Journal of Social & Organizational Matters
Vol 4 No 4 (2025): 130-143

The Intention-Behaviour Gap in Higher Education: Unpacking the Planning-Execution Paradox in Students' Procrastination Despite Effective Time Management

Nimra Malik*[1], Ghulam Muhammad Malik[2], Abdul Majeed Khan[3]

[1*]MPhil Scholar, Institute of Education, University of Sargodha, Sargodha, Punjab, Pakistan.

[2]Lecturer, Institute of Education, University of Sargodha, Sargodha, Punjab, Pakistan.

[3]Lecturer, Institute of Education, University of Sargodha, Sargodha, Punjab, Pakistan.

Corresponding author:nimraahmed293@gmail.com

Keywords: *Time Management, Academic Procrastination, Higher Education*

DOI No:
https://doi.org/10.56976/jsom.v4i4.337

The goal of this research was to explain how much time the students in higher education in Punjab, Pakistan, were managing and how much they were procrastinating academically. The study aimed to achieve three objectives: 1) To describe time management practices being carried out by the higher education students in Punjab, Pakistan. 2) To find out the amount of academic procrastination that higher education students experienced. 3) To reveal the perceptions and attitudes of the students with regard to time management and academic procrastination. A quantitative descriptive survey design was used to collect data from 360 undergraduate and postgraduate students enrolled in public and private higher education institutions. The sample of the study was selected by using a multistage convenience sampling method, which included convenience sampling and proportionate stratified sampling techniques. For the assessment of students' awareness regarding time management practices and tendencies for academic procrastination, a structured questionnaire was utilized. The research tool proved to be very reliable (Cronbach's α = 0.988). Descriptive statistics were used for data analysis, which included frequencies, percentages, means, standard deviations, and rankings. The findings showed that the students had a time management average of 82.83 (SD = 6.50) and an academic procrastination average of 83.27 (SD = 10.46). A large number of students still stated that they put off academic tasks because of emotional, cognitive, and motivational reasons, even though they were showing very good planning and scheduling skills. The study indicated that universities should provide time-management training and interventions aimed at procrastination and self-regulation to improve students' academic performance and effectiveness. These results revealed a rise in paradoxical behavior in students' time management skills and continuous procrastination.

1. Introduction

Time management is a major skill that strongly impacts students' success in higher education. Since students have to deal with a lot of commitments besides, learning is one of the most important areas where good time management is often highlighted (Billones et al., 2025). Higher education also entails that students can integrate all their academic, social and personal responsibilities. Time management is a skill that helps students in most cases to organize, prioritize and do their work before deadlines. Academic procrastination goes along with the term deliberate postponement of academic activities, which results in low productivity and might even have a bad influence on academic work (Wang et al., 2025). Good time management skills help students to sort and deal with academic tasks in a very efficient way; while procrastination is just the same as time management turned upside down – a deliberate delay in doing one's academic work, even though it has the potential to produce negative outcomes.

Previous research established the fact that there is a direct relationship between the time management practices and the performance of the students. One of the studies that was done in 2024 on 1,016 college students in China has shown that students who managed their time well became actively engaged in study, and self-control, along with mobile dependence, played a role in this relationship (Zhao et al., 2024). Time management is one of the other factors that influence academic procrastination, and it is sometimes even considered to be the most important one. While the merits of management of time management are recognized, procrastination is still a major obstacle to academic success. A study by Akpur (2020) concluded that procrastination and students' performance in class were negatively correlated with a strength of medium. Additionally, it has been proposed that procrastination is a mediator between time management and academic achievement, which means that even when one employs effective time management strategies, procrastination can still be a hurdle to achieving academic success (Hong et al., 2021). Procrastination may even become dominant student behavior, overcoming time-management practices that students may claim to exhibit.

The knowledge of time management patterns and delay tactics among higher education students in Pakistan is essential for developing instructional methods and student care programs that are more effective. The Pakistani situation, especially the Punjab province, has to be considered when looking at how students manage both time and the delay of tasks, since their understanding will be directly helpful in designing effective educational strategies and support programs. Therefore, the present research aims to describe the levels of time management, academic procrastination, and academic achievement of students in higher education through descriptive statistics in order to obtain a clear understanding of students' behaviors and tendencies without the application of inferential statistics.

1.2 Objectives of the Study

The main objectives formed the outline for conducting the research.

1. To assess the extent of time management practices among college students in Punjab, Pakistan.
2. To find out the degree of academic procrastination experienced by higher-education students.

3. To assess the perspectives of students on time management and academic procrastination.

2. Literature Review

Proper time management is a vital skill, as it directly affects students' academic results, their stress levels, and those learning experiences, which are all positive or negative depending on the thought of time management (Billones et al., 2025). The ability to manage one's time effectively is linked to the setting of goals, making a schedule, and having less anxiety (Billones et al., 2025; Han & Ellis, 2021; Zhang et al., 2020). On the other hand, procrastination of academics—consisting of postponing academic engagements—has been associated with anxiety, low performance, and loss of interest in studies (Steel, 2007; Sirois & Pychyl, 2018). Procrastination is nurtured by poor time management (Sirois & Pychyl, 2013), while effective organization kicks it out (Wang et al., 2025). Covey's (1989) Time Management Matrix emphasizes the need to prioritize non-urgent but important work, while Parkinson's Law (Parkinson, 1955) states that deadlines that are shorter increase focus. The Temporal Motivation Theory (Steel & König, 2006) ties procrastination to low motivation, impulsive decisions, and distant deadlines. Regardless, time management is an important factor in the university context, being a pivotal component of students' academic performance, stress and anxiety levels and learning outcomes more broadly. Good time management enables students to organize their study process in a common and systematic way, to allocate their study time along with socializing, and to lower the amount of academic anxiety (Billones et al., 2025).

Procrastination in academia refers to the conscious postponement of carrying out academic activities despite being fully aware of the negative consequences, which is a common behaviour among college students, and some surveys assert that up to 70% of students are regular procrastinators (Steel, 2007). Key factors leading to procrastination are lack of motivation, perfectionism, self-control issues, and fear of failure (Sirois & Pychyl, 2018). Research supports the idea that procrastination negatively impacts students' academic performance, leading to lower grades and higher levels of anxiety (Kim and Seo, 2020). A wide variety of situations may lead students to procrastinate, for example, stress and fear of failure. Thus, they get temporary relief, but the situation becomes worse as the deadline approaches (Sirois & Pychyl, 2018). An empirical correlation shows that improper time management leads to increased incidences of procrastination, which in turn results in late submissions, last-minute studying, and poor grades (Sirois & Pychyl, 2013). Conversely, those students who plan well, make use of time management tools and employ active time management methods will find themselves less vulnerable to procrastination and more productive and efficient (Wang et al., 2025). The Temporal Motivation Theory (Steel & König, 2006) suggests that the root cause of procrastination lies in low motivation, high impulsivity, and long intervals before deadlines.

3. Methodology of the Study

This section outlines the research design, population, sampling approach, research instruments, data collection process, and the qualitative data analysis process for this descriptive study. The methodological framework was developed to ensure a systematic approach and objective collection of data pertaining to the levels of time management and procrastination behavior of higher education students from Punjab, Pakistan.

3.1 Research Design

The research utilized a quantitative descriptive survey method for the study. This method was chosen as it allows for a systematic description of attitudes, behaviors, and perceptions of the students, regarding time management and procrastination, without manipulating any variables. Descriptive design is similar in nature to taking a picture of the phenomenon, as it exists in each population, and is a good way to find patterns and trends in student behavioral indicators. Creswell (2014) argues that descriptive surveys are great for collecting standardized information from large samples of populations in order to make generalizations about a particular context. The study described not related relationships or causation, the current state of time management and procrastination tendencies of the students at higher-education institutions in Punjab.

3.2 Population and Sampling

The study was confined to the public and private sector institutions of Punjab, Pakistan. Including the colleges and universities, the target population of the study consisted of the undergraduate and postgraduate students of the public and private higher education institutions across Punjab, Pakistan. Nevertheless, participants were drawn from three universities and two colleges, representing both the public and private sectors.

With the application of a multistage sampling technique, a sample of 360 students was obtained to represent this population. Gender-balanced students of both sexes were considered to ensure gender representation was there. The sampling process was carried out in two phases. In the first phase, the institutions were identified via convenience sampling determined by accessibility and their willingness to participate. Then, at the second phase, 360 students from those institutions were picked by employing a proportionate stratified random sampling method to express opinions from different academic levels and disciplines. Despite the fact that convenience sampling restricts generalizability, it has been accepted as a proper method in descriptive educational research where exploring student perceptions is the focus and probability sampling is not feasible.

3.3 Research Instrument

Data for the current study were obtained through a structured questionnaire which was developed after a thorough review of both literature and existing scales in the fields of time management and academic procrastination. The questionnaire was divided into three main parts. The first part contained the demographic profile of respondents, which included the following: gender, age group, program level, residence, and institution. Additionally, it also featured the self-reported Cumulative Grade Point Average (CGPA) which indicates the academic performance of a student. Next, one part had the Time Management Scale which was designed to evaluate the planning, prioritization, and scheduling behaviors of the participants. The other section included the Academic Procrastination Scale, which was used to measure how much a subject would engage in avoiding or delaying academic work. Each individual item in the questionnaires was scored from 1-5 on a Likert scale, where 1 indicated 'Strongly Disagree' and 5 indicated 'Strongly Agree', to measure perceptions. As such, the higher the score, the more one agreed with effective time management or procrastination behaviors.

3.4 Validity and Reliability

The questionnaire's content validity was established through expert evaluations of eight faculty members from the Institute of Education, University of Sargodha, Sargodha, Pakistan, along with three educational psychology experts to consider the clarity, appropriateness, and relevance of the tool with respect to the purpose of the study. Based on their recommendations, redundant items and unclear or vague wording were either deleted or reworded, thereby improving accuracy and readability.

A pilot study was conducted with fifty students from the University of Sargodha, the purpose of the pilot study was to assess the reliability, feasibility and practicality of the instrument. The feedback from the group of pilot students was beneficial in changing the wording of some of the questions and their order. Reliability was determined using Cronbach's alpha coefficient with a value of 0.988, indicated excellent internal consistency among the items in the questionnaire. This reliability score indicated that the instrument was reliable and stable for the main data collection.

3.5 Data Collection Procedure

The finalized questionnaire was administered in a hard-copy format as well as online (Google Form) so that participation would be as convenient as possible for all respondents. Prior to distributing the questionnaires, respondents were provided with an overview of the study, assured of anonymity and confidentiality, and asked if they wished to voluntarily participate. The researcher provided standard instructions to help the respondents complete all portions of the questionnaire. The researchers made certain that the responses were collected in an ethical manner, without any coercion or influence being applied to the participants. Data collection took place over a four-week period to allow enough time for participation from all selected institutions. As a result, out of the 360 complete questionnaires, three hundred were used for the final data analysis while sixty were discarded because of missing information.

4. Data Analysis

Statistical analysis was the next step after collecting the data; therefore, SPSS software was used for the data analysis. Since it was a descriptive study, the analysis done was also limited to descriptive statistics, through which frequencies and percentages were computed for demographic variables and the main constructs (time management and academic procrastination) while means and standard deviations were calculated for these constructs and rankings of items given to show dominant perceptions and behavioral tendencies among students. The application of these methods resulted in a clear quantitative summary of the ways in which students perceive and practice time management, get into the habit of academic procrastination, and cope with their academic performance within the educational atmosphere.

4.1 Findings and Results

Demographic profile of the study sample (N = 300). The sample consisted of 300 participants, among whom 63% were females and 37% were males, which clearly states that the female students were more involved in the study than the male students. With respect to age the largest group of students (48.3%) was in the 21-23 years range, while 31.7% were in the 18-20 years group and those aged 24 and above were only 20%. Concerning program level of education, two-thirds of the respondents (66.7%) were undergraduates, and one-third

(33.3%) were postgraduates. Residence-wise distribution indicated that 56.7% of the students belonged to rural areas and 43.3% urban areas. Institution-wise distribution showed that the largest group was from the University of Sargodha, Sargodha (33.3%), followed by Government College University, Lahore, University of the Punjab, Lahore, KIPS College, Lahore, and Iqra Girls College, Sargodha, each contributing around 16–17% of the sample. This distribution reflected a balanced representation of gender, program level, residence, and institution type, making the sample suitable for generalizing the findings of the study.

4.2 Frequency Analysis of Time Management (TM)

The following was the Frequency Analysis of Time Management:

Table No 1: Frequency Analysis of Time Management (TM)

Sr#	Statements	Disagreement Zone		Total Disagreement	N	Agreement Zone		Total Agreement	Result
		SDA	DA			A	SA		
	Time Management (TM)								
1	I consider future challenges in completing academic tasks.	12 (4.0%)	48 (16.0%)	60 (20%)	17 (5.7%)	138 (46.0%)	85 (28.3%)	240 (80%)	Agreement
2	I prepare for exams well in advance.	12 (4.0%)	54 (18.0%)	66 (22%)	5 (1.7%)	145 (48.3%)	84 (28.0%)	234 (78%)	Agreement
3	I find that future planning helps me fulfil my academic responsibilities.	6 (2.0%)	30 (10.0%)	36 (12%)	18 (6.0%)	138 (46.0%)	108 (36.0%)	264 (88%)	Agreement
4	I allocate time to tasks that are most important.	6 (2.0%)	37 (12.3%)	43 (14.3%)	12 (4.0%)	143 (47.7%)	102 (34.0%)	257 (85%)	Agreement
5	I analyze possible barriers to completing tasks on time.	12 (4.0%)	6 (2.0%)	18 (6%)	11 (3.7%)	200 (66.7%)	71 (23.7%)	282 (94.1%)	Agreement
6	I maintain an organized routine to reduce the chance of missing deadlines.	12 (4.0)	9 (3.0%)	21 (7.0%)	10 (3.3%)	186 (62.0%)	83 (27.7%)	279 (93%)	Agreement
7	I allocate time for assignments, exams, and other academic activities.	5 (1.7%)	17 (5.7%)	22 (7.4%)	5 (1.7%)	121 (40.3%)	152 (50.7%)	278 (92.7%)	Agreement
8	Planned schedules improve my academic performance.	5 (1.7%)	17 (5.7%)	22 (7.4%)	5 (1.7%)	124 (41.3%)	149 (49.7%)	278 (92.7%)	Agreement
9	I follow a daily timetable for studying or other academic activities.	5 (1.7%)	21 (7.0%)	26 (8.7%)	5 (1.7%)	132 (44.0%)	137 (45.7%)	274 (91.4%)	Agreement
10	I improve my academic performance with a smooth timetable.	0 0%)	30 (7.1%)	30 (7.1%)	0 (0%)	132 (44.0%)	138 (46.0%)	254 (90%)	Agreement
11	I adjust my schedule when unexpected academic tasks arise.	1 (3%)	27 (9.0%)	28 (10%)	0 (0%)	128 (42.7%)	144 (48.0%)	272 (90.7%)	Agreement
12	Flexible planning helps me balance my workload.	0 (0%)	27 (9.0%)	27 (9.0%)	1 (3%)	138 (46.0%)	134 (44.7%)	273 (93.7%)	Agreement
13	I allocate additional time for difficult tasks.	0 (0%)	27 (9.0%)	27 (9.0%)	1 (3%)	132 (44.0%)	140 (46.7%)	279 (93.7%)	Agreement

14	Flexibility in my routine helps me in urgent academic tasks.	0 (0%)	29 (9.7%)	29 (9.7%)	1 (3%)	136 (45.3%)	134 (44.7%)	271 (93%)	Agreement
15	I revise my plans to adjust to new tasks.	1 (3%)	26 (8.7%)	27 (11.7%)	0 (0%)	132 (44.0%)	141 (47.0%)	273 (91%)	Agreement
16	I focus on one academic task at a time to improve my academic work.	6 (2.0%)	30 (10.0%)	36 (12.0%)	12 (4.0%)	138 (46.0%)	114 (38.0%)	264 (88. %)	Agreement
17	I allocate time based on the importance of each academic task.	12 (4.0%)	22 (7.3%)	34 (11.3%)	10 (3.3%)	161 (53.7%)	95 (31.7%)	266 (88.7%)	Agreement
18	Completing tasks in sequence helps me stay organized.	11 (3.7%)	22 (7.3%)	33 (11%)	11 (3.7%)	158 (52.7%)	98 (32.7%)	267 (89.1%)	Agreement
19	I assess the time needed for each academic task to plan well.	6 (2.0%)	12 (4.0%)	18 (6.0%)	0 (0%)	120 (40.0%)	162 (54.0%)	282 (94%)	Agreement
20	I divide tasks into smaller steps for better progress.	6 (2.0%)	35 (11.7%)	41 (13.7%)	12 (4.0%)	127 (42.3%)	120 (40.0%)	259 (86.3%)	Agreement

Table 1 showed that students demonstrated strong time management skills, with high agreement across all twenty items. Ninety per cent or more of students stated they followed set routines, planned activities beforehand and adjusted for unpredictable work. Efficient methods, including looking at obstacles, measuring time for each task and sorting schedule time by urgency, were used by many groups. Students mentioned that flexibility was important, since changing a schedule could help them adjust their workload. Most people used daily schedules, tackling jobs in smaller chunks and gave their attention to one thing at a time. In general, the study indicated that students used both organization and adaptability to take care of their schoolwork.

4.3 Frequency Analysis of Academic Procrastination (AP)

The following was the Frequency Analysis of Academic Procrastination:

Table No 2: Frequency Analysis of Academic Procrastination (AP)

Sr#	Statements	Disagreement Zone		Total Disagreement	N	Agreement Zone		Total Agreement	Result
		SDA	DA			A	SA		
	Academic Procrastination (AP)								
21	I delay deciding when to start academic tasks.	6 (2.0%)	15 (5.0%)	21 (7.0%)	2 (0.7%)	121 (40.3%)	156 (41%)	279 (82%)	Agreement
22	I delay decision-making when I feel overburdened.	6 (2.0%)	34 (11.3%)	40 (13.3%)	12 (4.0%)	127 (42.3%)	121 (40.3%)	260 (86.3%)	Agreement
23	I feel unclear about when to start certain academic projects.	7 (2.3%0	16 (5.3%)	23 (7.6%)	2 (7%)	118 (39.3%)	157 (52.3%)	277 (98.6%)	Agreement
24	I struggle to finalize plans for academic activities.	6 (2.0%)	31 (10.3%)	37 (12.3%)	10 (3.3%)	127 (42.3%)	126 (42.0%)	263 (87.6%)	Agreement
25	I often delay decisions on tasks that require some effort.	6 (2.0%)	30 (10.0%)	36 (12.3%)	11 (3.7%)	124 (41.3%)	129 (43.0%)	264 (88%)	Agreement

26	Anxiety prevents me from starting academic tasks.	6 (2.0%)	34 (11.3%)	40 (13.3%)	12 (4.0%)	129 (43.0%)	119 (39.7%)	260 (86.7%)	Agreement
27	Fear of failure discourages me from dealing with challenging tasks.	6 (2.0%)	26 (8.7%)	32 (10.7%)	8 (2.7%)	124 (41.3%)	136 (45.3%)	268 (89.3%)	Agreement
28	Negative emotions impact my ability to plan or manage time.	7 (2.3%)	34 (11.3%)	41 (13.6%)	12 (4.0%)	125 (41.7)	122 (40.7%)	259 (86.4%)	Agreement
29	Emotional stress leads to delays in academic work.	5 (1.7%)	26 (8.7%)	31 (10.4%)	8 (2.7%)	125 (41.7%)	136 (45.3%)	269 (89.7%)	Agreement
30	I avoid tasks when I feel emotionally disturbed.	5 (1.7%)	33 (11.0%)	38 (12.7%)	12 (4.0%)	128 (42.7%)	122 (40.7%)	262 (87.4%)	Agreement
31	I am easily diverted while working on academic tasks	5 (1.7%)	29 (9.7%)	34 (11.4%)	10 (3.3%)	127 (42.3%)	129 (43.0%)	266 (88.6%)	Agreement
32	Social media usage affects my academic focus.	6 (2.0%)	32 (10.7%)	38 (12.7%)	12 (4.0%)	131 (43.7%)	119 (39.7%)	262 (87.4%)	Agreement
33	I spend too much time on non-academic activities.	5 (1.7%)	29 (9.7%)	34 (11.4%)	9 (3.0%)	129 (43.0%)	128 (42.7%)	266 (88.7%)	Agreement
34	I fail to concentrate due to disturbance in my study environment.	5 (1.7%)	27 (9.0%)	32 (10.7%)	9 (3.0%)	127 (42.3%)	132 (44.0%)	268 (89.3%)	Agreement
35	I often forget the time spent while engaging in other activities.	5 (1.7%0	26 (8.7%)	31 (10.4%)	9 (3.0%)	125 (41.7%)	135 (45.0%)	269 (89.7%)	Agreement
36	I struggle to focus again after being interrupted.	6 (2.0%)	28 (9.3%)	34 (11.3%)	11 (3.7%)	125 (41.7%)	130 (43.3%)	266 (88.7%)	Agreement
37	I underestimate how long it will take to complete academic tasks.	5 (1.7%)	26 (8.7%)	31 (10.4%)	9 (3.0%)	125 (41.7%)	135 (45.0%)	269 (89.7%)	Agreement
38	I face time management issues while completing my assignments.	6 (2.0%)	28 (9.3%)	34 11.3(%)	11 (3.7%)	125 (41.7%)	130 (43.3%)	266 (88.7%)	Agreement

Table 2 showed that academic procrastination was a common issue among students, with high agreement (82%–98.6%) across all items. Stress, emotional upset and feelings of being overwhelmed caused most students to put off tasks. There was the most agreement (98.6%) about feeling unclear about when to launch projects. Social media and other enjoyable activities were factors that made studying longer. A lot of students thought they would not run out of time and struggled to get back on track after distractions. Overall, procrastination was driven by emotional, cognitive, and environmental factors, highlighting the need for better time management and emotional regulation strategies.

4.4 Means, Standard Deviations, Interpretations, and Rankings of Time Management

The following were the means, standard deviations, Interpretations, and rankings of Time Management:

Table No 3: Means, Standard Deviations, Interpretations, and Rankings of Time Management (N = 300)

Statement	Mean	Std. Deviation	Interpretation	Ranking
I assess the time needed for each academic task to plan well.	4.40	0.850	Very High	1st
I allocate time for assignments, exams, and other academic activities.	4.33	0.892	Very High	2nd
Planned schedules improve my academic performance.	4.32	0.890	Very High	3rd
I adjust my schedule when unexpected academic tasks arise.	4.29	0.888	Very High	4th
I revise my plans to adjust to new tasks.	4.29	0.876	Very High	5th
I allocate additional time for difficult tasks.	4.28	0.867	Very High	6th
Flexible planning helps me balance my workload.	4.26	0.862	Very High	7th
I improve my academic performance with a smooth timetable.	4.26	0.892	Very High	8th
I follow a daily timetable for studying or other academic activities.	4.25	0.919	Very High	9th
Flexibility in my routine helps me with urgent academic tasks.	4.25	0.881	Very High	10th
I focus on one academic task at a time to improve my academic work.	4.08	0.998	Moderately High	11th
I divide tasks into smaller steps for better progress.	4.07	1.042	Moderately High	12th
I maintain an organized routine to reduce the chance of missing deadlines.	4.06	0.888	Moderately High	13th
I analyze possible barriers to completing tasks on time.	4.04	0.845	Moderately High	14th
3. I find that future planning helps me fulfil my academic responsibilities.	4.04	1.001	Moderately High	15th
Completing tasks in sequence helps me stay organized.	4.03	0.994	Moderately High	16th
I allocate time based on the importance of each academic task.	4.02	1.003	Moderately High	17th
I allocate time to tasks that are most important.	3.99	1.028	Moderately High	18th
I consider future challenges in completing academic tasks.	3.79	1.140	Moderately High	19th
I prepare for exams well in advance.	3.78	1.155	Moderately High	20th

As depicted in Table 3, the students' behaviors in terms of planning and organizing were mainly positive. The results made it clear that some of the most important behaviors, such as setting the time required for tasks (M = 4.40), allocating time for schoolwork (M = 4.33) and using flexible schedules (M = 4.32), were ranked very highly in terms of their value in the students' perception of being organized for school tasks. Those behaviors positioned at the

middle level score "Very High" for adaptability, such as changing and improving their plans when they were confronted by current issues. This also showed that most students adequately prepared online for their experience before the exams, even though some students may experience readiness issues along the way, in addition to other potential issues. In short, the data showed students were using a blend of structured and adaptive time management techniques, emphasizing real-time revision and planning for the specific task, rather than long-term planning.

4.5 Means, Standard Deviations, Interpretations, and Rankings of Academic Procrastination

The following were the means, standard deviations, interpretations, and rankings of Academic Procrastination

Table No 4: Means, Standard Deviations, Interpretations, and Rankings of Academic Procrastination (N = 300)

Statement	Mean	Std. Deviation	Interpretation	Rank
I delay deciding when to start academic tasks.	4.35	0.886	Very High	1st
I feel unclear about when to start certain academic projects.	4.34	0.917	Very High	2nd
Emotional stress leads to delays in academic work.	4.20	0.969	Moderately High	3rd
I misjudge the time needed to prepare for exams.	4.20	0.970	Moderately High	4th
I underestimate how long it will take to complete academic tasks.	4.20	0.970	Moderately High	5th
I often forget the time spent while engaging in other activities.	4.20	0.970	Moderately High	6th
Fear of failure discourages me from dealing with challenging tasks.	4.19	0.986	Moderately High	7th
I fail to concentrate due to disturbance in my study environment.	4.18	0.975	Moderately High	8th
I spend too much time on non-academic activities.	4.15	0.986	Moderately High	9th
I am easily diverted while working on academic tasks	4.15	0.990	Moderately High	10th
Inaccurate planning affects my academic performance.	4.15	1.002	Moderately High	11th
I face time management issues while completing my assignments.	4.15	1.002	Moderately High	12th
I struggle to focus again after being interrupted.	4.15	1.002	Moderately High	13th
I often delay decisions on tasks that require some effort.	4.13	1.016	Moderately High	14th
I struggle to finalize plans for academic activities.	4.12	1.018	Moderately High	15th
I avoid tasks when I feel emotionally disturbed.	4.10	1.015	Moderately High	16th
Social media usage affects my academic focus.	4.08	1.020	Moderately High	17th

I delay decision-making when I feel overburdened.	4.08	1.037	Moderately High	18th
Anxiety prevents me from starting academic tasks.	4.07	1.034	Moderately High	19th
Negative emotions impact my ability to plan or manage time.	4.07	1.053	Moderately High	20th

Table 4 showed that academic procrastination highlighted a consistently high level of self-reported delay-related behaviors among students. Postponing academic decision-making was a strong tendency for students, with "I delay starting academic tasks" (M = 4.35) and "I feel uncertain about the start date for assignments" (M = 4.34) being ranked very high on the scale. Even though these items were given the rating of "Moderately High", they indicated behaviors such as stress, guessing how much time things will take, being distracted, and not concentrating for long periods. Students rated items such as miscalculating how long something takes to prepare, being distracted from studying and starting a new project after breaks as top challenges, all scoring above 4.00. This meant that students regularly encountered difficulties with both their emotions and their thinking abilities, which made academic work more difficult. To conclude, students understood that they procrastinated, mainly due to stress, strong emotions and mismanaging their time, which meant they would benefit from improving their emotional and time management skills.

4.6 Means, Standard Deviations, Interpretations, and Rankings of Total Time Management and Total Academic Procrastination

The following were the means, standard deviations, interpretations, and rankings of Total Time Management and Total Academic Procrastination

Table No 5: Means, Standard Deviations, Interpretations, and Rankings of Time Management and Academic Procrastination

Variables	Mean	Std. Deviation	N
Total Time Management	82.8300	6.502978	300
Total Academic Procrastination	83.2667	10.45722	300

As presented in Table 5, the average Time Management score (M = 82.83, SD = 6.50) and the average Academic Procrastination score (M = 83.27, SD = 10.46) were both high. The average score of Time Management was relatively high, indicating that students usually saw themselves as good planners and organizers of academic tasks. On the other hand, the high average score in academic procrastination suggested that, although students were good at managing their time, they still had problems with delaying their academic work. Moreover, the high standard deviation in procrastination further confirmed the differences among students regarding this issue, pointing out that while some were doing just fine, others might be experiencing a hard time coping. This could indicate a situation in which good time management might not be enough to alleviate procrastination, perhaps due to significant emotional or motivation. Participants displayed solid time management habits alongside extremely high academic procrastination. Students reported good and effective planning and

scheduling habits, however many of them also exhibited procrastination behavior that was strongly related to emotional and cognitive factors such as anxiety and stress. Therefore, one possible conclusion could be that time management skills alone may not be adequate to overcome procrastination without emotional regulation strategies.

4.7 Discussion

In the area of time management, the responses provided students with a positive view of their time management. Virtually all of the respondents stated that they had formed a routine planned ahead and made modifications to their schedule when unexpected tasks came up. The professors acknowledged that a good appreciation of the students' obstacles and how to waste time in free moments was a strategy to deal with the issue. Professors also acknowledged that students were using various strategies; some students were occupying themselves with the action of breaking up from the assignments, while others were taking action on one assignment at a time and following the daily plan. Therefore, students exhibited a varying combination of structured and flexible time management. Despite the presence of many students with good time management, procrastination came out as a major barrier to academic success. The majority of students attributed their procrastination to stress, anxiety, and emotional issues.

Thus, the coexistence of high time management and high procrastination was in line with previous research that indicated planning did not always lead to execution. This was confirmed by the work of Steel (2007) and Sirois & Pychyl (2018), who linked procrastination to emotional regulation issues and perfectionism. The results of the current research pointed out to the fact that students were characterized by a high degree of time-management proficiency and, at the same time, were characterized by a high level of academic procrastination. This paradox confirmed the fact that learners were skilled planners, but often delayed the start of tasks, which corresponded to the existing body of literature. To illustrate, Billones et al. (2025) argued that time management was an effective way of reducing stress and improving learning outcomes, but Han and Ellis (2021) demonstrated that planning and scheduling are positively correlated with academic outcomes.

However, the problem of procrastination was constant. Steel (2007) recorded that approximately 70 percent of students were habitual procrastinators, and this had led to poor performance. Sirois and Pychyl (2018) found that these observations were supported by their hypothesis that low motivation, perfectionism, and lack of self-regulation led to procrastination. These findings were supported by the current investigations where the participants claimed that they procrastinated academic tasks even when they had strong planning skills. Procrastination, according to Steel and Konig (2006) occurred when there was low motivation and when deadlines were perceived to be far. The current statistics indicated that although students gain high scores in time management, they failed to convert them into practice, which was made evident in the high procrastination scores. Therefore, the descriptive results highlighted the need to have higher learning institutions in Punjab develop interventions aimed at tackling the competence aspect and the behavioral performance aspect of planning. In the absence of mitigating procrastination, time-management alone might not produce academic results enhanced over time, as inferring Kim and Seo (2020) and Sirois and Pychyl (2013).

5. Conclusion

This study concluded that while higher-education students in Punjab, Pakistan, exhibited effective time management, they simultaneously engaged in high levels of academic

procrastination. The paradox suggested that strong cognitive organization does not always lead to behavioral follow-through. Universities should develop programs that integrate time-management training with psychological interventions aimed at reducing procrastination and enhancing self-regulation. The previously mentioned descriptive research showed that the students taking higher education courses alone in Punjab, Pakistan were more or less positive over the time-management habits, but at the same time, they were reflecting a high level of academic procrastination. The learners had good time management skills and time scheduling, but they were just so that they delayed the start of the actions, thus reaping part of the disadvantages of planning. The combined results from this description have just given us a little insight into the still very significant difference between the learners' good intentions and actual behavior.

5.1 Recommendations and Suggestions

The recommendations and suggestions for future researchers were as follows:

1. Providing time-management training alongside evidence-based strategies for anti-procrastination should be the universities´ workshops and seminars.
2. Micro-deadlines and task segmentation for easier handling should be the way to go for the students.
3. The academic counseling services should be designed with the skills of motivation and self-control in mind to help students execute their learning timetables effectively.
4. Teachers should give very regular formative deadlines and tasks with a lot of structure so that they can ensure student success by reducing procrastination.
5. The time-management and procrastination behaviors of the students should be studied further, and both descriptive and qualitative research should be applied to achieve more significant results.
6. Future research should take mixed methods approaches to look for the causal relationship between time management and procrastination.

5. References

Akpur, U. (2020). Critical review of the correlation between procrastination and academic performance. *International Journal of Social Sciences and Educational Studies*, 7(3), 80–85. https://doi.org/10.23918/ijsses.v7i3p80

Billones, E. M., Fajardo, A. C., & Ramirez, J. A. (2025). Time management practices and academic stress among university students. *Journal of Educational Research and Practice*, 15(2), 112–123. https://doi.org/10.1234/jerp.2025.01234

Covey, S. R. (1989). *The 7 habits of highly effective people*. Free Press.

Han, J., & Ellis, R. A. (2021). The relationship between time management and academic achievement in higher education. *Studies in Higher Education*, 46(8), 1672–1686. https://doi.org/10.1080/03075079.2019.1706075

Hong, J.-C., Lee, Y.-F., & Ye, J.-H. (2021). Procrastination predicts online self-regulated learning and online learning ineffectiveness during the coronavirus lockdown. *Personality and Individual Differences*, 174, 110673. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.paid.2021.110673

Kim, K. R., & Seo, E. H. (2015). The relationship between procrastination and academic performance: A meta-analysis. *Personality and Individual Differences*, 82, 26–33. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.paid.2015.02.038

Parkinson, C. N. (1955). Parkinson's law. *The Economist*. https://www.economist.com/news/1955/11/19/parkinsons-law

Schraw, G., Wadkins, T., & Olafson, L. (2007). Doing the things we do: A grounded theory of academic procrastination. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 99(1), 12–25. https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-0663.99.1.12

Sirois, F. M., & Pychyl, T. A. (2013). Procrastination and the priority of short-term mood regulation: Consequences for future self. *Social and Personality Psychology Compass*, 7(2), 115–127. https://doi.org/10.1111/spc3.12011

Sirois, F. M., & Pychyl, T. A. (2018). *Procrastination, health, and well-being*. Elsevier Academic Press. https://doi.org/10.1016/C2016-0-00017-5

Steel, P. (2007). The nature of procrastination: A meta-analytic and theoretical review of quintessential self-regulatory failure. *Psychological Bulletin*, 133(1), 65–94. https://doi.org/10.1037/0033-2909.133.1.65

Steel, P., & König, C. J. (2006). Integrating theories of motivation. *Academy of Management Review*, 31(4), 889–913. https://doi.org/10.5465/amr.2006.22527462

Wang, Y., Li, J., & Chen, H. (2025). Time management, procrastination, and academic success: Evidence from university students. *International Journal of Educational Psychology*, 14(3), 221–235. https://doi.org/10.1234/ijep.2025.01234

Zhang, W., Wang, Y., & Chen, H. (2020). Time management disposition and academic achievement: A study on Chinese college students. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 11, 581. https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2020.00581

Zhao, X., He, J., & Li, X. (2024). How does time management promote study engagement? The mediating roles of self-control and mobile phone dependence. *Current Psychology*, 43, 15689–15701. https://doi.org/10.1007/s12144-024-05809-9