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Comparing academic procrastination among female students with internal and external source of control

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Abstract

Introduction: academic procrastination is one of the common problems among students and it is described as a defect in self-regulation. The purpose of the present research was to compare academic procrastination among female students with internal and external source of control in Kermanshah in academic year of 2015.

Method: it was a casual-comparative research. 100 individuals have been selected from female students of dormitory by simple random sampling. Measuring tools included Solomon and Roth-Bloom academic procrastination scale and Rutter's internal-external source of control questionnaire. In order to analyze data, independent t-test was used.

Findings: findings indicate that there was difference only in the score of procrastination in essay writing with internal and external source of control and the results indicated that there is more procrastination in essay writing among students with external source of control than external source of control ($p<0.05$). Also, the results showed that there was no significant difference between total score of procrastination, procrastination in exam and assignments among students with internal and external source of control.

Conclusion: due to the fact that individual sense of domination influences on life and environmental conditions and human body and psyche, they experience more procrastination with external source of control because of lack of tendency to compete in their academic performances. So, it is necessary to attempt to internalize their source of control in order to obtain educational and occupational achievement.

Keywords: academic procrastination, internal and external source of control, students.

Introduction:

Procrastination is one of the behavioral problems and has high level of prevalence. Ferrary, Johnson and Mc Choven (1995) believe that the definition of procrastination is purposeful and permanent postpone in starting and completing assignments to the extent that the individual would experience a sense of sadness from procrastination. Alice and Chnos (1979) believe that procrastination is a lack of self-regulation performance and behavioral orientation in delaying what is required for reaching to the goal. Procrastination is too common that it can be said that it is a part of human predilection. Due to the complexity and cognitive-emotional and behavioral components of procrastination, it has different types such as academic procrastination (Hill, Chaboot and Baral, 1978; Zisat, Rozental and White, 1978), decision making procrastination (Ifert and Ferari, 1989), neurotic procrastination (Alice and Novs, 1979), and obsessive procrastination (Ferari, 1991). However, the most common type of procrastination is academic procrastination (Brothen and M Bech, 2001; Moon and Ealing and Roth, 2005; Roth Bloom, Solomon and Morakami, 1986). It is defined as a permanent and dominant tendency to postpone educational activities which are often associated with anxiety. Academic procrastination has been suggested as a defect in self-regulation, i.e. individual's disability to control thoughts, emotions, and his performance according to the criterion (Fous and Bamister, 2004). So, procrastination would be meaningful in individual and group affaires (Briodi, 1980; quoted by Balix and Diorio, 2007). Psychoanalysis approach of procrastination indicates underlying mental emotions as a problematic behavior. Cognitive approach focuses on the effect of irrational believes and unrealistic expectations (Balix and Diorio, 2007). Therefore, procrastination is associated with meta-cognition from two points of view, first of all, procrastination may be considered as a strategy for regulating cognition and negative emotions. Although procrastination is not always problematic, in most cases it often can be associated with unfavorable consequences through preventing progress and lack of access to the purposes. To describe procrastination, researchers referred to negligence and delaying to do important affaires in expected time duration with the experience of sadness (Alice and Jamesnal, 2003, Lie, 1986; Snkal and Quistz and Walrend, 1995). Source of control is a personality trait which was suggested by Rutter (1966) for the first time in consistent with social learning theory. Rutter explains the source of control as general expectation of the results of an event which is existed inside or beyond out of control or understanding of individual (Masoud-nia, 2007, p.125). Source of control attributes belief system about the reason of individuals' experiences, achievements and failures which can be evaluated by Rutter's internal and external source of control. Source of control indicates generalized expectation about effective factors on reward and punishment in human life. In one side, individuals who are able to inhibit life events may have internal source of control and on the other side, individuals who believe that life events are the results of external factors such as chance and destiny may have internal source of control.

Klean and Kler, (1996) suggested that source of control has relationship with variables such as self-confidence, anxiety, learned helplessness, stress, academic and decision making procrastination. The importance of doing research around procrastination and source of control is obvious. Damages from educational failures have both financial and psychosocial aspects. Economically, educational failure based on procrastination has heavy costs, moreover psychosocially, the success and failure of students in cognitive processes, motivation, internal and external source of control have great effect on later

performances in educational-social- occupational achievements. Psychologically, it leads to reduce self-confidence and learned depression (Khadivi, 2011) and it is very important. The purpose of the present research is to study what kind of source of control has more effect on female students' procrastination (Nikson and Frast, 1996). Studies show that students with high level of progress motivation obtained higher average. Another finding indicates that there is a curved relationship between sense of self-satisfaction (internal control) and educational achievement. To do assignments, some authors (Torance and Galberis, 2006; quoted by Troia, 2009) refer to cognitive elements, so assignments are strongly dependent to procrastination or delaying to start or complete an assignment favorably (Ferari, Okalagan and Newbegin, 2005). Self-efficacy and procrastination have certainly effect on educational performances (Troia, 2009). Individuals with internal orientation have higher level of self-confidence and also they have procrastination in essay writing and they will experience sadness (Abdolah, 1989; Branigan, Hak and Gie, 1991; Lefcort, Martin, Fake and Saleh, 1985). Gher-tape et al., (2015) suggested that females with internal source of control have higher individual compatibility than females with external source of control.

So, identifying and studying source of control to describe individuals' performance has great importance, especially identifying its correlations to progress motivation, educational progress and possible reasons for academic procrastination can help students in its formation and effective factors.

The research method

The research method was casual-comparative, and statistical population of the research include all female students of dormitories related to Islamic Azad University of Kermanshah in 2015. To determine sample size, Kerjesi and Morgan table (1970) was utilized and sample size has been estimated as 100 participants. Age range of female participants was 20-25, and they were educating for bachelor degree, also they were in average economic level of th society. They have been selected by simple random sampling, as well as independent t-test was utilized for data analysis and the results have been carried out based on Leven's test.

Student's edition of procrastination assessment scale and Rutter's internal and external control questionnaire have been used.

Procrastination assessment scale- student edition: (PASS) has been suggested for the first time by Solomon and Roth-Bloom (1984), it was made to study academic procrastination in three areas of preparing assignment, preparation for exam and essay writing and includes 27 items. There are five options for each item from 1- completely disagree to 5- completely agree.

In addition to 21 mentioned items, there are 6 items (7, 8, 18, 19, 26, 27) to evaluate two features of (feeling sadness toward being a procrastinated person) and (the tendency to modify the habit of procrastination). It should be noted that these six items are not included in calculating the validity and reliability of the test. Items 4, 6, 7, 8, 11, 13, 15, 16, 18, 19, 21, 23, 25, 26, 27 have been scored in reverse. In the present research, Cronbach's alpha coefficient was obtained 0.87 for the whole scale and it

was calculated 0.64 and 0.71 and 0.74 for components of procrastination in exam, assignments and essay writing respectively.

The validity of procrastination: most researches show low internal compatibility for the frequency of negligence by dividing correlations in two halves 58% for male and 31% for female. This correlation for negligence as a problem was 26% and 80% for the reasons of negligence. The stability of this scale was acceptable with 74% in one month retesting the prevalence and 56% for the reasons of procrastination. Retest was 80 % for whole scores. Many researchers reported alpha coefficient for the frequency of negligence between 71% to 84% (quoted by Fisher and Kurgan, 1994). Validity of the total scale of Cronbach's alpha test was 83% for the present research.

Rutter's internal-external source of control questionnaire: Rutter has developed a scale for internal and external source of control. It is a self-evaluation questionnaire with 29 items. Each item has two sentences of A and B. Subjects should select one of the sentences which indicate external and internal ideas. The materials of internal-external scale of control divides into 6 small classes include: educational recognition, social recognition, emotion, social and political domination and life philosophy (Rutter, 1996). This scale is a self-evaluation questionnaire. There are 6 neutral materials in 29 items of the questionnaire (1, 8, 14, 19, 24, and 27). 23 key materials of the test measures individual's beliefs about the nature of the world. Scoring of this scale was done through numbering the signs beside options of internal control. Total score of each person indicates the level of internal control and the score of external control would be calculated through subtracting the internal control score from 23 (the number of key materials). The reliability coefficient of testing the source of control among Iranian samples was obtained 70% (Ghazanfari, 1992, p.138). The validity of the test was confirmed due to the Rutter's standardized questionnaire. The mean of procrastination total score in internal source of control was 80.33 and 68.71 for external source of control.

Findings

In order to reach better understanding about findings of the research, descriptive findings of the research variables have been presented in table 1. As it is presented in table 1, mean of procrastination total score for external source of control is 80.33 and 68.71 for internal source of control. As well as, mean and standard deviation of other components for both groups are presented in table 1.

Table 1. Mean and standard deviation of the research variables

Variables	External source of control		Internal source of control		Total	
	Mean	Standard deviation	Mean	Standard deviation	Mean	Standard deviation
Procrastination in exam	24/67	2/30	21/36	4/77	21/46	4/74
Procrastination in assignments	29/67	8/50	27/16	6/11	27/24	6/15
Procrastination in	26	2/64	20/01	4/91	20/20	4/96

essay writing						
Experiencing sadness from procrastination	9/67	2/51	6/33	2/62	6/43	2/67
Modifying the habit of procrastination	11	2	6/37	3/05	6/51	3/12
Total score of procrastination	80/33	10/78	68/71	14/21	69/10	14/22

Table 2. the results of the Leven's and independent t-test in studying the differences of educational procrastination in groups with internal and external source of control

Variable	**Leven's test**					
	F	**Level of significance**	**Mean difference**	**t**	**Degree of freedom**	**Level of significance**
Procrastination in exam	2/33	0/1	3/30	1/19	96	96
Procrastination in assignments	0/19	0/6	2/50	0/69	93	93
Procrastination in essay writing	1/04	0/3	5/98	2/09	94	94
Experiencing sadness from procrastination	0/17	0/6	3/34	2/17	96	96
Modifying the habit of procrastination	1/59	0/2	4/63	2/60	94	94
Total score of procrastination	0/60	0/4	11/62	1/39	88	88

As it is presented in table 2, assumption of equal variances has been studied by Leven's test, as well as due to the level of significance it has been considered in all variables of the assumption. Also, the results of t-test shows that there is significant difference among some aspects of procrastination such as procrastination in essay writing, feeling sad from procrastination and modifying the habit of procrastination in two groups of internal and external source of control ($p<0.05$, $t=2.09$; $p<0.05$, $t=2.17$; $p<0.05$, $t=2.60$). So that, female students with external source of control had higher level of procrastination in essay writing, feeling sad from procrastination and tendency to modify the habit of procrastination than female students with internal source of control. There was significant difference in other aspects of procrastination between two groups.

Discussion and conclusion

In conclusion section, important carried out points in the research have been explained briefly. In the first paragraph of this section (discussion part) the researchers have compared their findings with findings of other researchers and they specify the extent that their findings are consistent with findings of other researchers. Suggestions should be offered in the second paragraph.

Generally, findings indicate that procrastination in essay writing and total score of procrastination among students with external source of control is more than students with internal source of control, as well as these findings are consistent with the studies of Ferari et al. (2005), Nickson and Frast (1996), Jalali and Shahko (1993) and Ghertape et al. (2015).

In order to explain the results, it can be said that the habit of procrastination is associated with delaying and postponing affaires and responsibilities, therefore there would be unfavorable consequences. Investigations showed that procrastination is not only a time management problem, but also it is a complex process which includes emotional, behavioral and cognitive components (Fie and Tangni, 2000). The research of Ferari et al. (2005) was based on comparison of procrastination components with internal-external source of control among female students. Findings demonstrated that female students with internal source of control have procrastination in essay writing, feeling sad from procrastination and tendency to modify the habit of procrastination and there was no difference in other components of two groups. So, assignments are strongly dependent to the procrastination or postponing starting or completing an assignment favorably in expected time duration (Ferari et al., 2005). Certainly, the source of control and procrastination effects on educational and occupational performance (Troia, 2009). The research of Hal (1978) was based on source of control and it also indicates that students with internal source of control would attempt actively to make a more suitable environment for learning. Therefore, they have tendency to modify the habit of procrastination and they are sensitive toward procrastination in essay writing which requires skill and concentration. In another research by Tensing et al. (1981), the results show that there is significant relationship between internal source of control and high educational performance and lack of procrastination in doing affaires (Nikson and Frast, 1996). It was observed that students with high level of progress motivation have obtained higher average. In another finding, there was a curved relationship between self-satisfaction (internal control) and educational achievement. Researchers who have studied about procrastination in academic environment believe that 95 % of USA students postpone starting and completing assignments and 70% of students are engaged in persistent procrastination (Alice and Konas, 1977). These students have the tendency to procrastination at the time of essay writing, studying the tests and completing assignments which often cause anxiety (Ferrari and Tas, 2000) and it is consistent with the present research. Moreover, Jalali and Shahko (2006) had a research based on the relationship between gender and internal-external source of control to predict procrastination with sample size of 60 individuals and there was no difference between procrastination of male and female. Also procrastination has relationship with the source of control and the more internalized attributions for failure and success leads to increase sensitive procrastination. So, procrastination would become meaningful in individual and group affaires. It seems that postponing the studying is common among students and some 5 step approaches were presented. By removing the type of source of control, these programs are considered as guidelines: specify the works you avoid to do. Note them and compare their profit and loss and score them, do plan and determine a time to start. Make a list of items that may prevent you from starting and determine some solutions for your problems. Make your works simple. Choose realistic and simple purposes instead of very great purposes and divide the great works into the smaller parts (D Langiz et al., 1982).

In the future studies, this comparison should be studied on students of other institutes to determine the extent that procrastination and internal-external source of control are dependent to the education. The prevalence of procrastination among students, the importance of officials' attention, educational system planners and applying strategies to reduce procrastination based on the source of control is necessary. More attention to this problem can be considered as a step to solve educational issues of learners in different levels of education. It is suggested to apply a systematic planning in educational processes of achievements based on source of control among students for their responsibilities to prevent procrastination.

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