




Academic procrastination in secondary and high school students

Procrastinación académica en estudiantes de educación secundaria y media

Procrastinação acadêmica em estudantes do ensino secundário e secundário


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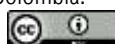
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KEYWORDS

ABSTRACT. The objective of the research was to establish the relationship between academic procrastination, age and grade in high school students. A quantitative design of correlational type was used. A total of 148 students participated through a non-probabilistic intentional sampling. After informed consent, the Academic Procrastination Scale (EPA) was applied, which evaluates the levels of academic procrastination taking into account two dimensions: procrastination of activities and

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academic self-regulation, academic year, academic procrastination.

academic self-regulation. The results were analyzed through descriptive statistics and Spearman's correlation coefficient was used in the SPSS 21 program. It is mainly concluded that academic procrastination was related to age and that there is no relationship between academic procrastination and course.

PALABRAS CLAVE

autorregulación académica, curso académico, procrastinación académica.

RESUMEN. El objetivo de la investigación fue establecer la relación entre procrastinación académica, edad y curso en estudiantes de secundaria y media académica. Se utilizó un diseño cuantitativo de tipo correlacional. Participaron 148 estudiantes a través de un muestreo intencional no probabilístico. Previo consentimiento informado se aplicó la Escala de Procrastinación Académica (EPA), la cual evalúa los niveles de procrastinación académica teniendo en cuenta dos dimensiones: postergación de actividades y autorregulación académica. Los resultados fueron analizados a través de estadísticos descriptivos y se utilizó el coeficiente de correlación de Spearman en el programa SPSS 21. Se encontraron niveles altos y moderados de procrastinación académica en los estudiantes. Se concluye principalmente que la procrastinación académica tuvo relación con la edad y que no existe relación entre procrastinación académica y el curso.

PALAVRAS-CHAVE

autorregulação académica, ano académico, procrastinação académica.

RESUMO. O objetivo da investigação era estabelecer a relação entre a procrastinação académica, a idade e a classe dos estudantes do ensino secundário. Foi utilizado um desenho correlacional quantitativo. Um total de 148 estudantes participou através de amostragem não-probabilística. Após consentimento informado, foi aplicada a Escala de Procrastinação Académica (EPA), que avalia os níveis de procrastinação académica tendo em conta duas dimensões: procrastinação e autorregulação académica. Os resultados foram analisados através da estatística descritiva e o coeficiente de correlação de Spearman foi utilizado no SPSS 21. Conclui-se principalmente que a procrastinação académica estava relacionada com a idade e que não existe qualquer relação entre a procrastinação académica e o curso.

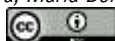
1. INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this research was focused on studying academic procrastination, age and course in high school students in an educational institution. In the first place, procrastination is understood, according to Carhuapoma (2018), as a process where the subjects testify that they do not want to perform a task because they have little pleasure in doing it compared to other activities of their interest, therefore, it is postponed. Or delayed, which can be presented as a conflict between duty and doing.

In this sense, according to Montoya et al. (2019) in the educational context, especially regarding academic performance, it is necessary to identify certain immersed factors, such as the peer group, the classroom and other personal aspects, hence the importance of keeping in mind the issue of procrastination in relation to other variables.

In addition, if it is taken into account that in the various academic courses students are estimated to be younger or older than the average found in the majority of the population, this invites an analysis of this problem; without neglecting some factors found such as investigative background, where they stand out, the lack of commitment in certain students when responding to academic duties, in subjects, grades, and schedules. As well as the presence of affectations in certain habits, attentional capacity, motivation and interest (Durán & Moreta, 2017).

However, education is a duty and a right of all human beings. In this sense, the educational context is considered the secondary entity where they are formed and prepared as rational beings capable of developing by themselves in a world as complex as the current one. Due to this, Bataloso (2006) argues that education is made up of a series of phenomena that are immersed in the practices of a personal nature of the human being such as cultural, historical and social, likewise, it has the ability to decide on its own different areas of life, decisions that



sometimes lead the human being to make mistakes, which will allow new learning, essential for the appropriate adaptation.

Among these factors in the academic area, there is the lack of commitment of certain students who daily spend their time educating themselves and preparing in places adapted to their condition and their needs as human beings. However, there is another group where irresponsibility and lack of commitment prevail. It should be noted that, when analyzing the most relevant problems in these institutions, it can be seen that there is a high probability of procrastination. In this regard, Vargas (2017) states that academic procrastination consists of postponing the performance of academic activities, which is related to multifaceted aspects where affective, cognitive and behavioral aspects are involved.

To make way to this situation, the contextualization of this work was carried out in an Educational Institution in a municipality in the Department of Sucre, Colombia. In which a high rate of poor academic performance is manifested every year. Therefore, teachers and parents are frightened about discovering these results and fail to understand the reasons why their children cannot adapt to the educational environment. It is not possible to say directly that Procrastination is manifested there, but it is feasible to investigate it as a possible factor related in this problem situation; making it clear that the existence of other considerable variables must be taken into account.

With this in mind, García & Zencenarro (2019) stated that these behaviors and especially in students, are related to procrastination and in turn is connected to personal attitudes such as self-confidence deficit, low self-esteem, loss of self-control, behaviors of disorganization, depression and in many situations of perfectionism and anxiety. Similarly, the incidence of excessive use of devices and internet connection is referred to, aspects that exacerbate the subject matter.

In this order of ideas, a researcher interested in the subject of procrastination stated that it could be recognized as fear of failure; related to family ties of a pathological nature, because the function performed by parents has favored a maximum of frustrations and a minimum of self-esteem when it comes to children. Meanwhile, the author expresses, as in the adolescence stage there is a greater sensitivity and risk to show procrastination and its factors (Carranza & Ramírez, 2013).

On the other hand, a study carried out by Steel (2007) showed that, in the school and university area, there is a high rate of procrastination in an evident percentage that is between 80% and 95% where the students presented dilatory attitudes, and between 50% and 70% recognize that they postpone their school activities and spend less time on them. The above information draws a lot of attention because an important figure is identified in the attitude of students towards their academic work inducing procrastination; in the same way, these results motivate the desire to continue researching and addressing more about the subject matter.

Carrying out this study by analyzing academic procrastination in relation to the course and age is necessary because it makes it possible to emphasize students from other perspectives and to question whether the age is a factor in postponing activities. Perhaps, someone is at an age in which the interests are different or have changed as he/she grows and therefore, causes the school interest to be diverted since other factors are involved such as social relationships and cognitive abilities.

With regard to procrastination, this is considered a phenomenon that has existed throughout the ages, but has been investigated comparatively few times. According to Álvarez (2018), it is important to increase research on this topic with different young people and adults to have more contributions about their levels and the

consequences of procrastination in people. Therefore, it is pertinent to investigate because few studies are focused on procrastination and age. Van Eerde (2003) argues that people may outgrow this tendency to procrastinate as they get older and gain control over themselves.

Now, the concept of procrastination etymologically means postponing and deferring. They defined it as the behavior of postponing activities considered essential or important where the person replaces them with ones that are less significant, relevant or simply more pleasant (Rodríguez & Clariana, 2017). Procrastination had its origin in past years and was known in Latin as "procrastinare" which is understood as a procedural routine characterized by voluntary suspension of activities that must be delivered on a specific date (Ferrari & Tice, 2007).

For Ferrari & Tice (2000); Riva (2006) & Steel (2007) is a pattern that has always existed, however, it got its start because of the industrial revolution. These same researchers pointed out that the causes of procrastination have to do with the time stipulated to carry out that activity, and the less time there is to carry it out, the less chance there is to procrastinate. Senecal & Guay (2000) stated that it is manifested by avoiding performing tasks that are not considered pleasant or that are not considered as important as others; for this reason, an internal dispute is created between duty, will and power.

Regarding the characteristics of procrastination, authors such as Pittman et al. (2008) pointed out that one of the main characteristics is the preference of activities that are satisfactory for students as opposed to those that are not to their liking which entails to refusal behavior. On the other hand, it is feasible to consider that being accustomed to procrastinating and, at the moment in which they decide to stop doing it, they may present negative behaviors and thoughts such as not being able to carry out activities on time or creating excuses for perform them another day (Stainton et al., 2000).

Finally, another characteristic according to Contreras et al (2005) would be the fear linked to failure and irrational thoughts, due to not feeling capable or not having the skills to perform certain tasks that are evaluated by a second or third person, which leads to the point to abandon them.

Considering the contributions about academic procrastination, Busko (1998) was found as the main author, who stated that this consists of an irrational predisposition to avoid the work or tasks that must be completed. According to Busko (1998, cited by Álvarez, 2010), procrastination is the action of avoiding or promising to do tasks later, excusing or justifying delays, and avoiding guilt towards an academic task.

For Ayala (2019), academic procrastination has to do with the experience of anxiety due to the constant delay in academic activities. In this regard, Rothblum et al. (1986) conceptualize it as the predisposition to frequently postpone academic activities and feelings of anxiety related to procrastination.

Now, from the dimensions of procrastination, self-regulation is highlighted, considered as one of the two dimensions immersed in academic procrastination. Firstly, according to Castro & Mahamud (2017), in the school environment it is a continuous cause where students expose their goals in order to know, inspect and regulate their mental processes, motivations and behavior. On the other hand, García (2012) defines self-regulation as a regulatory behavior that students use in different situations in the academic field. Meanwhile, for Flores (2008) it is the process in which students are aware of their learning when doing the work.

In the case of the postponement of activities, established as the second dimension within academic procrastination, authors such as Castro & Mahamud (2017) conceptualized it as the behavior of postponing academic work. Likewise, Morales & Chávez (2017) define postponement as delaying the different academic

activities that are the duties that must be fulfilled in a specific time. In addition, Álvarez (2010) mentions that the activities of postponing the purpose of a job is not something simple, because students do not give it the importance of planning their activities, which leads them to carry out others in the short term. Taking this into consideration, this research aims to determine the relationship between academic procrastination, age and course in students of an educational institution.

2. METHOD

The research was based on a quantitative approach of correlational type, according to Hernández et al. (2014) he aims to establish the degree of relationship that may exist between two or more variables. In this case, we sought to establish the relationship between the variables: Procrastination academic, age and course.

Participants

It is constituted by students of an educational institution, who are in an age range of 13 and 18 years old, between eighth and eleventh grades. The sample was intentional and non- probabilistic, made up of 148 students between men and women.

Instruments

Busko's Academic Procrastination Scale (EPA) adapted by Álvarez (2010).

According to Busko (1998, cited by Álvarez, 2010) the EPA scale has two dimensions: academic self-regulation has 9 items that are graded indirectly, that is, the higher the score, the lower the self-regulation and the other dimension is the postponement of activities that has 3 items that are scored directly, that is, the more the person scores, the greater their tendency to postpone.

For the first, scores less than 27 indicate a low level and scores greater than 35 indicate a high level of academic procrastination. While for the postponement of activities dimension; scores less than seven indicate a low level and scores greater than nine indicate a high level of academic procrastination.

At a general level, this inventory has 12 items; each of them is evaluated through a five-point Likert scale. The response options are: Never (1), Rarely (2), Sometimes (3), Almost Always (4) and Always (5). The interpretation of the scores is straightforward; this means that, the higher the score obtained on the test, the student presents a higher procrastination behavior.

Sociodemographic file

A sociodemographic record was used in order to obtain data such as: general information, schooling, age, information about the course and in addition to the activities that they practice in their free time.

Process

Mainly, the population to which the Scale was applied was identified, taking into account age and course.

The institution was asked for the appropriate permission to implement the research there.

The identified courses were addressed and their collaboration was requested and they were given an informed consent that their parents must fill out and sign where they accept the participation of their children in the research.

After the authorization from parents, they proceeded to attend the school campus and a time was requested from the teacher in charge with the support of the institution's coordinator.

Finally, the objective of the research and the method they should use to respond were explained. In this stage, the students were told that their names will not be exposed because it will be anonymous.

The statistical analysis was carried out using the SPSS program (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) through descriptive statistics and for the correlational component, the Spearman formula was used.

3. RESULTS

The results of the research are initially presented through tables of frequencies and percentages for the sociodemographic variables and academic procrastination. Followed by the descriptive and correlational analysis of the variables under consideration.

First of all, it is shown that the research participants were made up of 85 men (57.4%) and 63 women (42.6%), for a total of 148 students, with an average age of 14.93 years. In addition, they were distributed in 29.1% by ninth grade students, 35.8% in eighth grade, 18% in eleventh grade and the remaining 23% in tenth grade. From these, 50.7% have not failed the school year, while 49.3% have failed.

Concerning the activities that predominate in their free time, 47.3% are dedicated to play, 21.6% report that they watch television, and 16.9% state that they spend this time studying. On the other hand, regarding the type of family of the participants, 55.4% belong to a nuclear family, while 29.7% to a single-parent family and 14.9% to another type.

In the academic self-regulation dimension, an average of 28.97 points was found; with a maximum score of 44 points. Regarding the postponement of activities factor, it was shown that the maximum number was 15 points and an average of 10.76. At a general level, in academic procrastination a total average of 39.74 points was found.

Distribution by EPA diagnostic categories

In the first place, it is shown that 64.9% of the participants are at the high level of procrastination and 10.1% at very high, which indicates that they are students who tend to postpone their activities, in this case academic (when they have to do a task, they usually leave it for the last minute, they postpone the work and reading of the subjects they dislike), they also have a low level of self-regulation, they do not have the capacity to carry out or plan a cognitive or motivational process. For these reasons the person may have a tendency to procrastinate (López-Frías et al., 2021). According to Westgate et al. (2017), it has to do with students prone to postponing tasks to the point of using different ways to postpone them depending on the circumstances.

23% of the students in this research have moderate presence, which refers to the fact that they procrastinate a little less, compared to the high and very high levels, and their level of self-regulation is higher than the levels mentioned before. Finally, in the level of non-significant or slight presence, 2% of the cases were found, which shows that the level of postponement of activities in these participants is minimal and they mostly have the ability to plan and carry out cognitive and motivational processes in the development of their activities (see table 1).

Table 1*EPA Diagnostic categories*

	Frequency	Percentage
Non- significant or slight	3	2,0
Moderate presence	34	23,0
High	96	64,9
Very high	15	10,1
Total score	148	100,0

Correlations between academic procrastination, age and course

The results obtained from the correlations of the variables procrastination, age and course are presented. Explaining that, the level of significance indicates whether or not there is a relationship between two variables. When the significance is less than 0.05, there is a significant correlation.

Table 2*Correlation between academic procrastination, age and subject*

Correlation	Procrastination	
Age range	Correlation coefficient	- ,169*
	Sig. (Bilateral)	,040
Subject	Correlation coefficient	-0,25
	Sig. (Bilateral)	,766

Regarding the association between the variables, it was found that there is a significant negative correlation, but with a certain low intensity between academic procrastination and age, for the 0.05 bilateral level. This is supported in consistency with what is stated by Mejía et al., (2018) who point out that younger students would be the ones with higher levels of procrastination. Contrary to this, no significant correlation was found with respect to the academic procrastination and course variables. In other words, procrastination depends on age and not on the course (Rodríguez & Clariana, 2017).

4. DISCUSSION

The main purpose of the study carried out was to establish the relationship between academic procrastination, age and course in students between 13 and 18 years of age. The results showed that, firstly, the level of procrastination of the students is not related to the academic year. Secondly, it was found that there is a relationship between the variables age and academic procrastination.

Now, when analyzing the results obtained in a similar investigation carried out by Rodríguez & Clariana (2016) who worked on the same variables, but in the university environment. The aforementioned authors demonstrated

in their results a relationship with the age variable and specified that, as students grow, there is less probability of academic procrastination. Aspects that also coincide with what was found by Balkis & Duru (2009) who stated that there is a contradictory and indicative relationship with respect to procrastination behavior, which means that, at a younger age, greater procrastination behavior and at older age, less procrastination behavior.

Now, when analyzing the results obtained in a similar investigation carried out by Rodríguez & Clariana (2016) who worked on the same variables but in the university context. The aforementioned authors demonstrated in their results a relationship with the age variable and specified that, as students grow, there is less probability of academic procrastination. Aspects that also correspond with the findings by Balkis & Duru (2009) who stated that there is a contradictory and indicative relationship with respect to procrastination behavior, which means that, at a younger age, greater procrastination behavior and at older age, less procrastination behavior.

Besides, regarding the course and procrastination variables, according to the statistics obtained, they were able to show that there is no relationship and, therefore, only the association with the student's age is notable. This information maintains the same trend as that stated by Van Eerde (2003) and Steel (2007), who stated that procrastination reduces as people mature.

On the other hand, the descriptive results of this study are mentioned, where high and very high levels of academic procrastination are highlighted. This corresponds with the findings by Rosario et al. (2009) who showed that upon reaching high school, a high rate of procrastination was more noticeable in adolescents. In addition, they specified that, to explain this high level of academic procrastination, it was due to the inability of the student to reject the distractions that the environment offered them.

One point that must be taken into account is that probably older students who are between 18 years old have very high motivations and interests. Therefore, they are more inclined to enjoy those extracurricular activities offered by the institution, and as mentioned in the problem statement, we are in a modern century, manipulated by technology which is conceived as one of the significant factors of distraction and therefore a reason for procrastination in these population.

In this same line, it was determined regarding the dimensions of the Busko EPA scale, that there is a significant score in terms of the postponement of activities. When conducting a review of research that used academic procrastination as the main theme, it was possible to show that there were high levels of procrastination (Morales, 2020; Gutiérrez & Núñez, 2020). But it is worth mentioning that in the same way other investigations did not conceive these high rates and their results were favorable and positive, so they did not present high rates of procrastination.

For this reason, the research carried out by Bazalar (2011) is mentioned since he was interested in studying academic procrastination as an important predictor of academic performance in young people with higher education. His results showed high levels of procrastination, both in men and women. In addition, 61.5% of the participants have failed between one to six courses or subjects in the process of academic training. Likewise, high levels of academic procrastination were evidenced in university students specifically in the area of physics according to Morales (2020).

However, it is worth mentioning an investigation carried out by Villanueva (2018) who was inclined to study emotional intelligence and academic procrastination in ninth-grade students of an educational institution. His results differ from those discovered in the current investigations, since it was discovered that the students

evaluated had a medium level of academic procrastination and that it was also not related to the variables that they intended to study.

5. CONCLUSIONS

After performing the analysis corresponding to the results, it was possible to conclude that there is no relationship between procrastination and the grade level, but there is a relationship with the age of the participants. However, in terms of academic procrastination, the presence of high levels of this behavior in the population under study was verified.

On the other hand, according to the sociodemographic analysis, it was possible to conclude a greater tendency of procrastinating behaviors in the eighth and ninth grades, who are mostly students who spend their free time playing games or watching television. In addition, it was possible to know how a favorable figure expressed not having failed school years. What was expressed above, showed the way in which students present procrastinating behaviors and that due to their age said behavior is more complex, being more likely to be distracted or to choose other tasks of an interesting nature for them more than the obligatory academic ones.

In short, procrastination is a general behavior that can manifest itself in any field and to any individual regardless of age. It is a behavior that affects many personal and social factors; and that according to several authors, this type of behavior can also affect decision-making and the ability to resolve conflicts in an appropriate manner, especially those related to academic life and obligations of the context, which can affect the links work, school and family.

Conflicto de intereses / Competing interests:

Los autores declaran que no incurren en conflictos de intereses.

Rol de los autores / Authors Roles:

Lina Vergara: Conceptualización, curación de datos, análisis formal, investigación, metodología, recursos, software, supervisión, validación, visualización, administración del proyecto, escritura -preparación del borrador original, escritura -revisar & edición.

María Bernett: Conceptualización, análisis formal, investigación, metodología, administración del proyecto, escritura -preparación del borrador original, escritura -revisar & edición.

Abigail Serpa: Conceptualización, análisis formal, investigación, metodología, administración del proyecto, escritura -preparación del borrador original, escritura -revisar & edición.

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Isneila Martínez: Conceptualización, análisis formal, investigación, metodología, administración del proyecto, escritura -preparación del borrador original, escritura -revisar & edición.

Jair Montes-Millan: Conceptualización, análisis formal, investigación, metodología, administración del proyecto, escritura -preparación del borrador original, escritura -revisar & edición.

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