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Identifying and Explaining the Factors Affecting Perfectionism in Managers

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Abstract

The aim of present study was to identify and explain the factors affecting perfectionism in managers, coaches and professional athletes in Iran. The present study was applied in terms of nature and descriptive-exploratory in terms of analysis method and survey in terms of research method. The statistical population of the study included all university experts in the field of organizational behavior in the qualitative section and all athletes, coaches and managers of professional sports in Iran in the quantitative section. Purposeful and convenient sampling method was used in the qualitative section. Accordingly, 15 experienced professors of the university were interviewed. The statistical sample in the quantitative section was determined to be 353 people using Morgan table, which 374 questionnaires without defects were returned and these 374 questionnaires were used as a final sample in data analysis. In the qualitative section, data were collected using qualitative interviews with elites, and in the quantitative section, they were collected using a researcher-made questionnaire. The results of Friedman test showed that according to the mean ranks, the variable of individual factors has the highest rank, and the environmental variable, interpersonal and organizational has the lowest rank among the variables. The results also revealed that the model of factors affecting perfectionism in managers, coaches and professional athletes of Iran had a desirable fit. The results also showed that there is no significant difference between the perfectionism levels of managers, coaches and professional athletes in Iran.

Keywords: Perfectionism, Managers, Coaches, Athletes, Professional Sports

Introduction

Perfectionism is one of the personality traits and plays a major role in the etiology and persistence of psychological pathologies (Besharat et al., 2002).

Over the last two decades, research on perfectionism has increased growingly. In these two decades, several empirical and theoretical studies have been conducted to explain the nature of perfectionism and its related harms (Gordon- Smith et al., 2016).

In the early conceptualizations of perfectionism, there was a one-dimensional, pathological view of it, but (Rice et al., 1998), considered two types of perfectionism, a normal and healthy form of perfectionism, called as positive perfectionism, and a maladaptive and pathological form of perfectionism, called as negative perfectionism.

Healthy or positive perfectionists are people who show high levels of perfectionist efforts with a low level of perfectionist worries, while unhealthy or negative perfectionists are people with high levels of perfectionist efforts and high levels of perfectionist worries and non-perfectionists have low levels of perfectionist efforts and an unspecified level of perfectionist worries. Sports psychology pays special attention to professional and championship sports, so that the research results indicate that psychological variables such as anxiety, perfectionism and self-esteem have important and different effects on athletes' performance (Bieling et al., 2016).

Individual goals and standards and interpersonal comparisons have been also reported as important predictors of cognitive anxiety, self-confidence, and athletic achievement (Abolghasemi, 2014).

Perfectionism is one's constant desire to set complete and unattainable standards and effort to achieve them, which has positive and negative psychological and behavioral effects on athletes, especially competitive athletes (Akbari et al., 2020).

One of the variables related to athletic performance is perfectionism. Perfectionism is an almost new psychological construct that has recently been considered by some sports psychologists. Although the behavioral model of perfectionism has been described as a positive and adaptive factor, it has also been considered a negative and maladaptive style in behavior (Flett & Hewitt, 2017).

Perfectionism is the persistent desire of a person to set complete and unattainable criteria and an effort to achieve them, which is associated with critical self-evaluations of personal performance (Vaez Mousavi & Yaghoubi, 2015).

(Belt, 1995), argues that maladaptive perfectionists strongly avoid failure and are vulnerable to others' criticism. Such people view social activities and relationships as threatening, imposing, and non-supportive. Accordingly, (Zuckerman et al., 2005), have stated that focus on mistakes and the possibility of negative social evaluation in athletes with abnormal perfectionism as factors in their failure.

Perfectionism as the persistent desire of a person to set complete and unattainable criteria and effort to achieve them is associated with critical self-evaluations of personal performance. Burns considers perfectionism as the effect of highly critical evaluations and high personal criteria in setting personal goals (Alamardani, 2019).

In the sports psychology area, there has been much debate about how perfectionism is formed and how it helps or prevents athletes' goals. Researchers suggest that perfectionism should be viewed from two dimensions. One positive dimension is called normal perfectionism, which is associated with issues such as efforts to

achieve superiority, high personal standards, positive evaluation of past success, positive expectations in relationships, and better performances. The other one is negative or abnormal dimension, which is associated with issues such as excessive worry on mistakes, doubts about actions, feelings of difference between expectations and outcomes, and negative consequences such as anxiety and stress, fear of negative evaluation, and poor self-esteem (Raesi et al., 2020).

Abnormal perfectionists can also achieve high levels of performance, but these athletes are aroused by fear of failure, and often get tired, rarely feel satisfied with doing works well, and are in danger of exhaustion in the long term. Researchers define exhaustion as a state of fatigue due to the existence of a cause or relationship that causes failure (Hormozi Nejad, 2017).

In sports psychology, the question of how perfectionism affects performance has always been controversial. Some studies consider perfectionism as a characteristic of elite athletes that facilitates athletic performance, but other studies have viewed perfectionism as an abnormal trait that is more harmful to performance than to be helpful (Brien et al., 2018).

Perfectionism is a concept that can develop a dynamic and active human force and may be one of the causes of mental and physical illnesses, because perfectionism has both positive and negative aspects. Studies suggest that perfectionism can cause disorders such as depression, anxiety, eating, suicide, etc., and at the same time, it can be a gift to have elite and cheerful students and athletes in a society. (Arbab et al., 2019) stated that an effort to achieve perfection with the hope of success and motivation for progress is positively and significantly associated with symptoms of depression and somatic complaints.

(Azimi et al., 2017) also found a positive and significant relationship between achievement motivation and academic performance, so that increasing motivation of a person will increases his or her success rate. Researchers believe that the motivation to progress affects other factors that influence an athlete's performance, including physical fitness, technique, tactics and lifestyle, and it is not possible to describe it as something that happens only during competition, but it is accompanied with several days, months and even the years of an athlete's life and can be manifested more or less.

In a study, (Besharat et al., 2002), found that there is a positive and negative correlation between positive and negative perfectionism and sport success, respectively, but only positive perfectionism can significantly predict changes in sports success. Positive perfectionism through characteristics such as realism, acceptance of personal limitations, flexibility, feeling satisfied with personal performance, strengthening self-esteem and self-confidence, and one's positive perception of social support and social evaluation is associated with increased sport success. Thus, given what was stated above, the present study seeks to identify and explain the factors affecting perfectionism in managers, coaches and professional athletes in Iran.

Methods

The aim of present study was to identify the factors affecting perfectionism that requires the use of inductive methods and the use of accurate and valid indices. The present study is applied in terms of nature, mixed in terms of data search type (quantitative and qualitative) and descriptive-exploratory in terms of analysis method and survey in terms of research method.

Statistical population

Qualitative section: The statistical population of the study includes all scientific and executive experts in the area of organizational behavior who have the following common characteristics:

• Having a history of teaching, writing and compiling articles on organizational behavior

• Having more than 10 years of experience of management and activity in the area of club and professional sports

Quantitative Section: The statistical population of the present study in the quantitative section includes all athletes, coaches and professional managers of governmental and non-governmental sports centers and clubs in Iran in 2020 as described in (Table 1):

In this research, cluster random sampling method was used.

Qualitative Section: Purposeful and convenient sampling method was used in this study. In this regard, 15 experienced professors of the university were interviewed.

To determine the required sample size, Morgan and Krejcie sample estimation table was used (Beighifard, 2017). The sample size in this study was determined to be 353 people using Morgan table, but due to possibility of incomplete and defective completion of the questionnaires, 400 questionnaires were distributed and 374 questionnaires were returned without defect and they were used in in the final data analysis.

Data collection tools

Data collection in qualitative stage: Data collection stage is the beginning of a process during which the researcher collects field and library findings and inductively compresses them through classification and then analysis and testing the developed hypothesis, and finally answers to the research question based on them.

Quantitative data collection: A questionnaire is a set of open-ended or closed questions designed to evaluate the attitude of people towards a fact through it.

Therefore, this tool is especially used in large populations. In this questionnaire, the knowledge, interests and attitudes of individuals can be evaluated (Silverman, 1999). In this research, the researcher prepared a researcher-made questionnaire consisting of 34 questions in 4 main dimensions

The test-retest reliability of the interviews in this study is 98%. Since the reliability value is more than 60%, the reliability of coding is confirmed.

Table 1. AVE index for research variables

Research variable	index AVE
Perfectionism	0.621
Individual factors	0.571
Interpersonal factors	0.601
Environmental factors	0.504
Organizational factors	0.560

According to (Table 1), it can be stated that the AVE index for all research variables is higher than 0.5, so all variables have acceptable validity.

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The Fornell and Larcker method is commonly used to examine divergent validity. They proposed a matrix that is similar to the correlation coefficient matrix, but the values on the principal diameter of this matrix include the square root of the AVE values for each of the exogenous variables. The Fornell and Larcker matrix for divergent validity is presented in the (Table 2):

Table 2. Fornell and Larcker matrices

Research variable	Individual factors	Interpersonal factors	Environmental factors	organizational factors
Individual factors	-	-	-	-
Interpersonal factors	0.413	-	-	-
Environmental factors	0.520	0.568	-	-
Organizational factors	0.490	0.563	0.435	-

As seen in the (Table 2), the square root AVE value of each variable is greater than its correlation value with the other variables. Therefore, it can be stated that the research variables interact more with their indicators than with other variables and divergent validity of the model is at acceptable level.

Table 3. Alpha and Spearman coefficients separately for research variables

Research variable	Alpha coefficient	Spearman coefficient	Number of items
Perfectionism	0.849	0.852	34
Individual factors	0.756	0.767	14
Interpersonal factors	0.800	0.803	9
Environmental factors	0.723	0.728	6
Organizational factors	0.779	0.789	5

Based on (Table 3), it can be stated that the alpha and Spearman coefficients for all variables are higher than 0.7, confirming the reliability of the research tool.

Qualitative stage of the research: Data in the qualitative section were analyzed using the interview analysis method. First, the data obtained from the interviews were categorized, and then coded using open and axial coding according to the interviews with the experts. In this section, all the indicators and criteria mentioned by the

Quantitative stage of the research: In this stage of the research, the data collected through a questionnaire were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistical methods using SPSS-21 and AMOS software. In descriptive statistics, frequency,

experts in addition to the cases mentioned in indicators and need modification are presented. Then, each category is placed in the relevant dimensions according to the coding. Finally, each of the dimensions is presented and the primary and sub-categories resulting from the interviews are completed, and the opinions of experts in this area are fully included in the categories and markers and a conclusion is made about the measurement scale of each marker.

percentages, indices of central tendency and dispersion will be used to describe the demographic characteristics and the level of research variables. In inferential statistics, Bartlett and KMO test and confirmatory and exploratory factor analysis were used to check the adequacy of sample and the validity of the instrument structure, Cronbach's and Spearman Brown test were used to check the reliability of the research tool, and Kolmogorov-Smirnov test was used to check the normality of data distribution. Also, explanatory factor analysis test was used to investigate and explore the factors affecting perfectionism, and Friedman test was used to rank the factors affecting perfectionism and t-test and analysis of variance were used to examine inter-group differences.

The final Research Model

According to the results of qualitative section and structural model of the research, the following applied model is designed as a model of factors affecting perfectionism in managers, coaches and professional athletes in Iran (Figure 1):

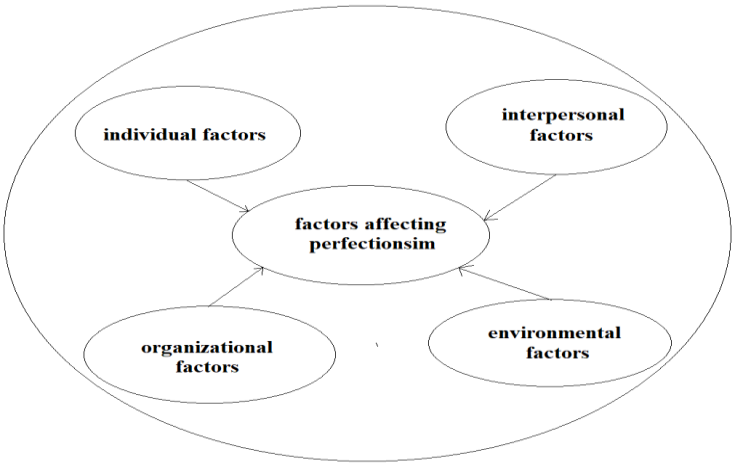

Figure 1. Model of factors affecting perfectionism in managers, coaches and professional athletes of Iran

Results

The first research question

What are the factors affecting perfectionism in managers, coaches and professional athletes of Iran?

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Table 4. Relationships between structures based on the hypotheses

Assumptions	Mean difference	Df	Test statistic	Significance level	Result
The effect of individual factors on perfectionism	1.322	2	28.140	0.001	H_1 is confirmed
The effect of interpersonal factors on perfectionism	1.04	2	14.892	0.001	H_1 is confirmed
The effect of environmental factors on perfectionism	0.942	2	9.209	0.001	H_1 is confirmed
The effect of organizational factors on perfectionism	0.997	2	10.828	0.001	H_1 is confirmed

Based on the (Table 4), it can be stated that all the components are effective on perfectionism.

The second research question

What is the ranking of the factors affecting perfectionism in managers, coaches and professional athletes of Iran?

Table 5. Friedman test to prioritize the factors affecting perfectionism

Variables	Mean rank	rank	Chi-square	Degree of freedom	Significance level
Individual factors	1.68	1	59.05	9	0.000
Interpersonal factors	1.39	3			
Environmental factors	1.52	2			
Organizational factors	1.23	4			

Based on the (Table 5), it can be seen that the significant level obtained for the effective factors of perfectionism in Friedman test is less than 0.05, so there is a significant difference between the mean dimensions of the factors affecting perfectionism. According to the mean ranks, the variable of individual effective factors has the highest rank, and environmental, interpersonal and organizational variables obtained the lowest rank.

The third research question

Is the model of factors affecting perfectionism in managers, coaches and professional athletes in Iran fit?

Table 6. Relationships between structures based on the conceptual model

Relationships between structures	Impact coefficient	Critical ratio	Significance level
The effect of individual factors on perfectionism	0.56	10.56	0.001
The effect of interpersonal factors on perfectionism	0.60	11.34	0.001
The effect of environmental factors on perfectionism	0.59	10.95	0.001
The effect of effective organizational factors on perfectionism	0.73	13.16	0.001

Based on the (Table 6), it can be seen that the variables of individual, interpersonal, environmental and organizational factors affect the perfectionism variable with 95% confidence (t- statistic values are greater than 1.96) and their effect is 0.56, 0.60, 0.59 and 0.73, respectively (Figure 2).

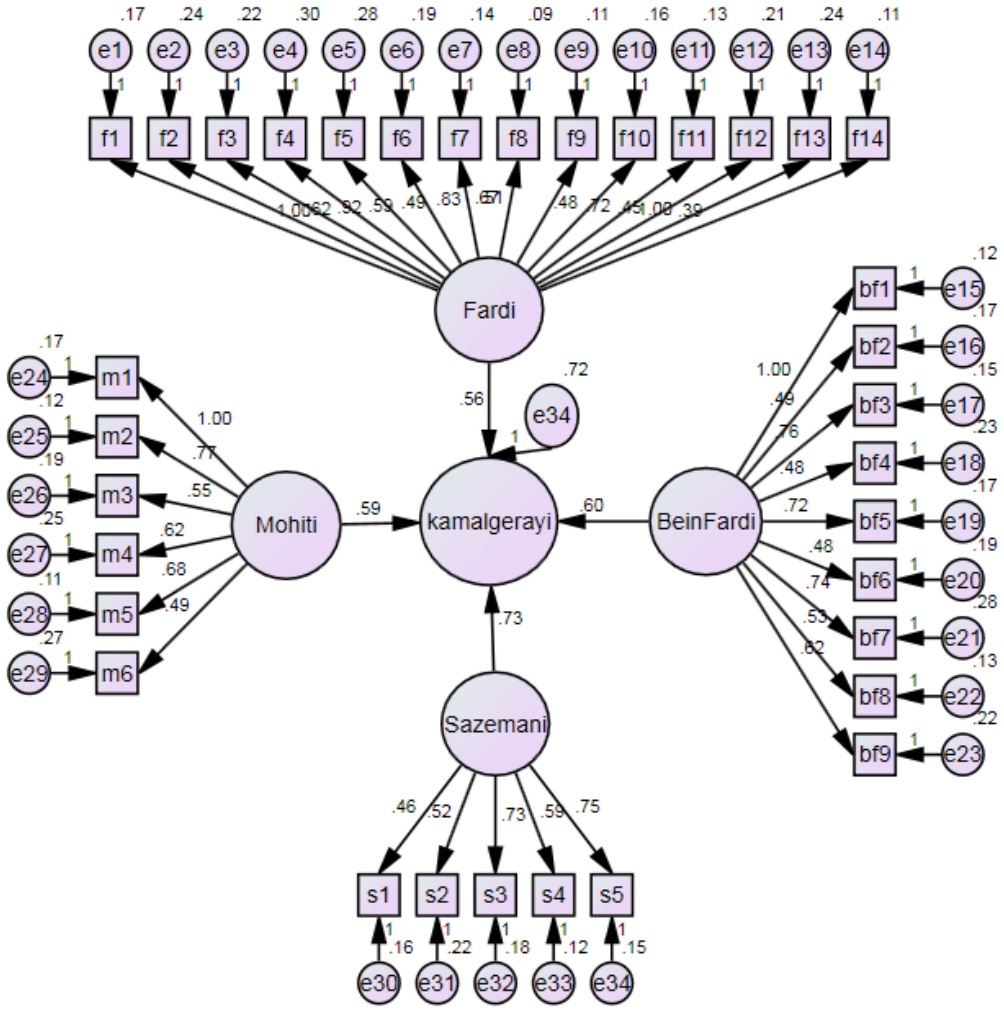

Figure 2. The values of factor loads related to the structural model of the research

The fourth research question

Is there a significant difference between the perfectionism of managers, coaches and professional athletes in Iran?

There is no significant difference between the perfectionism levels of managers, coaches and professional athletes (Table 7).

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Table 7. Summary of statistical indices of one-way analysis of variance of mean perfectionism

Source of variations	Squared sum	df	Squared mean	Test value	Significance level
Intergroup	95.487	2	47.743	0.639	0.528
Intergroup	27721.275	371	74.720		
Total	27816.762	373			

Significance level of the test (Sig. = 0.528) indicates that the differences are not statistically significant. Therefore, it can be stated that there is no significant difference between the perfectionism levels of managers, coaches and professional athletes in Iran.

Discussion

The aim of present study was to identify and explain the factors affecting perfectionism in managers, coaches and professional athletes. The present study was applied in terms of nature and descriptive-exploratory in terms of analysis method and survey in terms of research method. The statistical population of the research in the qualitative section included all university experts in the field of organizational behavior, and in the quantitative section, it included all athletes, coaches and professional managers of governmental and non-governmental sports centers and clubs in Iran in 2020. Purposeful and convenient sampling method was used in the qualitative section. Accordingly, 15 experienced professors of the university were interviewed. The statistical sample in the quantitative section was determined to be 353 people using Morgan table, which 374 questionnaires were returned without defects and these 374 questionnaires were used as a final sample in data analysis. In the qualitative section, data were collected using qualitative interviews with elites, and in the quantitative section, they were collected using a researcher-made questionnaire consisting of 34 questions in 4 dimensions.

Data analysis in the qualitative section was done using the interview analysis method. The data collected in the quantitative section were analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistical methods in SPSS-21 and AMOS software. Descriptive demographic results showed that the statistical samples in the qualitative section were 15 university professors with PhD degrees. Out of 15 samples in the qualitative section, 2 (13.42%) were single and the rest were married and 3 (19.98%) were female and the rest were male. Also, 3 people (19.98%) were aged between 45 and 50 years, 8 people (53.28%) were aged between 51 and 55 years, and 4 people (26.64%) were aged between 51-60 years. It should be noted that out of 15 people, 6 people (39.96%) had below 10 years of history of activity, 7 people (46.62%) had a history of activity of between 10 and 15 years and 2 people (13.42%) had a history of activity of more than 15 years.

In addition, the demographic results in the quantitative section showed that in terms of

gender variable, among the 374 people in the study, 67.6% were male and 32.4% were female. Comparison of the results showed that the majority of the samples were male. Regarding the age variable, among the 374 samples studied, 23.8%, 16.3%, 7.2%, 15.5% and 37.2%, respectively, were in the age groups of 20-25, 25-30, 31-35, 36-40, and above 40 years. Comparison of the above results showed that the highest percentage of the studied samples was in the age group of 40 years and above. However, the lowest number of samples was in the age group of 31-35 years. In terms of the education level, among the 374 sample students, 2.1%, 17.4%, 2.7%, 0.15%, 20.6%, 32.6% and 9.6%, respectively, were school student, university student, diploma, associate, bachelor, master, and PhD. Comparison of the above results showed that the highest percentage of the samples had master degree, while the lowest number of samples was school students with 1.2%. In terms of the variable of field of study, out of 374 people studied, 56.1% had a related field of study and 43.9% had an unrelated field of study. In terms of the type of activity or responsibility, out of 374 people studied, 55.3% were athletes, 27% were coaches and 17.6% were managers. Comparison of the above results showed that athletes with 55.3% had the highest frequency, while the lowest frequency belonged to the group of managers. In terms of history of activity, out of 374 people studied, 34.2% had below 5 years, 23.5% had between 5 and 10 years, 14.7% had between 11 and 15 years, and 27.5% had more than 16 years of history of activity. Comparison of the above percentages showed that the highest percentage of samples had less than 5 years of history of activity, while the lowest percentage of them had 11 to 15 years of history of activity. In terms of the type of activity variable, out of 374 people studied, 19% were active in football, 23.3% were active in futsal, 16% were active in volleyball, 8.3% were active in handball, 10.2% were active in basketball, and 23.3% were in individual sports. Comparison of the above results showed that the highest of them were active in futsal and individual sports with 23.3%, and the lowest of them were active in handball. Analysis of interview data and the results of data classification and coding showed that the factors affecting perfectionism in managers, coaches and professional athletes from the perspective of experts with 34 items were classified in 4 general categories. They included individual factors (14 items), interpersonal factors (9 items), environmental factors (6 items), and organizational effective (5 items).

Quantitative description of the research variables showed that the mean scores of perfectionism variable among managers, coaches, and athletes were 3.67, 3.29, and 3.45, respectively, from maximum score of 5 with a median of 3. Also, among the components of perfectionism, individual factors with a mean of 3.81 had the highest mean from a maximum score of 5 and a median of 3. The results of Friedman test showed that according to the mean ranks, the variable of individual factors has the highest rank, and the environmental variable, interpersonal and organizational

has the lowest rank among the variables. The results revealed that the variables of individual, interpersonal, environmental and organizational factors with 95% confidence (t-statistic values greater than 1.96) affect the variable of perfectionism and their effect is 0.56, 0.60, 0.59, and 0.73, respectively, and the model of factors affecting perfectionism in managers, coaches and professional athletes has a desirable fit. The results also revealed that there is no significant difference between the perfectionism levels of managers, coaches and professional athletes in Iran. Burns first defined perfectionism as a one-dimensional structure, and according to this definition, the perfectionist believes that he or she can work hard to achieve complete results. However, complete results are not achievable and efforts to achieve them will lead to psychological harms. In general, in the negative view, perfectionists often have all or nothing thinking and have self-defeating and critical thoughts about themselves and others. They are inflexible in evaluating their failures and not achieving goals leads to feelings of worthlessness. Other researchers view perfectionism as an maladaptive trait that disrupts an athlete's performance rather than helping him or her and thus prevents the athlete's progress (Dunkley et al., 2008) and (Hayes et al., 1999).

The distinction between perfectionist efforts and perfectionist worries is also important in the sport area. There is evidence of convergence, according to which aspects of perfectionism correlate with the dimension of perfectionist efforts as one dimension of perfectionism (e.g., personal criteria, efforts to achieve perfection), positive correlations with characteristics, processes, and positive outcomes in athletes such as competitive self-confidence (Akbari et al., 2017), goal orientations (Johnson et al., 2010), and performance in practice (Ehring et al., 2011).

Conclusion

Based on the results of present study, it can be concluded that psychological factors can have a positive impact on our behavior psychologically and psychologically. It increases the rate of positive perfectionism in people and significantly reduces anxiety, neuroticism, negative emotions, difficulty in performing purposeful behaviors in times of helplessness, difficulty in impulsive skills in times of helplessness, maladaptive distress, distraction-suppression, denial-suppression, distress, intolerance of uncertainty and repetitive thoughts. This negative relationship of perfectionism with the above variables will be also expected. Based on the research model and at the individual level, it can be stated that the goals and standards of individual work should be adjusted to the individual's ability and effort. At the interpersonal level, the expectations of parents, friends and family of coaches and athletes should be based on the abilities and at the environmental level, attention should be paid to the expectations of the people and society at reasonable level. Also, at the organizational level, due to changing conditions and environment of sports organizations, one should always be realistic and consider the level of the club or team in

setting the goals. The model of factors affecting perfectionism in managers, coaches and professional athletes of Iran had a desirable fit. The results also revealed that there is no significant difference between the perfectionism levels of managers, coaches and professional athletes in Iran.

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