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Dimensions of Perfectionism on Anxiety Sensitivity among Adults

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I. INTRODUCTION

Perfectionism, as a conceptual framework, exhibits a profound intricacy owing to its multifaceted portrayal of the dynamic interplay among cognitive, emotional, motivational, and behavioural factors and processes. Its essence lies in the nuanced orchestration of these elements, manifesting in a tapestry of intricate patterns that delineate the contours of human aspiration and self-expectation. While the crystallisation of a universally embraced definition of perfectionism remains an elusive pursuit, scholars and thinkers alike have converged upon a broad consensus regarding its fundamental essence—an unwavering commitment to establishing and adhering to exceptionally lofty standards, accompanied by a relentless pursuit of their attainment. This pursuit is not merely a matter of external validation but encompasses an internal journey characterised by an intense preoccupation with the meticulous calibration of one's efforts towards the realisation of these standards. It is within this labyrinth of self-imposed demands and aspirations that the paradox of perfectionism unfolds, wherein the pursuit of excellence becomes both a beacon of aspiration and a crucible of psychological turmoil.

One well-studied model of multidimensional perfectionism is that proposed by Hewitt and Flett (1991). In their model, perfectionism is understood in terms of the direction of perfectionistic beliefs and behaviours. When directed toward the self, individuals attach irrational importance to being perfect, hold unrealistic ex- pectations of themselves, and are punitive in their self-evaluations (self-oriented perfectionism). When perceived to come from others, individuals believe their social context is excessively demanding, that others judge them harshly, and that they must display perfection to secure approval (socially prescribed perfectionism). When perfectionistic expectations are directed toward others, in- dividuals impose unrealistic standards on those around them and evaluate others critically (other-oriented perfectionism).

This model was developed at a time when approaches to perfectionism were unidimensional and focused on only intrapersonal conceptu- alizations of perfectionism (i.e., self-oriented perfectionism). In this regard, the model offered, and continues to offer, an important advancement in that both intrapersonal and interpersonal expres- sions of perfectionism can be studied (i.e., socially prescribed and other-oriented perfectionism).

Frost, Marten, Lahart, and Rosenblate (1990) offered a different multidimensional perspective of perfectionism. They identified six dimensions of perfectionism and also developed a Multidimensional Perfectionism Scale to tap the dimensions of high personal standards, concerns about meeting parental expectations, doubts about one's actions, preference for organisation and order, excessive concern about making mistakes, and parental criticism. According to Frost et al. (1990), perfectionists are often excessively self-critical as well. Many researchers have found associations between perfectionism and a number of problems, including anxiety, depression, procrastination, low self-esteem and poor adjustment (Castro & Rice, 2003).

Hamachek (1978) argued that perfectionism can be normal and that the striving associated with it may lead to positive adjustment. He described "normal perfectionism" as striving for realistic standards from which a sense of pleasure is derived when results are achieved and self-esteem is enhanced (Blackburn, 2003). In contrast, Hamachek also described "neurotic perfectionism". This is when an individual strives for excessive and unrealistically high standards, and is overly critical and evaluative of their own behaviour. They are motivated by a fear of failure and are unable to feel satisfaction if even the tiniest flaw occurs. They also experience uncertainty and anxiety about their own capabilities (Flett & Hewitt, 2002). Hamachek distinguished between normal and neurotic perfectionism proposing that normal perfectionists enjoy their arduous pursuit of their goals while neurotic perfectionists continually strive for achievement of their unrealistic high standards without ever gaining a sense of satisfaction from their accomplishments (Tashman, 2005). Summarily, perfectionism has been described as a form of over conscientiousness or hyper conscientiousness (Flett & Hewitt, 2006). The characteristics of negative and positive perfectionism as a personal trait could be investigated in any organisation.

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Through a literature review, it was hypothesised that there are six dimensions making up the construct of multidimensional perfectionism which are:

1) A tendency to react negatively when mistakes occur and to view mistakes as failures (concern over mistakes),
2) A tendency to doubt the quality of one's performance (doubts about actions),
3) A tendency to set very high standards and place excessive importance on these for self-evaluation (personal standards),
4) a tendency to perceive one's parents as having high expectations (parental expectations),
5) A tendency to perceive one's parents as being overly critical (parental criticism) and
6) A tendency to emphasise the importance of order and organisation (organisation).

Perfectionism, delineated as a relatively stable personality trait, encapsulates the inclination towards establishing lofty personal standards and the relentless pursuit of flawless execution. Hewitt and Flett thought that perfectionism embodies an ardent quest for flawlessness, a pursuit that, in its most extreme manifestations, permeates every facet of one's existence. Conversely, Burns thought that perfectionism universally embodies non-adaptive and undesirable traits, irrespective of contextual nuances. However, contemporary discourse reflects a divergence of opinions, with some authors vehemently challenging the notion that perfectionism can ever be construed as positive, healthy, or functional—arguing instead that it inherently predisposes individuals to maladaptive patterns of behaviour. Amidst this intellectual milieu, a consensus emerges regarding the enduring nature of perfectionism as a stable trait, impervious to fluctuations in one's emotional state. This assertion finds validation in empirical studies, which attest to the resilience of perfectionism as a pervasive aspect of an individual's psychological makeup, exerting its influence irrespective of transient emotional fluctuations. Thus, within the evolving discourse surrounding perfectionism, divergent perspectives converge upon the recognition of its enduring nature as a salient component of the human psyche.

Alfred Adler spoke about the innate aspiration for perfection, which is the main driving force of personality development. In the seventies and eighties, perfectionism was generally considered negative trait and in this period of time it was mainly associated with poor outcomes (low self-esteem, procrastination, guilt, shame and feelings of failure) or psychopathological phenomena (addictions, depression, anorexia, personality disorders).

During the nineties, perfectionism was mostly described as a multidimensional construct, so accordingly, new perfectionism scales were multidimensional too. Factor analysis of these tests showed that all dimensions may be reduced to two factors: one was related to positive aspirations, and the other was related to maladaptive evaluation concerns.

Slade and Owens discern a nuanced dichotomy within the construct of perfectionism, delineating between positive perfectionism, stemming from an aspirational drive towards success, and negative perfectionism, rooted in a pervasive fear of failure. This conceptualization parallels Hamachek's classification of perfectionism into normal and neurotic variants, further elucidating the multifaceted nature of this psychological trait. While positive perfectionism embodies a constructive pursuit of excellence, negative perfectionism is fraught with apprehension and self-doubt, casting a shadow over one's endeavours. This dichotomy underscores the diverse manifestations of perfectionism, each bearing distinct implications for psychological well-being and adaptive functioning. Moreover, a plethora of studies have unveiled the multifaceted associations between perfectionism and an array of problems and phenomena, further accentuating the intricate interplay between this trait and various aspects of human experience. Thus, within the expansive domain of psychological inquiry, the nuanced nuances of perfectionism continue to be unravelled, offering profound insights into its manifold manifestations and implications for individual flourishing.

The association of perfectionism with deleterious outcomes is a recurrent theme in scholarly discourse, as individuals ensnared within its relentless grasp often find themselves entangled in a web of heightened stress and pervasive discontentment. This affliction stems from their steadfast dedication to meticulously scrutinising their performance, a relentless pursuit that invariably magnifies perceived flaws and amplifies self-critical tendencies. Indeed, the quintessential perfectionist is characterised by an unwavering commitment to exacting standards, accompanied by a heightened state of anxiety that serves as an ever-present companion on their quest for flawlessness. While the historical acknowledgment of the nexus between perfectionism and anxiety is indisputable, contemporary research has shed further light on this intricate relationship, revealing a notably more robust correlation, particularly within the domain of maladaptive perfectionism. In this contemporary paradigm, the symbiotic intertwining of perfectionism and anxiety engenders a cycle of psychological distress, wherein the relentless pursuit of unattainable ideals becomes a harbinger of perpetual discontentment and existential angst.

Numerous studies contend that individuals oriented towards perfectionism evince a proclivity for meticulously scrutinising their performance, predominantly fixating on the negative aspects thereof, consequently yielding little satisfaction. Furthermore, it has been consistently observed that perfectionists tend to harbour self-critical tendencies concomitant with heightened anxiety.

While the longstanding acknowledgment of a nexus between perfectionism and anxiety prevails, recent scholarship underscores a notably heightened association, particularly concerning maladaptive perfectionism. Schuler's findings underscore this escalation, revealing a discernibly elevated level of anxiety experienced by individuals entrenched within maladaptive perfectionist tendencies. Delving deeper into the role of perfectionism within the realm of psychopathology unveils its multifaceted conceptualization, wherein maladaptive perfectionists, ensnared by unrealistic standards and unattainable goals, invariably succumb to feelings of anxiety, depression, and pervasive inadequacy. Presently, the prevailing consensus acknowledges the composite nature of perfectionism, characterised by both personal and interpersonal components, each exhibiting varying degrees of association with an array of phenomena, including but not limited to depression, anxiety, suicidality, personality disorders, and the endorsement of irrational beliefs. Scholarly investigations have further illuminated the profound impact of maladaptive perfectionism, elucidating its role in elucidating up to 40% of the variance observed in trait anxiety, with additional studies corroborating a significant correlation between maladaptive perfectionism and elevated anxiety levels. A notable study involving 223 middle school students corroborated this assertion, establishing a robust correlation between the maladaptive perfectionist style and heightened anxiety levels.

Anxiety, a pervasive facet of the human psyche, often precipitates from the anticipation of impending threats. Characterised as a state of apprehension, the term "anxious" carries with it connotations of deep-seated worry and palpable tension. It is within the crucible of stress that anxiety finds fertile ground, germinating into a multifaceted phenomenon that permeates various domains of human experience, encompassing the physical, emotional, cognitive, and behavioural spectrums. Central to the nuanced landscape of anxiety is the concept of anxiety sensitivity, a construct that elucidates the variability in individuals' susceptibility to pervasive fearfulness and their propensity towards distinct anxiety disorders, including panic disorder, social anxiety disorder, specific phobias, and posttraumatic stress disorder. Those harbouring heightened anxiety sensitivity are prone to fixate more intently on the somatic manifestations of arousal during periods of heightened distress, thereby exacerbating the overall magnitude of their anxiety experience. This intricate interplay between individual predispositions and environmental stressors underscores the intricate tapestry of factors contributing to the genesis and perpetuation of anxiety-related phenomena.

In situations of heightened stress, the emergence of anxiety is a common occurrence, characterised by a myriad of manifestations spanning the realms of physical, emotional, cognitive, and behavioural domains. From an evolutionary standpoint, anxiety serves a crucial function, augmenting awareness of potential threats to one's safety, thereby facilitating adaptive responses in the face of adversity. Nevertheless, an excessive or chronic manifestation of anxiety can precipitate a significant burden, impeding the individual's capacity to execute even routine tasks essential for daily functioning. When viewed through this lens, the intricate interplay between stress and anxiety unveils a delicate equilibrium, wherein the adaptive mechanisms of anxiety are juxtaposed against the potential determinants of its disproportionate or prolonged expression, underscoring the nuanced complexities inherent in the human experience of psychological distress.

Within the realm of pathological perfectionism, two principal components stand out prominently: elevated performance expectations and maladaptive self-appraisal. Individuals harbouring heightened performance expectations tend to employ stringent criteria in assessing their own achievements. These standards, whether self-imposed or adopted from external sources, serve as the benchmarks against which their worthiness is gauged. Central to the construct of maladaptive self-appraisal is a pervasive sense of personal inadequacy, accompanied by neurotic self-doubt, thereby fostering a debilitating cycle of self-criticism. Moreover, this maladaptive self-appraisal system operates as a catalyst for magnifying even the minutest of behavioural errors, thereby engendering a profound sense of internal anxiety. Thus, within the intricate tapestry of pathological perfectionism, these twin pillars of elevated performance expectations and maladaptive self-appraisal intertwine to forge a formidable barrier to psychological well-being, perpetuating a cycle of relentless self-scrutiny and profound existential angst.

There were also reports found that individuals predisposed to heightened anxiety levels exhibit a distinct characteristic known as anxiety sensitivity, which manifests as an acute apprehension towards their own experience of fear. This phenomenon is emblematic of a profound fear of anxiety itself, constituting what is often considered a cornerstone within the pantheon of human fears. Anxiety sensitivity, in its essence, encapsulates a profound aversion towards the experience of anxiety, thereby catalysing a propensity to avoid behaviours and situations perceived as potential triggers. Delving deeper into its nuanced conceptualization, anxiety sensitivity can be delineated as an intricate interplay between the dread of anxiety-related bodily sensations and a pervasive belief in the dire ramifications that these sensations may precipitate. This cognitive distortion amplifies the perceived threat posed by somatic, social, or psychological manifestations of anxiety, engendering a profound sense of trepidation that permeates various facets of the individual's lived experience. Consequently, this heightened sensitivity to anxiety serves as a formidable impediment to psychological well-being, constraining individuals within a labyrinth of avoidance behaviours and perpetuating a cycle of debilitating apprehension.

When individuals grappling with heightened anxiety find themselves ensnared in the throes of distress, they invariably direct a heightened focus towards the myriad sensations associated with arousal, thus perpetuating a cycle of escalating anxiety. This phenomenon is underscored by empirical evidence which delineates that individuals afflicted with diverse manifestations of anxiety disorders exhibit a heightened propensity towards anxiety sensitivity in contrast to their non-affected counterparts. Moreover, a salient correlation emerges between the intensity of one's current anxiety levels and the subsequent likelihood of manifesting future symptoms of anxiety, thereby elucidating the intricate interplay between present distress and future vulnerability within the realm of anxiety-related pathology. Within this complex framework, the relentless amplification of anxiety sensitivity emerges as a potent catalyst, exacerbating the individual's susceptibility to a myriad of psychological afflictions and impeding the attainment of psychological equilibrium.

Recently Ellis & Flett ventured further into the intricate realm of perfectionism, positing that individuals entrenched within its confines are predisposed to elevated levels of anxiety sensitivity. This assertion is rooted in the all-encompassing nature of perfectionist tendencies, wherein an unforgiving dichotomy between perfection and imperfection prevails. Within this rigid dichotomy, the belief emerges that one must attain a state of flawless perfection, unblemished by even the slightest hint of panic or discomfort. As the discomfort arising from panic sensations becomes increasingly palpable, this belief is thrust into the forefront of the perfectionist's cognitive landscape, serving as a catalyst for heightened anxiety sensitivity. Moreover, it is imperative to acknowledge the intertwined dynamics of neuroticism, maladaptive perfectionism, and self-criticism within the intricate fabric of anxiety pathology. Indeed, empirical evidence underscores the pivotal role played by these constructs in perpetuating the cycle of anxiety, underscoring their intricate interplay with the perfectionist mindset. Furthermore, scholarly discourse has illuminated the association between perfectionism and the behavioural inhibition system, wherein perfectionists exhibit a heightened sensitivity to signals of punishment and non-reward. This fearful sensitivity underscores the pervasive apprehension that permeates the perfectionist's psyche, engendering a profound aversion towards perceived threats to their coveted ideals of flawlessness and unattainable standards of achievement. Thus, within the intricate tapestry of anxiety pathology, the fusion of perfectionism with neuroticism and self-criticism serves as a potent catalyst, perpetuating a cycle of psychological distress and impeding the individual's quest for psychological well-being.

While the notion of a link between anxiety sensitivity and perfectionism appears plausible, the current landscape of research investigating this intricate connection remains somewhat sparse. Notably, Cox et al. undertook a study elucidating the influence of personality variables on major depression and panic disorders, shedding light on the direct nexus between perfectionism and anxiety sensitivity. This empirical revelation aligns seamlessly with broader evidence attesting to the pivotal role played by social-evaluative concerns within the perfectionist paradigm. Indeed, the pervasive fear of negative evaluation emerges as a salient hallmark of anxiety sensitivity, further corroborating the intricate interplay between these psychological constructs. However, it is imperative to underscore the dearth of comprehensive research delving into the depths of this association, thereby necessitating further inquiry and exploration to unravel the complexities inherent in the intersection of anxiety sensitivity and perfectionism. Within this evolving discourse, the revelations gleaned from Cox et al.'s study serve as a catalyst for deeper investigation, beckoning scholars to delve into the nuanced intricacies of this intriguing relationship and its implications for our understanding of psychological well-being.

While an ostensible correlation between anxiety sensitivity and perfectionism is acknowledged, the existing body of research probing this intricate association within the collegiate demographic remains somewhat circumscribed. This lacuna in scholarly exploration underscores the imperative for a deeper interrogation into the multifaceted dynamics at play. Recognizing the profound ramifications inherent in comprehending the nuanced interplay between anxiety sensitivity and perfectionist inclinations, the primary objective of the present inquiry extends beyond mere cursory examination. Rather, it endeavours to embark upon a comprehensive scrutiny, meticulously dissecting the potential substantive relationship between the myriad facets of perfectionism and the proclivity towards heightened anxiety sensitivity. In this ambitious quest for elucidation, the inquiry adopts a multifaceted approach, endeavouring to encapsulate the diverse dimensions of perfectionist tendencies and their concomitant impact on anxiety sensitivity. Through a concerted effort to amass empirical evidence, the inquiry aspires to transcend the confines of conjecture and speculation, instead aiming to furnish tangible insights that not only enrich theoretical comprehension but also hold pragmatic significance within the context of academic settings. By shedding light on the prevailing levels of anxiety sensitivity pervasive among college students, this endeavour seeks to offer actionable insights that resonate far beyond the realm of academia, permeating various facets of societal discourse and fostering a deeper understanding of the intricate interplay between psychological constructs.

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II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Alicia K Handley, Sarah J Egan, et al, (2014) conducted a study, Perfectionism, Pathological worry and Generalised Anxiety Disorder. The study explored the utility of perfectionism in predicting pathological worry in a sample of individuals with elevated perfectionism and GAD ($n = 36$). Following this, the study examined whether perfectionism could predict a principal GAD diagnosis in the full sample ($n = 42$). The scores on the perfectionism dimensions Concern over Mistakes, Personal Standards, and Clinical Perfectionism significantly predicted pathological worry among participants with GAD after controlling for gender and depression. The perfectionism dimension Doubts about Actions significantly predicted whether individuals from the full sample received a principal diagnosis of GAD. These findings support certain dimensions of perfectionism having significant associations with pathological worry and GAD.

Raspopovic Milena (2015) conducted a study on The Connection between Perfectionism and Anxiety among University Students. The aim of this research was to examine if there is any correlation between perfectionism and anxiety, what is its level and direction. Also, to examine if there are any gender differences regarding these two personality traits.They used a Systematic non-experimental research. The study involved 202 students of Belgrade University, 158 girls (78%) and 44 boys (22%). Perfectionism level was measured with Multidimensional Perfectionism Scale, by Frost et al., while anxiety was measured with the Endler Multidimensional Anxiety Scale - Trait. Statistical analysis included Pearson correlation and t-test of independent samples. The results show moderate positive correlation between anxiety and perfectionism (r = 0.29, p= 0.01), and slightly higher positive correlation between anxiety and negative aspects of perfectionism (r=0.40, p = 0.01). There is a gender difference shown in anxiety level between female and male students, i.e. Girls have shown significantly higher anxiety levels than boys (t= 3.39, p < 0.01, n=0.05). Regarding per-fectionism, only significant gender difference was on the sub dimension of doubt about the action (t = 2.11, p =0.04, n° = 0.02), showing girls as more likely to express this trait than boys. It was concluded that more anxious persons are more perfectionists (especially negative perfectionists) than those who are less anxious. Also, the results describe female students as generally more anxious than male students.

Meng Zhao, Jia Xin Li, et al, (2022) conducted a study on The Effect of Perfectionism on test anxiety and the mediating role of sense of coherence in adolescent students. This study employed a sample of Chinese junior high school students as participants to examine the longitudinal relationship between perfectionism, sense of coherence, and test anxiety. 427 Chinese junior high school students (212 girls, 215 boys) participated in all three measurement times. The Frost Multidimensional Perfectionism scale, sense of coherence scale (SOC), and Test Anxiety scale were administered to the participants. Results from structural equation modelling indicated that negative perfectionism significantly contributed to test anxiety in the adolescent students. The lagged effect of perfectionism (T1) on SOC (T2) was significant, and the lagged effect of SOC (T2) on test anxiety (T3) was significant, indicating that SOC played a significant mediating role in the effect of perfectionism on test anxiety. The longitudinal effects of negative perfectionism on test anxiety were mediated by sense of coherence. The findings of the study have general implications for mitigating test anxiety and improving school adjustment and academic achievement.

Fernández-García O, Gil-Llario MD, et al, (2023) conducted a study on Academic perfectionism, psychological well-being, and suicidal ideation in college students. This study aims to analyze the implication of perfectionism in psychological well-being and suicidal ideation in the last year. A total of 1.287 students from different degrees reported their academic performance in the previous academic year and completed questionnaires on academic perfectionism, psychological well-being, and suicidal thoughts in the last year. In both men and women, academic perfectionism correlates positively with academic performance and negatively with the different dimensions of psychological well-being. Likewise, both the average grade in the previous year ($\beta = 0.364$) and the level of demand of the degree ($\beta = -0.461$) are mediating variables between perfectionism and psychological well-being. Furthermore, the interaction between perfectionism and academic performance is related positively to psychological well-being, but not to with suicidal ideation. So, the relation between suicidal ideation and perfectionism is positive (OR = 1.075), but this is negative with academic performance (OR = 0.900), although both variables show a mild predictive capacity. These findings suggest that the levels of perfectionism are associated differently with the mental health of students, since if perfectionism is effective (high academic performance), psychological well-being is high, although in our results, this interaction is not as important for suicidal thoughts.

Liv Sand, Tormot Boe, et al, (2021) conducted a study of Perfectionism in Adolescence: associations with gender, age and socio-economic status in a Norwegian sample. This study investigated perfectionism among adolescents from the general population in relation to demographic factors. The study is cross-sectional and draws on the epidemiological study. The sample consisted of 10.217 adolescents aged 16–19 years (52.9% girls).

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Self-reported perfectionism was assessed by the EDI-P scale from the Eating Disorder Inventory with two dimensions of perfectionism, namely self-oriented (SOP) and socially prescribed (SPP) perfectionism, and a total score. Perfectionism was analysed in relation to age, gender, and socioeconomic status (SES) by perceived economic well-being and parental education level. Chi-squared tests, *t*-tests, and regression analyses were performed. The results found that the levels of perfectionism were relatively similar between the genders, besides slightly higher SPP among girls than boys. There were also significantly more girls than boys among the high scores on overall perfectionism. Higher perfectionism was related to SES for perceived economic well-being, but not for parental education level. Implications for further research and clinical interventions were suggested.

Thomas Curran & Andrew P. Hill, (2019) conducted a study, Perfectionism Is Increasing Over Time: A Meta-Analysis of Birth Cohort Differences From 1989 to 2016. In this study, the authors examine whether cultural changes have coincided with an increase in multidimensional perfectionism in college students over the last 27 years. Their analyses are based on 164 samples and 41,641 American, Canadian, and British college students, who completed the Multidimensional Perfectionism Scale (Hewitt & Flett, 1991) between 1989 and 2016 (70.92% female, Mage 20.66). Cross-temporal meta-analysis revealed that levels of self- oriented perfectionism, socially prescribed perfectionism, and other-oriented perfectionism have linearly increased. These trends remained when controlling for gender and between-country differences in perfectionism scores. Overall, in order of magnitude of the observed increase, the findings indicate that recent generations of young people perceive that others are more demanding of them, are more demanding of others, and are more demanding of themselves.

Fatemeh Jadidi, Shahram Mohammadkhani, Komeil Zahedi Tajrishi, et al, (2011) conducted a study, Perfectionism and Academic Performance. The study explored the relationships between perfectionism and academic procrastination. 200 students (92 males, 108 females) were selected from universities in the city of Tehran through multistage cluster-random sampling. All subjects were asked to complete the following questionnaires: Multidimensional Perfectionism Scale and Procrastination Assessment Scale-Students (PASS; Solomon & Rothblum,1984). Three dimensions and total scores of perfectionism (concern over mistakes, parental criticism, and doubts about actions) were found to be positively and significantly correlated with academic procrastination and organisation dimension negatively and significantly correlated with it. In other words, individuals with higher scores in perfectionism revealed more academic procrastination in comparison with individuals with lower scores. The findings provide preliminary support for the role of perfectionism in the maintenance of academic procrastination.

Yuzheng Wang, Jing Chen, Yabin Sun, et al, (2022) conducted a study, The Relationship between Perfectionism and Social Anxiety: A Moderated Mediation Model. The study investigated the possible mediation of perceived stress in the relationship between perfectionism and social anxiety, and whether this mediation depends on the level of trait mindfulness. A total of 425 college students (female: 82.9%; mean age: M = 19.90 ± 1.06 years old) completed the Multidimensional Perfectionism Scale (MPS), the Chinese Perceived Stress Scale (CPSS), the Interaction Anxiousness Scale (IAS), and the Five-Facet Mindfulness Questionnaire (FFMQ). After controlling for age and gender, the moderated mediation analysis suggested that perfectionism significantly and positively predicted social anxiety and that perceived stress mediated the link between perfectionism and social anxiety. In addition, the indirect effect of perfectionism on social anxiety was moderated by trait mindfulness. Specifically, the indirect effect was weaker among the individuals with a high level of mindfulness compared to those with a low level of mindfulness. The findings of this study suggest that trait mindfulness significantly moderates the indirect effect of perfectionism on social anxiety via perceived stress.

Hamid Afshar, Hamidreza Roohafza, Masoumeh Sadeghi, et al, (2011) conducted a study, Positive and negative perfectionism and their relationship with anxiety and depression in Iranian school students. Their study used multistage cluster random sampling; 793 Iranian school students in 2007 were studied. Data of demographic characteristics, children's depression inventory, revised children's manifest anxiety scale, and the positive and negative perfectionism scales were obtained using questionnaires. The results indicated that both aspects of perfectionism are associated with depression and anxiety. Negative and positive perfectionism have positive and negative associations, respectively, with depression and anxiety. The interaction of anxiety and depression with perfectionism reveals that depression is in association with lower scores of positive perfectionism, whereas in students with higher scores of negative perfectionism, the anxiety scores are also higher. Moreover, the accompaniment of anxiety with depression is in association with relatively lower levels of negative perfectionism. It was concluded that negative perfectionism is a risk factor for both depression and anxiety, while positive perfectionism is a protective factor. However, the interventions which encourage the positive aspects of perfectionism and decrease its negative aspects may be able to diminish psychopathological subsequence.

Nabi Nazari, (2022) conducted a study, Perfectionism and mental health problems: Limitations and directions for future research. This research has indicated that perfectionism is prevalent among adolescents and may be harmful in terms of its association with mental health problems.

This letter aims to create a paradigm for future studies of perfectionism. Specifically, they suggest gaps and implications that must be considered at perfectionism in future research in terms of assessments, interventions, settings, potential treatments, gender, and social media.

Kelly B. Filipkowski, Alicia H. Nordstrom, Triet Pham, et al, (2021) conducted a study on The Impact of Perfectionism on Mental, Social and Physical Health of Graduate Students in the Health Sciences. Their study hypothesised that the diverse perfectionism components would predict well-being outcomes of similar valence. The current study investigated perfectionism and mental, social, and physical health outcomes of graduate students in health science disciplines, across two semesters, utilising two approaches in our empirical analysis. They first examined the continuous relationships between perfectionistic strivings, perfectionistic concerns, and health-related outcomes of graduate students.

Additionally, they assessed differences between three perfectionism groups (i.e., adaptive, maladaptive, or non-perfectionist) on these well-being outcomes. Results indicated that generally, adaptive perfectionism was related to better mental health, quality of life, and social functioning; maladaptive perfectionism was related to worse outcomes. The groups, however, did not statistically differ in general physical health. Overall, their results support a conceptualization of perfectionism that is differentially related to graduate student well-being. Thus, supportive networks may be fostered by differentiating between adaptive and maladaptive features of perfectionism. Moreover, they highlighted the need for further discussion relative to determining perfectionism in high-achieving populations, in particular, graduate students in the health sciences.

Tingting Fang & Fan Liu, (2022) conducted a study, A Review on Perfectionism. It describes Perfectionism as a personality trait that strives for high standards of performance and is accompanied by a tendency to critically evaluate oneself, which is closely related to individual mental health and has a profound impact on individuals' work, study and life. Nevertheless, there are controversies in its nature and characters and whether its impact on mental health is positive or negative still exists in the domain of perfectionism, calling for further discussions. The article identifies key findings in the perfectionism literature, reviews and summarises the current state of perfectionism research, including the conceptual dimensions of perfectionism, the cluster of perfectionism, and the negative and positive effects of perfectionism on mental health. Finally, several future research directions were discussed.

Danielle M. Andrews, Lawrence R Burns, et al, (2014) conducted a study on Positive Perfectionism: Seeking the Healthy "Should", or Should We?. Using a prospective design they examined the nomological network of positive and negative perfectionism by considering relations with optimism, pessimism, neuroticism, conscientiousness, and variables of health and psychological well-being. Positive perfectionism was found to have a large amount of variance in common with optimism and conscientiousness and negative perfectionism was found to share a large amount of variance with pessimism and neuroticism, but not enough to be considered redundant in either case. Importantly, both positive and negative perfectionism were found to add significant incremental validity to the prediction of the criterion measures even after controlling for the influence of time on variables. Implications of these findings for future research on perfectionism are discussed.

Hahna Patterson, Casey Mace Firebough, Tara Rava, et al, (2021) conducted a study, A Systematic Review on the Psychological Effects of Perfectionism and Accompanying Treatment. The purpose of this study was to investigate the psychological and physical impacts of maladaptive perfectionism on individuals and best practices for accompanying treatment. A systematic review was performed to search, review, analyse, and synthesise the existing literature. Suggestions for practical treatment recommendations and potential areas of further inquiry are offered. PRISMA checklist was utilised for inclusion in the review and 118 articles met search criteria. The broader emerging themes were: aetiology and progression, psychological consequences of perfectionism, and available treatments. Concerns related to the multitude of downstream psychological impacts are highlighted, including the emerging evidence regarding perfectionism as both a primary and secondary disorder along with current and emerging interventions.

Paola Spagnoli, Carmela Buono, Anna Esposito, et al, (2020) conducted a study on Perfectionism and Burnout during COVID-19 Crisis: A two-wave Cross-Lagged Study. The current study aims at examining the relationship between the perfectionism two-factor model (i.e., concerns and strivings) and burnout dimensions measured by using the BAT (Burnout Assessment Tool) through a longitudinal study. A two-wave cross-lagged study was conducted using path analysis in SEM (Structural Equation Modelling) of 191 workers. Results confirmed the predictive role of perfectionistic concerns on the burnout dimensions, whereas perfectionistic strivings were not significantly related, suggesting that perfectionism should be monitored by employers and clinicians to prevent employee burnout. Limitations and future research directions are envisaged.

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Malikeh Beheshtifar, Fateme Mazrae-Sefidi, et al, (2011) conducted a study on Role of Perfectionism at Workplace. This study talks about how Perfectionism has been receiving attention in personality psychology for many years, but only a handful of studies have investigated the effects of perfectionism in a normal workplace. Perfectionism is considered a stable pattern of thinking and behaviour that changes relatively little over time. The distinction between positive and negative perfectionism is grounded in behavioural theory, where a similar behaviour might be associated with different emotional responses depending on whether it is a function of positive or negative reinforcement. In the professional and corporate world, perfectionism is regularly thought of by managers and employees alike as a positive trait which enables an employee to strive toward a perfect performance/product. However, there is a "dark side" of perfectionism, typically explored in and attributed to clinical populations. The "dark side" could lead to behaviours typically associated with clinical disorders, such as depression, health problems and severe stress. Although there is not yet a model of perfectionism in the workplace, the results will help managers and human resource management practices.

Martin M. Smith, Donald H. Saklofske, Gonggu Yan, et al, (2017) conducted a study, Does Perfectionism Predict Depression, Anxiety, Stress and Life Satisfaction After Controlling For Neuroticism. This study shows how Neuroticism overlaps substantially with several perfectionism dimensions, depression, anxiety, stress, and life satisfaction. Accordingly, research testing whether perfectionism dimensions explain unique variance in these outcomes beyond neuroticism is needed. Research on cultural differences in perfectionism is also scarce. And it is especially unclear whether the link between perfectionism and psychological distress differs across individualistic and collectivistic cultures. The study addressed these important gaps in knowledge. A sample of undergraduates from a traditionally individualistic culture (Canada; N = 449) and a traditionally collectivistic culture (China; N = 585) completed measures of self-oriented perfectionism, personal standards, socially prescribed perfectionism, concern over mistakes, doubts about actions, depression, anxiety, stress, and satisfaction with life. To test the incremental validity of perfectionism dimensions beyond neuroticism, as well as to test potential moderating effects of culture, four hierarchical regression analyses with interactions were conducted. Results supported the explanatory power of concern over mistakes and doubts about actions, beyond neuroticism and culture, in the prediction of depression, anxiety, and stress.

Jessica Lunn, Danyelle Greene, Thomas Callaghan, et al, (2023) conducted a study, Association between Perfectionism and symptoms of Anxiety, Obsessive Compulsive Disorder and Depression in Young People: A Meta Analysis. This study is about how Perfectionism is a transdiagnostic process contributing to the onset and maintenance of anxiety, obsessive-compulsive disorder (OCD) and depression. The aim of this systematic review and meta-analysis was to examine the association between perfectionism, and symptoms of anxiety, OCD and depression among young people aged 6–24 years. A systematic literature search retrieved a total of 4,927 articles, with 121 studies included (M = ~17.70 years). Perfectionistic concerns demonstrated significant moderate pooled correlations with symptoms of anxiety (r = .37–.41), OCD (r = .42), and depression (r = .40). Perfectionistic strivings demonstrated significant, small correlations with symptoms of anxiety (r = .05) and OCD (r = .19). The findings highlight the substantial link between perfectionistic concerns and psychopathology in young people, and to a smaller extent perfectionistic strivings, anxiety, and OCD. The results indicate the importance of further research on early intervention for perfectionism to improve youth mental health.

III. METHODOLOGY

A. *Statement of the Problem*

This study is to be conducted on the college going students of India to examine if there is any correlation between perfectionism and anxiety.

B. *Defining Key Concepts*

1) Perfectionism is defined as “striving for flawlessness, and setting exceedingly high standards for performance, accompanied by tendencies for overly critical evaluations”
2) Anxiety sensitivity is an intense fear of arousal related, bodily sensations, arising from dysfunctional beliefs about the meaning of consequences of the sensations.

C. *Variables*

Perfectionism
Anxiety Sensitivity

D. Inclusion Criteria

1) College going students in India.
2) Adults as per WHO i.e. 19 and above.

E. Exclusion Criteria

Students of different nationalities other than India.

F. Objectives of the Study

To study the relationship between Perfectionism and Anxiety Sensitivity among College students in India.

G. Research Design

Correlational Quantitative method

H. Hypothesis

There is a significant relationship between dimensions of perfectionism and anxiety sensitivity

I. Sample and Techniques

1) Population- College Students in India.
2) Sample- Adults i.e., 19 years and above as per World Health Organization(WHO)
3) Sampling Techniques- This study will be using a convenient sampling technique for sampling purposes. The rationale behind employing a convenient sampling technique for the study is to obtain multiple opinions from the population. This technique also avoids administration of unnecessary biases as the participants are randomly selected from a large group population which provides the individuals the equal probability of being selected from a larger group and in turn creates a balanced set of sample population from a group. This technique is also simple to apply as the name suggests and is less complicated as compared to the other sampling methods.

J. Tools for the Study

1) Frost Multidimensional Perfectionism Scale (FMPS)

It was developed by Randy O. Frost, Patricia Martin, Cathleen Lahart, and Robin Rosenblate to measure perfectionism. The FMPS is a 35-item instrument designed to measure the several components of perfectionism. Since few if any existing measures tap all major dimensions of perfectionism, the FMPS was developed.

Reliability: The FMPS has good to excellent reliability, with alphas that range from .77 to .93 for the subscales. The alpha for the total scale was .90. No test-retest data were provided.

Validity: The FMPS has good concurrent validity, significantly correlating with three other perfectionism scales, the BURNS, EDI, and IBT. The overall FMPS and/or several of its subscales have good construct validity, correlating with a variety of measures of psychopathology including the Brief Symptom Inventory, the Depressive Experiences Questionnaire, several measures of compulsivity and with procrastination.

2) Anxiety Sensitivity Index

The anxiety sensitivity index ASI was developed by Stephen Reiss et al in 1986 to validate the concept of anxiety sensitivity. The scale has 16 items specifying a possible negative consequence to the experience of anxiety. These consequences include additional anxiety or fear, illness, embarrassment, and loss of control.

The Anxiety Sensitivity Index (ASI) is a widely used psychological assessment tool designed to measure the degree to which individuals are fearful of anxiety-related symptoms. The ASI is based on the concept of "anxiety sensitivity," which refers to the fear of sensations associated with anxiety itself. In other words, some people may experience heightened concern or distress about the physical, cognitive, and social consequences of anxious feelings, fearing that these symptoms may lead to adverse outcomes like loss of control, public embarrassment, or severe medical conditions.

K. Statistical techniques to be used to analyse the data

Pearson's Correlation Coefficient.

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1: Correlations of Perfectionism and Anxiety

Variables	r	Sig. (2 tailed)	N
Perfectionism	1	.000	400
Anxiety	.512**	.000	400

- There is a strong significant correlation between Perfectionism and Anxiety

Table 2: Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.512	.263	.261	11.173

- R value is greater than 0.4 which indicates that it is a good influence and the model of regression is good to analyze further.
- R Square and Adjusted R Square are not significant indicating that the variables have greater impact in the study.

V. DISCUSSION

This study investigated whether dimensions of perfectionism were associated with anxiety sensitivity. In this manner, concern over mistakes, personal standards, parental expectations, parental criticism, doubts about actions and organization, dimensions of perfectionism were associated with anxiety sensitivity. These findings suggested that the six dimensions of perfectionism are associated with anxiety sensitivity among adults and it can be said that the dimensions of perfectionism are important factors that impact anxiety sensitivity level of adults. As seen in Table 1, meaningful connections were found between perfectionism and anxiety sensitivity. Similar results were found in a study by (Yuzheng Wang et al, 2022) which was done with a sample of 425 college students which shows that trait mindfulness significantly moderates the indirect effect of perfectionism on social anxiety via perceived stress. The study by (Jessica Lunn et al, 2023), to examine the association between perfectionism and symptoms of anxiety, OCD, and depression among young people aged 6-24 years found the substantial link between perfectionistic concerns and psychopathology in young people. From table 2, it can be understood that the variables have a great impact on this study as R Square and Adjusted R Square are not significant and the R Square being greater than 0.4 indicates that it is a good influence and model of regression can be analysed further.

VI. SUMMARY

This study is to investigate the relationship between dimensions of perfectionism and anxiety sensitivity. The study group is composed of 400 college students who fall under 19 years and above. The datas were collected using Frost Multidimensional Perfectionism Scale and Anxiety Sensitivity Index-R. Pearson correlation analysis was employed to study the relationship between the two variables. Through the results obtained it can be seen that concern over mistakes, personal standards, parental expectations, parental criticism, doubts and actions and organization, dimensions of perfectionism were found to be significantly correlated to anxiety sensitivity.

VII. CONCLUSION

In this study, it was found that there was a positive relationship between dimensions of perfectionism and anxiety sensitivity and it can also be understood that concern over mistakes, personal standards, parental expectations, parental criticism, doubts about actions and organisation dimensions of perfectionism significantly explains anxiety sensitivity.

As a result, it can be understood that maladaptive perfectionism is an important risk factor to identify in adults with anxiety sensitivity. It should be noted that within this manner, maladaptive perfectionism tendencies are closely connected with many psychological problems such as anxiety disorders, depression, fear of negative evaluation, shame and defensiveness.

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Though a link is indicated by the current findings between dimensions of perfectionism and anxiety sensitivity, it should be emphasized that these findings were limited because they have been found as a result of the analysis of self-report data and it should not only be restricted to this population.

All of these findings showed that there are meaningful associations between dimensions of perfectionism and anxiety sensitivity but their clinical implications deserve further investigation. In this manner, within the context of mental health counselling services, adults should be taught how to deal with problems as such. Psychoeducation about these issues can also be provided by trained counsellors.

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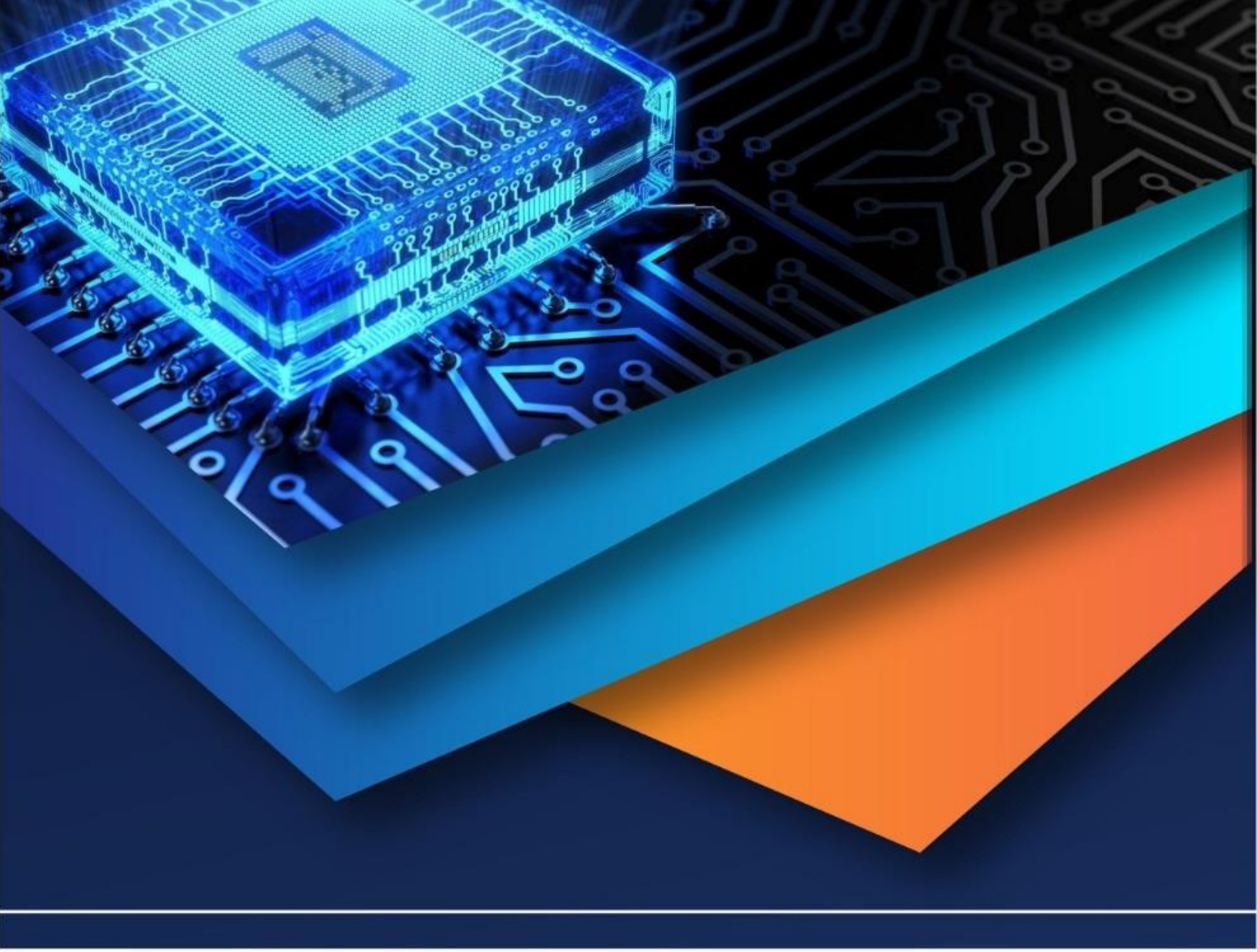

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