



## Influence of academic procrastination and school climate on mental health among nursing and Midwifery students at colleges in Kwara State, Nigeria

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**Abstract** – This study examines the influence of academic procrastination and school climate on the mental health of nursing and midwifery students at colleges in Kwara State, Nigeria. It adopted a quantitative approach through a descriptive survey design. This study used a purposive and simple random sampling technique. The sample size was comprised of 800 respondents selected from two colleges in Ilorin and Oke Ode. Three adapted instruments were used to collect data: academic procrastination, school climate, and psychological wellbeing. Their validity and reliabilities were acceptable. The findings of this study revealed that there is a positive influence of academic procrastination on the psychological wellbeing of college of Nursing and Midwifery Students; it also revealed that the majority of the respondents strongly agreed that there is a strong positive influence of academic procrastination on psychological wellbeing of college of Nursing and Midwifery Students; it revealed that majority of the respondents strongly agreed that there is a positive influence of academic procrastination and school climate on mental health of college of Nursing and Midwifery Students. Thus, this study recommended that students develop good study habits, and the school authority should provide a conducive learning environment to enhance students' mental health.

**Keywords:** Academic Procrastination, School Climate, Mental Health, Nursing and Midwifery students

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### I. INTRODUCTION

ACADEMIC procrastination is considered a distortion trait that can have particularly serious consequences for students with frequent deadlines. Procrastination is considered an individual's habit of completing less important tasks instead of pressing important ones, engaging in more enjoyable rather than less enjoyable ones, and completing high-priority tasks at the last minute (Salem, 2016). Steel (2007) posited that procrastination is a common and destructive form of self-regulation that is not fully understood. Ellis and Knaus (2002) described it as an interactive dysfunctional and behaviours avoidance process characterized by the desire to avoid an activity, the promise to get it later, and the use of excuse-making to justify the delay and avoid blame. Academic procrastination is an irrational tendency to delay the beginning or completion of an academic task. Many students intend to complete their academic tasks within the time frame, but they lack the motivation to get started and done as scheduled due to their self-defeating behaviour, academic procrastinators often experience dire consequences, which involve low self-esteem, depression, and academic failure (Fung, 2010).

Procrastination implies delaying urgent and necessary tasks and doing something else instead, substituting work with lower priority and less essential. Procrastination is also seen as delaying a task that was initially planned despite expecting to be worse off for the delay

(Thakkar, 2010). Not all delays amount to procrastination. Delays are part of structuring and prioritizing, whereas procrastination is needless voluntary postponement of tasks undertaken with the knowledge that it may harm a person's performance or feelings. Because the delays are irrational, people voluntarily choose a course of action. According to Noran (2000), academic procrastinators often avoid essential projects and other tasks to socialize or entertain themselves. They prevent unpleasant tasks and engage in activities that appear rewarding. Academic procrastination can also be seen as an "anti-motivation" where individuals decide not to move towards carrying out and finishing a chosen academic task (Wolters, 2003). Academic procrastination can be viewed as any academic work that is delayed or avoided due to the discrepancy between intention and actual behaviours to the extent that the delay or avoidance negatively affects the procrastinator (Kelly, 2000). More importantly, students may delay because they feel negative or conflicted about different courses they are enrolled in or because they do not have any reason to learn the material taught in these courses. Three factors influence the emergence of procrastination in every individual; certain personality traits (e.g., high impulsivity) determine the vulnerability to procrastination. Some people are more seducible to procrastinate than others; self-regulation deficits play an essential role. They include little perseverance or deficient time management, but also gaps between one's intention and action; and situational factors such as complexity, plausibility, structuralizing, and attractively of a task, anticipated feedback, experienced autonomy, and social isolation (Habelrih & Hicks, 2015).

Similarly, the school imparts knowledge of the immediate society's values, norms, and traditions for the survival of that particular community and its citizens (Cherongis, 2010). Where the school was found to be well equipped with facilities, structures, qualified teachers, positive relationships, a library, etc, it may have realized its stated objectives. Still, where the school is neglected, it will not facilitate learning. School climate may influence students' psychological wellbeing. Children need a safe, healthy, and stimulating environment to grow and learn, as it plays a critical role in child development. Thus, school climate is paramount in shaping and reshaping students' psychological wellbeing. However, a supportive and favorable school environment enriched with enough learning facilities (laboratory equipment, books, libraries, etc.) and favorable climate makes students more comfortable and more concentrated on their academic activities, resulting in high psychological wellbeing (Byoung-suk, 2012). A healthy school climate is significant to the educational system's continuing and long-term growth in any society. It likely forms the prerequisite for professional knowledge and skills, which center on competencies, educational resources, and strategies, probably the valuable determinants of academic performance and success. The success of any formal organization, especially schools, depends upon its climate. Therefore, the school management could do everything possible to achieve excellent academic performance and ensure a favorable and conducive school climate. According to Moos (2009), school climate is the social atmosphere of a setting or learning environment in which students have different experiences depending upon the protocols set up by the teachers and school management. Aso (2006) describes a school climate as a condition of the school's social and organizational atmosphere, which may affect the lives of the teachers and students. The school may have an atmosphere of friendliness and cooperation, formal informality and freedom; the state of affairs may be confused or uncertain, and so on. Whatever atmosphere pervades a school is its climate.

Psychological wellbeing is a major concept in this research. According to Kallay and Rus (2014), psychological wellbeing is embedded in two dimensions: hedonic and eudaimonic wellbeing. Hedonic wellbeing implies subjective wellbeing, maximising subjective happiness, pleasure, and life satisfaction. In contrast, eudaimonic wellbeing implies psychological wellbeing, which explains the significance of living within one's values and accomplishing potential. There are several broad and inconsistent definitions being used in current psychological literature. Being a multi-dimensional construct, the definition of psychological wellbeing, or the elements emphasized, changes depending on the context in which it is studied (Dodge, Daly, Huyton & Sanders, 2012). Psychological wellbeing relates to how people subjectively evaluate their lives cognitively and affectively.

Recently, the consensus in much research surrounding psychological wellbeing as a construct was that it was to be seen as the opposite of negative states. For example, psychological wellbeing is considered as not stressed or not depressed, and therefore, low scores on depression, anxiety, stress, or other negative attributes indicate higher psychological wellbeing. The recent change in thinking has seen the emergence of a positive emphasis on this more dated approach (Libran, 2006). Concerning its positive aspects, psychological wellbeing indicates, for instance, happiness or life satisfaction rather than the opposites of depression and anxiety. According to Ryff (1989), the positive aspects of wellbeing include at least six main variables: sense of autonomy, self-acceptance, purpose in life, positive relations with others, personal growth, and environmental mastery. Several studies have been conducted on academic procrastination about psychological wellbeing. According to Sirois and Tosti (2012), procrastination is a strategy that enables immediate, temporary relief from stressful thoughts and situations.

Conversely, this strategy may create more distress if the task is incomplete (procrastination). Many procrastinators feel overwhelmed, causing stress and affecting physical and psychological wellbeing. This

distress also seriously reduces psychological wellbeing by creating self-criticizing thoughts and negative self-judgments Sirois and Tosti, (2012). Students with higher psychological wellbeing would be expected to perceive the academic environment as less daunting, making them less likely to procrastinate (Riulli, Savicki, & Richards, 2012). Those with low psychological wellbeing are more likely to procrastinate. Positive meta-cognitive beliefs improve academic confidence (self-confidence and efficacy beliefs), thus reducing procrastination (Fernie & Spada, 2008). In contrast, ineffective meta-cognitive beliefs increase academic procrastination. These empirical findings indicated that the relationship between procrastination and psychological wellbeing is also cyclic, with low psychological wellbeing, including cognitive processes, increasing the likelihood of procrastination but increased procrastination, then decreasing psychological wellbeing (Fernie & Spada, 2008).

More importantly, there are various empirical studies on procrastination and mental health, and few empirical and clinical studies have been conducted on the relationship between procrastination and mental health (mental wellbeing). Health is the state of efficacy and physical, mental, and social wellbeing, not just the absence of disease. However, the absence of mental disease has been linked to psychological wellbeing Abd Al-khaleq (2001). In some other studies, it was revealed that procrastination has a powerful effect on an individual's thoughts, feelings, physical health, behavior, and overall functioning (Burka & Yuen, 1983), as cited in Mohammed (2017); symptoms often include craving diversion, ineffective working, last minute rushing, missed deadlines, difficulty in making a start on a piece of work or revision, nagging guilt, disappointment, self-disgust, stress, and depression. Sirois (2004) found a negative correlation between procrastination and university students' mental health (wellbeing). Mohammed (2017) found significantly positive correlations between procrastination and the following indexes of mental wellbeing: awareness and acceptance of one's self and others, personal and social adjustment, courage and problem-solving, life's purpose and meaning. Contrariwise, there is a significantly negative correlation between procrastination and other aspects of mental health (Trust in one's self and others, willingness, freedom, responsibility, straightness, perception of reality and objects, and love of one's self and others).

In the same vein, several studies have been conducted on school climate and psychological wellbeing; for instance, School climate is the character and quality of life within a school and refers not only to the physical environment but also to the whole school experience (Cohen, McCabe, Michelli & Pickeral, 2009a; Cohen, Pickeral & Fegge, 2009b). A sustained positive school climate promotes student social, mental, and emotional development and behavioural and learning outcomes while guaranteeing physical and social safety (Loukas & Robinson, 2004; Zullig, Koopman, Patton & Ubbes, 2010). Study has shown positive school climate is associated with improved academic achievement and performance, adaptive psychosocial adjustment, satisfaction with school, sense of belonging, academic value and self-concept, motivation to learn, decreased behavioural problems and overall positive health and wellbeing (MacNeil, Prater, & Busch, 2009; Roeser, Eccles, & Freedman-Doan, 1999; Vieno, Perkins, Smith, & Santinello, 2005; Wang, Selman, Dishon, & Stormshak, 2010; Zullig, Huebner, & Patton, 2011). Against this backdrop, this study deems it fit to study the influence of academic procrastination and school climate on the mental health of Nursing and Midwifery students at colleges in Kwara State, Nigeria.

## II. OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

The study's main purpose is to examine the influence of academic procrastination and school climate on the mental health of Nursing and Midwifery students at colleges in Kwara State, Nigeria. Specifically, the study examines the influence of academic procrastination and school climate on the psychological wellbeing of college of Nursing and Midwifery students in Kwara State, Nigeria, and the influence of academic procrastination and school climate on the mental wellbeing of college of Nursing and Midwifery students in Kwara State, Nigeria.

### III. METHODS

#### Research approach and design

This study adopted a descriptive survey research design. The descriptive survey research would allow for the sampling of many respondents. Thus, the survey method is considered most appropriate here as it will give ample opportunity for getting spontaneous reactions of the sample for eventual interpretation and analysis of phenomena relating to the focus of this study.

#### Population

The population for this study consisted of all Nursing and Midwifery students in Kwara State Nursing and Midwifery (Ilorin & Oke Ode), respectively. The target population for this study was all 200 and 300-level students selected across the colleges in Kwara State, Nigeria. The sample comprised eight hundred (800) randomly selected students in the selected colleges. A proportionate sampling technique was used to select the respondents from each college. In line with this, Sambo (2008) posited that the proportionate sampling technique is the best procedure for choosing a sample from an unequal population. The purposive sampling technique was used to select the two colleges of Nursing and Midwifery in Kwara State, Nigeria: Kwara State College of Nursing and Midwifery Ilorin and Kwara State College of Nursing Oke- Ode. Simple random sampling was used to select eight hundred (800) respondents in selected colleges in Kwara State, Nigeria.

#### Instruments

##### *Academic Procrastination Scale (APS) (Lay, 1986)*

This study used three instruments: academic procrastination, school climate, and mental health scales. It used the Academic Procrastination Scale (APS) developed by Lay (1986) to measure the dispositional levels of procrastination. The APS consisted of twenty items (20), which will be adapted for this study. This adapted questionnaire consists of thirty (30) items. Respondents will be asked to rate the frequency of engaging in the items. The academic procrastination scale will be scored by assigning scores ranging from 1-5 to each item. This is to determine the extent to which the items indicated apply to the respondents. The scale was scored on five Likert scales, thus: All the time (ATT)=5, Often (O)=4, C Sometimes (S)=3, D Rarely (R)=2, and E Not at All (NA)=1.

##### *School climate questionnaire*

The second instrument is the school climate questionnaire, which contains 15 items adapted from Nicholas, Alvin, and Sandra (2016). It was scored on four Likert's-type: strongly Agree=4, Agree=3, strongly Disagree=2, and Disagree=1.

##### *Mental health scale*

The third instrument is the mental health scale (Depression Anxiety Stress Scales-21)(DASS-21), a 21-item self-report inventory composed of three subscales comprising seven items related to depression, anxiety, and stress. The DASS-21 uses a four-point Likert scale from 0 (did not apply to me at all) to 3 (applied to me very much or most of the time) to indicate the extent to which an individual has experienced each affective state during the past week (Lovibond & Lovibond, 1995). A depression (average alpha = 0.90), anxiety (average alpha = 0.85), and stress (average alpha = 0.87) score were calculated at each time point for each student by adding the items. Higher scores reflect more significant levels of distress. The instruments were validated by psychologists, and reliability coefficients of 0.67, 0.72, and 0.83 were found, respectively.

#### Procedure for Data Collection

Data collection is one of the crucial pillars in conducting the study. The researcher visited the selected colleges to administer the instruments in this research. Permission was sought from the authorities concerned in the selected colleges before administering the instruments. The purpose of the research was carefully explained to the respondents before they attempted filling the questionnaire. Also, an effort was made to collect the completed questionnaire from the respondents immediately after completion. In a few cases, the researcher had to revisit the respondents who could not respond immediately. This was done to avoid losing the questionnaire.

#### Data Analysis Technique

Descriptive statistics, which inform the frequency count and percentage, were used to answer the research questions. The data collected, collated, and coded was analysed using the SPSS 21 version.

#### Ethical considerations

This study was conducted in line with the research principles. The protocol of this study, including details on the study's design, sample size, sampling procedure, materials, instruments, and procedures, was submitted to the experts in the field. A few amendments to the procedure were requested and made. Participants were informed about the study's purpose before administering the instruments. Conducive environment was provided for the participants while administering the instruments. This study was conducted within the time frame. The conduct of this research was approved by the Nigerian Tertiary Education Trust Fund (TETFUND).

### IV. RESULTS

#### Academic Procrastination Influenced Psychological Wellbeing of College of Nursing and Midwifery Students

Respondents' responses on academic procrastination and school climate influence on the psychological wellbeing of college of Nursing and Midwifery Students in Kwara State, Nigeria. Given that, the questionnaire contained 30 items structured in a five-response type. The minimum, maximum, and score ranges were 30, 150, and 100, respectively. Therefore, the range score was divided into two responses (positive and negative influence of procrastination on the psychological wellbeing of college of Nursing and Midwifery Students in Kwara State, Nigeria, and 75 was obtained. Therefore, participants whose scores fell within the grade of 30-105 and 106-150 signified negative and positive influences of procrastination on the psychological wellbeing of college of Nursing and Midwifery Students in Kwara State, Nigeria, respectively. The statistics of the respondents are summarized and presented in Table 1

Table 1: Influence of Procrastination on Psychological Wellbeing of college of Nursing and Midwifery Students

Procrastination Influence	Grading	Frequency	Percentage
Negative Influence	30-90	108	13.5.6%
Positive Influence	91-150	692	86.5%
Total		800	100%

Results in Table 1 reveal that 108 (13.5%) of the respondents sampled for this study strongly agreed that procrastination negatively influences the psychological wellbeing of college of Nursing and Midwifery Students in Kwara State, Nigeria. While the majority of the sampled respondents, 692 (86.5%), strongly agreed that procrastination positively influences the psychological wellbeing of college of Nursing and Midwifery Students in Kwara State, Nigeria. Therefore, it could be inferred from the analysis that procrastination strongly influences the psychological wellbeing of college of Nursing and Midwifery Students in Kwara State, Nigeria.

#### School Climate Influenced Psychological Wellbeing of College of Nursing and Midwifery Students

Respondents' responses on school climate influence on psychological wellbeing of college of Nursing and Midwifery Students in Kwara State, Nigeria. Given that, the questionnaire contained 15 items structured in a four-response type. The minimum, maximum, and score ranges were 15, 60, and 45, respectively. Therefore, the range score was divided into three responses (Low influence, average influence, and high influence) regarding school climate on the psychological wellbeing of college of nursing and Midwifery students in Kwara State, Nigeria, and 15 were obtained. Therefore, participants whose scores were 15-30, 31-46, and 47-60 signified low, average, and high influence of school climate on the psychological wellbeing of college of Nursing and Midwifery Students in Kwara State, Nigeria, respectively. The statistics of the respondents are summarized and presented in Table 2

Table 2: Influence of School Climate on Psychological Wellbeing of College of Nursing and Midwifery Students

Procrastination Influence	Grading	Frequency	Percentage
Low	15-30	119	14.9%
Average	31-46	158	19.8%
High	47-60	523	65.3%
Total		800	100%

Results in Table 2 reveal that 119 (14.9%) of the respondents sampled for this study believed that school climate has a low influence on the psychological wellbeing of college of Nursing and Midwifery Students in Kwara State, Nigeria. 158 (19.8%) of the sampled respondents also agreed that school climate has an average influence on the psychological wellbeing of college of Nursing and Midwifery Students in Kwara State, Nigeria. While the majority of the sampled respondents, 523 (65.3%), strongly agreed that procrastination positively influences the psychological wellbeing of college of Nursing and Midwifery Students in Kwara State, Nigeria. It could, therefore, be inferred from the analysis that school climate strongly influences undergraduate students' psychological wellbeing in North-West Nigeria.

#### Academic Procrastination and School Climate Influenced Mental Wellbeing of College of Nursing and Midwifery Students

Participants' responses on academic procrastination and school climate influence the psychological wellbeing of college of Nursing and Midwifery Students in Kwara State, Nigeria. Given that, the questionnaire contained 30 items structured in a five-response type. The minimum, maximum, and score ranges were 30, 150, and 100, respectively. Therefore, The range score was divided into two responses (positive and negative influence of procrastination on the psychological wellbeing of college of Nursing and Midwifery Students in Kwara State, Nigeria, and 75 was obtained. Therefore, participants whose scores fell within the grade of 30-105 and 106-150 signified procrastination's negative and positive influence on the psychological wellbeing of college of Nursing and Midwifery Students in Kwara State, Nigeria, respectively. The statistics of the respondents are summarized and presented in Table 3

Table 3: Influence of Academic Procrastination and School Climate on Mental Wellbeing of College of Nursing and Midwifery Students

Procrastination Influence	Grading	Frequency	Percentage
Negative Influence	30-90	108	13.5.6%
Positive Influence	91-150	692	86.5%
Total		800	100%

Results in Table 3 reveal that 108 (13.5%) of the respondents sampled for this study strongly agreed that academic procrastination and school climate negatively influence the mental wellbeing of college of Nursing and Midwifery Students in Kwara State, Nigeria. While the majority of the sampled respondents, 692 (86.5%), strongly agreed that academic procrastination and school climate positively influence the mental wellbeing of college of Nursing and Midwifery Students in Kwara State, Nigeria. Therefore, it could be inferred from the analysis that procrastination strongly influences the mental wellbeing of college of Nursing and Midwifery Students in Kwara State, Nigeria.

#### V. DISCUSSION

The findings reveal that the majority of the sampled respondents strongly agreed that academic procrastination positively influences the psychological wellbeing of college of Nursing and Midwifery Students in Kwara State, Nigeria. This connotes that academic procrastination positively influenced the psychological wellbeing of college of Nursing and Midwifery Students in Kwara State, Nigeria. Meanwhile, academic procrastination was practiced by students and does not affect their general psychological wellbeing. This finding corroborates the finding of Fernie and Spada (2008), who found that the relationship between procrastination and psychological wellbeing is cyclic, with low psychological wellbeing, including cognitive processes, increasing the likelihood of procrastination but increasing procrastination then

decreasing psychological wellbeing. Also, Riolli, Savicki, and Richards (2012) found that students with higher psychological wellbeing would be expected to perceive the academic environment as less daunting, making them less likely to procrastinate. Those with low psychological wellbeing are more likely to procrastinate.

This study's finding revealed that most sampled respondents strongly agreed that procrastination positively influences the psychological wellbeing of college of Nursing and Midwifery Students in Kwara State, Nigeria. This finding supports the finding of Cohen and colleagues (2009), who found that school climate is the character and quality of life within a school and refers to the physical environment and the whole school experience. Loukas and Robinson (2004); Zullig et al. (2010) found that a sustained positive school climate promotes student social, mental, and emotional development, as behavioural and learning outcomes while guaranteeing physical and social safety and psychological wellbeing.

The finding revealed that most of the sampled respondents strongly agreed that academic procrastination and school climate positively influenced the mental health of colleges of Nursing and Midwifery Students in Kwara State, Nigeria. This implies that academic procrastination and school climate positively influenced the mental health of college of Nursing and Midwifery Students in Kwara State, Nigeria. Despite the fact that most of them relatively procrastinated in their academic pursuits but performed academically better in their academic activities, this study also found that school climate positively influenced college of Nursing and Midwifery Students in Kwara State, Nigeria, mental health. This finding is in line with the finding of Burka and Yuen (1983), who found that procrastination has a powerful effect on an individual's thoughts, feelings, physical health, behavior, and overall functioning. Also, Mohammed (2017) found significantly positive correlations between procrastination and the following indexes of mental wellbeing: awareness and acceptance of one's self and others, personal and social adjustment, courage and problem-solving, life's purpose and meaning. Contrariwise, there is a significantly negative correlation between procrastination and other aspects of mental health (Trust in self and others, wiliness, freedom, responsibility, straightness, perception of reality and objects, and love of one's self and others). Also, Sirois (2002) found a negative correlation between procrastination and university students' mental health.

#### VI. CONCLUSION

This study concludes that academic procrastination positively influences the psychological wellbeing of college of Nursing and Midwifery Students in Kwara State, Nigeria. Also, procrastination positively influences the psychological wellbeing of college of Nursing and Midwifery Students in Kwara State, Nigeria. Academic procrastination and school climate positively influence the mental health of college of Nursing and Midwifery students in Kwara State, Nigeria. Based on the findings of this study, recommendations were made that students should develop good study habits and that a conducive learning environment should be provided by the school authority to enhance students' psychological wellbeing.

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