

Temporal Motivation Theory: Best Theory (yet) to Explain Procrastination

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Procrastination is frequently associated with postponing to make a decision or to act. Such phenomenon could be found in almost all walks of life. Therefore a comprehensive understanding to alleviate it is urgently needed. This article compared four approaches which tend to explain procrastination: psychoanalytic and psychodynamic, behavioristic, cognitive, and temporal motivation theory (TMT). As a recent and comprehensive approach, TMT was used as the main theoretical framework (Steel, 2007). TMT approach was believed to accommodate the other three previous theoretical approaches. Further explanation and critical elaboration on TMT are discussed.

Keywords: psychoanalytic, psychodynamic, behavioristic, cognitive, temporal motivation theory

Prokrastinasi seringkali dihubungkan dengan perilaku menunda mengambil putusan atau bertindak. Fenomena tersebut dapat dijumpai di hampir seluruh aspek kehidupan. Karena itu pemahaman yang lebih terpadu untuk mengatasinya sangatlah diperlukan. Artikel ini membandingkan empat pendekatan untuk menjelaskan prokrastinasi, yaitu psikoanalitik dan psikodinamik, perilaku/behavioristik, kognitif, dan teori motivasi temporal (TMT). Sebagai pendekatan teoretis terkini dan terlengkap, TMT digunakan sebagai kerangka teoretis utama (Steel, 2007). Pendekatan TMT diyakini telah mawadahi ketiga pendekatan teoretis sebelumnya. Ulasan mengenai pendekatan TMT secara lebih lanjut beserta kritiknya telah dibahas.

Kata kunci: psikoanalitik, psikodinamik, perilaku/behavioristik, kognitif, teori motivasi temporal (TMT).

It is not rare to find someone who ever mourned or cried because of their own procrastinatory behavior. They who are searching for a procrastinator should just look into the mirror to find a procrastinator. Enormous loss, whether financial, social, physical, or psychological, have been reported because of this single dreadful habit (Steel, 2007). It happens not only in formal or academic life (Beswick, Rothblum, & Mann, 1988; Green, 1982; Lay, 1986; Muszynski & Akamatsu, 1991; Rothblum, Solomon, & Murakami, 1986; Wesley, 1994), but it also happens in everyday life (Ferrari, 1993; Lee, 2003). No wonder, some people even called it a deadly sin (Steel, 2002). No doubt, the necessity of understanding procrastination more thoroughly should not ever been procrastinated.

Procrastination Etiology

Various efforts have been made to comprehend the causes of individuals' conduct of procrastination. There

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are several major explanations concerning procrastination according to the psychology mainstream theory. This research compares four approaches, namely the psychoanalytic and psychodynamic, behavioristic, cognitive, and temporal motivation theory. These four approaches are discussed according to their time of publication.

According to Brown (cited in Ferrari, Johnson, and McCown, 1995), the psychoanalytic approach is the oldest theory developed to explain behavior in a comprehensive way. Psychoanalytic approach to discuss procrastination is rather famous among psychiatrists (Ferrari, et al.). Behavioristic and cognitive approaches are common approaches to overcome procrastination. Therefore, it will be interesting if these approaches are compared with other approaches, especially TMT, whereas temporal motivation theory is new approach which was coined by Steel and Konig in 2006.

Every approach has a unique perspective and difference. More positive results would be obtained if the differences are addressed as aspects that complement each other rather than treated as a single truth that exclude other alternative answers.