

Influence of Perfectionism and Academic Motivation on academic procrastination among students

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Abstract

Academic procrastination is defined as postponing academic duties and abandoning academic tasks in such a way that academic failure, unhappiness, and stress result. Perfectionism is referred to as deciding of purposes and goals that causes an individual to experience negative opinions. Adaptive perfectionism is associated with getting good marks on tests for academic achievement, but maladaptive perfectionism is not correctly associated with academic achievement. In other words, maladaptive perfectionism can cause academic procrastination among students. Individuals who possess perfectionism enforce high standards illogically upon themselves and express procrastination. In academia, motivation is defined as an internal process that used to activate and sustain activities for achieving specific academic targets and goals. Motivation as intrinsic or extrinsic has an impact on procrastination among students. With this background, the present study was conducted to find the influence of perfectionism and academic motivation on academic procrastination among students. The sample was comprised of 250 respondents randomly selected from well reputed and high ranked universities of the province of Punjab. Three well-structured instruments were used for data collection: Frost's Multidimensional Perfectionism Scale, the Procrastination Assessment Scale-Student and Academic Motivation Scale, College 28. Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) was used to analyze the data collected to derive conclusions and formulate recommendations. Findings of the study showed a strong positive correlation between perfectionism, procrastination, and academic motivation. Items of all the mentioned scales were highly consistent. Procrastination, motivation and its subcategories also depicted no variation on the basis of gender. Motivation had an impact on procrastination, but perfectionism did not reveal any impact on procrastination among students. It was recommended that instructors concentrate on appropriate strategies for lowering the decimal of procrastination. They should develop motivational tools and help students to formulate their future goals in order to cope with academic

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responsibilities. Conducting seminars and other educational activities could be a better alternative opportunity for improving level of personal development of students.

Keywords: Perfectionism, Procrastination, Academic Motivation

Introduction

Procrastination is considered to delay a work till the last stage that it is difficult to complete it in the required time (Choi & Moran, 2009; Chu & Choi, 2005; Tan *et al.*, 2008; Ferrari *et al.*, 2005). In procrastination, a person wants to postpone his work, being aware that he is delaying his work and making an excuse that that he will complete his task later (Knaus, 2000). Almost every person delays completing his duties and responsibilities in its life. Some people show procrastination at work at home, assignments or some in payments appointments. This type of behavior mostly results in restlessness, a high level of anxiety, shortage of time and un-satisfied completion of task. People make promises to themselves that they will finish assignments on time next time (Kagan *et al.*, 2010). Ferrari *et al.* (1995) has described that procrastination in academia is the behavior in which a person is avoiding school responsibilities that can result in a big failure. Educational procrastination was characterized as running away from educational responsibilities, for example, students doing their homework and studying at the last time of the exams (Slomon & Rothblum, 1984; Milgram *et al.*, 1998).

There is no specific theory explaining the habit of delaying students. One of the most common themes is perfectionism. It is considered as a characteristic of personality to struggle with perfectionism and very high standards that are set by individuals; they consider it very important to meet these standards (Flett & Hewitt, 2002; Frost *et al.*, 1990). Procrastination makes an individual think related to the reasons for this kind of conduct. There are different elements prevail, like issues regarding managing time, maintaining self-worth and less motivation. These elements put students towards procrastination. The predominance of procrastination in academia resulted in finding its major reasons. The main reasons that are contributing to this habit are issues with management of timings, having difficulty in maintaining self-respect and a low level of enthusiasm (Eerde, 2000; Soloman & Rothblum, 1984; Balkis, 2007). Furthermore, inefficient assignment completion and a lack of time management skills can contribute to procrastination.

Perfectionism is illustrated by making an attempt at perfection and milieu of unnecessarily absolute expectations for execution consolidated by inclinations for unduly basic assessments of a person's conduct (Flett & Hewitt, 2002). Perfectionism of self-situated contains inside-propelled convictions that attempting to be perfect and being flawless are essential to one and is portrayed by setting too many lofty goals and for one person having a perfectionist inspiration. Conversely, socially approved compulsiveness contains inspired convictions that trying to be perfect and flawless is vital to others and that their acknowledgment is provisional on satisfying the mentioned

objectives (Enns & Cox, 2002; Hewitt & Flett, 1991). Numerous creators demonstrate that perfectionism and procrastination have a few attributes in the same manner (Burka & Yuen, 1983). Both have prominent requirements and need to support nonrealistic convictions (Beswick *et al.*, 1988; Flett *et al.*, 1991). Likewise, two kinds of individuals encounter the dread of committing errors (Flett *et al.*, 1991; Solomon & Rothblum, 1984) while displaying an inclination to ascribe significance to the prolongation of interminable achievement (Flett *et al.*, 1992).

According to experts, academic motivation includes two inner procedures that activate and support activities for accomplishing particular academic objectives (Pintrich & Zusho, 2002). According to Deci & Ryan (2002), academic motivation scholars explain scholastic inspiration as multiple dimensions, e.g. internal motivation, external motivation and amotivation. Researchers have utilized various motivational methodologies, i.e. attribution hypothesis, expectation value theory (Eccles and Wigfield, 2002; Eccles, 2005), self-adequacy hypotheses (Schunk & Pajares, 2009), and attainment goal theory (Maehr & Zusho, 2009) to look at the connection between scholastic inspiration and scholarly accomplishment. This hypothetical point of view on inspiration has produced in the area of training a number of studies, and to better comprehend instructive results has been utilized widely (Ryan & Weinstein, 2009; Ryan & Deci, 2009; Niemiec & Ryan, 2009).

The present study is aimed at determining the relationship between adaptive, maladaptive perfectionism, achievement motivation (intrinsic, extrinsic) and academic vacillation among university graduates which are mentioned in the related literature. Research on adaptive, maladaptive perfectionism, motivation (intrinsic, extrinsic) and academic procrastination has been conducted in western culture. This research has been helpful in determining the relationship between adaptive, maladaptive perfectionism, motivation (intrinsic, extrinsic) and academic dithering among university and college students in Punjab-Pakistan. This study looked at how intrinsic motivation predicts less academic procrastination. It has also examined how greater academic procrastination is predictive by extrinsic motivation.

Materials and Methods

The population of the present study comprised all the students of five well-reputed universities, which are University of Agriculture Faisalabad, University of Education Lahore, University of Sargodha, Bahaudin Zakariya University Multan and Punjab University Lahore of the province of Punjab. A total sample of 250 students was taken randomly from the above mentioned universities. Three scales were used for in-depth study of the research problem. The Frost Multidimensional Perfectionism Scale was used for assessing perfectionism in students. People who get greater scores on the perfectionism scale indicate a greater level of perfectionism in them (Frost, *et al.*, 1990).

The Procrastination Assessment Scale-Student (PASS) was also adopted, which describes the students' activities related to education and how they delay in different tasks (Solomon & Rothblum, 1984). The Academic Motivation Scale (AMS-C 28) is actually the explanation of Self Determination theory presented by Deci and Ryan (2002). It is comprised of 28 statements and the scaling method used in this scale is the 07 point Likert type scale (Vallerand *et al.*, 1992). All the scales used in this study were foreign measures and validated by the foreign researchers. After getting permission from them, these measures were used in this study. Data was collected personally by the researcher through face to-face interviews. After collecting the data, the data was arranged and analyzed through the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS). Two samples T-test was applied using a given formula.

Results and Discussion

Table 1

Correlation Coefficient on the scale of Perfectionism, Procrastination, Academic Motivation Scale (N =250).

Note. ** $p < 0.01$

Table 1 indicates that there was a significant correlation between perfectionism,

| Scales | Perfectionism | Adaptive | Maladaptive | Procrastination | IM | EM | Motivation |
|-----------------|---------------|----------|-------------|-----------------|--------|--------|------------|
| Perfectionism | 1 | .765** | .954** | .495** | .555** | .614** | .638** |
| Adaptive | | 1 | .586** | .387** | .539** | .624** | .611** |
| Maladaptive | | | 1 | .473** | .476** | .542** | .565** |
| Procrastination | | | | 1 | .400** | .436** | .469** |
| IM | | | | | 1 | .797** | .940** |
| EM | | | | | | 1 | .932** |
| Motivation | | | | | | | 1 |

procrastination and motivation. Perfectionism and its sub categories (Adaptive and Maladaptive Perfectionism) were positively correlated with procrastination, motivation and with its subcategories. Flett *et al.* (1992) study suggested that perfectionism and academic procrastination were positively correlated. One more study explores that people who are perfectionists show procrastinating behavior (Burka and Yuen, 1983; Onwuegbuzie, 2000). Procrastination was positively correlated with motivation and its subcategories; internal and external motivation. There was a positive correlation between Intrinsic motivation and extrinsic motivation. Results of another study suggest that

students with intrinsic motivation had procrastination as compared to extrinsic motivation (Wolters, 2003).

Table 2
Mean, Standard Deviation and t-test on the scale of Perfectionism among Male and Female Students (N= 250).

| Scales | Gender | N | M | SD | t | p |
|---------------------------|--------|-----|-------|--------|-------|------|
| Perfectionism | Male | 125 | 95.99 | 14.443 | 2.346 | .031 |
| | Female | 125 | 92.94 | 13.348 | | |
| Adaptive Perfectionism | Male | 125 | 46.51 | 8.648 | 1.778 | .239 |
| | Female | 125 | 44.54 | 8.927 | | |
| Maladaptive Perfectionism | Male | 125 | 72.58 | 10.838 | 1.181 | .077 |
| | Female | 125 | 70.99 | 10.366 | | |

Note. $df = 248, p < 0.05, p > 0.05$

T-test depicts that difference between two categories. Table 2 depicts that significant difference in perfectionism scores between male students and female students ($p = 0.31$). As mean value also depicts the significant difference between male students and female students. Mean value of this table indicates that male (mean: 95.99) students had more perfectionism as compared to female (mean: 92.94) students. There has been found no significant variation in the categories of perfectionism, such as adaptive and maladaptive perfectionism. But the mean value of Adaptive perfectionism shows that males (mean, 46.51) had more adaptive perfectionism as compared to females (mean, 44.54). Same as with maladaptive perfectionism, males (mean, 72.58) had more adaptive perfectionism as compared to females (mean, 70.99).

Table 3
Mean, Standard Deviation and t-test on the scale of Procrastination among Male and Female Students (N= 250).

| Scales | Gender | N | M | SD | t | p |
|-----------------|--------|-----|--------|--------|------|------|
| Procrastination | Male | 125 | 132.28 | 22.842 | .067 | .947 |
| | Female | 125 | 132.08 | 24.514 | | |

Note. $df = 248, p > 0.05$

Table 3 elaborates that there was no significant variation in the scores of procrastination among male students and female students. The mean value of this table also represents that there was no difference between males students (mean: 132.28) and females students (mean: 132.08). Previous literature indicated that females had a lesser propensity to

procrastinate than males (Senecal *et al.*, 1995). Results of the current study are contradictory to the studies cited above.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Academic procrastination has always remained a serious threat towards students' academic performance. It has not only degraded academic performance, but it has damaged the personality traits of students as well. The research findings of the present study strongly recommend that teachers should have to lessen the assignment burden by breaking down assignment contents. In addition, motivation and multifaceted approach may also be useful to help students reduce their academic procrastination and disengagement. Psycho-educational programs as well as seminars could be an alternative option for their development at individual and educational level.

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