

The Relationship of Parents' Perfectionism with Academic Self-Regulation and Self-Control

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Abstract

The present study aimed to examine the relationship of parents' perfectionism with academic self-regulation and self-control among male high school students in Iranshahr. This descriptive study followed a correlational design. The statistical population included all third grade second period male high school students in Iranshahr and the sample included 140 individuals selected hierarchically among 235 individuals using Morgan's table. To collect data, the Frost Multidimensional Perfectionism Scale (1990), the Ryan and Connell Academic Self-Regulation (1989), and the Weinberger and Schwartz Self-Restraint Scale (1990) were applied. The obtained data was analyzed using Pearson correlation coefficient and stepwise regression analysis. The results indicated that parents' perfectionism, parents' expectations, and individual standards were significantly and negatively related to academic self-regulation. Among components of perfectionism, parents' expectations explained 6% of the variance in academic self-regulation. Moreover, parents' perfectionism and concerns about mistakes, parents' expectations, and individual standards were significantly and negatively correlated with students' self-regulation. When explaining self-control via components of parents' perfectionism, in the first step, individual standards alone explained 19% of the variance in students' self-control. In the second step, component of concerns about mistakes together with individual standards explained 27% of the variance in students' academic self-regulation. Additionally, in the third step, component of parents' expectations along with individual standards and concerns about mistakes explained 32% of the variance in students' self-control.

Keywords: parents' perfectionism, academic self-regulation, self-control, students

1. Introduction

Adolescence, as a period full of somatic and mental changes and evolutions, is one of the most important stages of life wherein individuals experience many difficulties in relation to their self-control and self-regulation (Casson & Banner, 2002; as cited in Amidi et al., 2006).

Psychosocial, cognitive and biologic changes during adolescence creates numerous evolutionary opportunities for adolescents to be involved in behaviors which are implicitly important in adopting either a healthy or an unhealthy lifestyle (Harris, Duncan, & Boisjoly, 2002).

Perfectionism, without a shadow of doubt, is one of the personality traits that can be either constructive, positive and useful or neurotic and negative. Perfectionism is an individual's driving force towards growths and self-actualization. All people need to develop their potential capacity to the highest possible level and to achieve a growth beyond its current level. Individuals tend naturally towards realizing their potentials; however, they may face environmental and social barriers. Even though achieving perfection and actualization of talents and potential latent capabilities is very valuable per se and thus perfectionism is considered positive, what it has been mentioned of perfectionism is laid on two extremes. As a personality and motivational trait, perfectionism affects individuals' behaviors. Horney (1950) considers perfectionism a lifestyle adopted by individuals to be released from basic anxiety. Although the concept of perfectionism has attracted widespread attention of psychologists, it is still almost an unknown and incompatible phenomenon. Perfectionism is one of the personality traits that could be both constructive and destructive. Historically, perfectionism, as a psychological concept, has attracted the attention of many psychologists (Horney, 1950).

One of the cognitive subjects linked with learning is the concept of self-regulation defined by specialists differently. Self-regulation is a procedure through which individuals become active and achieve cognition and behaviors regularly leading them toward their own goals. The concept of self-regulation originates from Bandura's (1997) cognitive-social theory. The basic assumption of this theory is that personality is composed of the interaction among personal, environmental and behavioral variables. Accordingly, self-regulation is not merely determined by personal processes, but is also affected by environmental and behavioral elements interactively. The relative power of personal, environmental and behavioral effects in this triple interaction can change through personal attempts for self-regulation, behavioral consequences of function, and changes in the environment. Locke and Latham (2002) found that the dimensions of family function have a direct and significant effect on students' academic self-regulation.

Positive parent-adolescent relationships depict an image of human behavior, the most important of which are self-efficacy and self-control which make students apply higher tendency, effort and perseverance in performing their duties and increase their confidence in their own abilities. The basis of self-control is one's ability in voluntary control of inner processes without behavioral data. In addition, self-control has cognitive, emotional and behavioral components that facilitate the growth of morality and conscience. Hence, self-control reflects the growth of self. Self-control echoes the child's cognitive ability to appraise a position and compare it with previously learned guidance and finally it is the ability and capacity for self-regulation or a reflection of ability to express or direct impulses to decrease their intensity (Khodapanahi, 1997).

Semantically, self-control overlaps with many other terms. In human sciences, it is synonymous with continence, will, self-regulation, self-discipline, and self-organization. In Islamic, educative and ethical sciences, it overlaps with self-care, self-sustenance, self-protection, and self-correction (Azarbaijani & Deilami, 2006). Therefore, in many cases, parents' inattention to the health of mental and emotional environment of children and adolescents and lack of appropriate relations expose them to emotional and motivational defects and mental difficulties (Shamloo, 2007).

Bardone-Cone et al. (2006) investigated the relationship between perfectionism and self-regulation among a sample of 406 students. The results indicated a negative correlation between individual standards and self-regulation.

Esmaeilkhani (1998) developed and validated a scale to measure self-regulation. The researcher also examined the relationship between psychological tenacity, perfectionism and academic performance of boys and girls and found a negative correlation between self-regulation and perfectionism.

Rizzemberg and Zimmerman (1992; as cited in Wolters, 1998) reported that high school students who had higher academic performance were more successful in the use of self-regulation strategies and they use a wider variety of strategies to deal with learning situations, while students who were less successful reported less strategies suggesting no systematic method to study scientific content.

Eisenberg and Losya (1997) found that parents' response to their children and adequate monitoring on the behavior have effects, the most important of which include improvement of children's academic achievement. They also considered self-control a key factor for substance use among adolescence.

According to Zimmerman (2000), when self-control occurs, the learner directs training efforts in such a way that they lead to refinement of skills so as to achieve stable implementation. In addition, external self-regulation forms self-control, while internal self-regulation removes self-control.

It seems that parents' perfectionism influences adolescents' academic self-regulation and self-control in educational environment. Therefore, family, as the nurturing substrate for developing self-regulation and self-control, is one of the institutions which are examined in the current study. Perfectionism has not been well addressed by Iranian research communities and the number of research studies in this field is limited. On the other hand, there is a dearth of research on self-regulation (Gleason et al., 2009). In addition, little attention has been paid to the relationship of perfectionism, self-regulation and self-control of students. Considering this research gap, the current study aimed to investigate such a relationship.

Thus, the basic research question of this study is whether there is a significant relationship between adolescents' perfectionism, self-regulation and self-control. Considering this general question, the following questions were posed.

- 1) Are parents' perfectionism and its components significantly related to self-regulation among third grade high school students?
- 2) Can parents' perfectionism components predict students' academic self-regulation?

- 3) Are parents' perfectionism and its components significantly correlated with self-control among third grade high school students?
- 4) Can parents' perfectionism components predict students' academic self-control?

2. Method

2.1 Statistical Population and Sample

The statistical population of this study included all third grade high school second period male high school students in Iranshahr (N=235) in the academic year 2015-2016. In this study, multistage (hierarchical) sampling method was used. According to Morgan's table, the sample size was 146. However, overall, the final sample included 140 students of four schools in different parts of the city. In the next stage, after a visit to each school and given the number of classes, students were randomly selected to complete the questionnaire.

2.2 Data Collection Tools

2.2.1 The Frost Multidimensional Perfectionism Scale (FMPS)

The perfectionism scale was developed by Frost and his colleagues in 1990. This questionnaire contains 35 items and five subscales including concerns about mistakes, doubt about behaviors, parents' expectations, individual standards, and discipline and order. In addition, a total score is calculated for the whole scale.

Thus, the questionnaire is valid. In the present study, Cronbach's alpha of the total questionnaire was obtained 0.91.

2.2.2 Academic Self-Regulation Inventory

This inventory was developed by Ryan and Connell in 1989 to measure children's self-regulation. It contains 31 4-option items. Their reliability was estimated using Cronbach's alpha coefficient which was 0.87 and 0.94, respectively.

2.2.3 Self-Restraint Scale (SRS)

This scale is a self-report instrument with 30 5-option items that measure emotional restraint and the ability to suppress anger. This scale was developed by Weinberger and Schwartz in 1990 and is considered among the Weinberger Compatibility Scales. The self-restraint scale has an overall scale and 4 subscales Feldman and Weinberger (1994).

Reliability coefficient of, using Cronbach's alpha coefficient and Kuder-Richardson coefficient, was 0.60 and 0.95, respectively.

2.3 Research Procedure and Data Analysis

The descriptive study followed a correlational-predictive design. To analyze the data, descriptive statistics (frequency, percentage, mean and standard deviation) as well as inferential statistics including Pearson correlation and stepwise regression using SPSS were applied.

3. Results

Table 1. Descriptive indicators of perfectionism and its components

| Variable | N | Mean | SD | df |
|------------------------------|-----|-------|------|-----|
| Concerns about mistakes | 140 | 88.22 | 7/3 | 139 |
| Doubt about behaviors | 140 | 10.10 | 08.2 | 139 |
| Parents' expectations | 140 | 54.10 | 84.2 | 139 |
| Individual standards | 140 | 43.17 | 13.3 | 139 |
| Discipline and order | 140 | 00.15 | 93.2 | 139 |
| Total score of perfectionism | 140 | 97.75 | 62.8 | 139 |

As Table 1 indicates, the mean score of the respondents on the subcomponent of concerns about mistakes, doubt about behaviors, parents' expectations, individual standards, discipline and order and parents' perfectionism is 88.22, 10.10, 54.10, 43.17, 00.15 and 97.75, respectively.

Table 2. Descriptive indicators of self-regulation

| Variable | N | Mean | SD | df |
|--|-----|-------|-------|-----|
| Total score of academic self-regulation | 140 | 51.52 | 98.16 | 139 |

As Table 2 indicates, the mean score of the respondents on academic self-regulation is 51.52.

Table 3. Descriptive indicators of self-suppression

| Variable | N | Mean | SD | df |
|--------------------------------------|-----|-------|-------|-----|
| Total score of self-restraint | 140 | 69.47 | 69.18 | 139 |

As Table 3 indicates, the mean score of the respondents on self-restraint is 69.47.

3.1 Are Parents' Perfectionism and Its Components Significantly Related to Self-Regulation among Third Grade High School Students?

Table 4. Correlation coefficients of parents' perfectionism and its component with students' academic self-regulation

| Academic Self-regulation | | |
|---------------------------------|--------|-------|
| Variable | r | Sig |
| Parents' Perfectionism | -0.295 | 0.000 |
| Concerns about Mistakes | -0.144 | 0.09 |
| Doubt about behaviors | -0.055 | 0.516 |
| Parents' Expectations | -0.257 | 0.002 |
| Individual Standards | -0.216 | 0.01 |
| Discipline and Order | -0.165 | 0.052 |

The results presented in Table 4 show a negative significant relationship between parents' perfectionism and academic self-regulation at the 99% confidence level ($P < 0.01$). Among the components of parents' perfectionism, parents' expectations and individual standards have a negative significant relationship with academic self-regulation at the 99% confidence level ($P < 0.01$). Therefore, the research hypothesis is rejected and the alternative one suggesting a significant positive relationship between the variables under examination is confirmed.

3.2 Can Parents' Perfectionism Components Predict Students' Academic Self-Regulation?

Table 5. Results of regression analysis conducted to predict academic students' self-regulation via parents' perfectionism

| Model | Variables | R | R2 | ADJ.R2 | SE | B | β | T | F | Sig |
|-----------------|-----------------------|-------|-------|--------|------|-------|---------|-------|------|-------|
| Stepwise | Constant | | | | 35.5 | 63.68 | | 82.12 | | 0.000 |
| | Parents' Expectations | 0.257 | 0.066 | 0.059 | 0.49 | -1.53 | -0.257 | -3.12 | 9.73 | 0.002 |

To investigate the predictive power of perfectionism components in determining the variance in academic self-regulation, the stepwise regression analysis was used. The results indicated that in the first step, the component of parents' expectations entered the equation. As can be seen in Table 5, parents' expectations alone explained 6% of the variance in academic self-regulation.

3.3 Are Parents' Perfectionism and Its Components Significantly Correlated with Self-Control among Third Grade High School Students?

Table 6. Correlation coefficients of parents' perfectionism and its component with students' academic self-control

| Self-control | | |
|--------------------------------|----------|------------|
| Variable | r | Sig |
| Parents' Perfectionism | -0.53 | 0.000 |
| Concerns about Mistakes | -0.381 | 0.000 |
| Doubt about behaviors | -0.110 | 0.195 |
| Parents' Expectations | -0.39 | 0.000 |
| Individual Standards | -0.440 | 0.000 |
| Discipline and Order | -0.155 | 0.068 |

The results presented in Table 6 show a negative significant relationship between parents' perfectionism and self-control at the 99% confidence level ($P < 0.01$). Among the components of parents' perfectionism, concerns about mistakes, parents' expectations and individual standards have a negative significant relationship with academic self-regulation at the 99% confidence level ($P < 0.01$). Therefore, the research hypothesis is rejected and the alternative one suggesting a significant positive relationship between the variables under examination is confirmed.

3.4 Can Parents' Perfectionism Components Predict Students' Academic Self-Control?

Table 7. Results of regression analysis conducted to predict students' self-control by parents' perfectionism

| Model | Variables | R | R2 | ADJ.R2 | SE | B | β | T | F | Sig |
|-----------------|-------------------------|----------|-----------|---------------|-----------|----------|---------------------------|----------|----------|------------|
| Stepwise | Individual Standard | 0.44 | 0.194 | 0.19 | 0.456 | -2.626 | -0.44 | 27.80 | 33.20 | 0.000 |
| | Concerns about mistakes | 0.5026 | 0.277 | 0.27 | 0.377 | 1.492 | -0.296 | -3.96 | 26.198 | 0.000 |
| | Parents' Expectations | 0.579 | 0.335 | 0.32 | 0.539 | -1.57 | -0.284 | -3.46 | 22.86 | 0.001 |

To investigate the predictive power of perfectionism components in determining the variance in self-control, the stepwise regression analysis was used. The results indicated that in the first step, the component of individual standards entered the equation. As can be seen in Table 7, this variable alone explained 19% in the variance of self-control. In the second step, parents' expectations entered the equation, and as can be seen in Table 7, this variable together with individual standards explained 27% of the variance in students' self-control. In the third step, parents' expectations, individual standards and concerns about mistakes explained 32% of the variance in students' self-control.

4. Conclusion

The first research question showed a negative significant relationship between parents' perfectionism and academic self-regulation at the 99% confidence level ($P < 0.01$). Among the components of parents' perfectionism, parents' expectations and individual standards had a negative significant relationship with academic self-regulation at the 99% confidence level ($P < 0.01$). In addition, the second research question revealed that parents' expectations alone explained 6% of the variance in academic self-regulation. This finding is consistent with what Bardone-Cone et al.'s (2006) found. They investigated the relationship of perfectionism with self-regulation among a sample of 406 students. The results indicated a negative correlation between individual standards and self-regulation.

The third research question revealed a negative significant relationship between parents' perfectionism and academic self-regulation at the 99% confidence level ($P < 0.01$). In addition, among the components of parents' perfectionism, parents' expectations and individual standards had a negative significant relationship with academic self-regulation at the 99% confidence level ($P < 0.01$). The fourth research question indicated that in the

first step, individual standards explained 19% in the variance in self-control. In the second step, parents' expectations together with individual standards explained 27% of the variance in students' self-control. In the third step, parents' expectations, individual standards and concerns about mistakes explained 32% of the variance in students' self-control. This finding is consistent with what Esmaeilkhani (1998) found. He developed and validated a scale to measure self-regulation and examined the relationship between psychological tenacity, perfectionism and academic performance of boy and girl students and found a negative correlation between academic performance and perfectionism.

5. Discussion

The present study aimed to examine the relationship of parents' perfectionism with academic self-regulation and self-control among male high school students in Iranshahr.

It seems that parents' perfectionism influences adolescents' academic self-regulation and self-control in educational environment. Therefore, family, as the nurturing substrate for developing self-regulation and self-control, is one of the institutions which are examined in the current study. Perfectionism has not been well addressed by Iranian research communities and the number of research studies in this field is limited. On the other hand, there is a dearth of research on self-regulation (Gleason et al., 2009). In addition, little attention has been paid to the relationship of perfectionism, self-regulation and self-control of students. Considering this research gap, the current study aimed to investigate such a relationship.

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