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**To Link this Article:** http://dx.doi.org/10.6007/IJARAFMS/v3-i1/10266 DOI:10.6007/IJARAFMS /v3-i1/10266

Received: 12 January 2013, Revised: 16 February 2013, Accepted: 28 February 2013

Published Online: 21 March 2013

In-Text Citation: (Forghani et al., 2013)

**To Cite this Article:** Forghani, M. H., Ghafari, M., Shirangi, S. Y., Ghandehari, F., & Emadzadeh, M. K. (2013). The Role of Personality Traits in Perfectionism Orientation (Isfahan Melli Bank Employees as Case Study). *International Journal of Academic Research in Accounting Finance and Management Sciences*, 3(1), 64–75.

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# RESEARCH IN ACCOUNTING, FINANCE AND MANAGEMENT SCIENCES



ISSN: 2225-8329

# The Role of Personality Traits in Perfectionism Orientation (Isfahan Melli Bank Employees as Case Study)

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#### **Abstract**

The purpose of this study is to investigate the role of personality traits in perfectionism orientation among Isfahan Melli Bank employees. The statistical population of this study consists of the employees of Melli Bank in the city of Isfahan in the third season of 2012. The sample size was 150 and then the respondents were selected by random sampling method. Data collection instrument was self-administrated questionnaire that included 56 items in order to measure the variables. So as to examine the validity of the questionnaire, content validity was used and afterwards, the questionnaire was corrected and modified by some faculty members. After conducting a primary sampling, the final version of the questionnaire was developed. Also Cronbach's Alpha was used to examine reliability of the questionnaire whose coefficient was 87% which is an acceptable value to confirm the reliability. In order to analyze the data and conclude the results, descriptive and inferential statistics were used. Pearson correlation coefficient and regression test are the most important statistic tests that were used in the present study by SPSS. The results of this study indicate that there were significant relationships between personality traits and perfectionism orientation. Also the results show that significant relationships were found between perfectionism and dimensions of personality traits (extraversion 0.135, sig: 0.000; agreeableness 0.135, sig: 0.000; consciousness 0.151, sig: 0.000; emotional stability 0.265, sig: 0.000; and openness to experience 0.183, sig: 0.000).

Keywords: Personality, Personality Traits, Perfectionism, Isfahan Melli Bank

#### Introduction

Perfectionism or perfectionism orientation is characterized as one of the most important features among human beings in the past. Indeed, it is considered as one of the main differences between human beings and other creatures (Afshar, 2007). Perfectionism is an emotional characteristic that everybody experiences in his/her life. Ferast et al. (1990) defined perfectionism as

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putting high measures in performance and critical tendencies in evaluation. Hamachak (1978) divided perfectionism into two sets including positive (normal) perfectionism and negative (abnormal) perfectionism. According to Hamachak (1978), normal perfectionists are individuals who enjoy precise and sound functions and are not obsessed in appropriate and timely situations. These individuals are sociable and like to communicate with others and their positive feelings reinforce their self-confidence and also increase their activities. Abnormal perfectionists do not accept their activity limitations to achieve high performance measures. They try for the fear of failure, not being excellent. For this, they aren't satisfied with their activities and with themselves (Soleimani, 2010). The dimensions of Perfectionism should be added to these dimensions; the dimensions that show multidimensional interpersonal, intrapersonal, and social nature of perfectionism (Ferast et al., 1990). Hewitt and Felt (1991) concentrated on three dimensions that include self-oriented perfectionism, other-oriented perfectionism, and social-oriented perfectionism. According to them, self-oriented perfectionism refers to ordaining unreal measures for oneself and focuses on defects and failures in performance with accurate self-evaluations. Other-oriented perfectionism refers to the orientation toward radical expectations and critical evaluation of others, and finally social-oriented perfectionism refers to the necessity of the observation of measures and the actualization of prescribed expectations from desired individuals to achieve their confirmatory (Hewitt and Felt, 1991). The perfectionists are unsatisfied with themselves and others and also experience undesirable life because of their radical anxiety about mistakes or failure, choosing very high and unreal standards, and needing the confirmation of others. Also it should be remembered that seeking perfection hurts one's peace of mind, makes their personal and family relationships fragile and vulnerable, undermines their self-confidence, and finally increases the probability of depression and anxiety in them. From Freud's times, who considered perfectionism as a type of narcissism, to modern divisions of perfectionism, many different studies have been conducted by authors. Perfectionism is a personality trait that can lead to many problems for individuals and especially children and teenagers. Moreover, perfectionism in multidimensional personality traits may lead to different psychological disorders and interpersonal problems and is also considered sometimes as the most important reason for failures and behavioral disorders. Usually, people think of perfectionism as attempts for successfulness, consciousness, and gravity. Perfectionism may be similar to moral and social traits and characteristics, but it is a behavioral non-adaptive style that causes different problems. Indeed, effort, strive, gravity, and consciousness along with individual's abilities, competence and ends with satisfaction and relaxation feeling, but seeking perfection along with inappropriate expectations from oneself and unreal goals that lead to dissatisfaction from themselves. Perfectionism is viewed as a potential source of stress. The perfectionists need to see themselves as perfect and such expectations are the main source of stress and anxiety disabling them in the face of problems. Generally, personality is a set of physical, mental, and behavioral characteristics that differentiate everybody from others. Some of these characteristics are genetic and the others originate from the social, environmental, and cultural factors. Though it is difficult to determine which factors are significant in personality formation, it is obvious that the individual's personality is created by reciprocal interactions and effects. Therefore, the main factors that create personality include genetic and environmental factors. Altogether, perfectionism is one of the important personality traits that is observed in some families more than others and is probably derived from their genetic backgrounds. Perfectionism usually develops in childhood and adolescence. Children receive different messages of perfectionism at this age. They receive these messages through different methods or parental

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activities and behaviors and believe that if they accept and act according to these models, they will be good, accepted, and flawless.

These messages include:

- Being perfect
- Being best
- You will be lovely, if you are perfect
- Being strong

As you will see later, personality traits influence perfectionism and perfectionism orientation among people. Therefore, the main purpose of this study is to investigate the role of personality traits in perfectionist orientations. For this, personality traits (based on the big five models) are described in following sections, some of the previous studies on personality traits and perfectionism are indicated, and then, the research methodology and main discussion are offered.

#### **Personality Traits**

Some researchers believe that almost all dimensions of personality traits should be categorized through the big five model dimensions (Goldberg, 1993), (Hayes et al., 1994), (McCrae, 1997). It is seemed that the big five model's dimensions are different in various cultures (McCrae, 1997). But also some other studies indicate that the big five models' dimensions have genetic themes and are probably congenital (Jang et al., 1996), (Rothman, 2003). The dimensions of this model include extroversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, neuroticism, and openness that are described below (Robbins et al., 2008).

- Extraversion: The extraversion dimension captures one's comfort level with relationships. Extraverts tend to be gregarious, assertive, and sociable. Introverts tend to be reserved, timid, and quiet (Robbins et al., 2008). Extraversion is categorized by positive effects and emotions and can be seen as a positive sensation (Clark et al., 1991). Many researchers concluded that extraversion can be valid predictor in social-related works such as sales and managerial jobs (Bing et al., 2000).
- Agreeableness: The agreeableness dimension refers to an individual's propensity to defer to others. Highly agreeable people are cooperative, warm, and trusting. People who score low on agreeableness are cold, disagreeable, and antagonistic (Heresy et al., 2003). Some researchers such as Salgado (1997) indicate that agreeableness has a close relation with job performance (Salgado, 1997). The agreeable workers have plurality entity that is suitable to public-related and costumer services jobs (Rothman et al., 2003).
- Conscientiousness: The conscientiousness dimension is a measure of reliability. A highly conscientious person is responsible, organized, dependable, and persistent. Those who score low on this dimension are easily distracted, disorganized, and unreliable (Heresy et al., 2003). But also conscientiousness dimension can be characterized by reliability, being achievement-oriented, and orderliness (Rothman et al., 2003). Some researchers concluded that there are close relationship between reliability (one of conscientiousness dimension) and job performance (Borman et al., 1991).
- Emotional stability: The emotional stability dimension often labeled by its converse, neuroticism taps a person's ability to withstand stress. People with positive emotional stability tend to be calm, self-confident, and secure. Those with high negative scores tend to be nervous, anxious, depressed, and insecure (Heresy et al., 2003). Some researchers believed that emotional stability is a valid indicator of job performance in different jobs (Horman et al., 1996).

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• Openness to experience: The openness to experience addresses one's range of interests and fascination with novelty. Extremely open people are creative, curious, and artistically sensitive. Those at the other end of the openness category are conventional and find comfort in familiar areas (Heresy et al., 2003). Some researches indicate that openness to experience has close relationship with consulting jobs (see, Hamilton, 1988) and educational jobs (Barrick et al., 2001).

As indicated, the main purpose of the study is to investigate the role of personality traits in perfectionism orientation. For this, the relationship between personality traits and perfectionism orientation is examined and the hypotheses are offered below.

**H 1:** there are significant relationships between personality traits and perfectionism orientation

**H 1-1:** there is significant relationship between extraversion and perfectionism orientation

**H 1-2:** there is significant relationship between agreeableness and perfectionism orientation

**H 1-3:** there is significant relationship between consciousness and perfectionism orientation

**H 1-4:** there is significant relationship between emotional stability and perfectionism orientation

**H 1-5:** there is significant relationship between openness to experience and perfectionism orientation

#### **Literature Review**

Hewitt and Felt (1991) investigated the relationship between personality traits and perfectionism. The results of their study indicate that there are significant positive relationships between personality traits with neurosis and consciousness and perfectionism, but the relationship between personality traits and extraversion and agreeableness were found negative. Ultimately, they found that there isn't any significant relationship between openness to experience and personality traits. Ferry et al. (1997) investigate the relationship between perfectionism and flexibility (as one of the dimensions of personality traits) among 108 students. They also found that some students that cannot change their activities and are unable to adapt with their environment easily have more perfectionist orientations. They believed that such students have problem with putting in life mental problems and maybe that rigid style of their life deter them from adaptation with unpredictable problems in their life. Moulaei (2007) studied the relationship between personality traits and positive and negative perfectionism among 90 male and female students in MA and Ph.D. levels. He discovered that only the relationship between positive perfectionism and agreeableness was significant and significant relationships between other variables did not follow this. Also he found that only the negative relationship between negative perfectionism and experience was significant and significant relationship among other variables did not confirmed. Hormozinejhad (2007) examined the relation between assertiveness (extraversion as one of the dimensions of personality traits) and perfectionism. The results of his study indicate that there is significant negative relationship between these variables in a way that students with more perfectionist orientations have less ability to be assertive. Nasr et al. (2012) examined the effect of personality traits on creativity among male and female students in the University of Isfahan. They used the big five personality traits for this means. They found that all dimensions of personality traits influence creativity positively among them.

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#### Methodology of Research

As mentioned earlier, the main purpose of the study is to investigate the role of personality traits in perfectionism orientation. The statistical population of this study is employees of Melli Bank in Isfahan. The sample size is 150 based on sampling formula. The members are selected by random sampling method in this bank. The data collection instrument was self-administrated questionnaire with 56 items to measuring variables (26 items to measuring perfectionism orientation and 24 items to measuring personality traits). The reliability and validity of the questionnaire was examined in the study. In order to examine the validity of the questionnaire, content validity used and then the questionnaire corrected and modified by some corrections that faculties and experts of this field offered and after conducting a primary sampling, the final version of the questionnaire developed and therefore the validity of the questionnaire was confirmed. Also Cronbach's Alpha coefficient was used to examine the reliability of the questionnaire. The 78% coefficient confirms the reliability of the questionnaire. In order to analyze the data and have results, descriptive and inferential statistics were used in SPSS. Pearson correlation coefficient and regression test are the most important statistic tests that were used in the present study by SPSS to analyze the hypotheses. To do this, Pearson correlation coefficient was used to examine the relationship between personality traits and perfectionism orientation and the regression test was used to examine the extent of the dependent variables variances (perfectionism orientation) that were explained by independent variable (personality trait). Also Durbin-Watson test was used to examine the auto-correlation among independent variables so that if Durbin-Watson value is between the ranges of 1.7-2, it shows that there is not any auto-correlation among independent variables.

#### **Findings and Discussions**

The findings of the demographic variables of sample members indicate that 24 percent of sample members were female and 76 percent were male, 19.3 percent of sample members were single and 80.7 percent were married, 28.7 percent of respondents have income less than 250\$ in a month, 62 percent have 250-500\$, 6.7 percent have 500-1000\$ monthly income, and finally 2.7 percent have monthly income more than 1000\$. The findings of demographic variables in terms of job experience indicate that 35.3 percent of respondents have less than 5 years job experience, 30 percent of them have 5-10 years job experience, 22.7 percent have 10-20 years job experience, and only 9.3 percent of them have job experience more than 20 years. The findings of the demographic variables in terms of age indicate that 44.7 percent of respondents have 20-30 years old, 35.3 percent of them have 30-40 years old, 16 percent of them have 40-50 years old, and finally 4 percent of them have more than 50 years old. The findings of demographic variables in term of educational level indicate that 35.3% of respondents had high school completion degree, 21.3 percent had associate degrees, 38 percent had BA, 4 percent of them had Masters of Administration, and only 1.3 percent has doctoral degrees. The findings are indicated in table 1.

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Table 1. Demographic characteristics of sample members

Demographic	Groups	Frequency	%	Demographic	Groups	Frequency	%
characteristics				characteristics			
Age	Female	36	24	Marital status	Single	29	19.3
	Male	114	76	iviaritai Status	Married	121	80.7
Income	Less than	43	28.7		Less than	53	35.3
	250\$				5 years		
	250-500\$	93	62		5-10	45	30
					years		
	500-1000\$	0-1000\$ 10 6.7 <b>Job</b>		10-20	34	22.7	
				experience	years		
	More than	4	2.7	experience	20-30	14	9.3
	1000\$				years		
Educational levels	Diploma	53	35.3		More	4	2.7
					than 30		
					years		
	Associate	32	21.3		20-30	67	44.7
	_				years		
	BA	57 38		30-40	53	35.3	
					years		
	MA	6	4	Age	40-50	24	16
					years		
	Ph.D.	2	1.3		More	6	4
					than 50		
					years		

In this section, the main and subsidiary hypotheses of the study are examined. Pearson correlation coefficient and regression test are the most important statistic tests used for this purpose in SPSS. To do this, Pearson correlation coefficient was used to examine the relationship between personality traits and perfectionism orientation and regression test was used to examine extent of dependent variables variances (perfectionism orientation) that explained by independent variable (personality trait). Also Durbin-Watson test was used to examine the auto-correlation among independent variables so that Durbin-Watson value is among 1.7-2, shows that there isn't any autocorrelation among independent variables. In order to analyze the hypotheses and results, the main hypothesis of the study was examined. This hypothesis indicates that there are significant relationships between personality traits and perfectionism orientation. In order to examine this hypothesis, Pearson correlation coefficient was used. The results of Pearson correlation coefficient indicate that the correlation between personality traits and perfectionism is 0.588. Therefore, the results indicate that there are significant relationships between personality traits and perfectionist orientations and so the main hypothesis of the study confirmed. The results of the regression test indicate that 0.346 of the dependent variable (perfectionism) explained by independent variable (personality traits). Also the results of Durbin-Watson test indicate that Durbin-Watson value is 2.000 and this demonstrates that there is not any auto-correlation between independent variables

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(personality traits). The results of this hypothesis are indicated in table 1 and 2. Then, the hypothesis 1-1 is examined. This hypothesis indicates that there is significant relationship between extraversion and perfectionism orientation. The results of Pearson correlation coefficient indicate that the correlation between extraversion and perfectionism is 0.135. Therefore it is inferred that there are significant relationships between extraversion and perfectionism orientation and so the hypothesis 1-1 of the study is confirmed. The results of the regression test indicate that 0.0182 of dependent variable (perfectionism) explained by independent variable (extraversion). The results of this hypothesis were indicated in table 2 and 3. Then the hypothesis 1-2 was examined. This hypothesis indicates that there is significant relationship between agreeableness and perfectionism orientation. The results of Pearson correlation coefficient indicate that the correlation between agreeableness and perfectionism is 0.102. Therefore it is inferred that there are significant relationships between agreeableness and perfectionism orientation and so the hypothesis 1-2 of the study is also confirmed. The results of the regression test indicate that 0.010 of the dependent variable (perfectionism) was explained by independent variable (agreeableness). The results of this hypothesis are indicated in table 2 and 3. Then the hypothesis 1-3 is examined. This hypothesis indicates that there is significant relationship between consciousness and perfectionism orientation. The results of Pearson correlation coefficient indicate that the correlation between agreeableness and perfectionism is 0.151. Therefore, it is inferred that there are significant relationships between consciousness and perfectionism orientation and so the hypothesis 1-3 of the study is confirmed. The results of the regression test indicate that 0.022 of dependent variable (perfectionism) explained by independent variable (consciousness). The results of this hypothesis are indicated in table 2 and 3. Afterwards, the hypothesis 1-4 is to be examined. This hypothesis indicates that there is significant relationship between emotional stability and perfectionism orientation. The results of Pearson correlation coefficient indicate that the correlation between emotional stability and perfectionism is 0.265. Therefore it can be inferred that there are significant relationships between the emotional stability and perfectionism orientation and so the hypothesis 1-4 of the study is also confirmed. The results of the regression test indicate that 0.070 of dependent variable (perfectionism) explained by independent variable (emotional stability). The results of this hypothesis indicated in table 2 and 3. Then the hypothesis 1-5 examined. This hypothesis indicates that there is significant relationship between openness to experience and perfectionism orientation. The results of Pearson correlation coefficient indicate that the correlation between openness to experience and perfectionism is 0.183. Therefore, it is inferred that there are significant relationships between openness to experience and perfectionism orientation and so the hypothesis 1-5 of the study confirmed. The results of the regression test indicate that 0.035 of dependent variable (perfectionism) were explained by independent variable (openness to experience). The results of this hypothesis are indicated in table 2 and 3.

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Table 2. The results of Pearson correlation coefficient between personality traits and perfectionism

Independen	Personalit	Extraversio	Agreeablenes	Consciousnes	Emotiona	Openness
t variables	y traits	n	s	s	I stability	to
Dependent						experienc
variable						е
Statistics	0.588	0.135	0.102	0.151	0.265	0.183

Table 3. The results of regression test

Statics	Standard deviation	R <sup>2</sup>	Sig
Independent variables			
Personality traits	0.372	0.082	0.000
Extraversion	0.094	0.0182	0.000
Agreeableness	0.123	0.010	0.008
Consciousness	0.099	0.022	0.031
Emotional stability	0.084	0.070	0.008
Openness to experience	0.127	0.035	0.001

#### **Conclusions**

The purpose of this study was to investigate the role of personality traits in perfectionism orientation among Isfahan Melli Bank employees. The statistical population of this study consists of the employees of Melli Bank in the city of Isfahan in the third season of 2012. The sample size is 150. The sample members were randomly selected. The data collection instrument was self-administrated questionnaire with 56 items to measure variables. In order to examine the validity of the questionnaire, the content validity was used and then the questionnaire was corrected and modified by the faculty members and after conducting a primary sampling, final version of the questionnaire designed. Also Cronbach's Alpha used to examine reliability of the questionnaire that its coefficient is 87% and is acceptable value to confirm its reliability. In order to analyze data and conclude results, descriptive and inferential statistics were used. Pearson correlation coefficient and regression test are the most important statistic tests that used in the present study by SPSS. The results of Pearson correlation coefficient indicate that the correlation between personality traits and perfectionism is 0.588. Therefore it is results that indicates that there are significant relationships between personality traits and perfectionism orientation and so the main hypothesis of the study confirmed. The results of regression test indicate that 0.346 of dependent variable (perfectionism) explained by independent variable (personality traits). Also the results of Durbin-Watson test indicate that Durbin-Watson value is 2.000 and this refers that there isn't any auto-correlation between independent variables (personality traits). Also the results show that the significant relationships were found between perfectionism and dimensions of personality traits (extraversion 0.135, sig: 0.000; agreeableness 0.135, sig: 0.000; consciousness 0.151, sig: 0.000; emotional stability 0.265, sig: 0.000; and openness to experience 0.183, sig: 0.000). As the results of this study indicate there are significant positive relationship between personality traits and perfectionism orientation and so it concluded that personality traits has significant role in perfections orientation. Based on the results of this study, it is suggested that human resource managers pay attention to personality traits and its

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role in perfectionism orientation to reinforce perfectionism orientation among their employees. One of the most important limitations of this study is that it is conducted among the employees with high bureaucratic tendencies, while perfectionism orientation may be different among the employees in other organizations with lower levels of bureaucratic tendencies. Also it is suggested that the relationship between personality traits and perfectionism orientation was examined in other cases such as students as future manpower. Finally, it is suggested that the perfectionism orientation is divided into negative and positive in order to examine the role of personality traits in the best manner.

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