

Age- Differences in Academic Procrastination: A Cross-Sectional Analysis of High School and Postgraduate Students

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ABSTRACT

The present study aimed to investigate age-related differences in academic procrastination by conducting a cross-sectional analysis of high school and postgraduate students. A total of 140 students, comprising 70 students of High school (Mean age= 14.25) and 70 students who perusing Post Graduation (Mean age= 22.75) were selected through purposive sampling method from Uttar Pradesh state of India. The Academic Procrastination Scale (McCloskey, 2011), was administered to measure the tendency to delay academic tasks or activities. Results indicated a significant difference between high school and postgraduate students of different age group on the measure of academic procrastination, suggesting a possible link between age-related maturity and self-regulation. The findings underscore developmental trends in procrastinatory behaviour, suggesting that age may inform appropriate interventions to enhance academic time management.

Keywords: *Academic Procrastination, Self-Regulation, Maturity, Time Management*

Procrastination is characterized by the postponement of task completion, leading to subjective discomfort (Ferrari, 1992); it simply refers to the act of delaying or putting off task or a set of tasks until last minute. We procrastinate when we say, “I’ll do it later”. Procrastination is a type of self-regulation failure that is typified by the unreasonable postponement of duties in spite of possible drawbacks. (Prem et.al, 2018). Everybody has procrastinated at some point in their lives, regardless of how well-organized they are, for example, wasting time on unimportant things like watching television, scrolling mobile for an additional hour when they need to finish their homework. Procrastination occurs when people believe that tasks they need to finish will not take as long as they actually do, and they also believe that they need to be inspired or motivated to finish the task at hand. Academic procrastination is the most prevalent among schoolchildren, teenagers, and young adults.

Academic procrastination, which affects students of all ages, whether they are enrolled in school or working toward a degree, is the propensity to postpone or postpone school-related activities and behaviors, such as putting off assignments, not finishing projects until the deadline, and so forth (McCloskey, 2011). Academic procrastination causes important school-related tasks and activities to be delayed, it is regarded as a dispositional trait that can

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have particularly serious consequences for students whose lives are marked by frequent deadlines for their school or college-related activities (Tuckman, 2002). A persistent and widespread desire on the part of the learner or pupils to put off academic tasks is known as academic procrastination. This tendency is frequently accompanied by high levels of anxiety because the work is not finished on time. The two most evident and well-known examples of this type of procrastination are postponing tasks until the night before the test and the accompanying worry (Solomon & Rothblum, 1984). A persistent and widespread desire on the part of the learner or pupils to put off academic tasks is known as academic procrastination. This tendency is frequently accompanied by high levels of anxiety because the work is not finished on time. The two most evident and well-known examples of this type of procrastination are postponing tasks until the night before the test and the accompanying worry (Solomon & Rothblum, 1984).

A meta-analysis by Steel (2007) revealed that procrastination decreases with age; older persons often procrastinate less because they are better at managing their time and emotions. Significant age differences were discovered in another study involving undergraduates; older students showed lower levels of procrastination, maybe as a result of their greater maturity and life experience (Jackson, 2003). According to research by Beutel et al. (2016), procrastination was considerably higher in younger people and gradually decreased as people aged. According to Harriott and Ferrari (1996), procrastination was inversely connected with age, with young person's being the most likely to engage in this behavior.

In contrast, a number of studies found no discernible difference in procrastination between graduate and undergraduate students, suggesting that age differences were not a relevant factor. (Onwuegbuzie & Alexander, 2007). According to Ferrari et al. (2005), procrastination is common in all age groups and is more closely associated with personality and task aversion than age. Academic procrastination is linked to motivation styles rather than age, according to another study (Senécal, C., 1995).

Objective:

To examine and compare the levels of academic procrastination among high school and postgraduate students, with age-related differences in procrastination behaviour.

METHODOLOGY

Sample

The study was conducted with 140 students, comprising 70 students of High school (Mean age= 14.25) and 70 students who perusing Post Graduation (Mean age= 22.75). The samples were selected through purposive sampling method from Uttar Pradesh state of India.

Instruments

- **Demographical Information:** A general data questionnaire sheet (included name, age, gender, education) was used to collect essential socio-demographic information from the participants.
- **Academic Procrastination Scale:** It was developed by McCloskey (2011), which is a standardized tool to measure the academic procrastination among students. The scale consists of 25 items which are scored using a 5-point Likert-type scale where 1 indicates disagree with the item, 2 indicates slightly disagree, 3 indicates neutral, 4 indicates slightly agree, and 5 indicates agree with the item. The participant is asked to select the most preferred option for each item. The scoring is then performed using

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the scoring key, and the scores range from 25-125. Some of the items are reversed scoring items for which scores were reversed and then the final score was obtained by summing up the responses. Obtaining high score in this questionnaire indicates that the student procrastinates in academically related tasks, whereas a low score indicates a less academically procrastinating student who completes his school related activities, such as homework, studying for exams, and so on, on time. This scale was used rather than using any other scale of measuring academic procrastination because this scale yields highest reliability for measuring academic procrastination than any other scales available for the same. The Academic Procrastination Scale by McCloskey has a high internal reliability, $\alpha = .94$, according to Cronbach's alpha. The Academic Procrastination Scale also exhibited significant convergent validity evidence when correlated with the scores of other procrastination measures, such as Tuckman Procrastination scale ($r=.84$).

Procedure

The sample filled the questionnaires in an offline setup. A response sheet was given to each participant individually. and given the consent form which explained the voluntary nature of participation, Instructions were made clear to each participant and their queries were attended appropriately. Each participant was requested to ensure that they had responded to all the items.

Statistical Analysis

The obtained data was analysed with a t-test to assess and compare the gender differences in spiritual intelligence among male and female people. The collected data was tabulated and analysed using the SPSS.

RESULT & DISCUSSION

Table 1 shows the Mean, SD and t-value of High school (HS) and Post Graduate (PG) students of different age group on the measure of academic procrastination. The findings indicated that there was found a significant difference ($t= 2.02$, $p<0.05$) between the High school ($M= 76.28$, $SD= 20.39$) and Post Graduate ($M= 69.77$, $SD= 17.68$) students.

Table: 1 Mean, SD & t-value of HS & PG students on Academic Procrastination

Variable	Students (Mean age)	N	Mean	SD	t
Academic Procrastination	HS (14.25)	70	76.28	20.39	2.02*
	PG (22.75)	70	69.77	17.68	

* $p< .05$

The findings showed a significant difference between High school (HS) and Post Graduate (PG) students of different age group on the measure of academic procrastination. It suggested that high school students (teen-age) often show more academic procrastination than postgraduate (adult) students due to a combination of developmental, psychological, and contextual factors. High school students are still developing executive functions like self-regulation, time management, and impulse control. Postgraduate students typically have more experience and maturation managing academic demands and deadlines. It is often perceived that high schoolers often study due to external pressure (parents, teachers) rather than intrinsic motivation. They also perceive their academic tasks as less meaningful or relevant, causing disengagement and they have lack of autonomy and motivation, while postgraduate students usually choose their field of study and have clearer academic and

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career goals, which reduce procrastinate behaviour. Steel (2007) noted in the study, procrastination is linked to poor self-regulation, which improves with age and maturity. Senécal et al. (1995) linked intrinsic motivation to lower procrastination.

Implications

the research has revealed several important implications that help us understand how procrastination behaviours vary across the lifespan, especially in academic contexts. The study is helpful to apprehend a link between age and academic procrastination because this research showed younger students (adolescents, early age) are more prone to procrastination than older students (postgraduates, adult age).

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Conflict of Interest

The author(s) declared no conflict of interest.

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