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The Relationship between the Rate of the Use of Computer Games and Academic Procrastination: The Mediatory Role of Goal Orientation in Elementary School Students

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Extended Abstract

This study intended to investigate the relationship between the rate of the use of computer games and elementary school students' academic procrastination considering the mediatory role of goal orientation. To this end, using a multi-stage cluster sampling procedure, 213 male and female elementary school students (112 female and 101 male students) were selected from the two educational districts of Shiraz. The instruments used in the study included a questionnaire on Academic Procrastination (Savari, 2011), one on Goal Orientation (Elliott, 1999 and McGregor, 2001) and a researcher-made questionnaire on the time spent using computer games daily. Regarding the first two questionnaires, Cronbach's alpha method was used to estimate the reliability and validity of the correlations of the items with the dimensions and the correlation of the dimensions with the total score was also used. The obtained results confirmed the acceptable validity and reliability of the questionnaires. To evaluate the model, path analysis was utilized using SPSS 21 software. Results indicated that there was a negative and significant relationship between academic procrastination, mastery-oriented goal orientation and the rate of the use of computer games. Furthermore, the mastery-avoidance goal orientation was a positive and significant predictor of academic procrastination. However, there was not any statistically significant difference between male and female students in terms of the relationship between goal orientation (performance-oriented, performance-avoidance, mastery-oriented, and mastery-avoidance) and the rate of the use of computer games. Findings of the research indicated that there was a negative and significant relationship between academic proclivity and goal orientation-dominant and tenderness-performance. Also, the use of computer games predicted a positive and significant predictive of academic achievement and predicted a negative and significant predictive the mastery-avoidance goal orientation. Also, there was no significant difference between male and female students in terms of academic procrastination and goal orientation.

Keywords: academic procrastination, goal orientation, computer games.

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INTRODUCTION

Academic procrastination as one of the most paramount and prevalent issues ever observed at all academic levels has drawn the attention of most researchers (Steel, 2007). Undoubtedly, the goal of the educational system is training learners who are motivated and academically successful, which is in contrast to academic procrastination. Therefore, identifying individual and contextual factors affecting academic procrastination is of paramount importance. One of the most important factors affecting academic procrastination in elementary school students is their tendency to play games, especially computer games which are popular among children of different age groups. Moreover, one of the influential personal factors which is caused by personality and contextual factors is the type of goal orientation. Goal orientation not only includes a person's intentions and reasons for progress but also reflects the criteria according to which people evaluate their own performance (Pintrich, 2000).

PURPOSE

This study intended to investigate the relationship between the rate of the use of computer games, the type of goal orientation and academic procrastination among elementary school students, and whether the use of computer games is predictive of academic procrastination and goal orientation in students. Furthermore, it examined whether there is any significant gender difference in goal orientation, academic procrastination and the rate of computer games used among students.

METHODOLOGY

This research was a correlational one. The research population consisted of all elementary students of grades 5 and 6 from Shiraz, based on which a sample of 213 participants was selected using a multi-stage cluster sampling procedure. To collect the necessary data, three questionnaires were used: Savary's academic procrastination questionnaire, goal orientation questionnaire (Elliott, 1991; Elliott & McGregor, 2001) and a researcher-made questionnaire on the rate of the use of computer games.

RESULTS

The results of the statistical analysis indicated that there was a significant relationship between academic procrastination and the types of goal orientation and the rate of computer games used. Furthermore, the results of regression analysis demonstrated that the rate of the use of computer games had a positive and significant relationship with academic procrastination. It should also be noted that among the dimensions of goal orientation, the rate of computer games used was a negative and significant predictor of the mastery-avoidance. Finally, no statistically significant difference was observed between female and male students in terms of academic procrastination and goal orientation.

DISCUSSION

Given the findings of this study, it can be stated that the more children are involved in computer games, the less motivated they will be in game's outcomes and educational results because false beliefs are formed in their minds, which results in the reduction of their motivation. Hence, the more they play computer games, the less motivated they will become in that they will pay less attention to academic outcomes. In other words, false cognitive beliefs are formed in students so that they will become indifferent to the results. On the other hand, the more they spend time on computer games, the less time they will spend on studying, which leads to an increase in their academic procrastination. That being so, they try to justify themselves by attributing their academic procrastination to external factors such as lack of time and heavy workload as well as internal ones like I could not, I do not like, etc.

CONCLUSION

Academic procrastination, especially at the elementary level, is a multidimensional phenomenon which is influenced by various personal, social and family factors. Results of this study showed that computer games and goal orientation significantly contributed to it, which highlights the importance of parents' awareness of the negative effects and consequences of computer games in reducing students' academic procrastination.

NOVELTY

Given that the negative phenomenon of academic procrastination in early school years, especially with regard to the role of computer games, is observed abundantly, it is worth studying it from different perspectives. Furthermore, most studies on academic procrastination have been conducted on adults' procrastination and hence, elementary school students' academic procrastination has remained as a rather under-researched area of enquiry, which points out the urgent need for such a study.



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