



The Status of Procrastination among College Students and Its Influencing Factors

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Abstract

Objective: To explore the status of procrastination among college students and analyze its influencing factors.

Methods: A total of 774 undergraduates were selected from Guangdong Province by stratified random sampling. They were investigated with General Procrastination Scale (GPS), Academic Self-Efficacy Scale (ASES), Adolescence Time Management Disposition Inventory (ATMDI), and a self-compiled personal general information questionnaire. Results: First, the total scores of GPS, ASES, and ATMDI in this group were (66.46 ±14.44), (73.14 ±10.91), and (146.60 ±19.47), respectively. Second, multiple linear stepwise regression analysis showed that the following three factors including part-time job, being a student leader, and understanding of the major ($\beta=0.243, 0.069, 0.064$, all $P<0.005$), positively predicted total score of GPS; and four factors like ASES total score, ATMDI total score, grade, and satisfaction with school management system negatively predicted GPS totalscore ($\beta=-0.072$ to -0.442 , all $P<0.05$). Conclusion: Procrastination is a common learning psychological problem among college students, and identification with the school and major, workload, time management ability, and academic self-efficacy may be important influencing factors of procrastinate among college students. **Keywords:** College students; Procrastination; Influencing factor

Procrastination is a state of self-regulation failure, which refers to the conscious and proactive postponement of executing and completing a predetermined plan even though serious consequences can be predicted. The actor hopes to complete the task as soon as possible but delays taking action [1].

Procrastination troubles various groups of people, and the incidence of procrastination in adults ranges from 15% to 20% [2, 3]. 96% of college students exhibit varying degrees of procrastination, which has become a common problem among contemporary college students. 36% to 45% of college students exhibit significant procrastination behavior [4-6], with 46% to 50% of them consistently procrastinating [7-9]. From the perspective of procrastination targets, it involves various aspects of college students' lives, such as academic procrastination [6], sleep procrastination [10], job search procrastination [11]. The most common and significant impact on college students is academic procrastination. Procrastination often accompanies various adverse reactions such as stress, self-blame, guilt, anxiety, depression, fatigue, self-denial. When procrastination leads to an accumulation of unfinished tasks, negative emotions will continue to accumulate, ultimately leading to a vicious cycle [12]. Over time, this will lead to low academic and work efficiency, poor academic performance, and decreased life satisfaction, with a negative impact on the physical and mental health of college students [13, 14].

The phenomenon of procrastination among college students is increasingly attracting academic attention. Identifying the main influencing factors and proposing effective intervention methods and approaches is an urgent task in current higher education. However, previous studies have focused on the influence of individual internal factors, such as achievement goals [15], self-control [4, 7, 16], personality [15], self-efficacy [17], etc. Although these studies on internal factors help us clarify the dominant reasons for procrastination, there is little research on the demographic factors that contribute to the external causes [8, 14], and the overall factors and the effects on procrastination among college students have not been fully understood.

Based on the above analysis, this study adopts a large sample, multicenter questionnaire survey to explore the current status of procrastination among college students, and analyzes the main psychological and demographic factors that affect it.



I. Objects and Methods

1.1 Objects

A total of 836 undergraduates in Guangdong Province were selected by stratified random sampling, and 774 valid questionnaires were collected, with an effective rate of 92.3%. Among them, there are 420 boys and 354 girls; Age (18.5 ± 1.4) years old; 175 freshmen, 156 sophomores, 154 juniors, 149 seniors, and 140 fifth-year student; 201 majoring in engineering, 171 in science, 149 in medicine, 135 in humanities, 77 in sports, and 41 in art.

1.2 Tools

1.2.1 General Procrastination Scale, GPS

Compiled by Lay (1986) [18] and revised by BaoCuiqiu et al. [19] into Chinese version, GPS is used to evaluate the degree of individual procrastination in most affairs. There are a total of 20 items, grouped into one dimension. The Likert 5-point scoring method is used to score from 1 to 5 points corresponding to "completely disagree" to "completely agree". The higher the score, the stronger the tendency in this dimension (item). Those with a total score greater than 60 are considered procrastinators, while those with a total score ≤ 60 are considered non procrastinators. In this study, The Cronbach's α coefficient of GPS is 0.828.

1.2.2 Academic Self-efficacy Scale, ASES

Compiled by Liang Yusong (2000) [20], there are 22 items, divided into two dimensions including academic ability self-efficacy (AABSE) and academic conduct self-efficacy (ACOSE), with 11 items in each dimension. The Likert 5-point scoring method is used to score from 1 to 5 points corresponding to "completely disagree" to "completely agree". The higher the total score, the higher the academic self-efficacy. In this study, The Cronbach's α coefficient of the total scale is 0.866, and the Cronbach's α coefficients of two dimensions are 0.819 and 0.785, respectively.

1.2.3 Adolescence Time Management Disposition Inventory, ATMDI

Compiled by Huang Xiting and Zhang Zhijie [21], there are 44 items divided into the following three subscales like sense of time value (STV), view of time monitoring (VTM), and sense of time efficiency subscale (STE). The Likert 5-point scoring method is used to score from 1 to 5 points corresponding to "completely disagree" to "completely agree". The higher the score, the stronger the time management disposition. In this study, the Cronbach's α coefficient of the total scale is 0.909, and the Cronbach's α coefficient of each subscale is 0.842 to 0.860.

1.2.4 Self-compiled personal general information questionnaire

It includes 20 items such as gender, age, grade, major, class leader or not, and place of origin.

1.3 Data processing

SPSS20.0 is used for statistical analysis. The average score and standard deviation of each scale are calculated by descriptive statistics; Pearson product moment correlation is used to explore the correlation between variables; Linear regression analysis is used to analyze the influencing factors of procrastination among college students.

II. Results

2.1 Current status of general procrastination, academic self-efficacy, and time management disposition among college students

As shown in Table 1, the academic self-efficacy [20] and time management disposition [21] of this group are at a moderate level, while general procrastination behavior is at a high level [18, 19].

Table 1. Descriptive statistics of each scale (n=774)

Variable	Min	Max	M	SD	Item number	M of item	SD of item
1. GPS	35	98	66.46	14.44	20	3.34	0.72
2. AABSE	20	53	37.81	6.83	11	3.44	0.62



3.ACOSE	21	49	35.44	5.69	11	3.22	0.52
4.ASES	48	99	73.14	10.91	22	3.32	0.50
5.STV	11	49	35.92	5.50	10	3.59	0.55
6.STM	34	115	76.69	11.75	24	3.20	0.49
7.STE	15	65	33.98	5.26	10	3.40	0.53
8.ATMDI	70	205	146.60	19.47	44	3.33	0.44

2.2 Multiple linear stepwise regression analysis of the influencing factors of general procrastination among college students

2.2.1 Variable assignment

First, values are assigned to the possible situation (alternative answers) of 20 categorical variables (including demographic variables and psychosocial variables) that may have influence on GPS total score, and the results are shown in Table 2.

Table 2. Variable Assignment

Item Options and assignments	
1. Grade	0=freshman, 1=sophomore, 2=junior, 3=senior, 4=fifth-year
2. Gender	0=male, 1=female
3. School category:	0=Comprehensive, 1=Engineering, 2=Normal, 3=Finance, 4=Language, 5=pharmaceutical, 6=agriculture, 7=art
4. Professional categories:	0=Science, 1=Engineering, 2=Humanities, 3=Medicine, 4=Agriculture, 5=Education, 6=Law, 7=Art
5. Professional prospects	0=poor, 1=not very good, 2=unclear, 3=average, 4=good
6. Are you an only child?	0=No, 1=Yes
7. Family monthly income	0=0-4000 yuan, 1=4001-8000 yuan, 2=8001-12000 yuan, 3=12001-16000 yuan, 4=more than 16001 yuan
8.Place of origin	0=rural areas, 1=city or town
9. Grade ranking of performance	0=top 10%, 1=top 10% to 20%, 2=top 20% to 40%, 3=top 40% to 60%, 4=top 60% to 80%, 5=bottom 20%
10. Have you a part-time job?	0=no, 1=yes
11.Are you a class leader?	0=no, 1=yes
12. Parents' identification with your major?	0=unsupported, 1=unclear, 2=very supportive
13. Ways to study this major	0=your own choice, 1=being transferred
14. Professional interest	0=very interested, 1=slightly interested, 3=no feeling 4=not very interested, 5=not interested at all
15. Understanding of your major	0=in-depth, 1=preliminary understanding, 2=not very familiar, 3=completely unfamiliar
16. Satisfaction with teacher's knowledge	0=very dissatisfied, 1=not very satisfied, 2=indifferent, reserves and teaching methods; 3=basically satisfied, 4=very satisfied
17.Satisfaction with school management	0=very dissatisfied, 1=not very satisfied, 2=indifferent, 3=basically satisfied, 4=very satisfied
18. Satisfaction with campus life	0=very dissatisfied, 1=not very satisfied, 2=indifferent, 3=basically satisfied, 4=very satisfied
19. Satisfaction with student research activities	0=very dissatisfied, 1=not very satisfied, 2=indifferent, 3=basically satisfied, 4=very satisfied
20. Satisfaction with cultural and sports activities	0=very dissatisfied, 1=not very satisfied, 2=indifferent, 3=basically satisfied, 4=very satisfied

2.2.2 Multiple stepwiselinear regression analysis of factors related to general procrastination



among college students

Taking the total score of GPS as the dependent variable and 20 categorical variables, the total score of ASES and ATMDI as independent variables, the multiple stepwise linear regression analysis is carried out within 95% confidence interval, and the results are shown in Table 3.

From Table 3, it can be seen that the total score of

GPS is positively correlated with the following 3 factors like “Are you a class leader?”, “Have you a part-time job?”, and “Understanding of your major” ($\beta=0.243, 0.069, 0.064$, all $P<0.05$), and the 4 factors such as ASES total score, ATMDI total score, grade, and satisfaction with school management system are four factors that negatively predict GPS total score ($\beta=-0.072$ to -0.442 , all $P<0.05$).

Table 3 Multiple Stepwise Linear Regression Analysis of Factors Related to GPS Total Score

Dependent variable	Independent variables	B	SE	βt	PR^2	R^2_{adj}
GPS total score	Have you a part-time job?	7.139	0.814	8.768	0.243	0.438
	Are you a class leader?	2.047	0.820	2.496	0.069	0.433
	Understanding of your major	1.506	0.652	2.310	0.064	0.433
ASES total score		-0.585	0.044	-13.160	0.442	<0.001
ATMDI total score		-0.094	0.025	-3.703	0.127	<0.001
Grade		-1.243	0.336	-3.696	0.103	<0.001
satisfaction with school management system		-0.984	0.384	-2.565	0.072	0.010

III. Discussion

The academic self-efficacy and time management disposition of this group are at a moderate level, while the general procrastination is at a high level, which is consistent with the results of previous studies [2-4,7,19-23], indicating that the learning psychology, learning behavior, learning ability, and habits of college students all need to be improved.

The result of multiple stepwise linear regression analysis showed that three factors, including part-time job, student cadre status, and understanding of the major, positively predicted the total score of GPS; while four factors, including ASES total score, ATMDI total score, grade, and satisfaction with school management system, negatively predicted the total score of GPS.

Student cadres and part time worker are more prone to procrastination, indicating that social activities and work can cause some degree of interference with the regular activities of college students. University classes are the basic unit of university life, the terminal for schools and secondary colleges to carry out work, and the foundation for college students to learn and live together. Class cadres are an important bridge and link between counselors and students, and the main

way to achieve self-management, self-service, and self-education of students. Therefore, work of class cadres is extremely important for the construction of university classes, the creation of class academic and behavior atmosphere, as well as the personal development of class students. At present, in the context of vigorously promoting labor education, practical education, and quality education in universities, the work content of class cadres has greatly expanded, and the workload has also greatly increased. This not only requires class cadres to possess and constantly hone their ideological and political qualities and organizational management abilities, but also requires them to invest a lot of time. The conflict between class management work and academic activities has become a personal development obstacle for college class cadres. Many class cadres find it difficult to handle class management work in a timely manner, balance academic activities, and even more difficult to handle other personal affairs properly[24]. The same situation also occurs in college students that hold part-time jobs. Part time jobs can help college students increase their income, gain social knowledge, explore their careers, expand their networks, and enhance their social influence. However, due to the high requirements of employers



and the insufficient work ability of college students, it is difficult for part-time college students to easily complete work tasks. They not only need to be busy with part-time work in their leisure time, but also occupy a considerable amount of study time due to part-time work, making it difficult to complete heavy learning tasks and routine daily affairs on time.

Understanding of the major is an independent predictor of procrastination among college students. The deeper the understanding of the major, the lower the degree of procrastination, which is consistent with the results of previous studies [25, 26]. This suggests that professional resources and professional commitment can help alleviate procrastination among college students. Only through in-depth and sufficient professional understanding can college students have a clear understanding of professional resources, including opportunities to learn new things, enrich and improve themselves, reflected in professional training programs, course design, practical opportunities, teaching staff, ability development, and employment prospects. When students receive more learning conditions and opportunities, they will establish a firm professional commitment, be willing to invest more time and energy in professional learning, and enhance their confidence and hope for future career development. In this way, they will have clear goals and actively learn, greatly reducing procrastination behavior.

ASES total score negatively predicts GPS total score, consistent with previous studies [27-28]. Self-efficacy is an important motivational factor that affects procrastination [29]. Individuals with high academic self-efficacy believe that they can efficiently complete learning tasks and cope with stress, achieve goals, and demonstrate their learning ability through decisive, brave, and persistent actions. Individuals with low academic self-efficacy do not believe in their learning abilities, question their learning strategies, and always believe that their methods cannot solve learning problems or achieve learning goals. Therefore, they are prone to procrastination due to fear of failure and are hesitant to tackle learning tasks, ultimately resulting in procrastination [30].

The negative prediction of ATMDI total score for GPS total score is consistent with the results of previous studies [31]. Time management is a series of planning and control work carried out to improve the utilization and effectiveness of time under the same time consumption. From a psychological mechanism perspective, procrastination is closely related to time management tendencies. First, both are personality traits with diffusion, which will be reflected in various aspects

of individual learning and life. Second, procrastination is essentially a time use error. The parties involved are unable to develop a reasonable activity plan or effectively execute the action plan. The main manifestation is the inability to distinguish the importance and urgency of things, making it difficult to handle things in an orderly manner, but instead adopting the principle of convenience, doing easy or interesting things first, which leads to procrastination of important tasks.

The negative prediction of grade for procrastination among college students is contrary to the results of previous studies [26,32], suggesting the influence of subcultural differences on procrastination behavior among college students. The grade difference in this study is mainly due to the gradual maturity of the mental state of college students. The learning and life of middle school students in our country mainly follow the extremely tight teaching schedule set by the school and teachers, and the strict college entrance examination does not allow them to procrastinate at all. Due to their limited autonomous time, they do not have to think about time management issues and have not received any training on time management. Therefore, college freshmen face a lot of autonomy time and are not able to arrange it. Coupled with the "relief" mentality caused by the tense college entrance examination, as well as a lack of deep understanding of and strong interest in their major, and the strong attraction brought by new media, they have obvious procrastination. This situation gradually improves with the deepening of professional education in schools, the strengthening of professional understanding, the improvement of thinking and self-management abilities of college students, and the strengthening of social cognitive abilities brought about by social activities.

The satisfaction with the school management system independently predicts procrastination among college students, and the higher the satisfaction, the lower the degree of procrastination. The satisfaction with the school management system reflects the confidence of college students in their university studies, believing that the school can provide good education for them, effectively cultivate students' professional skills and employability, and therefore willing to invest more time in school activities. On the other hand, a scientific school management system can efficiently solve students' problems, meet their reasonable needs, and save them a lot of time; It can also provide implicit time management education to students with its efficient style and scientific and rigorous procedures, so that students can unconsciously learn



the correct time management methods and apply them to learning and life, thereby reducing procrastination and improving efficiency.

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