

Academic Procrastination and Perfectionism among College Students

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Abstract: *The present paper in an attempt to explore Academic Procrastination in relation to Perfectionism among college students. The objectives of the study were – To study whether academic procrastination has any effect on perfectionism of college students and to study whether there is any difference in academic procrastination between males and females and to study whether there is any difference in perfectionism between males and females. The data were collected from two colleges of malappuram district. The sample included 60 participants of which 30 were males and remaining 30 were females which were selected by using random sampling method. The age group of the sample range between 18-21. ‘Procrastination scale’ developed on 1986 by Lay, is also called the ‘General Behavioral Procrastination(GP) Scale’, and ‘Multidimensional perfectionism scale’ developed on 1991 by Hewitt & Flett, were used as tools for the study. The major statistical analysis used in the study involve Pearson correlation and ‘t’ test. The result shows that there is no significant relationship existing between Academic Procrastination and Perfectionism. The study also revealed that there is no significant difference in a Academic Procrastination between males and females and there is a significant difference in perfectionism between males and females.*

Keywords: Academic procrastination, Perfectionism

1. Introduction

Academic procrastination is a special form of procrastination that occurs in the academic settings. It involves knowing that one needs to carry out an academic task or undertake an academic activity, such as writing a term paper, studying for examinations, finishing a school related project, or undertaking the weekly reading assignments, but, for one reason or another, failing to motivate oneself to do so within the expected time frame.

Academic procrastination is a complex phenomenon with cognitive, affective, and behavioral components. Academic procrastination has been studied extensively by a variety of researchers because it can have serious consequences for students who are frequently faced with various academic deadlines and social pressures. Many studies treat academic procrastination as a self-defeating personality flaw that corresponds to the behavior pattern of choosing the short-term gains, such as free time and effort, over the long-term costs of academic performance. Although the procrastinators might obtain genuine benefits in the short run, their short-term “benefits are eventually more than offset by the costs, however, because the stress and illness suffered by procrastinators late in the task exceed and outweigh the initial benefits” and academic procrastination “apparently leads to stress, illness, and inferior performance”. It also leads students to experience various psychological and behavioral problems, such as anxiety, depression, shame, cheating and plagiarism, fear of failure, and task aversiveness. Fear of failure also is associated with perfectionism, evaluation anxiety, and low self-confidence.

Perfectionism, in psychology, is a personality trait characterized by a person's striving for flawlessness and setting high performance standards, accompanied by critical self evaluations and concerns regarding others' evaluations. It is best conceptualized as a multidimensional characteristic, as psychologists agree that there are many

positive and negative aspects. In its maladaptive form, perfectionism drives people to attempt to achieve an unattainable ideal, while their adaptive perfectionism can sometimes motivate them to reach their goals. In the end, they derive pleasure from doing so. When perfectionists do not reach their goals, they often fall into depression. Perfectionists strain compulsively and unceasingly toward unobtainable goals, and measure their self-worth by productivity and accomplishment. Pressuring oneself to achieve unrealistic goals inevitably sets the person up for disappointment. Perfectionists tend to be harsh critics of themselves when they fail to meet their standards.

Greenspon (2008) defined “perfectionism is the desire to be faultless, a fear of imperfection, equating errors as personal defect, and viewing perfection as the only route to personal acceptance.

Perfectionism is increasingly being seen as a risk factor for suicide that has a double edged sword. The tendency of perfectionists to have excessively high expectations of self and to be self-critical when their efforts do not meet the standard they have established combined with their tendency to show a "perfect face" to the world increases their risk of suicide ideation while decreasing the likelihood they will seek help when they should. Anorexia nervosa-Perfectionism has been linked with anorexia nervosa in research for decades. Researchers in 1949 described the behavior of the average anorexic girl as being "rigid" and "hyperconscious", observing also a tendency to "neatness, meticulousity, and a mulish stubbornness not amenable to reason which make her a rank perfectionist". Perfectionism is a life enduring trait in the biographies of anorexics. It is felt before the onset of the eating disorder, generally in childhood, during the illness, and also, after remission. The incessant striving for thinness among anorexics is itself a manifestation of this trait, of an insistence upon meeting unattainably high standards of performance. Because of its chronicity, those with eating disorders also display perfectionistic tendencies in other domains of life than

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dieting and weight control. Over-achievement at school, for example, has been observed among anorexics, as a result of their over-industrious behavior.

Academic procrastination refers to the tendency to needlessly put off or delay school related activities and behaviors. Academic procrastination occurs with students of all ages, whether those students are attending grade school or pursuing some type of educational attainment or degree. Procrastination among undergraduate students in college is particularly common. Such procrastination can place undue stress or anxiety upon individuals as they hasten to meet deadlines and complete assignments. Putting things off can not only affect one's psychological well-being, but can also affect one's relationship with others. As individuals fail to meet deadlines and commitments, relationships become strained.

Rothlum and Soloman (1986), academic procrastination is defined in terms of "irrational delay or postpones the academic tasks to the point of experiencing considerable anxiety.

Academic perfectionism is nothing but striving towards perfection. This aspect is very important in almost every field where task completion with precision is important. Academic procrastination is something when something is delayed and lagged on. Perfectionism and academic procrastination are mostly seen variables which greatly influences people especially students. Academic success and performance is a key factor in the future development and growth of college students. Heights success is achieved only when there is a positive curve in their academics with which their future career is shaped. In order to shape the future development, it is important that they strive towards perfection in all means and also avoid procrastination which interferes their academics.

The objectives of the study were-to understand whether academic procrastination has any effect on perfectionism of college students, to study whether there is any difference in academic procrastination between males and females and to study whether there is any difference in perfectionism between males and females.

The first hypothesis is that there will be a significant relationship existing between academic procrastination and perfectionism among college students, second, there will be a significant difference in academic procrastination between males and females and third, there will be a significant difference in perfectionism between males and females.

Main aim of study was to measure strength of relationship between academic procrastination and perfectionism. It was hypothesized that, academic procrastination and perfectionism are positively and significantly related.

2. Materials and Methods

The data were collected from two colleges of malappuram district. The sample included 60 participants of which 30 were males and the remaining 30 were females which were

selected by using random sampling method. The age group of the sample ranges between 18-21.

Procrastination scale developed by Lay (1986), is also called the General Behavioral Procrastination (GP) Scale. A 20-item one-dimensional inventory, it contains statements such as "I generally return phone calls promptly" and "I usually buy even an essential item at the last minute." Responses across items are summed to obtain a single score. The scale has a Cronbach alpha of .82 and a retest reliability of .80.

Multidimensional Perfectionism Scale (H&F-MPS) was developed by Hewitt and Flett, 1991. It consisted of 45 questions. .7 point Likert-format instrument designed to measure 3 dimension of perfectionism: self oriented (SOP), other-oriented perfectionism (ORP) and self-prescribed perfectionism (SPP). The co-efficient alpha reliability estimates of the multidimensional scale were (.86) for self oriented perfectionism, (.82) other oriented perfectionism, and (.87) for socially prescribed perfectionism.

The major statistical analysis used in the study involve Pearson correlation and 't' test. Pearson correlations were used to find out the relationship among Academic Procrastination and Perfectionism. To understand the influence of demographic variables on mainstream variables 't' test was conducted.

3. Result

Variables	Perfectionism
Academic procrastination	0.84

Table I shows the correlation between academic procrastination and perfectionism

Table1: Table I correlation between academic procrastination and perfectionism.

Table I shows that there is no significant relationship existing between academic procrastination and perfectionism. The correlation of academic procrastination and perfectionism is .084. That is, it has a negative correlation. It is understood from the study that academic procrastination has no important role in developing perfectionism. Academic procrastination was found to have no significant effects on perfectionism among college students. Thus the hypothesis I is rejected.

Table 2: Mean, SD and t Value of AP and P

Variables	Group	N	Mean	SD	t value
AP	Males	30	214.13	32.979	.647
	Females	30	218.93	23.689	
P	Males	30	62.80	8.775	2.157
	Females	30	67.93	9.638	

Females are having higher Academic procrastination than males and also revealed that females are having higher perfectionism than males.

Table II shows that there is no significant difference between males and females on academic procrastination. It

also shows that there is a significant difference between males and females on perfectionism is accepted.

4. Discussion

Academic procrastination is a special form of procrastination that occurs in the academic settings. It involves knowing that one needs to carry out an academic task or undertake an academic activity, such as writing a term paper, studying for examinations, finishing a school related project, or undertaking the weekly reading assignments, but, for one reason or another, failing to motivate oneself to do so within the expected time frame. Academic procrastination is a complex phenomenon with cognitive, affective, and behavioral components. Perfectionism, in psychology, is a personality trait characterized by a person's striving for flawlessness and setting high performance standards, accompanied by critical self evaluations and concerns regarding others' evaluations. When perfectionists do not reach their goals, they often fall into depression. Perfectionists strain compulsively and unceasingly toward unobtainable goals, and measure their self-worth by productivity and accomplishment. Pressuring oneself to achieve unrealistic goals inevitably sets the person up for disappointment. Perfectionists tend to be harsh critics of themselves when they fail to meet their standards. Academic perfectionism is nothing but striving towards perfection. This aspect is very important in almost every field where task completion with precision is important. Academic procrastination is something when something is delayed and lagged on. Perfectionism and academic procrastination are mostly seen variables which greatly influences people especially students. Academic success and performance is a key factor in the future development and growth of college students. Heights success is achieved only when there is a positive curve in their academics with which their future career is shaped. In order to shape the future development, it is important that they strive towards perfection in all means and also avoid procrastination which interferes their academics. There is a need to study this because it's important to understand whether there are any elements of procrastination and how much the students are inclined towards perfectionism so that according to the results the academic structure of colleges can be shaped accordingly. Academic structure fostering perfectionism and avoiding procrastination will lead a positive development in the students. In this study we clearly look upon the relationship between academic procrastination and perfectionism and gather information regarding the reasons behind the problems faced by students and how they overcome this problem.

The present study was conducted with an intention to find out whether there is any significant relationship existing between academic procrastination and perfectionism. From the study it is clear that there is no significant relationship existing between academic procrastination and perfectionism. There is no significant difference in academic procrastination between males and females and there is a significant difference in perfectionism between males and females.

5. Conclusion

From the study we can conclude that there is no significant relationship existing between academic procrastination and perfectionism among college students, thus the hypothesis I is rejected. There is no significant difference in academic procrastination between males and females, thus the hypothesis II is rejected. There is a significant relationship in perfectionism between males and females students, thus the hypothesis III is accepted.

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