

A Study of Aggression and Academic Procrastination among Students

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Abstract

In the prehistoric age, aggression helped our ancestors in their survival struggle. Although considered a negative character in modern society, it is still prevalent. Aggression is a behavior directed to harm others but the other one tries to escape from such harm. Personal, environmental, and situational factors influence aggression. Procrastination is an intentional delay by choosing one activity over the other. Delaying work earlier and making a last-minute rush for completing the task may cause aggression among students. The study explores the relationship between aggression and four areas of academic procrastination and assesses the aggression among students with high and low levels of academic procrastination. In this quantitative study, the normative survey method was used. The sample of 248 ninth-class students was collected using the convenience sampling method. Data was collected in the academic session 2021-2022 immediately after the COVID-19 lockdown. The tools used were Aggression Scale by R. L. Bharadwaj (2008) and the Academic Procrastination Scale by Ashok Kalia and Manju Yadav (2015). There is a significant and positive relationship between aggression and academic procrastination in four sub-areas. Students with high and low levels of academic procrastination differ significantly in aggression.

Key Words: *Aggression and Academic Procrastination*

In the prehistoric age, aggression helped our ancestors in their survival struggle. But in subsequent evolutionary stages when social groups started forming, more and more pro-social behavior, team efforts, and interdependence ensured successful survival. This reduced the importance and acceptance of aggressive behavior. In modern societies, although aggression is looked at as a maladaptation and a negative personality character, the prevalence of aggression is still a common phenomenon. It is present in one form or the other. This may be attributed to the complexities of modern life. Life in the 21st century is full of tensions, instability, cut-throat competitions, and power struggles. Materialism, consumerism, and the commercialization of every aspect of life have changed social structures. It has changed the way individuals think and behave in societies. Individual desires are mounting higher and higher all of which cannot be fulfilled. Thus, unfulfilled desires, fears, and increased societal demands are common experiences of people, including adolescents. Masaeva and

Lechieva (2016)¹ have pointed out that alienation, anxiety, and spiritual emptiness are also experienced by children.

Adolescence is a transition phase of one's life. Physical, psychological, and social changes are taking place simultaneously at this age. Adolescents can face adjustment problems in this phase of life. And this probability of facing adjustment problems increases even more in the present socio-economic scenario. There are so many rapid changes taking place in this technology-driven 21st century that these changes baffle adolescents resulting in maladjustment and aggression. Veeraraghavan (2006)² has noted that unfulfilled desires, interruptions in activities, and constant unfavorable comparisons give rise to aggression among adolescents. Studies have found that personal, environmental, and situational factors influence aggression. Aggression is a study area for many social psychologists as it has long-lasting effects on an individual's health as well as health of the society.

Aggression

The meaning of the term aggression differs widely for the general public and social psychologists. As aggression can appear in varying forms and degrees, it becomes increasingly complex to define the construct. It can cover minor to more serious actions, like yelling, criticizing, insulting, kicking, and poking to actions like shooting, or killing. As a psychological construct, it is defined as aggression is a behavior that is directed to harm others but the other one tries to escape from such harm. (DeWall, et al. 2012) Thus, it is clear from this definition that aggression is essentially a behavior. It is neither a thought nor an emotion alone. Aggression is also intentional. It is intended to cause harm. Aggressive behavior can be expressed physically or verbally or through gestures. Both physical and verbal aggression can be direct or indirect in nature. Aggression is direct when the object of aggression is physically present but it is termed as indirect when the object of aggression is not physically present. (DeWall, et al. 2012)³ Aggression can be a displaced aggression where the target is substituted with someone else, especially an innocent person and he becomes the victim. Here the aggression gets displaced from the actual target to a substituted target. Active aggression and passive aggression are also one type of classification of aggression. Aggression is active when the individual gets involved in harmful behavior. And it is called passive aggression when an individual although in a position to help, withholds the help to the target. (Bushman & Huesmann 2010)⁴ based on motives or function aggression can be reactive aggression or proactive aggression.

Aggression has a social context and is related to others in society i.e. it is interpersonal in nature. It can involve certain emotions towards the object that is intended to be harmed or has a certain motive for the behavior. Social norms are often neglected in aggression. Aggression, physical as well as non-physical has negative outcomes. Apart from other forms of aggression, verbal aggression, and hostility are found to have more detrimental effects (Nevill, et al. 2022)⁵. The nature of aggression can change with age and can differ with gender. Even though aggression helps an individual in the short run, in the long run, its effects are

detrimental, hence social psychologists are interested in understanding the factors responsible for aggression and tried to study various forms of aggression and its functions.

Factors responsible for developing aggressive behavior can be categorized into the following heads. (Rajdeep Kaur 2020)⁶

- 1) Biological factors: like biological characteristics, hormone levels, etc.
- 2) Situational factors: unpleasant events, provocation
- 3) Personal factors: personality, poor emotional control
- 4) Interpersonal factors: family relations, peer relations, mass media
- 5) School factors: classroom context, school environment
- 6) Cultural and community environment

There are many theories developed for aggression. They provide a theoretical framework for studying the causes and consequences of aggression. The frustration–aggression theory states that frustration occurs when goal-directed behavior is hindered or blocked which leads to aggression. There is an association between aggression and frustration. Novaco, R.W. (1991)⁷ has noted that an individual will tend to be aggressive when his efforts or wish to reach his destination in time are obstructed. Aggression is also explained by behaviorist theories as a learned behavior conditioned by reinforcement or through stimulus-response bonds. A general aggression model is developed which has incorporated biological, social, cognitive, personality, and other processes in its framework. (DeWall, et al. 2012)³ The latest theory proposed for aggression is I³Theory. This is a broad meta-theory. The theory states that the urge for aggression in an individual is increased in situations where more provoking and threatening factors are available but at the same time,adequate restraint is lacking. Students tend to be aggressive when it is perceived that aggression is the easiest way to get desired things quickly. Understanding aggression among students is very important for teachers and parents as it can affect their academic performance and career prospects.

Academic Procrastination

Procrastination is a Latin word meaning delaying or postponing. Postponing certain activities or decisions intentionally can be termed procrastination. Procrastination is an intentional or conscious choice of one activity over the other. It is a commonly observed trait among people. Even after knowing the consequences of the delay, individuals put off doing certain work. This tendency is called procrastination. Procrastination is a behavioral trait. It is a person's disposition to delay actions. (Hussain & Sultan 2010)⁸ Procrastination is studied as a personality trait and/or as a conditional response by researchers. When procrastination is done in academic work, it is known as academic procrastination. Academic Procrastination is recurring, students tend to procrastinate in most tasks and continue postponing one or the other tasks. The procrastinator fails to do the right work at the right time. He either did not start the task or was unable to continue the task. This may lead to failure, stress, or emotional disturbances. Ferrari & Pychyl (2008)⁹ have found that procrastination has increased physical and psychological problems for students. When students fail to set a pace with their course

of study or could not meet high-performance expectations, they tend to procrastinate. Students procrastinate academic work for indulging in pleasurable activities. Earlier studies have noted that Students procrastinate academic work for several reasons. Academic procrastination is generally in four areas of procrastination namely procrastination in homework, procrastination in preparation for exams, procrastination in project work, and procrastination in co-curricular activities

Delaying work earlier and making a last-minute rush for completing the task may cause aggression among students. They can exhibit aggression in one or the other form. Aggression can be direct or indirect. It can be hostile or instrumental or displaced aggression. It can take any other form too. Thus it will be interesting to study the relationship between academic procrastination and aggression and if there is any significant difference in aggression among students with high or low levels of academic procrastination.

The pandemic period was marked by the rise in psycho-social problems of the population as reported by the research and official records of these periods. One such problem is an increase in aggression among adolescents. It is a cause of concern and requires immediate attention. There are some studies on aggression among children but few on school students of adolescent age. Although aggression and academic procrastination have been focused on by very few researchers, the question of how aggression and academic procrastination are related remains unclear. A study exploring the relationship between aggression and academic procrastination among school-going students particularly after the COVID-19 lockdown is rare. This points to the need for the study. Thus, the present research aims to study the relationship between aggression and academic procrastination among students. The study also explores the relationship between aggression and four areas of academic procrastination. It will be interesting to assess the aggression among students with high and low levels of academic procrastination after the COVID-19 lockdown. The present study will extend the past research and provide a further understanding of the role of academic procrastination in instigating aggression among school-going students. Past research has demonstrated the negative effect of both aggression and academic procrastination in the overall development of the personality, present study will provide guidelines to work further on these variables. It will be beneficial to the stakeholders too.

Objectives:

The objectives of the present study areas follows

- 1) To study the relationship between Aggression and Academic Procrastination in four sub-areas (homework, preparation for exams, project work, and co-curricular activities).
- 2) To study the difference in aggression among students with high or low levels of academic procrastination in four sub-areas (homework, preparation for exams, project work, and co-curricular activities).
- 3) To compare differences in aggression across gender and area among students with high or low levels of academic procrastination

Methodology

This was a quantitative study. The normative survey method was used for the study. The Nagpur and Wardha Districts of Maharashtra state in India were the geographical areas under study. The sample was selected using the convenience sampling method. Students studying in the ninth class were selected as samples. Data was collected in the academic session 2021-2022 immediately after the COVID-19 lockdown was over and the students started going to schools in Maharashtra. A total of 248 students were selected as a sample. The tools used for the data collection were Aggression Scale by R. L. Bharadwaj (2008)¹⁰ and the Academic Procrastination Scale by Ashok Kalia and Manju Yadav (2015)¹¹. The data was tabulated using the test norms and descriptive statistics were used to find the results. Finally, the findings and conclusions were drawn.

Findings and Discussions

Relationship between aggression and academic procrastination

The relationship between aggression and academic procrastination and between aggression and four areas of academic procrastination is shown in Table 1.

The value of 'r' to be significant for 246 degrees of freedom at the .05 level is .127 and at the .01 level is .166 calculated by interpolation. The obtained 'r' values are more hence they are significant at both levels. The calculated value of the 'r' between aggression and academic procrastination of students is .75, this indicates a significant and positive relationship between aggression and academic procrastination. The coefficient of correlation 'r' between aggression and procrastination in homework is .71 which is positive and significant. Thus, it can be said that the more procrastination in homework by students, the more will be aggression among students. The correlation between aggression and procrastination in preparation for exams is found to be .61 which is significant and positive. A significant positive correlation between aggression and procrastination in project work is identified and the same is identified between aggression and procrastination in co-curricular activities. Thus, it can be summed up that there is a significant and positive relationship between aggression and academic procrastination and its four areas, the more academic procrastination the more aggression, and the less academic procrastination the less aggression.

Aggression among students with high and low levels of Academic Procrastination

Table 2 exhibits the comparison of aggression among students with high and low levels of academic procrastination in four sub-areas namely homework, preparation for exams, project work, and co-curricular activities.

The significant t-value at 0.01 level indicates that students with high and low levels of academic procrastination significantly differ in aggression and the difference is in favor of high academic procrastinators. The difference in Aggression is also found to be significant between students with high and low levels of procrastination in homework, procrastination in preparation for exams, procrastination in project work, and procrastination in co-curricular

activities. Students with high and low levels of academic procrastination and procrastination in four sub-areas differ significantly in aggression

Differences in aggression across Gender and Area among students with high or low levels of academic procrastination

Differences in aggression across Gender and Area among students with high or low levels of academic procrastination is shown in Table 3

There is a marked significant difference across gender and area in aggression among students with high and low levels of academic procrastination. Both boys and girls exhibit significant differences in aggression when compared between high and low academic procrastinators. High and low academic procrastinating students from both urban and rural areas are found to differ significantly in aggression levels. Thus, across the demographic variables of gender and area, aggression levels differ significantly between high and low academic procrastinators and procrastinators in four sub-areas.

Conclusions:

The present study focused on finding the relationship between aggression and academic procrastination in four areas. The results showed that the coefficient of correlation between aggression and academic procrastination is 0.75 and between aggression and four areas of procrastination are 0.71, 0.61, 0.62, and 0.60 respectively. Hence it is concluded that there is a positive and significantly higher level of relationship between aggression and academic procrastination. The positive value of correlation indicates that aggression and academic procrastination tend to move in the same linear direction. When academic procrastination is more, the aggression level is found to be more and when academic procrastination is less, the aggression level is also found to be less. This finding is substantiated by the findings of Chandwani, (2022)¹² who noted a moderately positive relationship between aggression and procrastination.

Further academic procrastination in four areas namely, Procrastination in homework, preparation for exams, project work, and co-curricular activity are also found to be positively and significantly correlated to aggression. The obtained coefficient of correlation indicates a higher degree of correlation. The Changes in all four areas of academic procrastination are affecting the same type of changes in aggression. When the procrastination in homework, preparation for exams, project work, and co-curricular activity is more, the aggression level among students is found to be more, and when academic procrastination in four areas is found to be less, the aggression level is also found to be less among students. This result is similar to the results of Kiamarsi & Aryapooran (2015)¹³ have identified a positive correlation between academic procrastination, aggression, and internet addiction.

The study further aims to compare the difference in aggression levels between high and low academic procrastinators. The obtained t - values, as shown in Table 2 are significant at 0.01 levels. Thus it is concluded from the results that students with high and low levels of

academic procrastination differ significantly in their aggression levels. The mean difference is in favor of high academic procrastinators which denotes that high academic procrastinators have higher levels of aggression than aggression levels of low academic procrastinators. The mean difference in the levels of Aggression is also found to be significant between students with high and low levels of academic procrastination in four areas namely procrastination in homework, preparation for exams, project work, and co-curricular activities. It signifies that students with higher procrastination in four areas have higher aggression levels than students with lower procrastination. The findings are similar to the theoretical framework of the constructs. The study of Zvereva et al. (2015)¹⁴ has pointed out the presence of procrastination and different levels of manifestation of indirect aggression at a young age. In a meta-analysis Steel (2007)¹⁵ has found that academic procrastination and irrational thoughts were positively correlated and procrastination has an effect on mood, a negative effect on happiness, and state agitation.

Another aim of the study was to find out the differences in aggression levels across gender and area among students with high and low academic procrastination. The conclusion can be drawn that high and low academic procrastinating students are found to differ significantly in aggression across gender and area. The mean difference in aggression scores is in favor of high academic procrastinators. This implies that high academic procrastinators across gender and area are higher in their aggression levels as compared to low academic procrastinators. The conclusion so arrived at is all categories boys, girls, urban and rural students, show significant mean differences in aggression when high and low academic procrastination students are compared on aggression, and irrespective of gender and area, the high and low academic procrastinators certainly differ in their aggression levels. This finding is in line with Hussain & Sultan (2010)⁸ who have noted that procrastination is not a gender-based trait or gender restricted but works across the gender and has its effect on both sexes. Ucar et al. (2021)¹⁶ also reported that academic procrastination did not show gender differences in online learners.

Thus, the study concludes that academic procrastination has a clear impact on the aggression of students. Similarly, Hussain & Sultan (2010)⁸ reported in their study that procrastinating students develop hostile and intimidating attitudes resulting in insulting and aggressive temperament. The study has wide implications for all those engaged in the educational sector. Strategies for controlling academic procrastination will go a long way in controlling aggression too.

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Table 1

Correlation between Aggression and Academic Procrastination and four sub-areas

		Mean	S D	'r'- value
Aggression		68.41	12.23	
Academic Procrastination		56.05	11.91	.75**
Procrastination in Homework		21.58	5.25	.71**
Procrastination in Preparation for Exams	12.71	2.93	.61**	
Procrastination in Project Work	11.35	2.86	.62**	
Procrastination in Co-curricular Activities	10.41	2.59	.60**	

Note: N = 248

d. f. = 246

** significant at 0.01 level

Table 2

Aggression among students with high and low levels of Academic Procrastination

		Aggression						
		Levels	N	Mean	S D	d. f.	t-value	
Academic Procrastination	High	54	83.40	11.73				
		Low	37	54.81	6.18	89	15.12*	
Procrastination in Homework	High	60	81.7	12.29				
		Low	32	55.47	7.27	90	12.86*	
Procrastination in Preparation for Exams	High	41	81.02	11.16				
		Low	32	55.94	6.79	71	11.83*	
Procrastination in Project Work	High	38	82.42	12.91				
		Low	38	55.34	6.97	74	11.38*	
Procrastination in Co-curricular Activities	High	50	80.36	12.7				
		Low	28	57.29	8.50	76	9.57*	

Note: *significant at .01 level

Table 3

Differences in aggression across Gender and Area

		Aggression						
Gender	A. Pro Levels	N	Mean	S D	d. f.	t-value		
Boys	High	32	86.19	12.33				
	Low	14	55.14	5.59	44	11.76*		
Girls	High	22	79.36	9.69				
	Low	23	54.61	6.63	43	9.94*		
Area								
Urban area	High	31	84.61	12.48				
	Low	17	57.06	5.86	46	10.39*		
Rural area	High	23	81.78	10.67				
	Low	20	52.9	5.93	41	11.15*		

Note: A. Pro stands for Academic Procrastination *significant at .01 level

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