

# Academic procrastination among University students – A gender based study

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■ **ABSTRACT** : Academic procrastination is a tendency of delaying academic-related tasks due to one or other reasons until the last minute of experiencing anxiety and stress associated with it. The present study aims to investigate gender differences in the reasons for academic procrastination among University Students. The sample consists of 199 undergraduate's students who were selected from Assam Agricultural University (AAU) using Solvin's formula and proportionate allocation. The procrastination Assessment Scale for Students (PASS) (Solomon and Rothblum, 1984) was administrated to collect the data. The difference between male and female in reasons was checked by using Z test and the results revealed that there is no significant difference in reasons of academic procrastination in relation to gender. Procrastination leads to failure of meeting individual's academic goals so proper recognition to delaying behaviour is very much important in today's time for a successful and accomplished life.

■ **KEY WORDS**: Academic procrastination, Gender difference

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Academic procrastination is needlessly avoiding the academic tasks into indefinite time that is needed to be finished. It is a major issue among numerous students where they have to deal with its negative consequences like poor academic achievement, failure, depression at almost all the stage of education. In this competitive society where good academic achievements, proper time management skills and punctuality is considered as important value, procrastinators who keep on postponing their task for last minutes and need to pay a heavy loss. Mostly laziness is considered as reason behind procrastination but there are various factors due to which students keep on

delaying their tasks such as over- confidence, lack of guidance, too much work, gossiping, social media influence, impatience, confusion, family burden, waiting for others to complete the work first, lack of interest, etc. Researchers revealed that procrastination is not arised directly during college years or due to too much work of the students but parenting style influence the development of delaying behaviour in children from early age (Ferrari and Olivette, 1993). This behaviour is also found in early adolescence (Palmer, 1998), college students (Ellis and Kanus, 1977) and adults in Universities (Ferrari, 2001).

Gender is a socially constructed roles and activities

which is determined by the conception of tasks, functions and attributes to men and women in society, public and private life. It is not same as sex which is biological characteristics of male and female. In social science studies and gender related studies, gender is always consider as a social construct where male and female shows different psychological characteristics such as personality trait, study habit (Koki and Abdullahi, 2014) and other attributes such as procrastination (Vij, 2016).

In terms of gender difference in academic procrastination studies showed mixed results. Several studies revealed that there is no significant different in academic procrastination (Sirin, 2011; Ozer, 2011 and Mohammed *et al.*, 2013). According to Sharma and Kaur (2011) girls procrastinate slightly more than boys in academic procrastination and some of the research revealed that males delay more than females (Flett *et al.*, 1992; Prohaska *et al.*, 2000, Khan *et al.*, 2014). Although various researches have been carried out in gender difference related to academic procrastination but very few researches have been conducted in reasons for procrastination. Here the research objective is to assess the gender difference in reasons of academic procrastination among University students.

## ■ RESEARCH METHODS

At first Jorhat district was selected conveniently out of thirty-three districts in the state of Assam. At the second stage, Assam Agricultural University (AAU),

Jorhat was selected for personal convenience and acquaintance. AAU campus consists of four colleges namely College of Agriculture, College of Community Science, College of Horticulture, and College of Sericulture. Out of the four colleges, two colleges were selected randomly by lottery method (probability sampling) *i.e.* College of Agriculture and College of Community Science. In the third stage, classes were selected randomly (probability sampling) from both the colleges, for the selection of samples, the list of students of the I<sup>st</sup> year and II<sup>nd</sup> year was collected from the academic cell of College of Community Science and the list of students of III<sup>rd</sup> year and IV<sup>th</sup> year was collected from the academic cell of College of Agriculture. Then by using Solvin's formula ( $N/1+Ne^2$ ), where 'N' is total population and 'e' is the margin of error and proportionate allocation total 199 numbers of undergraduate students were selected. For data collection a standardize tool namely Procrastination Assessment Scale for Students (PASS) was used.

## ■ RESEARCH FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1(a) highlighted the results of gender differences according to the evaluation of anxiety, dependency, difficulty making decisions, and time management. The results revealed that the calculated values of Z scores for all the reasons are negative, which is lesser than that of the table value 1.959. Hence there was no significant gender difference in the evaluation

Table 1(a) : Gender difference according to evaluation anxiety, dependency, difficulty making decisions and time management								
Sr. No	Reasons for procrastination	Items	Sex	Mean	S.D	Z value	Table value	
1.	Evaluation anxiety	Concerned that professor wouldn't like the work.	Male	2.225	1.098	-16.099	1.959	
			Female	2.375	1.170			
		Worried about getting a bad grade.	Male	2.633	0.959			
			Female	2.507	1.072			
2.	Dependency	Waited until a classmate did his/hers, so that he/she could give some advice.	Male	2.704	0.834	-18.256	1.959	
			Female	2.609	1.117			
		Waited to see if the professor would give some more information about the paper.	Male	2.690	1.282			
			Female	2.937	1.314			
3.	Difficulty making decisions	Hard time knowing what to include and what not to include in paper.	Male	2.746	0.805	-22.716	1.959	
			Female	2.984	1.003			
		Couldn't choose among all the topics.	Male	2.605	1.048			
			Female	2.593	0.991			
4.	Time management	Had too many other things to do.	Male	2.887	0.979	-16.645	1.959	
			Female	2.656	1.300			
		Felt overwhelmed by the task.	Male	2.957	1.114			
			Female	2.742	1.117			

Significant at 0.01 probability level

anxiety, dependency, difficulty making decisions and time management.

The results regarding gender differences according to lack of assertion, rebellion against control, low self-esteem, aversiveness of the task, and risk-taking were indicated in Table 1(b), it shows that calculated values

of Z scores are negative, which is lesser than that of the table value 1.959. Hence there was no significant gender difference in the lack of assertion, rebellion against control, low self-esteem, aversiveness of the task, and risk-taking.

Table 1(c) outlines the results of gender differences

**Table1 (b) : Gender difference according to lack of assertion, rebellion against control, low self esteem, aversiveness of task and risk taking**

Sr. No	Reasons for procrastination	Items	Sex	Mean	S.D	Z value	Table value
5.	Lack of assertion	There's some information needed to ask professor, but felt uncomfortable approaching him/her.	Male	2.901	1.016		
			Female	2.734	1.104	-18.091	1.959
6.	Rebellion against control	Had difficulty requesting information from other people.	Male	2.901	1.071		
			Female	3.085	2.839	-16.930	1.959
		Resented having to do things assigned by others.	Male	2.295	1.060		
			Female	2.257	1.281	-14.263	1.959
7.	Low self esteem	Resented people setting deadlines.	Male	2.563	1.065		
			Female	2.312	0.986	-15.364	1.959
7.	Low self esteem	Didn't think know enough to write the paper.	Male	2.605	1.048		
			Female	2.75	1.150	-18.827	1.959
		Didn't trust oneself can do a good job.	Male	2.605	1.889		
			Female	2.320	1.149	-14.487	1.959
8.	Aversiveness of task	Really disliked writing term papers.	Male	2.788	1.081		
			Female	2.523	1.351	-15.668	1.959
		Felt it just takes too long to write a term paper.	Male	2.619	1.125		
			Female	2.656	1.342	-15.818	1.959
9.	Risk taking	Looked forward to the excitement of doing this task at the last minute.	Male	2.732	1.158		
			Female	3.007	1.226	-20.420	1.959
		Liked the challenge of waiting until the deadline.	Male	2.577	1.203		
			Female	2.492	1.397	-14.492	1.959

Significant at 0.01 probability level

**Table1(c) : Gender difference according to fear of success, laziness, peer pressure and perfectionism**

Sr. No	Reasons for procrastination	Items	Sex	Mean	S.D	Z value	Table value
10.	Fear of success	Concerned that if did well, classmates would resent.	Male	2.408	1.036		
			Female	2.382	1.123	-15.569	1.959
		Were concerned that if got a good grade, people would have higher expectations in the future.	Male	2.563	1.167		
			Female	2.320	1.351	-14.130	1.959
11.	Laziness	Didn't have enough energy to begin the task.	Male	2.619	1.113		
			Female	2.203	1.145	-13.937	1.959
		Just felt too lazy to write a term paper.	Male	2.591	1.076		
			Female	2.570	1.134	-16.616	1.959
12.	Peer pressure	Knew that classmates hadn't started the paper either.	Male	2.873	0.909		
			Female	2.484	1.003	-16.844	1.959
		Friends were pressuring to do other thing.	Male	2.521	0.938		
			Female	2.203	1.244	-14.696	1.959
13.	Perfectionism	Were concerned wouldn't meet own expectations.	Male	2.633	1.072		
			Female	2.445	1.002	-16.14	1.959
		Set very high standards and worried that wouldn't be able to meet those standards.	Male	2.098	1.160		
			Female	2.437	1.314	-16.986	1.959

Significant at 0.01 probability level

according to fear of success, laziness, peer pressure and perfectionism. The calculated values of Z scores are negative for all the reasons, which is lesser than that of the table value 1.959. Hence there was no significant gender difference in the fear of success, laziness, peer pressure and perfectionism.

For the present study Z test was used to analyse the gender difference in reasons of academic procrastination. The statistical results are showed in Table 1 (a), Table 1 (b) and Table 1(c). Findings showed that there is no difference in gender according to the evaluation anxiety, dependency, difficulty making decisions, time management, lack of assertion, rebellion against control, low self-esteem, aversiveness of the task, risk-taking, fear of success, laziness, peer pressure, and perfectionism. It may be because although males and females may differ in their attributes and habits, but processing of thought doesn't vary while providing excuses for delaying in the academic task. In the present era there are various means through which the students can get easily distracted and develop the habit of procrastination due to varieties of reasons which are readily available, like waiting for friends to complete so that individual can easily copy from it, low energy level, too much tasks, friends were influencing to do other task, concerned about not meeting their own standard, etc. The diversions of reasons allow the student to escape from the important tasks to more relaxing and enjoyable tasks which does not require more effort. So it automatically leads to the hindrance of starting the academic tasks. These findings were parallel to the study of Konovalova (2007) who revealed that no gender difference was found in the reasons for procrastination. Findings show that due to many reasons like inability in decision making, poor time management skills, perfectionism, etc hindered individuals from either starting or completing a task within a given time frame (Yong, 2010).

### Conclusion:

Due to present education system academic procrastination has increased among students as they get opportunities to explore virtual world and also get many assignment to be completed within limited timeframe. As the students choose to spend more time on other activities and procrastinate on their important activities and failed to finish their important tasks within

the assigned time. It can be supported by the study of Tantarangsee *et al.* (2017) who found that outside the classroom most of the students spend an average of 6-8 hours per day surfing the internet. Summarizing the findings of the results it can be stated that all students procrastinate more or less in their academic tasks due to various reasons but no gender difference was found in any of the reasons of academic procrastination. Although many students were unaware about their delaying behaviour so creating proper awareness about negative effects of such delaying behaviour will help them to reduce it and achieve success in their future.

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