

FACTORS MAKING UNDERGRADUATE STUDENTS TO BECOME A
PROCRASTINATOR**Sabina Ismoilova,**a second-year
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Procrastination has become a big problem in the majority of the world's population's behavior regardless of their culture or professions. As a result, people tend to end up not being able to meet the deadlines and experience negative psychological states such as stress or depression. This article mainly focuses on the reasons of undergraduate students for postponing their academic responsibilities and gives some practical recommendations to get rid of this behavior.

Key words: procrastination, postponing, time, energy, behavior, academic tasks, environment, psychology.

Introduction

Procrastination is deliberately delaying desired activities even though knowing that delaying them can have negative consequences (Svartdal et al., 2020). The term procrastination comes from the Latin procrastination with the prefix "pro" which means pushing forward or moving forward and the ending "castings" which means

"tomorrow's decision" or when combined becomes "to postpone or postpone until the next day"(Pala et al., 2011). Knaus (2010) explains that procrastination is the habit of postponing an important activity and not making assignments on time (Setiyowati et al., 2020). Individuals who like to procrastinate are termed procrastinators(Puspitasari & Suwarjo, 2018). A procrastinator generally commits acts of procrastination only to the extent of delaying doing tasks, causing failure to complete tasks on time.

Main part

The main characteristic of a procrastinator is that he is happy to postpone a job. In this regard, Burka & Yuen explain the characteristics of a procrastinator (procrastinator), namely a) prefers to postpone work or tasks, b) thinks it is better to do later than now and postponing work is not a problem, c) continues to repeat procrastination behavior, and d) difficulties in making decisions (Brett L. Beck et al., 2007). Meanwhile, Ferrari said that as a procrastination behavior, procrastination can be manifested in certain indicators that can be measured and observed with certain characteristics in the form of a) Delays in starting or completing tasks at hand, b) Delays in doing tasks, c) Gap in time between planning and task completion, d) Doing other activities that are more enjoyable than doing the tasks that must be done starting to do it or delaying to finish it if he has started doing it before (Wirajaya et al., 2020).

Psychological Factors:

a. Fear of Failure

Many students delay work because they are afraid they won't succeed. This fear creates anxiety that leads them to avoid the task altogether, rather than risk a poor outcome. For example, if a student believes they aren't good at writing, they might postpone starting an essay out of fear it won't be good enough.

b. Perfectionism

Perfectionists set unrealistically high standards for themselves. They often procrastinate because they're waiting for the "perfect" time to start or feel their initial attempts aren't good enough. Ironically, this results in rushed, lower-quality work.

c. Low Self-Esteem or Confidence

Students who doubt their own abilities are less likely to begin tasks early. They may question their competence, which makes academic work feel overwhelming and emotionally draining.

d. Mental Health Challenges

Conditions like anxiety and depression can sap motivation, reduce concentration, and impair decision-making—key ingredients for productive studying. A student experiencing depression may find even small tasks too exhausting to start.

Time Management Issues:

a. Poor Planning and Organization

Without a clear plan, students often don't know where to begin. They may underestimate how long a task will take or fail to schedule it properly. This leads to last-minute cramming or incomplete assignments.

b. Overcommitment

Taking on too many extracurricular activities, part-time jobs, or courses can leave students stretched too thin. With little time or energy left for academic tasks, procrastination becomes a coping mechanism.

c. Misconceptions About Productivity

Some students claim they “work best under pressure,” which justifies delaying tasks. However, this belief often masks a habit of procrastination and leads to unnecessary stress, lower quality work, and burnout.

Environmental Distractions:

a. Digital Distractions

Social media, streaming platforms, gaming, and constant notifications can easily hijack attention. These instant gratifications are far more appealing than long academic tasks, making procrastination more tempting.

b. Poor Study Environment

Studying in a noisy dorm, in bed, or among friends can hurt focus. Without a quiet, organized space, it's harder for students to get into a "study mindset."

Academic Factors

a. Lack of Interest

When a subject feels irrelevant or boring, students are less inclined to invest time. They might prioritize more enjoyable or directly relevant assignments and put off the rest.

b. Ambiguous Assignments

If students don't clearly understand what is expected (due to vague instructions or lack of examples), they may delay starting while trying to figure it out—or avoid it entirely.

c. Overwhelming Academic Load

Large volumes of coursework can create analysis paralysis. When faced with multiple pressing deadlines, students may become overwhelmed and end up doing nothing at all.

Lifestyle and Habits

a. Poor Sleep and Health Habits

Irregular sleep, poor nutrition, and lack of exercise can make students feel sluggish, unfocused, and unmotivated. These physical states make mental tasks much more difficult to tackle.

b. Lack of Routine

Inconsistent daily routines (e.g., sleeping and waking at different times) can reduce productivity. Without structure, students may drift into less productive habits.

Social and Cultural Influences

a. Peer Influence

Students often adopt the behaviors of those around them. If their friends also procrastinate or joke about doing things last minute, it may feel socially acceptable to delay.

b. Fear of Criticism or Rejection

Students may procrastinate on tasks like presentations, papers, or group work out of fear their work will be judged harshly—leading to avoidance as a form of emotional protection.

10 Quick Tips to Beat Procrastination

Break tasks down – Start with small, simple steps.

Use a planner – Schedule tasks and set early deadlines.

Try Pomodoro – Work 25 mins, rest 5 mins.

Remove distractions – Silence your phone, block websites.

Set clear goals – Know what you need to do each day.

Understand your habits – Notice what makes you delay.

Stay accountable – Tell a friend or study with someone.

Reward yourself – Celebrate small wins.

Keep healthy routines – Sleep well, eat right, exercise.

Ask for help – Talk to a counselor if needed.

Conclusion

Procrastination among undergraduate students stems from a variety of psychological, academic, environmental, and lifestyle-related factors. Fear of failure, perfectionism, poor time management, and distractions—especially digital ones—are key contributors. Additionally, lack of interest in subjects, overwhelming workloads, and social influences exacerbate the tendency to delay tasks. Understanding these root causes can help students develop more effective strategies for managing their time, improving mental health, and cultivating productive habits. With the right support and practical approaches, procrastination can be reduced, leading to better academic performance and overall well-being.

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