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Academic Procrastination and Self-Regulation among Secondary School Students

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ABSTRACT

In the contemporary techno-savvy era, rapid scientific and technological developments have significantly altered student priorities, lifestyle, and approaches toward academic duties. Academic procrastination—the intentional postponement of academic tasks leading to subjective discomfort—presents a major challenge in modern education. This study investigates the relationship between academic procrastination and self-regulation among secondary school students in the Amritsar district of Punjab, India. Utilizing a descriptive survey research design, data were collected from a stratified random sample of 200 adolescents (N=200) distributed equally across gender (100 males, 100 females) and school types (100 government, 100 private). Standardized scales were administered. Results revealed significant gender differences: male students exhibited significantly higher academic procrastination than female students, whereas female students demonstrated significantly higher self-regulation. Furthermore, government school students exhibited higher academic procrastination compared to private school students. Surprisingly, no overall correlation was found between academic procrastination and self-regulation.

INTRODUCTION

The vast scientific and technological developments characterizing the modern era have introduced both positive and negative transformations across all dimensions of human life. These advancements have drastically altered communication, lifestyle, culture, and educational paradigms. In a techno-savvy climate, students face novel distractions that frequently redirect their goals and priorities away from academic obligations. Consequently, academic procrastination has emerged as a critical behavioral challenge among modern learners.

Procrastination, derived from the Latin *procrastinare*—combining *pro* ("forward") and *crastinus* ("of tomorrow")—refers to the voluntary postponement of an intended course of action despite expecting to be worse off or the delay. Academic procrastination specifically denotes the postponement of academic tasks (e.g., preparing for examinations, completing assignments) resulting in subjective discomfort, unhappiness, or sub-optimal performance.

SELF-REGULATION IN LEARNING

Self-regulation represents a vital construct in educational psychology. First conceptualized by Bandura (1988) through cognitive motivators and expanded by Zimmerman (1989, 2000), self-regulation is the integrated process where in learners actively monitor, control, and evaluate their own behavior, thoughts, emotions, and motivation to achieve personal learning goals. Failure in self-regulation often manifests as disorganization and task avoidance.

OPERATIONAL DEFINITIONS & METHODOLOGY

Academic Procrastination: The total score obtained by secondary school students on the Academic Procrastination Scale by Kalia and Yadav (2015), measuring voluntary task delay.

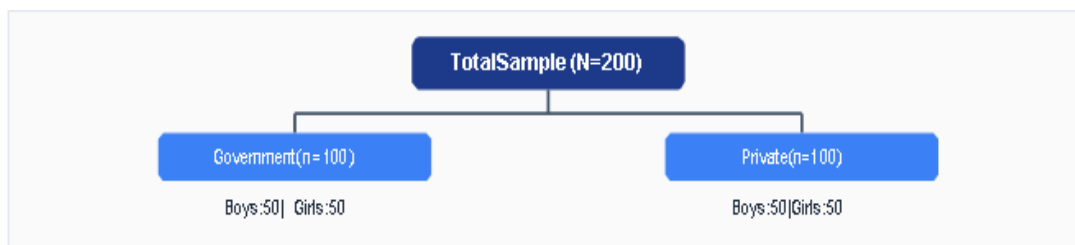
Self-Regulation: The total score obtained on the Self-Regulated Learning Scale by Gupta and Mehtani (2017), assessing autonomous goal setting and monitoring.

Research Design: The present study was drawn descriptive in nature and used a cross-sectional survey method to collect data from secondary schools in Amritsar District.

SAMPLE STRUCTURE

A stratified random sampling technique was employed to select 200 adolescent students across government and private secondary schools.

School Type	Boys(N)	Girls(N)	Total Sub-Sample
Government Schools	50	50	100
Private Schools	50	50	100
Total Sample Size	100	100	200



RESEARCH HYPOTHESES & STATISTICAL ANALYSIS

- **H1:** No significant difference in academic procrastination between male and female students. *(Rejected)*
- **H2:** No significant difference in self-regulation between male and female students. *(Rejected)*
- **H3:** No significant difference in procrastination between government and private school students. *(Rejected)*
- **H4:** No significant difference in self-regulation between government and private school students. *(Rejected)*
- **H5:** No correlation between academic procrastination and self-regulation. *(Failed to Reject)*

MAIN FINDINGS

- **Gender Differences:** Males scored significantly higher on academic procrastination than females. Females scored significantly higher on self-regulation strategies.
- **School Type Differences:** Government school students procrastinate more than private school students. Private school students demonstrated higher self-regulatory capacity.
- **Correlation:** No significant linear correlation (r) was observed between overall procrastination scores and self-regulation scores in this sample.

EDUCATIONAL IMPLICATIONS

This study provides key insights for teachers, parents, and policymakers:

- **Targeted Interventions:** Teachers should design activities to reduce task unpleasantness and teach goal-setting, particularly for male students.
- **Addressing Fear of Failure:** Procrastination often stems from perfectionism, low self-esteem, or fear of failure. Counseling programs should address cognitive misbeliefs.
- **Self-Regulation Training:** Integrating self-regulation instruction (literacy tasks, open-ended projects, portfolios) in inclusive classrooms enhances student autonomy.
- **Parental Guidance:** Parents must keep track of student routines to detect early task avoidance patterns without imposing excessive perfectionist pressure.

SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

- Expand geographical scope beyond Amritsar to cover other districts in Punjab.
- Utilize larger samples across different academic levels (primary, higher secondary, university).
- Examine additional mediating variables like digital device usage, test anxiety, and parenting styles.

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