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TENDENCIES FOR PERCEIVED SELF-EFFICACY AND PROCRASTINATION IN STUDENTS 5

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Abstract

This research was conducted in order to examine the relationship between the tendency to perceived self-efficacy and procrastination among third year students, divided by gender and school success to determinate if there are any difference in terms of procrastination and self-efficacy.

For the purpose of the research is used a convenience sample of 92 participants of which 29 male and 63 female respondents who are students in third year high school Josip Broz Tito in Skopje.

To collect data used appropriate measuring instruments such as The General Self-Efficacy Scale (GSE- like for general self-efficacy - Version student population) and The General Procrastination Scale (Lay, 1986).

SELF-EFFICACY

Self-efficacy is commonly defined as the belief in one's capabilities to achieve a goal or an outcome. Students with a strong sense of efficacy are more likely to challenge themselves with difficult tasks and be intrinsically motivated. These students will put forth a high degree of effort in order to meet their commitments, and attribute failure to things which are in their control, rather than blaming external factors. Self-efficacious students also recover quickly from setbacks, and ultimately are likely to achieve their personal goals. Students with low self-efficacy, on the other hand, believe they cannot be successful and thus are less likely to make a concerted, extended effort and may consider challenging tasks as threats that are to be avoided. Thus, students with poor self-efficacy have low aspirations which may result in disappointing academic performances becoming part of a self-fulfilling feedback cycle.

PEDAGOGIC STRATEGIES THAT FOSTER SELF-EFFICACY

Research shows that the type of learning environment and teaching method can improve self efficacy in the classroom (Bandura, 1994). The students' response indicated that a question and answer format, inquiry-based lab activities and conceptual (rather than quantitative) problems had a significant effect on creating a positive climate in the classroom. In addition to those pedagogies, collaborative learning and the use of electronic applications showed a positive correlation with increased self-efficacy in their student sample. Fencl and Scheel point out that the teaching methods that showed a measurable positive effect share the common feature of engaging students in a comfortable or creative manner. Moreover, pedagogies such as collaborative learning and inquiry-based activities have also been shown to have a strong correlation with how well students learn physics.

⁵ Original scientific paper

Bandura also concludes that cooperative learning strategies have the dual outcome of improving both self-efficacy and academic achievement. "Cooperative learning structures, in which students work together and help one another also tend to promote more positive self-evaluations of capability and higher academic attainments than do individualistic or competitive ones." (Bandura, A., 1994)

Other pedagogies for improving self-efficacy include:

• Establish specific, short-term goals that will challenge the students, yet are still viewed as attainable. (Schunk and Pajares, 2002)

• Help students lay out a specific learning strategy and have them verbalize their plan. As students proceed through the task, ask students to note their progress and verbalize the next steps. (Schunk and Pajares, 2002)

• Compare student performance to the goals set for that student, rather than comparing one student against another or comparing one student to the rest of the class(Bandura, 1994)

Self-Efficacy—In Seven Phases

Personal projects entail seven phases, each of which begins with a question that fosters self-efficacy.

Phase 1: What do I want to accomplish?

In phase one, students identify personal aspirations of interest. Typically, they don't share these with other students; rather, they record them in a journal that's accessible to the teacher only. To help students articulate their aspirations, a teacher might ask, "What would you do if you knew you wouldn't fail?" One female high school student might respond, "I want to go to the U.S. Air Force Academy and eventually fly military jets." A powerful addition to student projects is for the teacher to identify an aspiration and follow the same phases as the students.

Phase 2: Who else has accomplished the same goal, and who will support me?

During the second phase, students look for role models and mentors. The student who wants to fly jets might find her role model in Nicole Malachowski, who not only graduated from the U.S. Air Force Academy and flew F-15s in combat over Kosovo, but also was the first female to be selected to the Air Force's elite flying team, the Thunderbirds. The student might approach her own parents to be her mentors, just as Nicole Malachowski's parents were mentors for their daughter.

Phase 3: What skills and resources will I need to accomplish my goal?

Whereas phase one encourages students to "dream big" without any limitations, phase three asks them to confront the realities of their aspirations. During this phase, the young female student might find that she has to maintain a high grade-point average, procure a letter of recommendation from a U.S. senator or representative, and be in superb physical condition to be accepted into the Air Force academy.

Phase 4: What will I have to change about myself to achieve my goal?

This phase directly addresses the fourth self-efficacy skill: the ability to identify personal beliefs and habits that get in the way of accomplishing one's goals. It's probably the most confrontational of all the phases. Here, the student might realize that she gets discouraged easily when positive feedback begins to wane. As a result, she might resolve to work against this tendency.

Phase 5: What is my plan for achieving my goal, and how hard will it be?

This phase directly addresses the second self-efficacy skill: the ability to set concrete long- and short-term goals. Students develop written plans that detail the steps they will take

to accomplish their goals. With guidance from the teacher, the student who wants to fly jets might develop a detailed two-year plan that, when executed, would most likely result in a higher grade point average and enhanced physical conditioning.

Phase 6: What small steps can I take right now?

This phase partially addresses the third self-efficacy skill: the ability to monitor one's progress. Teachers might ask students to identify something they can accomplish within the next month or two that would be a small step toward their ultimate goal. Because Air Force cadets must regularly run long distances, the student might set the goal of being able to run the mile in less than eight minutes by the end of two months. An effective addition to this phase is for the teacher to ask students to write their small step on a piece of paper and put it in a self-addressed envelope. The teacher then mails these envelopes to students after two months.

Phase 7: How have I been doing, and what have I learned about myself?

In the last phase, students evaluate their overall progress and draw conclusions regarding what they have learned about themselves. The student who wants to fly jets might conclude that she's right on schedule, proud of herself because she's willing to dream big, and ready to celebrate her current progress. This phase is also a time when students can make adjustments in their efforts or time lines. Our student might find that she really isn't as committed to flying as she thought she was but that she's very committed to a career in the military. Such changes in direction are a natural consequence of exercising self-efficacy and are also to be celebrated.

PROCRASTINATION

Procrastination is the bane of most, if not all, college students. By the time we reach college, many of us are already experts at avoiding the inevitable. "Oh, we'll get to it," we say. And most of us do. We get it done, but not without a constant and looming pressure that builds until, the night before, we cram, sometimes all night long, to finish. The result? Seldom our best work. Was it worth it? Not a chance. So why do we procrastinate over and over again?

The reasons we procrastinate are easy to identify. We might feel overwhelmed by the task, or we may be perfectionists, or maybe we get distracted easily, or perhaps we are just plain lazy. Whatever the reason, the fact remains: procrastination creates more stress in our lives, and never yields our best results.

Since the demands placed on first-year college students are high, it is important to enter college knowing, first of all, that procrastination can severely hinder your academic performance. This is true in school as well as in life. With this in mind, it is essential to have a realistic game plan for overcoming procrastination in college. Here are some helpful tips once that first big project is assigned:

Assess the Task. Spend a few minutes thinking through everything that needs to be done, then, if possible, segment the task into various smaller pieces. It's much easier to tackle smaller chunks than one huge task.

"Once begun, it's half done." Yes, a cliché inspirational poster quote, but quite true. Don't shoot for completion in one sitting. This will overwhelm you every time. Just begin. Getting started is the key, and incremental progress will follow.

Schedule "Action Sessions." Progress, even a little bit each day, adds up, and over time increases your confidence that you can, that you will, finish. Schedule 15- to 30-minute "action sessions" with realistic goals in mind, and set your mind to completing these goals.

Eliminate Distractions. Find a quiet place, and try to make your "action sessions" count, all 15-30 minutes of them (or whatever amount of time you designate).

Reward Yourself. This can help seemingly painful projects become more pleasurable. After completing an "action session," take a nap, buy a latte, call a friend, round up a game of ultimate Frisbee. The point is to have something to look forward to, so that you begin to associate hard work at school with pleasure.

Find a (Good) Study Partner. And not just anyone, either. Find someone that cares about their performance even more than you do. The old adage, "If you want to be a good student, hang out with good students," is not only true, but imperative.

Be Reasonable. Don't beat yourself up about getting everything perfect. Remember, you will take on—and likely complete—hundreds, possibly thousands, of projects throughout your college career. The goal of making every one of them perfect is not only impossible, but silly. Remember, it's more important that every project gets finished, not that every project be perfect.

RESEARCH

The problem of this research is to explore the relationship of perceived self-efficacy with the tendency for procrastination among high school students, as well as to examine the differences between students who vary in gender and school achievement.

Sample

The sample in this study is composed of third year students from Gymnasium Josip Broz Tito in Skopje. It is consisted from 92 subjects of which 29 are male and 63 are female. In terms of school achievement in the sample are included students with excellent success (11 of which 3 males and 8 females), very good (33 respondents, of which 16 male and 17 female) and good success at school (out of 48 respondents, where 10 male and 38 female). In table 1 schematically is shown the structure of the sample according to the variables gender and school success.

Table 1. Structure of the sample

		Geno		
<u> </u>		Male	Female	Total
success	Good	3	8	11
ol suc	Very good	16	17	33
School	Excellent	10	38	48
	Total	29	63	92

Instruments

> The General Self-Efficacy Scale (GSE) is a 10-item psychometric scale that is designed to assess optimistic self-beliefs to cope with a variety of difficult demands in life. The scale has been originally developed in German by Matthias Jerusalem and Ralf Schwarzer in 1981 and has been used in many studies with hundred thousands of participants. In contrast to other scales that were designed to assess optimism, this one explicitly refers to personal agency, i.e., the belief that one's actions are responsible for successful outcomes. Perceived self-efficacy is a prospective and operative construct.

> The General Procrastination Scale (Lay, 1986) is a self-report measure of trait procrastination. This uni-dimensional inventory consists of 20 items describing general daily tasks such as "I often find myself performing tasks that I had intended to do days before." Each item is scored on a 5-point Likert-type scale (1 = False of me; 5 = True of me). Ten items are reversed scored, and responses are summed to obtain a single composite score with high scores reflecting procrasinatory behavior. The GP has been demonstrated to have a test-retest reliability of 0.80 (Ferrari, 1989) and a Cronbach alpha coefficient of 0.82. (Lay, 1986). According to Ferrari (1992), the GP scale is effective in measuring habitual task delay across several situations. The GP has been positively correlated with low self-esteem, defensive avoidance, disorganization, self-handicapping and individual need for achievement (Lay, 1986; Ferrari, 1992; Ferrari, et al., 1995).

Results

To check the hypothesis is used independent t-test and ANOVA.

	N	Xmin	Xmax	М	SD
Tendency for procrastination	92	32.00	69.00	51.33	8.43
Perceived self-efficacy	92	23.00	40.00	33.78	3.32

Table 2. Descriptive statistics for the level of self-efficacy and procrastination.

Table 3. Correlation between self-efficacy and procrastination

		Tendency for	Perceived self-
1		procrastination	efficacy
		l	
Tendency	_{for} R	1	-0.23*
procrastination	Р		0.026
	Ν	92	92
D	R	-0.23*	1
Perceived self-efficacy	Р	0.026	
	Ν	92	92

(r = -0,23; p < 0,05).

	Gender	N	M	SD	t-test	P
Tendency for procrastination	Man	2.9	49.86	7.70	-1.13	0.2
	Woman	63	52.00	8.72	-	
Perceived self-efficacy	Man	29	35.00	2.24	2.45	0,0
	Woman	63	33.22	3.59	1	

Table 5.	ANOVA	for	students	with	different	school	success	for	procrastination	and	self-
efficacy											

{			SS	df	М	F	Sig.
Tendency	for	Between	50.59	2	25.29	0.35	0.71
procrastination		groups					
		In groups	6413.63	89	72.06		
		Total	6464.22	91			
Perceived	self-	Between	15.90	2	7.95	0.72	0.49
efficacy		groups		1			
}		In groups	989.75	89	11.12	1	
		Total	1005.65	91			

CONCLUSION

The data is further processed using the statistical software package SPSS, version 20 where the first descriptive statisticians for certain variables, then obtained correlation tendency between procrastination and perceived self-efficacy after being sought for gender differences in terms of the aforementioned variables using a t-test and while no differences were found, and finally by using analysis of variance were examined differences between school achievement and the procrastination and perceived self-efficacy which also were not found statistically significant differences.

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