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Self-Regulation of Learning and Academic Delay of Gratification among Korean College Students

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Abstract

The goal of the present study was to examine the relationship between Korean students' motivation for learning, use of self-regulation of learning strategies, and delay of gratification. Self-regulation of learning is a process that required students to get involved in their personal, behavioral, motivational, and cognitive learning tasks in order to accomplish important and valuable academic goals. Successful learners are those who engage in self-regulation of learning by delaying gratification. Delay of gratification refers to individuals' intentions to postpone immediate available rewards in order to obtain larger rewards temporally distant. The results suggest that academic delay of gratification has an association with students' use of volitional strategies, expected grade, self-efficacy beliefs, and academic performance. These findings serve to establish academic delay of gratification as an important self-regulatory strategy useful to protect intentions from distracting tendencies while academic goals are pressing and that delay of gratification is associated with the students' self-efficacy beliefs for learning, as well as expected grade and final course grade.

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Self-regulation of learning is a process that required students to get involved in their personal, behavioral, motivational, and cognitive learning tasks in order to accomplish important and valuable academic goals (Zimmerman, 1998). Successful learners are those who engage in self-regulation of learning by using learning strategies to secure task completion. They exercise behavioral control not only to choose or plan valuable academic tasks, but also to maintain motivation and intention in the light of distracting alternatives (Zimmerman, 1998). *Self-regulation of learning* is a process that required students to get proactively involved in their personal, behavioral, motivational, and cognitive learning endeavors in order to accomplish important and valuable academic goals (Zimmerman, 1998). Current research has provided valuable information about how students use self-regulation. However, little is known about Korean college students' engagement in self-regulation of learning.

Successful learners are those who engage in self-regulation of learning by delaying gratification. *Delay of gratification* refers to individuals' intentions to postpone immediate available rewards in order to obtain larger rewards temporally distant (Bembenutty & Karabenick, 1998). Delay of gratification is important for self-regulation of learning because, for example, alternatives to academic goals are attractive, in part, because they offer immediate gratification, in contrast to rewards for academic goals (e.g., grades, degrees) that are temporally remote. Students who delay gratification sustain high motivation, high self-efficacy, and exercise behavioral control in the light of and competing alternatives (Bembenutty & Karabenick, 1998; Zimmerman, 1998). Delay of gratification is associated with students' use of learning strategies such as organization,

elaboration, rehearsal, critical thinking, help seeking, peer learning, as well as students' motivation for learning, such as self-efficacy, task value, and intrinsic interest. Bembenutty and Karabenick (1998) found that preference for delay options is related to students' final course grade, high self-efficacy, and intrinsic motivation.

Kim et al (2001) found an association between academic delay of gratification, academic performance, self-regulation of learning among Korean junior high students. f-regulation in order to help them to accomplish learning tasks. However, the relationship between students' motivation for learning, expected grade, use of self-regulation of learning strategies, delay of gratification, and final course grade among Korean college students is not fully understood. Thus, the goal of the present study was to examine the relationship between Korean students' motivation for learning, use of self-regulation of learning strategies, and delay of gratification.

Research Hypotheses

From the theoretical notions and empirical findings discussed above, the researcher derived the following two hypotheses:

1. Korean's college students' self-efficacy beliefs, expected grade, willingness to delay of gratification, use of volitional strategies, and final course grade will be positively related.
2. Korean's college students' self-efficacy beliefs, expected grade, willingness to delay of gratification, use of volitional strategies, and final course grade will be negatively related to test anxiety.

Method

Participants were 135 undergraduate college students (61 males and 74 females) enrolled in science education courses at a large rural Korean university.

Participants completed the *Academic Delay of Gratification Scale* (ADOGS; Bembenuddy & Karabenick, 1998), which has shown evidence of both validity and reliability in previous studies. An example of the items is: “Go to a party the night before a test for this course” OR “Study first and party only if you have time.”

The Motivated Strategies for Learning Questionnaire (MSLQ; Pintrich, Smith, García, & McKeachie, 1993) was used to assess students' self-efficacy beliefs and test anxiety.

To assess students' use of volitional learning strategies, the students responded to the *Academic Volitional Strategy Inventory* (AVSI; McCann, 1999), which is an instrument, which targets college students' use of motivational regulation strategies known to support and mediate cognitive and behavioral performance. The AVSI is a scale with the response format consisting of a 7-point Likert scale (1 = “Not at all of me” and 7 = “Very true of me”).

Final course grades were obtained from the instructor of the course.

Results

A Pearson correlation coefficient was computed to assess the association between students' self-efficacy beliefs, test anxiety, expected grade, willingness to delay of gratification, use of volitional strategies, and final course grade.

As expected, final course grade was related to delay of gratification ($r = .35, p < .05$) and expected grade ($r = .46, p < .05$), self-efficacy ($r = .18, p < .05$), but it was not related to test anxiety.

Delay of gratification was significantly related to expected grade ($r = .19, p < .05$), use of volitional control ($r = .17, p < .05$), but it was not related to self-efficacy beliefs or test anxiety.

Discussion

The results suggest quite reasonably that academic delay of gratification, as part of the self-regulatory system, has a solid association with students' use of volitional strategies, expected grade, self-efficacy beliefs, and academic performance.

These findings serve to establish academic delay of gratification as an important self-regulatory strategy useful to protect intentions from distracting tendencies while academic goals are pressing and that delay of gratification is associated with the students' self-efficacy beliefs for learning, as well as expected grade and final course grade.

The notion that delay of gratification and volitional learning strategies should be considered when examining students' academic performance is important.

For learners, it is important not only that they structure tasks and establish the intention to accomplish them, but also that they choose to postpone immediate gratification to achieve their academic goals.

References

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