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Academic Procrastination And Its Prevalence, Reasons And Differences In Gender Among Northeast Students

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Abstract: The community of northeast India is a minority and as students, receiving the adequate resources for their capabilities is necessary, thus that is usually the reason why the students from different northeast states decide on pursuing their higher education in more developed cities that have better facilities. The purpose of the present study is to examine Academic Procrastination behavior among northeast students studying in Delhi NCR, by investigating its prevalence and possible reasons, as well as differences in gender. The cross-sectional study was conducted on a sample of 120 northeast university students (69 female, 51 male), using a purposive sampling method. Data was collected by administering the Procrastination Assessment Scale-Student (PASS) by Solomon & Rothblum (1984) to measure the prevalence and reasons of academic procrastination. Results showed that overall 44.1% of the students were "nearly always/always" procrastinators. 39.1%, 51.6%, 483%, 30.8%, 22.4%, and 24.9% of the participants procrastinated almost always/always in the first to sixth areas of the PASS respectively. Additionally, the results revealed that procrastination was an issue quite often and most of the students indicated an eagerness to lessen this behavior. The main reasons for academic procrastination were found to be decision-making difficulty, time management, task aversivesness, and laziness. Independent sample t-test revealed no significant differences in gender with respect to the level of academic procrastination.

Keywords – academic procrastination, prevalence, reasons, gender, northeast students.

I. INTRODUCTION

Delaying or postponing a task is sometimes inevitable, it is a tendency in human beings. Using the phrases "I don't feel like doing this now," or "I'll do it later" has become a normalcy. Putting off things on a later time seems harmless, because one can always "do it later". Solomon and Rothblum, Beswick & Mann (1984) defines this behaviour as "procrastination is an act of needlessly delaying tasks to the extent of experiencing subjective discomfort". One of the most often used definitions of procrastination in research is "to put off the work which is necessary to reach some goal" (Lay, 1986).

Students' academic aspirations are always crucial to their professional success. And with aspirations comes juggling between deadlines for assignments, being punctual to classes, and maintaining good grades. Academic Procrastination (AP), as the name suggests, is a form of procrastination that occurs in educational settings. It refers to "the postponement of academic goals to the point where optimal performance becomes highly unlikely, resulting in psychological distress." (Ferrari et al., 1995). Whereas, Academic procrastination is defined by Dryden (2012) as an issue that is felt in areas such as finishing homework, prepping for tests, meeting with academic counselors, working on projects, and so forth. Research studies show that academic procrastination is a fairly prevalent occurrence, with 70% of students—particularly those who are in college education—describing it as an inherent aspect of their college experience (Ferrari, Lay, Pychyl, Schouwenburg, 2004). For instance, Daryani et al., 2021 in their study found that the majority of 55.1% of students at

Mulawarman procrastinate more than usual, and up to 44.9% exhibit below-average procrastination. Additionally, a recent study by Fentaw et al., 2022 revealed that among 323 public university students from Ethiopia, 81% were considered procrastinators and 19% were classified as non-procrastinators As a result, academic procrastination appears to be a significant issue among college students, with various individuals showing this pattern to varied degrees (Onwuegbuzie & Collins, 2001; Steel, 2004)

In a research, Solomon & Rothblum (1984) questioned pupils and staff members about their motivations for procrastinating on assignments. Two main components emerged from a factor analysis of the data: "Fear of Failure", and "Task Aversiveness." In addition to these two primary factors, other components that came up were dependency, taking risks, not making an effort, resisting authority, and having trouble making decisions. Another similar study by Syahrian et al., 2022 revealed that 64.41% of pupils exhibited significant levels of task aversion. This suggests that pupils in the high group are those who are concerned by task aversion or uncomfortable doing their duties. Whereas, Gohain & Gogoi (2021) in their study found that 68.9% of students procrastinated due to task dependency; 52.7% because of decision-making difficulty, and 66.4% due to lack of assertion. Other researchers on this theme have also found that low self-esteem, lack of sincerity, personal and situational anxiety, forgetfulness, laziness, and life satisfaction also lead students towards academic procrastination (Bashir, 2019; Wirajaya, 2020; Afzal and Jami, 2018; Aziz, & Tariq, 2013; Ozer et al., 2014)

According to Steel & Ferrari (2013), age, gender, and place of residence can all have an impact on a person's propensity for academic procrastination. Recently, many researchers have examined how differences in gender impact procrastinating behavior in educational environments, with varying degrees of success. Men reported procrastinating at higher rates than women, according to certain study (Mandap 2016). However, other researchers have discovered that female students procrastinated more often (RodarteLuna & Sherry, 2008). In another study, it was also found that procrastination happens irrespective of gender and that there is no notable difference (Fentaw et al., 2022)

Theoretical framework: Behavioral theories gave rise to opinions about academic procrastination in student populations. From a behavioral standpoint, academic procrastination is viewed as a task-related aversion tendency: Although persons often approach tasks that they think they are able to succeed; they prefer to avoid demanding tasks in which they think they are not capable (Bandura, 1986). According to classical learning theory, when punishment is avoided or reinforcement is given, behaviors often develop on their own (Ainslie, 1975). This was demonstrated by procrastinators' strong capacity to recall the events that followed their successes up until the very last moments when faced with a deadline. According to Ainslie's (1975) specious rewards theory, people would learn to avoid tasks if they received reinforcement at different rates. He purported that people prefer short-term incentives or reinforcement over long-term objectives since the former results in instant gratification. With this in mind, those who have a tendency to select instant gratification are considered procrastinators. Steel and König's (2006) temporal motivation theory (TMT) of procrastination expands the understanding of student procrastination. It is rooted in Ainslie and Haslam's work in 1992, which was named 'Picoeconomics' or 'Hyperbolic Discounting'. Their research identified three factors—a lack of incentives, imprecise instructions, and deadlines—that may contribute to procrastination. According to the theory, procrastination is a manifestation of a behavioral habit of delayed gratification. A student who puts off learning has the inclination to delay completing academic tasks linked to long-term objectives that will provide more rewards in favor of present immediate goals. Put another way, when people believe there is little benefit to completing a task, they tend to put it off.

A large number of researches done on students often reveal that academic procrastination is a prevailing issue that affects a student's academic performance vastly, with as much as 70% of students reporting that they procrastinate on major project deadlines, as well as preparing for tests. While researches have been conducted among different population groups, published literature on "the prevalence and reasons of academic procrastination" among northeast students of India as well as any difference in gender is still very limited and remain scarce. Therefore, the present research shall be helpful in studying procrastination on northeast students to examine prevalence, reasons, and differences in gender. Knowing about possible antecedents of academic procrastination as well as its prevalence will be of immense value to provide more information on this theme, strengthen intervention, prevention and to make the general public aware of its consequences and severity in the student population.

A. Research Questions

1) What is the level of academic procrastination among northeast students?

2) What is the prevalence of academic procrastination among northeast students?

3) Are there many reasons for academic procrastination among northeast students?

4) Is there any statistically significant difference for academic procrastination among northeast students with respect to gender?

B. Objectives

1) To investigate the level of academic procrastination among northeast students.

2) TO study the prevalence of academic procrastination among northeast students.

3) To examine possible reasons of academic procrastination among northeast students.

4) To study academic procrastination of northeast students with respect to gender.

C.Hypothesis

Research question 3: There are many different reasons for academic procrastination among northeast students.

Research question 4: There is no statistically significant difference in the level of academic procrastination among northeast students with respect to gender.

II. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The current research has employed a descriptive observational design to assess the objectives of the study. The study is quantitative in nature. The participants for the current study were selected from universities across South Delhi (Delhi NCR) using purposive sampling technique. Sample size consisted of 120 students, 69 were female (57.5%) and 51 were male (42.5%), pursuing undergraduate and postgraduate courses. The average age of the participants was 22.67 years (S.D= 1.43 years), ranging from 20 to 26 years. The sample was selected based on the following inclusion criteria: Northeast university students who are currently studying in Delhi NCR, students who are willing to participate voluntarily in the study, and students who are pursuing full-time undergraduate and postgraduate degrees. The exclusion criteria was students with diagnosed disorders that make them procrastinate (depression, ADHD, etc.), and students who do not fill out the questionnaire completely.

A. Tools Used

1) Procrastination Assessment Scale-Students (PASS) [44 items scale]: The PASS was intended to measure two things: 1) the frequency of academic procrastination, the degree to which it is viewed as a problem and the need to curtail it, and 2) the underlying causes. The first part has 18 items which measures the prevalence of procrastination in six academic areas:- (a) Writing a term paper, (b) Studying for exam, (c) Completing weekly reading assignments, (d) Performing administrative tasks, (e) Attendance tasks, and (f) Student activities in general. The second section consists of 26 items that evaluate thirteen reasons why students put off their academic work (2 items for each cause). The scale's items are listed in a statement with five possible responses, ranging from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5). A number of studies have reported that the Procrastination Assessment Scale possesses adequate reliability and validity. Test-retest reliability during a 6-week period was found to have a Cronbach's alpha of .74 for the first part of the scale and .65 for the second half of the scale (Mortazavi, Mortazavi, & Khosrorad, 2015).

B. Statistical Analysis

1) Descriptive statistics: Firstly, descriptive statistics (mean, frequency, percentage, standard deviation, etc.) values were calculated to study both the level of students' academic procrastination, and reasons for the same.

2) Independent sample t-test was done to investigate differences in gender for prevalence of academic procrastination.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1 Descriptive statistics

The descriptive statistics for the variable utilized in the study are shown in Table 1, along with the total number of participants, range, minimum and maximum values, mean, median, mode, standard deviation, and variance.

	Ν	Range	Min	Max	Sum	Mean	Median	Mode	S.D	Variance
Level of	120	40	14	54	4292	35.77	36	36	7.83	61.34
Students'										
Academic										
Procrastination										

 Table 1. Summary of Students' Academic Procrastination Level

S.D: Standard Deviation

According to table 1, the values of the mean, median, and mode are 35.77, 36, and 36 respectively. The values differ slightly from one another. Thus, it may be said from the table above that the distribution of the data is normal.

The four categories of procrastinators were tabulated using the values of the mean (M=35.77), and standard deviation (S.D=7.83) of the academic procrastination scores. Table 2 presents the classification of the students' academic procrastination level into four groups based on the scores.

able 2. Dist	Ioution of Students	Academic 110clasti			
Category	Interval	Frequency	Percent %		
Very High	X>44	18	15%		
High	36 <x≤ 44<="" td=""><td>35</td><td>29.1%</td></x≤>	35	29.1%		
Moderate	27 <x≤36< td=""><td>53</td><td>44.1%</td></x≤36<>	53	44.1%		
Low	19 <x≤27< td=""><td>12</td><td>10%</td></x≤27<>	12	10%		
Very Low	X≤19	2	1.6%		
	Total	120	100		

Table 2. Distribution of Students' Academic Procrastination Score

According to the table, the findings from the study of academic procrastination among northeast students studying in Delhi NCR reveals that a very high level of academic procrastination was reported among 15% of college students. Academic procrastination was found to be at the high level category in 29.17% of cases. A greater percentage of the sample, i.e., 44.17%, fell into the range of moderate academic procrastination. A proportion of 10% of participants was found to have low levels of academic procrastination. In contrast, just 1.67% of individuals fell into the category of academic procrastination at the very low level. (Table 2 has been shown in the accompanying graphic for clarity.)

Thus, based on the results of the descriptive analysis, the researcher infers that there is a moderate level or prevalence of academic procrastination among northeast students studying in Delhi NCR. This can be substantiated by a study conducted by Daryani et al., 2021 aimed to describe the prevalence of academic procrastination among students at Medicine Faculty, Mulawarman University. The results of the study revealed that the majority of students do delay longer than the usual amount of time. 119 students are among the responders that procrastinate more than usual (55,1%) and up to 97 pupils (44,9%) exhibit below-average procrastination.

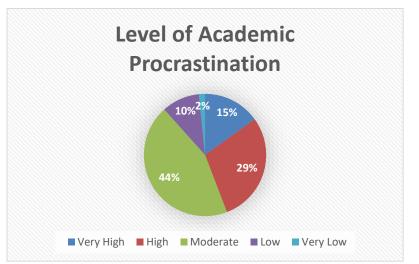


Figure 1: Showing percentage wise distribution of participants on the level of academic procrastination

3.2 Frequency table for prevalence of academic procrastination

The current study further aimed to determine the prevalence of academic procrastination across six domains.

Students' Tendency to	Never	Almost	Sometimes	Nearly	Always
Procrastinate in Six Domains		Never		Always	
	N (%)	N (%)	N (%)	N (%)	N (%)
Writing a term paper	15	19 <mark>(15.8)</mark>	39 (32.5)	30 (25)	17
	(12.5)				(14.1)
Studying for an exam	4 (3.3)	15 (12.5)	39 (32.5)	35 (29.1)	27
					(22.5)
Keeping up with weekly reading	6 (5)	18 (15)	38 (31.6)	39 (32.5)	19
assignments					(15.8)
Performing administrative tasks	17	32 (26.6)	34 (28.3)	25 (20.8)	12 (10)
	(14.1)				
Attending meetings	21	31 (25.8)	40 (33.3)	19 (15.8)	8 (6.6)
	(17.5)				
Student activities in general	11	23 (19.1)	56 (46.6)	17 (14.1)	13
	(9.17)		< 1 3		(10.8)

 Table 3. Propensity of students to procrastinate

Based on table 3 above, for the first dimension (writing a term paper), 25% and 14.1% had reported that they procrastinated "nearly always" and "always" respectively, while a study conducted by Hayat *et al.*, (2019) revealed that in writing a term paper, 26.6% had procrastinated almost usually or always. In studying for exams, participants had an overall prevalence rate of 84.1%, indicating that students had a tendency to procrastinate in this domain the most. Of them, 51.6% declared that they put off studying most of the time or always. In a similar study by Ankita & Kahramanb (2022), the researchers attempted to assess the degree of academic procrastination among students enrolled in prep classes at Kütahya Dumlupinar University. Results showed that in the second domain of studying for a test, 41.1% of students had nearly always procrastinated in the task. The present study however, shows higher prevalence rates.

The results of the present also showed that 48.3% and 30.8% of the participants, respectively, said they put off doing their weekly reading assignments and administrative work most of the time or all the time. Similar results can be seen in the study conducted by Mortazavi (2016) and Pedro (2018) where participants reported procrastinating nearly always and always in weekly reading tasks (49.9%), while a higher prevalence rate was found for the area of administrative tasks (45.5% of respondents were nearly always or always procrastinators in this domain). With regard to attending meetings, the findings revealed that 22.4% of respondents reported procrastinating almost always or always; other research by Shankar *et al.*, (2017) have indicated a lower value for this. Their research showed a prevalence rate of 18.7% in this domain. Finally, 24.9% of students in the present study were nearly always/always procrastinators in the domain of general student activities. Baguri, Ahmad, & Roslan (2020) study on master students at Universiti Putra Malaysia (UPM) yielded similar results. Their findings revealed that 25% of the students often/very often procrastinated in general student tasks.

3.3 Frequency table for Reasons of Academic Procrastination

In Table 4, based on replies, the frequency of reasons for academic procrastination among students is displayed. To investigate the main causes, we only draw attention to a significant portion of the "nearly always/always" replies.

Table 4. Students' Reasons for Academic Procrastination

Sl. No	Reasons for Procrastinati on	Items	Not at all reflects N (%)	Seldom reflects N (%)	Someho w reflects N (%)	Often reflects N (%)	Definite ly reflects N (%)
1.	Evaluation anxiety	Concerned professor wouldn't like your work Worried you would get a bad grade	37 (30.8) 32	22 (18.3) 21	43 (35.8) 38	8 (6.6) 18 (15)	10 (8.3) 11 (9.1)
			(20.6)	(17.5)	(31.6)		
2.	Dependency	Waited until a classmate did his/hers to get some advice	32 (20.6)	25 (20.8)	35 (29.1)	14 (11.6)	14 (11.6)
		Waited to see if the professor would give some more information about the paper	31 (25.8)	30 (25)	34 (28.3)	18 (15)	7 (5.8)
3.	Decision-	Hard time knowing what to include	16	16	37	26	25 (20.0)
	making difficulty	and what not to include in your paper Couldn't choose among all the topics	(13.3)	(13.3) 29	(30.8)	<mark>(21.6)</mark> 17	(20.8) 10 (8.3)
			(17.5)	(24.1)	(35.8)	(14.1)	, ,
4.	Time management	Had too many other things to do	13 (10.8)	26 (21.6)	40 (33.3)	24 (20)	17 (14.1)
		Felt overwh <mark>elmed by</mark> the task	17 (14.1)	20 (16.6)	40 (33.3)	26 (21.6)	17 (14.1)
5.	Lack of	Needed to ask professor for	24 (20)	17	41	23	15
	assertion	information, but felt uncomfortable approaching him/her		(14.1)	(24.1)	(19.1)	(12.5)
		Had difficulty requesting information from other people	32 (20.6)	31 (25.8)	29 (24.1)	15 (12.5)	13 (10.8)
6.	Rebellion against control	Resented having to do things assigned by others	46 (38.3)	30 (25)	28 (23.3)	10 (8.3)	6 (5)
		Resented people setting deadlines for you	45 (37.5)	42 (35)	23 (19.1)	10 (8.3)	0
7.	Low self- esteem	Didn't trust yourself to do a good job	38 (31.6)	22 (18.3)	34 (28.3)	14 (11.6)	12 (10)
		Didn't think you knew enough to write the paper	23 (19.1)	19 (15.8)	47 (39.1)	19 (15.8)	12 (10)
8.	Task aversiveness	Really disliked writing term papers	29 (24.1)	25 (20.8)	36 (30)	15 (12.5)	15 (12.5)
		Felt it just takes too long to write a term paper	18 (15)	20 (16.6)	39 (32.5)	20 (16.6)	23 (19.1)
9.	Risk-taking	Looked forward to the excitement of doing this task at the last minute	38 (31.6)	33 (27.5)	28 (23.3)	14 (11.6)	7 (5.8)
		Liked the challenge of waiting until the deadline	48 (40)	28 (23.3)	24 (20)	8 (6.6)	12 (10)
10	Fear of success		61 (50.8)	21 (17.5)	25 (20.8)	8 (6.6)	5 (4.1)
		Were concerned that if you got a good grade, people would have higher expectations of you in the future	47 (39.1)	28 (23.3)	25 (20.8)	8 (6.6)	12 (10)

11	Laziness	Didn't have enough energy to begin	19	21	36 (30)	23	<mark>21</mark>
		the task	(15.8)	(17.5)		(19.1)	(17.5)
		Just felt too lazy to write a term paper	16	24 (20)	34	<mark>27</mark>	<mark>19</mark>
			(13.3)		(28.3)	(22.5)	(15.8)
12	Peer pressure	Knew that your classmates hadn't	25	23	33	17	22
		started the paper either	(20.8)	(19.1)	(27.5)	(14.1)	(18.3)
		Friends were pressuring you to do	45	24 (20)	31	11 (9.1)	9 (7.5)
		other things	(37.5)		(25.8)		
13	Perfectionism	Set very high standards for yourself	24 (20)	27	33	19	17
		and worried that you wouldn't be		(22.5)	(27.5)	(15.8)	(14.1)
		able to meet those standards					
		Were concerned you wouldn't meet	30 (25)	27	34	17	12 (10)
		your own expectations		(22.5)	(28.3)	(14.1)	

Note: the item highlighted in green is the most significant and is explored.

The findings indicate that procrastination in educational settings can have a variety of causes. Among the northeast students studying in Delhi NCR, the main reasons for engaging in procrastinating behavior were found to be difficulty in decision making (42.4%), time management (69.8%)Task aversiveness (35.7%), and laziness (74.9%), shown in table 4 above.

The results suggest that indecisiveness is a cause of procrastination, as being unable to decide on a certain task may result in delaying to start that particular task. 42.4% of students reported having difficulty in choosing among the topics of the term paper. Due to their lack of metacognitive capacity, students may find it difficult to acquire information, find relevant sources to quote for their assignments, and structure their work in accordance with reporting standards. This can be substantiated from a study conducted by Izsóf- Jurás & Čačovecová (2021) where the researchers examined the relationships between indecision, academic procrastination and anxiety. The findings revealed that there was a significantly strong association between indecisiveness and academic procrastination. More variation in academic procrastination was explained by indecisiveness than by anxiety. Poor time-management and task aversiveness were also found to be the reasons why students procrastinated. Perhaps respondents struggle with time management, which impacts their targets and objectives, and makes it difficult for them to prioritize work. As a result, they put off completing academic assignments until later. This result can be validated by similar studies by other researchers. Aziz et al., (2017) conducted a study to investigate the causes of procrastination among university students. The results showed that the most contributing factor to students' procrastination tendencies is having too many assignments due at once, and time management plays a significant role in this behavior. In another study by Syahrial et al., (2022), the goal was to determine if task aversion and academic procrastination are related. According to the study's findings, 64.41% of pupils exhibit strong task aversion. This demonstrates that pupils in the high group are those who are concerned by dislike of tasks or uncomfortable doing their duties.

The present study found laziness to be the most contributing reason of students' academic procrastination. Students' excitement and drive to study are greatly influenced by their motivation to learn. Due to their hectic schedules and a lack of effort, students tend to postpone their learning behaviors. This finding can be justified by a similar study conducted by Abidin *et al.*, (2023) that aimed to determine the relationship between learning motivation and academic procrastination among students. The results showed that there was a significant negative association between students' academic procrastinating behavior and their learning motivation. This indicates that procrastination behavior increases with a decrease in learning motivation.

3.4 t-test

Another aim of the current study was to investigate differences in gender in the level of Academic Procrastination among northeast students studying in Delhi NCR. Table 5 below shows the independent sample t-test on the level of academic procrastination in terms of gender.

Variable	Gender	Ν	Mean	S.D	t-value	df	Significance value
Academic	Female	69	36.62	7.8	1.313	118	.191
Procrastination	Male	51	34.73	7.78			

Table 5. Summary of t-test on level of academic procrastination with respect to gender

According to Table 5, the results show that p > 0.05 (t= 1.313, df= 118, p=0.191). Thus, the researcher infers that among the northeast students who are studying in Delhi NCR (N=120), there is no statistically significant

difference between female students (M= 36.62, SD= 7.8) and male students (M= 34.73, SD= 7.78). This finding is validated by a similar study conducted by Reddy & Vijayan (2023) which aimed to assess whether there is any significant difference in gender with respect to procrastination. The results revealed that there is no significant difference in the procrastinating tendencies of men and women [t (116) = .271, p>.05] More studies on gender difference in the level of academic procrastination were investigated by Uma *et al.*, (2020), and Dr. Sadullah Serkan Seker (2015). Their results yielded similar findings, where no significant differences were found between student's gender and their academic procrastination.

Therefore, based on the research questions, we can conclude that:

1) There is a moderate level of academic procrastination among northeast students.

2) 39.1%, 51.6%, 483%, 30.8%, 22.4%, and 24.9% of the participants are high-to-very high procrastinators in the first to sixth areas of the PASS respectively.

3) There are many different reasons for academic procrastination among northeast students.

4) There is no statistically significant difference in the level of academic procrastination among northeast students with respect to gender.

IV. LIMITATIONS AND CHALLENGES

The results of this study were influenced by a number of factors. Therefore, it is necessary to take the current study's limitations into account. Among the limitations that might be mentioned are: the study had an uneven distribution of gender with more female participants, which may impact the external validity of the results. The present study used a measurement tool that was not adapted for Indian population. Therefore, the outcome of the study may have been affected due to this. Academic procrastination may be related to the participants' physical health status or the presence of any major life stressors. This study is limited because these variables were not taken into account.

V. IMPLICATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH

The importance of understanding that academic procrastination can have not only internal reasons (such as aversivesness of the task), but also external reasons (such as poor time management), may provide insightful data to university instructors and academic advisors. Furthermore, the data for this cross-sectional study were gathered throughout a certain time period. Thus, in order to ascertain the extent of procrastination behaviors among the students, it is recommended that more research be conducted longitudinally. The data from the study could help universities plan appropriate workshops on time management and task aversivesness to tackle the factors affecting academic procrastination. The present study could serve as a basis for more investigation into this area of research. Future research on academic procrastination can be studied using other variables such as personality, decision-making styles, and role of social media, etc.

VI. CONCLUSION

The goal of the study is to comprehend the many obstacles and difficulties that students have when trying to finish projects, meet deadlines, and perform other academic duties. Thus, the research findings reveal the gender disparities, potential causes, and potential prevalence of academic procrastination—all of which have not received much attention. Over half of college students procrastinate almost usually or always. This indicates that northeast students exhibit a great deal of procrastination, particularly when it comes to completing reading tasks and studying for a test. The researcher declares that the study on academic procrastination among northeastern students is pertinent after presenting the findings and the discussion from the investigation. This research endeavor is commendable as it tackles a subject that is highly relevant to our situation while also assisting us in comprehending the structures of our educational system.

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