

# A Study of the Relationship between Perfectionism Components and Organization Based Self-Esteem among Teachers in Kermanshah, Iran

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## Abstract

The purpose of this study was to examine the relationship between perfectionism and OBSE (organization based Self-esteem). To measure teacher's perfectionism, Hill et al., Inventory was utilized and to measure teacher's organizational-based self-esteem, Pierce et al., Inventory was utilized. In the present study the reliability coefficients (Cronbach's alpha) for the Perfectionism Inventory scale was estimated 0.76 and the Cronbach's alpha for the OBSE scale was estimated 0.75. For data analysis, regression, ANOVA, independent t-test was used. The population was teachers of all three levels of schooling (elementary, middle and high school) in the province of Kermanshah, Iran during academic year 2013-2014. The sample consisted of 396 teachers who were randomly selected from among 46 schools. Results of the study showed that OBSE has a significant negative correlation with playfulness and concern over mistakes ( $p < .01$ ) and a positive relationship with organization, high standards for others, conscientious perfectionism and perfectionism. Also, the results of the study revealed that dimensions of perfectionism were a strong predictor of OBSE. Results indicate that organizational-based self-esteem and perfectionism based on any of the demographic variables (age, seniority, level, and degree) is not significant.

**Keywords:** perfectionism, organizational-based self-esteem, teachers.

## Introduction

The term 'perfectionism' is rooted in cultures because of human competitions in workplaces and his (her) striving high to attain resources on one hand and all cultures tendency to prompt a good life for their people in the other hand. Hereby, it is assumed that perfectionism has various outcomes across different cultures. This term means a good human life and it is an account of human well-being which implies that the best life for humans is the most perfect one that they can live, and also this originated in their nature. Perfectionism was explained by different ethical, religious and philosophical theories that characterize the good being of humans, in terms of development of human nature by philosophers such as Aristotle. However, a number of scholars have sought to develop accounts of the human good in modern philosophy (Foot, 2003), but this term was considered by psychologists too.

Initially, the theory of perfectionism was defined by Adler (1956) in the field of psychology. He noted that striving for perfectionism is normal and innate because of the tendency of human social being. He argued that those who express healthy perfectionism search for goals that are obtainable, while those who express maladaptive perfectionism might have obsessive order and fear of critique. Additionally, he recognized the importance of social forces for healthy perfectionism. Pioneer scholars of perfectionism have identified its central component as the setting of excessively high personal standards or goals, combined with other features such as, striving actively to meet rigid goals, self-criticism and underrating the accomplishments (Frost et al., 1990). Then, Shafran et al. (2002) proposed that perfectionism is present "when personally demanding standards are pursued despite significant adverse consequences" (p. 778).

Perfectionism has been studied extensively in relation to health and psychological problems and with regards to the developmental patterns that may influence its occurrence (Flett and Hewitt, 2002). Although in the literature there is an impressive number of studies that have revealed an association between perfectionism and many psychological problems, nowadays the most commonly accepted definition of perfectionism implies the fact that perfectionism is a multidimensional construct, with some dimensions being more positive than others, rather than a one-dimensional dysfunctional or maladaptive trait, as the early theorists like Burns (1980) had stated. The conceptual shift occurred in the 1990s with the groups of studies conducted independently by Frost et al. (1990) and Hewitt and Flett (1991) who proposed two different multidimensional models of perfectionism along with suitable measurement instruments. In this study, we opted for Hill et al. (2004) multidimensional model because, as the authors stated, it may offer a more comprehensive description of perfectionism, compared to Frost et al. (1990) six-facet model, or to Hewitt and Flett (1991) three-facet one, and it may not imply the overlapping characteristics that could result if these two models were considered together.

Self-esteem has been defined as a global feeling of self-worth or adequacy as a person, or generalized

feelings of self-acceptance, goodness, and self-respect (Coopersmith, 1967; Crocker and Major, 1989; Rosenberg, 1965; Wylie, 1979). This global, personal judgment of worthiness is characterized as the evaluative component of the self (e.g., Campbell, 1990), and as distinct from collective or racial self-esteem (Crocker and Major, 1989). According to Epstein (1973), people have a basic need for self-esteem, and, at least in Western cultures, they use numerous strategies to maintain it (Dunning et al., 1995; Taylor and Brown, 1988; Markus and Kitayama, 1991; Diener and Diener, 1995). Self-esteem forms early in the course of development, remain fairly constant over time, and are relatively immune to change (Campbell, 1990).

To date, most of our understanding of self-esteem in general and self-esteem within the work and organizational context stems from research focused on global (chronic) self-esteem (Brockner, 1988). Research focused on an organization-based conceptualization of the self has, however, started to emerge.

Building upon the notion that self-esteem is a hierarchical and multifaceted phenomenon, and Coppersmith's (1967) observation that self-esteem indicates the extent to which the individual believes him/herself to be capable, significant, and worthy, Pierce, Gardner, Cummings and Dunham (1989) introduced the concept of organization-based self-esteem.

*Organization-based self-esteem* (OBSE) is defined as the degree to which an individual believes him/herself to be capable, significant, and worthy as an organizational member. Elaboration of the construct casts OBSE as a self-evaluation of one's personal adequacy (worthiness) as an organizational member. It reflects the self-perceived value that individuals have of themselves as important, competent, and capable within their employing organizations – employees with high organization-based self-esteem have come to believe that "I count around here." Consistent with Korman's (1966, 1970, 1971, and 1976) view of self-esteem, people with strong organization-based self-esteem has a sense of having satisfied their needs through their organizational roles. OBSE is less malleable than task-specific self-esteem, but more malleable than global. Early in one's tenure with an organization, OBSE is an outer level conceptualization of the self – state-like, reflecting unstable feelings of self-regard (Campbell, 1990). With increasing tenure, self-esteem evolves from a primarily outer level to a less changeable inner level self-concept (Campbell, 1990). Thus, for most job-experienced employees OBSE is highly stable (Pierce et al., 1989). Organizational members with high OBSE have come to believe that "I make a difference around here" and that "I am an important part of this place" (from the OBSE Scale; Pierce et al., 1989).

The results of many studies have shown the relationship between perfectionism and self-esteem (Hamachek, 1978; Blatt, 1995; Parker, 1997; Rice, Ashby and Slaney, 1998; Ashby and Rice, 2002; Accordino, Accordino and Slaney, 2000; Park, Paul Heppner and Lee, 2010, Cruce, Pashak, Handal, Munz, Gfeller, 2012). But, this stream of research has been very limited in educational settings in Iran. Within Iran, Besharat (2004), state that there is a positive relationship between the Perfectionism and Self - Esteem in Pre-College Students. Present study examined the relationship between perfectionism with organization based self-esteem among teachers of all three levels (teachers of all three levels of elementary, middle and high school) in the province of Kermanshah, Iran.

## Hypothesis

- *H1*: There is a significant relationship between perfectionism component and organizational based-self - esteem.
- *H2*: There is a significant relationship between demographic variables and perfectionism and organizational - based self - esteem.

## Method

### 2.1. Participants and Procedure for Data analysis

The population consisted of teachers of all three level of schooling (elementary, middle and high school) in the province of Kermanshah, Iran during academic year 2013-2014.

The proposed suitable sample size based on sample size table by Krejcie and Morgan (1970) was 379 respondents but 396 people were examined. The sample consisted of 239 male teachers (60.4 percent) and 157 female teachers (39.6 percent) who were randomly selected from 46 schools.

The average age of the respondents was 35.49 years (ranging from 19 to 51 years). The Average length of seniority for teachers was 13.92 years. The gathered data were analyzed using SPSS (Release 20).

### 2.2. Instruments:

#### Perfectionism Inventory

To measure teacher's perfectionism, Hill et al. (2004) Inventory was utilized. The Perfectionism Inventory (Hill et al., 2004) is a self-report measure consisting of 59 items using a 5-point rating scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). These items comprise eight subscales (striving for excellence, concern over mistakes, high standards for others, need for approval, organization, perceived parental pressure, rumination, and

playfulness.), two higher-order components (conscientious and self-evaluative perfectionism), and an overall PI composite. Hill et al. (2004) computed scale means and standard deviations by dividing the total scores for each scale by the number of items comprising that scale. According to Hill et al. (2004), on American population, the eight scales have shown alpha coefficients ranging from 0.83 to 0.91. In the present study the reliability coefficients (Cronbach's alpha) for the Perfectionism Inventory scale was estimated 0.76.

### OBSE

The Organizational-Based Self-Esteem Scale consists of 10 items (Pierce et al., 1989). Each of the items reflects an employee's perception of whether he or she thinks he or she is a valuable, worthwhile, and effective member of his or her organization. The following statements were measured on a 5-point scale (1 = strongly disagree, 5 = strongly agree): "I am helpful." In the present study the Cronbach's alpha for the OBSE scale was estimated 0.75.

### Results

The correlations between variables, means, and standard deviations are reported in table 1. Table 1 shows that OBSE has a significant negative correlation with playfulness and concern over mistakes ( $p < .01$ ) and a positive relationship with organization, high standards for others, conscientious perfectionism and perfectionism ( $p < .01$ ). Also, Table 1 shows that striving for excellence has a significant negative correlation with need for approval, concern over mistakes and self-evaluative perfectionism and a positive relationship with high standards for others and conscientious perfectionism. Rumination has a significant negative correlation with organization, high standards for others and conscientious perfectionism and a positive relationship with playfulness, perceived parental pressure, need for approval, and concern over mistakes, self-evaluative perfectionism and perfectionism. Playfulness has a significant negative correlation with perceived parental pressure, need for approval, self-evaluative perfectionism, perfectionism and a positive relationship with organization and conscientious perfectionism. Perceived parental pressure has a significant positive correlation with organization, need for approval, concern over mistakes, self-evaluative perfectionism and perfectionism. Organization has a positive relationship with high standards for others, concern over mistakes, conscientious perfectionism and perfectionism. Need for approval has a significant negative correlation with high standards for others and conscientious perfectionism and a positive relationship with concern over mistakes, self-evaluative perfectionism and perfectionism. High standards for others have a significant negative correlation with concern over mistakes and self-evaluative perfectionism and a positive relationship with conscientious perfectionism and perfectionism. Concern over mistakes has a significant negative correlation with conscientious perfectionism and self-evaluative perfectionism and a positive relationship with self-evaluative perfectionism. Conscientious perfectionism a significant negative correlation with self-evaluative perfectionism and a positive relationship with perfectionism. Finally results showed that self-evaluative perfectionism has a significant positive correlation with perfectionism.

Table 1. Descriptive statistics and inter-correlations for study variables (n= 396)

	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
1. OBSE	3.4803	.41821	1											
2. Striving for Excellence	3.8725	.29496	-.087	1										
3. Rumination	4.3142	.27458	-.038	.011	1									
4. Plan fullness	4.0577	.25770	-.148**	.079	-.326**	1								
5. Perceived Parental Pressure	3.1600	.51149	.021	-.127*	.286**	-.466**	1							
6. Organization	3.1723	.54349	.473**	-.032	-.366**	.129*	.229**	1						
7. Need for Approval	3.4848	.74577	-.042	.280**	.414**	-.591**	.782**	-.009	1					
8. High Standards for Others	3.2727	.48892	.642**	.161**	-.255**	-.014	.038	.626**	-.229**	1				
9. Concern Over Mistakes	3.3980	.56540	-.228**	.173**	.183**	-.394**	.766**	.118*	.804**	-.220**	1			
10. Conscientious Perfectionism	3.5938	.26236	.483**	.359**	-.385**	.328**	-.014	.832**	-.335**	.832**	-.186**	1		
11. Self-Evaluative Perfectionism	3.5893	.44979	-.089	.205**	.463**	-.551**	.893**	.043	.953**	-.192**	.893**	-.260**	1	
12. Perfectionism	3.5916	.22897	.190**	.004	.234**	-.353**	.869**	.518**	.744**	.288**	.770**	.317**	.833**	1

\*\* Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level; \*Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level

In this study, regression analysis is also conducted to test the hypotheses and to define the direction of relations. A multiple regression analysis was conducted, with OBSE as the dependent variable and dimensions of perfectionism as independent variables (in table 2). The model was statistically significant ( $F = 31.90$ ,  $p < .01$ ,  $R^2 = 0.385$ ).

Regression results show that all the factors of perfectionism can be a predictor of Organizational -

Based Self - Esteem. A positive relationship was found between the four dimensions (standards for others, organization, rumination and need for approval) of perfectionism and OBSE. A negative relationship was found between the four dimensions (striving for excellence, plan fullness, concern over mistakes and perceived parental pressure) of perfectionism and OBSE. However, overall model is significant, in so that H1 is supported by regression analysis results.

Table 2. Regression analysis of the effect of perfectionism factors on OBSE

	B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
High Standards for Others	.420	.052	.424**	8.139	.001
Striving for Excellence	-.213	.056	-.156**	-3.794	.001
Plan fullness	-.197	.068	-.132**	-2.888	.004
Organization	.214	.047	.242**	4.577	.001
Rumination	.142	.065	.099*	2.171	.031
Concern Over Mistakes	-.234	.055	-.276**	-4.227	.001
Need for Approval	.230	.050	.346**	4.598	.001
Perceived Parental Pressure	-.133	.056	-.144*	-2.385	.018

Note: \*\* Sig. at 0.01 level; \* Sig. at 0.05 level

Independent sample t-tests measured differences in sex and measurement scores between male and female teachers (table 3, 4). No significant sex effects were found for perfectionism and OBSE scores, but female teachers had significantly higher levels of perfectionism symptoms than their male counterparts (mean scores of 28.4886 and 28.1882) and male teachers had significantly higher levels of OBSE symptoms than female teachers (mean scores of 3.4879 and 3.4688).

Table 3. Group Statistics

	gender	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Perfectionism	Male	239	28.1882	1.80269	.11661
	female	157	28.4886	1.86206	.14861
OBSE	Male	239	3.4879	.41381	.02677
	female	157	3.4688	.42590	.03399

Table 4. Independent Samples Test

		Levene's Testt-test for Equality of Means for Equality of Variances									
		F	Sig.	t	Df	Sig.	Mean	Std. Error	95% Confidence	Interval of the Difference	
										Lower	Upper
Perfectionism	Equal variances assumed	.039	.843	-1.601	394	.110	-.30042	.18763	-.66930	.06846	
	Equal variances not assumed			-1.590	326.183	.113	-.30042	.18890	-.67202	.07119	
OBSE	Equal variances assumed	.237	.627	.444	394	.658	.01908	.04301	-.06548	.10363	
	Equal variances not assumed			.441	327.038	.660	.01908	.04326	-.06604	.10419	

One-way ANOVA was applied to examine the differences between three years of seniority groups (1-10, 11-20, 21 and upper), age (18-28, 29-40, 41 and upper), degree (Diploma degree ,Associate's Degree, Bachelor's degree and master's degree and upper), and level (primary, middle school and high school) in perfectionism and OBSE. The results are provided in Table 5.

As the table 5 shows, the P-value for the variable of Perfectionism and OBSE is not significant. In other words, No significant age, seniority, degree, and level effects on perfectionism and OBSE scores were found.

Table 5. One-way ANOVA

		Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
differences between seniority groups in OBSE	Between Groups	.303	2	.151	.864	.422
	Within Groups	68.784	393	.175		
	Total	69.086	395			
differences between seniority groups in perfectionism	Between Groups	3.535	2	1.768	.527	.591
	Within Groups	1319.332	393	3.357		
	Total	1322.867	395			
differences between three age groups in OBSE	Between Groups	.281	2	.141	.802	.449
	Within Groups	68.772	392	.175		
	Total	69.054	394			
differences between three age groups in perfectionism	Between Groups	4.445	2	2.222	.662	.517
	Within Groups	1316.996	392	3.360		
	Total	1321.441	394			
differences between degree groups in OBSE	Between Groups	.478	3	.159	.911	.436
	Within Groups	68.608	392	.175		
	Total	69.086	395			
differences between degree groups in perfectionism	Between Groups	13.398	3	4.466	1.337	.262
	Within Groups	1309.470	392	3.340		
	Total	1322.867	395			
differences between level groups in OBSE	Between Groups	.478	2	.239	1.369	.256
	Within Groups	68.608	393	.175		
	Total	69.086	395			
differences between level groups in perfectionism	Between Groups	8.945	2	4.473	1.338	.264
	Within Groups	1313.922	393	3.343		
	Total	1322.867	395			

Therefore, the results using the t-test shows that perfectionism and OBSE based on sex are not significant. Also, the ANOVA results indicate that perfectionism and OBSE based on any of the demographic variables (age, seniority, level, and degree) is not significant. Therefore, the second hypothesis is rejected.

### Discussion and conclusion

The purpose of this study was to determine the aspects of perfectionism that affect teachers' organizational based self-esteem among teachers in the public schools in Iran. Overall, the results of the study showed that perfectionism components, (striving for excellence, concern over mistakes, high standards for others, need for approval, organization, perceived parental pressure, rumination, and plan fullness) effects teachers' OBSE. More specifically, the findings showed that High Standards for others, organization, conscientious perfectionism, perfectionism (positive) and concern over mistakes, plan fullness (negative) had significant effects on OBSE.

According to the results, of regression analysis, all the factors of perfectionism can be a predictor of organizational - based self - esteem. These findings are consistent with those of other researchers (Hamachek, 1978; Blatt, 1995; Parker, 1997; Rice, Ashby and Slaney, 1998; Ashby and Rice, 2002; Accordino, Accordino and Slaney, 2000; Park, Paul Heppner and Lee, 2010, Cruce, Pashak, Handal, Munz and Gfeller, 2012), which found significant positive relationships between the dimensions of perfectionism and OBSE.

Also, the results are consistent with the findings found in Iran by Besharat (2004), who state that perfectionism has significant positive effect on the self - esteem among Pre-College Students of physical education teachers. Similar findings were reported by Akbari Shaye, Mehrabi Zadeh Honarm and, Zarezadegan, Ahmadian, Eydi Baygi (2012) and Hajloo, Sobhi-Garamaleki, Mohammadi (2013), when they found that there is positive relationship between perfectionism and self- esteem; the only difference was that their study was concerned with Students. Therefore, the pattern of results of this study supported the hypotheses 1. Thus, results of several studies have shown that there is a relationship between perfectionism and self-esteem. This means that with positive perfectionism, self-esteem increases. Note that positive perfectionism, rational and realistic

expectations created based on the capabilities and limitations of individual. This realistic approach through limiting the expectations in the areas of personal and interpersonal to help the hard and extreme measures imposing the failure of the self oneself and others. Due to this psychological fact, reducing the fear of failure and increased personal satisfaction strengthen person self-esteem. This helps his (her) to better suited to the realities faced, and make it easier to accept restrictions.

The results of the second hypothesis (*H2: There is a significant relationship between demographic variables and perfectionism and organizational - based self - esteem.*) was not confirmed. The research on the relationship between self-esteem and perfectionism based on organization with none of the demographic variables (age, seniority, level, and degree) were not significant. Thus, these results imply that the second hypothesis is rejected.

Finally, it is suggested that the relationship between perfectionism and self-organization in other provinces be also checked. It is also recommended that managers pay attention to psychological empowerment to strengthen organizational based self-esteem and provide guidance and direction forward positive Perfectionism.

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