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Self-Efficacy and Academic Procrastination: A Study Conducted in University Students of Metropolitan Lima

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The objective of this study is to determine the relationship between self-efficacy and academic procrastination in university students of Metropolitan Lima, in the year 2019. The sample consisted of 712 subjects, including 344 male and 368 female subjects between the ages of 16 and 21 years old selected undertaking their first two terms at 7 private and public universities in the city of Metropolitan Lima. The sample was evaluated with the Specific Perceived Self-Efficacy Scale of Academic Situations (EAPESA) and with the Academic Procrastination Scale (EPA). Both instruments evidenced having psychometric properties of reliability, according to the internal consistency method, and construct validity through exploratory factor analysis. The results show that there is a relationship between self-efficacy and academic procrastination since Spearman's correlation is -.139 and the effect size is 0.373. The statistical power is 1.00, so it is concluded that the results can be generalized to the entire population of university students in the city of Lima.

Key words: *Self-efficacy, academic procrastination, higher education.*

Introduction

Learning in a university context requires students to develop the ability to regulate their own knowledge acquisition processes. For this, reflection, self-awareness, and self-control stand as pillars of active participation in the classroom (Rodríguez-Gómez et al, 2012; Tuckman &

Monetti, 2011). The ability to regulate their own processes allows changing traditional forms of evaluation (Boud, 2006; Boud & Associates, 2010; Nicol, 2009) in which the teacher was the leading character and the only one capable of assessing learning. In this context, entering the university means new challenges for students who are not prepared. There are several factors that hinder the process of adaptation to university life (Londoño, 2009). Although many are related to external factors, there are also those that are linked to the potential to "learn to learn" and "learn to think" processes. They go through not only the need to promote ways to improve the quality of what they learn, but also to help students to be able to self-direct their learning and transfer it to other areas of their lives (Pozo & Pérez Echevarría, 2009).

Cognitive and behavioural factors that favour or hinder student performance in their academic activity, and how these relate to academic success, have stirred interest in the area of educational psychology (Contreras et al, 2005). Of these factors, self-efficacy, defined by Bandura (1986, 1997) as the personal capacity to cope with specific situations, is a determining psychological variable and is strongly predictive of academic achievement (Pajares, 1997, 2001. This is because self-efficacy involves beliefs about their own capacities to organize and execute actions to achieve certain results (Contreras et al, 2005). A self-efficient student is one who is able to organize and execute their activities based on specific actions that enable them to achieve results. This ability is related, above all, to judgments and not to problem solving skills. In other words, students who obtain high grades develop a strong sense of confidence in their abilities in that area (domain experience) (Pajares, 2002), either because of the effects produced by others (thin experience), the messages that they receive from others favouring beliefs of self-efficacy (social persuasions) or by certain behavioural states such as procrastination or physiological factors such as anxiety, tension, or excitement.

For Bandura (1986) the motivation that a student feels to commit to those activities in which they feel more competent and safer which is related to self-efficacy. This is because their commitment will be reinforced based on what they believe they can achieve. That is why it can be said that the higher the sense of competence, the greater the demands, aspirations and dedication of the students (Bong, 2001; Huertas, 1997). However, a student who has high expectations of self-efficacy will enjoy greater academic motivation which, over time, will lead them to obtain better results, given that they will be able to effectively self-regulate their learning, and show great intrinsic motivation during it (González & Tourón, 1992). In this sense, the greater the expectation of self-efficacy, the greater the motivation and performance of the students when performing learning tasks. For this reason, whatever the objective of strengthening education, this should focus on increasing the feelings of self-worth and competence of students. In this case, self-esteem and self-concept will be strengthened, including important aspects for the development of motivation towards achievement,

interpersonal relationships and, in general, the particular way of coping with various tasks and challenges that arise (Bandura, 1987; Roa, 1990).

Procrastination, on the other hand, is defined as the postponement of tasks, activities or jobs, as well as making decisions in a habitual and voluntary manner (Garzón & Gil, 2017; Ferrai & Tice, 2007; Ferrari & Tice, 2000; Riva, 2006; Steel, 2007). Likewise, its presence is an indicator of other equally complex phenomena such as low self-esteem, deficit in self-confidence, deficit of self-control, depression, disorganised behaviours, and, in some cases, perfectionism, dysfunctional impulsiveness, and anxiety (Solomon & Rothblum, 1984; Senécal, Koestner & Vallerand, 1995; Ferrai & Tice, 2007; Spada, Hiou & Nikcevic, 2006). Some authors have pointed out that the person who procrastinates does so because it is convenient to carry out only activities that will generate positive results in the short term (Riva, 2006). This will lead him/her to enter into a conflict between what he/she should do and what he/she wants to do (Senécal & Guay, 2000).

For Rothblum (1990), procrastination is approached from four models: the psychodynamic (postponement of tasks), the motivational model (behaviours invested by the person to achieve success), the behavioural model (a person's choice to perform activities that will allow short-term results), and the cognitive model (dysfunctional information processing that involves maladaptive schemes). With regard to the first two models, there are marked oppositions to be taken into account for the procrastination analysis, since they lack empirical evidence. This fact has led to various authors such as Ferrari, Johnson, and McCown (1995) to consider that procrastination takes the form of a cognitive and behavioural pattern related, first, with the intention of doing a task and second, with a lack of will to develop or complete.

With regard to academic procrastination, it has a dynamic nature and its presence responds to educational factors such as the completion of work, exams, briefings, or interactions with the teacher. In case these factors are postponed due to the negative assessment of the educational conditions, procrastination sets in, so the time that could be dedicated to the culmination of these activities is used to develop others of a distracting nature or to perform actions that generate immediate satisfaction. Procrastination affects the academic performance of students, who develop academic activities within the frame of previously established deadlines (Cao, 2012; Chan, 2011; Clariana, Cladellas, Badía & Gotzens, 2011; Klassen, Krawchunk & Rajani, 2008; Hsin Chun Chu & Nam Choi, 2005).

In recent years, studies on self-efficacy and procrastination (Pajares, 1997, 2001; Steel, 2007; Ferrari & Díaz-Morales, 2007; Busko, 1998) have stirred interest because of their impact on the university environment. Taking this into account, and as Alegre (2013) states, it is from the analysis of these phenomena that it is proposed that beliefs of self-efficacy are related to

the increasing incidence of procrastination exhibited by university students. For the Peruvian case, the studies of Alegre (2013), Chigne (2017), Bustos (2017), Arias-Chávez et al. (2020) and Caljaro (2019) and their work in Lima, Trujillo, and Tacna on university students stand out. These studies reinforce the idea that being a university student entails a series of difficulties that often hinder the successful development of the professional career. If family, social, and economic factors are added to these difficulties, a direct impact on academic performance can be established, which is the basis for the formation of their professional future. In that sense, low levels of ability, motivation, and self-efficacy will generate the beginning and persistence of a student before a task, job, or learning activity (Alegre, 2013).

It is proposed that self-efficacy beliefs are related to the increasing incidence of procrastination exhibited by university students. Therefore, if there are inadequate levels of ability and motivation, low self-efficacy would affect the start and persistence of a student to a task, job, or learning activity. Thus, the study of the relationship between both variables is proposed (Alegre, 2013, p. 59).

The present study focuses on determining to what extent self-efficacy is related to procrastination in order to provide relevant data so as to help and improve the processes of learning and professional development of students.

Materials and Method

The population consisted of 6900 students, of which a sample of 712 subjects, 344 male and 368 female, aged between 16 and 21 years (mean of 18 and standard deviation of 1) was taken from the first two terms of 7 private and public universities in the city of Lima. For the selection, a non-probabilistic, incidental procedure was used.

The instruments used were the following:

a) The Specific Perceived Self-Efficacy Scale of Academic Situations (EAPESA) was created by Palenzuela (1983). This scale has only 10 items and four alternatives: Never, Sometimes, Enough, and Always. Its psychometric properties calculated for the present investigation show an adequate internal consistency by having a Cronbach's alpha of .878 with a single factor that explains 49.80% of the total variance of the scale.

b) Busko's Academic Procrastination Scale (EPA), adapted by Álvarez (2010), has 16 questions and five alternatives: Never, Rarely, Sometimes, Almost Always and Always, with a score ranging from 1 to 5. Its psychometric properties for the present investigation have an adequate internal consistency with a Cronbach's alpha of .852 with two factors that explain 49.73% of the total variance of the instrument.

Design

This is an "ex post facto" investigation, prospective and non-experimental, as none of the variables under study are altered. The instruments were applied collectively to each sample in the classrooms of the seven universities in the study. The application time was not in excess of 15 minutes when applied in each group.

Participation in research was promoted by teachers who teach courses in the first and second terms of the chosen universities. Prior to this activity, the corresponding permits were requested and personalized training was carried out in order to guarantee the correct collection of the data. Students completed this task without any academic or monetary inducement or pressure.

Results

Psychometric Analysis
Self-Efficacy Scale

The psychometric analysis of the Self-efficacy Scale (see Table 1), when analysed, concludes that the items have homogeneity indices ranging from .304 (item 9) to .717 (item 3), these being significant, exceeded the established minimum values by the Kline (2000) criterion of 0.20. Therefore, we can claim that the items of the self-efficacy scale have correct homogeneity indices. The reliability coefficient was obtained using the internal consistency method, calculating a Cronbach's alpha of .878 based on the 10 items of the scale, and it can be concluded that the Self-efficacy Scale has a high reliability.

Table 1: Reliability of the Self-efficacy Scale

	M	ED	Ritc
I am trained enough to successfully tackle any academic task	2,84	,724	,672
I think I have enough ability to understand a subject well and quickly	2,82	,709	,663
I feel confident to face situations that put my academic abilities to the test	2,84	,744	,717
I am sure that I can get excellent marks in exams	2,84	,744	,671
From the academic standpoint I think I am a qualified and competent person	2,90	,729	,705
To me it's just the same if professors are demanding and tough	2,63	,809	,525
If I set my mind to it, I think I have enough ability to get a good academic record	3,23	,695	,553
I think I can pass the courses quite easily, and even get good grades	2,76	,734	,618
I'm one of those people who doesn't need to study to pass a written exam or pass a full course	2,15	,831	,304
I believe I am prepared and quite capable of achieving many academic successes	2,93	,747	,653

n=712, ritc= Corrected item-test corrections.

The construct validity of the Self-efficacy Scale (see Table 2) was obtained through exploratory factor analysis. The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin index was .916, the value of which shows that the scale has explanatory potential. Bartlett's sphericity test is significant because it is the Chi-square of 2970.214 and $p < .05$, for what is pertinent to carry out a factor analysis with the resulting data. Finally, the exploratory factor analysis through the principal components method establishes the conformation of a single factor that explains 49.80% of the total variance. This allows the researchers to conclude that the Self-Efficacy Scale has an optimal construct validity.

Table 2: Construct validity of the Self-efficacy Scale through exploratory factor analysis

	Component 1
I feel confident to face situations that put my academic abilities to the test	,798
From the academic standpoint I think I am a qualified and competent person	,795
I am trained enough to successfully tackle any academic task	,769
I am sure that I can get excellent marks in exams	,757
I believe I am prepared and quite capable of achieving many academic successes	,747
I think I have enough ability to understand a subject well and quickly	,743
I think I can pass the courses quite easily, and even get good grades	,687
If I set my mind to it, I think I have enough ability to get a good academic record	,658
To me it's just the same if professors are demanding and tough	,606
I'm one of those people who doesn't need to study to pass a written exam or pass a full course	,365

Note: Extraction method: principal component analysis. a. 1 components removed. Variance explained 49.80%, Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin sample adequacy measure = .916, Bartlett Chi-square sphericity test = 2970.214 G.L. = 45 p = .0000. n = 712

Academic Procrastination Scale

The reliability of the items of the Academic Procrastination Scale (see Table 3) was evaluated using the internal consistency method, and a Cronbach's alpha value of .852 was obtained for the 12 items also having homogeneity indices ranging from .272 (item 5) to .623 (item 10), this being greater than the criteria of Kline (2000). Therefore, it can be concluded that the Academic Procrastination Scale presents reliability.

Table 3: Reliability of the Academic Procrastination Scale

	M	SD	ritc
When given an assignment, I normally left it to the last minute.	3,02	,842	,575
Usually I prepare in advance for exams.	2,72	,892	,606
When I have trouble understanding something, I immediately try to get help	2,41	,930	,415
I attend classes regularly	1,45	,881	,272
I try to complete the assigned work as soon as possible	2,34	,806	,564
I postpone the assignments of the courses I don't like	2,93	,987	,572
I postpone course readings that I don't like	3,05	1,002	,570
I constantly attempt to improve my study habits	2,23	,864	,503
I spend the necessary time I need to study even if the subject is boring	2,63	,915	,623
I try to motivate myself to keep my pace of study	2,15	,899	,527
I try to finish my important assignments with time to spare	2,49	,875	,599
I take the time to review my assignments before I hand them over	2,34	1,022	,479

Note: n = 712, ritc = Corrected item-test correlations.

The construct validity of the Academic Procrastination Scale (see table 4) was evaluated through exploratory factor analysis. The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin index obtained a value of .882, highlighting its adequate explanatory potential. In addition, Bartlett's sphericity test is significant, the Chi-square being of 2735,268 and p <.05. The exploratory factor analysis with the principal components method concludes that the scale is two-dimensional, since two factors arise that explain 49.730% of the total variance and obtain factor saturations between .450 (item 12) and .70 (item 7). Therefore, it can be concluded that the Academic Procrastination Scale has a construct validity.

Table 4: Validity of the Academic Procrastination Scale construct through exploratory factor analysis

	Component	
	1	2
I postpone course readings that I don't like	,832	,075
I postpone the assignments of the courses I don't like	,831	,076
When given an assignment, I normally left it to the last minute	,720	,212
Usually I prepare in advance for exams	,559	,425
I try to complete the assigned work as soon as possible	,542	,382
I try to motivate myself to keep my pace of study	,187	,720
I constantly attempt to improve my study habits	,197	,675
I attend classes regularly	-,111	,626
I spend the necessary time I need to study even if the subject is boring	,454	,564
I try to finish my important assignments with time to spare	,440	,545
When I have trouble understanding something, I immediately try to get help	,265	,455
I take the time to review my assignments before I hand them over	,361	,450
Note: Extraction method: principal component analysis. Rotation method: Varimax with Kaiser normalization. to. The rotation converged in 3 iterations.		

Descriptive Analysis

When analysing by means of the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test (see Table 6), the goodness of adjustment to the normal curve, statistics are obtained with high and significant values for both the self-efficacy scale and the academic procrastination scale. It is concluded that both scales present a distribution far from normal.

For this reason, it was deemed appropriate to conduct a statistical analysis of the non-parametric data.

Table 6: Goodness analysis of adjustment to the normal Kolmogorov-Smirnov curve

	Kolmogorov-Smirnov[a]			Shapiro-Wilk		
	Statistic	gl	Sig.	Statistic	gl	Sig.
Self-efficacy	,074	712	,000	,989	712	,000
Procrastinatión	,074	712	,000	,990	712	,000
Note: a. Lilliefors significance correction.						

Hypothesis Testing

The hypothesis stated that there is a significant and inverse relationship between self-efficacy and academic procrastination in students of the seven universities analysed. The contrast was performed through the Spearman correlation coefficient.

In Table 7, you can show that there is a relationship between self-efficacy and academic procrastination. The correlation is -.139. The effect size is large, being 0.373 (Cohen, 1998), which also validates the correlation and demonstrates that it is relevant and important. As for the statistical power, the values exceed 0.80, and the value of 1.00 is obtained, which is why these results can be generalized to the entire population of university students in the city of Lima.

Table 7: Correlation of the variables Self-efficacy and academic Procrastination

		AcademicProcrastination
Self-efficacy	Spearman rho	-0.139**
	Sig. (bilateral)	0.000
	P	0.373
	1-β	0.9905
	N	712

Note: **. The correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2 tails).

Therefore, the hypothesis proposed for this research is accepted since there is a significant and negative relationship between self-efficacy and academic procrastination, although the association between both variables is low.

Discussion

Academic procrastination is an avoidance behaviour of an academic work. An individual who is a procrastinator feels that carrying out a task is a stressor that does not generate pleasure. For this reason, he/she chooses to postpone it (Sánchez, 2010). The concept of self-efficacy arises within the Social Cognitive Theory (Bandura, 1987) and refers in a broad sense to personal competence that allows the student to face a variety of stressful and novel situations.

The purpose of this research was to establish the relationship between academic procrastination and self-efficacy, and to this end the instruments that evaluate both variables were previously validated. The result obtained leads us to accept the hypothesis proposed in the present study. It can be evidenced that there is a relationship between self-efficacy and academic procrastination. Spearman's correlation is -.139. The effect size is 0.373. The

statistical power is 1.00, so these results can be generalized to the entire population of university students in the city of Lima.

The results achieved are aligned with the findings of Alegre (2013) who, in his study with university students, concludes that self-efficacy and academic procrastination have a low, negative (r = -.234) and significant correlation (p = .000), the statistical power being high (power = .95). Chigne (2017) also concludes that there is a significant low correlation between both variables, having a Spearman correlation coefficient of -0.321. Both results show that the presence of an inverse and significant relationship (p = 0.00) with a low degree of relationship between self-efficacy and procrastination. Then, one can infer that the higher the level of self-efficacy, the lower the level of academic procrastination.

This relationship is discussed by Bustos (2017), who suggests a direct and highly significant correlation (p < .01) between self-efficacy and academic procrastination. Therefore, the greater the self-efficacy, the less procrastination and vice versa. Citing Bandura (1997), students tend to think and reflect on themselves and their performance, judging how competent they are to perform a certain activity or task. Depending on these evaluations, the choice of activity, the effort invested and the persistence of difficulties arising in the fulfillment of a task, activity or goal, prevents it from being postponed or left until the last moment. Consequently, self-efficacy judgments will adversely affect academic procrastination.

Caljaro (2019) corroborates what was expressed by Bandura, that a student with a higher perception of self-efficacy has a lower tendency to procrastinate. In their study, both variables obtained an inverse correlation (rho -0.681; p value 0.001). This means that self-efficacy stands as a motivational component for the achievement of students' academic aspirations. This is because it requires meeting the commitments demanded by studies, as well as allowing them to face difficult situations and favours persistence in the actions that the student perform (Bandura, 1997).

The results of this study are consistent with the theoretical basis, which confirms what was mentioned by Pajares (1997), for whom self-efficacy directly influences the selection of the activities that the subject wishes to perform. This is because the individual seeks to select those for which he/she deems himself/herself skilful, postponing or discarding the tasks for which he/she is considered unskilled or incapable.

It should be noted that there are currently no varied psychological instruments that measure procrastination. Despite this difficulty, the instrument used in this study has the criteria of reliability in the modality of internal consistency and construct validity. Regarding the reliability of the procrastination questionnaire, Cronbach's alpha values show an index of

0.852. This indicates an acceptable internal consistency and, in terms of the validity of the construct, was evaluated through exploratory factor analysis. The Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin index obtained a value of .882, which highlights its adequate explanatory potential. In addition, Bartlett's sphericity test is significant, being the Chi-square of 2735,268 and $p < .05$. The exploratory factor analysis with the principal component's method concludes that the scale is two-dimensional, since two factors arise that explain 49.730% of the total variance. Therefore, it can be concluded that the Academic Procrastination Scale has a construct validity.

It is important to point out that the greater confidence in the student's abilities to achieve an academic objective, the greater the impulse he will have to fulfill his/her activities in advance, rather than procrastinate. On the other hand, if the student postpones his/her performance, it is because this activity is being aversive or threatening, since he/she considers it very difficult with respect to the competences he/she has to carry it out (Steel, 2007).

Therefore, it is advisable to implement strategies that allow developing the proper perception of self-efficacy, including in the teaching-learning process. Otherwise, if the student is excessively demanded and he has low self-efficacy, an immediate procrastination will be generated, postponing the activity. This, in the best of cases, will be carried out only for compliance, increasing the voluntary procrastination of university duties (Ferrari & Díaz-Morales, 2007).

If procrastination becomes a problem that generates feelings of dissatisfaction in life and low achievement of objectives, it is advisable the urgent intervention of educational psychology and even clinical psychology to reverse this worrying situation.

Conclusions

From the results obtained in the present study, the following conclusions can be reached:

a) With regard to the analysis of the reliability of the Self-Efficacy Scale, this shows adequate internal consistency by having a Cronbach's alpha of .878 with a single factor that explains 49.80% of the total variance of the scale.
b) Regarding the Academic Procrastination Scale (EPA), its psychometric properties for the present investigation have an adequate internal consistency with a Cronbach's alpha of .852 and two factors are obtained that explain 49.73% of the total variance of the instrument, which confirms the reliability of the instrument.

c) Spearman's correlation is -.139, the effect size is 0.373, and the statistical power is 1.00, which allows generalizing the results to the entire population of university students in the city of Lima.

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