

## **A study of the relationship between parents' perfectionism and hidden anxiety and social adjustment of third grade high school's girl students in Tehran Dist. 5, 2011**

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**Abstract:** The objective of this research is determining the relationship between parents' perfectionism and hidden anxiety and social adjustment of third grade high school's girl students in Tehran Dist. 5, in academic year 2011. The statistical society of this research is comprised of all girl students of third grade high school in Tehran Dist. 5 and their parents. The sample group is consisted of 300 persons who have been selected via multi-stage cluster sampling method according to the scientific principles. For collecting the data, three questionnaires including: a) Hill's perfectionism questionnaire; b) Spielberger's anxiety questionnaire (trait-state); c) Sinha's and Singh's adjustment questionnaire was used for high school students. For analyzing the data, multiple regression and Pierson's correlation coefficient methods have been used. The research results indicate that: 1- No significant relationship exists between parents' perfectionism and hidden anxiety of Tehran girl students. 2- No significant relationship exists between parents' perfectionism and social adjustment of Tehran girl students.

**Keywords:** Perfectionism; anxiety; social adjustment

### **1. Introduction**

Perfectionism is usually considered a characterization of personality, specified for having performance by effort for perfection and imposing very high standards, accompanied by intention to critic assessment of their behavior [1]. Many persons in the current world perform much more, even extreme, endeavors for perfection of their works and attaining perfection. Such attempts may sometimes be efficient and constructive, causing development of person, or create a space full of stress and anxiety with different disorders such as social, emotional, educational or occupational conflicts.

[2]The children's perfectionism is rooted somewhat in interaction with the perfectionist parents. In this relationship, the child is reinforced positively with the great performances. Therefore, when it is failed in an effort, its parents deem this failure as the training skills of their child and instead of ensuring and calming the child react unhelpfully, with anxiety and unrest, as a result, the fear of making mistakes is formed in the child

And its reactions are reinforced by parents' behaviors.

[3] Believes that perfectionism refers to self-destruction thoughts and behaviors aiming at meeting the targets in an extremist and unrealistic form. [4] Perfectionism means finding the best and highest quality now and in the future in the intellectual, physical, educational and working fields. This intellectual intention begins with a good and absolutely favorite life, limiting life in a definite route.

[5] Fear and anxiety are usually used antonym, but clinical psychologists distinguish them. Fear refers to the answer of instinct and relatively biological warning to a dangerous situation, but anxiety, on the contrary, is more general and futuristic, referring to a state by which person is worry and depressed for a dangerous

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happen in the future more than usual. Anxiety has both cognitive and emotional element. When you are anxious, you feel a perilous accident will happen and you are unable to change it. You then focus on your internal worries, and will be caution for possibility of danger or threat more and more. [6] Effect of perfectionism on anxiety has been studied frequently. It is believed that the high emphasis and sensitivity to others assessments of ourselves, as a negative fundamental element of perfectionism, are related to growth and stability of anxiety.

[7] The hidden anxiety is demonstrated on the individual differences in responding the stressful situations with different amounts of overt anxiety. The hidden anxiety like as potential energy hints to the individual differences in the reactions. Potential energy hints to the differences in the amount of kinetic energy which has been accompanied with a special physical subject and may be appeared when an appropriate power is created. Therefore, in the extant paper, this hypothesis is raised that a relationship exists between parents' perfectionism and hidden anxiety of the students. Today, the adjustment is deemed as a type of flexibility in face of hard or easy conditions and conformity with the changes of the around environment. Individual and social adjustment as the most important trait of mental health is one of the topics which have been specially considered by the psychologists, socialists, psychoanalysts particularly the instructors within the recent decades. In fact, the person's in adjustments may be deemed as a rigidity and inflexibility of the person in face of the problems. Also, in the extant research, this hypothesis is raised that a relationship exists between parents' perfectionism and students' social adjustment.

[8] Personal and social adjustment as the most important characteristic of mental health is a subject considerably paid attention by psychologists, sociologists and psychoanalysts especially teachers in the recent decades. [9] Adjustment is a process of psychological dynamics, consisting of some interrelated steps, and persons shall pass stages for making adjustment. It begins with need and completes with its fulfillment. For example, if a young feels the elimination and rejection, he/she wants need, which may be met by acceptance of parents, teachers or group of the same age. Therefore, the adjustment steps may be deemed the process of moving from stable condition and reaching to a rebalance state.

[10] harmony of environment and personal skills and activity in different social fields, ability to understand need of others and interest in their welfare, and stability and resistance against pressure of conformity and intention of cooperation and conformity.

[11] believes that the maladjustments of adolescence or pubescence means from 14 to 20 years old is mostly related to the difference between adolescent's belief and taste and his/her parents and their life style. The differences of this period are appeared generally in relation to the makeup, clothing, program, amusement, passing leisure times, correct chosen of educational field and job, political, religious and such affairs. In this period, the symptoms are appeared as psychopathic and psychotic behaviors. Therefore, considering the foregoing, the objective of the present research is "studying the relationship between parents' perfectionism and hidden anxiety and social adjustment of third grade high school girls in Tehran Dist. 5".

## **2. Methods**

The statistical society of the extant research is comprised of all girl students of third grade high school in Tehran Dist. 5, who were studying in the academic year 2011-12 while this research. (As per table Kersey-Morgan) total students were (N=1500) persons and sampling group included (n=300) persons, out of them 109 persons (36.3%) were studying in the field of mathematics, 105 persons (35%) in the field of experimental sciences and 86 persons (28.6%) in the field of humanities. The design of this research is correlation between three variables (perfectionism, anxiety, and social adjustment). Also, via multistage cluster sampling, at first all girl high schools in Dist. 5 of Tehran Education Dept. were selected, then from among them 4 high schools were selected via simple random method and from each school 3 classes in third grade and from each class 25 students (the students whose names are a multiple of 2) were selected via simple random method. Tools includes: 1. Hill's perfectionism questionnaire: Persian version of perfectionism list of Hill including 58 terms and 6 subscales has found reliability, validity and normality in Iranian sample by [12].

The reliability and validity of this scale has been made by four-option Likert's scale including completely disagree (=1), disagree (=2), agree (=3) and completely agree (=4). [12] Have applied Cronbach's alpha coefficient estimation and retest methods for reliability of this set. Cronbach's alpha coefficient of the whole set that is an index for the questionnaire reliability has been calculated equal to 0.926 and reliability coefficient of perfectionism list via retest method, will be implemented again after final implementation on 50 persons after 2-6 weeks (averagely 4 weeks). The calculated Pierson's correlation coefficient between two times implementations has been equaled to 0.736. This value was significant statistically within the range less than 0.001. The reliability of perfectionism list retest indicates the stability of its basic structures [12].

For studying the validity of the structure, factorial analysis via analyzing the main elements with varimax rotation of perfectionism list has been applied and the results indicated 6 factors in the Persian version of perfectionism list respectively as follows:

Table 1: Six-factors mean value, standard deviation, and standard, reliability and standard measurement error

Factor	Mean value	Standard deviation	Reliability	Standard measurement error
Interpersonal sensitivity	46.45	9.51	0.913	2.80
Attempting for being better	13.57	3.71	0.825	3.55
Discipline & organization	14.67	3.80	0.827	1.58
Perception of pressure applied by the parents	17.73	4.19	0.837	1.69
Targeting	16.23	3.61	0.793	1.64
High standards for the others	22.31	3.81	0.751	1.90

In the second time factorial analysis on two general aspects of compatible and incompatible perfectionism, these factors are divided as follows:

Table2: Factors dividing

No.	Aspects	Subset factors
1	Compatible perfectionism	Interpersonal sensitivity, high standards for the others, Perception of pressure applied by the parents, targeting, discipline and organization, attempting for being better

2. Anxiety (state-trait) questionnaire of Spielberger's (STAI-Y anxiety test), the first form of state-trait questionnaire (clear and hidden) of anxiety has been presented in 1970 by Spielberger et al in the name of STAI-Y and in 1983 has been reviewed. The main purpose of review was preparing a pure value of anxiety in order to provide a substantial basis for differential diagnosis of the patients suffer from anxiety disorders due to depression. The reviewed STAI-Y form is consisted of 40 questions. Questions 1 to 20 are related to the state (clear) anxiety with four options (not at all, sometimes, generally, and very much), questions 21 to 40 are related to the trait anxiety with four options of (almost never, sometimes, most times, and almost ever). Reliability index of the set of questions which forms the clear and hidden test of anxiety via Cronbach's alpha test, for questions 1 to 20 clear anxieties has been equaled to 0.889 and for questions 21 to 40; hidden anxiety has been equaled to 0.864. For compiling the evidences related to the validity of anxiety test, converged validity and factorial analysis methods were applied [13].

3. Adjustment questionnaire for high school students (AISS): this 60-item questionnaire has been implemented in the final form on the 1950 samples (1200 boys and 750 girls) out of students in first, second and third grades in 40 high schools which have been selected randomly. Distribution of scores has been tested via chi-square formula as respect to the natural being and the distribution had no significant difference with natural distribution. This questionnaire may be scored manually. For the answers indicating the adjustment, score of 0 is applied, otherwise 1 is applied. The following table indicates the key answer which demonstrates the maladjustment. Adjustment questionnaire has been designed with the objective of counseling the high school students 14-18 years old. Its application shows the personal problems of the said

age group in relation to each one of emotional, social and educational contexts and total score indicates the general adjustment states. Validity coefficient has been determined via three modes as follows: [14].

Table 3: Reliability coefficient of adjustment questionnaire

Applied method	Emotional	Social	Educational	Total
Halving	0.94	0.93	0.96	0.95
Test	0.96	0.90	0.93	0.93
Test-retest of Cuder Richardson 2	0.92	0.92	0.96	0.94

For analyzing the questions, validity coefficients for each question has been determined via two-dimensional correlation and only for the questions that their two-dimensional correlation in both criterions; 1- total score, 2- the score of each one of the contexts has been confirmed within the significance range of 0.001. The internal correlations between three contexts of the questionnaire have been calculated, correlation matrix has been provided in the following table [14].

### 3. Findings

A relationship exists between the parents' perfectionism and hidden anxiety of the students.

Table 4- The mean value and standard deviation of students' hidden anxiety as per educational field (n=300)

Index/variables	Fields	Mean value	Standard deviation
	Mathematics	23.61	5.30
Hidden anxiety	Experimental sciences	24.29	5.19
	Humanities	23.42	6.05
Parents' perfectionism	-	26.16	2.69

Comparison of table 4 indicates that the mean value of perfectionism of the parents (26.16) is more than mean value of students' hidden anxiety in the fields of mathematics (23.61), experimental sciences (24.29) and humanities (23.42).

Table 5- Summary of regression model for predicting the students' hidden anxiety according to the parents' perfectionism (n=300)

Model	R	R <sup>2</sup>	Balanced R <sup>2</sup>	F	Significance level
1	0.064	0.004	0.001	1.228	0.269

As it is observed in table 5, parents' perfectionism predicts 0.4% of students (hidden) anxiety variance. Considering the reliability level of 95%, this value is not significant (P=0.269). The parents' perfectionism may not predict the students' hidden anxiety significantly. Linear indexes indicate non-linear relationship between available variables in the model.

A relationship exists between parents' perfectionism and students' social adjustment.

Table 6- mean value and standard deviation and social adjustment of the students as per educational filed (n=300)

Index/variables	Fields	Mean value	Standard deviation
	Mathematics	6.24	3.41
social adjustment	Experimental sciences	6.38	2.74

	Humanities	6.22	3.06
Parents' perfectionism	-	26.16	2.69

Comparison of table 6 indicates that the mean value of perfectionism of the parents (26.16) is more than mean value of students' social adjustment in the fields of mathematics (6.24), experimental sciences (6.38) and humanities (6.22).

Table 7- Summary of regression model for predicting the students' social adjustment according to the parents' perfectionism (n=300)

Model	R	R <sup>2</sup>	Balanced R <sup>2</sup>	F	Significance level
1	0.053	0.003	0.001	0.832	0.362

As it is observed in table 7, the parents' perfectionism predicts 0.3% of students' social adjustment variance.

Considering the reliability level of 95%, this value is not significant (P=0.362).

#### 4. Discussion

The purpose of applying this research is studying the relationship between parents' perfectionism and hidden anxiety and social adjustment of the students, considering the gained results it may be stated that parents' perfectionism is not able to predict the hidden anxiety and social adjustment of the children. Because a part of anxiety and social adjustment is in relation to the personality and the other part in relation to the cultural and social factors such as cultural and ethnic differences and educational level of the parents as well. In fact, it is concluded that today's high school girl students in third grade model their parents less as their behavior pattern. Particularly Dist. 5 of Tehran which population form is untraditional and probably are religious less than the other Tehran districts. The students show less sensitivity to their parents' perfectionist demands. Students of 3<sup>rd</sup> grade of secondary education are youngsters (17-18 years old) mainly influenced by others of the same age. Sometimes, this influence is more by their parents, especially if parents enjoy values and opinions not aligned with them. Students learn both institute courses and also application of tools and entertainments. Learning of such field may be sometimes more important than learning institute syllabuses. In such cases, parents resist their children and this is the beginning of gap made between children and parents. Such gap makes void the effect of perfectionism of parents on children; in fact, young person tries to have sense of conformity with peers or sense of self-assertion by ignoring perfectionist sensitivities and regulations of their parents. Also, in this research, parents' perfectionism doesn't predict the social adjustment of the students, so other factors may be effective on the creation of social maladjustment. The cause of probability of this subject may be due to the difference in tastes between parents' ideals and their students' ideals that over time may leads to social maladjustment for the students. Parents balance their perfectionism concerning social adjustment of children in a realistic action. In other words, they adopt middle social adjustments as a favorite behavior and encourage their children in this type of behavior. For example, they recognize shyness of their children to others and their doubt in asking question from teacher as a good sign of politeness and education and social comprehension of their children. The results of [15] results indicated that a significant difference exists between mathematical anxiety and different kinds of perfectionism. Also, via Scheffe post hoc test it was concluded that normative perfectionist students have less mathematical anxiety in comparison with the informative perfectionist and non-perfectionist. The results gained in this research are incompatible with the results of researches applied by [15].

The results of [16] research indicated that presence of perfectionism causes increasing or intensifying the negative effects of the stress which leads to the maladjustment. The results of the research applied by [17] indicated that the quality of communication between parents and children, kindness value and parents' control are considered as the important elements for increasing the mental health of the students. The appropriate communication between parents and children, condolence in the problems, ideas exchange on the educational and social issues and control and supervision on their status leads to the creation of self-

efficiency feeling in the students and more motivation for achieving the consequent successes in the education. Also, the results gained from this research are not compatible with the results concluded from the applied researches by [16] and [17].

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