

Relationship between Procrastination, Job Performance and Mindfulness in Male and Female Employees: A Mediating Model

Zafar Ahmad

International Islamic University, Islamabad, Pakistan

E-mail: zafahmad@gmail.com

Received for publication: 02 April 2019

Accepted for publication: 26 June 2019.

Abstract

Self-determination theory is a commonly applied framework for identifying and understanding procrastination, mindfulness and job performance. This approach has further been used to comprehend telecom employee issues. Apart from previous theoretical recommendations, there exist only a few of empirical studies on above matter. The endeavor of the current study is to investigate the mediating role of mindfulness between procrastination and job performance across male and female employees.

Purposive sampling technique was applied based on cross-sectional approach. Mindfulness Attention Awareness Scale (MAAS; Brown & Ryan, 2003), Tuckman's Procrastination Scale (TPS; Tuckman, 1991), and Job Performance Scale (JP-S; Wright, Kacmar, McMahan, & Deleeuw, 1995) have been used to a sample of 400 male and female employees from different telecom's employee of Rawalpindi and Islamabad in Pakistan.

The correlation as well as moderation to mediation analyses have been used to investigate the study data. Findings demonstrate that procrastination is associated with lower level of mindfulness in female and male employees. Additionally, mindfulness is also linked to higher level of job performance in female employees. Moreover, mindfulness had positive influence to enhance job performance in male employees. Results reveal that procrastination is associated with higher level of job performance because higher level of the mindfulness across female and male employees.

These results support the self-determination theory recommending that mindfulness could decrease procrastination and increase job performance in male and female employees. These findings also suggest that procrastination could inhibit job performance in male and female employees.

Keywords: Mindfulness, Procrastination, Job Performance, Male & Female Employees,

Introduction

Procrastination has both positive and negative connotations in literature. Earlier research recommended that long-term procrastination is enveloping at a rate of above 20% (Ferrari, O'Callaghan, & Newbegin, 2005). Although procrastination creates a profusion of adjustment disquiets such as elevated depression, stress, anxiety, poorer academic outcomes, job performance, job stress, and lower life satisfaction (Beheshtifar, Hoseinifar, & Moghadam, 2011; Vaculík, Vytásková, Procházka, & Zalis, 2016; Chun Chu & Choi, 2005; Flett, Haghbin, & Pychyl, 2016; Gagnon, Dionne, & Pychyl, 2016; Kim & Seo, 2015; Richardson, Abraham, & Bond, 2012), everyone procrastinates to a unequivocal degree, particularly in college and work place (Schouwenburg, Lay, Pychyl, & Ferrari, 2004; Nguyen, Steel, & Ferrari, 2013). It is characterized as a dearth of self-control as well as self-regulation, and a behavioral predisposition to deliberately delay the commencement or execution of indisputable tasks (Gagnon et al., 2016; İskender, 2011; Sirois & Tosti, 2012; Van Eerde, 2000). At the disbursement of evacuating long term tasks (Tice & Bratslavsky, 2000), procrastinators

usually choose short-term mood proclamation and avoid goals in support of more pleasurable activities or thoughts (Van Eerde, 2000). For example, preference recommends the prospective associations among procrastination, mindfulness, and job performance.

Mindfulness is a set of practice or a temperament of individuals that forces to focus concentration in the current situation on endeavor in a broad minded way. It is a kind of concentration self-regulation that draw attention on nonreactive knowledge and permissive approval of feelings and thoughts (Kabat-Zinn, 1994). Prior study demonstrates that characteristics of mindfulness is linked to mental health (Brown & Ryan, 2003; Cheung & Ng, 2018), achievement-related self-regulation (Howell & Buro, 2011), self-consciousness (Evans, Baer, & Segerstrom, 2009), and a procrastination (Flett et al., 2016).

Theoretical framework

This study model is proposing base on a theoretical work that associates job procrastination, mindfulness, and job performance in Pakistani work organizational context. The framework assumes that job procrastination contributes mindfulness, that in turn influence employees' job performance negatively or positively. The connections between job procrastination and job performance are therefore moderated by mindfulness in current study. This idea purposed based on interacting cognitive subsystems model and self-determination theory, which considers procrastination is one of most important factor that shapes and influence job performance of employees. However, mindfulness is facilitating to increase job performance and job stress in organizational settings (Teasdale, Segal, & Williams, 1995; Brown, Ryan, & Creswell, 2007). Interacting cognitive subsystems model proposed by Teasdale, Segal, and Williams, (1995), a difficult task could stimulated condemnatory thoughts and its frequently drag to less diligence, such as they facilitate impulsiveness and self-criticism to desert the task. Mindfulness, still, facilitates broad mind recognition of self-critical feelings as well as pessimistic thoughts, which is important to commitment in achieve a task.

Mindfulness further encourages and support autonomous and awareness self-regulation (Brown, Ryan, & Creswell, 2007). Self-determination theory explained self-endorsed autonomy and awareness are key factor to best possible functioning of individuals that can help to pay attention on and achieve their daily life's tasks at work and academic place (Deci & Ryan, 1980; Brown et al., 2007; Teasdale et al., 1995). Mutually, the promoted nonjudgmental and awareness acceptance linked to mindfulness may increase persons' self-regulation and reduce their inclination to procrastinate.

Procrastination is associated with pleasure of desires (Gustavson, Miyake, Hewitt, & Friedman, 2014) which may further facilitate to delay mindful commitment in prolong goals in preference of extra pleasant tasks. It is well know phenomena as self-regulatory failure (Grund & Fries, 2018). It may enhance *mindless* behaviors in individuals. A cross-sectional study conducted by Si-rois and Tosti (2012) found that procrastination is indirectly related with higher level of health issues and job stress because of lower level of mindfulness in employees

Despite, there is consensus across scholars globally on association among procrastination, mindfulness, and job performance remain understudied in different sample and context. This topic is still uncleared and controversial for further debate in various samples. This present study is conducting to investigate the moderating role of mindfulness on the relationship between procrastination and job performance of employee in Pakistani culture.

Prior studies demonstrated that the association between Mindfulness and job performance is under-debated among scholars now a days. There are different theories providing explanations of this relationship. Different models were found but no one is considered to represent a collective understanding (Judge, Thoresen, Bono, & Patton, 2001). The moderators found in previous studies

were rewards, salary, job complexity or self-esteem. Studies focusing on these moderators had diverse findings, few yielding substantial results (Judge et al., 2001; Petty, Mcgee, & Cavender, 1984). Previous studies found that mindfulness can act as another moderator in the relationship between procrastination and job performance. As described earlier, there is emerging evidence that mindfulness is positively related to job performance. However, these relationships seem to be small and they do not preclude a possible moderating effect of mindfulness. We suggest that mindful people are more focused on their work tasks and are less distracted by their emotions and beliefs about the job and thus their performance.

Rationale

In today's world where large number of people are working to meet the demands of their necessities, one's satisfaction with job is considered is a prime value. For any job a good fit' is the one that have a productive attitude towards the growth of workplace. In order to yield positive productive attitudes of workers, there has been ongoing debate among scholars that procrastination and job performance are interlinked with each other (Beheshtifar, Hoseinifar, & Moghadam, 2011; Vaculík, Vytásková, Procházka, & Zalis, 2016; Chun Chu & Choi, 2005; Flett, Haghbin, & Pychyl, 2016; Gagnon, Dionne, & Pychyl, 2016; Kim & Seo, 2015; Richardson, Abraham, & Bond, 2012) . The theoretical underpinnings that maintains the association between procrastination and job performance have not seen to be completely implicit, however there has been at least one common clarification that have been presented so far i.e. that this association is affected by a third variable which is Mindfulness. It has been found that the employees' procrastination and job performance is affecting by the presence or absence of mindfulness. Many prior studies have investigated the relationship between procrastination and job performance (Vaculík, Vytásková, Procházka, & Zalis, 2016; Chun Chu & Choi, 2005; Flett, Haghbin, & Pychyl, 2016) and found that procrastination is affecting employee job performance.

Methodology

Objectives

1. To investigate the association among mindfulness, procrastination and job performance in male and female employees.
2. The mediating role of mindfulness's perception between procrastination and job performance across male and female employees.

Hypotheses

Following hypotheses were formulated to study mindfulness, procrastination and job performance among employees.

1. Mindfulness will be positive associated with job performance in male and female employees
2. Mindfulness will be negatively associated with procrastination in male and female employees.
3. Procrastination will be negatively associated with job performance in male and female employees.

Sample

The sample for this research comprised of 450 employees both male and female from different organizations of Telecom Sector. The age range of employees were from 21 years to 60 years and there qualification were from Matric to MS in their respective field. The data comprised of IT professionals, engineering's, accounts/finance and HR/administration department of the telecom organ-

izations. The data were collected through convenient sampling technique whereas consent obtained from the participants.

Instruments

A demographic sheet was established to obtain information about the participants. Mindfulness was measured using Mindfulness Attention Awareness Scale (MAAS) (Brown & Ryan, 2003), Procrastination was measured by Tuckman's Procrastination Scale (TPS) (Tuckman, 1991) and Job Performance was measured by Job Performance Scale (JP-S) (Wright, Kacmar, McMahan, & Deleeuw, 1995).

Demographic sheet: Information and consent from participants was obtained with the help of demographic sheet. The sheet inquired the age, gender, working position/rank, working sector, duty hours, marital status, part-time job status, family system and monthly income. To assess job security variable, nature of job i.e, permanent or contractual employment were inquired.

Mindfulness Attention Awareness Scale (MAAS): The Mindfulness Attention Awareness Scale (Brown & Ryan, 2003) was a 15-item scale designed to assess a core characteristics of dispositional mindfulness, namely, open or receptive awareness of and attention to what is taking place in the present. Responses to items were rated on 6-point Likert scale such as 1 = almost always, 2 = very frequently, 3 = somewhat frequently, 4 = somewhat infrequently, 5 = very infrequently, 6 = almost never. The highest scores on MAAS was 90 and the lowest score was 15. Highest score reflected higher levels of dispositional mindfulness and vice versa. The MAAS has demonstrated high test-retest reliability, discriminate and convergent validity, known-groups validity, and criterion validity (Brown & Ryan, 2003). According to Brown and Ryan (2003) the Cronbach's alpha reliability of this scale was found to be .87.

Tuckman's Procrastination Scale (TPS): The scale was developed by Tuckman (1991). It measures the individual's tendency to delay his/her work. It comprised of 16 items, with Cronbach alpha .85. the scale is Likert type scale and has 4 response categories; 4 = that's me for sure; 3 = that's my tendency; 2 = that's not my tendency and 1 = that's not me for sure. Minimum score on scale one can attain is 16 and maximum can be 64. A higher score is indicative of the greater tendency to procrastinate and vice versa.

Job Performance Scale (JP-S): Job performance scale developed by Wright, Kacmar, McMahan, and Deleeuw (1995) was used to measure the job performance of the employees. The English version of the scale was used to test the job performance level of the employees. The scale consisted of Eight items rated on 5 point Likert scale ranging from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5). This scale is rated by the supervisor or the job in charge of the employees.

Procedure

The study was carried out in accordance with the recommendations of the Department of Psychology, International Islamic university and BASR Board of Advanced Studies and Research. All procedures performed in studies involving human participants were in accordance with the ethical standards of the institutional research committee and its further amendments or comparable ethical standards. An ethics approval for this research was not required as IIUI university and BASR committee guidelines and national regulations. Standardized questionnaires, which are used in psychological worldwide research, were exclusively used in the research procedure. This type of research is based on guidelines and procedures in accordance with applicable law and ethics, but do not require individual consent. Consent to the study was approved by the appropriate authorities of the respective departments and the employees themselves. It was carried out in telecom organizations. Before starting to fill the questionnaire, they were asked to sign an informed consent form which specified all their tasks and rights. The study was carried out among 400 employees of different telecom sector organizations comprising of 305 male and 95 female participants. The study was

conducted during their working hours. The total number of study participants amounted to 400 persons, including 95 women (% of the participants) and 305 men (% of participants).

Results

Table 1. Pearson Product Moment Correlation between Mindfulness, Procrastination, Job Performance in male and female employees (N = 400)

Variables	(Male) α	(Female) α	1	2	3	4	5
1TMAAS	.86	.85	-	-.29**	.48**	.51**	.30**
2 TTPS	.82	.80	-.26**	-	-.14	-.11	-.13
3 TJP	.77	.80	.32**	-.15**	-	.86**	.85**
4 TJPE	.70	.68	.32**	-.05	.83**	-	.48**
5 TJPS	.70	.75	.21**	-.21**	.82**	.36**	-

Note. (Male) α = alpha Cronbach for male sample; (Female) α = alpha Cronbach for female sample; Upper diagonal values = Female correlation matrix; lower diagonal values = Male correlation matrix; MAAS = Mindfulness Attention Awareness Scale, TPS = Tuckman Procrastination Scale, JP = Job Performance, JP-E = Job Performance Employee, JP-S = Job Performance Supervisor. ** $p < .01$. * $p < .05$.

Table exhibits that mindfulness is positively associated with job performance and its dimension in female employee. However, findings also reveal that mindfulness is positively associated with job performance and its dimensions in male employee. Table further demonstrates that procrastination is negatively linked to mindfulness in females and male employees.

Table 2. The mediating role of mindfulness's perception between procrastination and job performance across male and female employees (N=400).

Variables	Mindfulness		Job Performance			
	B	SE	B	B	SE	β
Females employees (N=95)						
Procrastination	-.42	.141	-.29*			
Mindfulness				.34	.06	.48***
Males employees (N=305)						
Procrastination	-.41	.087	-.26***			
Mindfulness				.19	.033	.32***

This conditional model demonstrated fit the data adequately, $\chi^2(2) = 2.026$, $p < .363$, $\chi^2/df = 1.013$, RMSEA = .01, CFI = 1.00, NFI = .97, IFI = .96, TLI = .99, RFI = .93. Predictor variables revealed 08% of the variance for Mindfulness, 23% of the variance in job performance in female employees. Moreover, predictor variables also accounted 6% of variance for Mindfulness, 10% of the variance in job performance in male employees.

Results demonstrated that Procrastination (TTPS) was negatively predicting to mindfulness (TMAAS) ($\beta = -.29$, $p < .05$) in female employees. Furthermore, mindfulness (TMAAS) was positively predicting to job performance ($\beta = .48$, $p < .01$) in female employees. Results also displayed that procrastination (TTPS) was negatively predicting to mindfulness (TMAAS) ($\beta = -.26$, $p < .000$) in male employees. Furthermore, mindfulness (TMAAS) was positively predicting job performance ($\beta = .32$, $p < .000$) in male employees. Study results revealed that mindfulness's perception fully

mediated in the relationship between procrastination and job performance across male and female employees.

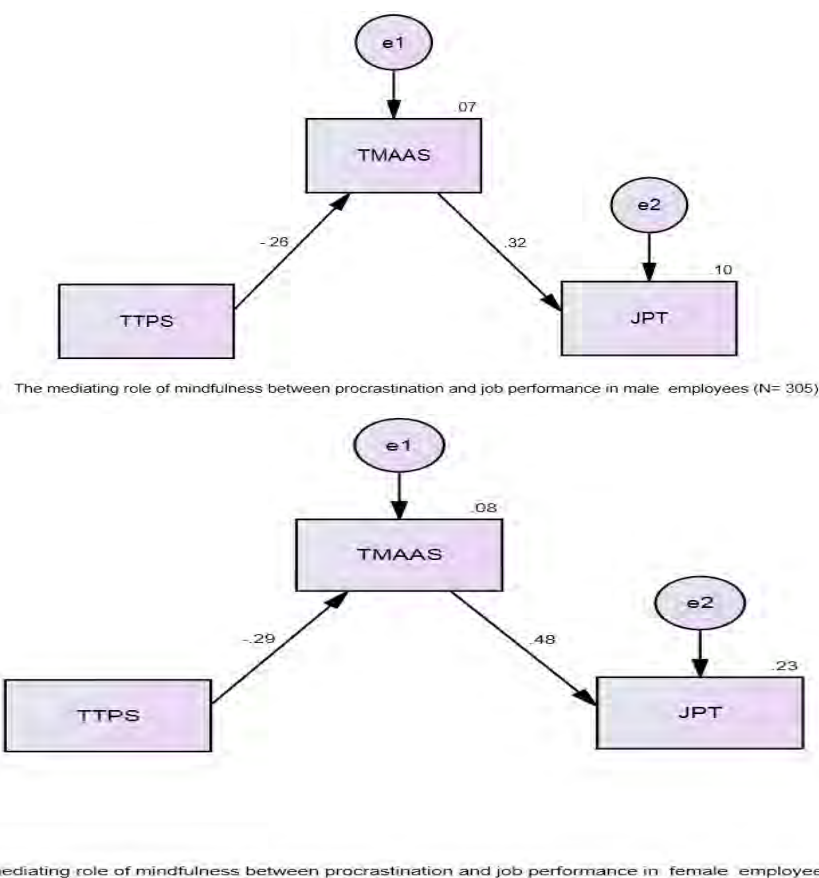


Figure 1. Mediating role of Mindfulness, Procrastination and Job Performance among male and female employees

Discussion

Self-determination theory is a commonly applied framework for identifying and understanding procrastination, mindfulness and job performance. This approach has further been used to comprehend employees' issues. Apart from previous theoretical recommendations, there exist only a few of empirical studies on above matter. Therefore, the aim of the current research was to inspect possible links between procrastination, job performance, and mindfulness in employees. The endeavor of the current study is to investigate the mediating role of mindfulness between procrastination and job performance across male and female employees.

The endeavor of research was to examine the assumptions associated with direct connection between Mindfulness and Procrastination in male and female employees. It was assumed that mindfulness would be the important mediator in this relationship. The finding of the mediation analysis was proven that procrastination is directly associated with higher level of job performance because it favor of the higher level of mindfulness. This result means that higher level of procrastination inclination towards lower level of mindfulness and job performance in both male and female. The current results are consistent with previous study findings and it is also supporting the self determination theory (Kabat-Zinn, 1994; Brown & Ryan, 2003; Cheung & Ng, 2018; Flett et al., 2016; Teasdale, Segal, & Williams, 1995; Brown, Ryan, & Creswell, 2007; Brown, Ryan, & Creswell, 2007;

Deci & Ryan, 1980; Brown et al., 2007; Teasdale et al., 1995; Gustavson, Miyake, Hewitt, & Friedman, 2014) Mindfulness is a set of practice or a temperament of individuals that forces to focus concentration in the current situation on endeavor in a broadminded way. It is a kind of concentration self-regulation that draw attention on nonreactive knowledge and permissive approval of feelings and thoughts (Kabat-Zinn, 1994). Prior study demonstrates that characteristics of mindfulness is linked to mental health (Brown & Ryan, 2003; Cheung & Ng, 2018), achievement-related self-regulation (Howell & Buro, 2011), self-consciousness (Evans, Baer, & Segerstrom, 2009), and procrastination (Flett et al., 2016).

Mindfulness further encourages and support autonomous and awareness self-regulation (Brown, Ryan, & Creswell, 2007). Self-determination theory explained self-endorsed autonomy and awareness are key factor to best possible functioning of individuals that can help to pay attention on and achieve their daily life's tasks at work and academic place (Deci & Ryan, 1980; Brown et al., 2007; Teasdale et al., 1995). Mutually, the promoted nonjudgmental and awareness acceptance linked to mindfulness may increase persons' self-regulation and reduce their inclination to procrastinate.

Procrastination is associated with pleasure of desires (Gustavson, Miyake, Hewitt, & Friedman, 2014) which may further facilitate to delay mindful commitment in prolong goals in preference of extra pleasant tasks. It is well know phenomena as self-regulatory failure (Grund & Fries, 2018). It may enhance *mindless* behaviors in individuals. A cross-sectional study conducted by Sirois and Tosti (2012) found that procrastination is indirectly related with higher level of health issues and job stress because of lower level of mindfulness in employees.

Prior studies demonstrated that the association between Mindfulness and job performance is under-debated among scholars now a day. There are different theories providing explanations of this relationship. Different models were found but no one is considered to represent a collective understanding (Judge, Thoresen, Bono, & Patton, 2001). The moderators found in previous studies were rewards, salary, job complexity or self-esteem. Studies focusing on these moderators had diverse findings, few yielding substantial results (Judge et al., 2001; Petty, Mcgee, & Cavender, 1984)). Previous studies found that mindfulness can act as another moderator in the relationship between procrastination and job performance. As described earlier, there is emerging evidence that mindfulness is positively related to job performance. However, these relationships seem to be small and they do not preclude a possible moderating effect of mindfulness. We suggest that mindful people are more focused on their work tasks and are less distracted by their emotions and beliefs about the job and thus their performance.

Limitation

Limitations of our study include its correlational design and the use of only self-reported measures. The scores obtained in our research are significant but the variance under explanation is moderate. It means that in subsequent studies, it is necessary to take account of other factors, which might contribute to the fact that in Mindfulness, procrastination and job performance. Future research should be carried out to gather additional information on the mindfulness, procrastination and job performance among employees in organizations.

Conclusion

These findings suggest that procrastination could inhibit job performance in male and female employees. Therefore, job performance could be stimulated by individual mindfulness in male and female employees. This study finding suggested that the procrastination is affecting job performance

of both male and female employees. On the other hand, it is recommended that the mindfulness can improve the job performance in male and female employees.

References

- Brown, K. W., Ryan, R. M., & Creswell, J. D. (2007). Mindfulness: Theoretical foundations and evidence for its salutary effects. *Psychological Inquiry*, 18(4), 211–237. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10478400701598298>.
- Brown, K. W., & Ryan, R. M. (2003). The benefits of being present: Mindfulness and its role in psychological well-being. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 84(4), 822–848. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-3514.84.4.822>.
- Beheshtifar, M., Hoseinifar, H., & Moghadam, M. (2011). Effect procrastination on work-related stress. *European Journal of Economics, Finance and Administrative Sciences*, 38, 59–64.
- Chun Chu, A. H., & Choi, J. N. (2005). Rethinking procrastination: Positive effects of “active” procrastination behavior on attitudes and performance. *The Journal of Social Psychology*, 145(3), 245–264. <https://doi.org/10.3200/SOCP.145.3.245-264>.
- Cheung, R. Y. M., & Ng, M. C. Y. (2018). Mindfulness and symptoms of depression and anxiety: The underlying roles of awareness, acceptance, impulse control, and emotion regulation. *Mindfulness*. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12671-018-1069-y>.
- Ferrari, J. R., O'Callaghan, J., & Newbegin, I. (2005). Prevalence of procrastination in the United States, United Kingdom, and Australia: Arousal and avoidance delays among adults. *North American Journal of Psychology*, 7(1), 1–6.
- Flett, A. L., Haghbin, M., & Pychyl, T. A. (2016). Procrastination and depression from a cognitive perspective: An exploration of the associations among procrastinatory automatic thoughts, rumination, and mindfulness. *Journal of Rational-Emotive & Cognitive-Behavior Therapy*, 34(3), 169–186. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10942-016-0235-1>.
- Gustavson, D. E., Miyake, A., Hewitt, J. K., & Friedman, N. P. (2014). Genetic relations among procrastination, impulsivity, and goal-management ability: Implications for the evolutionary origin of procrastination. *Psychological Science*, 25(6), 1178–1188. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0956797614526260>.
- Grund, A., & Fries, S. (2018). Understanding procrastination: A motivational approach. *Personality and Individual Differences*, 121, 120–130. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.paid.2017.09.035>.
- Gagnon, J., Dionne, F., & Pychyl, T. A. (2016). Committed action: An initial study on its association to procrastination in academic settings. *Journal of Contextual Behavioral Science*, 5(2), 97–102. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jcbs.2016.04.002>.
- Howell, A. J., & Buro, K. (2011). Relations among mindfulness, achievement-related selfregulation, and achievement emotions. *Journal of Happiness Studies*, 12(6), 1007–1022. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10902-010-9241-7>.
- Kim, K. R., & Seo, E. H. (2015). The relationship between procrastination and academic performance: A meta-analysis. *Personality and Individual Differences*, 82, 26–33. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.paid.2015.02.038>.
- Kabat-Zinn, J. (1994). *Wherever you go, there you are: Mindfulness meditation in everyday life*. New York: Hyperion.
- Nguyen, B., Steel, P., & Ferrari, J. R. (2013). Procrastination's impact in the workplace and the workplace's impact on procrastination. *International Journal of Selection and Assessment*, 21(4), 388–399.

- Richardson, M., Abraham, C., & Bond, R. (2012). Psychological correlates of university students' academic performance: A systematic review and meta-analysis. *Psychological Bulletin*, *138*(2), 353. <https://doi.org/10.1037/a0026838>.
- Sirois, F. M., & Pychyl, T. A. (Eds.). (2016). *Procrastination, health, and well-being*. Academic Press.
- Sirois, F. M., & Tosti, N. (2012). Lost in the moment? An investigation of procrastination, mindfulness, and well-being. *Journal of Rational-Emotive & Cognitive-Behavior Therapy*, *30*(4), 237–248. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10942-012-0151-y>.
- Schouwenburg, H. C., Lay, C. H., Pychyl, T. A., & Ferrari, J. R. (2004). *Counselling the procrastinator in academic settings*. Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.
- Teasdale, J. D., Segal, Z., & Williams, J. M. G. (1995). How does cognitive therapy prevent depressive relapse and why should attentional control (mindfulness) training help? *Behaviour Research and Therapy*, *33*(1), 25–39. [https://doi.org/10.1016/0005-7967\(94\)E0011-7](https://doi.org/10.1016/0005-7967(94)E0011-7).
- Tice, D. M., & Bratslavsky, E. (2000). Giving in to feel good: The place of emotion regulation in the context of general self-control. *Psychological Inquiry*, *11*(3), 149–159. https://doi.org/10.1207/S15327965PLI1103_03.
- Vaculík, M., Vytásková, J., Procházka, J., & Zalis, L. (2016). Mindfulness, job satisfaction and job performance: Mutual relationships and moderation effect. I. Simberova, F. Milichovsky, & o. Zizlavsky (Eds.), *Smart and efficient economy: Preparation for the future innovative economy*, 148-156.
- Van Eerde, W. (2000). Procrastination: Self-regulation in initiating aversive goals. *Applied Psychology*, *49*(3), 372–389. <https://doi.org/10.1111/1464-0597.00021>.