

CONFERENCE PROCEEDING

Profiling of Perfectionism among Gifted and Talented Students in Kolej Genius Insan

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ABSTRACT

Perfectionism is a personality trait characterized by a person's striving for flawlessness and setting high performance standards, accompanied by critical self-evaluations and concerns regarding others' evaluations. This study was conducted to profile the level of perfectionism among muslim gifted and talented students in one of the gifted institution located in Negeri Sembilan, Malaysia. 41 students were involved in this study and the participants responded to an instrument, which is the Frost Multidimensional Perfectionism Scale (FMPS). Using the SPSS Version 20.0 software, quantitative data were analysed descriptively and inferentially. Confirmatory factor analyzes supported a six subscales of perfectionism that includes constructs of Concern Over Mistakes (CM), Personal Standards (PS), Parental Expectations (PE), Parental Criticism (PC), Doubts about Actions (D) and Organizations (O). This study predicted that most of students will possess higher personal standards and concern about mistakes and doubts actions. This study suggest that repeated scientific studies of greater perfectionism among the gifted and talented students may be a result of differential labeling pattern of maladaptive behaviors when shown by gifted and talented students.

Keywords: *perfectionism, muslim gifted and talented students*

INTRODUCTION

Background of Study

Researchers state that a number of authors have identified perfectionism as a standard characteristics of the gifted (Adderholt-Elliot, 1987; Clark, 1983; Delisle, 1982, 1986; Kramer, 1988; Roedell, 1984; Roeper, 1982; Webb, Meckstroth, & Tolan, 1982). Perfectionism has always been analyzed predominantly from a psychological perspective as a negative trait that must be removed if gifted students are to excel (Schuler, 2000; Siegle & Schuler, 2000). Their characteristic often cause social and emotional problems which will affect their emotional and social development, and one among the characteristic is perfectionism. However, many researches believe that perfectionism exists on a continuum of behaviors and thoughts and has positive or negative aspects. As academically gifted students tend to be perfectionists (Chan, 2010; Silverman, 2007) stated that analysis and profiling into exactly into what sort of personality is a need that leads to the development of positive and negative perfectionism.

It is critical to have accurate, valid, and effective techniques to quantify perfectionism in order to study this problem. (Hewitt *et al.*, 2003; Shafran *et al.*, 2003) stated that it is important to keep in mind that today's modest changes in how we operationalize and quantify perfectionism can lead to study on unrelated but related variables. (Frost *et al.*, 1990) also once stated that although there is no specific definition of perfectionism, it is sometimes described as having unnecessarily high

expectations and overly critical self-evaluations. A named scale was developed by Frost *et al.*, 1990 which is known as Multidimensional Perfectionism Scale (FMPS) in the early 1990s. The 35-item scale consist of six dimensions; Concern Over Mistakes (CM), Personal Standards (PS), Parental Expectations (PE), Parental Criticism (CM), Doubts about Actions (D) and Organizations (O).

The dimensions Personal Standards (PS), Parental Expectations (PE), Parental Criticism (CM) and Organizations (O) were referred as “perfectionistic strivings” can be said to be an adaptive perfectionism while the dimensions Concern Over Mistakes (CM) and Doubts about Actions (D) both were categorized as “perfectionistic concerns”. In the research, “perfectionistic concerns” is frequently characterised to as maladaptive or pathological perfectionism, underlining its link to several other severe mental health effects. (Egan *et al.*, 2011) once stated that anxiety disorders, stress, depression, eating disorders, and obsessive–compulsive disorder have all been linked to perfectionistic concerns. Therefore, the purpose of this study was to investigate the Multidimensional Perfectionism Scale (Frost *et al.*, 1990) with a sample of middle school-level academically gifted and talented students, and to analyze the level of perfectionism among the gifted and talented students in Kolej GENIUS Insan.

Problem Statement

Most of students in Kolej GENIUS Insan tend to possess anxiety or maybe depression when assignments or work done don't seem to be perfect as they wanted them to be. The students also always get depressed when their parents put tons of pressure and hopes for them to excel and obtain perfect scores in examinations. Perfectionism can be a mixture of thoughts and behaviors related to overly high standards or perceptions of one's own success, and is recognized as a common emotional characteristic of giftedness (Chan, 2010; Silverman, 2007; SpeirsNeumeister *et al.*, 2009). Setting ourselves high and ambitious goals can be either a positive or negative influence in one's life. To meet the expectations of others, the person strives for unattainable standards. The motivation exists in the fear of failure and even when the standards are met, the worrying continues. Positive perfectionism, however, refers to perfectionist behavior in which the person has a desire to meet stimuli, and aims to achieve high expectations. The student sets high goals and private objectives, and aims for the achievement-related incentives while maintaining the ability to fulfill one's success (Silverman, 2007; SpeirsNeumeister *et al.*, 2009). Although there is acceptance on the positive and negative aspects of perfectionism, there is still a lack of studies in Malaysia on the consistency between positive perfectionism and negative perfectionism faced by gifted students. There are not enough studies administered in Malaysia to spot the extent of perfectionism among gifted and talented students. This study hopefully will provide a support data for other researches in Malaysia to also contribute to the development of perfectionism among gifted and talented students.

Objectives

This study is carried out to profile the level of perfectionism among gifted and talented students in Kolej GENIUS Insan, and identify which component of perfectionism is the highest in predicting positive and negative perfectionism among gifted and talented students in Kolej GENIUS Insan.

METHODOLOGY

Instrumentation

The subscales in the Multidimensional Perfectionism Scale (MPS) by Frost *et al.*, 1990 includes Concern over Mistakes (CM) is characterised by Frost *et al.* (1990) as "negative reactions to mistakes, a desire to see mistakes as similar to failure, and a tendency to feel that one would lose others' respect as a result of failure"; "The inclination to believe that projects are not completed satisfactorily" is Doubts about Actions (D). "The inclination to assume that one's parents set excessively high expectations and are too critical," according to Parental Expectations (PE). Furthermore, Parental Criticism (PC) is defined as "the tendency of parents to engage in consistent, frequently critical evaluations of their children, together with the child's tendency to place outstanding value on these judgments"; Personal Standards (PS) is defined as the propensity to set "quite high standards for self-evaluation and the excessive attention placed on these high standards"; and Organization/Order (O) is defined as "the priority of and preference for order."

Therefore, perfectionism of the students were measured using one set of questionnaire was used to collect the data which is the Multidimensional Perfectionism Scale (MPS: Frost *et al.*, 1990). All instruments were translated to Bahasa Malaysia using back translations. FMPS may be a 35-item instrument divided in 6 subscales: concern over mistakes (CM) which incorporates items 9, 10, 13, 14, 18, 21, 23, 25, 34; personal standards (PS) which are items 4, 6, 12, 16, 19, 24, 30; parental expectations (PE) which are items 1, 11, 15, 20, 26; parental criticism (PC) items 3, 5, 22, 35; doubts about actions (D) items 17, 28, 32, 33; and organization (O) items 2, 7, 8, 27, 29, 31. FMPS is scored by summation the results of individual subscales, then summing the individual subscales for the entire score. This instrument was in five-point Likert scale that ranged from 1 ("strongly disagree") to 5 ("strongly agree") for a total score of at least 8 and a maximum of 40, and a subscale score of 4–20.

Participants

The study included a total of 41 students from Level 1 (16 years old) students from Kolej GENIUS Insan that were chosen to participate in the sampling procedures. This sample of participants primarily identified students in different fields with gifts and talents. Participation in this study was entirely voluntary; there were no rewards offered to take part in this study. The confidentiality of the results was ensured by utilising student name and ID numbers to identify students and comparing questionnaire results to course performance scores. The gender breakdown for the study was 15 male students and 26 female students. The dataset was cleaned up by removing observations with missing responses to items.

Procedure

Each student received a copy of the questionnaire with an answer grid. Students evaluated items 1-35 on a 5-point scale where the choices were strongly disagree (1), disagree (2), almost agree (3), agree (4) and strongly agree (5). After all participants completed their answer grid, the answers and the corresponding item scores were analyzed using the SPSS software. The participants scored their own grids and compared their score to the score ranges. Finally, interpretations for score categories, the relevance of the scores and some approaches to overcome perfectionism among the gifted and talented students were reviewed.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Descriptive Statistics

During the session, the students accumulated their own scores, but their data was afterwards evaluated and analysed independently. As indicated in Table 1, the mean score of the total participants who responded to the questionnaire was 121.70. Based on Table 2, we can see that the dimension or subscale Concern over Mistakes (CM) has the highest mean score which is 29.78 followed by Personal Standards (PS), Organization (O), Parental Expectations (PE), Doubts about Actions (D) and the subscale that obtained the lowest mean score which is Parental Criticism (PC)

Table 1. Means, medians, standard deviations and etc. for the total of responds obtained

	N= 41		Mean	Median	Std. Deviation	Variance	Sum
	Valid	Missing					
Total	40	1	121.70	121.00	15.983	255.446	4868

Table 2. Means, medians, standard deviations, variance and sums for perfectionism dimensions

Scale	N= 41		Mean	Median	Std. Deviation	Variance	Sum
	Valid	Missing					
CM	41	0	29.78	30.00	6.923	47.926	1221
PS	41	0	25.76	26.00	3.826	14.639	1056
PE	40	1	18.85	19.00	3.363	11.310	754
PC	41	0	9.98	9.00	3.198	10.224	409
D	41	0	12.22	12.00	3.119	9.726	501
O	41	0	24.85	25.00	3.245	10.528	1019

Note. CM= Concern over Mistakes, PS= Personal Standards, PE= Parental Expectations, PC= Parental Criticism, D= Doubts about Actions, O=Organization

Adaptive and Maladaptive Perfectionism

Our study on profiling the dimensions of perfectionism among the gifted and talented students have implications for research, theory and practice. This research backs up previous empirical investigations that the dimensions Concern over Mistakes (CM) Parental Expectations (PE), Doubts about Actions (D) and Parental Criticism (PC) is categorized as negative or can be said as maladaptive perfectionism while the dimensions Personal Standards (PS) and Organization (O) can be considered as positive or adaptive perfectionism. Our profiling found that some the dimensions of maladaptive perfectionism such as CM are significantly higher than those of adaptive dimensions of perfectionism. This findings, on the other hand, contradicts earlier research. Mobley *et al.* (2005) discovered that maladaptive perfectionists have significantly lower personal standard scores than adaptive perfectionists, while other studies found no statistically significant differences between adaptive and maladaptive perfectionists in personal standard scores according to (Ashby & Bruner, 2005; Grzegorek *et al.*, 2004; Rice & Slaney, 2002).

CONCLUSION

Considering the limitations we faced, the current research has uncovered some empirical data on perfectionism in gifted and talented students. From the results obtained as referred to Table 2, the data analysed according to the dimensions of perfectionism showed that most of the participants possessed a higher mean score in the dimension Concern over Mistakes (CM) which is categorized as maladaptive perfectionism. The results we obtained might be inaccurate. Therefore, more

participants from various age categories are needed to obtain more data in order to get more accurate results in the future study.

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