



The Relationship between Indecisiveness and Academic Procrastination in Pakistani Students from Single-Parent Households

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ABSTRACT

There is limited literature on indecisiveness and academic procrastination, particularly among students living with single parents in Pakistan. Therefore, the objective of this study is to examine the relationship between indecisiveness and academic procrastination among Pakistani students living with single parents, addressing a gap in research on these issues within this specific cultural context. The current research utilized a cross-sectional correlational design with purposive sampling to assess these variables in a sample of 120 college and university students (120 men, 30 women), with a mean age of 21.14 years and a standard deviation of 3.37. Two questionnaires were used to assess the study variables: the Academic Procrastination Scale and the Indecisiveness Scale. The results show a significant positive relationship between indecisiveness and academic procrastination, with higher levels of indecisiveness strongly linked to increased procrastination behaviors among Pakistani students living with a single parent. The regression analysis further suggests that indecisiveness significantly contributes to academic procrastination, highlighting the role of decision-making difficulties in fostering procrastination tendencies among students from single-parent households. The study offers comprehensive implications for students, parents, and the government to decline students' procrastination and elevate the decision making skills.

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1. Introduction

Indecisiveness refers to the generalized difficulty in making decisions and often involves overthinking options and repeatedly evaluating pros and cons, which leads to delays in decision-making (Appel, Englich, & Burghardt, 2021; Lauderdale, Martin, & Moore, 2019). Some people are good at making decisions, while others overthink, which leads to missing deadlines and failing to complete important tasks on time (Ferrari, Johnson, & McCown, 1995). The delay in executing tasks leads to aversive outcomes, such as poor academic achievement, missed assignment deadlines, and academic procrastination, ultimately affecting academic performance despite the perceived stress to complete work promptly (Schraw, Wadkins, & Olafson, 2007). There is a significant association between indecisiveness and procrastination, which has been proven to adversely affect academic performance. The reason behind this is the lack of decision-making skills, such as how to start and prioritize tasks (Ferrari, O'Callaghan, & Newbegin, 2005). According to Rassin's Model of Indecisiveness, there are two factors behind indecisiveness: internal and external. External factors refer to social support in decision-making, while internal factors relate to an individual's own decision-making skills (Rassin, 2007). Children from single-parent households often lack proper emotional support, which has been proven to lead to academic procrastination due to inadequate decision-making skills and insufficient support, ultimately decreasing academic success (Lauderdale, Martin, & Moore, 2019; Leach Jr, 2020). A

comparative study of students from single-parent households and a control group revealed that students from dual-parent households possess better decision-making skills, leading to greater academic success compared to students from single-parent households (Ferrari, 1994).

Another study indicates that single parenting is not proven to provide adequate support due to a lack of emotional support and proper time allocation, which adversely affects a child's academic behavior (Yuen, 2008). Support networks have been proven to mitigate indecisiveness in students, reducing procrastination and leading to better and more timely decision-making (Germeijs & De Boeck, 2002). There is limited literature regarding students from single-parent households, particularly concerning the association between indecisiveness and academic procrastination, especially in collectivistic cultures like Pakistan, where both parents play a vital role in a child's upbringing, including the development of decision-making skills and academic behavior. This study aims to address this gap, propose appropriate interventions, and provide literature for future research.

1.1. Hypotheses

1. There is likely to be a significant and positive relationship between indecisiveness and academic procrastination among students from single-parent households.
2. There is likely to be a significant and positive effect of indecisiveness on academic procrastination among students from single-parent households.

2. Method

2.1. Research Design

A correlational research design was used to explore the relationship between indecisiveness and academic procrastination among Pakistani students of single parents.

2.2. Sample

The sample consisted of 120 college and university students (20 girls and 100 boys) with age range of 18 to 25. The rationale behind choosing this particular age group is due to mostly intermediate and university students are of this age range.

2.3. Sampling Strategy

A purposive sampling strategy was employed to select participants i.e. college and university students.

2.4. Inclusion Criteria

Both male and female students from college and university living with single parent i.e. father or mother were included in the study. Participants comprised both college and university students between age range of 18 to 25.

2.5. Assessment Measures

2.5.1. Indecisiveness Scale

The Indecisiveness Scale (owen, n.d) was used to assess the indecisiveness levels of participants. This scale includes a Likert-type format with five response options (Strongly Disagree = 1 to Strongly Agree = 5). It includes 15 items that assess chronic difficulty in decision-making across different contexts.

2.5.2. Academic Procrastination Scale

The Academic Procrastination Scale (Yockey, 2016), which consists of 25 items, was used to measure the tendency to procrastinate academic tasks. This scale also uses a 5-point Likert scale (1=Disagree, 5=Agree) to gauge the frequency of procrastination behaviors among students.

2.5.3. Ethical Considerations

The study adhered to ethical guidelines as outlined by the American Psychological Association. The department and institutes were taken permission before data collection. The authors of questionnaires were also approached via email and took permission for data collection. Informed consent was obtained from all participants, and they were assured that their responses would remain confidential. Participants were informed of their right to withdraw from the study at any time, and their privacy was strictly maintained. Ethical approval was sought and granted by the relevant institutional review boards.

3. Results

Table 1: Demographic Characteristics of Participants (N=120).

Characteristics	Frequency	Percentage	Mean	SD
Gender				
Men	90	75		
Women	30	25		
Age			21.14	3.37
Students of Single-Parent Households				
Living with separated mother	36	30		
Living with divorced mother	10	8		
Living with widow mother	20	17		
Living with separated father	14	12		
Living with divorced father	8	7		
Living with widow father	12	10		
Lives with mother while father lives abroad	20	17		
Qualification				
Intermediate	31	26		
Bachelor	68	57		
Master	21	17		

Note: *SD*= Standard deviation

The above table shows that 90 (75%) men and 30 (25%) women participated in the study, with a mean age of 21.14 and a standard deviation of 3.37. Regarding the students' household status, most live with separated mothers (36, 30%), followed by 10 (8%) who live with divorced mothers, 20 (17%) who live with a widowed mother, 14 (12%) who live with a separated father, 12 (10%) who live with a widowed father, and 20 (17%) who live with their mother while their father lives abroad. In terms of educational qualifications, the majority of participants have a bachelor's degree (68, 57%), followed by 21 (17%) with a master's degree.

Table 2: Correlation among Study Variables (N=120)

Variables	1	2
1. Indecisiveness	-	.55**
2. Academic Procrastination		-

Note: ** $p < .01$

The above table depicts a positive and significant association between indecisiveness and academic procrastination.

Table 3: Regression Analysis for Academic Procrastination (N=120)

Variables	B	SE	B	P	R	R ²	F	95% CI	
								LL	UL
Indecisiveness	.31	.04	.55	.000	.55	.30	52.66	0.23	0.40

Note: *** $p < .001$

The above table depicts indecisiveness as a predictor of outcome variable academic procrastination. Indecisiveness positively and significantly predict academic procrastination ($\beta = .55***$, $R^2 = .30$, $F = 52.66$) and its accounts for 30% variance in academic procrastination among students of single parents.

4. Discussion

There is limited literature regarding the association between indecisiveness and academic procrastination, particularly in the context of single parenting in Pakistan. This study aims to address this gap by exploring the relationship between indecisiveness and academic procrastination among college and university students aged 18 to 25 who are living with single parents (either a father or mother). The first hypothesis of the study states that there is likely to be a significant association between indecisiveness and academic procrastination among students from single-parent households. The correlational analysis confirmed this hypothesis, as a significant association was found between indecisiveness and academic procrastination. These findings align with previous studies, which suggest that academic procrastination is more common in single-parent households because of inadequate emotional and social support that

leads to mental health challenges and indecisiveness, thus declining the academic performance of students (Ferrari & Olivette, 1994; Lauderdale, Martin, & Moore, 2019). Pakistan is a country where family values and collectivism are highly regarded; the absence of a parent could be the reason for participants' academic procrastination and difficulty in making effective decisions for their studies. Regression analyses significantly supported the second hypothesis of the study. The results of the study are aligned with the results of previous studies that depict that a lack of decision-making skills and procrastination of academic activities are related to insufficient parental support, specifically the absence of one parent (Hen & Goroshit, 2020; Rosário et al., 2009; Sagone & Indiana, 2023; Saya, 2015). The other cultural explanation for the study's results could be Pakistan's collectivistic society, where the absence of one parent significantly affects the growth of the child adversely due to a lack of financial and emotional support, pressure of failure, and may cause indecisiveness and procrastination of academic activities among Pakistani students.

4.1. Limitation and Recommendations

The first limitation of the study is the small sample size (120 participants), which limits the generalizability of the findings to all students with single parents. Future studies should include larger cohorts, using tools like G*Power to determine appropriate sample sizes. The second limitation is the use of a cross-sectional design; a longitudinal research design would be more effective in examining changes in the variables over time. The third limitation is the imbalance in gender and living arrangements with single parents, which prevented the analysis of mean differences. Future studies should ensure a balanced representation of demographic characteristics to explore such differences. Additionally, future research should consider the financial income levels of students' households.

4.2. Implications

The findings of this study affirm its objectives and highlight the need for actionable implications to support college and university students in Pakistan who struggle with indecisiveness and academic procrastination. First, it is essential to promote help-seeking behaviour among students, encouraging them to seek psychological assistance from mental health professionals. Universities can facilitate this by organizing seminars, webinars, and workshops, with higher authorities inviting mental health experts to enhance student performance. Second, the government and NGOs should develop effective policies and provide financial and educational resources for students from single-parent households, as single-parent incomes are often insufficient to meet their needs. Third, workshops should be arranged to train parents in fostering their children's decision-making skills, such as time management, to help them overcome academic procrastination and improve academic performance. Additionally, parents should be encouraged to create a supportive and guiding environment for their children, ensuring they feel emotionally secure and motivated to succeed academically.

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