Challenging Prospective Elementary Teachers To Mitigate Academic Procrastination

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Abstract

Prospective elementary teachers face and encounter academic procrastination during the entire course of study. This study determined ways to mitigate procrastination among prospective elementary teachers of the selected Teacher Education Institutions (TEIs) in the Philippines. The qualitative research design using thematic analysis analyzed the activities, reasons, and challenges in procrastination. Generated responses revealed that school-related activities and home responsibilities were the activities that they frequently procrastinate. External, internal/personal, school, and family factors are reasons that triggered them to procrastinate while school and behavior-related issues are the challenges they encountered. Task and behavior management are ways to mitigate the encountered procrastination.

Keywords: Education, Mitigating Academic Procrastination, Prospective Elementary Teachers, Philippines

Introduction

Teaching diverse learners is one of the most challenging roles that educators are facing right now. Bringing out the best on them is the top concern that educators should look into consideration. Most of the students nowadays encounter failures in school. These failures make them incompetent in doing a given task. The advent of technology and the exposure of learners with social media are the trending issues concerning learners' incompetence. Delaying things that could be done in one sitting has been postponed by them until the deadline has lapsed. As a result, they usually cram to meet deadlines and/or finish their work. This attitude arises from the indolent mentality that a problem will go by itself.

As defined by Choi, J. N. & Moran, S. V. (2009) procrastination is the act of postponing the task until another point in time which could result in shortage of time to complete the task. Ozer (2009) stressed out that procrastination is the delay factor or inclination to postpone completion of a task or activity. On the other hand, (Klassen et al., 2009) found that procrastination occurs within a wide range of populations that are diverse in age, culture, types of students, professions, and many other important factors.

The above definitions of procrastination only show that delaying and postponing tasks would not help individuals to accomplish the given task on time. In the study conducted by (Firouzeh & Jalil, 2011) that procrastination is a

weak point of personality and leads to low self-confidence. Moreover, (Klingsieck, K.B., et al., 2013) believed that procrastination is voluntarily delaying an intended course of action despite the negative consequences of that delay. However, (Pychyl, 2013) stated that not all delay is procrastination. According to Sirois & Pychyl, (2013) in contrast to reasoned delay aimed at facilitating goal attainment in achievement settings, or external delays beyond one's control, procrastination represents a needless gap between intention and action that is indicative of self-regulation failure. (Schouwenburg, 1995) revealed that 70 percent of college students consider themselves as procrastinators.

The reason behind the procrastination activities is elaborated in the study of Klingsieck, K. B et al., (2013) who have the difficulty of becoming motivated in accomplishing their tasks, trying to avoid working on projects, and cramming until the last minute. They prefer to do enjoyable activities that suit their current moods, such as playing using social media, and anything else that makes them refrain to do something relevant or needed.

Various results of researchers revealed the different impacts of procrastination. Michinov, et al., (2011) and You, J. W. (2012) mentioned in their studies that procrastination produces adverse results, negatively affecting grades, learning, and completion of coursework. Further, Kane (2018) mentioned in her study that if seasoned teachers are not exempted with this attitude, how much more with the neophyte teachers and of course with the soon to be future teachers. Prospective elementary teachers face and encounter different challenges during the entire course of study including their pre-service teaching. One of these challenges is academic procrastination which is proven by scholars affecting students' performance and efficiency. With these grounds, the researchers prompted to conduct the study to identify different ways of mitigating procrastination as considered as one of the greatest challenges that practice teachers face and encounter in the field. This study will be of great help to teachers because it improves the quality of education provided to students, and to the extent of reducing procrastination since

teachers prompted to conduct a study to play role in students' procrastination.

Review of Related Literature

This part will provide concepts and related studies, theories, and principles collected from various sources such as books, journals, and other readings which were used as bases in conceptualizing this study.

Academic Procrastination and College-Related Activities

Results of research revealed common activities that collegiate students frequently procrastinate. As Hussain, I., & Sultan, S. (2010) found common attitudes among college students in postponing and delaying school-related activities. Among the identified academic procrastination are delay in preparing & submitting their assignments and presentations, completing projects, and even preparing for the examinations. As defined by (Schouwenburg, 2004), academic procrastination is a widespread phenomenon in college settings which deals with intentional delay in the beginning or completion of important and timely academic activities. Procrastinated academic and non-academic tasks were mentioned too in the study of (Ferrari, J. R., & Scher, S. J., 2000) which should be challenging and fun.

Academic Procrastination and the Factors that Trigger It

Collegiate students trigger to procrastinate due to some factors like along external factors. Muslikah et al., (2018) revealed that one of the main factors affecting academic procrastination is the usage of handphone or the similar to play social media. The effect of improper use of social media is one of a field of interests of scholars (Aslan Efe, H., & Efe, R. 2018) and Muslikah et. al, 2018). Various constructs support the influences of any social media forms to students' procrastination: (Davis, D. R., & Abbitt, J. T., 2013) the use of technology has a relationship with academic procrastination, (Schulenburg, 2004) procrastination behavior can happen once a task is unaccomplished due to

engagement in pleasurable like Internet use, (Aypay, et al., 2007) a negative relationship between technology use and academic procrastination is supported by the relevant literature. Access on the internet allows 90 % of university students to use different social media sites as revealed in the study conducted by the EDUCAUJE Centre for Applied Research (ECAR).

Similarly, procrastination is triggered through internal/personal factors. According to Hussain, I., & Sultan, S. (2010), students procrastinate and cannot complete their work on time due to overconfidence, laziness, negative comments, a habit of dependency, and communication gap. They pointed out that these could slow down their performance making them careless, indolent, passive, academically stagnant, and irresponsible. Studies argued associated problems with procrastination: (Onwuegbuzie, 2004) anxiety issue, (Ferrari, J. R., & Pychyl, T. A., 2008) low achievement of students and increased physical and psychological problems, anxiety, (Rivait, 2007) irregularity, confusion, and irresponsibility.

School factors were reflected too in the study of different scholars. Zhu, et al. (2019) found that extended deadlines may produce negative effects and consequences on target goals. Though a long deadline provides flexibility and fewer restrictions the unintended difficulty perception arising from extended time sometimes sabotage goal pursuit which more likely to increase procrastination and worst is quitting. Hussain, I., & Sultan, S. (2010) comprehensively explained other school related factor that discusses negative attitude of their teachers, lack of guidance and counseling from teachers, negative comments on their work: assignments and presentations; lack of coordination with their class fellows; too much work and enjoying the company of their class fellows as reasons of procrastination among college students.

Lastly, family factors found to trigger the students to procrastinate too. Family responsibilities and priorities such as caring for siblings and doing household chores were generated from the informants. Students failed to do the given task on time due to their responsibilities at home. Various researches confirm the relationship of students' procrastination with family responsibilities: Uzun, B., et al., (2022). parents' demands and Esmaeili & Monadi (2016) negligent parenting style can trigger students to procrastinate.

Procrastination and the Challenges Encountered

Committing procrastination exposes students to different challenges. One of these is the negative association of procrastination to learning outcomes of students. According to Hussain, I., & Sultan, S. (2010), procrastination have negative effects on students' learning resulting in their low achievements in examinations; or it causes failure in the examination; or it creates fear of examinations; resulting in depression and anxiety; lowering their morale, feel hesitation; losing their competition, and spirit which can be resulted to discontinuation of their study. Procrastination appears a tendency, attitude or behavioral trait which Shah (2000) described as indecisive state lacking in will power and vitality to do a work among students. They become unable to do the right work at the right time leaving it for some other time; that may result in failure plunging them (Milgram, 1991) in a state of emotional disturbance and effect on students' personality traits and their learning. Likewise, (Steel, 2008) pointed out that procrastination effects the self-efficacy & self-actualization, distractibility, impulsiveness, self-control and organizational behavior of the students.

Procrastination and the Ways to Mitigate It

Various constructs suggested ways and remedial measures to minimize the effects of procrastination. Hussain, I., & Sultan, S. (2010) recommended in their study the proper guidance and counselling services at the campus, appreciation and positive comments on students' assignments, presentations, group work, displays and other academic activities, provision of appropriate encouragement and reward to

students on their good academic performance, developing and maintaining academic relationships with fellow students and teachers to reduce or minimize the procrastination among university students. (Gussone, F., & Britt, R. R. (2021) suggested tips to lessen procrastination such as getting organized, set simple and achievable goals, visualize the benefits of finishing, figure out the first step, announce your commitment, turn your stress into an advantage, improve your focus, create a timeline and set a deadline
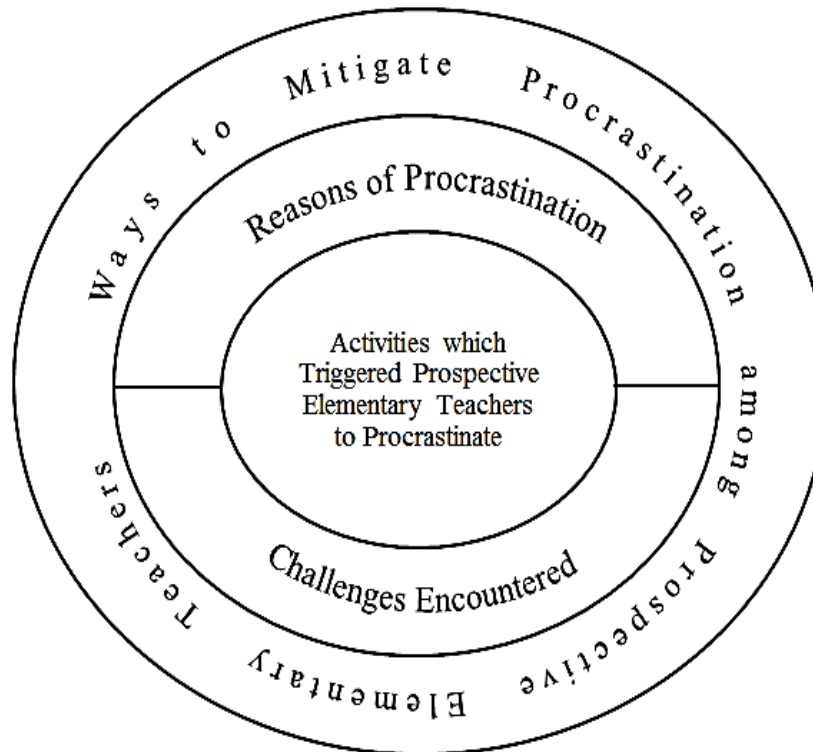
Conceptual Framework

Figure 1: **The Research Paradigm**

The paradigm shows activities which triggered prospective elementary teachers to procrastinate, the factors and challenges that they encounter and the possible ways to mitigate procrastination.

Objectives

This study determined ways to mitigate procrastination among prospective elementary teachers of the Teacher Education Department of the 4 Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) in the Province of Abra for the Academic Year 2019-2020.

Specifically, this study sought to answer the following questions:
1. What are the activities that practice teachers usually procrastinate?
2. What are the reasons and factors that trigger the practice teachers to procrastinate?
3. What are the challenges encountered by the practice teachers in procrastination?
4. What are the respondents' points of view in mitigating these challenges of procrastination?

Methodology
Research Design

This study used qualitative research design through thematic approach. Qualitative research is a means for exploring and understanding the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem. The process of research involves emerging questions and procedures, data typically collected in the participant's setting, data analysis inductively building from particulars to general themes, and the researcher making interpretations of the meaning of the data. The final written report analyzes the activities that triggered the prospective elementary teachers to procrastinate, the reasons and the challenges they encountered, and the possible ways to mitigate such activities.

Population and Sample

In this study, purposive sampling of prospective elementary teachers was employed in the study. Purposive sample is a nonprobability sample that is selected based on characteristics of a population and the objectives of the study. Purposive sampling is also known as judgmental, selective, subjective sampling. As Creswell (2013) mentioned "It is essential that all participants have [similar lived] experience of the phenomenon being studied". The sample size of ten (10) prospective elementary teachers of the Teacher Education Department of the 3 Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) in the Province of Abra namely Abra State Institute of Sciences and Technology (ASIST), Divine Word College of Bangued (DWCB), and Abra Valley Colleges (AVC) enrolled for the Academic Year 2019-2020 was determined as sufficient to provide a vivid appreciation of the experience (Creswell, 1998).

Data Gathering Instrument

The researchers used a semi-structured interview guide to collect the data. The semi-structured interview guide allows the researchers to ask follow-up questions and for the participants to elicit more information. The questions centered around activities that triggered the respondents to procrastinate, the reasons and the challenges they encountered, and the possible ways to mitigate such activities.

Further, the instrument was written in English and contextualized in *Ilokano* the mother tongue of the respondents. The translation was done for more convenience and to permit the easier flow of communication with the participants.

Findings of the Study

Based on data gathered, the following findings are presented below.

1. What are the activities that you frequently procrastinate?

Two main themes emerged from the data on the different activities that the respondents frequently procrastinate, the school-related activities and home responsibilities. The gathered data revealed that the topmost activities that they frequently procrastinate fall along school-related activities. School responsibilities like doing projects, preparing instructional materials, submitting school requirements such as assignments, activities, reports, and other tasks as class presentations, research, and group works were among these activities that they commonly postpone.

This theme corroborates with the study of Hussain, I., & Sultan, S. (2010) which explains that common attitudes among college students in postponing and delaying school-related activities. Among the identified academic procrastination are delay in preparing & submitting their assignments and presentations, completing projects, and even preparing for the examinations. As defined by Schouwenburg (2004), academic procrastination is a widespread phenomenon in college settings which deals with intentional delay in the beginning or completion of important and timely academic activities.
Along with household activities, the respondents reiterated that doing household chores such as cleaning rooms is the activity that causes them to procrastinate at home. This means that the activities of procrastination are not limited only to school-related tasks but also to home responsibilities.

2. What are the reasons that triggered you to procrastinate?

Figure 2 below shows the reasons that triggered the prospective elementary teachers to procrastinate. These reasons were themed into external, internal/personal, school, and family factors.
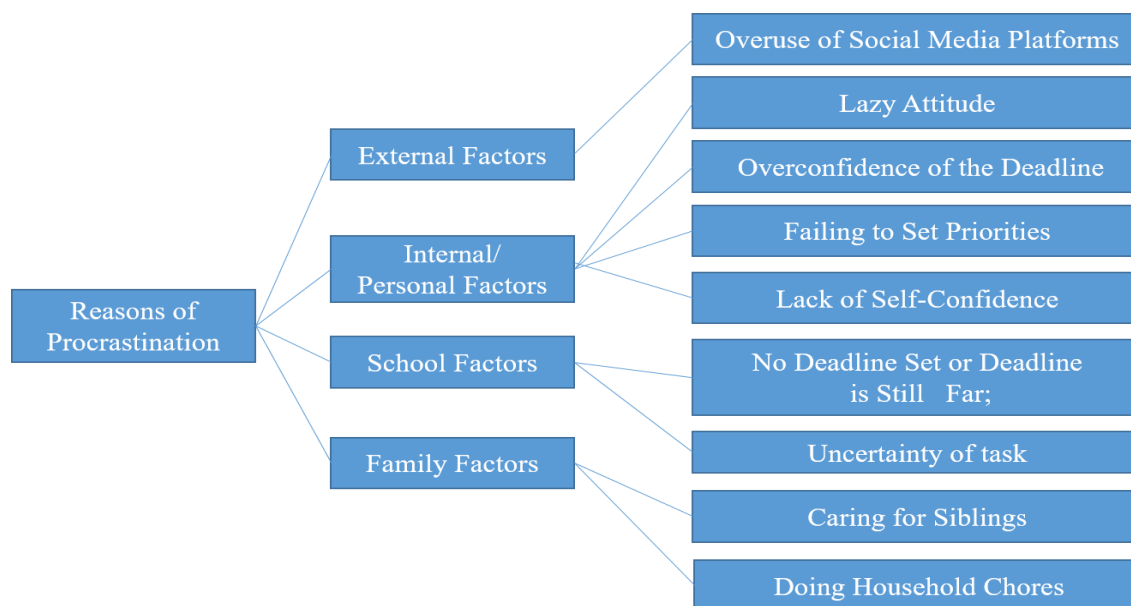

Figure 2 Concept Map

Reasons that Triggered Pre-Service Teachers in Procrastination

Along with external factors, overuse of social media platforms like Facebook, YouTube, and online gaming were generated from the responses of the informants. This means that the higher chance of exposure with the aforementioned external factors the greater chance of procrastination among the respondents. Hence, procrastination can be triggered by the improper use of social media platforms.

As Muslikah et al., (2018) revealed, one of the main factors affecting academic procrastination is the usage of handphone or the similar to play social media. The effect of improper use of social media is one of a field of interests of scholars. Various constructs support the influences of any social media forms to students' procrastination: (Davis & Abbitt, 2013) the use of technology has a relationship with academic procrastination, (Schouwenburg, 2004) procrastination behavior can happen once a task is unaccomplished due to engagement in pleasurable like Internet use, (Aypay et al., 2007)

a negative relationship between technology use and academic procrastination is supported by the relevant literature. Access on the internet allows 90 % of university students to use different social media sites as revealed in the study conducted by the EDUCAUJE Centre for Applied Research (ECAR).

On the other hand, procrastination is triggered through internal/personal factors such as laziness, the overconfidence of the deadline, failing to set priorities, and lack of self-confidence which hinder them to complete the task on time and compel them to delay academic works. These internal/personal factors may directly affect their performance in class. According to Hussain, I., & Sultan, S. (2010), students procrastinate and cannot complete their work on time due to overconfidence, laziness, negative comments, a habit of dependency, and communication gap. They pointed out that these could slow down their performance making them careless, indolent, passive, academically stagnant, and irresponsible. Studies argued associated problems with procrastination: (Onwuegbuzie 2004) anxiety issue, (Ferrari, J.

R., & Pychyl, T. A., 2008) low achievement of students and increased physical and psychological problems, anxiety, (Rivait, 2007) irregularity, confusion, and irresponsibility.

Similarly, school factors like no deadline or the deadline are still far and uncertainty of task emerged as a theme that triggered them to procrastinate. A given task without a deadline is useless. Thinking that the deadline still far makes students start accomplishing the task only when the due date is near. This affects the output of the task as they rush to meet the deadline.

Zhu, et al. (2019) found that extended deadlines may produce negative effects and consequences on target goals. Though a long deadline provides flexibility and fewer restrictions the unintended difficulty perception arising from extended time sometimes sabotage goal pursuit which more likely to increase procrastination and worst is quitting. Likewise, the uncertainty of the task leads students to procrastinate. Uncertainty of tasks can be described as the lack of prior knowledge to perform a given task. This means that the result of the work done does not meet the desired and expected outcome. A given requirement that is not explained and deliberated well may lead to uncertainty of task.

Lastly, family factors triggered the respondents to procrastinate too. Family responsibilities and priorities such as caring for siblings and doing household chores were generated from the informants. Students failed to do the given task on time due to their responsibilities at home. Various researches confirm the relationship of students' procrastination with family responsibilities: (Uzun, B., 2022) parents' demands and (Esmaeili & Monadi, 2016) negligent parenting style can trigger students to procrastinate.

3. What are the challenges encountered by the practice teachers in procrastination?
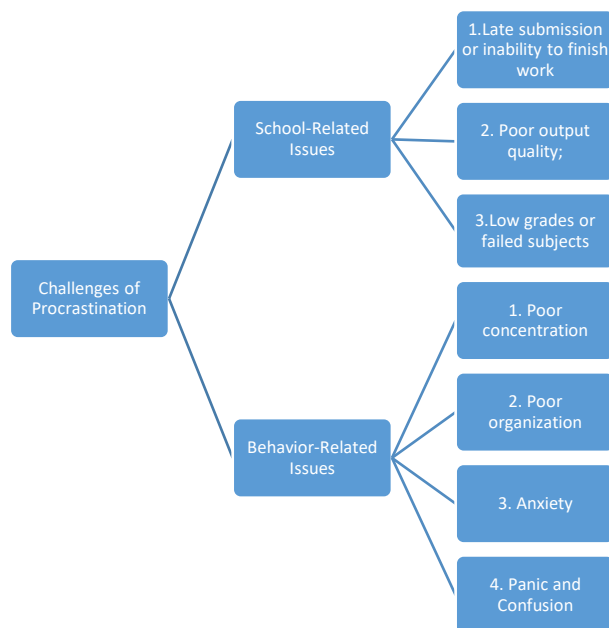

Figure 3 Concept Map

Challenges Encountered by Pre-Service Teachers in Procrastination

Figure 3 shows a concept map of the challenges encountered by the practice teachers in procrastination. These are grouped into two general themes. The first general theme is the school-related issues and the second is the behaviour-related issues.

School-related issues are generally seen as the problems that usually arise when pre service teachers procrastinate. In this connection, the following sub-themes were generated: 1. Late

submission or inability to finish work; 2. Poor output quality and; 3. Low grades or failed subjects.

Based on the response of the pre service teachers, the greatest concern they needed to handle in procrastinating is the inability to submit their output in the set deadline. This caused much guilt and anxiety on their part. The after effects of their action would automatically be poor output quality and lower grades.

Accordingly, procrastination can have a negative effect on students' schoolwork, grades, and even their overall health. The effects of procrastination can have an even bigger impact on high school students. Once students reach high school and start receiving more take-home assignments and larger projects, students who procrastinate until the last minute tend to receive lower grades than their peers.

On the other hand, there are also behavior-related issues. These refer to behavioural or psychosomatic concerns and challenges that are developed from within the person when procrastination is committed, these are: 1. Poor concentration; 2. Poor organization; 3. Anxiety; 4. Panic and confusion.

According to the responses of the pre-service teachers, procrastination results to difficulty in focusing and thinking properly, generally leading to issues of one's poor concentration and poor organization. Another result of procrastination is cramming or the attitude of "rushing" or doing things at the last minute, which is usually the case with college students. This action leads to behaviour anxiety, which is also one of the challenges identified in the study.

Cramming may seem like an effective way for students to prepare for a test, but it only leads to more stress and disappointing performance. To get the most out of studying, the solution is constant, repeated exposure to the material, and a well-rested and healthy mind (Haberman, A., 2011).

The last behaviour-related issue is confusion and panic. This is usually brought about as a result of overlapping workload and undefined priorities. The pre-service teacher's failure to identify priorities and work immediately on these make tasks more difficult to accomplish, hence becoming more confusing and stressful for them--the end-results, even more frustrating.

Students who procrastinate experience higher levels of frustration, guilt, stress, and anxiety—in some cases leading to serious issues like low self-esteem and depression. This can create a cycle of responses that can be difficult for students to overcome and can even be carried on in later years in school.

4. What are the respondents' points of view in mitigating these challenges of procrastination?

Figure 4 shows a concept map of the different views of mitigating procrastination among pre-service teachers. It can be seen that two general themes were formed, these are: 1. Task-management and 2. Behaviour-management.

Task management as a general theme refers to solutions directed towards addressing issues of procrastination as viewed by pre-service teachers. This is further defined by the following sub-themes, these are: time management, setting priorities, planning, and eliminating distractions.

Time management is commonly described by the pre-service teachers in the following manner: "doing work on time," "if you can do the work now, then do it. Do not wait for later!", "always keep in mind that everything you do has a time span, as if tomorrow is the deadline," "finish what you have started," and "have the courage to finish them on time."

Setting priorities is defined as "working on tasks that are more important," "doing things that have a closer deadline," and "taking things one step at a time by finishing one task first before going to another."

Planning ahead means "planning and preparing ahead of time," "if you know you need to spend for an activity, then make sure you have the needed resources."

Eliminating distractions is defined by the pre-service teachers as "spending less time on unnecessary things" and "uninstalling unnecessary apps on gadgets and computers."

The second general theme is Behaviour-Management. Behaviour-management is geared to address attitudinal and psychological issues in procrastination. This is further described in the following sub-themes: mind conditioning (personal mantra), cultivate positivity, practising accountability and self-regulation, and self-motivation through rewards.

Mind conditioning or more specifically, creating a personal mantra, is one offered solution viewed to address procrastination. A personal mantra is an affirmation to motivate and inspire a person. It is a positive statement one repeatedly tells himself or herself. Statements like "always believe in yourself, ""love what you do" and, "put love in every responsibility given to you" reflect some of the personal mantras given by the informants.

Cultivate positivity means doing things with a positive thought. This implies that pre-service teachers not only suggest an optimistic mind to motivate a person, but also an enthusiastic approach in doing or executing the task. "Make it a habit to be productive," "always bear in mind that if you start early, you will finish a lot" and, "move fast so that your work will not be late" are some statements reflecting this behaviour-management concept.

Practising accountability and self-regulation are two related concepts in this aspect. Accountability means being ultimately answerable for the activity or decision, and in procrastination, there is no other person to blame in a failed task but the person himself. Self-regulation, on the other hand, basically involves controlling one's behavior, emotions, and thoughts in the pursuit of long-term goals. More

specifically, emotional self-regulation refers to the ability to manage disruptive emotions and impulses, one of them, to procrastinate. Statements like "be responsible," "avoid being lazy," "think of the consequences of your actions" and, "be alert" are statements signifying responsibility and discipline.

Lastly, procrastination may be mitigated through motivating oneself with a reward. After a hard-day's work, every individual deserves a "pat-in the-back. This is a great source of motivation for one to repeat the good output.

Motivation is an important factor which encourages individuals to give their best performance and help in reaching enterprise goals. A strong positive motivation will enable the increased output of individuals but a negative motivation will reduce their performance.

Intrinsic motivation represents all the things that motivate you based on internal rewards like self-improvement or helping a friend in need. Conversely, you might be motivated to succeed in a task because you want to positively affect the lives of the people around you, like your family.

Extrinsic motivation represents all the things that motivate you based on external rewards like money, praise or good grades. These types of motivation are more common than intrinsic motivators and include achieving things due to a tangible incentive, fear, or expectation, all of which depend on external factors, like school-related activities.

Awareness of these sources of motivation may inspire individuals to accomplish their tasks and responsibilities way ahead of time, mitigating problems of procrastination. These statements show the concept of motivation in their responses: "develop initiative and self-motivation by rewarding yourself," "appreciate what you do by finding meaning to your work," "always think that your grades will be affected if you procrastinate."

Figure 4 Concept Map

Views in Mitigating Procrastination Among Pre-Service Teachers

Findings

Below are the salient findings of the study:

1. School-related activities and home responsibilities are the two main themes that emerged on the different activities that the respondents frequently procrastinate.
2. Procrastination was triggered through external, internal/personal, school, and family factors.
3. Two general themes were formulated in mitigating challenges of procrastination, task, and behavior management.
4. Task management involves time, setting priorities, planning ahead, and eliminating distractions while behavior management entails mind conditioning, culturing positivity, practicing accountability and self-regulation, and self-motivation through rewards.

Conclusion

The study has the following conclusions based on the results and summary of findings:
1. Prospective elementary teachers postpone the preparation and submission of school-related activities and delay house responsibilities too.

2. The higher chance of exposure with the external, internal/personal, school, and family

factors the greater chance of procrastination among the respondents will become.
3. Prospective elementary teachers are aware of the issues and concerns in procrastination.
4. While prospective elementary teachers are aware of the presence of challenges, they continue to commit procrastination which indicates lack of self-regulation, self-initiative and self-discipline.

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