

# THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN STRESS AND ACADEMIC PROCRASTINATION AMONG PRIVATE UNIVERSITY STUDENTS IN KLANG VALLEY

KASSIM, S. N. F.<sup>1\*</sup> – HAZIDI, A. A.<sup>1</sup> – KASIM, N. M.<sup>1</sup> – IDRIS, R.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> *Faculty of Education and Social Sciences, Universiti Selangor, Selangor, Malaysia.*

*\*Corresponding author  
e-mail: fadilah[at]unisel.edu.my*

(Received 31<sup>st</sup> December 2024; revised 19<sup>th</sup> February 2025; accepted 26<sup>th</sup> February 2025)

**Abstract.** The research examines the relationship between stress and academic procrastination among private university students in Klang Valley. A total of 280 university students were selected for this study through convenience sampling. An online questionnaire was distributed to students in four private universities in Klang Valley by using a Google form. The questionnaire was adapted to the Perceived Stress Scale (PSS-10) to measure an individual's subjective experience of stress over the past month. Meanwhile, The Academic Procrastination Scale-Short Form (APS-S) was used to measure the tendency to delay or postpone academic tasks. The reliability analysis for the pilot test is Cronbach's alpha of 0.96, which indicates excellent internal consistency and reliability. For data analysis, Pearson's correlation coefficient was performed to analyse the relationship between stress and academic procrastination. These variables are predicted to have a high positive correlation. The findings of this study predict a significant correlation between perceived stress and academic procrastination, indicating that higher stress levels were associated with increased procrastination tendency.

**Keywords:** *stress, academic procrastination, university students, Malaysia*

## Introduction

Procrastination in academic settings has become a widespread issue, particularly among university students who face constant changes affecting their physical and mental well-being. Defined as the deliberate, unreasonable, and habitual postponement of tasks despite awareness of potential negative consequences, procrastination is notably prevalent in Malaysia, where a substantial portion of university students exhibit such behaviours, raising concerns about its impact on their academic performance and overall well-being (Rozental et al., 2022; Kim et al., 2018; Ferrari, 2010). A significant factor associated with procrastination is academic stress, which stems from various sources including workload, examinations, and academic expectations (Barbayannis et al., 2022; Hj Ramli et al., 2018). Students who procrastinate often experience higher levels of stress, which can manifest as psychological and physical symptoms such as headaches, gastrointestinal issues, and fatigue (Kuftyak, 2022). This stress-procrastination cycle is particularly pronounced among low-performing students who are more susceptible to stress and its detrimental effects (Kuftyak, 2022). Procrastination often serves as a coping mechanism for students who fear failure or have difficulty managing their time and priorities (Niazov et al., 2021). This avoidance behavior can lead to a range of negative outcomes, including poor academic performance, increased stress, and a disconnect between intentions and actions (Niazov et al., 2021; Ko and Chang, 2019). Numerous studies indicate that procrastinating in class can lead to time management and organizational issues, distraction, and lower academic performance, which can exacerbate stress levels, creating a vicious cycle where stress leads to procrastination,

which in turn increases stress (Catacutan et al., 2024; Kim and Seo, 2015). This behavior is particularly common among students under academic stress, who often delay assignments and exam preparations despite knowing the possible negative outcomes (Sirois, 2023; Kuftyak, 2022).

This study aims to explore the relationship between academic stress and procrastination among private university students in the Klang Valley. Given the competitive nature of higher education and the unique cultural and societal pressures faced by students in this region, understanding this relationship is crucial (Mohammadzadeh et al., 2018). The main objective of this research is to investigate the relationship between stress and academic procrastination among private university students in Klang Valley. Understanding the relationship between stress and academic procrastination is essential for developing effective interventions that promote student welfare and academic success (Ferrari and Tibbett, 2020). Insights from this research can help educators and policymakers implement targeted programs to address the specific needs of students in Klang Valley. Additionally, students can benefit from understanding the underlying causes of their procrastination tendencies, enabling them to develop coping strategies to manage stress and improve academic performance (Kim et al., 2018). This study also contributes to the broader body of knowledge on academic procrastination in Malaysia, providing valuable data that can inform future research and policy development. By addressing the factors contributing to procrastination, this research aims to enhance the quality of life and mental well-being of university students, helping them overcome procrastination and alleviate stress (Yee and Lai, 2021). Academic Procrastination is defined as the deliberate postponement of tasks, assignments, and test preparation, often to the latest possible time before a due date, or prioritising less important or more enjoyable tasks over critical ones (Kuftyak, 2022; Ferrari and Tibbett, 2020; Ashraf et al., 2019). Stress is a response to environmental demands that threaten an individual's well-being, involving biological and psychological disturbances (Adedamola et al., 2022). Stress can be understood through three components: stressors (situations causing stress), symptoms (bodily reactions to stress), and coping mechanisms (strategies to manage stress) (Manrique-Millones et al., 2019; Cohen et al., 2016;).

### ***Literature review***

There are various studies investigating the relationship between procrastination, stress, and academic performance among students. Kuftyak (2022) study highlights a positive correlation between procrastination and stress and a negative correlation between these factors and academic performance, suggesting that reducing procrastination could alleviate stress and improve academic outcomes. Mercado-Vinces et al. (2021) found similar results in their study of electronic engineering students in Peru, indicating that higher procrastination levels lead to increased stress and negatively impact emotional well-being, contributing to anxiety and depressive symptoms. In contrast, Muhammadamin and Abdalwahid (2023) did not find a correlation between procrastination and academic stress, although they noted significant associations among subscales measuring academic stress. Ashraf et al. (2019) explored the role of peer influence resistance in the relationship between procrastination and stress among young adults. Their findings indicate that while procrastination is positively correlated with stress, individuals with higher peer influence resistance experience a weaker link between the two, suggesting that resisting peer pressure can mitigate the stress effects of

procrastination. Fentaw et al. (2022) investigated procrastination among Ethiopian university students, finding that a significant majority procrastinate due to reasons like stress, laziness, and lack of preparation, impacting their emotional behavior and leading to academic failure. Rozental et al. (2022) differentiated between severe and less severe procrastination, revealing that severe procrastination is associated with more negative consequences such as anxiety, depression, and stress, and is more likely to be diagnosed as pathological delay.

Alenazi (2023) focused on female students at Jouf University, finding a significant negative correlation between procrastination and academic achievement. Nayak (2019) examined the interplay between procrastination, time management, and academic stress among nursing students, showing that procrastination exacerbates stress while effective time management alleviates it. Muliani et al. (2020) found a significant positive correlation between stress levels and procrastination among first-year nursing students, indicating that higher stress levels contribute to increased procrastination. Niazov et al. (2022) studied students with learning disabilities, finding that these students are more prone to procrastination and that academic stress and self-efficacy play mediating roles, with high stress levels exacerbating procrastination and strong self-efficacy mitigating it. The theoretical framework includes McCloskey's Theory of Academic Procrastination, which attributes procrastination to factors like study habits, underestimating deadlines, low success expectancy, lack of joy, and anxiety. The Theory of Planned Behavior, as described by Sirois (2004), suggests that intentions and choices moderate the influence of attitudes on behaviour, with motivational factors impacting decision actualization. The Transactional Model of Stress and Coping (TMSOC) posits that stress results from the interaction between an individual's appraisal of a situation and their coping resources, with problem-solving and social support being effective coping mechanisms, while avoidance and procrastination are maladaptive. The conceptual framework illustrates the relationship between stress as the independent variable and academic procrastination as the dependent variable.

## Materials and Methods

This study adopts a quantitative approach to investigate the relationship between stress and academic procrastination. By employing a quantitative research design, the study ensures that identical questions are asked of every respondent, allowing for a fair and consistent analysis of the data. This method is more efficient compared to qualitative research because it eliminates the need for coding a large number of unstructured responses. Instead, it utilises statistical techniques to measure and analyse numerical data, providing clear and measurable insights into the research questions. A convenience sampling method was utilised, selecting 280 private university students from Klang Valley. This method was chosen due to its practicality and relevance to the research question, focusing on a specific population that might experience higher academic pressure and stress. Despite its limitations in generalizability, convenience sampling allowed for efficient data collection and initial hypothesis exploration. The densely populated and competitive environment of Klang Valley was considered a significant factor contributing to the stress levels of the participants, providing a valuable context for the study. The research procedure involved a series of well-structured steps, starting with the determination of the research topic and variables. Google Forms was used to create and distribute the surveys, which included the

Perceived Stress Scale (PSS-10) and the Academic Procrastination Scale (APS-S). The survey consisted of three sections, collecting demographic information and assessing stress and procrastination levels using a five-point Likert scale. A pilot study with 30 private university students was conducted to test the reliability of the instruments, resulting in a high Cronbach's Alpha score of 0.956, indicating excellent internal consistency. The data collected through these instruments was analysed using SPSS software, ensuring the reliability and validity of the findings.

## Results and Discussion

The data gathered from 280 respondents for this study is used to assess three types of analysis using SPSS. The results for reliability, descriptive and inferential analysis were performed using the Pearson Correlation Coefficient. The analysis above focuses on the demographic data which includes examining the distribution of gender, age, place of study, level of study and year of study among the private university students in Klang Valley. *Table 1* shows the frequency of gender and age among the target population. The respondent consists of 117 (41.8%) Male and 163 (58.2%) Female respondents (N=280). According to *Table 1*, the age distribution from 18-21 amounted to 154 (55%), 22-25 added up to 100 (35.7%), and 26 above totalled 26 (9.3%). This indicates that most respondents are between 18-21 years old while 26 above years old university students are the least represented. Based on *Table 1*, It can be determined that the majority of respondents are University Kuala Lumpur students which totalled 143 (51.1%) meanwhile 22 (7.9%) Open University students are the minority. In addition to that, based on *Table 1*, most of the respondents are degree students numbering 168 (60%) and the least represented are master students with only 5 (1.8%) respondents. Lastly, *Table 1* shows that Year 1 students have the highest representation in this study with 162 (57.9%) and Year 4 students compressing 10 (3.6%) are the least represented.

**Table 1.** Demographic profile.

Category	Frequency (N)	Presentage (%)
Gender		
Male	117	41.8
Female	163	58.2
Age		
18-21	154	55.0
22-25	100	35.7
26 and above	26	9.3
Place of study		
UniKL	143	51.1
UNITEN	54	19.3
MMU	61	21.8
OU	22	7.9
Level of study		
Foundation	16	5.7
Diploma	91	32.5
Degree	168	60.0
Masters	5	1.8
Year of study		
Year 1	162	57.9
Year 2	92	32.9

Year 3	16	5.7
Year 4	10	3.6

### *Inferential analysis*

At the beginning of this research, the alternative hypothesis was formulated to assert that there is a significant relationship between stress and procrastination among private university students in Klang Valley. *Table 2* shows the results of Pearson Correlation Coefficient (r) analysis, which assesses the relationship between stress and academic procrastination. The Sig. (2-tailed) was rounded off to the nearest 3 decimals which means (p-value<0.001). The analysis has a correlation coefficient of  $r=0.734$  which indicates a strong positive correlation between stress and academic procrastination. It can be concluded that stress positively reflects academic procrastination and is significantly correlated. Based on the findings above, it can be inferred that Hypothesis Alternative is accepted as it suggests that there is a significant relationship between stress and academic procrastination among private university students in Klang Valley.

**Table 2.** *Pearson's Correlation between PSS-10 and APS-S.*

Variable	Correlation coefficient	Sig. (2-tailed)
Perceived stress scale	0.734**	0.000
Academic procrastination scale		
N	280	280

The current study found a significant relationship between stress and academic procrastination among private university students in Klang Valley. This finding aligns with previous research highlighting the negative impact of stress on academic behaviours, including procrastination. One such study, conducted by Mercado-Vinces et al. (2021) and investigating university students of electronic engineering, found that procrastination negatively affects students' satisfaction with their studies and mental health, and emotional exhaustion is one of the identified causes of procrastination. Similarly, another study by Ashraf et al. (2019) on young adults found that students who procrastinate more tend to experience higher levels of academic stress. These findings suggest that stress can act as a trigger for procrastination, potentially leading to a negative cycle where procrastination further exacerbates stress due to unmet deadlines and increased workload. This finding aligns with previous studies conducted on university students from various backgrounds, including electronic engineering students (Mercado-Vinces et al., 2021), young adults in general (Ashraf et al., 2019), and female students at a specific university (Fentaw et al., 2022). Past research has found that stress can be a significant contributor to academic procrastination (Mercado-Vinces et al., 2021; Ashraf et al., 2019; Fentaw et al., 2022). For instance, Mercado-Vinces et al., (2021) highlight emotional exhaustion as a key driver of procrastination, while Ashraf et al. (2019) identify a positive correlation between procrastination and academic stress. These findings suggest that stressful academic environments or personal situations can lead students to delay or avoid their academic work. Furthermore, the study's emphasis on private university students brings an interesting dimension to the existing literature. While the broader association between stress and procrastination appears consistent across different student populations, it is important to acknowledge that students in private universities might face unique stressors compared to their counterparts in public institutions. These stressors could stem from factors such as higher tuition fees,

increased academic competition, or specific expectations associated with private education. In short, the current case study strengthens the established relationship between stress and academic procrastination among university students.

## **Conclusion**

This study investigates the relationship between stress and academic procrastination among private university students in Klang Valley. The results of the study support the growing body of research demonstrating a significant correlation between stress and academic procrastination among university students, specifically within the context of private universities in Klang Valley. By aligning with previous studies, this research reinforces the understanding that stress acts as a critical trigger for procrastination, which in turn exacerbates stress through the accumulation of unmet deadlines and increased workloads. Notably, this study highlights the unique stressors faced by private university students, such as higher tuition fees, increased academic competition, and specific expectations linked to private education, which may not be as prevalent in public institutions. These findings underline the need for targeted interventions that address these particular stressors to help reduce procrastination and its effects on academic performance and mental health. Moreover, the study acknowledges its limitations, such as the use of convenience sampling and self-reported measures, suggesting that future research should employ more rigorous sampling methods and explore the underlying mechanisms linking stress and procrastination. By addressing these limitations and focusing on the unique experiences of private university students, future research can develop more effective strategies to help students manage stress and reduce procrastination, ultimately supporting their academic success and well-being.

## **Acknowledgement**

The authors would like to express their sincere gratitude to the students from private universities in Klang Valley for their participation in this self-funded research.

## **Conflict of interest**

The authors declare no conflict of interest involved with any parties regarding the publication of this article.

## **REFERENCES**

- [1] Adedamola, A.T., Akin, O., Abiola, A.A., Egun, A.J. (2022): Stress among university students in Osun State, Nigeria. – *International Journal of Health Sciences and Research* 12(7): 8-24.
- [2] Alenazi, F.M. (2023): The relation between academic procrastination and student's achievement-a quantitative study among female students at Jouf University. – *Information Sciences Letters* 12(5): 2075-2087.
- [3] Ashraf, M., Malik, J.A., Musharraf, S. (2019): Academic stress predicted by academic procrastination among young adults: Moderating role of peer influence resistance. – *Journal of Liaquat University of Medical & Health Sciences* 18(01): 65-70.

- [4] Barbayannis, G., Bandari, M., Zheng, X., Baquerizo, H., Pecor, K.W., Ming, X. (2022): Academic stress and mental well-being in college students: correlations, affected groups, and COVID-19. – *Frontiers in Psychology* 13: 10p.
- [5] Catacutan, S.M., Ortiz, M.J., Mangadlao, T.D., Mission, R.J., Nonong, R.G., Obenza, D.M. (2024): The Relationship Between Procrastination and Academic Stress Among University Students. – *International Journal of Multidisciplinary Studies in Higher Education* 1(1): 12-21.
- [6] Cohen, S., Gianaros, P.J., Manuck, S.B. (2016): A stage model of stress and disease. – *Perspectives on Psychological Science* 11(4): 456-463.
- [7] Fentaw, Y., Moges, B.T., Ismail, S.M. (2022): Academic procrastination behavior among public university students. – *Education Research International* 8p.
- [8] Ferrari, J.R. (2010): Still procrastinating: The no regrets guide to getting it done. – Turner Publishing Company 256p.
- [9] Ferrari, J.R., Tibbett, T.P. (2020): Procrastination. – In *Encyclopedia of Personality and Individual Differences*, Cham: Springer International Publishing 8p.
- [10] Hj Ramli, N.H., Alavi, M., Mehrinezhad, S.A., Ahmadi, A. (2018): Academic stress and self-regulation among university students in Malaysia: Mediator role of mindfulness. – *Behavioral Sciences* 8(1): 9p.
- [11] Kim, K.R., Seo, E.H. (2015): The relationship between procrastination and academic performance: A meta-analysis. – *Personality and Individual Differences* 82: 26-33.
- [12] Kim, L.S., Nainee, S., Aun, T.S. (2018): The association between self-regulation and procrastination among private university students in Malaysia. – *Jurnal Psikologi Malaysia* 32(1): 12-18.
- [13] Ko, C.Y.A., Chang, Y. (2019): Investigating the relationships among resilience, social anxiety, and procrastination in a sample of college students. – *Psychological Reports* 122(1): 231-245.
- [14] Kuftyak, E. (2022): Procrastination, stress and academic performance in students. – *Arpha Proceedings* 5: 965-974.
- [15] Manrique-Millones, D., Millones-Rivalles, R., Manrique-Pino, O. (2019): The SISCO Inventory of Academic Stress: Examination of its psychometric properties in a Peruvian sample. – *Ansiedad y Estrés* 25(1): 28-34.
- [16] Mercado-Vinces, S., Aliaga, J.C.C., Castillo, J.A.R., Ocaña-Fernández, Y. (2021): Academic procrastination and the stress of university students of electronic engineering from the Callao region. – *REVISTA GEINTEC-GESTAO INOVACAO E TECNOLOGIAS* 11(4): 320-333.
- [17] Mohammadzadeh, M., Awang, H., Ismail, S., & Kadir Shahar, H. (2018). Stress and coping mechanisms among adolescents living in orphanages: A n experience from Klang Valley, Malaysia. – *Asia-Pacific Psychiatry* 10(1): 5p.
- [18] Muhammadamin, B.B., Abdalwahid, H. (2023): Academic Stress and Its Relationship With Procrastination Among University Students. – *Twejer Journal* 6(1): 2118-2140.
- [19] Muliani, R., Imam, H., Dendiawan, E. (2020): Relationship between stress level and academic procrastination among new nursing students. – *The Malaysian Journal of Nursing (MJN)* 11(3): 63-67.
- [20] Nayak, S.G. (2019): Impact of Procrastination and Time-Management on Academic Stress among Undergraduate Nursing Students: A Cross Sectional Study. – *International Journal of Caring Sciences* 12(3): 1480-1486.
- [21] Niazov, Z., Hen, M., Ferrari, J.R. (2022): Online and academic procrastination in students with learning disabilities: the impact of academic stress and self-efficacy. – *Psychological Reports* 125(2): 890-912.
- [22] Rozental, A., Forsström, D., Hussoon, A., Klingsieck, K.B. (2022): Procrastination among university students: Differentiating severe cases in need of support from less severe cases. – *Frontiers in Psychology* 13: 15p.

- [23] Sirois, F.M. (2023): Procrastination and stress: A conceptual review of why context matters. – *International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health* 20(6): 15p.
- [24] Sirois, F.M. (2004): Procrastination and intentions to perform health behaviors: The role of self-efficacy and the consideration of future consequences. – *Personality and Individual Differences* 37(1): 115-128.
- [25] Yee, X.P., Lai, C.S. (2021): Relationship Between Academic Motivation and Procrastination Among Students at a Private University College in Kuala Lumpur. – *Academic Motivation and Procrastination* 13p.