

Academic Procrastinating Behaviours Among College Students

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Abstract

Background

Academic procrastination is a major challenge among college students studying in different courses. Academic procrastination behaviours lead them to face anxiety, stress, low academic performance, and worse mental & physical health. Understanding this behavior and reducing its effect on students is becoming important.

Objectives

This study was focused (i) to assess the level of academic procrastination behaviors among college students (ii) to compare academic procrastination behaviours among college students over their genders (male, female), nature of courses (academic, professional), locality (rural, urban) and type of family (joint, nuclear).

Method and Participants

In this survey 100 participants (UG and PG students) studying in different academic and professional courses of Government and Private Degree Colleges of Bareilly City affiliated to MJP Rohilkhand University, Bareilly (UP).

Results

The study results revealed that most college students showed moderate (40%) and below-average (25%) academic procrastination. 10% of college students were equally distributed over low and extreme levels of academic procrastination. College students of both genders were significantly different in their academic procrastination behaviours. Still, there were no significant differences reported among college students in their course categories (academic, professional), locality (rural, urban), and type of family (joint, nuclear).

Conclusions

Appropriate motivation techniques, breaking down the tasks, fixing the deadlines and sticking to them, using a planner, eliminating distractions, taking proper breaks to avoid burnout, and rewarding at the time of compellation of tasks are recommended.

Keywords: Procrastination, academic procrastination, academic tasks, college students

Introduction

Academic Procrastination (AP) is an act of postponing any academic tasks such as homework, studying, or completing assignments. This behavior is very much common among college students and this type of behavior can result in reduced productivity, increased stress, anxiety, poor academic achievement and

worse mental & physical health. Procrastinating behaviours can negatively impact one's academic progress and ultimately their education.

Academic procrastination is a common phenomenon among students and it characterized by the act of delaying or postponing academic tasks despite knowing the potential negative consequences. There are several theories that attempt to explain why students engage in procrastination, including the self-regulation theory, which suggests that individuals who lack self-discipline or control are more likely to procrastinate, and the learned helplessness theory, which suggests that students may feel overwhelmed or helpless in their academic pursuits and resign themselves to not completing tasks on time.

Academic procrastination occurs when issues i.e. anxiety, fear of failure, and lack of self-regulation abilities becomes a burden on students' self-control and motivation and students often postpone academic tasks even when they want to get them done. But, they often only manage to start shortly before the deadline, when the increasing pressure finally pushes them to do their work.

Procrastination is identified as a barrier to academic success [1], and it is also reported in many studies that procrastinators generally prefer to spend their time in watching TV or seeking joy or pleasure in other activities [2]. It is also reported that engaging in academic procrastination can bring negative outcomes such as stress, guilt, poor academic performance, and low self-esteem among students [3]. It is also theorized to be due to a failure in self-regulation, inability to exert control over thoughts, emotions, impulses, and task performances in regard to preferred standards [4]. It has also been observed that academic procrastination is task-dependent and that people exhibit procrastination in a variety of behaviors and settings [5].

Review of literature

Academic procrastination has been studied by many researchers working in different disciplines. The delays seen in academic procrastination may result from late onset and impulsive diversions during work [6]. Researchers have examined internal contributors to procrastination such as locus of control and emotional intelligence [7], emotional intelligence and self-efficacy [8], and self-awareness and emotional responses [9]. It was also reported that students with high emotional intelligence procrastinate less than those with lower emotional intelligence [7], and that individuals with higher self-efficacy, emotional intelligence has notable impact on academic procrastination [10].

Research suggested the need to study on academic intervention for academic procrastination and to develop effective interventions in a systematic literature review [11]. Positive relation was found between delaying and academic anxiety, time wasting and academic stress among the nursing undergraduates [12]. High self-esteem reduces the procrastinating behaviours and lower self-esteem maximize the procrastinating behaviours [13]. The higher the sense of community lowers the academic procrastination among university students [14]. Academic procrastination was significantly convinced by self-control techniques [15]. A positive correlation between depression and academic procrastination, and students who had high level depression had high level of procrastination [16]. A significant correlation between procrastination, general social self-efficacy, and locus of control was also reported [17]. Self-regulated learning in a strong predictor of college students' academic procrastination [18]. Delaying and highly dizziness or lethargus cause the procrastination behaviour in any person [19].

College level students are struggling with numerous distractions emerged as a result of advancement in information and communication technologies and various social media platforms. These distractions also engage the students in the fun loving activities associated with these technologies and social networks. It

is very important to reducing academic procrastination behaviours among college level students that there should be motivating academic interventions those could help in engaging students in their academic tasks without delaying. Present study may help the college or university level teachers in planning appropriate academic interventions to avoid academic procrastination behaviours among their students.

Research questions

After a detailed review of literature following research questions framed which are to be answered with the help of the findings of this research study-

1. What is the level of academic procrastination among college students?
2. Is there any significant difference between the levels of procrastination among college students?

Objectives

Following objectives have been derived from the above research questions –

1. To know the status of level of academic procrastination behaviors among college students.
2. To study Academic Procrastination behaviours of college students on the basis of their genders (male, female), nature of courses (academic, professional), locality (rural, urban) and type of family (joint, nuclear).
3. To suggest major factors for controlling Academic Procrastination behaviours among college students.

Hypotheses

Following null hypotheses have been formulated with regard to above study objectives-

- H₀₁** There is no significant difference between Academic Procrastination behaviours of male and female college students.
- H₀₂** The difference is not significant between Academic Procrastination behaviours of college students studying academic (liberal) and professional courses.
- H₀₃** No significant difference exists between Academic Procrastination behaviours of rural and urban college students.
- H₀₄** There is no significant difference exists between Academic Procrastination behaviours of college students according to their type of family.

Participants and Material

Survey method of descriptive research approach was employed to examine the status of academic procrastination behaviours among college students. A total of 100 participants were selected randomly studying in different UG and PG level academic and professional courses of Government and Private Degree Colleges of Bareilly city affiliated to MJP Rohilkhand University, Bareilly (UP). Academic Procrastination Scale (APS) developed and standardized by Dr. Savita Gupta & Liyaqat Bashir (2018) was used to examine the Academic Procrastination behaviours of college students. It contains 30 items distributed across 4 dimensions i.e. time management, task aversiveness, sincerity and personal initiative. The gathered data was analysed using SPSS-21 package.

Results and Discussions

Q1. What is the level of academic procrastination?

Table-1: Level of Academic Procrastination among Colleges Students

Sr. No.	AP	Gender		Locality		Type of Course		Type of Family		Overall Category
		M	F	R	U	PR	ACD	JF	NF	
1	Extremely High	01 (01)	00 (00)	00 (00)	01 (01)	01 (01)	00 (00)	01 (01)	00 (00)	01 (01)
2	High	02 (02)	00 (00)	00 (00)	2 (02)	01 (01)	01 (01)	01 (01)	01 (01)	02 (02)
3	Above Average	10 (10)	02 (02)	06 (06)	06 (06)	07 (07)	05 (05)	05 (05)	07 (07)	12 (12)
4	Moderate	16 (16)	24 (24)	19 (19)	21 (21)	22 (22)	18 (18)	18 (18)	22 (22)	40 (40)
5	Below Average	08 (08)	17 (17)	10 (10)	15 (15)	11 (11)	14 (14)	14 (14)	11 (11)	25 (25)
6	Low	05 (05)	05 (05)	05 (05)	05 (05)	04 (04)	06 (06)	03 (03)	07 (07)	10 (10)
7	Extremely Low	04 (04)	06 (06)	03 (03)	07 (07)	07 (07)	03 (03)	03 (03)	07 (07)	10 (10)
	Total	46	54	43	57	53	47	45	55	100

AP=Academic Procrastination, M=Male, F=Female, R=Rural, U=Urban, PC=Professional Course, AC=Academic Course, JF=Joint Family, NF=Nuclear Family;
(Numbers in Parenthesis are in percent)

Table-1 revealed that 01% college students showed extremely high level academic procrastination which equates to males (01%), urban (01%) and colleges students from joint family (01%). Further, 02% college students in overall category reflected high level academic procrastination. Similarly, 12% college students in overall category indicated above average level of academic procrastination. In this level of academic procrastination 10% males showed academic procrastination which is the highest percent in this level. Overall 40% college students showed moderate level of academic procrastination; 24% females also indicated moderate level academic procrastination which is the highest percent.

Again moving forward, 25% colleges students indicated below average academic procrastination; 17% females also showed below average level academic procrastination which is highest percent in this level of academic procrastination showed by other categories. Only 10% participants reflected low level of academic procrastination and in the same level college students from nuclear family (07%) showed academic procrastination which is the highest percent. Similarly, overall 10% college students demonstrated extremely low academic procrastination, in this level of academic procrastination urban college students (07%), students from professional courses (07%) and college students from nuclear family (07%) showed extremely low level of academic procrastination.

From the above discussion it can be concluded that major population of college students falls in moderate (40%) and below average (25%) level of academic procrastination. 10% college students are equally distributed over low and extremely levels of academic procrastination.

Q2. Is there any significant difference between the levels of procrastination among college students? To answer the above research question above null hypotheses have been formulated and tested with regard to demographic characteristics (gender, nature of course, locality and type of family) of the participants and mean, SD, and t-values are given in table-2.

Table-2: Mean, SD and t-values of college students on Academic Procrastination

Attributes	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	df	t-value
Male	4	84.96	19.01	2.803	9	2.085*
	6					
Female	5	77.98	14.40	1.959	8	
	4					
Professional Course	53	81.13	18.55	2.547	98	.036 NS
Academic Course	47	81.26	15.16	2.211		
Rural	43	82.53	14.99	2.285	98	.682 NS
Urban	57	80.19	18.37	2.434		
Joint Family	45	82.73	14.46	2.155	98	.822 NS
Nuclear Family	55	79.93	18.79	2.534		

*=Significant at .05 level of significance, NS=Not Significant

The table-2 showed the scores of Academic Procrastination behaviours of college students over their demographic characteristics. Significant difference was found in academic procrastination behaviours between male and female college students ($t=2.085^*$, $df=98$, $p<.05$) and the null hypothesis (H_{01}) was rejected. The difference in mean scores of Male ($M=84.96$, $SD=2.803$) indicated that male college students appeared to have higher level of Procrastination behaviour than Female college students ($M=77.98$, $SD=14.40$). The difference could be because male college students are much more open to the society and communication activities as compared to female college students and they got engaged in various outdoor activities. Female students are sincere, learning and goal oriented. Therefore, it might be a reason that both genders are more differs in conscious and active focus for their academic tasks.

Moving forward, Academic Procrastination behaviours between college students of professional and academic courses did not differ significantly ($t=.036$ NS, $df=98$, $p>.05$). and null hypothesis (H_{02}) was accepted. The difference in mean scores of academic courses ($M=81.26$, $SD=15.16$) indicates they appeared to have marginally higher level of Academic Procrastination than their professional course counterparts ($M=81.13$, $SD=18.55$). The difference between college students of both these courses could be due to the difference in nature of courses.

Similarly, the difference in Academic Procrastination behaviours of rural and urban college students was not significant ($t=.682$ NS, $df=98$, $p>.05$) and null hypothesis (H_{03}) was accepted. The difference in mean scores of rural ($M=82.53$, $SD=14.98$) showed that rural college students appeared to have slightly higher level of academic procrastination behaviours than urban college students ($M=80.19$, $SD=18.37$). The reason behind could be the low access to required resources for rural college students to complete different academic tasks and compared to urban students.

College students from joint and nuclear family were not significantly differing ($t=.822$ NS, $df=98$, $p>.05$) on their academic procrastination behaviours and null hypothesis (H_{04}) was also accepted. The mean scores of college students from joint family ($M=82.73$, $SD=14.46$) reflected that they seem to

show slightly higher level of academic procrastination than their counterparts from nuclear families ($M=79.93$, $SD=18.79$). The reason behind this slight difference in academic procrastination could be that college students from joint families may have guidance as well as to complete the academic tasks timely. They may have much more moral support as compared to college students who belong to nuclear families.

Results

1. Majority of college students showed moderate level (40%) and below average (25%) level of academic procrastination. 10% college students were equally distributed over low and extremely levels of academic procrastination.
2. College students of both the genders were significantly different in their academic procrastination behaviours.
3. In contrary to above, the difference in academic procrastination behaviours was not found to be significant between college students of academic and professional courses.
4. Further, no significant difference in academic procrastination behaviours was reported between rural and urban college students.
5. Similarly, there was no significant difference found between the academic procrastination behaviours of college students belong to joint and nuclear family.

Conclusions

Personal factors are more responsible for academic delays among college students this could be because students pay less attention to studies due to more exposure to social media platforms. Students and teachers should try to remove the behaviour of dizziness or lethargicness to stay away from academic procrastination. A time-keeper and planner or digital tools for planning can be suggested to students to minimise academic anxiety and excellent academic performance. Distractions should be minimized or reduced by minimizing the screen time other factors. Appropriate interventions can help students in improving their skills like time management and study habits to stay away from academic procrastination.

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Authors' Biography

First author (Ms. Shilpi Saxena) is a student of M.Ed. final year student and this research paper is a part of her dissertation. Dr. Satish Chandra is presently working as an Assistant Professor at Rakshpal Bahadur Teacher's Training, Bareilly, Uttar Pradesh, India and presently, he is teaching and guiding M.Ed. students at the institute. He supervised me during my M.Ed. dissertation.

Conflict of Interest

There is no conflict of interest.

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