

Influence of Academic Self-Concept and Self-Efficacy on Academic Procrastination in Peruvian University Students

Influencia del autoconcepto y autoeficacia académica sobre la procrastinación académica en universitarios peruanos


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Summary

The objective of this research was to determine if academic self-concept and academic self-efficacy predict academic procrastination in university students from the La Libertad Region. The data of 386 university students of both sexes were analyzed through an associative strategy with a cross-sectional predictive design. The questionnaires used were the AF5 Self-Concept Scale (ECT), the EAPESA scale for self-concept and the EPA Procrastination scale. It was found that there is a statistically significant and practical relationship between the study variables ($p < .01$) and that the coefficient of determination $R^2 = .273$ indicates that academic self-concept and academic self-efficacy explain 27.3% of the variance criterion of total academic procrastination of the variable. It is concluded that the coefficients $\beta (-, .382, -, .201)$ indicate that academic self-concept and academic self-efficacy (predictor variables) significantly predict academic procrastination (criterion variable).

Keywords: academic procrastination; academic self-concept; academic self-efficacy; college life; college students.

Resumen

El objetivo de esta investigación fue determinar si el autoconcepto académico y autoeficacia académica predicen la procrastinación académica en estudiantes universitarios de la región de La Libertad. Se analizaron los datos de 386 estudiantes universitarios de ambos a través de una estrategia asociativa con un diseño predictivo transversal. Los cuestionarios usados fueron la Escala de autoconcepto AF5 (ECT), la escala EAPESA para autoeficacia y la escala de Procrastinación EPA. Se encontró que existe relación estadísticamente significativa y práctica entre las variables de estudio ($p < .01$) y que el coeficiente de determinación $R^2 = .273$ indica que el autoconcepto académico y autoeficacia académica explican el 27,3 % de la varianza total de la variable criterio procrastinación académica. Se concluye que los coeficientes $\beta (-, .382, -, .201)$ indican que el autoconcepto académico y la autoeficacia académica (variables predictoras) predicen significativamente la procrastinación académica (variable criterio).

Palabras clave: procrastinación académica; autoconcepto académico; autoeficacia académica; vida universitaria; estudiantes universitarios.

Introduction

In March 2020 the World Health Organization decreed the COVID-19 outbreak as a pandemic (World Health Organization, 2020), generating several crises, most notably in the educational field (Quispe & Garcia, 2020). As a result, universities had to align themselves to the transition from face-to-face teaching to online learning, presenting a virtual format where educators and students had to adapt and interact through different platforms (Iglesias-Pradas et al., 2021). Furthermore, the university system's demands are measured in success or failure which is an additional challenge for the students (Hernández et al., 2020) as they must adapt their habits to a completely different method than the one they learned in school (Arias-Chávez et al., 2020). Thus, many of these demands end up being deferred, generating a problem at a personal and academic level that merits further study (Dominguez et al., 2014).

In these circumstances, procrastination appears, not as a new phenomenon, but rather as a reality that has basically accompanied humankind over the last millennia. (Steel, 2007). Today, there is an increasing interest among postmodern psychologists in conducting research to explain procrastination, however, there is still much to learn (Klassen et al., 2008). In Peru, only few studies have been developed, in particular one with 1,494 students from eight universities. This research reported that procrastination has a relationship with self-esteem and self-efficacy

(Hernández et al., 2020), and furthermore, it is considered a highly stressful situation that hampers the prioritization of tasks (Valdivieso et al., 2020). Among the faculties with the highest levels of procrastination are Business Engineering, Communication Sciences, Nursing and Marketing (Mejia et al., 2018).

Procrastination has been defined as the voluntary or involuntary delay of something that should be delivered at a set time (Carranza and Ramirez, 2013). This is an ineffective lifestyle which leads to failure in achieving and committing to pre-determined goals (Kandem, 2014). From an academic point of view, it refers to the way a student perceives themselves and how they face academic challenges. Moreover, there are several academic concepts associated to this term, each one related to a different area of knowledge (Miras, 2009). Previous works centered on French university students mention the effect of self-esteem and motivation on procrastination (Osiurak et al., 2015). In turn, academic self-efficacy is a self-evaluation tool in which an individual refers to their personal confidence with respect to their own abilities (Veliz & Apodaca Urquijo, 2012). Preliminary studies in Chinese students show the effect of academic self-efficacy on academic procrastination (Li et al., 2020) and, reports revealing the presence of variables that are related to procrastination such as academic self-efficacy in Canadian students (Klassen et al., 2008).

Based on this evidence, it is necessary to carry out research on higher education scenarios, as there has always been an interest in understanding the cognitive and behavioral factors that favor or limit the students' performance under academic demands (Gutiérrez-García & Landeros-Velázquez, 2018).

It is under this idea that this study aims to contribute to the scientific community, presenting significant findings regarding the predictors of academic procrastination in university students of the La Libertad region (Northern Peru). It also deepens the knowledge proposed by the theory of social learning (Bandura, 1978) and the theory of self-determination (Deci & Ryan, 2000); which generates a need to test a theoretical model where latent variables in the university context, such as academic procrastination, are explained in function of the academic self-concept and academic self-efficacy. In addition, we encourage the idea of fostering educational administrators and leaders to implement means and resources that motivate and empower the development of the main agents in the university community.

Studies on the variables of this research have been analyzed from different perspectives. Among the most important we find Solomon and Rothblum (1984), who analyzed the frequency of procrastination in university students and highlight anxiety and fear in their predictive model. Muijs (1997) emphasizes that academic self-concept and academic performance are predictors of each other. Saddler and Buley (1999) found that concern about negative evaluation and low self-concept emerged as a strong predictor of procrastination. Joo et al. (2000) revealed that academic self-efficacy predicts student performance in Korean students. Chemers et al. (2001) in their study of first-year university students, found that self-efficacy and optimism were related to academic performance. Klassen et al. (2008) found that, among all variables, self-efficacy was shown to be the most predictive variable of procrastination. Meanwhile, Kandem (2014) provides with another point of view, he analyzes how personal traits and academic self-efficacy explain the behaviors of Turkish university students and the predictive effect of personal traits and academic self-efficacy. Lowinger et al. (2016) found that coping styles, academic self-efficacy, and English proficiency were significant predictors of procrastination similar to other studies (Kim et al., 2016). Rusdi et al. (2020) took into account the importance of the procrastination variable and provided significant data of 586 students under the theory of Solomon and Rothblum (1984).

This study addresses a knowledge gap in current literature and broadens the framework for investigating the impact of self-concept and self-efficacy variables on procrastination under the model of self-determination by Deci and Ryan (2000). In addition, this study is the first study

to incorporate self-efficacy and self-concept in university students from northern Peru. Also, due to the pandemic, universities moved from face-to-face to virtual, interfering with academic activities (Jenei et al., 2020) and creating additional conditions for procrastination that did not occur before (Rahimi & Vallerand, 2021). Therefore, the objective of this research is to determine whether the academic self-concept and academic self-efficacy predict academic procrastination in university students from the La Libertad region.

Method

Design

A cross-sectional predictive study (Ato et al., 2013) was carried out in La Libertad region between April and June 2021.

Participants

Through non-probabilistic sampling, 386 female and male university students between the ages of 17 and 36, from the region of La Libertad, Peru, participated in the study. A 79.5% of the participants belonged to a private university while 20.5% to a public one. Regarding the exclusion criteria, students not enrolled and foreigners were excluded from this study (Table 1).

Table 1.

Characteristics of the participants

Characteristics	No.	%	
Gender	Male	209	54.1
	Female	177	45.9
Age	17 – 21	193	50.0
	22 – 36	193	50.0
University	Private	307	79.5
	Public	79	20.5

Instruments

The Five-Factor Self-Concept Questionnaire of García and Musitu (2014) was used for the collection of data, validated by Carranza-Esteban and Bermúdez-Jaimes (2017) for Peruvian university students through construct validity under the technique of structural equations. The academic self-concept factor was used, and considers 6 items with Likert-type scale responses: 1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = undecided, 4 = agree and 5 = strongly agree. The scale is valid (CFI = .920, TLI = .900 and RMSEA = .054) and reliable ($\alpha = .83$).

Additionally, the Confirmatory factor analysis of the General Self-Efficacy Scale (EAPESA, by its initials in Spanish) was used to measure self-efficacy for academic situations. It was validated for Peruvian university students by Dominguez et al. (2018) through construct validity, content validity and factorial structure. It is organized in 10 questions, with Likert-type scale responses: 1 = never, 2 = sometimes, 3 = often and 4 = always. The scale is valid (KMO = .938, Bartlett sphericity test $p < 0.01$) and reliable ($\alpha = .89$).

As for the measurement of academic procrastination, Dominguez et al. (2014) validated the PASS for Peruvian university students under low construct validity and exploratory factor analysis technique. It is composed of 12 items, with Likert-type scale responses: 1 = never, 2 = sometimes, 3 = often, 4 = almost always and 5 = always. The scale is valid (CFI = 1, GFI = .97 and RMSEA = .078) and reliable ($\alpha = .81$).

Procedure

Due to the current situation in Peru, the data was collected in a virtual manner, using the online Google Forms format. Once the questionnaire was online, students were contacted through social networks such as Facebook and WhatsApp. The first part of the questionnaire presented the ethical considerations (informed consent, objective of the research and confidentiality).

Data Analysis

The information obtained through Google Forms was transferred to a Microsoft Excel spreadsheet, then exported to the statistical program IBM SPSS for Windows version 25.0. Afterwards the descriptive statistics and the correlation between the study variables were analyzed, and finally a multiple linear regression analysis was executed considering the linearity, independence, homocedasticity, normality and non-linearity of the variables. Thus, this research arrived to the conclusion that the assumptions were corroborated so the analysis was executed in order to respond to the objective of the study.

Results

Descriptive Statistics

Table 2 shows the calculation of mean, standard deviation, asymmetry and kurtosis (descriptive statistics) for the academic self-concept, academic self-efficacy and academic procrastination. Likewise, the asymmetry and kurtosis coefficients do not exceed the range $> \pm 1.5$ (Pérez & Medrano, 2010).

Table 2.
Descriptive analyses of the academic self-concept variable

Variable	M	SD	A	K
Academic self-concept	23,33	3,635	,013	-,541
Academic self-efficacy	28,25	5,184	-,221	-,785
Academic procrastination	43,38	3,977	-,231	1,228

Note: M = Mean, SD = Standard Deviation, A = Asymmetry Coefficient, K = Kurtosis Coefficient.

Correlation Analysis

As observed in Table 3, there is an inverse or negative relationship between procrastination and self-concept/self-efficacy, and positive or direct relationship between self-concept and self-efficacy ($p < .01$).

Table 3.
Correlation coefficients between academic procrastination, academic self-concept and academic self-efficacy

	Academic procrastination	Academic self-concept	Academic self-efficacy
Academic procrastination	1		
Academic self-concept	-,495**	1	
Academic self-efficacy	-,416**	,561**	1

** *The correlation is significant at level 0.01.*

Predictive Analytics

A multiple regression analysis was performed to determine which variables best predict academic procrastination. To do so, the multiple correlation coefficients R, R2, R2-corrected, standard error of estimation (SE) and the F value of ANOVA were used (Table 4).

Table 4.
Multiple correlation coefficients R, R2, R2-corrected, SE, F.

Model	R	R2	R2-Corrected	SE	F	Sig
1	,522	,273	,269	5,374	71,862	0,000

a Predictive variables: (Constant), Academic self-efficacy, Academic self-concept.

b Dependent variable: Academic procrastination.

It was observed that the coefficient of determination $R^2 = ,273$ indicates that the academic self-concept and academic self-efficacy explain 27.3% of the total variance of the criterion variable academic procrastination. R2-corrected, explains 26.8%. The F value of ANOVA ($F = 71,862$, $p = .000$) shows that there is a significant linear relationship between the variables academic self-concept and academic self-efficacy (predictors) and the variable academic procrastination (dependent).

Table 5 shows the non-standardized regression coefficients (B), standardized regression coefficients (β) and the statistics related to the predictor variable. The β coefficients (-,382, -,201) indicate that academic self-concept and academic self-efficacy (predictor variables) significantly predict academic procrastination (dependent variable). The t-value of the beta regression coefficients of the predictor variable is highly significant ($p < 0.01$).

Table 5.
Multiple regression coefficients B (non-standardized), β (standardized) and t-test

Model	B	SE	β	T	Sig
1 (Constant)	46,877	1,881		24,915	,000
Academic self-concept	-,661	,091	-,382	-7,264	,000
Academic self-efficacy	-,244	,064	-,201	-3,823	,000

a Dependent variable: Academic procrastination.

Discussion

Academic procrastination is one of the problems that every student faces in their academic life, and as explained by (Li et al., 2020), it is the tendency to delay learning tasks. According to Saddler and Buley (1999), procrastination is linked to perfectionism and various social dimensions. In Peru, the issue of procrastination has become widespread in different cities and now academics look for ways to control its effects (Hernández et al., 2020). Therefore, the objective of this research is to determine whether the academic self-concept and the academic self-efficacy can predict academic procrastination in university students from the La Libertad region.

The results of the predictive model show that the variables academic self-concept and academic self-efficacy predict academic procrastination in Peruvian university students from the La Libertad region. This result is consistent with what was presented by Klassen et al. (2008) who found that high levels of procrastination are related to students' lack of academic self-efficacy.

Malkoç and Kesen Mutlu (2018) reported that academic self-efficacy is shown as a significant and inverse predictor of procrastination. Moreover, the regression analysis indicates that the academic self-concept and self-efficacy explain 27.3% of the variable variance and significantly predict academic procrastination, which means a significant degree of dependence between these variables. Meaning that students who have a good academic self-concept have lower levels of academic procrastination (Hen and Goroshit, 2014).

Thus, the academic self-concept can be based on two processes, the perceived self-capacity of the student in the mastery of a subject, and the external comparison of this mastery with their peers (Wang and Neihart, 2015), is what makes the student predisposed to desirable results and better educational achievements, which reduces procrastination (Arens et al., 2021).

Studies have corroborated that when the student doubt their ability, they are more likely to delay the start or completion of their academic tasks because they fear failure (Selçuk et al., 2021).

Furthermore, a negative relationship between academic self-efficacy and academic procrastination is observed. These results are in line with the theory of Bandura (1978), who highlights self-efficacy as the ability to perform a task. Bong and Skaalvik (2003) state that academic self-efficacy is the ability to perform any specific task and the confidence to achieve academic success. Veliz and Apodaca Urquijo (2012) emphasize that self-efficacy is a self-evaluation on the effectiveness of actions compared to the perceived effectiveness of others. This leads the student to successfully complete academic tasks and reduce the tendency toward academic procrastination or avoidance. Students with poor academic self-efficacy tend to postpone their academic activities (Niazov et al., 2021).

Both the academic self-concept and academic self-efficacy explain and predict students' actions (Bong and Skaalvik, 2003; Karpiuk et al., 2015), understanding that the self-concept predicts more affective reactions, while self-efficacy better predicts cognitive processes. In contrast to these results, Kim et al. (2016) found that collective coping, avoidance, and linguistic ability are the three strongest predictors of procrastination. Likewise, Brunner et al. (2010) conclude that the self-concept is closely linked to positive achievements, which means that if a student has not had specific achievements, their academic self-concept will not be the best, therefore, it is important that studies that analyze academic self-efficacy linked to self-control or self-regulation are developed.

Among the practical implications of this research is the fact that university faculties can develop programs to improve students' levels of self-concept and self-efficacy in order to prevent procrastinating behaviors. Such initiatives should be complemented by different student support and welfare programs.

We consider the importance of this research in the understanding of procrastination by university lecturers, as they will be in a better position to help overcome procrastinating behaviors in their students. In addition, these findings can contribute to the understanding and discussion of the topics being studied in the field of higher education, showing the need to continue with this type of research.

Finally, it is necessary to mention some limitations present in this study. First, the data used mainly derived from a sample of a single region of Peru, therefore it is advisable to expand the sample in order to strengthen the results found here. Second, in regards to participation, as this was voluntary and virtual, some participants may have had a particular motivation or need to refer their experiences. Third, given that this is a cross-sectional study, there is only information on the behavior of the variables at a given time among the participants; consequently, it would be advisable to carry out further studies of a longitudinal nature.

Despite these limitations, this research has considerably expanded the understanding of the influence of academic self-concept and academic self-efficacy on procrastination in a representative sample of 386 students from the La Libertad region. First, this study contributes to the literature by addressing the variables academic self-concept, academic self-efficacy, and procrastination. Second, this study found that academic self-concept and academic self-efficacy significantly and inversely predict academic procrastination in students from the La Libertad region, providing strong support for theoretical perspectives on self-efficacy and self-concept. Finally, students who showed high levels of self-efficacy and academic self-concept greatly lowered procrastination levels.

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