



PERFECTIONISM AND ITS RELATIONSHIP WITH ANXIETY AND DEPRESSION AMONG YOUNG ADULTS

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ABSTRACT

The present study examined the relationship between perfectionism, anxiety, and depression among young adults. A correlational research design was used, and data were collected from 100 young adults aged 19–30 years in Bareilly City through random sampling. SPSS was used to analyze the data using descriptive statistics and Pearson's correlation.

The findings revealed a moderate positive correlation between perfectionism and anxiety ($r = .61$), indicating that higher levels of perfectionism were associated with higher levels of anxiety. Similarly, a moderate positive correlation was found between perfectionism and depression ($r = .60$), suggesting that individuals with greater perfectionistic tendencies experienced higher levels of depressive symptoms.

The results indicate that maladaptive perfectionism is significantly associated with psychological distress among young adults. The study highlights the importance of addressing unhealthy perfectionistic tendencies to promote better mental health and emotional well-being.

KEYWORDS: Perfectionism, Anxiety, Depression, Young Adults.

INTRODUCTION

Perfectionism is a personality trait in which individuals set very high standards for themselves and try to achieve flawlessness in everything they do. While striving for excellence can sometimes be helpful and motivating, perfectionism can also have negative effects when individuals become overly critical of themselves and fear making mistakes (Paul L. Hewitt & Gordon L. Flett, 1991; Stoeber, 2018). This type of unhealthy or maladaptive perfectionism is increasingly common among young adults, especially in today's highly competitive academic and social environment.

Young adulthood is an important stage of life marked by major transitions such as higher education, career decisions, and changes in social relationships. During this period, individuals often face high expectations from family, peers, and society. These pressures can lead young adults to develop perfectionistic tendencies, where they believe they must meet unrealistic standards to be successful or accepted (Randy O. Frost et al., 1990). As a result, they may constantly worry about their performance and fear negative evaluation from others.

Research has shown that maladaptive perfectionism is closely linked with mental health problems, particularly anxiety and depression. Anxiety may arise when individuals feel stressed about meeting their high standards (David M. Dunkley et al., 2003). Similarly, depression can develop when individuals repeatedly feel that they are not good enough or fail to meet their own expectations, resulting in feelings of hopelessness and low self-worth (Joachim Stoeber & Dirk P. Janssen, 2011). Over time, this cycle of high expectations, self-criticism, and emotional distress can significantly affect a person's well-being.

In recent years, the mental health of young adults has become a growing concern worldwide. Increasing academic competition, social comparison through social media, and uncertainty about the future have further intensified feelings of anxiety and depression (World Health Organization, 2022). In this context, understanding the role of perfectionism is important because it may act as a risk factor that worsens these mental health issues.

Therefore, the present study aims to explore the impact of perfectionism on anxiety and depression among young adults. By examining this relationship, the study seeks to contribute to a better understanding of how perfectionistic tendencies influence mental health and to highlight the need for interventions that promote healthier attitudes toward success and self-worth.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Liu and Sun (2026) investigated the relationship between perfectionism and depression among Chinese college students. Using a large sample of university students and structural equation modeling, they found that adaptive and maladaptive perfectionism influenced depression primarily through self-esteem, coping styles, and loneliness, rather than through direct effects. Self-esteem was the strongest mediator, while positive coping and loneliness contributed additional indirect pathways. The findings suggest that interventions aimed at strengthening self-esteem, promoting positive coping strategies, and reducing loneliness may help mitigate depressive symptoms in students with perfectionistic tendencies.

Chaudhary and Kewalramani (2025) reviewed the relationship between perfectionism and anxiety among college



students. The review found that maladaptive perfectionism is positively associated with anxiety among college students. The review suggests that mindfulness and family support can help reduce anxiety and the negative effects of perfectionistic tendencies.

Goswami and Baksi (2025) aimed to examine the relationship between perfectionism, anxiety, and burnout among students. The study focused on students experiencing academic pressure. Results showed that maladaptive and socially prescribed perfectionism were positively associated with higher anxiety, stress, and burnout. The findings indicate that maladaptive perfectionism negatively impacts mental health and contributes to burnout among students.

Simon et al. (2025) aimed to examine the association between adaptive and maladaptive perfectionism and bidimensional mental health among undergraduate students. The sample included 467 students from a private university in the Philippines. Results showed that High Standards positively predicted stress and life satisfaction but negatively predicted depression and meaning, while Discrepancy positively predicted depression, anxiety, and stress and negatively predicted life satisfaction. The findings indicate that maladaptive perfectionism is linked to poorer mental health, whereas adaptive perfectionism shows mixed effects on both positive and negative mental health outcomes.

Callaghan et al. (2024) examined the relationship between perfectionism and symptoms of depression, anxiety, and OCD, aiming to assess its association with psychopathology in adults. The study included 416 studies with 113,118 participants. Results showed moderate correlations for perfectionistic concerns ($r \approx .38-.43$) and small correlations for perfectionistic strivings ($r \approx .10-.21$). The findings indicate that perfectionistic concerns are more strongly linked to psychological distress, although both dimensions are associated with mental health problems.

Cuervo Gil et al. (2023) aimed to examine the relationship between perfectionism, academic stress, worry, rumination, and affective symptoms among university students. The sample included 403 students aged 18–29 years from Colombian higher education institutions. Results showed that perfectionism was positively associated with academic stress, and worry and rumination mediated the relationship between academic stress and anxiety and depression. The findings indicate that perfectionism indirectly contributes to anxiety and depressive symptoms through academic stress, worry, and rumination.

Hewitt et al. (2022) reviewed the relationship between perfectionism and depression, identifying perfectionism as a major risk factor for depressive disorders. The result found that self-oriented and socially prescribed perfectionism increase vulnerability to depression through heightened stress, self-criticism, and social disconnection. They also reported that perfectionism can interfere with psychotherapy outcomes. The review concluded that dynamic-relational treatments targeting perfectionism effectively reduce both perfectionistic tendencies and depressive symptoms.

Wright et al. (2021) examined the relationship between perfectionism and depression and anxiety in individuals with chronic fatigue syndrome (CFS/ME), aiming to assess its psychological role. The study included 7 studies (8 papers). Results showed moderate to strong positive associations between maladaptive perfectionism and depression ($r = .42-.48$), including concern over mistakes and doubts about actions. The findings indicate that maladaptive perfectionism is strongly linked to depression.

METHODOLOGY

Aim: To examine the relationship between perfectionism, anxiety, and depression among young adults.

Objective

1. To assess the levels of perfectionism, anxiety, and depression among young adults.
2. To examine the relationship between perfectionism and anxiety among young adults.
3. To examine the relationship between perfectionism and depression among young adults.

HYPOTHESES

1. There is no significant relationship between perfectionism and anxiety among young adults.
2. There is no significant relationship between perfectionism and depression among young adults.

Research Design: Correlational Design

Sample and sampling method:

We used 100 young adults in Bareilly city, aged 19 to 30, through a random sampling method.

Statistical Method

SPSS was used to examine the correlation, mean, and standard deviation.

Table 1 summarizes the relationship between anxiety and perfectionism among adults.

Variable	Perfectionism	Anxiety	N	Mean	SD
Perfectionism	1	0.61	100	13.52	3.94
Anxiety	0.61	1	100	12.64	3.73

Table 1 results revealed a positive correlation between perfectionism and anxiety ($r = 0.61$, $N = 100$). This indicates that higher levels of perfectionism are associated with higher

levels of anxiety among participants. The relationship is moderately strong, suggesting that perfectionism may be an important factor related to anxiety.



Table 2 summarizes the relationship between depression and perfectionism among adults.

Variable	Perfectionism	Depression	N	Mean	SD
Perfectionism	1	0.60	100	13.52	3.94
Depression	0.60	1	100	14.02	4.03

Table 2. Perfectionism and Fatma Pearson correlation analysis was conducted to examine the relationship between perfectionism and depression among 100 participants. The results indicated a moderate positive correlation between perfectionism and depression ($r = .60$), suggesting that higher levels of perfectionism were associated with higher levels of depression. The mean score for perfectionism was 13.52 (SD = 3.94), while the mean score for depression was 14.02 (SD = 4.03). These findings support the hypothesis that perfectionism is positively related to depression.

DISCUSSION

The present study examined the relationship between perfectionism and anxiety among 100 participants. The findings revealed a moderately strong positive correlation between perfectionism and anxiety ($r = 0.61$). This indicates that individuals with higher levels of perfectionism tend to experience higher levels of anxiety. Our study was supported by the findings of **Goswami and Baksi (2025)** that perfectionism was positively associated with higher anxiety and stress. The results suggest that excessive concern about making mistakes, meeting high standards, and striving for flawlessness may contribute to increased anxiety levels. Therefore, perfectionism appears to be an important psychological factor associated with anxiety. These findings highlight the need for awareness and interventions aimed at reducing maladaptive perfectionistic tendencies to promote better mental health and emotional well-being.

Furthermore, the present study examined the relationship between perfectionism and depression among 100 participants. The findings revealed a moderately strong positive correlation between perfectionism and depression ($r = 0.60$). This suggests that individuals with higher levels of perfectionism are more likely to experience depressive symptoms. Our findings align with the study conducted by **Wright et al. (2021)**, which found that maladaptive perfectionism is moderately positively correlated with depression. The tendency to set unrealistically high standards, engage in excessive self-criticism, and perceive personal shortcomings may contribute to increased feelings of depression. Therefore, perfectionism appears to be an important factor associated with psychological distress, including depressive symptoms. These findings highlight the importance of recognizing and addressing maladaptive perfectionistic tendencies to promote better mental health and emotional well-being.

Future Suggestions

1. Future studies may include larger and more diverse samples from different regions to improve the generalizability of the findings.
2. Researchers can examine gender, educational background, and socioeconomic status as potential factors influencing the relationship between perfectionism and mental health.

3. Longitudinal studies are recommended to better understand how perfectionism develops and affects anxiety and depression over time.
4. Future research may explore additional psychological variables such as self-esteem, resilience, coping strategies, and social support.
5. Intervention-based studies can be conducted to assess the effectiveness of counseling, cognitive-behavioral therapy, and self-compassion programs in reducing maladaptive perfectionism.

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