



Academic Procrastination among Students with Dual Roles as Workers and Parents

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ABSTRACT

Academic procrastination is frequently observed among college students, especially those juggling multiple roles, including work and child-rearing. The demands of educational, professional, and familial duties can significantly hinder their capacity to finish assignments punctually. This study follows the Temporal Motivation Theory (Steel, 2007) and employs a unique case study methodology, focusing on two individuals from Universitas Muhammadiyah Sidoarjo (UMSIDA). The selection of participants was carried out using purposive and snowball sampling techniques. Data were gathered through semi-structured interviews and observations where the researchers did not take part, followed by analysis using the thematic approach outlined by Miles and Huberman. The results identify three primary reasons for procrastination: (1) a lack of belief in achieving success due to exhaustion, (2) a reduced perceived importance of academic tasks in comparison to work or family responsibilities, and; (3) a loose interpretation of deadlines. The study concludes that procrastination in academia acts as a way to cope with conflicting roles and helps in preserving mental balance.

ABSTRAK

Kata Kunci:
Prokrastinasi Akademik,
Peran Ganda,
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Prokrastinasi akademik adalah suatu keadaan yang sering terjadi di kalangan mahasiswa, khususnya bagi mereka yang memiliki peran ganda sebagai karyawan dan orang tua. Kompleksitas tuntutan dari aspek akademis, pekerjaan, dan keluarga sering kali berdampak pada kemampuan mereka dalam menyelesaikan tugas secara tepat waktu. Berdasarkan pada Temporal Motivation Theory (Steel, 2007), penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif dengan desain studi kasus intrinsik yang melibatkan dua peserta dari Universitas Muhammadiyah Sidoarjo (UMSIDA). Peserta dipilih melalui metode purposive dan snowball sampling. Pengumpulan data dilakukan melalui wawancara semi-terstruktur dan observasi non-partisipatif, yang kemudian dianalisis menggunakan model tematik dari Miles dan Huberman. Hasil penelitian mengidentifikasi tiga faktor utama yang menyebabkan prokrastinasi, yaitu (1) rendahnya harapan terhadap keberhasilan akibat kelelahan, (2) berkurangnya nilai tugas akademik jika dibandingkan dengan tanggung jawab pekerjaan atau keluarga, serta; (3) pengertian tengat waktu yang tidak ketat. Penelitian ini menarik kesimpulan bahwa prokrastinasi akademik berfungsi sebagai strategi adaptif untuk menghadapi konflik peran serta mempertahankan keseimbangan psikologis.

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INTRODUCTION

Many secondary school graduates choose to postpone their academic pursuits and take a gap year to explore personal interests, engage in employment, or prepare themselves emotionally and financially before entering university. Yulianti defines a gap year as a period in which individuals temporarily suspend their educational or professional activities to participate in alternative pursuits (Ardine et al., 2024). In addition, factors such as economic hardship, family responsibilities, or the urgent need to secure employment are among the primary reasons for delaying further education. This phenomenon has become increasingly prevalent in modern society, where individuals are often required to navigate multiple roles simultaneously (Firdaus, 2025).

Within the context of higher education, such conditions frequently give rise to academic procrastination. Research by Jami and Afzal (2018) indicates that approximately 70% of university students tend to delay completing their academic tasks. Similarly, a survey conducted in Indonesia by Nurfarhanah (2024) revealed that more than 60% of students experience difficulties in managing their study time due to work demands and family responsibilities. These high figures suggest that procrastination is a widespread issue closely associated with the pressures of multiple roles faced by contemporary students. Such delays can result in poor time management, weakened academic commitment, and adverse effects on students' academic performance and mental well-being.

As one of the leading private universities in East Java, Universitas Muhammadiyah Sidoarjo (UMSIDA) accommodates students from diverse backgrounds who carry varying degrees of responsibility. The complexity of campus life is reflected in the numerous challenges students encounter in balancing academic demands with extracurricular and off-campus activities. On a daily basis, students are required to complete written assignments, prepare for examinations, participate in classroom discussions, deliver presentations, and meet multiple deadlines. Rirahayu, as cited in Rusmaini and Rahayu (2021), emphasizes that students must develop adaptive skills to enhance critical thinking, collaborate effectively in teams, and build resilience against escalating academic pressure. These challenges require not only intellectual capacity but also strong time management skills, self-regulation, and psychological resilience to remain productive amid intense academic routines.

The level of difficulty experienced by UMSIDA students is strongly influenced by the responsibilities and roles they assume during their studies. Broadly, students can be classified into three groups. First are those who focus exclusively on their studies without employment or family obligations, allowing them greater flexibility for academic and campus-related activities. Second are working students who must divide their time between academic responsibilities and employment, placing them at risk of physical exhaustion and scheduling conflicts. Third are students with dual roles—those who simultaneously pursue higher education, maintain employment, and manage household responsibilities (Mardelina & Muhsan, 2017). This group faces the most complex challenges in allocating time, energy, and attention. Despite their differing circumstances, all three groups share a common objective: completing higher education to secure a better future.

Students who simultaneously function as learners, employees, and parents experience substantial pressure due to the accumulation of academic, occupational, and familial responsibilities (Enindari & Nurmala, 2023). These individuals are required to attend classes, complete coursework, meet work schedules or performance targets, and manage household duties.

Such conditions often complicate time management, reducing the time and energy available for focused learning. Consequently, many students develop a tendency to delay academic tasks, a behavior commonly referred to as procrastination ([Nur Aisha, 2024](#)). Solomon and Rothblum argue that academic procrastination is closely associated with feelings of anxiety and discomfort when tasks are postponed, which are further intensified by stress arising from multiple life domains that must be managed concurrently ([Khasanah & Farida Panduwinata, 2022](#)).

Academic procrastination refers to the tendency to delay completing academic tasks or responsibilities despite awareness of the potential negative consequences ([Marsela & Agus Irianto, 2024](#)). This behavior is not merely a sign of laziness but often represents a response to pressure, uncertainty, or an overwhelming workload ([Sutjipto, 2012](#)). In educational settings, procrastination may manifest as delaying the initiation of assignments, lack of engagement in lectures, or distraction by non-productive activities such as excessive social media use ([Wardati Maryam et al., 2019](#)).

The consequences of academic procrastination are multifaceted. Academically, tasks completed hastily tend to be of lower quality and may prolong the duration of study, particularly during the completion of theses or final projects. Psychologically, procrastination can heighten stress, anxiety, and feelings of guilt, and may even trigger mental health issues such as depression or long-term burnout ([Kunti Mu'alima, 2021](#)). Students with multiple roles also experience intensified pressure in their professional and family lives ([Tena Meo et al., 2024](#)). Delays in fulfilling academic obligations can exacerbate role conflict, strain relationships with partners or children, and result in sustained physical and psychological fatigue ([Kinasih, 2019](#)). Overall, habitual procrastination can hinder the development of essential skills such as time management, discipline, and decision-making, all of which are critical in professional contexts ([Nabila, 2023](#)). Conversely, when academic procrastination is effectively managed, the outcomes can be highly beneficial. Students are more likely to complete tasks on time, achieve better academic results, and reduce stress and anxiety related to deadlines. This improvement can also enhance self-confidence, satisfaction, and balance among academic, work, and family life domains ([Khumaerah et al., 2022](#)). Positive habits developed through overcoming procrastination, particularly discipline and effective time management, may yield long-term benefits that support academic success, career development, and overall quality of life ([Kumalasari, 2023](#)).

Preliminary observations involving several students who work while also carrying parental responsibilities revealed a clear tendency toward delaying academic activities. This phenomenon appears to stem from dual obligations, namely employment and family duties, which often diminish the time and focus available for academic engagement. These findings indicate that academic procrastination is not solely driven by internal factors such as learning motivation, but also by the dynamics of multiple roles undertaken by students.

The factors contributing to procrastination among students with dual roles are diverse. Intense work schedules, family expectations, and limited social support are among the primary contributors. Difficulties in time management and the psychological burden associated with multiple responsibilities further exacerbate procrastinatory tendencies ([Ramadhanti et al., 2024](#)). Students in this position frequently experience stress and fatigue, which may lead them to use procrastination as a coping strategy to avoid pressure. The interaction of these factors creates conditions that perpetuate recurring procrastination. For students who simultaneously serve as

workers and parents, these interrelated factors significantly increase the likelihood of delaying academic tasks ([Ursia et al., 2013](#)).

Academic procrastination is a pervasive phenomenon among students and has long been a central topic in educational psychology. According to Temporal Motivation Theory (TMT), proposed by Piers Steel in 2007, procrastination is explained through the interaction of four core elements: expectancy (belief in one's likelihood of success), value (the perceived importance of the task), impulsiveness (the tendency to seek immediate gratification), and delay (the temporal distance between action and desired outcomes). The TMT framework suggests that motivation to act diminishes when expectations of success are low, tasks are perceived as lacking value, or the time required to achieve outcomes is prolonged. Thus, procrastination reflects not only deficiencies in time management but also a complex interplay among self-perception, task valuation, and temporal context.

In this study, TMT serves not only as a theoretical foundation but is also operationalized within the data collection and analysis processes. The expectancy component is examined through questions exploring students' confidence in completing academic tasks amid work and family demands. The value component is investigated based on participants' interpretations of priorities among academic learning, employment, and household responsibilities. Meanwhile, the delay component is analyzed through students' perceptions of deadlines and their underlying reasons for task postponement. Using semi-structured interviews and non-participant observation, these elements are analyzed to understand how students with dual roles manage time and academic motivation. This methodological approach enables a contextualized and practical application of TMT, positioning the theory as an analytical framework for interpreting motivational dynamics and procrastination behaviors in real-life settings.

Global literature indicates that academic procrastination has been widely studied across countries; however, much of the existing research remains focused on individual-level factors, with limited consideration of social and cultural dimensions. Klassen et al. ([2010](#)), in a comparative study of students in Canada and Singapore, found that motivational variables such as self-efficacy were associated with procrastination in both cultural contexts, yet the patterns and levels of procrastination differed significantly. Their findings highlight the influence of social and cultural contexts on how students delay academic tasks, particularly within collectivist societies that prioritize social and family obligations over individual interests. These results underscore the need to reconceptualize motivational constructs beyond Western perspectives, as social values and family-oriented norms may shape the relationships among expectancy, value, and delay as proposed in TMT.

Furthermore, Koppenborg and Klingsieck ([2022](#)), writing in Social Psychology of Education, noted that procrastination is also influenced by social and situational structures, such as the nature of group work and the degree of interdependence among students. Their study demonstrated that social support, collaborative dynamics, and academic task design can contribute to reducing procrastination tendencies. These findings reinforce the notion that procrastination is not merely a matter of individual laziness but is also shaped by social environments and structural conditions. In the context of students who simultaneously serve as workers and parents, these insights are particularly relevant, as institutional support, academic flexibility, and policy responsiveness may play a decisive role in shaping procrastination behaviors.

Despite these advances, most international studies continue to focus on traditional student populations, largely overlooking those with dual roles. Limited research has examined how students who juggle employment and family responsibilities adapt their academic motivation within collectivist cultural contexts such as Indonesia. In developing countries with a strong private higher education sector, students often face significant financial pressures and complex household responsibilities, which can alter how they evaluate task importance, expectations of success, and perceptions of time. Accordingly, this study seeks to address this gap by examining academic procrastination as a form of adaptive strategy rather than merely a failure of self-regulation.

Previous studies have examined various academic constraints, such as Pratama and Affandi (2024), who explored the relationship between academic self-concept and learning procrastination among high school students, and Zuraida Juniar Nastiti (2023), who investigated the association between academic stress and procrastination behaviors among university students. However, no study has specifically focused on students who simultaneously hold roles as workers and parents, particularly within private universities such as UMSIDA. Most existing research has concentrated on procrastination related to final projects or theses, while neglecting other forms such as weekly assignments or exam preparation. Moreover, the predominant reliance on quantitative methods has limited the depth of understanding regarding students' lived experiences in managing dual pressures.

This study focuses on academic procrastination among students at Universitas Muhammadiyah Sidoarjo (UMSIDA) who occupy dual roles—namely, individuals who are students while also working and/or fulfilling parental responsibilities. These students encounter unique challenges that distinguish them from traditional students or full-time employees, as they must simultaneously coordinate academic tasks, occupational demands, and family obligations. This research is crucial for identifying the causes, forms, and consequences of academic procrastination experienced by this group, thereby informing the development of appropriate interventions, such as time management training, psychological support services, or educational policies responsive to the needs of dual-role students. Employing a qualitative approach centered on exploring the personal experiences of UMSIDA students with dual roles, this study seeks to address existing research gaps. This approach allows for an in-depth examination of the nature, causes, and impacts of academic procrastination among an underrepresented student population. Unlike previous studies that focus primarily on traditional students, this research aims to capture the dynamics of conflict arising from competing academic, occupational, and family responsibilities. Consequently, the study contributes both theoretically to the academic procrastination literature and practically by highlighting the importance of adaptive academic policies, such as flexible scheduling or targeted time management interventions for students bearing multiple responsibilities.

The purpose of this study is to provide an in-depth understanding of academic procrastination among students at Universitas Muhammadiyah Sidoarjo (UMSIDA) who hold dual roles as workers and parents. From a descriptive perspective, the study seeks to identify patterns of procrastination behavior, underlying factors related to academic, occupational, and familial

pressures, and the resulting effects on academic achievement and daily life balance. Analytically, the study investigates how students with dual roles regulate time, manage stress, and sustain academic motivation amid competing demands. Drawing on the Temporal Motivation Theory framework (Steel, 2007), which emphasizes expectancy, value, and delay, this research aims to explain why procrastination may emerge as an adaptive response to role conflict. Thus, the study not only documents procrastination behaviors empirically but also interprets their meaning within the social and cultural context of Indonesian students navigating the intersection of academic, professional, and family responsibilities.

Based on prior research emphasizing the dual burdens experienced by students, Nurhikmah (2024) analyzed students engaged in part-time work while maintaining academic performance, while Merlinda (2023) examined students who simultaneously assumed roles as learners and homemakers. However, neither study explored academic procrastination in depth from a psychological perspective, particularly among students who combine employment and/or family responsibilities within private higher education institutions such as UMSIDA. Accordingly, the present study aims to examine the dynamics of academic delay among students with dual roles and to offer insights that may inform the development of educational policies and support services for non-traditional students.

METHODS

This study employed a qualitative approach with a case study design. This approach was selected because the research aimed to explore in depth the phenomenon of academic procrastination experienced by students who hold dual roles, namely as workers and/or parents at Universitas Muhammadiyah Sidoarjo (Muslimin, 2023). The scope of the study encompassed factors that contribute to academic procrastination as well as its implications for students' academic achievement and psychological well-being. According to Morissan, the unit of analysis refers to any entity examined in order to obtain a concise yet comprehensive understanding of the observed phenomenon. In this study, the unit of analysis was academic procrastination behavior among students at Universitas Muhammadiyah Sidoarjo (UMSIDA) who carry dual responsibilities as employees and/or parents.

The study involved two primary participants selected through a combination of purposive and snowball sampling techniques, identified as LAF and APB. LAF is a 25-year-old male student in his final semester of the Public Administration Study Program who works full-time in the logistics sector. He is married and has a three-year-old child. Meanwhile, APB is a 24-year-old female student in her seventh semester who is a full-time homemaker and has two children of elementary school age. The selection of these participants was based on their alignment with the study criteria, which included being active university students with dual roles as workers and parents, as well as having experienced difficulties in meeting academic assignment deadlines.

The number of participants was determined using the principle of data saturation, whereby the second interview no longer generated new information or themes relevant to the main constructs of the study, Expectancy, Value, and Delay, as conceptualized within the framework of Temporal Motivation Theory (Steel, 2007). The decision to terminate data collection was made after conducting member checking, in which preliminary findings were reviewed with the participants to ensure the accuracy and credibility of the interpretations.

To enhance the credibility and rigor of the findings, methodological triangulation was applied by integrating three primary techniques: (1) semi-structured interviews, aimed at exploring participants' subjective experiences in depth; (2) non-participant observation, used to document behavioral cues and non-verbal expressions during the interviews; and (3) document analysis,

including work schedules, academic task logs recorded in the Learning Management System (LMS), and students' reflective notes.

In addition, participants' profiles are presented in the following table to provide a clearer social context for interpreting the research findings:

Table 1. Research Respondent Demographics

Participant Code	Age	Marital Status	Occupation	Number of Children	Semester	Role Status
LAF	25	Married	Logistics employee	1	Final	Student-worker-parent
APB	24	Married	Homemaker	1	7	Student-parent

Accordingly, this theory functions not only as an analytical framework but also as a conceptual foundation for the development of research instruments and data analysis procedures. The collected data were analyzed using thematic analysis as proposed by Miles and Huberman (1994), which involves three sequential stages: data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. During the data reduction phase, the researcher applied open coding to the interview transcripts to identify statements related to the three core elements of Temporal Motivation Theory (TMT)—Expectancy, Value, and Delay. The initial codes that emerged were subsequently organized into broader themes representing recurring patterns of procrastination behavior among students with dual responsibilities.

These themes were then mapped into a thematic matrix to illustrate the relationships among contributing factors, types of procrastination, and their impacts on both academic and non-academic aspects of students' lives. This analytical process was conducted iteratively, with data verification carried out through methodological triangulation (interviews and observations) to ensure the accuracy, credibility, and consistency of the findings.

RESULT

This study aims to examine in depth the dynamics of academic procrastination among students who hold dual roles—as workers and/or parents—by applying the Temporal Motivation Theory (TMT) framework introduced by Steel (2007). TMT posits that motivation to complete academic tasks is influenced by three core components: Expectancy (expectation of success), Value (perceived importance of the task), and Delay (perceptions related to deadlines and time). This study explores the lived experiences of two informants, LAF and APB, both of whom simultaneously fulfill roles as workers and parents, using a qualitative approach to gain a nuanced understanding of the elements contributing to the academic procrastination they experience.

Expectancy of Success

The first respondent, LAF, a final-year student who works full-time in the logistics sector, shared his daily experiences with a tone of exhaustion and a vacant gaze that occasionally drifted toward the interview table. He described how his demanding work routine drained his physical and mental energy, making it difficult for him to initiate academic tasks.

“Saya bekerja dari pagi hingga sore, kadang lebur jika ada pengiriman besar. Sampai di rumah, rasanya sudah tidak ada energi untuk membuka laptop. Kadang saya membuka tugas di LMS, membaca soalnya, tetapi langsung menutupnya lagi. Pikiran saya terasa sangat berat. Saya berjanji pada diri sendiri akan mengerjakannya malam nanti, tapi

akhirnya saya tertidur. Jika saya mendapatkan waktu luang di kantor, hanya dapat sedikit dikerjakan, tidak fokus juga karena takut tertangkap atasan. ” (Interview, LAF, 2025).

Observationally, LAF was seen taking deep breaths several times while recounting his experiences. His voice was flat and slow, reflecting profound fatigue and a sense of resignation. Although he was aware that procrastination could negatively affect his academic performance, his compromised physical and psychological state diminished his confidence in his ability to complete assignments effectively. LAF framed procrastination not as a deliberate choice, but as a form of self-protection against an overwhelming and unavoidable workload.

In contrast, APB, a female student who is also a full-time homemaker with two young children, faced different challenges that nonetheless produced similar effects on her self-confidence. During the interview, she spoke softly, often looking down, and appeared to hold back tears. She explained how her maternal responsibilities frequently compelled her to postpone academic tasks, despite a strong intrinsic desire to study.

“Saya memulai aktivitas dari pagi, mengatur rumah, mempersiapkan anak untuk sekolah, memasak, dan kadang membantu suami dengan penjualan online. Baru bisa menyentuh laptop malam hari, itu pun jika anak-anak sudah tidur. Namun sering kali saya sudah sangat kelelahan. Kadang saya hanya membuka tugas sebentar lalu menutupnya lagi. Ada rasa bersalah, tetapi saya juga tidak mampu. Saya berkata pada diri sendiri, besok saja, nanti jika ada waktu. Ketika sudah dekat dengan batas waktu, baru saya paksa diri untuk mengerjakan, kadang-kadang sambil mengantuk. Namun hasilnya tidak maksimal. Saya sadar dosen pasti kecewa, tetapi saya juga tidak tahu harus mulai dari mana jika pikiran terasa penuh. Oleh karena itu, saya menunda tugas, bukan karena malas, tetapi karena tubuh dan pikiran saya merasa tidak kuat.” (Interview, APB, 2025)

From observation, APB was seen fidgeting with the edge of her headscarf—a gesture indicating anxiety and low self-assurance. She was fully aware that delaying tasks negatively affected her learning outcomes, yet the weight of family responsibilities made it difficult for her to concentrate on academic work. At certain moments, she offered a faint smile when speaking about her procrastination, suggesting a reluctant acceptance of a situation she wished she could change.

Both informants demonstrated a similar pattern: confidence in academic achievement declined as physical and mental exhaustion intensified. Postponing academic tasks became a means of shielding themselves from fatigue and emotional pressure originating outside the academic environment. Thus, procrastination emerged not as a manifestation of laziness, but as an adaptive response to survive amid complex and overlapping demands.

Value of Academic Tasks

The first informant, LAF, perceived academic assignments as obligations that needed to be fulfilled, yet lacked immediate tangible benefits when compared to his employment. During the interview, he spoke confidently, although his expression occasionally turned serious when describing his workplace responsibilities. He explained that his job in logistics required punctuality and a high level of accountability to clients.

“Ketika bekerja, hasilnya segera tampak, Mbak. Saya lebur dan mendapat bonus. Ada penghasilannya. Sedangkan untuk tugas kuliah, meskipun saya menghabiskan sehari mengerjakan, hasilnya hanya berupa nilai. Terkadang, nilainya pun tidak memenuhi ekspektasi. Jadi, saya merasa lebih baik fokus pada pekerjaan terlebih dahulu. Kuliah itu bisa saya kejar nanti, yang penting tidak sampai tertinggal jauh. Saya memahami bahwa kuliah itu penting untuk masa depan, tapi masa depan itu belum pasti. Jika saya tidak

bekerja sekarang, saya tidak bisa membayar biaya kuliah. Jadi, nilai tugas kuliah tidak sebanding dengan tanggung jawab saya di tempat kerja. Saya tidak meremehkan kuliah, hanya saja waktunya belum bisa saya bagi dengan seimbang. " (Interview, LAF, 2025)

Throughout the interview, LAF sat slightly hunched forward with his hands clasped on the table. His face conveyed determination, yet his eyes appeared weary. His posture reflected an internal conflict between occupational responsibilities and academic commitment. Education was viewed as a long-term investment, while employment represented an immediate and non-negotiable source of stability.

This condition illustrates a clear value conflict: academic tasks are considered theoretically important but not practically urgent. This perception directly influenced LAF's tendency to postpone academic work until the final moments before deadlines.

In contrast, APB viewed the value of academic work through an emotional and moral lens. As a homemaker, she prioritized family responsibilities over academic commitments. While she perceived education as valuable, its meaning was often overridden by her moral obligations as a mother and wife. Speaking gently and occasionally smiling, she stated:

"Saya menjalani kuliah untuk diri sendiri, tetapi juga demi anak saya. Saya ingin anak saya tahu bahwa ibunya juga bisa meraih pendidikan tinggi. Namun, jika harus memilih antara anak dan tugas, saya akan mengutamakan anak terlebih dahulu. Kadang saya baru bisa menyelesaikan tugas setelah semua orang tidur, tetapi sering kali saya sudah kelelahan. Jika sudah mengantuk, saya akan berhenti. Saya bilang kepada diri sendiri, besok saja dilanjutkan. Saya menyadari betapa pentingnya kuliah. Namun, terkadang saya merasa situasinya tidak fair. Saya belajar bukan hanya untuk memperoleh nilai, tetapi untuk masa depan. Tetapi masa depan itu masih jauh, sementara hari ini saya harus menjadi ibu yang siap untuk anak-anak. Jadi, saya menunda tugas bukan karena tidak peduli, melainkan karena saya tahu mana yang harus diutamakan. " (Interview, APB, 2025).

During the interview, APB tightly clasped her hands on her lap. Her facial expression reflected guilt, yet also a sense of calm resignation. She appeared fully aware of the academic risks associated with postponement, but her decisions were rooted in emotional and moral considerations rather than negligence.

Field observations indicated that APB held strong spiritual and social values. She viewed education as a symbol of struggle and a role model for her children, rather than merely an academic obligation. However, when family responsibilities required her physical presence, she chose to fully engage in her domestic role.

Both LAF and APB demonstrate that the meaning attributed to academic tasks is shaped by how individuals assess their benefits and impacts on daily life. For LAF, value is measured in economic and temporal terms; for APB, it is framed by moral and emotional considerations. These differences indicate that academic procrastination among students with dual roles is not solely driven by psychological factors, but also by value systems formed within each individual's social context.

Delay (Perceptions of Deadlines and Postponement)

The first informant, LAF, described his habit of delaying academic work due to a perception that ample time remained. During the interview, he appeared relaxed, with his arms crossed and occasional slight smiles when discussing this habit. His expression suggested an awareness that the behavior was suboptimal, yet had become an ingrained routine.

"Ketika tenggat waktu masih seminggu lagi, saya merasa tenang dan berpikir masih banyak waktu, jadi saya menundanya. Biasanya, saya baru mengerjakan tugas ketika sudah tinggal

dua hari sebelum deadline. Kadang-kadang, malah pada malam sebelum harus dikumpulkan. Anehnya, di situ saya bisa lebih fokus. Jika sudah mengerjakan terlalu awal, justru saya bingung harus menulis apa. Jadi, saya menunggu hingga ide itu muncul mendekati tenggat. Pernah saya sudah berniat untuk mengerjakan tugas jauh-jauh hari, tetapi akhirnya tetap tidak selesai. Seperti kehilangan semangat, begitu. Namun, saat mendekati deadline, anehnya saya bisa bekerja hingga larut malam sambil minum kopi, meskipun saya ada pekerjaan di pagi harinya. Rasanya seperti dikejar-kejar waktu, tetapi justru itu yang membuat semangat saya muncul.” (Interview, LAF, 2025).

During the interview, LAF spoke with a faint smile and gazed out the window, as though reflecting on a deeply ingrained habit. He showed little hesitation in acknowledging this behavior and even perceived time pressure as a catalyst for productivity. This pattern indicates a highly subjective perception of time, in which deadlines are not seen as rigid constraints but as triggers that activate last-minute motivation.

APB demonstrated a similar pattern, though within a different context. As a homemaker, she organized her study time around the rhythms of family life. During the interview, she spoke in a subdued tone, her face visibly fatigued. She occasionally lowered her head and grasped the edge of her headscarf while explaining her postponement habits.

“I usually start working on assignments only when the deadline is close—about two days before. If the deadline is still far away, I think I can do it later. But that ‘later’ often never comes because there’s always something happening at home. The children get fussy, my husband needs help, and on top of that I’m already exhausted. So I wait for a moment that feels truly calm, even though it’s often very close to the deadline. My most productive time is actually the night before the deadline. I work while making tea, after the children are asleep and the house is quiet. But the risk is that I have to stay up very late. Sometimes the assignment is finished at two in the morning, sometimes it’s not finished at all because a child suddenly wakes up. I know this isn’t good, but those are the only moments when I can really focus.” (Interview, APB, 2025).

Observationally, APB spoke in a flat tone, yet her eyes reflected accumulated exhaustion. She did not perceive deadlines as strict boundaries demanding immediate action, but rather as final signals indicating when her personal circumstances might allow for concentration. For APB, procrastination was not an expression of indifference, but a consequence of life rhythms shaped by household demands and physical condition.

Both informants shared a similar perception of deadlines: time was viewed not as fixed, but as negotiable depending on emotional states and daily circumstances. Postponement was understood not as a lack of concern, but as an adaptive strategy to wait for moments when energy and concentration could be fully mobilized.

In this context, academic procrastination is not merely a failure of time management, but a psychological mechanism that serves to maintain balance between academic responsibilities and competing role demands. The flexible perception of deadlines provides students with dual roles an opportunity to adjust their schedules to the realities of a demanding life, although this often results in diminished work quality and heightened stress as submission deadlines approach.

DISCUSSION

The findings indicate that academic procrastination among students with dual roles is a complex issue that cannot be understood solely through the lens of motivation or self-control. Students who simultaneously carry responsibilities as workers and/or parents face living conditions that demand substantially more challenging management of time, energy, and emotion

than students who occupy only a single role. In this context, academic procrastination is not merely a form of poor study discipline; rather, it can function as an adaptive strategy to maintain balance among academic, professional, and personal obligations.

Overall, the results support the core proposition of Temporal Motivation Theory (TMT) advanced by Steel (2007): the tendency to delay task engagement (procrastination) is shaped by the interaction among expectancy, value, and delay. For students with multiple roles, procrastination is not simply a consequence of low academic motivation; it may also reflect an adaptive attempt to reconcile simultaneous demands of studying, working, and fulfilling family responsibilities. This interpretation aligns with Sirois and Pychyl (2013), who argue that procrastination often serves mood-regulation purposes—individuals postpone academic tasks to reduce emotional distress in the short term. From this perspective, delaying behavior can be understood as an effort to preserve psychological equilibrium when individuals encounter complex role conflict.

Interview data showed that LAF described a highly demanding routine as a full-time employee, which directly affected his academic functioning. He reported frequently postponing assignments due to exhaustion after working from morning until evening. This pattern reflects diminished expectancy, consistent with Temporal Motivation Theory (Steel, 2007), which posits that the lower an individual's confidence in their ability to complete a task, the greater the likelihood of procrastination. Importantly, LAF's postponement was not rooted in laziness; rather, it emerged because his body and mind were no longer able to function optimally after prolonged work demands.

In contrast, APB—who simultaneously serves as a homemaker and student—highlighted the emotional dimension of academic procrastination. She explained how family responsibilities often compelled her to set aside academic obligations. In a gentle tone, she acknowledged feeling guilty when delaying tasks, yet she continued to do so because of physical and emotional fatigue associated with dividing attention among children, household duties, and study. This phenomenon parallels Labiro and Kusumiati (2022), who suggest that procrastination can operate as an avoidance mechanism—a strategy used to evade psychological pressure arising from conflict between personal goals and competing responsibilities.

Both informants also demonstrated convergent perspectives regarding the value of academic tasks. For LAF, academic assignments were important in principle but did not yield immediate outcomes comparable to his paid work. For APB, higher education carried moral and symbolic meaning, yet it remained difficult to prioritize over family responsibilities that required her continuous presence. These patterns are consistent with Zainab et al. (2024), who found that working students often assign secondary priority to academic activities due to economic demands. Similarly, Supriadi et al. (2024) reported that students who are homemakers tend to view education as a long-term investment that is frequently postponed because of domestic obligations. In other words, the perceived value of academic tasks is shaped not only by academic priorities but also by broader social, economic, and emotional value systems.

The observed differences in how informants interpreted and valued academic tasks are further reinforced by Asikainen et al. (2024), published in *Frontiers in Psychology*. Their study emphasizes that time management, sustained effort, and psychological flexibility play vital roles in reducing procrastination. They found that students who can adapt their learning strategies and manage time flexibly tend to procrastinate less. This resonates with the present findings, where the capacity to adjust to changing work demands and family responsibilities influenced how strongly participants could position academic tasks as meaningful priorities. Accordingly, psychological flexibility may be understood as a practical manifestation of adaptive coping in role conflict and, at the same time, broadens the interpretation of the value construct within TMT.

With respect to delay—that is, perceptions of deadlines—both informants tended to view deadlines as relatively flexible. LAF and APB admitted that they could work most effectively when submission dates were imminent, and that time pressure temporarily intensified their

productivity. From the standpoint of Temporal Motivation Theory (Steel, 2007), this reflects motivation that escalates as urgency increases near the deadline. However, this pattern also generated psychological costs, including sudden stress, reduced work quality, and subsequent feelings of guilt.

In addition, the study suggests that the way students interpret deadlines constitutes a key element in procrastination behavior. This finding is consistent with Afzal and Jami's (2018) study, *Overcoming Procrastination: Time Pressure and Positive Affect as Compensatory Routes to Action*, which indicates that time pressure and positive affect can influence whether individuals take action or postpone. Among working students and parents, pressures from employment and family responsibilities can shift priorities such that academic tasks are perceived as less urgent than other obligations. Yet when time pressure increases sharply, some participants demonstrated a short-term surge in motivation to complete tasks—an evaluative pattern consistent with the temporal appraisal described by Steel (2007).

Taken together, the findings suggest that academic procrastination among students with dual roles emerges from the interaction of three key elements: (1) low expectancy of success due to physical and emotional exhaustion; (2) a reduced prioritization of academic tasks relative to economic and family responsibilities; and (3) a flexible view of deadlines as a way to cope with life stressors. In this sense, procrastination represents not negligence, but a method by which students manage priorities under constraints of limited personal resources.

Conceptually, these results extend perspectives on self-regulated learning, which emphasize that self-regulation does not always entail strict control of time and motivation. Rather, it also involves adaptive capacity—managing stress and modifying learning strategies in response to personal circumstances. Therefore, students who postpone tasks should not necessarily be interpreted as entirely failing at self-regulation; instead, their behavior may reflect survival-oriented strategies aligned with the realities of their lives.

These findings carry significant implications for higher education, particularly in efforts to understand and address academic procrastination among students who serve as workers and parents. The phenomenon indicates that academic delay is not merely a matter of discipline, but also reflects how individuals adapt to social and emotional pressures beyond the campus environment. Accordingly, the results should be interpreted within a broader framework that includes institutional, pedagogical, psychosocial, and policy dimensions.

For higher education institutions, the study underscores the need to design academic systems that are more flexible and responsive to the needs of non-traditional students. Students with dual responsibilities require institutional space that allows them to harmonize professional, personal, and academic roles without being overwhelmed by rigid deadlines. Universities such as Universitas Muhammadiyah Sidoarjo (UMSIDA) could implement more adaptive academic policies, for example by offering an official grace-period mechanism or structured deadline extensions facilitated through online learning platforms. Such policies are not intended to dilute academic standards, but to align institutional expectations with the lived realities of students who frequently face constraints of time and energy.

Moreover, the implementation of flexible hybrid learning systems may provide a tangible response to these findings. Learning models that allow students to choose between online and face-to-face participation can substantially support those who must meet work schedules or caregiving duties at certain hours. With such systems, students can remain academically engaged without losing learning opportunities due to time constraints. This approach aligns with student-centered learning principles that emphasize learners' needs and conditions, rather than focusing exclusively on content delivery.

From the perspective of instructors and lecturers, the findings highlight the importance of empathetic and reflective pedagogical practices. Lecturers are expected to recognize that students do not share uniform life circumstances; some must continually negotiate between academic demands and social responsibilities. Therefore, adaptive teaching strategies—such as scaffolded

assignments, reflective teaching practices, and open communication between lecturers and students—are crucial. With such approaches, students are supported not only cognitively but also emotionally, which may ultimately reduce procrastination driven by psychological strain.

Additional implications emerge in the psychosocial domain. This study reveals that academic procrastination among dual-role students often stems from emotional exhaustion and limited personal capacity, rather than laziness or indifference. Consequently, there is a clear need for non-academic support that assists students in managing stress and time more effectively. Such support may include structured time-management training, emotional regulation skill development, and campus counseling services.

Overall, integrating these findings with international research suggests that procrastination is multilayered and context-dependent. In classic work such as Schraw et al. (2007), procrastination is often interpreted as postponement driven by the pursuit of immediate gratification. In contrast, among dual-role students in Indonesia, procrastination may be more accurately understood as a negotiation among emotional needs, social pressures, and temporal constraints. By situating this phenomenon within Temporal Motivation Theory, this study also reinforces findings by Steel and König (2006), who identified time, task value, and expectancy of success as key predictors of procrastination. At the same time, the present study contributes an additional dimension—namely, societal pressure and family responsibility—which remains relatively underexplored in much of the international literature.

CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates that academic procrastination among students who simultaneously hold roles as employees and parents is a complex phenomenon. Delaying task completion is not merely a consequence of laziness; rather, it represents an adaptive strategy adopted by students to maintain physical well-being, mental calmness, and emotional stability amid competing demands. The findings indicate that: (1) students' expectations of successfully completing academic tasks tend to decline due to limited time and energy, combined with work-related and household responsibilities; (2) academic tasks are often perceived as less urgent than the immediate benefits derived from employment or caregiving, resulting in non-academic activities receiving higher priority; and (3) perceptions of deadlines as relatively flexible lead students to postpone task completion until the final stages, causing academic work to be carried out hastily as deadlines approach.

The limitations of this study are primarily related to the methodological approach and access to information. Relying on a qualitative intrinsic case study design, the research emphasizes an in-depth understanding of individual experiences and does not aim to provide broader generalizable analysis. In addition, documentation constraints were encountered, as several important academic records and personal notes of the informants could not be fully accessed due to privacy policies and limited disclosure by participants. These constraints consequently narrowed the scope of analysis.

Based on these findings, the study recommends that universities implement more flexible policies, such as revising class schedules, adjusting deadlines and related academic requirements, and offering guidance services and time-management skills training for students who also function as workers and parents. Such institutional support is crucial in helping students balance academic and household responsibilities without compromising the quality of their learning. From a theoretical perspective, these findings also extend the understanding of Temporal Motivation Theory (Steel, 2007) by demonstrating that procrastination does not invariably carry negative connotations; instead, it can function as an adaptive coping mechanism in response to overlapping role pressures. The results underscore the importance of viewing procrastination within a broader contextual framework—not merely as a failure of self-regulation, but as an adjustment strategy aimed at preserving mental balance amid social, occupational, and academic demands.

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