

Procrastination: An Unethical Practice in Higher Education

Archana Pal¹, Dr. Arpana Godbole²

¹Research Scholar, Department of Education, University of Lucknow, Lucknow, India

²Associate Professor, Department of Education, University of Lucknow, Lucknow, India

Received: 2/9/2022, Review-1: 8/10/2022, Review-2: 3/11/2022, Accepted:10/12/2022

Abstract

Higher Education plays a significant role in everyone's life as it belongs to the stage of career advancement and building. Revamping the Higher education system is a need of the hour. Following unethical practices in higher education by academicians is a matter of global issue and concern. The term 'Unethical Practices' refers to Individual's behavior who are getting indulged in wrong practices. Unethical Practices in Higher Education are practiced by all academicians frequently without knowing the consequences and offenses. Among all the stakeholders, students usually get indulged in such activities due to a lack of awareness. As they have casual behavior toward their studies and act like they did nothing wrong by procrastinating their tasks. Studies show that students are committing these unethical practices while preparing their assignments, and submitting their final term project work, dissertation work, and doctoral thesis work. Despite getting so many Ph.D. holders over the years, the condition of research in India is still unsatisfactory.

The conditions of higher education are not satisfactory in India, none of the University able to come under the top hundred ranking in NIRF. That compels the higher education bodies to put quality check mandates. In line to maintain standards, UGC issued regulations on the "Quality of Ph.D. theses in Indian Universities" for the quality of the theses submitted by the researchers and dissertations by postgraduate students. For ensuring the prevention of unethical practices UGC has to set up a **Consortium for Academic and Research Ethics (CARE)** and issued a care reference list to prohibit predatory and dubious journals. There is a code of conduct for all academicians to maintain the quality and standards in higher education that should be taken concern. Procrastination is one of the reasons for declining the quality of higher education. This paper will bring the academicians' attention to all the major issues of higher education by procrastinating and to stop this unethical practice. This paper will orient the readers about the guidelines to maintain their quality of higher education so that they can get acquired results in the given period and better opportunities for a quality life.

Keywords: Procrastination, Academic Procrastination, Unethical Practice, Higher Education, Quality Concerns

Introduction

Ethics acts as a guide for drawing attention to do's and don'ts. An individual or a person who behaves in a way that is not remarkable with the accepted principles and standards is called immoral and unethical. A worldwide wake-up call is needed for academicians and research practitioners towards various unethical and immoral practices which are occurring continuously. Emerging issues that arise with these are what should be done to make improvements and what areas need to be worked on. Unethical Practices are a global concern in Higher education and students are facing a huge problem with unethical practices. So many practices are unethically adopted by the practitioners consciously and unconsciously. These practices affect the quality of their academic work and their workplace. Whether we talk about research work or academic work, all are badly affected by adopting such practices. Before looking over all these practices firstly understand the ethics. What is ethics? From where do these ethical concerns come? And why are they so much required to follow? Ethics are defined as good or right conduct by various philosophers and practitioners. Research practitioners are familiar with the concept of research ethics and principles. In every discipline, there is a code of conduct and principle that must follow by academicians and researchers. In the textbook and curriculum, we found some text about research ethics or related to ethical considerations in that field. But we do not have enough information about what are unethical practices and why all these are taken into consideration before proceeding with our work. That must be known by every academician. Many practitioners even do not aware of all these practices and unknowingly they all are committing the same mistakes again and again which can be under the punishable act.

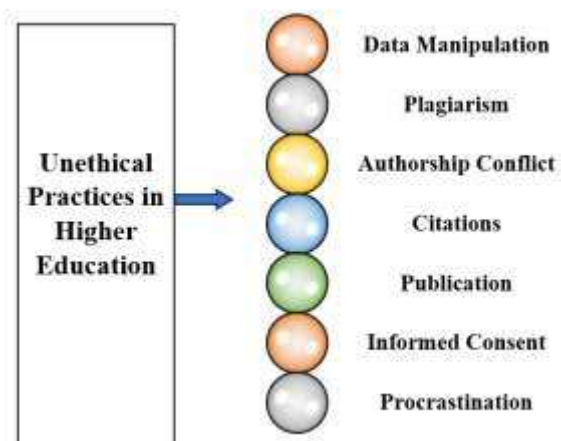
Objectives

- To discuss all the Unethical Practices of Higher Education.
- To identify reasons and rationales for Procrastination in Higher Education.
- To analyze the connotation between the quality of higher education/Unethical Practices and the student's behavior of academic procrastination.

- To orient readers about the Policy's guidelines to maintain the quality of higher education.

Unethical Practices of Higher Education:

Among all the unethical practices some are quite well-known by everyone and some are not. It is required to get acquainted with these unethical practices to improve the quality of research more prominently. These Unethical practices are a result of Academic Misconduct, Academic Dishonesty, Academic Cheating, etc. A new kind of unethical practice is introduced in an academic era that is very common but turned into a major issue if not considered within time. That is called Procrastination. Procrastination depicts unnecessary delaying of important tasks that are required to do within the time frame. Now it is becoming a global problem that has been seen in everyone in general behavior form but it affects every individual's lifestyle badly as people are not realizing their consequences before time and taking this seriously. Sichan, He. (2017) investigated in his studies that 48% of students often procrastinate. This concludes that 86% of Ph.D. students feel anxious when they procrastinate and 48% of Ph.D. students admitted themselves stressfully due to academic procrastination. This shows procrastination is one of the reasons for declining the quality of higher education. Here is the list of prominent unethical practices which are required for consideration and researchers are expected to avoid such practices in their academic journey otherwise they will be supposed to be punished.



Reasons and Rationales for Procrastination in Higher Education:

Where higher education plays a significant role in individuals' life. Higher education institutions must be committed to maintaining standards and quality. The demand for higher education is increasing very rapidly. It has been witnessed in the last two decades very clearly. According to the data revealed by MHRD's All India Survey on Higher Education (AISHE website) Enrolment ratio of students in higher studies changes rapidly. The enrolment has grown considerably during the last five years from 2016-17 to 2020-21, i.e., around 15.89%, and if we compare from the last year the increase in enrolment in 2020-21 over 2019-20 is 7.3%, which is the highest increase in last five years. Though the quality of higher education is not as much as the expectations. It has been seen that the great transition of higher studies is moving from the public to the private sector. Despite having enough infrastructure, resources, and availability of funds, still, the interest of youth in public higher education institutions is decreasing. All India Survey on Higher Education (2018-19) statistical data shows that 40,813 students were awarded Ph.D. level degrees during 2018 with 23,765 males and 17,048 females. All India Survey on Higher Education (2019-20) depicts that 38,986 students were awarded Ph.D. level degrees during 2019 with 21,577 males and 17,409 females. Despite getting so many Ph.D. holders over the years, the condition of research in India is still unsatisfactory. Various higher education institutions have their policy documents related to ethical consideration and academic integrity which preserves the norms and standards for maintaining quality. Academicians and Research Practitioners are supposed to follow these policies to uphold the excellence and quality of that higher bodies.

Procrastination in higher education is a common problem among students thus procrastination in the academic area is very popular and easily seen in terms of assessing assignments, project work, homework, and co-curricular activities. Students who have enrolled in higher studies, have to do certain tasks in their enrolled program in a form of curricular and co-curricular activities. If they failed to do so their academic performance has affected. They are engaged in both kinds of academic & non-academic activities throughout their program. Students those are failed to accomplish their

academic as well as non-academic activities are called procrastinators. Even though they are capable enough to complete all the given tasks, still they used to procrastinate and delay the task needlessly. Research has concluded some factors behind procrastination behavior among students. These reasons and factors are listed below.



Studies represented the connotation between the quality of higher education/Unethical Practices and the student's behavior of academic procrastination:

Procrastination is a general pattern of behavior in everyone to some extent and affects an individual's lifestyle. Procrastination, in general, has an impact on daily routine activities such, as paying bills, routine check-ups, and day-to-day tasks. Procrastination in Academic Areas, on the other hand, hurts a student's academic career and accomplishments. The literature on procrastination reveals that it arose in ancient Egypt and Greece. Although it has been a significant issue since ancient times and continues to occur in human life. Both undergraduate and postgraduate students have been reported to engage in academic procrastination (Klassen, Krawchuk & Rajani, 2008; Klassen et al., 2010). According to Steel (2007), between 80% and 95% of students put off academic tasks. Burka & Yuen (2008) estimated that approximately 90% of students had academic procrastination, with 25% experiencing severe procrastination, which generally compelled students to abandon their academic careers.

Roig, M., and DeTommaso, L. (1995) investigated in their article 'Are College Cheating and Plagiarism

Related to Academic Procrastination?'. During separate testing sessions, 115 college undergraduates were given the Procrastination Assessment Scale for Students as well as a cheating and plagiarism questionnaire. Exam cheating and plagiarism scores were positively correlated with self-ratings of procrastination and negatively correlated with self-reported grade point averages on these self-report measures. Students with high procrastination scores had significantly higher plagiarism scores than students with low procrastination scores. The findings suggest that procrastination may be one of several factors influencing academic dishonesty.

Bukhori, B. (2019), conducted research on plagiarism, self-efficacy, and academic procrastination in university students. The students ranged in age from the second to twelfth semesters at Walisongo State Islamic University Semarang. To obtain 388 students, the stratified sampling method was used. Furthermore, multiple regression analysis techniques were used to analyze the collected data. The data analysis results revealed that both academic self-efficacy and academic procrastination influence plagiarism behavior. Higher academic self-efficacy and lower academic procrastination equal lower plagiarism behavior; conversely, lower academic self-efficacy equals higher plagiarism behavior. The higher academic self-efficacy and lower academic procrastination, the lower the plagiarism behavior; conversely, the lower academic self-efficacy and higher academic procrastination, the higher the plagiarism behavior.

Herdian and Zamal (2021) investigated in their article 'Is Academic Dishonesty Related to Academic Procrastination in Student College,' the effect of academic procrastination on academic dishonesty in teaching and education faculties students in Indonesia. The quantitative study included 260 participants who were analyzed using the simple linear regression method. The findings of the study indicate that academic dishonesty influences student procrastination behavior in academic settings and that the greater the academic procrastination committed by students, the greater the academic dishonesty in their academic tasks.

Ghanbari, S., and Azizi, A. (2022) investigated the relationship between ethics behavior and academic procrastination and cheating attitudes. The primary goal of this research was to discover the link between

ethics and academic procrastination, as well as attitudes toward cheating. The descriptive correlation method was used in this study. Using a stratified random sampling method, 386 undergraduate students from Hamadan's Bu-Ali Sina University are included in the study. Data were collected using standardized tools and analyzed using Pearson correlation coefficient and path analysis in LISREL and SPSS statistical software. The study found a negative and significant link between ethical behavior, academic procrastination, and attitudes toward cheating. The analysis of research hypotheses revealed a negative and significant relationship between academic procrastination and self-efficacy and scientific responsibility of ethical behavior components.

According to the studies cited above, procrastination has a negative impact on students' ethical behavior and promotes academic dishonesty. As a result, the papers that were picked for analysis to establish the association between unethical behavior and academic procrastination accurately depict their relationship. Higher education institutions need to take this seriously and evaluate students' procrastinating tendencies to maintain high performance.

Policies and Guidelines of UGC to maintain the quality of higher education:

It is apparent that quality controls must be put in place and better education standards must be maintained if education standards are gradually dropping. To maintain its quality and standards, the UGC has proposed three major regulations and guidelines for higher authorities to follow. The poor performance of India's higher education institutions calls for immediate action by all stakeholders. UGC has issued regulations that must be followed by higher education authorities as well as research practitioners to maintain the quality of research and academic work.

- UGC first brought up the regulations 2009 of Minimum standards and procedures for the award of MPhil/Ph.D. Degrees issued on 1st June 2009.
- On May 5, 2016, UGC changed the regulation regarding Minimum Standards and Procedures for Awarding MPhil/Ph.D. Degrees. Under clause 9.5 of this guideline, UGC state that the Thesis be evaluated using the proper software

- to identify plagiarism and academic dishonesty.
- On July 23, 2018, the UGC introduced the Regulation for Promoting Academic Integrity and Preventing Plagiarism in Higher Educational Institutions. UGC has suggested developing a system to detect and prevent plagiarism in this regulation by organizing awareness programs, training workshops, and so on. There is a specific criterion for accepting Plagiarism levels and various penalties for similarities greater than 10%.
 - On June 14, 2019, the UGC issued a Public Notice on Academic Integrity. UGC has mentioned in this notice the importance of publishing and participating in the UGCCARE-Reference List of quality journals and conferences to avoid academic misconduct and benefit from academic credits. (UGC, 2019a).
 - On July 31, 2019, the UGC introduced a new policy aimed at "Promoting and Enhancing the Quality of Research in Indian Universities/Colleges." The purpose of this regulation is to create a committee to organize an awareness program on research ethics and develop writing skills which include knowledge of proper citation style, references style, and use of paraphrasing to improve the quality of research.
 - Another clause added in UGC regulation under 2019 section c. In this regulation, UGC has suggested and Distributed the Plagiarism Detection Software (PDS) to all universities free of cost and advised all academic institutions to check for plagiarism before the work submission. (UGC, 2019c)
 - On April 20, 2020, UGC once more published a public notice on "Self-Plagiarism." It is explicitly stated in this law that text recycling is a type of unethical behavior and falls under the category of plagiarism. Reproducing one's own ideas and thoughts is not permitted and is seen as plagiarism.

Policies and regulations issued by UGC are closely related to plagiarism and the prevention of academic misconduct or dishonesty. All of these mandates aim to raise the quality and standards of higher education. Researchers and academicians are asked to follow these guidelines early to keep their tasks free from academic theft and to raise awareness of future threats and repercussions. Academic procrastination is strongly linked to these consequences. Research shows that If students are

aware of their academic journey and try to accomplish all the tasks ethically, then there will be no way of procrastination and misleading. Thus, the need of the hour is to put a quality check by all stakeholders in maintaining and observing the difficulty of the tasks.

Suggestion & Conclusion:

Institutions should organize an awareness program for researchers and academicians so that they are all aware of the University Grant Commission's regulations and guidelines. Both the researcher and the supervisor are responsible for the quality standards of research as they are equally responsible if one of them is involved in academic misconduct. They must remember all of the research ethics codes recommended by the Committee on Publication Ethics. The institution should organize a mandatory seminar or workshop for all academicians on how to stop publication theft and how to avoid publishing with predatory and dubious journals. As much as they will be aware of the unethical conduct and what should be done or not? they will find their academic journey smooth.

Procrastination should be considered one of the most unethical behaviors among all of them. When delaying duties leads to several problems and misconduct, it is best to avoid it. It will cause worry, despair, fear, stress, and a host of other mental and psychological problems that students may not initially recognize. Students should consult with their organization if they are enduring difficulties at work or in their academic context. Postgraduate students are the institution's future researchers. Higher education institutions and colleges are expected to guide their students as much as possible and to prepare them academically sound for potential prospects for institutional growth and advancement. If the youth use their mind and institutional resources ethically, they all get to be safer from such kind of unethical practices and stay away from all the offenses.

References

- Bukhori, B. (2019). Plagiarism, self-efficacy, and academic procrastination on university students. *Psymphatic: Jurnal Ilmiah Psikologi*, 6(2), 201-212.
- Burka, J. B., & Yuen, L. M. (2008). *Procrastination: Why you do it, what to do about it now* (Anniversary Edition).
- Ghanbari, S., & Azizi, A. (2022). The Relationship Between Ethics Behavior and The Academic Procrastination and Attitude to Cheating. *Research in Teaching*, 10(1), 296-274.
- He, S. (2017). A Multivariate Investigation into Academic Procrastination of University Students. *Open Journal of Social Sciences*, 5, 12-24. doi: 10.4236/jss.2017.510002.
- Herdian, H., & Zamal, S. N. (2021). Is Academic Dishonesty Related To Academic Procrastination In Student College? *Education, Sustainability & Society (ESS)*, 4(2), 62-65.
https://www.ugc.ac.in/pdfnews/7172274_Public-Notice-Study-on-Quality-of-PhD-Theses-in-Univ.pdf
<https://www.yourarticlelibrary.com/business/ethics/ethics/99812>
- Klassen, R. M., Ang, R. P., Chong, W. H., Krawchuk, L. L., Huan, V. S., Wong, I. Y., & Yeo, L. S. (2010). Academic procrastination in two settings: Motivation correlates, behavioral patterns, and negative impact of procrastination in Canada and Singapore. *Applied Psychology*, 59(3), 361-379.
- Klassen, R. M., Krawchuk, L. L., Lynch, S. L., & Rajani, S. (2008). Procrastination and motivation of undergraduates with learning disabilities: A Mixed-Methods inquiry. *Learning Disabilities Research & Practice*, 23(3), 137-147.
- Kumar, A., & Srivastava, A. (2021). Plagiarism: Role of UGC, INFLIBNET, and Libraries in Encouraging Integrity and Quality of Academic Research in India.
- MHRD, 2019. All India Survey on Higher Education Final Report, 2018-19. Retrieved from https://mhrd.gov.in/sites/upload_files/mhrd/files/statistics-new/AISHE%20Final%20Report%202018-19.pdf
- MHRD, 2020. All India Survey on Higher Education Final Report, 2019-20. Retrieved from <http://aishe.gov.in/aishe/gotoAisheReports>
- MHRD, 2021. All India Survey on Higher Education Final Report, 2020-21. Retrieved from <http://aishe.gov.in/aishe/gotoAisheReports>
- Roig, M., & DeTommaso, L. (1995). Are College Cheating and Plagiarism Related to Academic Procrastination? *Psychological Reports*, 77(2), 691-698. <https://doi.org/10.2466/pr0.1995.77.2.691>
- Steel, P. (2007). The nature of procrastination: A meta-analytic and theoretical review of quintessential self-regulatory failure. *Psychological Bulletin*, 133(1), 65-94.
- UGC, 2009. University Grants Commission (Minimum Standards and Procedure for Award of MPhil/Ph.D. Degrees) Regulations, 2009. Retrieved from <https://www.ugc.ac.in/oldpdf/regulations/mphilphdclarification.pdf>
- UGC, 2016. University Grants Commission (Minimum Standards and Procedure for Award of MPhil/Ph.D. Degrees) Regulations, 2016. Retrieved from [https://www.ugc.gov.in/pdfnews/4952604_UGC-\(M.PHIL.-PH.D-DEGREES\)-REGULATIONS,-2016.pdf](https://www.ugc.gov.in/pdfnews/4952604_UGC-(M.PHIL.-PH.D-DEGREES)-REGULATIONS,-2016.pdf)
- UGC, 2018. University Grants Commission (Promotion of Academic Integrity and Prevention of Plagiarism in Higher Educational Institutions) Regulations, 2018. Retrieved from https://www.ugc.ac.in/pdfnews/7771545_academic-integrity-Regulation2018.pdf
- UGC, 2019a. Public Notice on Academic Integrity. Retrieved from https://www.ugc.ac.in/pdfnews/6315352_UGC-Public-Notice-CARE.pdf
- UGC, 2019c. Distribution of PDS (Plagiarism Detection Software) to All Universities Free of Cost, 2019. Retrieved from https://www.ugc.ac.in/pdfnews/7680776_UGC-letter-reg-PDS.pdf
- UGC, 2020b, April 20. Public Notice on Self-Plagiarism, 2020. Retrieved from https://www.ugc.ac.in/pdfnews/2284767_self-plagiarism001.pdf