



Analysis of the Effect of Procrastination on College Students' Studies

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Abstract. Procrastination is a widespread problem that affects many university students. The main goals of this study were to identify the root causes of procrastination in college students and to analyze potential remedies. The findings indicate that self-control, time management, failure-related fear, and perfectionism are frequently linked to procrastination among university students. The solution to this problem is to reassess what one will learn from the semester's assignments, to set and concentrate on academic goals, and to approach those goals by completing tasks as a self-driven way of getting closer to them, rather than cultivating task aversion under external pressure that results in task procrastination. The value of the external learning environment, such as a quiet area away from a busy environment, must also be taken into account before beginning a task. To avoid retaliatory procrastination from overwork, it is also essential to strike a balance between work and rest.

Keywords: Academic Procrastination, College Students, Self-regulation, Time Management, Perfectionism.

1 Introduction

Procrastination is a type of self-regulatory failure characterized by unreasonable delays in task completion, despite the possibility of negative consequences [1]. Furthermore, procrastination is not only prevalent in people's daily lives or at work, but it is also prevalent in higher education, where it is also referred to as 'academic procrastination.' Academic procrastination is frequently defined as failing to complete an academic task within the expected timeframe or deferring work that must be completed [2]. It is estimated that 80-95% of college students are procrastinators, 75% believe they are procrastinators, and nearly 50% consistently procrastinate and have procrastination problems [3]. Previous studies on the causes of procrastination relied on fear of failure factors such as assessment anxiety, excessive perfectionist standards of personal performance, and a lack of self-confidence [4]. By using quantitative analysis to investigate the links between procrastination and factors such as time management, mental health, and perfectionism, it suggests that students in this category procrastinate because they are unable to meet their own or others' expectations, or fear that poor performance will cause others to be disappointed in them (especially those who place a high value on

their parents’ expectations and evaluations of them), resulting in a fear of tasks [5]. Based on previous research, this paper will continue to investigate the phenomenon and causes of academic procrastination among university students, as well as how academic procrastination caused by these factors affects university students’ studies and will conclude with recommendations for solutions and preventative measures. Future researchers can better understand the nature of academic procrastination, when it occurs, its primary causes, and how students can avoid it by using this review as a foundation.

2 Cause Analysis

Academic procrastination is defined as the tendency throughout one’s academic career to postpone and delay academic tasks or to ignore academic responsibilities [6]. According to research, the primary cause of college students’ procrastination is frequently low self-perceived efficacy as a result of task stress [6]. Students’ doubts or lack of confidence in their ability to complete the task typically manifest as academic procrastination. Simultaneously, an excessive fear of failure of the outcome may create a fear of the task, delaying the start of writing. Previous research has classified academic procrastination into two categories: 1. the importance of students’ self-regulation and time management skills in the formation of procrastination [2]; 2. the impact of failure fear-induced negative perfectionism on academic procrastination [4]. This research looks at the phenomenon of procrastination among university students while writing a dissertation, what factors contribute to it, and how to deal with it.

2.1 Students’ Poor Self-regulation and Time Management Skills

Self-regulated learning (SRL) is a recursive process in which students actively manage their learning by organizing, overseeing, and managing their internal and external resources to accomplish personal objectives in the academic setting [7]. According to research, students who are more in control of their behavior tend to have adaptive motivation and attitudes that enable them to succeed in a variety of academic settings [7]. Self-regulated students are motivated and involved in their studies because of these traits, and they are less likely to procrastinate on their academic work. However, persistent habitual procrastinators have lower levels of self-control, which is demonstrated by their frequent assignment submission delays, inability to interact positively with teachers in class, and even absenteeism, among other undesirable behaviors. A random whole group multi-stage sampling method was used to choose 200 students at random from 6217 undergraduate students at the University of Isfahan in Iran, according to Zarrin, S. A., et al. (2020), who used self-regulation as a predictor of academic procrastination to conduct a linear regression analysis [8]. Table 1 displays the study’s findings.

Table 1. Pearson correlations between the study variables [8]

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
Procrastination	1							

Fear of failure	.19**	1						
Memory	-.19**	-.68	1					
Goal-setting	-.15**	-.02	.49**	1				
Self-evaluation	-.16**	.09	.44**	.37**	1			
Help-seeking	-.21**	-.19**	.52**	.28**	.65**	1		
Responsibility	-.41**	.06	.39**	.37**	.43**	.50**	1	
Organizing	-.78**	-.14	.42**	.30**	.43**	.33**	.46**	1
Note. **p<0.1								

As shown in table 1, procrastination was negatively associated with memory, goal setting, self-evaluation, help-seeking, responsibility, and organization, suggesting that increasing self-regulation strategies may reduce procrastination [8]. This study will support Cheng, S. L., & Xie, K. (2021) that students with greater self-regulation are less likely to suffer from academic procrastination than those with less self-regulation [7]. This stems from their intrinsic self-efficacy and acuity to the to-do list. They can autonomously recognize the importance of tasks and complete them promptly, rather than choosing to procrastinate pointlessly. In other words, self-regulation can lead individuals to actively begin work or academic tasks rather than relying on teachers, parents, and the outside world in general [8]. This phenomenon is also commonly referred to as academic self-regulation [8].

Time management is a crucial part of academic self-control and a key element in controlling procrastination [8]. Studies have shown that self-efficacy among students has a significant direct impact on time management, which in turn has a significant indirect impact on academic procrastination through time management [6]. In other words, students will start making plans for their lives when they think they can perform at a certain level [6]. Rather than wasting time or delaying tasks they could have completed earlier, they will manage the amount of time they spend on particular tasks or activities to be more effective, efficient, and productive [6]. In contrast, students who lacked confidence in their skills tended to lack a life plan and engage in useless activities [6]. This result is consistent with Rosetti, L. (2011), who hypothesized that students who procrastinate overestimate the amount of time needed to finish tasks, which causes academic delays as a result of poor time management [9].

2.2 The Influence of Perfectionism on Procrastination

Individual Component Perfectionism. The study of the causes of procrastination has long included the relationship between perfectionism and behavior. Notably, the perfectionism construct has both personal and social dimensions [10]. Due to the personal element that makes up perfectionism, it has been classified in earlier research as positive versus negative perfectionism. Prior studies on the positive versus negative perfectionism scale indicate that positive perfectionism characteristics include an emphasis on one's strengths, positive results, and positive reinforcement experiences as a result of perfectionism behavior (e.g., athletes often achieve success through a function of demanding, positive or non-pathological perfectionism) [11]. On the other hand, negative perfectionism is a personality trait that is motivated by a fear of failure or a desire

to avoid receiving criticism [11]. Students' procrastination behavior is somewhat influenced by negative perfectionism, an unhealthy psychological factor. It typically shows up as sensitivity to both real and perceived negative evaluations by others [11]. The main causes of negative perfectionism are the belief that others have unreasonably high expectations of themselves as well as the fear of failing at a task, disappointing others, or facing punishment. Furthermore, low self-efficacy is the foundation of negative perfectionism. Therefore, from a theoretical standpoint, one would assume that those who procrastinate lack confidence in the efficacy of preventive measures have expectations of performance they feel they cannot achieve or have low self-efficacy [11].

Social Component Perfectionism. The social component of perfectionism usually manifests itself in the belief that others expect one to be perfect [10]. When students believe they are unable to meet the expectations of others, they develop anxiety and fear. This psychology is regarded as a major cause of procrastination. Previous research on academic procrastination has found that procrastination is caused in part by the socially disapproving expectations of people who hold perfectionist standards for others [10]. According to Flett, G. L., et al. (1992), in a study on the components of perfectionism and procrastination in university students, socially prescriptive perfectionism was positively associated with the frequency of academic procrastination, and the primary cause was still procrastination due to students' fear of failing at tasks [10]. The MPS was used to assess 131 undergraduate students enrolled in an introductory psychology course at the University of Toronto on three main assessment dimensions: (1) self-directed perfectionism (e.g., I demand perfection from myself); (2) other-oriented perfectionism (e.g., if I ask someone to do something, I expect them to do it perfectly); and (3) socially prescriptive perfectionism (e.g., the people around me expect me to succeed at everything I do). The main finding in the total sample was that socially prescribed perfectionism was significantly associated with most procrastination measures. Socially prescribed perfectionism was positively related to scores on the lay procrastination scale as well as the frequency of academic procrastination. Not only that, but the study discovered that procrastination caused by socially prescriptive perfectionism was frequently associated with high parental expectations for students. This finding is generally consistent with the findings of Frost et al. who discovered that academic procrastination was positively related to high parental expectations and criticism [5]. Similar to previous research, perfectionism fueled by parental expectations causes students to overthink the consequences of task failure, such as parental neglect or punishment. This perfectionism is typically negative [11].

Perfectionism's most pervasive trait is the uncertainty of when tasks will be completed. The majority of people define perfectionists as people who place a high value on their parents' expectations and evaluations of them, as well as their proclivity to overfocus on errors and doubt the quality of their work [5]. If this hypothesis is correct, students' procrastination on assignments may be due to external pressure rather than a lack of self-efficacy. Stress is an unpleasant emotional experience caused by both internal and external factors. As stress levels rise, students' ability to cope with or adjust to it may become overburdened, depleting their physical or psychological resources [6].

Procrastination's progression from psychological causes to pathological symptoms will undoubtedly harm the student's academic future.

3 Impact of Procrastination on Students' Academic Performance

'Academic delay' could be intentional, accidental, or habitual, but it has a significant impact on university students' learning and achievement [12]. Previous research has identified academic procrastination as a negative student behavior [11]. Most people, however, are well aware of the negative consequences of such delays and understand how this phenomenon can reduce individual performance satisfaction levels [9]. Despite this, one in every five adults is unable to complete their daily homework assignments [9]. According to Hussain, I., and Sultan, S. (2010), in a study of the factors influencing procrastination and its impact on college students' learning, procrastination appears to cause college students to postpone their studies or submit assignments throughout their studies. Students who lack self-confidence may become restless and depressed, negatively impacting their learning and performance [12]. Procrastination had an impact on students' academic performance in terms of classroom learning and activity participation, assignment submission, exam preparation, and grade achievement, according to the findings of a study that used a random sample of data from 500 students and 40 teachers at Bahawalpur Islamic University in Pakistan [12]. The same study showed that the main effects of procrastination on university students include: causing students to underachieve or fail in exams; causing students to fear exams; causing students to be depressed, anxious, and hesitant to begin their studies; causing them to lose the competition and become inferior as a result. The above factors become the main reason for their academic stagnation [12].

4 Measures and Suggestions

Research has linked procrastination to time management, mental health, and perfectionism. By understanding these factors, we can target the right remedial actions: 1) General advice for procrastination caused by time management chaos is to list tasks, but this can backfire when a large pile of tasks is on the table and students are intimidated by such a heavy task and choose to continue procrastinating [13]. The best option is to make a 'to-do list' of tasks that need to be completed today, no more than three per day, intending to get students to remove as much fear as possible and actively start completing the tasks [13]. It's important to note that this must be done daily to be effective. half-hearted efforts won't achieve the desired result. 2) Reducing delays in tasks caused by a low sense of efficacy reduces academic procrastination. To solve this problem, set and focus on academic goals. Students can write down their reasons for taking the course and use a goal-setting sheet to track progress [13]. In this way, learning tasks are self-driven by the student's progress toward the goal, not procrastination caused by external pressures that cause task aversion. 3) Immersive learning environments that

eliminate distractions can also help overcome procrastination. In a study room or library, students can study and write more effectively than at home or in a dorm. 4) Proper relaxation and breaks can also help with the next task phase. Try setting a 3:1 time allocation and a timer to take a 15-minute break after every 45 minutes of work to encourage new ideas [14]. A combination of work and breaks can help avoid problems like lack of concentration from working too long and breaks extending indefinitely and delaying tasks.

5 Conclusion

Procrastination is linked to students' self-regulation, time management skills, and task-related perfectionism. These factors affect students' study habits. Students should start with a routine, maintain high self-efficacy, be aware of tasks, avoid unnecessary time wastage, and use daily study habits to improve academic procrastination. Start with simple tasks and work up to more difficult ones by collecting data, reviewing information, and completing basic tasks. No habit is formed quickly. It takes time to become ingrained enough to have an impact. It's often wise to implement change quickly. Based on previous research, this paper analyzes academic procrastination factors. Due to limited resources, this paper did not use quantitative analysis to obtain findings. Future research should avoid this and use practical data collection to obtain a more realistic and valid theoretical basis.

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