

RTP110

Understanding procrastination: The deadliest nemesis of productivity across all generations and how to overcome it.

Sanjeeda Afroz Meem¹, Kibo Mahojenin Khan², Shahriar Khandoker³

¹English and Humanities department, Brac University,
sanjeeda.afroz.meem@g.bracu.ac.bd

²Microbiology Department , Brac University,
kibo.mahojenin.khan@g.bracu.ac.bd

³Department of Computer Science and Engineering, Brac University,
shahriar.khandoker@g.bracu.ac.bd

Abstract

Contrary to popular belief, the advent of social Media is not solely responsible for triggering a spike in procrastination. Since the beginning of early history, humanity has already had trouble overcoming their innate tendency to hesitate and put off work for later. When we put off making a choice or taking an action until later, we are engaging in the behavior known as procrastination. For example, a person is procrastinating if they put off starting a task until the very last moment, despite knowing that it would be wiser and preferable to begin ahead of schedule. Numerous procrastinators are aware of the negative effects of their conduct yet fail to alter it despite their best intentions. In light of this, if you're a procrastinator, perhaps you might well have pondered, "Why do I postpone so much?" or "Why do I continue postponing even though I understand that it's harmful for me?" There are deeper and far more nuanced psychological explanations of procrastination than merely a dearth of time management capabilities. Fear of rejection, inferiority, or having one's own identity called into question causes us to ignore important tasks and put them off for later. And as a result, progression is slowed because we avoid pushing our limits from fear of criticism. What, therefore, is the magical cure that would enable us to finally put an end to our procrastination?

Keywords : Procrastination, procrastinate, perfectionism, cognitive factors, time management, fear of failure, perfectionism, stress, anxiety, academic validation, emotion, motivation, self-efficacy.

Introduction

Procrastination is a widespread habit . The vast majority of us are guilty of putting things off till later. Despite having many duties to complete, chronic procrastinators often find themselves in a position to put off critical activities until the last possible minute and often end up indulging in time-wasting pursuits that provide them pleasure. They always have a tendency to come up with some reason not to begin their task, even though they have everything else that is required to begin their work. Despite the fact that there are occasionally justifiable reasons for putting things off, doing it frequently can be detrimental to one's scholastic success, professional advancement, and many other dimensions of one's life. In this article, we will delve into the psychology of procrastination and look at methods for combating it or at the very least, decrease its impact to some degree.

Literature Review

We find that most studies have focused on student data and have covered procrastination's description, designation, background information, repercussions, and interventions. Yet, procrastination in diverse circumstances and among different groups has not yet been considered. Therefore, answering these questions is important because it helps to understand what causes procrastination in the first place in order to overcome it. Many researchers (Solomon and Rothblum 1984; Eerde, 2003; Pychyl, et al. 2000) in the last few decades, have claimed procrastination to be associated with depression, guilt, and anxiety. In the essay that follows, you will read more about the psychology of procrastination, its causes, and how this information can help to quit doing it in the real world.

What triggers procrastination ?

One of the very common struggles that people of all ages suffer from is procrastination. There are several factors that trigger procrastination. Procrastination involves behavioral, cognitive, and emotional factors, not merely poor study habits or time management skills (Reynold, 2015). One might be able to lessen it if they can pinpoint its causes and trigger points.

- The overwhelming complexity of the task is a major contributor. One might easily feel discouraged when confronted with an insurmountable amount of labor or a job that seems impossible to finish. People procrastinate because they anticipate that doing such tasks would be very challenging, which causes them stress, worry, and a lack of confidence in their abilities (Jaffe, 2013).
- Fear of failing is another crucial trigger and the majority of the claimed reasons for procrastinating were fear of failure. Procrastination is driven by a fear of failure. Individuals who are anxious about failing could act ineffectively, such as postponing as a way to avoid unpleasant consequences (Gustavson & Miyake, 2017).
- Perfectionism and procrastination are closely interconnected. The likelihood of procrastination is higher in those who spend more time dwelling on their flaws and ways to improve (Yosopov, 2020). Procrastination and perfectionism go hand in hand. People who ruminate on their shortcomings and potential improvements are more likely to procrastinate. Perfectionists have greater standards of oneself and frequently worry they won't reach them. Therefore, students often put off doing their job until later, and procrastination is on the rise.
- Procrastination may set in when the path toward your goals is clouded by doubt. Individuals are more inclined to postpone activities until later whenever they lack confidence in their time management or organizing skills. Therefore, setting goals and planning the activity in advance are crucial to avoiding procrastination (Gustavson & Miyake, 2017).

Long term effects of procrastination

Procrastination can be thought of as a harmless habit but it has its far reaching consequences. It can affect both our personal and professional life for a long time.

- You cannot perform to your full ability when you procrastinate, which is one of its devastating consequences. When someone puts off doing their work, they might not have enough time to finish it. They work quickly and are unable to perform to the best of their abilities.(Reynold, 2015)
- You risk missing opportunities that could have changed your life if you procrastinate. One risks missing possibilities that will be taken away by those who are more active than them if

they frequently miss deadlines and postpone their task (Pychyl et al. 2000).

- One of the most hazardous effects is that it lowers our self-esteem. People who procrastinate frequently have low self-esteem, which has additional detrimental effects (Flett et al. 1991). They believe they are not capable or productive enough when they postpone their task and are unable to complete it effectively. Because of this, people experience severe low self-esteem.
- Procrastination can cause health hazards as it can lead to severe stress and that can lead to other mental and physical problems. According to author Eric Jaffe (2015), people who procrastinate experience higher stress levels and worse levels of wellbeing. Stress and unhappiness are magnified in the lives of procrastinators. Procrastinators suffer emotional distress because they rush to finish their work at the last possible moment. Furthermore, people's existing high levels of stress are heightened by their concern about the potential repercussions of failing to complete the task.

Ways to Control Procrastination

Despite the fact that procrastination-related guilt or self-criticism is extremely common, we nevertheless put things off without understanding the basic principle behind why we are doing it. People who procrastinate often attribute their failures to their own character flaws, such as laziness, carelessness, or a lack of organizational skills. There are still unresolved questions that need to be discovered about the fundamental and sustaining mechanisms of procrastination. (Katz et al., 2014; Visser et al., 2018). Burka and Yuen (1982, p. 32) reported that people who struggle with procrastination frequently blame personality defects such as being lazy, disorganized, or incapable of managing their time for their problems. Even the more nuanced interaction of mental, emotional, and behavioral components may be taken into consideration. The only way to overcome procrastination is to learn what drives it and what reinforces it in the first place.

- Making proper management of time

According to Macan, TH (1994), Time management is the ability to control how a person chooses to use time as skillfully as possible through organizing, arranging and managing time, always prioritizing tasks based on importance and the desire to be organized which can be

expressed by actions like organizing workspaces and avoiding procrastination. Time Management skills are crucial factors to control procrastination. Setting realistic deadlines, for instance, if you want to start learning a programming language, an appropriate objective might be “being capable to build a program that prints ‘hello world’ in the first trial and learn all the basics of that language by the end of the month”. These techniques may assist people in planning, prioritizing, and organizing their work, giving them a sense of control and decreasing their propensity to procrastinate.

- Getting rid of distractions

It's easy to become sidetracked in today's high-tech world, what with all the pinging and beeping of cellphones, the allure of checking social media feeds repeatedly, and all the other fun and entertaining things that surround us. Making a to-do list, controlling internal triggers by identifying the origin of distraction, breaking tasks down into smaller pieces, or taking short breaks in between (also known as the Pomodoro Technique, which allows 25-minute sprints interspersed by 5-minute pauses, as recommended by a neuroscientist and senior lecturer at Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute in New York, Alicia Wolf, are some of the vital keys to stay keenly focused, minimize real interruptions and deal with procrastination throughout your work-hour (Gustavson & Miyake, 2017).

- Self-rewarding upon completion of a task

Rewarding oneself (even at least with a small Alpenliebe candy) after accomplishing a task is undeniably motivational and an effective way to positive reinforcement. It can also be done prevalingly with others' participation. For instance, after finishing a term paper, you might offer yourself some refreshments by giving a tour of exciting and entertaining places with your friends or family members. Self-rewarding practices can help one stay inspired, energized, and out of negative thoughts to surpass procrastination. In addition, making a reward promise to yourself could be a great kick start for your job refraining from distractions until it's done. (Flett et al., 1991)

Conclusion

Procrastination is a common and sometimes fatal habit that causes us to squander valuable time. Understanding the causes of delays is the first step in eliminating them and developing more effective time management techniques and might increase self-awareness. Even if

procrastination is one's deadliest adversary, it is still possible to win the battle against it.

References:

1. Burka, J. B., & Yuen, L. M. (1983). *Procrastination: Why You Do It What to Do about It*. Cambridge, MA: Da Capo Press.
2. Flett, G. L., Hewitt, P. L., Blankstein K, O'Brien S. (1991) Perfectionism and learned resourcefulness in depression and self-esteem. *Pers Individ Differ*. 12(1). 61–8.
3. Gustavson, D. E and Miyake. A. (2017) . Academic Procrastination and Goal Accomplishment: A Combined Experimental and Individual Differences Investigation. 10.1016/j.lindif.2017.01.010
4. Jaffe, E. (2013, March 29). *Why wait? The science behind procrastination*. Association for Psychological Science - APS. <http://www.psychologicalscience.org/index.php/publications/observer/2013/april-13/why-wait-the-science-behind-procrastination.html>
5. Katz, I., Eilat, K., & Nevo, N. (2014). “I’ll do it later”: Type of motivation, self-efficacy and homework procrastination. *Motivation and Emotion*, 38(1), 111–119.
6. Macan, T. H. (1994). Time management: Test of a process model. *Journal of Applied Psychology*, 79(3), 381–391. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0021-9010.79.3.381>
7. Pychyl, T. A., J. M. Lee, R. Thibodeau, and A. Blunt. (2000). “Five Days of Emotion: An Experience Sampling Study of Undergraduate Student Procrastination.” *Journal of Social Behavior and Personality*, 15, 239–254
8. Reynolds, J. P. (n.d.). *Factors affecting academic procrastination*. TopSCHOLAR®. <http://digitalcommons.wku.edu/theses/1511>
9. Solomon, L. J., & Rothblum, E. D. (1984). Academic procrastination: Frequency and cognitive-behavioral correlates. *Journal of Counseling Psychology*, 31(4), 503-509.
10. Van Eerde, W. (2003). “A Meta-analytically Derived Nomological Network of Procrastination.” *Personality and Individual Differences*, 35, 1401–1418.
11. Visser, L., Korthagen, F. A., & Schoonenboom, J. (2018). Differences in learning characteristics between students with high, average, and low levels of academic procrastination:

students' views on factors influencing their learning. *Frontiers in Psychology*, 9, 808.

12. Yosopov, Lital. (2020) The Relationship between Perfectionism and Procrastination: Examining Trait and Cognitive Conceptualizations, and the Mediating Roles of Fear of Failure and Overgeneralization of Failure". *Electronic Thesis and Dissertation Repository*. 7267. <https://ir.lib.uwo.ca/etd/7267>

Authors' Biography:

Kibo Mahojenin Khan , an enthusiast in the field of research. She's also a social activist, and a bookish content creator. Kibo's interest in science and research led them to pursue a degree in Microbiology at Brac University. Kibo is currently in their fourth semester.



Shahriar Khandoker is a young and ambitious individual who is currently pursuing his higher education at Brac University as a freshman. He was born and raised in Dhaka, Bangladesh. In his academic and research pursuits, Shahriar is known for his work ethic and determination. Being committed to lifelong learning and personal growth, he is poised to make a significant impact and apply his knowledge to real-world situations with dedication, passion, and drive.