

# [Anxiety as a procrastination behavior psychology essay](https://assignbuster.com/anxiety-as-a-procrastination-behavior-psychology-essay/)

Delaying an academic task until experiencing anxiety as a procrastination behavior is common among college students (Burka & Yuen, 1983). Although procrastination is common, however it is a serious problem at the same times (Burka & Yuen, 1983). It cause internal consequences like irritation, regret, despair, and self-blame (Burka & Yuen, 1983). Also, external consequences such as impaired academic and work progress, lost opportunities, and strained relationship (Burka & Yuen, 1983).

According to the above mentioned issues, procrastination among college students was a common yet destructives habit, which effecting an individual’s all aspect of university life. Procrastination among college students was predicted to bring impact or negative effect to college life. Thus, this study aims to examine the reasons of procrastination among university students.

Context of Study

Academic procrastination is a widespread phenomenon in academic world (Liu, 2010). According to Boice (1996), procrastination means avoiding or delaying a task that needs to be done. 95% of university students in the USA are estimated having procrastination (Ellis and Knaus, 1977). A study from Solomon and Rothblum (1984) on American University found that students often or always procrastinated when writing a term paper (46%) than procrastinated in reading weekly assignments (30. 1%) and procrastinated in studying for exams (27. 6%). Latest research that done in a Canadian university by Klassen, Krawchuk & Rajani (2008) conclude that almost all of the students defined themselves as procrastinators and with 89% of students reported more than 1 hour of procrastination per day. Also, another Turkish research on adolescents’ academic procrastination by Klassen & Kuzucu (2009) reported that more than 80% of Turkish adolescents spending more than one hour procrastinating each day, more than 40% reporting spending three hours or more procrastinating during an ordinary school day. Findings by Ferrari (2004) suggested that procrastination increases over years during university life at English-speaking schools.

A cross-culture study by Mann et al. (1998) comes with a conclusion that East Asian university students, especially Japanese and Taiwanese tended to procrastinate more than their Western peers. A latest study by Liu (2010) based on Chinese university students show that there are moderate procrastination tendency.

Academic procrastination is divided into positive and negative academic procrastination based on the research by Klassen, Krawchuk, and Rajani (2008). Positive academic procrastination is defined as students able to gain benefit from procrastination, for example better academic performance while for negative academic is defined as students suffer from the effect of procrastination for example, anxiety. So, current research on academic procrastination mainly focuses on negative academic procrastination (as cited in Liu, 2010). In this paper, the study is focus on the negative academic procrastination. The term “ academic procrastination” is always refers to negative academic procrastination when used.

Procrastination among undergraduate students in college is more common and some studies have even found that over 70% of university students reported that they procrastinate regularly (Schraw, Wadkins & Olafson, 2007). A study by Wohl, Pychyl & Bennett (2010) have found that procrastinators tend to rationalize their tendencies to put things off and their ability to work under pressure. Many causal factors contributing to the sources of procrastination have been found by several researchers. A number of factors are related to procrastination suggested by Burka and Yuen (1983) including evaluation anxiety, difficulty in making decision, rebellion against control, lack of assertion, fear of the consequences of success, perceived aversiveness of the tasks, and overly perfectionistic standards about competency. On the basis of a principal component factor analysis of their procrastination measure, Solomon and Rothblum (1984) claimed fear of failure and task aversiveness as two main reasons for student academic procrastination.

According to Steel (2004), gender difference of academic procrastination is a controversial issue that may be hard to predict. There are studies done by Milgram, Marshevsky, & Sadeh (1994) and Pyhyl. Coplan, & Reid (2002) that reported significant gender differences, other studies that done by Ferrari (1991), Ferrari (2001) and Schouwenburg (1992) reported that there are no gender difference in academic procrastination.

Significance of Study

Since procrastination behavior is common among college students, it is especially important to conduct investigations into few aspects that linked to procrastination in Malaysia university context.

First, the study aimed to reveal the reasons of procrastination among university students. It is worth to examine the reasons behind procrastinate which contribute most to this problem to help prescribe the right method for the parties involve overcoming it.

Second, it gives an idea to understand about the relationship between sex differences and procrastinations behavior. Thus, it allows better future assessment for those at-risk male and female college students who having procrastination behavior.

Lastly, this study also investigates the differences in the reason of procrastination between students from different faculty. It helps to reveal the connection between sciences stream and arts stream students to the reason of procrastination. Significantly, this research study provides information for educators and students to gain more understanding about procrastination in college students.

Purpose of Study

This study aims to reveal the gender variables, faculty variables and the reasons of procrastination in procrastination among college students. In addition, this research study received the great impetus when there were only few studies been carried out to examine college students’ procrastination behavior in Malaysia. Hence, this research provided an essential tool for future research to establish and enlarge the picture of how procrastination behavior was initiated in local university students and develop the right approach to overcome this behavior.

Research Questions

The specific research questions of this study had been displayed as follow:

What are the reasons of procrastination among UTAR students?

Are there any differences between genders in reasons of procrastination?

Are there any differences between arts and sciences students in their reasons of procrastination?

Problem Statement

Procrastination behavior is getting more and more common among the university student in Malaysia. Students delay their academic task and doing last minute work. This led to mental health problem such as burnout or stress out. Also, the procrastination behavior may cause them fail to submit their assignment on time or even fail in examination due to procrastinate in studying for exam. Thus, this study is to aim to reveal the reason of procrastination among the university students.

Definitions and Key Concepts

Procrastination. Putting off something until a future time or postponing action on something you have decided to do (Ellis & Knaus, 1977). Whenever you put something off you are procrastinating, regardless of the reason for your delay (Burka & Yuen, 1983). Avoiding or delaying a task that needs to be done (Ness, 1988). Boice (1996) defined it as largely of opting for short term relief through acts that are easy and immediately rewarding, while generally avoiding even the thought and its anxiety of doing more difficult, delayable, important things. Preference for choosing the leisure alternative when there is a motivational conflict between learning and leisure activities (Dietz, Hofer & Fries, 2007).

There are no common shared definitions about procrastination. However in my study, I adopt Ellis and Knaus (1977) definitions. This is because it is best described of procrastination while Dietz, Hofer, and Fries (2007) are more like a reason for procrastination.

Academic Procrastination. It is the procrastination that happens in academic settings (Liu, 2010). Academic procrastination is considered to be a form of situational procrastination, which has been described as behavior that is linked to a specific task (Harris & Sutton, 1983). Burka and Yuen (1983) have said that it is common for college students to delay academic tasks to the point of experiencing considerable anxiety.

In this study, academic procrastination is defined as any academic task that is delayed or avoided which cause discrepancy between motive and actual behavior until develop negative effect to the procrastinator.

Gender. It refer to the social and psychological dimension of being male and female, it could be future explore into gender identity and gender roles. Gender identity is the sense of being male or female while gender role are sets of expectation that prescribe how male or female should think, act, and feel (Santrock, 2009). In this study, gender is only differentiated in male and female.

CHAPTER II

LITERATURE REVIEW

Reasons of Procrastination

Solomon and Rothblum (1984) revealed that procrastination is not solely a problem in study habit or time management, but involves a complex interaction of behavioral, cognitive, and effective components. There are two groups of procrastinators after performing factor analysis of subjects’ reasons for procrastination. Each of the procrastinator holds a primary reason of procrastination. The first group of procrastinator reported that their reason of procrastination is fear of failure which related to anxiety about meeting others’ expectations (evaluation anxiety), concern about meeting one’s own standards (perfectionism), and lack of self-confidence. This may the reason for the students in this group procrastinate as they concern on unable to meet their own or others’ expectation, or worry about poor performance.

The second group of procrastinators reported that aversiveness of the task is the reasons for their procrastination. however, aversiveness of task usually unable to represent the only reason that students procrastination, it usually relate to task unpleasantness or the feeling of dislike toward academic activities and a lack of energy. Also, students who under this group usually endorse in having difficulty decision making and time management. Those who procrastinate due to fear of failure can be identified by the presence of anxiety and low self-esteem, otherwise absence of these two would be due to aversiveness of the task.

However, Ferrari (2009) had redo another factor analysis that previously done by Solomon & Rothblum (1984) when onducting a research on turkish students population. This is because the reasons for procrastination are affected by the population and methods used for data collect. There are 4 group of procrastinator from the factor analysis which is fear of failure, risk taking, laziness and rebellion against control. The result revealed that Turkish students procrastinate on important tasks, such as studying for exams, reading assignments, and writing term papers is due to fear of failure, risk taking, laziness, and rebellion against control.

Fatimah, Lukman, Khairudin, Shahrazad and Halim (2011) reveal that procrastination has significant relation with fear of failure. It is the primary reason for students to procrastinate when experiencing high fear of failure. Students fear of evaluation and tend to procrastination or prolong the starting or finishing the tasks when knew being evaluated on.

Steel (2007) study on the nature of procrastination shows that the task aversiveness is a strong and consistent predictor for procrastination. Task aversiveness which describe as decreasing the value of task, task consider boring or attempted in low energy level does increase procrastination.

Finally, the study from Ackerman and Gross (2005) shows that fear of failure does not effect in procrastination between low and high procrastinator. Also, the difficulty or task nor time-consuming task in other word aversiveness of task show no different in low and high procrastinator. It is the interest toward the task and the variety of skills needed to complete the task affect in procrastinator.

Gender Difference in Reasons of Procrastination

In the study of academic procrastination by Solomon and Rothblum (1984), the analyses of variance of sex differences actually shows that there are a significant difference for the primary reason for procrastination, fear of failure where females reflected higher mean score than males. But, for another primary reason for procrastination which is aversiveness of task, result shows that there is no significant sex difference.

Also, the study from Ferrari (2009), actually shows a consistent result with Solomon and Rothblum (1984) where female score higher in academic procrastination for the reason of fear of failure than males. Also, females report higher academic procrastination score than male in the reasons of laziness. The reason females found to be more fearful than males is due to hormonal constitution. The study also shows that male is report higher academic procrastination score in reason of risk taking and rebellion against control. This is due to men show more aggressive behavior toward psychological and social pressure.

Moreover, the study done by Rothblum, Solomon, and Murakami shows that affective, cognitive and behavioral factors are related with academic procrastination. In the affective measure, female high procrastinator report more test anxiety and the presence of physical symptoms. From the three way interaction of procrastination and gender with session point out that female high procrastinator report more anxiety related physical symptoms than male high procrastinator. Also, they report stable level of high anxiety all the time.

However, there are studies that show no differences in gender. First, the study done by Fatimah, Lukman, Khairudin, Shahrazad and Halim (2011) shows that there are no differences in fear of failure between genders for the reason of procrastination. In addition, Sepehrian and Lotf (2011) also show that there is no relationship between boy and girl students in procrastination grade and strategies procrastination. They conclude that gender does not play any role on habitual procrastination but there are some other factors that cause procrastination that affect gender. Besides, according to Sepehrian and Loft (2011), Solomon and Rothblum, Ann Wegbuzzy, Ozer and Ferrari (as cited in Sepehrian and Loft, 2011) prove that there are no difference between gender in academic procrastination.

Faculty Different in Reasons of Procrastination

In the study done by Liu (2010), reveal that the difference on academic major has no impact on the academic procrastination tendency of students or the relationship between academic procrastination and academic achievement after comparing the art-based university students and science-based university students. Liu (2010) suggested that the academic major variable can be excluded in studying the academic procrastination of university students.

Solomon and Rothblum (1984) done their study on procrastination using the self-report measure, Procrastination Assessment Scale-Students (PASS) only took psychology students as measurement which show no evidence that faculty may bring impact to reasons of procrastination. According to Liu (2010), most research on procrastination that was done took only the subjects on psychology-related course and while other research on procrastination no major or faculty was mentioned.

Theoretical Framework

Nomological Network. A nomological network is a means by which to evaluate the interrelatedness of a construct to other constructs and facets by observing their relationships and expected associations (as cited in Mccloskey, 2011). Adopt the nomological network can helps in creation of a scale by identify the construct and developing items.

A nomological network was proposed to gain a better understanding of the construct of academic procrastination. The results of meta-analysis on procrastination in an attempt to discover the relationship procrastination has to various personality variables and behavioral characteristics that conducted by Van Eerde (as cited in Mccloskey, 2011) shows that procrastination fits lawfully into a nomological network.

Figure 1 Proposed nomological network for academic procrastination.

The proposed nomological network of academic procrastination shows in figure 1 by Mccloskey (2011) is a detail list of all possible relationship without the use of imagination. However, this proposed nomological network for academic procrastination is not suitable for this study as this study only focus on the personality factor. So, based on this nomological network for academic procrastination, a proposed personality factors for academic procrastination as in figure 2 is constructed for this study.

Difficulty making decisions

Time management

Academic Procrastination

Aversiveness of task

Perfectionism

Evaluation anxiety

Personality

Low self-esteem

Rebellion against control

Peer pressure

Lack of assertion

Fear of success

Laziness

Dependency

Risk taking

Figure 2 Proposed personality factors for academic procrastination

CHAPTER III

METHODOLOGY

This chapter focused on the aspect of research design, participants and location, instrument, research procedures, and data analysis. In this study, survey method with convenience sampling was being implemented for obtaining data. Participants were undergraduates from Univertisi Tunku Abdul Rahman. Procrastination Assessment Scale- Students (PASS) served as the instrument to access the reasons of procrastination among UTAR students.

Participants and Location

Participants were undergraduates from Universiti Tunku Abdul Rahman (UTAR) Perak Campus. Seventy questionnaires were given out, for both males and females. All questionnaires were successful collected from the participants. However, only sixty six questionnaires were valid for this study. The reason is because the four participants were from other faculty which is not the chosen faculty for this study.

Instrument

Questionnaires. The questionnaires consist of two sections where respondents have to fill all of them. The first section would be the demographic data of the respondents that includes gender, faculty and course. The second section would be the Procrastination Assessment Scale- Students (PASS) to identify the reason for procrastination.

Procrastination Assessment Scale- Students (PASS). The Procrastination Assessment Scale- Students (PASS) was invented by Solomon and Rothblum in 1988. According to Solomon and Rothblum (1988), this purpose of PASS is to assess the prevalence of academic procrastinations among college students, to examine the reasons for academic procrastination and develop a self-report measure of procrastination that could be compared with behavioral indices of procrastination and standardized self-report measures of potentially related constructs like anxiety, study habits, depression, self-esteem, irrational cognitions, and assertion.

The PASS is a 5-point Likert-type, self-report measure consists of two sections including 44 items. However, in this study, only part 2 of the original questionnaire is selected. This is because this study only focuses on the reason of procrastination among college students. The second part that taken out from the original is the reason for procrastination which have 26 items, each rated on a 5-point Likert-type scale ranging from 0 ( not at all reflects why I procrastinated) to 4 (definitely reflects why I procrastinated), to assess the reason for procrastination.

First, a procrastination scenario (delay in writing a term paper) is provided and then a variety of possible reason for procrastination is listed out: (a) evaluation anxiety, (b) perfectionism, (c) difficulty making decisions, (d) dependeny and help seeking, (e) aversiveness of the task, (f) lack of self-confidence, (g) laziness, (h) lack of assertion, (i) fear of success, (j) tendency to feel overwhelmed and poorly manage time, (k) rebellion against control, (l) risk-taking and (m) peer influence (Solomon & Rothblum, 1984)

There are two statements listed for each of above reasons and participants are asked to rate each statement on the 5-point Likert scale according to how much it reflects the reason they procrastinated in the mentioned scenario during last time. For example, the two aversiveness of task statements are “ You really disliked writing term papers” and “ You felt it just takes too long to write a term paper”.

There are a few studies that show PASS scores possessed adequate reliability and validy. Onwuegbuzie (as cited in Ozer, Demir & Ferrari, 2009) found 0. 89 for the reasons for procrastination sections of the scale. Ferarri (as cited in Ozer, Demir & Ferrari, 2009) also found an adequate level of coefficient alpha with test-retest reliability over a six week interval is . 65 for reasons.

Equipment

In conducting the study, pen was used as one of the equipment for the participants to answer the questionnaire. Also, a laptop was also been used to search for information and analyzing the result of the research. During the research, some computer software is used in order to complete the research. First, Microsoft Office Version 2010 was used in writing the report and creating the questionnaire. Then, the Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) Version 19. 0 was used for analyzing the result of the questionnaire where all the raw data are being inputted into the SPSS systems for further analysis.

Research Procedure

The research was conducted in Universiti Tunku Abdul Rahman (UTAR) Perak

Campus in the month of July 2012. The questionnaire which consisted of 26 questions was distributed to the students in Universiti Tunku Abdul Rahman (UTAR) by using the method of convenience sampling. The survey was completed by 70 students in which come from faculty FAS and FSC. The process of distributing questionnaires took two days to be completed in order to get an adequate amount of samples in Block E of UTAR.

Data Analysis

Demographic variables which include gender and faculty had been measured in descriptive statistics (frequency, percent, valid percent and cumulative percent). Then, Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) program was used with several statistical methods consists of t-test between independent samples to obtain the result of reasons of procrastination in terms of gender and faculty.