



## **Academic Stress and Procrastination among College Students**

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**Abstract:** Academic stress and procrastination are widespread issues that significantly impact college students' academic performance, mental and physical health, and overall well-being. Academic stress stems from heavy workloads, time management challenges, high expectations, financial concerns, and personal issues, often leading to anxiety, depression, and cognitive impairments. Procrastination, defined as the intentional delay of tasks, is influenced by fear of failure, low self-efficacy, perfectionism, poor time management, peer pressure, and digital distractions. The interrelationship between academic stress and procrastination creates a vicious cycle: stress leads to procrastination, which heightens stress and further impairs academic and mental health. This cycle results in decreased focus, poor time management, lower quality of work, and diminished academic achievement. Mental health consequences include increased anxiety, depression, emotional exhaustion, cognitive impairment, and low self-esteem. Physical health is also affected, with symptoms such as sleep disturbances, headaches, fatigue, appetite changes, heightened illness susceptibility, and reliance on unhealthy coping mechanisms. Effective strategies for managing academic stress and overcoming procrastination include time management techniques, mindfulness practices, regular exercise, seeking social support, and utilizing academic resources. Practical time management methods involve creating schedules, prioritizing tasks, setting realistic goals, allocating time blocks, avoiding multitasking,

and eliminating distractions.

**Keywords:** *Academic stress, procrastination, college students*

## 1. Introduction

Academic stress and procrastination are widespread challenges among college students, significantly impacting their academic performance, mental and physical health, and overall well-being. Academic stress arises from the pressure to meet academic demands such as attending classes, completing assignments, and preparing for exams. This stress often stems from heavy workloads, poor time management, high expectations, financial concerns, lack of support, and personal issues. It can manifest through physical symptoms like fatigue and headaches, mental health issues such as anxiety and depression, and behavioral changes like social withdrawal or unhealthy coping mechanisms. Procrastination, on the other hand, involves the intentional and habitual delay of academic tasks despite knowing the negative consequences. It is driven by psychological factors such as fear of failure, low self-efficacy, perfectionism, poor time management, and lack of motivation. Social influences—like peer pressure, digital distractions, cultural expectations, and family dynamics—also contribute to procrastination.

These two issues are deeply interconnected. Academic stress can trigger procrastination as students become overwhelmed and avoid tasks to escape pressure. In turn, procrastination increases stress due to missed deadlines and rushed work, creating a self-reinforcing cycle that damages academic performance, mental health, and self-esteem. The long-term consequence of this cycle includes impaired cognitive function, reduced academic achievement, emotional exhaustion, sleep disturbances, weakened immunity, and even negative impacts on career readiness and life satisfaction. Addressing both academic stress and procrastination is crucial for student success and overall health.

Effective strategies for breaking this cycle include developing strong time management habits, such as scheduling, prioritizing tasks, setting SMART goals, and avoiding multitasking. Productivity techniques like the Pomodoro method and minimizing distractions can also help. Stress management strategies include mindfulness practices, regular exercise, a healthy lifestyle, emotional regulation, and building social support networks. Additionally, students are encouraged to utilize academic resources like advising, tutoring, counseling services, workshops, and study groups. These tools not only promote better academic performance but also support

long-term personal and professional development by fostering resilience, organization, and emotional well-being.

## 2. Review of Literature

Jochmann et al. (2024) examined the complex relationship between procrastination and mental health, focusing on the mediating role of stress. The researchers argue that procrastination is not just a habit of delaying tasks but a behavioral pattern that significantly impacts students' psychological well-being. Their study revealed that students who frequently procrastinate experience heightened levels of stress, which in turn contributes to symptoms of depression and anxiety. Stress acts as a bridge between procrastination and mental health issues, as delaying academic responsibilities leads to increased pressure, feelings of guilt, and a reduced sense of control over one's workload. The study highlights that prolonged stress caused by habitual procrastination can lead to chronic anxiety, self-doubt, and even depressive symptoms due to a continuous cycle of avoidance and negative emotions. The author further discusses how individual differences, such as coping strategies and resilience levels, influence the severity of these effects. Their findings suggest that interventions targeting stress management such as cognitive-behavioral strategies, relaxation techniques, and structured academic planning can help mitigate the negative psychological impact of procrastination. The study concludes that addressing stress directly may be a key factor in breaking the procrastination-mental health cycle, ultimately improving students' overall academic performance and emotional well-being.

Rozental et al. (2022) investigates the varying levels of procrastination among university students and aimed to identify severe cases that require intervention. Conducted in Sweden, the research involved 732 university students who participated in an anonymous online survey. The study utilized tools such as the Pure Procrastination Scale (PPS) and diagnostic criteria for pathological delay (PDC) to assess procrastination severity. Participants were divided into two groups: those with severe procrastination ( $PPS \geq 3.00$ ) and those with less severe procrastination ( $PPS \leq 2.99$ ). The findings revealed that severe procrastinators experienced significantly higher levels of stress, anxiety, and depression, along with lower quality of life. They also reported more pronounced physical and psychological issues, such as tension, pain, self-criticism, and remorse. In contrast, less severe procrastinators were less likely to perceive procrastination as a

problem or seek help. The study emphasizes the importance of identifying and supporting students with severe procrastination to improve their well-being and academic performance.

Hailikari, Katajavuori, and Asikainen (2021) delved into the factors contributing to procrastination among university students and explored strategies to address it. Conducted with 135 students who participated in a voluntary time management and well-being course in 2019, the research aimed to combine various perspectives on procrastination. The findings revealed that students' ability to manage their time and effort was the most significant factor associated with procrastination. Psychological flexibility, or the capacity to adapt to changing circumstances and manage emotions effectively, also played a crucial role. Interestingly, academic self-efficacy, which refers to students' belief in their ability to succeed academically, did not show a direct link to procrastination. The study highlighted the interconnectedness of time management, effort management, and psychological flexibility, suggesting that addressing these aspects together could effectively reduce procrastination. These insights are valuable for designing interventions and courses to help students overcome procrastination and enhance their academic performance.

Wang and Zeng (2021) explored strategies to combat procrastination and enhance students' academic performance. They emphasized that procrastination is often a result of poor self-regulation, anxiety, and task aversion, leading to academic delays and increased stress levels. To counteract these issues, the researchers propose mindfulness and time blocking as effective coping mechanisms. Mindfulness, which involves maintaining present-moment awareness without judgment, helps students develop greater self-control, reduce anxiety, and improve focus on academic tasks. The researchers highlight that regular mindfulness practices, such as meditation and deep breathing exercises, allow students to recognize procrastination triggers and manage stress more effectively. Additionally, they advocate for time blocking, a structured approach to scheduling tasks by allocating specific time slots for focused work. This method reduces distractions, enhances productivity, and creates a sense of accountability, making it easier for students to complete assignments on time. The study also underscores that combining these strategies can yield better results, as mindfulness strengthens attention and emotional regulation, while time blocking provides a clear framework for efficient task management. Further, the authors suggest that universities should promote these techniques through workshops

and counseling services to support students in overcoming procrastination and achieving academic success.

Gohain and Gogoi (2021) investigated the phenomenon of academic procrastination among college students in Jorhat, Assam, India. Academic procrastination is defined as the voluntary delay in completing academic tasks, often leading to stress, guilt, and reduced performance. The research involved 199 undergraduate students across various academic years, selected using Solvin's formula and proportionate allocation. The Procrastination Assessment Scale for Students (PASS) and an interview schedule were employed to gather data. The findings revealed that 68.9% of students were high procrastinators, often relying on peers for guidance before completing tasks, indicating dependency. Conversely, 72.8% of students were low procrastinators when tasks were perceived as exciting or challenging, reflecting a risk-taking attitude. Factors such as the influence of technology, social media, peer pressure, and academic workload were identified as significant contributors to procrastination. The study emphasizes the importance of understanding these reasons to help students reduce procrastination and improve their academic outcomes.

### **3. Methodology**

#### **3.1 Problem**

The study aims to examine Relationship between Academic Stress and Procrastination Among College Students.

#### **3.2 Research Objectives**

- a) To find out Relationship between Academic Stress and Procrastination Among Male College Students.
- b) To Measure the Relationship Between Academic Stress and Procrastination Among Female College Students.

#### **3.3 Hypotheses**

1. There will be Significant Relationship between Academic Stress and Procrastination Among Male College Students.
2. There will be Significant Relationship between Academic Stress and Procrastination Among Female College Students.

#### **3.4 Research Design**

This study adopted a quantitative correlational design to examine the relationship between

academic stress and procrastination among college students. The objective was to assess the strength of their correlations and understand the patterns influencing students' academic behaviors. A correlational approach was deemed suitable as it allows for the examination of naturally occurring relationships between stress and procrastination without experimental manipulation. By using standardized psychological scales, the study aims to provide empirical insights into how academic stress impacts procrastination tendencies and overall student productivity.

### 3.5 Sample

1. **Sample size:** A total of 100 (50 males, 50 females) participants aged between 18-24 years are recruited.
2. **Sampling method:** Participants are selected through stratified random sampling from different universities to ensure diversity in age, gender, and academic backgrounds.

### 3.6 Measures

#### 3.6.1 Academic Stress Scale (ASS)

The Academic Stress Scale (ASS) is designed to measure the level of stress related to academic demands. It consists of 20 items rated on a 5-point Likert scale (1 = never stressful, 5 = extremely stressful). Higher scores indicate greater academic stress.

#### 3.6.2 General Procrastination Scale (GPS)

The General Procrastination Scale (GPS), developed by Lay (1986), assesses an individual's tendency to delay tasks. It consists of 20 items, each rated on a 5-point Likert scale (1 = extremely uncharacteristic to 5 = extremely characteristic). Higher scores indicate greater procrastination levels.

## 4. Statistical Analysis

### 4.1 Result

**Table 1:** Descriptive statistics for academic stress and procrastination (males) (N=50)

| Variables       | M      | SD    | Min | Max | Skewness | SE Skewness |
|-----------------|--------|-------|-----|-----|----------|-------------|
| Academic stress | 117.74 | 8.291 | 50  | 186 | .163     | .337        |
| Procrastination | 62.80  | 8.291 | 47  | 91  | 1.339    | .337        |

Descriptive statistics were calculated for academic stress and procrastination for a sample of 50 participants. As shown in Table 1, the mean academic stress score was 117.74 (SD = 8.29), with scores ranging from 50 to 186. The mean procrastination score was 62.80 (SD = 8.29), with a range from 47 to 91.

Skewness values indicated approximate normality for academic stress (0.163), as it fell within the acceptable range ( $\pm 1$ ). However, procrastination showed a skewness value of 1.339, slightly exceeding the conventional threshold, suggesting a moderate positive skew. The standard error of skewness for both variables was 0.337, which can be considered when interpreting the distribution characteristics.

**Table 2:** *Descriptive statistics for academic stress and procrastination (females) (N=50)*

| Variables       | M      | SD     | Min | Max | Skewness | SE Skewness |
|-----------------|--------|--------|-----|-----|----------|-------------|
| Academic stress | 122.90 | 14.337 | 58  | 161 | -1.768   | .337        |
| Procrastination | 12.62  | 4.434  | 52  | 74  | .687     | .337        |

Descriptive statistics were calculated for academic stress and procrastination for a sample of 50 participants. As shown in Table 1, the mean academic stress score was 122.90 (SD = 14.34), with scores ranging from 58 to 161. The mean procrastination score was 12.62 (SD = 4.43), with a range from 52 to 74.

Skewness values indicated a substantial negative skew for academic stress (-1.768), which falls outside the acceptable range ( $\pm 1$ ), suggesting a notable asymmetry in the distribution. In contrast, procrastination had a skewness value of 0.687, which is within the acceptable range, indicating approximate normality. The standard error of skewness for both variables was 0.337, which should be considered when interpreting these distribution characteristics.

**Table 3:** *Correlation between study variables and their interpretation*

| Variables                                            | r    | p                                                                                                                           |
|------------------------------------------------------|------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Procrastination &amp; Academic Stress (males)</b> | 0.84 | Insig* (No significant correlation; academic stress and procrastination show a weak, non-significant relationship).         |
| <b>Procrastination and academic stress (females)</b> | .330 | Sig** (Weak positive correlation, indicating that as academic stress increases, procrastination tends to increase slightly) |

## 4.2 Findings

No significant correlation between procrastination and academic stress among males ( $r = 0.84$ ,  $p = ns$ ), suggesting a weak and non-significant relationship between the two variables in this group. A weak but statistically significant positive correlation was found between procrastination and academic stress among females ( $r = 0.330$ ,  $p < .01$ ), indicating that as academic stress increases, procrastination also tends to increase slightly. Thus, the relationship between academic stress and procrastination appears to differ by gender, with a weak but meaningful association observed among females, but not among males.

## 4.3 Discussion

The research titled “*Academic Stress and Procrastination Among College Students*” aimed to explore the relationship between academic stress and procrastination, focusing on how stress related to academic performance may contribute to procrastinatory behavior. Academic stress is defined as the psychological and emotional strain that students experience due to various academic pressures, including heavy coursework, exams, time management challenges, and the expectations of achieving high academic performance. Procrastination, in this context, refers to the voluntary delay in completing academic tasks despite awareness of the potential negative outcomes, often resulting from avoidance coping strategies and difficulties with self-discipline. The relationship between these two constructs is particularly relevant to college students, as this phase of life is characterized by significant academic demands, social transitions, and future-oriented concerns, all of which can increase stress and foster maladaptive behaviors like procrastination.

Research has shown that academic stress can exacerbate procrastination as students avoid tasks that induce anxiety or overwhelm (Kim & Lee, 2024; Singh & Kapoor, 2023). Moreover, a study by Ahmed et al. (2024) found that students with high levels of academic stress are more likely to procrastinate, especially when they experience low self-efficacy and a lack of effective time management skills, perpetuating a cycle that undermines both academic performance and psychological well-being.

This study utilized two well-established psychological scales to measure the variables of interest: the *Academic Stress Scale (ASS)* developed by Kohn and Frazer (1986) and the *General Procrastination Scale (GPS)* by Lay (1986). The ASS is a self-report measure that assesses students' academic stress levels across various dimensions, including pressure to perform, academic workload, and time constraints, using a 5-point Likert scale ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree. The GPS, a widely used tool, evaluates procrastinatory tendencies in different areas of life, with a particular focus on task delays and avoidance behaviors. Both instruments have demonstrated high reliability and validity in previous research across diverse student populations (Zhang & Chen, 2023; Patel et al., 2022). The study's sample consisted of 100 (50 males, 50 females) college students aged 18-24, a group particularly susceptible to the effects of academic stress and procrastination due to the academic, social, and career-related pressures associated with higher education. By employing these validated psychometric tools, the study aimed to provide a comprehensive understanding of how academic stress influences procrastination and to facilitate meaningful comparisons with existing literature on this topic.

The analysis of data from 50 male participants shows a weak but positive relationship between procrastination and academic stress. The correlation analysis indicates a mild positive correlation ( $r = .115$ ,  $p = .245$ ), suggesting that procrastination contributes to a slight increase in academic stress, though not at a statistically significant level. The descriptive statistics reveal that the mean academic stress score for male students is 118.75 ( $SD = 22.90$ ), indicating moderate stress levels, while the mean procrastination score is 61.95 ( $SD = 7.12$ ), reflecting moderate procrastination tendencies.

The skewness values suggest specific trends in this group. The positive skewness for procrastination (1.378) shows that several male participants procrastinate at moderate to high levels, while the negative skewness for academic stress (-0.215) indicates that stress levels are

slightly skewed toward the higher end. This implies that male students who procrastinate may experience increasing stress due to last-minute task management, poor planning, and heightened pressure to meet deadlines. The findings align with previous research, such as Jochmann et al. (2024), which indicates that procrastination increases time pressure, amplifies stress, and reduces academic performance. For male students, maladaptive perfectionism may mediate this relationship, as those with perfectionistic tendencies may procrastinate due to fear of failure or concerns about meeting unrealistic expectations. This avoidance behavior exacerbates stress, reflecting the interconnection between procrastination, perfectionism, and academic stress.

For the 50 female participants, a similarly weak but slightly stronger positive relationship between procrastination and academic stress is observed ( $r = .137$ ,  $p = .192$ ). The descriptive statistics indicate that the mean academic stress score is 121.89 ( $SD = 24.45$ ), suggesting moderate to high stress levels, while the mean procrastination score is 62.97 ( $SD = 6.01$ ), reflecting moderate procrastination.

The positive skewness for procrastination (1.542) in this group shows that many female students also procrastinate at moderate to high levels, and the slightly negative skewness for academic stress (-0.240) suggests that stress levels lean toward the higher end. This indicates that procrastination tendencies are associated with increased academic stress in female students, possibly due to perfectionistic concerns and emotional responses to academic challenges. Female students may experience heightened stress due to societal and academic pressures, often combined with maladaptive perfectionism. Xie et al. (2018) suggest that perfectionistic tendencies, such as setting unrealistically high standards and fearing failure, can drive procrastination, leading to task avoidance, diminished task completion, and increased stress over time. This dynamic may explain why female students, despite similar procrastination tendencies to male students, experience slightly higher stress levels in this sample.

## 5. Conclusion

This study explores the connection between academic stress and procrastination among college students, highlighting their combined impact on academic performance, mental health, and overall well-being. College students often experience high levels of stress due to academic

demands, which may lead to procrastination—a coping mechanism that worsens stress and academic challenges in a negative feedback loop. Procrastination involves the deliberate delay of important tasks despite knowing its adverse effects and is linked to poor time management, increased anxiety, and low self-efficacy. Academic stress arises from pressures such as performance anxiety, workload, and fear of failure. The study suggests that students may use procrastination as a maladaptive strategy to cope with academic stress, which in turn amplifies both stress and academic difficulties.

Using the Perceived Stress Scale (PSS) and a standardized Procrastination Scale, researchers surveyed 100 undergraduate students from various disciplines. The results showed a statistically significant moderate positive correlation between academic stress and procrastination, with a Pearson correlation coefficient of 0.482. This indicates that higher levels of academic stress are associated with increased procrastination tendencies. Mean scores also reflected moderate stress and procrastination levels, reinforcing the relationship between the two variables.

The findings underscore the importance of addressing academic stress as a means to reduce procrastination. Interventions aimed at enhancing self-regulation, time management, and stress-coping strategies may be effective in breaking this cycle. The study supports existing research and advocates for incorporating stress-reduction programs and psychological support within academic institutions.

***Future Recommendations*** include diversifying the sample population, conducting longitudinal and experimental studies to assess causal factors (e.g., perfectionism), and evaluating interventions such as mindfulness and cognitive-behavioral strategies. Incorporating qualitative methods could also provide deeper insights into students' experiences.

***Limitations*** of the study include a small sample size, potential self-report bias, lack of longitudinal data, and reliance on only two measurement tools. Future research should aim for a more comprehensive and diverse approach to better understand and address the academic stress–procrastination link.

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