

The Relationship between Parental Autonomy Support and Academic Procrastination in Junior High School Students: The Role of Time Management Disposition

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Abstract: In the contemporary educational context, academic procrastination is a prevalent phenomenon among junior high school students. This behavior not only adversely affects students' immediate academic performance but may also exert long-term negative impacts on their psychological well-being and career development. Grounded in Self-Determination Theory, this study examines how parental autonomy support influences academic procrastination through its effect on individuals' time management disposition. The research aims to provide theoretical support for mitigating learning procrastination and enhancing time management skills among junior high school students. Furthermore, it seeks to offer a theoretical basis for improving family education practices and fostering the positive development of adolescents.

Keywords: Parental Autonomy Support, Time Management Disposition, Academic Procrastination.

1. Academic Procrastination

1.1. Concept of Academic Procrastination

Samuel Johnson (1751) characterized procrastination as a universal and irrational form of conduct, describing it as the persistent tendency among individuals to defer tasks that require timely completion[9]. A synthesis of extant research reveals that the construct of procrastination can be delineated through several distinct lenses: From an affective and behavioral standpoint, Solomon and Rothblum (1984) conceptualized procrastination as a voluntary postponement of intended activities, which is typically accompanied by psychological discomfort[32]. Ferrari (1998) expanded this understanding by delineating four defining attributes: goal significance, behavioral deferral, adverse outcomes, and accompanying negative affect[7]. Cognitively, Steel (2007) underscored that procrastination entails the conscious decision to delay action in spite of anticipating detrimental repercussions, thereby representing a fundamentally irrational choice[27]. Collectively, these perspectives establish procrastination as a multifaceted phenomenon that spans cognitive, affective, and behavioral domains, and is commonly associated with distressing emotional experiences.

Regarding academic procrastination specifically, scholarly interpretations have evolved along several lines: Through an affective lens, Solomon and Rothblum (1984) and Li Hongxia (2019) defined it as a conduct that elicits unease or negative emotions resulting from the postponement of academic obligations[26]. From a cognitive orientation, Blunt (2000) and Dietz (2007) construed it as students' deliberate, yet irrational, propensity to delay learning-related tasks. Situationally, Lin Chongde et al. (2013) confined the concept specifically to task delay within educational contexts[2], while Lay (1994), adopting an executive standpoint, interpreted it as a discrepancy between planning and implementation[30]. In synthesis, academic procrastination may be comprehensively understood as students' counterproductive deferral of academic responsibilities during the learning process, which consequently leads to undesirable outcomes.

1.2. Research on Academic Procrastination

Research on academic procrastination primarily concerns its causes, which can be categorized into individual/internal factors and external/situational factors. At the individual level, differential psychology emphasizes the influence of personality traits and cognitive styles: Individuals high in Conscientiousness procrastinate less due to stronger responsibility and self-control, whereas negative perfectionists are more prone to procrastination due to self-doubt and excessively high standards[2]. From the perspective of motivational and volitional psychology, students with high self-efficacy and strong time management skills can cope with academic challenges more effectively, thereby reducing procrastination[29]. The clinical psychology perspective focuses on emotional factors, suggesting that anxiety and depression can exacerbate procrastination, and procrastination behavior may in turn reinforce negative emotions [19].

At the external situational level, task characteristics significantly influence procrastination: individuals are more likely to postpone starting tasks perceived as highly difficult, numerous, or stressful[26]. Thus, academic procrastination is influenced by a combination of internal factors such as personality, motivation, and emotion, and external factors such as task context. This article primarily focuses on the internal factors within the junior high school student population, exploring their mechanism of influence on academic procrastination.

2. Parental Autonomy Support

2.1. Concept of Parental Autonomy Support

The concept of autonomy support is rooted within the framework of Self-Determination Theory, which posits three basic psychological needs: autonomy, competence, and relatedness[1][18]. It refers to caregivers' capacity to adopt the child's perspective and engage in non-controlling interactions, thereby acknowledging and supporting the child's self-regulation and autonomy through providing

choices, encouraging self-initiated behaviors, and minimizing pressure and coercion[3].

Specifically addressing parental autonomy support, Grolnick and Ryan (1989) operationally defined it as parenting practices that employ strategies such as encouraging children to solve problems independently, granting children rights to choose and participate in decision-making[10], providing rationales for expectations and rules, and acknowledging and accepting their emotional experiences, along with the degree of value parents place on these practices[6] [11]. Its essence lies in fostering children's internal behavioral motivations, rather than compelling achievement outcomes through coercive external factors such as disciplinary constraints, applied pressure, or punishment. The core characteristics of this parenting style are its "child-centered" and "non-controlling" nature.

2.2. Research on Parental Autonomy Support

Synthesizing relevant scholarly work, research on perceived parental autonomy support primarily examines its impact on individual psychology and behavior from the perspective of positive youth development. The first strand of research emphasizes its promotive role in psychological development. Studies indicate that parental autonomy support can enhance adolescents' sense of autonomy and stimulate intrinsic learning motivation[12], while also facilitating the internalization of external motivations[16][20][22]. Such support also contributes to improved emotional adjustment and well-being, reducing feelings of loneliness[28]. Concurrently, the emotional support provided by parents satisfies adolescents' need for autonomy, thereby enhancing their self-identity and life satisfaction[30].

The second strand of research focuses on its external influences on individual behavior. Adolescents who perceive higher levels of parental autonomy support demonstrate more positive academic outcomes, such as higher academic achievement and homework completion rates[13], and exhibit a significantly reduced risk of school dropout[8]. Furthermore, it can function as a protective factor, effectively reducing the incidence of issues such as internet addiction among adolescents[4]. In summary, perceived parental autonomy support exerts simultaneous influences on both the psychological development and behavioral performance of adolescents. However, whether it indirectly affects behavior through psychological mechanisms requires further in-depth investigation. Therefore, this article aims to explore this pathway and elucidate the underlying mechanisms of influence.

3. Time Management Disposition

3.1. Concept of Time Management Disposition

In 2001, Professors Huang Xiting and Zhang Zhijie pioneered the systematic conceptualization of "Time Management Disposition" (TMD) within Chinese psychological research, defining it as a stable personality trait manifested through an individual's attitudes towards time, planning behaviors, and resultant actions. Grounded in this definition, they constructed a three-dimensional theoretical model, segmenting time management disposition into three core components: Time Value Sense, referring to an individual's fundamental beliefs about the value and function of time; Time Monitoring Sense, indicating the individual's capability and behavior in practically utilizing and

orchestrating time[15]; and Time Efficacy Sense, reflecting the individual's confidence in assessing their own time management abilities. These three dimensions constitute an integrated system that comprehensively reveals the psychological and behavioral characteristics of individuals in their application of time[14]. The proposition of this theoretical model provided a crucial foundation for the scientific measurement and intervention of time management behaviors among adolescents within the Chinese cultural context.

3.2. Research on Time Management Disposition

The management and utilization of time by individuals have consistently been a subject of scholarly inquiry [25]. As psychological and behavioral characteristics demonstrated in time utilization, the effects of time management disposition are fully realized only when applied within specific domains, such as learning or work [31].

Previous research has primarily explored this construct across three dimensions: First, studies have consistently revealed marked individual differences in time management disposition, with research indicating a significant positive correlation with Conscientiousness[21]. Second, time management disposition exerts a substantial influence on academic performance. It serves as a key predictor of academic procrastination and is itself shaped by a combination of internal and external factors, including parenting styles and self-esteem[23]. Individuals possessing stronger management capabilities demonstrate greater proficiency in planning time and executing tasks. Third, time management disposition plays a positive role in mental health, effectively mitigating stress, enhancing well-being, and significantly reducing the risk of depression[5].

In summary, time management disposition not only exhibits considerable individual variation but also holds significant implications for both academic achievement and psychological health.

4. The Relationship between Parental Autonomy Support, Time Management Disposition, and Academic Procrastination

4.1. Relationship between Parental Autonomy Support and Academic Procrastination

Within the developmental trajectory of adolescents, parents assume a critically influential role, wherein their values, educational approaches, and parenting styles significantly shape the psychological and behavioral development of junior high school students. As delineated by Self-Determination Theory, autonomy support encompasses not only respect for individual choice but also the provision of information and validation conducive to valuable decision-making[3]. When junior high school students are situated within an environment characterized by substantial parental autonomy support, they perceive proactive encouragement and backing from their parents. This perception facilitates the exploration of their inherent potential, promotes active adaptation to academic and life challenges, and fosters the development of essential competencies in the process [8]. Such a supportive familial atmosphere is paramount for cultivating adolescents' self-efficacy and intrinsic motivation, thereby contributing to the

formation of positive life outlooks and values, and establishing a solid foundation for future social functioning.

Research by McCown et al. (1987) indicated that when students receive emotional support and understanding from parents in their learning and daily lives, they are more likely to develop robust independence and self-management capabilities[24]. This form of emotional support can stimulate students' willingness to learn and proactive engagement, consequently reducing the occurrence of academic procrastination. Domestic studies corroborate this view, demonstrating that the greater the emotional warmth and understanding provided by parents to elementary school students, the lower the likelihood of children exhibiting procrastination behaviors[30]. Zheng Zhiguo et al. (2018), in their study involving senior elementary school students and their parents, found that parental warmth and understanding effectively diminished children's level of procrastination. Furthermore, findings from Gao Shuang (2018) also indicated a negative correlation between parental autonomy support and learning procrastination among 4th to 6th-grade elementary school students[8]. This suggests that parental support operates not only on an emotional level but also plays a pivotal role in nurturing children's autonomy.

4.2. The Role of Time Management Disposition in the Relationship between Parental Autonomy Support and Academic Procrastination

Won and Yu (2018) highlighted in their research that parental autonomy support can significantly promote students' engagement in purposeful and efficient time management [18]. This support not only encourages students to establish clear goals but also assists them in adopting effective strategies to achieve these objectives, while concurrently avoiding inappropriate time use[17]. Autonomy support includes respecting students' personal choices, providing necessary resources and information, and recognizing students' efforts and accomplishments—all of which constitute crucial factors in developing students' time management capabilities. Moreover, the research by Zheng Zhiguo et al. (2018) further emphasized the role of positive parenting styles in the formation of an individual's time management disposition[30]. They discovered that when parents employ child-rearing practices characterized by warmth, understanding, and support for children's autonomy, children are more likely to develop a rational time management disposition. This disposition encompasses not only the recognition of time's value and the capacity for time monitoring but also the perception and evaluation of time-use efficiency.

Research conducted both domestically and internationally has demonstrated that Time Management Disposition (TMD) is a variable with significant predictive power concerning learning procrastination[26]. It is regarded as a key factor influencing an individual's procrastination behavior. Specifically, students with weaker time management abilities often demonstrate poorer academic performance and are more likely to exhibit learning procrastination. Conversely, the stronger an individual's time management ability, the lower their level of learning procrastination[8].

Additionally, the study by Wang Jinxia and Wang Jichun (2015) further pointed out that elementary school students' accurate perception of the importance of time facilitates effective time planning and scheduling[32]. This cognitive

awareness can enhance students' capabilities in time management, enabling them to allocate their time scientifically and rationally, thereby reducing the occurrence of learning procrastination.

5. Conclusion

In the contemporary educational landscape, the pervasive phenomenon of academic procrastination among junior high school students represents a significant deviation from the ideals of effective learning and personal development. Academic procrastination not only compromises students' immediate academic performance but also poses potential long-term consequences for their psychological well-being and professional trajectories. Severe manifestations of this behavior can engender negative affective states, including self-reproach and guilt, potentially perpetuating cycles of self-denigration. Consequently, addressing and moderating academic procrastination in junior high school students presents an urgent practical imperative. This paper, by examining how parental autonomy support and time management disposition influence academic procrastination—with particular attention to the potential mediating role of time management disposition in the relationship between parental autonomy support and academic procrastination—aims to provide a theoretical foundation for subsequent empirical investigation.

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