



Academic Procrastination and Decision Making Styles

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Abstract. The purpose of the present study is to investigate the relationship between academic procrastination and decision making styles. The sample of the study was 503 (277 women, 226 men) undergraduate students. Procrastination Assessment Scale for Students (Solomon & Rothblum, 1984) and General Decision Making Style Inventory (Scott & Bruce, 1995) were administered to the students. Correlation results indicated that there were significant positive correlations between academic procrastination and both avoidant ($r = .29, p < .01$) and spontaneous decision making styles ($r = .19, p < .01$), but there was significant negative correlation between academic procrastination and rational decision making style ($r = -.12, p < .01$).

1 Introduction

Procrastination is a tendency to put off an intended action or decision (Ferrari, Johnson, & McCown, 1995). In academic settings, students have specific tasks to perform, such as writing term papers, studying for exams, reading assignments, and performing academic administrative and attendance tasks; however, for one reason or another, completion of these tasks is often postponed. Academic procrastination appears to be a significant problem among university students (Bishop, Gallagher, & Cohen, 2000; Onwuegbuzie & Collins, 2001) and students engage in this behavior in varying degrees (Steel, 2004). In fact, it has been estimated that approximately 70% of university students procrastinate (Ellis & Knaus, 1977). Solomon and Rothblum (1984) found that students procrastinated more often when writing term papers (46%) than they did when reading assignments (30%), studying for exams (28%), or attending to academic (23%) and administrative (11%) tasks.

When the sources of procrastination are considered, many causal factors contributing to academic procrastination have been found by several researchers (e.g., Kachgal, Hansen, & Kevin, 2001; Schowuenburg, Lay, Pychyl, & Ferrari, 2004). Burka and Yuen (1983) also suggested that a number of factors are related to procrastination including difficulty in making decisions. Decision making is not only a concept that includes the identification of alternatives but also it is a concept that consists of choosing the best alternative by considering the values, goals, desires and lifestyle of an individual. It can be also explained as reducing ambiguities while choosing between various alternatives and this explanation focuses on information gathering in decision making process.

The purpose of this research was to examine the relationships between academic procrastination and decision making.

2 Method

2.1 Participants



The participants of the study were 503 (277 women, 226 men) undergraduate students who are from five different faculties and different grade levels. They participated voluntarily. The age range of the participants was from 18 to 25.

2.2 Data Collection Instruments

The Procrastination Assessment Scale-Students (PASS) and The General Decision Making Style Inventory (GDMS) were used.

2.2.1 The Procrastination Assessment Scale-Students (PASS)

The Procrastination Assessment Scale-Students (PASS) (Solomon & Rothblum, 1984) was used to measure cognitive behavioral triggering of procrastination. It consists of two parts and 44 items. First part has 18 items which measures the prevalence of procrastination in six academic areas: a) writing term paper, b) studying for an exam, c) keeping up weekly reading assignments, d) performing administrative tasks, e) attending meetings and f) performing academic tasks in general. Participants answer each question about the six areas of procrastination mentioned above. For the first 18 items that assess six areas of procrastination, scoring is as follows. First two items are added to obtain a score that ranges from 2 to 10 points. First two questions of each six procrastination areas are summed to get a total score ranging from 12 to 60. The first part of the PASS includes the scores that show academic procrastination levels of participants (Solomon & Rothblum, 1984). Since the second part of the PASS includes possible reasons for procrastination on a variety of tasks, the second part was not used in this study. While the total score is evaluated, only the score of first two questions are calculated and a total score that ranges between from 12 to 60 is obtained.

Onwuegbuzie (2004) found a coefficient alpha score that was .85; the first part of PASS coefficient was .82 and the second part coefficient was .89. Uzun-Özer and Demir (2005) found a coefficient alpha score that was .86 in the Turkish version of PASS. in this study

2.2.3 The General Decision Making Style Inventory

The General Decision Making Style Inventory (GDMS) was developed by Scott and Bruce (1995) in order to measure individual differences in decision making styles while approaching problems in decision making process of an individual. It consists of 25 items. The participants were asked to indicate their degree of agreement on a 5- point scale ranging from 0 = "this is a very bad description of me" to 4 = "this is a very good description of me". The GDMS has five factors: the avoidant decision making style (e.g., "I avoid making important decisions until the pressure is on."), the rational decision making style (e.g., "I make decisions in a logical and systematic way") the spontaneous decision making style (e.g., "When making decisions I do what I think first."), the dependent decision making style, (e.g., "I rarely make important decisions without consulting other people."), and the intuitive decision making style (e.g., "When making decisions, I trust my inner feelings and reactions."). The Turkish version of the scale had sufficient reliability and construct validity (Öngen, 2012). Internal consistency of the total scale and the avoidant decision making style, the rational decision making style, the spontaneous decision making style, the dependent decision making style and the intuitive decision making style sub-scales were .88, .84, .78, .81, .79 and .78, respectively for this sample.

2.3 Data Collection Procedure



The PASS and the GDMS

were applied as hard copies in the beginning or at the end of the lessons to the university students from a variety of class levels. The data was collected by using

convenience sampling for accessing participants. During the data collection, participants were informed about confidentiality and voluntary attendance.

3 Results

The correlation indicated that there were significant positive correlations between academic procrastination and both avoidant ($r = .29, p < .01$) and spontaneous decision making styles ($r = .19, p < .01$), but there was significant negative correlation between academic procrastination and rational decision making style ($r = -.12, p < .01$). However, there is no significant correlation between procrastination and intuitive style ($r = -.03, p > .05$), and dependent style ($r = .02, p < .05$).

4 Discussion

Findings of the present study indicated that there was a significant negative correlation between academic procrastination and rational decision making style, and significant positive correlation between academic procrastination with avoidant and spontaneous decision making style.

First, in terms of finding, there was a significant negative relationship between academic procrastination and rational decision making style. Voge (2010) emphasized rationality of individuals in their continuing procrastination behavior. Acknowledging self-values includes self-awareness, and because of these characteristics of people who uses rational style, it was thought that they are more aware of their behavior. Therefore, it can be assumed that these people would have a tendency to do the tasks that they have planned on time, and they would also complete both daily or academic tasks on time and would not procrastinate.

Second, in terms of the result of a significant positive relationship of academic procrastination and avoidant style, the finding was similar with the study findings of Balkis (2007) in which there was a significant positive correlation between procrastination and avoidant decision making style. Since one of the prerequisites for beginning a task is making a decision to do that task, avoiding decision to start may lead to completion of the task in later period rather than completing it on time (Ferrari, 1995).

Third, the findings of this study on procrastination and spontaneous style were significantly and positively correlated which was parallel with the finding on literature. For instance, in the study of Balkis (2007), students who use spontaneous decision making style were found to have more procrastination behavior. In the present study, dependent and intuitive decision making style was not found to be significantly related to academic procrastination. These results were similar with the other studies (e.g., Uğurlu, 2013)

The findings of this study open a path to other studies to understand the link between each decision making style and academic procrastination by conducting research with various international samples.

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5th International Conference on Research in
Behavioral and Social Science
Spain | Barcelona | December 7-9, 2018

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