

Academic Procrastination : A Critical Issue for Consideration

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ABSTRACT

Procrastination means to put off or postpone for another day. Procrastination affects the behavioral and psychological, health of students. Academic procrastination is a form of procrastination peculiar to education. Milgram Batin & Mower (1993) reported that a common form of academic procrastination among students is waiting until the last minute to turn in paper or to study for an examination. Due to skill deficits a lack of motivation, fear to failure or success people do procrastinate. This article throws light on academic procrastination, causes of procrastination and different strategies to overcome academic procrastination.

INTRODUCTION

Procrastinating is so common that it's widely used. Procrastinating is the word meant just, delaying from the context. Procrastinating is delaying doing something you should do, usually because you don't want to do. There are expressions which mean delaying such as putting off Shelving or delaying work.

Procrastinating is avoidance of doing a task which needs to be accomplished. It is the practice of doing more pleasurable ones or carrying out less urgent task instead of more urgent ones thus putting off impending tasks to a later time. Sometimes procrastination takes place until the "last minute" before a deadline. People may procrastinate personal issues (raising a stressful issue with a partner), health issues (seeing a doctor or dentist), home care issues (patching a leak in a roof), or academic/work obligations (completing a report). Procrastination can lead to feelings of guilt, inadequacy, depression and self doubt.

Area of Procrastination: These are numerous areas where people procrastinate. Some of the areas are listed below.

BEHAVIORAL CRITERIA

Sochraw, wardkins and olafson in 2007 proposed three criteria for a behavior to be classified as academic procrastination. It must be counter-productive, needless and delaying.

Steel (2007) found that procrastination is 'to voluntarily delay an intended course of action despite expecting to be worse off for the dealy.

PSYCHOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVE

The pleasure principle may be responsible for procrastination; one may prefer to avoid negative emotions, and to delay stressful tasks. The belief that one works best under pressure provides an addition incentive to the postponement of tasks. Steel (2010) indicated in that anxiety is just as likely to get people to start working early as late, and that the focus of studies on procrastination should be impulsiveness. That is, anxiety will cause people of delay only if they are impulsive.

HEALTH PERSPECTIVE

Procrastination is found to result in stress, anxiety, a guilt and crisis, health problems, and severe loss of personal productivity, as well as social disapproval for not meeting responsibilities or commitments. These feelings combined may promote further procrastination while it is regarded as normal for people to procrastinate to some degree and it becomes a problem when it impedes normal functioning. Chronic Procrastination may be a sign of an underlying psychological disorder such procrastinators may have difficulty seeking support due to social stigma and the belief that task aversion is caused by laziness, low willpower, or low ambition.

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ACADEMIC PROCRASTINATION

According to an Educational Science professor, Odaci, academic procrastination is a significant problem during college year in part because many college students lack efficient time management skills in using the internet. Also, odcai notes that most colleges provide free and fast twenty four hours internet service which some students are not usually accustomed to, and as a result of irresponsible use or lack of firewalls these students become engulfed in a world of procrastination.

“Student Syndrome” refers to the phenomenon where a student will begin to fully apply himself or herself to a task only immediately before a deadline. This negates the usefulness of any buffers built in to individual task duration estimates. Results from a 2002 study indicate that many students are aware of Procrastination and accordingly set binding deadlines long before the date for which a task is due. These self imposed binding deadline are correlated with a better performance than without binding deadlines though performance is best for evenly spaced external binding deadline. Finally, student have difficulties optimally setting self imposed deadlines, with result suggesting a lack of spacing before the date at which results are due.

In one experiment, participation in online exercise was found to be five times higher in the final week before a deadline than in the summed total of the first three weeks for which the exercise were available. Procrastinators end up being the ones doing most of the work in the final week before a deadline. Other reasons cited on why student procrastinate include fear of failure and success, perfectionist expectations, as well as legitimate activities that may take precedence over school work, such as a job. Procrastination is considerably more widespread in student than in the general population, with over 70 percent of student reporting, procrastination for assignment at some point. A recent panel study from Germany among several thousand university student found that increasing academic procrastination increases the frequency of seven different forms of academic misconduct, i.e., using fraudulent excuses, plagiarism, copying

from someone else in exams, using forbidden means in exams, copying part of homework from others, fabrication or falsification of data and the variety of academic misconduct.

Why do people procrastinate?

1. Skill deficits are one of the most basic reasons for procrastination. If anyone lack skills to complete certain tasks. It is only natural to avoid doing them. Occasionally it has been seen that a slow reader have several lengthy articles to read before he can write a paper. He may postpone the reading because it is difficult. He may even have trouble admitting his poor reading skills because he do not want to be seen as seem “dumb”. Thus procrastinating may seem better than facing his need to improve his reading skills. Lack of interest seems to play a role in procrastination. All students from time to time lack interest in a course, however not all of these students delay in studying or completing assignments.
2. Lack of motivation is a commonly given reason for not attending to an unpleasant task. Most procrastinators believe that something is wrong with them if they do not feel motivated to begin a task. This simply is not true. To believe that you must feel motivated in order to begin a task has the order of events in reverse. Burns (1989)“The Feeling Good Handbook” writes that the “doing” comes first and then he motivation.
3. Fear of Failure is another reason people procrastinate. It goes something like this if any one really try hard and fail, that is worse than if one don't try and end up failing. It is generally seen that during Examination time one may postpone studying for a major test and then pull an “all-nigther”. The resulting grade may be poor or mediocre and they blamed the time that if they could have done better if they had more time to study. Similarly one may delay researching and writing papers until the last minute turning papers in late or incomplete. One then can also say that he could have gotten a better grade on that paper if he had more time to spend on that paper.

4. People procrastinate as the task they perform is unpleasant or overwhelming to them. When the in hand is unpleasant, then we become reluctant to complete it or to start it. Some time we feel fear of the future. We are comfortable in our own present day. The things may be unpleasant or we may encounter some unpleasant events while doing a task. That fear also promote procrastination.
5. Fear of the unknown what's going to happen or what you are going to encounter when talking on a particular task. Fear of change people tends to resist changes. Some people are set in their ways and don't want to change their life style. They will do only those things which fascinate them and make them feel more excited and thrilled.
6. Perfectionism often underlies the fear of failure. Family expectations and standards set by parents may be so high that no one could actually live up to them. Thus, procrastination steps in to derail parental expectations and standards and prevent them from really failing.
7. Fear of success can be the other side of fear of failure. Here they procrastinate because they are fearful of the consequences of their achievements. May be they fear that if them do well, then next time even more will be expected of them
8. Motivate their self with enjoyable activities, socializing and constructive hobbies.
9. Tackle issues in small block of time, instead of trying to solve whole problems at once and then be intimidated.
10. To prevent relapse, reinforce their pre-set goals based on needs and allow their self to be rewarded in a balanced way for a accomplished tasks.

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- Ways to overcome procrastination**
1. Be aware of habits and thoughts that lead to procrastinating.
 2. Seek help for self-defeating problems such as fear, anxiety difficulty in concentrating poor time management indecisiveness and perfectionism.
 3. Set realistic goals and develop a personal positive link between the tasks and the concrete meaningful goals.
 4. Evaluate their own goal, strengths, weaknesses and priorities.
 5. Modify their environment for that newly gained perspective.
 6. Restructure activities of daily life.
 7. Discipline their self to the priorities them set.