

Investigating Anxiety and Time Management Role in Academic Procrastination. Case of Ibn Khaldoun University EFL Department. Algeria.

التحقيق في القلق ودور إدارة الوقت في المماثلة الأكاديمية. حالة قسم اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية بجامعة ابن خلدون ، الجزائر

Lahmer Mokhtaria^{1*}, Bouhaous Walid², Rouabhi Mohamed Hikmet³

¹ Lecturer, Ibn Khaldoun University of Tiaret, Algeria. E-mail: mokha_anglais@yahoo.fr

² Master Student, Ibn Khaldoun University of Tiaret Algeria
E-mail: bouhaous.walid@gmail.com

³ Master Student, Ibn Khaldoun University of Tiaret, Algeria
E-mail: donhikmet@gmail.com

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Abstract

The present research work aims at exploring the aspect of academic procrastination as well the notions of anxiety and time management that are seen to be highly linked to this issue. We aim at providing an answer to the question raised about which extent these factors lead to procrastination. For this purpose, our investigation targeted students at Ibn Khaldoun University's EFL department. We used a questionnaire to collect the necessary data since it was more inclusive. The results revealed that anxiety and time management have a great role in academic procrastination

ملخص

يهدف العمل البحثي الحالي إلى استكشاف جانب المماثلة الأكاديمية بالإضافة إلى مفاهيم القلق وإدارة الوقت التي يُنظر إليها على أنها مرتبطة بشكل كبير بهذه القضية. نحن نهدف إلى تقديم إجابة على السؤال المطروح حول إلى أي مدى تؤدي هذه العوامل إلى المماثلة. لهذا الغرض ، استهدف تحقيقنا الطلاب في قسم اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية بجامعة ابن خلدون. استخدمنا استبيانًا لجمع البيانات الضرورية لأنه كان أكثر شمولاً. أظهرت النتائج أن القلق وإدارة الوقت لهما دور كبير في المماثلة الأكاديمية إلى جانب الافتقار إلى

along with lack of self-regulation. Students if not emotionally stable and regulated in terms of time management can undergo severe academic failure. Delay in completing given tasks successfully and on time may result in low grade and failed or repeated semesters.

Keywords : Academic Procrastination, Anxiety, Factors, Self-regulation, Time Management.

التنظيم الذاتي. إذا لم يكن الطلاب مستقرين عاطفياً ومنظمين من حيث إدارة الوقت ، فيمكن أن يخضعوا لفشل أكاديمي حاد. قد يؤدي التأخير في إكمال المهام المحددة بنجاح وفي الوقت المحدد إلى انخفاض الدرجة والفصول الدراسية الفاشلة أو المتكررة الكلمات المفتاحية: المماثلة الأكاديمية ، القلق ، العوامل ، التنظيم الذاتي ، إدارة الوقت ،

* Corresponding Author: Lahmer Mokhtaria, Email: mokha_anglais@yahoo.fr

1. INTRODUCTION

Procrastination can be described as an attitude of delaying, putting off, or postponing a task. It may affect students' academic career which may result in failure. There are different factors that appear to be related to procrastination among university students, anxiety, lack of commitment, inappropriate time management, social problems and so many other factors. Procrastination affects the self-efficacy & self-actualization, distractibility, impulsiveness, self-control and organizational behavior of the students. It makes students lazy & passive developing delaying tendency in them; either they feel hesitation in taking initiatives or fear to start an assignment. In this paper, we are about to investigate the effect of anxiety and poor time-management on EFL Algerian students. Furthermore, we are to explore what could be other factors leading students to procrastinate.

2. PROCRASTINATION AS A CONCEPT

It has been found that procrastination starts in secondary school and stay persistent throughout university, with more than 50% of the students

reporting a steady delay causing problems (Steel, 2007). McGhie (2012) mentioned that lack of proper planning and time management may lead to procrastination. Procrastination has furthermore been defined as the discrepancy between intent and behavior (Lay, 1994), and procrastinator behavior increases as this discrepancy increases (Schraw et al., 2007). Senecal et al. (1995) described procrastination as a global weakness of people, and argued that procrastination affect the academic domain mostly. Besides, Milgram et al. (1998) defined procrastination as a behavioral tendency in putting off what should be done, or postponing an activity that was already planned to be performed.

According to Van Eerde (2000, p. 375) procrastination is a “motivational mechanism, serving the purpose of avoiding a threat temporarily, in order to protect one’s well-being in the short term”, a view comes along with Freud’s pleasure seeking principal. An action is thus postponed when the threat is dealt with by avoiding it, and procrastination subsequently occurs. Procrastinators are classified into two types active and passive procrastinators Chu and Choi (2005). Active procrastinators delay their tasks on purpose and focus on what they prefer, but they can manage their activities timely. Active procrastinators already make decisions to procrastinate, but they finally finish their tasks under high feeling motivated under high pressure, yet they usually score satisfactory results (Choi & Moran, 2009). Based on Corkin, Yu and Lindt (2011). Active procrastination is a functional form of postponement. To a better understanding, these kinds of procrastinators are able to perform on time, even if they putt off their activities.

Passive procrastinator is the other type that has negative effect on students. Based on previous studies, passive procrastinators are the ones who cannot make decisions, they procrastinate unintentionally but they always postpone their tasks because they are not able to make the right decisions and do not know how to act towards it (Chu & Choi, 2005: 247). Inactive or passive procrastinators always delaying their tasks until there is not enough time and they feel guilty and depressed and discomfort (Ferrari, 1994) which may lead to failure in completing the tasks.

3. CAUSES OF ACADEMIC PROCRASTINATION

Different factors seem to contribute to academic procrastination among students and affect their performance. Experts listed various causes that are known of leading students to academic procrastination and these causes are classified into categories namely: individual, environmental, and organizational factors, as presented in a table below.

Table 1. Factors Leading to Academic Procrastination.

Factors of academic procrastination	Some causes of each factor
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Individual factors	Personality characteristics, anxiety, perfectionism, stress, fear of failure.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Environmental factors	Family pressure, economic pressure, social culture, unpredictable events.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Organizational factors	Self-regulation, time management, monitoring system, performance evaluation system.

Source: Hussain, I and Sultan, S, (2010:100)

Some students procrastinate because of temporal reasons, other students procrastinate because they are under stress or anxious and avoid the tasks, and some others are not able to begin their work and always skip it till later on.

3.1. ANXIETY

It has been mentioned that anxiety is a psychological phenomenon experienced as an anticipated fear or threat to human being. There is a significant link between academic procrastination and anxiety. Thus, they postpone their tasks to another period of time. Akinsola, Tella, and Tella (as cited in Olubusayo, 2010) reported that students resist completing their given assignments and deadlines produce tension and anxiety. Students always prefer postponing their activities and then procrastination comes as a result. Students believe that avoiding and delaying their tasks may reduce anxiety but there's a circular effect; avoidance does not reduce anxiety, it

leads students to feel guilt and become more anxious and anxiety with guilt lead students to more avoidance.

Furthermore, it is confirmed that there is a correlation between procrastination and both personal and situational anxiety. Personal anxiety is stated as a tendency to react at situations with anxiety, or to perceive situations as threatening. Whereas, situational is described as a reaction to a tense situation characterized by experienced feelings like stress, anxiety, inability to make decisions. Procrastination will be activated due to those situations of anxiety that lead student to point of delaying their tasks.

3.2.TIME MANAGEMENT

Time management can be defined as the ability to use time effectively and protectively. Time management is the skill in which all students should not only know, but also need to know how to apply (Miqdadi et.al, 2014). In a similar vein, (Aduke, 2015) defines time management as a series of skills, habits, principles, tools and systems which operate together to assist a person to get more value from his time together with the purpose of improving personal quality of life. Procrastinators cannot manage and organize their time. Moreover, Time management skill cannot be inherited, it can be learnt to organize daily activities. In order to manage time, students should perform their activities and assignments timely and respect the deadlines. Poor time management may lead the students forget their assignments.

Regarding this, it has been widely reported that academic procrastination produces negative effects on students' performance (Ariely & Wertenbroch, 2002; Wong, 2008; De Paola & Scoppa, 2015; Kim & Seo, 2015). In fact, high levels of procrastination make students unable to regulate and organize themselves to achieve their academic goals. Different factors appear to contribute towards procrastination among university students as lack of commitment, lack of encouragement or inappropriate time management skills (Hussain & Sultan, 2010).

4.THE POPULATION

Our population consists of students from the English Department at Ibn Khaldoun University of Tiaret. However, for the limitations in time and resources, only Master 2 students of the whole population are chosen to be the sample for this research. Thus, our sample consists of 30 students out of 90 (we sent the questionnaire to 40 colleagues but only 30 of them responded). The background information got from the questionnaire includes 16 females (55%) and 14 males (45%) ranging from 20 to 35 years old.

5. RESULTS

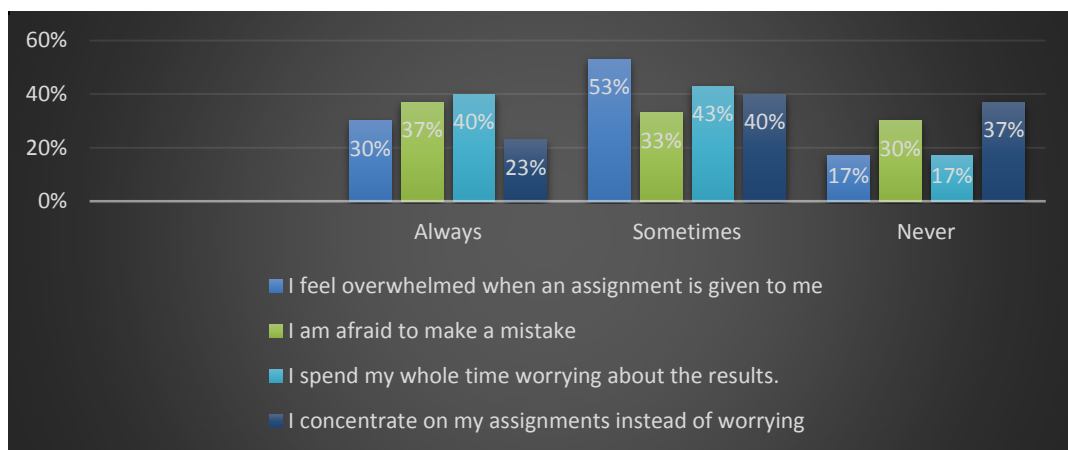
Students were asked to rate the given statements below according to their frequency. The below statements relate to the emotional response of students regarding assigned tasks.

Table 01 : Level of Anxiety

statements		Always	Sometimes	Never	Total
I feel overwhelmed when an assignment is given to me	N°	09	16	05	30
	%	30	53	17	100
I am afraid to make a mistake	N°	11	10	09	30
	%	37	33	30	100
I spend my whole time worrying about the results.	N°	12	13	05	30
	%	40	43	17	100
I concentrate on my assignments instead of worrying	N°	07	12	11	30
	%	23	40	37	100

The table above presents the findings of students' responses concerning their anxiety behavior towards their tasks. Answers help to identify the real impact of anxiety on students' behavior and in understanding to what extent can students be anxious when completing their tasks. The four items presented in the table seek to find out whether our participants show signs of anxiety or not.

Figure 01: Students' level of anxiety



According to the results obtained, students consume a huge amount of time worrying instead of starting their assignment. In a similar vein, students -in the four-item reported that they struggle to concentrate on their assignments (40% sometimes, 37% never). Whereas only 23 % of them ‘always’ maintain their focus.

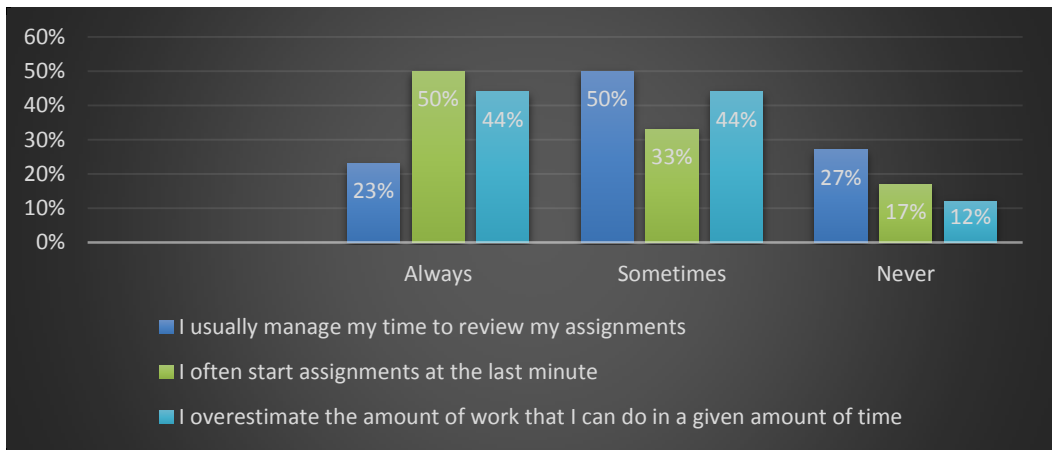
Table 02: Time management

statements		Always	Sometimes	Never	Total
I usually manage my time to review my assignments	N°	07	15	08	30
	%	23	50	27	100
I often start assignments at the last minute	N°	15	10	05	30
	%	50	33	17	100
I overestimate the amount of work that I can do in a given amount of time	N°	13	13	04	30
	%	44	44	12	100

The table above presents all the statements which are related to time management and shows how students organize their time when they have a written task. The first statement shows that 23% of the respondents

answered by they “always” as they manage their time to review their tasks. However, most of the students (50% answered by sometimes and 27%) do not organize their time. Second statement, we asked participants about the time they perform the task and mostly students (50% answered by always and 33% by sometimes) do the assignment at the last minute. Whereas 17% addresses those who never perform the given activity in such time (few days after for instance).

Figure 02: students’ time management



It is confirmed from item two that most of students tend to overestimate the given work (most of the students answered by always and sometimes) and only 12% responded by never overestimating the amount of work. This shows that students tend to procrastinate because of poor time management.

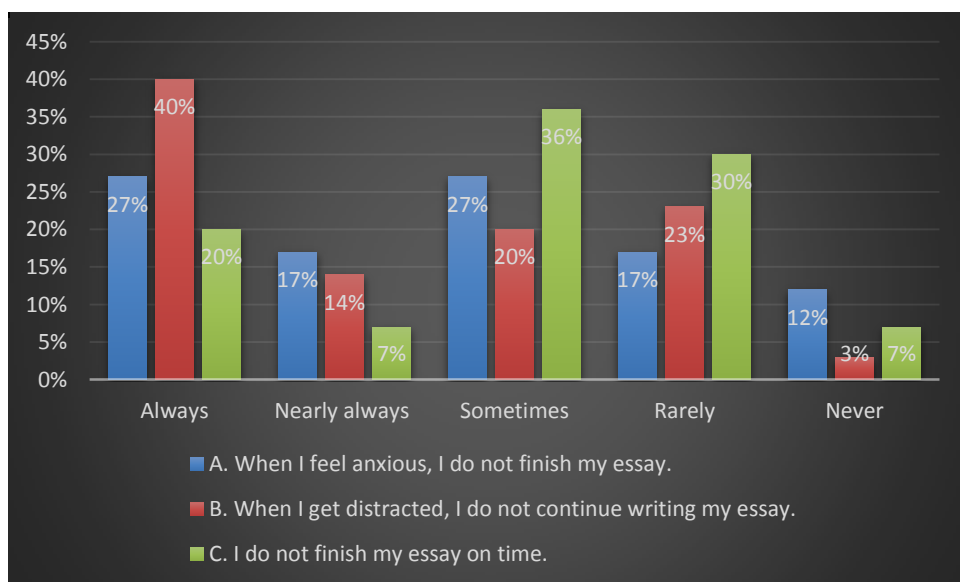
Table 03: Students’ Attitudes when Tackling Assignments

statements		Always	Nearly always	Sometimes	Rarely	Never	Total
A. When I feel anxious, I do not finish my task.	N°	08	05	08	05	04	30
	%	27	17	27	17	12	100

B. When I get distracted, I do not continue my task	N°	12	04	06	07	01	30
	%	40	14	20	23	3	100
C. I do not finish my task on time.	N°	06	02	11	09	02	30
	%	20	7	36	30	7	100

Table three reveals another cause for procrastination when it comes to finishing and submitting assignments. Lack of self-regulation and distraction is another factor that our research uncovered. Students (40%) admitted that they are easily distracted from finishing their given task. Whereas, the second majority revealed having anxiety issues and (20%) reported having time management difficulties.

Figure 03: Students’ Attitudes when Tackling Assignments



The figure simply reflects the various attitudes that students have towards their given assignment to finish at home. In the absence of a teacher or a strong parental role (especially at university level), it is up to the student to make the effort of delivering his assignment on time. The main factor that comes between them and the targeted objective (finishing the

task) is mainly distraction due to social media, TV, family issues...etc. Students cannot keep the focus on the target for a long span of time. Another major factor validating findings in table 01 that anxiety is the second factor inhibiting students from delivering assignments successfully. Last, we find out that time management is only third in their rating though most people would argue that time management is causing students to delay starting their tasks.

6. DISCUSSION

First, the findings of the questionnaire have shown that students struggle with a high level of anxiety when performing their academic tasks as they experience the fear of failure and lose their focus easily. As a result, they may procrastinate. In addition, the findings reported that most students face serious problems related to time management; they start writing till last minute and they often make wrong estimations concerning the time needed to finish their tasks. Whereas, only few of them who have the ability to organize their time properly. Regarding this, our students seem to fail to deliver their assignments on time as they choose to delay and postpone on regular basis. So, we can observe that poor time management can be another factor of procrastination. Based on these primary findings we can answer our first research question of this study; Anxiety, poor time management are the causes of academic procrastination.

Second, it can be observed throughout section two of the questionnaire that a mass of our students cannot finish their tasks for the most part, whether due to their anxiety issues or due to the insufficient time given to them. This signifies that when students delay or postpone their tasks, they end up by failing to complete tasks. In addition, their procrastination habits may prevent them to take time to concentrate and review what they write which can extremely affects their performance. These findings come very close to our second hypothesis which refers that academic procrastination has major negative impact on students writing performance.

Third, students have been given the opportunity to express their opinions freely in the last section of the questionnaire. At first, it can be clearly seen that most of the students prefer delaying to start their assignments as much

as they can, and their best time to write is late at night, which describes how students tend to procrastinate even though they know the importance of the time factor. Moreover, our participants seem to put some efforts and try to manage. Their justifications were that time management has huge positive impact on their writing, and they explain how this strategy makes performing easier and more organized. However, those who do not even try to manage time they tend to justify by giving various reasons (family problems, other priorities, work....).

7. CONCLUSION

In this work, the main purpose was to explain about academic procrastination and to draw a link between it and both anxiety and time management factors. Additionally, we attempted to explore the impact of these two factors on students' academic performance. We attempted to prove that when anxious students tend to delay working on their assignments or it could be that delaying the task leads to high levels of anxiety. Moreover, we discussed that poor time-management is another crucial factor that results in procrastination among students. Failure to organize time for completing academic tasks and also incapability to design a schedule for assignment completion leads to academic low performance and grades. Eventually, it has been found that EFL students at Ibn Khaldoun university are procrastinators in majority due mostly to anxiety and poor time management. However, it has been found that there are other factors involved in this matter such as poor self-regulation.

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