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Can fear of failure predict academic procrastination? A study of Indonesian university students

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Abstract – This study aims to determine the ability of fear of failure in predicting academic procrastination in students in Indonesia by involving 428 respondents (male = 52.63%). The instruments used are the academic procrastination scale and the fear of failure scale. Analysis of this research data uses a simple linear regression technique. This study showed that fear of failure affected academic procrastination significantly with a contribution value of 38.6% positive direction, while 61.4% was influenced by other factors not studied. Research confirms that students with high levels of fear of failure tend to have high levels of academic procrastination and vice versa.

INTRODUCTION

Knaus (2010) suggests that procrastination is the act of an individual who delays essential work that has been planned and needs to be completed promptly to not interfere with other activities. Consistent with this, Tuckman (1991) also states that procrastination is the act of individuals who spend time doing non-essential activities, delaying the completion of work, and not initiating activities that must be completed immediately.

Researchers obtained preliminary data by interviewing ten respondents, but all of them said they belonged to the category of people who delayed completing the task. The reason respondents delayed was for fear of being wrong in doing the task or afraid that doing the task alone would result in low scores; therefore, waiting for answers from other friends was one of the chosen options. Respondents tend to feel the period of task collection is still long, so there is still plenty of time for other more fun activities.

Interview results for ten respondents stated that they had used the time they were supposed to work on tasks for fun, such as watching Korean dramas, sleeping, sightseeing, accessing the internet such as Facebook, Youtube, TikTok. And Instagram. All respondents realized that delayed behavior could cause anxiety, fear, stress, panic, sadness, and nervousness.

Although respondents realized that things impacted procrastination behavior, they still did so. Ellis &Knaus (in Ferrari, Johnson, &McCown, 1995) says that it is estimated that more than 70% of students participate in academic procrastination. Concerning several research results on the high percentage of such behavior in Indonesia, including Syifa (2020), 64.1% of 103 subjects are included in high category academic procrastination. Wahyuniyas, Suminarti, & Amalia (2019) reached 52% of the 100 subjects included in the academic procrastination of high categories. Haryanti & Santo (2020) achieved 74% of the 127 subjects in the academic procrastination of the high category.

Students who have obtained adult status, i.e., 18 to 25 years, should take full responsibility (Santrock, 2012). In the early stages of cognitive development, individuals experience more specific changes than the previous stage's development. At this stage, the individual has a better way of thinking, can conclude events, thinks before he or she acts, and can think about the possibility of anything that will happen before doing something (Piaget in Suparno 2001).

Santrock (2012) confirms that as an individual with an early adult stage based on cognitive development, he should be able to reason abstractly, idealistically, responsibly, and distinguish good and bad cases when he wants to make decisions and actions. Students experience many significant changes in their lives, especially in terms of learning assignments. The impact of students who are challenged to manage time will be stuck with the buildup of tasks. So that the process of working on each of these tasks will be limited.

Researchers found facts in the field, i.e., when given a task, students will still choose other activities that are more fun than immediately completing the task, so that the task completion process is accompanied by anxiety, nervousness, etc. Solomon & Rothblum (1984) states that several factors influence procrastination: fear of failure is the fear of the individual to make a goal or tendency to be guilty when it fails. Aversiveness of the task is a negative feeling about a task or work that will soon be completed and other factors, such as reliance on others who have the capacity and much help, too much risk, and difficulty making decisions.

The study of Fitriah, Hartati & Kurniawan (2016) showed that 58% of the 178 subjects at the Faculty of Education, Semarang State University, conducted academic procrastination due to fear of failure factor in the high category with a presentation score of 71%. Another study conducted by Sebastian (2013) resulted that people who are afraid of failing in the high category consider that the tasks given are unpleasant, so they can be distracted by other things that are more pleasant so that academic procrastination behavior arises.

Based on the phenomenon that has been obtained before, then the researchers again take data; the results obtained are respondents stated that when there is a difficult task or does not like the task, then the respondent will delay for reasons of fear of wrong and fear if it has an impact on the values of respondents who do not meet expectations.

Based on the results of other interviews, the results were obtained so that respondents chose to do academic delays because some of them were feared. This fear is like parents who will be disappointed and afraid of being criticized by others. Eight respondents stated that criticism from others related to failure could make respondents feel embarrassed, lose spirit and confidence. Therefore, academic procrastination is a strategy to overcome the fear of failure.

Six respondents stated that the expectations or expectations given by parents so that respondents could complete the study as soon as possible made respondents feel anxious when obtaining less than optimal grades. Following the interview results, Gusniarti (2002) resulted in parents' expectations that their children can motivate them to achieve learning, but can also be a burden for children. Many parents' expectations and demands on their children can cause stress and anxiety that will be experienced to impact the fear of failure in terms of learning.

Conroy, Kaye, & Fifer (2007) says that fear of failure is the reason for avoidance motives committed by individuals based on shame and anticipation. It is associated with the humiliation to be acquired when individuals fail, or one can say that fear of failure is the tendency of individuals to evaluate threats and feel anxious when they do their work that can allow people to experience failure.

Solomon & Rothblum Research (1984) states that major factors due to fear of failure contribute to academic procrastination, ranging from 6.3% to 14.1%. The results of research conducted by Sebastian (2013) obtained the results of a significant relationship between fear of failure to academic procrastination. Haghbin, McCaffrey, &Pychyl (2012) found a positive relationship between fear of failure and delay. Based on the description presented, supported by various research results related to fear of failure and academic procrastination, this study aims to find out the ability of fear of failure in predicting academic procrastination in students in Indonesia.

RESEARCH METHOD

The subjects in the study were 428 respondents consisting of 207 female respondents and 221 male respondents aged 21-23 years old who lived in Makassar, South Sulawesi, Indonesia. The data collection in this study is a scale of fear of failure and academic procrastination. The fear of failure scale is a modified scale of Putri (2019) compiled based on Conroy, Kaye & Fifer (2007) with a reliability value of 0.912, while the academic procrastination scale is a scale adapted by Fany (2019) compiled based on Tuckman theory (1991) with a reliability value of 0.842. The validity test is carried out in several stages: logical, face and construct.

Data analysis in this study is calculated with simple regression. Furthermore, the assumption test was conducted on this study using the Kolmogorov-Smirnov normality test obtained p = 0.053, which means that the data used in this study has been normally distributed. While the linearity test in this study uses deviation from linearity p <0.001, meaning that the data in this study has a linear relationship. The hypothesis test uses a simple regression test with a value p < 0.001, which means the hypothesis in the study is accepted.

RESULT

Figure 1 shows that the fear of failure in most students is at the moderate category level. Furthermore, students' academic procrastination level is also at the moderate category level, as shown in Figure 2.
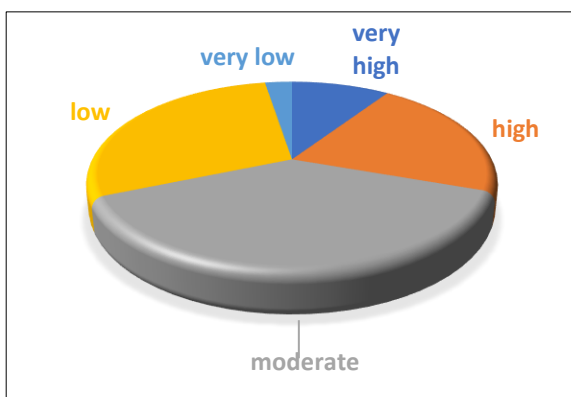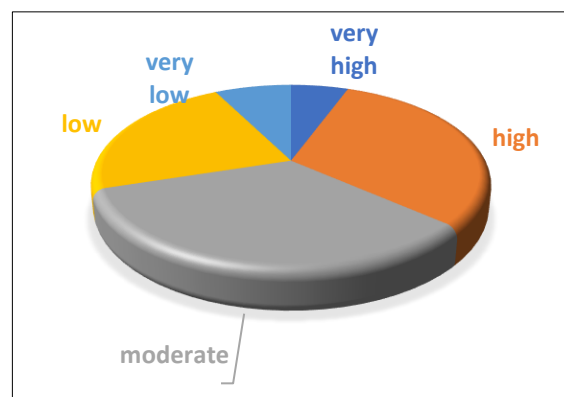

Figure 1 Fear of Failure Level

Figure 2 Academic Procrastination Level

Based on the hypothesis test table in Table 1, it can be concluded that fear of failure contributes to 0.386 or 38.6% to academic procrastination in students in Indonesia.

Table 1 Hypothesis Test

Variable	R square	Contribution	p-value
fear of failure toward **academic procrastination**	0.386	38.6%	<0.001

DISCUSSION

Based on the analysis results conducted on students in Makassar, it is known that fear of failure contributed 0.386 or 38.6% to academic procrastination. In addition, fear of failure also has a significant effect with a positive direction of influence, or in other words, the higher the fear of failure in students in Makassar, the higher the academic procrastination, and vice versa, the lower the fear of failure in students in Makassar, the lower the academic procrastination.

In line with this, the results of the study are obtained, the higher the level of dislike of the task, the academic procrastination will also increase, conversely if the lower they do not like the task, the lower the academic procrastination (Linra & Fakhri, 2016; Ahmad & Mudjiran, 2019). Many individual causes of academic procrastination, but one of them is for fear of failure (Solomon &rothblum, 1984; Steel, 2007; Van, 2004).

Based on the results of initial interviews conducted by researchers, it is known that respondents stated that when there is a difficult task, they will choose to delay to start the task

for fear of being wrong to get a low score that can disappoint parents. In addition, the respondents also stated that criticism of others for the disobedience experienced by the individual causes the individual to feel embarrassed, insecure, and even discouraged to achieve success. So procrastination is one strategy to overcome fear. In line with the results of the interview, Burka & Yuen (2008) stated that individuals perform procrastination on the grounds that they fear being judged and criticized by others. Individuals also worry about being poorly judged by others, so procrastination is a strategy to overcome the fear of failure.

Ferrari, Jhonson, & McCown (1995) states that fear generally causes individuals to avoid taking action. Fear of failure is an attitude of avoidance that can be procrastination. Generally, individuals with high fear of failure will experience anxiety when the deadline is near. Anxiety can decrease when given a stimulus, i.e., task avoidance or procrastination.

Sulaeman (1995) states that fear is a psychological state caused by the conflict in the individual because of persistent feelings of worry and uncertain feelings. Atkinson (1993) states that negative consequences such as fear can arise due to failure in specific tasks. So the urge to avoid failure is a negative consequence of an individual's capacity to anticipate the shame and humiliation they may have acquired.

The study results from Fitriah, Hartati & Kurniawan (2016) showed that 58% of 178 subjects at the Faculty of Education of Semarang State University conducted academic procrastination due to the fear of failure factor that falls into the high category with a presentation value of 71%. Another study conducted by Sebastian (2013) obtained the result that individuals who have a high fear of failure argue that the task is unpleasant so that it causes them to be distracted by other, more pleasurable things that cause them to perform procrastination behavior.

Another supporting study conducted by Mariana (2021) on students of grades X, XI, and XII of SMA X Surabaya showed a positive relationship between fear of failure and academic procrastination. Namely, if students have a high fear of failure, then academic procrastination will also be higher, and vice versa; students who have a low fear of failure, then academic procrastination will also be lower.

Research conducted by Akmal, Arlinkasari & Fitriani (2017) on students who are compiling the thesis shows a positive influence between the hope of success and fear of failure with academic procrastination. If students have a high fear of failure, then academic procrastination will also be higher, and vice versa. Academic procrastination will also be lower for students who have a low fear of failure.

CONCLUSION

This study confirmed that students who tend to have high levels of fear of failure also tend to have a high level of academic procrastination. Similarly, low levels of fear of failure contribute to low academic procrastination tendencies. This study's limitation is that uneven samples are still involved based on factors that influence academic procrastination behavior. Therefore, the authors suggest doing a more comprehensive follow-up study.

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