

A Study on Procrastination at Workplace

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Abstract: Procrastination is the act of putting forward the work which has to be done at the present. It affects whatever a person does and wherever the person is. It is caused due to lack of time management skills, fear of failure, perfectionism, lack of motivation and several distractions. It leads an individual to experience the worst in life. It impacts the person's personal and professional life. Personally it leads an individual to face the consequences of health, misunderstandings in the family, stressful life and so on. Professionally it affects the career growth, productivity, self-esteem and the overall development of the individuals and the organizations. One can get rid of the evil act of procrastination by avoiding multi tasking, enhancing of time management skills, dropping the fear of failure and perfectionism, planning and prioritizing the work to be done. In this article the researchers have made an attempt to gather the opinions of the respondents on how procrastination is caused, how does it affect the life of an individual and the ways to overcome it through this study?

Keywords: distraction, perfectionism, procrastination, productivity, work place.

1. INTRODUCTION

Procrastination is the act of delaying or postponing a task or set of tasks. It is the force that prevents you from doing what you set out to do. Procrastination is consistently associated with higher stress, more depression, anxiety, fatigue and reduced satisfaction across life domains, especially regarding work. With the high occurrence of procrastination, it leads a person to speculate about what causes this type of behavior. Factors contributing to the prevalence of procrastination are time management problems, self-handicapping to maintain self-esteem and lack of motivation etc. Weak time management skills, or not planning things efficiently to accomplish a task, can strongly lead to procrastination.

Procrastination is not born with a person, but it is inculcated by him/her as the time passes on in the life of a person. It can be learned in the family just like a parenting style. The friends circle may reinforce procrastination since they tend to be tolerant of their excuses. It may be the work environment which includes the rules and regulations of an organization, leadership style, peer group etc. will also leads to the individuals to postpone the work. It helps the people to tell lies to themselves and indulge the time pressure to turn out badly. It leads to look for distractions as a way to regulate their fear, failure and emotions. Most people are procrastinating for many reasons such as thrill seekers who wait until the last minute for the sense of pressure, avoiders who avoid the fear of failure and fear of success. These people lack effort than ability. And the decisional procrastinators who cannot make their own decisions and fear the outcome of events.

2. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Manfred E. Beutel, Eva M. Klein, Stefan Aufenanger, ElmarBrähler (2016) 'Procrastination, Distress and Life Satisfaction across the Age Range – A German Representative Community Study' have found pervasive negative associations of procrastination with successful mastery in virtually all life domains. Deliberately postponing actions can create a high level of discomfort and distress, and individuals with the tendency to procrastinate were consistently stressed, distressed and fatigued.

Jourdan Ford (2014) 'Procrastination and the College Student: AnAnalysis on Contributing Factors and Academic Consequences' has stated that It seems inevitable that all students will procrastinate at one time or

another. What seems to be the biggest issue is that students are not motivated by the work that they are assigned. To avoid procrastination, students need to increase their determination to see the bigger picture. They need to see that they will graduate some day and all of these small tasks will be worth it. It is up to them whether or not they will be an active procrastinator or just get the work done.

Lauren Rosetti (2011) 'Procrastination behaviors in college students' has expressed the opinion that Procrastination is a behavior that is extremely prevalent for college students and is projected that 95% of students engage in it. This study looked at a type of procrastination that is referred to as active procrastination where students intentionally delay homework. Specifically, this study hoped to support the hypothesis that students who actively procrastinate have a positive relationship with both intrinsic motivation and self-esteem. What the results show is that students who engage in active procrastination may not be intrinsically motivated in their studies. They may rely more on extrinsic motivation, or completing homework for external rewards than the desire to learn. A perspective on these findings is that students procrastinate with no bearing on their feelings for their studies or esteem.

Evanya Musolino (2007) 'The Effect of Procrastination and Stress on Low Effort and High Effort Tasks' The practical implications of this line of research relate to all different aspects of life. Stress and procrastination are two of the key features evident in universities across the world. Life is all about meeting deadlines, personal commitments and multi-tasking. In order to successfully complete these tasks, individuals must exercise stress management and time management.

RESEARCH GAP:

The available reports mainly emphasize on Procrastination with reference to college students and its implications on one's life. Whereas, 'Procrastination at workplace' has not been discussed in any of these reports. Hence the researchers have made an attempt to discuss the same in this article.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM:

Most of the employees fail to meet the deadlines / targets on time, which leads them to undergo lots of stress and pressure from employers for completion of the same. Does Procrastination play any role in such issues? If so, what strategies can be employed in overcoming such issues?

OBJECTIVES:

1. To know the reasons for procrastination and its impacts at work place
2. To find suitable measures to eliminate the act of procrastination

3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Research Type – Empirical Research

Sampling Technique – Convenient Sampling

Sample Size – 100 respondents from Bangalore.

4. DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS METHOD

The data is collected through primary as well as secondary sources. Primary data is collected by personal discussions with the respondents, peer group, personal experiences and through questionnaires. Secondary data collection includes books, periodicals, news reports and online sources. Statistical tools such as simple percentage cross tabulation and other simple tools are applied.

MEANING OF PROCRASTINATION:

The word procrastination is derived from the Latin word 'pro' which means "forward, forth, in favor of" and 'crastinus' which means "of tomorrow." So procrastination is the act of putting forward the work of today for a future date. Procrastination is avoiding doing things that need to be done or leaving things undone for as long as possible. To put off doing something, especially out of habitual carelessness or laziness, to postpone or delay needlessly. It is the avoidance of

doing a task that needs to be accomplished. Sometimes, Procrastination takes place until the last minute before a deadline. It is the act or habit of delaying, especially something requiring immediate attention. Procrastination can take place in any of the following 3 different varieties:

1. Arousal type, where people wait until the last minute to complete something. 2. Avoiders type, where people may be avoiding fear of failure or even fear of success. And 3. Decisional type, where people find it highly difficult to make a decision.

According to Merriam-Webster dictionary, to procrastinate is put off intentionally the doing of something that should be done. Another way of putting it is to wait until the last minute. Procrastination is a very bad habit even though procrastination is looked down upon many people still fall victim to it. This is because procrastinating is easy to do and comes naturally to everyone. There are many causes of procrastination like boredom, stress etc.

REASONS FOR PROCRASTINATION:

Generally we know that everyone procrastinates at some point, but some people avoid their unwanted obligations so much that it results in a downward movement of emotions that has a drastic effect. If you really want to discover why people procrastinate the best way to do it is to look at the causes of Procrastination. The reasons for procrastination are as under.

1. **Poor Time-Management Skills:** When people fail to manage time appropriately, everything planned will be put forward and for each activity the planned time will be extended.
2. **People prefer being Perfect:** The fear of making mistakes is a real thing, and this fear will lead people to put forward their important works. This means that they avoid doing certain tasks because they fear the risk of making a mistake and looking anything less than perfect. They want their work to be perfect. Because they believe that they will inevitably fail if the task is not in line with their given talents, it is best to set it aside for another time.
3. **People prefer being Motivated:** We all have felt the pain of being unmotivated when we are faced with a task we really want to complete. When a person is motivated to work on a task or project, the work will be done in an effective and efficient way. If not the result will be reverse. Similarly, unpleasant or unexciting tasks at work may have the same effect.
4. **When people are Unskilled:** Maybe we put things off because we struggle with the skills required to complete the task. If you are a slow typist, you may put off that report you need to type. If you don't understand how to complete a project, it may seem easier to push it to the bottom of your task list.
5. **When people have Fear of failure:** The fear of failure is a big reason people procrastinate on tasks. Fear of failure is the gigantic hurdle for the people which resist them from completing any task.
6. **When people are Uninterested:** When a person is not interested in doing work or in some task, he/she will not be willing to complete it irrespective of its result. Because the person is not interested in the task, it can be easier to ignore it until the last possible minute.
7. **When people are Distracted:** Some of the modern day distractions that we are faced like email, text messages, Skype, Face book, whatsapp etc., if you can always find a distraction when a person is trying to focus.

EFFECTS OF PROCRASTINATION:

As per the study and opinions of respondents one of the biggest costs of procrastination is health. Procrastination put individuals under pressure and stressful situations, due to which various health issues such as tension, raised blood pressure, sleep difficulties, fatigue, restlessness, headaches etc. arises. It burdens the responsibility of an individual and destroys teamwork and personal relationships. Procrastination affects the workplace heavily and stops the organization from reaching its goals and objectives. It leads to loss of precious time, loss of opportunities, unmet targets, deadlines, ruining of career, no recognition, no rewards or awards, no promotion, lower salaries, shorter durations of employment, lowering of self-esteem, poor decision making, reduced contribution to teamwork, increased likelihood of accidents, mistakes, damage of reputation etc. Due to postponement of work the productivity declines, workers become unproductive, reduction in creative output, workers tend to involve in non-work related activities etc. which affects the organization's profitability and progress.

WAYS TO OVERCOME PROCRASTINATION:

One of the main reasons that procrastination is a challenge to overcome is that everybody has different reasons for doing it. The key to beating procrastination is to find out what your specific reasons are doing so, then addressing them at the core.

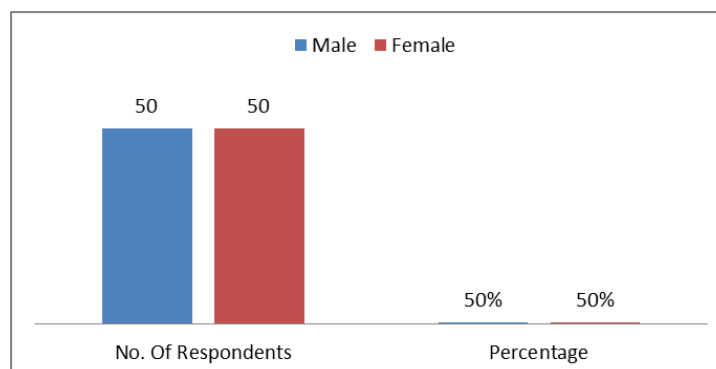
- Getting aware of the reasons, habits, and thoughts that lead to procrastination.
- Dwelling on success – not failure.
- Identifying one's special behavioural diversions
- Noting down when and where you procrastinate
- Plan how to diminish and control this behaviour
- Break large tasks into small ones
- Writing down the main task, goal, assignment, etc., Prioritize the work and setting deadlines
- Using behavioural suggestions, by placing reminders around you
- Changing location or position, taking a break, switching subjects or tasks.
- Reward oneself for accomplishment.
- Learning to tolerate discomfort
- Building accountability
- Visualizing the future that one wants
- Dropping the perfectionism.

As per the study and opinions of respondents the strategies to overcome procrastination are Finding the Flow And Staying In It, not to Multitask, Developing Routines And Disciplines, Taking a part of Job at a time not the whole, having Accountability, knowing Why he/she Procrastinates, Finding The Fun completing work on time, Focusing On the Top Three Priorities first and then rest, Identifying and eliminating the hurdles on the way to complete work , Listing and staying away from Distractions and so on.

5. DATA ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATIONS**Table No.1: Table showing Gender groups of the respondents**

Gender group	No. Of Respondents	Percentage
Male	50	50%
Female	50	50%

Table No.1: Primary Source

**Graph No.1: Graph showing Gender groups of the respondents**

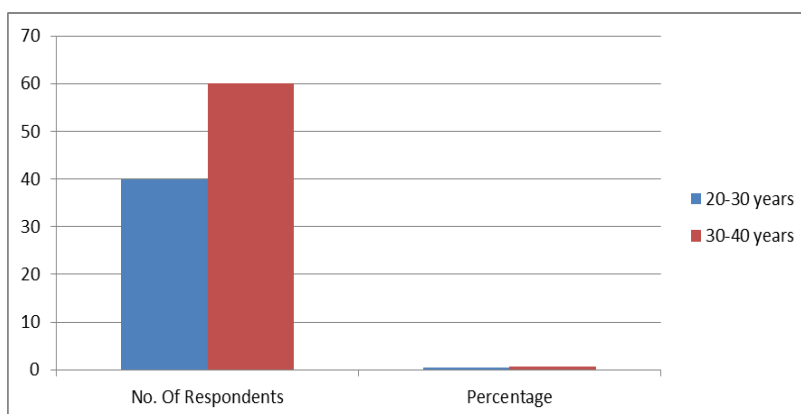
Interpretation:

From the above table and graph it is interpreted that out of 100 respondents 50% are males and 50% are females. Wherein both male and female respondents are equally selected for the study.

Table No.2: Table showing Age groups of the respondents

Age group	No. Of Respondents	Percentage
20-30 years	40	40%
30-40 years	60	60%

Table No.2: Primary Source

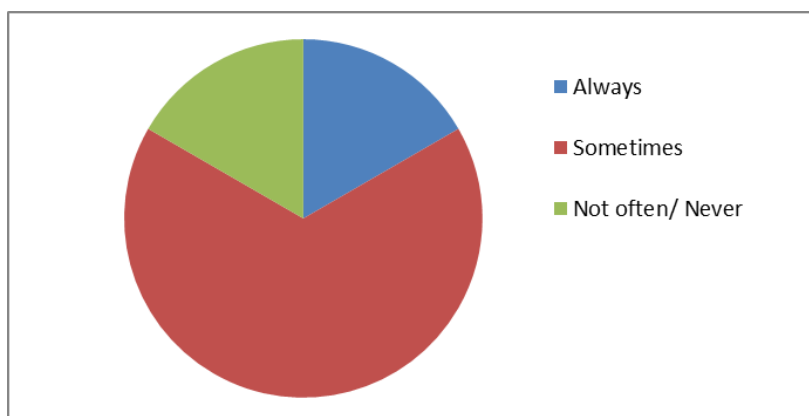
**Graph No.2: Graph showing Age groups of the respondents****Interpretation:**

From the above table and graph it is interpreted that out of 100 respondents 40% are of 20-30 years age and 60% are of 30-40 years age. Wherein 30-40 years age group respondents form the majority.

Table No.3: Table showing respondents response on waiting until the last minute to get things done

Particulars	Always	Sometimes	Not often/ Never
Men	10	40	10
Women	05	15	20

Table No.3: Primary Source

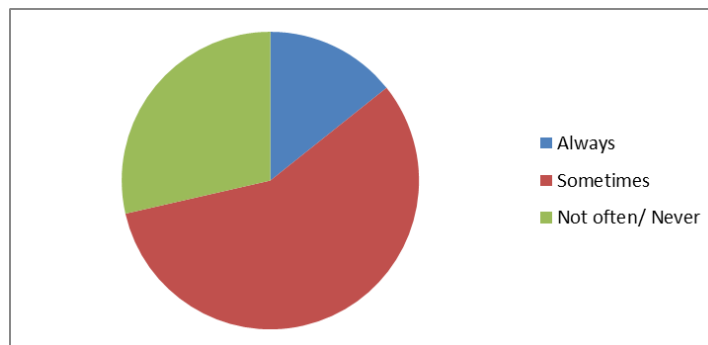
**Graph No.3: Graph showing respondents response on waiting until the last minute to get things done****Interpretation:**

From the above table and graph it is interpreted that out of 100 respondents 70% of respondents wait until the last minute to get the work done as they are not motivated, recognized and rewarded for the work they do.

Table No.4: Table showing respondents response on avoiding to set personal deadlines and sticking to them

Particulars	Always	Sometimes	Not often/ Never
Men	10	30	20
Women	05	15	20

Table No.4: Primary Source

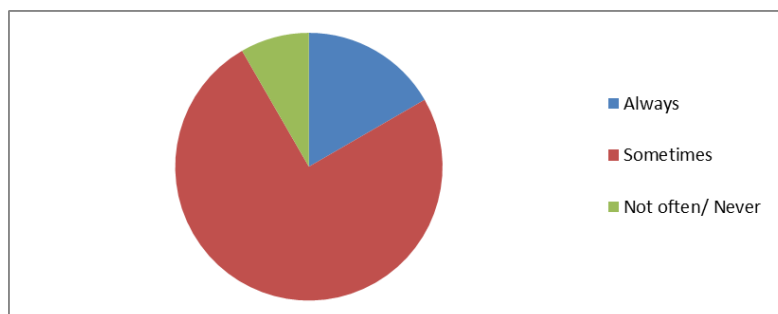
**Graph No.4: Graph showing respondents response on avoiding to set personal deadlines and sticking to them****Interpretation:**

From the above table and graph it is interpreted that out of 100 respondents 60% of respondents avoid to set personal deadlines and sticking to them as it creates unnecessary pressure, stress and other health related issues.

Table No.5: Table showing respondents response on often spending time in socializing instead of working

Particulars	Always	Sometimes	Not often/ Never
Men	10	45	05
Women	10	20	10

Table No.5: Primary Source

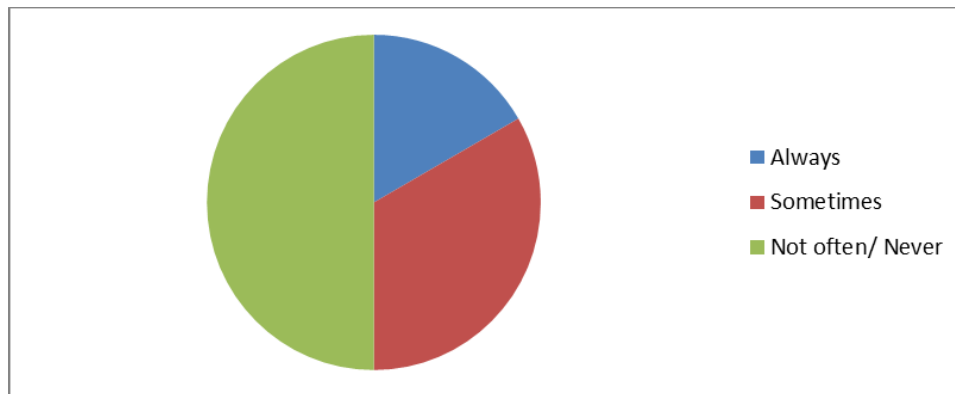
**Graph No.5: Graph showing respondents response on often spending time in socializing instead of working.****Interpretation:**

From the above table and graph it is interpreted that out of 100 respondents 85% of respondents often spend time socializing instead of working. The majority of respondents are interested to spend time with socializing like texting, whatsapp, face book, YouTube, instgram etc., as it gives relaxation to some extent, relief from stress, change their mood, refresh etc., which can be a source of procrastination at work place.

Table No.6: Table showing respondents response on leaving difficult tasks to the last minute and completing them under pressure

Particulars	Always	Sometimes	Not often/ Never
Men	10	20	30
Women	05	05	30

Table No.6: Primary Source



Graph No.6: Graph showing respondents response on leaving difficult tasks to the last minute and completing them under pressure

Interpretation:

From the above table and graph it is interpreted that out of 100 respondents 60% of respondents never leave difficult tasks to the last minute as it leads them to the tension, pressure, stress and anxiety but completing difficult tasks at the beginning will take extended time for completion, hence procrastination takes place.

6. FINDINGS

- It is found that 70% of the respondents wait until the last minute for getting any work done.
- It is found that most of the respondents fail to set the deadlines, follow daily schedule and prioritize the work.
- It is found that the major reason to procrastinate among the working people is social media.
- It is found that over commitment and multi tasking are the other important reasons for postponing the work.
- It is also found that procrastination at work place does not only affect the professional life but personal life too.
- It is also found that lack motivation, recognition, pay scale and other incentives from the organisations /employers are also the sources of procrastination.

7. SUGGESTIONS

- It is suggested for the organizations to introduce workshops on time management and other relevant topics as these will help the employees in completing their works/tasks/assignments on time.
- It is suggested to be aware of the reasons, habits, and thoughts that lead to procrastinating and to stay away from the same.
- It is suggested to write down the main task, goal, assignment, etc. and give it a deadline and to execute accordingly to the plan.
- It is suggested to break the work or task down into smaller segments scheduling a completion date for each and commit to completing this objective. This will build confidence and make the task seem manageable.
- If distractions are a problem, it is suggested to find a quiet place where the phone, internet, friends, etc. will not be an issue.
- It is suggested for the organisations /employers to recognise, motivate and to reward the employee's accomplishments periodically.

8. CONCLUSION

Everyone puts things off until the last minute sometimes, but procrastinators usually avoid difficult tasks and always look for directions. Employees procrastinate more on their work/task/completing the assignments etc, in the organization There are few reasons found in the research which are anxiety, poorly managed time, perfectionism, work stress etc. which

suggest that people work in the organization and are concerned much on their work and development. . It shows that they are more confident of procrastinating on this task. Procrastination in large part reflects the professional and personal life of people. Hence, procrastinators may stop postponing, if they understand its causes, effects and prevention. People can easily get diverted by the sources of putting things off and it comes from the environment such as technology and irrelevant work. We have to understand the consequences of taking things forward, reduction of stress levels and fear of failures. We can learn how to prevent this action from taking knowledge from the available sources. Therefore, one can overcome procrastination with better self-control and by making use of the various strategies available.

9. LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

The study is based on the primary and secondary data collected and opinion of the respondents are recorded here. The study is based on the limited population of a geographical area. As the sample size is too small the opinion cannot be generalized.

SCOPE FOR THE FURTHER RESEARCH:

This study focuses on the views of respondents which includes both literates and illiterates of a conveniently selected geographic semi urban area only. For the study opinions of the selected semi urban area in part of south Bangalore was considered. Further research can be done in other parts of the city.

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