



# Understanding the Relationship Between Perceived University Support, Hopelessness, and Procrastination Among University Students

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**ABSTRACT:** Procrastination is a common problem for university students, and it often affects their school performance, mental health, and overall well-being. This study focused on understanding the relationship between Perceived University Support, Hopelessness, and Procrastination among university students. Data was collected from 102 university students across India aged 18-25. Pearson's Product Moment Correlation was employed to understand the correlation between Perceived University Support, Hopelessness and Procrastination. The findings show that there is a significant negative correlation between Perceived University support and Hopelessness and a significant positive correlation between Hopelessness and Procrastination. However, the correlation between Perceived University Support and Procrastination was not significant. Further, Multiple regression showed that Hopelessness is a significant predictor of procrastination among university students while Perceived University Support is not. This suggests that there are other contributing factors that play a significant role in predicting Procrastination in University Students.

**KEYWORDS:** Procrastination, Hopelessness, Perceived university support

## I. INTRODUCTION

Perceived university support considers students' perception of their university's support, which includes: educational support, cognitive support, and business development support (Kraaijenbrink et al. 2010) At college, perceived university support could be in the form of mentors, access to learning materials, mental health help, and a sense of belonging to a community. More support from university staff would engender a feeling of less hopelessness among students, which would lead to less procrastination of activities, since they would feel safer and more equipped to deal with

schoolwork on time. The Goal setting theory suggests that when individuals are provided a clear sense of direction and purpose, they are motivated to achieve goals. Setting specific, measurable, achievable, relevant, and time-bound goals facilitate motivation and performance and reduces procrastination. Additionally, University's support can help in goal attainment of students by providing resources and guidance, and reduce feelings of hopelessness and minimize procrastination. Academic assistance, emotional support, access to resources, social connections are some forms of support students expect from their academic institutions. This plays a crucial role in shaping their academic experiences. Positive perception of university support makes students feel motivated, valued and involved in their curriculum. Such students also show high levels of academic success and satisfaction (Sheldon & Krieger, 2004). Higher perceived social support is negatively correlated with procrastination. (Yang, Zhu, & Hu, 2023). Lower levels of support from the university are perceived to cause students to engage in procrastination behaviors (Steel & Ferrari, 2013). Feeling unsupported by the university can lead to increased levels of stress and anxiety in students, exacerbating their tendency to procrastinate. Their perceived university support shapes a student's motivation and re-engagement in academic tasks. Students who perceive their support from the university to be high experience autonomous motivation, a great buffer against students' disengagement from academic tasks (Vansteenkiste et al., 2009). Moreover, perceived university support plays a crucial role in affecting students' academic performance, tendency to procrastinate, and overall well-being.

Hopelessness is negative expectations combined with the judgment that problems can't be solved—in other words, people in the grip of hopelessness believe that their future will be miserable and that there's nothing they can do to



change it (Beck et al., 1975). These feelings of despair and helplessness may arise due to academic pressure, lack of assistance, and personal challenges in university students. According to theory of Learned Helplessness, individuals who perceive a lack of control over their environment may develop feelings of helplessness and hopelessness leading to passive behaviors where they may delay tasks as they perceive their efforts to be futile. Past studies have found that feeling hopeless greatly affects motivation and how well students do in school. This causes students to lose interest in their studies and put off tasks to avoid them. They procrastinate not just because they are not interested, but also because they think their efforts will not make a difference (Blunt & Pychyl, 2000). To deal with such feelings of hopelessness becomes really important for students to avoid its negative consequences, one of which includes delaying tasks or procrastination. Well-being programs along with campus-based interventions can help students integrate hope. Students with higher levels of hope are less likely to procrastinate (Alexander & Onwuegbuzie, 2007). Promoting self-compassion therapeutically and reducing hopelessness plays a crucial strategy on college campuses to prevent suicide (Hirsch et al., 2021).

Procrastination may be defined as 'the voluntary delay of an intended and necessary and/or [personally] important activity, despite expecting potential negative consequences that outweigh the positive consequences of the delay' (KlingSieck, 2013). It is generally understood as a failure of self-regulation and is usually intensified by the presence

of emotional and cognitive factors, such as anxiety, fear of failure, and low self-efficacy (Steel, 2007). However, in different ways and to different degrees, external factors, such as the academic environment, are equally embedded with intrinsic factors, such as emotional well-being and stress. Perceived university support can also fulfil these needs and foster intrinsic motivation, reducing procrastination tendencies among students. According to self-efficacy theory low expectations about performing a task and one's ability can lead to procrastination in university students. This can result in avoidant behavior that may lead to inadequate performance and negative evaluation of self. A study on Chinese college students concluded that behavior focused strategies, natural reward strategies and constructive thought pattern strategies can significantly predict procrastination and practicing these strategies may help reduce students' procrastination (wang et al., 2021).

The purpose of this study will be to determine whether perceived university support and hopelessness lead to procrastination among college students. By unravelling these intertwined psychological aspects, we want to expound what motivates these habits of procrastination. This study will add value to existing literature by examining the relationship between perceived university support, hopelessness, and procrastination among college students. Since there is a significant gap in our understanding of how these constructs interact and influence students' tendency to procrastinate, the current study will aim to address this gap.

## II. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study is a correlational study that employed snowball sampling technique to collect data from 200 university students across India out of which 102 responses were received. The data was analyzed using the Excel (2019 version). Descriptive Statistics was calculated for a sample of 102 university students. Pearson Correlation Analysis examined the relationship between perceived university support, hopelessness, and procrastination. Multiple regression analysis assessed the predictive utility of perceived university support and hopelessness on procrastination.

### 2.1 Objectives

**2.1.1** To examine the correlation between perceived university support and hopelessness.

**2.1.2** To examine the correlation between perceived university support and procrastination.

**2.1.3** To examine the correlation between hopelessness and procrastination.

**2.1.4** To determine whether perceived university support and hopelessness can predict procrastination among university students.

### 2.2 Hypotheses

**2.2.1** Hypothesis (H1)- There will be a negative correlation between Perceived University support and Hopelessness.

**2.2.2** Hypothesis (H2)- There will be a negative correlation between Perceived university support and Procrastination.



- 2.2.3** Hypothesis (H3)- There will be a positive correlation between Hopelessness and Procrastination.
- 2.2.4** Hypothesis (H4)- Perceived University support and hopelessness levels will predict university students' procrastination behavior.

### 2.3 Population and Sample

The questionnaire was sent to a total of 200 university students across India with the inclusion criteria of Students enrolled in a university across India and the exclusion of students enrolled in any university outside India or not enrolled in any university across India below the age of 18 or above the age of 25. Out of 200, 102 responses were received. Snowball sampling method was used to collect data via email, WhatsApp, Telegram, and other messaging apps.

### 2.4 Data and Sources of Data

For this study primary data was collected from 102 university students across India. Participants were recruited through online platforms, social media, emails, and messaging apps. They were provided informed consent before participating in the study and were informed that they can withdraw any time they want without any consequences. Confidentiality was maintained throughout the research process and data was not disclosed to any other third party. The study extracted information that might hold some importance to the respondents, the anonymity and confidentiality of the top level is maintained.

**2.4.1 Student Perception of university structure and support scale** developed by M. G. Wintre in 2009 was used to collected data. The scale has 21 items and assesses how students perceive the organizational structure and support services provided by their university. The scale is scored on a nine-point Likert-type scale (1=Strongly Disagree, 9=Strongly Agree), high scores signify the perception of a supportive university structure, while low scores signify the perception of a non-supportive university. The Cronbach's Alphas for the scale were obtained to be .87 and .89 for internal validity. Alphas of .86 and .88 was obtained for split half reliability across universities.

**2.4.2 Beck Hopelessness Scale** is a psychological test designed to measure an individual's level of hopelessness. It was developed by Aaron T. Beck and his colleagues in the 1970s. The BHS consists of 20 true/false items that assess various attitudes and beliefs related to hopelessness, pessimism, and

negative outlook on life. The items that are marked "true" are given a score of one and summed up together. The scores range from 0 to 20, a higher score indicates greater hopelessness. Items marked "false" are given a score of 0. Initially the scale was developed for clinical population but has been standardized for use in non-clinical sample by different researchers (Kocalevent et al., 2017).

**2.4.3 The Procrastination Assessment Scale for Students** was developed by Joseph R. Ferrari, Timothy A. Pychyl, and Karen O'Callaghan in 1995. It is a tool designed to measure the tendency of students to procrastinate on academic tasks. It typically consists of a series of 44 questions or statements related to procrastination behaviors and attitudes. The scale is divided into two parts; the first part measures prevalence of procrastination in six academic areas, and the second part assesses reasons for procrastination. The scores are on a five-point Likert-type scale (a=1 to e=5) summed for each academic tasks ranging from 2 to 10 and across six areas of academic functioning, scores ranging from 12 to 60. The scores on reasons for procrastination are summed as a separate subscale. A total score is obtained by summing all subscale scores together. Correlation for the test-retest reliability for total score was .80. PASS has a very good concurrent validity with significant correlation with Beck's Depression Inventory, Ellis Scale of irrational cognitions, Rosenberg self-esteem scale and delay Avoidance scale.

### 2.5 Theoretical framework

**2.5.1 Predictive Variables:** Perceived University Support, Hopelessness

**2.5.2 Criterion Variable:** Procrastination

Perceived university support considers students' perception of their university's support, which includes: educational support, cognitive support, and business development support (Kraaijenbrink et al. 2010). The social support theories assert that people who feel supported by their surroundings can better handle stress and difficulties (Cohen & Wills, 1985). At college, perceived university support could be in the form of mentors, access to learning materials, mental health help, and a sense of belonging to a community.

Hopelessness is negative expectations combined with the judgment that problems can't be solved—in other words, people in the grip of



hopelessness believe that their future will be miserable and that there's nothing they can do to change it (Beck et al., 1975). Hopelessness means having bad thoughts about the future, feeling unable to change things, and not wanting to chase after goals (Beck et al., 1975). Past studies have found that feeling hopeless greatly affects motivation and how well students do in school. This causes students to lose interest in their studies and put off tasks to avoid them (Blunt & Pychyl, 2000). Hopeless students might procrastinate not just because they are not interested, but also because they think their efforts will not make a difference.

Procrastination may be defined as 'the voluntary delay of an intended and necessary and/or [personally] important activity, despite expecting potential negative consequences that outweigh the positive consequences of the delay' (KlingSieck, 2013, 26). Academic Procrastination manifests as the unnecessary delay of essential tasks, including exam preparation, paper writing, and assignments, often leading to last-minute "cramming" as indicated by Solomon and Rothblum (1984). It means putting off starting or finishing tasks on purpose, even when knowing it can lead to bad results (Steel, 2007). Knowing what causes procrastination is important for dealing with this problem, since it has been linked to stress, anxiety, and other harmful mental health effects (Sirois & Pychyl, 2013).

### III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

#### 3.1 Results of Descriptive Statistics of Perceived University Support, Hopelessness, and Procrastination

Perceived University Support		Hopelessness		Procrastination	
Mean	115.0588	Mean	5.941176	Mean	128.5294
Standard Error	2.777654	Standard Error	0.504267	Standard Error	2.773173
Median	112	Median	4	Median	132
Mode	105	Mode	1	Mode	136
Standard Deviation	28.05293	Standard Deviation	5.092848	Standard Deviation	28.00767
Sample Variance	786.9668	Sample Variance	25.9371	Sample Variance	784.4298
Kurtosis	0.397764	Kurtosis	-0.24567	Kurtosis	1.059903
Skewness	0.004425	Skewness	0.833519	Skewness	-0.03489
Range	143	Range	20	Range	176
Minimum	39	Minimum	0	Minimum	44
Maximum	182	Maximum	20	Maximum	220
Sum	11736	Sum	606	Sum	13110
Count	102	Count	102	Count	102

Table 3.1 The mean for Student Perception of university structure and support scale was measured

#### 2.6 Statistical tools

##### 2.6.1 Descriptive Statistics

Descriptive Statistics was used to find the standard deviation, mean and normally distribution of the data of all variables used in the study. The data was analyzed using Microsoft Excel (2019).

##### 2.6.2 Pearson Product Moment Correlation

The Pearson Product-Moment Correlation Coefficient has been used in the study to determine the strength and direction of the relationship of the variables Perceived University Support and Hopelessness with the variable Procrastination.

The correlation coefficient is denoted by the symbol  $r$  and takes a value between -1 and +1. The closer the  $r$  is to 1 or -1, the stronger the linear relationship between variables.

##### 2.6.3 Multiple Regression

The study used Multiple Regression to model the relationship between Procrastination and Perceived University and Hopelessness.

to be 115.05 with a standard deviation of 28.05, and skewness and kurtosis of 0.00 and 0.39,



respectively. The mean for Beck's Hopelessness Scale was measured to be 5.94 with a standard deviation of 5.09, and skewness and Kurtosis of 0.83 and -0.24 respectively. The mean for The Procrastination Assessment Scale for Students was

found to be 128.52 with a standard Deviation of 28.00 and a skewness and kurtosis of -0.03 and 1.05 respectively. The skewness and Kurtosis for the variables were within the accepted range, i.e. -2 and +2 (George & Mallery, 2010).

### 3.2 Results of Pearson Product Moment Correlation

Table 3.2 Correlations between Student Perception of university structure and support scale (SPUSS), Beck's Hopelessness Scale (BHS), and The Procrastination Assessment Scale for Students (PASS)

Correlation Pair	Correlation Coefficient (r)	N
SPUSS & BHS	-0.393*	102
SPUSS & PASS	-0.161	102
BHS & PASS	0.332*	102

Note. \*. Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level\

Table 3.2 Pearson's Product Moment Correlation was used to find the correlation between Perceived University Support, Hopelessness, and Procrastination. Further, Multiple Regression was performed to understand the predictive utility of Perceived University Support and Hopelessness on Procrastination. The correlation between Perceived university Support and Hopelessness was found to be negative ( $r = -0.393$ ,  $p < .05$ ), aligning with Hypothesis 1 (H1) that states "There will be a negative correlation between Perceived University support and Hopelessness." This finding accords with previous research findings that demonstrate an academic supportive environment plays a critical role in reducing despair and emotional distress among students. Indeed, Wilcox et al. (2005) note that students who experience a perception of social as well as academic support within their universities tend to have decreased levels of hopelessness, depression, and anxiety. Major support systems that make up sustaining emotional well-being consist of mentoring, learning support, and belonging. In this paper, the perceived university support seems to work as a protective factor for hopelessness by providing a nurturing environment of academic and personal care. Further evidence in favour of these conclusions is provided by social support theory, by Cohen and Wills (1985), who note that the perception of actual social support can be potentially neutralizing regarding the adverse effects of stress, thereby reducing the likelihood of hopelessness. If students perceived that there was support available,

then they may show resilience, both academically and personally; as such, the cumulative emotional burden that could lead to hopelessness is likely smaller.

The second Hypothesis (H2) stated that "There will be a negative correlation between Perceived university support and Procrastination." Contrary to Hypothesis 2 (H2), the correlation between perceived university support and procrastination was not significant ( $r = -0.161$ ,  $p > .05$ ). In the literature of Tuckman (1998), where external support is related to the promotion of self-regulation and time management, the results of the given study indicate that perceived institutional support may not exert any significant influence on procrastination behaviors. The above result might suggest that procrastination behavior is instigated outside the immediate environment of the academics and does not depend on individual differences in personality traits, self-discipline, or emotional regulation. One explanation is that the procrastination defined by Sirois and Pychyl (2013) is often a self-regulation failure that should not be solely alleviated by external support systems. Even if students believe that the university supports them, their tendencies are bound to be more intrinsically driven, possibly through anxiety, perfectionism, or impulsivity (Steel, 2007). Thereby, procrastination is related to avoidant coping strategies: people delay their activities to escape feelings of incompetence and fear of failure. The perceived peripheral support





could hence be overruled by internal processes, such as cognitive and emotional processing.

The third Hypothesis (H3) stated that “There will be a positive correlation between Hopelessness and Procrastination.” The findings support Hypothesis 3 (H3), indicating a significant positive correlation between hopelessness and procrastination ( $r = 0.332$ ,  $p < .05$ ). This suggests that people who experience higher levels of hopelessness are prone to procrastination. This is in line with conceptual models of academic procrastination that define procrastination as a maladaptive coping strategy commonly used by people to avoid or escape difficult tasks with an emotional charge for them (Blunt & Pychyl, 2000). Hopeless students will overcome by the forces of their academic environment without seeing the point in active engagement with their studies. This perception can then translate into procrastination as

a manner of psychological avoidance (Beck, 1987). Within this conceptualization, procrastination can become an avoidance strategy that allows students to occasionally step away from academically stressful tasks. This behavior is in line with the escape theory of procrastination whereby individuals attempt to avoid aversive emotional states (Sirois, 2014). Moreover, learned helplessness lowers self-efficacy whereby students view themselves as powerless to achieve academic success thus helping to perpetuate the exacerbation of procrastination behaviors as an avoidant coping response against emotional distress (Solomon & Rothblum, 1984). The positive correlation between hopelessness and procrastination demonstrates the emotional bases of procrastination, pointing thus to the emotional turmoil in dealing with procrastinatory behaviors.

### 3.3 Results of Multiple Regression

Table 3.3 Regression Analysis to understand the predictive utility of Perceived University Support and Hopelessness on Procrastination.

Variable	B	SE B	t	p	95% CI for B
Procrastination	122.35	13.78	8.88	3.03*	95.01, 149.69
Perceived university support	-0.04	0.10	-0.36	0.723	-0.24,0.17
Hopelessness	1.75	.57	3.09	0.003*	0.62, 2.87

Note.  $R^2 = .11$ , Adjusted  $R^2 = .09$ ,  $F(2, 99) = 6.22$ ,  $p = .003$ .

Table 3.3 The multiple regression analysis sheds further light on the predictive relationships between the variables. The coefficients (B) for Procrastination, Perceived University Support, and Hopelessness were found to be 122.35, -0.04, and 1.75 respectively. The overall model was considered significant, ( $R^2 = 0.111692$ ,  $p < .05$ );  $F(2, 99) = 6.22$ ,  $p = .003$ . The model explains about 11% of the differences in procrastination. However, individual factors acted in diverse ways. Hopelessness is a significant predictor ( $p = 0.003^*$ ), indicating that as Hopelessness increases, the Procrastination increases, holding Perceived University Support constant. This suggests Hopelessness has a meaningful impact on the outcome. Hopelessness plays a big role in predicting how students handle emotional pain, which affects their schoolwork. This aligns with earlier research by Van Eerde (2003), which indicated that feelings such as hopelessness cause damage to self-control, thereby contributing to procrastination. Students who feel very hopeless might have quite a hard time finding the reason or

motivation in finishing their school tasks, hence making procrastination worse. On the other hand, the nonsignificant result of perceived university support as a predictor of procrastination ( $p = 0.723$ ) indicates that even if support from the university would reduce emotional distress, such as hopelessness, it does not have a direct impact on procrastination behaviors. The fourth hypothesis (H4) stating “Perceived University support and hopelessness levels will predict university students' procrastination behavior” is partially accepted. This finding reveals that one needs more than just help from the school while dealing with procrastination; it requires actions to strengthen self-control skills, emotional strength, and concrete support regarding how to handle procrastination. According to Steel (2007), procrastination usually happens because people struggle with self-control and time management. This means that programs designed to help improve these skills could work better than general support systems at universities in reducing procrastination.



#### IV. CONCLUSION

The study assessed the relationship between perceived university support, hopelessness, and procrastination. The correlation analysis results showed that perceived university support was negatively correlated with hopelessness but did not signify a significant correlation to procrastination. A positive correlation was found between hopelessness and procrastination, with hopeless students being more likely to procrastinate than hopeful students. Mental health services and programs dealing with the specific treatment of hopelessness should be more highly funded in universities since hopelessness is one major factor in the behavior of students. Multiple regression analysis revealed that only hopelessness was a significant predictor of procrastination whereas Perceived support by the university was not a predictor of procrastination. This indicates that possibly other factors may become more critical for students and, therefore, have to be explored by future research. The model explained approximately 11.1 % of the variance in procrastination. Despite the fact that the number of samples is 102 and snowball sampling, which probably limits generalizability, and the use of self-report measures includes possible biases, the study reveals that amongst the emotionally-based factors, hopelessness plays the most crucial role in procrastination among students. The findings underpin the need for additional research which may further explore other potential predictors of procrastination and how university support can be enhanced to create a better academic supportive environment.

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