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The Advantages and Disadvantages of Procrastination

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Abstract: Procrastination is a challenge we have all faced at one point or another. For as long as humans have been around, we have been struggling with delaying, avoiding, and procrastinating on issues that matter to us. During our more productive moments, when we temporarily figure out how to stop procrastinating, we feel satisfied and accomplished. Today, we're going to talk about how to make those rare moments of productivity more routine. The purpose of this article is to break down the science behind why we procrastinate, share proven frameworks you can use to beat procrastination, and cover useful strategies that will make it easier to take action.

Keywords: longitudinal study; self-reported; procrastination; academic delay

Introduction

Procrastination involves a useless and unwanted delay, that can be either decisional, implemented or a lack of actuality. An essential characteristic of delaying is the acknowledgement of the individual that this delay has some negative aspects. As a result, this delay can be seen as an irrational behavior- the delay of certain intentional actions, realizing that this is in his/her disadvantage. This delay in behavior is observed in at least two ways. Primarily, during the implementation of the action, the person can deviate to an alternative action and even more tempting, delaying intentionally in an indirect way the initial plan. Secondly, from a long-term perspective, the negative consequences of such a deviation become visible, for example, when people postpone the visit to the doctor until the treatment is no longer an option or postpone the initiation of personal plans. In a longitudinal study, it was proven that the students that delay at beginning of the semester have created a stress free, pleasant situation, experiment that these gains are just for short term and have big costs in long term at the end of the semester.

Although the main problem of the tardiness is the behavioral delay, studies as the one discussed here are in minority in the literature that deals with the concept of procrastination. The majority of the studies referring to the concept of delay concentrated more on the reported delay, measured with the help of scales. An obvious motivation for this preference is that the dilatory behavior is obviously subjective, that make reasonable the classification of certain action as being dilatory or not according to the intention of that person, that is evaluated in a convenient way through self reporting. The dilatory behavior is usually difficult to be operational, because its main feature is that it does not appear in a plan.

However, the addictiveness of the self-reported delay has remote the study of the delay from the main characteristic of the delay that is the behavior delay. As we will discuss, the number of studies that focus

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on behavior in the study of delay are rare. In addition, the exclusive dependence of the auto-reported delay can affect the results. In particular, the auto-reported delay does not have a calibration mechanism that can help the differentiation between common delay, but very harshly judged, and its serious forms, that has again implications for the prevalence appraisal. Thirdly, because the existent delay scales deal usually with behavior themes that are specific to the domain and culture, the conclusions can be vulnerable at the personal, cultural and contextual variability. As a result, bringing behavior in the equation of delay can be useful from many reasons.

Analyzing the delay from the evolutionary perspective of life history, it was sustained that the individual that postpones things, lives through a quick life strategy, with a psychological orientation of time in present. This kind of fast life strategy was functional in unpredictable environments during evolution, stimulating impulsivity, taking high risks, not caring about the consequences and minimizing the future. However, as long as contemporary life take emphasis in planning, personal control and responsibility, a fast life strategy has become unsuitable. As a consequence, research have fully documented that the concept of delay is closely connected to the one of impulsivity, with a preference for satisfying instant options instead of long term more benefic objectives. This kind of preference is associated with negative consequences that make the regular delay to be inadequate. In this way, the delay is associated with a series of feelings and adverse problems, including high stress, low performances of duties, reduced well-being, regret and suffering and a high risk of physical and psychical.

Because impulsivity suggests a preference for immediate results, and delay is characterized by postponing, the identification of the mechanisms that can mediate the relationship between impulsivity and behavior delay is crucial. A common response to this dilemma is that the diverse impulses to more attractive alternatives appear during plans implementation, creating indirectly delays in their realization. This can be seen as a temporal reduction, because the evident, immediately available rewards are dominant in front of the distant rewards. For example, taking a break from work that involves aversive, stressful or difficult tasks, getting a fast fix of the disposal, reducing stress, resulting in a direct form of delay of the tasks through the fact that the main motivation is that of stopping the continuous behavior more than going to something more attractive in that situation.

Procrastination is a regular problem and appears without major consequences. However, it can potentially become a dangerous practice for individuals, that transform it in a lifestyle, reducing its performance. Postponing can cause difficulties at a personal level, academic and professional contexts.

The last type of delay, known by the name of “academic delay” is a problem of growth. Diverse studies quantify that an average of 20% of the students are chronically delayers. Academic delay was related to a considerable number of factors, especially with the idea of perfectionism, fear of failure and aversion to the development of activities. The academic delay can also be related to immediate satisfactions.

In a similar way, it is concentrated on the delay from the satisfaction point of view: the duties perceived as unpleasant are avoided comparing to the tasks that produce higher levels of satisfaction. On the other side, there are a series of surveys that can prove the relationship between academic delay and the lack of punctuality or difficulties in compliance of instructions.

Other studies show the relationship between the academic delay and some demographic markers, as age or gender. There are a significant number of reports that show that postponing decreases together with age.

Furthermore, it was observed that academic delay is more preeminent at men rather than women. Nevertheless, these are surveys in which this hypothesis can not be proven.

The relationship between delay and academic performance was as well studied. In some cases a significant relationship was found. However, there are investigations in which this relationship was not found.

In the academic context, one of the most probable delay situations is the writing of the graduation paper or a master dissertation in which the student should write an original paper. This task does not produce an immediate satisfaction, but it needs an important, sustainable effort from the individuals to which are given this kind of tasks (professional or familial).

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