



**Nesrin Duman**

<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-2751-8315>

Assoc. Prof. Dr. Istanbul 29 Mayıs University, Department of Psychology, Turkey,  
nesrinduman@windowslive.com

**Shams Mustafayeva**

<https://orcid.org/0009-0002-9486-3730>

Student, Istanbul 29 Mayıs University, Department of Psychology, Türkiye,  
sems.mustafayeva02@gmail.com

**Elif Yıldız**

<https://orcid.org/0009-0008-3293-0233>

Student, Istanbul 29 Mayıs University, Department of Psychology, Türkiye,  
yildize19@29mayis.edu.tr

**Emine Şeyda Eldemir**

<https://orcid.org/0009-0009-1621-5149>

Student, Istanbul 29 Mayıs University, Department of Psychology, Türkiye,  
yildize19@29mayis.edu.tr

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## **A Comparison of the Perfectionism and Social Desirability Levels in the Context of the Azerbaijani and Turkish Youth**

### **Abstract**

As social beings, humans seek approval and recognition from society. In this context, the study aims to examine the relationship between the social desirability and perfectionism levels, referred to "the need to behave in a culturally approved way," by comparing them from a cultural perspective. A total of 214 participants, including 105 Azerbaijanis and 109 Turks aged 18-30, were reached. "Socio-Demographic Information Form", "Marlow-Crowne Social Desirability Scale Short Form C (SD SF-C)," and "Big Three



*Perfectionism Scale-Short Form (BTPS-SF)" were implemented. The results indicated that the Azerbaijani and Turkish youth exhibit moderate levels of perfectionism, with self-critical perfectionism being dominant in both of the samples. There was no significant difference between the perfectionism and social desirability levels of these two groups, but the Azerbaijani youth scored higher in the social-behavioral sub-dimension of SD SF-C. In terms of sex, the males in Azerbaijan showed higher narcissistic perfectionism while the females in Türkiye showed higher self-critical perfectionism. A significant and weakly negative linear correlational relationship was found between these two variables. These findings reveal that the youth of Türkiye and Azerbaijan share similar characteristics, as reflected in the motto "one nation, two states".*

**Keywords:** Perfectionism, Türkiye, Azerbaijan, Social Desirability, Culture

## **Mükemmeliyetçilik ve Sosyal Beğenirlik Düzeyinin Türkiye ve Azerbaycan Gençleri Bağlamında Karşılaştırılması**

### **Öz**

*İnsanlar, sosyal varlıklar olarak toplum tarafından onaylanma ve değer görme ihtiyacı duyarlar. Bu bağlamda, çalışma "kültürel olarak onaylanan şekilde davranma ihtiyacı" olarak adlandırılan sosyal beğenirlik ve mükemmeliyetçilik düzeyleri arasındaki ilişkiyi kültürel açıdan karşılaştırarak incelemeyi amaçlamaktadır. Araştırmada, 18-30 yaş aralığında 105 Azerbaycanlı ve 109 Türk olmak üzere toplam 214 genç katılımcıya ulaşılmıştır. Veri toplama araçları olarak "Sosyo-Demografik Bilgi Formu", "Marlow-Crowne Sosyal Beğenirlik Ölçeği Kısa Formu C (SBÖ)" ve "Büyük Üçlü Mükemmeliyetçilik Ölçeği-Kısa Formu (BÜMO-16)" kullanılmıştır. Sonuçlar, Azerbaycan ve Türkiye gençlerinin orta düzeyde mükemmeliyetçiliğe sahip olduğunu ve her iki örneklemede de öz-eleştirel mükemmeliyetçiliğin baskın olduğunu göstermiştir. İki grubun mükemmeliyetçilik ve sosyal beğenirlik düzeyleri arasında anlamlı bir farklılık bulunmamış ancak SBÖ'nün sosyal-davranışsal alt boyutunda Azerbaycan gençleri daha yüksek puan almıştır. Cinsiyet bağlamında, Azerbaycan'da erkekler daha yüksek narsistik mükemmeliyetçilik gösterirken, Türkiye'de kızlar daha yüksek öz-eleştirel mükemmeliyetçilik göstermiştir. Her iki örneklemede değişkenler arasında anlamlı ve zayıf negatif doğrusal bir korelasyonel ilişki olduğu saptanmıştır. Bu bulgular, "tek millet, iki devlet" şiarıyla ifade edilen Türkiye ve Azerbaycan toplumlarının benzer özellikler taşıdığını ortaya koymaktadır.*

**Anahtar sözcükler:** Mükemmeliyetçilik, Türkiye, Azerbaycan, Sosyal Beğenirlik, Kültür

### **Introduction**

Throughout the evolution of psychology, the psychology field has always concentrated on two main themes, including nature, which emphasizes the influence of the innate characteristics and heredity on behavior, and nurture, which highlights the role of the environmental factors, particularly culture, in shaping individuals' behavior. Thus, it is an undeniable fact that culture has a significant role in shaping human behavior. On the other hand, the majority of individuals in

modern society are confronted with the desire to constantly improve their performance to satisfy the personal and societal\cultural expectations and standards (Sapmaz, 2006). One of the major contributors to the improvement is perfectionism, defined as having high standards in life. Furthermore, social desirability -an additional contributing factor- is characterized as the tendency of individuals to reflect themselves in accordance with the existing cultural norms (King & Bruner, 2000). The desire to be acceptable by others is a tendency that helps people feel more comfortable and compatible in social relationships with others. Hence, individuals reflect their positive characteristic features to the social environment when they try to conceal their undesirable aspects (Erzen, Yurtçu, Ulu-Kalın, & Koçoğlu, 2021). Due to this fact, the concept of social desirability is linked to the conceptions of favorable assessment and seeking approval (Ural & Özbirecikli, 2006). The studies on the social desirability show that the impact of social desirability should be taken into consideration in researching any issue related to the value judgments of the culture (Kozan, 1984). For instance, if being a perfectionist is a value judgment of a society, then it should be expected that any individuals in this society will behave in a way that he/she is approved by the community to which they belong. It is important to remember that the concept of social desirability has not been sufficiently examined in the Turkish literature. Upon reviewing the research carried out in Türkiye, it was observed and determined that the need for social desirability was regarded as a sub-dimension of the irrational beliefs, and only a few of these studies directly addressed the desire for social acceptance (Karaşar & Öğülmüş, 2016). Perfectionism, one of the variables associated with social desirability, has been the focus of a lot of research. It is a personality trait characterized by an extraordinary desire for excellence and establishing very high standards along with an inclination for excessively critical assessment of one's own actions (Stoeber & Hotham, 2013). A great number of studies have underlined and conceptualized the importance of the multidimensional characteristics of perfectionism. Multidimensional Perfectionism Scale (Hewitt & Flett, 1991) is widely used to measure, and to classify perfectionism into three categories: other-oriented, self-oriented, and socially prescribed perfectionism. On the other hand, the recent model, Big Three Perfectionism Scale (Smith, Saklofske, Stoeber, & Sherry, 2016) includes 10 perfectionism facets and together, they comprise 3 distinct aspects: rigid perfectionism, self-critical perfectionism, and narcissistic perfectionism (Feher, et al., 2020) Additionally, it is thought that perfectionists tend to be motivated by a desire to be accepted or approved by others (Lasalle & Hess, 2022). As a result of the analysis of the research conducted in this context, it has been revealed that certain sub-dimensions of perfectionism are related to the high need for approval

(Anthony & Swinson, 2009; Hewitt & Flett, 1991; Karaşar & Öğülmüş, 2016; Sherry, 2002). In the same way, a study revealing three types of perfectionism in university students (self-oriented, other-oriented, and socially prescribed perfectionism) is related to social desirability (Stoeber & Hotham, 2013). Relatively few studies, meanwhile, have investigated the connection between the social desirability and perfectionism levels in the literature.

Regarding culture, a complex admixture of beliefs, values, morals, and actions, profoundly shapes societies. Culture famously is defined as a "web of meaning," emphasizing its complexity and multifaceted nature (Geertz, 1973). In terms of the Azerbaijani and Turkish societies, they partake in deep literary, verbal, and artistic ties owing to their common Turkic heritage. The Azerbaijani culture, told by Persian, Russian, and Ottoman traditions, reflects a mix of Eastern and Western rudiments. The Turkish culture, shaped by centuries of Ottoman history, embodies a fusion of Eastern and Western elements as well (Akşit, 2020). In substance, while the Azerbaijani and Turkish societies partake in certain shared religious and cultural values, each possesses its own unique identity shaped by cultural, geographical, and socio-political factors. Based on all of the approaches mentioned above, the aim of this research is to analyze the correlation between the social desirability and perfectionism levels among the Azerbaijani and Turkish Youth.

## **2. The Aim of the Study**

Although the literature includes a lot of research on the need for social approval and perfectionism, the primary goal of the current research is to analyze the relationship between these two variables from a cultural perspective in the context of the Azerbaijani and Turkish youth. To serve such an aim, the following questions were addressed:

1. What are the levels of perfectionism and social desirability of the Turkish and Azerbaijani youth?
2. Do the young people in Türkiye and Azerbaijan differ significantly in terms of perfectionism and social desirability?
3. Is there a significant difference in perfectionism and social desirability levels according to sex in the Turkish and Azerbaijani populations?
4. Do the levels of perfectionism and social desirability differ significantly between the young women and men according to nationality?
5. Do the levels of perfectionism and social desirability in the young people from Türkiye and Azerbaijan significantly correlate with one another?

### 3. The Significance of the Study

When the prestigious databases like *WOS*, *Scopus*, *EbscoHost*, *Ulakbim* were scanned, no research investigating the connection between social desirability and perfectionism from a cultural perspective was found. Comparing the levels of social desirability and perfectionism among the individuals from Azerbaijan and Türkiye will reveal the similarities or differences between these two groups representing the Turkish culture. Additionally, it is expected to have a significant impact on emphasizing the cultural factors which influence the individuals' levels of social desirability and perfectionism. Examining these factors is essential for understanding the complexity of human behavior and providing insights for the future studies.

### 4. Methods

In this section, the research model, data collection tools, data analysis, and sampling methods are presented.

#### 4.1. The model of the research

The study uses the survey model, defined as "*a research model that aims to detect a past or present situation as it exists*" (Karaşar, 2018, p.109). The *relational screening model*, a type of screening model, was preferred. Three important variables were identified in this research model: "Perfectionism Dimension," "Social Desirability Dimension," and "Culture." This research aimed to determine the existence and/or degree of change between these three variables.

#### 4.2. The data collection tools

The data for this research were collected using three forms: "*Socio-Demographic Information Form*", prepared by the researchers, "*Marlowe-Crowne Social Desirability Scale Short Form C (SD SF-C)*" and "*The Big Three Perfectionism Scale-Short Form (BTPS-SF)*". All data collection tools were distributed to the participants via the Google Forms.

***Socio-Demographic Information Form***: It was meticulously developed by the researchers and consists of several close-ended questions. This form included several questions about participants' sex, nationality (Azerbaijan or Türkiye), age groups (18-25, 26-30), proficiency level (Mother language, Advanced level, Intermediate and Very Little) in the Turkish language.

***Big Three Perfectionism Scale-Short Form (BTPS-SF)***: It was originally developed by Feher et al. (2020) and subsequently adapted to Turkish by Kaçar-Başaran et al. (2020). The primary objective of the scale is to identify individuals' specific indicators and degrees of perfectionism. The scale consists of 3 sub-dimensions (rigid perfectionism-RP, self-critical perfectionism-SCP and narcissistic perfectionism-NP) and a total of 16 items. RP refers to the

rigid insistence that an individual's performance must be faultless, ideal, and error-free. SCP includes self-criticism, uncertainty about one's behavior, socially acceptable perfectionism, and concern over faults. A tendency to excessively worry about mistakes and to respond negatively to perceived setbacks and failures is characteristic of SCP. NP encompasses behaviors such as entitlement (believing one deserves perfect or special treatment), grandiosity (persistently viewing oneself as perfect or superior to others), hypercriticism (harshly devaluing others and their imperfections), and other-oriented perfectionism (holding unrealistic expectations for other people) (Smith et al., 2016). The respondents are asked to indicate their level of agreement on a continuum from "strongly disagree" (1) to "strongly agree" (5). The scale does not include any reverse-coded items. The questions numbered 3, 11, 14, and 16 are designed to assess "Rigid Perfectionism"; questions numbered 2,6,8,9,10 and 13 evaluate "Self-Critical Perfectionism" and "Narcissistic Perfectionism" is gauged via the questions numbered 1, 4, 5, 7, 12, and 15. In this study, the Cronbach Alpha coefficient of the scale is ( $\alpha=.856$ ), the RP subscale is ( $\alpha=.721$ ), the SCP subscale is ( $\alpha=.812$ ), and the and the NP subscale is ( $\alpha=.663$ ).

**Marlowe-Crowne Social Desirability Scale Short Form C (SD SF-C):** The scale was first developed by (Crowne & Marlowe, 1960). Thereafter, Reynolds (1982) conducted a validity and reliability study regarding the short forms of the scale, and Marlowe-Crowne Social Desirability Short Forms A, B and C were designed. The scale (Crowne & Marlowe, 1960) was designed to assess a person's propensity to change their own presentation of a socially desirable situation. Since then, the scale has been widely used to measure social desirability around the world (Crowne & Marlowe, 1964). Firstly, the 33-item form of the Marlowe-Crowne Social Desirability Scale was adapted to Turkish by (Özeren, 1996). Akın-Arıkan, Baştemur, & Demirtaş-Zorbaz (2021) adapted SD SF-C to the Turkish culture. This scale was also utilized in the research. The scale has a two-factor structure as personal/emotional and social-behavioral and consists of 13 items and is answered in two categories: true (1 point) and false (2 points) (Akyazı, 2023). The scale's lowest possible score is 13, while the greatest possible value is 26. The high score obtained from the form shows the social desirability reaction tendency. In this study, the Cronbach Alpha coefficient of the scale is ( $\alpha=.637$ ). A Cronbach Alpha of 0.6–0.7 is generally considered to be an acceptable level of reliability.

#### **4.3. The ethics of the study**

The research commenced after obtaining the ethical approval from the İstanbul 29 Mayıs University Non-Interventional Clinical Research Ethics Committee on the date of 01.04.2024,

under the reference number 2024/04. The participants were informed about the research before the scales were administered. The participation in the study was voluntary. The informed consent form and scales were provided to the participants via the Google Forms.

#### 4.4. The data analysis

When analyzing the findings of the study, the data collected through the forms and scales were digitized and entered the SPSS-22 program for Windows. Prior to the data analysis, it was first determined whether the relevant data set displayed a normal distribution. Tabachnick & Fidell (2013) accept that the distribution is normal when the kurtosis and skewness values are between  $\pm 1.50$ . Since the kurtosis and skewness values of the scales and sub-scales are within this range in the study, it can be concluded that the data set has a normal distribution (*see* Table 2.). As such, the parametric methods were deemed suitable for analysis. The significance levels of  $p < .05$  and  $p < .001$  were used for interpretation.

#### 4.5. The sampling of the study

During the autumn semester of the 2023–2024 academic year, the current research was carried out. The simple random sampling technique—*a sampling strategy in which everyone in the research population has an equal chance of being selected*—was utilized to determine the sampling method. For the sample size, a total of 214 individuals were selected (104 Azerbaijani all possessing intermediate or advance proficiency in Turkish, and 109 Turks). This sample was determined by calculating a 90% confidence interval and an 8% margin of error for each sample group. Notably, the sampling process remained unrestricted with respect to the academic disciplines, faculty affiliations, employment statuses, socioeconomic strata, or geographic locations. The essential detailed information about the demographical variables for the Turkish and Azerbaijani samples is presented in Table 1.

*Table 1. Demographical Variables*

Variables	Nationality		Total	
	Azerbaijan	Türkiye		
Sex	Female	80	69	149
	Male	25	40	65
Age groups	18-25	88	82	170
	26-30	17	27	44
	Total	105	109	214

## 5. Results

In this section, the descriptive analysis results, comparative analysis results according to demographic variables, and correlation analysis results on the relationship between perfectionism and the social desirability dimensions according to the culture will be presented respectively.

### 5.1. The descriptive analysis

The descriptive statistics for the scales and their sub-scales are presented in Table 2.

*Table 2. Descriptive Statistics for scales and sub-scales*

Scales&Subscales	n	Min	Max	$\bar{X}$	Sd	Skewness	Kurtosis
A BTSP-SF Total	105	26,00	69,00	48,64	8,62	,020	-,065
Z <i>Rigid perfectionism</i>	2	4,00	20,00	13,60	2,97	-,441	,578
E <i>Self-critical perfectionism</i>	69	9,00	29,00	<b>18,91</b>	4,39	,156	-,445
R <i>Narcissistic perfectionism</i>	34	8,00	25,00	16,12	3,53	,190	-,275
B SD-SF C Total	105	13,00	26,00	21,22	2,37	-,446	,333
A <i>Personal-Emotional</i>	21	5,00	10,00	7,34	1,26	,102	-,380
I <i>Social-Behavioral</i>	184	8,00	16,00	13,87	1,66	-,773	,576
A N	105						
N BTSP-SF Total	109	16,00	80,00	49,14	11,18	,036	,295
T <i>Rigid perfectionism</i>	0	4,00	20,00	13,44	3,49	-,303	-,193
Ü <i>Self-critical perfectionism</i>	78	6,00	30,00	<b>19,07</b>	5,15	-,283	-,322
R <i>Narcissistic perfectionism</i>	31	6,00	30,00	16,62	4,56	,574	,392
K SD-SF C Total	109	14,00	26,00	20,71	2,72	-,051	-,541
İ <i>Personal-Emotional</i>	30	5,00	10,00	7,35	1,35	,250	-,874
Y <i>Social-Behavioral</i>	79	8,00	16,00	13,34	1,91	-,383	-,423
E N	109						

*Note: BTPS-SF = Big Three Perfectionism Scale–Short Form  
 SD-SF C = Social Desirability Scale –Short Form C*

As can be seen in Table 2, the Azerbaijani youth scored  $48.64 \pm 8.62$  on the BTSP-SF scale, indicating a moderate level of perfectionism. Examining the scale's sub-dimensions, it was found that the Azerbaijani youth were most dominant in the self-critical perfectionism ( $18.91 \pm 4.39$ ) dimension. Similar results were observed for the Turkish youth. The Turkish youth scored  $49.14 \pm 11.18$  on the BTSP-SF scale and showed dominance in the self-critical perfectionism ( $19.07 \pm 5.15$ ) dimension. On the other hand, in terms of the least dominant sub-dimension, it was determined that the rigid perfectionism dimension was the least for both the Turkish ( $13.44 \pm 3.48$ ) and Azerbaijani youth ( $13.60 \pm 2.96$ ). These results show that self-critical perfectionism is dominant among the participants in both cultures.

In the SD-SF C scale results, the Azerbaijani youth scored  $21.22 \pm 2.37$  points. This score indicates a high level of social desirability among the Azerbaijani youth. The examination of the scale's sub-dimensions revealed that the Azerbaijani youth were most dominant in the social-behavioral dimension. Similar results were obtained for the Turkish youth. The Turkish youth scored  $20.71 \pm 2.72$  points on the SD-SF C scale and showed dominance in the social-behavioral dimension. These results show that the social-behavioral dimension is dominant among the participants in both cultures.

### 5.2. The comparative analysis

An independent samples t-test analysis was conducted to ascertain if there are any culture-based differences in the participants' results. The findings are presented in Table 3.

*Table 3. T-test analysis results according to culture*

Scales&sub-scales	Azerbaijan		Türkiye		t	p
	$\bar{X}$	Sd	$\bar{X}$	Sd		
BTSP-SF Total	48,63	8,62	49,13	11,17	-,367	,714
<i>Rigid perfectionism</i>	13,60	2,96	13,44	3,48	,361	,719
<i>Self-critical perfectionism</i>	18,91	4,38	19,07	4,38	-,243	,808
<i>Narcissistic perfectionism</i>	16,12	3,52	16,62	4,55	-,899	,369
SD-SF C Total	21,21	2,37	20,70	2,71	1,468	,144
<i>Personal-Emotional</i>	7,34	1,26	7,35	1,35	-,083	,934
<i>Social-Behavioral</i>	13,87	1,66	13,34	1,91	2,156	,032*

\* $p < .05$

The findings indicate that there is no significant culture-based difference in the participants' overall BTSP-SF points,  $t(202,403) = -.367, p > .05$ . The results are similar in the comparisons of the sub-scales of the BTSP-SF scale; no significant difference was found between these two cultures (accordingly  $t(208,855) = .361, p > .05$ ;  $t(212) = -.243, p > .05$ ;  $t(202,760) = -.899, p > .05$ ). In SD-SF C scale total scores, there is no significant culture-based difference,  $t(212) = 1,468, p > .05$ . But in the social-behavioral sub-dimension, there is a significant differentiation between these two groups,  $t(209,830) = 2,156, p < .05$ . The Azerbaijani youth ( $13,87 \pm 1,66$ ) have significantly higher social-behavioral levels than the Turkish youth ( $13,34 \pm 1,91$ ).

To determine whether the outcomes of the youth in Türkiye and Azerbaijan differed based on sex, an independent samples t-test analysis was performed. The findings are presented in Table 4.

*Table 4. T test analysis results according to sex*

Scales&subscales	Female	Male	t (103)	p
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A Z E R B A I J A N		$\bar{X}$	<u>Sd</u>	$\bar{X}$	<u>Sd</u>	<i>t</i> (107)	p
		Female		Male			
		$\bar{X}$	<u>Sd</u>	$\bar{X}$	<u>Sd</u>		
	BTSP-SF Total	48,10	9,07	50,36	6,88	-1,146	,254
	<i>Rigid perfectionism</i>	13,39	3,13	14,28	2,30	-1,316	,191
	<i>Self-critical perfectionism</i>	19,04	4,68	18,52	3,31	,513	,609
	<i>Narcissistic perfectionism</i>	15,68	3,38	<b>17,56</b>	3,68	-2,383	,019*
	SD-SF C Total	21,05	2,48	21,76	1,92	-1,310	,193
	<i>Personal-Emotional</i>	7,21	1,26	7,76	1,23	-1,906	,059
	<i>Social-Behavioral</i>	13,84	1,77	14,00	1,29	-,425	,672
		Female		Male			
		$\bar{X}$	<u>Sd</u>	$\bar{X}$	<u>Sd</u>		
T	BTSP-SF Total	49,49	10,50	48,53	12,37	,434	,665
Ü	<i>Rigid perfectionism</i>	13,48	3,43	13,38	3,64	,148	,882
R	<i>Self-critical perfectionism</i>	<b>19,83</b>	4,74	17,78	5,61	2,033	,044*
K	<i>Narcissistic perfectionism</i>	16,19	4,32	17,38	4,90	-1,315	,191
İ	SD-SF C Total	20,78	2,66	20,58	2,84	,383	,702
Y	<i>Personal-Emotional</i>	7,38	1,25	7,33	1,54	,191	,849
E	<i>Social-Behavioral</i>	13,40	1,90	13,25	1,96	,408	,684

\**p*<.05

The results show that there is no significant sex-based difference between the Azerbaijani and Turkish participants' BTSP-SF total points, accordingly,  $t(103)=-1.146$ ,  $p>.05$ ;  $t(107)=.434$ ,  $p>.05$ . However, in the narcissistic perfectionism dimension, there is a significant differentiation among the Azerbaijani youth in terms of sex,  $t(103)=-2.383$ ,  $p<.05$ . The Azerbaijani males ( $17.56\pm 3.68$ ) exhibit significantly higher narcissistic perfectionism than the Azerbaijani females ( $15.68\pm 3.38$ ). On the other hand, in the self-critical perfectionism, there is a significant differentiation among the Turkish youth in terms of sex,  $t(107)=2.033$ ,  $p<.05$ . The Turkish females ( $19.83\pm 4.74$ ) show significantly higher self-critical perfectionism than the Turkish males ( $17.78\pm 5.61$ ). In SD-SF C scale total scores, there is no significant sex-based difference between the Azerbaijani and Turkish youth, accordingly  $t(103)=-1.310$ ,  $p>.05$ ;  $t(107)=.383$ ,  $p>.5$ . The results are similar in the comparisons of the sub-scales of the SD-SF C scale; no significant difference was found between these two sexes in both cultures, accordingly  $t(103)=-1.906$ ,  $p>.05$ ;  $t(103)= -.425$ ,  $p>.05$ ;  $t(107)=.191$ ,  $p>.05$ ;  $t(107)=.408$ ,  $p>.05$ .

An independent samples t-test analysis was carried out to determine if there are culture-based differences between the Azerbaijani and Turkish young males and young females' results. The results are shown in Table 5.

Table 5. T test analysis results according to culture

Scales&subscales	Azerbaijan	Türkiye	<i>t</i> (147)	p
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		$\bar{X}$	<u>Sd</u>	$\bar{X}$	<u>Sd</u>		
F E M	BTSP-SF Total	48,10	9,07	49,49	10,50	-,869	,386
	<i>Rigid perfectionism</i>	13,39	3,13	13,48	3,43	-,169	,866
	<i>Self-critical perfectionism</i>	19,04	4,68	19,83	4,74	-1,019	,310
M A L E	<i>Narcissistic perfectionism</i>	15,68	3,38	16,19	4,32	-,799	,426
	SD-SF C Total	21,05	2,48	20,78	2,66	,634	,527
	<i>Personal-Emotional</i>	7,21	1,26	7,38	1,25	-,797	,427
	<i>Social-Behavioral</i>	13,84	1,77	13,40	1,90	1,437	,153
		Azerbaijan		Türkiye		<i>t</i> (63)	<i>p</i>
		$\bar{X}$	<u>Sd</u>	$\bar{X}$	<u>Sd</u>		
M A L E	BTSP-SF Total	50,36	6,88	48,53	12,37	,767	,446
	<i>Rigid perfectionism</i>	14,28	2,30	13,38	3,64	1,112	,271
	<i>Self-critical perfectionism</i>	18,52	3,31	17,78	5,61	,674	,503
	<i>Narcissistic perfectionism</i>	17,56	3,68	17,38	4,90	,162	,872
	SD-SF C Total	21,76	1,92	20,58	2,84	1,839	,071
	<i>Personal-Emotional</i>	7,76	1,23	7,33	1,54	1,191	,238
	<i>Social-Behavioral</i>	14,00	1,29	13,25	1,96	1,861	,067

The results show that there is no significant culture-based differences between the Azerbaijani and Turkish woman and man's BTSPS-SF total points, accordingly  $t(147)=-.869$ ,  $p>.05$ ;  $t(62,341)=.767$ ,  $p>.05$ . The results are similar in the comparisons of the sub-scales of the BTSP-SF scale. No significant difference was found between these sexes in terms of culture, accordingly  $t(147)= -.169$ ,  $p>.05$ ;  $t(147)= -1.019$ ,  $p>.05$ ;  $t(128,098)=-.799$ ,  $p>.05$ ;  $t(63)=1.112$ ,  $p>.05$ ;  $t(62,850)=.674$ ,  $p>.05$ ;  $t(63)=.162$ ,  $p>.05$ .

In the SD-SF C scale total scores, there is no significant culture-based differences between the Azerbaijani and Turkish woman and man, accordingly,  $t(147)=.634$   $p>.05$ ;  $t(63)=1.839$ ,  $p>.05$ . The results are similar in the comparisons of the sub-scales of the SD-SF C scale; no significant culture-based difference was found between the Azerbaijani and Turkish woman and man (accordingly,  $t(147)=-.797$ ,  $p>.05$ ;  $t(147)=1.437$ ,  $p>.05$ ;  $t(63)=1.191$ ,  $p>.05$ ;  $t(62,771)=1.861$ ,  $p>.05$ ).

### 5.3. The correlation analysis

A Pearson correlation analysis was conducted to assess the correlational relationship between the levels of social desirability and perfectionism of the Azerbaijani and Turkish youth. The correlational relationship was examined separately for both of the sample groups. The results are shown in Table 6.

*Table 6. Pearson correlation analysis results*

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
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A	<sup>1</sup> BTSP-SF Total <sup>a</sup>	-						
Z	<sup>2</sup> Rigid perfectionism	,855**	-					
E	<sup>3</sup> Self-critical perfectionism	,817**	,601**	-				
R	<sup>4</sup> Narcissistic perfectionism	,708**	,500**	-,248*	-			
B	<sup>5</sup> SD-SF C Total <sup>b</sup>	-,318**	-,176	-,253**	-,315**	-		
A	<sup>6</sup> Personal-Emotional	-,301**	-,200*	-,342**	-,143	,744**	-	
I	<sup>7</sup> Social-Behavioral							-
J								
A		-,225*	-,098	-,100	-,342**	,860**	,298**	
N								
		1	2	3	4	5	6	7
	<sup>1</sup> BTSP-SF Total <sup>a</sup>	-						
T	<sup>2</sup> Rigid perfectionism	,889**	-					
U	<sup>3</sup> Self-critical perfectionism	,859**	,705**	-				
R	<sup>4</sup> Narcissistic perfectionism	,802**	,619**	,437**	-			
K	<sup>5</sup> SD-SF C Total <sup>b</sup>	-,302**	-,187	-,222*	-,347**	-		
E	<sup>6</sup> Personal-Emotional	-,269**	-,159	-,293**	-,207*	,755**	-	
Y	<sup>7</sup> Social-Behavioral	-,238*	-,152	-,108	-,345**	,885**	,362**	-

\*p<.05 \*\*p<.001

<sup>a</sup> N=214, <sup>b</sup> N=214

In the Azerbaijan sample, there is a significant, and a weak negative linear correlational relationship found between the levels of social desirability and perfectionism,  $r(212)=-.318$ ,  $p<.001$ . When the relationship between the perfectionism and social desirability sub-scales was examined, similar results were obtained, accordingly  $r(212)=-.301$ ,  $p<.001$ ;  $r(212)=-.225$ ,  $p<.05$ . In the Türkiye sample, there is a significant, and a weak negative linear correlational relationship found between the levels of social desirability and perfectionism,  $r(212)=-.302$ ,  $p<.001$ . When the relationship between the perfectionism and social desirability sub-scales was examined, similar results were obtained, accordingly  $r(212)=-.269$ ,  $p<.001$ ;  $r(212)=-.238$ ,  $p<.05$ .

### Conclusion

When the data obtained from this research are evaluated, based on the research results, it could be said that it was found that the youth in Azerbaijan and Türkiye had a moderate level of perfectionism; more significantly, the self-critical perfectionism was dominant in both of the cultures. When the related literature is examined, similar results in parallel to the research findings are found. As evidence, Fekih-Romdhane, at al. (2023) found that the young individuals mostly preferred self-critical perfectionism attitudes. Likewise, the self-critical perfectionism, a sub-dimension of perfectionism, was shown to be highly present in the Turkish university students in a study conducted by Büyükbayraktar (2011). Based on the results, it can be concluded that in the context of the Türkiye's historical and geographical evolution, society has established a dynamic

structure that is continuously self-critiquing and self-improving. Therefore, every individual who strives to keep up with such a society feels the need to constantly criticize his/her current situation while in search of perfectionism. With a similar history and set of dynamics to Türkiye, Azerbaijan may exhibit a higher level of self-critical perfectionism due to its efforts to improve upon the past difficult experiences and learning from them. On the other hand, the rigid perfectionism was found to be the factor with the lowest score across both samples in the current study. This result is supported by the study which found that the young participants preferred the Rigid Perfectionism as the lowest factor (Casale, Fioravanti, Rugai, Flett, & Hewitt, 2019). Contrary to this finding, in another study, the rigid perfectionism was the most exhibited perfectionism attitude among the Turkish university students (Kanık, 2019). On the other hand, if considered in terms of education systems in both countries, with Azerbaijan starting the compulsory education at an earlier age, the structured and rigorous educational systems in both countries may contribute to the development of perfectionist attitudes among students, characterized by high academic standards and societal expectations (Abdurahmanlı, 2024). Based on this context, it can be concluded that perceptions of perfectionism are shaped in the young people's minds from the start of their education.

In terms of the social desirability dimension, it was found that the youth of Azerbaijan and Türkiye exhibit a high level of social desirability; notably, the social-behavioral dimension was more prevalent in both cultures. When the relevant literature is examined, it is found that collective cultures (such as Asian Countries) show higher needs for social desirability compared to Americans (Ross & Mirowsky, 1984; Middleton & Jones, 2000; Twenge & Im, 2007). Although the social desirability dimension is not addressed adequately in the Turkish and Azerbaijan studies, the results based on Türkiye show that the need for social approval is a widely observed phenomenon in the cultural structure of Türkiye (Tanhan & Mukba, 2014). Overall, in the collectivist cultures, such as Türkiye and Azerbaijan, there is a higher emphasis on the group cohesion, interconnectedness, and social harmony. While numerous explanations could be proposed to explain this circumstance, it may be stated that there is more pressure to live up to the social standards and expectations to protect the group peace and maintain everyone's well-being in these cultures.

Upon evaluating the findings of the current study, it was concluded that the perfectionism and social desirability dimensions of the Azerbaijani and Turkish youth did not differ significantly based on their cultures. However, in terms of social desirability, it was revealed that the social-behavioral dimension of social desirability was significantly higher among the Azerbaijani youth, which may be attributed to a prevalent mentality based on the slogan “What will people say?”. To

be more precise, the social-behavioral dimension of social desirability refers to the concept of maintaining a positive impression in social situations at the expense of expressing their true thoughts or sentiments. From this perspective, the high incidence of this dimension in Azerbaijan can be explained by a phenomenon known as Relative's Criticism (*El Qınağı*), which suggests that people are less likely to face criticism when they are liked by the society. Consequently, individuals might be more inclined to emphasize projecting a socially acceptable image of themselves, even at the expense of repressing their actual feelings. This dynamic reveals the complex relationship between societal expectations and cultural norms in Azerbaijan.

In this study, it was discovered that although the perfectionism dimensions differ significantly according to sex, the social desirability dimensions do not differ according to sex between the Azerbaijani and Turkish youth. Such that, the results of the study showed that the men have been more prominent than the women in exhibiting narcissistic perfectionism among the young Azerbaijanis. Similarly, it was found that the males are more prone than the females to display "narcissistic perfectionism" in a study including the Ukrainian teachers (Grubi, 2016). When reviewing the local studies conducted in Türkiye, it can be hypothesized that the males in the Turkic culture are more likely to recognize and demonstrate the leadership and managerial traits, and it encourages them to hold themselves in high regard for other people (Tuncer & Voltan-Acar, 2006). According to another study, the females do not demonstrate higher levels of narcissistic perfectionism since their social roles typically require them to be more tolerant, patient and have a gentler temperament (Hortaçsu, 1997; Kanık, 2019). Another conclusion is that, compared to the male individuals, the female participants in the Turkish sample had higher levels of self-critical perfectionism. Although there is no research supporting this finding in the Turkish literature, a study from South India found that the women exhibit more self-critical perfectionism than the men due to the cultural and social pressures (Jerine & Mary, 2020). Consistent with this result, it is observed that the women in the Turkish culture must meet certain standards regarding the appearance and social behaviors. As a result, it is possible to assume that the internalized pressure from these expectations and social stereotypes contribute to the heightened self-criticism among the women. On the other hand, in contrast to the narcissistic and self-critical perfectionism, it is found that the rigid perfectionism did not differ in terms of sexes across these two nations. In line with the result mentioned above, the research carried out in Türkiye revealed that the necessity for the social desirability did not generally differ according to sex (Karaşar & Öğülmüş, 2016). Among the research results, it was revealed that there was a significant but weak negative linear

relationship between social desirability and perfectionism in both populations. Although there are limited studies in this field, one study examining these two variables found that as individuals' efforts to achieve perfection increase, their need for social desirability also rises (Karaşar & Öğülmüş, 2016). The results in the literature are consistent with the findings of the current study.

Finally, the current study found no significant difference between perfectionism and social desirability levels between the Turkish and Azerbaijani males and Turkish and Azerbaijani females. The absence of difference in these dimensions emphasizes the harmony and unity of their shared *cultural fabric*, which empowers the interconnectedness of these closely related cultures. Considering this outcome, it can be concluded that the populations in Türkiye and Azerbaijan, symbolically referred to as "*One nation, two states*," exhibit a set of similar characteristics in terms of perfectionism and social desirability. Suggestions are

1. Repeating the study with individuals from different age groups, cultures (e.g. Kazakhstan, Kyrgyzstan, Uzbekistan, Cyprus etc.) and comparing the research results.
2. Conducting new research using comprehensive questionnaires and comparing the results.
3. Examining the reasons for women's self-critical perfectionism in the Turkish nation with a qualitative study.

#### **Limitations**

1. The research is based on individuals' self-reports, which means that there is a possibility that some of participants may have avoided expressing their real situations or exaggerated it during the process.
2. The small number of male participants is one of the limitations of the study.

#### **Ethical Statement of the Research**

All the rules outlined in the "*Directive on Scientific Research and Publication Ethics of Higher Education Institutions*" were followed throughout the present study. None of the actions specified under the second section of the Directive, "Actions Contrary to Scientific Research and Publication Ethics", were carried out. In addition, according to ULAKBIM TR Index 2020 criteria, the study required the ethics committee approval for data collection. The ethics committee approval received is mentioned in the method section of the article and has been uploaded to the system along with the article.

#### **Declaration of the Contribution Rate of the Researchers to the Article**

Contribution rate of the first author: 25%

Contribution rate of the second author: 25%

Contribution rate of the third author: 25%

Contribution rate of the fourth author: 25%

### Conflict of Interest Statement

There are no personal or financial conflicts of interest among the authors.

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