Neriman Hazal Söyleyen {ORCID: 0000-0002-8396-2779}
Melisa Aksu {ORCID: 0000-0002-8707-0815}
Gökben Hızlı Sayar {ORCID: 0000-0002-2514-5682}

PROCRASTINATION AND ACADEMIC PROCRASTINATION
ERTELEME VE AKADEMİK ERTELEME

Neriman Hazal Söyleyen[1], Melisa Aksu[2], Gökben Hızlı Sayar[1]*

Öz

Erteleme, üzerinde çokça değerlendirme yapılmış, literatürde oldukça geniş bir yere sahip olan bir kavramdır. Yapılması planlanan iş ve görevlerin ileriki bir zamana bırakılması "erteleme" olarak adlandırılmaktadır. Akademik erteleme davranışı ise ertelemenin alt bir kavramıdır ve bireyin akademik başarısını, kişiler arası ilişkilerini etkileyen önemli bir problemdir. Araştırmalar, akademik ertelemenin temelinde başarısızlığa dair gerçekçi olmayan düşüncelerin, kaygı, mükemmeliyetçilik ve zaman yönetiminde başarısızlığın olduğunu göstermiştir. Ayrıca akademik erteleme davranışının birçok ruhsal problemin davranışsal yansıması da olabileceği görülmüştür. Bu doğrultuda, bu çalışmada, ertelemeye ilişkin tanımlar ve farklı teorik yaklaşımlar, ertelemenin türleri ve literatür gözden geçirilmiştir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: erteleme davranışı, akademik erteleme, erteleme türleri

Abstract

Procrastination is a concept that has been greatly evaluated, and has a quite wide place in literature. Procrastination is defined as to putt off intended tasks to another time. As for academic procrastination, it is a subfield of procrastination and is an important problem that affects individual's academic achievement, interpersonal interaction. With the research, it is seen that the basis of academic procrastination is consisted of unrealistic thoughts regarding failure, and such situations as anxiety, perfectionism and failure in time management. In addition, it is seen that academic procrastination can be a behavioral reflection of several psychological disorders. In this respect, in the present study, definitions and theoretical approaches regarding procrastination, and types of procrastination are reviewed.

Keywords: procrastination behavior, academic procrastination, types of procrastination

[1] Üsküdar University, Institute of Social Sciences, Istanbul, Turkey.

[2] Üsküdar University, Faculty of Humanities and Society Sciences, Department of Psychology, Istanbul, Turkey.

*Sorumlu Yazar: Gökben Hızlı Sayar, Üsküdar University, Institute of Social Sciences, Istanbul, Turkey. e-mail: gokben.hizlisayar@uskudar.edu.trr

1. Introduction

In today's world, where information is rapidly spreading, and technological developments take place in a very short time, all kinds of obstacles that make it difficult for individuals to keep up with this speed constitute a big problem.

Individual's productivity and success can be possible only with the ability to reach to speed of information production and distribution. One of the problems that affects individuals' both academic and private lives, and that inhibits individuals to keep up with present day speed is procrastination behavior. It would be hard to think that any individual, regardless of his or her social role, age, and gender, does not procrastinate his task and responsibilities. Some people apply to procrastination behavior in specific areas of life, while some people show this behavior in every aspect of their lives; they make the procrastination continuous. Although individuals feel comfortable by putting the tasks, assignments, responsibilities off, these procrastinated tasks get back to individuals as anxiety, feeling of inadequacy, remorse. As procrastination is a very wide concept, there are a lot of explanations which are obtained by different theoretical approaches and research outcomes. In this study, it was aimed to review scientific approaches, causes and effects for academic procrastination behavior according to the current literature.

2. Materials and Methods

A search of Google Scholar and Türk Psikiyatri Dizini using the systematic review methods filter was undertaken in September 2018. The search terms used were: (literature search*[Title/Abstract]) AND academic procrastination erteleme and 37 results were returned. We used allt the relevant papers.

3. Results and Discussions

3.1. Dimensions of Procrastination

The origin of the word "procrastination" derives from Latin procrastinat- "deferred until tomorrow", from the verb procrastinare, from pro- "forward" plus crastinus "belonging to tomorrow" which refers to action of delaying or postponing something (Knaus, 2010).

When the literature review has been done for procrastination, it is seen that procrastination behavior being a multidimensional structure involving cognitive, emotional and behavioral processes with regard to both its causes and results (Rothbolum, Solomon, Murakami, 1986; Uzun Özer et al 2014). Some researchers consider procrastination phenomenon as not to complete an intended task, or as taking more time than scheduled to complete an intended task (Rothbolum, Solomon, Murakami, 1986).

These definitions in the literature emphasize behavioral dimension of procrastination. By behaving in this manner, individual might cause to slow progression down both in academic and non-academic areas, and miss the opportunities. Individuals who exhibit procrastination behavior are tending towards to another work instead of doing the main work needs to be completed; these individuals prefer tending towards to behavior which seems more attractive to escape from the work already planned (Balkis, 2010).

Another dimension of procrastination is the cognitive dimension drawing attention to inconsistency between individual's goals, thoughts and behaviors (Blunt and Phycl, 2000). When the literature review has been done for procrastination, it is observed that such cognitive variables as rational beliefs, perfectionism are discussed together with procrastination with the intention of explaining the effects of cognitive processes on procrastination behavior (Balkıs, 2013). It is revealed with the several research that procrastination behavior is a problem which has a cognitive dimension, and at the same time, procrastination can be considered as absolute procrastination only in the situations of postponing something on purpose (Steel, 2016). Individuals experience anxiety, remorse and depression after the procrastination behavior (Burka and Yuen, 2008).

The emotional dimensions of behavior are created by these resultant emotional reactions. Rothblum, Solomon, Muraki (1986) mentioned to emotional dimension of procrastination by stating that there should be anxiety which is brought along by procrastination while defining academic procrastination. It is stated that there is an important correlation between anxiety of making mistake and suspicion which are the sub-dimensions of anxiety, procrastination and perfectionism. In summary, as the studies about procrastination behavior show, the reasons of procrastination cannot be be attributed only to laziness and failure in time management; it is a very complex and multidimensional concept with its reasons and results.

3.2. Theoretical Approaches Regarding Procrastination Behavior

3.2.1. Psychoanalytic Theory:

The first explanations to academic procrastination behavior have come from psychoanalytic theories as it is seen in many subjects in psychology. Especially the academic procrastination behavior for the specific tasks was discussed by Freud and subsequent researchers. While Freud evaluated that coping with anxiety is the main component of human existence, he also defined defense mechanisms which are some specific behaviors that individuals apply to avoid anxiety (Ferrari et al, 1995). Freud argued that anxiety is a stimulus arising from unconscious material that disturbs ego. After these stimuli are received, ego defends itself and uses lots of defense mechanism. Freud stated that incomplete works disturb ego, so that to get rid of anxious situation ego exhibits procrastination behavior (Goroshit ,2018). In other words, procrastination behavior is a kind of a defense mechanism that ego uses to protect itself. Defense mechanisms cannot be completely remove anxiety. When having experiencing the problem again, defense mechanisms will not be enough to decrease the anxiety (Ferrari et al., 1995). Emotions and thoughts intended for avoidance delay individuals to face with their emotions of

inadequacy. Although procrastination saves the individual from facing the negative emotions for a short time period, it affects individual development negatively in a long time period.

3.2.2. Psychodynamic Theory:

Psychodynamic theorists reject Freud's strict and stable principles, but at the same time they are agree with Freud on the view of dynamic structure of human nature. Psychodynamic theorists argue that childhood experiences have a huge impact on personality development and on the cognitive processes at adulthood period (Ferrari et al., 1995). Burka and Yuen (2008) who studies child development with psychodynamic viewpoint expresses this behavior as "procrastination syndrome" which is caused by inaccurate parenting. Parents' unrealistic expectations about their children and setting high standards of achievement and associating these with parental love and approval are one of the most important reasons of procrastination behavior. Because, the kids who grew up with these kinds of parenting attitudes feel anxious and worthless at the times they fail, thus they show procrastination behavior. Children who grew up with extremely high expectations of achievement or whose parents did not have any expectation of achievement are more likely to show procrastination behavior.

3.2.3. Behavioral Theory:

The main concept of behaviorism is formed by reinforced behaviors. The fundamental idea of reinforcement theories is very simple; behaviors exist because they are reinforced. Classical conditioning theory underlies the importance of both reward and punishment. According to learning theory, people exhibit procrastination behavior since they are reinforced or not punished for this behavior (Ainslie, 1975).

The term self-efficacy is one of the fundamental terms of social learning, and it has an effect on human behavior by to decide on the activities will be done, quality of performance, determination on difficult tasks. While people have a tendency to approach to the tasks that they think they are able to succeed; they tend to avoid challenging activities in which they think they are beyond their capabilities (Bandura, 1986). Berber Çelik and Odacı (2015) have identified that there is a negative correlation between academic procrastination behavior and self-efficacy of college students in their study regarding the question of to what extent does procrastination behavior explain students' fear of negative evaluation, sense of self, sense of self-efficacy, distorted beliefs.

3.2.4. Cognitive Behavioral Theory:

Pioneers of cognitive behavioral theory Ellis and Knaus (1977) addressed procrastination behavior with human cognitive and behavioral structures. Cognitive behavioral theory specifies that thoughts are decisive on human behavior by not ignoring impact of emotions and environment on human behavior as well (Burka and Yuen, 2008; Ellis and Knaus, 1977). The assumptions and beliefs, in which individuals gain from their families, immediate environments, or experiences since the

childhood create "the codes" of procrastination behavior that they will produce in the coming years (Burka and Yuen, 2008).

Ellis and Knaus (1977) argued that there are eleven steps that people with procrastination behavior follow up:

- Individuals with procrastination behavior have a desire to complete a task.

- They decide to do the task for sure.

- They unnecessarily procrastinate doing the task.

- They don't realize procrastination is not beneficial.

- They continue to postpone their task.

- They get angry with themselves for their tendency to procrastinate.

- They continue to procrastinate.

- They try to complete their tasks when there is little time left until the deadline, or they don't even complete the tasks.

- They become irritated because of procrastination behavior.

- They promise themselves about not to procrastinate anymore.

- After all of these steps, they show procrastination tendency again in a new task.

3.3. Procrastination Cycle

Individual who is in a process of procrastination has particular feelings and behaviors. This process, which has been named as "procrastination cycle" by Burka and Yuen (2008), vary from person to person. While this process lasts for couple of weeks, months and even years for some people, and it also can be completed in couple of hours for some people. Burka and Yuen have defined procrastination cycle into seven stages. At the first stage; people who exhibit procrastination behavior are very hopeful with the idea of "I am going to start earlier this time", and they have assumptions on following more systematic path when they are assigned. Although they see themselves inadequate and unmotivated, they think that the beginning can be happened on its own and without any effort. However, after a while, existing hopes give way to anxiety while it becomes certain that this situation is not different than the others. At the second stage of cycle, the hope about the right time to start is lost because the time for beginning early was already passed by. The idea of "I need to start studying as soon as possible." makes people who have procrastination behavior anxious on to start to do something. As the hopes regarding to the idea that beginning can be happened on its own disappears, they feel that they need to do something immediately to be able to start. However, there can still be hope because the deadline has not approached yet. At the third stage of cycle, people with procrastination behavior have not started even though time passed by. At this stage, with the question of "what would happen if I cannot start?" past hopeful thoughts become intuitions. The ideas that individuals can no

longer start will cause bad results with life-long effects. At this point, individuals will become obsessed with repetitive thoughts. Individuals are aware of the fact that they cannot turn back the time. They punish themselves with the thought of "I should have started earlier.". It is very common that people with procrastination behavior are dealing with other activities rather than doing the necessary thing that they are trying to avoid. In that way, people are getting relaxed by thinking that they are at least doing something. These individuals try to distract themselves by hanging out with their friends, going for a walk at the weekends and watching movies. However, the enjoyment of these activities will exchange for guilt and anxiety when they notice their uncompleted works. At the other stage, procrastinators are ashamed of this situation as the time goes by. They don't want anybody to know the truth. They start acting as if they are very busy. They keep away from everything that can be revealed their secrets. The more they keep hiding this situation, they start lying in detail, as a result, they feel like impostor. At the fourth stage of cycle, although these the feelings of shame and fraud, they still preserve their hopes on still having enough time to complete their works. They are optimistic because they think something makes them relaxed coming soon. At the following stage, the dominant feeling is hopelessness and fear in procrastinators. The feelings related starting earlier, shame, suffering, guilt and the idea that something, "a miracle", makes them relaxed is coming didn't work. Individuals start questioning themselves at this point. They think everybody, except them, has self-discipline, courage and luck. At the sixth stage of procrastination, procrastinators either completely give up on their tasks that they delay or they choose to complete them. Procrastinators who completely gave up on their works think that they either cannot stand the tension because it is not possible to complete the work in remaining time, or they suggest it is not end of the world to not finish the relevant work. As for procrastinators who chose to complete the work in the remaining time, they start doing their tasks as they think it is not accurate to wait any longer, and other procrastinators think that it is not that frightening when they begin to work. At the seventh stage, which is the last stage of the cycle, procrastinators feel tired and relaxed because they completed or gave up their works. A quite difficult process was left behind. Procrastinators don't even want to think about they are in the same cycle again. At this point, procrastinators promise themselves they will start studying earlier, be more planned, stick to their plans, manage their anxiety from now on. These promises are valid until the next plan. Although the cycle comes to an end with all these promises, many people can find themselves in the same cycle over and over again.

3.4. Types of Procrastination

When reviewing the literature for concept of procrastination, there is not a consensus on classifying this concept as there is not a consensus on definition of this concept either. One of the classifications regarding procrastination is the classification of functional or non-functional behavior. Procrastination behavior has been addressed with negative evaluation by many researchers. However, procrastination behavior results in individual being defeated by himself as well as a response to individuals' self-interest (Ferrari et al., 1995). According to this point of view, Ferrari divided concept of procrastination into two titles. He has emphasized that it can be accepted to ignore rare procrastinations in the situations required extra information or in the urgent tasks, he also discussed this type of procrastination as a functional procrastination.

Ferrari (2000) interpreted functional procrastination as an intentional strategy that individuals motivate themselves in a limited period of time. This is a form of a procrastination which is often accepted that helps to increase the success of the work that will be done, and helps to individual to gain benefit. Ferrari (2000) defines non-functional procrastination as a tendency in which becoming an attitude as a result of delaying to start or complete a job. This tendency causes individual to not show optimum success on the work needs to be done. Non-functional procrastination is mentioned in two types: delaying decision needs to be taken and delaying task needs to be done. It is stated that chronic procrastination is not an effective technique for lifetime success, and this type of procrastination can be a tendency to non-adaptive personality.

There is another classification as well involving the highlight of procrastination being a tendency to a personality which is the classification that procrastination as a personality trait is discussed into procrastination and situational procrastination (Goroshit, 2018). As for situational procrastination, that is a procrastination behavior being shown to specific areas of life which is opposite to procrastination as personality trait. Situational procrastination specifically involves procrastinations regarding academic issues. Academic procrastination is the best-known situational procrastination (Ferrari and Pyhcyl, 2000). Rothbulum et al. (1986) specified academic procrastination as postponing academic tasks nearly every time, and accordingly feeling enormously anxious all the time.

3.5. Academic Procrastination Behavior: Causes and Effects

Academic life leads to many tasks and responsibilities. A research indicates that individuals postpone their such academic responsibilities as assignments, exams and projects due to variety of reasons. Academic procrastination is a behavior of which prevalence is proven by research (Ellis and Knaus, 1977). While Uzun Özer (2009) 's research that was conducted on Turkish college students states that 52,5% of students show academic procrastination behavior due to laziness, fear of failure, Ellis states that approximately 95% of American students show academic procrastination on academic tasks.

Burka evaluated the following statements as the "codes of procrastination" which are based on non-functional attitudes, assumptions and rules of individuals to

postpone their distorted cognitions: "I must do everything perfectly" "I should do the works easily and without any effort" "doing nothing is safer than failure and taking risk." "if I show the real me, nobody would like me" "if I'm doing well now, I should always do well" I cannot stand anything or anyone leaving". Because, these unrealistic and non-functional evaluations may cause failure, avoidance from intimate relationship, fear of loneliness. For instance, an individual who has the non-functional attitude of "I must always be perfect" can qualify procrastination behavior a safer way.

Another cognitive concept that the effect of individual on academic procrastination behavior has been demonstrated by many studies is self- esteem (Balkıs, 2010). According to Aydoğan and Özbay (2012), the procrastination behavior is a method that individuals refer to protect their self-esteem. When individuals scared of being unsuccessful, they may prefer to exhibit procrastination behavior to prevent any damage to their self-esteem.

It is detected by various research that academic procrastination behavior which is occurred by many effects, leads emotional outcomes such as depression, remorse, anxiety, and it also can bring along some complaints related to health (Glick et al., 2015; Burka and Yuen, 2008;).

4. Conclusion

According to these findings, it is seen that the main reasons for academic procrastination are based on fear of failure, laziness, reduced sense of responsibility, and failure in time managing. Perfectionism, anxiety and avoidance have a huge impact on developing this behavior. Moreover, individuals' unrealistic expectations regarding themselves and their performances, and their distorted beliefs substantially increase academic procrastination behavior. On the other hand, to be able to distinguish whether an action of postponement is a procrastination behavior, frequency of procrastination must be analyzed, and it should be checked if there is an anxiety accompanied by.

Referances

Ainslie, G. (1975) Specious reward: A behavioral theory of impulsiveness and impulse control. Psychological Bulletin, 82, 463-496.

Aydoğan, D. ve Özbay, Y. (2012). Akademik erteleme davranıslarının benlik saygısı, durumluluk kaygı ve öz-yeterlik ile açıklanabilirliğinin incelenmesi. Pegem Eğitim ve Öğretim Dergisi, 2(3), 1-9.

Balkıs, M. ve Duru, E. (2010). Akademik erteleme eğilimi, akademik başarı ilişkisinde genel ve performans benlik saygısının rolü. Pamukkale Üniversitesi Eğitim Fakültesi Dergisi, 27, 159-170.

Balkıs, M. (2013). Academic procrastination academic life satisfaction

and academic achievement: The mediation role of rational beliefs about studying. Journal of Cognitive and Behavioral Psychotherapies, 13(1), 57-74.

Bandura, A. (1986). Social foundations of thought and action. Englewood Cliffs, NJ, 1986.

Berber, Çelik, Ç. ve Odacı, H. (2015). Akademik erteleme davranışının bazı kişisel ve psikolojik değişkenlere göre açıklanması. Hacettepe Üniversitesi Eğitim Fakültesi Dergisi 30(3), 31-47.

Blunt, A. and Pychyl, T. A. (2000). Task aversiveness and procrastination: Amultidimensional approach to task aversiveness across stages of personel projects. Personality & Individual Differences, 28, 153- 167.

Burka, J. B. and Yuen, L. M. (2008). Procrastination: Why you do it and what to do about it now. Cambridge: Da Capo Press.

Ellis, A. and Knaus, W. J. (1977). Overcoming procrastination. New York: Signet Books.

Ferrari, J. R., Johnson, J. L., & McCown, W. G. (1995). Procrastination and task avoidance: Theory, research, and treatment. New York: Plenum Press

Ferrari, J. R. and Pychl, T. A. (eds.) (2000). The scientific study of procrastination: Where have we been and where are we going. Journal of Social Behavior and Personality (special issue),15.

Glick, D. M., & Orsillo, S. M. (2015). An investigation of the efficacy of acceptance-based behavioral therapy for academic procrastination. Journal of Experimental Psychology: General, 144(2), 400. doi: 10.1037/xge0000050

Goroshit, M. (2018). Academic procrastination and academic performance: An initial basis for intervention. Journal of Prevention & Intervention in the Community, 46(2), 131-142. doi: 10.1080/10852352.2016.1198157

Knaus, W. (2010). End procrastination now! Get It done with a proven psychological approach. The McGraw-Hill Companies.

Rothblum, E. D., Solomon, L. J., and Murakami, J. (1986). Affective, cognitive, and behavioral differences between high and low procrastinators. Journal of Counseling Psychology, 33, 387-394. doi: 10.1037/0022-0167.33.4.387

Steel, P., & Klingsieck, K. B. (2016). Academic procrastination: Psychological antecedents revisited. Australian Psychologist, 51(1), 36–46. doi:10.1111/ap.12173

Uzun, Özer, B. (2009). Bir grup lise öğrencisinde akademik erteleme davranışı: Sıklığı, olası nedenleri ve umudun rolü. Türk Psikolojik Danışma ve Rehberlik Dergisi, 4(32), 12-19.

Uzun Özer, B., O'Callaghan, J., Bokszcanin, A., Ederer, E. and Essau, C. (2014). Dynamic interplay of depression, perfectionism and self regulation on procrastination. British Journal of Guidance & Counselling, 42 (3), 309-319. doi: 10.1080/03069885.2014.896454

,