Not Just Laziness!: an Exploratory Research about Procrastination of Elementary School Students

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Abstract

Who thought children could do that academic procrastination? In fact, children, especially elementary school age, are in a period of volatile emotional changes, and it is very closely related to the development of independence, decision-making, and behavior such as 'procrastination'. This study used a qualitative approach with a phenomenological design to explore the academic procrastination of 14 elementary school students in Tangerang City. Therefore, the results of this study provide an overview of any subjects and tasks that students procrastinate. Then this study also found that emotion regulation is the main factor of this student's procrastination. Perceptions about subjects, laziness, and poor time management result from mental diversion from their negative feelings.

Keywords: Procrastination, Elementary School Students, Emotion Regulation.

INTRODUCTION

Education is one of the important means in maximizing the potential possessed by every student in which one of the goals of national education is to shape the character and civilization of a dignified and noble character. To realize a nation that is dignified, faithful and devoted, a strong mental condition is needed, which is able to control themselves to avoid irresponsible behavior. To achieve good learning behavior, students often experience obstacles that can interfere with the learning process.

There are many obstacles that often hamper student learning processes. One of them is procrastination behavior that can be interpreted as a delay behavior of school assignments.

According to Milgram (1992 in Ferrari et al., 1995) procrastination behavior is increasingly popular in the era of the industrial revolution, procrastination is the behavior of modern society and is common in countries with advanced technology. There is a term that reveals that the more industrialized a society, the more prominent the delay behavior. Thus it can be said that procrastination is a behavior that can occur in every realm of life so that this behavior becomes a common problem that is commonly carried out by almost every individual. Delay can appear at the level of perception where sensory impression goes to mental processes and directly stimulates memory associated with negative emotions (Ferrari et al., 1995). In other words, delay is an individual's effort to avoid awkwardness in deciding how to start an activity. This is in line with Burka & Yuen (2008) which explains that procrastination is a complex psychological problem caused by a feeling of fear to start and do a task.

Procrastination is very popular in the world of education; a number of studies say that more than 70% of students conduct academic procrastination (Ellis & Knaus, 1977). Meanwhile, the results of the Survey Steel (2007) show that 95% of people experience procrastination and almost 50% do it consistently (Solomon & Rothblum, 1984). Procrastination can occur in the elementary school environment; several studies have shown that elementary school students are involved in delaying their academic tasks. This is because students prefer to do more fun activities, such as playing or reasoning, because they do not understand the tasks given by the teacher (Safitri et al., 2020). Other studies have shown that 47% of 6th grade students experienced academic procrastination in the medium category (Rahmadani et al., 2022).

The high number of procrastination will cause various adverse effects, including the results of the study of Pekpazar et al., (2021) shows that the impact of the procrastination can hamper academic performance so as to hamper the learning process. In addition, özer & Saçkes, (2011) also suggested that the impact of procrastination behavior can reduce life satisfaction (life satisfaction). Furthermore, the results of Suhadianto & Pratitis's research (2020) explained that the impact of academic procrastination was divided into six domains including 1) Affective domains, such as anxiety, panic, uncontrolled emotions. 2) Cognitive domain, as always remembered and imagined unfinished tasks. 3) The realm of behavior, such as late for collecting tasks, always in a hurry. 4) Physical domain, in the form of dizziness, fatigue, difficulty sleeping. 5) Moral domains, such as cheating. 6) Interpersonal domains, such as getting unfavorable images or assessments from others.

Procrastination behavior can occur due to various factors, namely internal factors and external factors. Several studies have studied internal factors including the results of research Schouwenburg (1995) states procrastination can occur due to fear of failure and laziness to do the task. While Rahimi & Valland (2021) revealed that individuals who have negative emotions will have an impact on academic delays. In addition, stress can also trigger someone to do a procrastination (Handayani & Abdullah, 2016). While Ulum (2016) added that low self -regulation can also cause a person to do a procrastination. On the other hand, other studies also examine related to external factors. According to Candra, et al (2014) procrastination is more often influenced by external factors, namely the environment. The intended environment can be in the form of a family environment, school environment, and community environment. Other researchers also added that there were several factors of procrastination, namely easily distributed by more enjoyable activities, and lack of support and encouragement from parents (Cania, 2021).

Based on the description above, it can be seen that procrastination behavior is a common behavior that can be done by anyone. In the learning process, procrastination behavior is often found both elementary to tertiary levels so that the study of procrastination is very interesting to discuss especially at the elementary school level. This is because the topic of procrastination at the elementary school level has not been found much so researchers want to study more deeply related to procrastination behavior and factors causing elementary school students to delay in the academic field.

METHODS

This study used a qualitative approach with phenomenological design. Phenomenological Design is one of the designs in qualitative research that described by the general meaning obtained from the experience of research participants regarding academic procrastination (Creswell, W. John & Creswell, 2012). Through in -depth interviews with probing, this research explores data purposively from 14 elementary school students in the city of Tangerang. Each is a grade 6 elementary school student, with a choice of 7 capabilities and 7 men. To maintain confidentiality, this research used pseudonym for participants. As for this study, using the interpretive phenomenological analysis (IPA), which was carried out through the reading and reading stage, initial noting, developing emergent themes, searching for connections across emergent themes, moving the next case, and cooking for patterns across casross cases (smith & smith Nizza, 2021). Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis was chosen to interpret the meaning of the personal world and social

research (Hefferon & Gil-Rodriguez, 2011), considering the participants of children who still have limitations to describe the meaning of their experiences.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Do you still suspect that the procrastination is only done by adults? In fact, procrastination can occur in people of all ages, including children at elementary school age. Procrastination is a common problem that often occurs in the school environment. Procrastination is generally defined as an act of delaying starting or completing tasks on time. Procrastination according to Knaus (2010) is the behavior of delaying an important task until the next day which will cause certain consequences. Academic procrastination includes six areas of which are 1) The task of composing 2) Learning to face examination 3) Reading reference sources 4) Administrative assignments 5) Attending meetings 6) Overall academic performance (Solomon & Rothblum, 1984). Meanwhile, this study found elementary school students had a tendency to procrastinate in certain lessons because it considered it difficult. In addition, students also revealed that they did this at a certain time for various reasons.

Objects and Reasons for Academic Procrastination of Elementary School Students

Almost all students in various parts of the world who take school exams must have ended the most difficult questions (Cleland et al., 2005) . The reasons can vary, usually due to limited exam time and this is part of the exam strategy (Purnamasari, 2013) and study regulation. In this study, a phenomenon similar to this trend was also found but without a positive motivational basis or learning regulation. Students admit that they often end assignments that are considered difficult. In addition, the results of the interviews also show that in this case, students often delay doing homework assignments given by the teacher. Students revealed that they did this at certain times for various reasons.

This study found that all research participants included Almineta, Sintia, Hanum, Mailina, Moza, Aul, Sandra, Fandy, Reinaldo, Jamal, Firman, Didik, Asep, Hasbi; revealed that mathematics, Islamic religious education, Arabic and themed lessons were the subjects most often procrastinated.

"Usually religion and mathematics, because the task is rather difficult"
(Almineta Interview, 6 May 2023)

"Religion and mathematics too (which is often postponed), because it's a bit difficult. As for the others, it's not."
(Interview with Sintia, 6 May 2023)

"Mathematics is the same theme (which is often postponed)"
(Interview with Hanum, 6 May 2023)

"Mathematics and (lesson) religion, what can I do, it's difficult (laughs)"
(Mailina Interview, 6 May 2023)

"Mathematics, because the questions are difficult, they also like to play, but don't do the easy ones" (Interview with Moza, 7 May 2023)

"I actually rarely (procrastinate), except when it comes to math and work"
(Aul Interview, May 7, 2023)

"Hehe (embarrassed), often fits math and theme lessons"
(Sandra Interview, May 7, 2023)

"I'm usually in religion and math class"

(Fandy interview, 8 May 2023)

"It's just lazy, especially math and theme lessons"
(Interview with Reinaldo, 8 May 2023)

"There are those who like to postpone, math and themes"
(Interview with Jamal, 9 May 2023)

"Ohh, yeah, most (the one who is procrastinated) is math, it's difficult, even in Arabic, I don't understand"
(Interview with Firman, 13 May 2023)

"As for other subjects that are easy to do, it's just like math and Arabic it's difficult (therefore procrastination)"
(Interview with Hasbi, 13 May 2023)

"Sometimes it's difficult (mathematics), so later, Arabic is the same"
(Asep's interview, 14 May 2023)

"I often (procrastinate doing assignments) when it comes to math, it's as difficult as Arabic"
(Interview with Didik, 15 May 2023)

From the statements of the research participants, it was found that mathematics was the subject most often procrastinated, with almost the same reasons, namely feeling that mathematics was difficult. In addition, other subjects such as Arabic, Islamic religious education, and thematics were not spared from student procrastination. This is similar to the results of research by Fulano et al.,

(2018) which showed that most students delayed doing their math homework because of a lack of knowledge and mastery of the material.

Several studies on procrastination reveal that individuals are more likely to postpone unpleasant or boring tasks (Dryden, 2012) . This is closely related to individual perceptions of tasks that are considered difficult, tasks that are considered to have a high level of difficulty will provide great opportunities for delays (Afzal & Jami, 2018; Isma, 2020) . This is in line with the research findings that have been conducted by researchers that elementary school students have a tendency to procrastinate in certain subjects because they find them difficult.

In addition, this study also found that there are several other reasons besides the perception of difficult subjects. One of them is bad time management.

"I don't rush the time (to do assignments), I spend more time playing"
(Interview with Sintia, 6 May 2023)

"I don't have time, at night I recite the Koran, so I can't (there's no time), during the fasting month from 9 o'clock, on weekdays until 10 at night" (
Interview with Hasbi, 6 May 2023)

From Sintia and Hasbi's statement, this study found that elementary school students still really need help in managing study time. Elementary school students still do not have a priority reference and task management in everyday life (Sari et al., 2022) . This is also supported by further findings in this study, where students continue to procrastinate with the excuse of being 'lazy', even though students have received punishment from school due to the procrastination that students have done.

"Even though I've been punished (for not finishing my assignments), but I forget, or I'm often lazy, if I'm not lazy, I'll do the work right away"
(Asep Interview, 14 May 2023)

"Lazy, if I was (the reason)"
(Interview with Didik, 15 May 2023)

"If we haven't done our job at the teacher's law, we are pinched"
(Interview with Sintia, 6May 2023)

Referring to information from Sintia, that the punishment for students who don't do their assignments is a gentle pinch to give a deterrent effect. However, again the punishment was not enough to encourage students to stop procrastination which caused their negligence in carrying out assignments, and some students continued to give statements that there was a feeling of laziness that covered them so they did procrastination.

Factors of Academic Procrastination in Elementary School Students: Emotion Regulation

If we combine the various reasons compiled by this study, it is found that behind the perception of difficult studies, poor time management, and laziness, there are 'other triggers' for procrastination behavior. Some research emphasizes students' self-regulated learning (Wolters, 2003) , but some others think that this is more dominant in students' emotional regulation (Eckert et al., 2016) . Among the two predictions of these factors, it has been scientifically proven that learning regulation or emotional regulation can affect the emergence of procrastination behavior. However, in this study, emotional regulation is considered more dominant, seeing that the majority of students have a tendency to procrastinate academically in subjects that are considered difficult. In addition, students also show negative emotions such as anxiety, frustration, despair, and fear of failure. These feelings arise when encountering obstacles in the process of doing the task.

According to Ferrari et al., (1995) procrastination can appear at the level of perception where sensory impressions go to mental processes and directly stimulate memories associated with negative emotions. This shows that procrastination that appears in certain areas is possible because of feelings of discomfort with the activities to be carried out, such as assuming that these activities are difficult, boring, and scary so that strong negative emotions arise. Therefore, emotional regulation has a role to help children overcome fear or anxiety about tasks that are considered difficult or less interesting, and helps children stay motivated in completing tasks (Southam-Gerow & Kendall, 2002) .

CONCLUSION

Procrastination is a common problem that often occurs in every realm of life, even among elementary school students, procrastination has also become a habit that cannot be avoided. The object that is often postponed is the homework assignment. The majority of students postpone doing their assignments because the characteristics of the task are considered too difficult so that it makes students feel stressed and diverts their learning activities to other things that are more fun. The subjects considered too difficult were mathematics, Islamic religious education, Arabic, and thematics. This is because students have not mastered the material taught by the teacher. The next factors that cause students to procrastinate are laziness, poor time management, and low emotional regulation.

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