

The effective strategies for preventing high school students' academic procrastination

Asad Yeganeh

Faculty member of Farhangian University, Allame Tabatabai Branch, Khorramabad, Iran

Abstract

The purpose of this study was to investigate effective strategies for high school students' academic procrastination in Lorestan province. For this purpose, 382 subjects were selected among the statistical population of high school students in grade two and three, by cluster random sampling method. Data collecting tool consisted of a 73 multiple choice questionnaire that its validity was confirmed by experts' approval and content validity method and its reliability obtained to be 0.92 after implementation in a sample of 30 subjects by Cronbach alpha coefficient calculation. After the distribution, completion, collection, arranging and data entry the principal component analysis method was used for data analysis. The obtained results were led to the extraction of nine main factors including the sense of need for effort and act, time, planning, pledge, self-confidence, self-monitors, reminders and induce oneself to do homework, detail technology, reward and punishment.

Keywords: contrastive strategies, academic procrastination, high school students, Lorestan Province

Introduction

Undoubtedly, comprehensive development of students is the main objective of the education system of the country. In order for the students to be successful in their tasks, it is necessary to consider them from different ways. Many students prefer to do their task immediately for any reason (rational or irrational), rather than assign it to tomorrow. In some of Persian literature related to this subject, the terms procrastination, postponement of work, negligence and negligent are called as equivalent words (Farjad, 2006). It is common that the students have done some works with negligence. For

example, ignoring to do their assignments and duties or give them with delay and bring reasons for that. Sometimes, some students oppose with whatever it is happening at school, blame the educational system and protest to the governing rules of school. Sometimes, they blame the teachers for determining the difficult assignments, and sometimes their parents for taking them to school. In fact, instead of blaming their negligence, throw all faults on others. It is happened so much that the students leave course matters to the days near the exam. In other words, they do not pay attention to it during the school year and this has multiplied their responsibility. Maybe, they have been confronted to serious problems in last days and so, they were concerned for the missed opportunities. However, procrastination is common among the most individuals and a few individuals are not suffering from this fault. Therefore, it is essential to pay attention to it. The discussion about the postponement of work is notable in the scope of psychology. From this perspective, procrastination means the work that we have decided to do, devolve it to future (Ellis & Knall 1985). Also, procrastination means eluding and delaying which its literal meaning is the postponement of work to the next time (Desimon, 1993). According to Dyer (1997) procrastination is the way to escape from living in the present moments as much as possible. According to Bruno (1991), procrastination is the art of continuing yesterday and avoiding today (Gulshani & Dalali, 2005). Sutton (2009) believes that, procrastination led to the performance of fruitless act. Procrastination is the thief of time and causes the person to feel guilty, and others' view toward him changes (Khosravi, 2009). Mc Quini (1986) says that, today's, behaviorists often define procrastination as a learned habit that is caused by human preference for short-term rewards (Karami, 2009). According to Geld Berg (1998), procrastination has been considered as a habitual behavior that has more prevalence in various communities and its

Corresponding author: Asad Yeganeh, Faculty member of Farhangian University, Allame Tabatabai Branch, Khorramabad, Iran. Email: asadyeganeh@yahoo.com

growing trend is widespread. This habit combined with the delay in performing the work or responsibility, and thus leads to unpleasant consequences. However, the negative consequences of this habit may not be in everyday life but the losses arising from the prevalence of this behavior are important and considerable among individuals of the different groups and this matter reveals the need to prevent such behavior (Karami, 2009). One of the common types of procrastination is Academic Procrastination. It can be said that academic procrastination means postponement of academic activities such as homework by students. In statistical survey, which was performed in this case, it was found that the main reason for students' academic procrastination refers to their high expectation and low tolerance which leads to hostility and hatred of people (Ellis & Knall 1985). On the other hand, there are different methods and techniques to dealing with academic procrastination. In other words, the theoretical and practical approaches can be presented to change the nonchalant students' habits and slightly reduce their mental concerns. Thus, this study tries to provide strategies to deal with the academic procrastination of high school students. Before continuing the discussion, it is necessary to said that the subject of procrastination, in addition to be considered in psychology and areas related to that, it has long been regarded in the Islamic sources and has been mentioned in the traditions and prayers. Anyway, procrastination discussion is one of essential issues with moral and psychological root and research in this regard can be helpful in many actions.

Review of Literature

Ringenbach compiled a book entitled "Procrastination Emotive Reasons". Although this study was interesting, but did not help clarify the issue (Ellis & Knall 1985). After Ringenbach, Ellis & Knall wrote a book entitled "Psychology of Procrastination". Since then, several researchers have discussing the various aspects of procrastination, including academic procrastination. Procrastination as a personality trait can be considered both as a cause and as an effect that since impact on individual's motivation, it is confirmed as a cause. Procrastination has learning aspect from various factors such as low self-esteem, lack of work plan, inability of time management, fear of failure, lack of exercise and smoking and although people are aware of its losses, ignore it (Ellis & Knall 1985). Procrastination is manifested in different forms such as dreaming, anxiety, crisis, aggression, hyperactivity, distraction, task aversion, confusion in performing affairs (Steel,

2007, Tracy, 2007, Neenan & Dryden, 2002, Ariely, 2002). According to Ellis & J. Knall (1985), procrastination is an undesirable and reprehensible behavior that gradually becomes as a habit in human. Postponement of work consequences is also painful for person and a sense that is caused by this delay, in addition to the expected and not expected losses, contains the shame and self-hate. Ellis & Knaus (1997), in their study found that 95 percent of students in the United States certainly delay the onset and completion of the assignments, and 70 percent of students are involved in ongoing procrastination. Fuchia also found that 70 percent of the students complain to academic procrastination in chronic form.

Ferary & tice (2000), in their studies, have pointed to the conclusion that 70% of university population procrastinate in their educational assignments and probably this type of procrastination increases from newcomer to senior student. These students tend to procrastination in essay writing, exams studying and completing the high pressure and causing anxiety assignments. Gallagher *et al* (1992) in a study concluded that 52% of students suffer from procrastination. Also, in a survey 80 to 95 percent of students had experienced the postponement of work and 75 % of them procrastinated. Research results of Effert & Ferrari (1989 & 1991) show a relationship between procrastination and self-esteem which also indicates the importance of emotional factors considering (Ronda, 2001). Also, in another research, Solomon & Rothblum (1984) found that anxiety is associated with delay (Malleus, 2002). There is also evidence that students' procrastination has direct relation with pessimism and stress and inverse correlation with optimism (Parker, 1992, Tokmn, 1991). Research results of Jalali & Shahko (2006) showed that the procrastination rate was not different between men and women. Also, procrastination has correlation with Locus of Control Extrinsic. In other word, whatever the individual's documents be external for his success and failure, procrastination is more in them. Research results of Karami (2009) indicate a relation between students' procrastination and their depression rate. Also his research clarifies that the 61% of studied students suffer from high and very high procrastination.

On the other hand, Rothblum (1984) by conducting a study on high school students reported the 0.88% correlation coefficient between students' procrastination rate and their depression which is a significant relation. He and his colleagues had also stated that 50 percent of American students, spend at least half of their time on delay in doing their homework and 38% of them become procrastinate. They also believed that

academic procrastination is more common in preparing practical activities during the semester rather than in exam studying. Scholars and researchers have presented different methods and techniques to deal with procrastination (Brian Tracy, 2007, Steel, 2007, Dayer, 1997, Bruno, 1991, Beless, 1989, Alice and J. Knull, 1985, Femi Tafreshi, 2007, Agha Tehrani, 2006, Qrachehdaghy, 2005, Farjad, 2003). Some provided methods and procedures included the bits and pieces, the five minute plan, penalties aversive conditioning, the use of confederates, self-monitors and reminders, playing probabilities, forceful persuasiveness, expect backsliding, procrastination emotive method overcoming, shame attaching exercise, prioritize tasks, indoctrination therapy, and trying to motivate and avoid lazy and lethargy, changing the environment, working in own ability extent, planning for every day, changing the new attitude, overcoming fear of success and fear of failure, and praying and solitude with God.

Methodology

This study was conducted according to the non-experimental research strategy and it is a type of survey study. The statistical population included all second and third grade students of high school of Lorestan province which 382 subjects were selected among them as statistical sample by sampling method. Also, the Krejcie & Morgan's sample size estimating table was used to estimate the sample size. Data collection was done as follows: First, the 40 studied students were asked to answer an open questionnaire to express in phrases the main methods for dealing with the academic procrastination. From the 10 experienced teachers who were working in the fields of psychology and counseling were also asked to list the most important ways to deal with students' academic procrastination. Also, researchers by studying the research literature have extracted the important method to deal with the students' academic procrastination.

After listing the mentioned items, excluding heterogeneous items and integration of similar cases the preliminary questionnaire was designed and developed. The mentioned questionnaire was given to 20 students and 5 psychology and counseling teachers to express their ideas about it. After considering all proposed comments, the 73-item questionnaire with multiple-choice questions was designed. The experts' approval and content validity method were used to determine the validity of intended tools and reliability of tools was obtained 0.92%, after implementation in 30 subjects sample of studied popu-

lation by Cronbach alpha coefficient calculation which indicated acceptable reliability of tools.

The principal component analysis from the exploratory factor analysis was used to analyze data. After considering the correlation matrix of questions which its minimum was 0.3 as a criterion, it was clear that all questions had required conditions for subsequent examination. According to the obtained KMO (Kaiser – Meyer – Olkin) namely 0.845, it was clear that the number of samples were sufficient and the Bartlett test result namely 13603.471 also showed significant correlations. In other words, obtained correlations had required qualification and conditions for factor analysis. Another point is that, the factor loadings of at least 0.4 was used in research. In other words, if variables after rotation were located under the mentioned level, were excluded. Also, the principal component analysis and Varimax rotation were used.

Results

As mentioned, the factor analysis method was used to analyze the data. Load factor of questions are presented in table (1). Generally, from the total of 73 questions included in the questionnaire, 20 questions on the first factor, 10 questions on the second factor, 8 matter on the third factor, 8 matter on the fourth factor, 7 matter on the fifth factor, 6 matter on the sixth factor, 5 matter on the seventh factor, 5 matter on the eighth factor and 4 matter on the ninth factor were located. Therefore, 5 numbers of identified factors are summarized in present study, which are discussed in the following. Results of factor analysis in Table 2 showed that each factor measures what percent of the total variance before and after rotation. It can be seen that the highest percent is related to the first factor and the lowest percent is related to the ninth factor. The results of factor analysis after rotation shows that, the first factor approximately 11.8%, the second factor 7.8%, the third factor 6.8%, the fourth factor 5.7%, the fifth factor 4.5%, the sixth factor 3.9%, the seventh factor 3.4%, the eighth factor 3% and the ninth factor 2.9%, and totally measure the 50.213% of the total variance.

The first factor, the sense of need for effort and act include components that are located on this factor. With respect to factor loadings, they include the investigation of the postponement of academic affairs and onset to do them, lack of expectation to do assignments perfectly and begin to do academic affairs as soon as possible, trying to replace hope and optimism instead of despair, becoming a operator person instead of hope, wish and criticism,

acting rationally and raising the level of knowledge and skills needed to perform the assignments cor-

rectly instead of paying attention to high demands and desires.

Table 1. Loading factors of the questions

F9		F8		F7		F6		F5		F4		F3		F2		F1	
Loading	Item	Loading	Item	Loading	Item	Loading	Item	Loading	Item	Loading	Item	Loading	Item	Loading	Item	Loading	Item
413/0	16	446/0	13	409/0	8	432/0	14	497/0	9	527/0	11	551/0	4	451/0	6	464/0	1
444/0	33	407/0	30	482/0	24	449/0	15	487/0	10	414/0	12	420/0	5	454/0	7	456/0	2
459/0	60	413/0	46	456/0	25	418/0	31	408/0	26	465/0	28	502/0	20	549/0	22	482/0	3
426/0	67	417/0	47	503/0	41	419/0	32	463/0	27	421/0	29	508/0	21	497/0	23	423/0	17
		426/0	58	555/0	55	401/0	48	415/0	42	411/0	44	514/0	37	426/0	39	454/0	18
						488/0	59	417/0	43	435/0	45	496/0	38	590/0	40	620/0	19
								431/0	56	534/0	57	477/0	52	484/0	53	450/0	34
										442/0	66	524/0	64	485/0	54	548/0	35
														460/0	65	520/0	36
														443/0	71	585/0	49
																455/0	50
																486/0	51
																583/0	61
																568/0	62
																502/0	63
																401/0	68
																517/0	69
																552/0	70
																520/0	72
																554/0	73

Table 2. Results of factor analysis before and after rotation

Factor	Special value before rotation	Special value after rotation
1	23.739	11.822
2	6.094	7.862
3	4.023	6.819
4	3.133	5.757
5	3.077	4.552
6	2.812	3.927
7	2.632	3.464
8	2.491	3.061
9	2.211	2.949
Total	50.213	50.213

The first factor included lack of delay in performing works to prevent further problems, finding reasons for detection and alternative thinking to understand the delay in work, trying to recognize talents and more reinforcement of them, trying to eliminate anxiety by strengthening will and self-confidence, strengthening a sense of courage and assertiveness to undertake the homework doing, timely performing assignments regarded as an excellent and desirable

position, devoting more time to the study, avoiding to impute the failure in performing assignments to others, reinforcing the sense of being able to overcome the educational problems, spending more effort to do homework, performing assignments regardless of like or dislike them, giving teachers the right to ask the students the assignments, deciding to leave the past destructive habits and acquiring new positive habits, reinforcing the sense that, trying is important and not necessarily the performance of assignments quickly, and finally revising the educational objectives.

The second factor, time, retains components that are located on this factor. In order of factor loadings, they include understanding the passage of time and excessive use of it, allocating more time to do homework timely, increasing the study speed, doing more difficult homework at first, determining the exact time of the start and end of study, division of time among assignments, performing the assignments in specified time, deciding not to waste the time and finally performing the most important and necessary homework when individuals have the higher mental and physical efficiency.

The third factor, planning, includes those components that are located on this factor. Based on factor loadings, they include specifying the objectives before performing the assignments, careful planning for doing assignments, providing the list of assignments and prioritizing them in terms of necessity, value and importance, having planning for every day, providing the preparation and condition to perform the assignments timely, focusing on the main objectives and then the sub-objectives, performing only one assignment at a time and avoiding doing several assignments at a time.

The fourth factor, pledge, consists of the components that are located on this factor. In the order of factor loadings, they include pledge with God, Prophet "p", Imams and Immaculate Imams (AS), parents, teachers, friends, oneself and placing sophisticated and successful individual as pattern and try to adhere to covenant.

The fifth factor, self-confidence, included components that are located on this factor. With respect to factor loadings, they include reinforcement of will and deal with the sense of weakness in assignments doing, strengthening the feeling of success, even if the works performed incomplete, avoiding and overcoming the feeling of being bad even in case of failure to do assignments, considering assignments worthwhile even if they have small problems, being sure about own abilities, strengthening the sense of empowerment in order to compensate for delayed homework.

The sixth factor, self-monitoring and reminding are those cases that are related to this factor. With respect to factor loadings, they included providing an alarm clock or anything else like that, marking those assignments that must be performed, putting assignments list where that is in front eyes, getting help from a trusted friend or a family member to remind the assignments doing and recording the performed assignments in calendar or in special notebook.

The seventh factor, force oneself to do assignments, is among the cases that are related to this factor. With respect to factor loadings, they included strengthening the sense that individual can afford the assignments doing, reinforcing the sense that tiredness or illness cannot overcome the individual, changing the usual way of life in homework doing, overcoming the illusions that lead to delay the assignments and eventually putting constant pressure to do homework.

The eighth factor, the bits and pieces are the cases that are related to this factor. With respect to the factor loadings, they include dividing academic tasks into smaller parts, completing concentration

on performing assignments and performing each assignment every time and step by step.

The ninth factor, reward and punishment, included the components that are located on this factor. In order of factor loadings, they include designing scorecard for oneself, considering reward for the number of study hours and punishment (reducing score, fine etc) for the number of hours that delay the assignments doing and finally considering reward (go to cinema, park or any other recreational activity) for oneself since performing assignments timely.

Conclusion

This study was conducted with the aim to answer the question of what are the contrastive strategies for students' academic procrastination? The results led to the identification of nine factors totally with 73 retail components. It is noted that the obtained results are consistent with the results of other studies about this issue that can be pointed to (Tracy, 2007, Steel, 2007, Dayer, 1997, Bruno, 1991, Beless, 1989, Alice and Knnull, 1985, Femi Tafreshi, 2007, Agha Tehrani, 2006, Qrachehdaghy, 2005, Farjad, 2003).

What is obvious is that students of different educational period such as the high school students have a degree of academic procrastination. An alternative should be considered to go out of this status. In this regard, contrastive strategies for academic procrastination can be applied by providing necessary infrastructure. A part of these mechanisms was written in format of 9 major factors and 73 sub-components. Accordingly, planners, managers and decision makers can help students in reducing the amount of procrastination by adopting appropriate methods. Students should be considered as the most important investment of country that will have key role in accessing to each society's objectives. Today, large costs are spent to teaching and improve student learning. However, students face to many problems such as academic procrastination. Although, escaping from doing homework and procrastination toward them may be accompanied with enjoyment and spurious convenience, but we should know that the students will suffer from them in future and it will be continuing with adverse consequences. Hence, the need for attention to this issue can be felt by all those involved in education more than ever.

References

- Agha Tehrani, M. (2006). *Procrastination (assess the causes and treatment strategies)*. Publication

- center of Imam Khomeini Educational and Research Institute
- Alice, A., & J. Knull. (1985). *Procrastination Psychology (overcome to procrastination)*. Translated by Farjad, M. A., 2006, first edition, Roshd Publication.
- Ariely dan, Wertenbroch, K.(2002). Procrastination, and performance, *Psychological Science*, 13(3).
- Beless, A. (2003). *New stepwise approach to reduce delay*. Translated by M. Qrachhdaghy, Sixth edition, Roshd Publication
- Bruno, F. (1991). *Psychological problems*. Translated by Golshani, F., & Delali, N., Blackboard Publication.
- Dayer, W. (1997). *How to find a healthier personality? (Overcoming the nervousness)*. Translated by B.Z.Nik Fetrat, Science Publications.
- Desimon, A. (1993) . Patterns of academic procrastination. *Journal of Colledge Reading and Learning*, 30,120-134.
- Ellis, A.& Knaus, W.J.(1997). *Overcoming procrastination*, New York, Signet books.
- Fami Tafreshi, B. (2007). *Swallow your entrance exam of university*. Second edition, Green Book Publications.
- Femi Tafreshi, B. (2007). *I can*. First edition, Green Book Publications.
- Ferrari, J.R & Tice, D.M. (2000). Procrastination As a self- handicap for men and women: A task – avoidance strategy in a laboratory setting, *Journal of Research in Personality*, 34, 73, 83.
- Fuchia, L.A. (2001). Correlation of academic procrastination and students grade. *Current Psychology*, 27(2) , 135-144.
- Gallagher, R.P., S. Borg, A. Golin, & K. Kelleher (1992). *Journal of College Student Development*, 33(4), 301-10. <http://my.ilstu.edu/dfgrayb/personal/procrastination>.
- Jalali Shahkou, F. (2006). Investigating the relationship between gender and locus of control (external - internal) to predict the characteristics of procrastination among the students of Roudehen Islamic Azad University. MA thesis.
- Karami, D. (2009). The prevalence rate of procrastination in the students of Roudehen Islamic Azad University and its association with anxiety and depression
- Khosravi, A.A., (2009). Investigating the relationship between job satisfaction of employees and their procrastination in the Trade development Organization of Iran.
- Louvain, M. (2006). *Lazy at study and school*. Translated by Razavi, E. & Azhdari, F., first edition, Peyke Bahar Publications.
- Moghadas Bayat, M. (2004). *Normalization of scale measure of Talk man procrastination for students*, M.A. Thesis, Islamic Azad University of Rudehen
- Ninan, M. & Dryden, W. (2002). *Life constructing thoughts*. Translated by Azimi, N. & Mirhadi Zadeh, T., Farhange Tara Publication.
- Rotblum, E.D. (1984). Academic procrastination: frequency and cognitive behavioral correlates. *Journal of Counseling Psychological*, 31,503-509.
- Steel, P. (2007) .The nature of procrastination: A meta- analytic and theoretical review of quint-essential self- regulatory failure, university of Calgary.
- Tracy, B. (2006). *Swallow your frog*. Translated by A. Rahmani, A., & B. Tarami, , Rashin publication.
- Yeganeh, A. (2010). *Research in psychology and education*. Sifa Publications