

Psychological and Environmental Causes of Procrastination and Academic Performance of College Students

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Index Terms:

psychological causes, environmental causes,
academic performance, procrastination

Abstract. This survey-correlational study was conducted to determine the level of psychological and environmental causes of procrastination and academic performance of college students at Capiz State University – Roxas City campus, for the school year 2025- 2026. The participants in the study were 377 college students selected from a population of 6,438 across five (5) colleges using stratified random sampling. Data were gathered using a 36-item researcher-made and modified questionnaire. The study revealed that the level of psychological and environmental causes of procrastination among college students was “High.” As for academic performance, the results indicated that college students achieved a “Very good” level. Furthermore, the results show a positive relationship between psychological and environmental causes of procrastination. There is a negative, but not statistically significant, relationship between psychological causes of procrastination and academic performance. There is a negative relationship between environmental causes of procrastination and academic performance. The study concludes that procrastination causes does not have a definitive impact on students’ grades.

Introduction

In the contemporary educational landscape, widespread access to digital tools, the internet, and artificial intelligence (AI) has fundamentally transformed how students retrieve information and complete academic tasks. While these modern conveniences streamline learning, they simultaneously foster digital distractions and over-reliance, exacerbating academic procrastination. Procrastination is defined as the voluntary and unnecessary delay of intended tasks despite recognizing that doing so will result in harmful consequences (Klingsieck, 2013; Sirois, 2023). Over two decades of empirical research show that chronic delay severely damages academic performance, compromises mental health, and decreases overall well-being (Rozenal, 2014; Sirois, 2023). This issue is alarmingly prevalent in higher education, with Klingsieck (2013) reporting baseline rates of 20–25% and Rozenal et al. (2022) finding that up to 75% of university students report being habitual procrastinators who resort to last-minute efforts (Xi, 2023).

Academic procrastination stems from a complex interplay between internal psychological states and external situational conditions. Psychologically, procrastination manifests as a failure of emotional and volitional self-regulation driven by low intrinsic motivation, low self-efficacy, perfectionism, fear of negative evaluation, and high task aversiveness (Gohain & Gogoi, 2021; Klingsieck, 2013). Environmentally, external pressure points—such as heavy academic workloads, unsupportive home environments, communication gaps, negative feedback, and constant access to distracting technologies—heavily influence when and how severely delay occurs (Gohain & Gogoi, 2021).

In the Philippines, academic procrastination remains an overarching issue among learners across both online and face-to-face learning environments (Feguracion et al., 2023; Pacaol & Siguan, 2022). Historically linked to culturally embedded practices such as the *mañana* habit, procrastination among Filipino students is frequently triggered by a combination of high academic demands, environmental stressors, and personal coping mechanisms (Copita et al., 2026; Feguracion et al., 2023; Reyes & Dizon, 2016).

While existing literature broadly recognizes that procrastination is multi-faceted, there remains a critical gap in understanding how psychological traits and environmental factors interact simultaneously to predict procrastination levels among Filipino college students in modern, technology-saturated learning environments. Most local research examines psychological or situational factors in isolation rather than analyzing their combined predictive impact. Conducting this study is essential to bridging this gap, as identifying the specific psychological and environmental drivers will enable educators, guidance counselors, and institutional leaders to design targeted interventions, foster supportive academic environments, and equip students with effective self-regulation strategies to enhance academic success and psychological well-being.

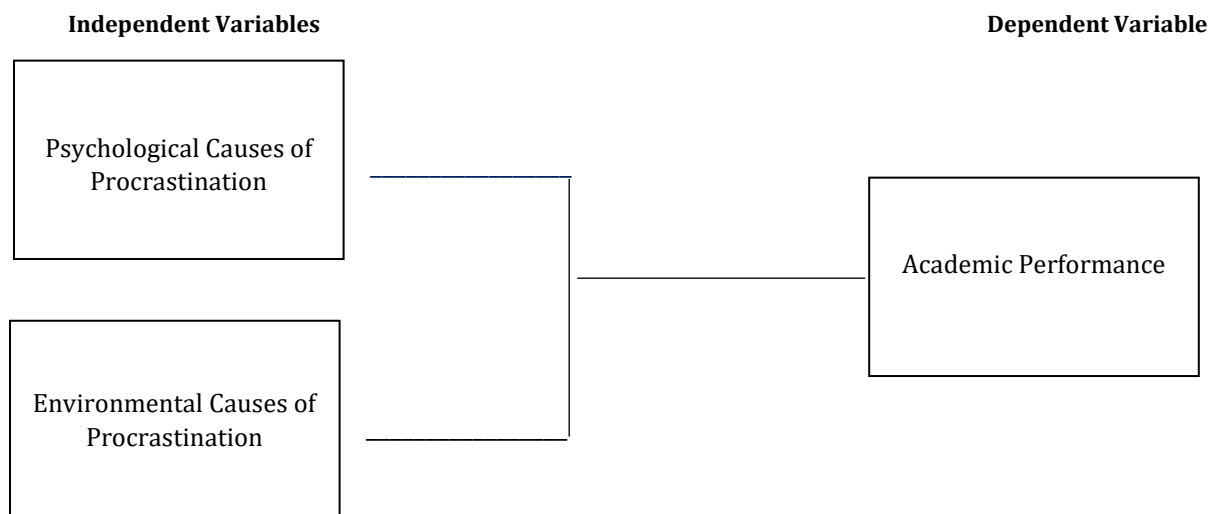


Figure 1. The schematic diagram illustrates the academic performance of college students as influenced by psychological and environmental factors related to procrastination.

Statement of the Problem and the Hypotheses

Generally, this study aimed to identify the level of psychological and environmental causes of procrastination and the academic performance of college students at Capiz State University-Main Campus enrolled for the first semester of the academic year 2025-2026.

Specifically, this study sought to answer the following questions:

1. What is the level of psychological causes of procrastination of College Students?
2. What is the level of environmental causes of procrastination of College Students?
3. What is the level of Academic Performance of College students?
4. Is there a significant relationship among psychological causes of procrastination, environmental causes of procrastination and academic performance of college students?

Based on the aforementioned problems, the following will be hypothesized:

1. There is no significant relationship among psychological causes of procrastination, environmental causes of procrastination and academic performance of college students.

Methodology

Design

This study aimed to identify the level of psychological and environmental causes of procrastination and the academic performance of college students at Capiz State University-Main Campus enrolled for the first semester of the academic year 2025-2026.

This study utilized a survey-correlational research design. The survey-correlational method, as defined by Creswell (2015), is a type of non-experimental quantitative research design where a researcher measures two or more variables and assesses the statistical relationship, or correlation, between them. This method is frequently used in the social sciences,

including psychology and education, because it is efficient for collecting data on attitudes, beliefs, behaviors, and characteristics from a large number of participants.

This survey-correlational research was conducted using the 36-item modified Psychological and Environmental Causes of Procrastination Questionnaire, adopted from Solomon and Rothblum's (1984) Procrastination Assessment Scale-Students (PASS), modified by the researcher to fit the actual scenario, and a General Weighted Average (GWA) for the First semester of the school year 2025-2026 as secondary data for the academic performance of college students.

In this study, the independent variable was the Psychological and Environmental Causes of Procrastination, and the dependent variable was the Academic Performance of College students.

Participants

The participants in this study were 377 college students at Capiz State University, Roxas City Campus, enrolled during the first semester of the 2025-2026 school year, from a population of 6,438. The participants were chosen using a stratified random sampling. Stratified random sampling will be used by first dividing a population into smaller subgroups, or strata, based on shared characteristics of the members and then randomly selecting from each stratum to form the final sample (Simkus, 2023). The sample size was determined using Slovin's formula.

Table 1 shows the distribution of the respondents. Out of 6,438 college students enrolled in the first semester of school year 2025-2026, 377 were taken as the respondent of the study.

College	Population	Sample Size	Percentage
College of Education	1,471	87	22.85%
Bachelor of Industrial Technology	2,755	161	42.80%
College of Management	778	45	12.08%
College of Engineering	1,130	66	17.55%
College of Architecture	304	18	4.72%
Total	6,438	377	100%

Table 1. Distribution of the Respondents

Research Instrument

This study was conducted using the 36-item modified Psychological and Environmental Causes of Procrastination Questionnaire, adopted from Solomon and Rothblum's (1984) Procrastination Assessment Scale-Students (PASS) and modified by the researcher to make it more suited to the study. The questionnaire uses a five-point Likert scale with each item answered using the following responses:

Scale	Description
5	Strongly Agree
4	Agree
3	Neutral
2	Disagree
1	Strongly Disagree

The mean score obtained was classified as follows:

Mean Range	Description
4.21-5.00	Very High
3.41-4.20	High
2.61-3.40	Average
1.81-2.60	Low
1.00-1.80	Very Low

The 36-item questionnaires underwent content and face validation by experts and panel members. The instrument was pilot tested among 30 students from across the five (5) colleges. The pilot testing results were analyzed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) to determine validity and reliability. After item analysis, 36 out of the 40-items were retained. The instrument obtained a Cronbach's alpha of .944, indicating a very high level of reliability.

As to the academic performance of college students, this study utilized the General Weighted Average (GWA) for the First Semester of the school year 2025-2026, as secondary data for the academic performance of college students. Below will be the descriptive interpretation of the student's General Weighted Average (GWA):

GWA Range	Description
1.00-1.25	Excellent
1.50-1.75	Very good
2.00-2.25	Good
2.50-2.75	Satisfactory
3.00-5.00	Needs improvement

Data Collection Procedure

The data for this study were gathered systematically and ethically to ensure both accuracy and confidentiality. Before the data collection process, the researcher obtained official permission from the Office of the University President and the Focal Person at Capiz State University, Roxas City campus. This authorization was granted through a signed letter from the President and Focal Person, ensuring that the study complied with institutional protocols and ethical standards governing research involving human participants. A Certificate of Research Ethics was also secured from the Research Office of Filamer Christian University.

Ethical Considerations

Each participant was provided with a consent form that clearly explained the purpose of the study, the nature of the data being collected, and the rights of the respondents. Participation was entirely voluntary, and respondents were assured that the information they provided would be treated with strict confidentiality and used solely for academic research purposes.

Data Analysis

The data gathered was tabulated and analyzed using the computer-based Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) to answer the questions quantitatively. The descriptive statistics used in this study were the frequency counts, percentages, means, and standard deviations. The inferential statistics will be the one-way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) and Pearson r . The alpha level of significance will be set at .05.

After data collection, the data were compiled, organized, and forwarded to a statistician for analysis and interpretation using appropriate statistical tools. This procedure ensured that the data were processed accurately and that the statistical results were reliable for addressing the study's objectives. The gathered data were encoded, tabulated, and analyzed using SPSS. Descriptive statistics, including means and standard deviations, were used to summarize the respondents' performance.

The overall significance of the regression model was evaluated using Analysis of Variance (ANOVA). Pearson's correlation coefficient (r) was employed to examine the relationships between the independent variables (Psychological and Environmental Causes of Procrastination) and the dependent variable (Academic Performance). The significance level was set at 0.05 to assess the statistical significance of the findings. The results were interpreted based on the statistical findings and aligned with the statement of the problem and hypotheses, with tables presented to show the computed values and their corresponding interpretations.

Results and Discussion

Descriptive Data Analysis

Level of the Psychological Causes of Procrastination of College Students

Table 2 presents the Level of Psychological Causes of Procrastination of College Students. The data shows that the Level of Psychological Causes of Procrastination of College students are "High" ($M = 3.54$, $SD = .49$).

Variable	Mean	SD	Description
Psychological Causes of Procrastination	3.54	0.49	High

Table 2. Level of the Psychological Causes of Procrastination of College Students

Results revealed that the Psychological Causes of Procrastination of College students were “High”. This finding that college students experience a high level of psychological causes of procrastination indicates that academic delay in higher education is fundamentally an issue of internal emotional, cognitive, and volitional self-regulation rather than simple poor time management. College environments impose high cognitive demands, autonomous schedules, and constant performance evaluation. When faced with these academic pressures, students often experience evaluation anxiety, low academic self-efficacy, perfectionist tendencies, and task aversiveness, leading them to use task avoidance as an immediate coping strategy. Rather than reflecting an inability to construct a schedule, a high psychological drive toward procrastination functions as an emotional defense mechanism designed to shield self-esteem from potential failure, harsh criticism, or perceived incompetence.

This result aligns closely with existing empirical literature on academic procrastination. Sirois and Pychyl (2013) demonstrate that procrastination is primarily a failure of short-term mood regulation, wherein individuals prioritize relieving immediate negative emotional states—such as anxiety, boredom, or self-doubt—over long-term goal achievement. Steel (2007) reinforces this finding in a comprehensive meta-analysis, characterizing procrastination as a quintessential self-regulatory breakdown heavily driven by psychological traits, including low conscientiousness, low self-control, and high impulsivity. Furthermore, Rozentel et al. (2022) observed that university students with pronounced procrastination habits exhibit significantly higher rates of psychological distress, anxiety, perfectionist automatic thoughts, and depression compared to their non-procrastinating counterparts. Klingsieck (2013) similarly emphasizes through a multi-perspective theoretical review that cognitive distortions, fear of failure, and emotional vulnerability consistently outweigh simple scheduling flaws when predicting severe academic delay.

However, a nuanced interpretation of this result warrants caution against viewing procrastination as an exclusively internal psychopathological trait. Klingsieck (2013) notes that psychological vulnerabilities do not operate in a vacuum; rather, internal self-regulation deficits frequently interact with external environmental triggers—such as vague assignment instructions, distant deadlines, or noise and digital distractions within the study environment. Therefore, while psychological factors serve as a primary internal catalyst for academic delay, they function in tandem with situational pressures that either exacerbate or mitigate a student's vulnerability to procrastinate.

Level of the Environmental Causes of Procrastination of College Students

Table 3 presents the Level of Environmental Causes of Procrastination of College Students. The data shows that the level of Environmental Causes of Procrastination of College students is “High” ($M = 3.83$, $SD = .66$).

Variable	Mean	SD	Description
Environmental Causes of Procrastination	3.42	0.59	High

Table 3. Level of the Environmental Causes of Procrastination of College Students

The level of the Environmental Causes of Procrastination of College Students is “High”. The finding that college students experience a high level of environmental causes of procrastination indicates that external factors and physical surroundings significantly disrupt students' ability to focus on their academic responsibilities. This “High” level demonstrates that the delay in performing tasks is rarely a choice made in isolation; rather, it is frequently a reactive response to a cluttered, noisy, or digitally distracting environment that makes starting or completing work difficult. The implications of this result are concerning, as a high susceptibility to external triggers suggests that students struggle to maintain academic discipline when their surroundings are not strictly controlled. Consequently, this highlights a critical need for universities to provide better-designated quiet zones and for students to develop stronger boundaries against digital interruptions, such as social media and constant notifications, which function as major contributors to this environmental pressure.

A substantial body of recent empirical literature supports the finding that the modern learning environment serves as a primary source of academic delay. Hidayat and Hasim (2023) observed that the current technological landscape and social media act as pervasive environmental distractions that lead students to defer academic tasks, ultimately elevating stress levels. Similarly, Ucer (2022) noted that the environmental complexity of university life, particularly for young adults, significantly influences academic satisfaction and well-being by providing continuous external diversions. The widespread transition toward digital spaces has introduced unique situational challenges; Melgaard et al. (2022) highlighted how virtual learning environments and online coursework exacerbate procrastination due to a lack of direct physical supervision and an increase in home-based interruptions. Furthermore, Opdenakker (2021) established that the perceived social environment and social network usage are among the strongest predictors of academic delay, proving that a student's immediate peer group can actively encourage procrastination. Finally, Li et al. (2020) demonstrated a direct structural link

between smartphone addiction and academic procrastination, illustrating how the mere physical presence of digital devices within a student's immediate environment serves as an ongoing invitation to postpone essential duties.

Level of the Academic Performance of the College Students

Table 4 presents the level of Academic Performance of College Students. The data shows that the level of Academic Performance of College Students is "Very Good" ($M = 1.89$, $SD = .66$).

Variable	Mean	SD	Description
Academic Performance	1.89	0.28	Very Good

Table 4. Level of Academic Performance of College Students

The results showed that the level of the Academic Performance of the College Students is "Very Good". The academic performance of the college students is classified as "Very Good," with an overall mean GWA of 1.89. This result implies that despite the challenges of university life, the respondents maintain a high level of competency, demonstrating a strong grasp of their course materials and a consistent ability to meet institutional academic standards.

The primary implication of this result is that procrastination, which was found to be high among the respondents—does not necessarily lead to low grades or academic failure. This phenomenon can be explained through the concept of "active procrastination," where students intentionally delay tasks because they find that working under intense time pressure enhances their focus and motivation. Unlike passive procrastinators who are paralyzed by indecision or anxiety, active procrastinators make a deliberate, functional choice to delay work, possessing the self-efficacy to complete assignments at the last minute without compromising the quality of the output.

Several studies support the idea that certain types of procrastinators can maintain high academic standing. Sirois and Pychyl (2020) argue that while traditional procrastination is linked to poor health, students with high self-regulation skills can successfully navigate deadlines through "coping-oriented delay." Furthermore, a study by Palo and Maghuyop (2020) found that active procrastination can have a positive relationship with academic performance because these individuals are "pressure-driven," using the looming deadline as a catalyst for peak mental performance. Li et al. (2022) further explain that for many modern students, the intentional delay of tasks is a strategy used to prioritize more urgent or interesting activities, relying on their cognitive abilities to produce "Very Good" results during a final burst of productivity. This suggests that the respondents in this study likely possess the characteristic of being able to work effectively under pressure, ensuring that their GWA remains high despite their tendency to postpone tasks.

Inferential Data Analysis

Pearson r Between Psychological Causes of Procrastination and Environmental Causes of Procrastination

Table 5 shows the relationship between Psychological and Environmental Causes of Procrastination. As shown below, there is a positive correlation with $r = 0.616$ and $p = 0$, and it is statistically significant at the 0.01 level.

Variables	R	Sig
Psychological Causes of Procrastination and Environmental Causes of Procrastination	0.616	0.00

* $p < 0.05$ significant @5% alpha level; ns $p > 0.05$ not significant @5% alpha level

Table 5. Pearson r Between Psychological Causes of Procrastination and Environmental Causes of Procrastination

The correlation coefficient ($r = 0.616$) with a significance of 0.00 which was less than the 0.05 alpha level of significance reveals a strong positive relationship between the psychological and environmental causes of procrastination among the respondents. This statistical result indicates that these two categories of procrastination triggers do not act in isolation; rather, they are closely interrelated in the lives of the college students surveyed. Specifically, as a student's internal psychological barriers—such as anxiety, fear of failure, or lack of motivation—increase, there is a corresponding tendency for environmental factors, like digital distractions or a noisy study space, to also be perceived as more significant obstacles. This finding suggests that a student's mental state may influence how they interact with their physical surroundings. For instance, a student experiencing high psychological distress (internal) may become more susceptible to social media notifications or household noise (external), or conversely, a chaotic environment may exacerbate internal feelings of being overwhelmed.

This finding is consistent with the study of Wypych et al. (2023) found that psychological factors like poor emotional regulation are often paired with environmental "situational temptations," where students who struggle internally are more likely to succumb to the distractions present in their immediate surroundings. Similarly, Sonia and Vijayalakshmi (2022) observed that students with high levels of academic stress (a psychological cause) are more easily swayed by environmental factors like peer influence and digital media, reinforcing the positive correlation between the two. Furthermore, Yang et al. (2024) highlight that the "person-environment fit" is crucial, noting that students with psychological vulnerabilities are significantly more impacted by "distractive environmental cues" than those with higher self-discipline.

Therefore, the null hypothesis which states that there is no significant relationship between Psychological and Environmental Causes of Procrastination is rejected.

Pearson r Between Psychological Causes of Procrastination and Academic Performance

Table 6 shows the relationship between Psychological and Environmental Causes of Procrastination. As shown below, there is a negative correlation with $r = -0.55$ and $p = 0.38$, and it is not statistically significant.

Variables	R	Sig
Psychological Causes of Procrastination and Academic Performance	-0.055	.38

* $p < 0.05$ significant @5% alpha level; ns $p > 0.05$ not significant @5% alpha level

Table 6. Pearson r Between Psychological Causes of Procrastination and Academic Performance

The correlation analysis between the psychological causes of procrastination and the academic performance (GWA) of the students yielded an r-value of -0.055 with a p-value of 0.38.

This result indicates a negative correlation that is not statistically significant, effectively meaning that in this specific group of 246 students, internal psychological triggers for delaying tasks have no predictable or meaningful relationship with their final grades. The implication of this finding is that even when students report high levels of psychological procrastination—such as anxiety, lack of motivation, or low self-efficacy—their academic standing remains largely unaffected.

This suggests the presence of "resilient procrastinators" or "active procrastinators" who, despite struggling with the impulse to delay, possess enough academic competence or last-minute drive to secure a "Very Good" GWA. Essentially, the psychological burden of procrastination does not automatically translate into poor classroom performance for these individuals.

Sirois and Pychyl (2016) highlight that the impact of procrastination on performance is often mediated by a student's level of self-regulation; students with high cognitive abilities can often compensate for their delay by working more intensely as deadlines approach. Similarly, research by Wypych et al. (2018) found that while procrastination is widespread among university students, it does not consistently correlate with lower GPA, suggesting that many students have developed "coping-oriented delay" strategies that protect their marks. Furthermore, Asma et al. (2021) demonstrated that in certain academic environments, the psychological aspects of procrastination do not significantly predict academic achievement, as students may be intentionally delaying tasks to manage a heavy workload without sacrificing the quality of their submissions.

Pearson r Between Environmental Causes of Procrastination and Academic Performance

Table 7 shows the relationship between Environmental Causes of Procrastination and Academic Performance of College Students. As shown below, there is a moderately strong positive correlation with $r = -0.131$ and $p = 0.040$, and it is statistically significant at the 0.05 level.

Variables	R	Sig
Environmental Causes of Procrastination and Academic Performance	-0.131	0.040

* $p < 0.05$ significant @5% alpha level; ns $p > 0.05$ not significant @5% alpha level

Table 7. Pearson r Between Environmental Causes of Procrastination and Academic Performance

The correlation analysis between environmental causes of procrastination and academic performance (GWA) reveals a statistically significant, albeit weak, negative relationship ($r = -0.131$, $p = 0.040$). In the context of the grading scale used in this study, where a lower numerical value (e.g., 1.00) represents higher achievement and a higher numerical value (e.g., 3.00) indicates lower performance, this negative coefficient suggests that as environmental distractions and external pressures increase, the numerical GWA tends to decrease slightly. Paradoxically, in this specific numerical system, a decrease in GWA value actually implies an improvement in academic standing. This weak relationship indicates that while environmental factors like noise, digital distractions, or social pressures do play a role in how students manage their time, they are not the sole or primary determinants of final grades. The significance of the p-value (0.040) confirms that this link is not due to random chance, but the low r-value suggests that students in this sample may possess sufficient academic resilience or "active procrastination" traits to prevent environmental hurdles from severely damaging their overall success. Existing literature supports the idea that environmental context significantly influences academic behaviors, though its impact on final outcomes can vary based on student adaptability. For instance, Visser et al. (2018) found that while environmental distractions are a leading cause of task delay, their direct impact on grades is often mediated by a student's level of self-control and the specific nature of the distractions. Furthermore, Aben et al. (2022) observed that modern digital environments often create a "low-level" persistent interference that increases procrastination frequency but may not result in significant academic failure if the student is capable of high-intensity work as deadlines approach. Additionally, Sarmiento and Labadia (2019) noted that in collegiate settings, students often develop localized coping mechanisms to mitigate environmental noise, which explains why environmental factors may show a significant but weak correlation with actual grade outcomes.

These studies collectively suggest that while the environment "triggers" the impulse to procrastinate, the ultimate academic result is more heavily influenced by the student's internal ability to eventually re-focus and complete the required tasks.

Conclusion and Recommendations

In the light of the aforementioned findings of the study, the following conclusions were drawn:

1. College students experience a high level of psychological triggers that lead to procrastination. With an overall mean of 3.54, it is evident that internal factors—such as task aversion, fear of failure, or lack of self-regulation—are dominant forces that cause students to delay their academic responsibilities. This suggests that for the majority of the 377 respondents, the struggle with procrastination is deeply rooted in their mental and emotional approach to their studies.
2. External environment plays a significant role in fostering procrastinatory behavior, reaching a high level with an overall mean of 3.42. This indicates that students are highly susceptible to outside distractions, such as noise, social media, or disorganized study spaces, which interfere with their ability to complete tasks on time.
3. Despite the high prevalence of causes of procrastination, the study concludes that the students maintain a "Very Good" level of academic performance, as evidenced by the mean GWA of 1.89. The high homogeneity of the data ($SD = 0.28645$) further suggests that this strong academic standing is consistent across the group. This implies that students possess a high degree of academic resilience or intellectual capability that allows them to succeed even when they struggle with the impulse to delay work.
4. Psychological and environmental causes of procrastination are closely interrelated, as shown by a moderately strong positive correlation ($r = 0.616$, $p = 0.000$). This means that as a student's internal psychological struggle with procrastination increases, they also become more vulnerable to environmental distractions. These two variables reinforce one another.
5. Finally, the study concludes that procrastination causes do not have a strong or definitive impact on final grades, as seen in the very weak negative correlation between environmental causes and GWA ($r = -0.131$, $p = 0.040$) and the non-significant relationship with psychological causes ($p = 0.388$). This suggests that while procrastination is common, it does not automatically result in poor academic performance. The results indicate that these students may be "active procrastinators" who are able to utilize time pressure to their advantage, ensuring their grades remain high despite their tendency to postpone tasks.

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Competing Interests Statement

The authors declare that they have no known competing financial interests or personal relationships that could have appeared to influence the work reported in this article.

Data Availability Statement

Data sharing is not applicable to this article as no new data were created or analyzed in this study; all data used were obtained from previously published sources as cited in the reference list.

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Appendices

No appendices are attached to this study.