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**Parenting Styles And Academic Procrastination**

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**Abstract**

The present study examined the relationship between the parenting styles and academic procrastination. Three-hundred-ninety-five Shiraz University students (261 girls and 134 boys) were participants of the study. Steinberg's Parenting Styles Scale (2005) and Solomon & Rothblum's Academic Procrastination Scale (1984) were used as measures of the study. Simultaneous multiple regression of academic procrastination total score on the parenting styles subscales, revealed that the "acceptance-involvement" and "psychological autonomy-granting" styles were significant and negative predictor of the academic procrastination, whereas the "behavioral strictness-supervision" style had a significant predict power for the academic procrastination.

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**1. Introduction**

Procrastination is a common behavior in contemporary societies. Procrastination means to put off, delay, prolong, defer, stall, or postpone performing a task. Despite the fact that procrastination occurs in all kinds of daily tasks (Alexander & Onwuegbuzie, 2007), academic procrastination is highly frequent in students and regarded as detrimental to academic progress and success justifying thus its study. It is estimated that academic procrastination in tasks related to academic life is a common phenomenon for about 70% of university students (Ferrari, O'Callaghan, & Newbegin, 2005). Academic procrastination is an irrational tendency to delay at the beginning or completion of an academic task.

The term of academic procrastination entails an "act of needlessly delaying tasks to the point of experiencing subjective discomfort" (Solomon & Rothblum, 1984), trait dilatory behavior in an academic domain (Schouwenburg, 2004), and dysfunctional procrastination "as the time past the optimal beginning point for completion of an important task that has a high probability of needing completion and that does not have unreasonable demands of personal costs associated with attempted completion" (Ferrari, Johnson, & McCown, 1995). Burka (2008) maintained that academic procrastinators often underestimate the time required to synthesize and evaluate information. Ferrari (1991, 1992, 200) maintained that academic procrastinators fail to attain academic goals due to task avoidance and fear of failure. They fail at doing what ought to be done to achieve goals (Lay,

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1992; Lay & Silverman, 1996). Ellis and Knaus (2000) stated that academic procrastinators have the tendency to avoid activities, using excuses to justify delay and avoid blame. Popoola (2005) postulated that academic procrastinators know what to do, want to perform, able to perform, attempt to perform, yet do not perform in the end. Ellis and Knaus (2002) regard it as an “interactive dysfunctional and a behavior avoidance process,” characterized by the desire to avoid an activity, the promise to get to it later, and the use of excuses to justify the delay and avoid blame. Nevertheless, there is some evidence that academic procrastination is associated with poor academic performance (Wesley, 1994; Beck, Koons & Milgram, 2000). Another line of research that is being currently developed relating to the family role in this process. Family undoubtedly plays an essential role in the acquisition of suitable habits (Rosário, Mourão, Núñez, González-Pienda, & Solano, 2006). Burka and Yuen (1983), for example, suggested that procrastinators push themselves excessively, and that behavior usually occurs in demanding families that doubt on the child’s ability to be successful. Parental expectations and high levels of criticism are usually associated with a kind of socially prescribed perfectionism that is positively correlated to procrastination (Ferrari & Díaz-Morales, 2007; Pylchyl, Coplan, & Reide, 2002). Ferrari and Olivetti (1993, 1994) and Scher and Ferrari (2000) suggested that family dynamics play an important, albeit indirect, role in procrastination.

The factors are related to procrastination such as individual factors, environment factors and family factors. Parenting style is as one of the family factors related to procrastination. Darling and Steinberg (1993) conceptualized the parenting styles as a constellation of attitudes toward the child that are communicated to the child, and that, taken together, create an emotional climate in which the parents’ behavior is expressed. The several categories of parenting styles have existed (Baumrind, 1971; Baumrind, 1991; Stainberg, 2001; Baumrind, 2005). Baumrind (1971) identified three qualitatively different patterns of parental authority: authoritarian, authoritative, and permissive. This typology was subsequently modified by categorizing families according to their levels of parental demandingness (control, supervision, and maturity demands) and responsiveness (warmth, acceptance, and involvement) (Maccoby & Martin, 1983).

Steinberg (1992) designed the scale for assessment of the parenting styles that was based on real models and it did revision in during different years, as well (Steinberg, 2001; Steinberg, 2005). This scale had three factors: Acceptance-involvement, Psychological autonomy-granting, and Behavioral strictness-supervision. Acceptance-involvement is based on one’s perception of amount of paying attention and responsiveness of parents; these parents are warm, firm, involved, and sensitive to their children’s changing needs, and set realistic standards and clear rules (Jaffe, 1998). Psychological autonomy-granting parenting style refers to parent’s tolerance against children’s opinions, and they use democratic discipline in parent-child relationship also the parents don’t push their children to compliant the rules. In behavioral strictness-supervision style, parents shape, control and evaluate the behavior and attitudes of the child in accordance with a set of standards of conduct, usually the absolute standards (Baumrind, 1996), and child is not allowed to his/her express opinions and there is little opportunity to think about situations or employ reasoning (Knight, et al., 2000).

The researchers have explored the relations between parental variables and many diverse aspects of adolescents’ development including achievement and academic motivation (Lamborn, Mounts, & Steinberg, & Dornbusch, 1991), autonomy (Youniss & Smollar, 1985), adolescent self-worth (see Grotevant, 1998, for a recent review), and procrastination (Elliot, 1993, 1994; Ferrari & Elliot, 1993). Some researchers examined the relations between parental authority and the development of indecision (Ferrari & Olivette, 1993) or chronic avoidant procrastination (Ferrari & Olivette, 1994). Pylchyl, Coplan, & Reid (2002) examined the relationship between parenting and procrastination, that the results showed the relations between parenting style and procrastination. Furthermore, Ferrari, Harriott, and Zimmerman (1999) examined the quality of relationships between both women and men procrastinators with their mothers and fathers, as well as with their participants’ more general social-support network. Interestingly, Ferrari et al. (2005) reported that procrastination tendencies were significantly related to

more conflicts in relationship with parents and best friend of the same sex, as well as less depth in the relationship with the participants' fathers and same sex best friends.

The purpose of the present study was to examine the relationship between parenting styles and academic procrastination. The main question of the study was which one of the parenting styles predicts the academic procrastination? Also the effect of the gender variable in this relationship was examined.

## 2. Methods

Participants of this study were 395 Shiraz university students (261 girls and 134 boys) that selected by multi-stages cluster random sampling; from different colleges of Shiraz university.

### 2.1. Measures

#### 2.1.1. Academic procrastination scale (Solomon & Rothblum, 1984)

The academic procrastination scale is comprised of 27 item scale and comprises three subscales. In the original version, the reliability of the measure examined by internal consistency Chronbach alpha method and alpha coefficient was 0.6 Validity of the measures investigated by the factor analysis method. Result of exploratory and confirmatory factor analysis confirmed the validity of measure for use in Iran.

#### 2.1.2. Parenting style scale (Steinberg, 2005)

Steinberg's Parenting Scale (2005) is comprised of 24 item scale and comprises three subscales: acceptance-involvement, psychological autonomy-granting and strictness-supervision. The reliability of the measure examined by internal consistency Chronbach alpha method. The Alpha coefficient for acceptance-involvement was 0.80, for psychological autonomy-granting was 0.74 and for behavioral strictness-supervision was 0.68. The validity of the measures investigated by the factor analysis method. Result of exploratory and confirmatory factor analysis confirmed the validity of measure for use in Iran.

## 3. Results

The results revealed a positive and significant correlation between "behavioral strictness-supervision" parenting style and academic procrastination, and negative and significant correlation between "psychological autonomy-granting" and academic procrastination (Table 1).

Table1. Correlation matrix of academic procrastination and parenting styles

Variable	1	2	3	4
Acceptance-involvement	1			
Psychological autonomy-granting	-0.14	1		
Behavioral strictness-supervision	0.30**	-0.36**	1	
Academic procrastination	-0.06	-0.31**	0.24*	1

\* p<0.05

\*\* p<0.001

Simultaneous multiple regression of academic procrastination total score on the parenting styles subscales, revealed that the "acceptance-involvement" and "psychological autonomy-granting" styles were significant negative predictor of the academic procrastination, whereas the "behavioral strictness-supervision" styles didn't have a significant predict power for the academic procrastination (Table 2).

Table2. Multiple regression of parenting styles on academic procrastination

Criterion Variable Prediction Variables	R	R <sup>2</sup>	Academic procrastination			
			B	$\beta$	t	P<
Acceptance-involvement			-0.17	-0.13	2.01	0.05
Psychological autonomy-granting	0.46	0.21	-0.49	-0.33	5.28	0.00
Behavioral strictness-supervision			0.20	0.08	1.37	N.S

The results of analysis t-test showed that the mean score of boys (26.98) was significantly greater than girls (23.48) in the "acceptance-involvement" parenting style ( $t=3.68$ ,  $p<0.00$ ) and the mean score of boys (58.50) was significantly greater than girls (57.01) in the academic procrastination ( $t=2.08$ ,  $p<0.05$ ). Although, there wasn't significant difference between girls and boys in "psychological autonomy-granting" and "behavioral strictness supervision" parenting styles.

#### 4. Discussion

Results of this study indicated "acceptance-involvement" style was significant negative predictor of the academic procrastination. These parents are warm, acceptor and control their children's behavior appropriately. In other words, parents' supervision is based on keeping individual independence and responsibility in doing homework; these parents provide suitable conditions that their children become an independent person. They encourage their children to involve in doing homework (Joon, 2007); thus, they reduce procrastinating behavior and increase academic achievement in their children (Steinberg, et al., 1994). The current finding is consistent with the finding of Elliot (1993). Findings current study showed "psychological autonomy-granting" style had a significant negative prediction power for the academic procrastination. These parents show tolerance to their children's opinion; however, the parental behavior is a combination of low control and discipline at home. In addition to, they employ restrictions along with logical thinking on children. In these families there are encouragement, acceptance, and confidence toward children as well. Conversely, some researchers expressed these children despite having high self-esteem and discipline in their activities indicate procrastinating behavior (Darling & Steinberg, 1993). Results this study indicated that there was a significant and positive relationship between "behavioral strictness-supervision" style and academic procrastination. These groups of parents are sensitive to their children's developmental needs, and employ low emotional supports towards them. In addition to, they take great restrictions using severe discipline that leads to low verbal communication between parents and children. This parenting style is associated with decreasing of academic achievement in children. Thus, severe control and supervision without attention to children's attitude could lead to academic procrastination in them. Other findings this study indicated that there was a significant difference between boys and girls in academic procrastination; and boys showed more academic procrastination than girls. There are socially different attitudes toward girls and boys in society; for example, providing an appropriate situation for studying, and parents' encouragement and supports in girls could lead to decrease academic procrastination them in comparison with boys. The findings of current study provided evidences that parenting style has an effective effect on decreasing academic procrastination.

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