

Models of Attachment and Persistence Among First and Second-Year College Students

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INTRODUCTION & AIM

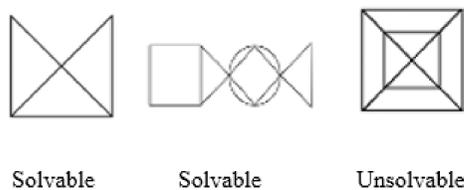
- ❖ Ciocca et al. (2022) notes that females are more likely to have an anxious attachment style while males are more likely to be avoidant. Attachment orientations can have an ongoing effect on persistence (Sollenberger et al., 2007).
- ❖ Attachment, gender, ego-resilience, and anxiety have been connected to persistence (Kogelnik, 2022; Kobak, 1988; Rudaizky et al., 2012). Given the connection between persistence and college completion (Davidson et al., 2009), understanding those factors that contribute to persistence can help to inform interventions.
- ❖ The purpose of this study is two-fold. First, to better understand how these factors relate to persistence. Second, to explore how attachment style uniquely contributes to models of persistence.

METHOD

All participants ($N = 49$) were first and second-year students enrolled at Marietta College ($M = 19.1$ yrs., $SD = 0.80$ yrs.). There were slightly more male participants (58%) and second year students (54%). Participation was in-person with the researcher present. Participants completed a brief demographics survey prior to all assessments.



Figure 1
Puzzle Tracing Tasks



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RESULTS & DISCUSSION

- ❖ All insecure attachment classifications ($n = 9$) were collapsed into one category since over 80% of the sample were securely attached. Thus, differences across insecure attachment categories that could be meaningful, were not captured. A Mann-Whitney U test was performed. There were no significant differences in persistence on the unsolvable task. Given the limited power, findings should be interpreted with caution.
- ❖ Ego resilience was dichotomized using a median-split. Given the rather high mean score for the sample, differences between the two categories may not reflect practical difference. Again, a Mann-Whitney U test indicated no significant differences in persistence on the unsolvable task.

Table 1

Overall Effect on Persistence

Model	SS	df	MS	F	Adjusted R ²	RMSE	p
H1 Regression	242218.35	4	60554.59	1.88	0.08	179.68	0.136
Residual	1.162x10 ⁶	36	32285.33				
Total	1.404x10 ⁶	40					

Table 2

Coefficients' Effects on Persistence

Model		b	SE	β	t	p
H1	(Intercept)	247.17	241.76		1.02	0.313
	Ego-Resiliency Median	90.18	68.90	0.24	1.31	0.199
	Trait-Anxiety Gender	5.47	3.52	0.32	1.55	0.129
		-110.85	60.32	-0.30	-1.84	0.074

- ❖ Models of persistence that include gender, ego-resiliency, trait-anxiety, and attachment were not significant. Data was collected during the spring term, so all participants had successfully completed at least one semester of college. The timing of assessment could have skewed the results.

CONCLUSION

- ❖ Although persistence on the unsolvable task was not significantly impacted by scores on ego-resilience (dichotomized using a median-split), both first and second-year-students profiled high on resiliency.
- ❖ Findings failed to support attachment as a unique predictor of persistence. However, an overwhelming majority of the sample were securely attached.

FUTURE WORK / REFERENCES

- ❖ Future studies should consider exploring the link to attachment and persistence among first-year college students prior to the fall term. This will provide a more representative sample of attachment styles. Targeted interventions can be implemented earlier for those at-risk.