Academic Procrastination Behaviour of Pre-service Teachers’ of Celal Bayar University

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Abstract
Procrastination is extremely prevalent behaviour, mainly in school settings. It is described as “knowing that one is supposed to and perhaps even wanting to complete an academic task but failing to perform the activity within the expected or desired time frame.” Procrastination also appears to be a troubling phenomenon. People most strongly characterize it as being bad, harmful, and foolish (Briody, 1980), and over 95% of procrastinators wish to reduce it (O’Brien, 2002). The aim of this study is to investigate the impact of variables such as gender, department, grade level, and income on students’ academic procrastinations. Participants were the 366 students attending Faculty of Education and Faculty of Science and Letters of Celal Bayar University in Manisa, Turkey. The results of the study show that procrastination means are different for gender groups. Male students are more likely to procrastinate their academically works. Means are also different according to department. English Literature and Letters students are more procrastinators than Biology and Turkish Literature students. There are no differences according to grade level or socio-economical degree.

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Key words: academic procrastination; pre-service teachers

Introduction
The origin of the term is derived from the Latin ‘pro’ (forward or in favour of) and ‘crastinus’ (of tomorrow) and it refers to either avoiding a task altogether or deferring it to a later, often unspecified time. In an academic situation Senecal et al (2005) describe procrastination as ‘…knowing that one is supposed to and perhaps even wanting to complete an academic task but failing to perform the activity within the expected or desired time frame’. Procrastination involves avoiding doing what we know we should be doing. Sometimes we can be creative in our avoidance strategies. If you find yourself procrastinating on a regular basis then a bit of soul searching is worth doing to help you understand the reasons for your inactivity. Tucker-Ladd (2006).

The best definition for procrastination is the delaying of a task that was originally planned despite expecting to be worse off for the delay (Van Eerde, 2003). It is evident that all conceptualizations of procrastination recognize that there must be a postponing, delaying, or putting off of a task or decision, in keeping with the term’s Latin origins of pro, meaning “forward, forth, or in favor of,” and crastinus, meaning “of tomorrow” (Klein, 1971). Building on this base, one procrastinates when one delays beginning or completing an intended course of action (Beswick & Mann, 1994; Ferrari, 1993a; Lay & Silverman, 1996; Milgram, 1991; Silver & Sabini, 1981).

Procrastination is a common behaviour, mainly in school settings. The term procrastinate comes from the Latin word procrastinare and means to put off, delay, prolong, defer, stall, or postpone performing a task. It implies performing an alternative activity to the one intended, which is not synonymous with idleness (Schouwenburg, 2004). Academic procrastination which can be named as reflection of daily postponement to school life is defined as to delay duties and responsibilities related to school, or to save them to the last minute (Haycock, McCarthy, & Skay, 1998). Procrastination behaviour occurs as not completing the given assignments or delaying preparation for examinations (Beck, Koons, & Milgrim, 2000). It may be defined as the postponement of task completion usually resulting in a state of unhappiness (Ferrari, Johnson, & McCown, 1995; Milgram, 1991) or subjective discomfort.
Specifically, academic procrastination is a pervasive and potentially maladaptive behaviour for many university and college students often resulting in feelings of psychological distress (Solomon & Rothblum, 1984). Schouwenburg (cited in Ferrari et al., 1995) described student procrastination as a result of three behavioural manifestations: 1) lack of promptness, either in intention or in behaviour; 2) intention-behaviour discrepancy; and 3) preference for competing activities.

From an educator’s perspective, it is important to understand what can be done to reduce procrastination. Procrastination has been shown to be related to personality traits, such as attitudes toward learning (Midgley, Arunkumar, & Urdan, 1996), attribution styles (Brownlow & Reasinger, 2000), anxiety level (Haycock, McCarthy, & Skay, 1998), locus of control, perfectionism (Onwuegbuzie, 2000), proneness to boredom (Vodanovich & Rupp, 1999), self-efficacy (Wolters, 2003), self-esteem (Beck, Koons, & Milgrim, 2000), and self-handicapping (Midgley, Arunkumar, & Urdan, 1996).

When all the studies about academic procrastination are considered, it is concluded that procrastination behaviours are a common problem among university students and an influential factor on their personalities, psychological well-being, and academic achievement. Chronic procrastination is either getting worse or more people are more willing to admit to chronically procrastinating (Steel, 2007).

Estimates indicate that 80%–95% of college students engage in procrastination (Ellis & Knaus, 1977; O’Brien, 2002), approximately 75% consider themselves procrastinators (Potts, 1987), and almost 50% procrastinate consistently and problematically (Day, Mensink, & O’Sullivan, 2000; Micek, 1982; Onwuegbuzie, 2000; Solomon & Rothblum, 1984). The absolute amount of procrastination is considerable, with students reporting that it typically occupies one third of their daily activities, often enacted through sleeping, playing, or TV watching (Pychyl, Lee, Thibodeau, & Blunt, 2000). Furthermore, these percentages appear to be on the rise (Kachgal, Hansen, & Nutter, 2001). In addition to being endemic during college, procrastination is also widespread in the general population, chronically affecting some 15%–20% of adults (J. Harriott & Ferrari, 1996; “Haven’t Filed Yet,” 2003).

Procrastination is the universal weakness of people and a problem of arranging oneself in this way (Senecal, Koestner, & Vallerand, 1995). It is stated in the literature that 70% of university students have procrastinating behaviours (Ellis & Knaus, 1977), %50 of those procrastinates their academic responsibilities at least in a half of their times and %38 of those rarely procrastinates (Solomon & Rothblum, 1984). Generally, such behaviours are much more common among the students who were graduated from high school and have just entered university (Kachgal, Hansen, & Nutter, 2001; Lee, 2005). Why do students procrastinate? There is no single answer to this. The same students might procrastinate for different reasons at different times. Burka and Yuen (1982) noted that those who have serious problems with procrastination generally tend to attribute their difficulties to personality flaws, such as being lazy, undisciplined, or not knowing how to organize their time. However, is there anything that educators can do to effectively reduce this dilatory behaviour? Very few studies have investigated the effects of social and situational variables on procrastination behaviours among those who are low or high on trait procrastination. Therefore, the goal of our work is analyse the impact of variables such as gender, department, grade level, and income on students’ academic procrastination.

**Method**

**Participants**

Participants were volunteer 366 (students % 31.2 males and % 68.8 females) attending Faculty of Education and Faculty of Science and Letters of Celal Bayar University in Manisa, Turkey.
Table 1: Demographic Statistics

| Gender         | N   | %   |
|----------------|-----|-----|
| Male           | 114 | 31.2|
| Female         | 251 | 68.8|

| Faculty                  | N   | %   |
|--------------------------|-----|-----|
| Faculty of Education     | 212 | 58.1|
| Faculty of Science and Letters | 153 | 41.9|

| Grade | N   | %   |
|-------|-----|-----|
| 2     | 106 | 29.8|
| 3     | 250 | 70.2|

| Monthly income | N   | %   |
|----------------|-----|-----|
| 0-1000         | 165 | 45.2|
| 1001-2000      | 156 | 42.7|
| 2001-3000+     | 44  | 9.6 |

| Department                     | N   | %   |
|--------------------------------|-----|-----|
| Turkish Education              | 50  | 14  |
| Science Education              | 71  | 19  |
| Primary Education              | 33  | 9   |
| Social Sciences                | 45  | 12  |
| Mathematics                    | 31  | 8   |
| Chemistry                      | 19  | 5   |
| Physics                        | 18  | 5   |
| Biology                        | 19  | 5   |
| Turkish Language and Letters   | 48  | 13  |
| History                        | 31  | 8   |

Instruments

The Academic Procrastination Behaviour Scale was developed by Aitken (1982) and adapted by Balkıs (2007) a 16-item instrument was used to gather information about academic procrastination behaviours. Participants responded on a 5-point Likert-type scale, ranging from 1 (never) to 5. Participants also completed a 5-item demographic questionnaire pertaining to their gender, faculty, department, and income. For the current study, Cronbach alpha reliability coefficient was 0.85.

The questionnaires were administered in two faculties of Celal Bayar University in Manisa/Turkey, in April, 2011. As the goal of this investigation was to determine the possible existence of associations such as gender, department, grade level, and income on students’ and procrastination, we used independent samples t test and one-factor analysis of variance (ANOVA) to analyse the data. As some variables had more than two levels or groups, in order to determine whether there were or weren’t significant mean differences, we used Scheffe’s post hoc test.

Results

Table 2. T test for the comparison of the means of academic procrastination according to participants’ gender

| Group       | N   | X   | ss  | t    | sd  | p   |
|-------------|-----|-----|-----|------|-----|-----|
| Female      | 251 | 34.28 | 9.74 | -3.76 | 363 | 0.00*|
| Male        | 114 | 38.48 | 10.27 |       |     |     |
An independent t test applied in order to test whether academic procrastination means based on gender are significantly different or not. According to the test there is a significant difference between the two groups. The means of academic procrastination of male students ($\bar{x}_1=38.48$), is higher than that of the female students ($\bar{x}_2=34.28$). Male students do more academics procrastination than female students.

Table 3. T test for the comparison of the means of academic procrastination according to participants’ faculty.

| Grup                              | N   | $\bar{x}$ | ss  | t   | sd  | p  |
|-----------------------------------|-----|-----------|-----|-----|-----|----|
| Faculty of Education              | 153 | 36.29     | 10.76 | 1.16 | 362.00 | 0.25 |
| Faculty of Science and Letters    | 211 | 35.05     | 9.57  | 0.16 | 354.00 | 0.83 |

An independent t test applied in order to test whether the means of academic procrastination based on participants’ faculty are significantly different or not. According to the test, there is no significant difference.

Table 4. T test for the comparison of the means of academic procrastination according to participants’ grade.

| Grade | N   | $\bar{x}$ | ss  | t   | sd  | p  |
|-------|-----|-----------|-----|-----|-----|----|
| 2     | 103 | 35.65     | 10.51 | 0.21| 354.00 | 0.83 |
| 3     | 250 | 35.44     | 9.82  | 0.21| 354.00 | 0.83 |

An independent t test applied in order to test whether the means of academic procrastination based on participants’ grade are significantly different or not. According to the test, there is no significant difference.

Table. Means of academic procrastination according to participants’ department

| Department                | Turkish Language | Science Education | Primary Education | English Language and Letters |
|---------------------------|------------------|-------------------|-------------------|-----------------------------|
| N                         | 50               | 71                | 33                | 45                          |
| Mean                      | 37.62            | 34.9              | 37.45             | 40.86                       |
| Std. Deviation            | 11.23            | 10.58             | 10.18             | 9.28                        |

| Department | Chemistry | Physics | Biology | Turkish Language and Letters | History | Mathematics | Total |
|------------|-----------|---------|---------|-------------------------------|---------|--------------|-------|
| N          | 19        | 18      | 19      | 48                            | 31      | 31           | 365   |
| Mean       | 32.73     | 35.16   | 31.63   | 33.2                          | 34.06   | 33.9         | 35.59 |
| Std. Deviation | 10.28 | 10.65   | 10.44   | 8.37                          | 8.73    | 8.11         | 10.08 |

Table 6. ANOVA for the comparison of the means of academic procrastination according to participants’ department.

| Source                             | Sum of Squares | df | Mean Square | Sig. | Post-hoc* |
|------------------------------------|----------------|----|-------------|------|-----------|
| Between Groups                     | 2495.60        | 9  | 277.282.850 | 0.003*4-8 |           |
| Within Groups                      | 34498.57       | 355| 35597.17    | 4-9  |           |
| Total                              | 36994.17       | 364|             |      |           |

An analysis of variance (ANOVA) applied to data in order to test whether the means of academic procrastination based on participants’ department are significantly different or not. According to the analysis, the means of academic procrastination of the students from at least two departments have been found to be significantly different. In order to find from which departments the difference comes from Tukey multiple comparison test was done and
that the difference is between the English Language and Letters and Biology English Language and Letters and Turkish Language and Letters departments has been found out.

Table 6. ANOVA for the comparison of the means of academic procrastination according to participants’ income.

| Grup | N         | Mean | Std. Deviation | Sum of Squares | df | Mean Square | F     | Sig.   |
|------|-----------|------|----------------|----------------|----|-------------|-------|--------|
| 1    | 16535.729 | 35.72| 9.43           | 19.47          | 2  | 9.73        | 0.090 | 0.90   |
| 2    | 15635.331 | 35.33| 11.08          | 36974.69       | 362| 102.14      | 0.000 | 0.90   |
| 3    | 44        | 35.97| 8.81           | 36994.17       | 364| 102.14      | 0.000 | 0.90   |
| Total| 365       | 35.59| 10.08          |                |    |             |       |        |

An analysis of variance (ANOVA) applied to data in order to test whether the means of academic procrastination based on participants’ income are significantly different or not. According to the analysis, there is no significant difference between income groups.

Discussion and Conclusions

The findings point out that academicals procrastination is affected by gender. Male students tend to procrastinate more. The results of previous studies on relations between academicals success and gender along with the results of this study make it seem normal that male students which are academically less successful than females, procrastinate more than them.

Besides academicals procrastination points are different between English Language and Letters and Biology and English Language and Letters and Turkish Language and Letters. While English Language and Letters department is the one where the procrastination is the highest, it’s the lowest in the Biology and Turkish Language and Letters departments.

There is no difference between academicals procrastination points of the participants based on their faculties, grades and income groups. This very fact is a significant indicator of academicals procrastination being a very common thing.

In the light of these findings, programmes should be developed in order to decrease the level of academicals procrastination especially among male students. Besides, additional studies must be done to find out the reasons behind the high level of procrastination students of English Language and Letters.

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