Subjective and Projective Measures of Thesis Writing Procrastination: Real World and The Sims World.

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Although it has been studied since 1980s, the theoretical framework for procrastination has just been comprehensively developed about two decades later. This study applied Temporal Motivation Theory (TMT) as a theoretical framework to develop thesis writing procrastination instruments, using self report and Sim’s behavior observation methods. Self-report results of 232 undergraduate students have fulfilled psychometric norms, concerning either the reliability or validity aspects. Observation of Sim’s behaviors, performed by 48 students, also fulfilled some of the psychometric criteria. The discovery of contradictory patterns of academic activities in the real world against The Sims 2 World was perceived as evidences of basic value differences and manifestation of defense mechanism. Inclusion of subject’s responses on The Sims 2 game play pattern scale in the hierarchical linear regression equation improved the prediction power toward latency of thesis completion.

Keyword: multi-methods, procrastination, Temporal Motivation Theory, The Sims, thesis

Procrastination measurement has been conducted since 1980s (Schouwenburg, Lay, Pychyl, & Ferrari, 2004). Its theoretical framework was comprehensively developed in about two decades since its inception (Steel, 2002; van Eerde, 2003). The theoretical framework were developed by Steel and König (2006), based on Temporal Motivation Theory (TMT).

TMT approach believes that thesis writing procrastination happens due to the low level of its subjective utility (Lowenstein & Prelec, 1992). Subjective utility tends to decline temporarily when the deadline is far in the future, and return to its original level when the deadline is near. This understanding was supported by the graduation record in the Faculty of Psychology, Universitas Surabaya (FP UBAYA) in academic year 2000-2007. About 59.3% of 1502 graduates completed thesis writing in the last month of the graduation registration deadline.

Subjective utility was influenced by four components (Gröpel & Steel, 2008, Steel, 2007; Steel & König, 2006). Those components are expectancy, value, sensitivity to delay in receiving the reward (usually called sensitivity to delay), and time delay to the reward.