

An Intervention Study of Academic Procrastination in College Students - A Comparison Based on ACT and Time Management

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Abstract

In recent years, academic procrastination has become a common problem in college students' learning process. It is more and more important to explore why college students procrastinate, what factors have a significant impact on it, and how we can effectively intervene to enable college students to solve or overcome academic procrastination. This paper introduces the concept of academic procrastination, analyses its influencing factors and introduces the advantages and disadvantages of various intervention methods to give us a more detailed understanding of how to choose an effective way to solve academic procrastination.

Keywords

Academic procrastination, college students, time management, self-efficacy.

1. The concept of academic delay

Academic procrastination was first mentioned in the article "Academic Procrastination Frequency and its Cognitive and Behavioural Correlates", and Rothblum and Solomon (1984) pointed out that academic procrastination is the postponement of the completion of the learning task by an individual without the influence of sufficient objective reasons. Academic procrastination is a branch of various procrastination behaviours, and although there are a large number of studies on this behaviour at home and abroad, different scholars have different understandings of its definition, and there is no uniform definition yet. At first, some researchers (Lay CH, 1986) think that academic procrastination is a kind of irrational behaviour, individuals can foresee that procrastination leads to negative results but still choose to procrastinate, Tuckman (1991) thinks that "academic procrastination" refers to the individual's tendency to postpone or even avoid the academic tasks that should be completed by himself. In contrast, Ferrari (2007) and others suggest that academic procrastination is a rational behaviour in which an individual actively chooses to procrastinate in a given situation in order to protect his or her self-worth or to obtain delayed gratification, even if the negative impact of such procrastination on the outcome of the task is foreseeable. [1]

From the above, it is easy to see that there is no standard answer to the definition of academic procrastination, but the definition of it points to the individual who can foresee the consequences of procrastination or actively choose to procrastinate, it is a kind of purposeful and conscious behaviour, and it will ultimately bring negative impacts to the object of procrastination.

2. Factors affecting academic delays

Academic procrastination is a common problem among college students, and it has a great impact on students' academic performance and learning outcomes. There are many factors affecting academic procrastination, which will be discussed in the following four aspects: motivation, time management, environment, and emotion.

College students' academic procrastination shows a negative correlation with academic motivation. [2] Academic motivation is the internal drive to try to overcome difficulties when individuals face them. Academic motivation can prompt students to spontaneously engage in learning and push them to work hard to achieve their goals. When students lack interest in learning tasks or lack a clear understanding of future learning goals, they are prone to delay their studies as a result. The stronger the motivation, the less academic procrastination behaviour of college students. The effect of motivation on academic procrastination is also influenced by individual academic self-efficacy. [3] For example, for students with the same level of motivation, those with higher self-efficacy will take more positive and proactive actions and have persistence, and thus have less procrastination.

There is a negative correlation between academic procrastination and time management tendency. [4] The significance of time management lies in planning time, doing a good job of setting goals and self-management, reducing time-wasting factors and bringing the value of time into play. People with time management tendency will be better at arranging study and rest time reasonably, improving study efficiency, thus avoiding academic procrastination. In the process of constantly setting up plans to achieve goals, the courage and confidence to face pressure are enhanced, and individuals are motivated to make continuous efforts to achieve their goals through effective time management.

Secondly, environmental factors are also an important influence on academic procrastination. Environmental factors include learning environment, family environment and social environment. The quality of the learning environment directly affects students' learning effectiveness and motivation. If students' learning environment is noisy and without good learning facilities and resources, they are prone to the tendency of academic procrastination. Family environment is also an important factor affecting academic procrastination. If the family does not attach enough importance to learning and does not provide adequate learning support and supervision, students are prone to relax their attention to their studies. In addition, the social environment may also have an impact on academic procrastination. If students are surrounded by classmates or friends who commonly engage in academic procrastination, they are easily influenced to engage in similar behaviours.

Emotional states have a direct impact on academic procrastination. Students' emotional state and emotional regulation play an important role in academic procrastination. When students face academic tasks, if they feel anxious, stressed or overwhelmed, they are prone to academic procrastination behaviour. College students' anxiety level and academic procrastination are significantly and positively correlated. The higher the anxiety level the more serious the academic procrastination behaviour of individuals. [5] Students are prone to academic procrastination if they are overly worried about the outcome of their studies, afraid of failure or have low self-efficacy and lack confidence in their academic tasks. At the same time, students' low emotional state affects learning motivation and indirectly affects academics.

The factors affecting students' academic procrastination involve motivation, time management, environment, and emotion, etc. Understanding these influences is important for correcting procrastination behaviours and improving learning outcomes and academic development.

3. Modes of intervention for academic delays

3.1. Time management aspects

The main principle of time management interventions is to teach students how to better organise their time in order to increase their efficiency and self-control. Specific methods include the following:

For individual college students, the group counselling and supervision programme allows students to understand their own learning problems, improve their own time management ability, and reduce academic procrastination; For the practice of higher education, teachers can intervene to improve college students' perception of time management and enhance their time management skills. The improvement of college students' time management ability can relatively reduce the academic procrastination behaviour; It also plays a certain role in promoting the teaching and learning in colleges and universities. The reduction of college students' procrastination can improve the quality of education in the whole college; for the guardians, let the guardians realize the importance of supervision, college students' time management will be improved, they can make plans, enhance the sense of control of time, and reduce the academic procrastination behaviour in learning. [6]

However, there are some shortcomings of time management interventions. Firstly, time management requires a high level of self-control and planning skills, which some students may not be able to acquire. Second, time management may cause students to become overly concerned with their plans and progress, leading to neglect of other important matters. Finally, time management interventions usually only cover the student's time management problems and do not address other factors such as emotions and attitudes.

As their grades increase, college students gradually lose their sense of freshness and curiosity about college life, their devotion to their studies gradually decreases, and their attention shifts to the development of interpersonal relationships and increased social practice; at the same time, they begin to be picky, paying attention to the school's teaching facilities, the teacher's way of teaching, and the quality of teaching, etc., and they enter a period of uncertainty in their academic life and begin to think about their own futures. When they first enter the university campus, the kind of longing and hopeful, pleasant academic emotions gradually diminish, and negative emotions such as disappointment and boredom become more and more common. [7]

3.2. Cognitive and behavioural aspects

The second area of intervention is cognitive and behavioural. In existing interventions for academic procrastination, according to the theory of time motivation, the higher the academic expectations, the higher the self-efficacy is usually, the higher the likelihood of estimating that one is better at completing the task, and the faster and more likely one is to act [8]. Individuals with high academic self-efficacy have relatively less procrastination behaviour because they are more confident in their abilities, are purposeful and persistent in their learning activities, and are able to actively and attentively engage in their learning activities [9]. In an experiment to study self-efficacy, college students majoring in nursing were selected as the research subjects for a questionnaire survey. The results of the experiment found that nursing students may be prone to academic procrastination due to heavy course loads and rigorous standards of assessment requirements, which cause students to have a low sense of goal achievement and a high sense of frustration, and a loss of confidence in learning leading to an aversion to learning [10]. The students who have high self-efficacy are more likely to have academic procrastination [10]. Nursing students with a high sense of self-efficacy have a positive attitude when facing academic tasks, and are able to objectively and correctly understand themselves and complete them within the specified time, thus less procrastination. [11] Therefore, it can be seen that the higher the self-efficacy, the lesser the delay. Therefore, it can be seen that the higher the self-

efficacy, the less academic procrastination will occur. Xu Xinfang used cognitive-behavioural intervention techniques to conduct group counselling around improving college students' self-efficacy, and to reduce the distance between intention and action by intervening in behaviours and building positive cognition. [11] This type of group intervention was found to be effective for procrastination in self-directed learning.

At the same time, there are also autonomous interventions based on rational emotive therapy that build rational beliefs by questioning and confronting irrational beliefs about the procrastination task, drawing on the interplay of cognition, emotion and behaviour, which in turn improves procrastination [12]. This approach is derived from Ellis and Kennedy [13]. This approach is derived from the ABC model proposed by Ellis and Knaus. People experience event A and react emotionally and behaviourally to it. It is not the event itself, but the perception of the event, our beliefs, that leads to event C. Cognitive therapy helps people to reassess the situation they are facing, enabling them to identify and modify irrational beliefs and change unwanted behaviours [13]. b. These types of interventions are targeted, more self-initiated, broader in scope, more practical and feasible, and simple to follow. In addition, Knaus suggests several practical techniques based on cognitive behavioural theory to help visitors identify beliefs and challenge their irrational thoughts, which gives them a sense of balance and control over their lives [6]. This gives them a sense of balance and control over their lives [6]. However, there have been insufficient clinical trials to determine the reasons for the effectiveness of CBT techniques and the specific mechanisms of action. Many researchers have conducted controlled studies to demonstrate the effectiveness of CBT as a psychotherapeutic treatment for procrastination, but it is still not possible to give a definitive answer [14].

3.3. Emotional

The main principle of the Emotional Perspective Intervention is to help students overcome academic procrastination by changing their emotions and attitudes. Specific methods include the following:

Understanding the causes of procrastination, students should have an in-depth understanding of the causes of their procrastination, e.g., fear of tasks, lack of motivation, and difficulty in concentrating. Changing the mindset of procrastination,

Students should change their negative attitudes and stereotypes about procrastination, such as "I won't finish the task", "I don't have time", and so on. Learning emotional regulation skills: Students should learn emotional regulation skills, such as deep breathing, relaxation training, and positive mental suggestion, in order to reduce the effects of procrastination. Improve self-efficacy: Students should improve their self-efficacy and increase their confidence in themselves by, for example, successfully completing tasks. Seek help: Students should seek help from parents, teachers or counsellors to work out feasible solutions together.

Emotional perspective intervention can help students overcome academic procrastination by helping them better manage their emotions and attitudes. This intervention can address students' emotional problems and improve their self-efficacy and motivation to learn. In addition, the emotional perspective intervention can help students understand and overcome the causes of procrastination and reduce the duration of procrastination.

However, there are some shortcomings of the emotional perspective intervention. Firstly, this intervention method relies more on students' self-awareness and self-management ability, which is difficult. Second, the emotional perspective intervention requires time and effort, and some students may need more support and guidance. Finally, the emotional perspective intervention does not solve all academic procrastination problems and may need to be combined with other interventions in some special cases.

4. Summaries

In summary, college students' motivation, time management, individual surroundings and emotional state all affect whether they will eventually develop academic procrastination. Among the existing interventions for academic procrastination, increasing our sense of control over time through time management can effectively reduce academic procrastination, but the need for strong self-control and planning ability also suggests its limitations; while interventions on college students' emotions can help them understand and overcome academic procrastination, but it depends on their self-consciousness, which makes it difficult to implement; and finally, interventions on cognitive and behavioural aspects can improve college students' academic expectations and self-efficacy. Finally, cognitive and behavioural interventions can improve college students' academic expectations and self-efficacy, and make college students willing to devote themselves to their studies, thus effectively solving the problem of academic procrastination. By solving the problem of academic procrastination, we can stimulate the motivation and self-confidence of individuals, improve the self-management and self-control ability of college students, reduce the psychological pressure of college students to complete their studies, and better manage their emotions and behaviours, which is of great significance to the academic and career development of college students.

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