Available online at www.sciencedirect.com

ScienceDirect

Procedia - Social and Behavioral Sciences 89 (2013) 567 – 571

Procedia Social and Behavioral Sciences

2nd Cyprus International Conference on Educational Research, (CY-ICER 2013)

Prediction of Marital Satisfaction based on Perfectionism

Hayedeh Cheraghali Gol[a]*,Amir Masood Rostami[b], Mahdi Goudarzi [c]

[a]*Islamic Azad University, Roudehen Branch, Young Researchers Club, Tehran, Iran*
[b]*Islamic Azad University, Roudehen Branch, Department of Psychology, Tehran, Iran*

Abstract

This study aims to predict marital satisfaction based on positive and negative perfectionism. Therefore, 123 people (67 men and 56 women) were selected as the study samples from all the counseling centers located in the city of Tehran through multi-stage random sampling method. The study methodology was correlation. Participants in the study were tested using Hill Perfectionism Inventory and Enrich Marital Satisfaction Scale. The multiple regression method was used for statistical analysis. The results obtained from this study indicated that there is a positive correlation between positive perfectionism and marital satisfaction and a negative correlation between negative perfectionism and marital satisfaction.

© 2013 The Authors. Published by Elsevier Ltd. Open access under CC BY-NC-ND license.
Selection and/or peer-review under responsibility of Prof. Dr. Huseyin Uzunboylu, Near East University, Faculty of Education, Cyprus

Keywords: Marital Satisfaction, Positive Perfectionism, Negative Perfectionism;

1. Introduction

The motivation of perfectionism is influence human behavior widely and comprehensively discussed by psychologists and particularly theorists of psychoanalysis approach all through the history (Stoeber & Stoeber, 2009). “Perfectionism” is in principle the constant tendency of the individual to create perfect and unachievable criteria and the attempts made to realize them that is accompanied by critical self-evaluations of personal performance (Donkley et al, 2006; Barnes, 1980). Freud (1975) describes perfectionists in the following way: the main stimulus in the lives of these individuals is not achieving happiness in life, but to gain superiority and perfection (Verdy, 2001). According to Freud (1926-1959), when the strict super-ego puts a person under pressure for progress and perfect behavior, the tendency for perfectionism emerges in that person (Hill et al., 1997 qtd. in Kooroshnia & Latifian, 2011). Horney (1950) considers perfectionism a way of life, which is employed by people in order to get rid of fundamental anxieties. He defines perfectionism as a psychotic tendency for being perfect and ideal, regarding the slightest error an unforgivable sin, and anxiously waiting for ominous consequences (Sadati et al., 2008). Alice (1958) defines perfectionism as: the acceptance of the belief that the individual needs to be

* Corresponding author: Hayedeh Cheraghali Gol. Tel.: +98-912-806-0205.
E-mail address: hayedecheraghi@yahoo.com

1877-0428 © 2013 The Authors. Published by Elsevier Ltd. Open access under CC BY-NC-ND license.
Selection and/or peer-review under responsibility of Prof. Dr. Huseyin Uzunboylu, Near East University, Faculty of Education, Cyprus
doi:10.1016/j.sbspro.2013.08.896

completely meritorious and intelligent, a pioneer in all aspects of life and that there is always an exact, comprehensive and correct way for solving human problems without which life would be disastrous (Egan, 2005). Adler (1973) believes that the attempt to achieve high criteria and ambition to reach perfection in a proper way is among the conditions that will lead to human development. However, a psychotic attempt could be revealed by the desire for power and control over others (Sharif et al., 2011). It was assumed in the past that perfectionism was a one-dimensional concept (Bronze, 1980). However, it is now believed that it has a multi-dimensional nature (Stamoff & Parker, 2000). A group of theorists (like Adler, 1956; Rogers, 1961; Mazlo, 1970; Spence and Holmbridge, 1983 qtd. in Mohammadi & jokar, 2010) have considered the healthy aspect of perfectionism by considering it as the attempts made by individuals to realize their potential capacities and talents. Meanwhile, another group of theorists (such as Hamachek, 1978; Frost et al., 1993; Sliny et al. qtd. in Mohammadi & Jokar, 2010) have regarded the two main dimensions of perfectionism; one dimension expressed in terms of natural, healthy, adapted, and normal, and the other dimension expressed in terms of psychotic, unhealthy, un adapted, and uncoordinated. Terry-Short et al. (1995) have proposed a distinction between normal perfectionism and neuroticism using theoretical bases. Positive or normal perfectionism is defined as a motivation for progress towards a defined goal to reach a desirable (positive) outcome and negative or neurotic perfectionism is defined as the motivation towards a defined goal in order to prevent the occurrence of undesirable (negative) outcomes (Bahadori Khosroshahi & Babapoor Kheiral-Din, 2012).

Perfectionism influences all aspects of life including romantic relationships and marital satisfaction (Stoeber & Stoeber, 2009). The results of the studies indicate that the spouses who have abnormal (negative) perfectionism show less marital satisfaction (Dimitrioski et al., 2002; Martin & Ashby, 2004; DiBarto & Barlow, 2006; Kim, 2011; Safarzadeh et al., 2011; Ehteshamzadeh et al., 2011) and the spouses who have normal perfectionism show higher marital satisfaction (Ashby et al., 2008). According to the influence of perfectionism on marital satisfaction and the report made by the European Commission proving that 96 per cent of people have regarded family life as the only important and valuable aspect of life and consider family a secure environment and an improving place for the development of its members (Govahi Jahan, 2008), the present study was conducted with the aim of predicting marital satisfaction based on perfectionism.

2. Method

The study methodology was correlation. To analyze the data according to the measurement level of analyzed variables, descriptive statistics (central and dispersion index) and inferential statistics (multiple regression) were used and all data processing operations were done by SPSS software.

2.1. Statistical Population, Sample and Sampling Method

The statistical population of this study included all 24-44 spouses in the city of Tehran in 2011. From among this population, 123 people (67 men and 56 women) were selected using the multi-stage random sampling method from the counseling centers located in the north, south, east, and west of Tehran.

2.1.1. Instruments

Enrich Marital Satisfaction Questionnaire: This questionnaire consists of 12 subscales, including idealistic distortion, marital satisfaction, personality issues, communication, conflict resolution, financial management, leisure activities, sexual relationship, children and parenting, family and friends, egalitarian roles, and religious orientation. Enrich questionnaire was normalized by Soleimanian (1994) in Iran with 47 questions. The main form of the questionnaire, which included 115 questions, was reported to be 92 per cent reliable with the Cronbach's alpha and the alpha coefficient for the shortened form was 95 per cent. Mirkheshti (1996) also calculated the validity of the shortened form by alpha coefficient equivalent to 92 per cent. The score of each subject in this questionnaire is between 47 and 235 (Rohani & Manavipoor, 2008).

Hill Perfectionism Inventory: includes 59 sentences and 8 subscales. The subscales of this inventory include: concentration on mistakes, need for approval, rumination, perceived parental pressure, organization, planfulness,

and high standards for others, and striving for excellence. Dimensions one to four are among the negative aspects and dimensions five to eight are among the positive aspects of perfectionism. The reported Cronbach's alpha by Jamshidi et al. (2009) was between 0.83 and 0.91 and in the study conducted by Sharifi et al. (2011), the reliability of the whole scale was obtained 0.929 using Cronbach's alpha (internal consistency) in Tehran.

3. Results

Descriptive findings: Table 1. Presents the descriptive indices of the scores obtained by the participants in perfectionism and marital satisfaction components.

Table 1.Descriptive Indices of Perfectionism and Marital satisfaction

Variables	M	SD	Skewness	Kurtosis	Min	Max
Positive Perfectionism	80.51	12.38	0.625	1.01	30	100
Negative Perfectionism	124.44	21.10	0.300	1.20	65	185
Marital Satisfaction	186.54	30.45	0.185	0.229	87	225

The highest mean and standard deviation of spouses belong to marital satisfaction with the value of M=186.54 and S=30.45.

Inferential Findings: in order to conduct the statistical analysis, multiple regressions was used. Table 2 provides a summary of the regression analysis pertaining to prediction of marital satisfaction based on positive and negative dimensions of perfectionism.

Table 2.Summary of the Regression Analysis Pertaining to Prediction of Marital satisfaction based on Perfectionism

Predictors	B	SE	β	T	Sig
Constant	150.435	19.701		7.636	0.000
Positive Perfectionism	0.951	0.222	0.387	4.294	0.000
Negative Perfectionism	0.325	0.130	0.255	2.502	0.000

R=0.375 R^2=0.141 Adjusted R^2=0.126 F= 9.815 Sig =0.000

The results obtained from multiple regression analysis indicate that regression coefficient (B) for the variables of positive and negative perfectionism were 0.951 and -.325, respectively. For the standardized regression coefficient (Beta), positive perfectionism's beta was 0.387 and negative perfectionism's beta was – 0.255. Considering the relationship and the direction of positive and negative perfectionism's beta, these variables could be predictors of marital satisfaction. In addition, the determinant coefficient (R2) is reported to be 0.141, indicating that about 2 percent of marital satisfaction variance could be explained by positive and negative perfectionism. In other words, 2 percent of the distribution observed in marital satisfaction could be explained by these two variables. The value of the observed R (0.375) indicates that the present linear regression model could be used for predicting marital satisfaction. Moreover, the ratio of the calculated f (9.815) was significant at the level of 99 percent. Therefore, with the increase of each unit in positive perfectionism, marital satisfaction will increase 0.951 units. In contrast, with the increase of each unit in negative perfectionism, marital satisfaction will decrease 0.325 units.

4. Discussion and Conclusion

Alice (1995) believes that individuals' irrational attitudes and assumptions could play a significant role in creating dysfunctional emotional relationship. From the viewpoint of cognitive psychologists (Bronze, 1997; Alice, 1977; Beck, 1995), many misunderstandings in marriages are rooted in prejudiced and irrational thoughts of spouses (Shayesteh et al. 2006). This study, which aimed to predict marital satisfaction based on positive and negative perfectionism, demonstrated that there is a positive correlation between positive perfectionism and marital satisfaction. In other words, the increase in positive (normal) perfectionism will increase marital satisfaction. Similarly, there is a negative correlation between negative perfectionism (abnormal) and marital satisfaction, i.e. the increase in negative perfectionism will decrease marital satisfaction.

The results obtained from this study are consistent with the results obtained from the study conducted by Ashby et al. (2008), who showed that spouses with normal perfectionism have higher degree of marital satisfaction and

spouses with negative perfectionism have lower degree of marital satisfaction. In addition, this study also confirms the findings by Dimitrioski et al. (2002), Martin and Ashby (2004), DiBarto and Barlow (2006), Kim (2011), Safarzadeh et al. (2011), Ehteshamzadeh et al. (2009), who proved that spouses with abnormal perfectionism have less marital satisfaction.

In order to explain the findings of the study, it could be said that a normal perfectionism which is healthy, consistent or positive includes those aspects of perfectionism that are related to idealistic attempts such as having high personal standards, having exact measures for performance, and striving for excellence. This dimension has positive correlation with consistency indices such as positive emotion. Hamachek (1978) believes that normal perfectionists enjoy their difficult and overwhelming attempts, in a way that they fight for success and progress in a flexible way. They accept personal and situational limitations, set them challenging and at the same time logical goals which provides them with the opportunity to participate in activities, surpass others, and enjoy their successes (Flett, Hewitt, Blankstein, O'Brien, 1991 qtd in Besharat et al., 2008). People with normal perfectionism enjoy their married life more due to having flexibility and positive emotion.

On the other hand, abnormal perfectionism is unhealthy and unadapted. It is related to idealistic concerns such as concerns about mistakes, doubts about actions, fear of not being approved by others, and lack of coordination between expectations and outcomes. This dimension has positive correlation with the indices of inadaptability such as negative emotion (StobroOoto, 2006; Stobro et al., 2007; Harris et al., 2008). Abnormal perfectionists expect themselves, their partner and their relatives to be perfect, and of course this unrealistic expectation is not realized. Therefore, they are always experiencing problems in their relationship with their spouse. Perfectionism decreases inter-relational trust and friendship in their marital satisfaction. Abnormal perfectionists are punctilious and captious and this behavior decreases the self-confidence in the spouse and will become annoying for him/her. The abnormal pattern of perfectionism will lead to marital problems and lack of satisfaction in marital relationships (Ehteshamzadeh et al., 2009). Due to experiencing a high degree of negative emotion and inhibition in progress as well as problems in intimacy expression in their marital relationships, abnormal perfectionists experience a lower degree of marital satisfaction. Based on the results obtained from the study, holding cognitive educational workshops and couples therapy sessions in order to change the pattern of abnormal perfectionism between spouses to a normal and positive perfectionism pattern to increase marital satisfaction is recommended.

References

Ahmadi, K., S.M. Nabipoor, S.A. Kimiaee and M.H. Afzali, (2010). Effect of family problem – solving on marital satisfaction. Journal Applied Sci. 10(8): 682- 687.

Ashby, J.S., K.G. Rice and C.B. Kutchins, (2008).Matches and mismatches: Partners, perfectionism and premarital adjustment. Journal of Counseling Psychology. 55(1): 125- 132.

BahadoriKhosroshahi,J and BabapourKheyroddin,J.(2012). Relationship between Identity Styles and Perfectionism with Happiness among Students , Journal of Psychology, 16 (Spring) 36-50.

Besharat, Mohammad Ali, Nadali, Hossein, Zebardast, Ozra, and Salehi, Maryam (2008). Perfectionism and styles of fighting with stress, Iranian Psychologists Quarterly, Year 5, no. 17, 7-17.

Burns, D. (1980). The perfectionist's script for selfdefeat.PsychologyToday, 34-51.

Dibartolo, P.M. and D.H. Barlow,) 2006(.Perfectionism, marital - satisfaction and contributing factors to sexual dysfunction. Archives of Sexual Behavior Journal., 25(6): 581-588.

Dimitrovsky, L., R. Levy-Shiff and I. Schattner-Zanany, (2002). Dimensions of Depression and Perfectionosm in Pregnant and Nonpregnant Women: Their Levels and Interrelationships and Their Relationship to Marital Satisfaction. Journal Psychology.,136(6): 631- 646.

Dunkley, D. M., Zuroff, D. C., &Balnkstein, K. R. (2006).Specific perfectionism components versus selfcriticism in predicting maladjustment. Personality and Individual Differences, 40, 665-676.

Edalati, A. and M. Redzuan, (2010) .Perception of Women towards Family Values and Their Marital Satisfaction. Journal American Sci., 6(4): 132-137.

Egan, S, (2005). An investigation of positive and negative perfectionism, Unpublished master's thesis, Curtin University of Technology Human Research. Australia.

Ehteshamzadeh, Parvin, Sakvandi, Behnam, and Bagheri, Ashraf (2009).The relationship between forgiveness and perfectionism and intimacy with marital satisfaction in the spouses of war veterans in Ahvaz, Woman and culture Journal 4 (12), 123-136.

Floyd FJ, Gilliom LA, CostiganCL .(1998). Marriage and the parenting alliance: longitudinal prediction of change in parenting perceptions and behaviors. Child Dev; 69(5): 1461-79.

GovahiJahan, Fatemeh. (2008). The relationship between meaningfulness in life and marital satisfaction, Psychology and Educational Sciences Quarterly, Year 2, No. 8, 49-69.

Heidari, Alireza, and Eghbal, Fereshteh (2010). The relationship between difficulty in emotional regulation, attachment styles, and intimacy with marital satisfaction in the spouses in Ahvaz Alloy Industries, New Findings in Psychology Quarterly, Year 5, no. 15, 113-132.

Harris, P. W., Pepper, C. M., &Maack, D. J. (2008). The relationship between maladaptive perfectionism and depressive symptoms: The mediating role of rumination. Personality and Individual Differences 44, 150–160.

Kim, L.(2011).A "Perfeat" storm : perfectionism, forgiveness, and marital satisfaction .Regent university.

Kooroshnia, Mariyam, Latifian, Morteza. (2011).The relationship between the big five models of personality and perfectionism. Psychological Studies, Faculty of Educational Sciences and Psychology, University of Al-Zahra, Period 7, no. 4., 27-54.

Malekpur M, Jadidzade N.(1997). A survey on the relation between the stress of parents (having Mental Retarded Child) with the intense of Retardation, children sex and age, social-economics level and education of parents. Journal of PajuheshhayeTarbiyativaRavenshenakhti; 1(3): 37-56. [Persian]

Martin, J.L. and J.S. Ashby, (2004). Perfectionism and Fear of Intimacy: Implications for Relationships. The Family Journal., 12(4): 368-374.

Mohammadi, Zohreh&Jokar, Bahram. (2010). Perfectionism, emotional problems, and marital satisfaction in Iranian students, Developmental Psychology, Iranian Psychologists, Year 6, no. 23, 269-276.

Rohani, Abbas and Manavipoor, Davood (2008).The relationship between the practice of religious beliefs and happiness and marital satisfaction in Islamic Azad University, Mobarakeh Branch, Science and Research in Psychology. Islamic Azad University, Khorasegan Branch, no 36, 189-206.

Safarzadeh,S. Esfahaniasl ,M .and Bayat,M.R , (2011). The relationship between forgiveness, perfectionism and intimacy and marital satisfaction in Ahwaz Islamic Azad University Married Students. Middle-East Journal of Scientific Research ,9 (6): 778-784.

Sadati, Semoyehsadat, Behpazhooh, Ahmad, Afrooz, Gholamali, and Moltafet, Ghavam (2008). The relationship between the dimensions of perfectionism and creativity in high school students of NODET schools, Fmily and Research Quarterly (sociology, psychology, and educational sciences), Year 2, no. 4, 25-47.

Shayesteh, Golnaz, Sahebi, Ali, and Alipoor, A. (2006). Investigating the relationship between marital satisfaction and relationship beliefs and irrational expectations of spouses, Family Studies Quarterly, Year 2, no. 7., 223-238.

Sharifi,H.P, Salehi,M,. EmamiPour,S,. Bashardoust,S.(1390). An Investigation into Psychometric Properties of Hill's Perfectionism Inventory, Journal of Modern Industrial/Organization Psychology 2,(7), 9-19.

Stoeber J,,&Stoeber FS.(2009).Domains of perfectionism: Prevalence and relationships with
perfectionism, gender,age and satisfaction with life. PersIndivid Dif;46:530-5.

Stoeber, J., Harris, R. A., & Moon, P. S. (2007). Perfectionism and the experience of pride, shame, and guilt: Comparing healthy perfectionists, unhealthy perfectionists, and non-perfectionists. Personality and Individual Differences, 43, 131-141.

Stoeber, J., & Otto, K. (2006). Positive conceptions of perfectionism: Approaches, evidence, challenges.Personality and Social Psychology Review, 10, 295-319.

Stumpf, H., & Parker, W. D. (2000). A hierarchical structural analysis of perfectionism and its relation
to other personality characteristics. Personality and Individual differences, 28, 837-852.

Verdi, Mahmood. (2010). The relationship between perfectionism and psychological hardiness and physiological (mental) health and educational performance of female students in Ahvaz Pre-university Centers, Master's thesis, Ahvaz ShahidChamran University.

Zadhoosh, Somayeh, Neshatdoost, Hamid Taher, Haghighat, Fereshteh, RasoolzadehTabatabaee, Kazem, and Kalantari, Mehrdad. (2011). Investigating the effectiveness of cognitive-behaviour therapy group with religious orientation on women's marital satisfaction, Psychological Studies Quarterly, Year 1, no. 3, 21-41.