

ACADEMIC PROCRASTINATION AND LOCUS OF CONTROL AS PREDICTORS OF ACADEMIC ACHIEVEMENT OF COLLEGE STUDENTS

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Abstract

Background: Procrastination is considered as one of the serious threats in daily life and educational settings in modern societies. It is the postponement of task completion usually resulting in a state of unhappiness or subjective discomfort. **Aim:** This study was conducted to investigate academic procrastination and locus of control as predictors of academic achievement of college students. **Methodology:** A sample of 200 male and female students studying in B.A. 1st year was randomly drawn from the different Colleges of Amritsar District affiliated to Guru Nanak Dev University, Amritsar. Pearson's Product Moment correlation and Regression Analysis was used. **Results:** The study revealed insignificant but negative relationship between academic achievement and academic procrastination. Academic achievement has also indicated an insignificant negative relationship with locus of control. However no gender differences were found on Academic Achievement, Academic Procrastination as well as Locus of Control.

Key words: *Academic Achievement, Academic Procrastination and Locus of Control*

INTRODUCTION AND REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Today our youth requires developing skills and competence to cope with external demands of the 21st century, since education is viewed as an institute to develop the cognitive qualities, tolerance and understanding of people. In the present era, achievement of an individual determines the progress of the nation but main responsibility lies with education institutions established by the society. Achievement is the main yardstick of measuring the performance. The whole system of education revolves around the academic achievement of students. Academic Achievement is one of the top priorities for schools and it may be affected by various factors operating in home or school. Some factors play an important role to promote or decline academic achievement such as procrastinate on and locus of control.

Academic Achievement

The word achievement is generally applied to academic status of a child in different subjects or as a whole it refers to the level of proficiency attained by the student. Academic achievement is commonly measured by examinations or continuous assessment but there is no general agreement on how it is best tested or which aspects are more important. Academic Achievement is the proficiency of performance of the student as denoted by marks assigned by the teacher in the test. There are two levels of academic achievement, High and Low Achievement. High and Low Achievement account for academic success and failure respectively. Measurement and prediction of academic achievement is an area of research which aroused the interests of various philosophers, scientists and educationalists who did their level best to search and classify significant factors that could facilitate academic performance. The present study is also an attempt to find the predictors of academic achievement.

Academic Procrastination

Procrastination is considered as one of the serious threats in daily life and educational settings in modern societies. Studies throughout history show that it has been a damaging disaster for individuals at least from three thousand years ago (Steel, 2007) and a common behavior in contemporary societies (Ferrari, Johnson, & McCown, 1995; Ferrari, O'Callaghan, & Newbegin, 2005). The term procrastinate comes from the Latin word 'procrastinare', which means to put off, delay, prolong, defer, stall or postpone performing a task. Procrastination may be defined as the postponement of task completion usually resulting in a state of unhappiness or subjective discomfort. Procrastination is common for college students; about 80- 95% of students report procrastination (Steel, 2003). Specifically, academic procrastination is a pervasive and

potentially maladaptive behavior for many university and college students often resulting in feelings of psychological distress (Solomon and Rothblum, 1984 cited by Binder, 2000). The cognitive component of procrastination involves the discrepancy between intentions and actual behavior. Procrastinating implies performing an alternative activity to the one intended, which is not synonymous with idleness (Schouwenburg, 2004). Procrastination can even be distinguished from the intentional postponement of a task because procrastination is unplanned – or from logical and necessary delay, due to understandable reasons such as illness or technical problems (Burka & Yuen, 1983; Milgram, Sroloff, and Rosenbaum, 1988; Van Eerde, 2003). Procrastination can be temporary or permanent and can be defined as a function of the behavioral output- putting off the action – or the cognitive output- putting off making a decision (Dewitte and Lens, 2000).

The majority of the research that has been carried out has focused specifically on academic procrastination (McCown & Roberts, 1994). The results of numerous studies indicate that procrastination occurs in all kinds of daily tasks (Alexander & Onwuegbuzie, 2007), but academic procrastination is widespread among students and regarded as detrimental not to academic progress and success but also with their quality of life (Moon and Illingworth, 2005). Estimates of academic procrastination range from a low of approximately 25% to a high of 70% of college students (Aitken, as cited in Ferrari et al., 1995, 2005; Ellis & Knaus, 1977; Solomon & Rothblum, 1984). In general, procrastination can be considered to interfere with people's will and their engagement in tasks, resulting in the increase of stress reactions, characterized by negative feeling, loss of control over their personal lives, or consequences for their physical and mental health (DeLongis, Coyne, Dakof, Folkman & Lazarus, 1982; Senecal, Koestner & Vallerand, 1995; Tice & Baumeister, 1997). According to literature, procrastination is associated with a maladaptive life style, resulting in serious personal and social effects which reinforce feelings of lack of personal competence (Brownlow & Reasinger, 2000, Burka & Yuen, 1983., Ferrari et al., 1995); beside this it is known that the prolonged exposure to stress can increase the risk of serious illness. Obviously, when it turns to our students' lives, procrastination can also cause delay in studying behaviors (Rothblum, Soloman, & Murakami, 1986., Tice & Baumeister, 1997) in drafting works or reports, missing deadlines to hand in papers and putting off administrative tasks related to academic life, such as returning library books, registering for an exam, and so forth (Scher & Ferrari, 2000; Rothblum et al., 1986).

Locus of Control

Locus of control refers to the perceived influence that one has on the attainment of reinforcement. It has been postulated as a dimension of personality and according to Rotter's (1966) approach locus of control can be divided into two parts i.e., internal and external locus of control. Internal locus of control refers to the influence of internal factors whereas external locus of control refers to the influence of external factors on the behavior of the individual. People with internal locus of control believe that they control their own destiny and their own experiences are controlled by their skills or efforts. It is related to the measurement of the extent to which an individual is self-motivated, directed or controlled (internal frame of reference) and to the extent to which the environment (luck, chance etc.) influences his behavior. Externals are more subject to anxiety and depression (Naditch, 1975) while internals are more likely to use denial (Court, et al. 1975, Phares, 1976). In general, which style is more appropriate depends upon the goal to which behavior is directed.

Research has shown that having an internal locus of control is related to higher academic achievement (Findley & Cooper, 1983). Internals earn somewhat better grades and work harder. This includes spending more time on homework as well as studying longer for tests. This makes sense because if you believe working hard will pay off, then you are likely to do so. What may cause someone to develop an external locus of control? According to Bender (1995), "Continued failure in spite of continued attempts at school tasks leads to an external locus of control. Further, a high external locus of control, in turn, leads to a lack of motivation for study and school in general." If someone has an external locus of control, he or she may feel that working hard is futile because their efforts have only brought disappointment. Ultimately, they may perceive failure as being their destiny. Developing an external locus of control also makes it easier to excuse poor performance without hurting the individual's self-esteem (Basgall & Snyder, 1988).

Gifford, Denise, Briceno-Perriott and Mianzo (2006) studied more than 3,000 first-year students and indicated that students scored lower on the locus of control scale (internals), obtained significantly higher GPAs than those who scored higher (externals) on the same scale. Howell and Watson (2007) examined relations between procrastination, achievement goal orientations and learning strategies on 170 undergraduate students and showed that procrastination is related negatively to mastery – approach goal orientation. Alexander and

Onwuegbuzie (2007) found that academic procrastination is highly frequent in students and regarded as detrimental to academic progress and success.

Jiao, Qun, DaRos-Voseles, Denise, Collins, Kathleen, Onwuegbuzie and Anthony (2011) suggested that level of academic procrastination appears to play an important role among graduate students with respect to the performance of cooperative learning groups.

OBJECTIVES:

So, keeping in mind the previous findings, the present study was planned with the following objectives:

1. To compare academic achievement, academic procrastination and locus of control among males and females.
2. To study the relationship of academic achievement with academic procrastination and locus of control among males and females.
3. To study the role of academic procrastination and locus of control as predictors of academic achievement.

HYPOTHESIS:

1. There exists no significant difference in academic achievement, academic procrastination and locus of control among males and females.
2. There exists no significant relationship between academic achievement and academic procrastination & locus of control among males and females.
3. Academic procrastination and locus of control may not be the predictors of academic achievement among males and females

METHODOLOGY:

Sample:

A sample of 200 college students (Males: N=100 and Females: N=100) studying in B.A. 1st year was randomly selected from colleges of Amritsar District affiliated with Guru Nanak Dev University Amritsar.

Measures:

Following tools were used to measure the various constructs used in the present study:

1. Tuckman's Procrastination Scale (1990)
2. Locus of Control Scale by Pettijohn (1992)

Academic Achievement was measured on the basis of marks/ grades obtained by the students in plus 2 standards. The grades/marks were also verified from the office records and they were converted into percentage by using appropriate formulae.

ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF DATA

In this study the measurement of Academic Procrastination, Locus of Control and Academic Achievement was done. On the basis of the data, analysis and interpretation has been done and obtained results are discussed under different heads as following:

1. Comparison of Means
2. Correlation Analysis
3. Regression

1. Comparison of Means

1. It is obvious from the results given in the Table 1 that the mean score of academic achievement among males and females is 58.30 and 59.34 respectively. The standard deviations among males and females are 7.206 and 8.138. The obtained value of t (0.957) is less than the table value i.e., 1.96 at 0.05 level. It means there is no significant difference in academic achievement among male and female college students. However, females ($M=59.34$) have scored higher than males ($M=58.30$) on academic achievement.
2. It is evident from the results given in the Table 1 that the mean score of academic procrastination among males and females is 44.01 and 42.68 respectively. The standard deviations among males and females are 5.94 and 6.07. The obtained value of t ($t=1.57$) is less than the table value i.e., 1.96 at 0.05 level. It means there is no significant gender difference with reference to academic procrastination but males ($M=44.01$) have scored higher than females (42.68). The study of Sepehriam and Lotf (2011) also

indicated that there is no significant difference among boys and girls with reference to academic procrastination.

- It is apparent from the result given in the Table 1 that the mean score of locus of control among males and females is 61.65 and 62.15 respectively. The standard deviations among males and females are 12.062 and 11.015. The obtained value of t (0.306) is less than the table value i.e., 1.96 at 0.05 levels. It means there is no significant difference in locus of control among male and female college students. However, females ($M=62.15$) have scored higher than males (61.65) on locus of control.

Therefore, it is concluded that there are no significant gender differences with reference to academic achievement, academic procrastination and locus of control. However, females have scored higher than males on academic achievement and locus of control whereas males have scored higher on academic procrastination than females.

Hence, the 1st Hypothesis i.e. "There exists no significant difference in Academic Achievement, Academic Procrastination and Locus of Control among males and females" is not rejected.

Table 1 Showing Means and Standard Deviations of Males and Females on Academic Achievement, Academic Procrastination and Locus of Control along with Statistical Significance of difference between Means (N=200)

Variable	Gender	N	Mean	S.D.	t-ratio	Level of Significance
Academic Procrastination	Male	100	44.01	5.94	1.565	Not significant
	Female	100	42.68	6.07		
Locus of Control	Male	100	61.65	12.06	0.306	Not Significant
	Female	100	62.15	11.02		
Academic Achievement	Male	100	58.30	7.206	0.957	Not significant
	Female	100	59.34	8.138		

2. Correlation Analysis

Pearson Product Moment Correlation Method was used to study the relationship among various measures. The results of correlations are explained as below:

- It is clear from the Table 2 that co-efficient of co-relation between academic achievement and academic procrastination among male and female college students is -0.084 and -0.035 which is found to be insignificant at 0.01 and 0.05 levels. However, there is a negative relationship between academic achievement and academic procrastination among male as well as female college students. The result of the study done by Dewitte and Schouwenburg (2002) also compliment the result of the present study. They also found that the most frequent consequence of procrastination is poor individual performance. Howell and Watson (2007) also found negative relationship between procrastination and achievement.
- It is clear from the Table 2 that co-efficient of co-relation between academic achievement and locus of control among male and female college students is -0.013 and 0.100 respectively and both the values are insignificant at 0.01 and 0.05 levels. However, the correlation between Academic Achievement and Locus of Control among males is negative whereas among females is positive.

Therefore, it can be concluded that academic achievement has no significant correlation with academic procrastination and locus of control in both the genders. However academic achievement has a negative correlation with academic procrastination among male as well as female college students. On the other hand, correlation between academic achievement and locus of control in males is negative whereas in females is positive.

Table 2 Showing Correlations between Academic Achievement and Academic Procrastination & Locus of Control among Males and Females (N=200)

Variable	N	Academic Procrastination
Academic Achievement (Males)	100	-0.084
Academic Achievement (Females)	100	-0.035
Variable	N	Locus of Control
Academic Achievement (Males)	100	-0.013
Academic Achievement (Females)	100	0.100

Hence the 2nd Hypothesis i.e. “There exists no significant relationship between academic achievement and academic procrastination & locus of control among male and female college students” is not rejected.

REGRESSIO ANALYSIS:

Regression is generally applied to make prediction of one variable when the other variable is known and the relation between the two is also known. Then it is possible to predict the required variable from the regression equation. In the present study, the dependent variable Academic Achievement is to be predicted on the basis of two independent variables viz. Academic Procrastination and Locus of Control. A simple regression was applied separately on both the independent variables.

In case of academic procrastination, the value of r is 0.065 (The value indicates correlation between the two variables) and the value of r^2 is 0.004 (The value indicates significance) and both the values are insignificant. The value of constant came out to be 62.39. The relationship between academic achievement and academic procrastination came out negative (-0.08). So, the regression equation in this case can be framed in the following manner by taking into consideration the above stated values. Similarly, the regression equation on the basis of locus of control can be stated as below:

$$\text{Academic Achievement} = 62.39 - 0.08 (\text{Academic Procrastination})$$

$$\text{Academic Achievement} = 56.94 + 0.03 (\text{locus of control})$$

In both the regression equations the value of r and r^2 is insignificant. The correlations between the academic achievement and academic procrastination & locus of control are insignificant so it is not possible to make accurate prediction about academic achievement from academic procrastination and locus of control. Hence academic procrastination and locus of control may not be the predictors of academic achievement among male and female college student.

Hence the 3rd Hypothesis i.e., “Academic Procrastination and Locus of Control may not be the predictors of Academic Achievement among male and female college students is not rejected”.

FINDINGS

- There are no significant gender differences with reference to academic achievement, academic procrastination and locus of control
- Academic achievement has no significant correlation with academic procrastination and locus of control in males and females. However academic achievement has a negative correlation with academic procrastination among male as well as female college students. On the other hand, correlation between academic achievement and locus of control in males is negative whereas in females is positive.
- Academic procrastination and locus of control may not be the predictors of academic achievement among male and female college students.

EDUCATIONAL IMPLICATIONS

- It is vital to identify students who are at risk for procrastination. The results from this preliminary analysis should be of interest to academic advisors, counselors, and educators.
- Intervention programs designed to assist struggling students and to reduce procrastination would be beneficial.
- Academic procrastination is a pervasive and potentially maladaptive behavior for many university and college students often resulting in feelings of psychological distress.
- Teacher should try to develop internal locus of control among students because research findings suggest that internals experience less stress and they are involved in more task oriented behaviors.

- Academic achievement largely depends upon locus of control. So, it is duty of teacher to develop internal locus of control among students.

CONCLUSION

In the conclusion we can say that the above suggestions have been the direct outcome of the present investigation. There are many possibilities of carrying out many more research projects, having both theoretical applied implications. Thus, the field of research is of immense significance and there is need of dedicated, serious and continuous efforts on the part of research worker.

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