



ACADEMIC PROCRASTINATION AND SELF-REGULATED LEARNING AMONG UNIVERSITY STUDENTS

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Abstract

This study examined the relationship between self-regulated learning (SRL) and academic procrastination among university students. The study involved 30 students aged 18–19 from the English Philology faculty at Uzbekistan State University of World Languages. Data were collected through a 15-item researcher-developed questionnaire using a 5-point Likert scale. Descriptive statistics and Pearson correlation analysis were used to analyze the data. The results showed relatively high levels of self-regulated learning ($M = 3.71$, $SD = 0.80$) and moderate levels of academic procrastination ($M = 3.09$, $SD = 0.92$). A weak negative correlation was found between SRL and academic procrastination, but it was not statistically significant, $r(28) = -.12$, $p = .53$. None of the examined SRL components showed a statistically significant relationship with procrastination. These findings suggest that further research with larger samples is needed to better understand the relationship between SRL and academic procrastination.

Keywords: academic procrastination; self-regulated learning; university students; self-regulation; time management; metacognitive strategies

Introduction

Academic procrastination is a common issue among university students and has been receiving considerable attention in educational and psychological research. It generally refers to the unnecessary or intentional delay of academic tasks despite being aware of negative consequences of delaying those tasks. Although procrastination is sometimes viewed simply as poor time management or a lack of motivation, previous research suggests that it is a more complex phenomenon associated with students' cognitive, motivational, and self-regulatory conditions. Recent research continues to identify academic procrastination as an important factor affecting students' academic performance and learning experiences.

One perspective that has been particularly beneficial in understanding academic procrastination is self-regulated learning (SRL). Self-regulated learning refers to students' ability to actively manage their thoughts, motivation, behaviors, and learning strategies in order to achieve academic goals. This ability is especially important in higher education, where students are expected to improve their independent learning skills. Research on university students has shown that SRL is associated with various academic outcomes, including academic performance, motivation, and the effective use of learning strategies.

Previous studies have also provided evidence of a relationship between self-regulated learning and academic procrastination. Limone et al. (2020), for example, examined procrastination among 450 university students and found that time management and metacognitive strategies were important in understanding students' procrastinating behavior. Similarly, Ma et al. (2022) found that lower levels of online self-regulated learning were associated with higher levels of academic procrastination among university students. Their

findings also suggested that factors such as attention control and peer support may have an effect on this relationship.

More recent research has examined this relationship specifically among students learning English as a foreign language. Tao et al. (2025) investigated 239 university EFL students and found that metacognitive strategies, effort regulation, and time management were relevant to academic procrastination. Their study further showed that academic procrastination was negatively related to academic success. These findings suggest that students' ability to regulate their learning may be particularly relevant when examining procrastination in language-learning contexts.

However, self-regulated learning should not be understood as a single skill. It involves several related processes, including metacognitive regulation, time management, effort regulation, and the control of learning strategies. Earlier research has also suggested that students' beliefs about their ability to regulate their own learning may be significant. Thus, examining SRL as a broader construct may provide a more comprehensive understanding of why some students are more likely to postpone academic tasks than others.

In spite of the growing body of research on academic procrastination and self-regulated learning, previous studies have examined different SRL components, student populations, and educational contexts. Some research has focused on general university populations, while other studies have examined online learners or EFL students. This variation indicates a need for further research examining the relationship between self-regulated learning and academic procrastination within specific university contexts.

Hence, the present study aims to investigate the relationship between self-regulated learning and academic procrastination among university students. It also seeks to identify which components of self-regulated learning are mostly related to academic procrastination. By examining these relationships, the study may contribute to a better understanding of the role of self-regulation in students' academic behavior and provide a basis for developing strategies aimed at reducing procrastination.

Based on the existing literature, the present study addresses the following research questions:

1. What are the reported levels of self-regulated learning and academic procrastination among the participants?
2. Is there a significant relationship between self-regulated learning and academic procrastination?
3. Are the individual components of self-regulated learning significantly related to academic procrastination?

Based on previous research, it was hypothesized that self-regulated learning would be negatively associated with academic procrastination.

Literature Review

Academic Procrastination

Academic procrastination refers to the voluntary and unnecessary delay of academic tasks despite being aware that such delay may have negative consequences. It is particularly relevant in higher education because university students are often responsible for managing their own time, learning activities, and academic responsibilities.

Previous research suggests that academic procrastination is influenced by multiple factors rather than by a single cause. These factors may include motivation, self-control, time management, emotional experiences, and students' beliefs about their own abilities. From this perspective, procrastination can be understood partly as a difficulty in regulating behavior in accordance with academic goals.

Procrastination may also be associated with negative academic outcomes. Students who frequently delay academic tasks may experience difficulties completing assignments on time and may consequently experience poorer academic performance. Therefore, understanding the

factors associated with academic procrastination is important for both educational and psychological research.

Self-Regulated Learning

Self-regulated learning (SRL) refers to the process through which students actively manage different aspects of their learning in order to achieve academic goals. Self-regulated learners plan their learning activities, monitor their progress, regulate their effort, and evaluate their performance.

SRL consists of several related processes rather than a single ability. These processes may include goal setting, time management, metacognitive monitoring, effort regulation, and the use of appropriate learning strategies. Students therefore differ not only in what they know, but also in how effectively they manage and regulate their learning.

This perspective is particularly relevant to university education, where students are generally expected to work more independently. Students who experience difficulties with planning, monitoring their learning, managing their time, or maintaining effort may have greater difficulty completing academic tasks effectively.

Relationship Between Self-Regulated Learning and Academic Procrastination

Previous research has generally suggested a negative relationship between self-regulated learning and academic procrastination. In other words, students who demonstrate stronger self-regulation tend to report lower levels of procrastination.

Limone et al. (2020) examined academic procrastination from a self-regulated learning perspective and highlighted the importance of time management and metacognitive processes. Their findings suggest that students' ability to organize and monitor their learning may be relevant to their tendency to postpone academic tasks.

Similarly, Ma et al. (2022) reported that lower levels of online self-regulated learning were associated with higher levels of academic procrastination among Chinese university students. Their findings also indicated that factors such as attention control and peer support may contribute to this relationship. This suggests that the relationship between SRL and procrastination may be influenced by additional psychological and social factors.

More recently, Tao et al. (2025) examined university EFL students and found that several SRL components, including metacognitive strategies, effort regulation, and time management, were related to academic procrastination. Their findings are particularly relevant to the present study because the current research also focuses on students in an English-language learning context.

Taken together, these studies suggest that academic procrastination may be related to several aspects of self-regulated learning rather than to a single learning behavior. However, the strength of these relationships may vary depending on the student population, learning context, and specific SRL component examined.

Self-Regulated Learning Components and Procrastination

Time Management

Time management is an important component of self-regulated learning because students need to allocate sufficient time to academic tasks and organize their study schedules effectively. Difficulties in managing study time may make it easier for students to postpone academic responsibilities.

Previous research has identified time management as an important factor associated with academic procrastination. Limone et al. (2020) highlighted its relevance among university students, while Tao et al. (2025) reported a negative association between time management and procrastination among university EFL students.

Metacognitive Strategies

Metacognitive strategies involve students' awareness and regulation of their own learning processes. These strategies include planning how to approach a task, monitoring understanding, and evaluating the effectiveness of learning strategies.

Metacognitive processes may be particularly relevant to procrastination because students need to recognize what they need to accomplish and monitor whether they are making sufficient progress. Limone et al. (2020) emphasized the relevance of metacognitive processes to procrastinating behavior, while Tao et al. (2025) also identified metacognitive strategies as relevant to academic procrastination.

Effort Regulation

Effort regulation refers to students' ability to maintain their effort when academic tasks become difficult, boring, or frustrating. This ability is important because completing academic tasks often requires students to continue working despite temporary difficulties or a lack of motivation.

Tao et al. (2025) found that effort regulation was negatively associated with academic procrastination among EFL students. This suggests that students who are better able to maintain their effort may be less likely to postpone difficult academic tasks.

Self-Efficacy for Self-Regulation

Students' beliefs about their ability to regulate their own learning may also be relevant to academic procrastination. Self-efficacy for self-regulation refers to students' confidence in their ability to successfully regulate their academic behavior.

Klassen et al. (2008) distinguished self-regulation from self-efficacy for self-regulation and found a strong negative relationship between self-efficacy for self-regulation and academic procrastination. This suggests that having self-regulation strategies may not be sufficient if students lack confidence in their ability to use those strategies effectively.

Research Gap

Although previous research has generally found a negative relationship between self-regulated learning and academic procrastination, several differences can be observed across existing studies. Researchers have examined different student populations, educational settings, and SRL components. For example, some studies have focused on general university populations, whereas others have examined online learners or EFL students.

Furthermore, previous studies have emphasized different aspects of SRL, including time management, metacognitive strategies, effort regulation, and self-efficacy for self-regulation. Examining these components together may provide a broader understanding of how different aspects of students' self-regulation relate to academic procrastination.

Therefore, the present study focuses on the relationship between self-regulated learning and academic procrastination among university students and examines whether different SRL components are associated with academic procrastination.

Methodology

Participants

The participants in this study were 30 university students aged 18–19 who were enrolled in the English Philology faculty at Uzbekistan State University of World Languages. All participants were actively studying at the university at the time of data collection.

Instrument

Data were collected using a researcher-developed questionnaire consisting of 15 items rated on a 5-point Likert scale (1 = Strongly disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Neutral, 4 = Agree, 5 = Strongly agree). The questionnaire consisted of two sections. The first section (Items 1–9) assessed self-regulated learning (SRL), covering planning and time management, metacognitive monitoring, learning strategies, effort regulation, and self-efficacy. The second section (Items 10–15) assessed academic procrastination, focusing on task initiation and delay behaviors.

Item 10, "I start assignments as soon as they are given to me," was reverse-scored before analysis because it was phrased in the opposite direction to the other procrastination items.

The questionnaire demonstrated acceptable internal consistency. Cronbach's alpha was .86 for the SRL scale and .79 for the academic procrastination scale.

Procedure

The questionnaire was administered online using Google Forms on 28 August 2026. Participation was voluntary, and participants completed the questionnaire anonymously. A total of 30 responses were collected.

Data Analysis

Descriptive statistics, including means and standard deviations, were calculated for individual items and for the overall SRL and academic procrastination scores. Pearson correlation coefficients were calculated to examine the relationship between self-regulated learning and academic procrastination, both overall and across the SRL subscales. Statistical significance was evaluated using a threshold of $p < .05$.

Results

The results showed that students reported relatively high levels of self-regulated learning (SRL), with a mean score of 3.71 (SD = 0.80) on a 5-point scale. Academic procrastination was moderate, with a mean score of 3.09 (SD = 0.92).

Among the SRL items, the highest mean scores were found for checking one's understanding after studying ($M = 4.03$) and confidence in completing academic tasks ($M = 4.00$). The lowest-rated SRL item was maintaining motivation when academic tasks became difficult ($M = 3.33$). For academic procrastination, the lowest mean score was reported for postponing tasks without a good reason ($M = 2.70$), whereas the highest was for delaying work until close to the deadline ($M = 3.53$).

Both scales demonstrated acceptable internal consistency. The SRL scale had a Cronbach's alpha of .86, while the academic procrastination scale had an alpha of .79.

A Pearson correlation analysis was conducted to examine the relationship between SRL and academic procrastination. A weak negative correlation was found between the two variables, but this relationship was not statistically significant, $r(28) = -.12$, $p = .53$. Therefore, the results did not provide sufficient evidence of a significant relationship between SRL and academic procrastination in this sample.

The relationships between the SRL subscales and academic procrastination were also examined. None of the subscales showed a statistically significant correlation with academic procrastination. Time management was weakly negatively correlated with procrastination ($r = -.03$, $p = .86$), as were metacognitive strategies ($r = -.21$, $p = .26$) and effort regulation and self-efficacy ($r = -.12$, $p = .55$). Although all three correlations were negative, none reached statistical significance.

Discussion

This study examined the relationship between self-regulated learning (SRL) and academic procrastination among university students. Based on previous research (e.g., Limone et al., 2020; Ma et al., 2022; Tao et al., 2025), a negative relationship between SRL and procrastination was expected. However, the results did not show a statistically significant relationship between overall SRL and academic procrastination. Similarly, none of the SRL subscales showed a statistically significant relationship with procrastination.

This finding differs from previous studies, which have generally reported that stronger self-regulated learning is associated with lower levels of academic procrastination. One possible explanation is the small sample size. With only 30 participants, the study had limited statistical power, making it difficult to detect weaker relationships between the variables. Although the correlations in the present study were not statistically significant, they were all negative, which was consistent with the expected direction of the relationship.

Another possible explanation is the relatively homogeneous nature of the sample. All participants were students from the English Philology faculty at one university and were aged 18–19. Therefore, the findings may not represent students from other faculties, universities, age groups, or academic backgrounds.

The use of self-report measures may also have influenced the results. Participants were asked to evaluate their own learning behaviors and procrastination tendencies, and their responses may not always accurately reflect their actual behavior. Such differences between reported and actual behavior may have reduced the strength of the observed relationships.

Overall, the findings should therefore be interpreted cautiously. The lack of a statistically significant relationship in this sample does not necessarily mean that SRL and academic procrastination are unrelated. Rather, the result may reflect the characteristics and limitations of the current sample and measurement approach.

Limitations

Several limitations should be considered when interpreting the findings. First, the sample size was relatively small ($N = 30$), which limits statistical power and the generalizability of the results. Second, participants were recruited from a single faculty at one university, which further limits the extent to which the findings can be generalized to other student populations. Third, the study used a researcher-developed questionnaire and self-report data, which may introduce measurement bias and makes direct comparison with studies using established validated instruments more difficult. Finally, the cross-sectional design provides information about the relationship between SRL and procrastination at one point in time but does not allow causal conclusions to be drawn.

Conclusion

This study investigated the relationship between self-regulated learning and academic procrastination among 30 university students. The participants reported relatively high levels of self-regulated learning and moderate levels of academic procrastination. However, no statistically significant relationship was found between overall self-regulated learning and academic procrastination or between the examined SRL components and procrastination.

Although the findings did not support the expected relationship, they contribute to the understanding of self-regulated learning and academic procrastination within this specific student context. Future research should use larger and more diverse samples and validated measurement instruments to further examine the relationship between these variables.

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