



## Association of Parental Level of Perfectionism with Their Education and Ordinal Position of Their Male and Female Adolescents

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**ABSTRACT:** *The findings revealed that an immense association exists between perfectionism of parents and their level of education as well as ordinal position of their children. However no considerable differences were seen in their perfectionism towards male or female adolescents.*

**Keywords:** *Parental Perfectionism, ordinal position*

### I. INTRODUCTION

Perfectionism is said to be an all pervasive attitude that whatever you attempt in life must be done letter perfect with no deviation, mistakes, slip ups, or inconsistencies. It is a habit developed from youth and which keeps you constantly alert to the imperfections, failings, and weakness in yourself and others or a level of consciousness that keeps you ever vigilant to any deviations from the norm, the guidelines, or the way things are "supposed to be".

Burns (1980), described perfectionism as a network of cognitions including expectations, interpretation and evaluation of events. Individual who possess perfectionist traits generally have excessively high expectations and define their self worth in regards to the achievement or outcome of these events.

This two dimensional view of perfectionism is further supported by Terry- Short, Owens, Slade and Dewey (1995) description of perfectionism as being either positive or negative. Roedell (1984) argues that in a positive form, perfectionism can provide the driving energy which leads to great achievement, the commitment which pushes composers to keep working until the music realizes the glorious sounds playing in the imagination, and the persistence, which keep great artists at their easels until the creation matches their conception all result from perfectionism. Hence, perfectionism help the adolescents to be better adjusted in their life and could attain satisfaction in their family life as according to a research done by Caprara, et al (2005), suggested that the greater the adolescents perceived self- efficacy, the more they reported open communication with their parents, the more accepting they were of their parents monitoring of their own activities outside the home.

In its pathological form, perfectionism can be very damaging. It can take the form of procrastination when it is used to postpone tasks. Therefore, perfectionism is often marked by low productivity as individuals lose time and energy on small irrelevant details of larger activities or daily activities. This can lead to depression; alienated colleagues and a greater risk of accidents (Castro and Rice, 2001). There are some negative consequences of perfectionism which includes low self- esteem, guilt, depression, lack of motivation, suicidal thoughts, frustration etc. Several studies have supported the vulnerable factors of perfectionism like that of a study done by Adkins and Parker (1996), results suggested that passive perfectionists who procrastinate out of fear of making mistakes are more likely to be preoccupied with suicides.

So, perfectionism takes a great toll. Perfectionists are likely to experience decreased productivity, impaired health and troubled interpersonal relationships. Hence, perfectionism is a two sided coin having both positive as well as negative aspects. It depends on the individual which side he has to accept.

Parental education can take another form- perfectionism. Perfectionism is like a double- edged sword as it cut both ways. More educated perfectionist parents often do not realize that they are hurting themselves by their own actions. . Parents who are more edified tell themselves that their determination to be perfect will win success, acceptance, love of their children, yet the opposite more often occurs. Even when perfectionist parents do achieve, the methods they use can deprive them of the very love and acceptance of their children. Mothers and fathers who are highly qualified strive for perfection which indeed do a great disservice to their children.

Hence, the roots of perfectionism are often temperamental which links to conscious development and native abilities.

**The chief objectives of the present study were:**

- Association between ordinal position and parental levels of perfectionism.
- Association between education of father as well as mother and level of parental perfectionism.

**II. METHOD**

**Sample**

**The study was carried out in Chandigarh.**

For the selection of schools, a comprehensive list of few co- educational schools of the city was prepared as the list was taken from DPI schools The sample was taken from the above given two schools of fifty students( 25 boys and 25 girls) each selected randomly from the age group of 16- 18 years studying in class 11th. The total sample comprised of 100 students belonging to science stream i.e. medical and non- medical. Thus, AKSIPS Public School, sector 41, Chandigarh and Shivalik Public School, sector 41, Chandigarh were selected for conducting the present study.

**Tools Used**

The following tools were used for the study:

- Multidimensional Parenting perfectionism questionnaire (Snell, Overby and Brewer, 2005). It consists of two sections containing 30 items each:

**Section I**

- (1) Self-oriented parenting perfectionism (SOPP)
- (2) Societal prescribed parenting perfectionism (SPPP)
- (3) Partner’s self-oriented parenting perfectionism (PSOPP)
- (4) Partner prescribed parenting perfectionism (PPPP)
- (5) Partner expected standards for parenting (PESP)

**Section II**

- (1) Concern over parenting mistakes (COPM)
- (2) Doubts about parenting activity (DPA)
- (3) Personal parenting standards (PPS)
- (4) Partner’s parenting expectations (PPE)
- (5) Partner’s parenting criticism (PPC)
- (6) Parental organization (PO)

For analyzing the data, chi- square test was carried out.

**III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

Table 1 presents data regarding the association between ordinal position and parental levels of perfectionism:

**Table 1(a)**

**1<sup>st</sup> Borns**

Variable	Category	Frequency of 1 <sup>st</sup> Borns	Percentage of 1 <sup>st</sup> Borns
<b>Parental perfectionism</b>	Low	19	27.1
	Average	30	42.9
	High	21	30.0
Total		70	100.0

$(\chi^2 = 4.709, P > 0.05)$

**Table-1 (b)**

**2<sup>nd</sup> Borns**

Variable	Category	Frequency of 2 <sup>nd</sup> Borns	Percentage of 2 <sup>nd</sup> Borns
<b>Parental perfectionism</b>	Low	7	36.8
	Average	8	42.1
	High	4	21.1
Total		19	100.0

$(\chi^2 = 4.709, P > 0.05)$

**Table-1 (c)**  
**3<sup>rd</sup> Borns**

Variable	Category	Frequency of 3 <sup>rd</sup> Borns	Percentage of 3 <sup>rd</sup> Borns
<b>Parental perfectionism</b>	Low	1	9.1
	Average	8	72.7
	High	2	18.2
Total		11	100.0

$(\chi)^2 = 4.709, P > 0.05$

An inspection of Tables 1 highlighted that, the adolescents of all birth orders experience average perfectionism of their parents, but high perfectionism is only seen in case of 1st born. Among the sample of first born, maximum experience average parental perfectionism i.e.42.9% followed by high perfectionism in 30.0%, and 27.1% of the sample experience low parental perfectionism. In case of second born, maximum experience average parental perfectionism i.e. 42.1% followed by low perfectionism in 36.8% and only 21.1% of the sample experience high parental perfectionism and amongst the third borns, maximum experience average parental perfectionism i.e. 72.7% followed by high perfectionism in 18.2% and only 9.1% of the sample show low parental perfectionism.

So, it can be concluded that ordinal position of the child is related to parental perfectionism. High parental perfectionism is seen in the first born as compared to second and third born. These results are in agreement with research done by Adler (1956), in which he found that the first born children are the "only child" and the center of parental attention until the second or the third child is born.

**Table 2:** depicts the association between education of father and level of parental perfectionism.

**Table 2**

Education of Father	Level of parental perfectionism			Total %
	Low %	Average %	High %	
<b>Secondary</b>	1	1	1	3
<b>Higher Secondary</b>	4	3	2	9
<b>Graduate</b>	11	25	10	46
<b>Post Graduate</b>	14	12	11	37
<b>Other</b>	1	4	0	5
	31.0	45.0	24.0	100.0

$(\chi)^2 = 7.169, P > 0.05$

An overview of table 2 reveals that the fathers' educational qualification was associated with their perfectionism in case of both boys and girls ( $(\chi)^2 = 7.169, d/f = 8, P > 0.05$ ). It was seen that among the post graduates fathers (37%), 11% show high perfectionism, and in case of graduate fathers (46%), 10% show high perfectionism. In the category of fathers who studied up to secondary (3%), only 1% show high perfectionism and among higher secondary fathers (9%), only 2% show high perfectionism.

This infers that fathers with higher qualifications show maximum perfectionism as compared to fathers with lower qualifications. To support this viewpoint, a research has been conducted by Diener, 2012, revealed many children of highly educated, affluent parents will likely come to assume positions of influence in society and also, highly qualified parents have more expectations from their children.

**Table 3:** portrays the association between education of mother and level of parental perfectionism.

**Table 3**

Education of Mother	Level of parental perfectionism			Total %
	Low %	Average %	High %	
<b>Primary</b>	1	1	1	3
<b>Secondary</b>	1	1	0	2
<b>Higher Secondary</b>	1	1	1	3
<b>Graduate</b>	16	27	13	56
<b>Post Graduate</b>	10	14	10	34
<b>Other</b>	1	1	0	2
	30.0	45.0	25.0	100.0

$(\chi)^2 = 4.795, P > 0.05$

A closer view of Table 3 shows that the education of mothers was associated with their level of perfectionism shown equally to males and females ( $\chi^2 = 4.795$ ,  $df = 10$ ,  $P > 0.05$ ). In case of mothers, the most common qualification found is graduation (56%) and show maximum of perfectionism which is 13% as compared to post graduate mothers (34%), and their perfectionism is 10%. But in case of mothers who have studied up to primary, secondary and higher secondary, there is an equal level of perfectionism that is primary educated mothers (3%), only 1% show high perfectionism and in higher secondary educated mothers (3%), again only 1% show high perfectionism.

Hence, it could be inferred that more than 50% of graduate mothers show the maximum of perfectionism as compared to mothers having low qualifications.

#### **IV. CONCLUSION**

The findings of the present study would provide an insight into how the higher expectation of parents especially the educated ones, from their children leads to setting of unrealistic perfectionist standards from the first borns' ,its consequences and how to cope with it. Only after making the parents discern the appropriate perfectionist aspiration, the adolescents could lead a healthier and a much satisfied life.

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