

**PSYRGGU 2019**  
**Psychology of subculture: Phenomenology and Contemporary  
Tendencies of Development**

**PROCRASTINATION AS A FACTOR OF AVOIDING THREATS  
TO SUBJECTIVE WELLBEING**

O. Yu. Zotova (a)\*, L. V. Tarasova (b), T. N. Nikolaeva (c), V. A. Klimenko (d), O. A.  
Dontskaya (e)

\*Corresponding author

(a) Liberal Arts University (LAU) – University for Humanities, Surikova st 24a, Yekaterinburg, Russia,  
oiambusheva@mail.ru

(b) Liberal Arts University (LAU) – University for Humanities, Surikova st 24a, Yekaterinburg, Russia

(c) Liberal Arts University (LAU) – University for Humanities, Surikova st 24a, Yekaterinburg, Russia

(d) Liberal Arts University (LAU) – University for Humanities, Surikova st 24a, Yekaterinburg, Russia

(e) Lomonosov Moscow State University (MSU), Mokhovaya st 11/9, Moscow, 125009, Russia

***Abstract***

The need to study procrastination in its psychological perspective is linked to the fact that today's man deliberately postpones the realization of things to do despite their importance and urgency. In particular, of considerable interest is correlation of procrastination and wellbeing, and satisfaction with the nature of communicative, cognitive and activity-based relationships. The importance of a deeper insight into factors of personality wellbeing is particularly growing given the spread of such social problems as poverty, migration, political and economic crises, higher crime rate, and, to crown it all, various everyday stresses. The diversity of factors jeopardizing wellbeing and the desire to avoid them determine the subjective strategies and tactics of decision-making with regard to important and routine acts people perform every day as well as corresponding emotional sensations. The sample was divided into three groups according to the respondents' level of procrastination. Two of them with the most different levels of procrastination were compared. The results of the study showed correlation between the intensity of procrastination and subjective wellbeing. So, it was state, that respondent with high levels of procrastination show high indicators values on the parameter subjective wellbeing, which testifies to the subject's communicative and activity-based engagement, his optimism, activity and satisfaction with life.

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**Keywords:** Subjective wellbeing, procrastination.



## 1. Introduction

Under modern conditions of global transformations, technocratic victories, economic contradictions and cross-cultural interactions research efforts increasingly focus on wellbeing of man who is activity-oriented and seeks meanings, reasons and prospects to these changes. To what extent is this individual satisfied with his life? What is a share of positive emotions in the whole range of his emotional life? Does this individual receive a volume of information, loads, commitments, disciplinary norms that corresponds to his capabilities?

Researchers have frequently been addressing these issues but insufficient attention in psychological literature has been given to their interrelations. The appeal to the concept of subjective wellbeing demonstrates that a sense of wellbeing is impossible without satisfaction with life and prevalence of positive sensations in emotional life of human. "People's moods and emotions reflect on-line reactions to events happening to them. Each individual also makes broader judgments about his or her life as a whole, as well as about domains such as marriage and work. Thus, there are a number of separable components of SWB: life satisfaction (global judgments of one's life), satisfaction with important domains (e.g., work satisfaction), positive affect (experiencing many pleasant emotions and moods), and low levels of negative affect (experiencing few unpleasant emotions and moods)" (Diener, 2000, p. 34).

The importance of a deeper insight into factors of personality wellbeing is particularly growing given the spread of such social problems as poverty, migration, political and economic crises, higher crime rate, an increase in the number of suicides, and, to crown it all, various everyday stresses. The diversity of factors jeopardizing wellbeing and the desire to avoid them determine the subjective strategies and tactics of decision-making with regard to important and routine acts people perform every day as well as corresponding emotional sensations. "The "subjective" is what people feel and sense. Subjective well-being comprises both cognitive and emotional components" (Zotova, Tarasova, & Syutkina, 2016, p. 161).

In a number of studies new data on the emergence of negative emotions and anxiety associated with procrastination are becoming accessible, which is, in particular, Milgram (1991) stated in his definition of procrastination. Perceived procrastination involves not only a longer period of performing task or decision-making but also distress and anxiety (Habelrih & Hicks, 2015; Rothblum, Solomon, & Murakami, 1986).

Timely decision-taking, adequate time allocation to accomplish a definite task create conditions for preventing negative effects, fears, threats to a balance of positive and negative emotions. Then a situation occurs when procrastination can give rise to lack of confidence and fear of hazards to subjective wellbeing.

In our study we are guided by the widely cited treatment of procrastination as voluntary, irrational postponement of an intended course of action despite knowledge that this delay will have negative effects (Simpson & Pychyl, 2009).

The widespread of procrastination has drawn researchers' attention to interrelations of subjective wellbeing and the individual' level of procrastination.

## **2. Problem Statement**

The value of experiencing subjective wellbeing identifies behavior strategies of the individual and his/her orientations in decision-making. Following these strategies creates conditions for preventing hazards to perceptions of one's own subjective wellbeing and satisfaction with the nature of communicative, cognitive and activity-based interrelations.

## **3. Research Questions**

1. Are there interrelations between the level of personality procrastination and his/her perception of subjective wellbeing?
2. Does subjective wellbeing influence the level of personality subjective wellbeing?

## **4. Purpose of the Study**

The study is aimed at exploring interrelations between personality subjective wellbeing and procrastination.

## **5. Research Methods**

The following methods of research were used in the study: a questionnaire-based survey, General Procrastination Scale by Lay (1986) (adapted by Vindeker & Ostanina, 2014); a questionnaire "Satisfaction with Life" by Melnikova (2004) for examining satisfaction as a component of subjective wellbeing; Subjective Wellbeing Scale by Perrudet-Badoux, Mendelsohn, and Chiche (1988), adjusted by Sokolova (1996).

The data obtained were processed and analyzed with the help of correlation analysis and methods for defining and estimating significant differences (Mann–Whitney U-Test and the Pearson correlation coefficient,  $r$ ) and Microsoft Excel and SPSS Statistics.

The survey was administered to the employees of one of Yekaterinburg production enterprises. The sample ( $N = 80$ ) was equalized by age and length of service in the given enterprise. At the initial state a questionnaire survey was conducted and resulted in indicating three groups of the respondents with different levels of procrastination (low, average, and high). It was agreed to choose two of them with the most different levels of procrastination for comparison. Mean values from Subjective Wellbeing Scale in two groups (with low and high levels of procrastination) were assessed via Mann–Whitney U-Test.

## **6. Findings**

According to the study results a statistically significant difference with respect to indicators of subjective wellbeing in the group with low level of procrastination (further LLP) and high level of procrastination (further HLP) (table 01) was revealed.

**Table 01.** The results of Comparative Analysis of SWB indicators in the respondents with high and low levels of procrastination

Subjective wellbeing scales	Mean values		Mann–Whitney U criterion value	Level of relevance
	LLP	HLP		
Tension and sensitivity	10.3	8.3	63.500	0.022
Importance of social environment	7.6	5.2	33.000	0.000
Life fatigue	4.8	6.3	56.500	0.010
Concern about future	4.8	6.4	59.500	0.015

The study showed that the higher a person’s level of procrastination is, the stronger his life fatigue (this state can manifest itself in apathy, passivity, lack of desires, interest in life), the greater his concern about his life (expressed in a state of anxiety and lack of confidence in the future) are. However, the respondents with low level of procrastination are more tense and sensitive, which can be explained by their experiencing a sense of loneliness, the quality of relationships with relatives and friends; they find their own social milieu which reflects their sensation of loneliness and quality of relationships with family and friends more essential.

The Pearson correlation coefficient was exploited to find out whether interrelations between the individual’s level of procrastination and his perception of his own subjective wellbeing exist. Inverse statistically significant relationships between the level of procrastination and the parameter “tension and sensitivity” ( $r = 0.012$ , where  $p \leq 0.05$ ), the parameter “Importance of social environment” ( $r = 0.002$ , where  $p \leq 0.05$ ) were revealed. The individual with a higher level of procrastination feels less tension or concern with regard to postponing tasks to do, he is not encumbered by the necessity to deal with other people; his need for being alone is pronounced to a lesser degree.

Direct statistically significant relationships between the level of procrastination and the parameter “life fatigue” ( $r = 0.002$ , where  $p \leq 0.05$ ), the parameter “concern about future” ( $r = 0.004$ , where  $p \leq 0.05$ ) were found. The subject with a higher level of procrastination feels more anxiety, insecurity of the world, lack of confidence in his future, anticipates troubles and ordeal and has no desires and aspirations.

The results of the study carried out showed that high level of procrastination performs a kind of a defensive function and can act as a factor for preventing threats to personality subjective wellbeing.

Therefore, we can conclude that people with high intensity of procrastination, thanks to their ability to realize the fact of postponing things to do for later time, are likely to accept this state and are able to control it and adequately assess their state and capabilities, which increases their self-esteem. Such procrastination can be construed as active.

Studies indicate that it is a high level of psychological wellbeing that predetermines active procrastination (Chu & Choi, 2005; Habelrih & Hicks, 2015; Sirois & Tosti, 2012), and it is negatively linked to passive delay in doing things, thus, defining the parameters of procrastination intensity and its relationships with subjective wellbeing one might say that it is activity, or passivity of experiencing procrastination that has a great impact on indicators of subjective wellbeing.

Low psychological wellbeing correlate, to some extent, with passive procrastination. In other words, the lower the indicator of subjective wellbeing is, the higher passive procrastination. A number of studies point out that tendencies to put off things due to time deficit create greater stress in the long run (Sirois & Tosti, 2012) and can cause emotional disturbance (Milgram, 1991). For instance, in their study

Pychyl and his colleagues found that a sense of guilt (negative affect) accompanied with anxiety and stress positively correlates with procrastination (Pychyl, 1995; Pychyl, Lee, Thibodeau, & Blunt, 2000).

These findings were confirmed in other research works demonstrating that passive procrastination tends to form negative beliefs, thus testifying to a low level of a subject's subjective wellbeing (Fernie & Spada, 2008) and confronts active procrastination in terms of its influence on subjective wellbeing.

## **7. Conclusion**

In order to identify the specifics of procrastination as a factor for avoiding threats to personality subjective wellbeing it is essential to take into consideration the fact that subjective wellbeing consists of cognitive and affective components which can change owing to different reasons and circumstances, a faster pace of life, a huge amount of information and so on. And these alterations are not always positive providing an additional psychological burden on a person effecting his behavior since a society places the increased demands on him: he should necessarily be responsible, self-sufficient, successful, and productive. In this situation the correct decisions, all intended life objectives and conditions to achieve them grow in their importance. However, targets and ways of their realization are not always clear and accessible, which leads to procrastination.

In the course of the study conducted it was revealed that the level of procrastination can change depending on the situation itself: whether it is simple or difficult for a person, pleasant, or unpleasant one. The greater the subject's expectation of the work implemented, the more valuable its results for the person are. And the more sensitive a person is, the lower of procrastination. It has been confirmed by many researchers. For example, Palys and Little (1983) argued that affairs that are considered to be pleasant even if they are quite complicated but at that are socially supported by significant others frequently contribute to a sense of subjective wellbeing. And people with a higher level of life satisfaction are more likely to actively participate in the projects they have initiated than people with a lower level of life satisfaction (Yetim, 1993). Also, the research carried out by Brunstein (1993) showed that commitment, timeliness and readiness to act, accessibility of the goals set and the course of their realization have a considerable impact on subjective wellbeing experiencing by the person. Thus, there exists a considerable body of studies which are concentrated on examining correlation between success in affairs and a sense of subjective wellbeing taking into account negative effects of procrastination on subjective wellbeing. But the qualitative differences in experiencing procrastination are not always taken into consideration.

The given study demonstrated that it is not the individual's level of procrastination but it is rather the quality of experiencing procrastination that influences a sense of subjective wellbeing. So, active procrastination, unlike passive one, is a significant factor of avoiding threats to subjective wellbeing. It does not preclude but rather contributes to living life to its full, developing active behavioral strategies which help preserve optimism, avoid unreasonably increased loads, control life and deliberately resort to delay as a means to regulate subjective wellbeing. However, the study also revealed that active experiencing of procrastination is characteristic of just some part of the respondents. The other group involved in the survey exhibited procrastination which is associated with a state of dissatisfaction with life and a low level of subjective wellbeing. Under these conditions, in order to reduce threats to

subjective wellbeing it is necessary to single out mechanisms capable of assisting a person in regulating his degree of adaptability, decreasing the level of anxiety and dissatisfaction with life that accompany procrastination. Addressing these challenges requires the development of the integrated packages of assessments which will allow psychologists to explore the structure, substance, dynamic and influence of everyday purposes and affairs of people to support them in understanding what they do and how they relate to their activity.

## Acknowledgments

The article was supported with a grant from the Russian Science Foundation (project № 16-18-00032-II).

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