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# Effects of reward schedule and pressure on procrastination

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## Abstract

Procrastination is ubiquitous, but how to reduce procrastination is rarely examined in a behavioral experiment. We hypothesized that procrastination is reduced when the reward is immediate versus delayed, and that the size of reduction could vary across different levels of pressure on task completion. To test our hypothesis, Subjects were assigned a week to work online on a lengthy reading task. We manipulated the reward timing (delayed versus immediate) and levels of task completion pressure. We quantified the level of procrastination with mean completion day of a paragraph, with a higher value indicating a higher level of procrastination. We found that among subjects who completed the task, there was no main effect of reward timing on procrastination level, whereas subjects who left the task unfinished procrastinated less when reward was immediate. There was no main effect of task completion pressure, and no interaction between reward timing and task completion pressure.