Factors Predicting Academic Procrastination with Special Reference to Self-esteem, Self-efficacy, and Stress Among Undergraduates in the Western Province of Sri Lanka

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ARTICLE INFO	ABSTRACT
	All universities enroll new students each year, however, not every enrolled student graduates from the University before completing the degree program. Academic procrastination is identified as one of the major reasons affecting academic performance and several factors such as stress, self-esteem, and self-efficacy may contribute to an individual engaging in procrastination. This study aimed to evaluate the factors associated with academic procrastination. A descriptive cross-sectional study was conducted among conveniently selected 150 undergraduates (Using the Daniel and Cross formula). A pretested self-administered questionnaire was shared as a Google form link with the ethical approval obtained from the Ethics Review Committee of Kaatsu International University. The data were collected using validated scales such as the Rosenberg self-esteem scale, the Generalized Self-efficacy Scale, the Depression Anxiety Stress Scale, and the Academic Procrastination Scale. Most of the participants were females (n=93, 62%), and they were 18-24 years old. The results showed that self-efficacy and self-esteem are a positive significant predictor of academic procrastination (β=.280, P<0.001) and (β=.187, P<0.001) respectively, stress is a negative significant predictor (β=-.370, P<0.001) of

academic procrastination. The results highlighted that self-esteem, self-efficacy, and stress are predictors of academic procrastination. The study findings have a theoretical and practical contribution to academic institutions and policymakers for improving academic success.

1. INTRODUCTION

University education is considered an important aspect of a person's life. This is because education provides an opportunity for an individual to ensure financial security through engaging in employment, growth in a career as well as developing skills to become a productive citizen in the country (Khan et al., 2011). Many students register in all the universities; however, not every enrolled student graduates from the University before completing the degree program. There are various reasons for dropping out of the university or for poor academic performance, academic procrastination is identified as one of the major reasons affecting academic performance (Indradevi & Vaidhyanatha Balaji, 2020).

When university students are unable to succeed in their academics, it not only costs them time, money, and energy but also they encounter family problems and mental health issues. According to (Najimi et al., 2013) academic failure is considered a challenge for university students as well as a massive loss for the country. Furthermore, many studies have identified the usage of drugs at an older age due to failure in academics: thus resulting in the tendency to be drug and alcohol addicts (Devi & Dhull, 2017).

Considering the above facts from studies, it can be evaluated that academic failure or dropping out of the University affects an undergraduate's quality of life which can also be accounted as a major problem for the growth of a nation.

The importance of the research can be further analyzed in a recent study conducted in China among medical students (Khalid et al., 2019) where the study identified that 70% of undergraduates" experience procrastination in their academic activities and 58% of the students tend to procrastinate three or more hours per day (Khalid et al., 2019). According to (Rajapakshe, 2021), the dropout rates from freshmen (first-year students) and sophomore students (second-year) is more than 40% in non-state universities of Sri Lanka. Therefore, it is important to conduct research on academic procrastination and identify the factors affecting the behavior.

The main aim of conducting this study is to identify the factors among stress, self-esteem self-efficacy is contributing towards academic procrastination. Not only that, some empirical evidence has provided both positive and negative influences of procrastination hence, it is important to research the impact of academic procrastination on mental health. Furthermore, the study aims to validate the Academic procrastination scale in the Sri Lankan context which would additionally support the main study. The previous work of literature captures the importance of academic procrastination as well as its impact on academic performance. However, fewer studies have been conducted in the Sri Lankan context although the statistics display significant dropout rates from the Universities (Rajapakshe, 2021).

2. MATERIALS AND METHODS

A descriptive cross-sectional study was conducted among 150 undergraduates using a convenient sampling method in the Western province of Sri Lanka. The main reason to select the Western province among the other provinces in Sri Lanka is that statistics indicate that more advanced-level students are eligible to enter universities in the Western province of Sri Lanka than in the other provinces (UGC statistics, 2021). Therefore, research in this province is important to predict academic procrastination. The ethical approval was obtained from KIU's Ethics Review Committee (ERC) (KIU/ERC/21/161) and the

research question of the study is, "Which factors among stress, self-efficacy and self-esteem are predicting academic procrastination among the Undergraduates in the Western Province of Sri Lanka?".

The participants were assessed using self-administered questionnaires which consisted oa demographic scale, Rosenberg self-esteem (Rosenberg et al., 1995, Generalized self-efficacy scale (Selvaratnam et al., 2018), Depression, anxiety, and stress scale (Lovibond & Lovibond, 1995), and Academic procrastination scale. The Cronbach Alpha values for the above scales are 0.6, 0.9, 0.9, and 0.8 respectively.

The scales were translated into Sinhala and Tamil languages and were validated. The face and content validity were derived for all the scales, and the translated and validated scales showed good reliability. The questionnaires were distributed online through a Google form and the link to the questionnaire was shared via social media platforms such as Email, and WhatsApp. The respondents were asked to fill out the questionnaire independently. SPSS- version 25 was used for data analysis. Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics and regression analysis was carried out to determine the relationship between self-esteem, self-efficacy, and stress towards academic procrastination.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1 Demographic details of the participants

The current study comprised 150 undergraduates from the Western province of Sri Lanka, and among them, 62% were female students (n=93) and 38% (n=57) were male students. The participants were ranked in the age groups with 69.3% for ages between 18-24 (n=104) and 29.3% for ages between 25-32 (n=44), while 1.3% were aged from 33-41 (n= 2) (Lakshmi et al., 2023). The results have depicted a higher response rate

from undergraduates in non-state universities of Western province in Sri Lanka.

3.2 Predicting Factors for Academic Pro crastination

The multiple regression analysis showed that self-efficacy is positively significantly predicting academic procrastination (β=.280, p=.000), stress is a negative significant predictor (β=-.370, p=.000) and self-esteem is positively significantly predicting academic procrastination (β=.187, p=.010). Table 1 and Figure 1 represent the coefficient table and the scatter plot of the regression analysis respectively.

Table 1: Coefficient table

Name of the scale	B	Std. Error	Beta	T	Sig.
(Constant)	1.417	.446		3.177	.002
Generalized Self-efficacy Scale	.325	.088	.280	3.686	.000
Depression Anxiety Stress Scale	-.284	.058	-.370	-4.864	.000
Rosenberg Self-esteem Scale	.354	.136	.189	2.607	.010

Figure 1: Scatter plot of the regression analysis
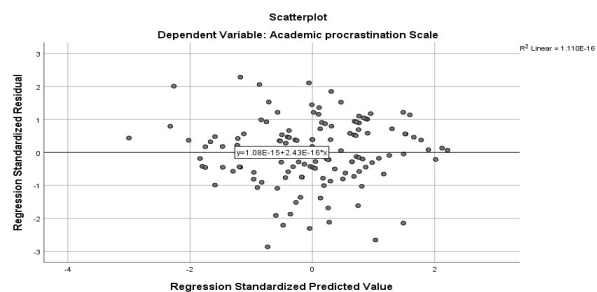
The study was able to identify that stress was negatively predicting academic procrastination. However, when comparing the result with the previous research they were able to identify a positive relationship between stress and academic procrastination (Khalid et al., 2019, Elias et al., 2011, Zajacova et al., 2005, Jogaratnam & Buchanan, 2004). The main reason for the negative association between stress and academic procrastination in the research is that the study selected participants without any diagnosis of mental health conditions in other words the participants were not from a clinical population.

The mean stress score of the sample was M=1.47, SD= .797 in the study and as per the DASS-21 criteria, the above score falls under normal levels of stress (0-14).

The study also identified that Self-esteem is a positive predictor of academic procrastination. However, when analyzing the reasons for this result in the study it can be identified that the Rosenberg self-esteem scale is not validated in the Sri Lankan context (Suraweera et al., 2013) and the reliability analysis displays a Cronbach alpha value of .552. Moreover, studies have identified that self-esteem can mediate the relationship between IQ and procrastination (Hajloo,2014). The individuals who have higher levels of IQ and low self-esteem their procrastination levels are high mainly due to a lack of confidence in their abilities. On the other hand, if the undergraduates have high IQ levels and high self-esteem, they will have lower levels of procrastination. This is because they have a positive self-image and confidence in their problem-solving skills (Heward, 2010). The levels of IQ among the population might have impacted the current study results in terms of self-esteem and procrastination; however, conducting IQ tests is expensive, and as future recommendations, the author strongly intends to identify the impact of IQ levels affecting procrastination.

The results revealed that self-efficacy is a positive predictor of academic procrastination. As discovered in the literature review, there are two types of procrastinators, namely active and passive procrastinators. Though there is a negative relationship between self-efficacy and academic procrastination a positive prediction can be seen between active procrastination to self-efficacy mainly due to the ability of self-regulation (Zohar et al., 2019). Thereby supporting the results of the study.

Furthermore, the Academic procrastination scale was created by the author with the supervision of the co-author for this study. Hence, this can be identified as a possible limitation factor that could have affected the study results. Therefore, as future recommendations, the author is suggesting to utilize a fully validated Academic procrastination scale to generate strong results.

4. CONCLUSION

The study did not support the existing literature that has been conducted based on the factors that are associated with academic procrastination. However, the analysis was able to identify that self-esteem, self-efficacy, and stress are predictors of academic procrastination. Due to the negative effects of procrastination, it is important to take steps to eradicate these behaviors and various coping skills and strategies will help to overcome procrastination.

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