Prediction of Career Attitudes Based on Future Concern and Perfectionism in University Students

Shiva Mousavi[1] iD , Seyed AbdolHadi Samavi[2]✉ iD

1. MA Student, Department of Educational Psychology, Bandar Lengeh Branch, Islamic Azad University, Bandar Lengeh, Iran

2. Assistant Professor, Department of Educational Psychology, Bandar Lengeh Branch, Islamic Azad University, Bandar Lengeh, Iran, hadi1602005@gmail.com

Article Info	ABSTRACT
	Objective: The present study was carried out with the objective of forecasting career attitudes by examining the relationship between future concern and perfectionism among students enrolled at Islamic Azad University of Bandar Lenge. **Methods**: The research methodology adopted for this study was descriptive in nature, specifically a correlational design. The target population for this study encompassed all students enrolled at Islamic Azad University, Bandar Lenge branch, across different academic levels (i.e., associate, bachelor and master's degrees) in 2024. A stratified random sampling technique was employed to gather data for this research. The instruments utilized for data collection included the career attitude scale (2017) developed by Tarvirdizad et al., Multidimensional Perfectionism Scale (Hoyt & Felt, 1991), and the Dark future scale by Zaleski (2019). To test the research hypotheses, a multiple regression analysis was conducted. **Results**: The findings from the statistical examination indicated a significant predictive capability of career attitudes by perfectionism and future concern ($P<0.05$). **Conclusions**: Consequently, it can be concluded that students at Bandar Lenge University may exhibit positive career attitudes when displaying a noteworthy level of future concern and perfectionism.

Introduction

The process of training individuals to become valuable human resources essential for the advancement and progress of societies stands out as one of the pivotal objectives of educational systems (Okoye & Ezejiofor, 2013). Within this realm, universities emerge as crucial institutions tasked with the cultivation of specialized and highly competent human resources, as highlighted by Sharifi et al. (2020). An issue of utmost significance in the domain of higher education pertains to the academic achievements of students, given its profound implications on various facets of their lives, such as progression to advanced educational levels, securing employment opportunities, and attaining a desirable social status and level of contentment, as noted by Samarita et al. (2024). Numerous studies have underscored that a positive outlook towards the prospect of a future career represents a crucial element contributing to academic success. Conversely, a decline in academic motivation among students has been attributed to the absence of viable job prospects, particularly evident in the context of over 70% of students grappling with unemployment. These individuals perceive their future prospects as instrumental in generating social value for themselves. The social significance attached to a job emerges as a pivotal factor influencing an individual's satisfaction with their field of study and their choices regarding future career paths, as indicated by Vaghefi Nazari et al. (2015). In the traditional sense, job attitude encompasses evaluations related to one's job that reflect their emotions, beliefs, and reliance on the job, characterized by notions of positivity-negativity, desirability-undesirability, and likability-dis likability, in line with Dalal conceptualization (Besharati Moghadam & Ramezaninejad, 2021).

A significant factor capable of shaping students' perspectives on their future careers pertains to apprehensions surrounding job security and future prospects (Munasinghe, 2006; Wang-Lu & Valerio Mendoza, 2023). Concurrently, apprehensions regarding future employment have become increasingly prevalent across diverse domains. The escalating number of graduates across various disciplines represents a pressing concern within society, engendering anxiety and disillusionment among students regarding their fields of study and prospective career trajectories. The surplus of specialization within a given society precipitates a decline in graduates' earning potential, consequently eroding their enthusiasm for pursuing studies and employment within that particular field, as outlined by Faraji Khiavi et al. (2015). Future-oriented anxiety manifests as a form of

apprehensive preoccupation characterized by recurrent contemplation of fears, uncertainties, potential threats, and hypothetical future calamities, as posited by Raes (2010).

Individuals' attitudes towards their future careers are considerably influenced by their unique personality traits, among which perfectionism holds particular way. Perfectionism, as delineated by psychologists, represents a multifaceted character trait embodying both positive and negative dimensions. The traits associated with perfectionism revolve around an individual's relentless pursuit of flawlessness and the establishment of exacting standards for optimal performance, intertwined with tendencies towards self-criticism and a preoccupation with external evaluations, as expounded by Stoeber and Janssen (2011). Perfectionism is identified as a personality trait capable of permeating various aspects of an individual's life, serving as a foundational element underpinning inefficacy within a person, as illuminated by (Hammond et al., 2019).

Perfectionism is a multifaceted personality trait characterized by striving for flawlessness, setting excessively high performance standards, and being overly critical of oneself and others (Flett et al., 2022). It is often driven by a desire for approval, fear of failure, or a belief that one's self-worth is dependent on achievements. Perfectionism can manifest in various aspects of life, including academics, work, relationships, and personal appearance, impacting both mental and physical well-being (Thomas & Bigatti, 2020).

Perfectionism is commonly viewed as a double-edged sword. On one hand, it can lead to high levels of achievement and success, as individuals are motivated to reach their goals and excel in their endeavors. On the other hand, perfectionism can lead to negative consequences such as anxiety, depression, burnout, and a persistent sense of dissatisfaction (Osenk et al., 2020). Individuals who are perfectionists may struggle with procrastination, as the fear of making mistakes can prevent them from starting or completing tasks. They may also experience difficulties in relationships, as their high expectations can lead to conflicts and feelings of inadequacy in themselves and others (Khayyer & Jalali, 2022).

The origins of perfectionism are complex and can be influenced by genetic, environmental, and cultural factors. It may develop from childhood experiences, such as receiving praise primarily for accomplishments or experiencing criticism for failures. Social media and societal pressures can also exacerbate perfectionistic tendencies, as individuals compare themselves to idealized images and standards (Wang et al., 2021).

Understanding perfectionism involves recognizing its different dimensions. Self-oriented perfectionism involves imposing high standards on oneself, while other-oriented perfectionism involves having high expectations of others. Socially prescribed perfectionism is the perception that others hold unrealistic expectations of oneself. These dimensions can interact and contribute to the overall experience of perfectionism (Hewitt et al., 2022).

In recent years, researchers and mental health professionals have focused on developing strategies to help individuals manage perfectionism. Cognitive-behavioral therapy (CBT) and mindfulness practices are among the approaches used to address the cognitive distortions and maladaptive behaviors associated with perfectionism. Emphasizing self-compassion and accepting imperfections as part of the human experience can also help individuals lead more balanced and fulfilling lives.

Woznyj et al. (2022) conducted a comprehensive investigation on job attitudes through a meta-analysis within the realm of research. Their study delved into the intricate web of relationships among various job attitudes, revealing a spectrum ranging from moderate to strong correlations between them, while also noting the strikingly similar patterns of these relationships when compared to findings from prior studies. Nonetheless, upon scrutinizing the relative weights of these attitudes, the researchers uncovered a nuanced insight - certain attitudes hold greater predictive validity than others when it comes to forecasting crucial employee outcomes. This observation not only sheds light on the hierarchical nature of job attitudes but also speaks to the underlying theoretical concerns surrounding the preferability of specific attitudes within the workplace milieu.

Furthermore, Hammad (2016) contributed to this discourse by highlighting a pertinent aspect in his research - the presence of a negative correlation between future anxiety and attitudes towards specialized fields, a phenomenon particularly pronounced among male individuals. In a related vein, Parsa et al. (2019) delved into the realm of job attitudes within the cohort of doctoral students, uncovering valuable insights. Their findings pointed towards a positive attitude prevailing towards the field of study, juxtaposed against a rather lackluster sentiment towards future career prospects. Drawing inspiration from the aforementioned scholarly inquiries, the current study embarks on a quest to unravel the nuances surrounding the predictability of perfectionism and apprehensions regarding the lack of success in shaping the career attitudes of students enrolled at Bandar Lenge

University. Employing a descriptive and analytical lens, this research endeavor aims to contribute to the existing body of knowledge by shedding light on the intricate interplay between these psychological constructs and the career attitudes of students within the academic setting.

Material and Methods

The research method employed in this study is both descriptive and correlational, specifically focusing on the collection of data. The research under consideration falls into the category of field studies, characterized by its practical purpose and method of implementation. Within the scope of this research, the statistical population consists of the students attending Islamic Azad University, Bandar Lenge branch across all academic levels (including associate, bachelor and master) in 2024. The total size of this statistical population was 1405 individuals. Through reference to Morgan's table and considering the population size, the initial sample size was determined to be 302 individuals. To ensure symmetry and homogeneity within the sample group, this figure was subsequently increased to 306 individuals, becoming the final sample size. The sampling approach adopted in this research involved the utilization of the stratified random method. This technique involved dividing the statistical population into distinct categories based on gender (male and female), with 51 individuals randomly selected from each gender group within each educational level.

In conducting this study several ethical considerations were be addressed to ensure the integrity and ethical standards of the research process. First, it was crucial to obtain informed consent from all participants. Students would be fully informed about the study's purpose, methodology, potential risks, and benefits, and their voluntary participation should be emphasized. Confidentiality and anonymity were be maintained throughout the research process to protect the privacy of participants and their personal information. Researchers ensured that data collected is securely stored and only accessible to authorized personnel. Additionally, care was taken to avoid any potential harm or distress to participants, particularly when discussing sensitive topics such as career attitudes and perfectionism.

In terms of data collection tools, the researchers utilized the Tarvirdizad, Sharifi, and Saberi scale (2017) to assess job attitude. This scale comprises 17 items organized into three subscales (interest in field of study, career future, and career planning) within two overarching sections, utilizing a 5-

point Likert scale for grading. Previous research by Tarvirdizad et al. (2017) demonstrated reliability coefficients of 0.92, 0.81, and 0.71 for the questionnaire components, indicating satisfactory reliability. In the current study, the reliability of this tool was assessed using Cronbach's alpha method, yielding a value of 0.77.

For the evaluation of the perfectionism variable, the researchers employed the Multidimensional Perfectionism Scale (MPS) developed by Hewitt et al. (1991). This scale consists of 30 questions, with the first ten items focusing on self-oriented perfectionism, the second ten on other-oriented perfectionism, and the final ten on society-oriented perfectionism, all rated on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 0 to 5. The scoring system for this scale involves a range of 10 to 50 for each of the three sub-scales, indicating the level of perfectionism in each dimension. Scoring methodology involves reversing the scale for all responses, with "I completely agree" receiving a score of 1 and "I completely disagree" assigned a score of 0. In an initial validation study conducted by Besharat (2012) on a sample of 180 students from various faculties of Tehran University, the Cronbach's alpha coefficients obtained were 0.90 for self-oriented perfectionism, 0.90 for other-oriented perfectionism, and 0.83 and 0.78 for society-oriented perfectionism, demonstrating strong internal consistency of the scale. In the current investigation, the researchers determined the reliability of the instrument by employing the Cronbach's alpha method, yielding a coefficient of 0.73.

The measurement of the construct pertaining to concerns about future events was carried out using the Dark future short scale developed by Zaleski et al. (2019). Zaleski et al. (2019) embarked on a validation and enhancement process of this shortened scale comprising 5 items, involving a sample of 2285 Polish adults aged between 18 to 70 years, demonstrating favorable outcomes in terms of validity and reliability. Similarly, Tarfaish et al. (2018) conducted a study in Iran focusing on the validity and reliability of the aforementioned scale among mothers of children with intellectual disabilities. The findings from this investigation revealed the confirmation of content validity, a high level of convergent validity at 0.65, material analysis ranging from 0.74 to 0.31 ($P<0.01$), significant criterion validity and construct validity at 0.78 to 0.58 ($P<0.001$), as well as satisfactory test-retest reliability, classification, and internal consistency coefficients of 0.70, 0.64, and 0.71, respectively. Additionally, in the present study, the researchers assessed the reliability of the instrument using the Cronbach's alpha method, resulting in a coefficient of 0.75.

Within this research endeavor, descriptive statistics including frequency, mean, and standard deviation were utilized for data exposition, while Pearson's correlation coefficient and multiple regression analysis were employed to scrutinize the research hypotheses. The analytical procedures were facilitated using the statistical software SPSS 26.

Results

Out of the total of 306 students participating in the research, 153 were men and 153 were women. The average age of male participants was 29.57 and the average age of female participants was 25.41. In the statistical sample of this research, an equal number of students from associate, bachelor and master degrees were present.

In Table 1, the descriptive indicators related to the variables included in the analysis are reported.

Table 1. Descriptive indices of research variables

Variables	Min.	Max.	Mean	SD	Skewness	Kurtosis
Interest in the field of study	8	33	25.36	4.71	1.12	-0.812
Career future	6	21	17.81	4.33	1.14	0.631
Career planning	6	22	17.92	3.62	-1.054	-1.009
Career attitude	22	76	61.09	7.80	1.54	0.127
Future concern	7	21	11.41	4.36	-1.068	0.517
Self-oriented perfectionism	12	46	23.12	6.36	1.044	1.731
Other-oriented perfectionism	13	44	25.44	6.81	-1.507	-0.447
Society-oriented perfectionism	11	48	21.67	7.19	-1.071	0.814
Perfectionism	36	138	70.23	14.76	1.566	-1.031

Based on the results of Table 1, the average variable of career attitude was reported with a value of 61.09, the average variable of future concern with a value of 11.41, and the average variable of perfectionism with a value of 70.23 was reported.

The Shapiro-Wilk test was used to show the normality of the data. The value of the Shapiro-Wilk statistic for the variables of career attitude (z=0.868), future concern (z=0.837), and perfectionism (z=0.868) was not significant (p>.05). Based on this, the hypothesis of normality of data was confirmed for all variables. This issue can be confirmed in the section of descriptive statistics and in the subject of skewness and elongation of scores because the values of skewness and elongation of all variables are in the range of -2 to -2. Therefore, in the analysis of research hypotheses, the use of parametric tests is unimpeded.

Pearson's moment correlation matrix was used to show the significance of the relationship between all research variables. Based on the results of this test, there was a significant relationship (at the 0.01 level) between all research variables. There is an inverse relationship between the variable of career attitude and the variables of future concern and perfectionism. This means that by reducing the worry about the future and reducing the level of perfectionism, a positive attitude towards the job is created. Based on the findings of the Pearson correlation matrix table, the second assumption is confirmed, and as a result, the regression analysis is unimpeded.

The current research was conducted in a limited period of time and its data was collected from a statistical sample in a certain period of time. Since for cross-sectional data, the possibility of the involvement of the time factor is weak, the assumption of independence is maintained and time factors cannot have significant effects in increasing or decreasing relationships and forecasts. In addition, the value of Durbin-Watson statistic was obtained equal to 2.191, which was far from the assumed points of 1 and 2.5, and based on this, the assumption of independence of the balances was confirmed. Based on this, it is possible to perform regression analysis.

Variance inflation index is used to check the assumption of multiple non-collinearities. The value of this statistic is 1.772 for the variable of future concern and 1.446 for the variable of perfectionism, which due to their large distance with the numerical value of 5, the assumption of multiple non-collinearities is established for predictor variables and there is a need to remove any of the variables is not from the regression model.

According to the confirmation of the existing assumptions, multiple regression analysis (which indicates the presence of several predictor variables and one criterion variable) was performed. In this analysis, predictor variables were entered into the analysis simultaneously. This method seemed appropriate since the researcher was looking for a general model of predictive variables and interactive and one-time evaluation of the variables was intended. Table 2 reports the standard and non-standard regression weights, standard error, T-statistics and the probability of type 1 error related to predictor variables.

Table 2. Results of regression analysis to predict career attitude

Predictors	B	B	Std. error	T	P
Future concern	-0.59	-0.53	0.083	7.11	0.001
Perfectionism	-0.64	-0.58	0.086	7.44	0.001

Table 3 shows the results of variance analysis related to the regression model.

Table 3. The results of the variance analysis related to the regression model

Source	SS	DF	MS	F	P
Regression	64333.79	2	32166.89	63.15	0.001
Residual	154318.17	303	509.30		
Total	218651.96	305			

According to results, R^2 coefficient of this model was equal to 0.29. Based on the findings, it was found that the regression model used in this research is at an optimal level. The value of R^2 indicates that 29% of the changes in the career attitude variable (criterion variable) are explained by the variables of perfectionism and future concern (predictor variables). Therefore, the research hypothesis is confirmed.

Discussion

The findings derived from the current study exhibit a high level of alignment with the research conducted by Woznyj et al. (2022), Hammad (2016), and Parsa et al. (2019). When delving into the elucidation of the outcomes of this particular research endeavor, it becomes evident that the incorporation of education and training, alongside the utilization of specialized, skilled, and experienced human resources, becomes a necessity in addressing the various predicaments and infrastructural challenges prevalent within society across a multitude of professions and vocations. Numerous scholarly investigations have underscored the subpar nature of academic performance among students, along with the inadequacies surrounding activities associated with it during the university education phase. It is discerned that gifted students often fail to harness their innate abilities to their fullest potential, while university resources remain underutilized.

A considerable portion of students lack the requisite academic drive and motivation, often diverting their focus towards elevating their educational status through the attainment of advanced degrees, rather than enhancing their academic proficiency. Several factors have been postulated as potential contributors to this prevalent scenario, including shortcomings on the part of universities in instilling and fostering a scientific mindset among students, misalignment in the selection of academic disciplines, and the individual attributes of students themselves.

The stance assumed by students regarding their chosen field of study and prospective career path emerges as a pivotal personal and psychological determinant influencing the academic progression of students, as highlighted by Jamali and Ghalenoei (2013). A key factor engendering a negative disposition towards one's academic specialization and future professional trajectory is the tendency to overestimate the extent to which a particular field of study aligns with one's personal aspirations, subsequently leading to disillusionment and apprehension regarding future career prospects. In recent times, a concerning trend has emerged wherein students are admitted into academic programs without due consideration for the exigencies of the job market, resulting in a palpable sense of disillusionment and diminished motivation among graduates. The pervasive apprehension surrounding future employability transcends national boundaries, emerging as a shared concern among policymakers and students globally, as noted by Parsa et al. (2019).

Despite the prevailing suboptimal conditions within the employment landscape in recent years, the overall outlook of students towards their prospective careers remains somewhat bleak, with the apprehension of securing a job that aligns with their years of toil being identified as a potent predictor of students' attitudes. Consequently, the imperative to enhance the quality of education and ensure a seamless transition for university graduates into gainful employment within organizational settings is underscored as a critical agenda item demanding concerted attention.

In the second part of the elucidation concerning the findings, it is plausible to assert that perfectionism manifests as a conscientious endeavor to eradicate imperfections. Perfectionists embody individuals who harbor a fervent desire to attain flawlessness across all facets of their existence, characterized by an escalating exertion towards achieving perfection. Their behavioral traits include a perpetual state of being and the consistent establishment of exceedingly stringent standards, coupled with a proclivity towards making meticulous and exacting assessments, as indicated by Stoeber and Janssen (2011). Hence, students inclined towards perfectionism harbor a pessimistic outlook regarding their prospective professional trajectory, owing to the imposition of exceedingly rigorous and stringent regulations and frameworks upon themselves, in a bid to realize their academic and vocational aspirations. The establishment of idealistic objectives, coupled with the subsequent failure to actualize them, has plunged these students into a realm characterized by despondency, a dearth of motivation, hopelessness, and desolation, thereby exerting a profound influence on their perceptions and attitudes towards their future vocations. Although the

formulation of constructive idealistic goals may serve as a propitious factor in advancing towards the realization of objectives, the contemplation of idealistic aims may pose as an obdurate impediment in the pursuit of predetermined goals.

In a comprehensive synthesis, it is conceivable to acknowledge that students epitomize the primary agents of evolution and advancement within any given society; any underlying factor that jeopardizes their psychological well-being can be construed as a formidable impediment obstructing the progress and elevation of the community. A favorable outlook stands as one of the fundamental constituents of mental well-being. Attitude represents a fusion of convictions and sentiments that predispose an individual towards perceiving others, objects, and collectives in either a positive or negative light. Attitudes encapsulate appraisals of entities, thereby prognosticating or steering forthcoming actions or conducts. Consequently, the cultivation of a positive attitude has the potential to render the trajectory of career and educational pursuits more seamless for students. In consonance with the findings gleaned from the current study, apprehensions pertaining to the future, particularly anxieties regarding the professional realm, alongside negative perfectionistic tendencies among students, can function as robust indicators of their vocational stance. Therefore, based on the outcomes obtained, recommendations are proffered with the aim of ameliorating the attitudes harbored by students.

The enrollment process in universities witnesses a significant number of individuals who successfully pass the entrance examination but eventually discontinue their academic pursuits due to a sense of discontentment with their chosen field of study, or alternatively, they persist in their studies driven by a feeling of desperation. It is imperative to develop an accurate and meticulous strategy aimed at enhancing the process of student admission and ensuring their future prospects, as this plays a crucial role in fostering the advancement and prosperity of the nation. The education and nurturing of students, tailored to their intrinsic motivations and aptitudes, stand out as one of the paramount responsibilities of the nation's policymakers. The surge in student admissions, without duly considering the demands of the job market, solely to meet the escalating demand from prospective candidates seeking university admission in recent years, coupled with the inadequate enhancement of essential infrastructure, has instilled a pervasive sense of despondency and disillusionment regarding the career trajectories of students. Hence, rather than fixating on quantifying the institutions of higher learning, it is recommended that universities prioritize the

caliber of education imparted and abstain from admitting students in excess of the capacity of the labor market.

While this study provides valuable insights into the relationship between future concern, perfectionism, and career attitudes among students at Islamic Azad University of Bandar Lenge, several limitations should be acknowledged. First, the study's correlational design limits the ability to establish causal relationships between the variables. Although significant associations were identified, it cannot be concluded that future concern and perfectionism directly cause changes in career attitudes. Additionally, the study's sample is limited to students from a single university, which may restrict the generalizability of the findings to other populations or educational settings. The use of self-report measures, such as the career attitude scale, the Multidimensional Perfectionism Scale, and the Dark Future Scale, may also introduce bias due to social desirability or inaccurate self-assessment. Moreover, cultural factors specific to the region and university context may influence the students' responses, which might not be representative of students from other cultural backgrounds or geographic areas. Future research should consider a longitudinal approach to examine changes over time and include a more diverse sample to enhance the applicability of the findings across different contexts.

Data availability statement

The original contributions presented in the study are included in the article/supplementary material, further inquiries can be directed to the corresponding author.

Ethics statement

The studies involving human participants were reviewed and approved by the ethics committee of the Islamic Azad University. The patients/participants provided their written informed consent to participate in this study.

Author contributions

All authors contributed to the study conception and design, material preparation, data collection, and analysis. All authors contributed to the article and approved the submitted version.

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Conflict of interest

The authors declare that the research was conducted in the absence of any commercial or financial relationships that could be construed as a potential conflict of interest.

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