



**Academic Risk Taking Behavior in University Students: Academic Procrastination, Academic Locus of Control, and Academic Perfectionism**

Sinem Evin AKBAY<sup>1</sup>, Ayca DELIBALTA<sup>2</sup>

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**ABSTRACT**

**Purpose:** The aim of this study was to examine how academic procrastination, academic locus of control, and academic perfectionism predicts the tendency of university students' academic risk taking. Also, this study focused on understanding how academic procrastination, academic locus of control, and academic perfectionism of university students had power to predict the students' tendency of academic risk taking.

**Research Methods:** The study group of this research consisted of 507 (351 female and 154 male) undergraduate students studying at a state university in Turkey during the 2018-2019 academic-year fall semester. The study group was identified using convenient sampling. In this study, the

"Personal Information Form", "Academic Risk Taking Scale", "Academic Procrastination Scale", "Perceived Social Self-efficacy Scale", "Academic Locus of Control Scale", and "Academic Perfectionism Scale" were used to collect data. The Pearson Moments Multiplication Correlation Coefficient ( $r$ ) and stepwise multiple regression analysis were used in the analysis of the data. The upper margin of error is assumed to be 0.05.

**Findings:** According to the findings obtained, academic procrastination, academic locus of control, and academic perfectionism respectively predicted the academic risk-taking behaviors of university students significantly. Accordingly, as the academic procrastination, academic external locus of control, and academic perfectionism decreased, academic internal locus of control increased, and academic risk-taking behavior increased as well.

**Implications for Research and Practice:** Research can be done by using other variables to understand academic risk-taking behavior. In addition, various activities can be planned for students to take more risks in academic life, to show less procrastination behavior and to have more internal locus of control.

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<sup>1</sup> Corresponding Author: Mersin University, TURKEY, e-mail:sinemakbay85@gmail.com, ORCID: <http://orcid.org/0000-0001-6189-1896>

<sup>2</sup> Mersin University, TURKEY, e-mail:delibaltaayca@gmail.com, ORCID: <http://orcid.org/0000-0003-3455-5760>

## Introduction

Education in the 21st century, is an important tool for individuals to develop themselves in modern societies and to exist as qualified individuals in society. While education provides support for individuals to be assertive, responsible, and realistic thinkers, qualified education also brings academic success. Although it is not seen as singularly sufficient for the society to gain momentum, academic achievement is one of the main objectives of educational institutions. There are many variables that are thought to be related to academic achievement. When the gains planned to be obtained as a result of educational experiences are evaluated, we cannot talk about the existence of certain uncertainties. In the face of these uncertainties, we can say that the position of individuals will play a role in their success. In this context, the importance of taking risks as one of the variables leading to academic success can be emphasized. According to Tan, Lim and Manalo (2016) academic risk taking is sufficient in the learning settings.

According to Assaily (2003), risk is defined as accepting the possibility of loss. Risk taking involves the behavior of individuals against this possibility. In other words, behavior with the acceptance of the possibility of unwanted consequences is called taking risks. Young (1991) defines risk-taking behavior as being willing to engage in an unknown behavior, and not primarily thinking of success and failure when trying new and different things. Pannel et al. (2006) express risk-taking behavior as showing courage when it comes to something unknown and emphasize that risk-taking is the desire to try something new and different without focusing on the success or failure as a result. Osman, Hamid and Hassan (2009) emphasize the importance of multi-dimensional thinking, high-level thinking, self-management as well as the ability to take risks in the academic platform.

Academic risk-taking behavior refers to the selection of school success tasks that vary according to the likelihood of success of the students, and also receiving feedback or having an expectation of feedback (Clifford, 1991). According to Korkmaz (2002), academic risk-taking behavior is defined as the determination of students to strive against the difficulties they face during the learning process. Also, Tan et al. (2016) says that the students who can take academic risks can choose more difficult tasks in an easy way. Furthermore, taking risk in academic settings mean that taking a chance to make a mistake, or getting low scores etc. (Tan, 2017). When the literature is examined, it is observed that there are many studies related to risk taking behavior while studies related to academic risk-taking behavior are limited. While it is emphasized that there is a negative relationship between risk-taking behavior and academic achievement (Kıran Esen, 2005); there is a negative correlation between academic risk-taking behavior and fear of negative evaluation (Cetin, İlhan & Yılmaz, 2014) and a positive relationship between problem solving skills and study skills (İlhan, Cetin, Oner-Sunkur & Yılmaz, 2013). Academic risk-taking behavior is one of the important factors related to academic achievement. For example, it is known that there is a positive relationship between academic risk-taking behaviors and positive attitude towards science (Deveci & Aydın, 2018). In addition, in the study conducted by Deveci and Aydın (2018), it was found that students with high academic risk-taking

skills were creative, had higher critical thinking skills, and innovative thinking skills. From these findings, it is obvious that academic success and academic risk-taking behavior are related. On the other hand, the study conducted by Karademir and Akgul (2019) emphasizes that students who perceive themselves as successful exhibit more academic risk-taking behavior. In addition to these findings, Sunkur, Ilhan, Kinay and Kılınç (2014) emphasized that there was a positive relationship between academic risk taking and positive perfectionism, while there was a negative relationship between academic risk-taking behavior and negative perfectionism.

When all these findings are taken into consideration, it is seen that academic risk-taking behavior, which is accepted as positive in contrast to risk-taking behavior, has an important role in students' academic lives. Students' being more successful, innovative and brave in their academic lives is related to their ability to show academic risk-taking behavior. In addition, it is observed that students with academic risk-taking skills have critical thinking and problem-solving skills which are among the necessary skills for both school life and after school life.

Procrastination can be defined as an individual, consciously and under their control, delaying a task and leaving it to be completed at a later time. In addition, procrastination includes the need for an individual to perform an activity or to complete a task, while not having the motivation to perform it (Ackerman & Gross, 2005). When the literature is examined, it can be seen that procrastination behavior is associated with many cognitive, emotional and personality variables. From an emotional perspective, procrastination behavior is associated with fear of failure, anxiety of evaluation (Soloman & Rothblum, 1984), and low self-confidence (Zhang, Dong, Fang, Chai, Mei & Fan, 2017). From a cognitive perspective, perfectionism, difficulty in decision making (Soloman & Rothblum, 1984) and low self-efficacy (Haycock, McCarthy & Skay, 1998) are related to procrastination behavior. When the personality dimension is considered, a positive relationship is observed between neuroticism, which is one of the five factors of personality theory, and procrastination behavior (Wang, Qian, Wang & Chen, 2011).

Academic procrastination behavior, which is a dimension of procrastination behavior, was stated by Akbay (2009) as suspending the works related to academic life (homework, exam preparation, reports to be submitted, etc.) of individuals. Senecal, Julien and Guay (2003), on the other hand, have defined academic procrastination as the tendency to delay starting academic tasks or delaying their completion irrationally. It can be said that academic procrastination behavior in university students is quite a common dynamic. Steel and Klingsieck (2016) underline that academic procrastination is an important obstacle for students' academic achievement. A study by Ozer (2005) reveals that 52% of university students exhibit procrastination behavior. In another study conducted by Soloman and Rothblum (1984), 46% of the students who participated in the study reported that they exhibited procrastination behavior in term papers, 27.6% postponed their studies for exams and 30.1% postponed their weekly assignments. In other words, one in two university students has to cope with academic procrastination behavior. When the literature is examined, a negative relationship is observed between academic procrastination behavior and academic achievement

(Balkis & Duru, 2010), general competence, and levels of responsibility towards others (Celikkaleli & Akbay, 2013). On the other hand, there is a positive relationship between general procrastination behavior and anxiety, including academic procrastination, and a negative relationship with time management skills (Kagan, 2009). Also, there is a negative relationship between academic procrastination and well-being (Grunschel, Schwinger, Steinmayr & Fries, 2016). Akca (2012), on the other hand, found a positive relationship between self-sabotage, external locus of control and academic procrastination behavior, while academic procrastination behavior, locus of control and academic achievement predicted self-hindering behavior. In addition, risk taking and academic achievement positively predicts academic procrastination behavior (Afzal & Jami, 2018). There is a negative correlation between academic risk-taking behavior, which is emphasized as a positive behavior in contrast to risk-taking behavior, and procrastination behavior (Watson, 2001). Miligram, Marshevsky and Sadeh (1995) point out that risk taking is an important reason for academic procrastination. Ozer (2005), supporting the thoughts of Miligram et al., also stated that one of the reasons for academic procrastination behavior was to prevent themselves from taking risks. In other words, it can be said that individuals show procrastination behavior because they avoid taking risks in the academic platform.

According to Rotter (1966), reinforcement, reward and appreciation play an important role in the acquisition and performance of skills and knowledge in human nature; but what an individual sees as a reward or reinforcement may not be the same for another person. One of the determinants of this situation is how they perceive the reward and their behavior, which corresponds to that reward, is dependent or independent of external forces (Rotter, 1966). Meaning, an individual thinking that the control of their behavior is dependent on external factors or themselves. In other words, it is related to the individual's view of their locus of control as internal or external. Therefore, Rotter (1966) divides the locus of control into two as internal and external locus of control. When individuals perceive their actions as a result of chance, fate, and the power of others, they call it external locus of control, and if they perceive their actions as a result of their characteristic features, they call it internal locus of control. The academic locus of control is related to what the individual bases the control of their actions in their academic life. External academic locus of control is explained by an individual looking at their academic experiences as having an external control (luck, fate, other people), whereas internal academic locus of control means that the individual relates it to their own behavior and characteristics (Akin, 2007). When the literature is examined, between internal locus of control and social self-efficacy levels (Iskender & Akin, 2010) there is a positive relationship, there is a negative relationship with internet addiction (Iskender & Akin, 2010), and a positive relationship with self-confidence levels (Mooney, Sherman, & Lo Presto, 1991) and positive thinking skills (Celik & Sarıcam, 2018). In an additional study, it is observed that students take less risks in studies where their performance is rewarded or evaluated (Condry & Chambers, 1978). In other words, individuals avoid taking risks when they are controlled by external factors. In addition, while the students choose less risky tasks while being evaluated by the teacher, they show that students tend to take more risks in tasks requiring self-assessment (Hughes, Sullivan & Mosley, 1985;

Salili, Maehr, Sorensen & Fyans, 1976). Similarly, this view was supported by Findley and Cooper (1983), indicating that individuals can take more risks when they have an external locus of control.

Perfectionism has been described by Pacht (1984) as individuals determining their goals at a level so high that they are unlikely to succeed. In other words, perfectionism can also be defined as an individual setting extremely high goals and then forcing themselves to achieve these goals. When the reasons of perfectionism are considered, it is observed that the goals are too high to be realistic, excessive efforts are made to achieve these goals, there is too much focus on failure and excessive criticism of the self by the individual (Burns, 1980; Hamachek, 1978; Hollender, 1965; Pacht, 1984; Hewit & Flett). Perfectionist individuals tend to exhibit procrastination behavior because they are afraid of judgment and failure (Pacht, 1984). Perfectionism can be examined in two sub-dimensions: harmonized perfectionism that sets realistic goals, strives to achieve these goals and, if necessary, can give up their goals, and discordant perfectionism where unattainable goals are set and they are unsatisfied with their efforts (Hamachek, 1978). One of the groups where perfectionism is very common is students. One of the reasons for this is that especially the teachers have high expectations from the students, and the problems of the students are exaggerated by the teachers (Pacht, 1984). Teachers' expectations from the students are generally in the academic field. Academic perfectionism, which is one of the types of perfectionism, is defined as over-exertion of individuals by setting unrealistic and self-challenging goals in the academic field (Odacı, Kalkan & Cıkrıkçı, 2017). When literature is examined, a positive relationship is observed between perfectionism and academic perfectionism (Odacı et al., 2017). There is a positive relationship between perfectionism and anger (Buyukbayraktar, 2011), and a positive relationship between discordant perfectionism and academic burnout (Zhang, Gan & Cham, 2007). There is very limited research on academic perfectionism in the literature.

When the literature is reviewed, it is clear that students' risk taking depends on a lot of variables. Also, it is clear that there is not enough research about these variables. So far, researchers have examined variables related to academic risk taking. However, up to present, the important variables such as academic procrastination, academic locus of control, and academic perfectionism have been ignored. Thanks to this study, the relation between academic risk taking and academic procrastination, academic locus of control, and academic perfectionism were examined. In this wise, understanding academic risk taking was clarified.

## Method

### *Research Design*

This study is a relational screening model study conducted in order to investigate the extent to which academic procrastination, academic locus of control, and academic perfectionism predicted the academic risk-taking behaviors of university students. Studies aiming to determine the existence and degree of co-change between two or more variables are relational screening model studies (Kuzu, 2005).

### Participants

The study group of this study consisted of 507 students studying in 4 major faculties (Faculty of Education, Faculty of Science and Literature, Faculty of Economics and Administrative Sciences and Faculty of Engineering) at a university in the spring term of 2018-2019. 351 of these students were female (69.2%) and 154 were male (30.4%). Two students did not specify their gender. The age range of the participants ranged from 18 to 33, with an average of 20.73 (SD = 1.84). Additionally, 151 of the participants were first year (29.8%), 123 were second year (24.3%), 171 were third year (33.7%), and 60 were fourth year (11.8%) students. Again, two students did not specify their class level. In order to determine the study group, convenient sampling method was used.

### Research Instruments

*Personal Information Form:* In order to define the study group, the participants were asked about their sex, class level and age, in the personal information form created by the researchers.

*Academic Risk-Taking Scale:* ARTS, which aims to measure students' academic risk-taking behaviors, was developed by Clifford (1991) and adapted into Turkish by Korkmaz Baylav (2002). The scale reveals the students' learning status, their courage to cope with the difficulties they face in the academic field, and their willingness or unwillingness to learn. ARTS, which is a five-point Likert-type scale, consists of 36 items. The lowest score that can be obtained from the scale is 36 and the highest score is 180. Higher scores obtained from the scale indicates the ability to take risks in the academic field. Korkmaz Baylav (2002), who carried out translation studies on both primary school and university students, reported internal consistency coefficients (Cronbach's Alpha) as .90 and .89, respectively, in the analysis of the reliability of the scale. While the items included in the original scale were collected under four headings (tendency to have negative feelings after failure, tendency to prefer difficult operations, tendency to recover after failure, and tendency to be effective), it was reported by the researcher that the items were collected under four headings in the Turkish translation (inclination to not complete homework). As a result of the reliability analysis conducted within the scope of this study, the internal consistency coefficient of the scale was found to be .84.

*Academic Procrastination Scale:* Academic Procrastination Scale (APS), which aims to measure the procrastination behaviors of individuals in the academic field, was developed by Cakıcı (2003). In the scale developed by Cakıcı (2003), there are 19 items including 12 positive and seven negative items that contain the tasks that students should undertake in their learning lives (such as studying, preparing for exams, preparing projects). APS is a five-point Likert-type scale (1 = "does not reflect me at all", 5 = "reflects me completely"). The lowest score from the APS is 19 while the highest score is 95. Higher scores indicate higher academic procrastination behaviors of the students. The internal consistency reliability (Cronbach Alpha) coefficient of the academic procrastination scale was reported as .92. However, internal consistency reliability coefficient calculated for the first factor of the scale was .89 and it was .84 for

the second factor. Spearman Brown's two half test reliability was calculated as .87 for the 10-item first half test, .86 for the second half-test with 9 items, and .85 in total. The internal consistency reliability coefficient of the APS used in this study was found to be .90.

*Academic Locus of Control Scale:* The Academic Locus of Control Scale (ALoCS) was developed by Akin (2007) to measure students' beliefs about their ability to gain control over academic outcomes. The five-point Likert-type (1 = "never reflects me", 5 = "completely reflects me") ALoCS consists of 17 items. It has two sub-dimensions: internal locus of control (six items) and external locus of control (11 items). The lowest score that can be obtained from the internal locus of control subscale is 6 and the highest score is 30. The lowest score that can be obtained from the external locus of control subscale is 11 and the highest score is 55. The increase in the score obtained from each sub-dimension of the scale, which doesn't have reverse items, shows that it has characteristics related to the related dimension. In the reliability analysis results, internal consistency reliability coefficients of the scale were .94 for internal locus of control and .95 for external locus of control. In the retest reliability analysis, the coefficient of internal control was found to be .97, while the external control locus was .93. Internal consistency reliability coefficients were .80 for internal control and .73 for external control.

*Academic Perfectionism Scale:* The Academic Perfectionism Scale (APS) was developed by Odacı, Kalkan and Cikrikci (2017) to determine university students' academic perfectionism attitudes in the academic field. The five-point Likert-type (1 = "strongly disagree", 5 = "strongly agree") APS consists of 13 items. As a result of the exploratory factor analysis, APS was reported to be a three-factor scale. Factors explained in the scope of the study are as follows; the first factor was defined as "Self-Doubt-six items", the second factor was "Comparison-four items" and the third factor was "Idealization-three items". In addition to the three-factor structure, a total score can also be obtained from the scale. For the scope of this study, it was conducted on the total score. When the total score is evaluated, the lowest score that can be obtained from the scale is 13 and the highest score is 65. There is no item on the scale that is reversed. Higher scores indicate that university students have a perfectionist tendency in their academic work. The internal consistency reliability coefficients for the sub-dimensions of APS were .78, .69, .57, respectively, and the Cronbach's Alpha coefficient for the whole scale was reported as .82. In the scope of this study, Cronbach's alpha coefficient for APS was found to be .83.

## Results

Pearson correlation coefficients between the academic risk-taking variable (predicted) and academic procrastination, locus of control and academic perfectionism (predictor) for 507 university students in the sample are given in Table 1.

**Table 1**

*Correlations between Academic Risk Taking, Academic Procrastination, Academic Locus of Control and Academic Perfectionism*

	1	2	3	4	5
1. Academic Risk Taking	-				
2. Academic Procrastination	-.36(**)	-			
3. Academic Internal Locus of Control	.18(**)	-.11(**)	-		
4. Academic External Locus of Control	-.32(**)	.28(**)	-.29(**)	-	
5. Academic Perfectionism	-.26(**)	.02	.11(**)	.32(**)	-
Mean	120.41	55.41	23.47	25.20	35.75
Ss	16.56	13.90	4.17	6.14	8.12

\* p<.05 \*\* p<.001

Table 1 shows that there was a significant negative relationship between academic risk-taking levels and academic procrastination ( $r = -.36$ ,  $p < .001$ ), academic external locus of control ( $r = -.32$ ,  $p < .001$ ) and academic perfectionism ( $r = -.26$ ,  $p < .001$ ) levels. According to this result, as the academic procrastination levels of university students decrease, external locus of control tendencies in the academic field decreases and they take a less perfectionist attitude in academic sense, their academic risk-taking levels increase. There was a significant positive relationship between academic risk taking and academic internal locus of control ( $r = .18$ ,  $p < .001$ ). This finding reveals that the increase in the tendency of university students to act with an internal locus of control in the academic field will increase their academic risk-taking tendencies.

When the relationship between independent variables was examined; there was a negative relationship between academic procrastination and academic internal locus of control ( $r = -.11$ ,  $p < .001$ ), and a positive relationship between academic external locus of control ( $r = .28$ ,  $p < .001$ ), whereas there was no relationship with academic perfectionism ( $r = .02$ ,  $p > .001$ ). Significant negative correlation was found between academic internal locus of control and academic external locus of control ( $r = -.29$ ,  $p < .001$ ) and a positive correlation with academic perfectionism ( $r = .11$ ,  $p < .001$ ). Finally, it can be said that there was a positive significant relationship between academic external locus of control and academic perfectionism ( $r = .32$ ,  $p < .001$ ).

The results of the stepwise regression analysis of the variables of academic procrastination, academic locus of control and academic perfectionism, which are considered to be predictors of taking academic risk in university students, are given in Table 2.



**Table 2**

*Results of Stepwise Regression Analysis on Academic Procrastination, Academic Locus of Control and Academic Perfectionism as Predictors of Academic Risk-Taking*

Model	Variables	B	SH <sub>B</sub>	β	t	R	R <sup>2</sup>	F	p
1	Constant	143.92	2.83	-	50.85	.36	.13	73.34	.000
	Academic Procrastination	-.42	.05	-.36	-8.56				
2	Constant	155.76	3.44	-	45.31	.42	.18	55.34	.000
	Academic Procrastination	-.34	.05	-.29	-6.84				
	Academic External Locus of Control	-.65	.11	-.24	-5.72				
3	Constant	167.75	4.12	-	40.77	.47	.22	47.15	.000
	Academic Procrastination	-.37	.05	-.31	-7.58				
	Academic External Locus of Control	-.44	.12	-.17	-3.77				
	Academic Perfectionism	-.43	.09	-.21	-5.04				
4	Constant	153.85	5.88	-	26.18	.49	.24	38.74	.000
	Academic Procrastination	-.38	.05	-.32	-7.67				
	Academic External Locus of Control	-.31	.12	-.11	-2.49				
	Academic Perfectionism	-.50	.09	-.24	-5.70				
	Academic Internal Locus of Control	.55	.17	.14	3.28				

\*p<.01

According to Table 2, when standardized regression coefficients (β) were considered, academic procrastination (β =-.32), academic external locus of control (β =-.11), academic perfectionism (β =.24) and academic internal locus of control (β = .14) significantly predicted academic risk-taking behavior, respectively (F<sub>(4-506)</sub> = 38.74, p<.001). On the basis of these findings, academic procrastination, which is the strongest predictor of academic risk-taking behaviors of university students, explained %13 of total variance alone. Academic procrastination explained %18 of the total variance, with academic external locus of control. While academic procrastination, academic external locus of control, academic perfectionism together explained %22 of the total variance, with the addition of academic internal locus of control, all variables jointly accounted for %24 of academic risk-taking scores (R=0.49, R<sup>2</sup> =0.24).

### Discussion, Conclusion and Recommendations

The purpose of this study was to investigate whether academic procrastination, academic locus of control, and academic perfectionism variables predict academic risk-taking behaviors of university students. The behavior patterns that students acquire in their academic life will continue after university life. In other words, the

behaviors acquired by students who spend most of their important development processes in academic environments, such as schools, will be part of their identities and accompany them throughout their lives. Characteristics such as assertiveness, responsibility, and intrinsic motivation will not only lead the individual to academic success throughout their university life but will also enable them to continue as qualified individuals after university. Therefore, exploring the relationship between these behaviors will enable students to discover the problems in their own lives. In addition, the psychological counselor's awareness of these relationships during the counseling process will facilitate the assessment of students who come with the problem of academic procrastination in a more holistic way and provide more comprehensive assistance.

One of the concepts related to academic achievement is the academic risk-taking behavior expressed by Korkmaz (2002) as efforts made by students towards problems in learning environments. In this study, it was aimed to investigate the relationship between academic risk-taking behavior and academic procrastination behavior, academic locus of control and academic perfectionism behavior. When the previous studies are examined, it is stated that there is a positive relationship between academic risk taking and perfectionism (Kılıç & Kinay, 2014) and a negative relationship between academic risk taking and procrastination (Watson, 2001). In addition, it is emphasized that there is a positive relationship between academic risk taking and internal locus of control and a negative relationship between academic risk taking and external locus of control (Prihadi et al., 2018). When all these studies are taken into consideration, it is seen that they support the findings of this study.

According to the correlation table of the study, it was observed that there was a negative relationship between academic risk-taking behavior and academic procrastination behavior. Similar to these findings, Watson (2000) states that there is a negative relationship between risk-taking behavior and procrastination behavior. Soloman and Rothblum (1984) argue that individuals perform procrastination behavior because they are afraid of failure. Academic risk-taking behavior explains the desire of the individual to realize the behavior without thinking about success and failure (Pannel et al., 2016). The opinion that individuals perform academic procrastination behavior because they avoid taking academic risks have been proposed by Miligram et al. (1995). In short, there can be a negative relationship between performing academic procrastination behavior and avoiding academic risks, since individuals focus on success and failure under procrastination behavior. In other words, the success-oriented individual can perform procrastination because of fear/anxiety of failure and avoid taking risks due to the same fear/anxiety. When the data of this study were examined, the negative relationship between academic procrastination and academic risk taking supports this idea.

Apart from these findings, while there was a negative significant relationship between academic risk-taking behavior and external locus of control, there was a positive and significant relationship between academic risk-taking behavior and internal locus of control. Huges et al. (1976) stated that while students avoid taking risks in teacher-assessment tasks, they take more risks in tasks requiring self-

assessment and emphasize that individuals do not take risks in external control-related situations and undergo risk in internal control situations. Similarly, Condry and Chambers (1978) emphasize that individuals take less risks in evaluation and rewarding situations and that external control is an obstacle to the risk-taking behavior of the individual. In another study, Prihadi et al. (2018) underline that individuals exhibit less risk-taking behaviors when they think that the control of events is dependent on outsiders. Maehr and Stallings (1972), who have a similar view, state that when students are subjected to external evaluations such as teacher evaluations, their autonomy is blocked and their performance decreases. In addition, it is emphasized that students are reluctant to try difficult tasks when exposed to external control (Maehr & Stallings, 1972). The reason for this may be that external evaluations focus on whether or not a person achieves the task given, rather than addressing their pleasure during learning. In other words, with an external locus of control, it may be that the individual is focused on whether or not they can succeed, while they are focused on enjoying themselves (Maehr & Stallings, 1972) and developing a skill (Elliott & Dweck, 1981) with an internal locus of control. Because in the external locus of control, individuals focus on performance rather than learning (Elliott & Dweck, 1981). Based on these findings, it is seen that when individuals achieve self-control in their lives, they do not have the anxiety of being evaluated by others, and they can exhibit risk-taking behavior. In other words, individuals with high internal locus of control exhibit academic risk-taking behavior, whereas individuals with high external locus of control avoid academic risk taking. The findings of the studies support the previous studies. As can be seen from all these studies, individuals are more comfortable taking risks when they have internal locus of control, that is, when they evaluate their own behavior. However, when evaluation is externally oriented, that is, an individual is subjected to the reward and discretion of an external individual, the individual avoids taking risks.

When the study findings are examined, there is a negative significant relationship between academic risk-taking behavior and academic perfectionism. In the light of this information, it can be stated that students who show academic risk-taking behavior are far from having a perfectionist attitude. Pannel et al. (2016) describe academic risk taking as an individual's desire to try without focusing on the success or failure as a result of the individual's behavior. Based on this statement, it is understood that there is a negative relationship between risk taking and perfectionism. This opinion is supported with the findings of this study. Previous studies have shown a negative relationship between academic procrastination and academic achievement (Balkis & Duru, 2010). An important reason why individuals exhibit perfectionism is their distorted focus on success (Patch, 1984). In short, the individual exhibits perfectionist behavior because they avoid failure. When both academic procrastination behavior and academic perfectionism behavior are examined, it is seen that an avoidance of failure lies under both of them. Taking academic risks is more about courage than focusing on success or failure. Individuals who exhibit academic perfectionism and academic procrastination behaviors may not be able to take risks in their academic life due having success as their main focus, and this study supports this view.

When all variables were analyzed using standardized regression analysis, it was observed that academic procrastination was the most powerful variable predicting academic risk-taking behavior. When all variables were examined together, it was seen that they predicted academic risk-taking behavior by 24%. This ratio is important and cannot be underestimated. In other words, it is seen that academic procrastination, academic locus of control, and academic perfectionism variables should be taken into consideration while considering academic risk-taking behavior.

As a result, there is a negative relationship between academic risk-taking behavior and academic procrastination and academic perfectionism. In other words, individuals need to be far from academic perfectionism and academic procrastination behaviors in order to exhibit academic risk-taking behavior. Considering that there is a focus of success in the basis of these behaviors, it is predicted that individuals who act with the desire to try something new without focusing on achieving or failing in the academic environment may exhibit more academic risk-taking behavior. In addition, while there is a negative relationship between external locus of control and academic risk taking, a positive relationship between internal locus of control and academic risk taking is observed. To explain, the external appreciation and reward is an important obstacle for individuals to take risks in the academic environment. On the other hand, when an individual makes their own assessment, they can be more courageous and take more risks. Therefore, when the academic locus of control is examined, it is possible that individuals with external locus of control perform less academic risk-taking behavior and individuals with internal locus of control are more likely to perform academic risk-taking behavior.

Academic risk-taking behavior has an important role in students' academic life and is associated with many variables. However, when the research about academic risk taking over the years are examined, it is seen that there are only a few national and international studies in this field. For this reason, researchers who want to work on this subject will make an important contribution to the literature in all quantitative and qualitative studies covering the factors that affect academic risk-taking behavior and what it affects. In addition, examining the demographic variables (age, sex, class level, socio-economic status) that affect academic risk-taking behavior, or looking at their relationship with parent and teacher attitudes, is recommended because it will provide important information about academic risk-taking. In addition, the variables of academic risk taking, academic procrastination, locus of control and academic perfectionism have been examined in the universe of university students. Researchers who want to do research on the subject working on different developmental periods will benefit the literature. Considering the results of this research, in order to increase the students' academic risk-taking behaviors, psychological counseling groups can be started, or interviews can be organized in schools to reduce the academic procrastination behaviors of the students. Apart from that, also, teachers can benefit from this research to understand the reasons behind low academic risk taking on their students and they can help their students to increase academic risk taking in the class environment. In addition to increasing the internal locus of control of the students, one of the main objectives of the education, education and training programs that can

reduce the external locus of control can be prepared, and each input, output and stakeholder in education and training can be rearranged to provide students with an internal control-oriented perspective. Counseling practices, workshops or interviews can be planned in order to increase the awareness of the students in line with their own goals, expectations and desires and to provide them with skills to reach them.

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## Üniversite Öğrencilerinde Akademik Risk Alma Davranışı: Akademik Erteleme, Akademik Kontrol Odağı ve Akademik Mükemmeliyetçilik

### Atıf:

Akbay, S. E., & Delibalta, A. (2020). Academic risk taking behavior in university students: Academic procrastination, academic locus of control, and academic perfectionism. *Eurasian Journal of Educational Research*, 89, 159-178. DOI: 10.14689/ejer.2020.89.8

### Özet

*Problem Durumu ve Araştırmanın Amacı:* 21. yy.da eğitim, modern toplumlarda bireylerin kendilerini geliştirebilmeleri ve toplum içinde nitelikli bireyler olarak var olabilmeleri için önemli bir araçtır. Eğitim bireylere atılgan, sorumluluk sahibi ve realist düşünebilen kişiler olmaları yolunda destek sağlarken, nitelikli eğitim yaşantısı akademik başarıyı da beraberinde getirir. Toplumun ileriye ivme kazanmasında tek başına yeterli olarak görülme de akademik başarı eğitim kurumlarının en temel hedefleri arasındadır. Akademik başarı ile ilişkili olduğu düşünülen birçok değişken bulunmaktadır. Eğitim yaşantıları sonucu elde edilmesi planlanan kazanımlar değerlendirildiğinde bir takım belirsizliklerin varlığından söz etmememiz mümkün olamaz. Bu belirsizlikler karşısında kişilerin aldığı pozisyonun onların başarıları üzerinde rol oynayacağını söyleyebiliriz. Bu bağlamda akademik başarıya kişileri götürecek değişkenlerden biri olarak risk alma kavramının önemine vurgu yapılabilir. Bu çalışmanın amacı üniversite öğrencilerinin akademik başarıları üzerinde önemli bir yer sahibi olduğu düşünülen akademik risk alma davranışlarını akademik erteleme, akademik kontrol odağı ve akademik mükemmeliyetçiliğin ne derecede yordadığını incelemektir.

*Araştırmanın Yöntemi:* Bu çalışma, üniversite öğrencilerinin akademik risk alma davranışlarını akademik erteleme, akademik kontrol odağı ve akademik mükemmeliyetçiliğin ne derecede yordadığını incelemek amacıyla yapılan, ilişkisel tarama modelinde betimsel bir çalışmadır. İki ya da daha fazla sayıdaki değişken arasında birlikte değişimin varlığını ve derecesini belirlemeyi amaçlayan çalışmalar ilişkisel tarama modeli araştırmalardır (Kuzu, 2005).

*Katılımcılar:* Bu araştırmanın çalışma grubunu, Türkiye'nin Güney bölgesinde yer alan bir Üniversitenin 2018-2019 bahar döneminde 4 büyük fakültesinde (Eğitim Fakültesi, Fen-Edebiyat Fakültesi, İİBF ve Mühendislik Fakültesi) öğrenim görmekte olan 507 öğrenci oluşturmuştur. Bu öğrencilerin 351'i kadın (%69,2), 154'ü erkektir (%30,4). İki öğrenci cinsiyetini belirtmemiştir. Katılımcıların yaş aralığı 18 ile 33 arasında değişmekte olup, ortalaması 20,73'tür (SS=1,84). Bununla birlikte katılımcıların 151'i

birinci sınıf (%29,8), 123'ü ikinci sınıf (%24,3), 171'i 3. sınıf (%33,7) ve 60'ı da 4. sınıf (%11,8) öğrencilerinden oluşmaktadır. Yine iki öğrenci sınıf düzeyini belirtmemişlerdir. Çalışma gurubunun belirlenmesinde kolay ulaşılabileni örnekleme yöntemi kullanılmıştır.

*Araştırmanın Bulguları:* Çalışma grubunu oluşturan 507 üniversite öğrencisi için akademik risk alma değişkeni (yordanan) ile akademik erteleme, akademik kontrol odağı ve akademik mükemmeliyetçilik değişkenleri (yordayıcı) arasındaki Pearson korelasyon katsayıları incelendiğinde, örneklemin akademik risk alma düzeyleri ile akademik erteleme ( $r = -.36, p < .001$ ), akademik dışsal kontrol odağı ( $r = -.32, p < .001$ ) ve akademik mükemmeliyetçilik ( $r = -.26, p < .001$ ) düzeyleri arasında negatif yönde manidar bir ilişki bulunmuştur. Bu sonuca göre, üniversite öğrencilerinin akademik erteleme düzeyleri düştükçe, akademik alandaki dışsal kontrol odağı eğilimleri azaldıkça ve akademik anlamda daha az mükemmeliyetçi tutum içerisine girdikçe akademik anlamda risk alma seviyeleri de artmaktadır. Akademik risk alma ile akademik içsel kontrol odağı arasında ise ( $r = .18, p < .001$ ) pozitif yönde manidar bir ilişkiye rastlanılmıştır. Bu bulgu ise üniversite öğrencilerinin akademik alandaki içsel kontrol odaklı hareket etme eğilimlerinin artmasının onların akademik risk alma eğilimlerini arttıracağını ortaya koymaktadır.

Bağımsız değişkenlerin birbirleri ile olan ilişkilerine bakıldığında ise; akademik erteleme ile akademik içsel kontrol arasında ( $r = -.11, p < .001$ ) negatif yönde, akademik dışsal kontrol arasında ( $r = .28, p < .001$ ) pozitif yönde bir ilişki olduğu buna karşın akademik mükemmeliyetçilikle arasında herhangi bir ilişkinin olmadığı ( $r = .02, p > .001$ ) görülmüştür. Akademik içsel kontrol ile akademik dışsal kontrol arasında ( $r = -.29, p < .001$ ) negatif yönde, akademik mükemmeliyetçilik arasında ise ( $r = .11, p < .001$ ) pozitif yönde anlamlı bir ilişki bulgusu elde edilmiştir. Son olarak akademik dışsal kontrol odağı ile akademik mükemmeliyetçilik arasında ( $r = .32, p < .001$ ) arasında pozitif yönde anlamlı bir ilişki olduğu söylenebilir.

Üniversite öğrencilerinde akademik risk almanın yordayıcıları olduğu düşünülen akademik erteleme, akademik kontrol odağı ve akademik mükemmeliyetçilik değişkenlerine ilişkin aşamalı regresyon analizi sonuçlarına göre, standardize edilmiş regresyon katsayıları ( $\beta$ ) dikkate alındığında, sırasıyla akademik erteleme ( $\beta = -.32$ ), akademik dışsal kontrol odağı ( $\beta = -.11$ ), akademik mükemmeliyetçilik ( $\beta = .24$ ) ve akademik içsel kontrol odağının ( $\beta = .14$ ) akademik risk alma davranışını anlamlı bir şekilde yordadığı görülmektedir ( $F_{(4-506)} = 38.74, p < .001$ ). Bu bulgular temelinde, üniversite öğrencilerinin akademik risk alma davranışlarını en güçlü düzeyde yordayan değişken olan akademik erteleme tek başına toplam varyansın %13'ünü açıklamaktadır. Akademik erteleme, akademik dışsal kontrol odağı ile birlikte toplam varyansın %18'ini açıklamaktadır. Akademik erteleme, akademik dışsal kontrol odağı, akademik mükemmeliyetçilik birlikte toplam varyansın %22'sinin açıklarken bu değişkenler akademik içsel kontrolün eklenmesiyle tüm değişkenler ortak olarak akademik risk alma puanlarını %24'ünü açıklamaktadırlar ( $R = 0,49, R^2 = 0,24$ ).

*Sonuç ve Öneriler:* Sonuç olarak akademik risk alma davranışı ile akademik erteleme ve akademik mükemmeliyetçilik arasında negatif bir ilişki bulunmaktadır. Yani

bireylerin akademik risk alma davranışını sergileyebilmeleri için akademik mükemmeliyetçilik ve akademik erteleme davranışlarından uzak olmaları gerekmektedir. Bu davranışların temelinde başarı odağı olduğu düşünüldüğünde akademik ortamda başarmaya veya başarmamaya odaklanmadan yalnızca yeni bir şey deneme isteği ile hareket eden bireylerin daha fazla akademik risk alma davranışı sergileyebilecekleri öngörülmektedir. Ek olarak dışsal kontrol odağı ile akademik risk alma arasında negatif ilişki olduğu gözlemlenirken, içsel akademik kontrol odağı ile akademik risk alma arasında pozitif ilişki gözlemlenmektedir. Açıklamak gerekirse dışarıdan gelecek olan takdir ve ödül bireylerin akademik ortamda risk almalarının önündeki önemli bir engeldir. Diğer bir taraftan birey kendi değerlendirmesini kendisi yaptığında daha fazla cesaretli olabilmekte ve daha çok risk alabilmekte olduğu düşünülmektedir. Dolayısıyla akademik kontrol odağına bakıldığında dışsal kontrol odağına sahip bireylerin daha az akademik risk alma davranışı gerçekleştirmesi, içsel kontrol odağına sahip bireylerin ise daha fazla akademik risk alma davranışı gerçekleştirmesi olası görülmektedir. Bu araştırmanın sonuçlarına göre şu önerilerde bulunulabilir; öğrencilerin akademik risk alma davranışlarını artırmak amacıyla öğrencilerin akademik erteleme davranışlarını azaltmak için psikolojik danışma grupları açılabilir veya okullarda mülakatlar düzenlenebilir. Bunun dışında, öğretmenler bu araştırmadan öğrencilerine akademik risk almanın engelleri arkasındaki nedenleri anlamak için yararlanabilir ve öğrencilerine sınıf ortamında akademik risk almayı artırmada yardımcı olabilirler. Öğrencilere iç kontrol odaklı bir bakış açısı sağlamak için eğitim-öğretim faaliyetleri ve işleyişi yeniden gözden geçirilebilir. Akademik erteleme davranışlarını azaltma, akademik mükemmeliyetçiliği sağlıklı bir boyutta deneyimleyebilmeleri için rehberlik uygulamaları, çalıştaylar veya mülakatlar planlanabilir.

*Anahtar Kelimeler:* akademik risk alma, akademik erteleme, akademik kontrol odağı, akademik mükemmeliyetçilik.