

## **The Relationship between Perfectionism, Self-Regulation, and Language Learning in Iraqi EFL Learners**

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### **Abstract**

The idea of perfectionism has been linked to a wide range of both negative and positive psychological effects. Anxiety, obsessive-compulsive disorder, and behavioral discipline are just a few of the negative consequences. (Flett & Hewitt, 2002). Accordingly, the current study was conducted on a population of 150 male and female Iraqi language learners. To do the study, practically, Multidimensional Perfectionism Scale (MPS) was distributed among the language learners; then, since the study is correlational design research, the researcher distributed the Self-Regulation Questionnaire (SRQ) in order to collect the learners' viewpoints about the level of self-regulation. The findings, indicated that there is a significant and positive relationship between learners' perfectionism and language achievement among the Iraqi language learners. In addition, positive correlation was found between learners' self-regulation and their language achievement. Consequently, the implication of the study demonstrated that those learners with perfectionist ideas in their mind can achieve threshold level of education comparing with those who lack such a mindset.

**Keywords:** perfectionism, self-regulated learning, language learning, EFL Iraqi learning

### **1.1 Introduction**

The necessity to create high standards in schools has increased as a result of the global social interest in performance and excellence. The growth in school quality, the concentration on social comparison, the importance of self-other assessments, and the obsession with self-development and assertion are all factors that contribute to the perfectionist proclivity of today's students (Rice, Richardson, & Ray, 2016). Perfectionism is a psychological notion that perfection should be pursued; perfectionists are people who attempt to reach extremely high standards in all they do and set unreasonably high objectives in a variety of areas, including the job, sports, cuisine, and other areas (Hewitt & Flett, 1991). They think that errors should never be made and that making them is a sign of unworthiness. They're consumed with the dread of failure and condemnation, and if they fail or disappoint, they become dysfunction ally sad (Hollander, 1965).

The majority of perfectionism research has focused on the link between perfectionism and various psychopathologies, or on the idea of perfectionism from a psychological standpoint. The link between perfectionism and language learning has only been studied in a few cases. Gregersen and Horwitz's study was one of the first to attempt to investigate such a link (2002). Gregersen and Horwitz (2002) investigated the connection between perfectionism and language learning, focusing on language anxiety in their research.

According to them, the students' reactions to their oral performance revealed that anxious and non-anxious foreign language learners had different levels of perfectionist inclinations. Anxious students reported higher expectations for their English performance, a greater proclivity for procrastination, a greater fear of others' opinions, and a greater level of concern about their mistakes than non-anxious students.

As a result, the purpose of this study is to determine the link between perfectionism, self-regulation, and language performance among Iraqi EFL learners. As a result, the researcher will use a correlational design to see if there is a significant association between the learners' perfectionism, self-regulation, and language achievement.

## **1.2. Statement of the Problem**

Perfectionism is defined as a belief that perfection should be strived for; perfectionists are people who strive to meet very high standards in everything they do, and even follow unrealistically high goals across any domains, be it in the workplace, sport, cooking, etc. One of the problems related to the learners' lack of perfectionism is their lack of self-confidence, since perfectionism is defined as a belief that perfection should be strived for; perfectionists are people who strive to meet very high standards in everything they do, and (Hewitt & Flett, 1991). They think that errors should never be made and that making them is a sign of unworthiness. They are preoccupied with fear of failure and disapproval, and if they experience failure and disappointment, become dysfunction ally depressed (Hullender, 1965) related to the learners' perfectionism is a work-related problem found in the work of some individual learners' performance in the EFL classes. Accordingly, this type of mentality can heighten the learners' knowledge and performance and effectively improves the learners' performance. Besides, keeping self-regulated learning that is defined as the ability to regulate one's thoughts and actions to attain goals and requires the learners' plans and behaviors to achieve learning goals.

## **1.3. Research Questions**

**Q 1:** Is there any significant relationship between Iraqi EFL learners' perfectionism and their language learning?

**Q 2:** Is there any significant relationship between Iraqi EFL learners' self-regulation and their language learning?

**Q3:** Is there any significant relationship between Iraqi EFL learners' perfectionism and their self-regulation?

## **1.4. Research Hypotheses**

**H01:** There is no significant relationship between Iraqi EFL learners' perfectionism and their language learning?

**H02:** There no significant relationship between Iraqi EFL learners' self-regulation and their language learning.

**H03:** There is no significant relationship between Iraqi EFL learners' perfectionism and their self-regulation

## Method

### 3.1. Participants

In the present study, a population of 150 Iraqi EFL learners were selected from both schools and English language institutes from Maysan, Iraq. The learners who were selected were mostly learning the language at public schools as well as Private English institutes. Besides, the language learners were selected based on the Convenience Sampling Method. The participants were a combination of males and females with age ranges between 12-18.

### Result

Descriptive statistics related to the first Multidimensional Perfectionism Scale (MPS) questionnaire are shown in the chart below. The questionnaire contains 45 questions; number 1 indicates the lowest and 7 the highest score (based on the lead spectrum). According to the chart, the highest score is related to the item *"Those around me readily accept that I can make mistakes too"*, with the score of 5.48, and the lowest related to the item: *It does not matter to me when a close friend does not try their hardest*, with the obtained score of 4.47.

**Table 4.1.**  
*One-Sample Statistics*

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
MPS	150	4.91	.57	.046

**Table 4.2.**  
*One-Sample Test*

Test Value = 4						
		Mean			95% Confidence Interval of the Difference	
	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Difference	Lower	Upper
MPS	19.58	149	.000	.91	.82	1.00

The average score obtained in the SRQ questionnaire is equal to 3.76. T-test is used to check for normal distribution of self-regulation among language learners. The hypothesis = 3 is tested for this purpose. The null hypothesis is rejected by P-Value = 0.000, as shown by the table and statistics. The hypothesis > 3 is supported since we have  $H_0: = 3 -_0 > 0$ . That is, the average score is much higher than 3, indicating that Self-Regulation has a normal distribution.

Table 4.3.  
One-Sample Statistics

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
SRQ	150	3.76	.36	.029

Table 4.4.  
*One-Sample Test*

Test Value = 3						
		Mean		95% Confidence Interval of the Difference		
	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Difference	Lower	Upper
SRQ	25.91	149	.000	.76	.70	.82

The average score obtained in the Language Achievement section is equal to 6.175. T-test is used to assess students' LC scores. The hypothesis = 3 is tested for this purpose. The null hypothesis is rejected by P-Value = 0.000, as shown by the table and statistics. The hypothesis > 3 is supported since we have  $H_0: = 3 - \mu > 0$ . That is, the average score is much higher than 3, indicating that Self-Regulation has a normal distribution.

Table 4.5  
One-Sample Statistics

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Language achievement	150	55.12	11.06	.90

Table 4.6  
*One-Sample Test*

Test Value = 50						
		Mean		95% Confidence Interval of the Difference		
	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Difference	Lower	Upper
Language achievement	5.67	149	.000	5.126	3.34	6.91

Independent Samples T-Test was used to evaluate the differences in MPS between male and female language learners. First, descriptive statistics are presented and then their equality of variance is examined.

**Table 4.6**  
**Group statistics**

	Sex	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
MPS	male	72	4.89	.549	.06
	female	78	4.93	.595	.064

According to the data in the table above, male students have an average RTQ of 4.89, while female students have an average RTQ of 4.93. The Independent T-Test uses Levene's Test to test equality of variance, which is one of the hypotheses.

According to the test findings, the confidence level is sig = 0.642, which is more than 0.05, and the variances of the two groups are identical, hence the first row of the table may be accepted. As a result, there is no distinction between the two groups. 5- The difference in SRQ between male and female students was assessed using an independent T-Test. The descriptive statistics are provided first, followed by an examination of their equality of variance.

**Table 4.7**  
**Group Statistics**

	Sex	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
SRQ	male	72	3.73	.38	.04
	female	78	3.79	.33	.03

According to the data in the table above, male students have an average RTQ of 3.73, while female students have an average RTQ of 3.79. The Independent T-Test uses Levene's Test to test equality of variance, which is one of the hypotheses.

**Table 4.8.**  
**Independent Samples Test**

		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
		F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2- tailed)	Mean Differ- ence	Std. Error Differ- ence	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference Lower Upper	
FLL AS	Equal varian- ces assum- ed	.28	.59	-.88	148	.37	-.05	.05	-.14	.03

Equal variances not assumed	- .88	140.5 2	.380	-.05	.05	-.17	.065
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The confidence level for the test findings is sig = 0.595, which is more than 0.05, and it can be assumed that the variances of the two groups are identical, and the first row of the table may be accepted. As a result, there is no distinction between the two groups.

The difference in LA scores between male and female students was assessed using an independent T-Test. The descriptive statistics are provided first, followed by an examination of their equality of variance.

**Figure 4.9.**  
*Group Statistics*

	Sex	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Language achievement	male	72	56.23	10.34	1.21
	female	78	54.10	11.65	1.319

According to the data in the table above, male students have an average LC score of 56.23, while female students have an average LC score of 54.10. The Independent T-Test uses Levene's Test to test equality of variance, which is one of the hypotheses.

**Table 4.9.**  
*Independent Samples Test*

	Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means						
	F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2- tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference Lower Upper	
RTQ Equal variances assumed	1.55	.21	1.18	148	.23	2.15	1.85	-1.44	5.94

Equal variances assumed	1.18	147.8 4	.23	2.15	1.76	-1.41	500
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According to the test findings, the confidence level is  $\text{sig} = 0.214$ , which is more than 0.05, therefore the variances of the two groups are identical, and the first row of the table is valid. As a result, gender has no bearing on LC scores.

## 4.2. Inferential Statistics:

### 4.2.1. Test of normality

In order to implement statistical methods and calculate appropriate test statistics and logical inference about research hypotheses, the most important step before any action is to choose the appropriate statistical method for research. To this purpose, knowledge of data distribution is a top priority. The normality test of a distribution is one of the most common applications of the Distribution Matching Test, and the valid Kolmogorov-Smirnov test is suitable for this purpose. The statistical hypotheses of the Kolmogorov-Smirnov normality test are as follows.

**H<sub>0</sub>**: The data are normally distributed.

**H<sub>1</sub>**: Data are not normally distributed.

Therefore, rejecting the statistical null hypothesis (H<sub>0</sub>) means that the data are not normal and reject the null hypothesis if the significance level of the test is less than .050 ( $\text{sig} < 0.05$ ). According to the results of the table and since sig or P-Value is more than 0.05, we can accept the null hypothesis that the data distribution is normal.

**Table 4.10.**  
*One-Sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test*

		MPS	SRQ	Language achievement
N		150	150	150
Normal Parameters <sup>a,b</sup>	Mean	4.9154	3.7662	55.1267
	Std. Deviation	.57258	.36205	11.06375
Most Differences	Extreme Absolute	.050	.069	.071
	Positive	.050	.043	.044
	Negative	-.044	-.069	-.071
Test Statistic		.050	.069	.071
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)		.200 <sup>c,d</sup>	.078 <sup>c</sup>	.059 <sup>c</sup>

a. Test distribution is Normal.

b. Calculated from data.

c. Lilliefors Significance Correction.

d. This is a lower bound of the true significance.

The null hypothesis ( $H_0$ ) may be accepted at the 95 percent confidence level since the test's significance level is equal to 0.248, which is larger than 0.05 ( $\text{Sig} = 0.248 > 0.05$ ). In other words, there is no link between language achievement and student self-regulation. C. Pearson parametric test is utilized to investigate the relationship and association between learners' self-regulation and perfectionism due to the normality of data distribution. Accepting the null hypothesis ( $H_0$ ) indicates there is no link between the variables, whereas rejecting the null hypothesis ( $H_0$ ) suggests there is a substantial relationship between learners' self-regulation and learners' perfectionism. It is given in the table below.

#### 4.2.2. Hypothesis testing

The Pearson Correlation Analysis parametric test is used to investigate the study hypotheses in this section. The Pearson correlation coefficient is a measurement of the link between two variables with a normal distribution. The presence of a correlation between two variables does not imply the existence of a cause-and-effect connection; rather, it merely indicates whether the changes in the two variables are in the same direction (direct) or in the opposite direction (inverse) (inverse). The highest correlation coefficient is +1, while the lowest is -1. There is a direct linear link and a significant correlation between the two variables the closer the correlation coefficient ( $r$ ) is to +1, i.e. increasing one variable raises the other variable. Close to 1 indicates that the two variables have an inverse and strong linear connection. If the two variables have no linear relationship, their correlation coefficient is 0. If the situation isn't reversed. If the correlation coefficient is 0, we cannot conclude that the two variables are independent of one another; instead, we can only conclude that the two variables do not have a linear connection. If the test's significance threshold is less than 0.05, hypothesis zero is rejected.

##### 4.2.2.1. The first hypothesis analysis

The research hypotheses were as follows:

**H01:** There is no significant relationship between Iraqi EFL learners' perfectionism and their language learning?

**H02:** There no significant relationship between Iraqi EFL learners' self-regulation and their language learning.

**H03:** There is no significant relationship between Iraqi EFL learners' perfectionism and their self-regulation.

- A) Due to the normality of data distribution, Pearson parametric test is used to examine the relationship and correlation between learners' perfectionism and language achievement. In this test, rejecting the null hypothesis ( $H_0$ ) means that there is a significant relationship between learners' perfectionism and language achievement, and accepting the null hypothesis means that there is no correlation between the variables. The results of Pearson correlation test have been shown in the table below.



**Table 4.11.**  
*Correlations Between Language Achievements and MPS*

		Language achievement	MPS
Language achievement	Pearson Correlation	1	.211**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.010
	N	150	150
MPS	Pearson Correlation	.211**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.010	
	N	150	150

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

If the situation isn't reversed. If the correlation coefficient is 0, we cannot conclude that the two variables are independent of one another; instead, we can only conclude that the two variables do not have a linear connection. If the test's significance threshold is less than 0.05, hypothesis zero is rejected.

B. Pearson parametric test is utilized to assess the link and association between learners' self-regulation and language success due to the normality of data distribution. Accepting the null hypothesis (H 0) suggests that there is no association between the variables. Rejecting the null hypothesis (H 0) means that there is a substantial link between learners' self-regulation and language achievement. The Pearson correlation test results are displayed in the table below.

**Table 4.12.**  
*Correlations Between Language Achievements and SRQ*

		Language achievement	SRQ
Language achievement	Pearson Correlation	1	.22
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.048
	N	150	150
SRQ	Pearson Correlation	.22	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.48	
	N	150	150

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

According to the above table, the test's significance level is 0.048, which is less than 0.05 (Sig = 0.248 > 0.05), therefore the null hypothesis (H 0) cannot be accepted at the 95 percent confidence level. To put it another way, there is a link between learners' self-control and their language achievement.

C. Pearson parametric test is utilized to assess the relationship and association between learners' self-regulation and learners' perfectionism due to the normality of data distribution. Accepting the null hypothesis (H 0) suggests that there is no association between the

variables. Rejecting the null hypothesis ( $H_0$ ) means that there is a substantial link between learners' self-regulation and learners' perfectionism.

### Conclusions

This research has a number of educational implications. To begin with, self-regulated based learning can help kids enhance their language skills. In fact, one of the most beneficial and significant implications in the context of L2 learning is that, based on the findings of the current study, teachers are advised to provide positive feedback via verbal messages and social persuasions to encourage learners to engage in extracurricular activities in order to achieve success. Similarly, because high expectations would create a stressful and frustrating atmosphere for perfectionists, students are advised to substitute unattainable criteria with rational goals in L2 study (Dashtizadeh&Farvardin, 2016). The current study's findings may also open up new horizons and insights for administrators, course and syllabus designers and developers, allowing them to better program their planning and move toward a more efficient language learning syllabus and a brighter future for teachers who play a critical role in their students' language achievements.

Furthermore, the results of this study revealed the importance of perfectionism in L2 acquisition. Defining hard and realistic goals is one of the fundamental criteria of personal growth, according to Locke and Latham (2006), and appropriately setting targets helps students maintain motivation and dedication to their accomplishment. Furthermore, it was shown that perfectionism is linked to the learners' ability to self-regulate.

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