

PERFECTIONISM AND STRESS - A STUDY IN COLLEGE STUDENTS

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Introduction: Perfectionism trait is commonly viewed as a personality style characterized by striving for flawlessness and setting of excessively high standards for performance which is accompanied by a tendency to be overly critical of one's behavior. Perfectionists are more likely than non-perfectionists to experience several kinds of stress in a variety of forms. Thus, the link between perfectionism and stress in influencing emotional distress /psychopathology can be quite complex.

Objectives/aims:

- 1) to analyze the association between perfectionism dimension and stress vulnerability;
- 2) to explore the relation between perfectionism dimension and other stress related mechanisms (for example, coping and social support).

Methods: 217 students filled in the Frost Multidimensional Perfectionism Scale, the Questionnaire of Stress Vulnerability, and four items to evaluate stress related mechanisms.

Results: We found positive associations between maladaptive dimensions of perfectionism and stress vulnerability (from $r=.181$, $p<.005$ to $r=.661$, $p<.005$). The adaptive dimensions of perfectionism are not significantly associated with stress vulnerability. These results confirm that only maladaptive perfectionists are more vulnerable to stress. Doubts about actions and concerns over mistakes (perfectionism dimensions) showed significant and positive association with all the dimensions of stress, and are negatively related with the social support.

Conclusions: Only the maladaptive perfectionists are more vulnerable to stress, find life events as more stressful and obtain less social support from others. Maladaptive perfectionism dimensions, in particular self-critical perfectionism might have an important role in stress generation.