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Abstract

Education is crucial for everyone in the twenty-first century. Planning for the future is acknowledged to be greatly aided by education, particularly at the university level. Procrastination is prevalent among university students and it affects different aspects of their personal and academic life. The study was carried out to investigate the role of gender between the relationship of academic stress and academic procrastination among university students of Bahauddin Zakariya Multan, Pakistan. This quantitative research was completed through correlational design. Sample of 571 student (male=251, female=320) were selected by employing convenient sampling technique. Findings of study reveal that there is positive relationship between academic stress and academic procrastination. Moreover, Results depict that academic procrastination is a significant positive predictor of academic stress. In addition, male students reported the greater level of academic stress and academic procrastination as compared to female university students. Furthermore, the major causes of academic stress are lack of work schedule planning, procrastination, poor eating, sleeping, and exercise habits, and unattainable academic goals. Coping strategies should be recommended for the students to encounter their academic stress and academic procrastination.

Keywords: Academic stress, academic procrastination

1. Introduction

Academic stress is a common issue at different stages of the educational system (Hoferichter and Raufelder, 2014). Especially, at university, which is marked by frequent changes that impact university students' physical and psychological well-being (Trigueros et al., 2020). It is associated with poor academic performance (Pluut, Curşeu and Ilies, 2015), mental health problems (Sawatzky et al., 2012), dropouts (Andersson et al, 2009), and suicidal tendencies (Ng, Chiu and Fong, 2016). Academic stress is defined as the body's reaction to academic demands that are beyond students' adaptive capacity (Wilks, 2008). Academic stress was identified as the single most significant health barrier to college student's academic performance in a study of college students conducted by the American College Health Association in 2006 (Alsulami et al, 2018), and, also Higher education is the stage at which academic stress develops as a reaction to increased workload and correlates with the process of separation from the family, preparing for future jobs or careers, and adaptation to a new environment (Castillo et al., 2018). According to Millones, Rivalles and Pino (2019), academic stress may be divided into three key components: stressors, symptoms, and coping. Events that occur in the academic setting are called stressors. In general, symptoms are our body's reaction to stress, which can also be translated into physical reactions. Finally, coping refers to using the tools at hand to handle a stressful situation (Millones, Rivalles and Pino, 2019).

1.1. Academic Procrastination

The act of delaying something that must be done is called procrastination. It involves doing more enjoyable activities instead of less enjoyable ones or putting off important duties later by choosing to complete fewer essential tasks instead of more urgent ones. There are instances when people put off doing something until the "last minute" before a deadline. Procrastination is the deliberate postponement or delay of necessary tasks (Rakes & Dunn, 2010). Every single human, working or not, needs to finish a lot of chores in a day to function effectively. However, for a variety of reasons, these necessary jobs are sometimes put off until later in the day. Procrastination is the overall tendency to put off or delay doing something else. Any facet of life can be affected by procrastination, including putting off chores like cleaning the stove, fixing a leaky roof, seeing the dentist or doctor, turning in an academic paper or employment report, or bringing up a hard topic with a significant other. Studies on academic procrastination have mostly measured study habits, including the amount of time spent studying, attitudes toward learning, and the completion of lessons in self-paced instruction courses. Academic procrastination has been observed most frequently in term paper writing, exam preparation, and homework completion (Solomon & Rothblum, 1984).

Academic procrastination can be classified into three categories by Solomon & Rothblum in 1984 based on cognitive and behavioural perspectives: Procrastinating academic tasks, low procrastination, and procrastination perception. Academic task procrastination includes delaying reading assignments (46%), test preparation (27.2%), and weekly reading assignments (30.1%). Procrastinating administrative tasks (10%), presence tasks (23%), and school events (10.2%) are examples of low procrastination. Pupils who think they procrastinate often cited writing papers (23.7%), exam preparation (21.2%), and weekly reading assignments (23.7%) as the main causes of their difficulties. According to these three descriptions of procrastination, academic procrastination is most associated with writing papers, getting ready for tests, and doing weekly reading assignments. These findings were made by Solomon and Rothblum in 1984 among undergraduates. Academic procrastination is defined as waiting until the last minute to begin or finish an assignment that is due. Approximately 80% to 95% of school students struggle with academic procrastination, according to research done as early as 1979 and 2000. Academic procrastination hurts performance because it is associated with negative behaviours like bad study habits, cramming for exams, test anxiety, turning in homework assignments and term papers late, receiving lower grades, and experiencing feelings of guilt and depression (Kader, 2014). While most students turn in their projects by the deadline, some students give in their work after the deadline or never turn it in at all, according to Owens and Newbegin (1997).

1.2. Procrastination Behaviours

In the modern world, procrastinating is a very prevalent and dangerous problem. The usual definition of procrastination is the tendency to put off or delay acting or deciding. Academic procrastination appears to be common in academic environments, since students frequently put off completing assignments until the very last minute, usually without good reason. According to research,

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between 30 to 40 percent of students believe that procrastination is a serious issue that impairs their ability to balance their personal and professional lives. This is especially true for elementary school students who put off completing many assignments until the last minute, which increases stress levels and may have a detrimental impact on their academic performance and psychological well-being. Academic procrastination is delaying assignments and projects. Primary academic responsibilities including lesson planning, term paper and test revision, and other academic issues and activities related to education are put off. Thus, postponing academic assignments and the problems that result from doing so are considered academic procrastination (Munda & Tiwari, 2024).

2. Literature Review

However, there is empirical evidence that being a student can be stressful (Stallman, and Hurst, 2016). University life may often be stressful; the demands of the educational system become increasingly complex, and students are regularly forced to reorganize their lives. They are required to be capable of completing tasks and assignments and to be able to manage their time effectively. Students may face problems related to managing their time. As a result, many academic tasks will be postponed, this postponing behaviour is called procrastination which is defined as the intentional postponing of an intended task despite the expectation of a negative outcome. (Lay, Steel, 2007), when it becomes a habit and repeated, it will be a problem for students and leads to other mental and physical problems, having negative consequences of procrastination are documented in one's mental well-being such as anxiety, depression, guilt, poor mental health (Sirois, 2014). Among College students procrastination are common (Steel & Ferrari, 2013). According to the study by Kim and Seo (2015), nearly 80% of college students procrastinate, and procrastination was recognized as one of the most common problematic behaviours that needed to be improved and the main factor which contributes to academic failure is procrastination (Kim & Seo, 2015).

Research has shown that numerous factors have been linked with procrastination such as family, environmental and personal issues (Zakeri et al., 2013). Previous studies show that there are positive relationships between stress and procrastination (Khalid, 2019; Ashraf, Malik and Musharraf, 2019). Procrastination increases stress among medical students (Khalid, 2019). According to Sirois (2014), trait procrastination is associated with a higher level of stress, and self-compassion is considered a mediator of the relationship between trait procrastination and stress. Pathak (2011) indicated that Academic procrastination has a negative influence on students' academic achievement and consequently causes stress and worry (Pathak, 2011). The major causes of academic stress are lack of work schedule planning, procrastination, poor eating, sleeping, and exercise habits, and unattainable academic goals (Adom, Essel and Chukwuere, 2020).

2.1. Objectives of the Study

- To investigate the relationship between academic stress and academic procrastination
- To compare the level of academic stress and academic procrastination

3. Method

The study was carried out to investigate the role of gender between the relationship of academic stress and academic procrastination among university students of Bahauddin Zakariya Multan, Pakistan. This quantitative research was completed through correlational design. Survey was conducted for the purpose of data collection. Sample of 571 students were selected by employing convenient sampling technique. For measuring students' academic stress, the study used (the SISCO inventory of academic stress) which is developed by (Barraza, 2006). It consists of 31 items with 5- a point Likert scale (1=never; 2=very rarely; 3=sometimes; 4=almost always; 5=always). It includes three dimensions; stressors (8 items) reflect the frequency with which environmental demands are seen as stressors, symptoms (15 items) represent the frequency with which the symptoms appear, and coping (6 items) indicate the frequency of coping strategies. Additionally, the SISCO inventory of academic stress has been utilized in several studies with high reliability, with Cronbach's alpha values ranging from 0.861 to 0.9 (Castello et al., 2018). The general Procrastination Scale which is developed by (Lay, 1986) is a 20-item scale that assesses procrastination tendencies generally across a variety of tasks, Participants responded to each statement on a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1= extremely uncharacteristic to 5= extreme characteristics. The scale has ten items that are rated in reverse, and the sum of all the scores indicates how likely a person is to postpone. The GPS has previously shown strong internal consistency ($\alpha = .8$; Lay, 1986).

4. Results

Table 1: Relationship between Academic Stress and Academic Procrastination

Variables	Mean	Std.Deviation	AS	AP
Academic Stress	10.512	3.95460	1	.729**
Academic Procrastination	15.920	7.93209		1

Table 2: Mean, Standard Deviation, t-value and scores of Academic Stress and Academic Procrastination between male and female (n=571)

Variable	Gender	N	M	Std.Deviation	df	t-test	p-value
Academic Stress	Male	251	39.3568	4.86715	569	23.540	.000
	Female	320	27.9812	3.78653			
Academic Procrastination	Male	251	47.6080	9.63421	569	17.931	.000
	Female	320	38.7901	5.24351			

5. Discussion

Stress and procrastination are widespread issues in modern life nowadays. Everyday stress is a given, and reducing it has always been difficult, especially for student's mental health life. Students' academic lives now include stress because of the various internal and external demands placed on their shoulders. University students are especially prone to experiencing the negative effects of

academic stress and procrastination. Findings of study reveal that there is positive relationship between academic stress and academic procrastination. Moreover, Results depict that academic procrastination is a significant positive predictor of academic stress. In addition, male students reported the greater level of academic stress and academic procrastination as compared to female university students. Furthermore, the major causes of academic stress are lack of work schedule planning, procrastination, poor eating, sleeping, and exercise habits, and unattainable academic goals. Previous studies show that there are positive relationships between stress and procrastination (Khalid, 2019; Ashraf, Malik and Musharraf, 2019). Procrastination increases stress among medical students (Khalid, 2019). Previous studies such as the studies of (Ashraf, Malik and Musharraf, 2019; Andersson et al., 2009; Khalid, 2019; McCown, Blake, and Keizer, 2012; Millones et al., 2019) which have shown a positive relationship between academic stress and procrastination.

6. Conclusion

The study was concluded that academic stress was positively correlated with academic procrastination among university students. Moreover, Results depict that academic procrastination is a significant positive predictor of academic stress. Moreover, male students showed the greater level of academic stress and academic procrastination as compared to female university students. Furthermore, the major causes of academic stress are lack of work schedule planning, procrastination, poor eating, sleeping, and exercise habits, and unattainable academic goals. Coping strategies should be recommended for the students to encounter their academic stress and academic procrastination.

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