

The Mediating Role of School Belonging and Parental Educational Aspirations in the Relationship Between Goal Congruence and Academic Persistence

Samira. Ataei Dizaji^{1*}, Shokoufeh. Moradi², Azad. Khodadadi³, Sara. Memari⁴

¹ Graduated Third level of Ethics and Islamic Education, Hazrat Fatemeh (PBUH) Khosrowshah seminary, Tabriz, Iran


² M.A. in Educational Psychology, Department of Educational Psychology, University of Zanjan, Zanjan, Iran

³ M.A. in Educational Psychology, Department of Educational Psychology, Shahid Madani University of Azerbaijan, Tabriz, Iran


⁴ M.A. in Educational Psychology, Department of Educational Psychology, Marlik Institute of Higher Education, Nowshahr, Mazandaran, Iran

* Corresponding author email address: s.ataeidizaji@gmail.com


Editor

Muhammad Rizwan
Associate Professor, Department of
Psychology, Haripur University,
Islamabad, Pakistan
muhammad.rizwan@uoh.edu.pk

Reviewers

Reviewer 1: Seyed Ali Darbani
Assistant Professor, Department of Psychology and Counseling, South Tehran
Branch, Islamic Azad University, Tehran, Iran.

Email: Ali.darbani@iau.ac.ir

Reviewer 2: Seyed Ali Darbani
Assistant Professor, Department of Psychology and Counseling, South Tehran
Branch, Islamic Azad University, Tehran, Iran.

Email: Ali.darbani@iau.ac.ir

1. Round 1

1.1. Reviewer 1

Reviewer:

In the paragraph beginning “Academic persistence has emerged as a central construct in understanding students’ ability to maintain engagement and commitment to their educational goals...”, the concept of academic persistence is described broadly but somewhat conflates persistence with related constructs such as engagement and academic motivation. It would strengthen conceptual clarity if the authors explicitly distinguished persistence from these constructs and provided a precise operational definition aligned with the instrument used in the present study.

In the sentence “One of the key psychological constructs that has received growing attention in educational research is goal congruence.” the authors introduce goal congruence but do not sufficiently anchor the concept within a specific theoretical

framework. The manuscript cites self-determination theory and expectancy–value theory later, but the mechanisms through which goal congruence operates within these frameworks should be explained more explicitly to enhance theoretical coherence.

In the sentence “Students who experience a strong sense of belonging are more likely to demonstrate higher levels of engagement, motivation, and academic persistence.” the authors should consider specifying empirical effect sizes or summarizing findings from meta-analytic studies to provide stronger empirical grounding for this claim.

In the paragraph beginning “In parallel with school-based influences, family factors play a significant role in shaping students’ educational trajectories.” the authors introduce parental educational aspirations but do not immediately clarify how this variable conceptually differs from parental expectations or parental involvement. A short clarification distinguishing these constructs would enhance conceptual precision.

Authors uploaded the revised manuscript.

1.2. Reviewer 2

Reviewer:

In the paragraph starting “Goal congruence refers to the degree of alignment between individuals’ personal goals and the expectations of their social environment.” the definition is conceptually appropriate but remains general. The authors should clarify how goal congruence is operationalized in the present study (e.g., dimensions, scale structure, and example items) to allow readers to better understand how the construct was empirically measured.

In the paragraph beginning “The importance of goal congruence becomes even more pronounced during adolescence, a developmental stage characterized by identity exploration and increasing autonomy.” the developmental argument is compelling, yet the discussion remains largely general. The authors could strengthen the argument by incorporating more recent empirical studies specifically examining goal alignment during adolescence and its educational outcomes.

In the sentence “Another critical variable in students’ educational experiences is their sense of school belonging.” the transition from goal congruence to school belonging is somewhat abrupt. A brief integrative explanation describing why school belonging is theoretically expected to mediate the relationship between goal congruence and academic persistence would improve the logical flow of the introduction.

In the paragraph beginning “School belonging refers to students’ feelings of being accepted, respected, included, and supported within their school environment.” the authors cite several foundational studies, but the literature review could benefit from a deeper synthesis rather than sequential citation. Specifically, discussing how school belonging influences motivational processes related to persistence would strengthen the theoretical argument for mediation.

Authors uploaded the revised manuscript.

2. Revised

Editor’s decision after revisions: Accepted.

Editor in Chief’s decision: Accepted.