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## The Mediating Role of Adolescent-Parent Conflict in The Relationship Between Academic Procrastination, Personality Traits, and Identity Styles in Adolescents

Mina. Abdolahi<sup>1</sup>, Maryam. Salehyan<sup>1\*</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Assistant Professor, Department of Psychology, Komesh Non-Governmental Higher Education Institute, Semnan, Iran.

\* Corresponding author email address: dr.maryam.salehyan@gmail.com

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### ABSTRACT

**Purpose:** Academic procrastination or procrastination is a common problem in the educational system, referring to the prevalent tendency of learners to delay performing assignments and academic activities to the extent that it alters the individual's effective performance. The study investigates the mediating role of adolescent-parent conflict in the relationship between academic procrastination, personality traits, and identity styles in adolescents.

**Methodology:** This applied research, conducted through a descriptive survey methodology, involved a sample of 375 out of 16,347 high school students from Tehran's districts 5 and 22, selected via stratified random sampling. Data were gathered using standardized questionnaires on academic procrastination (Solomon & Rothblum, 1984), personality traits (NEO-FFI by Costa & McCrae, 1992), identity styles (Berzonsky, 1989), and adolescent-parent conflict (short version for adolescents by Prinz et al., 1979), validated for content validity and reliability with Cronbach's alpha coefficient. Structural equation modeling and software SmartPLS version 2 and SPSS version 19 were used to test hypotheses.

**Findings:** Results indicated significant negative relationships between academic procrastination and adolescents' personality traits and identity styles, and positive relationships between personality traits and identity styles. Adolescent-parent conflict was found to mediate the relationship between academic procrastination and both personality traits and identity styles in adolescents.

**Conclusion:** In conclusion, this research not only advances our theoretical understanding of academic procrastination but also suggests practical implications for educators, parents, and policymakers aiming to support adolescents' academic and personal development. Future research should continue to explore the multifaceted nature of procrastination, particularly in relation to family dynamics and educational settings, to develop more effective interventions and support mechanisms.

**Keywords:** Adolescent-Parent Conflict, Academic Procrastination, Personality Traits, Identity Styles.

## 1. Introduction

Adolescence is a period of rapid biological and psychosocial changes, and conflicts play a significant role in shaping parent-child relationships during this developmental stage (Branje, 2018). A meta-analysis synthesized the literature on parent-adolescent conflict, distinguishing disagreement, hostility, and composite measures of disagreement and hostility, providing a comprehensive understanding of the multifaceted nature of conflicts (Weymouth et al., 2016). Furthermore, studies have investigated the reconstruction of conflict memories and their association with adolescent attachment, adding depth to the understanding of the cognitive and emotional aspects of conflicts (Dykas et al., 2010).

In this regard, academic procrastination or procrastination is a common problem in the educational system, referring to the prevalent tendency of learners to delay performing assignments and academic activities to the extent that it alters the individual's effective performance (Popova & Pronenko, 2023). Procrastination is one of the behavioral manifestations that occurs frequently among students and is linked to their academic status (Safari & Yousefpoor, 2022), leading to their academic, psychological, and physical failure. Researchers believe that procrastination causes high levels of anxiety and depression in students, lowers their self-esteem (Yockey, 2016), and is therefore one of the most important causes of learners' failure to succeed in learning and achieving their academic advancement program.

The destructive effects of procrastination and some individuals' inability to make appropriate decisions in the shortest possible time have posed serious challenges for researchers, raising questions about the causes and contexts of the emergence of procrastination and ways to treat it (Azizah, 2022). In this regard, various theories and models have been proposed that consider different antecedents and factors for academic procrastination. Based on these theories, research has been conducted, most of which are correlational, pointing to the relationship of procrastination with certain motivational, personality, or environmental variables. Individuals differ in their perception and confrontation with various tasks, events, and conflicts due to their personality traits. Some personality traits can play a significant role in the etiology and progression of disorders and also affect academic success (Mastrotheodoros et al., 2019). Cattell (1978) states that personality plays a role beyond intelligence in educational success. Therefore,

personality traits impact academic procrastination (Hong et al., 2015).

On the other hand, procrastination is associated with problems in various aspects of the self. The formation of self-concept begins in adolescence, a period when teenagers strive to find their place and develop a sense of self. Berzonsky (2003) considers identity as a conceptual structure combined with self-exploration and self-regulation, enabling individuals to have different styles and approaches to theorizing about themselves, with their performances reflecting different "self" theories (Rafezi & Hakami, 2020). Erikson (1963) views the outcome of achieving a stable identity as the establishment of commitment to values and goals. According to Lay et al. (2004), self-identity holds a distinct position in the procrastination literature (Bahari & Farkish, 2019).

One of the problems families sometimes face in raising their children is the disobedience and opposition of children to their parents' wishes, typically occurring during puberty and adolescence. These conflicts arise as children, with increasing age, seek changes in their parents' behavior, while parents often have an idealized image of a child in mind, always comparing their child to their ideals, fueling parent-child conflicts (Thomas et al., 2022). Families that interact and communicate warmly and intimately with their children achieve positive outcomes and report satisfying parent-child interactions (Weymouth et al., 2016), whereas negative and controlling parental behaviors in interactions with their children and, more broadly, family dysfunction, especially during adolescence, cause a rift in their interactions, resulting in behavioral, emotional, and academic problems (Doom et al., 2010; LoBraico et al., 2019). The greater the level of parent-child conflict, the higher the level of negative emotions and behavioral problems in children (Weymouth et al., 2016; Yang & Zhang, 2021).

Understanding the predictors of academic procrastination on one hand increases the prevention of school failure outcomes and the creation of a pleasant environment for learning, and on the other hand, can assist in achieving appropriate methods and relying on practical priorities.

Drawing on a robust body of literature, including foundational studies by Wang et al. (2022) and Qian & Zhao (2018), which explore the dynamics of procrastination within educational and psychological contexts, this discourse aims to unravel the layers of academic procrastination beyond mere time management issues (Qian & Zhao, 2018; Wang et al., 2022). The validation of measurement tools, such as the Short Form of the Academic

Procrastination Scale by Yockey (2016), and the exploration of routines' mediating roles by Magalhães et al. (2021), underscore the methodological advancements and conceptual deepening in the field. These contributions not only enhance our ability to measure and analyze procrastination but also shed light on the intricate relationships between procrastination and other key psychological constructs (Magalhães et al., 2021; Yaffe et al., 2017).

Mann (2016) expands the discourse by advocating for a broader investigation of procrastination that transcends academic confines, suggesting its significant implications for health and wellness (Mann, 2016). This perspective is crucial in understanding procrastination as a behavior that reflects deeper psychological and emotional processes. Further, the research by Awwad et al. (2022) into the interplay between self-esteem and procrastination, alongside Popova & Pronenko's (2023) examination of procrastination within the framework of personality's meaning structures, highlights the significance of individual differences in shaping procrastinatory behaviors (Awwad et al., 2022; Popova & Pronenko, 2023).

The investigations by Azizah (2022) and Safari & Yousefpoor (2022) into the roles of self-regulation, meta-cognition, and metacognitive beliefs in academic procrastination introduce a cognitive dimension to the discourse, emphasizing the importance of understanding the thought processes underlying procrastination. This cognitive perspective enriches the analysis of procrastination by linking it to broader cognitive and metacognitive frameworks, thereby offering deeper insights into how adolescents navigate their academic and personal lives (Azizah, 2022; Safari & Yousefpoor, 2022).

In synthesizing these diverse strands of research, this article endeavors to provide a comprehensive overview of the current state of knowledge on the relationship between academic procrastination, personality traits, and identity styles in adolescents. It highlights the critical mediating role of adolescent-parent conflict, a factor that has emerged as both a contributor to and a consequence of procrastination, embedded within the complex interplay of personality and identity development.

Therefore, research in this area is necessary to test the mentioned variables to lay a foundation for subsequent new research, based on which, the present study seeks to answer the fundamental question of whether adolescent conflict with parents plays a mediating role in the relationship

between academic procrastination and personality traits and identity styles of adolescents.

## 2. Methods and Materials

### 2.1. Study Design and Participants

The current study is classified as "applied research" in terms of its objective, as it aims to develop applied knowledge in a specific field. Methodologically, it falls under "descriptive and causal research" because it examines the impact of certain factors on others and is considered "survey research" as it involves consulting a population to study the distribution of characteristics.

The population of this research includes all high school students in the theoretical branch of districts 5 and 22 of Tehran, who were enrolled in non-governmental schools during the 2022-2023 academic year, totaling approximately 16,347 students according to inquiries made to the General Directorate of Education. The sample size was determined to be 375 individuals based on the Krejcie and Morgan table, selected through proportional stratified random sampling.

After obtaining permission from the Department of Education, considering the population comprising both girls' and boys' high schools in the non-governmental sector across districts 5 and 22 of Tehran, and given the population's heterogeneous and non-homogeneous structure, one boys' and one girls' school were randomly selected from each district in proportion to the sample size (375 individuals), totaling 4 schools. Subsequently, through this action (dividing the population into homogeneous groups), a simple random sampling method was used to determine 100 individuals from each school across different grades (33 from tenth grade, 33 from eleventh grade, and 34 from twelfth grade). Among these individuals, students were chosen based on research entry criteria, namely obtaining informed consent and willingness to complete the questionnaires, resulting in 375 participants (190 girls and 185 boys) who completed the questionnaires. Participants were assured that their information would remain confidential. The exclusion criteria were non-cooperation in completing the questionnaires and incomplete questionnaires. This research utilized standardized questionnaires:

### 2.2. Measures

Academic Procrastination Scale-Student Version (PASS) developed by Solomon and Rothblum (1984), consisting of

27 questions measuring procrastination in preparation for exams (questions 1 to 8), academic assignments (questions 9 to 19), and term papers (questions 20 to 27), scored on a five-point Likert scale from never (1) to always (5). The highest score (135) indicates high academic procrastination, and the lowest score (27) indicates low academic procrastination. Items 25, 23, 21, 16, 15, 11, 6, 4, and 2 are reverse scored. Validity and reliability have been confirmed through various studies, with Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficients ranging from 0.73 to 0.91 in different research.

NEO-Five Factor Inventory (NEO-FFI) developed by Costa and McCrae in 1992, comprises 60 questions covering five factors: neuroticism, extraversion, openness to experience, agreeableness, and conscientiousness, scored on a five-point Likert scale from strongly disagree (0) to agree (4). This questionnaire is used when time is limited, and a general overview of personality is sufficient. It is cost-effective and highly reliable. Validity and reliability have been established, with internal consistency and test-retest reliability coefficients reported in various studies.

Berzonsky's Identity Style Inventory, created in 1989 and revised in 1992, is a 40-item self-report measure consisting of four subscales: informational, normative, diffused/avoidant orientation, and commitment. Some items are reverse scored. Validity and reliability have been supported through construct validity and internal consistency measures.

Conflict Behavior Questionnaire-Adolescent Short Version (CBQ), developed by Prinz et al. in 1979, assesses

adolescents' perception of conflict and negative relationships with their parents. The short version used in this study consists of 40 statements (20 pertaining to the mother and 20 to the father), indicating the level of conflict with parents. Validity and reliability have been demonstrated, with the instrument able to distinguish between families with clinical problems and healthy families, and high reliability coefficients reported in various studies.

### 2.3. Data Analysis

Data analysis in this research will be performed using SPSS for descriptive and inferential statistics appropriate to the study's nature. Descriptive statistics include percentages, minimum, maximum, mean, standard deviation, and frequency distribution; inferential statistics will include sample size calculations necessary for PLS analysis. Research hypotheses will be analyzed using SMART PLS software, employing the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test for normalizing variable distributions, Pearson correlation coefficient, and stepwise multiple regression analysis.

## 3. Findings and Results

The results of the sample distribution based on the family's child order showed that the highest frequency was for second children of the family, numbering 227 individuals (60.5%). The results of the sample distribution based on the educational grade showed that the highest frequency was for the twelfth grade, numbering 131 individuals (34.9%).

**Table 1**

*Descriptive Statistics and Normality Tests*

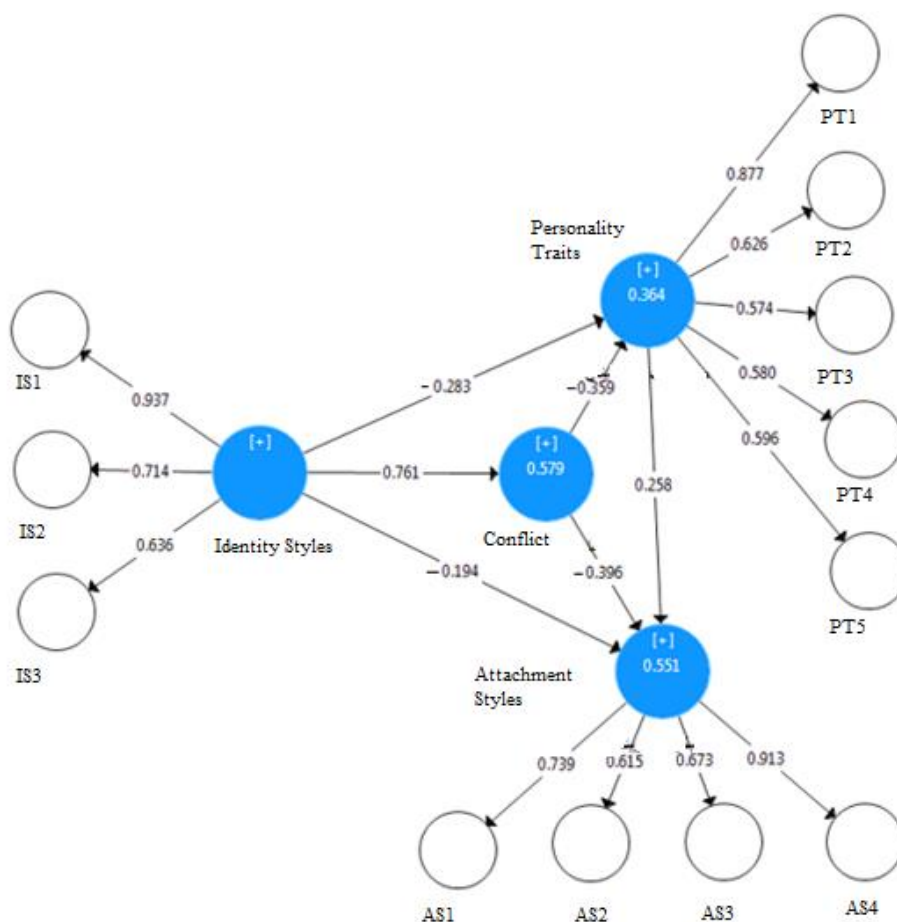
Index	Mean	SD	Kolmogorov-Smirnov	Sig
Personality Trait				
Neuroticism	3.267	0.434	4.562	0.000
Extraversion	3.119	0.615	3.779	0.000
Openness to Experience	3.340	0.438	3.567	0.000
Agreeableness	3.987	0.465	3.615	0.000
Conscientiousness	3.279	0.497	3.412	0.000
Identity Styles				
Informational Orientation	3.127	0.374	5.630	0.000
Normative Orientation	3.632	0.453	3.608	0.000
Confused Orientation	3.2161	0.505	4.214	0.000
Commitment	3.6683	0.475	3.132	0.000
Academic Procrastination				
Prepared for Exam	3.415	0.451	3.312	0.000
Ready for Academic Tasks	3.4075	0.479	4.845	0.000
Prepared for Papers	3.4975	0.436	3.567	0.000
Adolescent Conflict	3.314	0.451	3.976	0.000

Table 1 presents some descriptive statistical concepts of the variables, including mean, standard deviation, and Kolmogorov-Smirnov test. Among these, central parameters are a set of descriptors of a statistical distribution that express the characteristics of data relative to the center of distribution. The mean, as the balance point and center of gravity of a statistical distribution, is one of the suitable central indicators to show the centrality of data. For

example, the mean for adolescent conflict is 3.31, indicating that most data related to this variable are concentrated around this point. The significance levels of the research variables were above 0.05. Therefore, the assumption of normal distribution of these variables is rejected, and the contrary assumption of non-normal distribution of data is confirmed.

**Figure 1**

*Model with Path Coefficient*



**Figure 2**

*Model with T-Values*

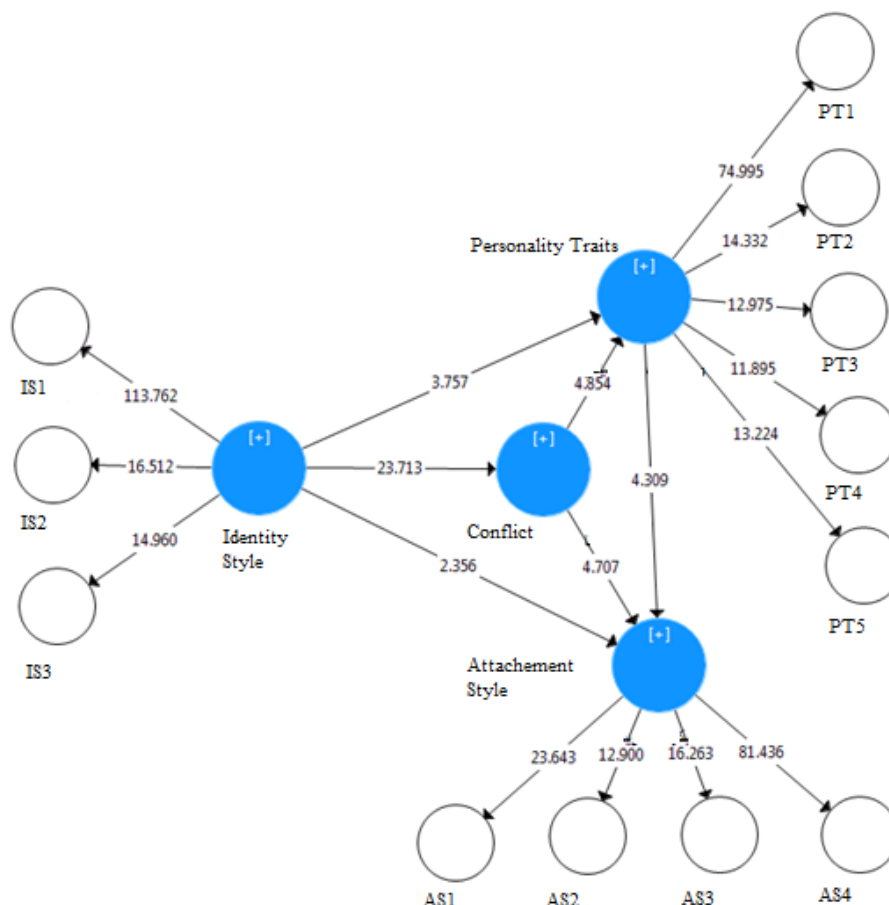


Figure 1 examines the path coefficient of variables and the extent of the impact of each independent variable on the dependent variable. The path coefficient values range from -1 to 1. A more positive value indicates a greater influence of the independent variable on the dependent variable. The coefficient of determination shows the amount of variance in the dependent variable explained by the independent variables. One of the indicators of confirming relationships in the structural model is the significance of path coefficients. The significance of path coefficients complements the magnitude and direction sign of the beta coefficient of the model. If the obtained value is above the

minimum statistic at the considered confidence level, that relationship or hypothesis is confirmed. At the 90%, 95%, and 99% significance levels, this value is compared with the minimum t-statistic of 1.64, 1.96, and 2.58, respectively.

With the obtained value for GOF being 0.280, close to the proposed value of 0.36, indicating the strength of the model, the overall model fit is thus confirmed. The desirable value for the root mean square residual's standardized root is a maximum of 0.1. The results obtained from this index showed a value of 0.079, which is desirable and therefore confirms the overall model fit.

**Table 2**

*The Results of Direct Effects*

Hypothesis	Path Coefficient	t-Statistic	P-Value	Result
Academic Procrastination -> Personality Traits	-0.283	3.757	0.000	Confirmed
Academic Procrastination -> Extraversion	-0.383	10.892	0.000	Confirmed
Academic Procrastination -> Agreeableness	-0.283	11.114	0.000	Confirmed

Academic Procrastination -> Neuroticism	0.273	15.823	0.000	Confirmed
Academic Procrastination -> Conscientiousness	-0.219	11.271	0.000	Confirmed
Academic Procrastination -> Openness to Experience	-0.361	10.350	0.000	Confirmed
Academic Procrastination -> Identity Styles	-0.194	2.356	0.019	Confirmed
Academic Procrastination -> Commitment	-0.196	8.638	0.000	Confirmed
Academic Procrastination -> Informational Orientation	-0.276	10.915	0.000	Confirmed
Academic Procrastination -> Confused Orientation	-0.337	11.202	0.000	Confirmed
Academic Procrastination -> Normative Orientation	-0.342	10.443	0.000	Confirmed
Personality Traits -> Identity Styles	0.258	4.309	0.000	Confirmed
Personality Traits -> Commitment	0.190	12.546	0.000	Confirmed
Personality Traits -> Informational Orientation	0.279	12.603	0.000	Confirmed
Personality Traits -> Confused Orientation	0.226	9.907	0.000	Confirmed
Personality Traits -> Normative Orientation	0.366	10.734	0.000	Confirmed

The hypothesis test results showed that the path coefficient for academic procrastination with adolescent personality traits has a significant negative relationship of -0.283, indicating an inverse relationship between these two variables. The t-statistic for this relationship was reported significant at the 95% confidence level [P-Value  $\leq 0.05$ ]. Accordingly, the research hypothesis is confirmed, meaning there is a significant negative relationship between academic procrastination and adolescent personality traits. Also, the hypothesis test results showed that the path coefficient for academic procrastination with adolescent identity styles is -0.194, indicating an inverse relationship between these two variables. The t-statistic for this relationship was reported

significant at the 95% confidence level [P-Value  $\leq 0.05$ ]. Accordingly, the research hypothesis is confirmed, meaning there is a significant negative relationship between academic procrastination and adolescent identity styles. Furthermore, the test results showed that the path coefficient for personality traits and identity styles is 0.258, indicating a direct relationship between these two variables. The t-statistic for this relationship was reported significant at the 95% confidence level [P-Value  $\leq 0.05$ ]. Accordingly, the research hypothesis is confirmed, meaning there is a significant positive relationship between adolescent personality traits and identity styles.

**Table 3**

*The Results of Direct Effects*

Hypothesis	Path Coefficient	t-Statistic	P-Value	VAF	Sobel	Result
Academic Procrastination -> Conflict with Parents -> Personality Traits	0.49	3.412	-	-	-	Confirmed
Direct Effect	-0.283	3.757	0.000	-	-	-
Indirect Effect	-0.274	4.718	0.000	-	-	-
Total Effect	-0.557	7.975	0.000	-	-	-
Academic Procrastination -> Conflict with Parents -> Identity Styles	0.61	5.214	-	-	-	Confirmed
Direct Effect	-0.194	2.356	0.019	-	-	-
Indirect Effect	-0.301	4.930	0.000	-	-	-
Total Effect	-0.495	5.315	0.000	-	-	-
Academic Procrastination -> Personality Traits -> Identity Styles	0.27	2.315	-	-	-	Confirmed
Direct Effect	-0.194	2.356	0.019	-	-	-
Indirect Effect	-0.073	2.928	0.004	-	-	-
Total Effect	-0.267	3.214	0.000	-	-	-

Finally, to examine the significance of the mediating effect, the Sobel test results were referred to. Given that the obtained Z-value is above 1.96, the mediating role of adolescent-parent conflict in the relationship between academic procrastination and adolescents' personality traits is significant at the 95% confidence level (P-Value  $\leq 0.05$ ), thus confirming the research hypothesis. The Variance Accounted For (VAF) statistic, being 0.50, indicates partial mediation. Similarly, the mediating role of adolescent-

parent conflict in the relationship between academic procrastination and adolescents' identity styles is significant at the 95% confidence level (P-Value  $\leq 0.05$ ), with a VAF value of 0.61, suggesting partial mediation. Additionally, the mediating role of adolescent-parent conflict in the relationship between personality traits and adolescents' identity styles is significant at the 95% confidence level (P-Value  $\leq 0.05$ ), with a VAF value of 0.27, indicating partial mediation.

#### 4. Discussion and Conclusion

The study's exploration into the mediating role of adolescent-parent conflict within the relationship between academic procrastination, personality traits, and identity styles in adolescents provides significant contributions to the field. Reflecting on findings from Wang et al. (2022), our research further underscores the complex interplay between educational environments and procrastination behaviors, emphasizing the critical role of supportive supervisory relationships in mitigating procrastination (Wang et al., 2022). Similarly, our results align with Qian & Zhao (2018), illustrating how procrastination mediates academic stress and performance, thereby highlighting the importance of addressing procrastination in educational interventions (Qian & Zhao, 2018).

Moreover, the validation of the Academic Procrastination Scale by Yockey (2016) and the study by Magalhães et al. (2021) on the impact of routines offer methodological insights that underpin our findings. These tools and models have been instrumental in quantifying the nuanced effects of procrastination on adolescents' academic and personal development, offering a robust framework for our analysis (Magalhães et al., 2021; Yockey, 2016).

Our study contributes to a deeper understanding of how adolescent-parent conflict serves as a mediator in the complex relationship between academic procrastination, personality traits, and identity styles. By integrating insights from Awwad et al. (2022) and Popova & Pronenko (2023), we underscore the significant impact of self-esteem and personality's meaning structures on procrastination behaviors (Awwad et al., 2022; Popova & Pronenko, 2023). Furthermore, the work of Azizah (2022) and Safari & Yousefpoor (2022) on self-regulation and metacognitive beliefs enriches our comprehension of the cognitive underpinnings of academic procrastination (Azizah, 2022; Safari & Yousefpoor, 2022).

In conclusion, this research not only advances our theoretical understanding of academic procrastination but also suggests practical implications for educators, parents, and policymakers aiming to support adolescents' academic and personal development. Future research should continue to explore the multifaceted nature of procrastination, particularly in relation to family dynamics and educational settings, to develop more effective interventions and support mechanisms.

This study's limitations include a reliance on self-reported measures, which may introduce bias, and a cross-sectional

design that limits causality inferences. The sample, drawn from a specific cultural and educational context, may not generalize across diverse populations or educational systems. Future studies should address these limitations by incorporating longitudinal designs, objective measures of procrastination, and broader demographic samples to enhance the understanding of the nuanced dynamics between academic procrastination, personality traits, identity styles, and adolescent-parent conflict.

Future research should explore longitudinal relationships to better understand the causality and evolution of academic procrastination, personality traits, identity styles, and their interaction with adolescent-parent conflict over time. Expanding the demographic and cultural diversity of the sample would enrich the generalizability of the findings. Additionally, investigating the role of technological distractions and online learning environments in academic procrastination could offer relevant insights for contemporary educational strategies.

The findings suggest educators and parents should address adolescent-parent conflict and its influence on academic procrastination. Interventions aimed at improving communication and understanding between parents and adolescents could mitigate procrastination's adverse effects. Educational programs that include personality and identity style development, alongside strategies for managing procrastination, may offer holistic support for adolescents, fostering better academic outcomes and personal growth.

#### Authors' Contributions

In this article, the corresponding author was responsible for the intervention implementation, data analysis, and manuscript writing, while the other authors supervised the data analysis and manuscript writing.

#### Declaration

In order to correct and improve the academic writing of our paper, we have used the language model ChatGPT.

#### Transparency Statement

Data are available for research purposes upon reasonable request to the corresponding author.

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## Declaration of Interest

The authors report no conflict of interest.

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## Ethical Considerations

In this study, to observe ethical considerations, participants were informed about the goals and importance of the research before the start of the interview and participated in the research with informed consent.

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