

Academic Procrastination and Cognitive Emotional Regulation among Young Adults

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ABSTRACT

More than often, there are instances when there is a gap between our intentions to do something and actually doing something, this gap is what we refer to as procrastination. This in turn induces an imbalance in our emotional equilibrium. By a lot of research academic procrastination has been associated with numerous factors such as low motivation, self-esteem issues, perception of a task as difficult etc. The present research aims to study the relation between academic procrastination and cognitive emotional regulation in young adults. A sample of 40 students, aged 18-25 was taken and standardized tools were used. The results found out that there is a significant negative correlation between procrastination and cognitive emotional regulation. Further it was suggested that division of tasks in a proper manner should be implemented so as to prevent emotional overload. Positive and realistic affirmations could also be very effective in regulating the feelings. Lastly, Cognitive Behaviour therapy (CBT) is also one of the strongest interventions that could be employed.

Keywords: *Academic Procrastination, Cognitive Emotional Regulation, Young Adults*

Procrastination is one the most self-defeating habits that a person could engage in. It is the act of delaying or postponing a task or set of tasks. It is also the belief system that the said work can be completed later, living in the illusion that there is a lot of time and when the deadline approaches really near, going into a spiral and as a result having issues in regulating one's emotions. Researchers have found numerous trigger points to explain the procrastinating behavior in a person, such as, perfectionism, low energy, overload, distractedness, difficult work etc. According to Roy Baumeister, an influential psychologist, procrastination is a self-sabotaging behavior pattern which is marked by short-term gains and long-term costs.

As found by researchers, a poor concept of time could amplify the problem of procrastination, but the inability to manage and regulate emotions seems to be its very core. We are aware that we ought to do something, complete that task at hand and be productive, but we are just not able to bring ourselves to actually doing it.

A study was conducted on 141 college students to examine the relationships among procrastination, efficacy expectations, anxiety, gender, and age. The results found out that

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efficacy expectations and anxiety were significantly related to procrastination. (Haycock et al, 2011) As per this research, when a person won't be able to meet their expectations and feel anxious, this in turn is going to inhibit their ability to regulate and manage their emotions.

Academic Procrastination

Procrastination is typically defined as an irrational tendency to delay tasks that should be completed (Lay, 1986) Addressing the emotions and thoughts pertaining to the completion of certain tasks is vital to overcome the habit of procrastination.

Academic procrastination—the intentional delay in the beginning or completion of important and timely academic activities (Schouwenburg, 2004; Ziesat, Rosenthal, & White, 1978).

Existing literature shows that about 80-95% students engage in procrastination, more or less. About 70% of which consider themselves to be chronic procrastinators and 50% acknowledge their procrastination to be a serious lifestyle issue.

Procrastination is increasingly being recognized as a failure in self-regulation. Procrastinators, relative to non-procrastinators, may have a lessened capability to resist social temptations, pleasurable activities, and immediate gratification when the benefits of academic preparation are not so near, these individuals also fail at making efficient use of internal and external cues to determine when to initiate, maintain, and terminate goal-directed actions.

A study was conducted on college students including 38 men and 66 women to assess the predictors for academic procrastination. The results found that the predictors were concerns about negative evaluation, low personal standards for achievement, believing that the results of anything are due to personal efforts etc, (Saddler and Bulley, 2016)

Another study that was conducted on 131 college going students examined the association between perfectionism and procrastination. The results found out that procrastination stemmed from the fear of disapproval from society who had perfectionistic standards for others. (Flett et al,1992)

Cognitive Emotional Regulation

In order to achieve one's goals, it is frequently necessary to initiate, sustain, modulate, or alter the occurrence, length, and strength of one's internal feeling states and motives. This process is known as emotion regulation (ER).

Garnefski et al. (2019) described Cognitive emotion regulation (CER) as the “conscious, mental strategies individuals use to cope with the intake of emotionally arousing information”

The capacity of a person to successfully regulate, control, and deal with emotions, emotional events, and emotional thinking is known as emotional regulation. People have a variety of ways they can control their emotions in daily life, including: taking breaks, napping, chatting with friends, binge-watching, smoking, engaging in self-harm, initiating fights, using sarcasm, and conversing with people. There are healthy ways to control emotions (such taking breaks) and there are destructive ways (like picking fights)

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The ability to control one's emotions has a significant impact on experience, emotion expression, as well as physical and mental health. According to Gross and Muñoz (1995), using strategies for adaptive emotion regulation is essential for having adaptive function, and nonfunctional emotion regulation has detrimental effects, such as poor well-being.

A research conducted on 1114 college students including 771 females and 343 males to examine the mediator role of cognitive flexibility and difficulties in emotion regulation in the relationship between resilience and distress tolerance amongst college students. The results found that higher the increase in resilience, lower the difficulties in regulating one's emotions. (Arici-Ozcan et al., 2019).

Purpose

The purpose of this research is to study academic procrastination and cognitive emotional regulation in college going students which fall into the age group of 18-25 years.

Hypothesis

1. There is a significant negative correlation between academic procrastination and cognitive emotional regulation.

METHODOLOGY

Sample

The present study was carried out with a sample of 50 college students (male and female) enrolled in various colleges of Delhi. The age of the participants was from 18-25. The data was collected through a questionnaire created through google forms, thus implementing a quantitative research design.

Measures

The questionnaire consisted of 3 sections. The first section involved the demographic details such as the name, email id, age etc. The second section consisted of Academic Procrastination Scale Short Form (APS-SF) to assess academic procrastination. The third section consisted of a Cognitive emotion regulation questionnaire to measure the cognitive emotional regulation in college students.

- **Academic Procrastination Scale Short Form (APS- SF):** The academic procrastination scale short form is a self-report measure consisting of 5 items, prepared by Yockey in 2016. The subjects present the responses on a five-point Likert scale with 1=standing for Agree and 5= standing for Disagree.
- **Cognitive emotion regulation questionnaire:** The Cognitive emotion regulation questionnaire (CERQ) was developed in 1999 by Dr. Nadia Garnefski and Dr. Vivian Kraaij. Items are measured on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (almost never) to 5 (almost always). Individual subscale scores are obtained by summing up the scores belonging to the particular subscale (ranging from 4 to 20). The higher the subscale score, the more a specific cognitive strategy is used.

Procedure

The participants were informed of the study's objectives, and Google forms were used to complete the questions. The contributions of each participant were recognised. Standardized psychological tests were administered to the test subjects.

Analysis of Data

The responses of participants were analyzed using Pearson product-moment correlation to study academic procrastination and cognitive emotional regulation among a sample of young adults. The Mean and Standard deviation data are presented in table 1, table 2 shows the correlation between analyses of procrastination and cognitive emotional regulation.

RESULTS

Table 1: N, Mean and SD of Variables

	procrastination	cognitive emotional regulation
N	40	40
Mean	16.1	111
Standard deviation	4.81	13.6

Table 2: shows the correlation between procrastination and cognitive emotional regulation

	procrastination	cognitive emotional regulation
procrastination	—	
cognitive emotional regulation	-0.285*	—

Note. * p < .05, ** p < .01, *** p < .001

DISCUSSION

The results found that there is a significant negative correlation between procrastination and cognitive emotional regulation. (r= p<.001), Hence, the hypothesis that procrastination is negatively correlated with cognitive emotional regulation is accepted.

A similar study was conducted by Bytamar (2020) which aimed at identifying the role of difficulty in emotional regulation in academic procrastination. The results found out that people who were found to be procrastinators also reported a high level of difficulty in regulating their emotions.

Another study conducted by Jobaneh et al (2016) on 335 students aimed at investigating the relationship between mindfulness and emotional regulation with procrastination of students. According to the results, there was a significant negative correlation between procrastination with emotional regulation and mindfulness.

Eckert et al. (2016) suggested that emotion regulation as a potential predictor of procrastination and that training of emotion regulation skills could reduce procrastination. This finding also aligns with theories that observe procrastination as a failure in self-regulation and maladaptive emotion regulation strategy (Pychyl and Sirois, 2016).

CONCLUSION

In the current study, a sample of 40 participants in the age group of 18-25, has been studied to examine the relationship between academic procrastination and cognitive emotional regulation across various colleges. Standardized scales were used to measure academic procrastination and cognitive emotional regulation in young adults. After analysis, a significant negative correlation was found between academic procrastination and cognitive emotional regulation.

The findings of this study highlight some implications for clinical and academic practice that may be helpful. For instance, one of the therapeutic objectives in procrastination therapies and academic consultations can be individuals' assessments of their capacity to properly regulate their emotions. There is significant evidence that emotional self-regulation reduces procrastination (Blunt & Pychyl, 1998). It was shown that interventions which induct positive moods (Tice, Baumeister, Shmueli, & Muraven, 2007) or interventions of self-affirmation (Schmeichel & Vohs, 2009) enhance self-regulation capacity, which is needed to overcome procrastination. Workshops that shed light on triggers of procrastination should be arranged for the students so that they're able to gain some insights upon their own behavioral patterns and work through them. Procrastination in students can be reduced by minimizing and learning to manage anxiety, correcting self-sabotaging and toxic coping strategies and building upon adaptive cognitive emotional regulation strategies. When a student is engulfed by academic procrastination it becomes vital to take a step back and work through it in a calm logical manner, breaking a task into pieces; if overwhelmed, putting your mind to some other thing; avoid judging yourself over failing or not being able to do something as well as you thought you would have; keeping a healthy and constructive view. In addition to this cognitive behavioral therapy has been seen to reduce procrastination more strongly than the other types of interventions.

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Conflict of Interest

The author(s) declared no conflict of interest.

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