The Relationship between Procrastination and Anxiety among Working Women

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Abstract
The aim of the current study was to determine the effect of procrastination on the anxiety level of working women. A sample of 40 working women belonging to similar socio-economic status and demographic area were selected. Procrastination Inventory by University Counseling Services Bayramian Hall for assessing procrastination attitude and Yung Self-Rating Anxiety Scale was employed to study the level of anxiety in working women was employed in the study. It was hypothesized that there will be no relation between procrastination and anxiety. The results indicate that there is a high correlation between habit of procrastination and anxiety. The habit of avoiding and ignoring important task and indulging oneself in less important ones increases the anxiety level of the women. These women should be given training to start and associate positively and purpose with the task they want to complete. It will dissipate their anxiety.

Key words: Procrastination, Anxiety.

Introduction:

PROCRASTINATION: Procrastination is the practice of carrying out less urgent tasks in preference to more urgent ones, or doing more pleasurable things in place of less pleasurable ones, and thus pulling off impending tasks to a later time. In order for a behavior to be classified as procrastination, it must be counterproductive, needless and delaying. It could be further stated as a habitual or intentional delay of starting or finishing a task despite knowing it might have negative consequences.

Causes: Procrastination is strongly connected with a lack of self-confidence (eg.-low self-efficacy or learned helplessness) or disliking the task (eg.- boredom and apathy). The strongest connection to procrastination is impulsiveness. The consensus is that the predominant reason we procrastinate is a breakdown in our self-control. When faced with a decision to make or a task to complete, we usually rely on our self-control in order to push ourselves to get things done. Further, more expectation of receiving some reward for our efforts, can provide support to our self-control and make it more likely that we will get things done in a timely manner. However, there are also various negative factors that we can experience, which have an opposite effect than our motivation, meaning that they make us more likely to procrastinate.
For example, anxiety and fear of failure can cause us to put off a task, or having to work in an environment which is filled with distractions. People are more likely to procrastinate when it comes to goals that are vague or abstract compared to when it comes to goals that are concrete and clearly defined.

People tend to discount the value of rewards that are far in future that is they know that they will only receive the reward for completing the task a long time for now.

People sometimes avoid taking action in the present because they intend or hope to pursue a more attractive course of action in the future. This mindset can lead to long term procrastination. The inability to make decisions in a timely manner is one of the leading causes of procrastination. Essentially this occurs when a person can’t decide which course of action to engage in.

Perfectionism can sometimes cause people to procrastinate. Beside this fear of evaluation and negative feedback from others can sometimes cause people to procrastinate. People sometimes procrastinate due to their tendency to engage in self-defecting behaviour which means that they actively try to sabotage their own progress.

Conscientiousness is the trait of being self-driven, disciplined and organized. In general, the less conscientious someone is the more likely they are to procrastinate.

Sometimes people procrastinate as an act of rebellion, often against an authority figure by delaying working on a task that they resent being given. Some people procrastinate because they suffer from depression, which leads to issues such as constant fatigue and difficulty in concentrating.

**Effects:** procrastination can be persistent and tremendously descriptive to everyday life. For these individual’s procrastination maybe symptomatic of a psychological disorder. It has been linked to a number of negative associations such as depression, irrational behaviour, low self-esteem, anxiety and neurological disorders such as ADHD. Guilt and stress are also the product of procrastination.

Thus, procrastination is not so much an effect of laziness. It is a higher trait influence of being impulsive and avoiding what we consider as boredom.

**ANXIETY:** the American Psychological Association (APA) defines anxiety as an “emotion characterized by feelings of tension, worried thoughts and physical changes like increased blood pressure.”

Feeling of anxiety is not only normal but necessary for survival. Any impediment danger causes a rush of adrenalin, a hormone and chemical messenger in the brain, which in turn triggers these anxious reactions in a process called the “flight or fight” response. This prepares humans to physically confront or flee any potential threats to safety.

Symptoms of generalized anxiety include:

- Restlessness and a feeling of being “on edge”
- Uncontrollable feeling of worry.
- Increased irritability.
- Concentration difficulties.
Sleep difficulties, such as problems in falling or staying asleep.

The DSM-V classifies anxiety disorders into several main types:

1. Generalized Anxiety Disorder.
2. Panic Disorder.
3. Phobia.
5. Social Anxiety Disorder.

The causes of anxiety disorders are complicated. Possible causes include:

- Environmental stressors such as difficulties at work, relationship problems or family issues.
- Genetics as people who have family members with an anxiety disorder are more likely to experience one themselves.
- Medical factors like effects of a medication, or the stress of an intensive surgery or prolonged recovery.
- Brain chemistry as misalignments of hormones and electrical signals in the brain.

Anxiety itself is not a medical condition but natural emotion. It develops into disorder when this reaction becomes exaggerated. An active lifestyle with a balanced diet can help to keep anxious emotions within healthy limits.

**Methodology:**

**Problem:**

In the present investigation an attempt was made to study the Effect Of Attitude of Procrastination on the Anxiety level of working women

**Hypothesis:**

In the present investigation following hypothesis was formulated:

1) Attitude of Procrastination will not have any influence on level of anxiety

**Research Design:**

*Independent Variable:* Attitude of Procrastination

*Dependent variable:* Level of Anxiety

**Sample:**

A total sample of 30 working women

Random Purposive Sampling technique was used for the selection of the sample.
Control:

- The test was given individually by researcher.
- The socio-economic status of the participants was equal.
- Sample belong to same demographic area.

Test:

1) Procrastination Inventory by University Counseling Services Bayramian Hall for assessing procrastination attitude.
2) Yung Self-Rating Anxiety Scale was employed to study the level of anxiety in working women.

Result table:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>r score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Attitude of Procrastination</td>
<td>132.68</td>
<td>0.521**</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Level of Anxiety</td>
<td>23.74</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Significant at 0.01 level and 0.05 level

Result table-01

Discussion:

Procrastination is the action of postponing something and carrying out less important tasks in preference to more important ones. The research aimed to study the relationship between procrastination and anxiety in working women. The result table show that there is a high correlation between procrastination and anxiety (r= 0.521). It means that women who procrastinate have vulnerability to pangs of acute anxiety and self-frustration. Working women have multi-dimensional responsibilities to fulfill both on professional as well as personal front. They procrastinate on one area but the incomplete task develops anxiety in them which can further lead to depression and other mental health disorders.

Procrastination is the result of avoidance. Procrastination and avoidance both are the drivers of anxiety. Anxiety associated with procrastination continues to fester and grows over time. Anxiety can become so uncomfortable that we seek relief for it, hoping there is some better way to tolerate things left undone. Chasing the tail of anxiety or rather trying to quell the anxiety caused by procrastination is ultimately time wasted and energy consumed without anything to show for it.

It is believed that people who already suffer from anxiety don't procrastinate. Sapadin noted that anxiety about not getting something done may drive some to be even more dutiful in completing the task. Steel is of the opinion that people who are anxious don't procrastinate.
Laurel A. Haycock (1998) concluded in his study that efficacy expectations and anxiety had significant individual relationship with procrastination. Steven J. Scher (2002) also reported that procrastination and conscientiousness are correlated with physiological anxiety.

People procrastinate for many reasons but the immediate goal is to bring a temporary sense of relief. The problem with procrastination is just that; the relief is temporary and it is eventually replaced with anxiety being behind in what needed to get done.

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