

Acceptance and Commitment Therapy for Procrastination in University Students : Evaluation of Efficacy

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Background & Objective

- ✓ Long-term procrastination leads to maladjustment – e.g., depression, stress, poor academic performance.
- ✓ There is a correlation between psychological flexibility and procrastination (Glick et al., 2014).
- ✓ A Japanese case study found acceptance and commitment therapy (ACT) may be an effective psychological and behavioral measure of procrastination. We examined the effects of acceptance and commitment therapy (ACT) on procrastination in university students and analyzed the psychological and behavioral measures of procrastination.

Method

Participants: 47 Japanese undergraduates (women $n = 39$, 18–22 years, Mean age = 19.73 years)

Outcomes

Primary outcomes

● Psychological indicator

Japanese version of the General Procrastination Scale (GPS)

● Behavioral indicator

Task achievement rate for seven days

= Number of tasks performed in 7 days / Number of tasks to be performed in 7 days

Process outcomes

● AAQ-II (Acceptance and Action Questionnaire-II)

● FFMQ (Five-Facet Mindfulness Questionnaire)

Treatment Protocol

- Analysis of the function of procrastination.
- Defusion from linguistic relationships that promote avoidance of the experience.
- Mindfulness exercises as alternatives to avoidance.
- Exploration of the students' values and promotion of valued actions.

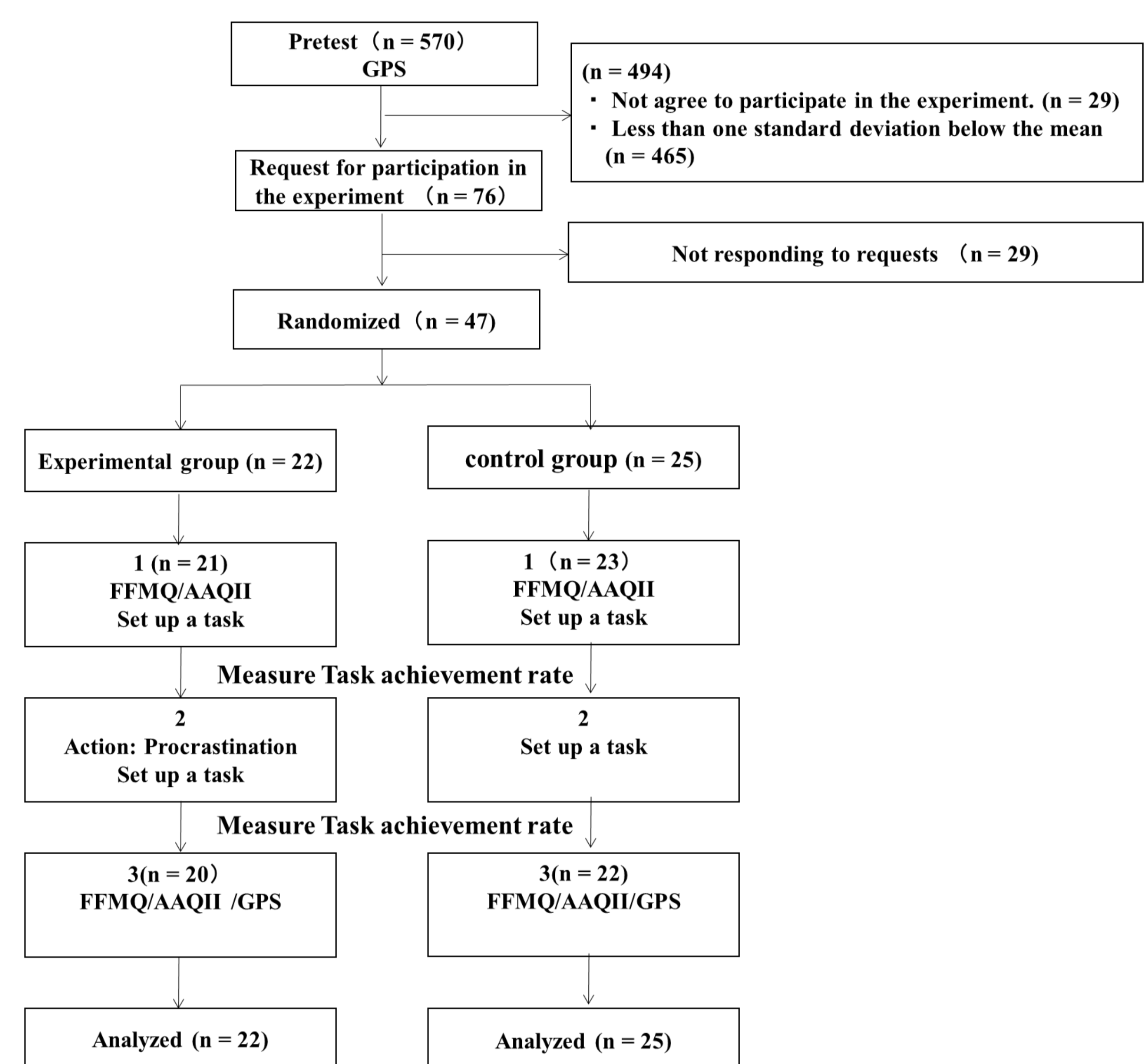


Fig1. Flow chart of this trial

Results

Analysis: The correlation of each variable at baseline was tested with the Pearson correlation coefficient.

Table1
Baseline Correlations Among Study Variables

Variable	AAQ-II (p value)	FFMQ (p value)
GPS	$r = -0.05$ (0.77)	$r = -0.40$ (0.01**)
AAQ-II		$r = -0.57$ (0.00**)

Analysis: For missing data, we analyzed using a linear mixed model.

Table2
Effects of ACT on procrastination

Dependent variables	Experimental Group			Control Group			Liner mixed model Interaction effect F	Between groups Cohen's d
	pre Mean (SD)	post Mean (SD)	Cohen's d	pre Mean (SD)	post Mean (SD)	Cohen's d		
Task Achievement rate	0.54 (0.16)	0.63 (0.14)	0.60	0.55 (0.17)	0.48 (0.21)	-0.42	13.34**	0.85
GPS	56.86 (3.37)	52.31 (4.56)	-1.18	55.04 (2.37)	53.64 (4.01)	-0.44	8.35**	0.32
AAQ-II	39.00 (9.87)	39.29 (8.88)	0.03	33.45 (8.69)	32.64 (9.90)	-0.09	0.18	0.72
FFMQ	100.35 (12.54)	106.00 (13.59)	0.44	102.05 (15.24)	100.09 (16.37)	-0.13	4.81*	0.40

Note) * $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$, *** $p < .001$.

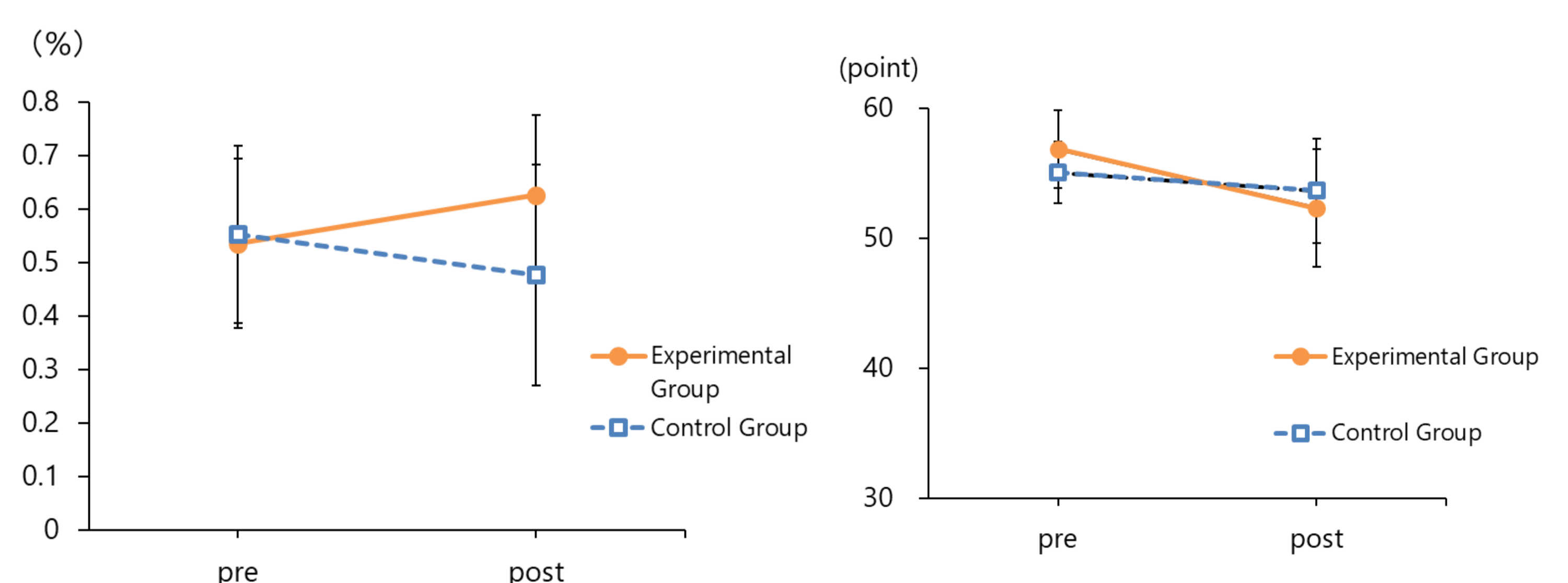
Primary outcomes

● Behavioral indicator

| Task achievement rate for seven days

● Psychological indicator

| GPS



Discussion

✓ Analysis of changes in the four indices showed that the experimental group reported an improvement in both the task achievement rate and the procrastination rate over the 7-day period, while the ACT process indicator remained unchanged.

✓ ACT-based programs may be effective for improving the psychological and behavioral aspects of procrastination, the mechanism of the effect needs to be examined.