Volume : 4 | Issue : 11 | November 2015 • ISSN No 2277 - 8179

Research Paper

Procrastination and Academic Performance

Psychology

KEYWORDS : Procrastination, academic performance

Tanuja Saikia — C/o Rajen Saikia ASTC Colony, Quarter No. 2, KB Road, Ward No. 11 North Lakhimpur, Assam Pin. 787001

Dr.K.Arockia Maraichelvi — Assistant Professor Department of Human Development Avinashilingam Institute for Home Science and Higher Education for Women Coimbatore – 641043 Tamilnadu, India

ABSTRACT

The present study was conducted among 91 final year engineering graduates of two Universities in Coimbatore district through k in 1 probability sampling method. Modified Lay's procrastination scale and Likert scale for appraising academic performance were adapted to collect the relevant data regarding the influence of procrastination and academic performance of the graduate students. Sixty four percent of the respondents were found to be mild procrastinators and more than thirty per cent in the category nearer to severe level of procrastination. T test carried out to find the gender-specific in the procrastination level had proved that male students procrastinate significantly more than the female respondents. Looking into the association between the pattern of procrastination and academic performance, had concluded that these variables are completely independent of each other.

Introduction

Scenarios of procrastination are very common in a student's day to day life that they never realize. The last minute rushing has become a popular phenomenon among them. It is a common scene to observe college library being filled with students borrowing books just before final exams and number of students thronging the photocopy shops to get ready with the needed notes. Such procrastination in the academic arena (academic procrastination) is regarded as a widespread problem in academic setting and it has received more research and professional interest than other kinds of procrastination.

Procrastination is wide spread in academic contexts, where students are required to meet deadlines for assignment completion in an environment full of events and activities which compete for the students' time and attention. Student syndrome refers to the phenomenon that many students will begin to engage themselves in a task just before a deadline (Ariely and Wertenbroch, 2002).

Academic Procrastination is referred as the irrational tendency to delay tasks until an individual experiences discomfort (Solomon and Rothblum 1984). Other experts define it as an action in which an individual voluntarily delays an intended course of action despite expecting consequences resulting from that delay (Day, Mensink, and O'Sullivan, 2000; Steel 2007).

Academic procrastination can negatively impact learning, achievement, academic self-efficacy and over-all quality of life (Clark and Hill, 1994). College students who procrastinate have also claimed that their procrastination has a significant impact on their academic standing, ability to understand class material and their well-being (Ferrari, 2001). Studies conducted in academic environments found that procrastination affects 46 per cent to 95 per cent of undergraduate students (Gallagher, Borg, Golin and Kelleher, 1992).

Despite these literatures on procrastination and its impact on academic performance, some people report procrastination as performance enhancing strategy, as it helps them to marshal their resources in coping with an oncoming deadline (Chissom and Iran-Nejad, 1992; Tice and Baumeister, 1997). Hence, Steel (2007) stresses on the need for examining the causes of procrastination. Also several other researches had recommended for further studies that could examine the affective implications of academic procrastination and its outcomes (Fee and Tangney, 2000; Ferrari, Keane, Wolfe and Beck, 1998). Consequently this study aimed to contribute to the existing literature by appraising the relationship between the pattern of procrastination and its influence on the academic performance amongst a particular category of college students (Engineering graduates).

Objectives of the study

The objectives framed for the study were to:

- Appraise the pattern of procrastination among the selected engineering graduates
- Associate their pattern of procrastination with the academic performance

Hypotheses

H_0 - Pattern of procrastination do not have an impact on the academic performance of the selected engineering graduates.

METHODOLOGY

Area - The study focussed on the engineering graduates as Bachelor of Engineering is one of the major professional studies with more takers. Universities in Coimbatore that offers engineering courses were chosen as the area for the research. With certain inclusion criteria two out of five universities were selected.

Sample – Since the study has a rationale to associate the academic performance with their procrastination pattern, the final year graduates were taken into account as they had received atleast four semester marksheets. However, there were 13 departments in one University and in other only eight departments existed. So for the convenience in identifying a homogenous group the investigator chose to select the eight similar departments that had been functioning in both the Universities. Through probability sampling of k in 1 method the sample were selected where k is 10. Hence the total sample from both the Universities accounted to 120 (60 from each University). However only 91 responded to the study.

Tools – The trivia of tools formulated were as given below

- *Questionnaire to elicit the general background* - A structured questionnaire was formulated to collect the general and personal profile of the selected engineering students with special relevance to age, religion, living situation and study habits.
- *Modified Lay's procrastination scale* - To evaluate their procrastination level Lay's procrastination scale was modified to fit the student population with twenty statements on a five point scale ranging extremely uncharacteristic to extremely characteristic. The total score varied from 20 to 100. The higher the score rare is the procrastination attitude of

Volume : 4 | Issue : 11 | November 2015 • ISSN No 2277 - 8179

the respondents as per their perception and lower the score the greater is the severity of procrastination. A total score for each of the respondent were obtained by summing up the score and were compared for further analysis.

- *Likert scale on academic performance* - The academic performances of the selected students were rated with four point rating scale. The scale ranged from one to four where one represented below average and four represented excellent performance. The total marks of the respondents in all the four semesters were converted into percentage and were categorized and rated into below average - less than or equal to 40 per cent; average – 40 to 60 per cent; good – 60 to 80 per cent and excellent – above 80 percent.

The data was collected with the above said tools and the collected data was coded, classified and tabulated. It was then subjected to statistical analysis.

KEY FINDINGS

General Profile

Among the total number of respondents, 54 per cent of them were female and 46 per cent were male.

Procrastination pattern of the selected respondents

The Table – 1 and Figure – 1 depicts the percentile representation of procrastination pattern based on the scores procured by the respondents on the modified version of Lay's procrastination scale.

Table – 1 Categorisation based on the procrastination pattern

Procrastination pattern	Male		Female		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	N	%
Severe (20-40)	-	-	-	-	-	-
Moderate procrastinator (40-60)	18	42.9	12	24.5	30	33
Mild procrastinator (60-80)	24	57.1	34	69.4	58	63.7
Rare procrastinator (80-100)	-	-	3	6.1	3	3.3
Total	42	100	49	100	91	100

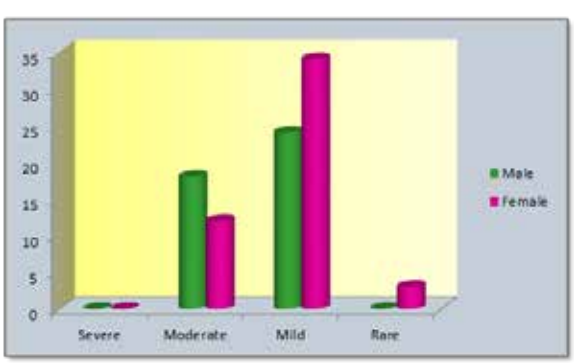


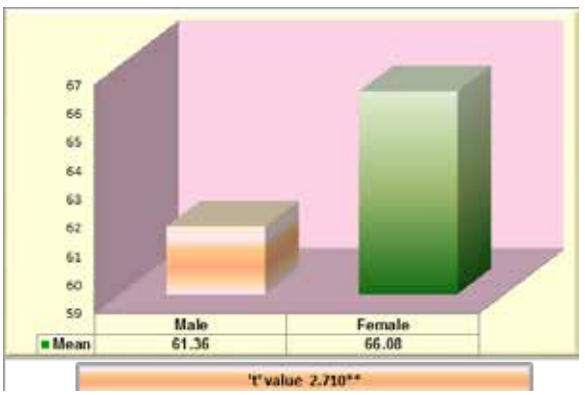
Figure – 1 Procrastination pattern of male and female students

Among the identified engineering graduates, none of them were found to possess the qualities of a severe procrastinator. Nearly 64 per cent of the graduates identified for the study claimed themselves to be in between the pattern of moderate and rare procrastination pattern (i e) not a systematic procrastinator or mild procrastinator. However an overall percentage of 33 percent are found to be moderate procrastinators. For the favourable pattern of procrastination namely rare procrastinator, only six per cent of female respondents got into it.

Effect of gender on procrastination score

To find out the effect of gender on the pattern of procrastination, 't' test was done with the mean scores of the respondents procured on the procrastination scale and shown in Figure -2.

Figure – 2 Gender – wise distribution of procrastination mean score



**** Significant at 1 per cent level**

In the present study the boy students responding to the survey reported a mean score of 61.36 which was much lesser than the mean procrastination score of female students (66.08). The results of 't' test ('t' value – 2.710, p< .01) suggest that the boys procrastinate significantly more than the female counterparts.

Procrastination and academic performance

The Table – 2 portrays the distribution of the respondents' as per their academic performance in relation to the procrastination mean score and also brings out its association.

Table – 2 Procrastination and academic performance

Academic score	Procrastination Score		
	Mean	S.D	No.
40-60 (Average)	60.20	3.83	5
60-80 (Good)	64.12	8.72	77
80-100 (Excellent)	64.11	9.45	9
Total	63.90	8.58	91
'F' value	0.487^{NS}		

NS- Not significant

The ANOVA value of 0.487 calculated to find the association between academic performance and procrastination mean score was not significant. In other words the pattern of procrastination does not influence the academic performance of the selected engineering graduates.

Discussion

General profile

Though the boys outnumber girls in taking up engineering course, the higher percentage of girls responding to the study owes to the verity that many of the boys identified through probability sampling had exhibited their procrastination attitude

in not returning the filled up tools.

Procrastination pattern of the selected respondents

Out of the 91 respondents no one reported to be in the threshold of severe procrastination, which in turn reflects a positive notion towards today's student community**.** The threshold score for the respondents being labelled as not a systematic procrastinator or mild procrastinator (i.e) procrastinates now and then was between the mean score of 60 and 80. Looking deep into the table it was found that the major contribution to this overall high percentage of 64 per cent in this category was from female population (69%) against 57 per cent from male population.

Also looking into the other favourable pattern of procrastination namely rare procrastinator (the threshold score is between 80-100) an overall three per cent of the respondents, contributed only from the female population of six per cent were found to be an interesting reading. Consequently, the magnitude of procrastination among the selected graduates was found to be high particularly with the male students over the female lot. The above observation is also made evident in the category of moderate procrastination (within the mean score of 40-60). Wherein 43 per cent of the male graduates were found to be procrastinating at a greater level compared to only 25 per cent of their counterpart.

Effect of gender on procrastination score

A study done by Özer, B.U. and Ferrari (2011) on 115 females, 99 males, found no significant difference between female and male students' on academic procrastination rates. On the other hand, another group of studies report that it is frequently seen in male students. Hence, in order to contribute to the research literature by exploring the effect of gender on the pattern of procrastination, 't' test was done. The 't' test applied to find whether the procrastination score differs significantly at 1 per cent level between male and female presented a finding in contradiction to the study of Washington (2004) who observed that procrastination is found more common among female students. However a study worth supporting the present study is the study of Balkis and Duru (2009) on a sample comprising of 580 students (329 girls, 251 boys) of teaching course in Pamukkale University showed that men are more intended to procrastinate.

Tuckman (2002) studied procrastination in undergraduate students enrolled in a web-based course. He found that procrastinators used rationalization rather than self regulation, which resulted in lower course grades. This phenomenon occurred in spite of the fact that the course was highly structured and enforced frequent deadlines throughout the duration of the course. In another study, Tuckman compared high, moderate and low procrastinators in undergraduate students on their reported degree of self-regulation. He found that the more self-regulation was used, the less procrastination resulted (Tuckman, 2002).

The academic performance grades of the engineering graduates were assessed from their semester marks sheet using the Likert's scale of academic performance. The total marks scored in a semester are converted into percentage. The average of the percentages of all the result declared semesters were calculated. Then the average was categorised into four divisions as specified in the methodology. The mean procrastination score of the individuals who score under each division of average mark was analyzed and the table vividly depicts the association between academic performance and procrastination mean score.

As evident from the characteristics of procrastinators, the possibility of not returning the filled up forms could be well realized. Consequently only five respondents were found to be average in their academic performance scoring within the range of 40 to 60 with a mean score on procrastination approximately at 60. In other words it is their procrastinating attitude that leads to average academic performance.

Procrastination and academic performance

A research study done by Seo (2011) has shown that students who procrastinate actually have more or less equal success in academic achievement, comparing to non procrastinating students. Hence, it was concluded that procrastinator are deluding themselves thinking procrastination has little impact on academic achievements. However Psychyl *et.al* (2000) has observed that it is still possible that procrastination can cause individual to fail. The table 2 lucidly explains the augmentation in the procrastination mean score from average performance to good and excellent academic performance of the selected sample. This finding undoubtedly demonstrates that less the attitude of procrastinating more the academic performance. However the insignificant 'f' value does not establish an association between the pattern of procrastination and academic performance among the selected lot. Hence the hypothesis is strongly accepted. The reason owing to this data is that most of the procrastinators did not return the filled up forms, which becomes a limitation for the study.

DIRECTIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

The recommendations for similar future research and policy decisions include the following

- As procrastination is a common phenomenon, every educational institution should establish a motivation cell to keep the students boosted up
- Future studies should examine the correlation evidence found in this research to see if procrastination pattern would change by age
- With improvement in methodology and increased resources, research can be conducted with other professional and non-professional groups.

CONCLUSION

In sum, the selected engineering graduates were found to procrastinate at various levels ranging from rare to moderate, tough not severe. However significant difference was observed between male and female graduates. The part of the research that investigated the influence of procrastination pattern on academic performance had evidently proved that these two predictor variable were independent of each other.

REFERENCE

1. Ariely,D., and Wertenbroch, K. (2002). Procrastination, deadlines, and performance: Self- control by pre commitment. Psychological Science, 13(3), Pp. 219-224. 2. Balkis M, Duru E (2009). Prevalence of academic procrastination behaviour among pre-service teachers, and its relationship with demographics and individual preferences. J. Theory Practice Educ., 5(1), Pp. 18-32. 3. Day, V., Mensink, D., and O'Sullivan, M., (2000). Pattern of academic procrastination, Journal of College Reading and Learning, 30(1), Pp. 120-134. 4. Ferrari, J. R. (2001). Procrastination as self-regulation failure of performance: Effects of cognitive load, self-awareness, and time limits on "working best under pressure." European Journal of Personality, 15, Pp. 391–406. 5. Özer, B. U., Demir, A., and Ferrari, J. R. (2009). Exploring academic procrastination among Turkish students: possible gender differences in prevalence and reasons, The Journal of Social Psychology, 149(2), Pp. 241-257. 6. Gallagher, R.P., Borg, S., Golin, A., & Kelleher, K. (1992). The personal, career, and learning skills needs of college students. Journal of College Student Development, 33(4), Pp. 301-10. 7. Sene´cal, C., Koestner, R., and Vallerand, R. J. (1995). Self-regulation and academic procrastination, Journal of Social Psychology, 135, Pp. 607–619. 8. Solomon, L. J., and Rothblum, E. D. (1984). Academic procrastination: Frequency and cognitive-behavioral correlates, Journal of Counseling Psychology, 31(4), Pp. 503-509. 9. Tuckman, B. W. (2002). Academic procrastinators: their rationalizations and web course performance. Paper presented at the 110th Annual Convention of the American Psychological Association, Chicago .