
Study On The Procrastination And 'Delay Of an Intended Course Of Action'

Procrastination can be described as an action of postponing an activity. It is a 'delay of an intended course of action' by an individual despite of knowing the negative impact on the task performance (Ferrari, 1996__). While, almost every person has at least lingered once with procrastination, its bad to know that some of them have made it a way of life. People mostly portray procrastination as bad or harmful (Briody, 1980) and over 95% of people desire to reduce it (O'Brien, 2002). Procrastination performs as a troubling phenomenon. Estimates reveal that some degree of procrastination may be unavoidable but over 25% of adults claim procrastination as a 'significant problem' in their lives (McCown & Johnson, 1989). Like many common-language terms are outlined into scientific study, definition for procrastination tend to be common in the researches of Ferrari, Johnson and McCown (1995). Ferrari (1994) pronounced procrastination as a usual habit of delaying task that ultimately has a negative effect on task success.

The extent of experimental work that has been done on procrastination is considerable (eg: Ferrari, Johnson and McCown, 1995; Steel, Brothen, & Wambach, 2001). Also, the historical reference has indicated that outlooks about procrastination have been reasonably constant over the ages: it has and will be a prevalent problem (Steel, 2007). Whether procrastination reflects emotion or not is an empirical question. However, emotions or feelings indicate the proximal effect of procrastination. Typically, researchers have argued about feeling like, worrying, trait anxiety or stress. (e.g., R.T. Brown, 1991; Burka & Yuen, 1983; Ellis & Knaus, 1977). Procrastination appears to redirect the human condition, because it is present everywhere and has been researched for thousands of years. It has always been volunteered in delaying an intended course of action despite of knowing its negative impact on one's behaviour.

To understand what procrastination stands for, it is first important to know the answer to the inevitable question of why people procrastinate when in a specific situation? Most obviously, people just procrastinate to avoid or delay the tasks that they view as unlikable. In his essay, Steel (2007) supported some empirical concepts of procrastination as a means of self-protection, which can also be described as lack of conscientiousness or fear of failure. Further explained, fear of failure can be well connected to both low self-efficiency and self-esteem. Procrastination can be either task-oriented or emotion-oriented, both placing obstacles that delay one's work. Procrastination is task-oriented is when people do find a particular task unpleasant and indeed are more likely to put it off. Whereas, emotion-oriented procrastination is when people procrastinate and feel that their actions might not change the situation and instead concentrates on managing the emotional reaction to the situation (Ellis & Knaus, 1977). Consequently, the people who procrastinate incline to be more emotion-oriented than task-oriented (Berzonsky, 1992; Flett, Blankstein, & Martin, 1995). In short, procrastination tend to be worse-off in terms of both how a person feels about it and what would they achieve after procrastinating.

Apart from being anxious or stressed after procrastinating it may affect different emotions of on individual including depression or diminished feeling of control. Given that depression may lead to procrastination, it leads to lack of concentration, loss of energy and also depressed people

often find tasks unpleasant. (American Psychiatric Association, 1994). Also, extroversion can be a curious cause of procrastination (Steel, 2007). It has been researched that impulsive people are more expected to procrastinate, as they are likely to struggle with desire (Blatt & Quinn, 1967). Procrastination is theoretically an agent of low conscientiousness and self-regulatory failure. Building on this base, there is a link between procrastination and social anxiety, concern over other's evaluation and a desire for approval (Ferrari, 1991b). In past years, researchers studied procrastination at workplace and they concluded that it was due to the increased responsibility and load of work together with a lot of pressure to achieve goals up to the mark (Lock and Latham, 1990). As organizations states different activities which include planning, structuring and organising, procrastination at a workplace is encouraged in several different ways (Bargh & Barndollar, 1996).

Conceptually, procrastination is linked to self-conscientiousness (Barrick & Mount, 2003; Hurtz & Donovan, 2000) which can be further extended as, people who are more self-interested are more likely to experience self-regulatory failure which reduces overall utility. Procrastination appears to be simply due to desire to delay or avoid day-to-day unpleasant tasks, but most of the researchers draws evaluative concern on the concept of procrastination as it has negative effect on one's behaviour or emotion. It can be said that, procrastination ultimately decreases a person's ability to complete a task on time and also affects emotions negatively (e.g., Ferrari, 2001; Senécal et al., 1995; Steel, 2007; Wolters, 2003). Together these findings show that procrastinate often represent a defence mechanism motivated by efforts to avoid and self-protect (Ferrari, Johnson, & McCown, 1995). Therefore, from the above evidences and researches it is found that, researchers believe that procrastination has a negative impact on a person's emotion and it seems that they are mostly related to self-critical emotions.

Considerable attention has been given to procrastination in previous researches which states that procrastination is related self-criticism or self-depreciation which means lower levels of self-efficiency, self-esteem and higher levels of anger or disgust (e.g., Ferrari et al., 2005, Howell et al., 2006, Schraw et al., 2007, Tice and Baumeister, 1997, Wolters, 2003). However, there is not much of research that examines the potential link or a proper association between procrastination and self-critical emotion such as shame and guilt. While much research has concentrated on different aspects and components of procrastination, less attention has been directed towards the self-critical emotion involved while procrastinating. Fee and Tangney (2003), recommended that self-conscious and self-critical emotions specially shame and guilt may play an important role in the usual tendency to procrastinate. They believed that shame and guilt may be responsible for procrastinating behaviour.

As evidenced above, the researchers found that procrastination can be related to different emotions and is a failure of self-regulation (e.g., Steel, 2007). Attempts to specify the relationship between procrastination and different emotion like fear of failure, perfectionism, self-consciousness, and evaluation anxiety have been abundant. Procrastination has long been viewed as a way of temporarily evading anxiety that unfortunately becomes compounded when later faced (Mayers, 1946; Solomon & Rothblum, 1984). Hence, the effect of procrastination on specific emotions like shame and guilt is not explored.

Ferrari et al. (1995) point out, procrastination involves a significant affective component, as well. Historically, procrastination has had a negative moral connotation and surprisingly, feelings of guilt are sometimes mentioned as a consequence of procrastination. Whereas, Fee and Tangney (2003), found that shame is actually more significant in framework of procrastination,

the reason is the fact that people fail to make a clear division between shame and guilt. Therefore, it is necessary to understand these emotions first and how they can be related to procrastination. However, there are several questions that needs an answer with respect to the situation where an individual's self-critical emotions are affected due to procrastination. For instance, what happens when one procrastinates and gets away with it? Will the negative emotions disappear and if not, which will remain? As in every situation there can be a feeling of guilt which can arguably be more reciprocal or shame which also can be argued to be more about personal shortcomings.

Shame and guilt are similar emotions and can be confused easily but theories and empirical studies indicate that shame and guilt are different emotions (Tangney & Dearing, 2003). They are commonly distinguished where shame focuses on the self while guilt focuses on a specific action. Guilt is arguably more reciprocal and if there are no negative consequences then the person who was procrastinating did not actually let anyone down. Whereas, shame can be argued to be more about personal shortcomings which might evoke a feeling even in light of no consequences. The emotions of shame and guilt had early attempts of differentiation, including the psychoanalytical and anthropological theories (Tangney & Dearing, 2003). Since then it has been studied that the emotions differ on the basis of different situations which elicit them (Lewis, 1971). Shame and guilt are extracted depending on a person's understanding of a particular situation. However, both the emotion guilt and shame are provoked with a realization where one doesn't match one's own or others' expectation (Baumeister, Reis & Delespaul, 1995).

Over the years, it has believed that shame and guilt can be found, in one form or other, in both psychological and popular literature. However, recent evidences show that shame and guilt depend on the range of situation (Tangney, 1992). Feelings of shame and guilt can be responsible for a 'personal shortfall', connected to person's own worth, goals and key aspects of life (Baumeister et al., 1995; Conroy & Elliot, 2004; McGregor & Elliot, 2005; Thompson, Dinnel, & Dill, 2003). It can be said that there is different individual tendency to experience shame and guilt. For example, a person can be particular about a situation resulting is particular wrongdoings that is ascribed to an oversight, delaying of work or forgetfulness, these inadequacies can result in guilt to some people, or result in personal fault resulting in shame (). The distinction between the two feeling may look indirect, but, the different focus of self-criticism in any case is linked to experience of shame and guilt (). It is assumed to be associated to moral and interpersonal wrongdoings. Test of self-conscious affect (TOSCA), in a past decade it has been a drastic increase in empirical studies of shame and guilt, in large part due to recent development of a number of new measures. However, there are various approaches developed for measuring shame and guilt. In this research the one used is TOSCA-the most recent version of measuring shame proneness and guilt proneness in specific situations.

Lewis (1971) also proposed that shame involves a negative judgement of the whole self while guilt involves a negative judgement of one's act. Quite a number of studies have been conducted on the nature of the shame and guilt experiences, and as a conclusion it can be said that shame and guilt differ not so much in the context of a situation where people construe self-relevant negative events. Subsequently, shame arises from public exposure of some failure or transgression whereas guilt arises from the more private pangs of one's internalized conscience. Shame is usually explained as unhappy-based negative experience where the person feeling shame sights personal transgression or let-downs as collectively flawed self. (Ferguson & Crowley, 1997a; Lindsay-Hartz, 1984; Tangney, 1992). Guilt on the other hand, is an altogether different experience inclusive of tension and distress. With the feeling of guilt, the

subsequent sense of accountability incites self-criticism, stimulating feelings like regret and remorse (Baumeister, Stillwell, & Heatherton, 1994; Lindsay-Hartz, 1984; Tangney, 1991).

The early literature of shame and guilt focused on their association with interpersonal wrongdoings, but more recent studies show the consequences of shame and guilt as emotions linked with different situations. While some are influenced to experience shame with respect to a given outcome, others are more likely to experience guilt (). There is a widespread research about the negative effect of shame and guilt in achievement situation. For instance, Perun, Elliot and Maier (2006) have explored an association between performance-avoidance goal orientation and negative evaluation. Against the backdrop of these negative traits, shame is more likely to be categorized as a negative evolution where the person tends to put the blame on other to protect themselves from self-criticism Tangney, Wagner, Gramzow, & Fletcher, 1992). In contrast, guilt is independent as the feeling of negative evaluation are confined to his or her behaviour. (Tangney et al., 1995).

To date, most of the theory and research on procrastination has focused on cognitive and behavioural constructs. The researches in past focused on the personal contravention related to shame and guilt, but the advances and more recent studies (Thompson, sharp, alexander, 2008)) shows that shame and guilt are more associated with moral consequences. Feeling of guilt is characterized as a negative consequence of one's wrongdoing. It is more likely to be guilty in goal-oriented situation where the person invests to achieve something. However, it has been noticed that (Pekrun, Elliot & Maier,2006), situations resulting in emotions like shame and guilt has more negative effect as it is more allied with achieving goals. McGregor and Elliot (2005), examined that shame is an essential emotion while experiencing fear of failure and whereas feeling of guilt has an insignificant relationship with fear of failure. Additionally, shame is associated with the achievement process, that is shame can be influenced by the characteristics of achievement making the person more vulnerable to failure (). Shame and guilt are supplementary to interpersonal achievements, these feelings tend to set high bars resulting in self-criticism and overgeneralization of negative evaluation. Woien et al. (2003), discovered that situational experience of guilt is linked to the behavioural change, also that guilt is an indicator of self-criticism.

Although theoretical accounts of procrastination frequently make reference to procrastination-related guilt (e.g., Burka & Yuen, 1983; Ferrari, 1991b; Ferrari & Beck, 1998), it can be expected that feelings of shame may be more relevant to the phenomena of procrastination than feelings of guilt. Although people may have experiences of guilt over specific act or while procrastinate in particular situation for instance feelings of regret, remorse or being annoyed at own self, hurting own conscious or getting angry over not having finished a particular task. The tendency to procrastinate over some motives may be more linked to feeling of shame for instance, feelings of being embarrassed or exposed. As discussed earlier, people often procrastinate because they fear the possibility to fail or any negative evaluation (Burka & Yuen, 1983). However, people engage in frequent or habitual patterns of procrastination that might be self-defeating in long-run, in order to avoid shame and guilt experiences in short-run. For example, Tangney (1993) conducted a study with 65 adults where participants were asked to describe personal shame and guilt experience. It was concluded that shame experienced more painful and participants experienced loss of control over the situation. In every day's common language and even in psychology, the terms shame and guilt are confused easily. The terms are commonly used inaccurately or rather indistinctly when individuals are asked to describe specific incidents stimulating shame and-guilt. (Tangney, 1993; Tangney, Miller, Flicker &

Barlow, 1996).

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