

Life Values as Predictors of Youth Procrastination in the Conditions of Globalization

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Abstract

Procrastination as a voluntary, irrational postponement of the planned actions despite the fact that it will cost a lot or will have a negative effect on a person, became the disease of our times (Milgram, 1992). In spite of the fact that procrastination becomes a more serious problem in business, as in well as in the academic environment, its reasons and mechanisms are not clear. This study is aimed at revealing whether the tendency of procrastination is associated with personal life values. For the diagnostics of procrastination the General Procrastination Scale (Lay, 1986) adapted by Ya.I. Varvaricheva (Varvaricheva, 2010) on the Russian sample was used. Life values were analyzed using adapted Sch. Schwartz's questionnaire PVQ-R (Schwartz, etc., 2012). The results (N=200) show that students with high level of procrastination have less values of self-direction, power, achievement and security. They less tend to dominate over other people, they are less ambitious, less strive for personal success, they seek less to ensure safety for themselves and stability for society, as well as it is less important for them to think and make decisions independently. At the same time, procrastinators show more value of stimulation, attaching more significance to getting new impressions and emotions in life. Moreover, the values of security and self-direction affect the distribution of students in groups with various levels of procrastination. Thus, the reduced value of security and self-direction becomes the cornerstone of procrastination. The results are discussed in the context of globalization.

Keywords: Procrastination, Life values, Youth, Globalization, Security, Self-direction, Hedonism.

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1. Introduction

Procrastination as a voluntary, irrational postponement of the planned actions despite the fact that it will cost a lot or will have a negative effect on a person became the disease of our times (Milgram, 1992).

In spite of the fact that procrastination becomes a more serious problem in business, as in well as in the academic environment, its reasons and mechanisms are not clear. To fill this gap this study is aimed at revealing whether the tendency of procrastination is associated with personal life values.

This particular research is topical because there are evidence that the globalization process increase the tendency of procrastination. Being in a flow of information, accelerating events, young people cannot manage rationally their time for the important issues, putting them away for later.

The identification of valuable predictors of procrastination will allow developing approaches to the correction of the negative effects of this phenomenon.

At the beginning of the paper the theoretical review on procrastination and the related phenomena is represented, further the research methods and the sample are described, then the results of the comparative and discriminant analysis of life values of students with various levels of procrastination are given. In conclusion the results are summed up and discussed, practical recommendations are offered.

2. Theoretical framework

The first scientific studies of procrastination were based on clinical observations (Ellis & Knaus, 1977), (Burka & Yuen, 1983), but a wide range of modern studies confirms the presence of signs of procrastination in mentally healthy people. N.A. Milgram calls procrastination the disease of our times (Milgram, 1992) showing that it is based on the principles and conditions of the modern society. This disease (a habit of putting various matters away “for later”) affects, according to different data, from 20% (Harriott & Ferrari, 1996), (Hammer & Ferrari, 2002), (Ferrari, O’Callaghan, & Newbegin, 2005) to 95% of adults in the countries of the West (Steel, 2007). Whereupon, both male and female are subject to procrastination (Ferrari & Pychyl, 2000), (Schowuenburg & Lay, 2004).

Russian scientists (Kovylin, 2013; Dorodeyko, 2013; Varvaricheva, 2010; Shukhova, 1996) emphasize the emotional component of procrastination. They suggest that procrastination is an expression of emotional reaction to planned or necessary matters (tension associated with general overload, loss of sense of time; dissatisfaction with one’s own achievements, unclear life goals; indecisiveness and self-doubt). This understanding is close to the view on procrastination as an emotional disorder, the roots of which lie in irrational thinking (Ellis & Knaus, 1977).

There are facts confirming the relationship between procrastination and perfectionism (Ferrari, Johnson, & McCown, 1995); the latter in turn is based on the fear of success or failure, provoking neurotic reactions to various situations arising in life (Effert & Ferrari, 1989).

Another approach to this phenomenon is related to the consideration of procrastination as a result of cognitive impairments (Ellis & Knaus, 1977), for example, difficulties in perception and adequate time evaluation (Aitken, 1982). Self-deception is considered as a cognitive factor of procrastination (Ferrari & Tice, 2000), (Lay, Knish, & Zanatta, 1992).

On the other hand, the difficulties in perception and time evaluation could be the consequences of low value of time and self – direction. This point should be studied deeper, because there are some related facts in the literature. In a number of studies, the associations between procrastination, motivational and volitional phenomena is identified: low self-control of behavior leading to difficulties in motivational sphere, organizational activity (Briordy, 1980), autonomous motivation (Katz, Eilot, & Nevo, 2014), self-determined motivation, self-esteem, and degree of maximization. (Osiurak et al., 2015).

In world science, there are attempts to identify the determinants of procrastination. Both external factors - difficult, subjectively uninteresting, insignificant, short tasks (Solomon & Rothblum, 1984), (McCownand & Johnson, 1991), (Steel, 2007), and internal ones - increased responsibility and tension (Ferrari & Pychyl, 2000), anxiety (Solomon & Rothblum, 1984), involvement in the flow (Lee, 2005), low level of self-identity (Shanahan & Pychyl, 2007), have been determined.

We would like to look at procrastination as a process that influenced by some particularities of motivation and values, first of all. The theoretical analysis (Briordy, 1980; Katz, Eilot, & Nevo, 2014; Osiurak et al., 2015) allow us to formulate two hypotheses.

H1: There are significant differences in some life values between Russian students with high and low levels of procrastination.

H2: There are life values that can predict procrastination.

3. Methods and sample

The students getting bachelor, specialist and master degrees at various faculties (law, economics, information technologies, management, journalism, oriental studies) of the regional Russian university took part in the study. The sample included 200 people (41 male, 159 female) at the ages from 18 to 23.

The General Procrastination Scale (Lay, 1986) adapted by Ya. I. Varvaricheva (Varvaricheva, 2010) on the Russian sample was used for the diagnostics. This technique is designed to determine the level of procrastination in everyday life, and consists of 18 statements, estimated on a 5-point scale from 1 – “completely incorrect” to 5 – “absolutely correct”.

Life values were analyzed using adapted Sch. Schwartz's questionnaire PVQ-R (Schwartz, etc., 2012). it provides an opportunity to diagnose 10 basic values identified in the original concept, thus making a comparison with previous studies.

In the concept of personal values of Sh. Schwartz and W. Bilski (1987) personal values are considered as the types of motivational goals. In the method of studying

personal values Sh. Schwartz identified ten motivationally different types of values, which include the following:

1. Power as the desire for social status or prestige, domination over people and resources.
2. Achievement as personal success through competence demonstration according to social standards, success and ambitiousness.
3. Hedonism as pleasure or sensual pleasure, satisfaction of biological needs and then pleasure experienced.
4. Stimulation as the desire for novelty and deep feelings.
5. Self-direction as independence of thinking and action decision in creativity and research activity.
6. Universalism as understanding, tolerance and protection of well-being of all people and nature.
7. Benevolence as preservation and improvement of well-being of close people who the individual is in personal contact with: utility, loyalty, condescension, honesty, responsibility, friendship, mature love.
8. Tradition as respect, acceptance of customs and ideas that exist in the culture and following them.
9. Conformity as control and prevention of actions, as well as propensities and motivations to actions that may harm others or do not meet social expectations: obedience, self-discipline, politeness, respect for parents and elders.
10. Security as safety for other people and oneself, harmony, stability of society and relationships. It is based on the need for adaptability and predictability of the world, reducing uncertainty.

The processing of the obtained data was carried out using the SPSS statistics package. Such methods of mathematical statistics as descriptive statistics, Kruskal-Wallis H-criterion, and discriminant analysis were used.

4. Results

To reveal the features of the life values in subjects prone to procrastination, a diagnostics of general procrastination was carried out at the first stage of the study, the results of which are presented in Figure 1 and Table 1.

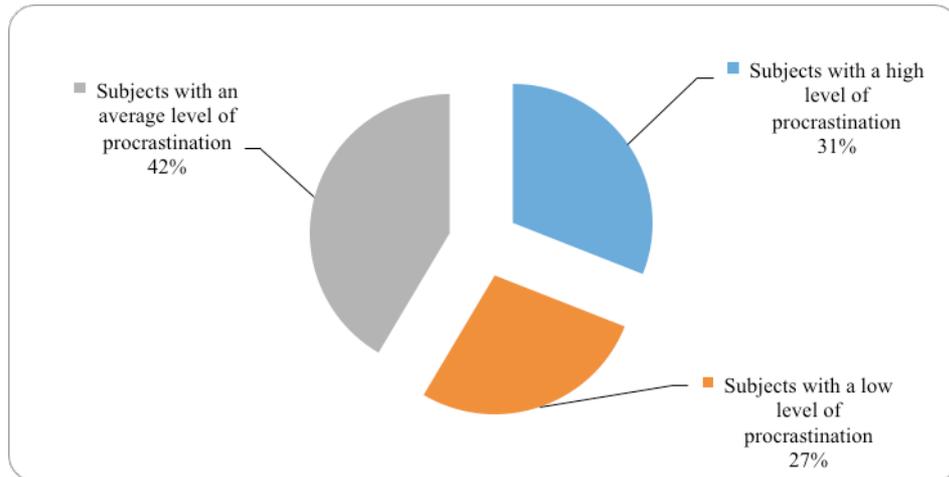


Figure. 1: Division of subjects into groups according to the general procrastination rate.

Figure 1 shows the results of division of the subjects into groups according to the general procrastination rate. A group of subjects with a high level to procrastination included 62 people (31% of the total sample). These are people who show a high tendency to permanently postpone even important and urgent matters, which leads them to life problems and painful psychological effects. In the diagram, the test subjects who are in the group with a low level of procrastination are highlighted in red, 55 in all (27% of the total sample). These are people who prefer not to postpone matters for later. The most numerous group highlighted in grey is the subjects with an average level of procrastination - 83 people (42% of the total sample).

Table 1 presents the rates of descriptive statistics of the level of procrastination in the groups described above.

Table 1: Descriptive statistics of procrastination

Group	M	SD
With a high level of procrastination	64,7	5,22
With a low level of procrastination	38,2	5,51
With an average level of procrastination	52,2	4,1

At the next stage the hierarchy of life values of students with various levels of procrastination was revealed (tables 2-4).

Table 2: Descriptive statistics of life values of students with high level of procrastination

Indicators	Mean	Standard deviation	Dispersion
hedonism	2,6484	1,10093	1,212
self-direction	2,4613	0,80752	0,652
benevolence	2,3419	0,85752	0,735
universalism	2,2919	0,80517	0,648
stimulation	2,2185	0,87451	0,765
achievement	2,0589	1,03121	1,063
conformity	1,79435	0,611576	0,374
security	1,6887	0,96583	0,933
power	1,3613	1,08497	1,177
tradition	1,1347	0,89679	0,804

Table 3: Descriptive statistics of life values of students with low level of procrastination

Indicators	Mean	Standard deviation	Dispersion
self-direction	2,9636	0,73033	0,533
achievement	2,5955	0,89945	0,809
hedonism	2,5236	0,96378	0,929
stimulation	2,5109	0,78402	0,615
benevolence	2,3955	0,93997	0,884
universalism	2,3909	0,79937	0,639
security	2,3273	0,65361	0,427
conformity	2,04091	0,729288	0,532
power	1,7982	0,98967	0,979
tradition	1,0309	0,99710	0,994

Table 4: Descriptive statistics of life values of students with average level of procrastination

Indicators	Mean	Standard deviation	Dispersion
self-direction	2,6795	0,74166	0,550
benevolence	2,5127	0,70921	0,503
hedonism	2,4446	0,99477	0,990
universalism	2,3843	0,68458	0,469
stimulation	2,2506	0,86622	0,750
achievement	2,2187	0,87853	0,772
security	2,1530	0,87155	0,760
conformity	2,00904	0,783252	0,613
power	1,5084	1,04335	1,089
tradition	1,3572	0,85896	0,738

In general, the analysis of mean scores of life values in three groups shows the lower scores of values by all types at students with the high level of procrastination. This

fact can be interpreted as a lower involvement of students – procrastinators in various types of activities, a lower level of their motivation and interest in anything.

As it can be clearly seen from the tables, the hierarchy of life values of students – procrastinators differs from structure of life values of the students who are not inclined to procrastination. Students – procrastinators put a hedonism value (the aspiration to derive sensual pleasure here and now, a present pleasure priority to the detriment of future achievements) on the first place of the importance. For comparison, at students with the low level of procrastination the value of hedonism is in the third place.

The students who are not inclined to procrastination put self-direction (aspiration to independence in thinking and behavior) on the first place in the system of values. At this group of students the value of achievements (aspiration to personal success) is in the second place while procrastinators put it to the sixth place from ten.

In order to reveal the particularities of life values of students with different levels of procrastination, a comparative analysis was carried out using the Kruskal-Wallis H-test (see Table 5).

Table 5: Results of a comparative analysis of time perspective in the subjects with different levels of procrastination

Characteristics	M			p
	Group with a high level of procrastination	Group with a low level of procrastination	Group with an average level of procrastination	
Conformity	88,67	107,42	104,75	0,144
Tradition	96,71	91,20	109,49	0,156
Benevolence	94,95	98,51	105,96	0,501
Universalism	94,31	104,44	102,52	0,585
<i>Self-direction</i>	<i>84,14</i>	<i>120,56</i>	<i>99,43</i>	<i>0,003</i>
Stimulation	94,40	113,88	96,19	0,125
Hedonism	110,24	100,22	93,41	0,220
<i>Achievement</i>	<i>88,15</i>	<i>119,02</i>	<i>97,45</i>	<i>0,013</i>
<i>Power</i>	<i>90,85</i>	<i>114,73</i>	<i>98,28</i>	<i>0,074</i>
<i>Security</i>	<i>74,99</i>	<i>119,18</i>	<i>107,17</i>	<i>0,000</i>

The results of the comparison show that at students with the high level of procrastination such values as self-direction, power, achievements and security are less expressed. They less seek to dominate over other people, to control resources, they are less ambitious, personal success is less significant for them. They less seek to ensure safety and stability for themselves and societies in general. Additionally, it is not so important for them to think and make decisions independently.

At the same time students – procrastinators show higher level of stimulation value (as a tendency) that allows to assume that it is more important for them to receive new impressions and emotions. This particular aspiration as well as a lack of self-discipline can distract procrastinators from the main goal.

Differences in life values of students with different levels of procrastination have suggested that the parameters of a person's motives and goals can act as predictors of procrastination. To test second hypothesis, a discriminant analysis was conducted, where independent variables are indicators of life values, and the dependent variable is procrastination. The results of the discriminant analysis are presented in Table 6.

Table 6: Results of discriminant analysis

Steps	Wilk's lambda	F	p
1 Security	0,915	9,134	0.001
2 Self-direction	0,881	6,437	0.001

The results of discriminant analysis (step-by-step method) made it possible to distinguish three factors that reliably determine the subjects' belonging to different groups according to the level of procrastination – value of security and value of self-direction. Thus, it was revealed that the reduced value of security and self-direction is the cornerstone of procrastination at students. The lack of care of safety for themselves and other people, carelessness, and a lack of aspiration to show independence in thinking and behavior promotes a habit to put important issues away for the later.

5. Discussion and conclusions

The study highlights the valuable basis of procrastination.

Firstly, the results show that procrastination at youth arises owing to decrease in interest in various aspects of life. Secondly, the most important value of procrastinator is the hedonism – the aspiration to derive pleasure here and now not thinking about the future. Thirdly, the brightest valuable predictors of procrastination are the low level of security and self-direction. Procrastinators have no fear of responsibility, no aspiration to stability, and no aspirations to independent thinking and behavior.

Study results can be considered in the context of globalization that defines stereotypes and patterns of behavior of the youth, promoting growth of procrastination. One of signs of the behavior of students with high level of procrastination is their orientation to receiving instant satisfaction, to the detriment of future achievements. This trend can be considered as sign of modern global society in which values of comfort and pleasure dominate.

Overall, the research hypotheses were confirmed. The results obtained offer new perspectives in practical application, in particular in correction of procrastination at students. It is recommended to define the students inclined to procrastination at the very beginning of training, and to apply the individual strategy of training to them. For example, the university staff can develop the optimum level of educational anxiety at them, speaking about the consequences of untimely delivery of tasks. It is also useful to develop skills of independence, self-discipline, and critical thinking at students. In fact, to avoid procrastination at student's age, it is necessary to form values of self-determination and safety at children from the earlier age.

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