



procrastination

Introduction

- Procrastination is a pervasive self-regulatory failure affecting approximately one-fifth of the adult population and half of the student population. It is defined as one's voluntarily delay of an intended course of action despite being worse off as a result of that delay
- Measures of the prevalence of procrastination are based on self-report measures, which indicate that approximately 15% - 20% of the adult population and 50% of the student population perceive themselves as engaging in procrastination

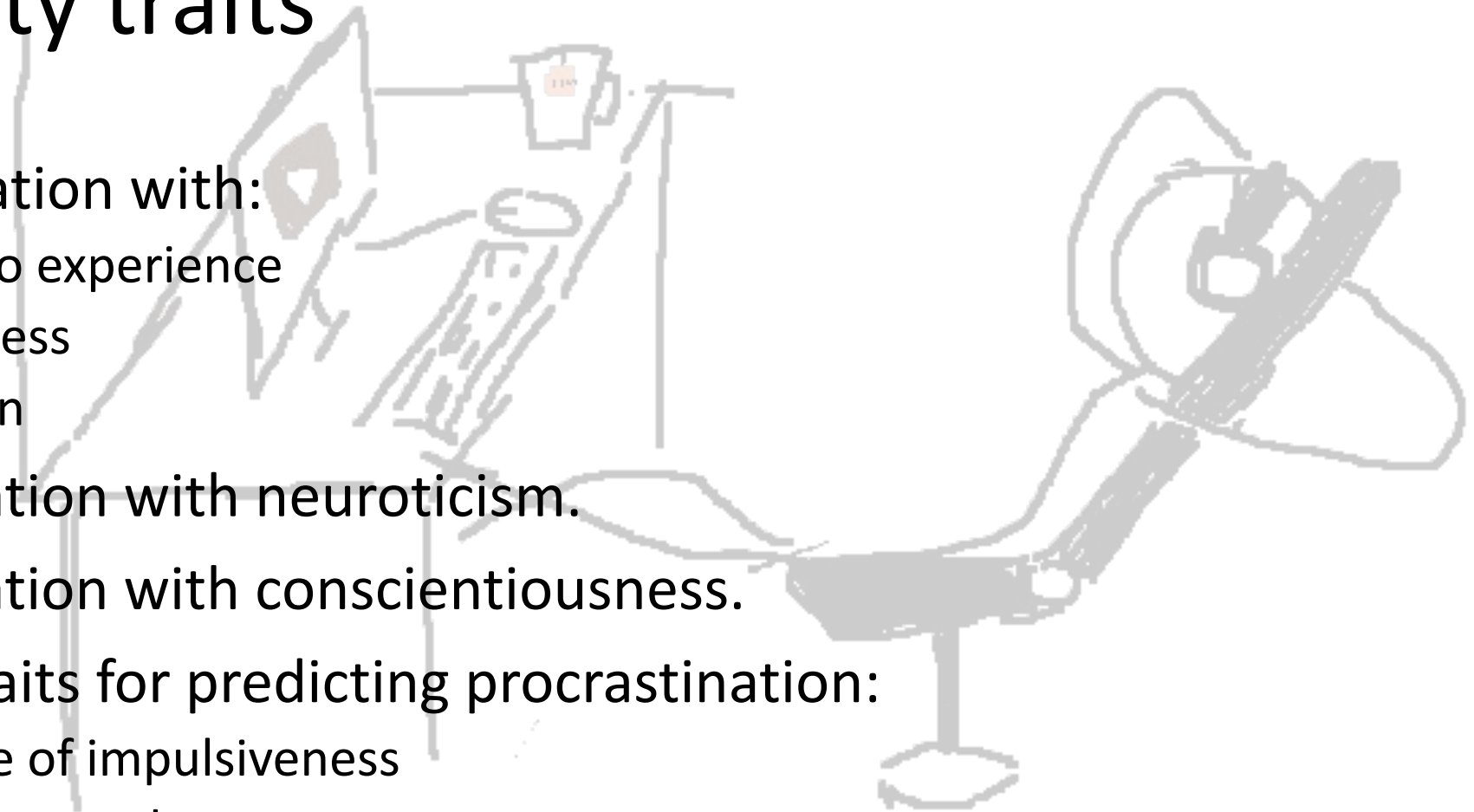
Sociodemographics

- Small influence of gender
- Age is associated with less procrastination



Personality traits

- Weak correlation with:
 - openness to experience
 - agreeableness
 - extraversion
- Small correlation with neuroticism.
- Large correlation with conscientiousness.
- Important traits for predicting procrastination:
 - high degree of impulsiveness
 - lack of self-control



Environmental stimuli

- In general there is an increase of procrastination in the society according to self-reported problems.
- Possible explanations:
 - awareness and the popularity of procrastination as a phenomenon
 - availability of immediate gratification and modern information technology
 - rise in the demand for self-control, sharpening the difficulties of self-regulation experienced by some individuals

Irrational beliefs

- Assumptions, core beliefs, negative automatic thoughts are the result of the delay of commitments.
- Socially prescribed perfectionism - small correlation with procrastination.
- Self-prescribed perfectionism is unrelated to procrastination.
- Self-esteem and self-efficacy, self-handicapping – association with procrastination is moderate.

Task Characteristics

- reasons of procrastination
 - task's unpleasantness, lack of interest and an individual's boredom
 - the more anxiety or effort a task produces, the more likely the person is to procrastinate
 - exploration regarding tasks' characteristics also reveals a relationship with conscientiousness
 - further exploration also reveals a relationship with conscientiousness and habitual procrastination

Motivational Factors

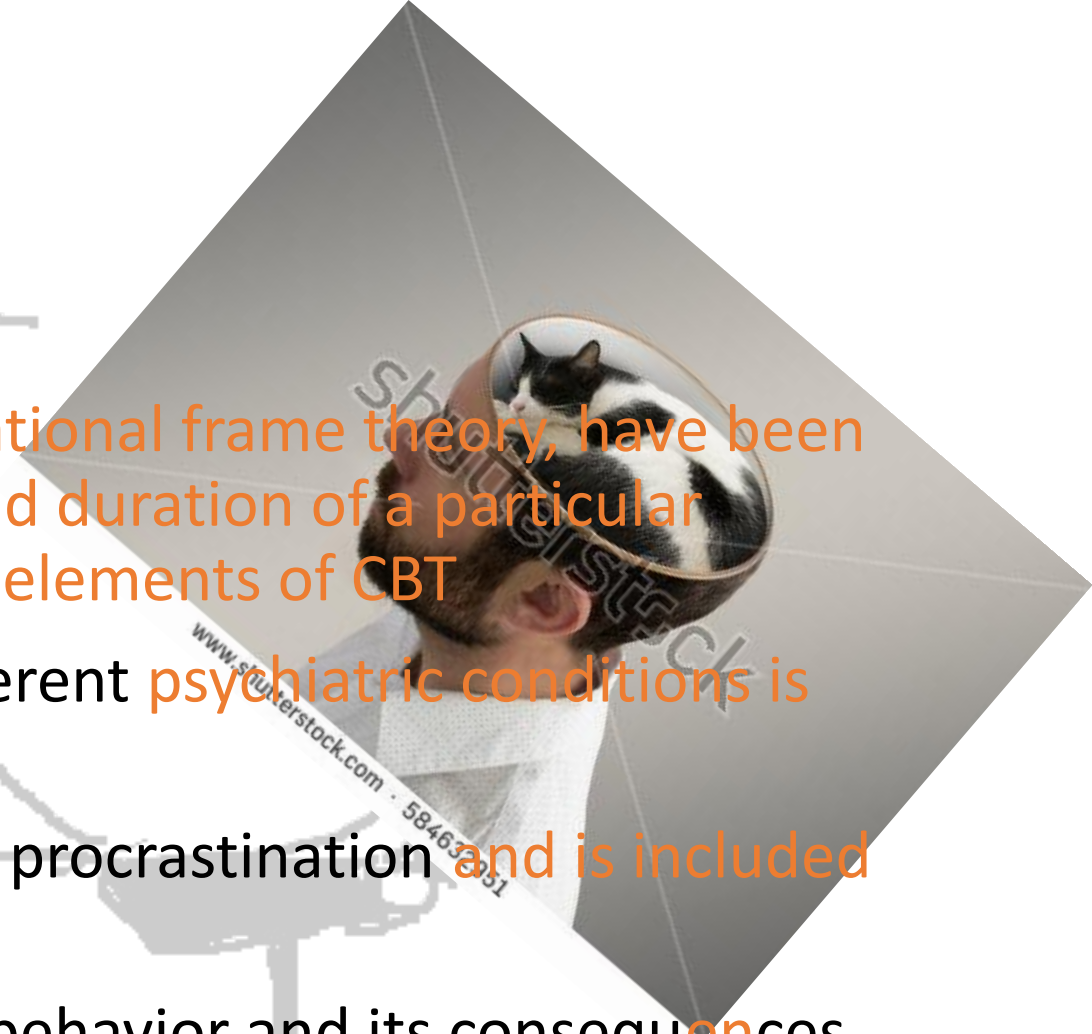
- Achievement motivation — the need for achievement in particular — is, for instance, moderately correlated with procrastination
- Intrinsic motivation is also related to procrastination, illustrating a small correlation between high intrinsic motivation and less procrastination
- Furthermore, research on motivational factors has not revealed a relation between intention and procrastination , meaning that people who procrastinate recurrently do not lack an intention to initiate or complete their tasks or assignments but, rather, experience difficulties acting on their intentions.

Motivational Theories

- Theories of motivation are often used to describe decision-making processes among individuals, groups, and organizations, including the choice to postpone tasks and assignments
- Steel and König (2006) proposed a general model of motivation
- motivational approach to understanding procrastination
- Cumulative prospect theory
- Need theory
- TMT suggests that an individual will engage in a commitment by considering its utility or benefit based on four different variables
- becoming motivated is related to the value assigned to a given activity, the expectancy that one can accomplish that activity, the immediacy of the reward, and one's ability to delay gratification
- individuals are likely to determine the utility or benefit of a commitment differently depending on the influence of each variable

Learning Theory

- Classical and operant conditioning and relational frame theory, have been used to explain the frequency, intensity, and duration of a particular response and are considered fundamental elements of CBT
- The development and maintenance of different psychiatric conditions is influenced by learning theory
- Learning theory is also used to understand procrastination and is included in several motivational theories
- The matching law - correlation between a behavior and its consequences
- Both schedules of reinforcement and sensitivity to delay are essential to comprehending procrastination



Self-Efficacy Theory

- • Self-efficacy has been proposed as a possible explanation for procrastination, indicating that low expectations should be associated with an increased tendency to procrastinate
 - Self-efficacy refers to the efficacy expectations related to performing a certain behavior, as well as the outcome expectations concerning the ability to achieve an anticipated outcome
- Research on the negative automatic thoughts associated with procrastination supports this notion, as self-reported cognitions often involve statements that indicate low self-efficacy:
 - “This is too hard,”
 - “I’m never going to make it,”
 - “I haven’t succeeded before, so why should I even bother?”
- Individuals who are fearful of making mistakes and doubt their ability to do well will probably engage in a commitment with low self-efficacy
Ability to meet similar commitments in the future may be judged negatively, producing even lower self-efficacy and putting the person at risk of producing self-fulfilling prophecies
- Lack of self-efficacy and the development of downward spirals could be essential to comprehending the maintenance of procrastination

Biases and Heuristics

- Research on decision-making processes has extensively explored the biases and heuristics used by individuals when choosing among competing activities, particularly when assessing different financial outcomes
- Biases and heuristics could add valuable knowledge regarding the decision making processes that affect the maintenance of psychiatric conditions, similar to the way dysfunctional or maladaptive beliefs are often explored in cognitive therapy
- Present bias refers to the process of overestimating the current situation when evaluating the outcome of various activities
- Planning fallacy involves the tendency to overlook prior experiences when planning for the future
- Projection bias concerns the procedure of using the present in order to predict a future behavior

Negative Consequences

- Procrastination involves the postponement of a given course of action and is thus presumed to affect the performance of tasks and assignments, particularly those related to school and work. The average correlation between procrastination and performance is generally quite small and inconsistent, revealing only weak associations with course grades, assignments, and the outcome on final exams
- delaying commitments is associated with poorer mental health in general, and a small correlation with stress in particular. Research also reveals a moderate correlation with worry, and feelings of guilt, but no consistent relationship with mood.
- Closer examination of procrastination reveals that deferring tasks and assignments probably results in less stress early on but increases closer to the deadline, generating more stress in the long run
- Postponing tasks and assignments contributes to a wide range of negative consequences that affect both mental and physical health, as well as the person's ability to achieve goals and ambitions.

Idiographic Approach

- procrastination might be better explained as a behavioral problem that can differ in character or topography but shares the same underlying mechanisms
- idiographic approach could be useful to explore what maintains the tendency to procrastinate
- Tasks and assignments are postponed for different reasons, based on how the utility or benefit of those commitments are being determined (lack of value, low expectancy, time preceding a reward, sensitivity to delay)
- idiographic approach can also provide the individual with valuable information regarding its present difficulties, raising awareness of the behavioral problem, increasing self-efficacy and independence, facilitating the implementation of treatment interventions, and minimizing the risk of relapse

Behavioral interventions

- Treatment interventions increase automaticity, facilitate time management, and prevent the individual from becoming distracted while working on tasks and assignments
- Procrastination is defined as an active choice between competing activities.
 - limiting the number of decisions involved in performing commitments, for example, disabling notifications on the computer or smartphone and using designated work areas free from distractions and other forms of immediate gratification
 - stimulus cues can prescribe when and where to engage in actions related to work
 - establishing routines, like working on commitments during daytime and using the evening to recover or to engage in social activities
 - ego depletion

Behavioral interventions

- Procrastination is associated with avoidance behavior
 - gradually exposing the individual to the avoided activity
 - prescribing the minimal amount of effort the individual is willing to exert, e.g. working for fifteen minutes before evaluating whether to continue
 - goal setting - Norcross (2012): “vague goals beget vague efforts”
- procrastination is often related to a lack of value, leading the individual to postpone fulfilling a commitment in favor of activities that generate more immediate gratification
 - using adequate goal setting that increases motivation
 - increasing extrinsic or intrinsic motivation, depending on individual preferences and the type of commitment being postponed
 - *learned industriousness*, using continuous reinforcers when working on tasks and assignments instead of rewarding only the outcome
 - *fusing* - combining the commitment being postponed with an activity that is experienced as more rewarding, for example, studying with classmates rather than alone.

Cognitive interventions

- Perfectionism, fear of failure, and self-doubt are all examples of cognitions that might interfere with the ability to engage in tasks and assignments
- First, since irrational beliefs could be associated with self-handicapping and avoidance behaviors, cognitive restructuring may be used to make the individual mindful of the cognitions that interfere with implementing the correct responses
- Procrastination can also be caused by exaggerated optimism, warranting cognitive restructuring and behavioral experiments that target cognitions resulting in ineffective time management and difficulties related to self-control

Cognitive interventions

- becoming aware of irrational beliefs might help the individual realize the discrepancy between the current situation and the goals and values that are desirable, in turn affecting motivation and instigating behavior change
- Open-ended questions, providing summaries and reflections, and steering away from directive measures could, for instance, be used to assess the opportunity to administer other treatment interventions, avoid confrontation, and increase the individual's commitment in therapy. Furthermore, cognitive interventions that specifically target irrational beliefs related to time management and goal setting have been proposed to promote more realistic performance judgments and the individual's engagement in goal-directed behaviors; particularly useful are for example implementation intentions and mental contrasting

Clinical Trials, Conclusion

- Little is known about the efficacy of therapy for procrastination.
- The research in the area has mostly concentrated on single-case trials, particularly involving the postponement of study-related activities; research does not examine efficacy on a group level
- Van Essen et al. (2004) and van Horebeek et al. (2004) used both behavioral and cognitive interventions. Tuckman and Schouwenburg (2004) took a similar approach involving task management, goal setting, and behavioral interventions

Clinical Trials, Conclusion

- DISADVANTAGES:
 - the use of quasi-experimental methods and the lack of randomization, which limits the generalizability of the results.
 - the use of self-report measures intended to determine the severity of procrastination that have not been validated on a clinical population.
- But none of these self-report measures have been evaluated with regard to their test-retest reliability
- The lack of established cutoffs makes it difficult to differentiate clinical for non-clinical populations of procrastinators.
- Steel (2010) proposed renewed outcome measure with improved correlations to key constructs presumed to be related to procrastination — namely, the Pure Procrastination Scale.

CONCLUSION

There is currently insufficient evidence to support the notion that CBT is suitable for the treatment of procrastination. Further research is necessary, employing randomized conditions in order to evaluate its efficacy.

Questions

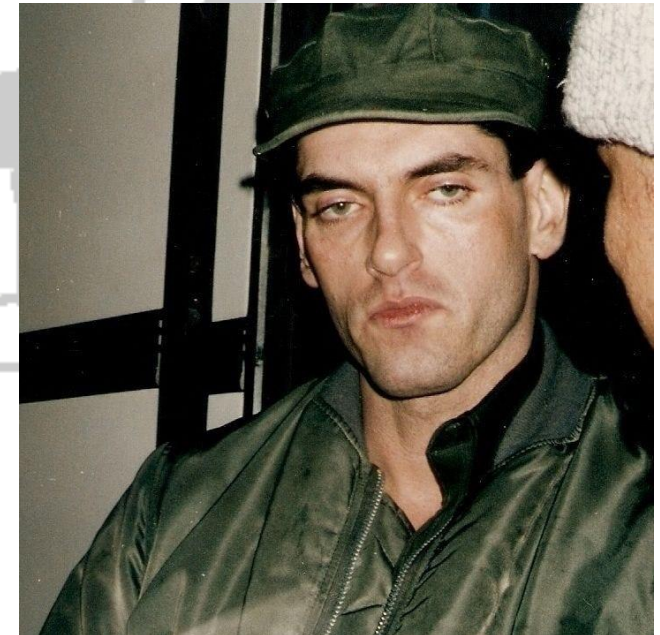
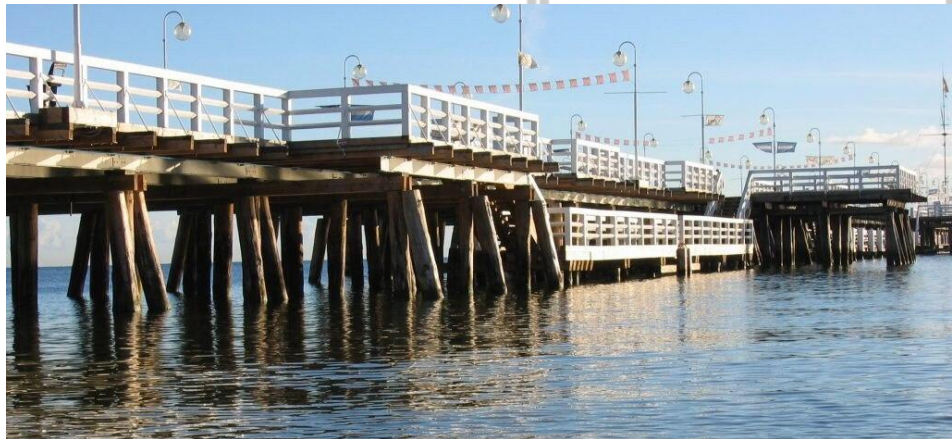
- What causes procrastination?
- Which characteristics has the biggest r , b



Questions*

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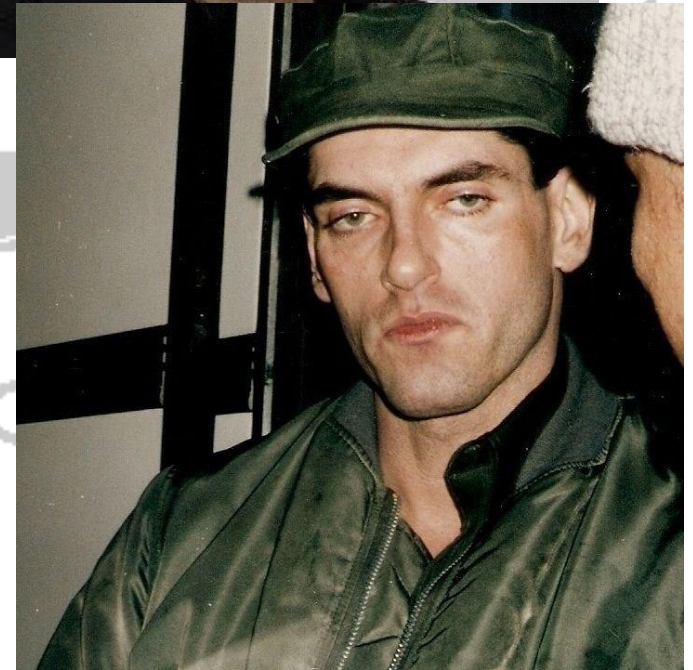
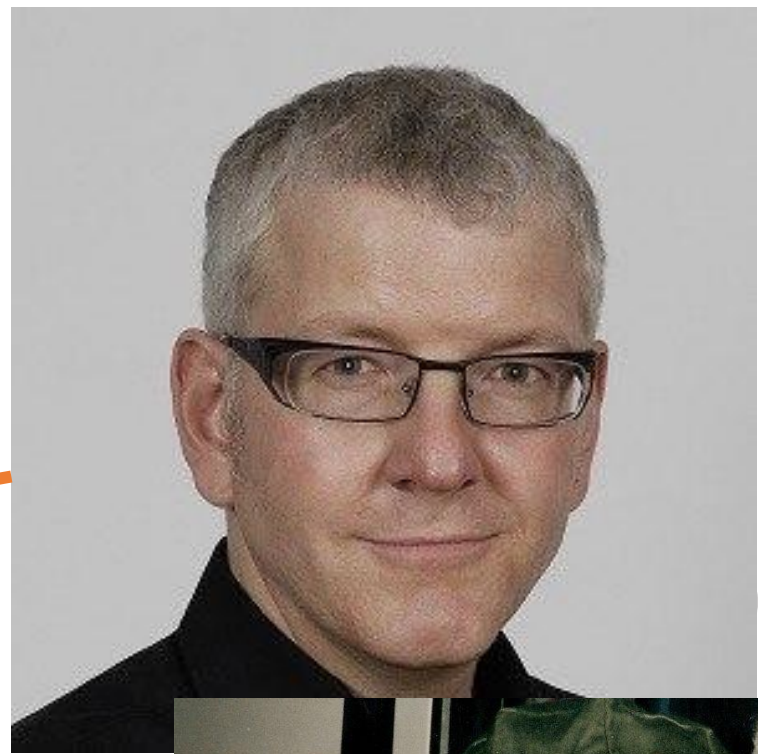
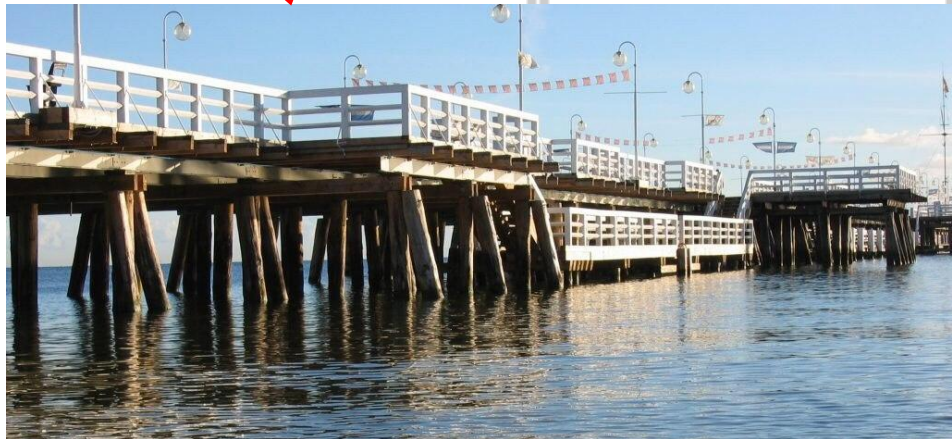
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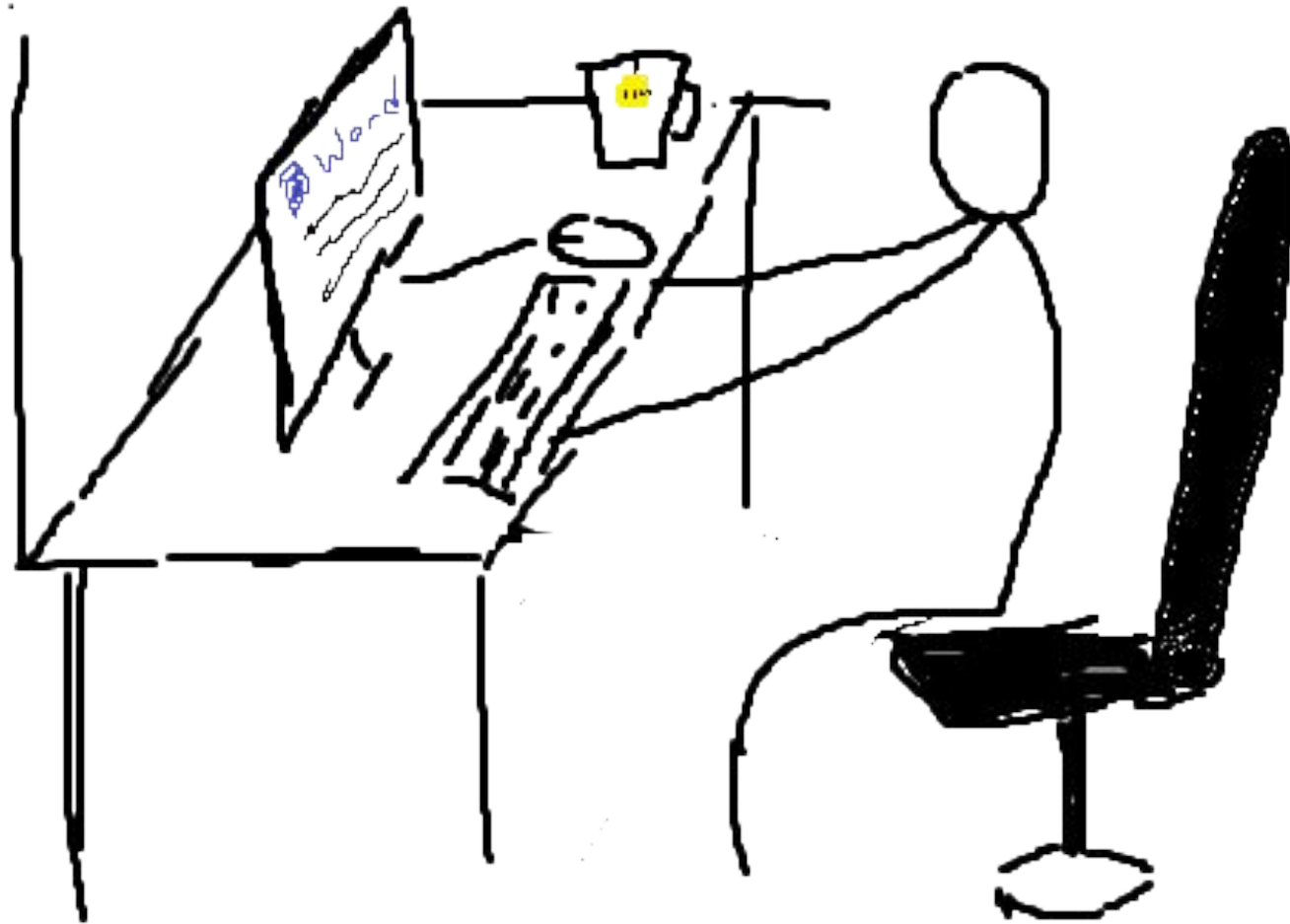


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thank you for attention