

ACADEMIC PROCRASTINATION AND ITS RELATIONSHIP WITH
PARENTING STYLES AND SELF-ESTEEM AMONG UNDERGRADUATE
STUDENTS

LEE MEI YUN

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Procrastination is like a dandelion. You pull it up and think you've got it, but then it turns out the roots are so deep, it just grows back.

(Burka and Yuen, 1983)

I dedicate this thesis to my family
for their endless love, support and encouragement.

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to investigate the issue of academic procrastination and its relationships with parenting styles and the level of self-esteem among undergraduate students. The student's self-esteem level has been hypothesized as a mediator in explaining the relations between different parenting styles and academic procrastination. A structural model has been proposed in this study to examine the mediating function of self-esteem on the relations between different parenting styles and student's involvement in academic procrastination. In this study, a sample of 376 undergraduate students (204 males, 172 females) between the ages of 19 and 23 years old completed measures of Procrastination Assessment Scale - Students (PASS), Parental Authority Questionnaire (PAQ) and Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (RSES). The results revealed that there were significant correlations between three different parenting styles and academic procrastination among undergraduate students. Furthermore, results of multiple regression analyses showed that self-esteem level acts as a partial mediator in the relations between different parenting styles and academic procrastination. Besides, the results also found that there was a gender difference between male and female students in academic procrastination. Several implications and recommendations for further research are discussed in this study.

ABSTRAK

Kajian ini bertujuan untuk mengenal pasti hubungan antara prokrastinasi akademik, gaya keibubapaan dan harga diri di kalangan pelajar peringkat pengajian sarjana muda. Harga diri dihipotesis menjadi *mediator* dalam hubungan antara gaya keibubapaan dan prokrastinasi akademik. Satu model struktur dicadangkan dalam kajian ini untuk mengenal pasti fungsi harga diri dalam menerangkan hubungan antara gaya keibubapaan dan prokrastinasi akademik. Dalam kajian ini, seramai 376 sampel pelajar peringkat pengajian sarjana muda (204 lelaki, 172 perempuan) yang berumur antara 19 dan 23 tahun terpilih untuk menjawab instrumen Procrastination Assessment Scale - Students (PASS), Parental Authority Questionnaire (PAQ) dan Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (RSES). Hasil kajian mendapati bahawa terdapat kolerasi signifikan antara gaya keibubapaan dan prokrastinasi akademik di kalangan pelajar peringkat sarjana muda. Tambahan pula, analisis regresi mendapati bahawa harga diri bertindak sebagai *partial mediator* dalam hubungan antara gaya keibubapaan dan prokrastinasi akademik. Selain itu, hasil kajian ini juga mendapati bahawa perbezaan antara pelajar lelaki dan perempuan dalam prokrastinasi akademik. Beberapa implikasi dan cadangan untuk kajian lanjutan turut dibincangkan dalam kajian ini.

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LIST OF SYMBOLS

f	-	Frequency
F	-	F-distribution variable
M	-	Mean
N	-	Population size
n	-	Sample size
p	-	Level of significance
RQ	-	Research question
R^2	-	Coefficient of determination
r	-	Correlation coefficient
SD	-	Standard deviation
t	-	T-value
α	-	Alpha value
β	-	Beta value

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of Study

Do you prefer to put your duty off till tomorrow or the day after? Or doing the task until the last minute? It is so hard to say that nobody involve in procrastination. We cannot deny the truth that most of us have procrastinated at times. Admittedly, most of us have at least dallied with dallying or procrastinate certain important tasks to some degree in our daily life. Procrastinators tend to make a lot of flimsy excuses that indulged themselves in this pernicious habit. For instance, “It’s too hard”, “I don’t know how to do”, “I don’t like it”, “I feel tired now” and “I don’t have time to do”.

What is procrastination? In general, procrastination can be defined as purposely deferring a particular task to a later time, which may be result in some negative effects such as increasing stress to individuals (Hoppe and College, 2011; Steel, 2007). Procrastination is certainly not a new phenomenon. It has existed for much of history and continues to thrive in the modern era. The problem of procrastination affects everyone in the general population and it doesn’t matter if you are adults or teenagers. Besides that, most researches have been indicated that procrastination consistently linked to various maladaptive cognitions and behaviors,

which can consume individuals' productive life (Ferrari, Johnson and McCown, 1995; Gendron, 2011; Park and Sperling, 2012).

In daily lives, procrastination is not an unusual circumstance if someone involved in it occasionally. As we know, procrastination is a common practice either in the general population or student population. It happens time and again: A man pays the bills one day before the deadline. A woman prepares the necessities one day before the trip. A student completes his or her homework in the last day before the submission date. All are these are the common examples of procrastination that can be found in our daily lives.

Recently, most students are encountered with a lot of behavioral habits that act as an impediment to academic achievement. As we know, procrastination is one of the behavioral habits that commonly seen among the student population. It is a common phenomenon in elementary schools, secondary schools and even university level. In other words, most of the students today prefer to carry out their school duties in last minute. They seem adept at procrastination. This unique form of procrastination is known as academic procrastination, which is a highlighted issue in recent years.

Countless investigations have been reported that academic procrastination is highly frequent among student population, especially for college or university students. They often postpone completing their academic reports and assignments until the last minute. Some of them seem to be involved in procrastination consistently regardless of its consequences. In addition, a vast collection of studies suggested that procrastination can be detrimental for individuals and also brings a lot of deleterious effects to students' academic progress (McCloskey, 2011; Santrock, 2011; Sepehrian and Lotf, 2011). Although many researchers indicated that procrastination brings a lot of negative side effects to individuals, what are the reasons that actually reinforce the habit of procrastination among student population? It is worth to deserve for further exploration.

In addition, the transition to university level may become one of the challenges to many students whether in the aspects of social or academic. During university life, the young generations are expected to make decisions independently and take more responsibilities in various aspects of their daily life. Socially, they are given more freedom to make new friends and take part in various activities. Besides, in academic, they are expected to take initiative in their schooling, such as planning their own schedule, attending lecture classes, completing assignments, and involving in academic workshops. Therefore, most university students are struggling in various stressors in new study environment compared to the periods of elementary and secondary level. Unsurprisingly, the shift in the learning environment creates more opportunities for procrastination among the student population.

As we know, parents play a significant role in their child development. In recent, many researches explored that parental attitudes and behaviors act as key role in shaping their children's personality and behaviors, such as parenting styles, parent-child attachment and parent-child interaction (Heaven and Ciarrochi, 2008). Specifically, the ways of parents interact with their children has directly affected on their child development. For example, the level of self-esteem and self-regulatory, emotional well-being, how they deal with authority, social interaction and school performance (Dinnel, Hopkins and Thompson, 2002 & Heaven et al., 2008).

It is true to said that parents are not directly involved in their children's life, especially during the periods of late adolescence and adulthood. During adolescence, there is a shift in orientation from parents towards peers or friends. However, the pattern of parenting is directly influence on their children's and youth's thinking and behaviors throughout whole life (Kentucky Department for Public Health, 2009). For instance, individuals who particularly prone to serious procrastination are the children that grew up in high-demanding and less-supportive home environment.

Furthermore, how does procrastination affect one's self-esteem? In turn, how does self-esteem affect students' procrastination involvement? There are timeless questions to discover how both variables influence to each another. As the study done by Farran (2004) and Kassen at al. (2008), they found that academic self-

efficacy is the most predictor for procrastination in the student population. Self-efficacy is associated with one's self-esteem level. In particular, students with high self-efficacy reported in high self-esteem. And, these students reported involve less in procrastination.

How about the student's self-esteem level? Do self-esteem play role in students' academic procrastination? Some researchers found that academic procrastination is significantly associated with students' general self-esteem (Farran, 2004; Pychyl et al., 2001). Based on the previous literature, Pychyl et al. (2001) indicated that self-esteem acts as a mediator in explaining the relations between parenting styles and procrastination. In specifically, different parenting styles influence individuals' self-esteem level, which in turn its influence on individuals' involvement in academic procrastination.

Some questions that often asked by primary caregivers and educators – “What is the “good parenting” stand for?” and “How should I do to teach my children in more proper way?” Actually, a lot of researchers mentioned that parenting practices are directly linked to children's psychosocial development, which may foster in shaping their children's later behaviors. Interestingly, according to Flett et al. (1995) and Pychyl et al. (2001), there is an indirect relation between parenting and procrastination. In other words, the relations between parenting styles and procrastination are mediated through a third variable – self-esteem. Further, the researchers indicated that procrastination was related to low self-esteem. In term to link parenting variables with the level of self-esteem, many adolescents and young adults who perceived authoritarian parenting reported in low self-esteem. It may lead them prone to involve in procrastination in different degree and different domains.

However, limited studies have been found for the relationship between parenting styles and academic procrastination among university students. The relation between parenting styles and academic procrastination remains largely uninvestigated. Besides, how the variable of self-esteem mediate the relations between parenting styles and academic procrastination? It is highly recommended for the researchers to investigate and explore in this issue. Thus, in the current study, the

primary purpose of the study was to investigate the relations of academic procrastination with the predictors of parenting style and self-esteem among the undergraduate students.

1.2 Statement of Problem

In this modern society, the phenomenon of procrastination is a popular concern that stimulates the interest of many researchers from diverse domains to study and explore it. Most researchers realize that this phenomenon is beyond being a bad habit, which has highly influence whole population worldwide.

In recent years, procrastination has become one of the modern maladies that adversely affect individuals, families, community and society. It can be viewed as an insidious condition that taking control of the mind of an individual even though they aware of it. Basically, a small degree of procrastination thought as normal. However, it will become a problem if individuals intoxicated with the habit of procrastination regardless of its consequences to daily functioning.

According to American Psychological Association (APA), procrastination is perpetual and it appears to be on the rise. Data shown that there are about 95 percent of the general populations involve in procrastination once in a while and out of 15 to 20 percent reported as chronic procrastinators (Bartlein, 2012). On balance, the behavior of procrastination is pervasive throughout individuals' life span either the teenagers or the adults (Ferrari et al, 1995).

As we know, procrastination is a salient issue in educational settings. It involves delaying some important learning tasks and performing assigned tasks in last minutes. An abundance of studies demonstrate that procrastination is prevalent in academic settings (Ferrari et al, 1995; Ozer, 2010; Steel, 2007). For decades, the behavior of procrastination has been viewed as a widespread phenomenon among the student population, especially at the university level. The tendency of procrastination

among students seems to be increased in higher education, including graduate students. In this modern century, most college students are forced to manage in a varied array of academic tasks, such as completing assignments or weekly reports, studying for exams, completing research projects and preparing for presentation. They frequently engage in planning and scheduling on their academic tasks and other extra school activities. Therefore, it is not unusual for most college students involve in procrastination behavior.

According to O'Brien's study (2002), there are about 80 to 90 percent of the college students engage in procrastination. For those students, an estimated 20 percent are regarded as chronic procrastinators. In O'Brien's study, most college students have been found actively involved in procrastination. Majority of them tend to procrastinate more in writing reports and assignments, which may result in low grades and poor academic performance. Consistent with the findings in Solomon et al. (1986) study, they documented that some students prefer to procrastinate until they feel worried, anxious, and even depressed to a highest level. Nonetheless, individual difference should be taken into consideration. Some students are able to perform and complete the tasks better in the last minute. In other words, they can work better and survive under certain pressure (Chu and Choi, 2005).

The problem of procrastination is a common issue in most Western countries. Nevertheless, little attention has been given to the problem of procrastination in the developing countries. In Yaakub's study (2000), the findings indicated that there was about 80 percent of the Malaysian university students considered as procrastinators. Supported by other study done by Fatimah, Lukman, Khairudin, Shahrazad and Halim (2011), the findings revealed that most university students choose to procrastinate on writing reports or assignments and studying for examination. They procrastinated mainly due to poor time management, low self-esteem, low self-efficacy, task aversiveness, fear of failure and perfectionism. Consequently, problem of procrastination become worsen from a sense that a lot of assignments need to complete during a study semester.

As the consequences of procrastination become more severe, this troubling phenomenon has been viewed as a culture in university life and most of us don't take it as a serious issue (Lenker and McAndrew, 2012). It is rarely for the researchers to show high interest in studying this issue, because the behavior of procrastination has been regarded as the problem similar with laziness. Besides that, general population also views procrastination as a normal behavior as laziness in this modern society (Thakkar, 2009).

Although there are many risk factors that contribute to individuals' behavior of procrastination, there has limited studies investigated about the relationship between parenting styles and procrastination. As we know, parents have been viewed as a training center for their children's tendencies to be procrastinated. It is because parents are considered as the first social environment to their children during life span development (Kentucky Department for Public Health, 2009). According to Pychyl, Coplan and Reid (2001), parenting style is a primary source that impacts on their children's development of procrastination. Moreover, Pychyl et al (2001) and Flett et al (1995) also indicated that harsh parenting and high parental expectations are related to perfectionism that linked to high involvement in procrastination.

On the other hand, some previous studies found that there is a direct link between self-esteem and procrastination (Ferrari, 1994; Solomon et al., 1984). Based on these previous studies (Ferrari and Tice, 2000; Pychyl, 2009; Solomon et al., 1984), most of the chronic procrastinators have low self-esteem compared to low procrastinators or non-procrastinators. Numerous studies also indicated that low self-esteem often leads to procrastination and suggested that most procrastinators are considered as self-handicappers.

1.3 Significance of Study

Studying procrastination as a field will benefit to the researchers in many areas. The problem of procrastination seems to be getting worse all the time, especially among the student population. So, most researchers intend to figure out how and why in purpose of taking right remedial steps to overcome this problem. Some professionals, such as psychologists, school counselors and educators interest to find invaluable knowledge by studying this research on tackle this troubling problem around them.

Nonetheless, there are lack of empirical researches on studying the topic of the relationships between parenting styles, self-esteem and academic procrastination among university students. Through this study, the researchers will enhance their knowledge and better understanding whether parenting style and self-esteem are associated with academic procrastination among university students.

Furthermore, this study also allows the young generation more understanding how procrastination works and how this habit greatly influence in their daily life. They will be much aware of it and able to avoid involving in the habit of procrastination. In particular, the more they know about the causes and consequences of procrastination, the less they procrastinate. In fact, nobody can totally give up the habit of procrastination, but can reduce this habit in daily life. Therefore, as a student, they will be more understanding about the consequences of procrastination and make efforts to reduce the tendency of problematic delay on their academic tasks. Further, the practice of self-discipline would be reinforced among the young generation.

Beside the issue of procrastination, the issue of parenting is another interesting topic to be study. According Turner, Chandler and Heffer (2009), parenting is a family dynamic that may directly bring greater impacts whether positive or negative, towards a child or a family. Throughout this study, parents can benefit from an understanding of how importance of parenting in rearing their young

children. In addition, parents also gain more knowledge how parenting may bring positive or negative consequences to child development. Besides, this study helps to increase awareness of parents and public about the importance of parenting style and how it play a key role in each stage of the child development.

Moreover, throughout this study, the importance of parent-child relationship will be highlighted. This issue cannot be ignored due to its linkage to parenting methods used by the parents to their children when they are growing up. In specifically, better understanding the different styles of parenting may assist the parents to foster a warm and trusting relationship with their children. And also, prevent their children to engage in unhealthy behaviors or activities.

1.4 Research Objectives

The current study was designed to find out how the undergraduate students' perceived parenting styles that adopted by their parents. Besides, the researcher in this study also wants to find out the frequency of procrastination in variety of academic tasks. Then, this study also aimed to investigate the academic procrastination and its relationship to the parenting styles, and the level of self-esteem among the undergraduate students.

In the current study, the concept of self-esteem has been hypothesized as an important mediator of the effect of parenting styles on student's academic procrastination. In simple, the current study proposed that self-esteem mediate the relationships between the different parenting styles and academic relationship among undergraduate students. Thus, a simple structural model has been created to test the hypothesized relationship between the examined variables (as shown in Figure 1.1). In addition to including the variable of gender in this study, the current study also intended to examine whether gender difference exist in academic procrastination among the undergraduate students.

In short, the primary purpose of this study was to construct a linkage between parenting styles and students' academic procrastination, meanwhile students' self-esteem act as a mediator on the relations between three different parenting styles and academic procrastination. Besides, the differences between male and female in the behavior of academic procrastination would be also examined in the current study.

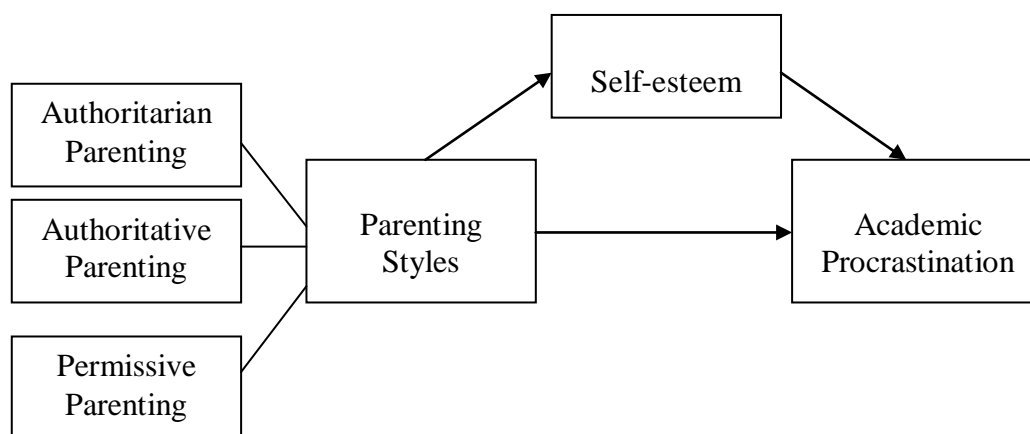


Figure 1.1: The Hypothesized Model

Specifically, the objectives of the current study include:

1. To identify undergraduate students' perception towards their parents' parenting styles.
2. To identify the prevalence of academic procrastination among undergraduate students.
3. To examine the relationships between different parenting styles and academic procrastination among undergraduate students.

4. To examine the relationship between parenting styles and academic procrastination are mediated by the students' level of self-esteem.
5. To examine the gender differences in academic procrastination among undergraduate students.

1.5 Research Questions

The present study intends to answer the following research questions:

1. What do undergraduate students' perceive their parents' parenting style?
2. How prevalent of the undergraduate students involve in academic procrastination?
3. Is there any significant gender difference in academic procrastination?
4. Are different parenting styles relate to the undergraduate students' academic procrastination?
 - i. Is authoritarian parenting style related to the undergraduate students' academic procrastination?
 - ii. Is authoritative parenting style related to the undergraduate students' academic procrastination?
 - iii. Is permissive parenting style related to the undergraduate students' academic procrastination?
5. Are relation between parenting styles and academic procrastination mediated by undergraduate students' level of self-esteem?

1.6 Hypotheses

Several hypotheses have been created in the current study to answer the research questions above:

1. There is no significant difference between male and female students in academic procrastination.
2. There is no significant correlation between different parenting styles and undergraduate students' academic procrastination.
 - i. There is no significant correlation between authoritarian parenting style and undergraduate students' academic procrastination.
 - ii. There is no significant correlation between authoritative parenting style and undergraduate students' academic procrastination.
 - iii. There is no significant correlation between permissive parenting style and undergraduate students' academic procrastination.
3. Self-esteem is not a mediator in explaining the relationship between different parenting styles and academic procrastination.

1.7 Operational Definition of Terms

Some important terms have been defined as follow in order to provide more understanding of the current study:

1.7.1 Academic Procrastination

Based on Rothlum and Solomon (1986), academic procrastination is defined in terms of irrational delay or postpones the academic tasks to the point of experiencing considerable anxiety. Procrastination is a bad habit for most students which may bring negative impacts on academic performance and their psychological health (Accodino, Accordino, and Slaney, 2000). In the current study, the Procrastination Assessment Scale- Students (PASS) that developed by Rothlum and Solomon is used, defining procrastination as an irrational behavioral delay on the academic tasks result in psychological distress. PASS is used to measure the frequency of cognitive-behavioral antecedents of academic procrastination. PASS consists of two important components, include (1) prevalence of procrastination in academic areas; (2) reasons for procrastination.

1.7.2 Parenting Styles

Parenting styles refer to a universal climate that involves family function and the child rearing behavior of the primary caregivers especially for both parents. It may directly or indirectly influence the development of a child (Darling, 1999; Darling and Steinberg, 1993). In simple, how primary caregivers (or parents) try to control and socialize with their children play a significant role in child development.

In addition, Maccoby and Martin (1983) pointed out that there are two significant elements of parenting: parental responsiveness and parental demandingness. Parental responsiveness is defined as the degree to which the parents respond to the needs of the children. In contrast, parental demandingness is defined as the degree to which the parents control their children and how they expect more responsive behavior from their children (Baumrind, 1991). Based on these two important dimensions of parenting, four parenting prototypes have been proposed by Baumrind, including authoritarian, authoritative, permissive, and neglectful.

There are a lot of measurements can be used to assess different parenting styles and parenting practices. In the current study, the Parenting Authority Questionnaire (PAQ) that proposed by Buri (1991) has been selected to measure the perceptions of late adolescents and young adults towards the parenting styles that adopted by their parents while they were growing up. However, Buri's instrument focuses on only three distinct parenting authority prototypes that proposed by Baumrind (1971): authoritarian, authoritative and permissive. These three styles of parenting would be used in this study.

1.7.2.1 Authoritarian Parenting

Authoritarian parenting is a restrictive, high demanding and punitive parenting style, which is not responsive to the needs of the child (high demandingness, low responsiveness). A lot of limitations or rules have been set to the children with little verbal exchange between parents and their children (Santrock, 2011). Specifically, authoritarian parenting style provides traditional and strict rearing patterns, high control and expectations, but less warmth to the children.

1.7.2.2 Authoritative Parenting

Authoritative parenting is a positive parenting style that encourages their children to become more independent, but at the same time, some appropriate and clear limitations have been set for the children (high demandingness, high responsiveness). Support has been given to the children and verbal exchange is encouraged between parents and their children (Santrock, 2011). Specifically, authoritative parenting style provides a balance of warmth and control to the children, and emphasizes on reasoning and verbal give-and-take between parents and children.

1.7.2.3 Permissive Parenting

According to Santrock (2011), permissive parenting is also known as indulgent parenting. Permissive parenting is characterized as high involvement of the parents with their children, however, no limitations and rules have been set to control their children's behaviors (low demandingness, high responsiveness). Buri (1991) also stated that permissive parenting is nontraditional and unrestrained that allow substantial self-regulation to children and keep away from confrontation between parents and children. Specifically, permissive parenting style provides a good relationship between parents and children, but lack of discipline and few demands upon the children.

1.7.3 Self-esteem

Self-esteem is also known as self-worth or self-image. It refers to an individual's overall views of himself or herself, and the judgments towards himself or herself (Santrock, 2011). In other words, self-esteem refers to how individuals think, feel and value towards themselves. Generally, individuals who have high self-esteem, they will positive and become more confident towards themselves as well as others.

In the current study, the Rosenberg Self-esteem scale (RSE) that developed by Morris Rosenberg is used, defining self-esteem as an attitude of a person towards himself or herself. This instrument is commonly used by most researchers to assess an individual's level of self-esteem. The more points gained that show a high level of self-esteem of an individual.

1.7.4 Gender

Gender is defined as a social category system based on biological differences (Fagot, Leinbach, Hort and Strayer, 1997). In addition, Galliano (2003) defined gender as the processes of cognitive and behaviors that are distinctive for male and female in certain society. Therefore, there are only two categories used to identify individual's gender, which are male and female.

1.7.5 Undergraduate Student

Undergraduate student is defined as the student of a university or college who is taking his or her first degree program, generally called as bachelor degree or equivalents (Oxford Dictionary Press, 2011). In Malaysian higher education institutions, majority of the undergraduate students belong to the age range of 19 years to 23 years, which are in the period of late adolescence and early adulthood. According to Malaysian Ministry of Higher Education (2009), students who are studying the Bachelor's degree programs normally from the age of 19 and above.

1.8 Conceptual Framework

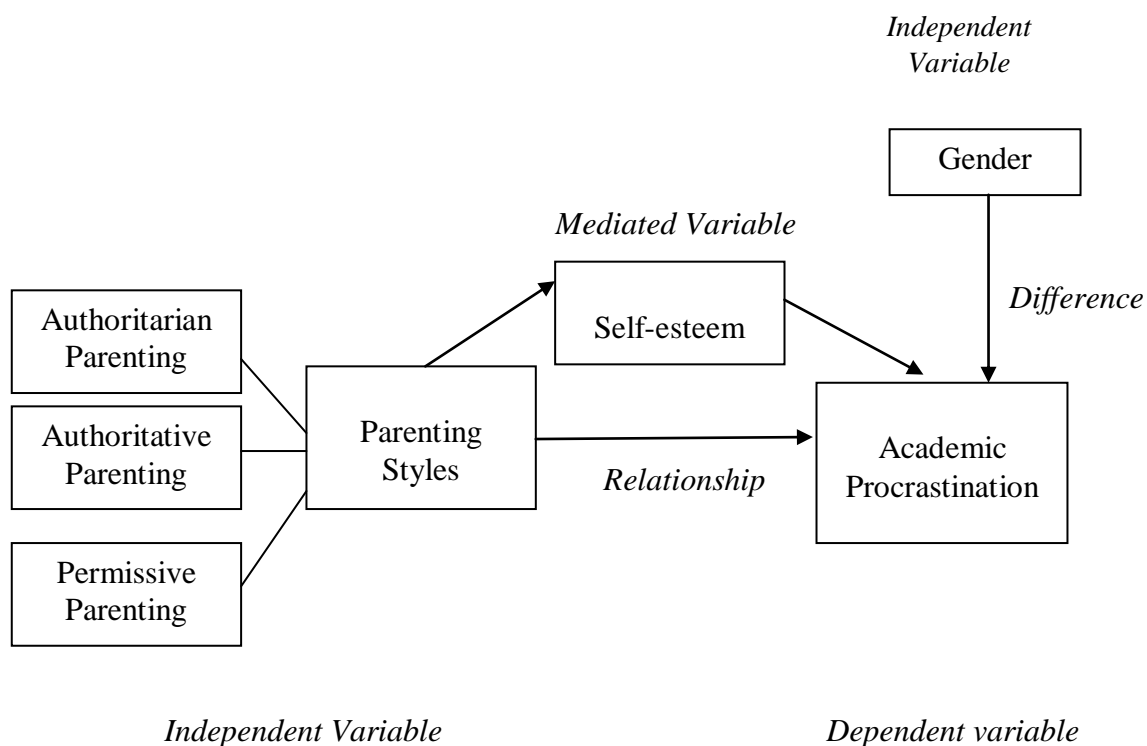


Figure 1.2: Conceptual Framework

1.9 Limitations of the Study

There are several limitations to be highlighted in the current study:

1. Limited sources have been collected in this study because the respondents in this study were the undergraduate students that selected from Universiti Teknologi Malaysia, Skudai, Johor. Hence, the findings cannot be generalized to the larger population.
2. The questionnaire that used for measure parenting style – Parental Authority Questionnaire (PAQ) is limited for measuring three parenting styles, not include the fourth parenting style – uninvolved parenting style.

However, it has long been accepted that there are indeed four prototypes based on Baumrind's model.

3. It is recognized that not every parent will fit neatly into a particular parenting style. It is because it is a self-reported measurement about students' perception toward parenting style practiced by their parents during the years of growing up. So, the perceived parenting style may differ from the true parenting style practiced by parents.
4. The respondents have to answer 52-items questionnaire in this study and it is tiring to answer too many questions.
5. The version of Parental Authority Questionnaire (PAQ) that used in this study referred not to father or mother, but to both parents. Some respondents would confuse to the statement that describe their parents rearing pattern, if both parents have different parenting style. It may affect the results obtained.

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