). University students engage in general procrastination while white-collar workers engage in active procrastination i.e., active delay (Hicks & Storey, 2015).

To assess how different aspects of human cognition, behavior and personality go together or to which extent they affect each other this study explore the relation between emotional intelligence and procrastination and how these two variables are affected by the type of personality (neuroticism and introversion) of the respondents. The gender differences of the respondents were also taken into account. Moreover, several studies explain the important role of

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emotional intelligence and procrastination in professional and academic life as described above therefore, the current study attempts to investigate this phenomenon in employees and student with the aim of finding out similarities and variations in both groups. Further, little knowledge is available about the comparative study of students and employees with respect to the emotional intelligence and procrastination and its relation to personality traits so this study will help provide a minor contribution into the existing body of knowledge about the phenomenon under study. Hence, this study intends to: investigate the relationship between emotional intelligence, procrastination, and personality traits i.e., introversion, and neuroticism; determine gender differences on emotional intelligences and procrastination; find out the differences on emotional intelligence and procrastination between university students and employees working in various public and private organizations of KP on non-executive level.

Following hypotheses were formulated to meet the objectives of the study.

1. Emotional intelligence would predict Procrastination.
2. Personality traits of introversion and neuroticism would predict procrastination.
3. Personality traits of introversion and neuroticism would predict emotional intelligence.
4. There will be significant difference in emotional intelligence across gender with female scoring higher on emotional intelligence as compared to male.
5. Significant gender difference will be existed on procrastination with male scoring higher on procrastination than female/
6. Students and employees will possess significant differences in their level of emotional intelligence.
7. Students and employees will possess significant differences in their level of procrastination.

METHOD

Participants

In the present study, the sample (N=120) comprised of students (n=60) and employees (n=60) with an equal number of males and females. The age range of the sample was from 19 to 25 years with the mean age of (M= 21.80,

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$\pm SD = 2.42$) and that of employees was from 25 to 45 years with the mean age of ($M = 36.16 \pm SD = 4.20$). Using purposive sampling method students were recruited from various universities of Khyber Pakhtunkhwa (KP) province, whereas the employees' sample was selected from various public and private organizations of the KP province.

Inclusion Criteria

- Undergraduate students currently enrolled in any public or private university of KP.
- For employees they must be working in private or public sector organization on wages or salary at non-executive level.
- Both genders were considered to be the part of sample.

Exclusion Criteria

- Students engaged in part time jobs along with their studies were excluded.

Measures

Demographic Information

Participants were required to provide demographic details of age, gender, qualification and their status either employee or student.

Schutte Self-Report Emotional Intelligence Test

The Schutte Self-Report Emotional Intelligence Test (SSEIT) (Schutte et al., 1998) is a self-report inventory comprised of 33-items with a five-point response scale, and the scale specifically analyzes typical emotional intelligence. Total score is found after reverse coding of items 5, 28 and 33, respondents can score between the range of 33 to 165 and higher scores means the person is having high level of emotional intelligence (Schutte et al., 2009). Alpha coefficient reliability of the scale was .90 in the current study.

Pure Procrastination Scale

Pure Procrastination Scale (PPS) (Steel, 2010) is comprised of 12 items with the response rate ranging from "very rarely or not correct all in my

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case=1" to "very often or all right and true held in my case=5". The PPS is comprised of combination of subscales measuring somewhat different aspects of procrastination but most important aspects are *decisional delay (items 1–3)*, *implemental delay (items 4–8)*, and *lateness/timeliness (items 9–12)* (Svartdal & Steel, 2017). In the present study, the Cronbach Alpha of .86 was obtained for PPS suggesting the high reliability of the scale for the current sample.

Introversion Scale

The Introversion Scale is a self-report inventory of introversion (McCroskey, 1998), used to assess introversion and neuroticism. Scale consists of 18 items requiring the participants to rate themselves on a 5-point scale that ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). Out of 18 items 12 items measure introversion while 6 items are related to neuroticism i.e., Items 3, 6, 9, 12, 15, and 17 depicting neuroticism tendencies for high scorer. Total score for introversion dimension is calculated through the formula that first we have to "add scores for item 1 and 4", and in the next step "add scores of items 2, 5, 7, 8, 10, 11, 13, 14, 16, & 18" and at the end "total of step 1 + total of step 2 is subtracted from 12" this will yield the total score for introversion. Individuals who score above 48 indicates that they are highly introverted; score below 24 means low level of introversion. Scores between 24 and 48 indicate moderate level of introversion. (McCroskey, 1998). The alpha coefficient reliability of introversion scale (IS) in this study was .88 and for neuroticism a reliability of .70 was obtained.

Procedure

For the administration of the study students were approached in their classes with the permission of head of their institutes and employees were approached during their working hours with the consent of their administration departments. All participants completed the questionnaires individually. Proper informed consent was taken from the participants about their agreement to participate in the study and they were briefed about the purpose and nature of the study. After these preliminary steps, participants completed three measures i.e., Schutte Self Report Emotional Intelligence Test, Pure Procrastination Scale and Introversion Scale and they provided their demographic information details. All instruments were used in English language as the scales were easy to comprehend by the participants of the study. Confidentiality of the respondents

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was maintained in the entire process because participants were required to report anonymously on all of the three measures.

Statistical Analysis

To explore the predictive relationship between emotional intelligence, personality traits i.e., introversion and neuroticism, and procrastination, linear regression analysis was conducted. The *t*-test was applied to assess differences in the level of emotional intelligence and procrastination between students and employees and across gender. All of the statistical analyses were carried out using computerized software SPSS 22 (Statistical Package of Social Sciences).

RESULTS

Table 1
Descriptive Statistics for Age of the Sample

Variables	Students (n=60)		Students (n=60)	
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Age	21.80	2.42	36.16	4.20

Table 2
Linear Regression Analysis with Emotional Intelligence as predictor of Procrastination

Model	<i>B</i>	<i>SE</i>	β	<i>R</i> ²	<i>F</i>	<i>Sig.</i>
Emotional Intelligence	-.24	.04	-.44	.19	28.50	.00*

**p* <.05, *df* = 1, 119

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Table 3
Linear Regression Analysis with Personality Traits i.e. Introversion and Neuroticism as predictor of Procrastination

Model	B	SE	β	R^2	F	Sig.
Introversion	.22	.08	.23*	.05	7.14	.01*
Neuroticism	.86	.17	.40*	.16	22.96	.00*

* $p < .05$, $df = 1, 119$

Table 4
Linear Regression Analysis with Personality Traits i.e. Introversion and Neuroticism as predictor of Emotional Intelligence

Model	B	SE	β	R^2	F	Sig.
Introversion	-.35	.16	-.20	.04	5.18	.03*
Neuroticism	-1.13	.34	-.29	.08	11.12	.00*

* $p < .05$, $df = 1, 119$

Table 5
Independent sample t-test showing Gender differences on Emotional intelligence and Procrastination

Variables	Male (n=60)		Female (n=60)		t	P
	M	SD	M	SD		
Emotional Intelligence	122.61	15.89	124.60	20.37	.59	.55
Procrastination	37.28	8.12	32.83	11.25	2.48	.01*

* $p < .05$, $df = 118$

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Independent Sample t-test Showing Differences on Emotional Intelligence and Procrastination among Students and Employees

Variables	Students (n=60)		Employees (n=60)		<i>t</i>	<i>P</i>
	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>		
Emotional Intelligence	127.81	14.97	119.40	20.24	2.59	.01*
Procrastination	34.30	10.05	35.81	10.02	.82	.41

**p* <.05, *df*=118

DISCUSSION

Regarding Hypothesis-1, the findings of the study show significant predictive relationship between emotional intelligence and procrastination (Table 2). Emotional intelligence is found to be negatively correlated with procrastination. Hence supporting the Hypothesis-1 of the present study. Previous studies also found a negative relationship between emotional intelligence and procrastination (Deniz et al., 2009). Pychyl (2009) suggested that by increasing EI we can overcome procrastination to some extent.

Results in relation to second hypothesis showed that personality traits of introversion and neuroticism predicted procrastination (Table 3). A positive association between introversion and neuroticism and procrastination is evident. Findings of the study confirm the relation and showed that procrastination will be increase with introversion and neuroticism in a person. The research work on procrastination suggests that neuroticism and procrastination are positively related with each other (Kim et al., 2017). Students with high level of neuroticism often procrastinate their tasks (Steel & Klingsieck, 2016).

Results regarding Hypothesis-3 are also in predicted direction (Table 4). A significant predictive relationship of neuroticism and introversion with emotional intelligence is evident. Previous studies also confirm the relation between emotional intelligence and personality traits. Emotional intelligence is

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negatively associated with neuroticism and positively related with extraversion (Ghiabi & Besharat, 2011). The reason behind this association is the fact that extraversion and neuroticism involve mood adjustment tendencies such as; extraverts often experience positive emotions and neurotics possess negative feelings, which correlates with mood adjustment factor of the EI (Bar-On 1997).

The Hypothesis-4 was about gender differences on emotional intelligence; the results found no significant differences on emotional intelligences among males and females (Table 5). Findings are consistent with the previous studies suggesting no significant difference between the between male and female in their emotional intelligence (Aquino, 2003; Meshkat & Nejati, 2017). Hypothesis-5 posited that there will be a significant difference in procrastination among gender with male scoring higher on procrastination than females. Results are in agreement with the hypothesis (Table 5). Significant amount of literature suggested that men possessed higher level of procrastination than women (Balkis & Duru, 2009; Khan et al., 2014; Özer et al., 2009; Steel & Ferrari, 2013). This gender differences may exist because men often possess poorer impulse-control as compared to the women (Steel & Ferrari, 2013).

Hypothesis-6 was that there will be difference in the level of emotional intelligence between students and employees. Results confirm the differences in emotional intelligence among students and employees with students scoring high as compared to employees (Table 6). One way to interpret the results is through the lens of multiple mediating or moderator variables that impact the influence of emotional intelligence in individuals. One such variable is individual's achievement. Furthermore, it could be speculated that emotional intelligence serves different functional purposes in students and employees due to difference in nature of their work and responsibilities.

Last hypothesis was that there will be significant difference in procrastination between students and employees. Findings suggested no differences in students and employees in their procrastination (Table 6). Studies reported that every individual procrastinate at least once in their life or they may procrastinate on daily basis so, employees and students possess no exception in this regard. Studies indicated that one out of five individuals fall into a category which they call chronic procrastinators (Murphy, 2017). Besides, findings of the studies may vary in other cultures and societies.

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This study extends our understanding of the phenomenon and helps us to focus our attention on developing strategies to lower the level of procrastination. Another important dimension of the study is its focus on the comparison of students and employees in procrastination and emotional intelligence. Little is known about the difference among students and employees, so this study will help the educational institutes and organization to develop strategies that will allow students and employees to engage in activities which boost their understanding of their own emotions, actions and cognition and that of the others.

There exist certain limitations that needs special consideration in future research work. The phenomenon under study could be better explained through longitudinal study design as the same group of students can be followed in their professional life and any variation in their level of emotional intelligence and procrastination can be better evaluated in this way. Another limitation of this study is that it considers only few dimensions of the procrastination and personality variables, the study would be more effective by incorporating a broader aspect of procrastination e.g., active and passive procrastination, etc. The above mentioned limitations allow the future work to explore the phenomenon of emotional intelligence and procrastination and their relation with personality traits in more detail with keeping in mind the various factors that might affect the variables in study. As this study consider only employees working at non-executive level, so better results can be obtained while considering different positions of employees in an organization. The same phenomenon can also be fully comprehended while studying it at diverse and larger geographical areas.

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