

**Marina Krstic<sup>1</sup>, MA,**

Daily centre for people with intellectual or physical disability, Bitola,  
Republic of Macedonia

**Prof. Ljupco Kevereski<sup>2</sup>, PhD**

University St. Kliment Ohridski, Faculty of Education, Bitola,  
Republic of Macedonia

Original scientific paper

UDK: 37.013.78

DOI: 10.17810/2015.04

=====

## THE IMPACT OF SOCIOECONOMIC STATUS ON THE OCCURRENCE OF PERFECTIONISM IN PRIMARY SCHOOL GIFTED STUDENTS

**Abstract:** Various pressures and influences of family, society, media, and other agents of socialization on individuals and their own pressures, associated with setting unrealistic goals and requirements lead to a life filled with worry, frustration and guilt, (Ferbezer, 2002). Perfectionism emerges especially as a negative trend in the behaviour of a person, appearing in childhood when an individual performs different roles in society. There are a number of factors that lead to the emergence of perfectionism in gifted but, Slaney and Ashby (1996) also suggest that parents consider that the style of education is a major factor in the development of perfectionism in gifted children. In this research the impact of socio - economic status of the families on the appearance of perfectionism in gifted children will be examined and researched. The results are expected to help improve the condition and acceptability of the gifted students in primary education.

**Keywords:** Socioeconomic Status, Perfectionism, Gifted Students.

### 1. Introduction

Various pressures and influences of family, society, media, and other agents of socialization on individuals and their own pressure, associated with setting unrealistic goals and requirements, often lead to a life filled with worry, frustration and guilt, (Ferbezer, 2002). Perfectionism as a negative trend in the behaviour of a person appears in childhood when the individual performs different roles in society. There are a number of factors that lead to the emergence of perfectionism in gifted but, Slaney and Ashby (1996) also suggest that parents consider style of education is a major factor in the development of perfectionism in gifted children.

Different models that emphasize different parental behaviours that can trigger the

<sup>1</sup> mkrsticbt@hotmail.com

<sup>2</sup> kever@t-home.mk

appearance of perfectionism are the following: model of social expectations, model of social learning, model of social reactions and model of expressed anxiety (Belavic, 2006). Those factors also include the socio-economic status of the families who are considered as important as other factors for perfectionism in gifted. Mia Erceg has in his research found statistically insignificant difference between the expectations from children by parents with a higher socio-economic status and expectations from children by parents with lower socioeconomic status. (Erceg, 2014) In this research the impact of socio - economic status of the families on the appearance of perfectionism in gifted children will be highlighted.

## 2. Research Methodology

**Subject of research:** the impact of socioeconomic status on the occurrence of perfectionism in gifted students in primary education.

**Objectives of the study:** to detect the actual situation on the impact of socioeconomic status on the occurrence of perfectionism in gifted students in primary education; to obtain information on the degree and the way it is affected by the socio-economic status, as one of the factors influencing the occurrence of perfectionism in gifted students in primary education;

### **Justification of the research**

Social justification – about getting theoretical and empirical data and information on the impact of socioeconomic status on the occurrence of perfectionism in gifted students in primary education;

Institutional justification – because of the possibility of taking and implementing adequate pedagogical- psychological measures to successfully deal with and reduce the effects of neurotic perfectionism in gifted students;

**Type of research:** developmental, transversal research with qualitative paradigm, the quantitative aspect in the field of data processing and descriptive design.

### **Hypotheses of research:**

#### **A general hypothesis**

The socio-economic status of the families of superiorly performing students affects the appearance of healthy or neurotic perfectionism in highly successful primary school students.

#### **Specific hypothesis 1**

There is no statistically significant difference between the respondents in terms of socio-economic status of their families.

#### **Specific hypotheses**

There is a statistically insignificant negative correlation between socioeconomic status and the results of all three scales designed for assessment of perfectionism (MPS, APS, AGQ); highly performing students with higher socio-economic status of their families will show and will get lower scores on all three scales of assessment of perfectionism or highly performing students with higher socio-economic status of their families will manifest neurotic perfectionism or lower levels of healthy perfectionism that is very close to neurotic perfectionism.

### **Sample:**

The sample of this research consists of highly performing students from upper classes from the central primary schools in the Municipality of Bitola. The sample is constructed as such, because the survey includes only superior performing students from upper classes who are selected according to certain criteria. The number of respondents, i.e. subjects in this survey was 102 (N = 102).

**Procedures and tools for data collection:**

Questionnaires for socio-economic status of families and scales for assessment of perfectionism: Multidimensional Perfectionism Scale (MPS); Almost Perfect Scale - Revised (APS-R); Elliot, Achievement Goal Questionnaire (AGQ).

**Data processing:**

Descriptive statistics and statistical processing was used for the processing of the data and the statistical package SPSS (Statistic all Package for the Social Sciences) <http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/SPS> was used for the analysis of the results.

**3. Results of Research**

**Table 1.** Relative relationship between socioeconomic status and the results of AGQ scale

			Results of AGQ scale				total
			<= 1.72	1.73 - 2.00	2.01 - 2.28	2.29=>	
socioeconomic status	High school	f	10	6	7	11	34
		s.e. status (%)	29.4%	17.6%	20.6%	32.4%	100.0%
		results of AGQ scale (%)	29.4%	30.0%	28.0%	47.8%	33.3%
		total (%)	9.8%	5.9%	6.9%	10.8%	33.3%
	higher qualifications	f	9	3	5	6	23
		s.e. status (%)	39.1%	13.0%	21.7%	26.1%	100.0%
		results of AGQ scale (%)	26.5%	15.0%	20.0%	26.1%	22.5%
		total (%)	8.8%	2.9%	4.9%	5.9%	22.5%
	university degree	f	15	11	13	6	45
		s.e. status (%)	33.3%	24.4%	28.9%	13.3%	100.0%
		results of AGQ scale (%)	44.1%	55.0%	52.0%	26.1%	44.1%
		total (%)	14.7%	10.8%	12.7%	5.9%	44.1%
total	f	34	20	25	23	102	
	s.e. status (%)	33.3%	19.6%	24.5%	22.5%	100.0%	
	results of AGQ scale (%)	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	
	total (%)	33.3%	19.6%	24.5%	22.5%	100.0%	

\* In each interval 25% of the total data obtained is included in order to satisfy the requirement in  $\chi^2$ -test, frequency f in each cell is  $\geq 5^{th}$

**Table 1.1 Pearson and Spearman correlation coefficient between socioeconomic status and results of AGQ scale by above average successful students**

	Value	Asymptotic standard error	Approximate standard error	Approximate significance
Pearson coefficient	-.126	.097	-1.266	.209
Spearman coefficient	-.122	.098	-1.224	.224
Number of valid cases	102			

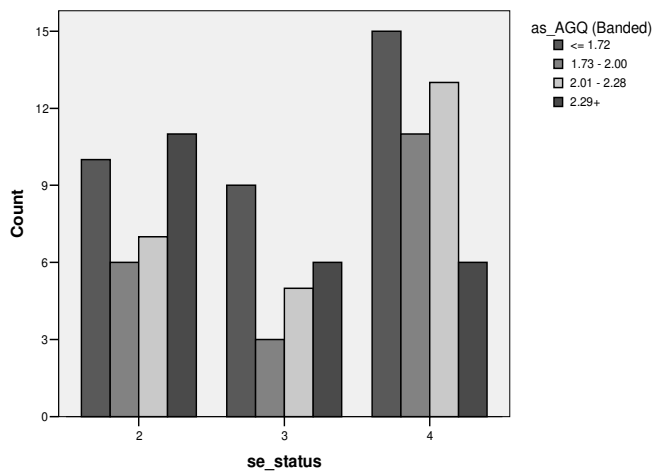
The value of Pearson correlation coefficient is -0.126 with approximate significance 0.209, and Spearman correlation coefficient range -0.122 with approximate significance 0.224. Pearson and Spearman correlation coefficient has shown a small negative correlation, which means that the relation between socioeconomic status and the results of AGQ scale is on low level of significance with negative relation, by increasing socioeconomic status the results of AGQ scale declined and vice versa. Above average successful students from upper class, who come from families with higher socioeconomic status, have shown lower results, lower levels of healthy or neurotic perfectionism on the AGQ scale (s. Table 1)

This confirms special hypotheses 1 and 2:

1. There is no statistical significant difference between respondents in the meaning of socioeconomic status of their families.
2. There is statistical significant negative correlation between socioeconomic status and results of all three perfectionism assessment scales (MPS, APS, AGQ); above average successful students with higher socioeconomic status of their families show lower results on all three perfectionism assessment scales, which means that above average successful students with higher socioeconomic status of their families will show neurotic perfectionism or lower levels of healthy perfectionism, which is very close to the neurotic one.

Although we have small negative correlation, we accept the general hypothesis: *The socioeconomic status of the families of above average successful students influences the appearance of healthy or neurotic perfectionism in above average successful elementary school students.*

**Histogram 1: Relation between socioeconomic status and the results of AGQ scale by the above average successful students**



**Socioeconomic status by the families of above average successful students (2-high school, 3-college, 4-university)**

**Table 2.** Relative relationship between socioeconomic status and results of APS scale

		results of APS scale				total	
		<= 2.13	2.14 - 2.35	2.36 - 2.61	2.62=>		
socioeconomic status	High school	f	7	9	9	9	34
		s.e status (%)	20.6%	26.5%	26.5%	26.5%	100.0%
		results of APS scale (%)	24.1%	39.1%	28.1%	50.0%	33.3%
		total (%)	6.9%	8.8%	8.8%	8.8%	33.3%
	higher qualifications	f	5	7	9	2	23
		s.e status (%)	21.7%	30.4%	39.1%	8.7%	100.0%
		results of APS scale (%)	17.2%	30.4%	28.1%	11.1%	22.5%
		total (%)	4.9%	6.9%	8.8%	2.0%	22.5%
	university degree	f	17	7	14	7	45
		s.e status (%)	37.8%	15.6%	31.1%	15.6%	100.0%
		results of APS scale (%)	58.6%	30.4%	43.8%	38.9%	44.1%
		total (%)	16.7%	6.9%	13.7%	6.9%	44.1%
total	f	29	23	32	18	102	
	s.e status (%)	28.4%	22.5%	31.4%	17.6%	100.0%	
	Results of APS scale (%)	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	
	total (%)	28.4%	22.5%	31.4%	17.6%	100.0%	

\* 25% of the total data obtained is included in each interval in order to satisfy the requirement in  $\chi^2$ -test, frequency f in each cell is  $\geq 5^{th}$

**Table 2.1 Pearson and Spearman correlation coefficient for correlation between socioeconomic status and APS scale results by above average successful students**

	Value	Asymptotic standard error	Approximate standard error	Approximate significance
Pearson coefficient	-.138	.101	-1.391	.167
Spearman coefficient	-.134	.101	-1.357	.178
Number of valid cases	102			

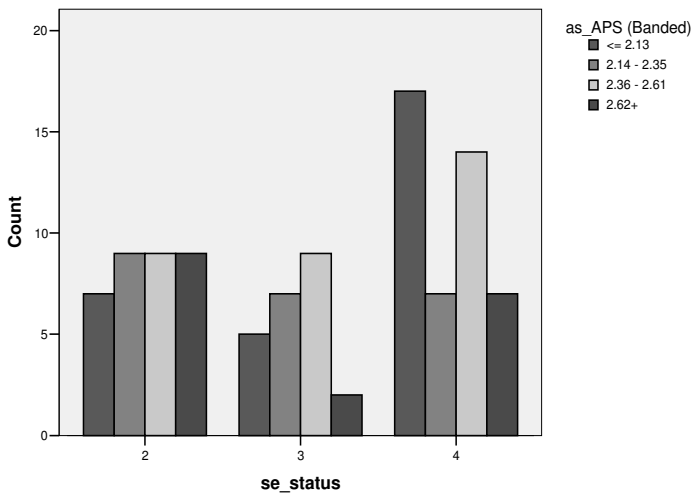
The value of Pearson correlation coefficient is -0.138 with approximate significance 0.167; the value of Spearman correlation coefficient is -0.134, with approximate significance 0.178. Pearson and Spearman correlation coefficient has shown a small negative correlation, which means that the relation between socioeconomic status and APS scale results is low. Above average successful students from upper class, who came from families with higher socioeconomic status, have shown lower results, lower levels of healthy or neurotic perfectionism on APS scale (s. Table 2).

This confirms special hypotheses 1 and 2:

1. There is no statistical significant difference between respondents in the meaning of socioeconomic status of their families.
2. There is statistical significant negative correlation between socioeconomic status and results of all three perfectionism assessment scales (MPS, APS, AGQ); above average successful students with higher socioeconomic status of their families show lower results on all three perfectionism assessment scales, which means that above average successful students with higher socioeconomic status of their families will show neurotic perfectionism or lower levels of healthy perfectionism, which is very close to the neurotic one.

Although we have small negative correlation, we accept the general hypothesis: *The socioeconomic status of the families of above average successful students influences the appearance of healthy or neurotic perfectionism in above average successful elementary school students.*

**Histogram 2: Relation between socioeconomic status and the results of APS scale by the above average successful students**



**Socioeconomic status by the families of above average successful students (2-high school, 3-college, 4- university)**

**Table 3.** Relative relationship between socioeconomic status and results of MPS scale

		results of MPS scale					total	
		<= 2.26	2.27-2.46	2.47-2.60	2.61-2.83	2.84=>		
socioeconomic status	High school	f	4	6	8	7	9	34
		Se. status (%)	11.8%	17.6%	23.5%	20.6%	26.5%	100.0%
		results of MPS scale (%)	18.2%	26.1%	47.1%	35.0%	45.0%	33.3%
		total (%)	3.9%	5.9%	7.8%	6.9%	8.8%	33.3%
	higher qualifications	f	6	7	3	4	3	23
		Se. status (%)	26.1%	30.4%	13.0%	17.4%	13.0%	100.0%
		results of MPS scale (%)	27.3%	30.4%	17.6%	20.0%	15.0%	22.5%
		total (%)	5.9%	6.9%	2.9%	3.9%	2.9%	22.5%
	university degree	f	12	10	6	9	8	45
		Se. status (%)	26.7%	22.2%	13.3%	20.0%	17.8%	100.0%
		results of MPS scale (%)	54.5%	43.5%	35.3%	45.0%	40.0%	44.1%
		total (%)	11.8%	9.8%	5.9%	8.8%	7.8%	44.1%
total	f	22	23	17	20	20	102	
	Se. status (%)	21.6%	22.5%	16.7%	19.6%	19.6%	100.0%	
	results of MPS scale (%)	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	100.0%	
	total (%)	21.6%	22.5%	16.7%	19.6%	19.6%	100.0%	

\* In each interval 25% of the total data obtained is included in order to satisfy the requirement in  $\chi^2$ -test; frequency f in each cell is  $\geq 5^{\text{th}}$

**Table 3.1 Pearson and Spearman correlation coefficient for correlation between socioeconomic status and MPS scale results by above average successful students**

	Value	Asymptotic standard error	Approximate standard error	Approximate significance
Pearson coefficient	-.150	.097	-1.521	.131
Spearman coefficient	-.148	.097	-1.494	.138
Number of valid cases	102			

The value of Pearson correlation coefficient is -0.150 with approximate significance 0.131; the value of Spearman correlation coefficient is -0.148, with approximate significance 0.138. Pearson and Spearman correlation coefficient have shown light negative correlation, which means that the relation between socioeconomic status and MPS scale results is low. Above

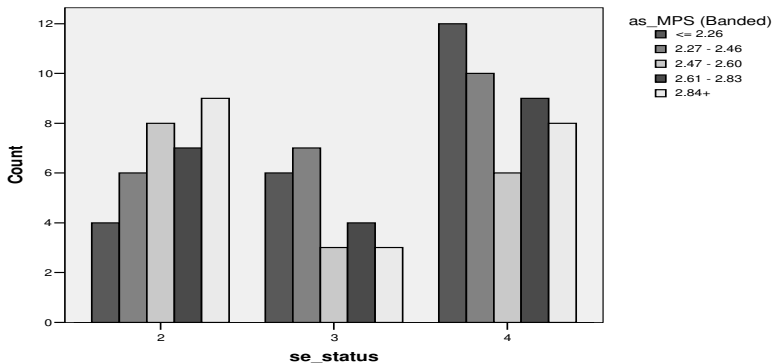
average successful students from upper class, who came from families with higher socioeconomic status, have shown lower results, lower levels of healthy or neurotic perfectionism on MPS scale (s. Table 3).

This confirms special hypotheses 1 and 2:

1. There is no statistical significant difference between respondents in the meaning of socioeconomic status of their families.
2. There is statistical significant negative correlation between socioeconomic status and results of all three perfectionism assessment scales (MPS, APS, AGQ); above average successful students with higher socioeconomic status of their families show lower results on all three perfectionism assessment scales, which means that above average successful students with higher socioeconomic status of their families will show neurotic perfectionism or lower levels of healthy perfectionism, which is very close to the neurotic one.

Although we have small negative correlation, we accept the general hypothesis: *The socioeconomic status of the families of above average successful students influences the appearance of healthy or neurotic perfectionism in above average successful elementary school students.*

**Histogram 3: Relation between socioeconomic status and the results of MPS scale by the above average successful students**



**Socioeconomic status by the families of above average successful students (2-high school, 3-college, 4- university)**

#### 4. Discussion

Having in mind the fact that this research was realized with average students of elementary school from 11 to 14 years, we have noticed that the perfectionism is manifested in childhood when a person is actively involved in social activities. The family, environment and one's own pressures are related to placing unreal goals and tendencies characterized by life fulfilled with concerns, frustrations and feeling of guilt. Also, we assert that the socio-economical status of gifted students' families has an important role in regard to the occurrence of healthful or



neurotic perfectionism of the gifted. All these matters are connected with the research which has shown that perfectionism occurs in the childhood period and in adolescence. Parents should not forget that they are role models for their children. They must not expose their gifted child as a symbol of socio-economical status, they must avoid exaggeration of strictly established life rules, they must encourage gifted child to take responsibility for their own behaviour, they have to be sincere, also imposing less strict limits, they have to emphasize the positive sides of their gifted children and they should never cease to communicate.

According to the research results gifted children whose parents have higher socioeconomic status manifest lower levels of healthy perfectionism or neurotic perfectionism; thus it is necessary to take appropriate pedagogical psychological measures to prevent the appearance of neurotic perfectionism. The results obtained in this research are in close correlation with the claim of the famous author (Ferbezer, 2002) that the individual and his/her own pressures, associated with setting unrealistic goals and strict rules and requirements lead to a life filled with worry, frustration and guilt of pressure from family, society and the media. In this line is also the research of Slaney and Ashby (1996), according to which parental upbringing style is a major factor in the development of perfectionism in gifted children. Not less important is the meaning of the different parental behaviours that can trigger the appearance of perfectionism and expressed anxiety (Belavic, 2006). Statistically insignificant is the difference between the parental expectations of children by parents with a higher socio-economic status and expectations of their children by parents with lower socioeconomic status and states (Erceg, 2014). The above mentioned researches are strong indicators of the impact of parental behaviour to gifted and talented and the emergence of neurotic perfectionism.

## 5. Conclusion

The results of this research carried out according to three scales for assessment of perfectionism in gifted, which were used in the study are confirmed by the specific hypotheses 1, 2 we have established, thus confirming and accepting the general hypothesis of this research as follows:

The socio-economic status of the families of superiorly performing students affects the appearance of healthy or neurotic perfectionism in highly successful primary school students.

According to the results, it was found that families of gifted people with higher socioeconomic status have a greater impact on the appearance of the lower limit of perfectionism and healthy appearance of neurotic perfectionism than families of the gifted with lower socioeconomic status, which indicates that they have no realistic expectations from their children; it is rather that they impose excessive demands on their children and react negatively to their mistakes, expecting their gifted children to perfectly perform their tasks. In the function of active functioning of the educational and developmental factors in preventing the occurrence of neurotic perfectionism activities should focus on positive and productive direction as follows:

1. It is necessary to inform and discuss with parents of highly performing students in regard to healthy perfectionism and consequences of neurotic perfectionism;
2. Do not create pressure for superiorly performing students; do not encourage the development and emergence of perfectionism;
3. It is necessary to provide positive support for the above-average performing students who have low self-esteem or who demonstrate lower levels of healthy perfectionism;

4. Educational therapies and counselling talks should be used to resolve socio-emotional problems in highly successful students;
5. Provide more opportunities for achieving success in the case of superiorly performing students (horizontal and vertical mobility);

We believe that these results and this research will to a degree contribute to prevention of potential emergence and manifestation of neurotic perfectionism among students of different ages.

#### References:

- Belavic, I. (2006). *Povezanost perfekcionizma, anksioznosti i depresivnosti kod djece*. Diplomski rad, Filozofski fakultet, Odsjek za psihologiju, Sveuciliste u Zagrebu, Zagreb, 3-4.
- Baricevic, P., Buljat, J., Djuran, S., Vilusic, I. (2006). *Nadarjena deca*. Seminarski rad, Sveuciliste u Zadru, Odjel za izobrazbu odgojitelja predškolske djece, Zadar, 5-6.
- Ferbezer, L. (2002). *Celovitost nadarjenosti*, Ljubljana: EDUCA, 41-78.
- Hudrap, B. (1999). *Perfekcionizem pri nadarjenih mladostnikih*, Diplomsko delo, Pedagoski fakulteta, Odelek za razrednik pouk, Maribor, 39-40.
- Erceg, M. (2014). *Uloga obrazovnih aspiracija i ocekivanja te ponsanja roditelja u objasnjenju perfekcionizma njihove djece*, Diplomski rad, Zadar: Sveuciliste u Zadru, Odjel za psihologiju, 60.
- Schuler P. A. (1999). *Voices of Perfectionism: Perfectionistic Gifted Adolescents in Rural Middle School*, New York: The National Research Center on the Gifted and Talented, 7-41.
- Silverman, L. K. (1987). *Perfectionism: The Crucible of Giftedness*, Fourth International Scientific Conference on the Theory of Positive Disintegration, Warsaw, 12-13.
- Silverman, L. K. (1999). *Perfectionism: The Crucible of Giftedness*, Denver, 7-19.

#### Biographical note:

**Marijana Krstic** (1980) was born in Bitola (Macedonia), where she finished secondary school and became a nurse. After she had finished her studies on the Special Education Institute (Defectology) of the Faculty of Philosophy at the University „Sv. Kiril i Metodij“ in 2005, she became a special education teacher (defectologist). Between 2010 and 2013 she studied her master studies on the education of the gifted and talented at the Educational faculty in Bitola. Until now she has participated in several conferences and published several papers in Macedonia and abroad. She also has work experience in ergotherapy with persons with developmental disabilities. In the period between 2006 and 2007 she worked as a special education teacher (defectologist) in the Institute for Rehabilitation of Children and Youth with impaired hearing „Koco Racin“, since 2007 to 2008 in the Elementary school „Kole Kaninski“, and since 2008 she works at Daily Care Center for Persons with Mental or Physical Disabilities.

**Ljupcho Kevereski** is a full time professor at the Faculty of Education in Bitola, Macedonia, teaching a wide range of subjects from the field of General Psychology with a special interest in the working with gifted and talented children and their inclusion in society. He is a renowned publisher, i.e. author of books from the field of Psychology, Family psychology, Psychology of Teaching, Special Groups Psychology and many other related subjects.