

# Multivariate Analysis of Dyadic Perfectionists' Levels of Relationship Satisfaction and Self-Reported Parenting Styles

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## Abstract

Past research has suggested that the development of perfectionism is correlated to parenting styles (Flett, Hewitt, & Singer, 1995; Kawamura, Frost, & Harmatz, 2001; Rice, Ashby, & Slaney, 1998). At the same time, the impact of perfectionism on the level of satisfaction in romantic relationships has been established (Ashby, Kutchins, & Rice, 2008; Flett, Hewitt, Shapiro, & Rayman, 2001; Hendrick, 1988; Lopez, Fons-Scheyd, Morua, & Chaliman, 2006; Rice, Lopez, and Vergara, 2005). The present study extends past research by examining family of origin parenting styles and relationship satisfaction across groups of maladaptive and adaptive dyadic perfectionists. In the proposed study, 250 undergraduate psychology students will participate. In addition to main effects, the present study examines interaction effects between maladaptive dyadic perfectionist groups, parenting styles, and self-reported relationship satisfaction. Limitations, implications, and future directions for research are discussed.

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## Rational

### Parenting Styles

-Authoritarian- Often used with physical punishment, requires absolute obedience from children, more likely to control their children physically and psychologically. Without explanation, these parents require from their children to follow their strict rules, or their failure leads to punishment.

-Authoritative- Even though these parents set strict rules, they allow the children more freedom, encouraging them to be more self-reliant. These parents are usually more responsive trying to avoid repressive methods of discipline.

-Permissive- Rarely use physical punishment and allow their children to grow up with freedom and autonomy. These parents usually set up fewer rules, and their children grow up with little discipline or self-control.

CHILDREN WHO WERE EXPOSED TO CERTAIN PARENTING STYLES MAY HAVE EXPERIENCED ENVIRONMENTS MORE CONDUCTIVE TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF DYADIC PERFECTIONISM TRAITS. THIS COULD ALSO AFFECT THEIR RELATIONSHIP SATISFACTION.

-HYPOTHESES - there will be differences in parenting style and relationship satisfaction in groups of maladaptive, adaptive, and non-dyadic perfectionists. Specifically, I expect that maladaptive dyadic perfectionists will report greater levels of authoritarian parenting styles and less relationship satisfaction compared to adaptive dyadic perfectionists and non-dyadic perfectionists. I also expect that an interaction between parenting styles and adaptive and maladaptive groups will be found with relationship satisfaction, such that maladaptive dyadic perfectionists who were exposed to an authoritarian parenting style report the least relationship satisfaction.

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## Methods

### Participants and Procedure

-Approximately 250 undergraduate university students, who are enrolled in advanced-level psychology classes, will participate.

- Participants must be at least 18 years of age or older and will have to be in a romantic relationship with the same partner for at least 6 months or longer.

-The participants will receive extra course credit for their participation according to the instructor's policy.

-The participants will be asked to fill out a web-based survey packet that should take approximately 30 minutes.

### Measures

-*Dyadic Almost Perfect Scale (DAPS)*; Shea & Slaney, 1999). The DAPS was created by rewording the instructions of the Almost Perfect Scale (Slaney, R. B., Rice, K. G., Mobley, M., Trippi, J., & Ashby, J. S., 2001). The 26-item DAPS measures the participants' expectations for their partners on a 7-point scale, ranging from *Strongly Disagree* (1) to *Strongly Agree* (7).

-*Parental Authority Questionnaire (PAQ)*; Buri, 1991). The PAQ measures parental authority, from the point of view of the child. The questionnaire yields three separate scores for authoritarianism, authoritarianism, and permissiveness. The items will include descriptions of the parenting style of their parents on a 5-point scale, ranging from *Strongly Disagree* (1) to *Strongly Agree* (5).

-*Relationship Assessment Scale (RAS)*; Hendrick, 1998). As a seven-item scale, the RAS measures relationship satisfaction. The questionnaire, as a self-report, will contain a 5-point rating scale, ranging from *Very Bad* (1) to *Very Good* (5). It will be expected from the participants to indicate their level of satisfaction in the romantic relationship

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## Proposed Analysis

STEP 1 - Cluster analysis in DAPS (ADP, MDP, and NDP)

STEP 2 - MANOVA

IV - ADP, MDP, and NDP

DV - Permissive, Authoritarian, and Authoritative Parenting Styles and Relationship Satisfaction

STEP 3 - Follow up ANOVAs and Post Hoc

STEP 4 - Interaction Effects

4a) Creating categories of high/low parenting styles with median split

4b) 3 ANOVAs with relationship satisfaction and high/low parenting styles

STEP 5 - 3 ANOVAs

IV - Continuation of cluster (high/low parenting styles)

DV - Relationship Satisfaction

\* Bonferroni correction to control for Type II error.

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## Potential Limitations

-There is limited literature on this topic, the proposed hypotheses are exploratory (The authoritarian parenting style might not be sufficient to lead to maladaptive dyadic perfectionism, and maladaptive dyadic perfectionism might not be the only reason for dissatisfaction in romantic relationships).

-This assumption is implicit, it is possible that there is no connection between these constructs.

-The argument that the authoritarian parenting style might lead to dissatisfaction in the children's romantic relationship might need to be tested in itself with a mediation model.

-The potential study would investigate undergraduate psychology students only; unexpected factors, (e.g., lack of the participants' experience in romantic relationships regarding their age), might influence the outcomes.

-It will be required from the participants that they have to be in a romantic relationship with the same partner for at least 6 months or longer. Still, the length of the relationship they are involved in might influence the outcomes, since there will probably be participants with different time lengths being involved in their relationships.

-Parental authority and relationship assessment will be used in the potential study, all the measures will be self-report questionnaires. Distorted and biased perception of self and others might influence the outcome of the study.

There is a possibility that the potential participants' expectations and their point of view would influence the parents' and partners' description in the answers of the questionnaires.

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## Future Directions

-Beside the participants described in the research proposal, future research could investigate directly the parents and the romantic partners of the participants as well in order to avoid biased and distorted perception of self and others.

-A longitudinal study would help to resolve certain concerns about the differences regarding the length of the relationships.

-The potential longitudinal study would offer the opportunity to evaluate participants who are older and with more experience in romantic relationship than undergraduate students.

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## Conclusion

-Despite the mentioned limitations of the proposed study, potential findings might suggest that individuals, who were exposed to childhood messages of "never good enough," may, be classified as maladaptive dyadic perfectionists later on.

-The people may be setting up high standards and expectations for their partner, and when those standards are not met there may be a significant association with dissatisfaction in their romantic relationships.

-Might have potential for counseling, as therapists might want to explore both dyadic perfectionism in the relationship and the parenting styles the client was exposed to growing up.

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