# The Relationship between Personality Characteristics and Academic Procrastination of Students

Ahmad Bahari[1*], Maryam Sadeghi Kheyrabadi[2], Alireza Azimpoor[3]

1. Department of Educational Psychology, Bandar Abbas Branch, Islamic Azad University, Bandar Abbas, Iran.
2. Department of Educational Science, Bandar Abbas Branch, Islamic Azad University, Bandar Abbas, Iran.
3. Professor Assistance of Psychology, Salman Farsi University, Kazerun, Iran.

A  B  S  T  R  A  C  T

The aim of this study was to investigate the relationship between personality characteristics and academic procrastination of secondary high school students. The statistical population of this study included all male and female students of secondary high school of the city of Orzooiyeh in Iran as 420 students (200 boys and 220 girls). In this regard, a sample of 201 students (96 males and 105 females) were selected by stratified random sampling method on the basis of gender and according to Morgan table and responded to the short form five-factor personality Inventory (NEO-FFI) Rathbloom and Solomon academic procrastination questionnaire. Data obtained from these questionnaires were analyzed using descriptive statistics such as mean, variance and standard deviation and inferential statistics as regression. The results of data analysis showed that among five personality characteristics, two characteristics of neurosis and consciousness have a relationship with academic procrastination in both male and female groups commonly and neurosis predicts the academic procrastination positively ($r^2$= 0.161 female and $r^2$=0.302 male) and consciousness predicts the academic procrastination negatively ($r^2$= 0.316 female and $r^2$=0.241 male). Extroversion characteristics in female students ($r^2$= 0.125) and agreeableness in male students ($r^2$= 0.152) showed a significant negative relationship with academic procrastination. This is while openness to experience could predict academic procrastination of students.

*Keywords:* Personality Characteristics, Academic Procrastination, High School Students.

## INTRODUCTION

Procrastination or postponing the work is so common that perhaps could be counted as the human instinctive inclinations. Although procrastination is not always problematic, in most cases, it can have undesirable and irrecoverable consequences as barriers to development and lack of access to objectives[1]. In

defining this structure, researchers have noted the sloth and postpone in doing important tasks (in time) with subjective and uncomfortable experiences[2, 3, and 4].

Procrastination has various faces given the complexity and cognitive, emotional and behavioral components including academic procrastination[1, 4, 5], decisional procrastination[6], neurotic procrastination[2] and compulsive procrastination[3]. But the most common form is academic procrastination[7, 8].

Rothblum, Solomon and Morakami[2] have defined procrastination as the habitual and dominant tendency of learners to postpone educational activities, which is almost always associated with anxiety. The obvious example is postponing study the book until exam night and the stress caused by it that involves students. In academic procrastination, negligent behavior takes place in school activities such as attending for the exam, doing homework and writing papers. In the view of Alexander and Onwuegbuzie[9] most negligent students are unhappy in their lives as well as having problem in study or inability in acquiring higher grades and feel negligence in different aspects of their lives. Although the negative consequences of this habit may be visible in everyday life, the harms of the spread of this behavior among different individuals and groups are important and significant and this will indicate the necessity of stopping such behaviors.

Researchers have identified several factors associated with procrastination, such as anxiety, dependency[5], hatred of tasks and the fear of failure[2], Fear of Negative Evaluation[5], perfectionism[1], irrational beliefs[6], low self-esteem, bad habits in the study, acquired disability[3]. Some of the most important antecedents or causes of academic procrastination in the view of experts include: parenting styles, perfectionism, low self-concept, personality factors, difficult and annoying homework, academic self-efficacy, learning styles, lack of proper study planning and study habits[2].

One of the variables that appear to be associated with negligence is personality traits. Due to the importance of the personality study and its role in recognizing human behaviors, this imagination is natural that a special position is been given to personality throughout the history of psychology. Personality has a determining role in the obvious behavior of the person. Personality is systematic complex including relatively fixed and continuous characteristics that identifies one personality form the other[6, 8]. Personality is a systematic and unified complex including relatively fixed and continuous characteristics that identifies one person form the other[2].

Personality characteristics include constant models of perception, relationship methods and person's thought regarding the self and the surrounding environment that is explicit in a wide range of personal and social backgrounds. Robert McCrae and Paul Costa[8] presented a model of personality in 1980 which is

famous as Big Five Factors. Their research results and also various factor analyses show that personality is formed of five fundamental and central factors. These factors include: neuroticism (N), extraversion (E), openness (O), agreeableness (A), and consciousness (C). They are confirmed by a diversity of measurement methods including self-assessments and correlation with many personality questionnaires. The relationship between procrastination and personality traits has always been of interest to researchers so that many researchers, for example, Solomon and RathBloom[2] and Steele et al., [1] have argued that there is a relationship between the procrastination and some of personality characteristics. Procrastination is increasingly considered as a deficiency in self-regulation (the ability to externally control thought, feelings, stresses and operation in comparison with accepted norms). According to the role and effects of procrastination and personality traits, this issue is worthy attention regarding personality models. Procrastination has a relationship with two major personality models: three-factor model includes extraversion, neuroticism and psychosis (Eysenck and Eysenck, 1985) and five-factor model includes extroversion, neuroticism, openness, agreeableness and consciousness[8]. As a result, this study sought to answer the question: Is there a relationship between personality characteristics and academic procrastination?

**METHODOLOGY**

This survey is a descriptive and correlation-based research. Accordingly, personality characteristics and academic procrastination of individuals were measured after gathering the theoretical foundations of the study and then the research questions and hypotheses were analyzed based on the objectives. The statistical population of this project included all male and female high school students in city of Orzooiyeh in Iran as 420 subjects (200 males, 220 females) respectively. Stratified random sampling based on gender of the students was the sampling method.

Morgan table was used to obtain the sample size and based on this table, 201 students (96 males and 105 females) were selected. The sample in this study was 201 male and female high school students of Orzooiyeh city who were selected by stratified random sampling method. Two questionnaires were used to measure the research variables as follows:

1. Big Five Personality Factors Questionnaire (NEOPI-R): This questionnaire is one of the personality test questionnaires that is based on factor analysis and is one the most recent tools in the field of personality which was introduced by Costa and McCrae in 1985 entitled as personality inventory (NEO). Long form of this questionnaire is designed in 240 phrases to measure five factors or main domains (neurosis N, extraversion E, openness O, agreeableness A and conscientiousness C). Also, this questionnaire has another form called (NEO-FFI), which is a 60-item questionnaire and is used to evaluate five personality traits and each factor is

measured by 12 questions.

2. Solomon and Rathbloom academic procrastination questionnaire: This scale is made by Solomon and Rathbloom[2] to measure academic procrastination in three areas of preparing assignments, preparing for the exam and half-year reports or papers, and includes 21 items. There is a four-option Likert scale in front of each item as rarely (1) sometimes (2) often (3) and always (4). There are six other questions added to the previous 21 questions to measure two characteristics of feeling sad for being negligence and tendency to change the habit of procrastination and these 6 questions are not considered in the reliability and validity of the questionnaire by the idea of the builder of the questionnaire. The minimum and maximum score on this scale are 27 and 108respectively. Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficient in this scale is 0.91. The calculated Cronbach's alpha coefficient for the preparing for the exam component is 0.75, for preparation and presentation tasks component is 0.85 and for the preparation and article presentation component is 0.81. Inferential statistical method that was used is the regression analysis. After collecting questionnaires, all information was analyzed via SPSS-20 software.

## RESULTS

Tables 1 and 2 show mean, variance, standard deviation, mean standard error, maximum and minimum of the research variables in male and female groups respectively.

**Table 1.** Mean and standard deviation of research variables in male group (N = 96)

| Variable | Mean | Variance | SD | minimum | maximum |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| neurosis | 23.96 | 26.714 | 5.169 | 5 | 37 |
| extraversion | 26.14 | 34.497 | 5.873 | 12 | 42 |
| Openness to experience | 25.83 | 16.351 | 4.044 | 16 | 36 |
| agreeableness | 25.06 | 21.280 | 4.613 | 14 | 36 |
| consciousness | 27.69 | 48.301 | 6.950 | 16 | 46 |
| procrastination | 64.46 | 51.704 | 7.191 | 46 | 83 |

**Table 2.** Mean and standard deviation of research variables in female group (N = 105)

| Variable | Mean | Variance | SD | minimum | maximum |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| neurosis | 24.51 | 37.156 | 6.096 | 9 | 38 |

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| **extraversion** | 30.79 | 43.956 | 6.630 | 11 | 45 |
| **Openness to experience** | 25.12 | 17.244 | 4.153 | 14 | 35 |
| **agreeableness** | 26.80 | 24.085 | 4.908 | 15 | 39 |
| **consciousness** | 34.19 | 58.444 | 7.645 | 11 | 48 |
| **procrastination** | 59.30 | 99.133 | 9.957 | 41 | 88 |

In order to study the normality of the score distribution of the 6 variables of the research (neurosis, extraversion, Openness to experience, agreeableness, consciousness and procrastination), Kolmogorov-Smirnov test was conducted on the data in both male and female groups. Table 3 shows the results of this test on male group and table 4 shows the results of this test on female group.

According to tables 3 and 4 and due to the fact that the level of significant for the distribution of all the research variables is more than 0.05, it can be concluded that the distribution of all variables is normal or near the normal.

**Table 3.** Kolmogorov-Smirnov test results for research variables in male group

| variables | Z.KS | Level of significance |
|---|---|---|
| **neurosis** | 0.799 | 0.546 |
| **extraversion** | 0.718 | 0.681 |
| **Openness to experience** | 0.908 | 0.382 |
| **agreeableness** | 0.962 | 0.312 |
| **consciousness** | 1.305 | 0.066 |
| **procrastination** | 0.846 | 0.472 |

**Table 4.** Kolmogorov-Smirnov test results for research variables in female group

| variables | Z.KS | Level of significance |
|---|---|---|
| **neurosis** | 0.707 | 0.700 |
| **extraversion** | 0.636 | 0.813 |
| **Openness to experience** | 1.003 | 0.267 |
| **agreeableness** | 0.810 | 0.528 |
| **consciousness** | 0.733 | 0.656 |
| **procrastination** | 0.896 | 0.399 |

## CONCLUSION

Some of personality theories and especially mental-dynamics theory pay attention to stress control. In the development period, most people learn how to deal with their dreams and inability in preventing stresses and temptations is a sign of neurosis increase among adults. Self-regulation can also be very active planning power, organizing and doing tasks desirably. Personal difference in this case is conscientiousness. A conscience person is purpose-oriented and strong-willed. Successful people, famous musicians and athletes have these characteristics in a high level. This domain is called "tendency to success". High score in C is associated with academic and career success and low score in C may cause the person to avoid subtlety, exactness and high cleanness. People with high scores in C are very disciplined, on time and trusted and people with low scores in C are not necessarily without moral principles but they are not exact in using moral principles. They are not very decisive in reaching their goals. There is evidence that shows these people are very hedonist and are have a high tendency to sexual affaires.

According to the view of Costa and McCrae[8], consciousness is included of the following dimensions:  competence, order, responsibility, endeavor to succeed, self-regulation and thought. A responsible person is only concentrated on some objectives and try very hard to achieve them. A conscience person is efficient, ordered and responsible. He is very disciplined and trustful and does everything to fulfill his responsibility. Therefore, there is an inconsistency between the emphasis on responsibility and endeavor with postponing and leaving responsibilities and there is negative relationship between conscious nesses with academic procrastination.

As a main clause of character, openness to experience is much less known than E and N. openness elements such as the active imagination of aesthetics, attention to inner feelings, diversity, intellectual curiosity and independence in judgment have often played a role in the theory and character components. But its integration in a wide range and forming a factor of the character has rarely been raised. Flexible people are curious about both the inner world and the outer world and their life is rich of experience. They are willing to accept new ideas and abnormal values and experience positive and negative excitements more than and deeper than inflexible people. The other Five-Factor models have often called this dimension as wisdom and flexibility scores are correlated with IQ test scores. Flexibility is concerned with different aspects of intelligence especially with the divergent thinking as a factor in creativity. Some very smart people are closed to experience. Correspondingly, some very flexible people have limited intelligence capacity. People who score low in flexibility are inclined to have conventional

behavior and maintain their position. These people prefer more familiar news and their emotional responses are very limited.

## REFERENCES

1. Steel, P. (2007). The Nature of Procrastination: A Meta-Analytic and Theoretical Review of Quintessential Self-Regulatory Failure. *Psychological Bulletin,* 133(1): 65-94.

2. Rothblum, E. D., Solomon, L. J., Murakami, J. (1986). Affective, Cognitive, And Behavioral Differences Between High And Low Procrastinators. *Journal of Counseling Psychology*, 33: 387-394.

3. McCown, W. (1986). Behavior of Chronic College Student Procrastination: An Experimental Study. *Social Science and Behavioral Documents*, 17, 133.

4. Klassen, R. M., Krawchuk, L. L., Rajani, S. (2008). Academic Procrastination Of Undergraduates: Low Self-Efficacy To Self-Regulate Predicts Higher Levels Of Procrastination. *Contemporary Educational Psychology*, 33, 915-931.

5. Schouwenburg, H. C., Lay, C., Pychyl, T. A., Ferrari, J. R. (2004). *Counseling the Procrastinator in Academic Settings*. DC: American Psychological Association, Washington.

6. Van Eerde, W. V. (2000). Procrastination: Self-Regulation in Initiating Aversive Goals. *Applied Psychology: An International Review*, 49 (3): 372- 389.

7. Diazmorales, J. F., Ferrari, J. R., Cohen, J. R. (2008). Indecision and Avoidant Procrastination: The Role of Morningness-Eveningness and Time Perspective in Chronic Delay Lifestyles. *Journal of General Psychology*, 13(3): 228-240.

8. McCrae R. R., Costa, P.T., Jr. (1989). Rotation to Maximize the Construct Validity of Factors in the NEO Personality Inventory. *Multivariate Behavioral Research*, 24 (1): 107-124.

9. Alexander, E., Onwuegbuzie, A.(2007) . Academic Procrastination and the Role of Hop as a Coping Strategy. *Personality and Individual Differences*.42 (7): 1301-1310.