



Academic Procrastination and Five Factor Personality Traits among College Students

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to explore the relationship between personality traits profiled by Personality Test Based on Adjectives (Neuroticism, Conscientiousness, Extraversion, Agreeableness, Open to experience) and academic procrastination. The research is based on a convenience sample of 120 undergraduate students (all of them were males) from a variety of departments at Zagazig Faculty of Education, Egypt. The mean age was 19.1 years (SD= 6.3). Pearson Product Moment Correlation analysis reported that there were no significant associations between all the personality traits profiled by Personality Test Based on Adjectives (Neuroticism, Conscientiousness, Extraversion, Agreeableness, Open to experience) and academic procrastination.

Keywords : personality traits, academic procrastination, college students.

Introduction

Procrastination has typically been defined as a trait or behavioral disposition to postpone or delay performing a task or making decisions (Milgram et al., 1998; Haycock et al., 1998; Kachgal et al., 2001). Additionally, procrastination has been seen as an impediment to academic success because it decreases the quality and quantity of learning while increasing the severity of stress and negative outcomes in students' lives (Howell & Watson, 2007). The literature has examined procrastination because it involves affective, cognitive, and behavioral mechanisms (Chu & Choi., 2005).

According to Firouzeh and Jalil, (2011) procrastination is a weak point of personality and leads to low self-confidence. Perception of university students of themselves as procrastinators varies according to different researchers as it is 95% reported by Ellis and Knaus (1977), 46% by Solomon and Rothblum (1984) and 75% reported by Potts (1987). Furthermore, studies also concluded that the most of the students demonstrate unrelenting and consistent procrastination in daily study activities (Day, Mensink, & O' Sullivan, 2000; Onwuegbuzie, 2000). It is seen among university students that they use to bunk classes (Rothblum, Solomon, & Murakami, 1986), have low academic performance (Fritzsche, Rapp, & Hickson, 2003), and tardiness (Rothblum, Solomon, & Murakami, 1986).

Academic Procrastination and Personal Traits

Procrastination may have an effect on students' personality traits and their learning. Steel et al. (2001). addressed this situation by creating scales based on both observed behaviors and a theoretical self-reports, and using these scales to determine procrastination's performance, mood, and personality correlates. One-hundred and fifty-two undergraduates were measured at six time periods during an 11-week introductory psychology course. The course consisted of a computer-administered personalized system of instruction, a system noted for susceptibility to procrastination. Results show that procrastination is an excellent predictor of performance, though some final-hour catching-up is possible. Efforts to clarify its causes were mixed. Procrastination does reflect an excessive discrepancy between work intentions and work actions, as procrastinators tend to have a larger than average intention-action gap, especially at the beginning of the course.

On the other hand, procrastination's correlations with mood (i.e., state and trait affect) and personality (i.e., neuroticism, self-esteem, locus of control, extraversion, psychoticism, dominance, and self-monitoring) are uncertain as results diverge depending upon whether observed or self-report procrastination criteria are used. This dichotomy indicates that self-

report procrastination likely reflects a self-assessment influenced by actual behavior but also significantly contaminated by self-concept.

Chooi Seong Lai et al. (2015) examined the association between personality traits and procrastination behavior among 148 university students (52 males, 96 females). Respondents completed two measurements - Leonard Personality Inventory and General Procrastination Scale. Descriptive analysis indicated that Diploma Year 2 students scored the highest (Mean = 58.47), while Degree Year 1 students scored the lowest (Mean = 54.75) in the level of procrastination. Personality traits profiling consistently indicated that the most dominant personality trait of Diploma Year 2, Degree Year 1, 2 and 3 students is Neutral trait (Mean= 78.05, 80.75, 78.84 & 76.82); while the least dominant trait is Decisiveness (Mean = 67.48, 68.25, 69.89 & 68.33). The most dominant personality traits among male university students are Openness (Mean= 75.77), Decisiveness (Mean= 68.69) and Neutral (Mean = 78.48), while female university students are Analytical (Mean = 73.36) and Relational (Mean = 72.42). Meanwhile, male students scored slightly higher in procrastination (Mean = 58.25) as compared to females (Mean = 57.09). However, independent sample t-test indicated no significant gender differences in respondents' level of academic procrastination [$t(146) = .702, p > .05$]. Finally, correlational analyses reported no significant associations between the five personality traits with procrastination behavior among university students.

In a recent study by Karatas (2015) that directly focused on the relationship of academic procrastination, personality traits, and academic achievement. The results from the preliminary analysis showed that there was a strong relationship among these variables, especially with academic achievement

The purpose of this study is to explore the relationship between academic procrastination and personality traits among college students.

Methods

Participants

The research is based on a convenience sample of 120 undergraduate students (all of the were males) from a variety of departments at Zagazig Faculty of Education, Egypt. The mean age was 19.1 years (SD= 6.3). The participants were asked to complete the questionnaires. The students were notified that participation in the research was voluntary and anonymous.

Instruments

Academic Procrastination Scale (APS; Justin, 2011). The APS was developed by means of a pilot study and the SONA participant pool at the University of Texas at Arlington. Item analysis, ensuring that items were highly correlated with total test scores, was used as one criterion for item selection. The APS consists of 25 items and has exhibited a high reliability, $\alpha = .95$. Using item discrimination indicators for item retention, however, may have auto-inflated reliability to some extent. Nevertheless, reliability was extremely high. The APS was validated using 86 undergraduates consisting of diverse academic majors and years of college completion.

Items were scored using a 5-point Likert-type scale where 1 indicates disagree with the item and 5 indicates agree with the item. For example, a participant who agrees to the question "I put off projects until the last minute" would be indicative of an individual who procrastinates to a greater extent. Items were reverse scored for all scales when applicable, and a total across items was created.

Personality Test Based on Adjectives (PTBA) was developed by Bacanli et al. (2009) based on the model of Big Five Personality Traits (Costa and McCrae 1992). PTBA is a Likert type scale including 40 pairs of opposite adjectives that can be graded from 1 to 7. PTBA consists of five dimensions: extraversion (9 items), agreeableness (9 items), conscientiousness (7 items), neuroticism (7 items), and openness to experience (8 items). Five dimensions explain 52.63 percent of the variance of PTBA. The test-retest reliability coefficient of PTBA ranged from .68 to .86 for all dimensions. The Cronbach Alpha coefficient of the dimensions of PTBA was found to be .89 for extraversion, .87 for agreeableness, .88 for conscientiousness, .73 for neuroticism, and .80 for openness to experience.

Procedure

Scales were administered to students in groups, in a class environment. Before administration of the scales, students were given the requisite information about the aim of the research and how the measurement scales should be answered. The relations between students' academic procrastination and perfectionism were investigated .

Results

Research Question: Are there significant relationships between personality traits and procrastination among college students?

Table 1. *Correlation between academic procrastination and personality traits*

Variables	Academic procrastination
Neuroticism	
r	.021
sig.(2-tailed)	.076
N	120
Conscientiousness	
r	.032
sig.(2-tailed)	.043
N	120
Extraversion	
r	-.103
sig.(2-tailed)	.061
N	120
Agreeableness	
r	-.080
sig.(2-tailed)	.688
N	120
Open to experience	
r	.147
sig.(2-tailed)	-.075
N	120

Pearson Product Moment Correlation analysis reported that there were no significant associations between all the personality traits profiled by Personality Test Based on Adjectives (Neuroticism, Conscientiousness, Extraversion, Agreeableness, Open to experience) and academic procrastination.

Discussion and Conclusion

The present study seeks to explore the different types of personality and academic procrastination by examining the personality constructs from a traits perspective. The results

obtained with this first sample indicated that there were no association between the types of personality and procrastination. This finding goes in the same line with the finding obtained by Chooi Seong Lai et al. (2015) which indicated that there were no association between the types of personality and procrastination, and the association between personality and procrastination is more complex than what the past theorists had predicted (Fleet et al. , 1992, 2012).

Limitations and Further Study

One limitation of the current study stems from the fact that academic procrastination was assessed via a self-report instrument, rather than on actual behavior, because it is possible that students may give socially desirable responses. Although self-report measures provide a simple, time efficient approach to measuring aspects of human thought and behavior, the limitation of these measures must be considered in this study. Self-report bias describes when people answer questions about themselves in a manner that is socially desirable, and they often respond in a way they want to see themselves rather than the truth. However, according to Rothblum et al. (1986, p. 388), „self-reported procrastination has been validated against delay in taking self-paced quizzes (Solomon & Rothblum, 1984), delay in submitting course assignments (Rothblum, Beswick & Mann, 1984), delay in participation in psychology experiments (Solomon & Rothblum, 1984), and lower course grades (Rothblum et al., 1984) . Nonetheless, future studies in this area should consider using behavioral measures of academic procrastination in addition to self-report instruments.

A second limitation of the current study stems from the fact that the scope of the study is limited to the data collected from only boys . Future research should consider gender differences.

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