

Explaining Students' Academic Procrastination Based on Attachment Style: Determining the Mediating Role of Psychological Well-Being

MohammadAgha Delavarpour ^{*1}, Faezeh Baba Ahmadi Milani ², Fatemeh Akbari ³

1. Corresponding Author: Assistant Professor, Educational Psychology Dept., Faculty of Psychology and Educational Sciences, Semnan University, Semnan, Iran E. Mail: mdelavarpour@semnan.ac.ir
2. M.Sc. Student in Psychology, Lorestan University, KhoramAbad, Iran
3. M.Sc. Student in Psychology, Semnan University, Semnan, Iran

Received: 2023-01-22

Accepted: 2023-06-24

Abstract

Aim: The present study aimed to investigate the structural effects of attachment styles on students' academic procrastination, mediated by psychological well-being. This research was performed by the descriptive correlation method. Using multi-stage, random, cluster sampling, 329 students (227 girls and 102 boys) were selected from all the high school students in Shahrekord during the academic year 2021-2022, and the Collins and Read Attachment Styles Questionnaire, Ryff's Psychological Well-Being Scale, and Solomon and Rothblum's Academic Procrastination Scale were completed. Based on the structural equation modeling, psychological well-being acts as a mediator of the influence of attachment styles on academic procrastination. Secure attachment leads to a reduction in academic procrastination by rising well-being, and contrarily, avoidant and anxious insecure attachment increases academic procrastination by decreasing well-being. These findings demonstrate how emotional connections affect mental health and help regulate teenage students' behavior.

Keywords: Attachment, psychological well-being, academic procrastination

Introduction

The successful academic performance of students depends on their behavior. Academic procrastination is one of the behaviors related to the context of learning that is manifested as an irrational desire to leave assignments or assign the start and completion of assignments to the last minute or another time (Yildiz & Iskender, 2021) and that can disrupt the academic progress of students through performance decline and destroyed opportunities. Procrastinator students have low GPAs, weak self-efficacy in self-regulation, a high dropout rate, and a lower level of health (Kurland & Siegel, 2016). Since the internal working models of securely- and insecurely-attached people have been introduced as factors of success and failure in self-regulation (Chen, 2017), procrastination is taken to indicate self-regulation failure (Steel, 2007). Attachment style can therefore be considered a determinant of procrastination. The effect of attachment style is not necessarily direct or one-hundred-percent established. The self-regulation failure hypothesis states that insecure internal working models put a person at risk of serious health issues and psychological disorders and threaten their psychological well-being by weakening the self-system components, such as self-worth and self-esteem (Raouf et al., 2019). Since these well-being determinants have a key role in the tendency toward procrastination (Chen, 2017; Dehghan Marvasti, 2023), it can be inferred that psychological well-being mediates the effects of attachment on procrastination. Academic procrastination is a phenomenon that affects people of all ages and academic levels, but it is more common and destructive in adolescence and therefore raises greater concerns, given the determining nature of this period of human life. In order to better understand how adolescents' academic

procrastination is influenced by their attachment style and psychological well-being, this study will look at the relationship between those two variables.

Methodology

This research was conducted using the descriptive-correlation method. The statistical population included all the upper secondary school students of Shahrekord in the academic year 2021-2022, from which a sample of 329 students were selected by multi-stage cluster sampling, including 227 female and 102 male students. The following instruments were used to collect the data:

Attachment Styles Questionnaire: This tool was developed by Collins and Read in 1991 and consists of 18 items. The respondents' scores are measured on a 5-point Likert scale. The questionnaire has three subscales: Dependence, closeness, and anxiety. The scale developers showed that these subscales remain stable for two and even eight months and reported Cronbach's alpha of 0.78 to 0.85 for them.

Academic Procrastination Scale: This tool was developed in 1984 by Solomon and Rothblum. It contains 27 items that measure the three components of preparing for exams, preparing for assignments, and preparing for essays based on a 5-point Likert scale. The internal validity and consistency of this scale were calculated and reported to be favorable by Jowkar and Delavarpour (Jowkar & Delavarpour, 2007).

Ryff's Psychological Well-Being Scale – Short Form: This measure is an 18-item self-report and closed-answer test based on a 6-point scale (from 'completely disagree' to 'completely agree'). The six-factorial structure as well as the divergent and convergent validity and other psychometric properties of this scale have been approved by researchers (Bayani et al., 2008).

These questionnaires were distributed to the students online. The ethical codes observed during the research included gaining informed consent and maintaining the privacy of the students' data.

Results

Table 1 shows the descriptive indices of the research variables along with their bivariate correlation.

Table 1: Mean, standard deviation, and zero-order correlation of the research variables

variables	1	2	3	4	M	S. D
1. Secure attachment	1				15.65	3.60
2. Avoidant attachment	-0.35**	1			17.70	3.98
3. Anxious attachment	-0.38**	0.45**	1		17.85	5.28
4. well-being	0.35**	-0.36**	-0.42**	1	50.46	10.93
5. Academic procrastination	-0.36**	0.30**	0.44**	-0.66**	79.51	16.13

According to Table 1, there was a significant relationship between all the variables included in the research model. The secure attachment style has a positive relationship with psychological well-being and a negative relationship with academic procrastination. In contrast, avoidant and anxious insecure attachments have a negative relationship with psychological well-being and a positive relationship with academic procrastination. To test the main hypothesis of the research, structural equation modeling (SEM) was used in AMOS software. After checking the assumptions, a statistical analysis was carried out. First, the fit of the theoretical model with the data was calculated according to the indexes in Table 2, and the results showed the good fit of the model with the data.

Table 2: The goodness of fit indices of the research model

indexes	RMSEA	NFI	CFI	AGFI	GFI	d.f	/d.f χ^2
values	0.06	0.90	0.92	0.90	0.91	315	2.227

Figure 1 shows the results of the research model testing with an estimation of the standardized parameters of the research structural model.

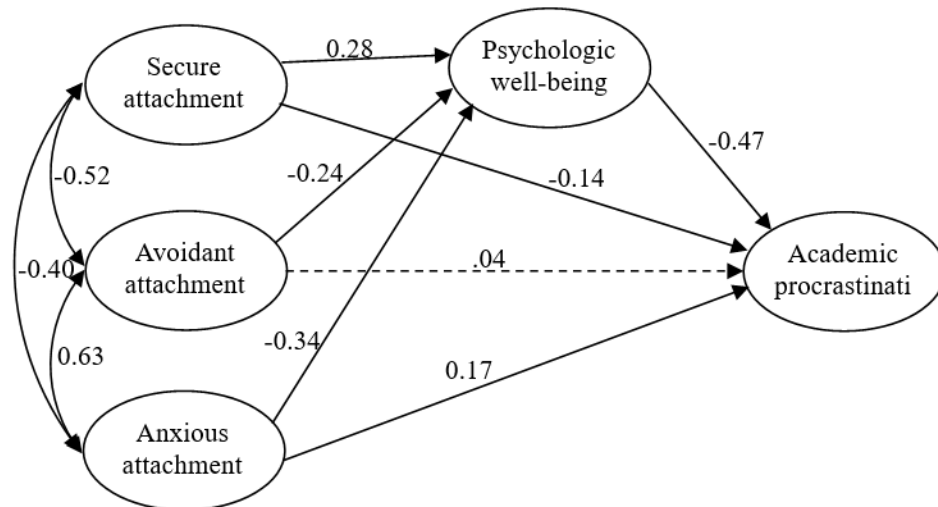


Figure 1. The model for the effect of attachment style on academic procrastination mediated by psychological well-being

The results show that secure attachment has a negative direct effect ($\beta = -0.14$, $p < 0.05$ (Knies et al., 2021) $\beta = 0.17$, $p < 0.03$) on students' academic procrastination. Secure attachment also has a positive direct effect ($\beta = 0.28$, $P < 0.002$) while avoidant attachment ($\beta = -0.24$, $P < 0.03$) and anxious attachment ($\beta = -0.34$, $P < 0.0001$ (Jafari et al., 2021) $\beta = -0.47$, $P < 0.001$) on academic procrastination. The indirect effects, which were examined with the help of the bootstrap technique, showed that secure attachment has a negative and significant indirect effect on academic procrastination through the mediation of psychological well-being ($\beta = -0.13$, $p < 0.02$). Also, the two insecure attachment styles, i.e., avoidant ($\beta = 0.11$, $p < 0.05$) and anxious ($\beta = 0.156$, $p < 0.03$) attachment styles, have a positive indirect effect on academic procrastination mediated by psychological well-being. The R-squared values for academic procrastination were 0.50, which suggests that the current research model explains 50% of the variance in students' academic procrastination.

Discussion and conclusion

The results of this study showed that the conceptual framework of the study, which was based on the contribution of attachment styles to academic procrastination through the mediation of psychological well-being, is appropriate. Academic procrastination is influenced both directly and indirectly by attachment styles, which highlights the significance of interpersonal aspects and emotional ties for academically-counterproductive behaviors, such as procrastination. Instead of mere emphasis on the performance of assignments and offering every amenity to their children and ensuring they have comfortable study settings, parents should try to establish and maintain healthy emotional interactions with their children.

Using self-report questionnaires and conducting the research in only one city and in a specific age range were some of the limitations of this study that reduce the generalizability of its findings. Therefore, we recommend to repeat this research on a larger sample of boys and girls, in separate groups, at other educational levels and in other cities. Also, a training course should be designed and implemented for students and their parents on subjects such as academic problems, attachment styles, and well-being.

Reference

- Bayani, A. A., Mohammad Koochekya, A., & Bayani, A. (2008). Reliability and Validity of Ryff's Psychological Well-being Scales. *Iranian journal of psychiatry and clinical psychology*, 14(2), 146-151. <http://ijpcp.iuims.ac.ir/article-1-464-en.html> (Text in Persian).
- Chen, B. B. (2017). Parent-adolescent attachment and procrastination: The mediating role of self-worth. *J Genet Psychol*, 178(4), 238-245. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00221325.2017.1342593>

- Dehghan Marvasti, S. (2023). The relationship of psychological entitlement and religious orientation with life satisfaction in students with symptoms of academic procrastination: The mediating role of psychological well-being. *Quarterly Journal of New Thoughts on Education*, 19(4), 69-95. <https://doi.org/10.22051/jontoe.2022.37818.3422>
- Jafari, S., Rafiepoor, A., Taheri, A., & Sabet, M. (2021). The mediating role of psychological well-being in the relationship between attachment styles and therapeutic alliances. *Razi Journal of Medical Sciences*, 28(7), 26-36. <http://rjms.iuums.ac.ir/article-1-6633-en.html> (Text in Persian).
- Jowkar, B., & Delavarpour, M. (2007). The relationship between academic procrastination and achievement goals. *New Thoughts on Education*, 3(3), 61-80. <https://doi.org/10.22051/jontoe.2007.312> (Text in Persian).
- Knies, K., Bodalski, E. A., & Flory, K. (2021). Romantic relationships in adults with ADHD: The effect of partner attachment style on relationship quality. *Journal of Social and Personal Relationships*, 38(1), 42-64. <https://doi.org/10.1177/02654075211061617>
- Kurland, R., & Siegel, H. (2016). Attachment and Academic Classroom Behavior: Self-Efficacy and Procrastination as Moderators on the Influence of Attachment on Academic Success. *Psychology*, 07, 1061-1074. <https://doi.org/10.4236/psych.2016.78107>
- Raof, K., Khademi Ashkzari, M., & Naghsh, Z. (2019). Relationship between perfectionism and academic procrastination :the mediating role of academic self-efficacy, self-esteem and academic self-handicapping. *Quarterly Journal of New Thoughts on Education*, 15(1), 207-236. <https://doi.org/10.22051/jontoe.2017.14118.1684>
- Steel, P. (2007). The nature of procrastination: a meta-analytic and theoretical review of quintessential self-regulatory failure. *Psychol Bull*, 133(1), 65-94. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0033-2909.133.1.65>
- Yildiz, B., & Iskender, M. (2021). The secure attachment style oriented psycho-educational program for reducing intolerance of uncertainty and academic procrastination. *Current Psychology*, 40(4), 1850-1863. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12144-018-0112-4>



This article is an open-access article distributed under the terms and conditions of the Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial 4.0 International (CC BY-NC-ND 4.0) (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/>).

How to cite: Delavarpour, M.A., Baba Ahmadi Milani, F., Akbari, F. (2024). Explaining Students' Academic Procrastination Based on Attachment Style: Determining the Mediating Role of Psychological Well-Being. *The Journal of New Thoughts on Education*, 20(2): 7-19. doi: 10.22051/jontoe.2023.42650.3722