

Unschedulering to Reduce Procrastination

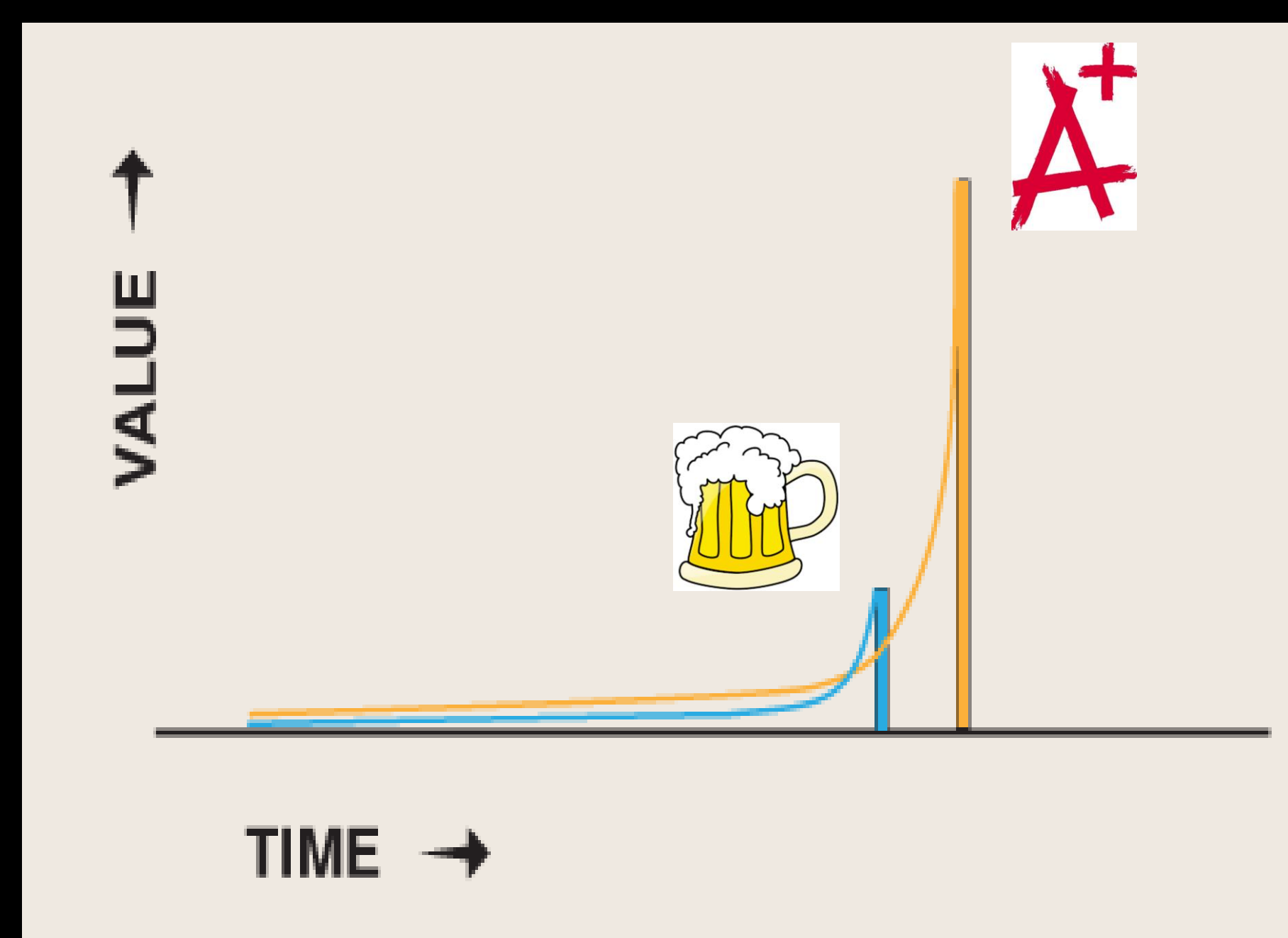
Can scheduling fun activities increase productivity and satisfaction?

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Introduction

Background

- Procrastination is often due to difficulties with self-control
- A basic problem is that immediate rewards are generally more powerful than delayed rewards
- As a result, small immediately available rewards, such as having a beer with friends, can often outweigh the value of working toward larger delayed rewards, such as getting an A+ at the end of the semester (Ainslie, 2005; see graph)



The Unschedule

- Fiore (2007) argues that procrastination is especially likely when work activities are seen as preventing access to fun activities
- To overcome this problem, he recommends the use of an “unschedule” in which high priority is given to the scheduling of fun activities
- Fun activities, such as a coffee date or favorite TV show, are scheduled first (along with any necessary activities)
- Work activities are later recorded within remaining time slots
- Fiore also recommends short, high quality work sessions to place the focus on getting started and not stressing about completion

Methods

Research Question

Can unscheduling increase study productivity and satisfaction and decrease procrastination in students who chronically struggle with procrastination?

Participants

- MacEwan University student volunteers

Procedure

1. Participants will complete a questionnaire package *before* and *after* the study
 - Aitkins Procrastination Inventory (API)
 - Schoolwork Attitude Questionnaire (SAQ)
 - Study Habits Questionnaire (SHQ)
2. They will record a two week baseline of their daily study duration and satisfaction.
3. They will be randomly assigned to one of the three experimental conditions
4. They will hand in their past week's study records at the beginning of each week

Conditions

Traditional Scheduling

- Participants will schedule only their schoolwork activities

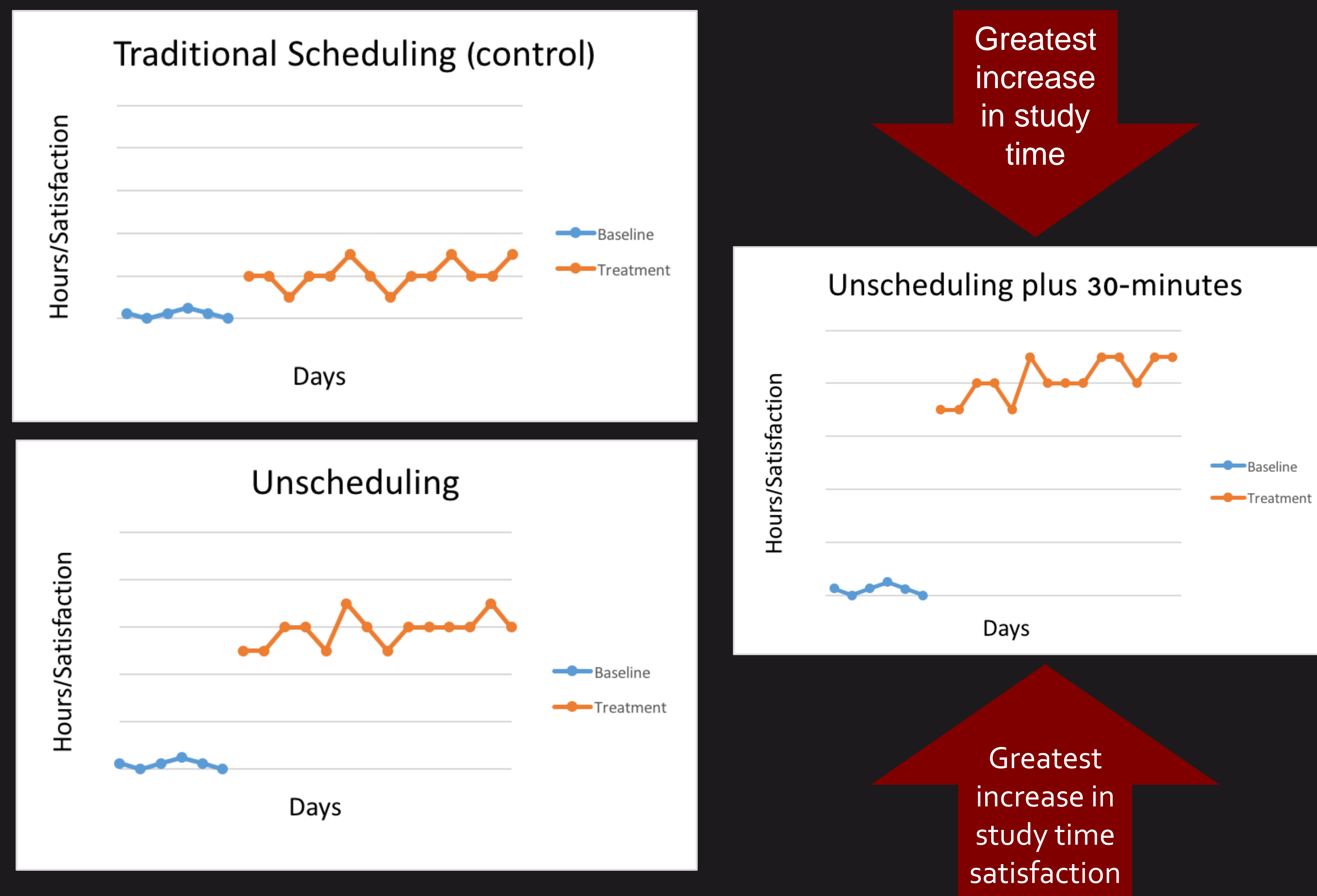
Unschedulering

- Participants will first schedule their fun activities
- Schoolwork will later be scheduled within the remaining time slots

Unschedulering plus 30 minutes

- Participants will first schedule their fun activities
- Schoolwork will later be scheduled within the remaining time slots
- Participants will be encouraged to engage in 30 minute, high quality work sessions

Expected Results



Conclusions

This research has the potential to help students who struggle with procrastination find a balance between getting a sufficient amount of schoolwork done and not depriving themselves of fun activities.

References

Ainslie, G. (2005). Précis of breakdown of will. *Behavioral and Brain Sciences*, 28(5), 635– 650. doi:10.1017/S0140525X05000117

Fiore, N. (2007). *The now habit: The Fiore productivity program for overcoming procrastination and enjoying guilt-free play*. New York, NY: Penguin Group.

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