

Reasons why Students Procrastinate in Academics: A Cross Sectional Study among Medical Students**Manu A S¹, Asha B², Shabnam S³, Vidya V Patil⁴**^{1,4}Assistant Professor, Department of Community Medicine, S S Institute of Medical Sciences and Research Centre, Davangere, Karnataka, India²Associate Professor, Department of Community Medicine, S S Institute of Medical Sciences and Research Centre, Davangere, Karnataka, India³Assistant Professor, Department of Biochemistry, Chikkamagaluru Institute of Medical Sciences, Chikkamagaluru, Karnataka, India

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Abstract:**Introduction:** Voluntarily delaying an academic task to an indefinite time which is needed to be completed at an assigned time. The prevalence of academic procrastination is very high among university students. There are various reasons for academic procrastination like lack of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation, communication gap, illness, too much work, lack of guidance, home environment, lack of coordination, work inability, unseen problems, teacher's attitude, perfectionism, negative comment, task averseness, dependence on technology.**Objectives:** To determine the different areas of academic procrastination and to assess the various reasons for Academic Procrastination among students.**Material and Methods:** A cross sectional study was conducted among medical students during February to April 2023. The purpose of the study was explained and oral consent was obtained from the participants before enrolling them in the study. A pretested questionnaire regarding socio demographic characteristics and a standardized tool "PASS" Procrastination assessment scale was given to assess the degree and reasons for procrastination. The data was entered in excel sheet and represented in frequencies & percentages.**Results:** A total of 521 students participated in the study. 84% of the students procrastinate in submitting assignments, 95% of the students mention time management as the major reason for academic procrastination.**Conclusion:** Assignments and preparing for the next class are the focal areas where majority of the students procrastinate. Major reason why students procrastinate academically is due to improper time management. The results are useful in identifying potential focal areas of procrastination and also areas for intervention and to tackle changes in procrastination over time. Mentors can be made aware of their role in decreasing procrastination.**Keywords:** Academic Procrastination, Reasons, Time Management, Medical students.This is an Open Access article that uses a funding model which does not charge readers or their institutions for access and distributed under the terms of the Creative Commons Attribution License (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0>) and the Budapest Open Access Initiative (<http://www.budapestopenaccessinitiative.org/read>), which permit unrestricted use, distribution, and reproduction in any medium, provided original work is properly credited.**Introduction**

Academic procrastination is voluntarily or needlessly delaying an academic task to an indefinite time which is needed to be completed at an assigned time. Various studies have shown that most university students procrastinate in their academic situations [1].

Voluntarily delaying an academic task to an indefinite time which is needed to be completed at an assigned time. Also it can be referred to as disregarding, delaying, postponing, prolonging and deferring a task to be performed.[2] This type of behaviour is very common among students especially when there is a deadline. Students particularly have deadlines always for various reasons from course selection, registration to

submission of assignments. [3,4] The prevalence of academic procrastination is very high among university students. College students need to devote most of their time to complete different academic-related tasks like assignments, projects, writing papers, extracurricular activities, office work. Academic Procrastination is considered to be illogical as many students delay their academic tasks with no logical reason despite their awareness of negative outcomes. [5,6]

There are various reasons for academic procrastination like lack of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation, communication gap, illness, too much work, lack of guidance, home environment, lack of coordination, work inability, unseen problems,

teacher's attitude, perfectionism, negative comment, task averseness, dependence on technology. Using too much internet, laziness, task averseness, anxiety and life satisfaction, forgetting about the task, low-self-esteem and depression. These are the factors where students to procrastinate academic activities. [7] Time inconsistency is also one of the major reasons among students who procrastinate academically.

Though academic procrastination is not always a major problem it can create undesirable stress, anxiety, frustration and prevent them from achieving their developmental tasks. Also negative consequences like academic performance, decreased life satisfaction, withdrawal from course can occur. [8]

Objectives:

1. To determine the various areas of academic procrastination among medical students.
2. To assess the various reasons for Academic Procrastination among students

Material and Methods: A cross sectional questionnaire based study was conducted among medical students during February to April 2023.

Ethical clearance was obtained from Institutional Ethics Committee. The purpose of the study was explained and oral consent was obtained from the participants before enrolling them in the study. A pretested questionnaire regarding socio demographic characteristics and a standardized tool "PASS" Procrastination assessment scale was given to assess the degree and reasons for procrastination. Academic Procrastination Scale (PASS): The PASS is a 44 item instrument designed to measure the frequency of cognitive-behavioural antecedents of procrastination. It measures prevalence in six academic areas and reasons in the second part [9]

Scoring: Scores on the 5-point Likert type scale ranges from 2 to 10 and across the six academic areas of academic functioning (12 to 60)

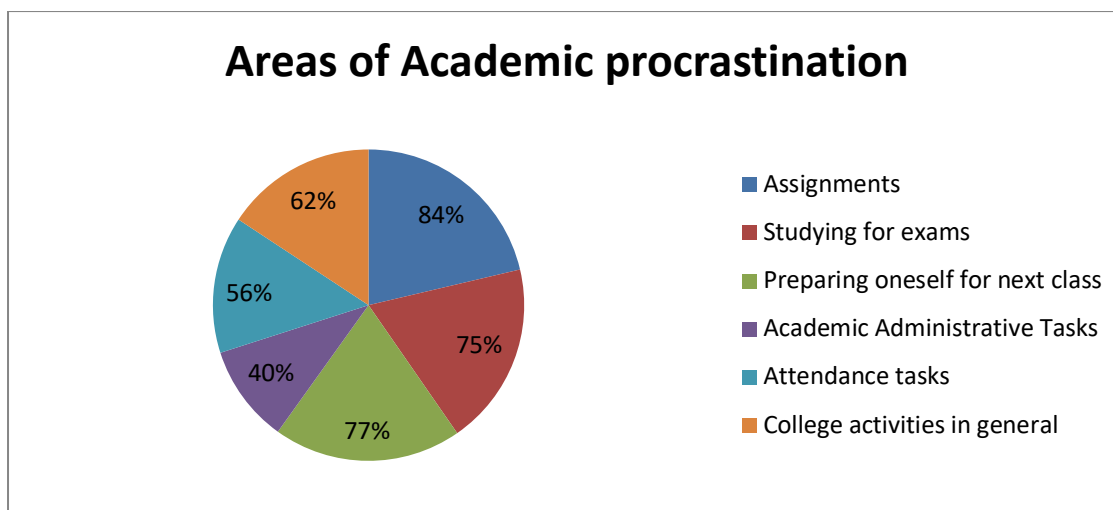
Statistical Analysis: The data was entered in excel sheet and represented in frequencies, percentages and graphs. The analysis was done using SPSS 16. Descriptive data was presented using means and Standard deviation. Chi square test and independent t test was used.

Results

Table 1: Socio-demographic details of the study participants

Age	Category	No (%)
	18-21	365(70)
	22-25	156(30)
Gender	Male	227(44)
	Female	294(56)
Place of stay	Hostel	399(77)
	Day Scholar	122(23)
Year of degree	1 st	160(31)
	2 nd	136(26)
	3 rd	132(25)
	4 th	93(18)
Total		521(100)

Table 1: A total of 521 students participated in our study. Among them 70% of the students were in the age group 18-21 years of age, 56% of the students are women, 77% of the students were residing in the hostel.



Graph 1: Areas of academic procrastination among students

Graph 1: The overall prevalence of academic procrastination among students was 78%. Majority of the students (84%) are procrastinating in completing assignments. 77% of the students procrastinate in preparing for next class. Around 40% of the students procrastinate in academic administrative tasks.

Table 2: Reasons for academic procrastination among students

Category /Reasons	Number (%)
Evaluation Anxiety	232 (57)
Difficulty making decisions	180 (44)
Dependency	275 (67)
Time management	389 (95)
Lack of assertion	92 (23)
Rebellion against control	73 (18)
Low self esteem	142 (35)
Aversion of task	275 (67)
Risk taking	64 (16)
Fear of success	85 (21)
Laziness	242 (59)
Peer Pressure	95 (23)
Perfectionism	45 (11)
Total	408 (100)

*multiple choices

Table 2: Majority of the students 95% mentioned time management as the major reason for academic procrastination, aversion of task and dependency as the next major reason for academic procrastination. Around 45% of the students reported perfectionism as the reason for delaying tasks.

Discussion

Our study described that majority of the students procrastinate in writing assignments which is similar to a study conducted by Hayat et al., [2] Next most common areas where students procrastinate is preparing for next class and studying for exams. The most common type of academic procrastination is postponing writing papers or studying for exams. Our study described time management as the major reason for academic procrastination which is also reported by Gohain et al., [10] and Limone et al., [11]. Another study conducted by Roshanisefat et al., [12] revealed that

improper time management skills and test anxiety as the major reason for delaying tasks. Howell & Watson et al., [13] also reported that difficulty in time management as one of the major reason for academic procrastination.

Solomon¹⁴ described major reason for academic procrastination as task aversiveness. Our study described that around 67% of the students had mentioned task aversiveness as the reason for academic procrastination. Another study conducted by Gohain et al., [10] showed task aversiveness, decision making and risk taking are the strongest predictors for prevalence of academic procrastination. Bytamar et al., [15] described task aversiveness as the major reason for academic procrastination. Next most common reason (67%) for procrastination behaviour was dependency to complete the task which is similar to a study conducted by Bashir et al., [7] where majority of

the students (69%) gave dependency as the reason for their procrastination behaviour, followed by 68% of them reported difficulty in making decisions, whereas it is around 44% among our study population. Around 65% of the students mentioned lack of assertion [10] and in our study it is around 23% and 44% [10] of the students mentioned perfectionism as the reason for procrastination which is around 11% among our students.

Saplavska et al., [16] reported evaluation anxiety as the major reason for procrastination among students which was also reported by more than half of the students in our study. Tezer et al., [17] mentioned internet usage as the most common reason for delaying tasks.

Fatimah et al., [18] found that students tend to procrastinate or delay the starting or finishing the tasks due to evaluation anxiety. Our study reported that 44% of the students had difficulty in making decisions similarly results were found in a study conducted by Santosa et al., [19] Around 60% of the students reported laziness as one of the major reason for their behaviour. Similarly Dautov [20] also described laziness as the reason.

Very few students (11%) in our study reported that perfectionism is one of the reasons for their behaviour of postponing things which is slightly high in a study conducted by Jadidi et al., [21]. In the same study 31% of them reported laziness, 26% of them reported aversiveness of tasks, 23% of them low confidence, 12% of them reported dependency, 8% of them reported risk taking as the reason of their procrastination in academics which is similar to our results.

Conclusion and Recommendation:

Assignments and preparing for the next class are the focal areas where majority of the students procrastinate. Major reason why students procrastinate academically is due to improper time management. Understanding the reasons for academic procrastination will help the students in decreasing their behaviour.

Counselling and continuous evaluation process can help in decreasing the procrastination. The results are useful in identifying potential focal areas of procrastination and also areas for intervention and to tackle changes in procrastination over time. Mentors can be made aware of their role in decreasing procrastination.

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