

Examination of The Relationship Between Positive and Negative Perfectionism Features and Future Expectations and Career Anxiety of Secondary Students *

Fatma Tuğba Samancı^a, Hasan Bozgeyikli^b

Abstract: This study was conducted to examine the relationship between positive and negative perfectionism, career anxieties and future expectations of secondary school students. The research was carried out with a total of 506 high school students, 325 girls and 181 boys. In the study, Positive and Negative Perfectionism Scale, Career Anxiety Scale, Adolescent Future Expectations Scale and personal information form were applied. Pearson correlation coefficient analysis and multiple linear regression analysis were used in the analysis of the data. As a result of the research, a weak positive significant relationship was found between positive and negative perfectionism and future expectation, and a weak negative significant relationship between career anxiety and future expectation. As a result of multiple linear regression analysis, it was found that the high standards and incompatibility sub-dimensions of the independent variable positive and negative perfectionism significantly predicted the sub-dimension scores of career anxiety towards family influence and towards career choice, and the work and education sub-dimension of future expectancy significantly predicted the sub-dimension scores of career anxiety towards family influence and towards career choice.

Keywords: Positive Perfectionism, Negative Perfectionism, Career Anxiety, Future Expectation.

1. Introduction

In general, perfectionism is setting unattainable goals for oneself and the environment and maintaining these goals (Burns, 1980). Perfectionism mostly emerges as a result of the urge to be loved, accepted and, being included in groups (Akça, 2020). The importance of perfectionism in every aspect of an individual's life is evident. Horney argues that perfectionism is an attitude that comes from within, but she also accepts that the environment and experiences of the person in the early childhood years are effective on the level of perfectionism (Horney, 1945). Blatt (1995) argued that the foundations of perfectionism are laid in childhood experiences and that family elders are effective in the perfectionism of the person (Enns et al., 2002). In addition, the imposition of perfect work by families and teachers creates the basis for people to acquire perfectionist personality traits at an early age. (Kottman & Ashby, 2000).

The reason why perfectionists have high expectations is that their parents are critical and have unrealistic expectations. These unrealistic demands of parents may cause children to develop irrational beliefs such as "If I am not perfect, my family will not love me" and perfectionist personality (Dilmaç et al., 2009).

Perfectionism can have positive effects on a person as well as negative effects. It is possible to find many studies in the literature that perfectionism causes negative consequences on individuals (Chen et al., 2019; Flett et al., 1989; Frost & Steketee, 1997; Hewitt & Flett, 1991a; Sherry et al., 2014; Zhang et al., 2007). Adler thinks that in perfectionism, the attitudes and behaviours of the person with this trait on the journey to achieve perfection are essential rather than good and bad (translated by Şipal, 2019). If the person who wants to achieve perfection fails to achieve his/her goal, it is possible that he/she behaves inconsiderately towards himself/herself and becomes unhappy (Ünal, 2013).

Perfectionism is the desire to reach the highest point for oneself and the environment. Perfectionism is considered in two sub-dimensions, positive and negative. Positive perfectionism is associated with high standards and order sub-dimensions, while negative perfectionism is associated with conflict sub-dimension (Kol, 2020).

People who develop a positive perception of perfectionism use this perception for their own success, they do not aim to show off to the society. They are tolerant towards their mistakes and learn from their mistakes, their self-criticism skills are developed, they work to improve themselves. On the other hand, people with a negative perception of perfectionism are dominated by the idea of "all or nothing", they are extremely intolerant of mistakes, they experience

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^a **Corresponding Author:** Expert pedagogue, Silifke Courthouse, Mersin, Turkey fatmatugbacoskun@gmail.com

^b Prof.Dr., Psychological Counseling and Guidance Department, Selcuk University, Education Faculty, Konya, Turkey, hbozgeyikli@selcuk.edu.tr

mental breakdown when they fail, they experience extreme anxiety in order to reach the criteria they set, and their anxiety increases one more time with every mistake they make. Their urge to be appreciated and admired by the society is dominant. The person who wants to reach the highest level and stay there has high expectations from himself/herself and his/her environment. Meeting this expectation and ensuring its continuity causes anxiety and reduces future expectations and satisfaction.

This study aims to reveal the relationship between positive and negative perfectionism personality traits and individuals' future expectations and career concerns. Roedell (1984) analyses perfectionism in two dimensions: positive perfectionism and negative perfectionism. Positive perfectionism is when the person strives to reach his/her standards and the result is successful. Negative perfectionism is when the person resorts to punishment when he/she fails to reach his/her standards, ignores his/her achievements on the way to the goal even if he/she fails to reach the goal, and is not satisfied with them. Burns and Fedewa (2005) argue, based on their study, that positive perfectionists strive to find effective solutions in the face of problems, while negative perfectionists have poor coping skills for dealing with stress and weaker thought patterns compared to positive perfectionists. They also stated that positive perfectionists provide themselves with positive affirmations, whereas negative perfectionists engage in negative self-talk.

In order to better understand the developmental characteristics of high school students who constitute the study group, it is necessary to know the adolescence period well. The period of sexual change and development and acquisition of sexual characteristics is the beginning of adolescence known as the puberty period. During puberty, rapid changes occur in the physical structure, cognitive structure and interests of the individual. Girls and boys complete their physical and hormonal sexual development. Most of the experts in the field call the youth period as a transition period between childhood and adulthood (Blair & Jones, 1964). This period is a period of rapid and continuous change and development.

The middle of puberty can be considered to be between the ages of 14-16 for girls and 15-17 for boys. Rapid changes are partially left behind. Since the ages of 16-17 coincide with the secondary education period and in terms of the requirements of the developmental period, they need to make important decisions about their future (Kulaksızoğlu, 2014). Similarly, Ginzberg states that individuals start to think about their interests, abilities and values in professional decisions at the ages corresponding to adolescence (Muro & Kottman, 1995). The high school period is also critical years in the orientation of adolescents towards work or university and this process is about making career choices (Rowland, 2004). According to Super, career research and decision-making are essential in adolescent career development (Brown, 1997).

Most of the young people who complete their high school education in our country experience great confusion when it comes to choosing a profession or choosing a university and they can make random choices. Unfortunately, these choices they make are usually irreversible under the conditions of our country. Interest, ability, personality traits, perception of the environment and society, professional values and expectations create career anxiety in students and the perception that the choices they make are irreversible despite their expectations for the future can cause negative emotions.

According to the findings of a study conducted with 359 high school students, 224 boys and 135 girls, aged 14-19, to determine their fears and anxieties, not being able to enter university causes significant anxiety and fear. The researcher also reported high levels of anxiety about failure and lack of self-actualization. (Özkan, 1984). Achievement or exam anxiety is thought to be positive as it motivates the individual at the optimum level and reveals his/her competitive side. However, as the level of anxiety increases, anxiety and panic increase and the individual is negatively affected.

A review of the literature reveals that young people are most concerned about their future. As a result of the increase in the number of applications for the university exam every year, the situation of entering the university is gradually decreasing and the number of unemployed university graduates is gradually increasing, which increases the concerns and problems of young people about the future and negatively affects their future expectations.

Erikson (1968) described adolescence as a developmental period in which changes are observed in physical, mental, social and moral dimensions and the importance of future planning emerges with the search for identity. When future expectations are compared among adolescents, inconsistency is often dominant (Sipsma et al., 2012).

The most common future expectations of adolescents are about education and professional success. This is followed by expectations of having a happy home, being healthy and being committed to religious beliefs (Mello, 2008). In the literature, it has been observed that the future expectations of young people vary depending on gender, values, family and community values.

1.1. Purpose of the research

The main purpose of the study is to answer the question "What is the relationship between positive and negative perfectionism characteristics of secondary school students and their level of future expectation and career anxiety?". The sub-objectives sought to be answered in order to reach the aim are as follows:

1. Is there a significant relationship between secondary school students' positive and negative perfectionism characteristics, future expectations and career anxiety?
2. Do secondary school students' positive and negative perfectionism traits predict their career anxieties in a significant way?
3. Do secondary school students' future expectations predict their career anxieties in a significant way?

2. Method

Some detailed information about method of article is given.

2.1. Research Model

The method of the research is descriptive and "relational survey model", one of the quantitative research methods, was used in the research. Research in the relational survey model enables to determine the relationships between two or more variables and to reach clues about the cause-effect relationship (Büyüköztürk et al., 2020).

2.2. Population and Sampling

The population of this study is all secondary school students studying in Turkey. The sample of the study consists of a total of 506 students, 325 female and 181 male students, who were volunteers selected by random element sampling method, studying in different high schools in Konya province in the 2021-2022 academic year.

2.3. Data Collection Tools and/or Techniques

The data collection tools used in this study are "Positive and Negative Perfectionism Scale", "Career Anxiety Scale" and "Adolescent Future Expectations Scale".

2.3.1. Positive and Negative Perfectionism Scale

The Positive and Negative Perfectionism Scale (Almost Perfectionism Scale APS-R), developed by Slaney and Ashby (1996), was developed as a self-assessment tool and later revised by Slaney et al. in 2001 to measure the positive and negative aspects of perfectionism. It is a 23-item, 7-point Likert type scale adapted to Turkish by Ulu in 2007 under the name of Positive Negative Perfectionism Scale. Positive perfectionism consists of high standards and order sub-dimensions and has 11 items in total. Negative perfectionism consists of conflict sub-dimension and has a total of 12 items. The items in the scale are scored as "Strongly Disagree":1 and "Strongly Agree":7. In this study, Cronbach's Alpha internal consistency coefficient of the scale was calculated as .85. Cronbach's Alpha coefficients were .78 for the high standards sub-dimension, .80 for the order sub-dimension and .87 for the conflict sub-dimension.

2.3.2. Career Anxiety Scale

The Career Anxiety Scale (CAES) developed by Çetin Gündüz and Nalbantoğlu Yılmaz (2016) was used to collect research data. The Career Anxiety Scale consists of two sub-dimensions and 14 items in total, 5 items measuring the sub-dimension of career anxiety towards family influence and 9 items measuring the sub-dimension of career anxiety towards career choice. In the scale, a 5-point Likert-type rating ranging from "Strongly Agree (5) to Strongly Disagree (1)" was used. A high score in the anxiety about family influence and career choice sections of the scale indicates a high level of anxiety related to the relevant dimension. In this study, the Cronbach's Alpha internal consistency coefficient of the scale was calculated as .92. Cronbach's Alpha coefficients were .90 for the sub-dimension of family influence and .92 for the sub-dimension of career choice.

2.3.3. Adolescent Future Expectations Scale

In this study, the Adolescent Future Expectations Scale (EGDS) by Tuncer (2011), which is the Turkish adaptation of the Future Expectations Scale for Adolescents developed by McWhirter and McWhirter (2008) was used to measure students' future expectations. The original scale consists of 25 items and all items start with "When I am an adult". For the scale items, a 7-point Likert-type rating ranging from 1: Strongly Disbelieve to 7: Strongly Believe was used (Tuncer, 2011). The "Work and Education" dimension of the scale consists of 11 items, the "Marriage and Family" dimension

consists of 7 items, the "Religion and Society" dimension consists of 3 items and the "Health and Life" dimension consists of 4 items (Tuncer, 2011). In this study, the Cronbach's Alpha internal consistency coefficient of the scale was calculated as .94. Cronbach's Alpha coefficients were found to be .95 for work and education sub-dimension, .90 for marriage and family sub-dimension, .73 for religion and society sub-dimension, and .74 for health and life sub-dimension.

2.4. Analysis of Data

The data obtained from the scales were analysed. After the scales were examined, it was seen that there were no errors and all data were entered into the SPSS 22 package programme. Then, in order to understand whether the scales and sub-dimensions show normality distribution, normality test was performed for all scale sub-dimensions with Explore analysis and it was found that the scales were suitable for normal distribution. Parametric tests were applied in order to compare the scales suitable for normality distribution with demographic variables.

Pearson Correlation was used to determine the relationships between the variables of the study. Multiple Regression Analysis was used to explain the cause-effect relationships between two or more independent variables affecting the variable with a model and to determine the effect levels of these independent variables.

3. Findings

In this section, the results are analyzed in detail by giving tables of the analyses related to the sub-problems of the research.

3.1. Findings on the relationship between secondary school students' mean scores of positive and negative perfectionism and their mean scores of career anxiety and future expectancy

The findings regarding the relationship between secondary school students' mean scores of positive and negative perfectionism and their mean scores of career anxiety and future expectancy are given in Table 1.

Table 1. Correlation analysis of the relationship between positive and negative perfectionism, career anxiety and future expectation scores of secondary school students

Variable	High standards	Order	Discord	Career Anxiety	Adolescent Future Expectations
High standards	1				
Order	.429**	1			
Discord	.288**	.049	1		
Career Anxiety	-.138**	-.146	.270**	1	
Adolescent Future Expectation	.423**	.359**	-.091*	-.321**	1

* $p < .05$, ** $p < .01$

According to the results in Table 1, low-level positive meaningful correlations were found between high standards and the order sub-dimension ($r = .429$, $p < .001$). When we look at the relationship between high standards and conflict, we see low-level positive meaningful relationships ($r = .288$, $p < .001$). There were very low negative meaningful correlations between the high standards sub-dimension and the mean score of the total career anxiety scale ($r = -.138$, $p < .001$). There was a low level of positive and meaningful correlation between the high standards sub-dimension and the mean scores obtained from the total future expectation scale ($r = .423$, $p < .001$). There is a low level of positive significant correlation between the order sub-dimension and the mean scores obtained from the total future expectation scale ($r = .359$, $p < .001$). A low level of positive and significant correlation was found between the conflict sub-dimension and the mean scores obtained from the total career anxiety scale ($r = .270$, $p < .001$). A very low level of negative significant correlation was found between the sub-dimension of conflict and the mean scores obtained from the total future expectation scale ($r = -.091$, $p < .05$). A low-level negative significant correlation was found between the mean scores obtained from the total career anxiety scale and the mean scores obtained from the total future expectation scale ($r = -.321$, $p < .001$).

3.2. Do secondary school students' positive and negative perfectionism traits predict their career anxiety in a significant way?

Multiple regression analysis technique was used to reveal the explanatory power of secondary school students' positive and negative perfectionism mean scores on career anxiety mean scores. The findings related to the analysis are given in Table 2 and Table 3.

Table 2. The power of positive and negative perfectionism to explain the mean scores of secondary school students' career anxiety sub-dimension of family influence

Variable	B	Std. Error	β	t	p
Constant	2,429	.280		8,661	.000
High standards	-.167	.052	-.158	-3,197	.001
Order	-.047	.040	-.055	-1,167	.244
Conflict	.251	.042	.269	-6,013	.000

R=.287 R²=.082 F=14,998 p=.000

When the data in Table 2 are examined, as a result of multiple linear regression analysis, it is seen that the independent variable positive and negative perfectionism significantly predicted the sub-dimension score for family influence (R=.287, R² =.082, F=14,998, p<.001). This finding shows that positive and negative perfectionism explained 8 % of the variance related to the total score obtained from the sub-dimension of family influence in secondary school students. When the standardized (β) coefficient and t values are examined, it can be said that incompatibility and high standards are significant predictors of anxiety towards family influence, respectively.

Table 3. The power of positive and negative perfectionism to explain the mean scores of secondary school students' career anxiety sub-dimension of career choice

Variable	B	Std. Error	β	t	p
Constant	3,606	.261		13,814	.000
High standards	-.194	.049	-.194	-3,999	.000
Order	-.063	.038	-.078	-1,672	.095
Conflict	.276	.039	.312	7,104	.000

R=.342 R²=.117 F=22,171 p=.000

When the data in Table 3 are analyzed, as a result of multiple linear regression analysis, it is seen that the independent variable positive and negative perfectionism significantly predicts the sub-dimension score for career choice (R=.342, R² =.117, F=22,171, p<.001). This finding shows that positive and negative perfectionism explained 11% of the variance related to the total score obtained from the sub-dimension of career choice in secondary school students. When the standardized (β) coefficient and t-values are examined, it can be said that conflict and high standards are significant predictors of anxiety towards career choice, respectively.

3.3. Do secondary school students' future expectations predict their career anxiety in a significant way?

Multiple regression analysis technique was used to reveal the explanatory power of the mean scores of future expectations of secondary school students on the mean scores of career anxiety. The findings related to the analysis are given in Table 4 and Table 5.

Table 4. The Power of future expectations of secondary school students to explain the mean scores of career anxiety sub dimension towards family influence dimension

Variable	B	Std. Hata	β	t	p
Constant	3,549	.204		17,358	.000
Work and Education	-.240	.048	-.292	-4,965	.000
Marriage and Family	-.044	.040	-.059	-1,105	.270
Religion and Society	.024	.040	.032	.609	.543
Health and Life	.027	.046	.033	.590	.555

R=.291 R²=.085 F=11,563 p=.000

When the data in Table 4 are analyzed, as a result of multiple linear regression analysis, it is seen that the independent variable future expectations significantly predicted the sub-dimension score towards family influence ($R=.291$, $R^2=.085$, $F=11,563$, $p<.001$). This finding shows that future expectations explained 9% of the variance related to the total score obtained from the sub-dimension of family influence in secondary school students. When the standardized (β) coefficient and t values are examined, it can be said that work and education are significant predictors of anxiety towards family influence, respectively.

Table 5. The power of future expectations of secondary school students to explain the mean scores of career anxiety sub dimension towards career choice dimension

Variable	B	Std. Error	β	t	p
Constant	4,992	.188		26,617	.000
Work and Education	-.265	.044	-.339	-5,970	.000
Marriage and Family	-.057	.036	-.081	-1,564	.118
Religion and Society	.004	.036	.005	-.107	.915
Health and Life	.010	.042	.012	.226	.821

$R=.380$ $R^2=.144$ $F=21,150$ $p=.000$

When the data in Table 5 are analyzed, as a result of the multiple linear regression analysis, it is seen that the independent variable future expectations significantly predicts the sub-dimension score for career choice ($R=.380$, $R^2=.144$ $F=21,150$, $p<.001$). This finding shows that future expectations of secondary school students explain 14% of the variance of the total score obtained from the sub-dimension of career choice. When the standardized (β) coefficient and t values are examined, it can be said that work and education are significant predictors of anxiety towards career choice, respectively, in terms of relative importance level.

4. Result and Discussion

While high standards and order sub-dimensions measure positive perfectionism, the incongruity sub-dimension measures negative perfectionism. According to the results of the research, it is seen that positive perfectionism features negatively affect career anxiety at a low level, while negative perfectionism features positively affect career anxiety at a low level. As positive perfectionism traits increase, career anxiety decreases, while negative perfectionism traits increase anxiety. It is seen that positive perfectionism features positively affect future expectation at a low level, while negative perfectionism features negatively affect future expectation at a very low level. As positive perfectionism traits increase, one's future expectations increase. The increase in negative perfectionism characteristics reduces the future expectation. On the other hand, weak negative significant relationships were found between the mean total score taken from the career anxiety scale and the total mean score taken from the future expectation scale. When the literature is analysed, there are not many studies on variables. Ciminli (2023) conducted a research with secondary school students and concluded that there is a relationship between perfectionism perceptions, irrational beliefs about career choice and career anxiety. According to the results obtained from the study, perceptions of perfectionism and irrational beliefs about career choice explain 19% of career anxiety. The result of the research supports the result of this study. In this study, a weak negative correlation was found between positive perfectionism and career anxiety, and a weak positive correlation between negative perfectionism and career anxiety. As a result of the research conducted by Pirinççi in 2009, a positive relationship was found between perfectionism levels and anxiety levels, and between self-directed perfectionism and state trait anxiety.

As a result of multiple linear regression analysis, it is seen that high standards and incompatibility sub-dimensions of the independent variable positive and negative perfectionism significantly predict the sub-dimensions of career anxiety, which are the sub-dimensions of family influence and career choice. As a result of the correlation test, no significant relationship was found between positive and negative perfectionism and career anxiety. Contrary to the results of the study, Eryılmaz and Kara (2017) examined the relationship between career adaptability, trait anxiety and multidimensional perfectionism personality traits in a study with 183 undergraduate students; and as a result, they found that trait anxiety and multidimensional perfectionism personality types were related to different sub-dimensions of career adaptability.

As a result of multiple linear regression analysis, it was found that the independent variable future expectancy significantly predicted the scores of the sub-dimensions of work and education, which are the sub-dimensions of career anxiety, towards family influence and towards career choice. According to the results of this study, it has been determined that there is a weak negative relationship between the two variables, and while one variable increases, the other variable decreases. Kurtuluş et al. (2022) conducted a study involving 306 secondary school students in Istanbul. The aim of the study is to determine the role of future expectancy in the relationship between adolescents' self-esteem and career anxiety. They concluded that self-esteem and future expectancy were significant predictors of adolescents' career anxiety.

There are some limitations in this research. It was conducted on a small sample that does not have the characteristics and size to represent all secondary education students in our country. The study was conducted on a total of 506 people in different high schools in Konya. For this reason, future research on the subject area in larger groups with different characteristics will provide more detailed and reliable results. It also focused only on the positive and negative perfectionism, career anxiety and future expectancy levels of secondary school students. Other researchers who will study on the subject can enrich and contribute to the study with different variables. It may be possible to reach more detailed results if different scales developed to measure variables other than the scales included in the scope of the study are accessed and studies are conducted on different samples. The study was conducted online via Google Docs, and in order to reach more detailed and real results, the relationship between the level of career awareness, perception of popularity and fear of missing developments in social environments can be investigated in more detail with a qualitative study (observation, interview, student opinions).

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Conflict of Interest

It has been reported by the authors that there is no conflict of interest.

ORCID

Author 1 Fatma Tuğba Samancı  <https://orcid.org/0009-0003-3728-3956>

Author 2 Hasan Bozgeyikli  <http://orcid.org/0000-0002-6762-1990>