The Effects of Procrastination on Student Productivity and Academic Success

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Abstract

Background

Procrastination is a common behavioural tendency among students and is often associated with poor time management, reduced productivity, increased stress, and lower academic achievement. Previous research suggests that delaying academic tasks can negatively affect learning outcomes and overall well-being. However, the extent to which procrastination influences productivity and academic success among undergraduate students remains an important area of investigation.

Objectives

The present study aimed to examine the effects of procrastination on students' productivity and academic success among individuals aged 18–21 years. Specifically, the study sought to explore the relationship between procrastination behaviours, productivity levels, and academic performance.

Methods

A descriptive cross-sectional survey design was employed. Data were collected from students aged 18–21 years using a structured questionnaire comprising 20 items. The instrument included 10 items assessing procrastination behaviours, 5 items measuring productivity, and 5 items evaluating academic performance. Responses were recorded using a Likert-type scale, and scores were calculated to determine overall tendencies toward procrastination, productivity, and academic success. Descriptive statistical analyses, including frequencies and percentages, were used to summarize participant responses and identify patterns within the data.

Results

The findings revealed that a considerable proportion of students demonstrated moderate to high levels of procrastination. Response patterns indicated that between 28.2% and 43.6% of participants frequently selected higher-scale options on procrastination-related items, suggesting regular engagement in delaying academic tasks. Students who reported higher levels of procrastination also tended to report lower productivity, particularly in maintaining consistent study routines, managing time effectively, and meeting deadlines. Although a majority of participants reported academic performance above 75%, the relationship between procrastination and academic success appeared more complex. Some students maintained satisfactory academic achievement despite procrastination, possibly through intensive last-minute efforts, while others experienced difficulties in achieving desired academic outcomes. These findings indicate that procrastination has a more direct and consistent negative impact on productivity than on academic performance alone.

Conclusions

The study highlights procrastination as a significant factor influencing students' productivity and academic experiences. While academic success may not always decline immediately as a result of procrastination, consistent delays in task completion can reduce efficiency, increase stress, and negatively affect study habits. The findings emphasize the importance of promoting effective time-management skills, self-regulation strategies, and academic support interventions to reduce procrastination and enhance student productivity and success. Future research may explore intervention-based approaches and examine additional psychological factors that contribute to procrastination among students.

Keywords*: Procrastination, Student Productivity, Academic Success, Time Management, Academic Performance, Study Habits, Higher Education, Student Well-being*

Introduction

Procrastination can seriously affect a student's productivity and overall academic life. When students keep delaying important tasks such as studying, completing assignments, or preparing for exams, they often end up doing everything at the last minute. Because of this, the quality of their work usually decreases, as they do not get enough time to think carefully, revise properly, or fully understand the subject. Many students begin assignments with good intentions but postpone them due to distractions, lack of motivation, fear of failure, or poor

time management. As deadlines get closer, they feel pressured to finish quickly, which leads to stress and careless mistakes. Over time, this habit can reduce confidence and make students feel less capable of handling their responsibilities. Instead of learning effectively and enjoying the academic process, students become focused only on completing tasks somehow before the deadline. This cycle of delay and rushed work gradually lowers their productivity, academic performance, and satisfaction with their studies.

Procrastination also has a strong impact on students' mental and emotional well-being. When work keeps piling up, students often experience anxiety, guilt, frustration, and constant worry about unfinished tasks. Even when they are not actively studying, the thought of pending work remains in their minds and creates stress. Many students blame themselves for not starting earlier, which can lower their self-esteem and motivation. As stress increases, concentrating on studies becomes even more difficult, causing further delays and creating a never-ending cycle. Some students may feel emotionally exhausted or lose interest in their academic goals altogether. In serious cases, continuous procrastination can contribute to burnout, sadness, and feelings of hopelessness about studies. Instead of feeling proud of their achievements, students may feel disappointed in themselves because they know they could have performed better if they had managed their time properly. Therefore, procrastination affects not only academic productivity but also emotional health and personal confidence.

The effects of procrastination can also be seen in students' physical health, relationships, and future opportunities. Students who delay their work often stay awake late at night trying to finish assignments or study before exams, which affects their sleep and energy levels. Lack of rest, unhealthy routines, and constant stress can lead to tiredness, headaches, and poor physical well-being. Procrastination may also affect relationships with family, friends, classmates, and teachers, as students may avoid conversations or social activities due to academic pressure and guilt. Over time, repeated procrastination can result in poor grades, missed opportunities, reduced participation in academic activities, and even thoughts of giving up on studies. Some students may lose confidence in their future goals because they feel unable to manage their responsibilities effectively. Therefore, procrastination is more than just delaying work for a short time; it is a habit that can negatively influence a student's academic success, mental and physical health, relationships, and overall quality of life.

Review of Literature

Dautov Denis (2020) conducted a study among students at Don State Technical University to examine the relationship between procrastination, laziness, and academic performance. The study involved 50 students between the ages of17 and 18, who were selected using proportionate stratified random sampling. To measure procrastination and laziness, the researcher used four standardized tools, including S. Lay's Procrastination Scale for Students. Statistical techniques such as Spearman's rank correlation and the Mann Whitney U test were used to analyze the data. The study found that students with lower academic performance showed higher levels of procrastination and laziness compared to students who performed better academically. It also revealed that the reasons for procrastination differed from one student to another. Some students delayed their work because of low motivation and poor self-discipline, while others procrastinated due to stress, fear of failure, or lack of interest in studies. The findings suggest that procrastination and laziness can negatively affect academic success and highlight the importance of improving students' motivation, time management, and self-control skills.

Objective

- To study the effect of procrastination on student productivity and academic success.
- To identify the relationship between procrastination and productivity

Hypothesis

- There will be significant gender difference in procrastination.
- There will be significant gender difference in productivity
- There will be significant difference in procrastination among degree and professional students.
- There will be significant difference in productivity levels between degree and professional students.
- There will be significant correlation between procrastination and productivity.

Methodology

4.1 Sample

The sample of the present study consisted of 50 students, aged 18-21 and representing diverse fields such as arts, science, engineering and medicine participated by completing a comprehensive questionnaire.

4.2 Tools used

General Procrastination Scale (GPS) Lay (1986) for measuring procrastination (10 questions) and Likert Scale by Rensis Likert in 1932 assesses self perceived productivity (5 questions). Both tools ensure reliable and standardised assessment making them suitable for academic research.

4.3 Data Analysis and Interpretation

This study uses a descriptive correlational research design to examine the relationship between procrastination, productivity, and academic success among students. The descriptive method was used to understand the common patterns of procrastination among students and how it affects their daily academic activities. It helped identify how students manage their time, complete assignments, and maintain productivity in their studies.

The correlational method was used to find out whether there is a relationship between procrastination, productivity, and academic performance. Through correlation analysis, the study examined how procrastination may influence students' ability to stay productive and achieve good academic results. This helped in understanding whether higher levels of procrastination are linked with lower productivity and poorer academic performance. Additionally, t-tests were used to compare differences based on gender and academic programs. This helped determine whether male and female students, or students from different academic streams, differ in their levels of procrastination, productivity, and academic success. Overall, the study design helped provide a better understanding of students' procrastination behaviors and their effect on academic life.

5. Result and Discussion

Table 1: Mean and standard deviations for procrastination among male and female students

Variables	Gender	Mean	SD	df	t value
Procrastination	Female	33.78	8.06	48	0.501
	MALE	32.58	7.91		

$p<0.05$

Table 1 shows the procrastination scores of male and female students. Female students had a mean score of 33.78, while male students had a mean score of 32.58. The obtained t-value of 0.501 was not significant at the 0.05 level, which means that there is no meaningful difference between male and female students in terms of procrastination. Although female students scored slightly higher, the difference was very small and not statistically important. This suggests that both male and female students tend to procrastinate in similar ways and experience comparable difficulties in managing their academic responsibilities. Students from both groups may delay assignments, postpone studying, or struggle to complete tasks on time due to distractions, stress, lack of motivation, or poor time management. The findings indicate that procrastination is a common issue faced by students regardless of gender. Therefore, gender alone does not seem to have a strong influence on students' procrastination behavior, and other personal or academic factors may play a more important role.

Table 2: Mean and standard deviations obtained for productivity of males and females

Variables	Gender	Mean	SD	df	t value
Productivity	Female	15.48	3.42	48	0.528
	MALE	14.94	3.49		

$p<0.05$

Table 2 presents the productivity scores of male and female students. Female students obtained a mean score of 15.48, whereas male students scored 14.94. The calculated t-value of 0.528 was not significant at the 0.05 level, showing that there is no significant difference in productivity between the two groups. Even though female students showed a slightly higher productivity score, the difference was very minimal. This finding suggests that both male and female students demonstrate similar levels of productivity in their academic work. Students of both genders may have similar abilities when it comes to completing assignments, managing academic tasks, and maintaining study routines. The results further imply that productivity may depend more on factors such as motivation, interest in studies, study habits, concentration, and time management skills rather than gender. Overall, the table highlights that male and female student are equally capable of being productive in their academic activities and face similar academic challenges in maintaining efficiency and performance.

Table 3: Mean, standard deviations and t value obtained for procrastination on academics (degree and professional courses)

Variables	Academics	Mean	SD	df	t value
Procrastination	Degree	33.60	8.06	48	0.227
	Professional	32.58	7.92		

$p<0.05$

Table 3 compares the procrastination levels of students studying in degree courses and those enrolled in professional courses. Degree students obtained a mean score of 33.60, while professional course students scored 32.94. The obtained t-value of 0.277 was not significant at the 0.05 level, indicating that there is no meaningful difference between the two groups in terms of procrastination. Although degree students had a slightly higher score, the difference was too small to be considered significant. This suggests that procrastination is a common problem among students regardless of the type of course they are pursuing. Students from both degree and professional courses may face similar academic pressure, workload, distractions, and difficulties in balancing studies with personal life. The findings show that delaying academic work, avoiding responsibilities, and struggling with time management are issues experienced by students across different educational streams. Therefore, procrastination appears to be influenced more by personal behavior and study habits rather than the academic program itself.

Table 4: Mean and standard deviations and t value obtained for productivity on academics (degree and professional courses)

Variable	Academics	Mean	SD	df	t value
Productivity	Degree	15.06	3.49	48	0.685
	Professional	15.76	3.32		

$p<0.05$

Table 4 presents the productivity scores of students from degree and professional courses. Degree students obtained a mean productivity score of 15.06, while professional course students scored slightly higher with a mean of 15.76. The calculated t-value of 0.685

was not significant at the 0.05 level, which means that there is no significant difference in productivity between the two groups. Although professional course students showed a slightly higher productivity score, the variation was very small and not statistically meaningful. The findings suggest that students from both academic streams have similar levels of academic productivity and efficiency. Students from degree and professional courses may experience similar academic demands, deadlines, and expectations, which influence their productivity in similar ways. The results also indicate that productivity may be more closely related to personal qualities such as self-discipline, motivation, commitment, and effective study practices rather than the type of course students are enrolled in. Overall, the table shows that students from both academic backgrounds are equally capable of maintaining productivity in their studies.

Table 5: Mean, standard deviations and correlation value obtained for procrastination and productivity

Variables	N	Mean	SD	Procrastination	Productivity
Procrastination	50	33.38	7.95	1	-.556**
Productivity	50	15.30	3.42	-.556**	1

Table 5 shows the relationship between procrastination and productivity among students. The correlation value obtained was -0.556, which was significant at the 0.01 level. This indicates a moderate negative relationship between procrastination and productivity. In simple terms, the findings show that students who procrastinate more are likely to be less productive in their academic work. As procrastination increases, students may find it harder to stay focused, complete assignments on time, and maintain good academic performance. Delaying work often leads to stress, last-minute pressure, rushed assignments, and reduced quality of work, all of which can negatively affect productivity. Students who frequently procrastinate may also experience feelings of guilt, frustration, and lack of motivation, making it even more difficult for them to perform effectively in their studies. The findings clearly highlight the harmful impact procrastination can have on students'academic productivity and overall performance. Therefore, developing good time management skills, self-discipline, and healthy study habits can help students reduce procrastination and improve their productivity and academic success.

The findings of the study showed that there were no significant differences in any of the comparisons, which led to the acceptance of the null hypotheses. Both male and female students showed similar levels of procrastination and productivity, suggesting that gender does not have a major influence on these behaviors. In simple terms, students of both genders seem to face similar difficulties in managing time, staying motivated, and completing academic tasks efficiently. This shows that procrastination is a common issue among students regardless of gender and may be more closely connected to personal habits, self-control, and study routines. The study also found no significant difference between students studying in degree courses and those enrolled in professional courses. Students from both academic backgrounds displayed similar levels of procrastination and productivity. This suggests that procrastination is not limited to a specific field of study but is something many students experience during their academic life. Regardless of the course they choose, students often deal with similar academic stress, distractions, workload, and challenges in balancing responsibilities.

Therefore, factors such as motivation, time management, and study habits may influence productivity more than the type of course itself. Even though the initial analysis did not show a strong connection between procrastination and productivity, further analysis revealed a significant negative relationship between the two variables. This means that students who procrastinate more are likely to be less productive. As procrastination increases, students may find it harder to focus, complete tasks on time, and maintain good academic performance. Delaying work often leads to stress, last-minute pressure, and reduced quality of work, which can negatively affect both academic success and personal well-being. Overall, the study highlights that procrastination can have a harmful effect on students' productivity and emphasizes the importance of developing good time management and self-discipline skills.

6. Limitations

- Small Sample Size: The current study utilized a small sample size of only 50 students, which may fail to capture the whole picture of the issue under consideration. A larger sample would be more helpful in order to draw more accurate conclusions.
- Limited Age Group: Students who participated in the research belonged to a narrow age range of 18-21 years old. Therefore, the findings cannot be applied to the student population of other ages or education levels.
- Self-Report Method: Questionnaires used to collect information relied on the self-reports of the participants, which means that some inaccuracies or even dishonesty may have affected the quality of the results.

- Limited Geographical Location: The participants may have come from a single region or institution, making it impossible to generalize the findings obtained to other regions or countries.
- Short Period of Time: The research may have been done for a limited amount of time, which did not allow the researchers to consider the long-term effects of procrastination on academic performance.
- Factors That May Influence Procrastination Behavior Not Examined: There may be numerous factors other than motivation and procrastination that affect productivity, but none of them were studied in this research project.

7. Conclusion

The study investigated the effects of procrastination on students' productivity and academic performance. The results showed no significant differences in procrastination and productivity according to gender and academic course. However, a significant negative relationship was observed between procrastination and productivity which indicates that students who procrastinate more tend to be less productive. The study concludes that procrastination can negatively affect the students' academic life, time management and overall well-being. Therefore, developing good study habits, self-discipline, and good time management strategies are important for improving productivity and academic success.

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