

# Lenient-Understanding Parenting and the Academic Grit of Secondary School Students: The Mediating Effects of Academic Interest and the Sense of Meaning in Study

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**Abstract:** *The study investigates how lenient-understanding parenting affects the academic grit of secondary school students from the perspective of positive psychology, based on a questionnaire survey of 2,101 secondary school students. Its research findings reveal a significantly positive correlation between lenient-understanding parenting and student academic grit, which is mediated by student academic interest and the student's sense of meaning in study.*

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**Keywords:** *Lenient-Understanding Parenting; Academic Grit; Academic Interest; Sense of Meaning in Study*

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## Introduction

This study investigates the relationship between lenient-understanding parenting and the academic grit of secondary school students and analyzes the mediating effects of student academic interest and the student's sense of meaning in study on the relationship, from the perspective of positive psychology. The study's results reveal the positive effects of lenient-understanding parenting on academic progress of secondary school students, which provide new perspectives on school and home education, as well as evidence for relevant education policies and practices.

## Research Methodology

### *Sources of Data*

Using the method of cluster sampling, the study surveyed 2,300 secondary school students through questionnaires. A total of 2,101 valid questionnaires (97.72% of the questionnaires distributed) were retrieved. The sample consists of 1,233 male and 868 female students, with an average age of 16.012 years. Among them, 681 were junior secondary, 1,164 senior secondary, and 256 vocational students.

### *The Analysis Model and Variables*

A mediating effect model was created to facilitate a thorough examination of how lenient-understanding parenting affects the academic grit of secondary school students. In this model, lenient-understanding parenting is the core explanatory variable, measured with the Parenting Style Questionnaire developed by Zhang and Liu (2013). Student academic grit is the dependent variable, assessed with the Secondary School Student Grit Self-Report Scale created by Li et al. (2020). For a more precise evaluation of the effects of lenient-understanding parenting on student academic grit, the study introduces two mediating variables, namely student academic interest and the student's sense of meaning in study. They are measured with the Interest-Enjoyment Subscale from the Intrinsic Motivation Inventory (Markland & Hardy, 1997) and the subscale with the items on the meaning of study and its

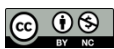
pursuit from the Senses of Meaning in Life Scale (adapted by Cheng et al., 2019), respectively. The study conducts Pearson correlation analysis and mediation effect analysis via Model 6 of the PROCESS macro developed by Hayes, using the software SPSS 24.0.

## Research Findings

- There is a significant positive correlation between lenient-understanding parenting and student academic grit ( $r = 0.268$ ,  $p < 0.01$ ), indicating that this parenting style can directly predict student academic grit.
- Student academic interest and the student's sense of meaning in study have significant mediating effects on the relationship between lenient-understanding parenting and student academic grit, including (i) the independent mediating effect of student academic interest, with an effect size of 0.091, accounting for 34.04% of the total effect; (ii) the independent mediating effect of the student's sense of meaning in study, with an effect size of 0.005, accounting for 1.91% of the total effect; (iii) the chain mediating effect of student academic interest and the student's sense of meaning in study, with an effect size of 0.013, accounting for 4.89% of the total effect. The combined mediation effects account for 40.84% of the total effect, with student academic interest contributing the most (34.04%).
- Lenient-understanding parenting heightens student academic grit by fostering their academic interest and senses of meaning in study.

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