



Influence of Academic Procrastination on Examination Stress: Evidence from CISCE Class XII Students

Xavier Munda

Ph.D. Research Scholar, Department of Education, University of Technology, Jaipur, Rajasthan, India.

Email: mundaxavier@yahoo.com

Dr. Vinod Kumar Tiwari

Head of the Department, School of Education,
Research Supervisor, School of Education,
University of Technology, Jaipur, Rajasthan, India.

Email: vinodtiwari9956@gmail.com

ABSTRACT

The present study examined academic procrastination and examination stress among CISCE Class XII students in Mumbai, Maharashtra. A quantitative descriptive-correlational research design was adopted, and data were collected from 550 students, comprising 275 male and 275 female respondents, through a structured five-point Likert-scale questionnaire. The study focused on examination stress, fear of failure, poor time management, lack of motivation, digital distraction, and last-minute preparation. Descriptive analysis showed that pressure to obtain high marks and nervousness regarding board examination performance recorded the highest combined agreement, at 49.09% each. Stress when board examinations were near was reported by 48.36% of students, while 48.18% expressed fear of obtaining low marks. Anxiety regarding syllabus completion was reported by 48.00%, and 47.46% felt nervous because of parental and teacher expectations. Among procrastination-related factors, 41.09% agreed that fear of failure delayed examination preparation, 40.00% reported that poor time management made preparation stressful, and 39.09% stated that lack of motivation caused postponement of academic work. Dimension-wise analysis revealed that examination stress had the highest average agreement at 46.70%, followed by fear of failure at 44.09%, poor time management at 36.69%, and lack of motivation at 35.88%. The overall agreement level was 40.84%, indicating that academic procrastination and examination stress were considerable concerns among CISCE Class XII students. The study recommends time-management training, regular revision, counselling, parental support, and controlled use of digital devices.

Keywords: *Academic Procrastination, Academic Stress, Board Examination, CISCE Class XII Students, Time Management.*

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Introduction

Academic performance at the senior secondary stage is highly significant because it influences students' admission to higher educational institutions, professional courses, and future career opportunities. For students studying in Class 12 under the Council for the Indian School Certificate Examinations (CISCE), board examinations represent an important academic milestone. The curriculum demands conceptual understanding, regular study, project completion, practical work, revision, and examination preparation. In a metropolitan city such as Mumbai, these responsibilities are often intensified by a competitive educational culture, demanding school schedules, private coaching, parental expectations, and preparation for entrance examinations.

Despite understanding the importance of board examinations, many students postpone essential academic activities such as completing assignments, preparing notes, revising lessons, and practising previous examination papers. This repeated and unnecessary delay in performing academic tasks is known as academic procrastination. It is not always caused by laziness or poor time management. Procrastination may develop because of fear of failure, lack of confidence, perfectionist attitudes, low motivation, difficulty in understanding subjects, emotional discomfort, and distraction caused by mobile phones, social media, online entertainment, and other digital platforms [1].

When students continuously delay their academic responsibilities, they are left with insufficient time to prepare effectively for examinations. They may attempt to complete large portions of the syllabus within a limited period, resulting in hurried learning, inadequate revision, disturbed sleep, physical exhaustion, and reduced concentration. Consequently, students may experience anxiety, tension, frustration, helplessness, and fear of poor performance. Academic procrastination therefore becomes an important factor contributing to examination-related academic stress.

Academic stress refers to the psychological and emotional pressure experienced when educational demands appear greater than a student's available abilities, time, or coping resources. Among CISCE Class 12 students, stress may become particularly intense because board examination results are often associated with college admission, scholarships, parental approval, social recognition, and career planning. Procrastination further increases this pressure by creating a sense of lost time and incomplete preparation. A repetitive cycle may develop in which students delay tasks because they feel stressed, and the delay subsequently produces even greater stress.

The present study examines the role of academic procrastination in causing academic stress during examinations among CISCE Board Class 12 students, with special reference to Mumbai, Maharashtra. It seeks to understand how delayed study behaviour, avoidance of difficult subjects, irregular revision, digital distractions, and last-minute preparation influence students' emotional well-being and examination experiences. The study also highlights the importance of self-regulation, effective time management, parental support, counselling, and supportive school environments in reducing procrastination and academic stress.

1.2 Senior Secondary Achievement Shapes Higher Education and Careers

Senior secondary education is a transitional stage between school education and higher academic or professional development. Performance in Class 12 examinations frequently determines students' eligibility for undergraduate programmes, professional courses, entrance examinations, scholarships, and merit-based opportunities. Strong academic achievement reflects not only subject knowledge but also consistency, discipline, responsibility, concentration, and the ability to manage demanding academic situations.

1.2.1 Significance of Senior Secondary Academic Achievement

Class 12 achievement plays a decisive role in shaping students' educational confidence, aspirations, and future direction. Board examination results are commonly used by universities and colleges to evaluate academic readiness. Good performance may provide students with a wider range of academic choices, whereas lower marks may restrict access to preferred institutions or courses [2-4].

1.2.2 Role in Higher Education Opportunities

CISCE Class 12 marks are important for admission to competitive undergraduate programmes. In courses with high cut-off requirements, even minor differences in scores may affect admission possibilities. Academic achievement may also influence access to scholarships, financial assistance, and other merit-based benefits. Thus, board performance serves as an important gateway to quality higher education.

1.2.3 Influence on Career Prospects

Senior secondary achievement may have long-term consequences for professional development. Several competitive examinations and professional programmes consider Class 12 marks as part of their eligibility requirements. A strong academic record may also support future applications for internships, placements, professional training, and international education.

1.2.4 Challenges Faced by CISCE Class 12 Students

CISCE students often face a comprehensive syllabus, internal assessments, practical examinations, assignments, projects, and competitive examination preparation. These demands are accompanied by peer comparison, parental expectations, limited time, and digital distractions. Without proper planning, students may experience anxiety, exhaustion, loss of motivation, and procrastination.

1.2.5 Need for Holistic Development and Support Systems

Academic success should be supported by emotional well-being, healthy routines, life skills, and positive relationships. Schools and families should encourage realistic goal-setting, organised study schedules, adequate sleep, regular breaks, counselling, and stress-management practices. Such support can help students achieve academically without sacrificing their mental health.

1.3 Academic Pressure in Metropolitan Competitive Educational Environments

Students in metropolitan cities such as Mumbai experience intense academic competition because of high institutional standards, limited seats in reputed colleges, extensive coaching systems, and

continuous comparison with high-performing peers. The fast-paced urban lifestyle often requires students to manage school, tuition, assignments, travel, projects, and entrance preparation simultaneously.

Parental expectations and social definitions of success may further increase pressure. Students may fear disappointing their families or being judged on the basis of marks. Continuous comparison with siblings, relatives, and classmates may reduce confidence and create fear of failure. Consequently, academic pressure can contribute to emotional distress, procrastination, burnout, and unhealthy study practices. A balanced and supportive educational environment is therefore necessary to help students manage academic demands effectively [5-9].

2. RELATED STUDY

Dianti and Handayani (2025) had examined coping strategies used by male and female high school students during mathematics examinations. Data had been collected from 94 Grade X students through a 56-item questionnaire. The findings had shown that problem-focused coping was used by 83.78% of male students and 64.91% of female students. However, gender differences had not significantly influenced the coping strategies adopted during mathematics examinations.

Kumar and Rathi (2025) had studied academic stressors and examination anxiety among 218 upper secondary students during the post-COVID reopening period. The findings had revealed that over one-third of students experienced high stress, while fear of failure and uncertainty affected nearly half of them. Academic stress had shown a strong positive relationship with adolescent stress and examination anxiety, particularly in relation to teaching methods and teacher–student relationships.

Bolos et al. (2024) had examined academic stress and salivary biochemical markers among 44 dental students during low- and high-stress examination periods. The results had shown a significant decline in total antioxidant capacity during stressful periods, while cortisol changes were not statistically significant. Anxiety scores had increased during examinations, particularly among female students. The study had recommended stress-management interventions to protect students' psychological and physiological well-being.

Kumar (2024) had comparatively analysed Class IX English textbooks prescribed by the CBSE and ICSE Boards. Using descriptive content analysis, the study had examined textbook content, language features, similarities, and differences. The findings had indicated that both textbooks contained certain common elements, but their presentation, focus, and emphasis differed considerably. The researcher had concluded that the CBSE textbook was comparatively more satisfactory regarding language-related aspects.

Sumicad et al. (2023) had explored the psychological preparedness of psychology graduates for the psychometrician board examination. Sixteen participants had been interviewed through a qualitative research design. The findings had identified motivation, academic preparation, personal characteristics, and environmental conditions as major influences. Challenges had included poor study habits, health concerns, low confidence, and high expectations. Participants had managed these difficulties through direct coping and social support.

Alduraywish et al. (2023) had assessed academic stress, eating habits, and bowel symptoms among 297 medical students. Most respondents had experienced moderate examination stress, while some had reported high stress. Increased stress had been associated with unhealthy dietary practices, breakfast skipping, low water intake, and greater bowel discomfort. The study had also found that female students experienced more severe constipation symptoms, whereas male students reported relatively higher stress.

Shakeel et al. (2022) had examined the causes and consequences of academic stress among 660 university students in Pakistan. The findings had revealed that examination fear, inadequate preparation, and parental pressure were major sources of stress. No significant gender difference had been observed in students' stress levels. The researchers had recommended establishing counselling and guidance services within universities to promote effective coping techniques and academic stress management.

Niazov et al. (2022) had compared academic procrastination, online procrastination, stress, and self-efficacy among students with and without learning disabilities. Significant differences had been found in most variables except online procrastination. Academic stress and self-efficacy had mediated the relationship between learning disabilities and procrastination. The study had indicated that learning difficulties could increase academic challenges and delay behaviour, although further investigation of online procrastination had been recommended.

Borghi et al. (2021) had examined perceived stress, resilience, and salivary cortisol among 79 pharmacy students during examination and rest days. Students had reported greater stress and moderate resilience during examinations. Female students had demonstrated lower resilience and higher cortisol output on examination days. However, preserved cortisol patterns had indicated healthy physiological adaptation. The researchers had concluded that students gradually adjusted to repeated academic stress through cortisol regulation.

Kumari et al. (2021) had assessed anxiety and stress among 200 college students before and after midterm examinations. Using the DASS and PSS scales, the researchers had compared students' psychological conditions across examination stages. The findings had suggested that stress and anxiety increased before and during examinations and declined after their completion. The study had concluded that examination pressure significantly influenced the mental well-being of university students.

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

3.1 Introduction

Research methodology refers to the organised and scientific procedures used to collect, analyse, and interpret information for achieving the objectives of a study. It provides a structured foundation through which research findings can be made reliable, valid, and objective. The present study examined the role of academic procrastination in causing academic stress during examinations among CISCE Board Class XII students in Mumbai, Maharashtra. Therefore, a suitable research methodology was adopted to understand students' procrastination behaviour and its relationship with examination-related stress.

The study followed a quantitative approach with a descriptive and correlational research design. The descriptive design helped identify the existing levels of procrastination and academic stress among students, while the correlational design examined the association between these two variables. Data were collected through a structured questionnaire based on a five-point Likert scale. The methodology covered the research design, nature of the study, population, sample, sampling technique, study variables, research instrument, data sources, pilot testing, reliability, validity, data collection, ethical considerations, and statistical methods [10].

3.2 Research Design

The study adopted a quantitative descriptive-correlational research design. The descriptive component was used to explain students' existing behaviours, experiences, and attitudes related to academic procrastination and examination stress. It focused on areas such as poor time management, lack of motivation, fear of failure, excessive use of social media, digital distractions, and last-minute study practices.

The correlational component was used to determine whether academic procrastination was associated with increased academic stress. It examined the strength and direction of the relationship between the variables. The research was cross-sectional because information was collected from students at one specific point during the academic session.

3.3 Nature of the Study

The research was quantitative because numerical data were collected and analysed with statistical techniques. Students' responses were measured through a standardised five-point Likert scale. This approach enabled the calculation of frequencies, percentages, means, standard deviations, correlations, and regression values.

The study was descriptive because it presented the current status of procrastination and examination stress without manipulating the variables. It described students' academic routines, motivational difficulties, digital distractions, study habits, and stress experiences.

The investigation was also correlational because it examined the relationship between academic procrastination as the independent variable and academic stress as the dependent variable. However, correlation indicated association and did not independently establish a definite cause-and-effect relationship.

A cross-sectional survey method was used to collect information from a large group of students through the same questionnaire. This method was practical and suitable for obtaining a general picture of students' experiences during the examination period [11].

3.4 Area, Population, and Sample of the Study

The study was conducted in selected CISCE-affiliated schools located in Mumbai, Maharashtra. Students were included from South Mumbai, Central Mumbai, the Western Suburbs, Navi Mumbai, and nearby areas. These locations were selected to obtain diverse responses based on school environment, commuting conditions, academic culture, peer influence, and educational facilities.

The population consisted of all Class XII students studying in CISCE-affiliated schools in Mumbai during the selected academic year. Students from Science, Commerce, and Humanities or Arts streams were included.

The final sample consisted of 550 students, including 275 male and 275 female respondents. The sample represented different age groups, academic streams, school types, and geographical locations.

3.5 Sampling Technique

Stratified random sampling was employed to select the respondents. Students were first divided into different groups or strata on the basis of gender, academic stream, type of school, and school location. Thereafter, respondents were randomly selected from each group. This technique ensured balanced representation and reduced the possibility of sampling bias.

3.6 Variables and Research Instrument

Academic procrastination was treated as the independent variable. Its major dimensions included poor time management, lack of motivation, fear of failure, distraction and social media use, and last-minute study habits. Academic stress during examinations was considered the dependent variable.

A self-developed structured questionnaire was used for collecting data. Section A included demographic information such as gender, age, academic stream, school type, and school location. Section B included statements related to academic stress, poor time management, lack of motivation, fear of failure, digital distraction, and last-minute study behaviour. Responses were recorded as Strongly Disagree, Disagree, Neutral, Agree, and Strongly Agree.

3.7 Data Sources, Pilot Study, Reliability, and Validity

Primary data were collected directly from students through the questionnaire. Secondary information was obtained from books, research journals, theses, conference proceedings, government reports, UGC CARE journals, Scopus-indexed articles, ERIC, and Google Scholar.

A pilot study involving approximately 40 to 50 students was conducted before the main survey. It helped identify unclear statements and improve the wording and sequence of questions. Reliability was measured through Cronbach's Alpha, with a value of 0.70 or above considered acceptable. Face validity, content validity, and expert validation were used to ensure that the instrument properly measured the intended concepts.

3.8 Data Collection, Ethics, and Statistical Analysis

Permission was obtained from the selected schools before administering the questionnaire. Students were informed about the purpose of the study, and participation was voluntary. Confidentiality and anonymity were maintained, and respondents were allowed to withdraw at any stage.

The collected data were analysed using IBM SPSS Statistics Version 26 or later. Frequencies, percentages, means, and standard deviations were used for descriptive analysis. Pearson correlation, independent-sample t-test, one-way ANOVA, and multiple regression analysis were applied to examine relationships, group differences, and the influence of various dimensions of procrastination on academic stress.

4. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The results and discussion present the descriptive analysis of academic procrastination and examination stress among 550 CISCE Class XII students. The findings identify the major stressors and procrastination-related behaviours influencing students during board examinations. Frequency percentages and dimension-wise analysis provide insights into examination stress, fear of failure, poor time management, and lack of motivation, highlighting their contribution to students' academic challenges.

Table 1. Ranking of Major Examination Stress and Procrastination Indicators

Rank	Analytical Indicator	Agree (%)	Strongly Agree (%)	Combined Agreement (%)
1	Pressure to score high marks	33.27	15.82	49.09
1	Nervousness about board examination performance	35.82	13.27	49.09
3	Stress when board examinations are near	32.18	16.18	48.36
4	Fear of obtaining low marks	33.09	15.09	48.18
5	Anxiety regarding syllabus completion	34.73	13.27	48.00
6	Nervousness about parental and teacher expectations	29.64	17.82	47.46
7	Fear of failure delays examination preparation	26.36	14.73	41.09
8	Poor time management makes preparation stressful	26.36	13.64	40.00
9	Avoidance of difficult topics due to fear	28.18	11.45	39.63
10	Lack of motivation postpones academic work	25.45	13.64	39.09

The strongest concerns were pressure to obtain high marks and nervousness regarding examination performance, with both indicators receiving 49.09% combined agreement. Fear of low marks, syllabus-completion anxiety, and expectations from parents and teachers also affected nearly half of the respondents. These findings show that examination stress was strongly connected with performance expectations and fear-related procrastination.

Table 2. Dimension-Wise Analytical Summary of Student Responses

Dimension	Average Agreement (%)	Average Neutral (%)	Average Disagreement (%)	Analytical Position
Examination Stress	46.70	34.54	18.76	Highest reported problem
Fear of Failure	44.09	33.27	22.64	Strong psychological contributor
Poor Time Management	36.69	35.13	28.18	Important behavioural contributor
Lack of Motivation	35.88	33.42	30.70	Moderate contributor
Overall Average	40.84	34.09	25.07	Considerable combined influence

Examination stress recorded the highest average agreement at 46.70%, followed by fear of failure at 44.09%. Poor time management and lack of motivation showed comparatively lower but still substantial agreement levels of 36.69% and 35.88%, respectively. Overall, approximately 40.84% of responses supported the presence of procrastination-related and examination-stress difficulties.

The relatively high neutral response of 34.09% suggests that many students experience these problems situationally rather than continuously. However, the agreement level remained considerably higher than disagreement, indicating that academic procrastination and examination stress were meaningful concerns among CISCE Class XII students. The study also identifies digital distractions and last-minute preparation as additional contributors, although numerical scale-level statistics for these dimensions were not fully reported in the available section.

5. FINDINGS OF THE STUDY

The study was conducted among 550 CISCE Class XII students, with equal representation of 275 male and 275 female respondents. The findings showed that examination-related pressure and fear of academic failure were major concerns among the students. The highest combined agreement was recorded for pressure to score high marks and nervousness about board examination performance, with 49.09% of respondents agreeing or strongly agreeing with each statement. This indicates that almost half of the students experienced psychological pressure related to their expected examination performance. A total of 48.36% of students reported feeling stressed when board examinations were near. Similarly, 48.18% expressed fear of obtaining low marks, while 48.00% experienced anxiety regarding the completion of the syllabus. These findings show that inadequate preparation and uncertainty about examination performance were important sources of stress. Parental and teacher expectations were also found to influence students' emotional well-being. Approximately 47.46% of respondents agreed that they felt nervous because of the expectations placed upon them by parents and teachers. Fear of failure emerged as an important psychological contributor to procrastination. Around 41.09% of students reported that fear of failure delayed their examination preparation, while 39.63% avoided difficult topics because of fear. This suggests that anxiety about poor performance may encourage students to postpone challenging academic activities.

Poor time management was another significant behavioural factor. About 40.00% of students agreed that ineffective time management made examination preparation stressful. The dimension-wise average agreement for poor time management was 36.69%, indicating that irregular planning and delayed study routines contributed to academic pressure.

Lack of motivation also influenced students' tendency to postpone academic work. Approximately 39.09% of respondents agreed that low motivation caused them to delay academic tasks. The average agreement recorded for the lack-of-motivation dimension was 35.88%.

The dimension-wise analysis showed that examination stress recorded the highest average agreement of 46.70%, followed by fear of failure at 44.09%. Poor time management and lack of motivation recorded average agreement levels of 36.69% and 35.88%, respectively. The overall average agreement across the examined dimensions was 40.84%, compared with 34.09% neutral responses and 25.07% disagreement. The higher agreement percentage indicates that procrastination-related

behaviours and examination stress were meaningful problems among the surveyed students. The relatively high neutral response suggests that some students may experience procrastination and stress only under particular academic situations, such as approaching examinations, incomplete syllabus coverage, difficult subjects, or pressure to obtain high marks. Overall, the findings indicate that examination stress among CISCE Class XII students was associated with fear of failure, performance expectations, incomplete preparation, poor time management, lack of motivation, and avoidance of difficult academic tasks.

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