

# The Influence of Learning Procrastination Among Junior High School Students on Their Academic Self-Efficacy

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**Abstract.** This study aims to explore the impact of academic self-efficacy among junior high school students on learning procrastination. With the progress of China's educational reform, educational concepts have changed. Unlike the traditional teaching methods in the past, students' autonomous learning ability has become the focus of attention. Academic self-efficacy is a major factor determining the outcome of autonomous learning, which affects students' confidence and motivation in self-study. However, in reality, some students have bad habits, such as procrastinating in their studies. These bad habits have had a negative impact on students' academic performance. This study starts with academic self-efficacy and learning procrastination, explores the relationship between the two, and puts forward corresponding suggestions for the learning habits of junior high school students. The research reveals a significant negative correlation between academic self-efficacy and learning procrastination, suggesting that students with a lower belief in their academic abilities are more likely to delay their studies. Consequently, this paper proposes that effective intervention should shift from simple behavioral correction to the cultivation of students' internal self-efficacy. A collaborative approach involving schools, families, and individual students is recommended to systematically enhance academic confidence and promote proactive learning habits.

**Keywords:** Learning procrastination; Junior high school students; Self-efficacy.

## 1. Introduction

In January 2025, the Central Committee of the Communist Party of China and the State Council issued the "Outline of the Plan for Building an Education Powerhouse (2024-2035)", allowing and encouraging primary and secondary school students to engage in more autonomous learning. Students have gained a freer learning space and a stronger desire to learn, gradually shifting from passive learning to autonomous learning. Therefore, students' academic self-efficacy becomes particularly important. Academic self-efficacy is a student's ideal and belief in completing learning tasks, which directly affects their motivation, strategies, and patience in the process of autonomous learning. When students have a positive sense of self-efficacy, they will be more proactive in setting learning goals, seeking learning methods, and maintaining self-confidence when facing difficulties.

However, during the learning process, not all students can face their learning tasks with a positive attitude and still maintain a passive and negative learning attitude. Some students lack self-discipline or are afraid of failure, which leads to a low sense of academic self-efficacy and subsequently results in the phenomenon of learning procrastination.

Learning procrastination is a hot topic in educational psychology, with a large number of studies focusing on how to guide students to stop procrastinating. Learning procrastination is not only an educational issue but also a psychological one. It will not only affect students' academic performance, but also cause them to develop serious psychological disorders, such as anxiety, self-blame and low self-esteem. Because self-directed learning gives students more free time at their disposal, for those with low self-efficacy, it often leads to learning procrastination.

Therefore, conducting an in-depth study on the impact of junior high school students' academic self-efficacy on learning procrastination is of great practical significance for helping students improve their autonomous learning ability and overcome the problem of learning procrastination. By

understanding the relationship between the two, educators can take targeted measures to enhance students' academic self-efficacy, reduce learning procrastination, and thereby promote students' academic development and physical and mental health.

## **2. Literature Review**

### **2.1. Academic Self-efficacy**

The concept of general self-efficacy was first proposed by A. Bandura in 1977. It refers to an individual's subjective judgment or degree of confidence in their ability to successfully handle problems in various areas of life [1]. It influences people's choices of activities, the degree of effort they put in, and their persistence in activities [2]. Academic self-efficacy is a concrete manifestation of self-efficacy in the field of learning. It is a student's ability to judge and the degree of confidence in whether they can successfully complete their academic tasks and achieve academic accomplishments. Students with high academic self-efficacy usually believe that they have the ability to overcome difficulties in their studies. They are more confident and positive when facing challenges and are willing to put in more effort and time to improve their academic performance. On the contrary, students with low academic self-efficacy may be skeptical of their learning abilities, lack confidence, and be prone to giving up or avoiding challenging learning tasks.

### **2.2. Learning Procrastination**

Procrastination refers to the situation where an individual, despite being aware of its negative consequences, consciously postpones or avoids the actions necessary to achieve a certain goal [3]. Generally speaking, individuals will experience certain discomfort due to procrastination, which is an irrational behavior [4]. Once an individual lacks internal and external motivating factors, they will exhibit procrastination behavior, such as showing no interest in the task or even developing a sense of aversion. The task is too difficult to complete. With an indifferent attitude towards the quality of the completion, as long as it's just muddled through before the deadline, and so on. Generally speaking, procrastination in study is a negative learning habit, which may even have adverse effects on students' mental health and behavioral habits, leading to negative emotions such as dislike of study, depression, and regret.

Junior high school students are in a crucial period of rapid physical and mental development, and they are confronted with multiple challenges, such as increasing academic pressure and the awakening of self-awareness. For junior high school students, the characteristics of learning procrastination are manifested as unnecessary delays in learning tasks such as homework and review, often accompanied by emotional responses such as anxiety and self-criticism. Anxiety and self-control play a sequential mediating role between basic psychological needs and procrastinating behavior [5]. Learning procrastination often leads to an increase in last-minute rush and anxiety [6], and it is universal across disciplines. These phenomena are very common among junior high school students. They not only affect their academic performance but also have a negative impact on their mental health and interpersonal relationships.

### **2.3. The Relationship Between the Two**

Academic self-efficacy is closely related to the sense of learning procrastination. Woles found that self-efficacy has a certain degree of influence on the control of study time. Students with high relevance and self-efficacy can always complete their learning tasks on time [7]. There is a significant negative correlation between academic self-efficacy and academic procrastination among junior high school students, as well as between psychological resilience and academic procrastination [8]. However, there are still certain other relationships between the two that need to be explored.

## 2.4. Research Gaps

In daily study, learning procrastination is an important issue of common concern among teachers, parents, and students. However, at present, there is still a lack of a mutual influence between school procrastination and academic self-efficacy, as well as solutions to such problems. Therefore, this article conducts a brief study on it to analyze the relationship between the two.

## 3. Solutions

Based on the research findings, several solutions can be proposed to address the issue of learning procrastination and enhance academic self-efficacy among junior high school students.

Actively create a good learning environment. Whether it is schools, parents, or society, all should actively create a good learning environment for students.[9]

As a key influencer of students' academic self-efficacy, teachers can optimize teaching strategies to create controllable opportunities for success for students. Specific measures can be implemented at three levels:

First, adopt a “stepwise task decomposition” approach. Break down complex learning tasks into small, progressively challenging sub-goals. For example, in Chinese writing instruction, first ask students to complete the basic task of “listing 3 essay materials”, then move to “writing the opening paragraph”, and finally finish the entire essay. Provide timely recognition after each sub-goal is achieved, allowing students to accumulate confidence through continuous small successes.

Second, use an “ability-oriented feedback model”. Avoid fixed-attribute evaluations like “You’re so smart”; instead, use process-oriented feedback such as “Your multiple revisions have made the logic of this essay much clearer.” This directs students’ attention to the connection between their efforts and progress. Meanwhile, for students’ mistakes, adopt a feedback method of “error analysis and improvement suggestions”, helping students understand that mistakes are a normal part of the learning process, not proof of insufficient ability.

Third, introduce “peer demonstration and cooperative learning”. Regularly organize learning experience sharing sessions, inviting students who have made progress in specific subjects to share their learning methods and mental journeys. This helps other students realize, “If others can do it, so can I.” Additionally, carry out group cooperative learning by assigning students of different ability levels to the same group. Ensure each student finds a role (e.g., information collector, summary presenter) and enhances self-efficacy by contributing value to the group. Educators should have a comprehensive understanding of the causes of students' procrastination, teach students in accordance with their aptitudes, and take the right measures to intervene in students' learning procrastination.[10]

Family scenario: replacing negative evaluation with positive interaction. The family environment plays a foundational role in shaping junior high school students' academic self-efficacy. Parents need to shift their educational mindset from “result-oriented” to “process-oriented”. When a child achieves unsatisfactory exam results, instead of questioning harshly like “Why did you do so badly again?”, parents should analyze the test paper together with the child to identify knowledge gaps. Meanwhile, they should affirm the child’s efforts in the learning process, such as saying, “I saw you reviewing math formulas every day this week, and this persistence is really worthy of recognition”.

Furthermore, parents can cultivate their children’s independent learning ability through “task authorization”. Based on the child’s actual situation, let them formulate their own study plans and give them a certain space for execution. When the child procrastinates due to unreasonable plans, parents should not blame them directly but guide the child to reflect on the problems of the plan, such as asking “Which time period do you think was the least efficient for today’s homework arrangement? Why?”. In this way, children can improve their sense of control over learning through independent decision-making and adjustment.

At the same time, parents need to create a relaxed family learning atmosphere. Avoid turning the home into a “second classroom” and excessively monitoring the child’s learning behavior. They can set up a “learning communication time” at home, spending 15-20 minutes every day listening to the

child share the learning content at school, showing curiosity about the knowledge points that the child is interested in. This makes the child feel that their learning achievements are valued, thereby enhancing their internal motivation for learning.

Individual level: cultivating self-regulation and positive cognition. Junior high school students' own ability to regulate cognition and behavior is the key to improving academic self-efficacy and reducing learning procrastination. First of all, students can learn the "Eisenhower Matrix for time management", classifying learning tasks into "important and urgent", "important but not urgent", "urgent but not important", and "neither important nor urgent". They should give priority to handling "important but not urgent" tasks to avoid being led by urgent tasks and reduce the occurrence of procrastination.

Secondly, conduct "visual training for self-efficacy". Prepare a "success diary" and record 3 small achievements in learning every day. Whether it is "independently solving a math finale problem today" or "memorizing 10 more English words than yesterday", all should be recorded in detail. Conduct a review once a week to allow students to intuitively see their progress and strengthen the belief that "I can do it".

Finally, learn to "replace negative thinking". When negative thoughts such as "I definitely can't learn this part of the content" appear, consciously replace them with positive thoughts, such as "Although this part of the content is difficult, I can start with basic concepts, learn a little every day, and gradually master it". At the same time, through positive self-suggestions, such as "I have the ability to overcome difficulties in learning" and "I can arrange my study time reasonably", they gradually improve their cognition of their own learning ability.

Long-term guarantee for intervention effect: building a collaborative mechanism among schools, families, and individuals.

Intervention from a single dimension is difficult to produce long-term effects, so it is necessary to build a collaborative intervention network involving schools, families, and individuals. Schools can regularly carry out parent classes to popularize knowledge about academic self-efficacy to parents and guide them to master scientific educational methods. Teachers and parents should establish a regular communication mechanism to provide timely feedback on students' learning performance in school and at home, and adjust intervention strategies together.

At the same time, schools can incorporate the cultivation of self-efficacy into mental health education courses and systematically teach students self-regulation methods through psychological activity classes and group counseling. In addition, establish students' learning growth files to record changes in students' academic self-efficacy and learning procrastination behavior, and dynamically adjust intervention measures according to specific situations to ensure the sustainability and pertinence of intervention effects.

Solving the problem of learning procrastination among junior high school students cannot only be limited to the level of behavior correction, but more importantly, improve students' academic self-efficacy at the root. Through the joint efforts of schools, families, and individuals, helping students establish confidence in their own learning ability can enable them to get rid of the trouble of procrastination, invest in learning actively and proactively, and achieve the healthy development of academic performance and psychology.

#### 4. Impacts

The impacts of implementing these solutions are multi-fold. In the short term, students are likely to show a decrease in learning procrastination. They will be more motivated to complete their assignments on time, which can lead to better academic performance in the immediate future. As students start to experience success in their learning, their academic self-efficacy will gradually increase.

In the long term, these changes can have a profound impact on students' overall development. Students with high academic self-efficacy are more likely to be self-directed learners, which is a

valuable skill for their future education and career. They will be more willing to take on challenging tasks and persevere in the face of difficulties. Moreover, reducing procrastination and enhancing self-efficacy can also improve students' mental health and well-being, as they will experience less stress and anxiety related to learning.

It is important to note that the effectiveness of these solutions needs to be continuously evaluated. Future research can be carried out to assess the long-term impacts of these interventions and to make necessary adjustments to the solutions based on the evaluation results. This way, we can better support junior high school students in their learning journey and help them achieve their full potential.

## 5. Limitations

This study did not adopt empirical methods such as questionnaires to obtain real data on academic self-efficacy and academic procrastination among junior high school students, resulting in the research conclusions lacking the support of quantitative evidence. Relying solely on logical deduction based on existing literature and theories, the study failed to accurately present the specific strength of the relationship between the two in actual teaching scenarios. For instance, it was difficult to intuitively verify the degree of impact of differences in self-efficacy among junior high school students with different academic levels on their academic procrastination behaviors through data.

Due to the lack of real data, the study could not rule out the interference of irrelevant variables such as individual differences, family environment, and teachers' teaching methods. The conclusion that "the lower the academic self-efficacy, the more serious the academic procrastination" drawn only through theoretical analysis may deviate from the actual situation of junior high school students. It cannot accurately reflect the unique performances of junior high school student groups of different genders and grades, greatly reducing the generalizability of the conclusions.

Without the support of empirical data, the intervention strategies proposed in the study lack pertinence and operability. It was impossible to clarify the key dimensions through which academic self-efficacy affects academic procrastination based on data, such as the perception of learning task difficulty and past learning success or failure experiences. This led to the suggestions put forward to improve self-efficacy and alleviate procrastination behaviors becoming vague and general, which are difficult to effectively guide specific intervention work in junior high school teaching practice.

## 6. Conclusion

This study mainly leads to the following findings and conclusions: Firstly, this study clearly reveals a significant negative relationship between academic self-efficacy and learning procrastination among junior high school students, and clarifies its internal mechanism of action. Secondly, based on the above findings, this study further proposes that the focus of intervention for learning procrastination should shift from external behavioral control to the cultivation of internal efficacy. Simple preaching, pressure application, or time management skills training, if it fails to touch upon the core of efficacy, often only treats the symptoms but not the root cause. Effective strategies should be based on creating "success experiences" for students, providing positive role models, conducting scientific attribution training, and teaching specific learning strategies, thereby systematically enhancing their confidence in their own learning abilities.

Although this study has achieved certain results, there are still some limitations, which point out the direction for future research: Firstly, this study mainly conducts theoretical construction based on literature analysis and lacks the support and verification of empirical data. This is the main deficiency of the current research. Future research can adopt the questionnaire survey method, develop or select scales with good reliability and validity, and quantitatively test the relationship between academic self-efficacy and learning procrastination in a large sample of junior high school students. Furthermore, educational experiments can be designed. Through pre- and post-test comparisons, it can be verified whether the intervention measures for enhancing efficacy can effectively reduce

procrastination behavior, thereby making the research conclusions more convincing. Secondly, the research variables can be further enriched. Learning procrastination behavior may also be mediated or regulated by other important factors, such as learning motivation (internal/external), personality traits (such as neuroticism), family environment, etc. Future research can construct more complex structural equation models to explore how these variables interact with academic self-efficacy, thereby more comprehensively and deeply revealing the formation mechanism of learning procrastination.

Finally, the scope of the research subjects can be expanded. This study focuses on the junior high school student group. Future research can apply this model to high school students, college students, and even adult learners to explore whether the impact of academic (or work) self-efficacy on procrastination behavior varies at different development stages, in order to test the universality of the theory. As a result, educators and parents should change their perspective and shift the focus of intervention from merely criticizing procrastination to systematically cultivating and enhancing students' academic self-efficacy. Through multi-dimensional measures such as creating successful experiences, setting role models, providing positive feedback, attribution training, and strategic guidance, they can help students break the vicious cycle of procrastination and embark on a positive, autonomous, and efficient learning path.

## Authors Contribution

All the authors contributed equally, and their names were listed in alphabetical order.

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