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PROCRASTINACIÓN Y CARACTERÍSTICAS DEMOGRÁFICAS ASOCIADOS EN ESTUDIANTES UNIVERSITARIOS

Procrastination and demographic characteristics associated with college students

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Resumen

La postergación voluntaria o involuntaria de responsabilidades que deben ser entregadas en un momento establecido también es denominada como procrastinación. Este fenómeno no es reciente en el actuar del ser humano; siendo que se registra desde hace muchos años atrás. Es interesante poder percibir que es una de las debilidades que el ser humano las practica con mayor ímpetu y la vez la menos entendida. El objetivo del estudio fue determinar el nivel de procrastinación en los estudiantes universitarios de la Universidad Peruana Unión sede Tarapoto. Muestra: 302 sujetos, ambos sexos entre 16 y 25 años. Se utilizó un diseño no experimental de tipo descriptivo. Instrumentos: Cuestionario de la Procrastinación creado por Ramírez, Tello y Vásquez (2013). Las propiedades psicométricas del instrumento indican que es válido y confiable. Los resultados evidencian que 33.7% de los estudiantes de la Universidad Peruana Unión pertenece al género femenino; de otro lado se aprecia que un 44% de estudiantes universitarios se ubican entre las edades de 16 y 20 años de edad respectivamente y quienes presentan mayores niveles de procrastinación. Asimismo, los estudiantes de la Facultad de Ingeniería y Arquitectura son quienes presentan un nivel alto de procrastinación (15.9%).

Palabras clave: Procrastinación, postergación, estudiante universitario, demografía.

Abstract

The voluntary or involuntary postponement responsibilities that must be delivered at a set time is also known as procrastination. This phenomenon is not new in the act of man, being that recorded many years ago. It is interesting to see that one of the weaknesses that the practical man more momentum and both the least understood. The aim of the study was to determine the level of procrastination in college students based Peruvian Union University Tarapoto. Sample: 302 subjects, both sexes between 16 and 25 years. We used a non-experimental descriptive. Instruments: Procrastination Questionnaire created by Ramirez Tello and Vasquez (2013). The psychometric properties of the instrument indicate that it is valid and reliable. The results show that 33.7% of students from the Universidad Peruana Union belongs to the female gender, on the other hand can be seen that 44% of college students are between the ages of 16 and 20 years old respectively, and those with higher levels of procrastination. Also students of the Faculty of Engineering and Architecture are those with a high level of procrastination (15.9%).

Key words: Procrastination, postponement, university student, demographics.

Introduction

We are living in an era where days, hours, and minutes are going faster and faster every time; similarly, the approaches of globalization and postmodernism, every time, more and more, are gaining momentum, this way, time equals money, and while some people fight for their objectives, others try to avoid a situation or liability; instead of doing an active effort to confront it, most surprising is that you, who is reading this might be part of this behavior that has been called procrastinación, phenomenon with negative consequences and very common in industrialized societies; so much so that it is considered a modern evil (Steel, 2007).

The term procrastination has appeared very often throughout history, and was regarded as something usual in human behavior, and it already had negative connotations in the industrial revolution (Ferrari and Emmons, 1995).

Ferrari and Emmons (1995) point to this as a pattern of behavior that is characterized by voluntarily postponing the realization of responsibilities that must be delivered at a set time. And if the person suffers from recurrent depression or anxiety, are more likely to be more vulnerable to procrastination as well as a symptom of depression or anxiety and a catalyst of the same ones. It may be a defense against a fear of failure.

Besides, Rothblum (1990) simply defines procrastination as the act of delaying a task with no reason at all which leads a person to experience feelings of discomfort, it is for this reason people show an avoidant pattern against situations involving high response cost or where they assess as too little the chance of achieving a good level of satisfaction regarding their performance.

The oldest reference related to the meaning of procrastination is found in a seventeenth-century sermon, of Rev. Walker, found on microfilms in the library of University of Ottawa in Ontario, Canada. This sermon was evidence of a connection between task avoidance, will, and sin, for it stated that people postponing their work was done on their own will and they were sinful for the same reason, for not being able to meet their goals of saints or scholars, only of getting old (Crane, 1999).

Likewise, Kachgal (2001) notes that prior to the industrial revolution, behaviour of postponing responsibilities had been seen with fairness and socially it was interpreted as a rational justified act, but examining it more, procrastination begins to take a negative mode from the onset of modernity when production systems become the basis for economic development of the society. That means it is not a recent event in human acting, as this concept has

been present for many decades, likewise in various parts of the world. Most surprising is that despite the passage of time, it still represents one of the least understood people's weaknesses (Klassen, Krawch, Lynch and Rajani, 2007).

Steel (2007) states that the first historical analysis on procrastination was written by Milgram in 1992, who stated that people usually get many commitments to be met in the short term, and not doing those leads them to procrastinate.

On the other hand, the time at university should be, for a person, a rewarding experience, friendly, pleasant, although in many cases this is rare, since today technology moves fast and makes, in one way or another, the college student to be tempted to procrastinate regarding the academic field of Ferrari (1991) that explains what voluntary delay in academic work is and which may occur because students intend to do their academic activity within the given time but do not feel motivated themselves or do not feel the desire to do it because of the aversion that causes this to them, or as Rothblum (1990) explains they are afraid of failure and aversion to tasks, or it is found in them low capacity of self regulation or a high level of anxiety in their performance (Klassen, Krawch, Lynch and Rajani, 2007).

One factor that appears to be closely related to procrastination is self-control; Ferrari and Emmons (1995) who defined this as the choice that a person makes to emit a behavior that will have consequences with higher values in the long-term rather than opting for a behavior that will have consequences involving a minor short-term value, so a self-controlled individual can determine short, médium, and long term goals, achieving pleasant consequences in each according to his/her purpose.

Regarding the above Wolters (2003) states that a person who usually evidence procrastination behaviors first agrees to the completion of a task, then begins to have complaining thoughts related to the activity progress and their inability to plan it and do it, therefore begin to show negative automatic thoughts related to low self-efficacy.

Thus, at present, more specific studies have been conducted on this topic, since this situation is extremely worrying, especially in the academic field, for example, in a study conducted in Latin America Ferrari, Ocallaghan, and Newbegin (2005) reported that approximately 61% of people show procrastination and 20% show chronic procrastination, the latter involves a regular pattern of delay behavior with regard to the tasks and activities which are their responsibility.

On the other hand Sirois (2007) states the period of greatest sensitivity and greater danger of procrastination is adolescence, appreciating that 80-95% of adolescents resort very often to procrastinating behaviors, showing that approximately 75% of students describe themselves as procrastinators, and about 50% show permanent features of procrastination with problematic consequences. At the same time, more than 95% of procrastinating adolescents have the desire to reduce procrastination, but not overcoming it, makes them develop a state of distress or self-blame, that ultimately results in poor mental health indicators as well as a low academic performance.

In Latin American countries, there is not much information that can tell us how this variable behaves according to the cultural, political, and social conditions since there are no instruments in the Spanish language for assessing academic procrastination.

Models that explain the procrastination variable

1. Baker's Psychodynamic model

This model explains procrastination as fear of failure and focuses on understanding the motivations of people who fail or withdraw from activities have despite sufficient capacity, intelligence, or preparation for success in their activities; besides, it explains that fear of failure is because of the establishment of pathological family relationships, where the role of parents has facilitated frustration maximization and the child's self-esteem minimization. And it was the first model to study the behaviors related to postponement of tasks (Baker, 1979, cited by Rothblum, 1990).

2. Motivational Model

This model states that achievement motivation is an invariable feature where the person invests a number of behaviors that are aimed at achieving success in any circumstances they occur, by which an individual can choose two positions: hope of reaching success or fear of failure, the first refers to motivational achievement and the second to motivation to avoid a situation a person values as negative. When fear of failure overweighs hope of success, people prefer to choose activities they perceive that success is guaranteed and thus postponing activities that they consider complex and in which they may predict failure (McCown, Ferrari and Johnson, 1991).

3. Skinner's Behavioral Model

The current behavioral view states that a behavior remains when it is strengthened, it means, behaviors persist due to their consequences (Skinner, 1977). Therefore, people procrastinate because their postponing behaviors have been properly fed back and have also had success due to various factors typical of the environment, which have allowed to continue this type of action. Also, people who suffer from behavioral procrastination, plan, organize, and initiate actions that they leave aside early without anticipating the benefits they may get when completing the task.

4. Wolters Cognitive Model

This model states that procrastination involves a dysfunctional information processing which involves maladaptive schemas related to the inability and fear of social exclusion, and procrastinators usually reflect on their delaying behavior; individuals experience obsessive ways of thinking when they cannot do an activity or when they get closer to submission time. Besides, they first agree to do a task, they later start to have complaining thoughts related to the progress of the activity and their inability to plan or do it; therefore, negative automatic thoughts related to low self-efficacy start to emerge (Wolters, 2003).

After seeing the different theoretical approaches. Now, we present and define the theoretical model in which our study is supported.

Academic procrastination

Regarding the term in the academic field, Ferrari (1995) explains it is the voluntary delay of doing their academic responsibilities and it may be because students intend to realize an academic activity in due time but they are not motivated or do not feel the desire to do so because of the aversion they have to doing the task, or it is found in them low self-regulation capability low or a high level of performance anxiety (Klassen, Krawch, Lynch and Rajani, 2007).

Family Procrastination

In this area Klassen, Krawch, Lynch, and Rajan (2007) explain it is voluntary delay of doing the duties and family roles that at a certain time it is assigned to someone, and it may be because people intend to do the activity in due time but they are not motivated or do not feel the desire to do so because of the aversion they have to doing the task.

Emotional Procrastination

Emphasizing this dimension Ferrari and Emmons (1995) mention that procrastination is a behavioral pattern with deep emotional roots, of which they are not aware. Some individuals find some special excitement in postponing the opening of an activity because of the overload in energy they experience. They show a kind of addiction due to the excitement that causes them to gather information at last minute, organize it, and submit it on time, if they feel it, they experience a great pleasure and tend to praise themselves for their achievement.

Research Design and Type

The research corresponds to non-experimental design, of descriptive type because it was sought to determine the level of procrastination in students of Peruvian Union University, site Tarapoto. (Hernández, Fernández, and Bautista, 2010).

Sample

Consisted of 302 male and female college students, registered at Universidad Peruana Union, site Tarapoto.

Variables

Procrastination.

Instruments

Procrastination Questionnaire created by Ramirez, Tello, and Vasquez (2013) and consists of 30 items.

To validate the instrument, expert judgements were sought; they evaluated the coherence, clarity, conciseness, sufficiency, fulfillment of objectives, replicability and relevance of the items presented in the instrument; regarding statistical justification, a pilot test was carried out prior to data collection in order to obtain information that may help us improve the validity and reliability of the instrument and find out any problem in construct and content validity.

On the other hand, students participation was voluntary where they were provided with some nature of the work and the benefits the real knowledge of the problem could generate, since the conclusions will be available to the university community. Likewise, the respective informed consent was

subscribed as evidence of an agreement of collaboration and mutual respect among students and researchers.

Furthermore, for data analysis, we have used descriptive statistics techniques with a significance level of $p < 0.05$. We have also used the SPSS Statistical Software for Windows to process and analyze the data.

Psychometric properties of the Procrastination Questionnaire

Reliability

In regard to determining the reliability in its mode of internal consistency Cronbach's alpha coefficient was estimated, obtaining as a result for the total scale a value of 0.940 (Procrastination Questionnaire) being valued as an indicator of high reliability (Adkins, 1994). Besides, Alpha coefficients of the dimensions that tests Academic, Family, and Emotional procrastination let us obtain reliable results from the point of view of the assumptions of the statistical theory, such value is an indicator of good internal consistency (Table 1).

Table 1. Reliability estimates using Cronbach's alpha coefficient for the Procrastination Questionnaire

Dimensions	N.º of ítems	Alpha
Academic	10	.861
Family	10	.843
Emotional	10	.843
Procrastinación	30	.940

Validity

As we can see from Table 2, the coefficients resulting from the correlation between each of the components of the construct and the construct in their entirety are moderate to strong, besides being highly significant, these data show the existence of Instrument Construct validity (Estreiner and Norman, 1989).

Table 2. Test sub-test correlations for the Procrastination questionnaire

Sub test Test		
r	p	
Académic	0.860**	0.000
Family	0.830 **	0.000
Emotional	0.830 **	0.000

** The correlation is significant at 0.01

Descriptive analysis of the study variables

Table 03 shows that 33.7% of students of Union Peruvian University belongs to the female gender, on the other hand we can see that 44% of college students are between 16 and 20 years of age respectively and who show with higher levels of procrastination. Likewise, we can see that 28.9% belongs to the Faculty of Business (CE) who show an average level of procrastination unlike students of the Faculty of Engineering and Architecture (FIA) who show a high level of procrastination (15.9)

Table 3. Procrastination levels by demographic characteristics (percentage in parentheses)

Characteristics	Low		Average		High		Total	
Sex								
Male	24	(8.0)	55	(18.2)	26	(8.6)	105	(34.8)
Female	44	(14.7)	102	(33.7)	51	(16.8)	197	(65.2)
Age								
16-20	51	(16.9)	133	(44.0)	59	(19.6)	243	(80.5)
21-25	17	(5.6)	24	(7.9)	18	(6.0)	59	(19.5)
Faculty								
FACISAL	23	(7.6)	61	(20.2)	10	(15.9)	94	(31.1)
FIA	26	(8.6)	9	(3.0)	48	(15.9)	83	(27.5)
CE	19	(6.2)	87	(28.9)	19	(6.3)	125	(41.4)
Total	68	(22.5)	157	(52.0)	77	(25.5)	302	(100)

Regarding the academic procrastination dimension in Table 04 we can see that female college students between 16 and 20 years of age are those with higher levels of procrastination (19.2%); in regard to the faculties FIA, CE, and FACISAL (Health Sciences), we can see the Faculty of Engineering and Architecture (FIA) shows a high level of academic procrastination (15.3%).

Table 4. Academic procrastination levels by demographic characteristics (percentage in parentheses)

Characteristics	Low		Average		High		Total	
Sex								
Male	14	(4.6)	64	(21.2)	27	(9.0)	105	(34.8)
Female	43	(14.2)	103	(34.1)	51	(16.9)	197	(65.2)
Age								
16-20	41	(13.6)	144	(47.7)	58	(19.2)	243	(80.5)
21-25	16	(5.3)	23	(7.6)	20	(6.6)	59	(19.5)
Faculty								
FACISAL	16	(5.3)	64	(21.2)	14	(4.6)	94	(31.1)
FIA	26	(8.6)	11	(3.6)	46	(15.3)	83	(27.5)
CE	15	(5.0)	92	(30.5)	18	(5.9)	125	(41.4)
Total	57	(18.9)	167	(55.3)	78	(25.8)	302	(100)

Regarding family procrastination, Table 05 shows that female college students who are between 16 and 20 years of age are those with higher levels of procrastination; in regard to the faculties we can see that the Faculty of Engineering and Architecture (FIA) shows a high level of academic procrastination (13.2%).

Table 5. Family procrastination levels by demographic characteristics (percentage in parentheses)

Characteristics	Low		Average		High		Total	
Sex								
Male	22	(7.3)	57	(18.9)	26	(8.6)	105	(34.8)
Female	38	(12.6)	101	(33.4)	58	(19.2)	197	(65.2)
Age								
16-20	43	(14.2)	136	(45.0)	64	(21.3)	243	(80.5)
21-25	17	(5.6)	22	(7.3)	20	(6.6)	59	(19.5)
Faculty								
FACISAL	13	(4.3)	65	(21.5)	16	(5.3)	94	(31.1)
FIA	28	(9.3)	15	(5.0)	40	(13.2)	83	(27.5)
CE	19	(6.3)	78	(25.8)	28	(9.3)	125	(41.4)
Total	60	(19.9)	158	(52.3)	84	(27.8)	302	(100)

In table 06, In regard to the emotional procrastination dimension, we see that female college students 16 to 20 years of age are those with higher levels of procrastination (21.9%), in regard to the Faculties, we find the Faculty of Engineering and Architecture (FIA) shows a high level of academic procrastination (15.9%).

Table 6. Emotional procrastination levels by demographic characteristics (percentage in parentheses)

Characteristics	Low		Average		High		Total	
Sex								
Male	18	(6.0)	58	(19.2)	29	(9.6)	105	(34.8)
Female	40	(13.2)	100	(33.1)	57	(18.9)	197	(65.2)
Age								
16-20	46	(15.2)	131	(43.4)	66	(21.9)	243	(80.5)
21-25	12	(4.0)	27	(8.9)	20	(6.6)	59	(19.5)
Faculty								
FACISAL	17	(5.6)	62	(20.5)	15	(5.0)	94	(31.1)
FIA	26	(8.6)	9	(3.0)	48	(15.9)	83	(27.5)
CE	15	(5.0)	87	(28.8)	23	(7.6)	125	(41.4)
Total	58	(19.2)	158	(52.3)	86	(28.5)	302	(100)

Discussion

At present there are various psychological instruments that measure depression, anxiety, study habits, satisfaction, stress, among others; however, the ones that measure procrastination are scarce; that is why the instrument used in this study successfully meets the reliability criteria in the mode of internal consistency and construct validity. Regarding reliability procrastination questionnaire, Cronbach Alpha values show an index of 0.940. This indicates acceptable internal consistency, since it is above the cutoff threshold equal to 0.70, considered as an indicator of good reliability for psychological measuring instruments (Miech, 2002), and regarding construct validity it was found in the correlation analysis test subttes a high degree of association. Accordingly, we conclude that the procrastination questionnaire presents evidence of Construct Validity.

It should be noted that when doing literature review it has been found few studies that have worked on procrastination variable, possibly due to the few instruments in the community. However, the results of our study are somewhat similar to the results found in the research entitled Academic Procrastination: exploring the phenomenon among adolescent students in Metropolitan Lima, it was an observational, analytical cross-sectional study. Where random sampling was used, by clusters. There were 292 participants. This study was conducted by Contreras, Mori, Lam, Gil, and Hinojosa (2011) where they found evidence of procrastination behaviours.

Then, a very important finding in this study is the confirmation that procrastination is going up. Likewise, research conducted by Onwuegbuzie (2004), Tice and Baumeister (1997), and Landry (2003) tell us that approximately 20% of the American university population shows chronic procrastination, and 50% of them perceive it that way, and meanwhile, we see behaviors associated with procrastination in over 80%. But, in 70% of cases there are a desire to change these behaviors (Sanchez, 2010).

Another of our findings to highlight is that in regards to gender differences, we can say that women are the ones with procrastinating behaviors (65.8%). Specifically, it is also important to consider that students in the School of Engineering and Architecture are those with a high level of procrastination (15.9).

Finally, it is interesting to be able to see that procrastination (procrastinating behaviors) is one of the weaknesses that human beings practice with great impetus.

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Received: March 20, 2013

Accepted: June 20, 2013

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