

# The Relationship Between Fear of Failure and Student Academic Achievement With Procrastination as Mediating Variable

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## ABSTRACT

Academic achievement is the result obtained after studying for a certain period. For undergraduate students, GPA (Grade Point Average) is the result obtained by students while studying in college. During the study process, there are several aspects that can influence it. This study aims to find out whether there is a relationship between fear of failure and student academic achievement, with procrastination as the mediating variable. The subjects of this study were 52 people consisting of 37 female subjects (71.2%) and 15 male subjects (28.8%). The results of this study indicate that procrastination does not mediate the relationship between fear of failure and student academic achievement.

**Keywords:** procrastination, fear of failure, academic achievement

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Education can have a major impact on individuals or students, both in terms of broader insights or changing behavior patterns to be more organized. Academic achievement can be obtained through student's effort by learning and study in their school or colleague. Winkel (1996) explained that learning achievement is a testament to the success of a student's learning or ability to carry out his/her learning activities in accordance with the achievable worth. In terms of insight, the outcome that can be generated for individuals or students who underwent education are obtaining values as proof of successful learning or the ability of students to carry out their learning activities called learning achievements.

In this study, researchers used procrastination as one of the factors that mediates the fear of failure that can disrupt student learning processes and have an impact on student academic achievement. Academic procrastination makes students postpone their academic duties and ignore their academic obligations during the study period (Karatas, 2015).

This research is based on the results of interviews with a university X student showing that this students have academic achievement or GPA of 3.4. Meanwhile, according to the observations of researchers and several other students, this student is intelligent, has broad insight, and high analytical and logical thinking skills. After further exploration through interviews with this student, this

student has high standards of thought and high expectations in thinking. If something does not meet his expectations, then he will delay or abandon his obligations as a student and choose to play games to find a more pleasant sensation. (SI, *Personal Communication*, 2020). This is in line with the opinion of McElroy (2016) published by the Journal of Health Psychology stating that more intelligent people tend to be lazier in their activities, because they present cognitive challenges that require more effort to complete.

From the results of interviews and observations above, researchers used it as consideration for conducting this research. There are some high potential students with a high level of thinking and broad insight but they do not achieve maximum marks. This means that the self-actualization of these students is less than their potential. This is caused by, among others, procrastination and perfectionism possessed by students. Procrastination is a behavior that can be found in almost all parts of the world and often found among students.

The research question about this research is procrastination act as mediator variable in the relationship between fear of failure and academic achievement.

Based on the background that has been described, this research has a hypothesis that procrastination act as a mediating variable in the relationship between fear of failure and academic achievement.

## 1.1 Related Research

This study is divided into three variables. This study using three variables; procrastination, fear of failure, and academic achievement.

### 1.1.1 Procrastination

According to Solomon and Rothblum (1984), academic procrastination is divided into a number of objects including delays in writing assignments, study assignments for exams, reading assignments, administrative assignments, attending lessons or meeting with thesis guide, to activities around university. According to Lay (in Karatas, 2015), procrastination is explained as a tendency to delay the initiation or completion of an important task. Steel (in Chen, et al., 2016) defines procrastination as a deliberate delay from the intended action, despite being aware of the negative results of the delay.

A survey by New Statement magazine 26 February 1999 suggested that approximately 20% to 70% of students procrastinate (Yuanita, 2010). From previous foreign research conducted by Rothblum, et al. (1986) 40.6% of 379 subjects procrastinated. Meanwhile, from Rizki's research (2009)(DAFPUS) there was a prevalence of 48.5% of the 66 subjects of North Sumatra University students who procrastinated. So it can be concluded that procrastination is a universal problem. In a study by De Castella, et al (2013) there were results that showed that the orientation of success largely moderated the relationship between fear of failure and academic achievement in high schools in Japan and Australia. In a previous study conducted by Meek, et al. (2015) when viewed from a cognitive perspective, uncertainty about the future can reduce felt competence (the ability to act effectively), disrupt motivation (Deci & Ryan, 2000), and increase procrastination behavior (Haghbin et al., 2012).

### 1.1.2 Fear of Failure

Fear of failure is a tendency to assess threats and feel anxious about situations involving the possibility of failure (Conroy, et al., 2007). Conroy (2002) stated that successful people often claim that fear of failure can either motivate them to a high level of performance or prevent them from actualizing their potential. The consequences of fear of failure can be fatal, as fear of failure is associated with achievement, mental health, moral development, and physical health. Fear of failure among students can prevent them from achieving the maximum actualization of their potential by decreasing student performance in learning so that they fail to get maximum results. Conroy (2002) states that fear of failure is an encouragement to avoid failure, especially the negative consequences such as shame, lowered self-concept, and loss of social influence.

Among students, fear of failure can cause them to act nonproductively, such as procrastinating as a form of behavior to avoid negative consequences. Uncertainty about the future is one aspect of fear of failure. Uncertainty about

the future can increase procrastination behavior among students and make them feel helpless or unable to act effectively.

Fear of failure is highly disruptive for most individuals, both in completing tasks and in daily activities. Not only in everyday life, fear of failure can also be felt by students. This leads to some students choosing not to make any effort to achieve the progress needed to reach their goals.

Research by Akmal, et al. (2017), found a relationship between students who are writing a thesis and fear of failure in predicting the potential for procrastination. Procrastination is a result of fear of failure felt by many, especially students. The combination of uncertainty about results and pressure for success can lead to fear of failure that plays an important role in human behavior, where actions are delayed due to fear of negative results (Conroy et al., 2002; Haghbin et al., 2012, quoted in Meek et al., 2015).

Therefore, it can be seen that individuals tend to be afraid of things that are uncertain, such as one's future and that fear makes the individual afraid to take a step forward and instead chooses to delay the steps that he/she should take. Many students are aware of the negative effects of procrastination, but students continue to procrastinate because it has become a habit. Rothblum and Solomon (in Ferrari, Johnson & McGown, 1995 cited in Mujahidah and Mudjiran, 2019) in regards to academic procrastination said that fear of failure is one of the individual factors for academic procrastination behavior.

### 1.1.3 Academic Achievement

At tertiary education level, students are required to do their utmost in the learning process to get satisfying results. Students are required to be active in the learning process both in the classroom, and through other media such as journals, scientific papers and books. Chaplin (2001) claimed that academic achievement in the field of academic education is a special level of achievement or the result of expertise in academic work that is assessed by teachers, through standardized tests, or through a combination of the two.

In tertiary institutions, academic achievement is described as the Grade Point Average (GPA) achieved by students. If students cannot reach the standard values set by the college, they will get sanctions as a consequence.

Based on the description above, there are several factors that can cause procrastination in individuals. Procrastination is reinforced by students' fear of failure. Both of these variables can affect the results of academic achievement of students who experience academic procrastination. The motivation of this research is to find out and test the relationship between fear of failure with procrastination as mediating variable and academic achievement of undergraduate students. This research was conducted during Covid-19, forcing participants to study at home.

## 1.2 Our Contribution

This research provides developments in understanding student academic achievement. Providing knowledge about how procrastination can mediate the relationship between fear of failure and student academic achievement.

## 2. METHOD

Researchers used quantitative method in a non-experimental form with survey as data collection technique. This research is a form of quantitative research with correlational research method, because researchers want to see the relationship between variables in research. The variables studied in this study were fear of failure and academic achievement of students mediated by procrastination. Participants in this study have an age range of 20 to 24 years. Based on the results obtained, the most subjects were 21 years old, as many as 26 participants (50%). For more information, see table 1.

Table 1. Participants Grouped by Age

Age	Frequency	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
20	3	5,8	5,8
21	23	50,0	55,8
22	17	32,7	88,5
23	4	7,7	96,2
24	2	3,8	100,0
Total	52	100,0	

Based on the data, there were 52 participants who participated in this research, including 37 women (71.2%) and 15 men (28.8%). For more information, see table 2.

Table 2. Participants Grouped by Sex

Sex	Frequency	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Male	15	28,8	28,8
Female	37	71,2	100,0
Total	52	100,0	

The population in this study are active students. Researchers used a sample of 384 based on Krejcie and Morgan's tables (1970), which consisted of students taken using nonprobability sampling techniques (which means that samples were taken randomly). However, based on consideration of data processing needs due to the Social Distancing and Work From Home regulations, researchers used as many as 52 participants. Researchers used GPA

(Grade Point Average) of students to measure student academic achievement.

In measuring the variables, the researcher used two measuring instruments; (a) The Performance Failure Appraisal Inventory (Conroy, 2003) to measure the fear of failure in students and (b) Procrastination Academic Scale-Students (Solomon & Rothblum, 1984). The fear of failure variable is measured using the PFAI (performance failure appraisal inventory) measuring instrument developed by Conroy (2003). PFAI measures the strength of confidence in individuals related to the consequences of a failure. Scores are given for each dimension of fear of failure; (a) fear of experiencing shame, (b) fear of devaluing oneself, (c) fear of having an uncertain future, (d) fear of important people being disinterested, (e) fear of making important people disappointed.

In this instrument, the responses are described in the form of a standard 5-point Likert scale, 1 which is distrust to number 5 which is complete trust. The higher the score obtained from the questionnaire filled out by participants, the higher the value of fear of failure they have. As for the internal consistency reliability coefficient for this variable, the value is 0.703. For more information, see table 3.

Table 3. Reliability of Fear of Failure Instrument

Fear of failure	
<i>Alpha Cronbach</i>	.767

Measurement of procrastination in students used the PASS (procrastination academic scale-students) measuring instrument developed by Solomon and Rothblum (1984). PASS measures the level of student procrastination by measuring 3 areas: (a) the prevalence of academic procrastination, (b) the reason for doing procrastination, and (c) comparing procrastination scores with behaviors that indicate those behaviors with procrastination. The researcher uses the prevalence section of procrastination which is divided into 6 academic areas: (1) writing term paper, (2) studying for exams, (3) keeping up weekly reading assignments, (4) academic administrative tasks, (5) attendance tasks, and (6) school activities in general.

In the questionnaire, the response to this measuring instrument is described in the form of a standard 5-point Likert scales. The final result of the coefficient of internal

consistency reliability for this variable is 0.905. For more information, see table 4.

Tabel 4. Reliability of Procrastination Instrument

Procrastination	
<i>Alpha Cronbach</i>	.905

### 3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

#### 3.1 Overview of Participants' Procrastination

Measurement of student procrastination in this study used a Likert scale of 1-5 with a mean value of 3. The measurement results shows that empirical mean is smaller than the mean value which means the participants' procrastination is low ( $M = 2.96$ ,  $SD = 0.65$ ).

#### 3.2 Overview of Participants' Fear of Failure

Measurement of fear of failure in this study uses Likert scale from -2 to 2 with a mean value of 0. The measurement results shows that the empirical mean is smaller than the mean value which means the fear of failure of participants is low ( $M = -0.041$ ,  $SD = 0.68$ ).

#### 3.3 Overview of Participants' GPA

Measurement of GPA of participants uses data categorization to get several categories of GPA which are classified as low, moderate, to high. Empirical data used for making this categories (Azwar, 2012). For more information, see table 5.

Table 5. GPA categorization

Category	GPA Score
Low	$X < 3,22$
Moderate	$3,22 < X < 3,85$
High	$X > 3,85$

From the data obtained, most participants had moderate GPA, which consists of 35 people (67.3%). It can be described that participants of this study are students with moderate GPA. For more information, see table 8.

Table 6. Overview of Participants' GPA

Category	Frequency	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Low	8	15,4	15,4
Moderate	35	67,3	82,7
High	9	17,3	100,0

#### 3.4 Hypothesis Testing

The final analysis, which is the indirect effect shows there is no indirect significant relationship between fear of failure and GPA through procrastination ( $b = 0,0006$ , 95% CI [0,00250, 0,0006]). Therefore, procrastination does not act as a mediator between the fear of failure and GPA. For more information, see Figure 1.

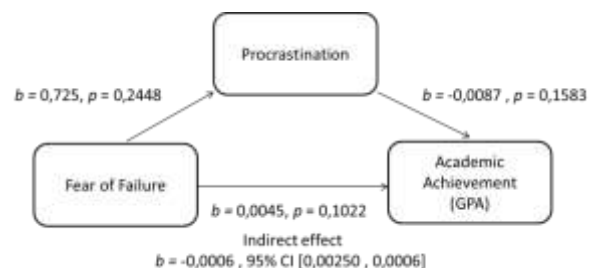


Figure 1. Relationships between Research Variables

### 4. DISCUSSION

In this study, the results show that procrastination does not act as a mediator between the fear of failure and GPA. This shows that the hypothesis of this research which is "procrastination mediates the relationship between fear of failure and academic achievement" in this study is rejected. Based on the results of data analysis, it shows that procrastination is not a variable that mediates the relationship between fear of failure and academic achievement.

These findings using students that have an age range of 20-24 in college. In contrast to research conducted by De Castella, et al (2013) that found a relationship between fear of failure with academic process that is moderated by a success orientation. The study involved high school students in Japan and Australia as research subjects. The subjects of this study showed a low level of procrastination behavior and fear of failure, therefore researchers suspected that the fear of failure variable is not suitable for study at X University which the majority of the subjects of this study are from.

The hypothesis of this research that procrastination act as mediator variable in the relationship between fear of failure and academic achievement are rejected, there is possibility it caused by the subject's age. The subject of this study has an age range of 20-24 years with lower level of procrastination compared to previous studies conducted by De Castella, et al (2013) involving high school students. This is in line with the statement of Steel (2007) which explains that as people age, procrastination will decrease. Subjects in this study had low level of procrastination and fear of failure. In a study conducted by Balkis and Erdinç (2017), the result showed that male subjects had higher levels of academic procrastination than women, despite having equal amount of female and male research subjects.

Meanwhile, the subjects of this study were dominated by female subjects at 37 participants (71.2%) and male subjects at 15 participants (28.8%) resulting in unbalanced data. This study was limited in acquiring more balanced research subjects in terms of sex and researchers feel a lack in terms of participant number in this study. At the time researchers conducted data collecting, an extraordinary condition occurred, which is the Covid-19 outbreak that might have caused behavioral changes in individuals. Previous studies were conducted under normal conditions. The researcher suggests a further research related to the fear of failure and students' academic achievement variables using group subjects with different age ranges than those used by the researcher. Future studies can involve subjects with a younger age range, such as high school students. Researchers also suggest using other variables that can measure the level of fear of failure or procrastination, such as self-efficacy.

## 5. CONCLUSION

There is a relationship between fear of failure and student academic achievement. However, procrastination does not mediate the relationship between fear of failure and student academic achievement. Other variables are predicted to mediate the fear of failure and student academic achievement.

## ACKNOWLEDGMENT

The researcher would like to thank the participants involved in this research.

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