

THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PROCRASTINATION AND ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT AMONG SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS IN EDO STATE.

GERRY-EZE, ISABELLA .U.

National Open University of Nigeria (Benin Study Centre), Edo State.

E-mail: isagerryeze@yahoo.co.uk

AND

PROF (MRS) A.N.G. ALUTU

Faculty of Education, University of Benin, Edo State.

E-mail: alutuaz@yahoo.com

ABSTRACT

Procrastination is one concept which has played a great role in assessing students' preparedness to learn and gain positively in the field of education. This study was undertaken to investigate the relationship between procrastination and academic achievement among adolescent secondary school students in Edo State. Using a stratified random sample technique, two hundred and forty (240) JSS1 students were randomly selected from the three senatorial districts of Edo State comprising of Edo north, Edo south and Edo central. A valid and reliable instrument (Academic Procrastination Scale) with 'r' 0.70 was used to collect data. The data obtained from the students were analyzed using correlation matrix and multiple regression analysis (Ordinary Least Square Method). The results from the regression analysis showed that though locus of control has positive relationship and has large influence in GPA scores of students, test anxiety and task aversiveness have negative effect on students' GPA but; their joint combination have significant impact on academic achievement among students. The conclusion is that as a matter of urgency, counselling psychologists should help schools to identify at-risk and active procrastinators and devise measures to help them.

INTRODUCTION

Often, educators complain that students are unmotivated to learn: parents echo this cry and each blame the other for the students' apathetic response to learning (Halawa, 2006). Students defer doing their class assignment in preference for low-priority tasks like playing games, reading comic books and discussing about latest films and apparels. They procrastinate and work under intense pressure and stress to beat assigned dead-line submission. This attitude does not aid self and life goal accomplishment but promotes half-baked graduates who cannot function effectively in the world of work. Academic achievement is accomplished by the actual execution of class work in the school setting, thus education is concerned with empowerment in training and skills. When there is an academic gap resulting from procrastination, even the most academically-brilliant among them are vulnerable to being undone by unruly emotions (Goleman, 1994).

Everyone irrespective of status tends to procrastinate in everyday living. This is assumed not to be a problem except where it incapacitates learning and attainment of life goals. This obvious maladaptive behaviour is manifested by students in attitudes like non or late submission of assignments, anxiety during tests, giving up studying in preference for other alternatives; and overall poor achievement in tests and activities assigned to a course (Lay and Schouwenbug. 1993). Procrastination is a Latin word 'procrastinatus' pro meaning (forward) and "crastinus" (of tomorrow). Procrastination is a complex psychological behaviour that almost everyone indulges in. People with low procrastination cast aspersion on active procrastinators, but according to Elmer (2000) this irritating behaviour is often tolerated. Procrastination has been defined as avoiding doing a task which needs to be accomplished (Noran, 2000). However, this does not mean the individual does not have the time and ability to perform these activities. He/she has the time but simply cannot get started. Emmons cited in Akinsola, Tella & Tella (2007) emphasized that researchers have identified different types of academic procrastinations such as; low-conscientiousness and anxiety-related procrastination. Other possible causes of procrastination have been

identified. They range from time management, inability to concentrate or having low levels of conscientiousness on one's work; negative belief about one's capability, unrealistic expectation, perfectionism (Akinsola, et al, 2007); and assigning blame to external sources (Tuckman, 1990). Some other reasons for procrastination are task difficulty, poor time management, lack of knowledge or skills, anxiety and fear and improper cognitive ascription (Ferrari, 1992).

Several researchers (Onwuegbuzie, 2000; Tuckman, 2000, Schraw, Wadkins & Olafson, 2001) have revealed many factors which can play a great role in creating procrastination among students which correlates with their academic achievements. Some of these factors are task aversiveness, test anxiety, locus of control among others. Task aversiveness covers actions which we find unpleasant. By definition, one seeks to avoid aversive stimuli, and consequently, the more aversive the situation, the more likely one is to avoid it through procrastination (Steel, 2007). Some students would rather go for activities that are not valuable to them and would bring them instant pleasure and satisfaction. This situation does not augur well for good academic attainment because when life challenges come later in their lives, the at-risk and active procrastinating students usually fail to deliver and perform their tasks as expected.

Test anxiety can also affect the achievement of students in examinations. It is not surprising that many students experience considerable anxiety when faced with a test particularly coming from a society that places high premium on achievement. When test anxiety begins to affect examination performance, it has become a problem (University of Buffalo, 2005). Lack of preparation in examination is indicated by cramming the night before the examination which culminates into worrying about the negative consequences of failure. This attitude can lead to outright failure in examination. Locus of control is also associated with procrastination. This refers to an individual's perception about the underlying main causes of events in his/her life: external and internal locus of control. Internal and external locus of control are important predictors of academic achievement (Wise, 1999). Students who do not feel responsible for their achievement and are not active participants in the learning process are at the risk of not excelling academically. They debase important roles of 'effort' and 'ability' on achievement but hinge success as externally-based: social gratifications and spiritually-destined.

This study conceptualizes a model founded on the social learning behaviour. It is a theoretical basis for finding explanation to the nature of students' task aversiveness, test anxiety, locus of control as having relationship with academic achievement.

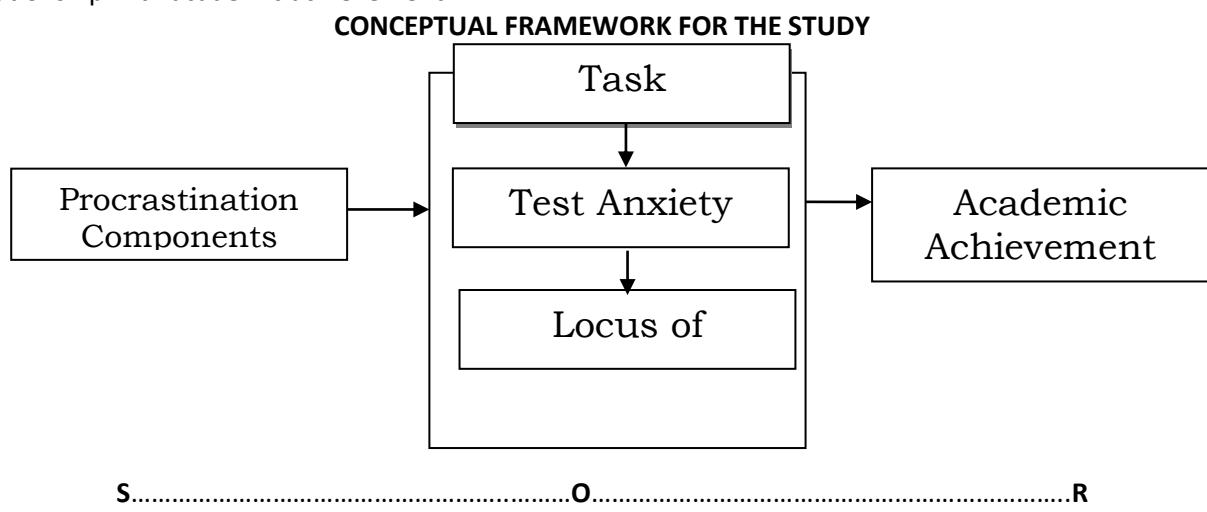


Fig. 1: Source: Adapted from Skinner (1971)

In this study, there exists a set of systematic and functional relationship between the behaviour of students and their environment in the procrastination process. Stimulus here could mean any changes in the internal and the external environment of the organism.

PURPOSE OF THE STUDY

This study therefore sets out to determine the degree of relationship between procrastination and adolescent students' academic achievement. Specifically, the objectives of this study are to;

- identify procrastination components

- find out the academic achievement of the students using their official GPA scores in all class subjects in third term and;
- know the relative and joint contributions of procrastination components on academic achievements of students.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The following research questions were raised to guide this study;

- a) Is there any relationship between procrastination components and academic achievement?
- b) What is the relative influence of procrastination components on academic achievement of students?

HYPOTHESES

Ho¹: There will be no significant relationship between procrastination components and academic achievement.

Ho²: Relative contributions of procrastination components on academic achievement among students are not significant.

METHODOLOGY

The design of the study was ex-post facto which adopted a survey to collect relevant data. There were 84 government-approved private secondary schools and 72 government-approved public schools in Benin-City when this study was conducted. A sample of two hundred and forty junior secondary school students were drawn from three (3) local government areas namely; Egor, Oredo and Ikpoba-Okha. The instrument for data collection was an Academic Procrastination Scale (APS) adapted from Tuckman's (1991) standardized instrument. The questionnaire was pre-tested, adjusted and self-administered. It revealed 'r' 0.70 after using Spearman Brown Prophecy formula to determine the consistency reliability. The first section (A) elicited the demographic characteristics of age, sex, class registration number and level then status of parents. The next section (B) comprised of 25 closed-ended statements presented on a four-point modified Likert scale of 'Strongly agree' scored 4; 'Agree' scored 3; 'Disagree' scored 2 and 'Strongly Disagree' scored 1. Multiple regression analysis (Ordinary Least Square OLS) method was used in order to determine the nature, strength and direction of the explanatory variables as they affect the dependent variable. The explanatory variables were quantified by coding the research questions to make them measurable since they were qualitative in nature in terms of the type of design adopted for this study. This was done using the SPSS package. The level of significance was set at 0.05.

RESULTS

Correlation matrix was run for all variables and examined for expected (and unexpected) significant relations. Thereafter, multiple regression analysis was used in order to determine the nature, strength and direction of the explanatory variables as they affected the dependant variable. Since the explanatory variables were qualitative in nature, they were quantified by coding the research questions.

Table 1: Correlation Matrix of Procrastination Components and Academic Achievement

	GPA	TAVR	TANT	LOC	CONS
GPA	1.000000	-0.433582	-0.310675	-0.368356	-0.317810
TAVR		1.000000	0.481528	0.488684	0.373437
TANT			1.000000	0.341340	0.377129
LOC				1.000000	0.494109
CONS					1.000000

GPA: Grade point Average, TAVR: Task aversiveness, TANT: Test anxiety, LOC: Locus of control, CONS: Conscientiousness (Dummy variable).

In order to comprehensively determine the unbiasedness of the regression analysis, a correlation matrix was carried out to determine the correlation between the variables used in the analysis.. The result in table 1 shows that there is absence of multi-collinearity among the variables under consideration. The absence

of multi-collinearity shows that the t-statistics is not biased and is statistically significant. A critical look at the result shows that test anxiety and task aversiveness are correlated but not to the extent of exhibiting multi-collinearity among them. The analysis also reveals that locus of control and task aversiveness have positive relationship with each other.

Table 2: Regression result and analysis of procrastination components and academic achievement.

Variable	Coefficient	β values	Std. Error	t-Statistic	Prob.
C	69.61841	69.61841	3.047282	22.84607	0.0000
Task aversiveness	-76.01271	-6.607139	1.040581	-2.893837	0.0042
Test anxiety	-77.05256	-6.3943	1.038406	-2.008132	0.0458
Locus of control	-1.779273	67.839137	1.036171	-1.717162	0.0873

r^2 0.5929 Adjusted r^2 0.572 F-statistic 13.44118

Regression Result and Analysis of the Relationship between procrastination components and academic achievement

The result in table 2 indicates that the computed multiple regression has an F-statistic value of 13.44 which is statistically significant at 5% confidence level. This means that the model has a goodness of fit. With the r-square of .59, it indicates that the explanatory variables accounted for 59% variation in the dependent variable while 0.41 is unexplained. This shows that the explanatory variables explains well of the dependent variable and this is endorsed by the r-bar-squared (r^2).

Individually, the explanatory variables are statistically significant by the rule of thumb. This is indicated by the t-statistic. The value of D.W. statistic shows the absence of serial auto-correlation. This means that the model is not biased. According to the coefficient, the result shows that locus of control is positively related to academic achievement with values of 67.84. However, with respect to task aversiveness and test anxiety, it shows that both have a negative relationship with GPA. A percentage increase in test anxiety and task aversiveness will reduce GPA. Since the result of the hypothesis confirm to a priori expectation, this means the rejection of null hypothesis and acceptance of alternative hypothesis that procrastination has a significant relationship with academic achievement of students.

REGRESSION RESULT AND ANALYSIS OF RELATIVE INFLUENCE OF PROCRASTINATION COMPONENTS ON ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT

From the statistical analysis in Table 2, it reveals that a combination of test aversiveness, test anxiety and locus of control have significant impact on academic achievement among students. The result shows that constant variable (conscientiousness which acts as a dummy variable in this study) and locus of control are positively related to GPA, with values of 69.61 and 67.83 respectively. Also, with respect to task aversiveness -6.39 and test anxiety -6.39, the result shows that both have a negative impact with academic achievement of students. Since the relative t-statistic and the explanatory variables are statistically significant; it then means that the hypothesis is rejected while the alternate hypothesis is accepted. It indicates that instrumental variables (which are the components) of procrastination have relative influence on academic achievement among students.

DISCUSSION OF FINDINGS

This study examined Procrastination components as correlates of students' academic achievement in secondary schools in Edo State, Nigeria. The findings show in table 2 that procrastination and academic achievement have significant relationship. These findings were consistent with the findings made by Tuckman (2002) on association of procrastination with poor academic achievement and that of Schraw & Wadkins (2007) who identified fear of failure as a result of test anxiety as one of the causes of procrastination.

The negative relationship in respect of task aversiveness and test anxiety as seen in table 3 is in agreement with the findings made by Onwuegbuzie (2003) on procrastination on assignment from high level of test anxiety. The research findings by Steel (2007) on task aversiveness occurring when students put off tasks that they find unpleasant and uninteresting which earns them low academic grades are also in line with this study's findings. These findings thereby confirmed that most students who experience test

anxiety also have a problem with procrastination. This is to affirm the fact that procrastination leads to last minute cramming which leads to anxiety, then self-doubts and excessive anxiety during a testing situation. This results to students being unable to remember or think logically.

Students whose orientation about events happening around them was modelled positively were characterized by higher achievements in educational expectations. The result of this study is in line with this observation. This goes to support what Ferrari in Marano (2003) revealed that failure-oriented individuals contributed outcomes to be caused by external factors namely; the difficulty level of the task or bad luck. Indeed, a number of studies had pointed to a strong relationship between perception of locus of control and achievement patterns (Wise, 1999; Gerry-eze, 2009). This study has also revealed that conscientiousness by implication increases GPA of students. This finding is in consonance with those of Johnson & Bloom (1995) who reported that lack of self discipline and impulsiveness accounted for most of the variance in procrastination scores. Moreover, these findings is at variance with McClun & Merrell (1998) who though reported locus of control as a predictive variable, but affirmed that it has no direct relationship with academic procrastination

CONCLUSION

The results from this study show that majority of adolescent students procrastinate in their studies. This study has also shown that academic procrastination is linked to the explanatory variables (locus of control, test anxiety and task aversiveness) which significantly affect their academic achievement. This goes to show the extent intensive counselling measures must be taken to curb these procrastination behaviours. It is devastating to note that when students procrastinate in their studies, they do not come out with the best they ought to and their mental health might be in danger. From this result, we should no longer apportion blames to teachers and school administrators for students' poor academic achievement in schools.

RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1) It is therefore recommended that Guidance Counsellors should through workshops/seminars organization help instil in students the appropriate skills that may serve to decrease procrastination behaviours from every level of education. There should be counselling interventions in areas of test anxiety, task aversiveness and locus of control.
- 2) Procrastination is a neglected area in educational research. Continued research into procrastination should not be delayed because its prevalence appears to be growing notwithstanding the declining standard of education in the country today.
- 3) Teachers should work closely with school practising guidance counsellors to identify and help refer students that procrastinate in school tasks for counselling and assistance.

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