

Research Paper

## Association of Academic Procrastination and Career Aspirations among Undergraduate Students

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### ABSTRACT

This paper aimed to examine academic procrastination among undergraduate students in relation to their career aspiration. For the current investigation 122 undergraduate students were selected as representative sample. The Academic procrastination scale (self-developed) and Career aspiration scale developed and standardized by Gregor and O'Brien (2015) was used. Results of the study disseminate that there is significant gender wise and locality wise difference in academic procrastination. But in regards to career aspiration no significant difference observed between male and female undergraduate students. The study also revealed significant difference in career aspirations between urban and rural students. It is also concluded from the study that there exists negative relationship between academic procrastination and career aspiration.

**Keywords:** *Academic Procrastination, Career Aspiration, Undergraduate Students, Gender, Locality*

College experiences act as a transition period for students which transform them into young adult and their exposure to college life put forward several new challenges in their academic tasks (Berk, 2000). Procrastination is common for students especially those at the undergraduate level. Moreover, it does more harm to academic success than good. Milgram et al. (1998) determined that procrastination is a behavioral attribute, or deformity which is identified as putting off a task or decision. It is key responsible factor for good academic performance of students. Academic procrastination which is prevalent in academic settings where students show the tendency to delay their activities without having valid excuses and submitting their assignments or other academic works until the last minute before the deadlines. There seems to be a relationship between academic procrastination and career aspirations. Lack of career aspiration affects academic procrastination in one way. Various studies have been conducted to study the factors affecting career aspiration and its relation to academic performance or academic achievement. In this study attempt has been made to study academic procrastination in association to career aspiration. In this study their relationship will be studied systematically.

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Academic procrastination is perhaps the most common type of procrastination. It denotes delay in academic tasks or activities i.e. related to learning and studying. Academic procrastination occurs when students unnecessarily postpone completion of activities which includes projects, assignments, homework etc. Such type of procrastination may create unnecessary stress and anxiety for students when they attempt to complete their assignments with rush until the last deadline. Academic procrastination can be also accepted as the voluntary delay in finishing academic work within the stipulated time frame in spite of assuming worse off for the delay (Steel 2007). From the existing literature on factors of procrastination, it was found that various personal behavioral factors, such as lack of motivation, external locus of control, deficiencies in self-regulation, perfectionism, disorganization, and poor time management skill influence procrastinating behavior of students (Ackerman & Gross, 2005).

According to Gray and O'Brien, (2007), "Career aspirations are defined as individual's desired or intended occupational goals." They are the goals an individual sets out to achieve in a particular desired profession. Career aspirations reflect our goals, our aspirations or dreams that we hope to achieve in the future. These include the selected job or activity the student wishes to join. It is a set of needs, motivations and behavioral objectives that people express in terms of different careers. The career fields are the social arenas in which careers take place (Bourdieu, 1987). According to this viewpoint, careers can also be regarded as a competition for a series of jobs or positions in one or more social fields. It means that one longs for and desires success and achievement in one's chosen career. They are very important as they encompass all future recognition and all individual experiences such as exploration, behavior and attitude as an environmental influence that includes the home environment and other values as well as self-assessment and recognition of their own skill, passion, values and motivation. Such career aspirations are shaped by the connection between personal, social and environmental factors with cognitive-psychological features.

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

J. S. Kumaran (2017) from his study found that there exists a significant positive correlation between the test anxiety of students with their act of procrastination. J. Kaur (2016) found that procrastination is related to lack of a number of factors i.e., exploration, curiosity and satisfaction experienced while acquiring knowledge or learning. Hence, students with low intrinsic or internal motivation and high amotivation put off tasks since they do not have intrinsic intellectuality and innate psychological need for competence. Similarly, G. Sindhu (2018) found from the study that the academic procrastination negatively influences the scholastic achievement. S. Dev (2018) revealed from his study that among the students studying in India there is substantial negative correlation of Procrastination Behavior with stress tolerance, study habits, and academic achievement. Balkis & Duru (2015) from their study indicated that among college-going students the absence or lack of self-regulation skills plays a significant role in procrastination behavior. The findings also demonstrated that the relationship between academic achievement and academic rational belief was fully mediated by academic procrastination and the time students preferred to study for exams, but that the relationship between academic procrastination and academic achievement was partially mediated by exam study time preferences.

Zarrin & Gracia (2020) in their study revealed that male and female students differ significantly in their academic procrastination, organizing, and fear of failure. Additionally results indicated a negative correlation between academic procrastination and subscales of self-regulation and positive correlation between academic procrastination and fear of failure.

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On the contrary J. Vij (2016) found that that gender does not exert any influence over excuses of academic procrastination. The study also revealed that laziness and time management were the two most cited explanations for procrastination. Nasim & Behrang (2018) found significant difference in academic procrastination between urban and rural students.

Watson et al. (2002) found that gender exerted no influence on the level of career aspirations expressed by the adolescents in our sample, nor were there any significant interactions involving gender. Jacob & R. Nandan (2018) also discovered no remarkable gender-based difference in career aspiration and academic achievement. However, Bakkar et al. (2020) found from their study a significant difference between male and female students as females scored higher on career aspiration than males and also revealed that parents' educational level and grade point average has a substantial impact on adolescent's career aspiration. Arhin, V. (2018) revealed that the large number of participants had positive career aspirations and good study behaviors. Rani, D (2017) investigated the relationship between career aspirations and academic achievement of adolescents and it revealed significant positive association between academic achievement and career aspiration.

During literature review, we observed that ample number of studies have been done on procrastination with academic performance, self- efficacy, self-regulation and personality etc. We also observed that many other significant variables have not been studied much in the context of procrastination in academic settings which may play a significant role on academic procrastination. This is a vital gap in view of which there is a certain need of study to find out the role of career aspirations on occurrence of procrastination. As a result, this study will not replicate the previous research. It is different from previous research in terms of its primary goal, the area it will be done in, and the conditions in which it will be carried out.

### ***Objectives***

- To interpret the nature of distribution of academic procrastination and career aspiration among undergraduate students.
- To investigate and compare academic procrastination between male and female undergraduate students.
- To investigate and compare career aspiration between male and female undergraduate students.
- To investigate and compare academic procrastination between rural and urban undergraduate students.
- To investigate and compare career aspiration between rural and urban undergraduate students
- To determine the relationship between academic procrastination and career aspiration among undergraduate students.

### ***Hypotheses***

- There will be no significant difference in academic procrastination between male and female undergraduate students.
- There will be no significant difference in career aspiration between male and female undergraduate students.
- There will be no significant difference in academic procrastination between rural and urban undergraduate students.

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- There will be no significant difference in career aspiration between rural and urban undergraduate students
- There will be no significant relationship between academic procrastination and career aspiration among undergraduate students.

### METHODOLOGY

The goal of the current study is to examine undergraduate students' academic procrastination in light of their career aspirations. Because the researcher wants to gather reliable and pertinent data regarding the current state of phenomena, the descriptive method was employed. All final-year undergraduate students enrolled in three colleges of Golaghat district who are pursuing bachelor's degrees under Dibrugarh University in Assam make up the target population. Using simple random sampling, we choose 122 final-year undergraduate students seeking degrees in the 2023–2024 academic year from three institutions in the Golaghat district to make up the sample for this study.

We selected and used the following research tools for the data collection:

- **Academic Procrastination:** Academic Procrastination scale was developed by the investigator. For this Academic Procrastination Scale the researcher used 5-point Likert scale from strongly disagree to strongly agree. After selecting the items of the scale, a pilot study was done on 40 undergraduate students. The objectives of the pilot study were to test a proposed research study before conducting it in a large-scale study.

**Reliability:** One of the important characteristics of research tool is reliability. Reliability means the level or the degree of consistency. In the present study the researcher used Cronbach alpha for determining the reliability. Cronbach alpha reliability was employed for estimating internal consistency. The reliability of this scale was found to be 0.83 for final 40 items.

**Validity:** A good test should fulfill the validity criteria, specially it is necessary for a test to possess content validity (Mouly, 1968). It basically focused on the relevance of each test items or content, individually as well as a whole. The test as a whole should only include representative items of the variable to be tested by the test; each individual item or content should appropriately and accurately measure the trait or variable. A test is therefore considered valid to the extent that it measures what it is intended to measure. It means how a tool is true to measures what it is supposed to measure. The content validity was determined by comparing the items in a test with the content and objective of the test. For the present tool content validity is established by examining each item of the scale by expert in this field.

- **Career aspiration:** The Career Aspiration scale was developed by Gregor and O'Brien (2015) to be used by the investigator. The purpose of the career aspirations scale was to assess the career aspirations of undergraduates, whether they have positive or negative attitude towards the various aspects related to career. It is a revised scale of original career aspiration scale developed by O'Brien in 1996. According to O'Brien "Career aspiration is educational or job-related ambition, goal or target that one has set for him / herself in life." The scale includes three components *i.e.*, achievement aspiration, leadership aspiration and educational aspiration. It is consisting of 24 items on 5-point Likert scale. It has 19 positive items and 5 negative items.

**Reliability:** The three subscales of the CAS-R exhibited adequate reliability *i.e.*, 0.74 to 0.87 and the test-retest reliability found between 0.68 to 0.81.

**RESULTS AND DISCUSSION***Nature of distribution of academic procrastination scores of undergraduate students*

The researcher computed the descriptive statistics, which are presented in the given table, to verify the normality of the distribution of academic procrastination in the selected sample of undergraduate students.

**Table 1: Frequency distribution table of academic procrastination**

Class limit	Frequency	Cumulative frequency	Cumulative frequency %			
71-80	5	5	4.00%			
81-90	9	14	11.48%			
91-100	17	31	25.41%			
101-110	11	42	34.43%			
111-120	23	65	53.28%			
121-130	30	95	77.87%			
131-140	14	109	89.34%			
141-150	8	117	95.90%			
151-160	4	121	99.18%			
161-170	1	122	100.00%			
		N=122				
Mean	Median	Mode	Q. D.	S.D.	Skewness	Kurtosis
116.61	120	120	14.25	18.97	-0.095	-0.32

According to the above table, undergraduate students' mean, median, and mode academic procrastination scores are 116.61, 120, and 120, respectively. The quartile deviation is 14.25 and the standard deviation is 18.97. The curve is negatively skewed, as indicated by the skewness value of -0.095. Furthermore, the kurtosis value is (-0.32), suggesting that the curve is platykurtic and flatter than a normal curve otherwise.

*Nature of distribution of career aspirations scores of undergraduate students*

Similarly, to verify the normality of distribution of career aspirations in the selected sample group of undergraduate students, the investigator calculated the descriptive statistics and are given in the following table –

**Table 2: Frequency distribution table of career aspirations**

Class limit	Frequency	Cumulative frequency	Cumulative frequency %			
11-20	1	1	0.82%			
21-30	3	4	3.28%			
31-40	16	20	16.39%			
41-50	21	41	33.61%			
51-60	29	70	57.38%			
61-70	20	90	73.77%			
71-80	15	105	86.07%			
81-90	15	120	98.36%			
91-100	2	122	100.00%			
		N=122				
Mean	Median	Mode	Q. D.	S.D.	Skewness	Kurtosis
58.42	56	53	12.5	16.73	0.083	-0.77

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According to the above table, undergraduate students' mean, median, and mode career aspirations scores are 58.42, 56, and 53, respectively. The quartile deviation is 12.5 and the standard deviation is 16.73. The curve is positively skewed, as indicated by the skewness value of 0.083. Furthermore, the kurtosis value is (-0.77), suggesting that the curve is platykurtic and flatter than a normal curve.

### *Gender wise and locality wise comparison of academic procrastination and career aspirations among undergraduate students*

To explore and compare the academic procrastinations and career aspirations on the basis of gender and location among undergraduate students, their mean, standard deviations and 't' value were calculated which are given below-

**Table 3: Comparison of academic procrastination and career aspirations scores on the basis of gender and locality among undergraduate students**

Variable	Gender/locality	N	Means	S.D.	SE <sub>D</sub>	df	't' value
Academic Procrastination	Male	61	121.52	19.90	0.38	120	2.93
	Female	61	111.72	16.86			
	Rural	61	120.32	22.13	0.24	120	2.49
	Urban	61	110.75	20.23			
Career aspirations	Male	61	55.86	16.94	0.03	120	1.44
	Female	61	60.27	16.68			
	Rural	61	52.08	15.42	0.02	120	4.71
	Urban	61	65.19	15.3			

**\*\* Level of significance- 0.05**

According to the above table, the calculated "t" value of academic procrastination for comparing the academic procrastination of male and female undergraduate students is 2.93. This value is greater than the tabulated value (1.98), making it significant at the 0.05 level of significance with 120 degrees of freedom. Therefore, we can conclude that the mean scores of academic procrastinations among male and female undergrad students differ significantly. As a result, the hypothesis was rejected. This study's results are consistent with those of Zarrin & Gracia (2020), who found that male and female students differ significantly in their academic procrastination. In the same way, the calculated "t" value of academic procrastination for comparing academic procrastination among urban and rural undergrad students was 2.49, which is significant at the 0.05 level of significance with degree of freedom (df)=120 because the calculated t value (2.49), at the 0.05 level of significance, is higher than the tableted value (1.98). Therefore, the hypothesis that "undergraduate students in rural and urban areas will not significantly differ in their academic procrastination" was rejected. It indicates that students from rural and urban areas have significantly different mean scores for academic procrastination. The study's results are in line with those of Nasim & Behrang (2018), who discovered a noteworthy difference in academic procrastination between students in urban and rural areas.

Furthermore, the aforementioned table shows that the calculated "t" value of career aspiration for comparing the career aspirations of male and female undergraduate students was 1.44. This value is less than the tabulated value (1.98) at 0.05, making it non-significant at the 0.05 level of significance with degree of freedom, df=120. Thus, it was established that there would not be any significant differences in the career aspirations of male and

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female students. It indicates that there was not a significant difference in the mean career aspirations scores between male and female undergraduate students. The results of this investigation align with those of Jacob & Ravindranandan (2018), who likewise came to the conclusion that there are no gender-based variations in career goals. Similarly, the calculated "t" value was 4.71, which is significant at the 0.05 level of significance with degree of freedom (df)=120 because the calculated t value (4.71) is greater than the tabulated value (1.98). Similarly, a significant difference in career aspirations between students from rural and urban localities was found. Therefore, it was rejected that there would be no apparent difference in the career aspirations of undergraduate students in rural and urban areas.

### *Coefficient of correlation between academic procrastination and career aspirations among undergraduate students*

To investigate the significance of correlation between academic procrastinations and career aspirations among undergraduate students, Pearson coefficient of correlation was calculated.

**Table 4: Co-efficient of correlation between academic procrastination and career aspirations among undergraduate students**

Variables	Mean	SD	Coefficient of correlation	df (N-2)	Level of significance
Academic procrastinations	116.61	18.07	-0.46	120	0.05
Career aspirations	58.42	16.73			

*\*\* Level of significance- 0.05*

According to the table, the calculated correlation between undergrad students' academic procrastination and career aspirations is (-0.46), higher than the tabulated value (.195) at the 0.05 level of significance for a two-tailed test with a degree of freedom of (df=120). As a result, the assumption that there would be no significant relationship between undergraduate students' career aspirations and academic procrastination was rejected. So, we can interpret that the variable academic procrastination and career aspirations are correlated to each other and there is significant negative correlation between academic procrastination and career aspirations i.e., higher the career aspirations lower the academic procrastination.

## **CONCLUSION**

From the analysis and interpretations of data, we can conclude that a remarkable difference exists between male and female undergraduate students in regard to academic procrastination, they exhibit different level of procrastinations. But no remarkable difference in career aspirations between male and female undergraduate students; they exhibit more or less same level of aspirations. Between students belongs to rural and urban locality significant or marked difference appeared in academic procrastination. So, the undergraduate students from both type localities exhibit different level of academic procrastination. Significant difference appeared in career aspirations between students belong to urban and rural locality. So, the undergraduate students from both type localities exhibit different kind of career aspirations. It was found that academic procrastination and career aspiration both are negatively correlated with each other. The variables academic procrastination and career aspiration are negatively correlated to each other.

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***Conflict of Interest***

The author(s) declared no conflict of interest.

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