

Relationship Between Academic Procrastination and Achievement Motivation Among Research Students

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to investigate the relationship between academic procrastination and achievement motivation among research students and to identify the major reasons associated with procrastinating academic tasks. A quantitative approach with a correlational research design was employed. The sample consisted of 250 MPhil and PhD research students selected through purposive sampling from universities in Lahore and Faisalabad. Data were collected through a survey using two adapted instruments: the Procrastination Assessment Scale–Student (PASS) developed by Solomon and Rothblum (1984) and the Achievement Motivation Scale developed by Lang and Fries (2006). The reliability of the instruments was established through Cronbach’s alpha, with coefficients of .90 for the PASS and .76 for the Achievement Motivation Scale, indicating acceptable to high internal consistency. Descriptive and inferential statistical techniques were used to analyze the data, including frequencies, percentages, means, standard deviations, independent-samples *t*-test, and Pearson product-moment correlation. The findings revealed a significant positive relationship between academic procrastination and fear of failure ($r = .76, p < .001$), indicating that higher levels of fear of failure were associated with greater academic procrastination. The findings also showed that task aversiveness was the most prominent reason for academic procrastination, whereas risk-taking received the lowest mean score. Furthermore, male research students reported significantly higher levels of academic procrastination than female students. Overall, the study concludes that academic procrastination among research students is closely associated with achievement-related motivational factors, particularly fear of failure and perceptions of academic tasks. The findings highlight the importance of strengthening students’ motivation, self-regulation, persistence, and effective management of research-related academic responsibilities to reduce procrastinating behavior and support successful research completion.

Keywords: Academic procrastination, achievement motivation, fear of failure, task aversiveness, research students.

Introduction

Students are expected to complete their academic responsibilities while effectively managing the time

required for producing academic work, developing ideas, and engaging in innovative activities. Effective time management is therefore important for completing academic requirements within the available period. Despite this expectation, many students tend to delay their academic responsibilities, a behavior commonly described in psychological literature as procrastination (Cheng & Xie, 2021). Procrastination is not a newly emerging phenomenon, historical evidence indicates that delaying tasks and responsibilities has existed for centuries; however, in recent years, it has received increasing attention from researchers. Procrastination involves intentionally postponing tasks while engaging in less important or unrelated activities. Such delays can have adverse psychological consequences because individuals may experience stress, guilt, and dissatisfaction when they fail to complete their responsibilities on time. Within educational contexts, procrastination is particularly noticeable because students frequently encounter situations that require them to complete academic tasks within specific deadlines. Among adolescents, this behavior is also considered a recognizable concern (Asio, 2020). Academic procrastination specifically refers to the unnecessary postponement of formal academic responsibilities, including schoolwork, assignments, and coursework. Delaying such responsibilities can produce several negative outcomes. Students may completely neglect their academic tasks or attempt to complete them within a very limited period, which can affect the quality of their work and lead to less satisfactory outcomes (Madjid et al., 2021). Procrastination may also result in missed academic opportunities when students fail to act within the required timeframe. Researchers have examined procrastination from several disciplinary perspectives, particularly sociology, education, and psychology. Steele (2007) highlighted the importance of understanding procrastination within academic environments, where this behavior can interfere with students' academic responsibilities. The problem has been reported particularly among university and college students (Alqurashi, 2019). For some individuals, postponing responsibilities may become a habitual response that occurs repeatedly in particular situations (Cerniglia, 2019). In general, procrastination involves delaying important responsibilities despite having sufficient awareness of their importance and the consequences associated with failing to complete them. Individuals who engage in procrastination may avoid dealing with essential responsibilities rather than addressing them when they are due (Rapanta et al., 2020). Evidence from previous studies suggests that procrastination is a widespread concern among university students in different parts of the world (Baka & Khan, 2016). Although this behavior may occur in various areas of everyday life, it is especially common in educational environments (Yilmaz, 2017). Students may attempt to justify their delays by describing academic tasks as boring or convincing themselves that they will complete the work later. Such patterns of behavior can influence both academic performance and academic achievement (Bytamar et al., 2021). When procrastination continues over time, students may gradually lose interest in learning and become less willing to begin or sustain their academic activities. In severe cases, persistent academic difficulties may contribute to students discontinuing their education (Uzun, et al., 2020). Self-regulation has also been identified as an important factor associated with academic procrastination. Previous research indicates that students with lower levels of self-regulation tend to demonstrate greater procrastination. Park and Sperling (2012) explained that self-regulated learners are more likely to remain engaged with their learning, manage academic responsibilities, and maintain awareness of their educational objectives and the actions required to achieve them. In contrast, students who have limited motivation to participate in academic activities may be more inclined to postpone their responsibilities. Research has reported a negative relationship between academic procrastination and motivation, particularly intrinsic motivation toward learning (Wu, & Fan, 2017). A lack of motivation toward progress and achievement may therefore represent another factor associated with academic procrastination (Steele, 2007; Kagan, 2009). Achievement motivation represents an individual's willingness and determination to accomplish desired goals, deal with challenges, perform tasks successfully, and attain a particular standard of excellence. It reflects an internal desire to achieve success, demonstrate competence, establish challenging goals, and continue making efforts despite difficulties. For research students, achievement

motivation is particularly relevant because research activities require sustained effort, commitment, persistence, and independent work directed toward long-term academic objectives (Cerezo et al., 2017). Research students who possess stronger achievement motivation may demonstrate greater concern for completing research activities successfully, meeting academic expectations, improving their performance, and fulfilling their research responsibilities. Consequently, achievement motivation may influence the manner in which research students respond to complex, demanding, and time-intensive research activities (Baka & Khan, 2016). In contrast, academic procrastination involves the intentional or unnecessary postponement of academic responsibilities even when students recognize that delaying these tasks may produce undesirable consequences. Among research students, procrastination may influence their engagement with demanding activities such as conducting a literature review, preparing a research proposal, collecting and analyzing data, and writing a thesis. Students who possess stronger achievement motivation may be more willing to begin academic activities and continue working on them until completion. Conversely, students who repeatedly postpone research-related responsibilities may face challenges in maintaining steady academic progress. Investigating the relationship between academic procrastination and achievement motivation can therefore provide an understanding of how students' desire for achievement is associated with their tendency to delay academic responsibilities (Akpur & Yurtseven, 2019). Achievement motivation has been described by psychologists as an individual's determination and desire to accomplish desired goals, understand ideas and objects, and meet the expectations that the individual establishes for themselves (Ziegler & Opdenakker, 2018). Individuals with achievement motivation may select activities and situations that support successful outcomes while reducing the likelihood of failure (Zacks & Hen, 2018). Thus, achievement motivation and academic procrastination represent two important aspects of students' academic behavior, particularly among research students who are required to manage long-term, demanding, and independently completed academic responsibilities.

Review of Related Literature

Procrastination has been conceptualized in several ways in the literature. Alqurashi, (2019) described it as postponing tasks that are perceived as difficult or uninteresting and eventually completing them within a shorter period under considerable pressure and effort. Lay (1986) viewed procrastination as a repeated inability to carry out actions that are necessary for attaining desired goals. Similarly, Steel (2007) defined it as the deliberate postponement of an important activity despite awareness that such delay may negatively influence an individual's interests. Occasional procrastination is a common behavior that most individuals may experience at some point. However, when postponement occurs repeatedly and across different situations, individuals may be characterized as procrastinators (Roy, 2016). Procrastination may also involve avoiding or neglecting a particular task, escaping important responsibilities, or postponing decisions (Steel, 2007). It occurs across different areas of human life, including the academic environment. Academic procrastination refers specifically to the unnecessary or unjustified postponement of activities associated with education and study (Krispenz et al., 2019). Students may continue this behavior because they choose alternative activities that are perceived as more enjoyable and provide immediate satisfaction (Ziegler & Opdenakker, 2018). Academic procrastination has been investigated for several decades because of its potential adverse effects on students' academic functioning and emotional well-being. Previous research has associated procrastination with assessment-related nervousness, depression, and academic failure, making it an important academic concern (Baka & Khan, 2016). Gender differences have also received attention in research on academic procrastination. Some studies have reported lower levels of academic procrastination among female students than male students, with several investigations identifying greater procrastination among male students. Khan et al. (2014) conducted a study among college and university students to examine academic procrastination among males and females. The researchers also investigated the role of demographic characteristics, including age, educational level, and gender.

The study involved 200 students, comprising 100 college students and 100 university students from various educational institutions in Islamabad. The participants were between 16 and 27 years of age. Data were gathered through the Tuckman Procrastination Scale (TPS), developed by Tuckman (1991). The findings revealed significant variations across age, gender, and educational level. Furthermore, male and female students differed significantly in their levels of academic procrastination. The findings also indicated a significant difference between students above and below the age of 20. Furthermore, university students were found to demonstrate lower levels of procrastination than college students (Khan et al., 2014). Students may provide different explanations for delaying their academic responsibilities. For example, some students do not maintain a regular study schedule at home and instead spend considerable time watching television or socializing with friends. Consequently, they may have insufficient time to study or complete their assignments at school or at home. Difficulties in managing study time may also result in students relying on last-minute preparation, such as studying only on the night before an examination. Such delays can arise from both internal and external factors, including individual motivation. Motivation provides a basic reason for an individual's actions, and students with stronger motivation may have greater reasons to complete their responsibilities. Individual motivation has been reported to have a negative relationship with procrastination, suggesting that students with higher intrinsic motivation may demonstrate a lower tendency toward academic procrastination (Chen, 2017). Achievement motivation is another factor associated with students' academic behavior. It can be understood as an individual's drive to attain particular standards of performance and overcome obstacles in pursuit of desired goals. Individuals with strong achievement motivation tend to work persistently, demonstrate resilience, seek meaningful feedback, focus on future outcomes, avoid unnecessary use of time, maintain optimism, accept responsibility, and show willingness to take risks (Devakumar, 2012). Achievement motivation can therefore be understood through two major tendencies: the desire to achieve success, commonly referred to as the "hope of success," and the tendency to avoid failure, known as the "fear of failure" (Singh, 2011). The expectation of success may strengthen an individual's confidence and emotional readiness to achieve a desired outcome. In contrast, fear of failure is associated with negative emotions and concern about failing to accomplish difficult goals, even when the anticipated failure has not actually occurred (Chowdhury & Pychyl, 2018). These two tendencies indicate that achievement motivation involves more than a single dimension. Both the expectation of success and the fear of failure may influence how an individual approaches a particular task. Some individuals may accept challenging activities as opportunities to evaluate their abilities and experience satisfaction from successful accomplishment. Within research-related academic work, these dimensions of achievement motivation may influence students' engagement with demanding responsibilities. Students who have a strong expectation of success may demonstrate greater enthusiasm toward research activities and may be less likely to postpone their thesis-related work. In contrast, students who experience a strong fear of failure may demonstrate lower achievement motivation when dealing with thesis completion and other demanding academic responsibilities (Akmal et al., 2017). Research on academic procrastination has also highlighted the importance of distinguishing between simply following academic instructions and being motivated to learn and achieve success (Schunk, 2005). Students who possess stronger academic motivation have been found to demonstrate greater skill in directing and regulating their own learning behavior (Pintrich & Schunk, 2002). Self-instruction and self-monitoring are influenced by the establishment of goals (Karas et al., 2009). Howell and Watson (2007) also examined academic procrastination in relation to different learning strategies, indicating a connection between students' learning approaches and their tendency to delay academic activities. Academic procrastination is widely reported among university students across different contexts (Baka & Khan, 2016; Kok, 2016). Although procrastination can occur in various areas of life, educational settings are particularly affected by this behavior (Katz et al., 2014). Previous researchers have identified several undesirable outcomes associated with procrastination, including failure to complete assigned tasks, psychological

and emotional stress resulting from accumulated workload, test anxiety, and poor academic grades (Kosnin & Khan, 2014). The prolonged occurrence of academic procrastination has therefore been associated with negative effects on students' academic performance and emotional well-being (Baka & Khan, 2016). Research has further linked procrastination with assessment-related nervousness, depression, and academic failure (Dewitte & Schouwenburg, 2002). Tice and Baumeister (1997) reported that students exhibiting higher levels of academic procrastination experienced greater levels of stress. Their findings indicated that procrastinating students experienced higher stress than students who were dealing with health-related problems and also obtained significantly lower grades than students who did not demonstrate procrastination. Previous studies have reported an inverse association between academic procrastination and achievement motivation. Students with higher levels of motivation to achieve their academic goals may be less inclined to delay or avoid completing their academic tasks. Thus, achievement motivation can be considered an important variable for understanding students' tendency to engage in academic procrastination. Ebadi and Shakoorzadeh (2015) investigated the association of academic procrastination with achievement motivation and academic self-regulation among high school students in Tehran. The study involved 624 participants, including 312 female and 312 male students. A multistage random cluster sampling technique was used to select the sample. Data were collected through several instruments, including the Procrastination Assessment Scale–Student developed by Solomon and Rothblum (1984), the Self-Regulated Learning Strategies Questionnaire developed by Zimmerman and Pons, and the Achievement Motivation Test developed by Hermans. The researchers examined the data through descriptive and inferential statistical analyses. The findings indicated that more than half of the students reported that they always or almost always engaged in procrastination. No significant overall difference in procrastination behavior was found between male and female students; however, males demonstrated greater procrastination than females specifically while preparing for academic activities. The results indicated that both achievement motivation and academic self-regulation were significant predictors of students' academic procrastination (Ebadi & Shakoorzadeh, 2015). For research students, inadequate motivation may likewise contribute to delays in completing thesis-related responsibilities. Research work requires students to maintain their engagement with demanding academic activities over an extended period. When students lack sufficient motivation toward achievement, they may be more likely to postpone research responsibilities, which can interfere with the regular progress and completion of their thesis work.

Methods and Materials

The study employed a quantitative approach with a correlational research design to examine the association between academic procrastination and achievement motivation. Data were collected from the participants through a survey method. A correlational research design is used to examine the direction and degree of association between two or more variables. The study population included MPhil and PhD students studying at HEC-recognized public and private universities located in Lahore and Faisalabad. Sampling involves selecting a representative group of participants from the larger population to take part in a research study. For this study, purposive sampling was employed to select the participants. The sample comprised 250 research students, including 143 females and 107 males. Of the total participants, 153 were studying at public universities, while 97 were enrolled in private universities. Two adapted instruments were employed to collect the required data. The first data collection tool was the Procrastination Assessment Scale–Student (PASS), developed by Solomon and Rothblum (1984). It was designed to assess students' tendency to procrastinate in academic activities and to explore the underlying reasons for such behavior. The second instrument was the Achievement Motivation Scale–Revised (AMS-R), developed by Lang and Fries (2006). It was used to assess achievement motivation across two dimensions: hope of success and fear of failure. The scale comprises 10 statements, with the first five items assessing hope of success and the remaining five

measuring fear of failure. Before data collection, both instruments were examined and validated by experts. The Procrastination Assessment Scale–Student demonstrated a Cronbach’s alpha reliability coefficient of .90, whereas the Achievement Motivation Scale yielded a Cronbach’s alpha coefficient of .76, indicating acceptable internal consistency. Data were collected using the selected instruments and analyzed through both descriptive and inferential statistical procedures. Frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations were calculated to summarize participants’ responses. An independent-samples *t*-test was conducted to examine differences between the respondent groups. Pearson product-moment correlation was used to assess the relationship between academic procrastination and achievement motivation.

Results and Discussions

Table 1: Demographic Variables of the Study Participants

<i>Demographic variables</i>		<i>N</i>	<i>%</i>
Gender	Male	107	42.8
	Female	143	57.2
Sector	Public	153	61.2
	Private	97	38.8

Table 1 presents the distribution of research scholars according to gender and sector. The total sample comprised 250 research scholars, of whom 42.8% were male and 57.2% were female. In terms of sector, 61.2% of the participants belonged to public-sector universities, whereas 38.8% were from private-sector universities.

Table 2: Level of Academic procrastination in research students

Statements		LP%	MP%	HP%	Mean	SD
1	To what extent do you procrastinate when writing your thesis?	30	22	48	3.28	1.26
2	To what degree do you delay or postpone your exam preparation?	36	11.2	53	3.14	1.51
3	To what extent do you delay completing your weekly assignments?	32.8	17.6	49.6	3.16	1.18
4	To what extent do you delay meeting with your supervisor?	42.8	11.2	46	3.23	1.52
5	To what extent do you postpone participating in general academic activities at the university?	28	14.4	59.6	3.30	1.21

The findings showed that 48% of the students were high procrastinators in thesis writing, 22% were moderate procrastinators, and 30% were low procrastinators ($M = 3.28$, $SD = 1.26$). Regarding examination preparation, 53% were high procrastinators, 11% were moderate procrastinators, and 36% were low procrastinators ($M = 3.14$, $SD = 1.51$). Similarly, 49.6% of the students were high procrastinators in completing weekly assignments, 17.6% were moderate procrastinators, and 32.4% were low procrastinators ($M = 3.16$, $SD = 1.18$). In meeting with supervisors, 46% were high procrastinators, 11.2% were moderate procrastinators, and 42.8% were low procrastinators ($M = 3.23$, $SD = 1.52$). Finally, 59.6% of the research students were high procrastinators in general university

activities, 14.4% were moderate procrastinators, and 28% were low procrastinators ($M = 3.30$, $SD = 1.21$).

Table 3: Areas of Procrastination

	Statements	NP%	AN%	S%	NA%	AP%	Mean	SD
6	To what extent is procrastination in thesis writing a problem for you?	14.4	16.4	19.2	43.6	6.4	3.11	1.194
7	To what extent do you consider delaying your exam preparation to be a problem?	20.4	11.6	18.4	34.4	15.2	3.12	1.370
8	To what extent do you consider delaying the completion of your weekly assignments to be a problem?	10.4	18.8	20.4	24.4	26	3.37	1.327
9	To what extent do you consider postponing meetings with your supervisor to be a problem?	22	14	14.8	24.8	24.4	3.16	1.493
10	To what extent is procrastination in general academic activities a problem for you?	23.2	21.6	16	18	21.2	2.92	1.476

The findings showed that 50% of the research students reported that procrastination during thesis writing was always a problem, 19.2% indicated that it was sometimes a problem, while 30.8% reported that it was not a problem ($M = 3.11$, $SD = 1.19$). Regarding examination preparation, 49.6% of the students reported that procrastination was always a problem, 18.4% indicated that it was sometimes a problem, and 36% reported that it was not a problem ($M = 3.12$, $SD = 1.37$). Similarly, 54.4% considered procrastination in completing weekly assignments a major problem, 20.4% reported that it was sometimes a problem, while 29.2% indicated that it was not a problem ($M = 3.37$, $SD = 1.33$). In relation to meetings with supervisors, 49.2% reported that procrastination was always a problem, 14.8% indicated that it was sometimes a problem, and 36% reported that it was not a problem ($M = 3.16$, $SD = 1.49$). Finally, 44.8% of the students reported that procrastination in general university activities was not a problem, 16% indicated that it was sometimes a problem, while 39.2% reported that it was a problem ($M = 2.92$, $SD = 1.47$).

Table 4: Fear of Failure as a Contributor to Academic Procrastination among Research Students

Sr.	Statement	SDA%	DA%	SH%	A%	SA%	M	SD%
1.	You were worried that your professor might not approve your work.	14	14.4	22	22.8	26.8	3.24	1.33
2	You were worried that you might receive a poor grade.	12.4	22	11.6	28	26	3.33	1.39
3.	You were unsure about your ability to achieve good performance.	23.6	28	20.8	18	9.6	2.62	1.29
4.	You were worried that you might fall short of your personal expectations.	18	13.6	20.8	26	21.6	3.20	1.40

The findings showed that 49.6% of the students strongly agreed that they procrastinate because they are concerned that their professor may not like their work, while 22% somewhat agreed and 28.8% strongly disagreed ($M = 3.24$, $SD = 1.33$). Similarly, 54% strongly agreed that they procrastinate because they are worried about receiving a bad grade, 11.6% somewhat agreed, and 34.4% strongly disagreed ($M = 3.33$, $SD = 1.39$). In contrast, 27.6% strongly agreed that they procrastinate because they do not trust themselves to do a good job, while 20.8% somewhat agreed and 51.6% strongly disagreed ($M = 2.62$, $SD = 1.29$). Finally, the findings showed that 47.6% of the respondents strongly agreed that they procrastinate due to concerns about failing to meet their own expectations, while 20.8% somewhat agreed and 31.6% strongly disagreed ($M = 3.20$, $SD = 1.40$).

Table 5: Task Aversiveness as a reason for Procrastination

Sr.	Statement	SDA%	DA%	SH%	A%	SA%	M	SD
5.	You had many other tasks to complete.	18	13.6	26.8	19.2	22.4	3.14	1.39
6.	You strongly disliked writing term papers.	12.8	18.8	14.4	24.2	28.8	3.38	1.40
7	You felt overwhelmed by the task.	15.2	24.8	19.6	27.6	12.8	2.98	1.29
8.	You lacked the energy to start the task.	17.2	21.6	24	16.8	20.4	3.02	1.38
9.	You felt that writing a term paper takes too much time.	12	24	19.2	18	26.8	3.24	1.39
10.	You felt too lazy to write a term paper.	14	8	18.8	26	33.2	3.56	1.39

The findings showed that 41.6% of the students strongly agreed that they procrastinate because they have too many other things to do, while 26% somewhat agreed and 31.6% strongly disagreed ($M = 3.14$, $SD = 1.39$). Similarly, 53% strongly agreed that they procrastinate because they dislike writing term papers, 14.4% somewhat agreed, and 31.6% strongly disagreed ($M = 3.38$, $SD = 1.40$). Regarding feeling overwhelmed by the task, 40.4% strongly agreed that this causes them to procrastinate, while 19.6% somewhat agreed and 30% strongly disagreed ($M = 2.98$, $SD = 1.29$). Furthermore, 37.2% of the respondents strongly agreed that they procrastinate due to insufficient energy to start the task, while 24.0% somewhat agreed and 38.8% strongly disagreed ($M = 3.02$, $SD = 1.38$). Similarly, 34.8% strongly agreed that they procrastinate because writing a term paper requires too much time, whereas 19.2% somewhat agreed and 36.0% strongly disagreed ($M = 3.24$, $SD = 1.39$). Finally, 59.2% strongly agreed that they procrastinate because they feel too lazy to write a term paper, while 18.8% somewhat agreed and 22.0% strongly disagreed ($M = 3.56$, $SD = 1.39$).

Table 6: Deficient Decision-Making as a Reason for Academic Procrastination

Sr.	Statement	SDA%	DA%	SH%	A%	SA%	M	SD
11	You found it difficult to decide what information to include in your paper and what to leave out.	8.8	8.8	24.8	19.6	38	3.69	1.29
12	You felt that you did not have sufficient knowledge to write the paper.	14	19.6	14	23.2	29.2	3.34	1.43
13	You found it difficult to choose from among the available topics.	8	15.6	26.8	28.8	20.8	3.39	1.21
14	You knew that your classmates had not started the paper either.	15.6	19.2	22.4	25.6	17.2	3.10	1.33

The results indicated that 57.6% of the students strongly agreed that difficulty in deciding which information should be included or excluded from their papers contributed to their procrastination. Meanwhile, 24% somewhat agreed with this reason, whereas 17.6% strongly disagreed ($M = 3.69$, $SD = 1.29$). Similarly, 52.4% of the students strongly agreed that they delayed writing because they felt they lacked sufficient knowledge to prepare the paper. In comparison, 14% somewhat agreed and 33.6% strongly disagreed with this statement ($M = 3.33$, $SD = 1.39$). With regard to selecting a topic, 49.6% of the students strongly agreed that difficulty in choosing from different topics was a reason for their procrastination. A further 26.8% somewhat agreed, while 23.6% strongly disagreed ($M = 3.39$, $SD = 1.21$). Finally, 42.8% of the students strongly agreed that they postponed their paper because their classmates had also not begun working on theirs. In contrast, 22.4% somewhat agreed and 34.8% strongly disagreed with this reason ($M = 3.10$, $SD = 1.33$).

Table 7: Dependency as a Factor Contributing to Academic Procrastination

Sr.	Statement	SDA%	DA%	SH%	A%	SA%	M	SD
15.	You delayed starting the work until a classmate completed it so that you could seek their guidance.	26	13.2	20.8	19.8	20.2	2.95	1.48
16.	You postponed the task while waiting for the professor to provide further information about the paper.	6.8	12	14.4	33.2	33.6	3.75	1.23
17.	Your friends encouraged you to participate in other activities instead.	23.4	12	20	26.4	7.2	2.60	1.38

The results revealed that 39.8% of the students strongly agreed that they postpone their work while waiting for a classmate to complete the task so that they can seek guidance or advice, whereas 20% somewhat agreed and 39.2% strongly disagreed with this reason ($M = 2.95$, $SD = 1.48$). Likewise, 66.8% of the students strongly agreed that they delay their work until they find out whether the professor will provide further information or instructions regarding the paper. In contrast, 14.4% somewhat agreed and 18.8% strongly disagreed ($M = 3.79$, $SD = 1.23$). Finally, 33.6% of the students strongly agreed that pressure from friends to participate in other activities contributes to their procrastination, while 20% somewhat agreed and 38.4% strongly disagreed with the statement ($M = 2.60$, $SD = 1.38$).

Table 8: Lack of Assertiveness as a Factor Contributing to Academic Procrastination

Sr.	Statement	SDA%	DA%	SH%	A%	SA%	M	SD
18.	You needed to ask the professor for some information but felt uncomfortable approaching them.	14.8	17.6%	12%	18%	37.6	3.46	1.50
19.	You found it difficult to ask others for the information you needed.	13.6	18.8	17.6	16.8	33.2	3.37	1.45

The results indicated that 55.6% of the students strongly agreed that they delay their academic work when they require specific information from the professor but feel hesitant or uncomfortable about approaching him or her. In comparison, 12% somewhat agreed with this reason, whereas 32.4% strongly disagreed ($M = 3.46$, $SD = 1.50$). Likewise, 50% of the students strongly agreed that difficulty in seeking or obtaining information from other individuals contributes to their procrastination. A further 17.6% somewhat agreed, while 32.4% strongly disagreed with this statement ($M = 3.37$, $SD = 1.45$).

Table 9: Risk-Taking as a Factor Contributing to Academic Procrastination

Sr.	Statement	SDA	DA	SH	A	SA	M	SD
20.	You enjoyed the excitement of completing the task at the last minute.	24%	21.6%	20.8%	16.8%	16.8%	2.81	1.41

The results indicated that 33.6% of the students strongly agreed that they postpone their work because they enjoy the excitement associated with completing an academic task close to the deadline. In contrast, 20.8% somewhat agreed with this reason, whereas 45.6% strongly disagreed ($M = 2.81$, $SD = 1.41$).

Table 10: Fear of Success as a Factor Contributing to Academic Procrastination

Sr.	Statement	SDA%	DA%	SH%	A%	SA%	M	SD
21.	You were concerned that performing well might cause resentment among your classmates.	20.8	10	30.4	21.2	17.6	3.05	1.36
22.	You were worried that earning a good grade might result in greater expectations from others in the future.	24	12.4	25.6	22	16	2.94	1.40

The results indicated that 38.8% of the students strongly agreed that they delay their academic work because they fear that their classmates might develop resentment toward them if they achieve better performance. Meanwhile, 30.4% somewhat agreed with this reason, whereas 30.8% strongly disagreed ($M = 3.33$, $SD = 1.39$). Similarly, 38% of the students strongly agreed that they postpone their work because they believe obtaining a good grade could result in increased expectations from others in the future. In comparison, 25.6% somewhat agreed and 36.4% strongly disagreed with this statement ($M = 2.94$, $SD = 1.40$).

Table 11: Factor-Wise Mean Scores of Reasons for Academic Procrastination

	<i>Reasons for Procrastination</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
1	Fear of failure	12.39	3.384
2	Task Averseiveness	19.32	5.015
3	Deficiency Decision Making	13.51	3.590
4	Dependency	9.30	2.827
5	Lack of Assertion	6.83	2.423
6	Risk-Taking	2.80	1.409
7	Fear of Success	5.98	5.984

Table 10 presents the mean scores for the different reasons associated with procrastination in thesis work. Among the identified reasons, task aversiveness obtained the highest mean score ($M = 19.32$, $SD = 5.015$), suggesting that students reported it more frequently than the other reasons. Conversely, risk-taking recorded the lowest mean score ($M = 2.80$, $SD = 1.409$), showing that it was reported comparatively less often as a reason for procrastinating on thesis-related tasks.

Table 12: Relationship Between Academic Procrastination and Fear of Failure as a Dimension of Achievement Motivation

<i>Variables</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>R</i>	<i>P</i>
<i>Academic Procrastination</i>	31.78	10.89	.76	.000
<i>fear of failure</i>	17.38	5.56		

A Pearson product-moment correlation analysis was conducted to examine the association between academic procrastination ($M = 31.78$, $SD = 17.38$) and fear of failure ($M = 17.38$, $SD = 5.56$) among research students. The analysis revealed a statistically significant, strong, and positive correlation between academic procrastination and fear of failure ($r = .76$, $n = 250$, $p < .001$). This result indicates

that research students who reported greater fear of failure also tended to demonstrate higher levels of academic procrastination. Overall, the findings demonstrate a strong positive association between the two variables. Therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected, indicating a statistically significant relationship between academic procrastination and fear of failure as a dimension of achievement motivation.

Table 13: Independent-Samples *t*-Test for Gender Differences in Academic Procrastination among Research Students

Gender	<i>N</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>T</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>Sig</i>
Male	107	33.68	11.84	2.35	204.50	0.02
Female	143	30.36	9.92			

An independent-samples *t*-test was applied to assess gender differences in academic procrastination among research students. As presented in Table 4.6, the results revealed a statistically significant difference between male students ($M = 33.68$, $SD = 11.84$) and female students ($M = 30.36$, $SD = 9.92$), $t(204) = 2.35$, $p = .02$. The findings indicated that male research students reported a higher level of academic procrastination ($M = 33.68$) than female research students ($M = 30.36$). Accordingly, the null hypothesis was rejected.

Table 14: Independent-Samples *t*-Test for Sector Differences in Academic Procrastination among Research Students

Sector	<i>N</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>T</i>	<i>Df</i>	<i>Sig</i>
Public	153	31.90	10.22	.20	181.34	.84
Private	97	31.68	11.93			

An independent-samples *t*-test was conducted to examine whether academic procrastination differed between research students from the public and private sectors. As presented in Table 4.6, the analysis revealed a statistically significant difference between the mean scores of students from the public sector ($M = 33.68$, $SD = 11.84$) and those from the private sector ($M = 30.36$, $SD = 9.92$), $t(204) = 2.35$, $p = .84$. The findings indicate that research students from the public sector reported a higher level of academic procrastination ($M = 33.68$) than those from the private sector ($M = 30.36$). Therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected.

Table 15: Independent-Samples *t*-Test for Gender Differences in Achievement Motivation among Research Students

Gender	<i>N</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>T</i>	<i>Df</i>	<i>Sig</i>
Male	107	33.76	5.41	-1.09	248	0.28
Female	143	34.52	5.63			

An independent-samples *t*-test was conducted to assess the difference in achievement motivation between male and female research students. As shown in Table 4.8, the mean achievement motivation score for male students was 33.76 ($SD = 5.41$), compared with 34.56 ($SD = 5.63$) for female students. The difference was not statistically significant, $t(248) = -1.09$, $p = .28$. These results indicate that male and female research students demonstrated similar levels of achievement motivation. Therefore, the null hypothesis was retained.

Table 16: Independent-Samples *t*-Test for University Sector Differences in Achievement Motivation among Research Students

Sector	<i>N</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>T</i>	<i>Df</i>	<i>Sig</i>
Public	153	35.80	5.51	6.41	230.61	0.02
Private	97	31.67	4.58			

An independent-samples *t*-test was conducted to examine whether achievement motivation differed significantly between research students from public and private universities. The results presented in the table indicated a statistically significant difference between the mean achievement motivation

scores of students from public universities ($M = 35.80$, $SD = 5.51$) and those from private universities ($M = 31.67$, $SD = 4.58$), $t(230) = 6.41$, $p = .02$. The findings show that research students from public universities reported a higher mean level of achievement motivation ($M = 35.80$) than those from private universities ($M = 31.67$). This suggests that public university research students demonstrated higher levels of achievement motivation, including hope of success and fear of failure, than their counterparts in private universities. Therefore, the null hypothesis was rejected.

Discussion

The findings of the present study suggest that achievement motivation is significantly associated with academic procrastination among research students undertaking thesis work. These results are in line with the studies of Saira (2018) and Ebadi and Shakoorzadeh (2015), which also identified a relationship between achievement motivation and academic procrastination among students engaged in thesis-related and other academic activities. The findings suggest that students with a stronger tendency toward achievement motivation are less likely to engage in academic procrastination. In other words, students who are more motivated to achieve their academic goals may demonstrate greater persistence, commitment, and willingness to complete their research tasks on time, thereby reducing their tendency to delay academic activities. Similarly, Ebadi and Shakoorzadeh (2015) reported that achievement motivation can contribute to the prediction of academic procrastination. In the present study, achievement motivation was examined through two dimensions, fear of failure and hope of success, which provide a multidimensional perspective for understanding students' procrastination behavior. These dimensions indicate that students' motivation toward achievement may influence how they respond to academic challenges, particularly the demands and pressures associated with thesis completion. The findings regarding the reasons for academic procrastination are also consistent with the study of Afzal and Jami (2018), which identified task aversiveness as an important factor contributing to academic procrastination among students. The present study similarly found that task aversiveness was the most prominent reason for procrastination in thesis work. This finding suggests that when students perceive thesis-related tasks as difficult, demanding, lengthy, or unpleasant, they may be more likely to postpone them. Thesis writing requires sustained effort, critical thinking, planning, and continuous engagement; therefore, students who perceive these activities as aversive may experience greater difficulty initiating or maintaining their research work. This finding highlights the importance of understanding the nature of academic tasks when examining procrastination among research students. The findings concerning gender differences in academic procrastination are consistent with the study of Khan et al. (2014), which reported a significant difference in procrastination tendencies between male and female students and found a higher tendency toward procrastination among male students. However, previous research on gender differences in academic procrastination has produced inconsistent findings. Therefore, gender-related patterns of procrastination should be interpreted within the specific cultural, educational, and social context of the population under investigation. Such differences may also be influenced by students' academic experiences, expectations, responsibilities, and approaches to managing academic tasks. Further research conducted within different cultural contexts may provide a clearer understanding of the role of gender in academic procrastination. The findings also have important practical implications for research students, supervisors, faculty, and universities. Students who experience procrastination during thesis work may benefit from strengthening their hope of success and developing strategies to manage their fear of failure. A positive orientation toward achievement may encourage students to approach challenging research tasks with greater confidence and persistence. At the same time, students need to develop effective strategies for managing the stress and pressure associated with thesis completion. Thesis supervisors can also play an important role in reducing students' procrastination by providing clear directions, timely guidance, realistic expectations, and constructive feedback according to students' research needs and abilities. Such support may help students better understand

their research tasks and reduce uncertainty that can contribute to delaying academic work. In addition, peer support and collaborative research environments may provide valuable assistance to students experiencing difficulties during thesis work. Faculty and universities can facilitate research groups or scholarly communities where research students can discuss academic challenges, exchange ideas, and support one another in completing research tasks. Interaction with peers may provide students with opportunities to share experiences, obtain practical guidance, and reduce feelings of isolation and research-related stress. A supportive research environment may therefore help students remain engaged with their academic responsibilities and manage procrastination more effectively. Overall, academic procrastination is an important concern in higher education, particularly among research students who are preparing for their future professional and academic careers. Thesis completion requires sustained motivation, self-regulation, persistence, and effective management of academic responsibilities. Therefore, understanding the factors that contribute to procrastination, including achievement motivation, task aversiveness, fear of failure, and hope of success, is important for improving research students' academic experiences and outcomes. The findings of the present study further emphasize the need for continued investigation of academic procrastination, particularly its underlying causes and the conditions that encourage or reduce procrastinating behavior. Future research may examine additional psychological, academic, social, and contextual factors associated with procrastination among research students to develop more effective strategies for supporting timely and successful thesis completion.

Conclusion

The findings of the study demonstrate that achievement motivation has a significant relationship with academic procrastination among research students involved in thesis work. Students who show a stronger achievement-oriented disposition tend to exhibit less procrastinating behavior. The dimensions of achievement motivation, including fear of failure and hope of success, offer a broader perspective for understanding procrastination and suggest that students' motivational orientations may shape their responses to the challenges associated with completing a thesis. The study also identifies task aversiveness as a major reason for academic procrastination among research students. Students may be more inclined to delay their thesis-related work when they perceive academic tasks as difficult, demanding, time-consuming, or unpleasant. In addition, the findings indicate a significant gender difference in academic procrastination, with male research students showing a greater tendency to procrastinate than female students. However, gender differences in procrastination need to be considered in relation to the particular cultural, educational, and social context of the students included in the study. In conclusion, academic procrastination among research students is closely related to achievement-related motivational factors and perceptions of academic tasks. Fear of failure, hope of success, and task aversiveness are relevant factors for understanding students' procrastinating behavior during thesis completion. The findings emphasize the significance of maintaining motivation, persistence, self-regulation, and effective management of academic responsibilities throughout the research process. Further studies may investigate other psychological, academic, social, and contextual factors that may contribute to or help reduce academic procrastination among research students.

Recommendations

1. Universities should organize awareness workshops to help students understand academic procrastination and its consequences.
2. Seminars and training programs should be arranged to develop students' time-management and task-completion skills.
3. Faculty members should provide academic guidance and remedial support to help students complete their work on time.

4. Future studies should include students from different universities, districts, and educational levels.
5. Future researchers should examine other psychological and academic factors related to procrastination.
6. Future studies should use larger and more representative samples to improve the generalizability of findings.

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