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## The Relationship Between Academic Procrastination and Parenting Styles Among Jordanian Undergraduate University Students

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**Abstract:** This study aims to identify the level of academic procrastination among a group of students and its correlation with parenting styles. A sample of 685 male and female undergraduate students was chosen from many different faculties at the Hashemite University. Two questionnaires; academic procrastination and parenting styles, were administered to members of the sample during the academic year 2013/2014. Results indicated that few students (7%) showed a high level of academic procrastination, over half of the students (67%) showed a medium level and approximately a quarter of students (26%) showed a low level of academic procrastination, there was no significant differences between male and female in academic procrastination scores. Final results indicated a significant positive correlation between academic procrastination and parenting styles.

**Keywords:** Academic procrastination, Jordanian university students, Parenting styles, Permissive style.

### INTRODUCTION

The first conceptual framework for this study project, personality traits Solomon and Rothblum [1] pointed out that academic procrastination behavior as doing homework, preparing for exams at the end of the term at the last minute. Loa [2] described procrastination as the unnecessary delaying of activities that one ultimately intends to complete, especially when done to the point of creating emotional discomfort. Schraw, Wadkins, and Olafson [3] defined it “as intentionally deferring or delaying that must be completed”. Popoola [4] described the procrastinator as someone who knows what he wants to do in some sense, can do it, is trying to do it, yet doesn’t do it.

Academic procrastination is considered a common phenomenon in the era we live in and educational settings in modern societies. It appears to be a significant problem among university students in recent years [5, 6]. In fact, it has been estimated that approximately 70% of university students procrastinate [7]. Moreover, Solomon and Rothblum [1] indicated that 46% of their undergraduate participants procrastinated on writing term papers, with 27.6% doing so when studying for exams, and 30.1% when reading weekly assignments. Similarly, Onwuegbuzie [8] reported high levels of academic procrastination with graduates, across the same three tasks of 41.7%, 39.3%, and 60.0, respectively. These percentages appear to be on the rise.

Researchers who have studied academic procrastination estimate that as many as 95% of American college students purposefully delay beginning or completing tasks and that as many as 70% of college students engage in frequent procrastination [9]. Also, Solomon and Rothblum [1] reported that nearly one-quarter of Caucasian –American college students report problems with procrastination on academic tasks. Further, Clark and Hill [10] found that between 30% and 45% of African-American undergraduate students in their sample reported problems with procrastination.

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Academic procrastination is one of the most common and important forms of procrastination prevalent in the field of education and particularly prevalent among school and university students; it is usually represented by the student delaying or postponing assignments resulting in late submissions, coupled with a general reduction in study time and inadequate preparation for exams [11 - 14].

Results of several studies revealed a wide range of negative effects and consequences of academic procrastination including personal, psychological and medical problems [15, 16], resulting in prolonged absences, low classroom attendance, and truancy [17], quote high levels of depression and low self-realization [18], weak academic achievement and worry [13, 19], found students had difficulty in self-regulation [16], were prone to lying [20], high levels of nervousness [13], problems with discipline and authority [21, 22], and psychological stress [23, 24]. Regarding the reasons for academic procrastination, the results of several studies including those of [1, 25, 26] indicated two main reasons: fear of failure and dislike of or aversion to the task, with the first resulting in a high level of anxiety and low level of confidence, whereas the second reflects negative self-esteem.

On one hand, because the relationship between academic procrastination and poor academic outcomes likely is casual [27], it is important to determine factors that may increase undergraduate students' likelihood of procrastination on academic tasks. Academic procrastination can be related to a wide range of contributory causes including environment, family and individual personal factors, with parenting styles being a prime family factor. Scher and Ferrari [28] suggested that family dynamics play an important or essential role in academic procrastination.

Another conceptual framework for this study project is parenting style. Parenting style is as one of the family factors related to procrastination. Some researchers pointed out that the development of academic procrastination in children is affected by exposure to and interaction with parents who serve as models, instructors, and reinforces of certain behaviors [29]. Parents' role as researchers has explored the relations between parental variables and many diverse aspects of adolescents' development including achievement and academic motivation [30], autonomy [31], and adolescent self-worth [32], and far less research on specific aspects of students' academic behavior.

Results from clinical observations and empirical studies have provided evidence for the role of parental influence in the development of procrastination [33, 34]. Academic procrastination was associated with university students' perceptions of high levels of parental criticism and parental expectations [35]. For example, high parental expectations and criticism have been linked to a form of socially-prescribed perfectionism that is positively related to procrastination [36]. Similarly, parenting that is characterized by stern inflexibility and over control has been found to correlate with a measure of decisional procrastination for late adolescent females [34]. Inclusion, Flett, Blankstein, and Martin [23] inferred that "procrastination may be a response to the expectation that parents will respond to self-characteristics in a harsh and controlling manner". So, Szalavitz [37] asserted that parenting styles represent one of the main causes to academic procrastination.

The theoretical frameworks which identify the parenting styles and the impact of these styles on the child's growth and character are varied. Bukatko and Daehlr [38] identify three child-rearing methods: (1) Induction, explaining and illustrating behavior criteria (2) Power assertion, using cruelty, domination, and rejection without explanation (3) Withdrawing or withholding love and affection, emotional isolation and neglect. One of the most important models defining the three types of child-rearing is that of Baumrind [39]: (1) Authoritarian style: ultimate parental control, submission of the child, in addition to limited interaction or verbal dialogue between parents and children. (2) Permissive style: responding to the child's desires without using reprimand or punishment, resulting in a weak sense of obligation, commitment and responsibility (3) Authoritative style: guides the child in a reasonable way, giving full consideration to his individuality. This style encourages verbal dialogue, provides explanation for actions and reprimands, without any retraction of love and acceptance. Based on that model, the following study of social child-rearing by Maccoby and Martin [40] identified the concept of socialization within two basic dimensions: emotion and domination.

Other researchers [41 - 43] agreed that parenting style during the socializing process plays an important role which may be either positive or negative. When positive, the child's character and abilities develop normally in a secure, stable environment likely to promote socio-emotional and academic success where as negative parenting promotes the opposite, weak character formation lacking self-discipline, poor socio-emotional adjustment and low academic achievement.

Other studies indicated that the parenting styles of one or both parents influenced most of the child's character features and traits, as well as their emotional and mental growth [44, 45]. In addition, parenting styles impact the child's

behavior, positive parenting consolidating their motivation towards academic achievement and performance [46, 47]. Burka and Yuen [33] suggested that procrastinators push themselves excessively usually as a result of parental pressure for academic excellence, particularly when parents doubt the child's ability to achieve the success they demand. Also, Milgram and Toubiana [29] hypothesized that parental involvement characterized by high investment of effort (and by inference, high demand upon the child) by parents will reduce the child's academic procrastination more than low investment.

In their study, Ferrari and Olivette [25] required females in late adolescence to rate their parents' authority style and their own tendency toward decisional and avoidant procrastination. Results showed that parents perceived as having an authoritarian parenting style characterized by stern inflexibility and over-control had the greatest influence on daughters, who consequently developed chronic indecision tendencies. Ferrari and Olivette [34] also reported that scores on authoritarian fathers accounted for approximately (10%) of the variance in both decisional and avoidant procrastination. In a study by Loa [2], 157 university students of psychology examined the relationship between academic procrastination and parenting styles. Results showed no correlation between academic procrastination and either authoritarian or permissive parenting styles, but showed a positive correlation between academic procrastination and authoritative parenting styles. Also, Zakeri, Esfahani and Razmjooe [27] conducted research with 261 female and 134 male students at Shiraz University, examining the relationship between parenting styles and academic procrastination. Results showed a significant positive correlation between the behavioral strictness-supervision parenting style and academic procrastination, but showed a significant negative correlation between psychological autonomy-granting and academic procrastination.

In addition, Gender differences with respect to academic procrastination are a controversial issue that may be hard to predict [48]. Although some studies reported significant gender differences [49, 50], other studies reported no such gender differences [1, 51 - 56]. However, some researchers (*e.g.* Haycock, McCarthy & Skay [12], Paludi & Frankell-Hauser [57]) have cautioned that there is evidence that women are at great risk for procrastination than men, and that women may in fact experience greater levels of procrastination-related than do men [19]. Findings of Balkis and Duru [58] on a sample comprising 580 (329 girls, 251 boys) students of teaching course in Pamukkale university showed that men are more intended to procrastination.

In Jordan, the only study was conducted by Abu Ghazal [51] who investigated the prevalence of academic procrastination and its cause from the point of view of the undergraduate students. The sample consisted of (751) undergraduate students (222 male, 529 female), from all faculties of Yarmouk University, Jordan. The results showed that 21.6% of participants exhibited a high level of procrastination, 60.3% participants exhibited an average level, and 18.1% of them exhibited a low level. No significant differences were found due to students' gender. The result also showed that the causes are order in this: fear of failure, instructor style, aversive task, risk taking, resisting discipline control, and classmate pressure.

### **The Current Study**

Thus, the purpose of the present study was to expand the literature in the areas of parenting styles and procrastination. Despite a few number of studies engaging in academic procrastination in the world, no research- as our knowledge- has been conducted in Arab countries, especially in Jordan, to determine the causal factors contributing to the academic procrastination among Jordanian students. Surprisingly, however, no research appears to have examined the relationship between academic procrastination and parenting styles among undergraduate Jordanian students. Because this link has not been empirically investigated in Arab countries. The problem of this study is an investigation the relationship between academic procrastination and parenting styles among a group of students at the Hashemite University in Jordan. Specifically, this study attempts to answer the following questions:

- What is the extent of academic procrastination among the Hashemite University students?
- Is there any differences in academic procrastination attributed to students' gender(male, female)?
- Is there a correlation between academic procrastination and parenting styles among the Hashemite University students?

### **Significant of the Study**

The findings from this investigation could facilitate the construction of strategies designed to improve Jordanian undergraduate student performance and instruction at the undergraduate level. Moreover, Findings of this study can be

beneficial within the domain of psychological guidance of university students. More specifically, the theoretical importance of this study lies in the fact that as we help the development of knowledge boundaries, the efficient factors of academic procrastination becomes clearer and the importance of this paper lies in determining the parenting styles to avoid academic procrastination. Nevertheless, to further understand the factors contributing to academic procrastination in university settings, we believed it was important to investigate the effects of gender and its relationship the parenting styles to academic procrastination. The results of the present study may provide important cues for counselors and university staff to develop new programs that may reduce the negative effects of such behaviors on students' academic procrastination. Consequently, it may be significant for the students who would like to reduce the power of procrastination. We expected that the present study would expand the limited literature about academic procrastination associated with parenting styles within Jordanian higher education systems and, thus, possibly lead to cross-cultural comparisons of academic procrastination.

## **METHODOLOGY**

### **Participants**

A sample of 685 undergraduate students was selected by multi –stage cluster random sampling; from different faculties of the Hashemite University in the academic year 2013/2014. The distribution of the sample according to gender was 285 (42%) males and 400 (58%) females. In terms of academic grade level, 198 (28.9%) of the participants were first level, 199(29.1%) of the participants were second level, 110 (16.8%) were third level and 178 (25.2%) were fourth level. Therefore, participants' ages ranged from 18 to 22 years.

### **Measures**

Research instruments included two scales:

#### ***Academic Procrastination Questionnaire (APQ)***

The APQ was developed by Abu-Ghazal [51] to measure undergraduate Jordanian academic procrastination. The APQ is a one-dimensional Likert-type questionnaire consisting of 21 items, all items are scored on the five-point Likert scale ranging from totally disagree 1 to totally agree 5. High scores indicate the subjects have a high level of academic procrastination.

The APQ has a Cronbach alpha reliability coefficient of 0.90.also; results of exploratory and confirmatory factor analysis confirmed the validity of questionnaire for use in Jordan. In the present study, Cronbach alpha was calculated at 0.89 for this questionnaire. Because the APQ was developed on a sample of undergraduate Jordanian university students, and this sample is a similar to a sample in this study, we decided using it in this study.

#### ***Parental Authority Questionnaire (PAQ)***

The Parental Authority Questionnaire by Buri [59] was used to measure Baumrind's (1971) three parental styles: permissive, authoritarian and authoritative, which contains 30 items which evaluate the dimensions permissive (10items), authoritarian (10items) and authoritative (10items). Each item is rated on a 5-point, Likert-type scale ranging from 1, strongly disagree, to 5, strongly agree. Buri [59] provides evidence of the test-retest and internal consistency reliability, as well as the validity of the measure for identification of the three parental authority prototypes. The 2-week test-retest scores for the three prototypes ranged from 0.78 for authoritativeness to 0.92 for authoritarianism. The prototype subscales demonstrate acceptable internal consistency with Cronbach coefficient alpha values ranging from 0.74 for permissiveness to 0.78 for authoritarianism. The parental authoritative prototype score was reported to have a strong positive relation with adolescent self-esteem [60].

In this study, it was translated to Arabic by the first author , back-translated to English by the second author, and revised by three instructors in educational psychology department. The questionnaire was piloted to check for language accuracy. The authors obtained the following indices of reliability (Cronbach's alpha; 0.77 for authoritativeness, 0.79 for authoritarianism, and 0.73 for permissiveness) and test retest ( $r=0.80$ ) for authoritativeness, ( $r=0.91$  for authoritarianism, and ( $r=0.85$ ) for permissiveness) which are highly consisted with original questionnaire.

### **Procedures**

We collected all the data from survey respondents by means of questionnaires in late summer 2014. The package included a letter that explained the purpose of the study and requested voluntary participation. The participants were

given around 40 minutes to answer the two questionnaires during their regular class time. They were also informed that there was no right or wrong answers. Participants were assured that their responses were kept within strict confidentiality and solely used for the purpose of the study. They were then asked to complete the survey individually; all who were asked did so.

**Data Analysis**

Data acquired from measurements instruments have been recorded by SPSS17 statistics program and essential analyses have been carried out. Statistics such as means, standard deviations, t-test, correlation coefficients, and standard multiple regression were used for determining and explaining relationships among variables.

**RESULTS**

**1<sup>st</sup> Question: What is the Extent of Academic Procrastination Among the Hashemite University Students?**

To answer this question, means and standard deviations were calculated for the sample participants' responses on the scale of academic procrastination. Table 1 provides the detailed results of this descriptive analysis.

**Table 1. Means and standard deviations for the participants' responses on the academic procrastination scale items.**

Items	M	SD	Rank
I do my assignments daily and regularly, so I am punctual with my course work.	3.03	1	2
When exam time approaches, I find myself busy with other things.	2.78	1.15	12
I usually hurry to complete academic missions before the deadline.	2.88	1.26	7
I always say to myself that I will complete my assignments tomorrow.	2.67	1.26	18
I usually start doing study duties immediately after being assigned them.	2.93	1.14	5
I finish my duties before the deadline.	3.01	1.18	3
I postpone my duties till the last moment.	2.82	1.19	11
I try to find excuses to justify my delay in doing study assignments.	2.71	1.29	16
I always waste time.	2.75	1.23	14
I always finish the important assignments and I have extra time.	3.07	1.17	1
I say to myself that I will do my duties then I change my mind.	2.76	1.14	13
I follow the plan I set for completing my assignments.	2.94	1.20	4
When I have difficult duties, I believe in delaying them.	2.72	1.07	15
I delay doing duties without justification even if they are important.	2.90	1.17	6
I delay doing duties regardless of their nature (exciting or not).	2.87	1.15	9
I feel uncomfortable when thinking about starting doing my duties.	2.85	1.21	10
I don't postpone a duty I think it is necessary to do it.	2.88	1.20	7
I do lots of entertaining activities so I don't have enough time for studying.	2.71	1.27	16
I always think I have enough time later, so it is not necessary to actually start studying.	2.47	1.67	21
Postponing academic duties is considered a real problem which I suffer from.	2.49	1.22	20
I stop studying early in order to do more enjoyable things.	2.66	1.22	19
Total	2.80	1.21	

Table 1 shows that means for the participants' responses on the scale of academic procrastination ranged from (3.07-2.47) with the highest for the item "I always finish the important assignments and I have extra time", whereas the lowest was for the item "I always think I have enough time later, so it is not necessary to actually start studying". The mean for the scale as a whole was (2.80). To identify the level of academic procrastination among the university students, means were divided as follows: 2.38 and less - low delay, 2.39 - 3.57 medium delay, 3.58 and above - high delay.

Also, frequencies and percentages were calculated for the academic procrastination levels among the sample participants as seen in Table 2.

Table 2 shows that the highest percentage for the distribution of participants on the academic procrastination scale was 67% for medium level delay, followed by 26% for low level delay, whereas high level delay showed the lowest percentage of 7%.

**Table 2. Frequencies and percentages for academic procrastination levels.**

Levels of academic procrastination	Frequencies	Percentage
High level	45	7%
Average level	460	67%
Low level	180	26%
Total	685	100%

### 2<sup>nd</sup> Question: Is There any Differences in Academic Procrastination Attributed to Students' Gender (Male, Female)?

In order to examine gender differences on academic procrastination, an independent sample t-test performed. There was no significant differences between male ( $M= 2.76$ ,  $S.D=.57$ ) and female ( $M=2.84$ ,  $S.D=.59$ ) in academic procrastination scores ( $p< 005$ ). The calculated t- value (1.25) is smaller than the table value (1.96), DF 683.

### 3<sup>rd</sup> Question: Is There a Correlation between Academic Procrastination and Parenting Styles Among the Hashemite University Students?

To answer this question, Pearson correlation coefficient was used between academic procrastination and parenting styles. Table 3 provides the detailed results of this correlation analysis.

**Table 3. Correlation matrix of academic procrastination and parenting styles.**

Variables	1	2	3	4
Authoritative style	1			
Authoritarian style	0.10**	1		
Permissive style	0.24**	0.14*	1	
Academic procrastination	0.32*	0.36*	0.21*	1

\*( $P<0.01$ ). \*\*( $P< 0.05$ ).

Table 3 shows a positive and statistically significant relationship at the level ( $\alpha=0.05$ ) between academic procrastination and parenting styles (authoritative, authoritarian and permissive).

### Multiple Regression Analysis

**Table 4. Hierarchical regression of parenting styles and academic procrastination.**

Parenting styles		R	R <sup>2</sup>	F	$\beta$	T	sig
Authoritative style	Academic procrastination	.315	.099	75.269	.315	8.676	.00
Authoritarian style		.360	.129	101.566	.360	10.078	.00
Permissive style		.212	.045	32.026	.212	5.659	.00

Table 4 shows the results of the stepwise regression analysis using parenting styles as predicted academic procrastination.

The results shown in Table 4 show that the authoritative parenting styles are significant predictors of academic procrastination:  $R^2 =0.099$ ,  $F= 75.269$ ,  $P<0.005$ . These results were supported by the close to moderate correlation between three variables ( $r= 0.315$ ), approximately 9.9% of the variance in student academic procrastination was accounted for by authoritative parenting styles. Authoritarian parenting styles are significant predictors of academic procrastination:  $R^2 =0.129$ ,  $F= 101.566$ ,  $P<0.005$ . These results were supported by the close to moderate correlation between three variables ( $r= 0.360$ ), approximately 12.9% of the variance in student academic procrastination was accounted for by authoritarian parenting styles. Permissive parenting styles are significant predictors of academic procrastination:  $R^2 =0.045$ ,  $F= 32.026$ ,  $P<0.005$ . These results were supported by the close to moderate correlation between three variables ( $r= 0.212$ ), approximately 4.5% of the variance in student academic procrastination was accounted for by permissive parenting styles.

### DISCUSSION

This study aimed firstly to identify the extent of academic procrastination among the Hashemite University students,

and also to investigate the correlation between academic procrastination and parenting styles. Analysis of results of participants' responses to the first questionnaire (APQ) indicated that 67% of the students demonstrated a medium level of procrastination, 26% a low level, and 7% a high level. This result could be explained in light of individual characteristics, students with high academic achievement being strongly self-motivated, realizing that success depends upon his own abilities, capacities, work style and performance; on the other hand, the student whose tendency is exterior is more likely to believe that performance and success depend upon luck and chance as well as other external factors, rather than on his own work ethic and performance. Thus, it appears logical for the student with an exterior-discipline tendency to postpone or avoid doing the required tasks since they are outside his influence zone, and to rely on instigation and motivation of external influences. Therefore, the attitudes of self-motivated (internal) students and those dependent on external motivation are totally contrary. The results of this study differed from those of previous studies [ 19, 58, 61] which asserted a high frequency of academic procrastination among university students.

Also, results revealed that no gender differences were found in the present study in academic procrastination. Nevertheless, the fact that academic procrastination doesn't change according to gender, as well as the fact that the overwhelming majority of previous research has documented that males and females report similar levels of academic procrastination [51, 54, 56], suggest that the findings of the present study may be similarly generalizable to both male and female undergraduate students.

The second aim of this study was to investigate the correlation between academic procrastination and parenting styles among Jordanian students. Results revealed the existence of a positive and statistically significant relation between academic procrastination and parenting styles (authoritative, authoritarian and permissive). This result could be explained in light of the fact that parenting styles which are harsh and unkind increase the level of academic procrastination among students, resulting in low commitment, attention and concentration on academic tasks, all of which negatively affect students' academic achievement. Therefore, parenting styles have a primary influence on the development of academic procrastination. In addition, there is a great deal of empirical evidence to suggest that parenting variables have a significant effect on the development of the child's character and personality traits. For example a parenting style characterized by acceptance and involvement, as well as strictness and supervision (authoritative parenting style) is associated with children who tend to be independent, self-assertive, friendly with peers, and cooperative with parents.

Parenting styles may directly influence the development of many different character traits including that of academic procrastination. Faulty parenting, unrealistic goals demanded by parents and the linking of goal achievement to parental affection, results in feelings of anxiety and worthlessness which can eventually lead to the procrastination syndrome. This manifests in "slow daydreaming paralysis" towards task achievement [62].

Parents should always beware of resorting to orders or commands related to study tasks. Students of all ages generally respond to the democratic rearing pattern and parents try to personalize its disciplines and behavioral criteria. The child is less likely to balk at or rebel against this style of upbringing because it includes fair and acceptable regulation, rather than random or dictatorial rules. Consequently, children feel they have competency which in turn reinforces their feelings of self- esteem, maturity and independence [63].

## **CONCLUSION**

Results from the present study revealed a significant relation between parenting styles and academic procrastination. Our findings suggest that parenting styles may be critical for understanding the nature of academic procrastination. Thus, the finding may provide a valuable insight for counselors who are providing services to procrastinators. Further, remediation may be enhanced through a better understanding of this relation.

The most significant limitation of this study is that conducted on 400 students who have been studying in the Hashemite university of the 2013/2014 academic years and who were answered the measuring and assessments instruments used in the research process correctly and precisely. Also, the data in this study were collected only through self-report scales. Therefore, it is hard to generalize this finding to other student population. Further research is needed to determine whether or not the findings may be generalized to other student populations.

Finally, the researchers recommended that further studies should be conducted based on other variables at a different university. Also, future research studies should include an investigation of the correlation between academic procrastination and personality and cognitive factors. Last, because findings in the present study reveal cultural differences, future researchers may consider investigating cross-cultural issues regarding academic procrastination

**CONFLICT OF INTEREST**

The authors confirm that this article content has no conflict of interest.

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