

## **Procrastination as the Important Problem in Modern Psychology**

## **Прокрастинація як актуальна проблема сучасної психології**

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### **ABSTRACT**

**The aim** of our research is to show psychological peculiarities of procrastination as the important problem in Modern Psychology, to describe the results of our research of the level of procrastination of teenagers.

**Methods of the research.** The following theoretical methods of the research were used to solve the tasks formulated in the article: a categorical method, structural and functional methods, the methods of the analysis, systematization, modeling, and generalization. The experimental method was the method of organizing empirical research.

**The results of the research.** Respondents with a low level of procrastination are highly organized and efficient in completing tasks. They are usually able to plan their activities with precision and adhere to the planned schedule, which allow them to avoid procrastination and postponing tasks for later. This ability to complete tasks in time is the result of well-developed time management skills, organization, and self-discipline. Pupils with a low level of procrastination are able to tune into completing tasks, even if they require significant effort or diffi-

*culties arise. They can also work effectively under stress, when they are affected by several tasks at once.*

**Conclusions.** *Procrastination, as a multifactorial psychological phenomenon, has come a long way from a simple understanding as laziness to the modern interpretation as a complex psychological process. Its emergence and development are associated with the evolution of views on human behavior, motivation and internal conflicts. From ancient times to the present day, procrastination has been changed in its understanding, and today it is considered not only as a personal flaw, but as a problem that requires special attention and intervention.*

**Key words:** *procrastination, motivation, internal conflicts, laziness, levels of procrastination, difficulties, stress.*

## Introduction

Procrastination is the tendency to postpone important, but usually unpleasant or difficult tasks for later, replacing them with less important or more enjoyable activities (Рудоманенко, 2020). This psychological phenomenon is widespread in modern society and can have serious consequences for the individual, his/her productivity and health. Procrastination is often accompanied by feelings of guilt, anxiety and stress, which, on the one hand, leads to postponing tasks, and on the other hand, to increase internal tension. It can manifest itself in various areas of the person's activity, such as study, work, personal relationships, which negatively affect the general state of a person (Максименко, Ткач, Литвинчук, & Онуфрієва, 2019).

The increasing pace of life in the conditions of information overload and technological progress contributes to the deepening of the problem of procrastination (Greco, Canal, Bambini, & Moro, 2020). Modern people are constantly surrounded by a large amount of information that requires immediate attention, while new technologies and gadgets create additional distractions that only increase the postponement of some more important matters (Hornberger, & Link, 2012). People begin to feel that they do not have time to complete all the necessary tasks, and therefore gradually spend time on less significant things

that give them instant gratification or simplify the process of execution (Ivashkevych Er., & Komarnitska, 2020).

One of the main reasons for procrastination is the fear of failure or low self-esteem. A person who doubts his/her abilities or considers a task too difficult may deliberately avoid completing it (Huang, Loerts, & Steinkrauss, 2022). This becomes a kind of protective reactions that allow the person to maintain internal comfort, but as a result negative emotions will be associated with postponing the matter has been arisen. In addition, procrastination can be the result of a low level of motivation, when a person does not feel the importance of the task or cannot clearly define its purpose (Engle, 2002; Gathercole, Pickering, Ambridge, & Wearing, 2004).

The problem of procrastination has serious consequences, both for the individual and for a society as a whole. From a psychological point of view, it is often accompanied by anxiety, stress and feelings of guilt, which worsen the emotional state and can lead to depression (Cui, Wang, & Zhong, 2021). Postponing important things affects a person's productivity, reducing the person's effectiveness in the process of the activity or at school, which in turn leads to a decrease our self-confidence. In addition, the lack of results can contribute to the development of feelings of dissatisfaction and helplessness (Dubovyk, Mytnyk, Mykhalchuk, Ivashkevych Er., & Hupavtseva, 2020).

In a social context procrastination can lead to a decrease in the process of interaction and communication with other people (Drigas, & Karyotaki, 2017). When a person procrastinates, it can affect his/her relationships with colleagues, friends or families, especially if there were shared projects or commitments suffer. This can lead to different conflicts, loss of trust, and even social isolation. Thus, procrastination is not only individual in nature, but it can also affect the broader social context (Івашкевич Ер., & Комарніцька, 2020).

So, **the aim** of our research is to show psychological peculiarities of procrastination as the important problem in Modern

Psychology, to describe the results of our research of the level of procrastination of teenagers.

### **Methods of the research**

The following theoretical methods of the research were used to solve the tasks formulated in the article: a categorical method, structural and functional methods, the methods of the analysis, systematization, modeling, and generalization. The experimental method was the method of organizing empirical research.

In our research we use such Methodologies: The General Procrastination Scale (GPS) (2024); The Tuckman Procrastination Scale (TPS) (2024).

### **Results and their discussion**

Showing the importance of this problem, the effective study and the development of methods for combating procrastination are urgent tasks of Modern Psychology. Studying the causes of procrastination allows us to find individual and collective ways to overcome it, which helps us to reduce the negative consequences for both individuals and a society as a whole. The development of methods that include cognitive-behavioral approaches, time management techniques and motivational strategies allows us to significantly improve the productivity and emotional well-being of a person, contributing to his/her personal development and social adaptation (Mykhalchuk, & Khupavsheva, 2020).

So, let us describe the concept of procrastination, its history of origin and modern interpretation. Also, in our article we'll show theoretical and methodological foundations of procrastination as a complicated psychological phenomenon.

Procrastination or putting off important matters for later is a phenomenon that has ancient roots and almost interesting history. Its emergence is associated with a person's desire to avoid unpleasant or difficult tasks. Despite the fact that the word "procrastination" itself appeared much later, procrastination as a unique phenomenon was known in antiquity. The chronological development of the understanding of procrastination reflects

the evolution of human ideas about the nature of the behavior and psychological characteristics of the individual. This phenomenon has a long history, because the desire to put off matters for later was noticed in ancient times. However, over the centuries, the perception of procrastination has changed, and at each historical stage different cultural, moral and scientific interpretations have been imposed on it. With the development of Philosophy, Religion and later Psychology, procrastination began to be considered not only as a personal flaw, but also as a complex psychological phenomenon (Jiang, Zhang, & May, 2019; Mai, 2022; Mykhalchuk, & Ivashkevych Er., 2021).

Table 1 shows the main stages of the development of procrastination understanding, starting from ancient times and up to the present day. It indicates the key periods and events that influenced the formation of a modern idea of procrastination as a behavioral phenomenon.

*Table 1*

**Timeline of the development of understanding  
the phenomenon of procrastination**

<b>A period of time</b>	<b>Key events and characteristics of attitudes towards the phenomenon of procrastination</b>
<b>the 4th-the 1st centuries BC</b>	In antiquity, particularly in Ancient Greece, philosophers such as Aristotle began to examine human behavior, including the avoidance of action. They interpreted procrastination as a manifestation of weakness of will and lack of self-control.
<b>the Vth-the XVth centuries AD</b>	In the Middle Ages, procrastination was considered a sin, and putting things off was perceived as unwillingness to fulfill duties, which was unacceptable.
<b>the XVth-the XVIth centuries AD</b>	The Renaissance era emphasized the importance of self-development and discipline, and procrastination was considered as a sign of laziness that needed to be overcome.

<b>the XVIIIth century AD</b>	With the development of science and rational thinking, procrastination began to be considered as a separate behavioral problem, but remained unstudied from a psychological point of view.
<b>the XIXth century AD</b>	Firstly, procrastination became a subject of scientific study when Psychology was just beginning to take shape. Scientists began to view it as a behavioral problem.
<b>the XXth century AD</b>	In the 20th century, procrastination began to be studied more deeply. It was viewed as a behavioral phenomenon related to motivation, emotions and internal conflicts. Cognitive-behavioral psychologists paid particular attention to procrastination.
<b>the XXIst century AD</b>	The modern interpretation of procrastination is based on a multifaceted approach that includes cognitive, behavioral and emotional aspects. Procrastination is viewed as a problem that requires individual correction methods and psychological support.

In ancient times, particularly in the 4th-the 1st centuries BC, procrastination was viewed through the prism of moral and philosophical ideas about self-control and weakness of will. Greek philosophers, especially Aristotle, deeply investigated the nature of human behavior and motives. Aristotle interpreted procrastination as a manifestation of *akrasia*. It is a state when a person cannot act in accordance with a rational choice, despite the awareness that the chosen task is important. Such behavior, according to Aristotle, is a consequence of weakness of will, when emotions or momentary desires dominate some rational decisions. To achieve harmony and happiness, ancient philosophers considered self-control and the pursuit of virtues necessary (Ivashkevych Er., Perishko, Kotsur, & Chernyshova, 2020).

Procrastination during this period of time (we mean the 4th-the 1st centuries BC) was not seen as a psychological pheno-

menon, but as a moral failing project. Philosophers of this time emphasized the importance of achieving virtue through discipline and prudence, as this was seen as the path to achieving “eudaimonia” (Hamed, & Pishghadam, 2021). Telling about eudaimonia, we mean a state of complete satisfaction and harmony. Procrastination was seen by us as an obstacle to self-improvement and higher wisdom, and was therefore avoided. Aristotle and his contemporaries laid the foundation for the idea that control over one’s own actions was an important component of a person’s moral maturity (Hogan, Adlof, & Alonzo, 2014).

The Middle Ages, which spanned the 5th-the 15th centuries AD, were marked by a significant influence of the Christian religion, which radically changed the approach to understand procrastination. Christian morality considered procrastination a manifestation of sin, primarily laziness, which is one of the deadly vices. People who constantly postponed things were considered unscrupulous in fulfilling their duties to God and their neighbors. At this time, discipline and conscientious completion of tasks were valued, and procrastination was perceived as a sign of spiritual weakness and remoteness from the divine order (Ehri, Nunes, Willows, Schuster, Yaghoub-Zadeh, & Shanahan, 2001).

With the beginning of the Renaissance in the 15th and the 16th centuries, views on procrastination began to change. The Renaissance, the era of renewed interest according to the individual, led to a rethinking of procrastination. Postponing things began to be perceived as a threat to personal growth and the realization of inner potential of a person. At this time, the culture of self-discipline and self-development acquired special importance, and the avoidance of procrastination became a part of the Renaissance as the ideal of harmonious, creative personality. Procrastination was perceived as an obstacle to self-improvement and the realization of creative abilities (El-Zawawy, 2021; Ivashkevych Ed., & Onufrieva, 2021).

In the 18th century AD, with the advent of the Age of Enlightenment, procrastination began to be perceived through the



prism of rational thinking and personal responsibility to the society. Philosophers of this era, such as Immanuel Kant and Jean-Jacques Rousseau, proposed a reason and rationality as the main drivers of social and individual development. Procrastination, in this context, began to be perceived as an obstacle to self-improvement and contribution to the public ideas, which hindered the development of both the individual and the society as a whole. Philosophers of that time emphasized the importance of using time efficiently and organized, but procrastination remained more of an ethical issue than a scientific object of the research (Ferdowsi, & Razmi, 2022).

The impact of a Scientific Revolution on Philosophy and Public thinking during the Enlightenment also contributed to a change in attitudes towards procrastination. Scientific advances and innovations emphasized the importance of systematic activity, which encouraged people to abandon the postponement of important matters. Procrastination began to be interpreted as irrational behavior that harmed personal development and productivity. However, although procrastination was evaluated from the point of view of rationality, it had not yet become the object of psychological analysis, since Psychology itself as a science had not yet been formed at that time (Murphy, Melandri, & Bucci, 2021).

The 19th century showed the emergence of Psychology as a separate branch of science, which led to a more detailed study of the causes and the manifestations of procrastination. During this period of time, the focus of researchers was shifted from moral judgments to the analysis of personality traits of each person, such as self-control, motivation and self-esteem. Researchers sought to understand why some people were more prone to procrastination, looking at this phenomenon as a connection with internal conflicts and weak motivation. Hypotheses arose that procrastination could be associated with personality traits, such as low self-esteem or lack of self-discipline. This understanding of procrastination as a psychological phenomenon was

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an important step towards expanding the understanding of it as a problem that requires deeper research and psychotherapeutic intervention (Falé, Costa, & Luegi, 2016).

In the early 20th century, the development of Cognitive-Behavioral Psychology helped to reveal the connection between thinking, emotions and behavior, which allowed researchers to understand procrastination as a manifestation of internal conflict that arises from negative beliefs and emotional barriers. Cognitive-Behavioral Approaches view procrastination not simply as a weakness of character, but as the result of emotional experiences, in particular, fear of failure, perfectionism and low stress tolerance. Scientific research has found that procrastination often occurs when people are afraid of failure or are overly critical of themselves, striving for ideal results. This approach has become the basis for developing strategies for managing procrastination, including through changing thinking, managing anxiety and developing time management skills (Рудоманенко, 2020).

Modern understanding of procrastination involves a multifaceted approach to studying this phenomenon, which includes cognitive, emotional and behavioral aspects. Researchers today understand procrastination not only as a character trait or a habit, but as a complex psychological process that involves the interaction of various factors: from personal characteristics to social influences.

Modern researchers distinguish several types and forms of procrastination, which help us to understand its depth and manifestations. *The main forms of procrastination are:*

– *procrastination due to fear of failure.* This type of procrastination usually occurs when people are very afraid of mistakes and failures. Fear of failure can lead to the fact that people refuse to complete a task, even if it is important. Often, such people expect a perfect result from themselves, and because of this they feel too much pressure. Instead of starting work, they postpone it because they feel that they will not be able to perform

the task at the highest level. This state of anxiety can be further exacerbated when expectations of the result do not correspond to real capabilities or resources.

– *Procrastination due to low motivation.* In this case, people feel a lack of internal motivation to complete important tasks. They do not see the point in carrying out the activity or consider it too difficult or uninteresting. This can lead to the fact that they often choose alternative, less meaningful or easier activities that temporarily bring pleasure, but ultimately do not help to achieve the goals they set. People with low motivation often lose the ability to set and achieve long-term goals, which only increases their procrastination.

– *Social procrastination.* This type of procrastination is manifested in the postponement of tasks due to fear of negative evaluation or criticism from other people. People prone to social procrastination, they may avoid completing a task due to fears that their work will not be perceived properly, or that they will not be able to meet the high demands from the side of others. Fear of judgment and a desire to avoid social tension may cause them to postpone completing tasks, even if they understand that doing so may have negative consequences for their reputation or career.

– *Procrastination due to lack of self-discipline.* This type of procrastination is often observed when people have difficulties with self-organization and time management. They cannot approach tasks in a disciplined manner and often postpone work for later, even if they understand its importance. The lack of regularity in the approach to tasks, weak ability to self-control and the absence of a clear strategy lead to the fact that such people cannot tune into systematic work or activity. They can start doing something, but do not complete the task due to the lack of internal motivation and organization.

In addition to forms, procrastination also has different levels of its manifestation: from easy postponement of routine tasks to serious avoidance of important life decisions. This phenome-

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non can be considered as a spectrum on which different types of behavioral manifestations are located, from mild ones to severe forms. Modern Psychology offers various methods for overcoming procrastination. The main ones are Cognitive-Behavioral Therapy, time management techniques, setting short-term and achievable goals, as well as developing self-discipline skills. The important role in overcoming procrastination is played by awareness of emotional triggers and the ability to manage one's own emotional state.

Let's consider the results of our research of the level of procrastination among 80 respondents who participated in the study. Two main instruments were used to assess the level of procrastination: the General Procrastination Scale (GPS) (2024), which allows us to measure the tendency to postpone tasks in the general context of everyday life, and the Tuckman Procrastination Scale (TPS) (2024), which specializes in assessing academic procrastination.

*The General Procrastination Scale (GPS).* To measure the tendency to procrastinate, the General Procrastination Scale (GPS) was used, which allows us assessing the level of procrastination based on several parameters, such as the frequency of postponing tasks, the impact of procrastination on productivity and the emotional state of respondents.

Respondents were divided into two groups: experimental and control ones. The experimental group consisted of 40 people who participated in a psychocorrectional program with the aim at reducing the level of procrastination using specially developed methods. The control group, also consisting of 40 people, performed only ordinary everyday tasks without the use of additional interventions. This distribution allowed us to assess the effectiveness of the applied methods by comparing the changes in the level of procrastination between the groups.

So, our groups were:

– experimental group E1 – 40 teenagers of the 6th-A form of Rivne secondary school №15;

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– control group C1 – 40 teenagers of the 6th-B form of Rivne secondary school №15.

The study was organized in several stages: first stage – respondents filled out questionnaires that assessed the level of procrastination using GPS and TPS. After that, groups were formed according to the level of their procrastination, which made it possible to identify the most common factors contributing to task postponement, as well as determine the relationships between procrastination and other psychological factors, such as self-control, motivation and emotional state.

An important stage of our research was the focus groups, which helped not only to confirm the obtained quantitative results, but also to delve deeper into the individual characteristics of the respondents, the reasons for procrastination and their attitude towards this phenomenon. Thus, the results of the study allow us to draw conclusions about the level of procrastination in different groups of respondents, as well as to identify the most effective methods of combating this phenomenon.

Let us consider the results of the study and provide a detailed analysis of the results having been obtained, as well as to make the conclusions that allow us to assess the scale and the impact of procrastination on various aspects of the respondents' lives. The study has the aim to determine the level of procrastination in general, as well as to find out in which situations and under what conditions respondents are most likely to postpone completing tasks. The results allow us to distinguish three groups by the level of procrastination: low, medium and high ones. The collected data make us possible not only to classify respondents by their level of procrastination tendency, but also to identify the psychological and behavioral characteristics of each group, as well as to assess the impact of procrastination on the overall level of productivity of the person's activity and emotional state of the person.

These results are important for understanding the nature of procrastination, because they allow us to identify both typical

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situations, which provoke procrastination and individual factors that contribute to this process. The derivation of such patterns is the basis for developing effective methods and strategies for overcoming procrastination that can be adapted to different groups of people (Table 1).

*Table 1*

**General Procrastination Scale Results of teenagers (GPS)**  
**(in %, a descriptive research)**

The Level of Procrastination	Group E1	Group C1
Low	15.98	14.31
Average	40.21	44.61
High	43.81	41.08

At the initial stage of the research, the levels of procrastination in both groups were evenly distributed, which allow us to objectively assess the effectiveness of the applied techniques in further comparison.

Respondents with a low level of procrastination are highly organized and efficient in completing tasks. They are usually able to plan their activities with precision and adhere to the planned schedule, which allow them to avoid procrastination and postponing tasks for later. This ability to complete tasks in time is the result of well-developed time management skills, organization, and self-discipline. Pupils with a low level of procrastination are able to tune into completing tasks, even if they require significant effort or difficulties arise. They can also work effectively under stress, when they are affected by several tasks at once. The lack of procrastination is often explained by a high level of intrinsic motivation, since such pupils are focused on achieving results and personal growth. They understand the importance of completing tasks, which allows them to overcome potential obstacles and stay focused. At the same time, such respondents may experience some stress due to excessive demands on themselves and high standards they set for themselves. This can lead to overload, especially when the number of tasks exceeds

their capabilities or when there is a need to complete complex tasks in a short time.

A middle group of respondents, who show a moderate tendency to procrastinate, demonstrate situational procrastination. They may put off tasks if they have a lack of sufficient motivation or when the tasks seem difficult or uninteresting. Procrastination of this group of respondents is often not constant, but depends on the context and conditions of tasks' performance. For example, when tasks are too abstract or do not have personal significance for them, they may postpone them until later, because they do not see a direct benefit or motivation for immediate completion. They often face great difficulties due to fear of failure or reach a lack of clear goals, which inhibits the start of work doing this task.

However, teenagers are able to overcome these barriers when tasks become more specific, interesting or when they receive external support that stimulates them to take some actions. Such respondents are able to use time management techniques, such as breaking large tasks into smaller steps or setting realistic deadlines, which can reduce their tendency to procrastinate. However, they still have difficulties with fully controlling their tendency to put off tasks, especially when they feel overwhelmed or have to deal with a large number of simultaneous responsibilities. Feelings of stress and overload often lead them delaying the start of the activity, which increases the duration of tasks and reduces productivity of general work.

Respondents with a high level of procrastination consistently experience difficulties in organizing their time and completing tasks in time. Their tendency to procrastinate often becomes a systematic one, and it is a significant barrier for achieving personal and professional goals. Pupils may put off different tasks due to fear of failure, perfectionism, low level of motivation or lack of clearly formulated goals. A high level of procrastination of such respondents may be associated with deeper psychological problems, such as anxiety, depression or low self-esteem.

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These factors create psychological barriers that make it difficult to make decisions and start working doing the task. Pupils often feel powerless or they are out of control, which lead to even more procrastination. As a result, this process creates a vicious cycle where the accumulation of tasks only increases stress and anxiety of teenagers, which leads to even more procrastination. Such respondents often experience their feelings of guilt and low self-esteem, as they realize the consequences of putting off important things, but they cannot take effective measures to overcome these conditions. Over time, this situation can lead to a further decrease in pupils' productivity and negatively affect their emotional well-being. High level of procrastination can become a significant psychological barrier, so respondents in this group need specialized support, such as psychotherapeutic methods or time management training to overcome these difficulties.

Thus, the results of the research show that procrastination has different degrees of severity among respondents. Most amount of pupils have average level of procrastination, which means that this phenomenon does not occur to them constantly, but it is in certain situations. Only 15.98% of respondents from group E1 and 14.31% from C1 have a low level of procrastination, demonstrating high organization and the ability to effectively complete the tasks without significant delays. At the same time, more than 40% of participants face serious difficulties in overcoming procrastination, which has a significant negative impact on their psycho-emotional and physical well-being, as well as on the productivity of their activity.

## **Conclusions**

Procrastination, as a multifactorial psychological phenomenon, has come a long way from a simple understanding as laziness to the modern interpretation as a complex psychological process. Its emergence and development are associated with the evolution of views on human behavior, motivation and internal conflicts. From ancient times to the present day, procrastination



has been changed in its understanding, and today it is considered not only as a personal flaw, but as a problem that requires special attention and intervention.

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**Михальчук Наталія, Славіна Наталія, Рудзевич Ірина.  
Прокрастинація як актуальна проблема сучасної психології.**

**Метою дослідження** є показати психологічні особливості прокрастинації як актуальної проблеми сучасної психології, описати результати нашого дослідження щодо рівня прокрастинації підлітків.

**Методи дослідження.** Для розв'язання поставлених завдань використовувалися такі теоретичні методи дослідження: категоріальний, структурно-функціональний, аналіз, систематизація, моделювання, узагальнення. Експериментальним методом є метод організації емпіричного дослідження.

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**Результати дослідження.** В статті доведено, що респонденти з низьким рівнем прокрастинації проявляють високу організованість і ефективність у виконанні завдань. Вони зазвичай здатні планувати свою діяльність із точністю і дотримуватись наміченого графіка, що дозволяє уникати зволікань і відкладання завдань на потім. Така здатність до своєчасного виконання справ є результатом добре розвинених навичок тайм-менеджменту, організованості та самодисципліни. Люди із низьким рівнем прокрастинації здатні налаштовуватися на виконання завдань, навіть якщо вони вимагають значних зусиль або з'являються труднощі. Вони також можуть ефективно працювати в умовах стресу, коли на них впливає кілька завдань одночасно.

**Висновки.** Прокрастинація як багатофакторне психологічне явище пройшла тривалий шлях від простого розуміння як лінії до сучасного трактування як складного психологічного процесу. Її виникнення і розвиток пов'язані з еволюцією поглядів на людську поведінку, мотивацію та внутрішні конфлікти. З античних часів до наших днів прокрастинація змінювалася у своєму розумінні, і сьогодні вона розглядається не тільки як особистісний недолік, а як проблема, що потребує особливої уваги та втручання.

**Ключові слова:** прокрастинація, мотивація, внутрішні конфлікти, лінь, рівні прокрастинації, труднощі, стрес.

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