

Academic Procrastination and its Relationship with Self-Esteem and Life Satisfaction

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The purpose of this study is to explore the relationship of academic procrastination with self-esteem and life satisfaction. Two hundred and six students from Sistan and Baluchestan University were selected through the simple random method and completed the measures of Academic Procrastination, Self-esteem and Students' Life Satisfaction. Correlational analysis indicated that procrastination was significantly related to self-esteem and so its dimensions; namely, academic achievement, social evaluation and appearance. There was a significant negative correlation between procrastination and life satisfaction. Multiple regression analyses indicated that self-esteem and life satisfaction were significant predictors for academic procrastination. Self-esteem was a greater predictor than life satisfaction for academic procrastination. Self-esteem accounted for 12.6% of the variance of academic procrastination ($\text{Beta}=.29, p<.001$) and in the second step life satisfaction accounted for 2.8% of the variance of academic procrastination ($\text{Beta}=-.19, p\leq.01$). The male students showed higher mean scores on academic procrastination than female students. There was not any significant difference on procrastination scores with regard to age and academic field. Eventually, it is concluded that self-esteem was a positive and life satisfaction a negative predictor for academic procrastination.

Keywords: procrastination, self-esteem, life satisfaction

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Procrastination is a very important social variable that recently researchers and practitioners have paid a great deal of attention to it, for example, Steel (2007) defines the procrastination as a “prevalent and pernicious form of self-regulatory failure that is not entirely understood”. Procrastination is the tendency to put off to a latter time an activity under one's control to the last possible minute, or even not to do it at all (Gafni & Geri, 2010). Researchers have considered the procrastination as a self-handicapping and dysfunctional behavior (Hsin & Chu, 2005). Fee and Tangney (2000) discuss that procrastination is not just a problem of time management. It is a complex process that includes: affective, cognitive, and behavioral concepts. Some researchers have declared that chronic procrastination happens in as much as 20% of adult population, and has been related to impairments in mental health and/or social functioning (Mancina & Ferrari, 2009). Ferrari (1992b) suggested three types of procrastination: the decisional, avoidant, and arousal trichotomy of procrastination. Lay (2009), the developer of the General Procrastination Scale, critiqued the Ferrari's procrastination model; he suggested “to intend to put off some activity to protect one's self-esteem is not procrastinatory behavior” (Steel, 2010). According to Solomon and Rothblum (1984) academic procrastination involves doing homework, preparing for exams or doing the term papers assigned at the end of the term at the last minute. Academic procrastination might have impact on some educational and psychological aspects. Milgram, Marshevsky, and Sadeh (1995) revealed that upset about delay was strongly related to perceived capability to perform academic tasks and to the desire to change delaying behavior. Researchers showed that there is a significant relationship between procrastination and self-esteem. In a study, Beck, Koons, and Milgrim (2000) found out that procrastination was significantly related to self-esteem. Di Fabio (2006) argued that there was an inverse correlation between decisional procrastination and the individual's self-esteem. Summer and Ferrari (2009) revealed that chronic procrastinators exhibited low states of self-confidence and low self-

esteem. Burka and Yuen (1983) found out that one basic motive of decisional procrastination could be low self-esteem as in other types of procrastination (Di Fabio, 2006). Some researchers and practitioners noted that undecided individuals inclined to make situations which ensure that they never test their abilities and aptitudes. Various studies have shown that there is a relationship between decisional procrastination and self-esteem (Beswick & Mann, 1994; Effert & Ferrari, 1989; Ferrari, 2000; Di Fabio, 2006). Ferrari (1992b) concluded that the General Procrastination Scale was arousal based, positively related to sensation-seeking, while the Adult Inventory of Procrastination was avoidance based, negatively related to self-esteem. Steel (2010) found out that there was relationships between different procrastination measures and sensation-seeking, self-esteem, and fear of failure. Milgram, Marshevsky, and Sadeh (1995) emphasized that students more frequently acknowledged reasons for academic procrastination that were less threatening to their self-image (e.g., problems in time management) than reasons that were more threatening (e.g., lack of ability). Interest in reducing delay is related more to self-perceived ability to handle tasks than to time spent procrastinating or reasons given for procrastinating. Studies demonstrated that procrastination has relation with high levels of stress, low self-esteem, low self-efficacy, self-denigration, lower level of resourcefulness, higher levels of self-consciousness, self-handicapping and depression (Flet, Blanckstein, & Martin, 1995; Akinsola, Tella & Tella, 2007).

Research evidence shows that one of the main variables which have great impact on academic procrastination is life satisfaction. Life satisfaction was conceptualized as a key indicator of well being. In judging about the satisfaction with lives, individuals set a standard, which they perceive appropriate for circumstances of their lives (Diener, Emmons, Larson & Griffin, 1985). "It may be possible that a person is satisfied with almost all domains (e.g., health, wealth, marriage, education, etc.) of his/her life but may still be dissatisfied with a particular domain which he/she weighs as most important and dissatisfaction with this particular

domain may negatively affect his/her overall judgment about life satisfaction” (Dubey, 2003). Procrastination is one of the variables which significantly correlate with life satisfaction. Studies revealed that successful task completion among non-procrastinators reduces stress and feelings of depression and increases life satisfaction and academic performance (Dipboye & Phillips, 1990; Tice & Baumeister, 1997; Hsin & Chu, 2005). Çapan (2010) examined the relationship among perfectionism, academic procrastination and life satisfaction of university students and results showed that self-oriented perfectionist personality trait significantly predicted academic procrastination and life satisfaction. Steel (2010) found out that there was a significant relationship between pure procrastination scale and satisfaction with life. Researchers found out that increased regrets negatively affect an individual's well-being, thereby decreasing one's life satisfaction (Mancina & Ferrari, 2009). Caldwell and Mowrer (1998) indicated that procrastination has significant negative relationship with life satisfaction. Procrastination also predicted life satisfaction directly and the total effect (direct and indirect) of procrastination on life satisfaction was negative.

Socio–Demographic variables such as gender and age might have a great impact on procrastination. Balkis and Duru (2009) indicated that procrastination significantly differed by gender, time preferences for studying courses and exams, and was negatively related to academic achievement. In a study Özer, Demir, and Ferrari (2009) argued that male students reported more procrastination on academic tasks than female students. Significantly more female students than male students reported greater academic procrastination because of fear of failure and laziness; male students reported more academic procrastination as a result of risk taking and rebellion against control than did female students. Some of the studies revealed that males are more procrastinator than females (Senécal, Koestner & Vallenard, 1995). Steel (2007) revealed that men did appear to procrastinate only slightly more than women. Yong (2010) found out that male students procrastinated more than female students on writing term

papers. But in a study Akinsola, Tella and & Tella (2007) reported equal level of academic procrastination among male and female students with impact on their academic achievement.

Age is a socio–demographic variable which has relationship with procrastination, for example, Baliks and Duru (2009) demonstrated that procrastination had a negative correlation with age i.e., as age increases, academic procrastination decreases. But some researchers reported incoherent results, for example, Yong (2010) showed that older students procrastinated more than younger ones. Some studies did not mark significant differences with regard to age level on procrastination; Ferrari, Özer and Demir (2009) examined the chronic procrastination among Turkish adults and they did not show any significant differences for age on any forms of procrastination. There is rare research about the impact of academic field on procrastination. Yong (2010) concluded that business students procrastinated more than engineering students on writing term papers.

Further, most of the current research has been carried out among western countries and there is expanding interest in the relationship of academic procrastination with self-esteem and life satisfaction. Because of the lack of literature review on academic procrastination in collectivism culture like Iran, it is obvious and necessary to conduct a research about this topic among Iranian students. Furthermore, the present study aims to find out the relationship of academic procrastination with self-esteem and life satisfaction among students of Sistan and Baluchestan University. Moreover, the present study attempts to find out the impact of demographic variables (e.g., gender, age and academic field) on procrastination. For this purpose the following questions are posited:

1. Does academic procrastination have significant correlation with self-esteem and life satisfaction?
2. What is equation regression of self-esteem and life satisfaction on academic procrastination?

3. Is there any significant difference between the mean scores of male and female students on academic procrastination?
4. Is there any significant difference between the mean scores of academic procrastination with regard to age?
5. Is there any significant difference between the mean scores of academic procrastination with regard to academic fields?

Method

Participants

The sample comprises 206 students (101 female and 105 male) that were selected through the simple random method from three faculties (131 students from Art and Humanities, 42 students from Engineering, and 33 students from Science faculty) of Sistan and Baluchestan University. The age group ranged from 20 or below to 35 years (mean age=23.60 and SD=2.77). The whole sample size of this research is given in the Table 1.

Table 1
Demographic Data of the Sample Included in the Study

		Group			
		Students (N=206)	Arts & Humanities (%) (N=131) (63.6)	Engineering(%) (N=42) (20.4)	Science (%) (N=33) (16.0)
N	Female (%)	101 (49.0)	67 (32.50)	16 (7.8)	18 (8.7)
	Male (%)	105 (51.0)	64 (31.1)	26 (12.6)	15 (7.3)
Age	M	23.61	23.67	23.00	24.13
	SD	2.78	2.88	2.50	2.67

Procedure

The study was conducted in three faculties (Art and Humanities, Engineering, and Science) of Sistan and Baluchestan University. In the present research the sample size consists of 206 students studying

currently as graduates in the university and all were selected randomly for this study. The scales were well translated into the Persian language. Permission letters were obtained from the three faculties of the University for distributing the scales among the participants, and scales were given to the participants with adequate instructions on how to respond to the questions. The respondents were also assured that their participation in the study was voluntary and their responses would remain confidential and used for the research purpose only.

Measures

Academic Procrastination Scale. This scale was developed by Lay (1986) to assess the students' procrastination and it has 20-items each of them to be rated from extremely uncharacteristic (1) to extremely characteristic (5). Participants are asked to respond to items such as "I am continually saying I will do it tomorrow". Higher scores reflect greater procrastination. To assess the reliability of this study 20 cases from this sample research were selected for a pilot study and the Cronbach's α coefficient was .69.

Self-Esteem Scale. This scale was constructed by Heatherton and Polivy (1991) to assess the self-esteem of students. There are three self-esteem factors in the State Self-Esteem Scale: Academic Performance, Social Evaluation, and Appearance. Each item is scored on a scale from 1 to 5 with larger numbers indicating higher self-esteem. In the study of Heatherton and Polivy (1991) Coefficient Alpha for the whole Scale was .92 (Equal for Males and Females). In the current research reliability of the scale by using Coefficient Alpha for overall scale was .72.

Life Satisfaction Scale. This scale was developed by Huebner (1994) in order to identify students' life satisfaction. Internal consistency (alpha) coefficients have been reported in various publications (Greenspoon & Saklofske, 1997; Huebner, 1994; Huebner, Laughlin, Ash, and Gilman, 1998). The findings suggest that the all reliabilities, range from .70 to .90 which are acceptable for research purposes. Test-retest coefficients for a

course of two to four weeks have also been reported (Huebner, 1997) falling mostly in the .70 to .90 range, providing further support for the reliability of the scale. Tamini and Mohammadyfar (2009) showed that overall Cronbach's Alpha was .76. In the current research reliability of the scale by using Coefficient Alpha was .81.

Results

Parametric tests (Pearson correlation coefficient, stepwise regression, independent sample t-test, and one way ANOVA) were calculated since F Leven's test showed that the homogeneity of the variances for the study variables were not significant.

Table 2
Pearson Correlation Coefficient between Procrastination, Self-esteem Dimensions and Life Satisfaction among Students of Sistan and Baluchsetan University (N=206)

Measures	1	2	3	4	5	6
1. Academic Procrastination1						
2. Self-esteem	.36**	1				
3. Academic Achievement	.34**	.79**	1			
4. Social Evaluation	.24**	.83**	.43**	1		
5. Appearance	.28**	.70**	.49**	.32**	1	
6. Life Satisfaction	-.29**	-.39**	-.31**	-.23**	-.41**	1

**p< .01.

Does academic procrastination have a significant correlation with self-esteem and life satisfaction?

Table 2 illustrates the correlations between procrastination, self-esteem and its dimensions and life satisfaction. Procrastination had significant positive correlations with self-esteem [r=.36, p<.01] and with its dimensions namely: academic achievement [r=.34, p<.01], social evaluation [r=.24, p<.01], and appearance [r=.28, p<.01], with high scores of academic procrastination associated with higher scores of self-esteem

and its dimensions. But there was a significant negative correlation between procrastination and life satisfaction [$r=-.29$, $p<.01$], with high scores of academic procrastination associated with lower scores of life satisfaction.

Table 3
Summary of Stepwise Regression Analyses with Academic Procrastination as the Criterion for Self-Esteem and Life Satisfaction

Criterion	Predictors	Beta	T	P
Academic procrastination	Self-Esteem	.29***	4.08	.000
	Life Satisfaction	-.19**	-2.59	.01
		R=.392	R ² =.154	R ² change= .126, .028
		***p<.001, **p≤.01		

What is the regression equation of self-esteem and life satisfaction on academic procrastination?

Table 3 illustrates the results of the stepwise regression of self-esteem and life satisfaction on academic procrastination. Results revealed that self-esteem (Beta=.29, $p<.001$) was significantly related with academic procrastination, but life satisfaction (Beta=-.19, $p\le.01$) had a significant negative relation with procrastination. Dimensions of self-esteem (academic achievement, social evaluation and appearance) failed to enter into the regression equation, which shows that they were not significantly associated with procrastination. Self-esteem accounted for 12.6% of the variance of academic procrastination and in the second step life satisfaction accounted for 2.8% of the variance of academic procrastination.

Table 4
Mean, Standard Deviation, and T Value of the Academic Procrastination for the Male and Female Students

	Female		Male		T	Sig.
	Mean	SD	Mean	SD		
Academic procrastination	49.62	10.02	54.18	8.53	-3.53***	.001

***p<.001

Is there any significant difference between the mean scores of male and female students on the academic procrastination scores?

Table 4 illustrates how female and male respondents rated themselves on the items of the academic procrastination. There was a significant difference in the mean scores of these two groups, males (M=49.62, SD=10.02), and females [M=54.18, SD=8.53; $t(204)=-3.53$, $p=.001$]. The male respondents scored notably higher on the items of academic procrastination.

Table 5
Summary of the One Way ANOVA on Academic Procrastination with Regard to the Age Groups

Source of Variation	Sum of Squares	DF	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	417.36	2	208.68	2.33	.101
Within Groups	18244.83	203	89.88		
Total	18662.18	205			

Is there any significant difference between the mean scores of academic procrastination with regard to age?

A one-way ANOVA was conducted between the groups to explore the impact of age on the academic procrastination, as measured by the Academic Procrastination Scale. Students were divided into three groups according to their age (Group 1: 20 or less; Group 2: 21 to 25; and Group 3: 26 to 35). There was no statistically difference in academic procrastination scores for the three age groups [$F(2, 203)=2.33, p=.101$].

Table 6
Summary of One Way ANOVA on Academic Procrastination with Regard to Faculty

Source of Variation	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups	57.75	2	28.88	.32	.73
Within Groups	18604.44	203	91.65		
Total	18662.18	205			

Is there any significant difference between the mean scores of academic procrastination with regard to academic field?

A one-way ANOVA was conducted between the groups to explore the impact of Academic field on academic procrastination. Students were divided into three groups according to their Academic Field (Group 1: Art and Humanities; Group 2: Engineering; and Group 3: Science). There was no statistically difference in academic procrastination scores for the three groups of students [$F(2, 203)=.32, p=.73$].

Discussion

This study was planned to explore the relationship of academic procrastination with self-esteem and life satisfaction in a sample of students at graduate level in Sistan and Baluchestan University, where they are under pressure and stress to make good academic results and compete with their classmates. The results of Pearson correlation coefficient revealed a significant positive correlation between academic

procrastination and self-esteem and its sub-scales. The results of the stepwise regression demonstrated also that self-esteem was a strong predictor for procrastination while dimensions of self-esteem were not. These results were consistent with the research of Steel (2010); Beck, Koons, & Milgrim (2000); they found out that procrastination was related to self-esteem. Previous research showed a negative association between procrastination and self-esteem, for example, findings of Ferrari (1992); Burka and Yuen (1983); Di Fabio (2006) results were not in line with our results. It seems that in a collectivism culture like Sistan and Baluchestan (Iran) procrastination is associated with higher levels of self-esteem. The results of this study showed that procrastinatory behavior was positively related to self-esteem of students. If self-esteem increases the amount of academic procrastination also increases. The results of this study showed that there was a reverse association between life satisfaction and academic procrastination. Moreover, life satisfaction was a negative predictor for academic procrastination, with higher scores of academic procrastination associated with lower scores of life satisfaction. Similar findings were reported by Steel (2010); Mancina and Ferrari (2009); Caldwell & Mowrer (1998). The results of Ferrari's (1992b) study showed that general procrastination scale was arousal based, positively related to sensation-seeking, while the Adult Inventory of Procrastination was avoidance based, negatively related to self-esteem. Findings of this research demonstrated that there was an inverse association between academic procrastination and the students' self-esteem. It seems that chronic procrastinators exhibited high states of self-confidence and higher self-esteem. In our culture one basic motive of academic decisional procrastination could be high self-esteem as in other types of procrastination.

The independent t-test was applied to compare the mean scores of males and females academic procrastination; males significantly showed higher mean scores on procrastination in comparison to females. The results of this study are in conformity with the researches of Özer, Demir,

and Ferrari (2009); Steel (2007); Yong (2010). Various researches showed that males are more procrastinator than females. It can be concluded that in an indigenous culture like Sistan and Baluchestan (Iran) finding a permanent job with regard to academic specialization is too difficult, furthermore, this issue might decrease males' motivation for doing their academic tasks moreover, since the number of graduate and post-graduate experts are increasing day by day, so this social issue might lead to despondency in male students and they face with higher tension and stress. However, this issue has not a great impact on female students, because the community like Sistan and Baluchestan has not the same expectations from males and females, so females are more punctual and organized in their academic tasks. In a collectivist culture like Sistan and Baluchestan (Iran) females tend to be more conformed to society, but males do not.

The results of the one-way analysis of variance between the groups did not show any significant difference in academic procrastination scores for the three age groups. The results of this study are in conformity with the research of Ferrari, Özer and Demir (2009). It seems that age has not a great impact on academic procrastination. Eventually, results of this study did not illustrate any significant difference among students of the three faculties (Art and Humanities, Engineering, and Science) on academic procrastination. Academic field also has no impact on academic procrastination.

Suggestions and Implications

In the present study it has been found that male students were more procrastinator than females. Therefore, on the basis of these findings it may be recommended that University of Sistan and Baluchestan should make an effort to decrease the level of academic procrastination of male students through, treating them fairly, and providing support from teachers and decrease the amount of unemployment in the province of Sistan and Baluchestan. It is also suggested to create some entrepreneurship centers in the university for graduate students and give them responsibility and

special occupational training to reduce their procrastination. This issue might enable them to become punctual and organized.

Limitations

This study has several shortcomings. First the sample size was collected from three faculties of Sistan and Baluchestan University, which limits our ability to generalize the findings to all students in Iran or overseas. Second, due to the lack of financial support of university the researchers were facing a lot of problems, especially the data collection. Third, the tools used were all constructed in the western cultures, although the Cronbach's Alpha was reported in the measure section, it was better to construct the scales in accordance with this indigenous culture, and four, there was research paucity about the review literature of academic branch and procrastination.

Conclusion

In sum it can be said that, self-esteem was positively correlated with and predicted academic procrastination, while life satisfaction was negatively associated with academic procrastination. Amongst the demographical variables only gender had a great impact on procrastination and males were more procrastinator than females. This finding is in line with the previous research.

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