

INTERGENERATIONAL DIFFERENCES IN PERFECTIONISM, ANXIETY, AND PROCRASTINATION: A REGRESSION-BASED MODEL

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Abstract

This study examined the relationships between perfectionism, anxiety (performance and social), and procrastination, focusing on intergenerational differences and predictive mechanisms. Participants (N = 155) were analyzed considering three generations: Generation Z, Generation Y, and Generation X. Levels of perfectionism, anxiety, and procrastination were assessed to explore generational differences and to identify predictors of procrastination. Results showed that Generation Z reported significantly higher levels of perfectionism, anxiety, and procrastination compared to the older generations. Correlational analyses revealed positive associations between both types of anxiety and procrastination, particularly for intentional delay behaviors. Regression analysis indicated that two perfectionism facets – Doubts about Actions (self-critical) and Entitlement (narcissistic) – were significant predictors of procrastination, beyond the influence of anxiety. The findings suggest that perfectionistic cognitions and evaluative anxiety jointly contribute to procrastinatory behavior, highlighting the importance of addressing these factors in psychological and educational interventions.

Keywords: perfectionism, anxiety, procrastination, intergenerational differences.

1. INTRODUCTION

In recent years, concerns regarding psychological well-being have intensified, as contemporary society places increasingly high expectations on individual performance, achievement, and self-presentation. The prevalence of anxiety, perfectionistic tendencies, and avoidance behaviors such as procrastination has drawn attention to the cognitive and emotional mechanisms underlying maladaptive self-regulation (Bornioli *et al.*, 2019; Saiphoo & Vahedi, 2019; Sam *et al.*, 2020). This growing psychological strain is reinforced by a culture of comparison and unrealistic standards that shape personal identity and self-evaluation (Myers & Crowther, 2009; Lloyd *et al.*, 2015).

Theoretical and empirical findings converge on the idea that these three constructs – anxiety, perfectionism, and procrastination – form an interconnected

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system of self-regulation. While anxiety and perfectionism reflect internal cognitive and emotional pressures, procrastination represents an observable behavioral outcome of these internal dynamics (Steel, 2007; Petrie, 2014). In contexts where performance and appearance are overemphasized, individuals are often trapped in a cycle of high expectations, fear of failure, and avoidance of evaluation (Bardone-Cone *et al.*, 2007; Levinson *et al.*, 2013). These dynamics are especially relevant in educational and professional settings, where external pressures and self-imposed standards intensify emotional tension and disrupt effective task engagement.

Classically, anxiety has been conceptualized as a persistent emotional state of apprehension associated with anticipated failure or negative evaluation (Zeidner, 1998; Spielberger & Vagg, 1995). However, more recent research has documented the growing prevalence of performance-related and social anxiety in contemporary contexts characterized by competition and constant evaluation (Bornioli *et al.*, 2019; Payne, 2019; Von der Embse *et al.*, 2018; Sam *et al.*, 2020). In these settings, anxiety undermines concentration and cognitive control, producing physiological arousal and avoidance tendencies that interfere with goal-directed behavior.

Perfectionism, defined as the tendency to impose excessively high standards and to evaluate one's worth based on achievement, has similarly shifted from being regarded as a positive motivator to being recognized as a significant vulnerability factor for emotional distress (Hewitt & Flett, 1991; Stoeber & Otto, 2006). Maladaptive perfectionism is characterized by overconcern with mistakes, doubts about actions, and conditional self-worth (Frost *et al.*, 1990; Levinson *et al.*, 2013). These perfectionistic tendencies are often accompanied by heightened anxiety, as individuals become preoccupied with avoiding imperfection or criticism (Sherry *et al.*, 2016; Lloyd *et al.*, 2015).

Procrastination has been defined as the voluntary delay of intended tasks despite awareness of negative outcomes (Steel, 2007). Far from reflecting simple laziness, procrastination often serves as a coping mechanism that momentarily reduces the discomfort generated by perfectionistic pressure and performance anxiety (Metin *et al.*, 2016; Petrie, 2014). Individuals delay tasks not because of indifference, but to avoid the psychological tension of potential failure or imperfection.

1.1. ANXIETY–PERFECTIONISM–PROCRASTINATION DYNAMICS

The relationship between anxiety and perfectionism is cyclical: high self-imposed standards increase the fear of failure, while anxiety reinforces rigid self-evaluative tendencies. Studies among students and professionals indicate that perfectionistic individuals interpret feedback as global personal judgment, which intensifies both anxiety and self-criticism (Vitasari *et al.*, 2010; Von der Embse *et al.*, 2018). Over time, this cycle creates emotional exhaustion and cognitive interference that can impair motivation and task engagement (Flett *et al.*, 2016; Stoeber, 2018).

Empirical evidence indicates that perfectionism and anxiety operate as powerful antecedents of procrastination (Steel & Klingsieck, 2016). Those with self-critical or rigid perfectionism tend to postpone work when convinced that their efforts will not meet internalized ideals (Flett *et al.*, 2016; Alblwi *et al.*, 2021). Similarly, anxious arousal generates cognitive interference – rumination, self-doubt, and avoidance of evaluation – that further reinforces delay behaviors (Alharthi *et al.*, 2019; Metin *et al.*, 2016).

From a cognitive-behavioral perspective, this triadic relationship can be viewed as a self-perpetuating loop: perfectionism creates unrealistic standards, anxiety amplifies the fear of not meeting them, and procrastination offers temporary relief that ultimately maintains both anxiety and self-criticism (Steel & Klingsieck, 2016). The avoidance brings short-term comfort but long-term costs, lower performance, guilt, and emotional strain (Steel, 2007; Petrie, 2014).

Recent studies emphasize that these processes are particularly salient in younger generations exposed to constant evaluative pressure (Bornioli *et al.*, 2019; Sam *et al.*, 2020). Yet, comparative evidence across generations remains limited, and little is known about how the specific dimensions of perfectionism contribute to procrastination when anxiety is considered. The present study therefore aims to explore these predictive relationships through an intergenerational analytical framework, clarifying the joint role of anxiety and perfectionism in shaping procrastination.

2. RESEARCH DESIGN

2.1. RESEARCH OBJECTIVE

The main research objective of this study is to investigate the relationships among anxiety, perfectionism, and procrastination, focusing on intergenerational differences and predictive associations between these variables. Drawing on previous literature that emphasizes the link between maladaptive perfectionism, evaluative anxiety, and avoidance behavior (Flett *et al.*, 2016; Steel & Klingsieck, 2016; Metin *et al.*, 2016), the study seeks to clarify how specific facets of perfectionism and anxiety contribute to procrastination across Generation Z, Generation Y, and Generation X.

2.2. HYPOTHESES

Prior research suggests that younger individuals face stronger social and academic pressures, leading to increased self-criticism, performance concerns, and avoidance behaviors (Bornioli *et al.*, 2019; Sam *et al.*, 2020). Exposure to constant evaluation and unrealistic standards contributes to heightened anxiety and perfectionistic striving (Lloyd *et al.*, 2015; Von der Embse *et al.*, 2018). Based on this theoretical rationale, we propose the following hypothesis:

H1: *There are significant generational differences in the levels of perfectionism, anxiety, and procrastination, with Generation Z expected to report higher scores than Generation Y and Generation X.*

The cognitive-behavioral model of avoidance explains procrastination as a response to emotional discomfort and evaluative fear (Steel, 2007; Petrie, 2014). Considering that anxiety, particularly in performance contexts was shown to lead to task delay as a short-term strategy to regulate distress, even though it reinforces avoidance in the long term (Metin *et al.*, 2016; Steel & Klingsieck, 2016), we propose the following hypothesis:

H2: *Higher levels of anxiety (social and performance) will positively predict procrastination.*

Perfectionism has been conceptualized as a multidimensional construct encompassing rigid, self-critical, and narcissistic forms (Smith *et al.*, 2016). Among these, self-critical perfectionism, characterized by doubts about actions and concern over mistakes, is most consistently associated with avoidance and self-regulatory failure (Frost *et al.*, 1990; Flett *et al.*, 2016). Additionally, narcissistic perfectionism, including facets such as entitlement and hypercriticism, may contribute to procrastination by undermining responsibility and persistence (Sherry *et al.*, 2016). Therefore, we propose the following hypothesis:

H3: *Specific perfectionism dimensions, particularly self-critical and narcissistic perfectionism, will significantly predict procrastination beyond the effect of anxiety.*

3. METHOD

3.1. PARTICIPANTS

The study included 155 Romanian participants aged between 18 and 64 years ($M = 40.67$, $SD = 10.31$), of whom 74.8% were women. Participants were categorized into three generational cohorts based on their year of birth: Generation X (1965–1980; 40%), Generation Y (1981–1996; 46%), and Generation Z (1997–2012; 14%).

Most respondents (71.6%) were employed at the time of data collection (March–April 2025), while 21.9% were students. Among those employed, 49.7% identified as entrepreneurs, 14.8% worked in the private sector, and 13.5% in the public sector. Regarding education, 41.9% held university degrees, 30.0% postgraduate qualifications, 23.2% had completed high school, and 4.5% held doctoral degrees. Data were collected online through a self-report questionnaire distributed via snowball sampling, ensuring confidentiality and voluntary participation.

3.2. INSTRUMENTS

Perfectionism was assessed using the Big Three Perfectionism Scale (BTPS; Smith *et al.*, 2016), a 45-item instrument rated on a 5-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree). The scale measures three major dimensions of perfectionism. The first, Rigid Perfectionism ($\alpha = .92$), includes two facets: Self-Oriented Perfectionism ($\alpha = .85$) and Self-Worth Contingencies ($\alpha = .87$). The second dimension, Self-Critical Perfectionism ($\alpha = .94$), comprises Concern over Mistakes ($\alpha = .85$), Doubts about Actions ($\alpha = .91$), Self-Criticism

($\alpha = .92$), and Socially Prescribed Perfectionism ($\alpha = .78$). The third dimension, Narcissistic Perfectionism ($\alpha = .90$), includes Other-Oriented Perfectionism ($\alpha = .87$), Hypercriticism ($\alpha = .71$), Entitlement ($\alpha = .73$), and Grandiosity ($\alpha = .64$). Overall, the BTPS demonstrated excellent internal consistency ($\alpha = .96$).

Anxiety was measured using the Liebowitz Social Anxiety Scale (Liebowitz, 1987), a 24-item instrument rated on a 4-point Likert scale (1 = not at all, 4 = severe). The scale evaluates two related constructs: Performance Anxiety (13 items, $\alpha = .92$) and Social Anxiety (11 items, $\alpha = .92$). The total score reflects a global measure of social-evaluative anxiety, with excellent internal consistency ($\alpha = .96$).

Procrastination was assessed using the Procrastination at Work Scale (PAWS; Metin *et al.*, 2016), consisting of 12 items rated on a 5-point Likert scale (1 = never, 5 = always). The instrument includes two subscales: Soldiering-intentional task delay (8 items, $\alpha = .90$)-and Cyberslacking, referring to non-work-related internet use (4 items, $\alpha = .75$). The total score indicated high internal reliability ($\alpha = .89$).

3.3. RESULTS

The collected data will be interpreted through a comprehensive analytical framework that integrates descriptive, correlational, and predictive approaches to clarify the interplay between perfectionism, anxiety, and procrastination, as well as to illuminate meaningful generational patterns and the relative weight of specific psychological mechanisms underlying procrastination behaviour.

Descriptive analyses showed that participants reported moderate levels of perfectionism and anxiety, accompanied by relatively elevated levels of procrastination. Global procrastination had a mean of 3.24 (SD = 1.20), with cyberslacking (M = 3.54, SD = 1.47) exceeding soldiering (M = 2.94, SD = 1.30). Social anxiety displayed a lower average level (M = 1.93, SD = 0.72).

Table 1

Associations between procrastination and anxiety at the facet level (N = 155)

Variable	1	2	3	4
1 Performance anxiety	-			
2 Social anxiety	.83**	-		
3 Soldiering	.38**	.37**	-	
4 Cyberslacking	.13	.17*	.49**	-

Notes: * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$

As shown in Table 1, zero-order correlations revealed a strong, positive association between performance anxiety and social anxiety ($r = .83$, $p < .01$), reflecting substantial overlap between evaluative and interpersonal forms of anxiety. Both anxiety dimensions were moderately associated with global procrastination: performance anxiety correlated at $r = .31$ ($p < .01$), and social anxiety at $r = .33$ ($p < .01$). Soldiering, the intentional postponement of tasks, showed stronger

correlations with both anxiety types (performance anxiety: $r = .38, p < .01$; social anxiety: $r = .37, p < .01$). For cyberslacking, only social anxiety showed a significant but weak relationship ($r = .17, p < .05$), whereas performance anxiety was not significantly associated ($r = .13, ns$).

Table 2 shows the procrastination associations with study variables, including anxiety facets and multiple facets of perfectionism. Within self-critical perfectionism, concern over mistakes correlated at $r = .36$ ($p < .01$), doubts about actions at $r = .44$ ($p < .01$), and self-criticism at $r = .33$ ($p < .01$). Among narcissistic perfectionism facets, hypercriticism ($r = .26, p < .01$) and entitlement ($r = .32, p < .01$) showed moderate associations with procrastination, while grandiosity demonstrated no meaningful correlation ($r = .02, ns$). These results support the hypothesis that higher levels of anxiety and perfectionism, particularly the most evaluative and self-critical facets, are linked to increased procrastination.

To test generational differences, Kruskal–Wallis analyses were conducted across the three cohorts: Generation X (1965–1980), Generation Y (1981–1996), and Generation Z (1997–2012). Significant effects emerged for all study variables. Differences were largest for self-critical perfectionism ($\chi^2 = 25.10, p < .001, \eta^2 = .146$) and rigid perfectionism ($\chi^2 = 23.32, p < .001, \eta^2 = .135$), indicating medium-to-large effects. Social anxiety also differed significantly between generations ($\chi^2 = 22.58, p < .001, \eta^2 = .130$), while narcissistic perfectionism showed a smaller but significant effect ($\chi^2 = 10.05, p = .018, \eta^2 = .047$). Procrastination varied between generations as well, although with a smaller effect size ($\chi^2 = 8.59, p = .035, \eta^2 = .037$).

Table 2

Associations between procrastination and all study variables at the facet level (N = 155)

Variable	Procrastination
1 Performance anxiety	.31**
2 Social anxiety	.33**
3 Self-oriented perfectionism	.22**
4 Self-worth contingencies	.28**
5 Concern over mistakes	.36**
6 Doubts about actions	.44**
7 Self-criticism	.33**
8 Socially prescribed perfectionism	.30**
9 Other-oriented perfectionism	.16*
10 Hypercriticism	.26**
11 Entitlement	.32**
12 Grandiosity	.02

Notes: * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$. Variables 3–12 represent the facet-level components of the three higher-order dimensions of perfectionism. *Rigid perfectionism* includes (3) self-oriented perfectionism and (4) self-worth contingencies. *Self-critical perfectionism* comprises (5) concern over mistakes, (6) doubts about actions, (7) self-criticism, and (8) socially prescribed perfectionism. *Narcissistic perfectionism* includes (9) other-oriented perfectionism, (10) hypercriticism, (11) entitlement, and (12) grandiosity.

Examination of mean ranks revealed a consistent pattern across generations. Generation Z showed the highest levels on all variables, with mean ranks of 105.35 for rigid perfectionism, 111.80 for self-critical perfectionism, 118.27 for social anxiety, and 96.93 for procrastination. In contrast, Generation X consistently displayed the lowest levels, with mean ranks of 57.32 for rigid perfectionism, 58.31 for self-critical perfectionism, 66.53 for social anxiety, and 66.14 for procrastination. Generation Y occupied an intermediate position, with mean ranks of 86.51 for rigid perfectionism, 83.99 for self-critical perfectionism, 76.08 for social anxiety, and 81.70 for procrastination. For narcissistic perfectionism, the pattern was more nuanced: Generation Y showed the highest mean rank (88.61), followed by Generation Z (80.34), while Generation X reported the lowest values (63.84). These results support the hypothesis that meaningful generational differences exist in perfectionism, anxiety, and procrastination, with younger adults generally reporting higher levels across these psychological dimensions.

Table 3

Hierarchical multiple regression predicting procrastination
from social anxiety and perfectionism facets (N = 155)

Model	Predictor	β	t	p	R	R^2	ΔR^2	F_{change}
1	Social anxiety	.33	4.33	<.01	.33	.11	.11	18.76**
2	Social anxiety	.16	1.94	.06				
	Doubts about actions	.36	4.40	<.01	.46	.21	.10	19.33**
3	Social anxiety	.16	1.99	.05				
	Doubts about actions	.31	3.76	<.01				
	Entitlement	.23	3.11	<.01	.51	.26	.05	9.67**

Notes: * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$

To determine the extent to which anxiety and perfectionism predict procrastination, a stepwise multiple regression analysis was performed. Results are shown in Table 3. Social anxiety entered the model first and emerged as a significant predictor, accounting for 11% of the variance in global procrastination, $F(1, 153) = 18.76$, $p < .001$. Its regression coefficient indicated a positive relationship ($B = 0.52$, $\beta = .33$).

The addition of doubts about actions, a self-critical perfectionism facet, significantly improved the model. With this variable included, the explained variance increased to 21%, and doubts about actions became the strongest predictor ($B = 0.40$, $\beta = .36$, $t = 4.40$, $p < .01$). Social anxiety remained statistically non-significant ($p = .06$), suggesting its predictive value diminished once perfectionistic self-doubt was taken into account.

Entitlement, a narcissistic perfectionism facet, entered at the next step and added another 5% to the explained variance. In this expanded model, doubts about actions remained the strongest predictor ($B = 0.34, \beta = .31$), entitlement was also significant ($B = 0.34, \beta = .23$), and social anxiety remained only marginally significant ($p = .05$).

The final model demonstrated that procrastination is best predicted by specific perfectionism facets, particularly doubts about actions and entitlement, while social anxiety plays a secondary and diminishing role once perfectionistic cognitions are considered. Performance anxiety and the global perfectionism dimensions did not enter the model, indicating that broad perfectionism factors are less predictive than their specific cognitive components.

Overall, these results provide partial support for the hypothesis: both anxiety and perfectionism contribute to procrastination, but the most robust predictors emerge from the self-critical and entitlement-related facets of perfectionism.

3.4. FINDINGS

The present study examined the interrelations among anxiety, perfectionism, and procrastination across three generational cohorts (Generation X, Generation Y, and Generation Z). Overall, the results align with previous literature indicating that evaluative concerns and maladaptive self-regulation processes tend to co-occur and reinforce one another (Flett *et al.*, 2016; Stoeber, 2018). The findings offer additional evidence that these associations are robust across age groups, though their magnitude varies inter-generationally. Importantly, the generational differences observed were not merely quantitative but also suggest qualitative variations in how evaluative pressures are internalized and translated into avoidance behavior.

Consistent with theoretical accounts emphasizing the cognitive–emotional burden of high self-imposed standards (Hewitt & Flett, 1991; Stoeber & Otto, 2006), Generation Z reported the highest levels of rigid and self-critical perfectionism, as well as elevated anxiety and procrastination. This pattern suggests that younger adults may be more sensitive to evaluative pressures and comparison-based environments, which increase vulnerability to self-doubt and avoidance. In contemporary digital and highly competitive contexts, performance is often public, permanent, and easily comparable, potentially amplifying doubts about adequacy and intensifying self-monitoring tendencies. Generation X, by contrast, exhibited the lowest overall scores on these constructs, potentially reflecting more stable self-regulatory strategies or reduced exposure to contemporary achievement-oriented norms. Although the study did not assess cultural or technological factors directly, the generational gradient observed echoes previous work linking younger cohorts to heightened psychological strain in performance contexts (Vitasari *et al.*, 2010). These differences may also reflect developmental variations in identity consolidation, coping flexibility, and tolerance of ambiguity.

Regarding associations among variables, both performance anxiety and social anxiety correlated positively with global procrastination, supporting models proposing that avoidance of feared evaluation reinforces task delay (Steel & Klingsieck, 2016; Metin *et al.*, 2016). Notably, anxiety showed stronger associations with the soldiering facet (intentional delay) than with cyberslacking, suggesting that emotionally driven avoidance is more directly tied to decisional postponement than to task-unrelated online behaviour. This distinction may indicate that soldiering reflects a deliberate self-regulatory attempt to reduce emotional discomfort, whereas cyberslacking may be influenced more strongly by contextual or habitual digital engagement patterns. From a generational perspective, cyberslacking may represent a more normalized form of disengagement among Generation Z, embedded in everyday digital multitasking, whereas for older cohorts intentional delay may be more closely associated with performance apprehension and cognitive indecision.

The regression analysis further clarified the predictive value of perfectionism-related cognitions. Among the perfectionism facets, doubts about actions emerged as the strongest predictor of procrastination, consistent with findings that indecisiveness and fear of error undermine task initiation (Flett *et al.*, 2016). The entitlement facet of narcissistic perfectionism also predicted procrastination, indicating that individuals who hold inflated expectations about outcomes or personal standards may be more prone to disengage when performance risks inconsistency with those standards. Taken together, these findings suggest the existence of at least two partially distinct pathways to procrastination: a self-critical pathway driven by fear of inadequacy and chronic self-doubt, and a self-protective or self-enhancing pathway, in which disengagement serves to preserve a positive self-image in the face of potential failure. Although social anxiety initially contributed to the prediction model, its effect became non-significant when perfectionistic doubts and entitlement were included, suggesting that the influence of anxiety on procrastination may be partly mediated or cognitively reframed through perfectionistic beliefs. This pattern supports the interpretation that cognitive appraisals associated with perfectionism may constitute a more proximal mechanism underlying task delay than emotional distress *per se*.

These findings carry several theoretical implications. First, they underscore the importance of examining perfectionism at the facet level, given that different components display distinct associations with procrastination and may operate through partially divergent motivational pathways. Second, the generational differences identified in the present study suggest that age-related socio-emotional development and differential exposure to evaluative contexts may influence the way self-regulatory vulnerabilities manifest. Third, the results reinforce the perspective that procrastination is less indicative of deficient motivation and more reflective of a coping strategy aimed at managing perceived inadequacy, anticipated failure, or threats to self-image (Petrie, 2014). The intergenerational patterns observed further suggest that the meaning and functional role of procrastination may shift subtly across developmental stages and socio-cultural environments.

The present findings also extend existing research by clarifying how specific facets of perfectionism and anxiety interact in relation to procrastination across generational cohorts. Rather than emerging as a straightforward consequence of emotional discomfort, procrastination appears to represent a self-regulatory response shaped by evaluative concerns, internalized standards, and perceived threats to self-worth. The prominence of doubts about actions as the strongest predictor indicates that indecision and persistent self-questioning constitute central mechanisms underlying task postponement. The additional contribution of entitlement suggests that procrastination may stem not only from fear of inadequacy but also from tensions between elevated personal standards and the possibility of failing to meet them. Together, these patterns emphasize the multifaceted psychological processes underlying procrastination.

4. DISCUSSIONS AND CONCLUSIONS

From an applied perspective, the results point toward meaningful implications, particularly within educational contexts. Interventions aimed at reducing rigid self-criticism, fear of mistakes, and cognitive inflexibility may help attenuate maladaptive delay patterns, especially among younger adults who reported higher levels of vulnerability. Approaches that combine cognitive restructuring with self-compassion practices, emotional regulation strategies, and adaptive goal-setting may be particularly effective. At the institutional level, learning environments that prioritize mastery, constructive feedback, and reduced normative comparison may buffer the impact of excessive evaluative pressure. Given the generational gradient observed, prevention and intervention programs may benefit from being developmentally sensitive and responsive to the intensified performance visibility characteristic of contemporary academic and digital spaces.

Beyond individual-level processes, the generational differences identified in this study may also reflect broader psychosocial dynamics. Younger cohorts have frequently been described as experiencing heightened social comparison and increased feelings of loneliness despite constant connectivity. Within such climates, procrastination may take on a relational dimension: postponing action can serve as a temporary shield against anticipated criticism, rejection, or negative evaluation. In this sense, delay behavior may represent not only avoidance of tasks, but also avoidance of exposure. When performance becomes closely tied to identity and social validation, refraining from engagement may offer short-term protection of self-worth, even at the cost of long-term efficacy.

Several limitations must be acknowledged. The relatively small sample size ($N = 155$) constitutes the primary constraint of the present research and limits the generalizability of the findings. The uneven distribution across generations, including the absence of a Baby-Boomer cohort, further restricts the scope of

developmental comparisons. Accordingly, the study should be regarded as a pilot investigation offering preliminary evidence regarding intergenerational variations in anxiety, perfectionism, and procrastination. The cross-sectional design precludes causal inference, and reliance on self-report measures may introduce response biases. Additionally, generational classifications are necessarily broad and may not fully capture intra-cohort diversity shaped by socio-economic, cultural, or contextual factors.

Future research would benefit from employing larger and more heterogeneous samples, longitudinal designs, and multi-method assessments capable of capturing dynamic processes over time. Such approaches would allow for a more precise examination of mediation and moderation pathways, clarifying whether perfectionistic cognitions function as intermediary mechanisms linking anxiety to procrastination and whether these associations vary across generational cohorts. Further expanding the relational and value-based dimensions of analysis may deepen understanding of how identity formation, perceived social worth, and performance-contingent self-evaluation interact with self-regulatory vulnerabilities. In particular, future studies may explore the hypothesis that generational differences in procrastination are partially explained by the extent to which self-worth is experienced as contingent upon achievement and external evaluation.

In light of these considerations, the present pilot study contributes to a more differentiated conceptualization of procrastination as a self-protective strategy embedded within both intrapersonal dynamics and generationally shaped evaluative climates. By showing that procrastination is more strongly linked to self-evaluative doubt and entitlement than to anxiety alone, the findings suggest that models of self-regulation may be refined through a more explicit integration of internal standards and perceived self-worth as central mechanisms shaping procrastination across generations.

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