

PROCRASTINATION VERSUS PLANNED PROCRASTINATION – A STUDY REPORT

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of writing this paper is to examine and analyze procrastination from different perspectives. Procrastination is generally synonymous of delay. There are several reasons of procrastination and, consequently there is an impact of procrastination on our overall task, aptitude and attitude of doing a task. Sometimes, procrastination can be an arrangement to get a task done in the most perfect manner. It has been found, if procrastination is planned, premeditated or structured, then it yields better and constructive result. A noteworthy change can be perceived in the quality of work. In order to scrutinize and differentiate procrastination from planned and structured procrastination, primary research was conducted. 100 students were given a questionnaire to make their response. Questions were prudently drafted, so that procrastination can be segregated from planned and structured procrastination on the basis of the responses. Mixed Research Methodology has been used to write this paper. The paper is an earnest endeavour to explain, analyze procrastination and to show how it is different from planned and structured procrastination.

KEYWORDS: Procrastination, Structured Procrastination, Planned Procrastination, Time Management, Self-Efficacy

INTRODUCTION

Every individual has his or her own way of doing certain tasks and obtain results accordingly. Not everyone could be the same, so as a matter of fact the approach and willingness to perceive the situations differs from person to person. Procrastination is somewhere and somehow present in everyone. Be it a student, a working individual, a homemaker, young and old everyone has a natural tendency to procrastinate. The degree of procrastination may differ from person to person. What is procrastination? Why do we procrastinate? Is procrastination always bad? Is procrastination having anything good in it? How to overcome procrastination? There are many questions related to procrastination, but the first and the foremost thing to understand is procrastination and its impact on individuals. Procrastination is an inclination, a disposition which detracts any task and leads to its postponement for an indefinite period of time. The most astounding fact is that there is no tangible reason of procrastination in its initial phase. It can be an instantaneous reaction of an individual, when he or she receives a particular task. An individual needs to ensure the reasons of procrastination and its impact on his life. Generally, procrastination is apparently perceived when we delay our task for several reasons. According to Steel (2007), procrastination is a form of self-regulatory failure, which is dominant and dangerous in nature and that is not understood entirely. As Akerlof (1991) discusses about the procrastination that what led people to procrastinate is the perception of the importance of the future over the present. During that process people ignore the fact that whatever they are postponing for tomorrow will be further postponed when that tomorrow will come.

Procrastination affects everyone, but plays a major role in students' life. It is perennial and recurring in nature and most commonly persists in the college students. The effects of procrastination are imperial and apparent. It not only affects one's attitude, but also mars his aptitude. It is due to consistent procrastination there is a constant decline in students' grades as well. Students procrastinate in completing their task and delay it to an extent that they fail to submit their work sometimes. 95 to 99% students procrastinate and identify themselves as procrastinators (Ellis & Knaus, 1977). There could be many reasons of procrastination and they vary from person to person. According to Xu (2016) secondary students usually procrastinate as they are usually given with long projects and assignment and they are unable to use their time wisely to finish their tasks and delay it for the future and start working on the task when the deadline is near. On the different side some people favor procrastination and justify this practice. They make a point that it doesn't matter if the project takes longer to be completed if one has put the same amount of the work on it (Tice, 1997).

The present study is conducted to identify the negative and positive impacts of procrastination on different individuals, and to analyze how procrastination is different from planned and structured procrastination

LITERATURE REVIEW

A significant amount of research has been done on procrastination from different perspectives. Many researchers touched this topic from different angles. Kandemir and Palanci (2014) suggest that the procrastination is not negative always and can be taken as functional procrastination. Functional procrastination is considered as the acceptable behavior which could lead to success at work. Procrastination behavior is common among students, but not researched well due to the lack of a scale so they develop a scale to assess the functional procrastination behavior of the students. Karmen, Kinga, Edit, Susana, Kinga and Reka (2015) focused on how the attitude towards procrastination, academic performance and school is different among the traditional students and students who out distance learning education... 162 students participated and completed questionnaires as a result, he found that the students from traditional and distance learning demonstrate the lower level of academic result when they procrastinate and there are some similarity and association in a few aspects of academic attitude and procrastination of the students.

There are different effects of procrastination on different people. Yazici and Bulut (2015) explored through their study that academic procrastination of the teachers and multi-dimensional perfectionist personality traits are related to each other. Veresova (2013) focused how the procrastination is related to the personal features shown by behavior, which is characterized by delaying the tasks, with the stress and the strategies to cope up with stress.

Khan, Arif, Noor and Munner (2014) focused their investigation on academic procrastination among the university and college students. They conducted their study on male and female students, as a result, they found many differences in terms of their age, demographic factors, education, but the important difference was found among the male and female students on academic procrastination. Balkis (2013) examines the role of rational belief in context of procrastination in academics, academic life satisfaction and academic accomplishment. The result of his study maintained the theory that RBS plays a moderator part in the effect of academic postponement on academic life contentment and success.

Kart, Eilot and Nevo (2014) through their study try to explore the role of motivation between procrastination and self-efficacy. After conducting questionnaire on the students of the 5th grade on motivation they require for homework, to

which extend they delay and their self-efficiency towards homework. As per the result of the study, procrastination cannot be diminished by addressing students' self-efficiency, but the students should be motivated more and sufficiently.

If we focus on Academic Procrastination, it can be understood as delaying or postponing assignments and tasks which are given to students. 70% - 95% students procrastinated on their assignment Ferrari (2001) announced in a study Academic Procrastination can lead to various problems in the life of students. If academic procrastination is for short duration or occasional, it does not require any serious concern, but if it is continued for a long time, then it may result to various problems like nervousness, depression and stress.

Procrastination is a kind of behaviour which is common in human nature. It has its positive and negative impact on different aspects of life. According to Mortazavi, Mortazavi, and Khosrorad (2015) procrastination can be understood as deliberate, habitual, intentional and unwanted delay when someone begins or ends a task. This turns out to be one of the obstacles in attaining a goal for an individual. Mostly people procrastinate occasionally, but some people do it as a habit which may create serious problems.

Mortazavi, Mortazavi, and Khosrorad (2015), tried to find out the problems and underlying causes of procrastination in his study. Their aim was to translate and validate PASS (Procrastination assessment scale-student) into Farsi to assess procrastination in Iranian students. The study was conducted on 423 students of medical sciences. The result indicated that the Farsi version of the PASS was a consistent and valid mechanism for evaluating academic procrastination in Iranian undergraduate medical students.

Gustavson, Miyake, Hewitt and Friedman (2014) threw light on the positive and moderate connection between postponement and impulsivity. The result showed a positive association because, procrastination leads to impulsive responding when it is close to deadlines.

Przepiorka, Blachnio and Diaz-Morales, (2016) did a study to understand the psychometric properties of the procrastination, decisional procrastination and adult procrastination in both undergraduate and adult Polish population. It was done on 390 students and 513 adults. The result showed that the students procrastinate more than the adults. The adult people deal with more responsibilities related to their families and their jobs. The working women perform different roles in their professional and personal lives. They have to accomplish their task on time and they cannot procrastinate in doing so.

Xu (2016) focused on the measures to reduce or prevent academic procrastination among the students. The three – tier anti – procrastination (T-TAP) model is used in this study. The result stated the T-TAP model supported students with a large assistance to reduce procrastination and increase self-regulation skills.

Procrastination as a Tendency of Delaying a Task/ Negative Impacts of Procrastination

Procrastination is widely drawing attention of scholars and researchers of different sections of society. In the academic sphere as well, it has been focused largely. Procrastination can be defined as a habit of delaying or postponing any work or action for an uncertain period of time, which is prevalent in every human being. The effect of Procrastination can be seen differently on different individuals. It's not necessary to coin this word only with the negative effects. It can be resulted fruitful and meaningful for certain individuals. It is essential to distinguish the effects of procrastination on different individuals, which can be analyzed on the basis of the degree and nature of Procrastination and its outcome.

However, the fact cannot be denied that procrastination has very serious negative effects on students, if it is habitual and prolonged. The academic period can be seen as preparation for life for the students as it inculcates discipline, enhances focus, prepare to face various challenges, unable to accomplish several tasks within the deadlines, develop multitasking attitude. The students require dedication and utmost discipline to accomplish their studies. According to Mortazavi, Mortazavi, Khosrorad (2015), academic procrastination indicates delaying assignments and tasks may lead to serious problems. Procrastination is not harmful if it is done occasionally, and it gives a sense of pleasure and relaxation, but if it is forming a habit and prolonged than it can reflect several negative consequences as depression and stress.

Academic procrastination may result in poor academic performance and that can lead to lack of confidence, lower self-esteem, and sense of guilt among the students who procrastinate. This can directly affect their mental and physical health. According to Ferrari (2001), procrastinator experiences more anxiety and stress in completing the time bound activities. Xu (2016) threw light in her studies that students who procrastinate can have adverse effects on their health as they don't utilize their time from the beginning and rush their work under stress and high pressure at the last minute which may lead to poor sleep and unhealthy diets. They experience great stress and anxiety. On the other hand, those students who don't procrastinate face less stress and tension in submitting their assignment. According to Solomon & Rothblum, (1984) procrastination results in lower grades and poor performance, which cause poor self-esteem, stress, lack of confidence, irrational behaviour and fear of failure among the students.

According to Ferrari (2001), procrastinator cannot perform under pressure; instead they show considerable failure in their performance. Procrastination, if it is extended for a prolonged period it can show the damaging effects on family life, financial matters, job responsibilities, health issues, etc. Academic Procrastination can develop an attitude which may bring failure in every sphere of life. More importantly due to academic procrastination students lose their precious time and simultaneously they miss out the many opportunities of learning. Time factor is very relevant during the academic period. All assignments and tasks are time bound. Procrastinators waste their time in delaying and deprived of many opportunities of learning. They cannot utilize optimal time and opportunities in giving period. If they don't meet their deadlines to submit their assignments and projects basically they show their incapability to meet their goals. This attitude brings multi challenges for them to face. They are incapable to compete with other students in class. Somewhere they feel themselves a failure, feel enormous pressure and stress, feel guilt and suffer with depression and anxiety. Sometimes, it may lead them to do misconduct and wrongful activities.

It is a serious problem if it turns out as a habit and consistent in nature. It can create decision making difficulties, and it can lower the self-esteem and the credibility of the students. It may affect their career and future prospects. It can adversely affect their quality of life. Balkis(2013) also mentioned in his paper that academic procrastination which results failure in academic life may largely impact on later life satisfaction and achievements. Due to all negative emotions such as anxiety, frustration and stress, students are deprived from the pleasant moments of their educational life. The negative results of academic postponement may determine the quality of life of students. The negative emotions and feelings which they experience in their academic life due to procrastination can ruin the peace and happiness. In the different spheres of life they are not confident to accomplish their task positively, as they constantly deal with the fear of failure, disappointment and frustration.

Hence, it is necessary to understand the harmful or negative effects of procrastination on the students and accordingly, measures should be taken to spread awareness about it among the students. Academic procrastination

damages the life of students in numerous ways. It not only impacts their mental health due to stress and anxiety, but their physical health is also destroyed to a greater extent. It brings down the morale of the students, which may create considerable a pattern of failure. They face problems in their social life as well, they find difficult to mingle with their friends. They are afraid of being mocked and humiliated. They don't share their feelings with their family and relatives. Procrastination is a serious problem which should be discussed openly with the students, who are habitual of procrastination in their academic life. This problem can largely be solved by changing the attitude and behaviour towards their work.

Planned or Structured Procrastination/ Positive Impacts of Procrastination

The aim of writing this paper is to study and analyze procrastination from different perspectives. Procrastination is generally synonymous of delay. There are various reasons of procrastination. According to Sahoo (2013) the laziness is not the only reason, but procrastination is caused by many reasons like childhood upbringing, educational background, the need for perfection and self-esteem. According to Kandemir & Palanci (2014) procrastination is not always wrong to interpret there can be functional procrastinations as well. Functional procrastination leads to acceptable behaviour which increases success at work. According to Ferrari (1994) people procrastinate to increase their performance. He depicts that intentional procrastination could be a strategy for the person to motivate himself and can make the best of his work. Sometimes procrastination is an arrangement to get a task done in the most perfect manner. As Ferrari (1994) defined functional procrastination is acceptable procrastination when this increases the probability of success of the work. Planned procrastination increases efficiency and productivity of an undertaken work. An individual, who puts off a certain task for some time is constantly engaged in some other task and in that process his mind is perpetually exploring some novel ways to get his desired task done. Managed delay thus provides an aid to carry out a task in a distinctive way.

As Yazici and Bulut (2015) evaluate the relationship between the academic procrastination and perfectionist personality traits. One of the reasons is that people like attention perfect results; they strive to look whether they have met the standards or not and in this process they fail to manage time, which leads to academic procrastination behaviour. Although this may be taken as poor time management, but the motive is to get the perfection in the work. If procrastination is planned and structured it yields better and positive result, and a phenomenal change can be noticed in the quality of work. As Brownlow & Reasinger (2000) refers procrastination a motivational tool for the students.

As Chu & Choi (2005) anticipated that procrastination behaviours of all types are not harmful and result in the adverse outcomes. They differentiate between the two kinds of procrastinators: Passive procrastinators and Active procrastinators. When someone intentionally decides to procrastinate and capable of completing the task before deadlines and achieve acceptable results considered as an active procrastinator (Choi & Moran, 2009). On the contrary, a traditional procrastinator is the one, who keeps on delaying the task until the last moment and feels guilty about it and more likely to fail to complete tasks is called passive procrastinator. We procrastinate something which does not uplift our enthusiasm or elevate our spirit or zeal of doing a particular task at a particular time. On the contrary, when we procrastinate a task which otherwise fascinates us then the purpose of procrastination gets changed. It's not delay, but enhancing the quality of work which becomes the cause of procrastination. This type of consented procrastination can be proved prolific in the completion of a focused assignment. According to Chu & Choi (2005) the active procrastinators like to work under pressure and make thoughtful decisions to delay. Active and passive procrastinators are different to each other in their relationship with avoidance goal.

As long as we know how to accommodate this delay, we should not feel guilty of procrastination. Delay or interval should be methodically managed. This type of procrastination with a reason can also be called “productive procrastination,” which is used by Piers Steel. Steel (2010) reveals that procrastination can be compressed, but it is not possible to defeat it completely. According to Seo (2013), active procrastinators might be different from that of the passive procrastinators in motivation. Corkin, Shirley, Yu and Lindt (2011) proposed that active procrastination is not actually procrastination; it is a purposeful delay and so on. They did not use the term active procrastination; instead they used the term active delay. Seo (2013) suggested that this is important to understand that active procrastination is completely different from the traditional procrastination which is passive procrastination. Controlled and organized procrastination provides ample time to make better decisions, which otherwise would have made in haste. It has been observed that not all procrastination is bad. The reason for procrastination needs to be found out. Putting a task off cannot be a sufficient reason for procrastination. If there is a rational reason of holding a particular task, then that delay can be justified.

There have been many eminent people belonging to all spheres of life, who procrastinated while crafting their masterpiece. According to Perry (2010) those who procrastinate have something to be great thinkers, if something which seems difficult or hard to do procrastinating may lead to inventing in a better way. Leonardo Da Vinci spent sixteen years in finishing his masterpiece painting of Mona Lisa to satisfy his aesthetic quest. Herman Melville, the great writer of *Moby Dick* took many years to complete his *Magnum Opus*.

While performing an action or doing a strenuous task, time plays a vital and pivotal role. Those who know when to pause and ponder and, when to start and execute an action, actually make a difference. One needs to rely on his skill of managing time. Procrastination can be a strategic technique of time management, if the goal of the task is clear in an individual’s mind. Sometimes giving pauses during the task can be of enormous help. Structured or premeditated procrastination can be helpful in many ways to accomplish a particular task. Partnoy (2012) evaluates that still people don’t realize and understand the role of time and the delay has in the decision making, and why people continue to make the timing error either to react to fast or too slow. He continues to say that at times, delay alone can be responsible in turning a good decision into bad one or vice versa. Sometimes, it’s good to trust the guts and respond instantly, but at times, postponing action and decisions to analyze and plan are not bad options.

The reasons of procrastination vary from person to person. Athulya, Sudhir and Philip (2016) state that there are various factors which affect the task delay and perfectionism is one of the factors. Some people procrastinate to critically assess their work. At the process of procrastination they explicitly look for the shortcomings and weaknesses of their task. This delay gives them ample time to re-evaluate their own piece of work. At Yazici and Bulut (2015) work if the students have set the high standards for them to attain this may lead to academic procrastination. The urge of perfection or excellence can be the pillar reasons of this kind of procrastination. Some people procrastinate to motivate themselves for completing a challenging task. They may use procrastination as a tool to constantly remind them of the task, which they may overlook otherwise. Planned and structured procrastination also helps an individual to prioritize his task.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

In order to see the various reasons and impacts of procrastination a well- planned questionnaire was prepared. 100 students filled the questionnaire. Out of 100 students, 50 students were males and 50 were females. The students were undergraduates. Questions were framed to check the various reasons of procrastination. The purpose of asking those

questions was to collect the different responses of the students to further understand the various reasons of procrastination. The aim of scrutinizing the responses was to analyze and differentiate procrastination from the planned procrastination. To conduct this survey, 100 students from a college of UAE were given a questionnaire. There were three options available for each question. The students had to choose any one option to answer the question. To carry out this Research Paper Mixed Research Methodology was used. Once the questionnaires were completed by the students, the questions were later segregated into two sections named: Procrastination and Planned procrastination. This division of questions helped to understand the different reasons of procrastination clearly and later to understand how procrastination is different from planned procrastination. The aim of this paper is to discuss that procrastination is not always bad and to segregate procrastination from planned procrastination. Sometimes procrastination is a strategic move of time management to accomplish a particular task. The responses can be seen in the Figures given below. Figure 1 shows the responses of Procrastination as a normal tendency of delaying a task. Figure 2 shows the percentage of the overall responses. Figure 3 shows the responses of planned or structured procrastination. Figure 4 shows the overall percentage of all the responses.

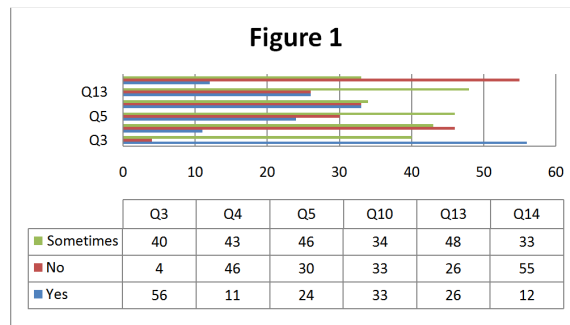


Figure 1: Procrastination as a Tendency of Delaying a Task

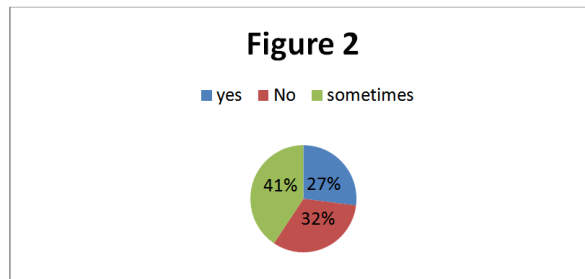


Figure 2: Percentage of the Responses of Figure 1

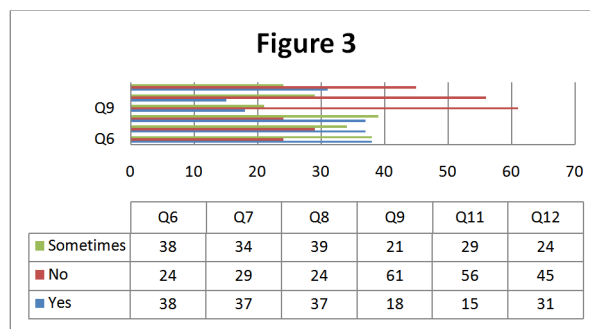


Figure 3: Planned or Structured Procrastination

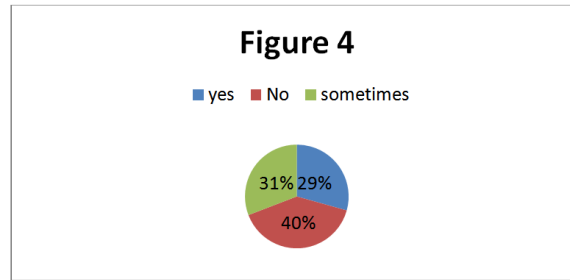


Figure 4: Percentage of the Responses of Figure 3

RESULTS

In order to study procrastination and Planned Procrastination, the analysis of the survey can be divided into two categories: Procrastination and Planned or Structured Procrastination. Figure 1 and 2 shows the percentage of respondents who procrastinate as the tendency to delay any task. Figure 3 and 4 show the percentage of respondents who procrastinate with a reason. Detailed analysis of the survey is discussed below.

Procrastination without Reason: A Delay

Figure 1 and 2 highlight those responses and question numbers which establish that some people procrastinate as a tendency to delay a task. In order to find out different reasons of Procrastination and how it impacts our behaviour or task a detailed questionnaire was prepared. There were specific questions which helped to clearly segregate procrastination from planned procrastination. In Figure 1 those Question numbers which indicated that people procrastinate just to delay a task, have been highlighted. The responses can be seen through the Bar Graph. The respondents were asked questions as: Do they finish their tasks on time? Do they start many tasks at a time and end up finishing nothing? Do they delay their task till the last moment? Do they delay those things they are not very interested in? Do they often lose motivation in the middle of the task? Do they generally give up the tasks they find difficult in doing?

Mixed responses were given by the respondents. There were students who agreed that above mentioned questions are some of the substantial causes of procrastination whereas there were some who refused to agree as they marked No as their response. Some students who answered sometimes may or may not procrastinate only due to the above mentioned reasons, but it is suggested that they also procrastinate some or the other time due to some reasons. If we scrutinize the questions and then see the responses we can infer that there is no specific reason for procrastination. It varies from person to person. It can be said that many times people procrastinate due to a propensity to adjourn a particular task. In some cases, people procrastinate because they don't seek any strong reason to carry out a task. Sometimes people have to relentlessly motivate themselves to accomplish a designated task as they don't find the task appealing. After studying and examining the responses it can be concluded that people procrastinate due to various reasons. Procrastination can be situational; it can be an outcome of less motivating task where people succumb a task without completing it or postponing it till the last moment.

Planned or Structured Procrastination

Figure 3 and 4 highlight the responses of those questions which were inquired to find out how many respondents use procrastination as a technique or in their case it can be termed planned or structured procrastination. The questions which helped to understand that procrastination can be a planned or structured procrastination were: Do you delay your

task in order to bring perfection in it? Do you believe that creative work takes time; hence you are not able to finish it by the given date? Have you ever justified your delay of work? Have you purposely delayed your task? Have you also delayed doing things you are interested in? Do you believe that you work better under pressure?

Although the respondents gave mixed responses, but we can see in (Figure: 4) 29% respondents answered Yes as their response. The response clearly indicates that not all procrastination is bad or just a delay without reason. There are some cases when people may use procrastination as a technique of time management. If we interpret the questions and see the responses of those respondents who chose Yes, as an answer, then we can infer that procrastination can be a planned procrastination as well. People may take a lot of time to carry out a task or may hold a task for some time as they have a specific purpose of doing this in their mind. It can be noticed that any creative or artistic work which requires a lot of precision and tenacity people may procrastinate. In that scenario the reason of procrastination is not lack of motivation or lack of interest. One of the most apparent reasons can be an enhancement and perfection of the task. As we know that perfection or bringing excellence is an on-going process. A lot of perseverance, dedication and devotion are required. During that time, if people procrastinate, then there are possibilities that they are seeking potential alternatives to aid and augment their work. Their mind is on a course of incessant search to bring perfection in their work.

On the basis of survey findings, it can be stated that people not only procrastinate because of delaying a task, but they also procrastinate to add quality in their task.

CONCLUSIONS

Procrastination has been defined and redefined by many psychologists and veterans in the past. Those who studied procrastination also made some or the other interpretations based on their analysis. Some have condemned procrastination as it leads to the postponement of any work or task. There is no obvious reason of this delay except lack of willingness and motivation in doing a particular task. In some cases, procrastination is nothing but an excuse of shifting today's work on tomorrow due to lethargy. On the contrary, in very few cases it is noteworthy that people make a deliberate attempt to procrastinate as they need time to ponder over and look for some superior substitutes to enrich the quality of work. Through this paper, an attempt has been made to delineate procrastination with a constructive approach. After collecting the responses, it can be concluded that it is imperative to discriminate procrastination from planned procrastination. As it has been earlier mentioned that procrastination is a natural tendency. People generally procrastinate, whenever a task is assigned to them. After making a detailed study on procrastination, it was analyzed that not all procrastination is worth criticizing. It has been noticed that some people procrastinate with a purpose in their mind. Their procrastination is not in vain, but it is a way of to enhance the standard and quality of their task. If procrastination has a significant reason than that procrastination can be of some help to add worth in a particular task.

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