

Investigating the relationship between emotional intelligence, perfectionism and mental health of undergraduate students

Ali Abedini*1

Abstract

Introduction: Students of any country are considered as the intellectual and spiritual assets of that country, and therefore examining the specific issues of students and ensuring their physical and mental health is one of the most important goals of educational planners. Therefore, the purpose of this research was to investigate the relationship between emotional intelligence and perfectionism and mental health of undergraduate students.

Research method: 240 students (140 girls and 100 boys) were selected from among the students who were studying in the academic year 1402-1401 using stratified random sampling method. The research tools included three questionnaires of emotional intelligence, perfectionism and mental health, which were distributed among the sample and the necessary information was collected and analyzed. In the inferential statistics section, Pearson's correlation coefficient, multivariate regression analysis, multivariate variance analysis and independent t-test were used.

Findings: The findings showed that there is a positive relationship between the emotional intelligence dimension of general mood and mental health. No relationship was found between dimensions of perfectionism and mental health. There is a negative relationship between all dimensions of emotional intelligence and all dimensions of perfectionism. Emotional intelligence predicts 2% of the variance of mental health. Also, no difference was found between boys and girls in terms of emotional intelligence, perfectionism and mental health.

Conclusion: Therefore, it is suggested to create conditions for the education of students to improve their self-awareness while familiarizing themselves with the principles of increasing mental health and coping with anxiety and stress.

Keywords: emotional intelligence, perfectionism, mental health, students

Received: 2024/5/1 Accepted: 2024/6/22

Citation: Abedini A. Investigating the relationship between emotional intelligence, perfectionism and mental health of undergraduate students, Family and health, 2025; 14(4): 46-60

¹ - (Corresponding author), Master of General Psychology, Arsanjan Branch, Islamic Azad University, Arsanjan, Iran, aliabedini2013@yahoo.com, tell: 09126599949

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Introduction:

Young people, including students, are the intellectual and spiritual assets of any society and are the builders of the future of that society, so these people are the ones who must accept the responsibilities of that society in the future. Examining the specific issues of young people, successful education and ensuring their physical and mental health is one of the most important goals of government educational planners. (1). Students are among the effective, important and future-building social groups of any society, whose personality development and improvement of their knowledge and skills depend on knowing the factors affecting their "conditions and way of life" (2).

One of the main factors in the success of students' education and subsequently in their careers after education is the benefit of mental health, which is considered an important part of public health. According to the definition of the World Health Organization, mental health is: the ability to communicate harmoniously with others, modify the personal and social environment, and resolve conflicts and personal desires in a logical, fair and appropriate manner. In fact, mental health is more than the absence of mental illness. This means that mental health in a person cannot be confirmed 100% just in terms of not having a mental illness. (3). The World Health Organization defines mental health as "a state of well-being resulting from understanding one's abilities, coping with normal life tensions, feeling effective and productive. Numerous studies show that in growing societies, along with progress in various fields, health problems Psyche is increasing (4).

On the other hand, according to Golman, emotional intelligence is a combination of skills that is related to a person's ability to manage and monitor his emotions as well as the emotional states of others (5). According to Baron, emotional intelligence is the adjustment of people's capabilities, qualifications and skills to successfully deal with environmental pressures and demands. Researchers conducted in this direction have shown that people who have high emotional intelligence have more power to adapt to new and everyday issues (6). Emotional intelligence is another type of being smart and includes understanding your emotions to make the right decisions in life.EQ. It is the ability to control anxiety states and control reactions. This means being motivated and hopeful to work and achieve goals. In general, EQ is a social skill and includes cooperation with other people, the use of emotions in relationships, and the ability to lead others. Emotional intelligence indicates that in social relations and in psychological and emotional interactions in certain circumstances, what action is appropriate and what action is inappropriate. It means that a person can always keep hope alive in himself in different situations, empathize with others, listen to other people's feelings, ignore small rewards in order to get a bigger reward, and not let worry disturb his thinking and reasoning power to be persistent in the face of problems and keep his motivation anyway. Emotional intelligence is a type of emotional talent that determines how one can use one's skills in the best possible way and even helps to use wisdom in the right direction (7). Emotional intelligence is one of the topics that have been raised in interpersonal relationships, and its relationship with mental health can be investigated. Empathy with others and the positive use of emotions in thinking and cognition, the appropriate use of emotions in human



relationships, understanding the emotional state of oneself and others, and self-control is the subject of emotional intelligence that can have a close relationship with physical and mental health (8). In general, regarding the relationship between emotional intelligence and mental health, many previous researches have shown that people who have high emotional intelligence have significantly higher physical and mental health than people who have lower emotional intelligence (9).

On the other hand, numerous studies show that the presence of characteristics such as strict selfevaluation, strong need for success and progress, tendency to think all or nothing, and the desire to meet the high expectations of parents and others, which are signs of perfectionism. It has endangered people's mental health. Perfectionism is one of the personality traits and it means to expect too much from yourself or others, which is accompanied by critical self-evaluations. Perfectionism is a common response of people to deal with the belief that their self-worth is undesirable, and lack of self-satisfaction is its key element. On the other hand, perfectionism can be defined as a multidimensional personality style that is associated with a large number of interpersonal and psychological problems. This characteristic is not a disorder or disease, but it is a vulnerable factor that has caused problems for children, adolescents and adults. Psychologists have examined the relationship between perfectionism and many mental disorders, such as its relationship with anxiety and depression., anorexia nervosa and self-esteem reduction, as well as perfectionism have an effect on academic adjustment and school-related stress and negative emotions of students (10). Felt, Hewitt, Blankstein and Ebrin (11) have described the positive aspects of perfectionism and believe that perfectionism is related to the motivation for progress and growth (12). But most researches have linked perfectionism with a wide range of negative consequences such as lack of academic progress, feelings of guilt and failure, and lower levels of self-esteem, doubt and ambivalence (13).

Since the importance of emotional intelligence has been proven, it can be expected that this type of intelligence will have a significant impact on the health of a person's life and mental health as an important aspect of public health. As cognitive intelligence can have a significant impact on academic success. It is expected that emotional intelligence has an impact on mental health and social communication. Likewise, perfectionism can be considered as an influential factor in a person's mental health due to its positive and negative aspects. Therefore, the main question of this research is whether there is a relationship between emotional intelligence, perfectionism and mental health of undergraduate students?

Research method:

The overall design of the research is descriptive-correlation based on the subject and purpose of the current research. The statistical population of the present study includes all undergraduate students who were studying in the Islamic Azad University of Zarand branch in Kerman in the academic year of 2001-2012, and their number was 2000. Of these, 34% were in the first year, 37% in the second year, 15% in the third year, and 14% in the fourth year. The current statistical

sample consists of 240 people who were selected according to Morgan's table from among the undergraduate students of Islamic Azad University, Zarand Branch, Kerman, using stratified random sampling. The complete sampling method is as follows:

First, students were identified in each class (first, second, third and fourth year) and then samples were randomly selected from each class. 83 people from the first year (34 percent), 89 people from the second year (37 percent), 35 people from the third year (15 percent) and 33 people from the fourth year (14 percent) and a total of 240 people were chosen as the sample size. Research tools:

Bar-An Emotional Intelligence Questionnaire: This questionnaire is a 133-question tool for measuring emotional intelligence with a 5-point Likert scale from "rarely true of me" to "often true of me". This questionnaire has 15 subscales, which are:

- 1) Emotional self-awareness (ES): including questions 7-9-23-35-52-63-88-116
- 2) Self-esteem (SR): including questions 11-24-40-56-70-85-100-114-129
- 3) Assertiveness (AS): including questions 22-37-67-82-96-111-126
- 4) Independence (IN) including: questions 3-19-32-48-92-107-121
- 5) Self-improvement (SA) including: questions 60-21-36-51-66-81-95-110-125
- 6) Empathy (EM) including: questions 18-44-55-61-72-98-119-124
- 7) Social responsibility (RE) including: questions 16-30-46-61-72-76-90-98-104-119
- 8) Interpersonal relations (IR) including: questions 10-23-31-39-55-62-69-84-99-113-128
- 9) Pressure tolerance (ST includes: questions 4-20-33-49-64-78-93-108-122
- 10) Impulse control (IS) including: questions 13-27-42-58-73-86-102-117-130
- 11) Reality test (RT) including: questions 8-35-38-53-68-83-88-97 112-127
- 12) Flexibility (FL) including: questions 14-28-43-59-74-87-103-131
- 13) Problem solving (PS) including: questions 15-29-45-60-75-89-118
- 14) Optimism (OP) including: questions 11-20-26-54-80-106-108-132
- 15) Happiness (HA) including: questions 2-7-31-47-62-77-91-105-120

The combined scale of this questionnaire are:

- A) Intrapersonal emotional intelligence (including subscales of self-esteem, awareness, emotionality, decisiveness, self-actualization and independence).
- b) Interpersonal emotional intelligence (including subscales of empathy, responsibility, social and interpersonal relationships).



- c) Emotional intelligence coping with pressure (including pressure tolerance and impulse control subscales).
- d) Adaptability emotional intelligence (including test reality subscales, problem solving flexibility).
- e) Emotional intelligence of general mood (including subscales of optimism and happiness)

Average scores above the average in emotional intelligence indicate a person who is potentially emotionally effective, so it is very likely that he is emotionally and socially intelligent. On the other hand, low scores indicate the inability to succeed in life and the possibility of behavioral, emotional and social problems. This questionnaire has been translated into 22 languages and its normative data has been collected in more than 5 countries and several studies have been conducted on its validity and reliability. This questionnaire includes a total score and fifteen subscales. In Iran, it has been validated by Samoui and colleagues in the universities of Isfahan city, and its reliability coefficients have been calculated between 0.80 and 0.90. The reliability of the test was calculated using Cronbach's alpha, and Cronbach's alpha was reported as 0.93 for the whole test. The reliability of the test using the even-odd method was also reported as 0.88, which is significant at the 0.0001 level.

Frost's Multidimensional Perfectionism Questionnaire (MPS-F)

This scale, which is based on Hamachek's (12) view of perfectionism, includes dimensions that have been seen many times in the research literature on perfectionism and categorizes 35 items into five dimensions. Concerns and doubts that include questions 4, 9, 10, 13, 14, 18, 21, 23, 25, 28, 32 and 34. Personal standards that include questions 6, 12, 16, 19, 24 and 30. Parental expectations that include questions 1, 11, 15, 20 and 26. Criticism of parents, which includes questions 5, 22, and 35, and the subject of order and organization, which includes questions 2, 7, 8, 27, 29, and 31, as well as questions 3, 17, and 33 were removed from the list of questions in the factor analysis. (Hashmi and Latifian). The total score is a linear order of all subscales except order and organization. Not including the score of the subscale of the organization in the calculation of the total score is suggested by the test creators due to the low correlation of this subscale with other subscales and the total score. Frost et al. and other users have reported favorable validity and reliability of the scale. Despite the fact that MPSF is usually used with students, it has been found that it is a suitable tool for students (normal and excellent) and their parents. Hashemi and Latifian have reported the validity in the table below through the correlation matrix. In this study, Cronbach's alpha values calculated for the dimensions of perfectionism in the questionnaire are: 0.71 concern and doubts dimension, 0.48 personal standards dimension, 0.35 parent expectations dimension, 0.17 parent criticism dimension, and 0.17 order dimension and organization 0.34. In addition, Cronbach's alpha coefficient of the whole test was 0.86.

Goldberg General Health Questionnaire: The 28-question form of the General Health Questionnaire was created by Goldberg and Hillier and has 28 items and 4 subscales of 7 questions

(physical symptoms, anxiety, impairment in social functions and depression). This questionnaire is graded as 0, 1, 2, 3, and research questions under the title of standardization of public health questionnaire were conducted on 571 female and male undergraduate students of Tarbiat Moalem University in 1375-76. The reliability of the whole questionnaire was estimated to be 0.82 using Cronbach's alpha method, and the construct validity value of this questionnaire was also 0.82. In the present study, the reliability of the Cronbach's alpha method for the total mental health score was 0.77.

In this research, descriptive statistics and frequency - mean - standard deviation) and inferential statistics (regression analysis, Pearson correlation, multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) and independent t-test) were used. Regarding the first, second and third hypothesis, Pearson correlation coefficient method was used, regarding the fourth hypothesis, multivariate regression analysis method, for the fifth and sixth hypothesis, multivariate analysis of variance (MANOVA) and for the seventh hypothesis, the independent t-test method was used.

Table 1: Descriptive information related to the studied variables by gender

group]	Boy	Girl		
Variables	average standard deviation		average	standard deviation	
General health	19/6	11/5	20/6	10/7	
inner intelligence	93/8	12/9	93/8	12/4	
Interpersonal intelligence	59/1	8/3	57/7	8/7	
Intelligence to deal with	50/9	6/6	49/6	7/8	
pressure					
Adaptability intelligence	73/5	9/3	72/1	9/7	
General intelligence	46	7	46/5	6/6	
Worries and doubts	35/1	7/3	34/9	7	
Personal standard	18/2	3/6	17/9	3/9	
Parental expectations	14/7	3	14/7	3/5	
Parental criticism	8/9	2/3	8/8	2/4	
Order and organization	18/1	3/1	18/2	3/8	
Total perfectionism	104/1	16/6	103/5	181	

Based on the information in Table 1, there is no significant difference between boys and girls in the studied variables. Of course, existing differences should be tested through appropriate statistical tests.

First hypothesis: There is a relationship between the dimensions of emotional intelligence and mental health.



Second hypothesis: There is a relationship between the dimensions of perfectionism and mental health.

The third hypothesis: There is a relationship between the dimensions of emotional intelligence and the dimensions of perfectionism.

Table 2. Correlation matrix of mental health with emotional intelligence and perfectionism

	mental health
inner intelligence	0/10
Interpersonal intelligence	0/12
Intelligence to deal with pressure	0/08
Adaptability intelligence	0/05
General intelligence	0/14*
Worries and doubts	0/01
Personal standard	0/09
Parental expectations	0/03
Parental criticism	-0/03
Order and organization	0/03
Total perfectionism	-0/04

^{*} Significant at the 0.05 level

According to the information in Table 2, mental health has a significant positive correlation only with general temperament intelligence.

Table 3: Correlation matrix of dimensions of emotional intelligence and dimensions of perfectionism

Variables	inner intelligence	Interpersonal intelligence	Intelligence to deal with pressure	Adaptability intelligence	General intelligence
Worries and doubts	-0/41**	-0/41**	-0/46**	-0/41**	-0/44**
Personal standard	-0/36**	-0/37**	-0/43**	-0/41**	-0/36**
Parental expectations	-0/35**	-0/27**	-0/33**	-0/31**	-0/39**
Parental criticism	-0/34**	-0/28**	-0/31**	-0/35**	-0/25**

Order and	-0/32**	-0/32**	-0/28**	-0/33**	-0/27**
organization					
Total	-0/46**	-0/41**	-0/47**	-0/44**	-0/44*
perfectionism					

The correlation matrix shows that all components of emotional intelligence have a significant negative correlation with the subscales and the total score of perfectionism.

Fourth hypothesis: emotional intelligence dimensions and perfectionism dimensions predict mental health. According to the information in Table 2, mental health has a significant correlation only with general temperament intelligence. Therefore, only these variables were selected to enter the regression equation.

Table 4: Step-by-step regression analysis for predicting mental health by emotional intelligence

predict	R	\mathbb{R}^2	F	F-	В	T	meaningful
				meaningful			
General intelligence	0/14	0/02	5	0/03	0/23	2/2	0/03

The result of the regression analysis showed that general mood intelligence predicts 2% of the variance of mental health, the F statistical test for the significance of the correlation coefficient is equal to 5, which is significant at the 0.03 level.

The fifth hypothesis: There is a significant difference in emotional intelligence dimensions among male and female students. Multivariate analysis of variance was used to investigate this issue. The findings of this analysis are shown in Table 5.

Table 5: The results of multivariate variance analysis of the overall difference of the variables in the groups

variable	Criterion	Statistical	F ratio	DF1	DF2	P
	statistics	value	1 /7		22.4	0/12
group	Pillai	0/03	1//	5	234	0/13
	Wilkes	0/97	1/7	5	234	0/13
	Hotelling	0/04	1/7	5	234	0/13

Table No. 5 shows that none of the three statistical indicators of the test criterion regarding the difference between the groups in terms of the studied variables is significant. This finding means that there is no significant difference between male and female students in emotional intelligence.



Sixth hypothesis: There is a significant difference in the dimensions of perfectionism among male and female students. Multivariate analysis of variance was used to investigate this issue. The findings of this analysis are shown in Table 6.

Table 6: The results of multivariate variance analysis of the overall difference of the variables in the groups

variable	Criterion statistics	Statistical value	F ratio	DF1	DF2	Р
group	Pillai	0/006	0/23	6	220	0/97
	Wilkes	0/994	0/23	6	220	0/97
	Hotelling	0/006	0/23	6	220	0/97

Table No. 6 shows that none of the three statistical indicators of the test criterion regarding the difference between the groups in terms of the studied variables is significant. This finding means that there is no significant difference between male and female students in perfectionism.

The seventh hypothesis: There is a significant difference in mental health among male and female students. To investigate this issue, the t-test was used, the results of which are presented in Tables 7.

Table 7. Comparison of average mental health scores of male and female students

group	Number	average	standard deviation	DF	T	meaningful
Girl	140	20/6	10/7	238	-0/63	0/53
Boy	100	19/6	11/5			

Table 7 shows that male and female students have no significant difference in mental health.

Discussion and conclusion:

The purpose of this research was to investigate the relationship between emotional intelligence and perfectionism and mental health of undergraduate students. The findings showed that there is a positive relationship between the emotional intelligence dimension of overall mood and mental health. No relationship was found between dimensions of perfectionism and mental health. There is a negative relationship between all dimensions of emotional intelligence and all dimensions of perfectionism. Emotional intelligence predicts 2% of the variance of mental health. Also, no difference was found between boys and girls in terms of emotional intelligence, perfectionism and mental health.

There is a relationship between the dimensions of emotional intelligence and mental health. As shown in Table 2, there is a positive relationship between the emotional intelligence dimension of overall mood and mental health. This finding is in line with the researches of Khosravi Kabir (14), Tejali (15), Kiani et al. but it is inconsistent with the results of Zarean and Khosrowjerdi's research. Of course, it should be noted that in the above studies, the dimensions of emotional intelligence have not been taken into account and the scores have been presented as a total score. It should be noted that the emotional intelligence of the general mood itself includes sub-comparisons of optimism and happiness (19). In various researches, the relationship between optimism and happiness has been proven many times. Golman also states about this component that optimism is a tendency that prevents a person from falling into despair, despair and depression when facing the difficulties of life. Seligman considers optimism as the way people describe their successes and failures (5). Disappointment and despair also lead a person to lack of mental health.

There is a relationship between the dimensions of perfectionism and mental health. As shown in Table 2, no relationship was found between the dimensions of perfectionism and mental health. This result is inconsistent with the results of Besser and Furnham (20), Watson and Kleinert (21), Yavarian et al. (22), Sadeghi et al. As stated in the first and second chapters, most researches regarding perfectionism have evaluated it as a negative trait and have shown a negative relationship with mental health. However, in the present study, no relationship between these two variables was found, and the reason for this can be found in the statistical population, which consisted of the students of Azad University of Zarand branch. Felt, Hewitt, Blankstein and Ebrin (11) have described the positive aspects of perfectionism and believe that perfectionism is related to the motivation for progress and growth (12), so it can be considered that the tendency to behave The perfectionism of the students makes them learn the course materials more completely and better and achieve a higher level of progress. Of course, this phenomenon appears more in the student community, and the reason for this is that the first and most important action that a student should do is to acquire knowledge and education, and for this reason, there may not be a relationship between perfectionism and mental health.

There is a relationship between the dimensions of emotional intelligence and the dimensions of perfectionism. According to the data in Table 3, the correlation matrix shows that all the components of emotional intelligence have a significant negative correlation with the subscales and the total score of perfectionism. This finding is inconsistent with Atadakht's research result (25). Of course, as seen, very little research has been done on the relationship between the dimensions of emotional intelligence and the dimensions of perfectionism. However, the result of this hypothesis can be explained based on the education of students, which is higher than the education level of ordinary people in the society. That is, it can be expected that students establish a kind of balance between the components of emotional intelligence and the dimensions of perfectionism and use the positive aspects of perfectionism and the components of emotional intelligence to achieve progress. For example, they use the assertiveness and problem-solving subscale of emotional intelligence against the scale of worries and doubts of perfectionism.



Against the scale of personal standards of perfectionism, they benefit from the flexibility skill of emotional intelligence, or against the scale of parental criticism, they use the skill of tolerance and adaptability.

The dimensions of emotional intelligence and the dimensions of perfectionism predict mental health. According to the information in Table 4, mental health has a significant correlation only with general temperament intelligence. Therefore, only these variables were selected to enter the regression equation. According to the data in Table 4 and the result of the regression analysis, it was shown that emotional intelligence predicts 2% of the variance of mental health, the F statistical test for the significance of the correlation coefficient is equal to 5, which is significant at the 0.03 level. Regarding the explanation of this hypothesis, you can also refer to the explanation of the first hypothesis, and for this reason, it is avoided to repeat it. The only point that should be considered and paid attention to is the small share that emotional intelligence predicts the variance of overall mood and mental health, which is 2%.

There is a significant difference in the dimensions of emotional intelligence among male and female students. Table No. 5 shows that none of the three statistical indicators of the test criterion regarding the difference between the groups in terms of the studied variables is significant. This finding means that there is no significant difference between male and female students in emotional intelligence. This finding is consistent with the results of Kayani et al.'s research (8), but it is inconsistent with the results of Khosrowjerdi's research (14), who stated that boys' emotional intelligence is higher than girls'. Considering that emotional intelligence can be taught and learned, it can be expected that different people learn this characteristic in different ways and at different levels. If this skill is learned in the family and school, and each of the parents and teachers use their desired methods. Therefore, people in different families are brought up with different levels of empathy, adaptability, self-esteem, happiness, flexibility and problem-solving ability, and this difference in levels is caused by the different educational and behavioral methods of parents and teachers, and it can be expected There was no difference in emotional intelligence between boys and girls. As Brazelton, a pediatric specialist from Harvard University, believes that many parents can be good teachers for teaching emotional lessons to their babies at home. The next stage is preschool courses, which are very vital and important for establishing social and emotional skills. The correct acquisition of skills at this stage leaves deep and lasting effects on the student's education and even his adulthood and saves him from falling into the abyss of drugs and delinquency gives him (5).

There is a significant difference in the dimensions of perfectionism among male and female students. Table No. 6 shows that none of the three statistical indicators of the test criterion regarding the difference between the groups in terms of the studied variables is significant. This finding means that there is no significant difference between male and female students in perfectionism. This finding is inconsistent with the results of Manochehri et al.'s research, which stated that men are more perfectionists than women. Regarding the lack of significant difference between girls and boys, we can point to the etiology of perfectionism. One of the factors that was

discussed is the way of education and parenting. As Frost (26) has pointed out, strict parenting methods can lead to the growth and evolution of perfectionism. Kamamura, Frost, and Harmatz examined the relationship between perfectionism and parenting styles in college students and found that strict and authoritarian parenting styles were negatively correlated with perfectionism (which was correlated with the subscales of self-doubt about performance and worry about mismeasured) was associated in both men and women. However, it did not show a relationship with normal perfectionism (which was measured by the subscale of high performance criteria) in both sexes. Therefore, it seems that the differences between people in the degree of perfectionism are caused by individual, family and biological factors.

Ethical Considerations: After the necessary approvals and obtaining permission from the university, in order to complete the questionnaires, the goals and working methods were explained to all the people participating in the study, and their consent was obtained and they were assured that the results of the research will be available to them if they wish. They will be placed. Also, people were assured that they were free to participate or not participate in the research. People were assured that they can decide to withdraw from the research at any stage of the research and this will not have any negative consequences for them.

Limitations of the research: Like other researches, this research had limitations, and one of these limitations was the mental and emotional state of the students when answering the questions, which may affect the accuracy and accuracy of their answers, and this limitation was uncontrollable.

Conflict of interest: The authors hereby declare that this work is the result of an independent research and does not have any conflict of interest with other organizations and persons.

Acknowledgment: The authors of the article express their appreciation and thanks to all the participants in the research.

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