

ANALYSIS OF ACADEMIC PROCRASTINATION OF STUDENT AT THE FACULTY OF LAW OF CHARLES UNIVERSITY

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Abstract

The authors started to tackle with the procrastination in the end of last century. Most of authors describe procrastination as an ineffective behavioural strategy or negative dysfunctional phenomenon, which causes to person unpleasant moods. Several researches have shown that more people suffer from procrastination, than was supposed. Research abroad showed up, that between the university students is higher of procrastination than the average procrastination in the public. The procrastination by university students is called academic procrastination. Until recently, the problematic of the academic procrastination has not been explored deeply in the Czech Republic. Some authors started to pay attention to the academic procrastination. However, until now, there has been no research about the academic procrastination of students at the Law Faculty. This paper deals with the procrastination of students at the Faculty of Law of Charles University in Prague. The aim of the research was to find out the prevalence of academic procrastination of students at the Faculty of Law. This paper considers the correlation between academic studying and procrastination.

Key words: procrastination, intertemporal choice, students, self-reporting scale

JEL Code: M19, D03, I23

Introduction

The term procrastination is very common not just abroad but also in the Czech Republic. Authors abroad started to deal with academic procrastination from 60's of 20th Century. However, authors in the Czech Republic started to explore this topic deeper just recently. The number of cases of academic procrastination is raising, which shows the interest of researchers, students, teachers and public about this topic in the Czech Republic. Academic procrastination is connected with colleges, universities and the behaviour of students of colleges and universities.

1 Methodology

The research dealt with the academic procrastination. 219 university students attended the research – 119 men (54.34 %) and 100 women (45.66 %). They all were studying their 2nd semester (1st year of Master's cycle) at the Law Faculty of Charles University. The aim of first research question was to find out prevalence of procrastination. Lay's (1986) scale of procrastination traditionally divides procrastinators into 3 groups. The maximum score was determined 100 points and the minimum score was determined 20 points. The students were divided into 3 groups. The first group, marked as light procrastinators, scored 20-50 points. The scale score for the group of middle procrastinators was between 51 and 70 points. Finally, heavy procrastinators scored between 71 and 100 points. The students who obtained more than 51 points were considered like procrastinators.

2 Procrastination

Many authors deal with procrastination. Authors who write about procrastination define this term differently. For example, Kraus & Freund (2014) describe procrastination like "...subjectively aversive inability to initiate or complete the pursuit of a given goal, is a common phenomenon in academic contexts." Another possible definition of procrastination from Milgram, Mey-Tal & Levison (1998) is that procrastination is connected with postpone or delay performing a task or making decisions. Another author – Eerde claims that procrastination is common phenomenon and people are involved in not doing and avoiding work (Eerde, 2000). He wrote "The dispositional approach may be reconciled with the idea that procrastination can also be described as a process. As such, procrastination involves the avoidance of the implementation of an intention. The avoidance is characterised by distraction with more pleasant activities or thoughts. The intention concerns a behaviour that is experienced as emotionally unattractive, but cognitively important because it will lead to positive outcomes in the future" (Eerde, 2000, p. 374).

One of the opinions about the term of procrastination is: "...procrastination itself (i.e., the delaying) is not "irrational" at all, but occurs when individuals pursue goals that are not in line with their personal values and basic needs. This may happen, because people now and then (have to) comply with externally imposed expectations and goals. However, from an "outsider" perspective, that is, especially for people who possess a different or even antithetic value structure, not pursuing these goals with eager tenacity may appear "irrational" (Grund & Fries, 2018, p. 121).

Some authors believe that the impact of procrastination between college students and students in secondary school is different. Saele, Dahl, Sorlie & Friberg wrote that: “Procrastination may have greater negative consequences for university students than students in secondary school because of more complex tasks, greater demands for independence and less feedback on own performance. The academic tasks often involve writing papers, which is a solitary task with delayed rewards, if any. Likewise, as they work, university students may lack sufficient meta-cognitive awareness to know when they are sufficiently prepared for an exam or when a paper is good enough to receive the grade that they desire” (Saele, Dahl, Sorlie & Friberg, 2017, p. 759). Other authors have same opinion. For example, Onwuegbuzie & Jiao (2000, p. 46), wrote: “graduate students may have an even greater tendency to procrastinate on academic tasks than undergraduate students do“.

Glick, Millstein, Orsillo believe, that between there is relationship between procrastination and psychological inflexibility. They found out, that: “...procrastination associated with lower acceptance/psychological flexibility, lower levels of mindfulness, and a lower degree of academic values” (Glick, Millstein, Orsillo, p. 84, 2014).

Other authors, Casey, Jones & Hare add that students have more social distractions and temptations. “When faced with an immediate personal decision, adolescents will rely less on intellectual capabilities and more on feeling” (Casey, Jones & Hare, 2008, p. 122).

Deemer, Yough & Morel think that study results are important. They wrote: “How well students perform in college can have a direct bearing on their later ability to pursue particular job opportunities or gain admission to graduate school” (Deemer, Yough & Morel, 2017, p. 200).

Perceived pressure to perform well academically can be highly anxiety-provoking, thus causing students to seek some temporary relief from an aversive situation (e.g., studying for an exam) by engaging in more pleasurable activities (Eerde 2000).

Klassen, Ang, Chong & et al. claim, that “the impact of procrastination is not a simple function of time spent procrastinating, but is also related to interpretations of behaviour that may be influenced by cultural beliefs” (Klassen, Ang, Chong & et al., 2010, p. 376).

3 Results

Students of the Faculty of Law of Charles University participated in the research. Printed questionnaires were given to 235 students. The return of the questionnaires was 100 %. This

high return of questionnaires was achieved by giving these questionnaires to students in lectures and seminars during their tuition.

The obtained data from the questionnaire collection were converted into electronic form and exposed to the statistical analysis. Validity was assessed using quantitative methods. Each participant filled in a questionnaire set of two scales in one questionnaire. If the answers varied, than these questionnaires were removed from research. For this reason 16 questionnaires were excluded from the research.

Participation in the questionnaire survey was not honoured. Teachers informed students of the process of data processing, archiving and presentation of outputs. The questionnaire survey was anonymous and the data processing was also anonymous.

Sorting of respondents by gender shows tab. 1 below.

Tab. 1: Sorting respondents by gender

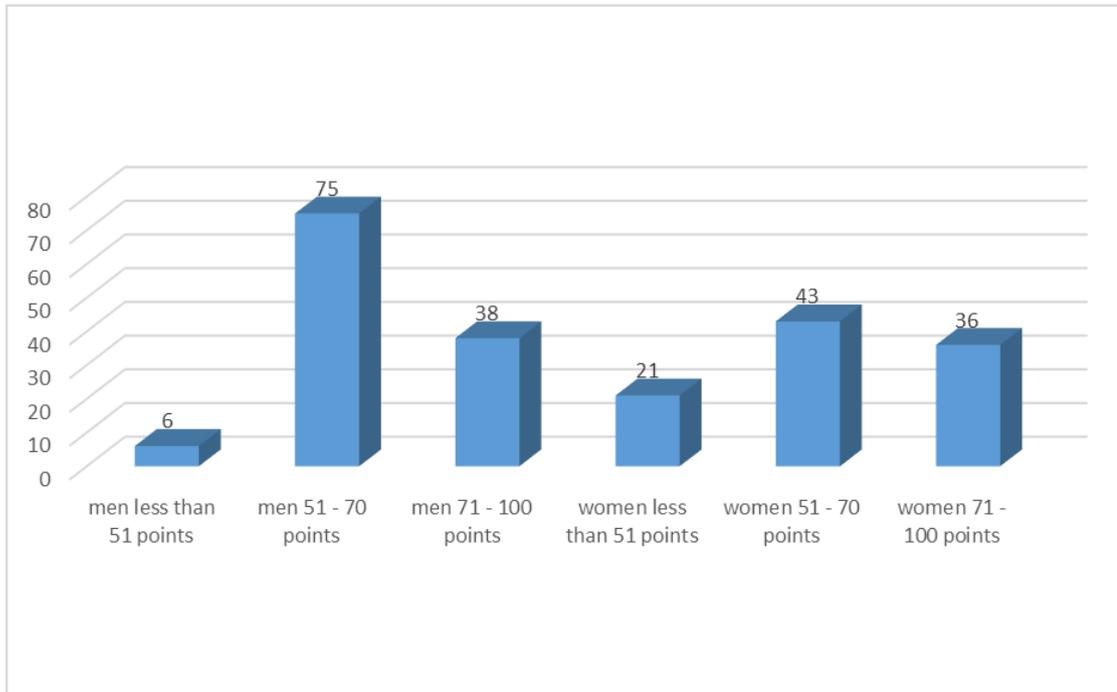
Female respondents	100	54.33 %
Male respondents	119	45.67%
Total respondents	219	100 %

Source: Own research, 2018

More male respondents attended the research, as it is possible to see in the table 1. However, the difference between the number of male and female respondents is not so significant.

In figure 1 (on another page), is possible to see procrastination rate between male students and female students. The tendency of female students to procrastinate is little bit lower than by male students. Male students formed the biggest group of middle procrastinators. The biggest second group was formed by middle procrastinators, which was formed by female students. The smallest group was formed by light procrastinators and in this group, there were just 6 men. So from these results is possible to see that male students have higher tendency to procrastinate than female students at the Law Faculty. The number of procrastinators would be 192 students – that is 87.67 % from all students asked. This rate does not differ from studies of other authors.

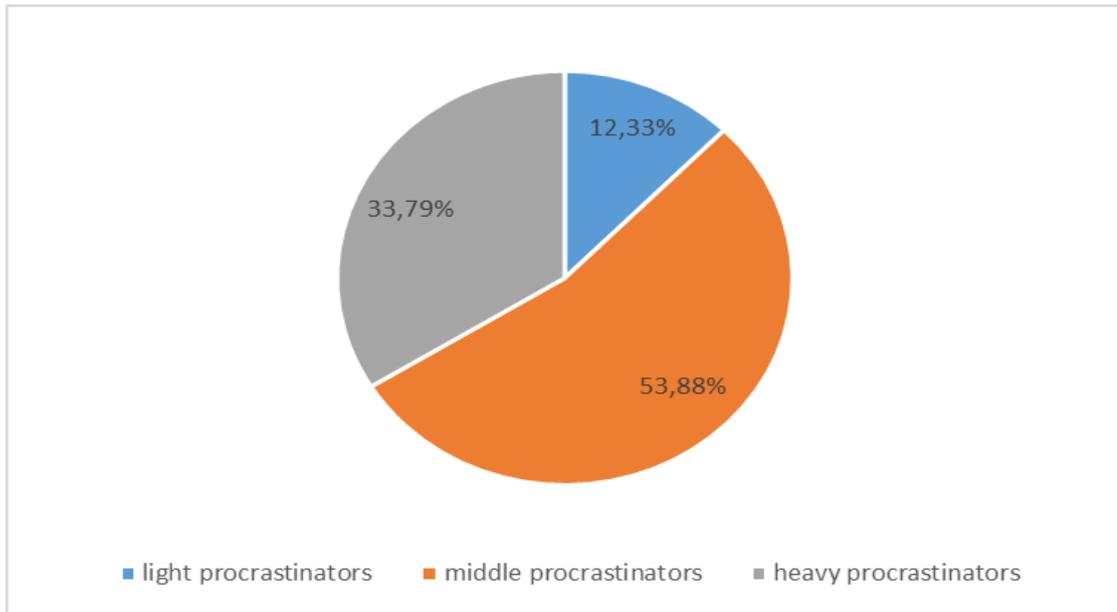
Fig. 1: Compare evaluation of rating



Source: Own research, 2018

In figure 2, which is displayed on another page, is possible to see how students were divided into 3 groups. Students who obtained less than 51 points were sorted into first group marked as light procrastinators, the second group of students who obtained between 51 – 70 points was marked as a middle procrastinators and third group of students who obtained between 71 – 100 points was marked as heavy procrastinators. According to these criteria of dividing into 3 groups, the distribution of the procrastinators is following: light procrastinators makes 12.33 % of all students, middle procrastinators 53.88 % of all students and heavy procrastinators 33.79 % of all students.

Fig. 2: Ratio of procrastinators among students



Source: Own research, 2018

Tab. 2: Degree of procrastination and gender

Degree of procrastination		Gender		Total
		Men	Women	
Low procrastination	Number	6	21	27
	% prevalence	22.23	77.77	100
	% gender from set	5.04	21	12.33
Middle procrastination	Number	75	43	118
	% prevalence	63.56	36.44	100
	% gender from set	63.03	43	53.88
High procrastination	Number	38	36	74
	% prevalence	51.35	48.65	100
	% gender from set	31.93	36	33.79
Total	Number	119	100	219
	% prevalence	54.34	45.66	100
	% gender from set	100	100	100

Source: Own research, 2018

In table 2 is possible to see the prevalence rate across genders. Table 2 shows that while males are slightly lower accurate in self-judging than women, in the high procrastination men obtained 31.93 % (N = 38) compared to women 36 % (N = 36) at high procrastination.

In the group marked as low procrastinators, the results were more significant. More women achieved a lower score on procrastination. It was 77.77 % from (N = 21). In the middle procrastination, men and women obtained also different values 63.03 % for men and 43 % for women.

However, the results are not statistically significant and the rate of procrastination is unrelated with the sex of the respondents in this research.

Conclusion

The research was concerned with academic procrastination of students in Faculty of Law Charles University. Academic procrastination is connected mainly with postpone of tasks, which are connected with studies of university and college students. Until now, there was no research which would inquire the academic procrastination of students in the Faculty of Law. The research also studied the reasons of procrastination. By the analysis of gained results, it was found out that when students procrastinate, they spend a lot of time watching TV and on their pc. It was found out that 96 students (53 men, 43 women) spend 1 – 3 hours daily on their computers. 67 students (39 men, 28 women) spend 3 – 5 hours daily on pc. 29 students (19 men, 10 women) spend more than 5 hours daily on pc. Students spend also time by watching TV, when they procrastinate. Research presented, that most of students do not watch TV otherwise. 175 students (97 men, 78 women) watch TV less than 1 hour per day. Just 3 students watch TV 5 and more hours per day. Research also examined, if students think, that they suffer by procrastination. 153 students believe that they procrastinate (89 men, 64 women). Just 45 students do not think that they procrastinate (18 men, 27 women). The rest of students did not know if they suffer by procrastination.

Research beside also considered when students start to write their projects and start to learn for their exams. Surprisingly just 20 students (5 men, 15 women) start to write their project right away. 68 students (28 men, 40 women) usually start to work on their projects 14 days before the due date. By research it was find out, that most of students start to learn 2 or 1 week before the exam, 74 students (35 men, 39 women) start to learn 2 weeks before exam

and 76 students (40 men, 36 women) 1 week before the exam. Just 19 students start to learn 3 – 4 days before the exam and just 3 men start to learn 1 day before the exam.

The results of the questionnaire survey are not representative and cannot be related to the whole population. Nevertheless, this research provides an elementary understanding into the issue of prevalence of procrastination of university students of Law Faculty in Prague in the Czech Republic.

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