

## Background

- **Conservation of Resources Theory (COR theory; Hobfoll, 1998)**  
Most students who experience test anxiety also have a problem with procrastination. This pattern of avoidance leads to a loss cycle: Procrastination leads to last minute cramming, which leads to test anxiety, which leads to self-doubts, which leads to excessive anxiety during a testing situation, which may lead to poor performance.
- Within the framework of the COR theory it can be hypothesized that test anxiety is a result of permanent avoidance and procrastination, existing in an environment where limited renewal of resources exist. (Buchwald & Hobfoll 2004)

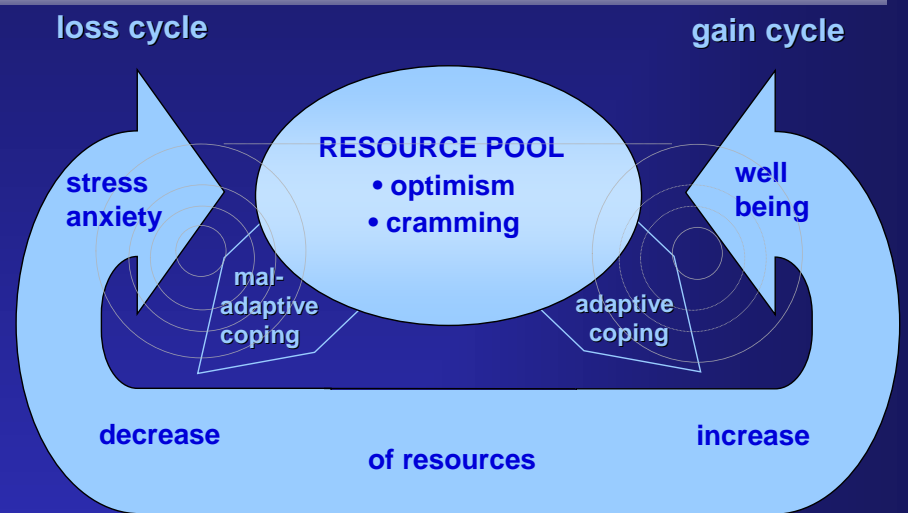


Fig. 1: Resource loss and gain at school (Buchwald & Hobfoll, 2004)

## Research Questions

How is the relationship between test anxiety, procrastination and optimism?

- Are procrastinators more susceptible to the onset of test anxiety?
- Do optimism mediates the relationship between procrastination and test anxiety?

## Method

### Questionnaires

- Test anxiety inventory (TAI-G) – Hodapp (1991)
- Life Orientation Test (LOT) – Scheier & Carver (1985)
- Procrastination Scale – Schwarzer, Schmitz & Diehl (2000)

## Samples

N = 659 students  
51% females  
Mean age 15.69 years (± 3 years)  
11 to 24 years

## Results



Fig. 2: Mediator effect of optimism to procrastination and lack of confidence



Fig. 3: Mediator effect of optimism to procrastination and emotionality



Fig. 4: Mediator effect of optimism to procrastination and worry



Fig. 5: Mediator effect of optimism to procrastination and interference

## Conclusion

Regression analyses of the data showed that optimism slightly mediated the relationship between procrastination and test anxiety. However, the total effect from procrastination is more susceptible to the onset of test anxiety.

- Further, procrastination could not influence 'lack of confidence' and 'emotionality' that much, if students were more optimistic.
- Procrastination's highest effect worked on 'interference' whereas the mediator effect was quite low.

Our results suggest that students who are tended to use procrastination at school are mildly influenced by optimism. In order to stop the loss cycle combined with procrastination, optimism might be one personality factor which should be enhanced and which might lead to more self-efficacy.

One possibility to intervene could be organizing study groups or offering mock exams where optimism and self-efficacy emerge. Procrastinators suffer especially during the test from interference. A focus training combined with positive thinking could reduce this relation.

## References

- Hobfoll, S.E. (1998). *Stress, culture, and community: The psychology and philosophy of stress*. New York: Plenum.  
Buchwald, P. & Hobfoll, S.E. (2004). Burnout aus ressourcentheoretischer Perspektive. [Burnout in the Conservation of Resources Theory]. *Psychologie in Erziehung und Unterricht*, 51, 247-257.