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Perceived Parenting Styles, Perfectionism, and Social Appearance Anxiety among Emerging Adults: A Mediation Analysis[*]

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Abstract

The main purpose of the study is to examine the mediating role of perfectionism in the relationship between perceived parenting styles (emotional warmth, overprotection, and rejection) and social appearance anxiety among emerging adults. Conducted as a relational survey model, the study sample included 410 university students (262 females, 148 males). Data were collected using the Personal Information Form, the Social Appearance Anxiety Scale, the Frost Multidimensional Perfectionism Scale, and the The Short Form of EMBU for Children. Pearson Product-Moment Correlation and Bootstrapping techniques were used for data analysis. Social appearance anxiety was positively correlated with perfectionism, maternal/paternal overprotection and maternal/paternal rejection, but negatively related to maternal/paternal emotional warmth. Moreover, perfectionism was positively correlated with maternal/paternal overprotection and rejection but not with emotional warmth. The results of the bootstrapping analysis revealed that maternal/paternal overprotection and rejection, but not emotional warmth correlated with social appearance anxiety via perfectionism. This suggests that parenting styles are indirectly linked to social appearance anxiety through perfectionism in emerging adults. These findings are expected to shed light on preventive and therapeutic interventions, especially in the context of mental health counselling to reduce social appearance anxiety in emerging adults, and to guide future research.

Keywords: *Perceived parenting styles, perfectionism, social appearance anxiety, emerging adulthood.*

Öz

Bu çalışmada, algılanan ebeveynlik stilleri (duygusal sıcaklık, aşırı koruma ve reddetme) ile sosyal görünüş kaygısı arasındaki ilişkide mükemmeliyetçiliğin aracı rolünün incelenmesi amaçlanmıştır. İlişkisel tarama modelinde tasarlanan çalışmanın örneklemi beliren yetişkinlik dönemindeki toplam 410 üniversite öğrencisinden oluşmaktadır. Katılımcıların 262'si kadın, 148'i erkektir. Veriler Kişisel Bilgi Formu, Sosyal Görünüş Kaygısı Ölçeği, Frost Çok Boyutlu Mükemmeliyetçilik Ölçeği ve Kısaltılmış Algılanan Ebeveyn Tutumları Ölçeği-Çocuk Formu'ndan yararlanılarak toplanmış, Pearson Momentler Çarpım Korelasyonu ve regresyon temelli Bootstrapping teknikleri ile analiz edilmiştir. Sosyal görünüş kaygısı; mükemmeliyetçilik, annenin/babanın aşırı koruyuculuğu ve reddediciliği ile pozitif, annenin/babanın duygusal sıcaklığı ile negatif yönde ilişkilidir. Ayrıca mükemmeliyetçilik anne/baba için algılanan aşırı koruyucu ve reddedici ebeveynlik stilleri ile pozitif yönde ilişkiliyken, her iki ebeveynin de duygusal sıcaklığıyla anlamlı bir ilişki göstermemiştir. Bootstrapping analizi sonuçları, mükemmeliyetçiliğin annenin/babanın aşırı koruyuculuğu ve reddediciliğiyle sosyal görünüş kaygısı arasındaki ilişkide aracı rolü oynadığını ortaya koymuştur. Bununla birlikte, annenin/babanın duygusal sıcaklığı ile sosyal görünüş kaygısı arasındaki ilişkide mükemmeliyetçilik aracılık rolüne sahip değildir. Bu bulgular, beliren yetişkinlerde ebeveynlik stillerinin sosyal görünüş kaygısıyla mükemmeliyetçilik üzerinden dolaylı bir ilişkisi olduğuna işaret etmektedir. Araştırmanın bulgularının, özellikle ruh sağlığı danışmanlığı bağlamında, beliren yetişkinlik dönemindeki bireylerde sosyal görünüş kaygısını azaltmaya yönelik uygulanacak olan önleyici ve iyileştirici müdahalelere ve gelecekte yapılacak araştırmalara önemli katkılar sağlaması beklenmektedir.

Anahtar Kelimeler: *Algılanan ebeveynlik stilleri, mükemmeliyetçilik, sosyal görünüş kaygısı, beliren yetişkinlik*

Introduction

As social beings, individuals continuously interact with one another, resulting in mutual influence (Hortaçsu, 2003). However, social anxiety may arise when individuals believe that they are incapable of making a favorable impression in social settings. Social anxiety is defined as an intense concern and discomfort regarding how one is perceived by others (Clark & Wells, 1995; APA, 2013). This intense fear and anxiety often occurs during social interactions and performance situations. Individuals experiencing this anxiety worry about being humiliated or constantly scrutinised by others (Antony & Rowa, 2008).

Social appearance anxiety (SAA) is defined as the intense stress and worry an individual feels about how their physical attributes - such as body shape, facial structure, height and weight - will be judged by others (Hart et al., 2008). Leary and Kowalski (1995) link this anxiety to an individual's desire to conform to societal standards of physical appearance and the fear of being judged on the basis of appearance. SAA differs from general social anxiety as it specifically concerns one's perceived attractiveness to others. The desire to make a positive impression and the belief that it is necessary can heighten this anxiety. Individuals with a negative body image tend to focus on how others perceive and evaluate their appearance (Hart et al., 2008). If they feel inadequate in making a positive impression, their SAA may intensify. Existing research findings in the literature show that the desire for social acceptance, negative body image and body dissatisfaction are strongly associated with SAA (Atalay & Gençöz, 2008; Boursier et al., 2020; Garcia, 1998; Levinson & Rodebaugh, 2013).

Social Appearance Anxiety in Emerging Adulthood

SAA can negatively impact relationships. Research shows that SAA affects social interactions (Moneva et al., 2020) and leads to feelings of loneliness (Amil & Bozgeyikli, 2015). Due to this impact, SAA is recognized as a phenomenon that should be particularly examined in individuals during emerging adulthood, which spans the ages of 18 to 25. Emerging adulthood is a crucial period when indi-

viduals strive for independence and define themselves within social relationships (Arnett, 2000). Additionally, this period is considered a developmental stage in which individuals are expected to resolve the intimacy versus isolation conflict described in Erikson's psychosocial development theory (Bishop, 2018). Difficulties in forming social relationships or challenges within these relationships can impact the quality of life of emerging adults. Inded, Kocovski and Endler (2000) highlight that the anxiety experienced during this period can have adverse effects on social relationships, academic success and overall life satisfaction. Furthermore, as emerging adults seek acceptance and strive to leave a positive impression in social settings, they become more sensitive to social evaluation. This heightened sensitivity can trigger SAA and negatively impact their social relationships. Besides, research indicates that external factors such as social media and peer pressure exacerbate SAA in this group (Boursier et al., 2020; Holland & Tiggemann, 2016). In particular, it has been reported that the widespread use of visual-based social media platforms (Instagram, Facebook, Flickr, etc.), which we encounter with new forms by the day, leads young people to make more appearance comparisons due to their exposure to unrealistic and idealized body images. This, in turn, increases body dissatisfaction fostering a stronger desire to achieve the perfect body (e.g., Bahtiyar, 2021; Karsay et al., 2020; Özmen & Çelik, 2024; Türk & Bayrakçı, 2019). Recent research indicates that this is a risk factor for SAA in emerging adults (e.g., Liu, 2024; Papapanou et al., 2023; Şengönül & Aydın, 2023), and leads to feelings of loneliness (Papapanou et al., 2023). Therefore, considering the developmental characteristics of this stage and the aforementioned effects of social media, it is crucial to examine both external (environmental) and internal (individual) factors contributing to SAA in emerging adults and to implement preventive interventions to mitigate its effects.

Perfectionism and Social Appearance Anxiety

Perfectionism is characterized by a persistent drive to set exceptionally high standards for oneself, along with an intense fear of making mistakes

(Frost et al., 1990). Research indicates that perfectionism, as a personality trait, is linked to various behavioral issues, including anxiety, anxiety-related disorders, eating disorders, interpersonal rumination, and depression (e.g., Hewitt et al., 2002; Nepon et al., 2011; Smith et al., 2017). Additionally, studies emphasize that perfectionism shapes expectations in social relationships and is associated with both social anxiety and SAA (e.g., Çelik & Güzel, 2018; Nepon et al., 2011; Levinson et al., 2013). Perfectionistic individuals may be more sensitive about their physical appearance, making them vulnerable to criticism and increasing their likelihood of experiencing SAA. At this point, the relationship between perfectionism and SAA can be explained by the view that parenting styles play a crucial role in shaping the cognitive foundation of perfectionism (Gabbard, 2004; Hewitt et al., 2017).

Parenting Styles, Perfectionism and Social Appearance Anxiety

The literature highlights the long-term effects of parenting styles from early childhood into later life (Flett et al., 1995; Frost et al., 1990; Hewitt et al., 2017; Hamachek, 1978). In this regard, studies also draw attention to the role of parenting styles in the development of perfectionism (Flett & Hewitt, 2002; Frost et al., 1991; Hamachek, 1978; Hewitt et al., 2017) and report their association with both perfectionism and anxiety disorders (Affrunti & Woodruff-Borden, 2015, 2018; Mitchell et al., 2013). Moreover, researchers have increasingly focused on the effects of parenting styles on domain-specific anxiety problems (Affrunti & Woodruff-Borden, 2018; Yaffe, 2018). All of these factors have led us to examine the relationship patterns between parenting styles, perfectionism, and anxiety, particularly in the context of SAA, a distinct form of anxiety.

Although various classifications of parenting styles exist in the literature, the most widely accepted classification of parenting styles comes from Baumrind's (1967) model, which identifies three types: authoritative (democratic), authoritarian (restrictive), and permissive (indulgent). This model was later expanded by Maccoby and Martin

(1983), who introduced a fourth parenting style, neglectful (rejecting). In this model, it is essential that parenting styles are defined on the basis of two key dimensions: reactivity (emotional warmth, sensitivity, interest, and supportiveness), which reflects the extent to which parents respond to their children's needs, and control (demandingness and discipline), which represents the degree to which parents establish authority and set limits for their children (Baumrind, 2005; Maccoby & Martin, 1983). In this study, parenting styles were analyzed in the context of *overprotection, rejection,* and *emotional warmth,* as these styles cover the two dimensions proposed by Baumrind.

Relatively little research has directly examined the relationship between parenting styles and SAA (Sen et al., 2020). Existing studies have primarily focused on the effects of parenting styles on other types of anxiety, such as generalised anxiety disorder, separation anxiety, and school anxiety (e.g., Yaffe, 2018; Stevens et al., 2015; Wood et al., 2003). As SAA is a specific form of social anxiety, research on parenting styles and social anxiety (e.g., Bögels et al., 2001; Banerjee, 2005; Lieb et al., 2000) suggests a possible link between parenting styles and SAA. In addition, some studies indicate that the parent-child relationship may predict body satisfaction even years later. (Boutelle et al., 2009; Crespo et al., 2010). Given that body satisfaction is linked to SAA, early experiences with parenting styles may contribute to its development over time. On the other hand, many theorists argue that perfectionistic tendencies stem from the family environment, parent-child interactions, and parenting styles (Flett et al., 1995; Frost et al., 1991; Hewitt & Flett, 1991; Hamachek, 1978; Rice et al., 1996). For example, overprotective and rejecting parenting styles may contribute to the development of perfectionism (Hewitt & Flett, 1991; Soenens & Vansteenkiste, 2010; Soenens et al., 2005). Furthermore, parental emotional warmth supports the adaptive aspects of perfectionism while buffering against its maladaptive aspects (Hibbard & Walton, 2014; Richter et al., 2000). Given the evidence linking perfectionism with SAA, perfectionism may act as a mediator in this relationship. In other words, early exposure to these parenting styles may shape perfectionistic tendencies, which in

turn may strongly contribute to the development of SAA later in life.

Aim of the Present Study

As highlighted earlier, the literature review revealed that studies have examined the relationships between parenting styles, perfectionist personality traits, and SAA separately. However, no study has been found that directly examines the relationship patterns among these three variables. In addition, it is common in the literature to consider children's perceptions rather than parents' reports when determining parenting styles. Based on the results of their studies, researchers emphasize that parents may tend to rate their own parenting style more positively —more supportive and moderate or less controlling— than they actually are (e.g., Hou vd., 2020; Korelitz & Garber, 2016). The fact that they responded in the direction of social desirability may explain this situation (Khaleque et al., 2008). Therefore, children's perceptions can be considered a more reliable indicator than parents' reports in parenting research. Indeed, it is noteworthy that in studies conducted on the variables examined in the present study, parenting styles are often assessed based on offspring perceptions rather than parents' self-reports (e.g., Avcanok, 2013; Bakiler, 2022; Banerjee, 2005; Yaffe, 2018; Ying et al., 2022). Based on these rationales, the present study aims to examine the relationship between perceived parenting styles in childhood and SAA in emerging adults, both directly and indirectly through perfectionism.

Understanding how mediating mechanisms, such as perfectionism, shape the relationship between perceived parenting styles and SAA may offer deeper insights into the dynamics of SAA. Identifying these relationship patterns is expected to pave the way for preventive, protective, and therapeutic interventions, particularly in mental health counseling, to reduce SAA in emerging adulthood. Additionally, this research may contribute to future studies on this topic. In line with the aim of the study, the following hypotheses were tested.

H1: Perceived maternal parenting styles (i.e., emotional warmth, rejection and overprotection) have indirect effects on social apperance anxiety via perfectionism in emerging adults.

H2: Perceived paternal parenting styles (i.e., emotional warmth, rejection and overprotection) have indirect effects on social apperance anxiety via perfectionism in emerging adults.

Method

Research Model

This study was designed using the correlational survey model, a quantitative research method. The hypothetical model constructed to analyze the relationships between variables was tested using a simple mediation model. A mediation model shows how M (*mediating variable: perfectionism*) mediates the relationship between X (*independent variable: parenting styles*) and Y (*dependent variable: social appearance anxiety*) through the pathway X → M → Y (Hoyle, 2012). Additionally, the study has a retrospective design, as participants rated their perceptions of parenting styles during childhood.

Population and Sample

The study population consists of university students in the emerging adulthood period, enrolled in one public and one private university in Istanbul. The study sample was selected using a random cluster sampling method from students in different departments. A total of 84,834 students from the specified universities constituted the study population. To determine the sample size, the Cohen et al.'s (2000) table, commonly used when the total population size is known, was utilized, establishing a minimum of 384 participants at a 95% confidence level. To account for potential missing or inaccurate data, the study sample size was expanded, and after data cleaning, the final sample comprised 410 participants. Of the participants, 262 (63.9%) were female and 148 (36.1%) were male, aged between 18 and 25 years, with the mean age of 21.00 years (SD = 1.66). Additionally, 236 (57.6%) were enrolled in a public university and 174 (42.4%) in a private university.

Data Collection Tools

Personal Information Form (PIF)

A PIF specifically created for this study was used to collect participants' personal details, including gender, age, and their enrolled university.

Social Appearance Anxiety Scale (SAAS): The SAAS is a 16-item, 5-point Likert scale (1 = not at all appropriate to 5 = completely appropriate) developed by Hart et al. (2008) and adapted into Turkish by Doğan (2010). It measures appearance-related social anxiety, with higher scores indicating greater SAA. Reliability analyses of the Turkish version showed a Cronbach's alpha of 0.93, test-retest reliability of 0.85, and split-half reliability of 0.88. In this study, Cronbach's alpha was 0.92 and McDonald's omega (ω) was 0.93.

Frost Multidimensional Perfectionism Scale (FMPS): The FMPS, developed by Frost et al. (1990) to assess perfectionistic tendencies, was adapted to Turkish by Kağan (2011). It consists of 35 items across six subscales, rated on a 5-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree). The adaptation confirmed the original six-factor structure in the Turkish sample. The subscales include *concern over mistakes, personal standards, parental expectations, parental criticism, doubts about actions,* and *organization.* The overall Cronbach's alpha was 0.91, with subscale values ranging from 0.64 to 0.94. Test-retest reliability was 0.82 for the total scale and ranged from 0.63 to 0.82 for the subscales. In this study, Cronbach's alpha for the total scale was 0.89, with subscale values between 0.71 and 0.92, while McDonald's omega (ω) for the total scale was 0.89.

The Short Form of EMBU for Children [Egna Minnen Barndoms Uppfostran; One's memories of upbringing] (S-EMBU-C): The S-EMBU-C is a self-report scale used to assess adults' perceptions of their parents' parenting styles during childhood. The scale was developed by Arrindell et al. (1999) and adapted to Turkish by Dirik et al. (2015). It consists of 23 items rated on a 4-point Likert scale (1 = no, never; 4 = yes, most of the time). The scale includes three dimensions: *emotional warmth, overprotection,* and *rejection.* It is administered separately to mothers and fathers. Reliability analyses showed that Cronbach's alpha for maternal parenting styles were 0.75 (emotional warmth), 0.72 (overprotection), and 0.64 (rejection), while for paternal parenting styles, they were 0.79, 0.73, and 0.71, respectively (Dirik et al., 2015). In this study, Cronbach's alpha ranged from 0.62 to 0.79 for mothers and from 0.64 to 0.80 for fathers. McDonald's omega (ω) reliability coefficients ranged from 0.70 to 0.81 for maternal and from 0.71 to 0.81 for paternal parenting styles.

Procedure

Before data collection, ethical approval was obtained from the Maltepe University Ethics Committee on December 13, 2018 (Decision No: 2018/07, Protocol No: 2018/07-09), along with permission from the university rectorates. Data collection was conducted in the classroom setting under the guidance of the first researcher. Participants confirmed their voluntary participation by signing the informed consent form. The data collection tools were administered in the following order: PIF, SAAS, FMPS, and S-EMBU-C, with an approximate completion time of 25–30 minutes.

Data Analysis

Missing values and outliers were identified prior to data analysis. Scales with incomplete responses were excluded. Outliers were detected using standard z-scores, and 15 cases exceeding ±3.29 (Çokluk et al., 2012) were excluded. Mahalanobis distance values (p < 0.001) were calculated to assess multivariate normality (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2019), resulting in the removal of five additional outliers. Mean (M), standard deviation (SD), skewness and kurtosis were computed, with skewness and kurtosis values falling within ±1.5 (see Table 1), confirming a normal distribution (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2019).

Given the normality of the data, parametric tests were applied. Pearson Product-Moment Correlation was used to examine relationships between variables. A simple mediation model, using

bootstrapping with PROCESS Macro Model 4, was performed to explore whether perfectionism mediates the relationship between perceived maternal/paternal parenting styles (emotional warmth, overprotection, rejection) and SAA in emerging adults. Separate models for maternal and paternal parenting styles were tested, with gender as a covariate. Gender was transformed into a dummy variable and coded as female = 0, male = 1.

Tablo 1. Descriptive statistics of the study variables (N= 410)

Variable	M	SD	Kurtosis	$SD_{kurtosis}$	Skewness	$SD_{skewness}$
SAA	1.84	0.60	0.58	0.24	0.91	0.12
PER	2.42	0.52	-0.24	0.24	0.08	0.12
OVERPRO-M	2.07	0.47	-0.09	0.24	0.34	0.12
WARM-M	2.10	0.55	-0.16	0.24	-0.49	0.12
REJ-M	1.26	0.26	0.67	0.24	1.07	0.12
OVERPRO-F	1.96	0.48	0.10	0.24	0.53	0.12
WARM-F	2.84	0.59	0.07	0.24	-0.44	0.12
REJ-F	1.24	0.27	1.53	0.24	1.34	0.12

Note. SAA: Social Appearance Anxiety, PER: Perfectionism, OVERPRO-M: Over Protection-Mother, WARM-M: Warmth-Mother, REJ-M: Rejection-Mother, OVERPRO-M: Over Protection-Father, WARM-M: Warmth- Father, REJ-M: Rejection-Father.

As the bootstrapping technique is regression-based, multicollinearity among independent variables was tested using tolerance and VIF values. All VIF values were below 10 (1.00-1.10) and tolerance values were above 0.20 (0.91-1.00), confirming the absence of multicollinearity (Hair et al., 2019).

resamples and a 95% confidence interval. In bootstrapping, the significance of direct and indirect effects is determined using confidence intervals. If the lower (BootLLCI) and upper (BootULCI) confidence intervals for the indirect effect exclude zero, indicating mediation (Hayes, 2022). Effect size determination is recommended to assess the strength of mediation and the completely standardized indirect effect sizes are classified as small (≈ .01), medium (≈ .09), and large (≈ .25) (Cohen, 1988; Preacher & Kelley, 2011).

IBM SPSS 24.0 was used for descriptive statistics, bivariate correlations, and Cronbach's alpha. McDonald's omega was computed with Jamovi 2.3.26, and mediation analyses were conducted using PROCESS Macro 4.0 in SPSS. Statistical significance was set at p < .05.

Findings

Preliminary Analysis

Prior to testing the mediation model, the bivariate relationships between participants' retrospective perceptions of parental styles, perfectionistic traits, and SAA were examined (see Table 2).

The results of the Pearson correlation analysis revealed that SAA correlated positively with per-

Table 2. Bivariate correlations

Variable	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1. SAA	-						
2. PER	.40**	-					
3. OVERPRO-M	.24**	.30**	-				
4. WARM-M	-.14**	.03	.07	-			
5. REJ-M	.29**	.28**	.32**	.34**	-		
6. OVERPRO-F	.15**	.30**	.72**	.03	.23**	-	
7. WARM-F	-.20**	.01	.02	.77**	-.24**	.11*	-
8. REJ-F	.22**	.28**	.22**	-.25**	.69**	.33**	-.28**

Note. SAA: Social Appearance Anxiety, PER: Perfectionism, OVERPRO-M: Over Protection-Mother, WARM-M: Warmth-Mother, REJ-M: Rejection-Mother, OVERPRO-F: Over protection- Father, WARM-M: Warmth- Father, REJ-M: Rejection-Father,

*p<.05, **p<.01.

Correlation values below 0.90, as seen in Table 2, further support this (Çokluk et al., 2012). Autocorrelation was assessed using Durbin-Watson (DW) values, which were approximately 2, within the expected range of 1.5-2.5, suggesting no autocorrelation problem (Kalaycı, 2006). This study performed bootstrapping technique with 5000

fectionism (r = 0.40, p<0.01), maternal overprotection (r = 0.24, p<0.01), paternal overprotection (r = 0.15, p<0.01), maternal rejection (r = 0.29, p<0.01) and paternal rejection (r = 0.22, p<0.01). It was negatively correlated with maternal (r = -0.14, p<0.01) and paternal emotional warmth (r = -0.20, p<0.01). Perfectionism was positively associated with maternal (r = 0.30, p<0.01) and paternal overprotection (r = 0.30, p<0.01) and with maternal (r = 0.28,

p<0.01) and paternal rejection (r = 0.30, p<0.01), but showed no significant relationship with maternal (r = 0.03, p>0.05) or paternal emotional warmth (r = 0.01, p>0.05).

Mediation Analysis

To test H1 and H2, six separate simple mediation analyses were conducted to examine the indirect effects of perceived parenting styles – *emotional warmth, rejection and overprotection*—on SAA via perfectionism for both mothers and fathers. The general hypothetical model is shown in Figure 1.
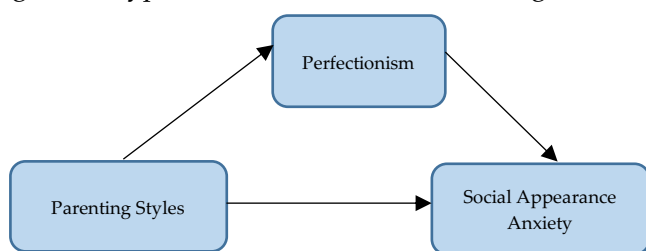

Figure 1. Hypothetical model for the mediating role of perfectionism

The Mediating Role of Perfectionism in the Relationship Between Perceived Maternal Parenting Styles and Social Appearance Anxiety

The first three mediation analyses tested H1, which proposed that perfectionistic traits would mediate the relationship between perceived maternal parenting styles—emotional warmth, rejection, and overprotection—and SAA in emerging adults, controlling for gender.

The direct effects in the first model indicated that perceived maternal warmth did not significantly predict perfectionism ($B_a = 0.15$, p>.05), but perfectionism positively predicted SAA ($B_b = 0.27$, p<.001). Conversely, perceived maternal warmth negatively predicted SAA ($B_c = -0.38$, p<.001). The indirect effect analysis showed that even when perfectionism was included in the model, the effect of perceived maternal warmth on SAA did not diminish and remained statistically significant ($B_{c'} = -0.42$, p<.001). Thus, perfectionism does not mediate this relationship. The overall model was significant ($R^2 = 0.20$, $F_{(406,3)} = 34.20$, p <.001), explaining 20% of the total variance in SAA.

Table 3. Direct and indirect effects of maternal warmth parenting style (N= 410)

Model 1	Boot Effect	SE	t	LLCI	ULCI
Total Effect (c: WM→SAA)	-.38	.12	-3.05**	-.62	-.13
Direct Effect (c': WM →SAA)	-.42	.11	-3.71***	-.64	-.20
Indirect effect (WM → PER→ SAA)	.04	.06		-.07	.15

Notes: WM (Warmth-Mother Independent variable); PER (Mediating variable); SAA (Dependent variable); ***p<.001; **p<.01; *p<.05

Bootstrapping analysis further confirmed the absence of mediation as the bootstrapped confidence interval of the indirect effect (bootstrap effect = 0.04, 95% CI *[-0.07, 0.15])* included zero (see Table 3).

The second mediation model was conducted to test whether perfectionism mediated the relationship between perceived maternal overprotection and SAA in emerging adults. The direct effects of the model showed that the perceived maternal overprotection positively predicted perfectionism ($B_a = 1.10$, p<.001). Perfectionism was also a positive predictor of SAA ($B_b = 0.24$, p<.001), and perceived maternal overprotection positively predicted SAA ($B_c = 0.53$, p<.001). When the indirect effect was analyzed, including perfectionism as a mediator, the effect of perceived maternal overprotection on SAA decreased but remained significant ($B_{c'} = 0.26$, p<.01). This indicated mediation, meaning perfectionism mediated the relationship between maternal overprotection and SAA. The overall model was significant ($R^2 = 0.19$, $F_{(406,3)} = 31.10$, p<.001), explaining 19% of the total variance in SAA.

Table 4. Direct and indirect effects of maternal overprotection parenting style (N= 410)

Model 2	Boot Effect	SE	t	LLCI	ULCI
Total Effect (c: OM→SAA)	.53	.11	4.84***	.31	.74
Direct Effect (c': OM →SAA)	.26	.11	2.47**	.05	.47
Indirect effect (O → PER→ SAA)	.26	.05		.17	.38

Notes: OM (Overprotection-Mother, Independent variable); PER (Mediating variable); SAA (Dependent variable); ***p<.001; **p<.01; *p<.05

Upon examining the bootstrapping analysis, the confidence interval of the indirect effect does not include zero (bootstrap effect = 0.26, 95% CI [0.17, 0.38]), confirming mediation. The completely

standardized indirect effect size was found to be 0.12, indicating a moderate effect (see Table 4).

The third model tested whether perfectionism mediated the relationship between perceived maternal rejection and SAA. In terms of direct effects, perceived maternal rejection was a positive and significant predictor of perfectionism (B_a = 2.25, $p<.001$). Consistent with the previous two models, perfectionism positively predicted SAA (B_b = 0.23, $p<.001$), and maternal rejection had a significant and positive predictive power on SAA (B_c = 1.52, $p<.001$). Including perfectionism as a mediator reduced the effect of maternal rejection on SAA, though it remained significant ($B_{c'}$ = 1.01, p <.001), indicating mediation. The overall model was significant (R^2 = 0.21, F (406,3) = 35.71, $p<.001$), explaining 21% of the total variance in SAA.

Table 5. Direct and indirect effects of maternal rejection parenting style (N= 410)

Model 3	Boot Effect	SE	t	LLCI	ULCI
Total Effect (c: RM→SAA)	1.52	.25	6.14***	1.03	2.01
Direct Effect (c': RM →SAA)	1.01	.24	4.18***	.53	1.48
Indirect effect (RM → PER→ SAA)	.51	.11		.31	.76

*Notes: RM (Rejection-Mother, Independent variable); PER (Mediating variable); SAA (Dependent variable); ***p<.001; **p<.01; *p<.05*

The results of the bootstrapping analysis indicated that the indirect effect was significant, as the confidence interval did not include zero. This confirms that perfectionism mediates the relationship between perceived maternal rejection and SAA (bootstrap effect = 0.51, 95% CI [0.31, 0.76]). The completely standardized indirect effect size was 0.10, indicating a moderate effect (see Table 5).

The Mediating Role of Perfectionism in the Relationship Between Perceived Paternal Parenting Styles and Social Appearance Anxiety

The procedures conducted for mothers were repeated to test H2, which posited that perfectionistic personality traits would mediate the relationship between perceived paternal parenting styles during childhood and SAA, controlling for gender.

In the first model, the direct effects revealed that perceived paternal warmth was not a significant predictor of perfectionism (B_a = 0.09, p>.05). However, perfectionism positively predicted SAA (B_b = 0.27, $p<.001$). Additionally, paternal warmth was a negative and significant predictor of SAA (B_c = -0.51, $p<.001$). After including perfectionism as a mediator, the effect of paternal warmth on SAA remained significant and unchanged ($B_{c'}$= -0.53, $p<.001$), indicating no mediation. The overall model was significant (R^2 = 0.23, F (406,3) = 39.43, $p<.001$), explaining 23% of the total variance in SAA.

Table 6. Direct and indirect effects of paternal warmth parenting style (N= 410)

Model 1	Boot Effect	SE	t	LLCI	ULCI
Total Effect (c: WF→SAA)	-.51	.11	-4.47***	-.73	-.28
Direct Effect (c': WF→SAA)	-.53	.10	-5.17***	-.73	-.33
Indirect effect (WF → PER→ SAA)	.02	.05		-.07	.14

*Notes: WF (Warmth-Father, Independent variable); PER (Mediating variable); SAA (Dependent variable); ***p<.001; **p<.01; *p<.05*

Bootstrapping results showed that the confidence interval of the indirect effect included zero, indicating that perfectionism did not mediate the relationship between perceived paternal warmth and SAA (bootstrap effect = 0.02, 95% CI [-0.07, 0.14]).

Table 7. Direct and indirect effects of paternal overprotection parenting style (N= 410)

Model 2	Boot Effect	SE	t	LLCI	ULCI
Total Effect (c: OF→SAA)	.32	.11	2.92**	.10	.53
Direct Effect (c': OF→SAA)	.03	.11	.29	-.18	.24
Indirect effect (OF → PER→ SAA)	.29	.05		.19	.40

*Notes: OF (Overprotection-Father, Independent variable); PER (Mediating variable); SAA (Dependent variable); ***p<.001; **p<.01; *p<.05*

The second mediation model tested whether perfectionism mediated the relationship between perceived paternal overprotection and SAA. The direct effects of the model indicated that paternal overprotection positively predicted perfectionism (B_a = 1.11, $p<.001$), which in turn had a positive effect on SAA (B_b = 0.26, $p<.001$). Paternal overprotection also positively predicted SAA (B_c = 0.32, $p<.01$). When perfectionism was included, the ef-

fect of paternal overprotection on SAA became insignificant (Bc' = 0.03, p>.05), indicating mediation. The overall model was significant (R² = 0.17, F (406,3) = 28.67, p<.001), explaining 17% of the total variance in SAA.

Bootstrapping analysis also confirmed the mediating role of perfectionism, as the confidence interval of the indirect effect excluded zero (bootstrap effect = 0.29, 95% CI [0.19, 0.40]). The completely standardized mediation effect size was 0.13, indicating a moderate effect (see Table 7).

The final model tested the mediating role of perfectionism in the relationship between perceived paternal rejection and SAA in emerging adults. Examining the direct effects, it was found that paternal rejection positively predicted perfectionism (Ba = 2.24, p<.001). Consistent with the previous two models, perfectionism also positively predicted SAA (Bb = 0.24, p<.01). In addition, paternal rejection was a positive and significant predictor of SAA (Bc = 1.20, p<.001). Including perfectionism as a mediator reduced the direct effect of paternal rejection on SAA, though it remained significant (Bc' = 0.67, p<.01), indicating mediation. The overall model was significant (R² = 0.19, F (406,3) = 31.68, p<.001), explaining 19% of the total variance in SAA.

Table 8. Direct and indirect effects of paternal rejection parenting style (N= 410)

Model 3	Boot Effect	SE	t	LLCI	ULCI
Total Effect (c: RF→SAA)	1.20	.25	4.80***	.71	1.70
Direct Effect (c': RF →SAA)	.67	.24	2.75**	.19	1.14
Indirect effect (RF → PER→ SAA)	.54	.12		.33	.80

Notes: *RF (Rejection-Father,Independent variable); PER (Mediating variable); SAA (Dependent variable); ***p<.001; **p<.01; *p<.05*

Bootstrapping analysis confirmed the mediating role of perfectionism, as the indirect effect was significant and the confidence interval did not include zero. This finding revealed that perceived paternal rejection was associated with SAA through perfectionism (bootstrap effect = 0.54, 95% CI [0.33, 0.80]). The completely standardized mediation effect size was 0.10, indicating a moderate effect (see Table 8).

Discussion and Conclusion

This section discusses findings in terms of the direct and indirect relationship of childhood parenting styles with SAA in emerging adults. As expected, both perceived maternal and paternal overprotection and rejection significantly predict perfectionism. In other words, as parental overprotection and rejection increase, perfectionistic traits in emerging adults also rise. This finding paralells with research highlighting the critical and long-term impact of early parenting experiences on the development of perfectionistic personality traits (Flett et al., 1995, Flett et al., 2002; Hewitt et al., 2017). Overprotection is manifested by excessive parental control that limits a child's autonomy (Parker, 1979). Overprotective parents also give their children the implicit message: 'I know what is best for you. Do what I say'. This parenting style is similar to Baumrind's (1967) authoritarian style, characterised by high expectations, low sensitivity to the child's needs and a demand for unquestioning obedience. Research suggests that overprotection promotes maladaptive perfectionism and feelings of inadequacy in children (Hewitt & Flett, 1991). Overprotected children may avoid making mistakes in order to meet their parents' high expectations and gain approval. Overprotection may also hinder the development of autonomy, leading the individual to constantly seek approval with a sense of inadequacy. Such tendencies may increase fear of negative evaluation (Soenens & Vansteenkiste, 2010) and contribute to the development of perfectionism over time (Frost et al., 1990; Hewitt & Flett, 1991). This finding of the direct relationship between perceived overprotective parenting and perfectionism is consistent with previous cultural and cross-cultural studies (Avcanok, 2013; Aydın, 2022; Banerjee, 2005; Ju et al., 2020; Segrin vd., 2021; Soenens & Vansteenkiste, 2010). In a meta-analysis study evaluating the relationship between parental overprotection—measured by the S-EMBU-C scale used in this study—and offspring psychological adjustment, the effect of parental overprotection on the psychological adjustment of the offspring yielded similar results in dif-

ferent cultures (de Roo et al., 2022). Although parental overprotection often leads to negative outcomes, some researchers emphasize that this behaviour may sometimes provide emotional security, in other words, it may have both positive and negative effects (Kağıtçıbaşı, 2010) and may not be perceived negatively as a form of 'love and protection' in societies like Turkey that experience the transition from collectivism to individualism (Ungar, 2009). This inconsistency in the literature may be related to methodological and measurement differences as well as cultural factors. For this reason, it is thought that there is a need for more cross-cultural, longitudinal studies in which variables such as socioeconomic level and parental educational status are taken into consideration along with regional differences within a culture.

The rejecting parenting style is characterized by excessive criticism, neglect, emotional unavailability, conditional acceptance, and disregard for the child's emotional and physical needs (Parker, 1979; Maccoby & Martin, 1983; Rohner et al., 2012). This approach can make a child feel worthless and unloved, leading them to base their self-worth on external standards and approval. As a result, this situation may contribute to the development of socially prescribed perfectionism, where individuals strive to meet the expectations of others in order to gain approval and avoid rejection (Flett et al., 1995; Hewitt & Flett, 1991). This finding is consistent with similar research findings in the national and international literature (Aydın, 2022; Walton et al., 2020; Maloney et al., 2014; Ying et al., 2021). Indeed, the results of 12 meta-analyses conducted to explore the universality of the Interpersonal Acceptance-Rejection Theory indicate that although the expression of parental behaviors may differ across cultures, children and adults tend to exhibit similar behavioral responses when they perceive rejection or acceptance from their parents (Khaleque & Ali, 2017).

However, no significant relationship was found between perceived maternal/paternal emotional warmth and perfectionism. Emotional warmth is characterized by accepting, caring, appreciative, and supportive parenting behaviors (Rohner, 1986; Parker, 1979; Baumrind, 1967). This style, aligning with Baumrind's (1967) authoritative parenting,

validates children's emotions while maintaining high but reasonable behavioral expectations. Research indicates that parental emotional warmth fosters healthy self-esteem and competence (Baumrind, 2013; Hamachek, 1978; Khaleque, 2012) and may reduce perfectionistic tendencies (Carmo et al., 2021). Previous studies have generally examined this parenting style in relation to both adaptive and maladaptive dimensions of perfectionism together, concluding that increased parental emotional warmth is associated with higher adaptive perfectionism and lower maladaptive perfectionism in children (Hibbard & Walton, 2014; Richter et al., 2000). The literature emphasizes that these two dimensions have distinct effects on individuals' behavior (e.g., Akbağ, 2024; Bieling et al., 2004; Chang et al., 2004). Therefore, the absence of a significant relationship between parental emotional warmth and perfectionism in this study may stem from the fact that both dimensions of perfectionism were not considered. Furthermore, when examining the relationship between these two variables, it is also crucial to determine whether emotional warmth is provided to the child unconditionally—without expectations, or conditionally, with demands and expectations. Indeed, Frost et al. (1990), who have conducted extensive theoretical and empirical studies on perfectionism, suggest that even when parents are emotionally warm, their high expectations and overemphasis on them – whether consciously or unconsciously - may be a risk factor for the development of maladaptive perfectionism.

The other finding of the study is that perfectionism is directly related to SAA. In other words, as perfectionism increases, so does social appearance anxiety. SAA, which is defined as the intense anxiety and discomfort an individual feels that he/she will be judged negatively because of his/her physical appearance (Hart et al., 2008), has been found to be positively associated with negative body image (Atalay & Gençöz, 2008; Boursier et al., 2020; Garcia, 1998; Levinson & Rodebaugh, 2013). There is also a positive relationship between perfectionism, body image dissatisfaction, and the tendency to avoid social situations where appearance may be the focus (Hewitt et al., 1995). Perfectionists' heightened sensitivity to their physical appearance

may make them more vulnerable to criticism. Their belief that they are not attractive or socially desirable enough may lead them to expect negative evaluations from others, thereby increasing their SAA. Furthermore, this finding is in line with research showing that individuals with social anxiety and SAA share similarities with perfectionists in their efforts to meet high standards and achieve perfection (Çelik & Güzel, 2018; Koçyiğit & Yalçın, 2021; Nepon et al., 2011; Zhu et al., 2021). This finding also supports research indicating that perfectionistic personality tendencies are an important risk factor for SAA (e.g., Levinson et al., 2013; Shah, 2023).

It was also concluded that perceived emotional warmth, overprotection, and rejection from both parents were directly associated with SAA. As parental emotional warmth increased, SAA decreased, whereas higher levels of overprotection and rejection were associated with increased SAA. The effect of parental overprotection in increasing SAA can be explained by several factors: excessive control may hinder the development of an individual's sense of competence (Ju et al., 2020), prevent them from discovering their identity and forming a positive self-concept (Beyers & Goossens, 2008), and lead to self-doubt due to controlling behaviors that do not allow mistakes. In addition, excessive self-consciousness may result in heightened feelings of shame (Flett et al., 2002), and dependency on others may cause individuals to become overly concerned with how they are perceived by others. Individuals who experience this parenting style during childhood may place excessive importance on gaining approval from others and use external evaluations as a reference point. As a result, they may develop heightened sensitivity to how their physical appearance is perceived in social settings, which may increase their level of SAA. Reseach supported this finding mainly report that children of overly controlling and protective parents tend to experience higher levels of social anxiety in later life (Banerjee, 2005; Spokas & Heimberg, 2009; Lieb, 2000; Stevens et al., 2015; Wood et al., 2003). A recent study in the national literature also found that an overprotective parenting style contributes to increased SAA in individuals (Bakiler, 2022). This finding regarding the relationship between overprotective parenting and social appearance anxiety can be interpreted in the context of cross-cultural similarities and differences, similar to the discussion of the finding regarding the relationship between this parenting style and perfectionism.

On the contrary, the decrease in SAA as the emotional warmth perceived by emerging adults for their mothers and fathers increases may be explained by the fact that these individuals form positive images of their own self and appearance as a result of their early experiences of unconditional acceptance and a sense of worthiness, and thus develop a basic belief system that they will be positively perceived based on the positive self-definition they have formed, rather than focusing too much on how others judge them in social settings. Khaleque (2012) found that parental emotional warmth was associated with positive self-esteem, self-competence, and psychological adjustment. Consistent with the findings of this study, research has also reported that parental acceptance reduces social anxiety (Wood et al., 2003) and SAA (Pınar & Epli, 2023).

Besides, emerging adults who perceived their parents as rejecting during childhood may not have experienced sufficient unconditional acceptance. A critical and insensitive parental approach may damage their emotional security, leading them to develop negative self-images in terms of both their identity and appearance (Bögels & Perotti, 2011; Hewitt & Flett, 1991). This, in turn, may contribute to the development of beliefs that they are not adequately perceived in a positive way in their social lives. In this context, an increase in SAA can be considered an expected outcome. It has been found that individuals who report experiencing a rejecting parenting style during childhood tend to have higher levels of negative body image perception and social physique anxiety (Sen et al., 2020), as well as higher levels of social anxiety (Lieb, 2000). Recent research in our culture also provides evidence for the relationship between a rejecting parenting style and SAA (Bakiler, 2022; Pınar & Epli, 2023).

Meanwhile, based on the findings of meta-analyses that provide global evidence that parental warmth/acceptance is associated with children's

psychological adjustment and cover many countries, including Turkey (e.g., Khaleque & Ali, 20017; Khaleque, 2012), researchers have pointed out that although there are differences in the way parents show warmth, meeting (i.e. warmth/acceptance) or not meeting (i.e. rejection) children's universal need for acceptance and love has the same function on offspring in different cultures (Khaleque & Ali, 2017; Lansford, 2022).

In conclusion, the findings of this study, which reveal the relationship between parenting styles and SAA, support the views of researchers that parental rejection and overprotection are early life risk factors for SAA (Brook & Schmidt, 2008; Stevens et al., 2015), while the parental emotional warmth serves as a protective factor (Bakiler, 2022; Pınar & Epli, 2023).

Findings regarding the indirect effects indicated that perfectionism mediated the relationship between SAA and perceived parental overprotection/rejection, but not emotional warmth. In another saying, parental warmth was only directly related to SAA, but not indirectly. Thus, hypotheses H1 and H2 were partially supported.

In view of the findings on indirect effects in the study, overprotective and rejecting parenting styles are not only directly related to SAA but also indirectly via perfectionism, which can be considered an expected outcome. As previously explained, individuals who are overprotected may struggle to develop sufficient autonomy, leading them to constantly shape themselves according to others' expectations and develop perfectionistic tendencies due to the fear of making mistakes (Soenens & Vansteenkiste, 2010; Soenens et al., 2005). In particular, maladaptive perfectionism is often observed in children of overprotective parents, and this tendency is known to drive them to pursue an ideal, flawless appearance in social settings as they grow older (Hewitt & Flett, 2002). This situation may increase the pressure to conform to societal standards of physical appearance, leading individuals to engage in excessive self-monitoring in social settings, thereby increasing SAA. Thus, perfectionism may act as a mediating variable that strengthens the relationship between overprotection and SAA. Studies highlighting the mediating role of perfectionism in the relationship

between parenting styles and different types of anxiety further support this finding (Banerjee, 2005; Wang & Yu, 2024).

On the other hand, the rejecting parenting style, characterised by criticism, lack of emotional support, emotional unavailability and conditional acceptance, may lead to sensitivity to rejection (Ibrahim et al., 2021), high levels of negative body image perceptions (Sen et al., 2020) and the pursuit of perfection in adulthood. Therefore, perfectionism is more likely to develop in children with overly critical parents (Flett et al., 1995; Frost et al., 1991). The rejecting parenting style experienced early on may lead the individual to internalise the belief that self-worth depends on meeting external standards. Rohner and Rohner (1980) noted that growing up with rejecting and overcontrolling parents can lead to overly critical thoughts about oneself and to being overly influenced by the opinions of others. This leads to over-adaptation which may increase social anxiety and appearance sensitivity. Indeed, some studies have shown that a rejecting parenting style is associated with 'socially oriented perfectionism', which refers to individuals' perception that others expect them to be perfect (Curran & Hill, 2022; Flett et al., 1995). As a result, this type of perfectionism may lead emerging adults to focus excessively on their physical appearance and increase their SAA for fear of being judged negatively in social settings (Leary & Kowalski, 1995). From another perspective, children who are exposed to overly critical, emotionally cold and lacking in compassion from parents with a rejecting parenting style may internalize this criticism and lack of compassion over time. This may inhibit the development of self-compassion and lead the individual to harshly criticise themselves and their appearance in a self-destructive way, increasing their vulnerability and causing them to be anxious and fearful in social settings. In the literature, studies demonstrating that individuals with a rejecting parenting style have low levels of self-compassion (Bakiler, 2022; Chen et al., 2020) and studies examining the relationship between self-compassion and perfectionism (Flett et al., 2023), provide evidence for this explanation.

The unexpected finding in this study that perfectionism did not play a mediating role in the relationship between perceived maternal/paternal emotional warmth and SAA. The lack of a direct relationship between parental warmth and perfectionism may explain this finding. However, previous studies have suggested that perceived parental warmth decreases maladaptive perfectionism and increases adaptive perfectionism (Hibbard & Walton, 2014; Flett et al., 1995), and the lack of expected findings may be due to the fact that both dimensions were not addressed in this study. Furthermore, the way in which parental warmth is expressed may affect perfectionism and SAA differently. If parents are supportive but emphasize success or have high expectations, perfectionism may still develop (Frost et al., 1990) and potentially contribute to the development of SAA (Wang & Yu, 2024). Different combinations of parenting styles - for example, controlling and overly demanding attitudes combined with emotional warmth - may increase or decrease SAA, with varied effects on different dimensions of perfectionism. Researchers suggest that in cases of overly warm parenting, children's ability to act independently may be weakened, leading to increased social anxiety (Van der Bruggen et al., 2010). In other words, excessive parental warmth may lead the child to seek more support in social settings and become more sensitive to others' judgements. In such situations, individuals may develop SAA by trying to maintain an idealized image in order to meet social approval standards. In summary, the influence of parenting styles is complex. Although the relationship between emotional warmth and SAA has been well documented in the literature, more research is needed to determine how emotional warmth affects perfectionism and how perfectionism, in turn, shapes this relationship.

Implications for Mental Health Practitioners

The results of this study point to a critical role for perfectionistic personality traits in the occurrence of SAA in emerging adults. As this study was conducted with university students in emerging adulthood, the findings may guide the development of preventive and intervention-based programmes within psychological counselling and guidance services in higher education. In individual or group intervention programmes, helping emerging adults to recognize their perfectionistic tendencies, to learn to base their self-worth on internal and realistic expectations rather than external standards, and to shift from destructive self-criticism to self-compassion could help to mitigate the negative effects of perfectionism. As a result, the risk of SAA may also be reduced.

The results of this study, conducted with individuals in emerging adulthood, provide clues to the long-term effects of parenting styles experienced since childhood. Given that overprotective and rejecting parenting styles are risk factors, while emotional warmth serves as a protective factor in the development of perfectionism and related SAA, implementing psychoeducation and counseling programs for parents may help them to adopt appropriate parenting styles and become aware of the long-term effects of negative parenting styles, such as overprotection and rejection, on their offspring.

Limitations of the Study and Recommendations for Future Research

This study has several limitations. Its retrospective and cross-sectional design limits understanding of the long-term effects of perceived parenting styles on perfectionism and SAA. Longitudinal studies are needed to track changes in parenting behaviors over time.

The study was conducted in a non-clinical sample, which limits the generalizability of the findings to individuals diagnosed with SAA. Future research should include clinical samples or be designed as comparative studies to gain deeper insights into the dynamics of SAA.

Data collection relied on self-report measures, making it unclear whether parental emotional warmth was unconditional or conditional, or in combination with another parenting style. To clarify this ambiguity, mixed-method research with triangulation of data should be designed.

This study did not find a significant relationship between parental emotional warmth and perfectionism, nor did it confirm the mediating role of perfectionism. Since adaptive and maladaptive aspects of perfectionism have different psychological effects (Akbağ, 2024; Bieling et al., 2004; Chang et al., 2004), not addressing both dimensions is a limitation of the study. Future research should include both dimensions for a clearer understanding of the relationships between these variables.

This study assessed perfectionism as a general trait. However, individuals may not display perfectionism across all domains of life. As researchers have increasingly emphasized (Affrunti & Woodruff-Borden, 2018; Stoeber, 2018; Stoeber & Stoeber, 2009), perfectionism should be examined in a domain-specific manner (e.g., appearance perfectionism).

To better understand the relationships between the study variables, a latent profile analysis could be conducted that includes factors such as combinations of parenting styles, number of siblings, birth order, single-parent upbringing, and parental divorce. Identifying profile types of individuals with SAA through such an analysis could provide mental health professionals with valuable guidelines for case formulation and intervention planning.

Finally, parenting styles may differ according to gender of both the child and the parent (Stephens, 2009; Yaffe, 2020). Future studies should investigate how gender moderates the relationships between the variables examined in this research.

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