

The predictive Role of Social Adjustment, Academic Procrastination and Academic Hope in the High School Students' Academic Burnout

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Abstract

Purpose: The aim of the current study was to predict the high school students' academic burnout based on social adjustment, academic procrastination and academic hope. **Materials and method:** Current research method was descriptive and correlational. The study population included all high school students of the state female high schools of Bojnourd. 350 students were selected as a sample employing multi-cluster sampling method. In order to collect data, social adjustment inventory, assessment scale of procrastination (PAS), academic hope and academic Burnout questionnaire were employed. Stepwise regression analysis was employed for data analysis. **Findings:** The results showed statistically significant Correlations between burnout scores with social adjustment, academic procrastination and academic hope scores. Also *Stepwise* regression analysis revealed that students' burnout could be predicted by social adjustment, academic procrastination and academic hope. **Discussion:** Based on hope theories, the main reasons of academic procrastination and academic burn out were factors such as social adjustment and academic hope. Students who procrastinate and experience burn out because of hate toward doing the assignment tend to postpone it and thus have low hope and social adjustment because they are incapable of doing their assignments.

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1. Introduction

New Researches (Alexander & Onwuegbuzie, 2007; Babadogan, 2010; Boffeli, 2007) reveals that students Success in education depend on various factors which are interrelated and interact with each other. One of the main educational phenomena among high school students is academic burnout. The phenomena of burnout have been investigated in a number of specific professions including human service workers (Wade, Cooley, & Savicki, 1986), nurses (Baran Oladi, Etemadi & Karami, 2012), teachers (Green glass, Fiksenbaum, & Burke, 1994), school psychologists (Mills & Huebner, 1998; Sandoval, 1993) and psychologists (Ackerley, Burnell, Holder, & Kurdek 1988; Kahili, 1986). Yang (2004) also reported that “student burnout can lead to higher absenteeism, lower motivation to do required course work, higher percentage of dropout” (cited in Yang, 2004, p.287). Durán, Extremer, Rey, Fernández-Berrocal, & Montalbán, (2006) found that student burnout was positively related with perceived stress, and negatively associated with self-efficacy, perceived emotional intelligent and academic engagement among students.

2. Research Background

Boudreau, Santen, Hemphill and Dobson (2004) reported that burnout was related to stressors including long hours engaging in practicum work, academic grades, uncertainty about the future plans, struggling to maintain relationships, control problems, low support from friends, less satisfaction with respondents' balance between personal and professional life, not having enough time and interaction with peers. Similarly, Jacobs and Dodd (2003) found that negative personality traits and perceived workload were associated with high levels of burnout, while positive personality traits, peer support, and participation in extracurricular activities were associated with low levels of burnout. In summary the negative and undesirable consequences of burnout suggest that life for the students who experience burn out is chaotic and seemingly out of control. It may negatively affect the overall quality of life and the school experience, students' well-being and academic hope.

Academic hope is a positive expectation to achieve the goals and is a uni-dimensional structure including understanding this issue which is an achievable goal (Snyder, 2000).

Cooper (2008) defines hope as a positive motivational state based on sensory interaction, derived from successful strategies (strategies for success orientation) and crossings (designs to achieve goals). Thus, hope has three components: 1) having specific goals, 2) thinking of crossings which help a person to create passageways to reach the goal, 3) determination, which includes the utilization of a person's ability to move toward the goal. In addition, this component is also known as the agent which the person's belief about the possibility of achieving the goal and having trust toward one's movement (Mc Dermott, Snyder, 2000).

Academic Hope theory is a motivational theory which explains how students use the educational passageways called crossing thought, agent and motivation to achieve educational goal (Snyder, 2002). Crossing thought consists of some methods and ways of thinking that are used to achieve educational goals. Agent thought shows the people's motivation for their hard works. Goals of the final points about the agent and crossing thought are behaviors that are intrinsically connected with planning, and as results the appropriate results for the behavior are expected (Snyder, 1994).

Hope theory is associated with goals which have at least moderate importance and their possibly to achieve (Averil, Catlin & Chon, 1990). The triangle of goals, crossing and agent are two additional assumptions of hope theory, obstacles and excitement. In pursuing the goals, sometimes crossing barriers hinder people's goals. These obstacles may be distressing and because crossing thought (Snyder, Lehman, Kluck & Monsson, 2006). Emotions are goal-oriented thoughts (Snyder, 2000).

Procrastination is taken from the Latin word "Procrastinus," Pro- means precursor and Crustiness means tomorrow, and the combination of these two words mean to postpone, delay, prolong, postpone or fail to perform a task (Asif, 2011). Procrastination has been described as a self-regulatory style in which the beginning or end of a task is postponed (Ferrai & Tice, 2000). Vanerde (2000) defines procrastination as an action to avoid making a decision (according to Levy, 2010). What can be inferred from these definitions is that the most important aspect of procrastination is "a task not being done within an appropriate specified time period". One type of procrastination which has received much attention from researchers is academic procrastination. This type of procrastination is the unreasonable desire to delay the beginning of course assignments.

Students may actually intend to do their assignments in an expected timeframe but fail to do so (Ferrari, 1998). Studies show that procrastination is very common among students. Therefore, it is estimated that approximately 50 to 95 percent of all students procrastinate to do their assignments (Steel, 2007, Ellis & Knaus 2002). Academic procrastination is defined as an irrational delay in performing academic tasks required of students (e.g., studying for exams, reading assignments, performing academic administrative and attendance tasks) (Özer, Demir, & Ferrari, 2009). Academic procrastination is a significant problem for college students, a moderate to strong negative predictor of grade point average (Moon & Illingworth, 2005), and a positive predictor of stress (Chu & Choi, 2005).

Social adjustment as an important indication of psychology health is a topic attracting the attention of many psychologists. Social growth is the most important aspect of one's development and acquired through the relationship with others especially with the parents, peers and the teachers. It is the assessing criterion of social growth related to the person's adjustment with oneself and others (Hartup & Rubin, 2013). On the other hand, living in a human society requires observing a set of values and expectations, and meeting one's expectations and value framework that a person needs for a sufficient amount of adjustment. Without adjustment, the person is not able to meet many of his/her basic needs. If one is incompatible with the society properly, he will feel isolated.

Nasir and Lin (2012) believe that one's personality, self-concept and social interactions are stemmed from his or her compatibility. Adjustment is an effective factor for one's positive self-concept. Hence, a person who has a positive self-concept has a vast range of joys and interests. Rogers (1951) indicated that one who does not have a clear self-concept is not compatible. Rogers's makes a differentiation between one's actual-self rooted in one's experience and one's ideal self which one wants to gain. To Rogers, if these two selves are far separated, one suffers more from incompatibility and vice versa. When one has positive self-concept, s/he feels more valuable, has a high self-esteem, behaves confidently and enjoys high social adjustment (Rogers, 1951).

Dhingra and Colleagues (2005) assert that adjustment is a continuous process through which one changes to be in proper adjustment with his environment, others, and him/herself. The basic objective to adjustment is to set a balance between one's wishes and social expectations that affects all aspects of one's life. As a result, the person can respond properly to all environmental stimuli to acquire his favorable stimuli and reinforcement. Although adjustment contains many aspects like social, emotional,

physical and educational dimensions; the best aspect is social adjustment which is the prerequisite to the other aspects of adjustment (Mazaheri, Baghiyan, & Fatehizadeh, 2006). Emotional and social adjustment resulting from positive self-concept can provide the person with some kind of ability to face the difficulties, and a higher self-esteem strengthens one's ability to efficiently tackle with the psychological pressures (Wilbum & Smith, 2005).

Findings of Hartup and Rubin (2013) shows that some level of academic procrastination is underestimating the time necessary to complete reading tasks, missing deadlines for submitting the assignments, preparing for examinations, receiving low course grades, and course withdrawal (Beswick, Rothblum, and Mann, 1988; Fritzsche, Rapp, & Hickson, 2003; Kachgal, Hansen, & Nutter, 2001; McCown, Petzel, & Rupert, 1987; Onwuegbuzie, 1999/2000, 2004; Semb, Glick, & Spencer, 1979). Indeed, academic procrastination is shown by students as an excuse for their poor performance in test situations (Beck, Koons, & Milgrim, 2000) to protect these students' level of self-esteem by removing the possibility that their performance levels attributed to intelligence deficits (Ferrari, 1991, 1992, 1994). However, undergraduate students perceive that their procrastination tendency is a barrier to their academic success (Fritzsche et al., 2003; Kachgal et al., 2001). Researchers have suggested that acculturative stress (Ying & Han, 2006), lower language proficiency (Yeh & Inose, 2003), and low academic self-efficacy (Gong & Fan, 2006) could account for students' academic problems including academic procrastination. Snyder, Erving and Anderson (1991) investigated students who were at the upper and lower levels of hope from among 384 students. The students with high degree of hope reported a strong sense of confidence and a sense of supreme self-value, life satisfaction and low levels of depression. Students who had less hope had more depressive symptoms and interpersonal relationships and were unable to forget their personal mistakes. Also, when they faced pressure, they tended to avoid stressful situations and spent less effort (Quoted from Baran Oladi, Etemadi, Karami, 2012).

In a literature review, Chavens, Feldman and Snyder (2005) showed that hope is related to academic performance of students in guidance school, high school and university. Erikson (2000) also noted that teachers in the learning process are able to inspire hope in their students. Hope enables the students to imagine and fantasize things they are going to learn. Besides, hope is obviously linked to performance and achievement; e.g. researchers have reported that students with high level of hope have a better GPA. Academic stress can affect students' self-esteem and self-confidence (Ertugut & Ertugut, 2010). Even in some cases, academic stress can lead to depression (Senecal, Koestner & Vallerand, 1995).

The lack of self-confidence caused by academic failure usually leads to withdrawal from matters related to the academic achievements one of which is completion of course assignments. Students would be reluctant, pessimistic and feel certain that their efforts would bear same failure. At the end the students would prefer to postpone the completion of their course assignments due to a priori the results of which will not be much different although they have done their best.

College students are challenged to manage a number of stressful situations and academic demands that include class assignments, examinations and evaluations in a limited time, and their familial commitments and responsibilities during their undergraduate training. In addition, the level of academic procrastination may lead to stress among college students. Van WYK (2004) found that increased level of procrastination results in increased levels of stress among teachers. McCown and Roberts (1994) noted that a considerable part of college students viewed academic procrastination as an important source of personal stress. Procrastination could create stress by increasing time pressure to complete

their academic assignments. Because of procrastinating students tend to do not complete tasks on time, and tend to start studying later for exams and study for some limited time (Jackson, Weis, Lundquist & Hooper, 2001; Lay, 1986; Lay & Burns, 1991).

Howard and Johnson (2004) reported that time pressure (inadequate time for preparation, imposed unrealistic deadlines) is one of the key causes of stress among teachers. In fact, Tice and Baumeister (1997) founded that procrastinating students reported increased occurrences of illness and stress toward the end of the specified time. It can be said that procrastination may lead to the point that the students appear to be predisposed to burnout. In the burnout literature, a numbers of researches have emphasized relation between burnout and stress (Chang, Rand & Strunk, 2000; Tobin & Carson, 1994). Durán, Extremera, Rey, Fernández-Berrocal, and Montalba (2006) found that emotional exhaustion and cynicism were positively related with perceived stress among college students. D'Aurora and Fimian (1988) reported that burnout symptoms may develop, when stress levels are standing over a period of time. In the light of above findings which show the negative and unpleasant consequences of procrastination, the first hypothesis of this study is that academic procrastination and three dimensions of burnout are positively correlated, and academic procrastination will predict the three dimensions of burnout.

3. Method

The method of the current study was quantitative method and it was practical on the basis of goal. For data collection descriptive and correlational method was employed.

1.3. Participants

Statistical population was consisting of all high school students of Bojnourd city in academic year of 94-95 which include 3600 people. According to Kerjeci and Morgan 384 people were selected. Multi cluster sampling method was employed for sampling. As a first step all female state high school of Bojnourd educational system were selected (25 school). At the second step 5 high school were selected from all female schools and at the third step two classes from every high school were selected. Finally, all volunteered students were selected as a sample of the study. Selected students completed the questionnaire. Invalid questionnaires (34 people) were deleted and finally 350 questionnaires were remaining.

2.3. Research Tools

1.2.3. Assessment Scale of Procrastination (PAS)

This scale has been developed by Solomon and Ruth Bloom (1984). The scale contains 27 items which explain three components of "preparation for exams", "doing the assignments" and "preparing for the end of term paper". The first component, "preparation for exams" is comprised of eight questions, the second component, "doing the assignments, including eleven items, and third component, "preparing for the end of term paper" is composed of eight items. Questions number 7, 8, 18.26 and 27 which were to assess two features of "discomfort about procrastination" and "willingness to change the habits of procrastination" were considered. It should be noted that, as the creator of the scale suggests, these six questions were not cited to be measured for the validity and reliability. In this scale, there were four options for each item ranging from "rarely" (score of one) to "always" (score of four).

Items 2, 3, 5, 9, 11, 13, 15, 16, 21, 23 and 25 were excluded and other items were graded directly. Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficient for this scale was .64 and it has been reported by Solomon and Ruth Bloom (1984). Also, the ratio .84 for internal consistency and reliability was measured as an indicator of validity. In a research, Hosseini-Chari and Dehghani Nasab (2008) used Cronbach's alpha internal consistency and reliability to determine the reliability and validity of the scale to examine the "prediction of academic procrastination based on self-regulated learning strategies", and the Cronbach's alpha coefficient was .79. In the present study, Cronbach's alpha coefficient was .81 that was at optimal level.

2.2.3. Maslach Burnout Inventory-Student Survey (MBSS)

The MBSS is designed to measure the burnout level of students. It contains 15 items which evaluate the dimensions of Emotional Exhaustion (5 items), Cynicism (4 items) and Academic Efficacy (6 items). Respondents used a 7-point scale ranging from 1 (never) to 7 (always) to indicate the level of agreement with each item. High scores on Exhaustion and Cynicism and Reduced Academic Efficacy dimensions reflected burnout (Schaufeli et al., 2002). They report adequate internal consistency measured with a coefficient alpha of .80 for emotional exhaustion, coefficient alpha of .86 for cynicism, and coefficient alpha of .67 for academic efficacy.

Balkis, Duru, Buluş and Duru (2011) examined psychometric characteristics of the MBI-SS for Turkish population. They reported internal consistency coefficient alpha of .83 for emotional exhaustion, .80 for cynicism, .70 for academic efficacy, and .83 for total scale for Turkish sample. For the structural validity of the instrument, the 15 items were factor analyzed, using principal-components analysis with oblimin rotations. The total percentage variance explained by the three-factor solution was 55.3% with emotional exhaustion, cynicism, and reduced academic efficacy accounting for 31.08%, 14.79% and 9.42% of the variance respectively (Balkis et al, 2011).

3.2.3. Adjustment Inventory for School Students (AISS)

This questionnaire was designed by E.K.P Sinha and R.P. Singh (1993) and standardized in Iran by Karami (2001). It has 60 questions and assesses the adjustment of high school students (14-18) in 3 fields of emotional, social and educational levels (each contains 20 questions). Zero is assigned for those who answered adjustment and one for those who answered maladjustment. In Persian version, the validity of the questionnaire obtained through test-retest method in 0.93 level (Karami, 2001).

4.2.3. Academic Hope

Academic Hope was measured with the *trait Hope Scale* (THS; Snyder, 2002). The scale is based upon Snyder's cognitive model of hope which defines hope as "a positive motivational state that is based on an interactively derived sense of successful (a) agency (goal-directed energy), and (b) pathways (planning to meet goals)" (Snyder, et al., 1991, p. 287). The THS contains 12 items. Four items measure pathways thinking, four items measure agency thinking, and four items are fillers. Participants respond to each item using an 8-point scale ranging from definitely false to definitely true. An example item is "I energetically pursue my goals". Higher scores indicate higher levels of dispositional hope. Cronbach Alpha reliability scores of the total scale range from .74 to .84.

4. Findings

In order to test whether Social Adjustment, Academic procrastination and academic hope were related to burnout or not, initially correlation between burnout scores and Social Adjustment, Academic procrastination and academic hope scores were examined by computing a Pearson correlation (Pearson's r). The results showed statistically significant correlations between burnout scores and social adjustment, academic procrastination and academic hope scores. Academic procrastination was significantly and positively correlated with social adjustment ($r = .34, p < 0.01$), academic hope ($r = .66, p < 0.01$), students' burnout ($r = .28, p < 0.01$). Distribution of data score of Social Adjustment ($z = 1.21, p < 0.05$), academic procrastination ($z = .86, p < 0.05$), academic hope ($z = .93, p < 0.05$) and student's burnout ($z = .81, p < 0.05$) was normal. Table 1 provides the detailed results of this correlation analysis.

Table 1. The relationship between social adjustment, academic procrastination and academic hope with student's burnout

variables	S A	AP	AH	SB	z	M	SD	Min	Max	a
SA	1				1/21	61/34	6/34	12	80	0/93
AP	0/34	1			0/86	57/37	5/22	16	79	0/90
AH	0/54	0/66	1		0/93	89/12	8/11	10	80	0/89
SB	0/51	0/28	0/31	1	0/81	56/09	5/76	11	54	0/80

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$

Note: SA, AP, AH, SB, z, L, M, SD, MIN, MAX, a and N stand for Social Adjustment, Academic procrastination, academic hope and students Burnout, Kolmogorov Simonov test, Levin test of homogeneity, Mean, Standard deviation, Minimum score, Maximum score, alpha, Number of participants in turn.

In order to examine whether social adjustment, academic procrastination and academic hope can statistically predict students' burnout or not, multiple regression analyses were performed. The results showed that students burnout was predicted by social adjustment ($\beta = .117, p < .05$). Academic procrastination ($\beta = .227, p < .05$) and academic hope ($\beta = .347, p < .001$). Table 3 provides the detailed results of stepwise regression analysis.

Table 2: Regression Analysis for Variables Predicting Burnout

Variables	B	SEB	β	R2	sig
Social Adjustment	0/117	0/234	0/222	0/11	0/03
Academic procrastination	0/227	0/332	0/334	0/20	0/04
academic hope	0/347	0/456	0/430	0/23	0/02

Table 3: stepwise regression analysis for Variables Predicting Burnout

Variables	B	SEB	β	R2	f
Model 1					
Social Adjustment	0/117	0/234		0/17	2/35
Model 2					
Social Adjustment	0/347	0/332			2/44
Academic procrastination	0/228	0/456		0/20	3/31
Model 3					
Social Adjustment	0/117	0/231			4/37
Academic procrastination	0/228	0/422			4/89
Academic hope	0/347	0/356		0/31	5/98

** $p < .001$, * $p < .05$

6. Discussion

Results of the current study found statistically significant correlations between burnout scores with social adjustment, academic procrastination and academic hope scores. Also *Stepwise* regression analysis revealed that students' burnout was predicted by social adjustment, academic procrastination and academic hope.

According to the results, one of the main predictors of students' burnout was academic procrastination which is a special form of procrastination that occurs in the academic settings. It involves knowing that one needs to carry out an academic task or undertake an academic activity such as writing a term paper, studying for examinations, finishing a school related project, or undertaking the weekly reading assignments, but for one reason or another failing to motivate oneself to do so within the expected time frame (Ackerman and Gross, 2005).

Considering the point that there is no universally accepted definition for procrastination, Tice and Baumeister (1997) concluded that the procrastinators might obtain genuine benefits in the short run but their short-term "benefits are eventually more than offset by the costs, however, because the stress and illness suffered by procrastinators late in the task exceed and outweigh the initial benefits" (p. 458) and academic procrastination "apparently leads to loss of social adjustment and academic hope" (p. 457).

It also leads students to experience various psychological and behavioral problems, such as anxiety (Carden, Bryant & Moss, 2004; Haycock, McCarthy & Skay, 1998; Onwuegbuzie & Jiao, 2000; Wang and Englander, 2010), depression (Saddler & Sacks, 1993), shame (Fee & Tangney, 2000), cheating and plagiarism (Roig and De Tomaso, 1995), fear of failure (Schulenburg, 1992), and task averseness (Schraw, Olafson & Wadkins, 2007; Solomon & Rothblum, 1984). Fear of failure also is associated with perfectionism, evaluation anxiety, and low self-confidence (Moneta, Spada, & Rost, 2007; Solomon and Rothblum, 1984; Thompson & Dinnel, 2001). Lack of hope is one of the main reasons for the academic procrastination and subsequent academic failure. Lack of motivation and frustration that were cited frequently by students participating in the study was that education, even at its best state, may not lead to the expected outcomes. Many participants believed that spending time for studying end with poverty and deprivation.

It can be stated that based on motivational theories such as hope therapy which explain the main reasons of academic procrastination and academic burn out and reducing it by factors such as self-control and self-efficacy, students who procrastinate because of hate toward doing the assignment tend to postpone it and thus, have low hope and social adjustment because they are incapable of doing their assignments (Soe, 2008).

Strengthening the hope beliefs and giving the positive points are the hope therapy goals that could easily cover these items. In this regard, Steele (2007) considers the interventions such as motivational perspective to reduce the procrastination and burn out to focus on increasing social adjustment which resulted from defining the goal, perception of management and alternative thinking and is also confirmed in this study.

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