PERSONALITY TRAITS AS PREDICTORS OF PROCRASTINATION AMONG UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS IN GOMBE STATE UNIVERSITY

[1]*Zubairu Sulaiman; & [2]Mohammed Kudi Dukku*
[1]Department of Science Education, Gombe State University
[2]Department of Primary Education, Federal College of Education (T), Gombe, Gombe State.
Email: mohammeddukku@gmail.com   **Phone:** +2348083363344.

Abstract
T*he study examined personality traits as predictors of procrastination among undergraduate students in Gombe State University. It explored the effects of personality traits to the prediction of procrastination among the students. One corresponding hypothesis was tested in the study. Using correlational design from a population of 7166 (n=2389 female, n=4777 male), the study used a sample of 349 undergraduate students (n=163 female, n=186 male) using multi-stage sampling techniques. Data were collected using the Personal Information Questionnaire (PIQ), the Tuckman Procrastination Scale (TPS) and the Ten-Item Personality Inventory (TIPI). The results found that personality traits (β = .2.908; t = 5.826; p = .000) have no effects on the prediction of procrastination, among the students. The study concludes that there seem to be other reasons for procrastination that are outside the focus of the study. The study recommended that students should be encouraged to build self-confidence, commence in earnest every academic task given during their studies. Personality assessment services should be strengthened and supported to guide students on how to adapt to certain personality traits.*

Key words: *Procrastination, Personality Traits, Prediction, Undergraduates.*

Introduction
Procrastination is described by Steel and Ferrari (2013) as "to voluntarily delay an intended course of action despite expecting to be worse off for the delay". As posited by Schraw, Olafson and Wadkins (2007), a behaviour must be needless delaying and counterproductive for it to be regarded as procrastination. Simpson and Pychyl (2009); and Steel and Ferrari (2013) regarded procrastination as an irrational delay, whereas recent studies, by using rational choice models find out that what might appear to be irrational on the surface can be a predictable behaviour (Zarick & Stonebraker, 2009). Within a rational choice framework, procrastination is not an irrational personality trait; it is a logical, although potentially inefficient, behaviour driven by a reasoned comparison of perceived costs and benefits (Zarick & Stonebraker, 2009). *Causes and correlates of procrastination have been studied extensively.* Steel and Ferrari (2013) *reported in a meta-analysis that the causes and correlates for procrastination are divided into four areas: task characteristics, individual differences, outcomes, and demographics. Research looking at task characteristics examines procrastination with an understanding that people who procrastinate voluntarily choose one behaviour or task over another. Factors associated with task characteristics of procrastination (task aversiveness) include timing of rewards and punishments.* Numerous problems appear to be associated with procrastination. Concerns from environmental to personal health are put off, and allowed to compound with several societal problems such as substance abuse to be related to procrastination; procrastination could also result in unhealthy habits when it comes to sleep, diet and exercise.

Procrastination weakens confidence among students as well as their expectancy of completing a task; procrastination creates anxiety and affects achievement of goals. Hussain and Sultan (2010) found procrastination to cause higher stress, low self-esteem, depression, plagiarism, higher use of alcohol, cigarettes and caffeine and to decrease ability to maintain healthy self-care habits like exercise and eating. Procrastination is therefore foreseeably becoming of interest to numerous fields such as public policy and behavioural contexts. Different primary and secondary problems have been found to be associated with procrastination, e.g. low achievement of students and their increased physical and psychological problems, confusion and irresponsibility. Hussain and Sultan (2010) argued procrastination to be promoted by longer timelines of completing a task, plenty of leisure time and co-curricular activities. The growing body of literature has demonstrated procrastination as a personality characteristic far more than mere time management. Procrastination is said to be a

personality trait intended to put off an existing task – an irrational delay (Burka & Yuen, 2008). If this is in fact the case, then certain personality types might be more prone to procrastination than others.

Personality is expressed early in both humans and other animal species (John, Robins, & Pervin, 2008), and is stable during adulthood. The big five personality traits capture the main dimensions of individual variation. The five traits includes: Extraversion, describing an energetic approach toward the world; Agreeableness, describing a pro-social and communal orientation as opposed to antagonism; Conscientiousness, implying a high level of control over tasks and goals; Neuroticism, being associated with anxiety and irritability for; and Openness to Experience, being related to creativity, curiosity, intellectuality, independent-mindedness etc (Terracciano, McCrae, & Costa, 2010). Steel (2010) reported that students in their study tended to perceive that they possessed certain characteristics leading them to repeatedly engage in behaviours of procrastination, and that it was an inborn habit. In previous researches like Abramowski, (2014), several claims have been made with respect to the personality of those who report procrastination: first, they are low on Conscientiousness, and second, high on neuroticism. Van Eerde (2000) found that the largest average effect size was found for Conscientiousness (r = -.63), but neuroticism, however, showed an effect size of only moderate magnitude. Solomon and Rothblum (2014) found a relationship between procrastination and the personality correlates only with men. They concluded that this may be due to attitudinal differences toward the routine activities included in the procrastination scale.

Personality is defined as a dynamic integration which includes an individual's personal experience as well as behavioural patterns. Personality can be taken as the combination of conscious, concrete, habits, self experiences and that of surrounding environment. It also includes a person's thoughts and cognitive functioning, and internal desires. An individual's personality also constitutes his patterns of behaviour which includes both conscious and unconscious. A person's personality traits affect many other dimensions of their life. The personality traits are the characteristics that are manifested through the behavioural patterns, thoughts and emotions of a person. The traits of personality are considered to be stable with time. The trait perspective theory of personality is one the most successful approaches in the study of personality. This approach focuses on the traits that form the major constitution of a person's personality. There are many theories which explain the personality traits. The roots of the history of trait perspective can be located in the ancient Greek history as well. Zeenath and Orcullo (2012) explained personality traits with respect to the body types (somatypes). He categorized the body types into: endomorphy, mesomorphy and ectomorphy. According to him, the three traits of personality are: viscerotonia, somatotonia and cerebrotonia. These body types and various traits of personality have a strong association with each other. Endomorphs are calm, high spirited and sociable. An ectomorph is entirely opposite to the endomorph. These people tend to be self conscious, socially anxious, creative, thoughtful, gentle, personal and reserved. The mesomorphs lie between the endomorphs and ectomorphs. The mesomorphs are daring and courageous. They like experimenting with new things and willing to hang out with new people.

However, Ferrari and Tice (2014) gave a new outlook to personality trait theory. They used the term dispositions for traits. He put forward three types of dispositions; cardinal, central and secondary. The dominant and common traits in a person are known as cardinal dispositions. The central traits form the basic foundation of personality but are less prominent. These traits are used to define individual's personality, for example, intelligent, shy, modest, loyal, funny, sensitive among others. The secondary dispositions are less important, less consistent and less generalised. These traits may include a person's favourite food, music choices, clothing preferences etc.

Ferrari & Scher (2002) gave the five factor model of traits of personality. The five factor model personality includes the following traits of personality: emotional stability, extraversion, and openness to experience, agreeableness and conscientiousness. There has been some disagreement, however, as to what each broad trait or dimension's exact label should be (Choi & Moran, 2009). The five factors were initially labelled by Steel and Ferrari (2013)) as; i - Extraversion or Surgency (talkative, assertive, energetic); ii- Agreeableness (good-natured, cooperative, trustful); iii - Conscientiousness (orderly, responsible, dependable); iv - Emotional Stability (calm, not neurotic, not easily upset); and

v - Culture (intellectual, polished, independent-minded). Zeenath and Orcullo (2012) interpreted factor V as Intellect and Charine (2015) interpreted it as Openness.

These five factors or broad traits interact to form human personality and are now generally accepted as extraversion, neuroticism, agreeableness, conscientiousness and openness to experience (Sharma and Kaur, 2011). These factors eventually became known as the "Big Five" with the title emphasising that each of these dimensions represent personality at the broadest level, summarising a much larger number of specific personality characteristics (Choi & Moran, 2009). Some researchers have argued that five factors are not sufficient to explain all individual differences in personality (Solomon and Rothblum, 2014), however the five factors do not deplete the description of personality but it simply represents the highest hierarchical level of a trait (Choi & Moran, 2009). It is only at a global level that the five factors give a complete characterisation of a person (Zeenath & Orcullo, 2012).

Pychyl, Coplan & Reid (2002) argued that there is still much more yet to learn about the tendency to procrastinate as a function of individual differences. One current trend in procrastination research has been building connections between procrastination and personality traits. According to the differential psychology perspective, procrastination is understood as a personality trait (Ozer & Sackes, 2010). Procrastination has been conceptualized as a weak point of personality and illustrates an extreme variant of a personality trait, namely conscientiousness (Pychyl et al 2012). As Abramowski, (2014) argued, procrastination can be conceptualized as a paucity of conscientiousness if viewed from a personality perspective. This approach to understanding the effects of personality on procrastination has received attention as an alternative way to understand maladaptive ways of being in the world.

Hussain and Sultan (2010) reported that individuals who demonstrated conscientiousness were found to be less likely to procrastinate. Conversely, those who demonstrated low levels of conscientiousness were reported to have higher tendency to procrastinate. In active procrastination, this means that students who exhibit low emotional stability may delay in submitting assignments and delay in examination preparation as they may feel unable or unlikely to meet the expectation.

Steel and Ferrari (2013) students with high emotional stability may have higher chances of academic success which may be protective against procrastination. Extraversion is a personality trait which is quite similar to emotional stability; however it is more susceptible to an expressed, sociable, optimistic, outgoing, energetic and exciting orientation. It was found that students who exhibit higher levels of extraversion have lower coping skill for academic performance. Hence, it might lead them to have higher tendency in procrastination (Diazh, Morales, Cohen, & Ferrari, 2008). Lastly, most of the previous studies showed that openness to experience and agreeableness are not related to procrastination. It is not clear why these two personality traits were not associated with procrastination and hence further studies are necessary.

Statement of the Problem
Procrastination that is common in school setting where students tend to delay academic tasks such as assignments and curricular activities until the last minute occurs with students of varying personality traits. The students procrastinate on a wide variety of activities and circumstances, whether it is putting off completing a task, writing an assignment, or even reading for examinations.

In Gombe State University, undergraduate students had been running from one place to another when it comes to submission of assignments, projects or even information regarding the commencement of examinations. This could not be unconnected to their procrastinatory behaviors they have been exhibiting. Experiences have shown that the tendencies to procrastinate had no boundaries among students. Could this problem be attitudinal or bahavioural? Does students' action to procrastinate had relationship with their personality traits? This study explored the place of personality traits to the prediction of procrastination among undergraduate students in Gombe State University.
Research Objective
The study explored the effects of personality traits to the prediction of students' procrastination among undergraduate students in Gombe State University.

Research Hypothesis
There is no significant relationship between personality traits to the prediction of students' procrastination among undergraduate students in Gombe State University.

Methodology
The study employed correlational design. The population of this study comprised all the 200, 300 and 400 levels students in 2018/2019 academic session in Gombe State University totalling seven thousand one hundred and sixty six (7,166). Through multi-stage sampling, the study used 349 of the sample for analysis and interpretation.

A Ten Item Personality Inventory (TIPI) was adapted and used during the study. Construct validity of the instrument was established through confirmatory factor analysis by the researcher. Multiple regressions were used to analyse the hypothesis. Statistical Package for Social Sciences for Windows (SPSS 23.0) was used to perform the analysis at 0.05 level of significance.

Results

Table 1: Regression Summary on the effects of personality traits to the prediction of procrastination among undergraduate students in Gombe State University

Personality Traits	β	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
Conscientiousness	3.743	1.298	.144	2.884	.004
Extraversion	3.633	1.255	.148	2.895	.004
Agreeableness	8.757	1.538	.300	5.694	.000
Emotional Stability	-1.747	1.186	-.080	-1.474	.142
Openness to Experience	3.587	1.576	.119	2.276	.023

The results as shown in Table 1 indicate that the partial correlation coefficient as indicated by the Beta values have no contribution to the explanation of the variability of undergraduate students' procrastination. The raw standardized regression coefficients of the predictors together with their relative effect as shown in Table 1 shows that agreeableness has the strongest effect in the model (β = 8.757; t = 5.694; p = .000) followed by extraversion and conscientiousness (β = 3.633; t = 2.895; p = .004) and (β = 3.743; t = 2.884; p = .004), then openness to experience (β = 3.587; t = 2.267; p = .023) whereas emotional stability (β = -1.747; t = -1.474; p = .142) was found to be significant at .05 levels.

Findings of the Study
The study found out that personality traits have no effects to the prediction of procrastination among undergraduate students in Gombe State University.

Discussion of Findings
The study investigated the ability of a set of personality factors to predict procrastination among undergraduate students in Gombe State University. The results confirmed the findings of previous studies regarding the important role played by the agreeableness factor in the predictability of procrastination. It was found that agreeableness was the essential factor among the Big Five factors of personality regarding the ability to predict procrastination. Agreeableness was the only factor which made a significantly unique contribution to predict procrastination.

The finding is also in substantial agreement with the findings of Sepehrian and Lotf (2011), who report that "in essence trait procrastination is the lack of conscientiousness". This result is not very surprising, because there exists what might be called a theoretical agreement among researchers regarding the strong negative relationship between both procrastination and conscientiousness. Steel and Ferari (2013) proposes that "procrastination is conceptually representative of low conscientiousness and self-regulatory failure. Consequently, it should show strong associations with these variables". He reported that the findings of their research showed that the majority of unique variance in procrastination scores was predicted by the conscientiousness factor. It was found that self-discipline, which is one of the most essential facets of conscientiousness, was the strongest facet level predictor of procrastination (Hussain and Sultan, 2010; Watson, 2001). However, Gallego and Pardos (2013) report that self-efficacy for self-regulation is more significant than self-regulation itself

as a predictor of the tendency to procrastinate. Steel and Ferrari (2013) found that procrastination was significantly correlated with low conscientiousness facets of competence, order, dutifulness, achievement striving, self-discipline, and deliberation. Consequently, we can argue that conscientiousness is the most essential factor in the prediction of academic procrastination.

Regarding the extraversion factor, although the table of correlation shows a significant relationship between procrastination and extraversion, the coefficient table indicates that extraversion does not make a significantly unique contribution to predict academic procrastination. The present results were consistent with earlier research (Hussain and Sultan, 2010) but in contrast with other studies that found a significant relationship between procrastination and extraversion (Watson, 2001). Extraversion could thus be considered one of the most interesting factors regarding its relationship with procrastination, although simultaneously be perceived as the most problematic factor (Steel, 2007).

Regarding emotional stability, although the result of the multiple regression analysis showed a significant relationship between academic procrastination and emotional stability, the contribution of this factor to predict academic procrastination was not statistically significant. This result showed that emotional stability does not play a significant role in the prediction of academic procrastination. Emotional stability is potentially the most contested factor regarding its relationship with procrastination, since although some researchers found a significant relationship between procrastination and this factor (Hussain and Sultan, 2010), other researchers reported no significant relationship between procrastination and emotional stability (Steel, 2007). Steel and Ferrari (2013) reports a significant correlation between procrastination and emotional stability facets such as anxiety, depression, self- consciousness, impulsiveness, and vulnerability. The relationship between extraversion and emotional stability in a recent study could be due to an overlap with other factors in the model.

Openness to experience was not significantly correlated with procrastination, indicating that this factor did not make a significant contribution to predict procrastination. The present results were consistent with several previous research findings (Hussain and Sultan, 2010). However, with regard to openness, Sepehrian and Lotf (2011) report that although there is no significant relationship between trait procrastination and openness, procrastination are related to fantasy, which is one of the major components of the openness factors.

Results from the study have shown a significant relationship between procrastination and several personality characteristics. This was in line with Gallego and Pardos (2013) who conducted research to examine the relationship among procrastination, self-efficacy, self-esteem, self-regulation, and self-efficacy for self-regulation, reporting that although the result showed a significant positive relationship among procrastination and these four variables. The results indicate that agreeableness was most predictive of procrastination tendency.

Relationships between the Big Five factors and academic procrastination have been investigated by several researchers (Poropat, 2009). Steel and Ferrari (2013) found that "total procrastination was related to both the low conscientiousness facets (competence, order, dutifulness, achievement striving, self-discipline, deliberation) and the neuroticism facets (anxiety, depression, self-consciousness, impulsiveness, vulnerability)". Although the result of the study showed agreeableness among them have the relation to the prediction of procrastination, there were other four factors like openness to experience and conscientiousness that does not predict procrastination among the undergraduate students in Gombe State University.

Conclusion
The study concludes that personality traits have made significant contributions to the prediction or otherwise, of procrastination among undergraduate students at Gombe State University. Those traits that had no effect to the prediction of procrastination significantly had uncopied a larger portion in the explanation of the predictability of undergraduate students' procrastination. However, it could be

certain that there exist other factors outside the focus of the study that might have predicting effects on undergraduate students' procrastination in Gombe State University.

Recommendations

The following recommendations were proffered:

i. During the regular orientation programme, the students should be encouraged to build confidence in their various courses of studies, since procrastination can be predicted on ones gender, age, and personality trait. This will enable the students to prepare ahead of time on any task.

ii. Despite high enthusiasm of students to meeting their deadline, their level of compliance is still affected by unnecessary delays. The study recommends that early commencement of task such as assignments and studies for test/examinations are instilled among students so as to avert the negative effects arising from procrastination.

iii. Personality assessment services should be strengthened in the Guidance and Counselling Unit and supported by the management of Gombe State University so as to enable students understand some personality type or traits, receive guidance on how to overcome certain personality traits as well as their implication to their academic pursuit.

References

Abramowski, A. (2014). Is it time for 'active' procrastination? New Voices in Psychology, 27(3), 180-183.

Charine, P. J. (2015). The relationship between procrastination, perfection, motivation and academic achievement of high school learners in North West province, South Africa – Unpublished thesis work submitted to the University of South Africa.

Choi, J. N., & Moran, S. V. (2009). Why not procrastinate? Development and validation of a new active procrastination scale. Journal of Social Psychology, 149(2), 195-211.

Diaz-Morales, J., Cohen, J., & Ferrari, J. (2008). An integrated view of personality styles related to avoidant procrastination. Personality and Individual Differences, 45(6), 554–558.

Ferrari, J. R., & Tice, D. M. (2014). Procrastination as a self-handicap for men and women: A task-avoidance strategy in a laboratory setting. Journal of Research in Personality, 34(1):73-83.

Ferrari, J. R., & Scher, S. (2002). Toward an understanding of academic and non-academic tasks procrastinated by students: The use of daily logs. Psychology in the Schools, 37(4), 359-366.

Gallego, A., & Pardos-Prado, S. (2013). The big five personality traits and attitudes towards immigrants. Journal of Ethnic and Migration Studies, 40(1), 79-99.

Hussain, I., & Sultan. S. (2010). Analysis of procrastination among university students. Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences, 5(1), 1897–1904.

Ozer, B. U., & Sackes, M. (2010). Effects of procrastination on college students' life satisfaction. Procedia Social and Behavioral Sciences, 12(1), 512–519.

Poropat, A. (2009). A meta-analysis of the Five-Factor Model of personality and academic performance. Psychological Journal, 135(2), 322–328.

Pychyl, T. A., Coplan, R. J., & Reid, P. A. (2002). Parenting and procrastination: Gender differences in the relations between procrastination, parenting style and self-worth in early adolescence. Personality and Individual Differences, 33(2), 271-285.

Schraw, G., Olafson, L., & Wadkins, T. (2007). Doing the things we do: A grounded theory of procrastination. Journal of Educational Psychology, 99(1), 12-25.

Sepehrian, F., & Lotf, J. J. (2011). The effects of coping styles and gender on academic procrastination among university students. Journal of Basic and Applied Scientific Research, 1(1), 2987-2993.

Sharma, M., & Kaur, G. (2011) Gender differences in procrastination and academic stress among adolescents. Indian Journal of Social Science Researches, 8(1), 122-127.

Simpson, W. K., & Pychyl, T. A. (2009). In search of the arousal procrastinator: Investigating the relation between procrastination, arousal-based personality traits and beliefs about procrastination motivations. Paper presented at the Canadian Psychological Association Conference, Montreal, QC.

Solomon, L. J., & Rothblum, E. D. (2014) Procrastination: frequency and cognitive-behavioural correlates. Journal of Counselling Psychology, 31(4), 503–509.

Steel, P. (2007). The nature of procrastination: A meta-analytic and theoretical review of quintessential self-regulatory failure. Psychological Journal, 133(1), 65-94.

Steel, P. (2010). Arousal, avoidant and decisional procrastinators: Do they exist? Personality and Individual Differences, 48(8), 926-934.

Steel, P., & Ferrari, J. (2013). Sex, education and procrastination: An epidemiological study of procrastinators' characteristics from a global sample. European Journal of Personality, 27(1), 51-58.

Terracciano, A., McCrae, R. R., & Costa, P. T. (2010). Intra-individual change in personality stability and age. Journal of Research in Personality, 44(1), 31-37.

Van E. W. (2000). Procrastination: Self-regulation in initiating aversive goals. Applied Psychology: An International Review, 49(3), 372-389.

Watson, D. C. (2001). Procrastination and the five-factor model: A facet level analysis. Journal of Personality and Individual Differences, 30(1), 149 – 158.

Zarick, L. M., & Stonebraker, R. (2009). I'll do it tomorrow. College Teaching, 57(4), 211- 215.

Zeenath, S., & Orcullo, D. J. C. (2012). Exploring procrastination among undergraduates. International Proceedings of Economics Development & Research, 47(1), 42-46.