**Perfectionism**


A nationally gathered sample of 820 academically talented 6th graders at the Center for Talented Youth of Johns Hopkins University took the Multidimensional Perfectionism Scale, and scores were cluster analyzed using both hierarchical and nonhierarchical cluster analysis with cross-validation. A 3-cluster solution was indicated. Students also took the Adjective Check List, the NEO-Five Factor Inventory, the Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale, and the Brief Symptom Inventory to determine characteristics of cluster membership. Results indicated that the cluster groups comprised a non-perfectionistic type (32.8%), a healthy perfectionistic type (41.7%), and a dysfunctional perfectionistic type (25.5%). Parent perceptions of the children were consistent with the students' self-perceptions. The construct of perfectionism was primarily associated with conscientiousness and secondarily with agreeableness and neurosis.


The different theoretical views of perfectionism are examined. Two multidimensional scales, each known as the Multidimensional Perfectionism Scale, are compared. These two scales have allowed the study of perfectionism to empirically investigate the leads suggested by earlier methods (i.e., case studies, anecdotal reports, or theoretical formulations), while permitting much greater precision in the definition and construct of perfectionism. Research questions concerning both the general and the gifted and talented populations are presented.


Using the Multidimensional Perfectionism Scale, perfectionism scores were compared between a group of 600 students identified as academically talented and a group of 418 peers from the general cohort. In this nationally gathered sample, all students were sixth graders and of similar socioeconomic status. Findings indicated little difference between the mean scores of the two groups. Comparisons were also made between the gifted students and the general cohort using an empirical typology of perfectionism. This analysis did not indicate a statistically significant difference in the frequency of perfectionistic types between gifted students and the general cohort. These findings suggest that the frequent anecdotal reports of greater perfectionism among the gifted may be a product of differential labeling patterns of similar behaviors when demonstrated by gifted students and the general cohort, or may represent a relationship with socioeconomic level rather than intellectual level. A greater distinction between
perfectionistic strivings which stimulate excellence and those perfectionistic strivings which frustrate and inhibit achievement needs to be made.


This study was designed to examine the effects of math anxiety and perfectionism on math performance, under timed testing conditions, among mathematically gifted sixth graders. We found that participants had worse math performance during timed versus untimed testing, but this difference was statistically significant only when the timed condition preceded the untimed condition. We also found that children with higher levels of either math anxiety or perfectionism had a smaller performance discrepancy during timed versus untimed testing, relative to children with lower levels of math anxiety or perfectionism. There were no statistically significant gender differences in overall test performance, nor in levels of math anxiety or perfectionism; however, the difference between performance on timed and untimed math testing was statistically significant for girls, but not for boys. Implications for educators are discussed.