

## ACADEMIC PROCRASTINATION AMONG UNIVERSITY UNDERGRADUATES: ROLE OF SELF-EFFICACY AND SELF-MOTIVATION

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### Abstract

*Academic procrastination occurs with students, regardless of their level of education. Procrastination is the tendency to avoid the completion of mandatory tasks and duties handed to them. At the higher education level, academic procrastination happens when an undergraduate delay the completion of provided tasks within the supposed period. This paper studied the role of self-efficacy and self-motivation towards academic procrastination among university undergraduate students. This study was carried out using a quantitative survey questionnaire on undergraduate students studying in a local private institution of higher education. Eighty respondents were gathered according to their clusters labelled high CGPA and low CGPA. This study used tools such as Academic Procrastination Scale (APS), Academic Self-Efficacy Scale (ASES), and Academic Motivation Scale (AMS), English versions. Results show that high achievers are driven by intrinsic motivation. They are internally driven to do something they are interested in and not rely on external motivation such as rewards, compliments, and low CGPA undergraduates.*

**Keywords:** Academic procrastination, Self-efficacy, Self-motivation, Academic achievement

### INTRODUCTION

University undergraduates are commonly associated with the phenomenon of procrastination (Zeenath & Orcullo, 2012). According to Rabin et al. (2011), the average number of college and university undergraduates engaged in academic procrastination behaviour is about 30 to 60 %. Vij and Lomash (2014) found that most undergraduates from higher education

institutions intend to complete their tasks within the period. However, they lack the motivation to begin doing their tasks. For some, procrastinators are considered pessimistic, as they often doubt their skills, which is known as an element of self-doubt (Habelrih & Hicks, 2015).

Procrastination could also be defined as a person's attempt to escape undesirable tasks, as Gargari et al. (2011) stated. It can also be viewed as a self-handicapping behaviour that contributes to a few adverse outcomes such as increased stress, poor academic performance, and wastage of time (Li, 2012). The concept of academic procrastination refers to the behavioural tendency involved in offsetting individual obligations and individuals who have been academically absent from self-regulated success (Park & Sperling, 2012).

One of the most studied variables concerning procrastination is self-efficacy (Joseph, 2016). A person's idea of their capability in organising and executing designated tasks assigned to them is, according to Taura (2015) as the definition of self-efficacy. Self-efficacy is an academic setting where students believe in themselves how well they finish their academic tasks on a more successful note (Sirin, 2011). It has been determined that high self-efficacy undergraduates have a more strategic approach towards their tasks and assignments, while those who have low self-efficacy are found to be more relaxed and carefree (Prat-Sala & Redford, 2010)

On the other hand, as Rakes and Dunn (2010) described, motivation is a process where the domination of perseverance and energy takes place to complete their duties and tasks by a person. Academic motivation is one of the many types of motivation. As Artino and Stephens (2009) described academic motivation, students act towards tasks, assignments, and learning subjects. In referring to the Self-Determination Theory (2000), motivation types could be differentiated by identifying the reason behind an action. Two main motivations are intrinsic motivation, where something is carried out due to the enjoyment and interest from within, and extrinsic motivation. An outcome such as a reward awaits at the end of the task's completion (Deci & Ryan, 2000).

As Mee et al. (2020) suggested, there is a need to create a fun-filled learning environment to build enthusiasm and curiosity, which leads to the undergraduates' willingness to learn. Therefore, this study aims to investigate undergraduates' self-efficacy and self-

motivation influence to commit academic procrastination. This study also attempts to see whether undergraduates' academic performance leads to academic procrastination.

## **Research Questions**

Two research questions were formed for this study.

1. How do undergraduates' self-efficacy and self-motivation influence their tendency to commit academic procrastination?
2. Is there any significant difference between undergraduates' academic achievement and academic procrastination?

## **METHODOLOGY**

The study conducted using a 4-point Likert-like scale quantitative method of questioning. A questionnaire to find the role of self-efficacy and self-motivation towards academic procrastination among university undergraduates was assigned to 200 respondents from University Selangor, Malaysia. However, only 80 respondents resubmitted their questionnaire for the study. All the respondents were then categorised according to their Cumulative Grade Point Average (CGPA) and grouped into High (n=40) or Low (n=40) CGPAs, respectively. Respondents with High CGPA were distinguished to have 3.00 to 4.00 pointer. Likewise, the respondents with a CGPA below 2.99 were classified as Low CGPA.

The questionnaire consisted of two (2) main sections labelled A and B, with three (3) sub-sections under section B. Section A is used to determine respondents' Cumulative Grade Point Average (CGPA) from the current semester. In section B, the first sub-section labelled as 'Academic Procrastination' consists of 10 items to identify whether respondents procrastinate academically. The second sub-section, labelled self-efficacy, consisted of 20 items identifying if respondents possess high or low self-efficacy within themselves. The third sub-section consisted of 20 items on self-motivation in identifying whether respondents possess higher intrinsic or extrinsic motivation while studying in higher education institutions.

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

### Responses on Self-efficacy

Table 1 below shows the responses for the respondents' self-efficacy. From the table, both High and Low CGPA groups had shown similar agreement to the statement '*Generally, I think I can accomplish outcomes that are meaningful to me.*' with n=35 respondents, equivalent to 87.5%. In addition, both groups have had similar second-highest responses on '*I am competent to achieve most of the objectives that I have set for myself.*' with High CGPA group shows n=34 (85%) and Low CGPA group shows n=33 (82.5%), respectively

**Table 1:** Frequency of Respondents' Self-efficacy

Group	Items	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
High CGPA	Q1: I am competent to achieve most of the objectives that I have set for myself.	34	85 %
	Q2: When facing challenging projects, I am positive that I will take care of them.	29	72.5 %
	Q3: Generally, I think I can accomplish outcomes that are meaningful to me.	35	87.5 %
	Q12: When I am in trouble, I can usually think of solutions quickly.	28	70 %
Low CGPA	Q1: I am competent to achieve most of the objectives that I have set for myself.	33	82.5 %
	Q3: Generally, I think I can accomplish outcomes that are meaningful to me.	35	87.5 %
	Q7: I know what to do when dealing with unexpected situations.	30	75 %
	Q8: I am confident that I could finish a task even when I procrastinate.	32	80 %

Based on the findings above, self-efficacy does affect university undergraduates. The findings show that Low CGPA undergraduates tend to have higher self-efficacy than High CGPA undergraduates. Both high and low achievers have their own goals in achieving what they want to achieve and how they will achieve it. However, there are specific differences between these two groups.

First, high achievers do have high self-efficacy. However, their confidence is slightly different from their counterpart. High achievers tend to have a backup plan if something goes wrong within their plan or does not work the way they want. They know that they will be able to come up with quick resolutions when they do not have time or labour to complete the task diligently and with quality.

On the contrary, low achievers are confident that they can finish their tasks even when they procrastinate. They are also confident when dealing with unexpected situations. The findings are significant to Lowinger et al.'s (2014) study that procrastinators tend to procrastinate due to their confidence in completing the task on time. Thus, self-efficacy does influence undergraduates to commit academic procrastination.

### **Responses on Self- motivation**

Table 2 shows respondents' responses to their self-motivation (intrinsic/extrinsic). From the findings on intrinsic motivation, n=39 equivalent to 97.5% respondents from the High CGPA group and n=38 equivalent to 95% respondents from the Low CGPA group agreed with the statement *'I want to prove to myself that I am capable of completing my college degree.'* Both groups agreed to the statement *'I enjoy learning new things.'* with n=38 (95%) respectively.

For extrinsic motivation, n=38 equivalent to 95% of the High CGPA respondents and n=36 equivalent to 90% of the Low CGPA respondents agreed to the statement *'I want to have "the good life" later on.'* Besides, one essential response for the High CGPA group in extrinsic motivation with the statement of *'I complete my work because I do not want to disappoint my parents.'* It indicated a total of n=32 equivalent to 80% of respondents agreed to the statement. On the other hand, the item on *'I need a comfortable environment to be able to work'* was the second-highest for both groups with n=37 (92.5%) and n=34 (85%) respectively.

**Table 2:** Frequency of Respondents' Self-motivation

Group	Types of motivation	Items	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
High CGPA	Intrinsic motivation	Q9: I enjoy learning the subjects of my course.	30	75%
		Q10: I want to prove to myself that I am capable of completing my college degree.	39	97.5%
		Q14: I enjoy learning new things.	38	95%
		Q19: University allows me to gain personal contentment in my journey for excellence in my studies.	36	90%
	Extrinsic motivation	Q13: I complete my work because I do not want to disappoint my parents.	32	80%
		Q16: I need a comfortable environment to be able to work.	37	92.5%
		Q18: I want to have "the good life" later on.	38	95%
		Q20: I study because I want to be successful like my idol.	32	80%
Low CGPA	Intrinsic motivation	Q9: I enjoy learning the subjects of my course.	30	75%
		Q10: I want to prove to myself that I am capable of completing my college degree.	38	95%
		Q14: I enjoy learning new things.	38	95%
		Q19: University allows me to gain personal contentment in my journey for excellence in my studies.	35	87.5%
	Extrinsic motivation	Q16: I need a comfortable environment to be able to work.	34	85%
		Q17: I believe that a few additional years of education will improve my competence as a worker.	31	77.5%
		Q18: I want to have "the good life" later on.	36	90%
		Q20: I study because I want to be successful like my idol.	31	77.5%

From the findings, self-motivation is also found to influence university undergraduates to commit academic procrastination. The findings show that high achievers from the High CGPA group are driven by intrinsic motivation. The findings contradicted Li's (2012) study that claimed procrastination where one is avoiding undesirable tasks. Since high achievers in

this study enjoy what they do or like in their courses, they tend to avoid procrastination. They do their tasks for long-term achievements compared to low achievers who are driven by extrinsic motivation. The Low CGPA group relies on external factors to complete their task and not because they want to, leading them to commit academic procrastination.

## **CONCLUSION**

Academic procrastination shows to be influenced by undergraduates' academic performance. Both groups do procrastinate. However, the High CGPA undergraduates' procrastination rates are lower than the Low CGPA undergraduates. The Low CGPA group of undergraduates procrastinate more than those of the High CGPA, affecting their academic performances. As for self-efficacy, it also influences the undergraduates' academic procrastination. It has been identified that the High CGPA undergraduates possess high self-efficacy, but in a more positive perspective, which is always having a backup plan in case something does not work out in the way they planned for it to be.

The Low CGPA undergraduates possess high self-efficacy but with a negative perspective that could damage their academic achievements. The Low CGPA group respondents can be a little too confident about dealing with unexpected situations, which sometimes leaves them less time to complete the task. They keep delaying the completion of the tasks. As for self-motivation, it too affects the rate of academic procrastination and academic performances of undergraduates.

The findings show that high achievers are driven by intrinsic motivation. They are internally driven to do something they like and not rely on external motivation such as rewards, compliments, and how those of Low CGPA undergraduates do. Thus, there is a need to integrate interactive learning activities to eliminate academic procrastination. The integration of interactive learning activities allows undergraduates to improve their self-confidence and motivation (Omar et al., 2020) in the long run.

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