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Exploring The Mediating Role Of Fear Of Failure In The Relationship Between Perfectionism And Procrastination Among Young Adults

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ABSTRACT

Procrastination is a common challenge among young adults, often linked to academic stress, reduced performance, and emotional distress. While perfectionism has been consistently identified as a significant predictor of procrastination, the mechanisms underlying this relationship are not yet fully understood. Fear of failure, which is closely associated with perfectionistic tendencies, may act as a critical mediator that explains why individuals with high perfectionism tend to delay tasks. This study aims to examine the mediating role of fear of failure in the relationship between perfectionism and procrastination among young adults aged 18–25 years. A quantitative research design will be employed, using standardized self-report measures to assess levels of perfectionism, fear of failure, and procrastination. Data will be collected from a sample of 100–200 young adults through purposive sampling. Statistical analyses, including correlation and mediation analyses, will be conducted to explore the strength and significance of the relationships among the variables. It is expected that fear of failure will significantly mediate the link between perfectionism and procrastination, highlighting it as a key psychological mechanism contributing to task avoidance. The

findings of this study aim to enhance understanding of maladaptive perfectionism and procrastination and provide practical implications for academic counseling, mental health interventions, and strategies to promote effective time management and coping among young adults.

Keywords: perfectionism, procrastination, fear of failure, mediation analysis

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

In this introductory chapter, we set the foundation for an in-depth exploration of the relationship between perfectionism and procrastination, with a particular focus on the mediating role of fear of failure. The study aims to examine how these interconnected psychological constructs influence the behaviors and emotional experiences of young adults. Perfectionism, often seen as the tendency to set excessively high standards, will be explored in terms of both its adaptive and maladaptive aspects. The study will then turn to procrastination, investigating how the tendency to delay tasks emerges as a behavioral response to the pressures of perfectionistic expectations.

A central theme of this research will be fear of failure, which is considered a critical emotional mechanism linking perfectionism and procrastination. By analyzing how fear of failure intensifies the pressure to meet unrealistic standards and contributes to avoidance behaviors, this study seeks to uncover the underlying pathways that explain the perfectionism–procrastination paradox. Additionally, the research will emphasize the broader psychological implications of these constructs, particularly their impact on academic performance, self-esteem, and overall well-being among young adults. Together, these variables form the conceptual foundation of the study, each offering unique insights into the complex interplay between personality traits, cognitive-emotional processes, and behavioral outcomes.

Perfectionism

Perfectionism is a multidimensional personality trait characterized by striving for flawlessness, setting extremely high standards, and engaging in overly critical self-evaluations (Flett & Hewitt, 2002). While aiming for excellence can be motivating and lead to personal growth, perfectionism often becomes maladaptive when individuals tie their self-worth to their achievements or perceived failures. It is commonly associated with excessive concern over mistakes, fear of negative evaluation, and doubt about one's actions, which can result in stress, anxiety, and burnout (Hewitt & Flett, 1991).

Perfectionism is not a new concept in psychological research. Historically, it has been studied in relation to personality development, cognitive processes, and mental health (Burns, 1980). Over time, researchers have identified different dimensions of perfectionism, such as self-oriented perfectionism—where individuals set high expectations for themselves, other-oriented perfectionism—where they expect others to be perfect, and socially prescribed perfectionism—where individuals feel pressured by others' expectations (Hewitt & Flett, 1991). These dimensions help explain why perfectionistic tendencies are observed in diverse contexts such as education, work, relationships, and health.

The negative effects of perfectionism are well documented. It has been linked to psychological disorders such as anxiety, depression, obsessive-compulsive tendencies, and eating disorders (Callaghan et al., 2024; Nazari, 2022). At the same time, some forms of perfectionism, especially when balanced and realistic, are associated with high achievement, motivation, and conscientiousness (Simon et al., 2025). This distinction between adaptive and maladaptive perfectionism is crucial in understanding how individuals can strive for excellence without compromising their mental health.

In today's fast-paced and highly competitive world, perfectionism has become more prevalent. Societal expectations, cultural norms, and the rise of digital media platforms often glorify unattainable standards of success and appearance, contributing to perfectionistic behaviors (Sedera & Lokuge, 2020). As a result, individuals may feel trapped in cycles of self-doubt, overwork, and dissatisfaction.

Understanding perfectionism, its dimensions, and its impact on mental health is essential for developing effective coping strategies and interventions. This research aims to explore the underlying mechanisms of perfectionism and its effects on individuals, with the hope of contributing to improved psychological support and healthier ways of coping with personal and societal pressures.

Perfectionism has long been recognized as one of the most influential yet paradoxical personality traits, shaping both the pursuit of excellence and the vulnerability to psychological distress. At its core, perfectionism refers to the tendency to strive for flawlessness, impose excessively high standards, and engage in critical self-evaluation while remaining sensitive to the expectations of others. The American Psychological Association (2023) identifies it as a multifaceted construct that is not merely about doing things well, but about equating personal worth with performance, success, and the avoidance of mistakes. Early clinical descriptions often painted perfectionism in negative terms, linking it to rigidity, obsessive tendencies, and neuroticism, while contemporary perspectives acknowledge that it can carry both adaptive and maladaptive qualities depending on its intensity, context, and underlying motivation. Burns (1980), one of the pioneers in modern perfectionism research, described it as a dysfunctional belief system in which self-worth is contingent upon achievement, arguing that such a mindset traps individuals in cycles of self-criticism and dissatisfaction. This understanding laid the groundwork for decades of empirical exploration into how perfectionism is defined, measured, and manifested across domains of life.

The historical development of perfectionism research reflects an ongoing tension between viewing it as a unidimensional negative trait versus a complex, multidimensional phenomenon. Early psychoanalytic thinkers often saw perfectionistic tendencies as rooted in unresolved childhood conflicts, authoritarian parenting, or internalized standards that produced rigidity and guilt when unmet. However, the field underwent a significant shift with the introduction of multidimensional models in the late 20th century, which emphasized that perfectionism could not be reduced to a simple flaw or pathology. Hewitt and Flett (1991) developed one of the most influential frameworks, distinguishing between self-oriented perfectionism, which involves imposing exacting standards on oneself; other-oriented perfectionism, in which unrealistic expectations are directed at others; and socially prescribed perfectionism, which reflects the perception that others demand perfection. Frost and colleagues (1990) expanded this perspective further through their six-dimensional model, including concern over mistakes, parental expectations, parental criticism, doubts about actions, high personal standards, and a preference for order and organization. These multidimensional approaches illuminated the fact that perfectionism is not a single trait but a constellation of cognitive, emotional, and behavioral tendencies shaped by both internal drives and external pressures. Slaney's Almost Perfect Scale (1996) further refined this distinction by differentiating between adaptive and maladaptive perfectionism, with the former reflecting ambitious goal-setting and satisfaction in achievement, and the latter manifesting as chronic dissatisfaction, fear of failure, and harsh self-criticism.

This duality between adaptive and maladaptive forms of perfectionism has been one of the most important developments in the field, as it highlights both the motivational and destructive potential of the trait. On one hand, individuals who exhibit adaptive perfectionism often demonstrate strong conscientiousness, persistence, and high performance in academic and professional contexts. They set lofty goals, yet they are capable of deriving satisfaction from progress and success, using perfectionism as a tool for achievement rather than a source of distress. On the other hand, maladaptive perfectionists impose unrealistic demands on themselves, interpret mistakes as personal failures, and experience relentless doubt about their abilities. This maladaptive form has been consistently linked with psychopathological outcomes, including depression, anxiety disorders, obsessive-compulsive tendencies, eating disorders, and burnout (Callaghan et al., 2024; Nazari, 2022). The distinction is not always clear-cut, as the same high standards that fuel academic or professional achievement can also render individuals vulnerable to procrastination, avoidance behaviors, and self-sabotage when the fear of falling short becomes overwhelming.

Perfectionism exerts its influence across multiple life domains, and its effects are particularly visible in high-pressure contexts such as academics, sports, and the workplace. Among university students, perfectionism has been identified as both a motivator and a burden, with research showing that nearly one-fourth of students report depressive symptoms directly linked to perfectionistic concerns (Philpot, 2025). In academic contexts,

socially prescribed perfectionism—the belief that others expect flawlessness—has been most strongly associated with psychological distress (Fernández-García et al., 2022). Students with maladaptive perfectionistic tendencies often delay completing tasks out of fear that their work will not meet impossibly high standards, thereby engaging in procrastination that paradoxically undermines their performance. In contrast, adaptive perfectionists may use their high standards as a form of intrinsic motivation, pushing themselves to achieve excellence while still maintaining resilience in the face of setbacks. Similar dynamics are observed in professional settings, where perfectionistic employees may excel through diligence and precision but risk exhaustion, job dissatisfaction, or burnout if they tie their self-worth too tightly to flawless performance. In sports and artistic domains, perfectionism can fuel peak performance but also contributes to performance anxiety, diminished enjoyment, and in some cases early withdrawal when the psychological costs outweigh the rewards.

A number of theoretical perspectives have been proposed to explain the origins and mechanisms of perfectionism. Cognitive-behavioral models emphasize the role of dysfunctional beliefs, such as “I must never fail” or “Anything less than perfect is unacceptable,” which lead individuals to engage in over-preparation, avoidance, or procrastination. These cognitive distortions are often reinforced by early experiences of conditional acceptance, in which children perceive that love and approval depend on meeting high standards. Psychodynamic accounts similarly highlight the role of critical or controlling parenting, suggesting that perfectionism serves as a defense mechanism against rejection, shame, or feelings of inadequacy. Attachment theory provides a complementary lens, noting that insecurely attached individuals may develop perfectionistic tendencies as a way to secure validation and avoid abandonment. Self-Determination Theory (Deci & Ryan, 1985) draws a distinction between perfectionistic striving driven by intrinsic motivation, which tends to be adaptive, and striving driven by external pressures or a need for approval, which is often maladaptive. The biopsychosocial model integrates these insights, recognizing that perfectionism emerges from the interaction of genetic predispositions, personality traits, family environments, and broader sociocultural factors.

In recent years, cultural and societal influences have received increasing attention as drivers of perfectionism, particularly among younger generations. Curran and Hill (2019) found evidence of rising levels of perfectionism over the past three decades, attributing this trend to growing social competition, individualistic cultural values, and the influence of social media. Platforms that showcase curated images of success, beauty, and achievement amplify the pressure to appear flawless, fostering a culture in which imperfection is stigmatized and constant comparison is the norm (Sedera & Lokuge, 2020). For many young adults, especially university students navigating competitive academic environments, these cultural pressures intensify the internalization of unrealistic standards. In collectivist cultures, the weight of parental expectations and family honor may further amplify perfectionistic concerns, while in individualist societies, the drive for personal distinction and achievement reinforces the same tendencies in different ways. The universality of perfectionism across contexts highlights the need to understand it not as an isolated personality trait but as a psychological response to developmental, relational, and cultural forces.

Taken together, the study of perfectionism reveals a trait that is at once inspiring and destructive, capable of motivating individuals to achieve excellence while also undermining their well-being when driven by fear, doubt, and external validation. Its multidimensional nature means that no single definition or framework fully captures its complexity, and researchers continue to debate where the line lies between healthy striving and maladaptive concern. As perfectionism becomes more prevalent in modern societies shaped by competition, social media, and performance-driven values, its relevance to psychology grows stronger. Recognizing its dual nature is essential for educators, clinicians, and researchers, who must not only appreciate how perfectionism can serve as a source of motivation but also remain vigilant to its capacity to foster distress, procrastination, and long-term psychological difficulties. Ultimately, perfectionism occupies a unique position in psychological science as a construct that bridges ambition and vulnerability, reflecting both humanity’s desire for excellence and the enduring fear of imperfection.

Perfectionism is a multifaceted personality trait characterized by striving for flawlessness, setting excessively high standards, and engaging in harsh self-evaluation, yet it extends far beyond mere academic or professional concerns. Philosophically, it can be viewed as a pursuit of virtue or existential excellence, reflecting broader human desires for meaning, achievement, and moral correctness. While perfectionism can fuel creativity and mastery, it often paradoxically inhibits innovation when fear of imperfection dominates, highlighting a tension between high standards and originality. Occupationally, perfectionism is linked to both achievement and burnout, as individuals navigate workplaces or academic environments that valorize flawlessness, often at the cost of well-being. Clinically, it is implicated in anxiety disorders, depression, obsessive-compulsive behaviors, eating disorders, and body dysmorphic disorder, positioning it as a transdiagnostic risk factor. Measurement debates underscore the complexity of the construct, with scales such as the Frost Multidimensional Perfectionism Scale, Hewitt and Flett's model, and the Almost Perfect Scale capturing different dimensions of personal and socially prescribed standards. Cross-cultural studies reveal that collectivist societies often emphasize socially prescribed perfectionism, whereas individualist cultures emphasize self-oriented standards, and gender differences also emerge in the prevalence and manifestation of these tendencies. Modern technological and societal influences, particularly social media, amplify perfectionistic concerns by exposing individuals to curated ideals of success and appearance. Neurocognitively, perfectionism involves heightened activation in brain regions associated with error monitoring and rumination, contributing to chronic self-criticism and anxiety. Intervention approaches such as cognitive-behavioral therapy, acceptance and commitment therapy, mindfulness practices, and self-compassion training have demonstrated efficacy in mitigating maladaptive patterns, promoting healthier striving, and balancing high standards with psychological flexibility.

Key Concepts of Perfectionism

Perfectionism is a multifaceted personality trait characterized by the relentless pursuit of flawlessness, excessively high standards, and critical self-evaluation. Perfectionists often set unrealistic goals for themselves or others, equating success with self-worth. While striving for excellence can foster achievement, excessive expectations frequently result in stress, frustration, and feelings of inadequacy when goals are unmet. A defining feature of perfectionism is harsh self-criticism; individuals tend to magnify their mistakes and overlook accomplishments, leading to low self-esteem and fear of failure. This fear manifests as an exaggerated concern over making errors, where even minor mistakes are viewed as signs of incompetence, prompting over-preparation, avoidance, or procrastination. Additionally, socially prescribed expectations, perceived pressure from family, peers, or society to be perfect intensify anxiety and dependency on external validation, often resulting in burnout and emotional distress. Perfectionists also exhibit a persistent fear of negative evaluation, fearing judgment or rejection, which can lead to avoidance of performance situations and excessive self-monitoring. Constant doubt about one's actions further reinforces inefficiency, as individuals repeatedly review or revise their work, believing it is never "good enough." Many perfectionists also exhibit a strong preference for order and organization, seeking control and predictability in their environment; while this promotes discipline, it can also foster rigidity and intolerance toward change. Importantly, perfectionism exists on a spectrum: adaptive perfectionism motivates healthy striving and personal growth, whereas maladaptive perfectionism is linked to unrealistic standards, anxiety, depression, and reduced well-being. Moreover, perfectionism influences relationships, as self-oriented types overexert themselves, other-oriented types impose unrealistic demands on others, and socially prescribed types fear disapproval. Over time, these patterns can damage interpersonal trust and lead to isolation. The cumulative impact of perfectionism on mental health is profound, contributing to chronic stress, low self-worth, and disorders such as anxiety, depression, and burnout. Recognizing and addressing these dimensions is essential for fostering balanced achievement and psychological resilience.

Perfectionism among young adults

Perfectionism is a personality trait characterized by setting excessively high and often unrealistic standards for oneself, accompanied by harsh self-criticism and fear of failure. Among college students, this tendency can become particularly prominent due to the unique combination of academic, social, and personal challenges they face. The transition to higher education involves adjusting to new academic demands,

forming new social networks, and planning for future careers, all of which can contribute to increased pressure. Many students develop perfectionistic tendencies as a way to cope with the stress and uncertainty of this life stage, often linking their self-worth to achievements and external validation (Flett & Hewitt, 2002).

In the college environment, students frequently set rigorous academic goals and feel compelled to maintain an image of success, both in person and through social media. The need to perform flawlessly in exams, assignments, and extracurricular activities, combined with peer comparison and parental expectations, exacerbates stress levels. Self-oriented perfectionism, where students impose high expectations on themselves, is particularly common, while socially prescribed perfectionism, where students believe others expect them to be perfect, can lead to anxiety, depression, and burnout (Hewitt & Flett, 1991). Studies suggest that nearly one-fourth of university students experience symptoms of depression linked to perfectionistic behavior (Philpot, 2025), and academic perfectionism is associated with reduced psychological well-being (Fernández-García et al., 2022).

Research also shows that perfectionistic concerns—such as fear of mistakes and self-criticism—are more strongly associated with psychological distress compared to perfectionistic strivings (Callaghan et al., 2024). Furthermore, perfectionism has been linked to mental health problems such as anxiety, depression, and obsessive-compulsive symptoms among adolescents and young adults (Nazari, 2022). The rise of social media has amplified perfectionistic tendencies by encouraging constant comparison and fear of judgment, contributing to digital perfectionism and stress (Sedera & Lokuge, 2020).

The consequences of perfectionism are far-reaching, affecting both academic and personal aspects of students' lives. High standards may motivate some students to excel, but for many, the inability to meet such expectations leads to frustration, self-doubt, and mental health issues. Studies have found that maladaptive perfectionism correlates with lower life satisfaction and increased psychological distress, while adaptive perfectionism can contribute positively to well-being (Simon et al., 2025). Moreover, perfectionism has been linked to procrastination and decreased work efficiency, especially in environments where performance pressure is high (Bellam, 2025).

Addressing perfectionism among college students is therefore essential to promoting mental health and academic success. Cognitive-behavioral therapy, mindfulness practices, and peer support groups have shown promise in helping students manage maladaptive patterns and build resilience (Fekih-Romdhane et al., 2023). However, existing research is limited, particularly in exploring cultural differences, the role of technology, and how perfectionism interacts with factors such as self-esteem and academic demands. For instance, perfectionism has been found to mediate the relationship between self-esteem and life satisfaction among students (Fekih-Romdhane et al., 2023), suggesting that interventions targeting perfectionism may significantly enhance students' overall well-being.

This study aims to explore the patterns, causes, and effects of perfectionism among college students. By understanding how perfectionistic tendencies influence academic performance, emotional health, and social relationships, the research intends to fill gaps in the literature and contribute practical recommendations for students, educators, and mental health professionals. In doing so, it builds on prior work that has identified both the challenges and opportunities related to perfectionism in higher education settings (Callaghan et al., 2024; Fernández-García et al., 2022; Philpot, 2025).

Theoretical Framework of Perfectionism

Perfectionism has been explained through multiple theoretical perspectives, each offering unique insights into its origins and development. The Cognitive-Behavioral Theory posits that perfectionism stems from dysfunctional beliefs and cognitive distortions that link an individual's self-worth to performance and achievement (Burns, 1980). Individuals view mistakes as personal failures, leading to excessive self-monitoring, fear of failure, and maladaptive behaviors such as procrastination and avoidance. Cognitive-

behavioral therapy (CBT) targets these distorted thought patterns, promoting healthier self-perceptions and coping mechanisms. The Psychodynamic Theory emphasizes early childhood experiences and unconscious conflicts as the roots of perfectionism. Conditional approval or excessive parental criticism during childhood may cause individuals to internalize the belief that love and acceptance depend on flawless performance, leading to chronic anxiety and fear of rejection in adulthood. The Multidimensional Model of Perfectionism proposed by Hewitt and Flett (1991) identifies three dimensions—self-oriented, other-oriented, and socially prescribed perfectionism—highlighting the different ways perfectionism manifests across individuals and social contexts. Research based on this model shows that socially prescribed perfectionism is especially linked to psychological distress. Similarly, Frost's Multidimensional Model (Frost et al., 1990) outlines six components—concern over mistakes, high personal standards, parental expectations, parental criticism, doubts about actions, and preference for order—illustrating the interaction between internal drives and external influences in shaping perfectionism. The Self-Determination Theory (Deci & Ryan, 1985) explains perfectionism in terms of motivational factors, suggesting that adaptive perfectionism arises from intrinsic motivation and personal growth, while maladaptive perfectionism results from external pressure and conditional approval. Attachment Theory further connects perfectionism to early caregiver relationships, proposing that insecure attachment styles, such as anxious or avoidant attachment, foster perfectionistic behaviors as strategies to seek approval or maintain emotional distance. Finally, the Biopsychosocial Model provides an integrative view, acknowledging the role of genetic predispositions, personality traits, environmental pressures, and cultural influences in the development of perfectionism. Together, these theories offer a comprehensive understanding of perfectionism as a multifaceted construct shaped by cognitive, emotional, social, and biological factors, guiding both research and therapeutic interventions aimed at promoting healthier striving and self-acceptance.

Procrastination

Procrastination is a common human behavior characterized by the voluntary delay of intended tasks, despite knowing that this delay may have negative consequences (Steel, 2007). It is distinct from laziness, as it often involves an internal struggle between the desire to complete a task and the impulse to avoid it due to fear, anxiety, or lack of motivation. Procrastination is widely observed across academic, professional, and personal contexts, making it a significant behavioral and psychological concern. College students, in particular, are prone to procrastination due to academic pressure, time management challenges, and the prevalence of distractions.

Psychologists view procrastination as a self-regulatory failure linked to difficulties in emotional regulation, impulsivity, and perfectionistic tendencies (Sirois & Pychyl, 2013). Tasks that evoke stress, boredom, or fear of failure are often postponed, providing short-term relief but amplifying long-term stress and guilt. Temporal factors also play a role, as individuals tend to prioritize immediate comfort over delayed rewards, a phenomenon explained by Temporal Motivation Theory (Steel & König, 2006).

Procrastination can have wide-ranging consequences. Academically, it is associated with lower performance, incomplete assignments, and increased anxiety. Psychologically, chronic procrastination can contribute to stress, low self-esteem, and mental health problems. Health behaviors may also be affected, as individuals delay medical checkups, exercise, or self-care routines (Sirois, Melia-Gordon, & Pychyl, 2013). Despite these negative effects, procrastination is not universal in severity, and some forms may even serve adaptive functions, such as allowing time for reflection or prioritization.

Understanding procrastination, its underlying causes, and its consequences is essential for developing effective strategies to improve self-regulation, academic performance, and overall well-being. Research on procrastination continues to explore cognitive, emotional, and motivational factors, providing a foundation for interventions that target both behavioral and psychological components.

Key Concepts and Theoretical Perspectives of Procrastination

Procrastination is a complex psychological phenomenon characterized by the voluntary delay of tasks despite awareness of potential negative consequences. One of its fundamental behavioral components is task avoidance, where individuals postpone tasks perceived as stressful or overwhelming, gaining short-term emotional relief but facing long-term costs such as guilt and poor performance (Solomon & Rothblum, 1984). Central to procrastination is emotional regulation, as individuals often delay work to manage unpleasant emotions like anxiety, boredom, or fear of failure (Sirois & Pychyl, 2013). Temporal discounting further explains procrastination through the preference for immediate comfort over future rewards (Steel & König, 2006). Low self-efficacy—the belief that one lacks the ability to complete a task successfully—also contributes to avoidance behaviors. Additionally, perfectionism and fear of failure play key roles; individuals with excessively high standards may delay tasks to avoid making mistakes or receiving criticism (Sirois, Melia-Gordon, & Pychyl, 2013). Impulsivity and decision-making difficulties further exacerbate procrastination, as individuals struggle to prioritize or resist distractions. When motivation is low or tasks are perceived as unimportant, motivational deficits emerge, reinforcing procrastinatory habits. Many procrastinators engage in short-term mood repair, prioritizing temporary emotional relief over long-term outcomes, perpetuating a self-defeating cycle. Furthermore, interpersonal and social factors such as external expectations, peer pressure, or fear of evaluation can intensify procrastination, especially in academic or performance-driven contexts.

Several theoretical frameworks explain these mechanisms. The Temporal Motivation Theory (TMT) (Steel & König, 2006) posits that motivation depends on expectancy, value, delay, and impulsiveness—factors that determine whether individuals act promptly or procrastinate. The Self-Regulation Failure Theory (Steel, 2007) attributes procrastination to the inability to control impulses and emotions aligned with long-term goals, highlighting deficits in self-control and emotional management. The Emotion Regulation Model (Sirois & Pychyl, 2013) views procrastination as a maladaptive coping strategy to avoid task-related stress, where temporary relief reinforces avoidance. The Cognitive-Behavioral Model (Solomon & Rothblum, 1984) links procrastination to distorted thought patterns such as self-doubt, perfectionism, and negative self-evaluation, which trigger avoidance behaviors and reinforce anxiety. The Motivational Deficit Theory (Steel, 2007) focuses on the lack of intrinsic or extrinsic drive, explaining why individuals fail to act despite recognizing a task's importance. Lastly, the Perfectionism-Procrastination Link suggests that maladaptive perfectionism, characterized by fear of failure and unrealistic standards, is a major predictor of procrastination, while adaptive perfectionism fosters productivity and healthy striving. Collectively, these concepts and theories provide a comprehensive understanding of procrastination as a multifaceted construct shaped by cognitive, emotional, motivational, and social processes, emphasizing the importance of addressing both emotional regulation and self-belief in reducing procrastinatory behavior.

Procrastination among young adults

Procrastination is a pervasive issue among college students, affecting a significant portion of the student population. Research suggests that nearly 50% of college students report regular procrastination on academic tasks, including assignments, studying for exams, and completing projects (Steel, 2007). Several factors contribute to this phenomenon. Cognitive factors, such as low self-efficacy and difficulties in decision-making, often lead students to delay tasks because they doubt their ability to complete them successfully (Solomon & Rothblum, 1984). Emotional factors also play a critical role; students may experience anxiety, stress, or fear of failure, which motivates avoidance behavior and short-term mood repair through distraction or leisure activities (Sirois & Pychyl, 2013).

Additionally, personality traits such as maladaptive perfectionism are strongly associated with procrastination. Students with high perfectionistic concerns may delay starting or submitting assignments due to fear of imperfection or negative evaluation from instructors and peers (Flett & Hewitt, 2002). Time management challenges, impulsivity, and a tendency toward temporal discounting—valuing immediate rewards over long-term outcomes—further exacerbate procrastination among students (Steel & König, 2006). The consequences are substantial: procrastination not only impairs academic performance, leading to

lower grades and incomplete work, but also increases stress, anxiety, and negative emotional experiences. It may even affect physical health, as students who procrastinate often neglect sleep, exercise, and other self-care behaviors (Sirois, Melia-Gordon, & Pychyl, 2013).

Given its high prevalence and negative outcomes, understanding procrastination among college students is essential for developing effective interventions. Strategies such as cognitive-behavioral techniques, time management training, mindfulness, and goal-setting interventions have been shown to reduce procrastination by targeting underlying cognitive, emotional, and motivational factors (Klingsieck, 2013). Addressing procrastination in college populations not only enhances academic achievement but also promotes mental health, self-regulation, and overall well-being.

Fear of Failure

Fear of failure (FoF) is a multidimensional psychological construct that encompasses the anticipatory anxiety, worry, and negative self-evaluation that arise when individuals perceive a risk of failing at a task or not meeting standards (Conroy, Willow, & Metzler, 2002). It is not merely the dislike of failing; rather, it involves concern about the consequences of failure, which can include social judgment, loss of self-esteem, disappointment, embarrassment, or perceived damage to one's reputation. FoF often triggers both emotional and physiological responses, including nervousness, tension, rumination, and avoidance behaviors.

FoF plays a significant role in motivation and performance. On one hand, moderate levels of FoF can serve as a motivator, prompting preparation, diligence, and persistence. On the other hand, excessive fear of failure is maladaptive, often leading to avoidance of challenging tasks, procrastination, self-handicapping, and reduced performance (Elliot & Church, 1997). For example, a student might postpone starting an important assignment due to anxiety about not achieving a perfect grade or avoid participating in classroom discussions out of fear of making mistakes.

The cognitive components of FoF involve negative self-beliefs, catastrophic thinking, and worry about outcomes, while behavioral components include task avoidance, reduced effort, and withdrawal from challenging situations. FoF is also influenced by personality traits such as perfectionism, low self-efficacy, and high conscientiousness. Individuals with maladaptive perfectionism are particularly vulnerable because they link self-worth directly to achievement outcomes, making failure feel threatening to their identity (Flett & Hewitt, 2002).

FoF is prevalent in academic, professional, and sports contexts. In education, students may avoid exams, assignments, or presentations due to anticipated failure. In workplace settings, employees might avoid taking on challenging projects or leadership roles out of fear of criticism or poor evaluation. In sports, athletes with high FoF may underperform in competitive situations due to anxiety and self-doubt. Research suggests that FoF can lead to negative mental health outcomes, including anxiety disorders, depressive symptoms, stress, and lowered life satisfaction, especially when individuals lack effective coping strategies (Conroy et al., 2002).

Addressing FoF involves interventions that target both cognitive and emotional aspects. Cognitive-behavioral strategies aim to restructure irrational beliefs about failure, reduce catastrophic thinking, and enhance self-efficacy. Emotion regulation techniques, mindfulness, and stress management skills can help individuals tolerate failure-related anxiety and approach tasks with resilience. FoF is also closely linked with procrastination and maladaptive perfectionism, as individuals often delay tasks or over-invest time in order to avoid perceived failure (Sirois, Melia-Gordon, & Pychyl, 2013). Understanding the mechanisms of FoF is essential for improving academic performance, professional productivity, and psychological well-being.

Key Concepts of Fear of Failure (FoF)

Fear of failure (FoF) is a multifaceted construct that encompasses cognitive, emotional, motivational, and behavioral components influencing an individual's performance and well-being. A central aspect of FoF is anticipatory anxiety, marked by intense worry, tension, and apprehension about the possibility of failing, which interferes with effective planning, decision-making, and task initiation (Conroy, Willow, & Metzler, 2002). This anxiety often leads to negative self-evaluation, where individuals harshly judge themselves, experience self-doubt, and perceive themselves as inadequate, fostering avoidance and maladaptive coping patterns (Flett & Hewitt, 2002). Such internal distress manifests behaviorally as avoidance behavior, where individuals deliberately avoid situations or tasks that carry a risk of failure to protect their self-esteem and minimize exposure to negative judgment (Atkinson, 1964; Elliot & Church, 1997).

FoF is also intricately linked with maladaptive perfectionism, wherein individuals set unrealistically high standards and fear disappointing themselves or others, which amplifies anxiety and reinforces avoidance tendencies (Flett & Hewitt, 2002). From a motivational standpoint, FoF exerts a dual influence—moderate levels may enhance effort and persistence, whereas excessive fear hinders motivation, leading to procrastination, withdrawal, or reduced engagement (Elliot & Church, 1997). Additionally, cognitive distortions, such as overestimating the likelihood or consequences of failure and magnifying minor setbacks, perpetuate the fear cycle and intensify anxiety (Conroy, 2001). Social dimensions of FoF are reflected in evaluation concerns, where individuals fear negative feedback or criticism from peers, mentors, or authority figures, heightening their apprehension and avoidance (Horner, 1972).

Emotionally, FoF triggers responses such as shame, embarrassment, frustration, and stress, alongside physiological symptoms like increased heart rate, sweating, and muscle tension, which collectively impair concentration and task performance (Conroy et al., 2002). These experiences contribute to procrastinatory behavior, as individuals delay tasks to temporarily escape anxiety, though this avoidance ultimately heightens stress and undermines performance outcomes (Sirois, Melia-Gordon, & Pychyl, 2013). Furthermore, FoF negatively influences goal-setting and achievement, prompting individuals to set overly cautious or easily attainable goals or to avoid challenging pursuits altogether, thereby restricting growth and self-actualization (Elliot & Church, 1997). Collectively, these interrelated components highlight that fear of failure not only hampers performance and motivation but also serves as a critical mediator between perfectionism and procrastination, influencing emotional regulation, cognitive processing, and behavioral outcomes in young adults.

Fear of Failure among young adults

Fear of failure is highly prevalent among college students due to the academic pressures, high expectations, and competitive environments characteristic of higher education settings. Research indicates that FoF in this population is associated with increased anxiety, stress, and negative self-evaluation, which often impair academic performance and overall well-being (Conroy, Willow, & Metzler, 2002; Elliot & Church, 1997). Students experiencing high FoF frequently exhibit avoidance behaviors, such as postponing assignments, skipping classes, or avoiding challenging courses, as a strategy to minimize the risk of failure and protect self-esteem (Atkinson, 1964; Flett & Hewitt, 2002).

FoF among college students is also strongly linked to maladaptive perfectionism, where individuals set excessively high standards for themselves and are overly concerned with meeting academic or social expectations. This combination of FoF and perfectionism contributes to procrastination, decreased motivation, and impaired goal-directed behavior (Flett & Hewitt, 2002; Sirois, Melia-Gordon, & Pychyl, 2013). Moreover, students with high FoF often experience cognitive distortions, including catastrophizing potential outcomes and overestimating the consequences of failure, which intensifies anxiety and avoidance tendencies (Conroy, 2001).

Social evaluation concerns also play a critical role, as students frequently fear negative judgment from peers, faculty, or family members, further exacerbating stress and task avoidance (Horner, 1972). Physiological and emotional responses, such as increased heart rate, tension, frustration, and feelings of shame, are common

among students with FoF, and these responses can negatively impact concentration, decision-making, and academic engagement (Conroy et al., 2002).

Overall, fear of failure among college students has significant academic and psychological implications, including lower academic performance, higher stress levels, and reduced engagement with challenging tasks. Addressing FoF in this population through interventions such as cognitive-behavioral strategies, time management training, emotional regulation techniques, and resilience-building programs is crucial for promoting academic success and mental health (Sirois et al., 2013; Klingsieck, 2013).

Theories of Fear of Failure (FoF)

The concept of fear of failure (FoF) has been explained through several psychological theories that highlight the interplay between motivation, self-worth, cognition, and perfectionism. Atkinson's Achievement Motivation Theory (1964) posits that FoF arises from the conflict between two opposing forces—the motivation to achieve success (approach motive) and the motivation to avoid failure (avoidance motive). When the avoidance motive dominates, individuals tend to withdraw from challenging tasks, exhibit performance anxiety, and display reduced persistence. Expanding on this foundation, Elliot's Approach-Avoidance Achievement Motivation Theory (1997) introduced a hierarchical model emphasizing that achievement behaviors are guided by approach goals (striving for success) and avoidance goals (preventing failure). Fear of failure primarily aligns with avoidance-oriented goals, where individuals focus on minimizing potential losses rather than pursuing growth.

In contrast, Covington's Self-Worth Theory (1992) emphasizes the protective nature of FoF in maintaining self-esteem. According to this theory, individuals link their self-worth to their performance outcomes, and any possibility of failure threatens their personal value. To safeguard their self-esteem, they may avoid evaluative situations or adopt self-handicapping behaviors. Conroy's Multidimensional Theory of Fear of Failure (2001) provides a comprehensive perspective, suggesting that FoF encompasses cognitive, affective, and behavioral dimensions. It arises from perceived personal standards, likelihood of failure, and anticipated negative consequences such as shame or loss of social approval. This multidimensional approach recognizes that FoF manifests differently depending on individual coping strategies and emotional regulation abilities.

Finally, the Perfectionism and Fear of Failure Theory (Flett & Hewitt, 2002) integrates cognitive, emotional, and motivational factors to explain how maladaptive perfectionism intensifies FoF. Individuals with high perfectionistic concerns equate self-worth with flawless performance, viewing failure as a personal defect. This perfectionistic tendency fosters avoidance, procrastination, and heightened stress, reinforcing a cycle of self-criticism and anxiety. Collectively, these theories underscore that fear of failure is not a singular construct but a complex motivational-emotional process shaped by personal beliefs, self-perception, and contextual influences.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

This chapter provides a comprehensive overview of the existing research related to perfectionism, procrastination, and fear of failure. It synthesizes theoretical foundations, empirical studies, and key concepts that form the intellectual basis of the present research. By examining prior work, this chapter highlights how perfectionism has been linked with both adaptive and maladaptive outcomes, with procrastination often emerging as a behavioral consequence, and fear of failure serving as a crucial emotional mechanism. The review not only summarizes past findings but also identifies gaps in understanding how these three constructs interact within the young adult population. This is essential for framing the research problem and objectives, as well as demonstrating the relevance of exploring fear of failure as a mediator. Furthermore, this chapter emphasizes the significance of grounding the current study in established literature, as it informs the research design, methodology, and interpretation of findings. Ultimately, the review positions the present research within the broader academic discourse and underlines its potential contribution to advancing knowledge on perfectionism, procrastination, and the underlying psychological processes connecting them.

Frost, Marten, Lahart, and Rosenblate (1990) aimed to develop a multidimensional measure of perfectionism and explore its components. Using a sample of 260 participants, they conducted factor analysis on self-report questionnaires assessing personal standards, concern over mistakes, parental expectations, parental criticism, doubts about actions, and organization. The study identified six dimensions of perfectionism. Concern over mistakes and doubts about actions were strongly linked to anxiety and negative self-evaluation, whereas personal standards were associated with motivation and achievement, highlighting both adaptive and maladaptive aspects of perfectionism.

Hewitt and Flett (1991) conceptualized perfectionism in interpersonal contexts by examining self-oriented, other-oriented, and socially prescribed perfectionism in 170 university students. They found that self-oriented perfectionism was related to personal goal striving, other-oriented perfectionism correlated with criticism of others, and socially prescribed perfectionism was strongly associated with depression, anxiety, and perceived external pressure. The findings emphasized that socially prescribed perfectionism is particularly maladaptive and has substantial implications for psychological distress.

Stoeber and Otto (2006) differentiated between adaptive and maladaptive perfectionism through a review of existing literature and empirical analyses involving 300 participants. They concluded that adaptive perfectionism predicts higher achievement and satisfaction without significant negative emotional consequences, whereas maladaptive perfectionism is linked to anxiety, depression, and stress. This distinction underscores the importance of evaluating perfectionism as a multidimensional construct.

Frost et al. (1993) explored the relationship between perfectionistic thinking and psychological distress among 200 college students using the Multidimensional Perfectionism Scale along with measures of anxiety, depression, and life satisfaction. High concern over mistakes was associated with elevated anxiety and lower life satisfaction, whereas personal standards were positively related to achievement motivation but not to psychological distress. This study further confirmed that perfectionism has both adaptive and maladaptive dimensions.

Kuusi et al. (2024) identified and examined the stability of perfectionistic profiles among lower secondary students. The study involved ninth-grade students and utilized cluster analysis to categorize them into distinct perfectionistic profiles. The findings revealed four distinct perfectionistic profiles, which were substantially stable over time. This study contributes to the understanding of how perfectionistic tendencies manifest and persist in adolescents, providing insights into potential targets for early intervention.

Philpot et al. (2025) explored the relationship between perfectionism and psychological distress among university students. The study involved a large sample of students who completed measures assessing perfectionism and psychological distress. The results indicated that students with higher levels of perfectionism experienced greater psychological distress, primarily due to their tendency to ruminate over mistakes. This study emphasizes the importance of addressing perfectionistic tendencies in university students to promote mental health and well-being.

Sotardi (2025) examined perfectionism among first-year university students in New Zealand. The study utilized both person-centered and variable-centered approaches to assess levels of perfectionism and associated outcomes. The findings revealed that perfectionism was prevalent among first-year students and was associated with various academic and psychological outcomes. This study highlights the need for targeted interventions to address perfectionism in the early stages of university education.

Fang and Liu (2022) conducted a review on perfectionism, focusing on its positive and negative aspects. They noted that existing research has primarily focused on the negative aspects of perfectionism, with positive aspects being often overlooked. Their review highlighted that positive perfectionism is negatively associated with emotional eating, while negative perfectionism is positively associated with emotional eating. This study emphasizes the need for a balanced perspective in understanding perfectionism, considering both its adaptive and maladaptive dimensions.

Sedera and Lokuge (2020) conceptualized digital perfectionism as an emerging disorder specific to increasing interactions with tools and technologies. They conducted a study involving 336 individuals to explore the effects of digital perfectionism. The study found that digital perfectionism, characterized by unrealistic expectations and constant striving for perfection in digital interactions, negatively impacted individuals' mental health and well-being. This research highlights the growing concern of digital perfectionism in the context of technological advancements.

Binder (2023) examined how individuals with perfectionism narrate their relationship to shared existential vulnerability. Through qualitative interviews, the study found that perfectionists often experience a heightened sense of isolation and fear of judgment, which can exacerbate their perfectionistic tendencies. The findings suggest that addressing existential concerns may be crucial in therapeutic interventions for perfectionism.

Oskouei et al. (2024) investigated the impact of perfectionism on suicidal ideation among medical students. The study found that maladaptive perfectionism was linked to higher levels of psychological distress, including depression and burnout, which in turn increased the risk of suicidal thoughts. The research highlights the need for targeted mental health support for perfectionistic individuals in high-pressure environments.

Ashraf et al. (2023) evaluated the impact of self-efficacy and perfectionism on academic procrastination among university students in Pakistan. The study found that while perfectionism significantly influenced academic procrastination, self-efficacy did not have a significant effect. This suggests that perfectionistic tendencies may be a more critical factor in academic procrastination than students' belief in their abilities.

Karaffa et al. (2024) explored the relationships between perfectionistic cognitions, self-compassion, and psychological distress. The study found that higher levels of perfectionistic cognitions were associated with lower levels of self-compassion, which in turn predicted higher levels of psychological distress. These findings highlight the potential benefits of fostering self-compassion in individuals with perfectionistic tendencies.

Sedera and Lokuge (2020) conceptualized digital perfectionism as an emerging disorder specific to increasing interactions with tools and technologies. The study found that digital perfectionism, characterized by unrealistic expectations and constant striving for perfection in digital interactions, negatively impacted individuals' mental health and well-being. This research highlights the growing concern of digital perfectionism in the context of technological advancements.

Sirois (2023) conducted a conceptual review to explore why individuals procrastinate, focusing on the role of stress. The study examined existing literature and found that procrastination often serves as a coping mechanism to manage negative emotions associated with tasks perceived as aversive or anxiety-inducing. The review highlighted that procrastination is linked to difficulties in emotion regulation and can lead to increased stress and negative outcomes.

Rad et al. (2025) investigated the predictors of academic procrastination among students. The study found that academic self-efficacy and difficulties in emotional regulation are significant predictors of academic procrastination. Students with lower self-efficacy and greater difficulties in regulating emotions were more likely to procrastinate. The researchers suggested that interventions aimed at improving self-efficacy and emotional regulation could help reduce procrastination among students.

Miller et al. (2024) examined the role of social support in mitigating procrastination among college students. The study found that family social support, but not support from friends or significant others, moderated the relationship between intolerance of uncertainty and procrastination. High levels of family support were associated with lower levels of procrastination, particularly among students high in intolerance of uncertainty.

Tao (2023) explored the relationship between self-discipline, autonomous motivation, and procrastination. The study found that a higher sense of self-discipline leads to higher levels of autonomous motivation, which in turn reduces procrastination. The research suggests that cultivating a sense of self-discipline can have positive effects on both motivation and procrastination, providing useful guidance for interventions aimed at reducing procrastination.

Rad et al. (2025) conducted a study to predict academic procrastination based on academic self-efficacy and emotional regulation difficulties. The study found that components of academic self-efficacy, including effort, talent, and context, as well as components of difficulty in emotion regulation, including difficulty in performing purposeful behavior, lack of emotional awareness, limited access to emotional regulation strategies, non-acceptance of emotional responses, difficulty in impulse control, and lack of emotional clarity, were identified as predictors of academic procrastination.

González-Brignardello et al. (2023) conducted a study to examine academic procrastination in children and adolescents. The study found that academic procrastination is a persistent behavior among students, characterized by postponing or delaying the completion of necessary tasks. The researchers highlighted that procrastination is associated with detrimental effects on performance, school dropout, and loss of student well-being. The study emphasizes the need for interventions at lower educational levels to address academic procrastination and its associated negative outcomes.

Kooren et al. (2024) explored the influence of active and passive procrastination on academic performance. The study aggregated existing research on the topic and found that procrastination can have a positive influence on academic performance if the procrastination is active rather than passive. The study suggests that active procrastination, characterized by deliberate delay to achieve optimal performance, may not necessarily be detrimental to academic outcomes, whereas passive procrastination, characterized by avoidance and lack of control, is more likely to negatively impact performance.

Sarwar (2025) analyzed the effectiveness of external and personal regulatory mechanisms in reducing procrastination behavior among university students. The study found that teachers' academic motivation, emotion regulation, and regulatory study habits significantly influenced students' procrastination behavior. The research highlights the role of educators in shaping the learning environment and reducing procrastination through motivational and regulatory support.

Hidalgo-Fuentes (2024) discerned and compared the degrees of academic procrastination among university students in Honduras and Spain. The study found that students in both countries exhibited varying levels of academic procrastination, with differences attributed to cultural and educational contexts. The research underscores the need for culturally sensitive approaches in addressing academic procrastination.

Ghasempour (2024) investigated the relationship between academic procrastination, self-esteem, and interest in the field of study among university students. The study found that higher levels of academic procrastination were associated with lower self-esteem and reduced interest in the field of study. The research suggests that enhancing self-esteem and fostering interest in the subject matter could help mitigate academic procrastination.

Bangar (2024) conducted a study to examine the relationship between fear of failure and academic procrastination among college students. The research involved a sample of 30 college students and found that fear of failure was positively correlated with academic procrastination. The study suggests that students who fear failure are more likely to delay academic tasks, potentially impacting their academic performance.

Obenza (2024) investigated the mediating effect of academic stress on the relationship between fear of failure and academic procrastination among college students. The study found that fear of failure and academic stress together explained 43.3% of the variance in academic procrastination. The results suggest that academic stress may mediate the relationship between fear of failure and procrastination behaviors.

Balkis (2024) examined the role of irrational academic beliefs in academic procrastination. The study found that irrational academic beliefs were indirectly associated with academic procrastination through fear of failure. The research highlights the importance of addressing irrational beliefs to reduce procrastination behaviors among students.

Yosopov (2024) explored the relationship between perfectionism, failure sensitivity, and procrastination. The study found that procrastinating perfectionists exhibit cognitive hypersensitivity to failure, leading to avoidance behaviors and increased procrastination. The research suggests that addressing cognitive biases related to failure sensitivity can be crucial in interventions aimed at reducing procrastination among perfectionist individuals.

Need for the study

Procrastination is a common issue among young adults, often leading to reduced academic performance, increased stress, and lower overall well-being. While perfectionism has been identified as a significant predictor of procrastination, the mechanisms underlying this relationship are not fully understood. Fear of failure, which is closely linked to perfectionistic tendencies, may play a critical role in explaining why perfectionistic individuals delay tasks. Exploring this mediating role can provide valuable insights into the psychological processes contributing to procrastination and help in developing targeted interventions. This study is particularly relevant for young adults, as understanding these dynamics can support their personal, academic, and professional growth.

CHAPTER III

Methodology

This chapter outlines the methodological framework utilized in the study, covering key elements such as the sampling strategy for participant selection, the study's objectives and hypotheses, and the operational definitions of the variables to ensure consistency throughout. It also details the criteria for participant inclusion and exclusion, describes the tools and instruments used for data collection, and provides a step-by-step account of the data collection process, including participant recruitment and ethical considerations. Lastly, the chapter explains the data analysis methods and statistical techniques employed to derive the findings. Overall, it provides a comprehensive guide to the research design and implementation, offering readers the necessary information to assess the study's rigor and the validity of its outcomes.

Hypothesis

The following are the hypothesis of the study:

- 3.1** There is a significant positive relationship between perfectionism and procrastination among college students.
- 3.2** There is a significant positive relationship between perfectionism and fear of failure among college students.
- 3.3** There is a significant positive relationship between fear of failure and procrastination among college students.
- 3.4** Fear of failure significantly mediates the relationship between perfectionism and procrastination.

Objectives

The following are the objectives of the study:

- To assess the relationship between perfectionism and procrastination among college students.
- To examine the association between perfectionism and fear of failure.
- To analyze the relationship between fear of failure and procrastination.
- To determine whether fear of failure mediates the relationship between perfectionism and procrastination.

Research Design

This study uses a quantitative, cross-sectional design with a correlational approach to examine the mediating role of fear of failure in the relationship between perfectionism and procrastination among college students. Data will be collected through standardized self-report questionnaires.

Sample Characteristics

The present study will involve a sample of young adults between the ages of 18 and 25 years, recruited from various undergraduate and postgraduate programs in Coimbatore, Tamil Nadu. A purposive sampling technique will be adopted to ensure that participants are relevant to the objectives of the study. The sample will include students from diverse academic streams such as Arts, Science, Commerce, Psychology, and Engineering, to reflect a wide range of academic pressures and expectations.

Participants will be selected based on specific inclusion criteria. Only students who are currently enrolled in a degree program, fluent in English, and willing to provide informed consent will be included in the study. Individuals who fall outside the specified age range or those currently undergoing psychiatric treatment will be excluded, in order to maintain the psychological integrity and focus of the research variables.

Inclusion Criteria:

The inclusion criteria for the present study comprise students currently enrolled in undergraduate or postgraduate programs, within the age range of 18 to 25 years. Participants are required to have the ability to understand and respond in English and must provide informed consent prior to participation.

Exclusion Criteria:

The exclusion criteria include individuals below 18 or above 25 years of age, those undergoing psychiatric treatment or diagnosed with a psychological disorder, and students who do not provide informed consent. These criteria ensure that the selected participants are representative of the target young adult population and capable of providing reliable and valid responses.

Measures

Frost Multidimensional Perfectionism Scale (FMPS, Frost et Al., 1990) is a 35-item self-report scale designed to measure different dimensions of perfectionism. The items are rated on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree). The scale includes six subscales such as

- Concern over Mistakes
- Personal Standards
- Parental Expectations
- Parental Criticism
- Doubts About Actions
- Organization

The FMPS differentiates between adaptive and maladaptive perfectionism, providing a comprehensive profile of an individual's perfectionistic tendencies. Higher scores on the maladaptive subscales indicate a greater risk of perfectionism-related distress.

Reliability: The FMPS has demonstrated high internal consistency, with Cronbach's alpha ranging from 0.77 to 0.93 across its six subscales. Test-retest reliability has also been established, confirming its stability over time.

2. Performance Failure Appraisal Inventory (PFAI)

The Performance Failure Appraisal Inventory (PFAI), developed by Conroy et al. (2002), consists of 25 items designed to measure individuals' beliefs about the aversive consequences of failure. It assesses five dimensions of fear of failure:

- Fear of experiencing shame and embarrassment
- Fear of devaluing one's self-estimate
- Fear of having an uncertain future
- Fear of important others losing interest
- Fear of upsetting important others

Participants respond on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (Do not believe at all) to 5 (Believe 100% of the time). Higher scores indicate stronger beliefs in the negative consequences of failure. The PFAI is widely recognized for its construct validity and its effectiveness in assessing fear of failure in academic and performance-related settings.

Reliability: The PFAI has reported Cronbach's alpha coefficients ranging between 0.72 and 0.92 across its five dimensions (fear of shame/embarrassment, self-devaluation, uncertain future, loss of interest from others, and upsetting others).

3. Tuckman Procrastination Scale (TPS)

Developed by Bruce W. Tuckman (1991), the Tuckman Procrastination Scale (TPS) is a 16-item tool used to assess general procrastination behavior. Each item is rated on a 5-point Likert scale from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree). The TPS measures the tendency to delay tasks despite potential negative consequences, such as academic underperformance or increased stress. Higher scores reflect a greater tendency to procrastinate.

The TPS is simple, reliable, and has been widely used in educational and psychological research, particularly among college students. Its concise format makes it suitable for use alongside other scales in multi-variable studies.

Reliability: The TPS has shown good internal consistency, with Cronbach's alpha values typically reported around 0.86. Test-retest reliability is also acceptable, supporting its consistency over time.

Procedure

The study will follow a quantitative, cross-sectional survey design and will be conducted among college students in Coimbatore. Prior to data collection, necessary permissions will be obtained from the institutional authorities, and ethical clearance will be sought if required.

Participants will be selected using purposive sampling based on the inclusion and exclusion criteria defined for the study. After identifying eligible participants, they will be approached either in person or via online platforms. The purpose and nature of the study will be explained to them, and informed consent will be obtained before participation.

Data collection will be carried out using both offline (paper-pencil) and online (Google Forms) methods. Participants will first complete a demographic information sheet, which includes personal and academic background details. Following this, they will respond to three standardized self-report scales:

1. Frost Multidimensional Perfectionism Scale (FMPS)
2. Performance Failure Appraisal Inventory (PFAI)
3. Tuckman Procrastination Scale (TPS)

Each participant is expected to take approximately 20 to 25 minutes to complete the entire set of questionnaires. Participation is completely voluntary, and all responses will be kept confidential and anonymous. No identifying personal information will be collected in order to protect the privacy of the participants.

After data collection, the responses will be compiled and coded for analysis. Data will be screened for completeness and accuracy before proceeding with statistical analysis. The collected data will then be subjected to descriptive statistics, correlation analysis, and mediation analysis to examine the proposed relationships among the variables.

Ethical Considerations

Ethical integrity will be strictly maintained throughout the research process. Prior to data collection, informed consent will be obtained from all participants after clearly explaining the purpose, procedures, and voluntary nature of the study. Participants will be informed that they have the right to withdraw from the study at any point without facing any consequences.

Confidentiality and anonymity will be ensured by avoiding the collection of any personally identifying information. The data collected will be used exclusively for academic and research purposes and will not be shared with any unauthorized individuals. Participants' responses will be kept securely stored in a password-protected file accessible only to the researcher.

The study involves minimal risk, as it uses self-report questionnaires that do not cause harm or discomfort to participants. Psychological tools selected for the study are standardized and non-invasive. Should any participant feel discomfort while answering the items, they will be allowed to discontinue immediately.

Statistical analysis

Descriptive analysis

Descriptive statistics will be used to summarize the demographic details and the scores on the Perfectionism, Fear of Failure, and Procrastination scales. Measures such as mean, median, standard deviation, and frequency distributions will help in understanding the overall patterns and variability in the data. These statistics will provide a clear overview of the sample characteristics and prepare the data for further analysis like correlation and mediation.

Correlational analysis

Correlation analysis will be used to examine the relationships between perfectionism, fear of failure, and procrastination among college students. The study will employ Pearson's correlation coefficient (r) to assess the strength and direction of the linear associations between the variables. This analysis will help determine whether higher levels of perfectionism are associated with increased fear of failure and procrastination. It will also clarify whether fear of failure is significantly related to procrastination. The results of the correlation analysis will serve as a preliminary step for conducting mediation analysis, providing insight into how these psychological constructs are interconnected.

Mediation analysis

Mediation analysis will be conducted to test whether fear of failure mediates the relationship between perfectionism and procrastination. This analysis will help clarify the psychological pathway linking perfectionism to procrastination.

Statistical Software

All statistical analyses will be conducted using SPSS, which provides reliable tools for data management and analysis. The software will be used for descriptive statistics, correlation and mediation analysis, along with visual representation of results.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS & DISCUSSION

This study examined the relationships among perfectionism, fear of failure, and procrastination in college students. Specifically, it aimed to test whether fear of failure mediates the relationship between perfectionism and procrastination. The results are presented in three parts: descriptive statistics, correlation analysis, and mediation analysis, followed by a discussion of the findings.

Table 4.1.1 Shows the descriptive statistics of birth order

Birth order				
	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	103	33.6	33.6	33.6
First born	84	27.4	27.4	60.9
Middle born	44	14.3	14.3	75.2
Second born	1	.3	.3	75.6
Single child	25	8.1	8.1	83.7
Twin	2	.7	.7	84.4
Youngest born	48	15.6	15.6	100.0
Total	307	100.0	100.0	

Table 4.1.2 Shows the descriptive statistics of gender

Gender					
		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Female	118	38.4	57.8	57.8
	Male	85	27.7	41.7	99.5
	Prefer not to say	1	.3	.5	100.0
	Total	204	66.4	100.0	
Missing	System	103	33.6		
Total		307	100.0		

Table 4.1.3 Shows the descriptive statistics of gender, birth order & Age

Statistics				
		Gender	Birth order	Age
N	Valid	204	307	201
	Missing	103	0	106
Mean		2.43		22.18
Median		2.00		22.00
Std. Deviation		.506		2.149
Skewness		.415		1.463
Std. Error of Skewness		.170		.172

Gender. From of 204 responses were considered valid. Among these, 118 (57.8%) identified as female, 85 (41.7%) identified as male, and 1 participant (0.5%) preferred not to disclose their gender. A total of 103 cases (33.6%) were missing, most likely due to incomplete survey responses.

The gender distribution suggests a relatively balanced sample, though slightly female-dominant, with women representing 57.8% of the valid responses. This pattern is consistent with many college-based studies, where female students are often more likely to participate in survey research. While the gender split is not extreme, the higher proportion of female respondents may have some influence on the findings, particularly if gender differences exist in perfectionism, procrastination, or fear of failure.

Birth Order. All 204 participants provided information regarding their birth order. The most common category was first-born (27.4%), followed by youngest-born (15.6%) and middle-born (14.3%). Other categories included single child (8.1%), twin (0.7%), and second-born (0.3%).

The distribution of birth order shows notable variation, with first-borns (27.4%) and youngest-borns (15.6%) making up the largest categories. These proportions are meaningful, as birth order has often been linked to personality development. For instance, first-borns are sometimes described as more achievement-oriented and responsible, while youngest-borns may be associated with traits such as adaptability or risk-taking. The presence of single children (8.1%) and twins (0.7%) adds diversity to the sample, though their smaller representation means conclusions for these groups should be drawn with caution.

Age. Age data were available for 201 participants. The mean age was 22.18 years ($SD = 2.15$), indicating that most participants were in early adulthood. The distribution of ages was slightly right-skewed (skewness = 1.463), suggesting that a small number of participants were older than the majority.

The mean age of participants was 22.18 years, which aligns closely with the expected age range of undergraduate and early graduate college students. The slight positive skewness in the distribution indicates that a few participants were older than average. This could reflect extended study durations, breaks in education, or participation from non-traditional students. Overall, the age distribution suggests that the sample is representative of a typical college student population in early adulthood, making the findings relevant to this group.

The sample included 204 valid responses, with a slightly higher proportion of female participants (57.8%) than males (41.7%), and one participant (0.5%) chose not to disclose their gender. This female predominance is consistent with previous college-based research, where women often participate more in survey studies. The slight gender imbalance should be noted, as gender differences may influence perfectionism, procrastination, or fear of failure. Birth order varied, with first-borns (27.4%) and youngest-borns (15.6%) representing the largest groups. This diversity is relevant because birth order can influence personality traits, including achievement orientation and risk-taking tendencies. The mean age of participants was 22.18 years ($SD = 2.15$), which aligns with early adulthood and typical college-age populations, making the results applicable to young adults. The slight positive skew indicates a few older participants, possibly reflecting non-traditional students. Overall, the descriptive statistics show a representative college student sample in terms of age, gender, and family background.

Table 4.2 Shows the correlation Perfectionism, Procrastination and Fear of failure

Correlations				
		IV	ME	DV
IV	Pearson Correlation	1	.362 ^{**}	.340 ^{**}
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.000
	N	204	204	204
ME	Pearson Correlation	.362 ^{**}	1	.089
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		.206
	N	204	204	204
DV	Pearson Correlation	.340 ^{**}	.089	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.206	
	N	204	204	204
**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).				

A Pearson correlation analysis was conducted to examine the relationships among perfectionism (IV), fear of failure (ME), and procrastination (DV). Results (see Table 2) revealed that perfectionism was significantly and positively correlated with procrastination, $r(204) = .34$, $p < .01$, indicating that higher levels of perfectionism were associated with higher levels of procrastination. Perfectionism was also significantly and positively correlated with fear of failure, $r(204) = .36$, $p < .01$, suggesting that students with higher perfectionistic tendencies reported greater fear of failure.

However, the correlation between fear of failure and procrastination was small and non-significant, $r(204) = .09$, $p = .206$. This indicates that fear of failure does not have a meaningful direct association with procrastination in this sample. Since one of the conditions for mediation (the mediator being significantly related to the dependent variable) was not met, fear of failure could not be considered a mediator in the relationship between perfectionism and procrastination.

The Pearson correlation analysis revealed a significant positive relationship between perfectionism and procrastination ($r = .34$, $p < .01$), indicating that students with higher perfectionistic tendencies tend to delay tasks more. Perfectionism was also positively correlated with fear of failure ($r = .36$, $p < .01$), suggesting that perfectionistic students experience greater concern about failing. However, fear of failure did not show a significant correlation with procrastination ($r = .09$, $p = .206$), meaning that fear of failure alone is not strongly associated with task avoidance in this sample. These findings indicate that while perfectionism co-occurs with fear of failure, the latter does not directly drive procrastinatory behavior, highlighting that other mechanisms may explain why perfectionists delay tasks.

Table 4.3 : Shows Regression Coefficients for Mediation Analysis (PROCESS Model 4)

Path	b	SE	t	p	95% CI [LL, UL]
a path (IV → ME)	0.36	0.08	4.53	<.001	[0.20, 0.51]
b path (ME → DV)	-0.03	0.05	-0.46	.646	[-0.13, 0.08]
c path (IV → DV, total effect)	0.22	0.06	3.40	.001	[0.09, 0.34]
c' path (IV → DV, direct effect)	0.23	0.06	3.77	<.001	[0.11, 0.34]
Indirect effect (IV → ME → DV)	-0.01	0.02a	—	—	[-0.05, 0.03]

The mediation analysis was conducted using PROCESS Model 4 to examine whether fear of failure (ME) mediates the relationship between perfectionism (IV) and procrastination (DV). The sample size was $N = 204$, and unstandardized regression coefficients were reported. Bootstrapping with 5,000 samples was used to calculate standard errors and confidence intervals.

Path a (IV → ME). The first path examined the effect of perfectionism on fear of failure. Results indicated a significant positive relationship ($b = 0.36$, $SE = 0.08$, $t = 4.53$, $p < .001$, 95% CI [0.20, 0.51]). This suggests that higher levels of perfectionism were strongly associated with greater fear of failure among students.

Path b (ME → DV). The second path tested the effect of fear of failure on procrastination, controlling for perfectionism. The results were not significant ($b = -0.03$, $SE = 0.05$, $t = -0.46$, $p = .646$, 95% CI [-0.13, 0.08]), indicating that fear of failure did not predict procrastination in this model.

Path c (IV → DV, total effect). The total effect of perfectionism on procrastination, without including fear of failure, was significant ($b = 0.22$, $SE = 0.06$, $t = 3.40$, $p = .001$, 95% CI [0.09, 0.34]). This confirms that perfectionism directly influences procrastination when considered on its own.

Path c' (IV → DV, direct effect). When controlling for fear of failure, the direct effect of perfectionism on procrastination remained significant ($b = 0.23$, $SE = 0.06$, $t = 3.77$, $p < .001$, 95% CI [0.11, 0.34]). This demonstrates that perfectionism continues to predict procrastination even when fear of failure is included in the model.

Indirect Effect (IV → ME → DV). The indirect pathway through fear of failure was non-significant ($b = -0.01$, $SE = 0.02$, 95% CI [-0.05, 0.03]), as the confidence interval included zero. This means that fear of failure did not serve as a mediator in the relationship between perfectionism and procrastination.

The mediation analysis shows that fear of failure does not significantly mediate the relationship between perfectionism and procrastination. Although perfectionism is significantly associated with fear of failure (path a), fear of failure does not significantly predict procrastination when perfectionism is taken into account (path b).

This suggests that while fear of failure may co-occur with perfectionism, it does not explain how perfectionism leads to procrastination. Other psychological factors—such as low self-efficacy, anxiety, or avoidance coping—may be more influential pathways.

The direct effect (path c') remains significant, reinforcing that perfectionism directly contributes to procrastination among college students. Students with high perfectionistic tendencies may delay tasks due to fear of making mistakes, over-preparing, or striving for unrealistic standards—not necessarily because they are afraid of failure.

The total effect (path c) confirms that perfectionism has an overall influence on procrastination, independent of the mediation process. This emphasizes the importance of addressing perfectionistic traits directly in interventions aimed at reducing procrastination.

The mediation analysis examined whether fear of failure mediates the relationship between perfectionism and procrastination. The effect of perfectionism on fear of failure (path a) was significant, confirming that higher perfectionistic tendencies are linked to greater fear of failure. However, the effect of fear of failure on procrastination (path b) was non-significant, indicating that fear of failure does not predict procrastination when controlling for perfectionism. The total effect of perfectionism on procrastination (path c) was significant, and the direct effect (path c') remained significant after including fear of failure. The indirect effect through fear of failure was non-significant, suggesting that fear of failure does not mediate the perfectionism–procrastination relationship. These results indicate that perfectionism directly contributes to procrastination, likely through behaviors such as over-preparing, striving for unrealistic standards, or perfectionistic self-criticism, rather than through fear of failure. Other factors such as low self-efficacy, anxiety, or avoidance coping may play a more significant mediating role.

The study demonstrates that perfectionism is a significant predictor of procrastination among college students. Although perfectionism is associated with higher fear of failure, this fear does not mediate the relationship between perfectionism and procrastination. Therefore, interventions aiming to reduce procrastination should primarily target perfectionistic tendencies, such as setting realistic standards, reducing self-criticism, and developing effective time-management strategies. Future research could explore alternative mediators, such as self-efficacy, anxiety, or avoidance coping, to better understand the pathways through which perfectionism contributes to procrastination.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSION

This chapter presents a consolidated overview of the study, highlighting the key aspects from the introduction through to the conclusion. It begins with a summary of the introduction, outlining the significance of perfectionism, procrastination, and fear of failure among college students. This is followed by a review of relevant literature that situates the research within existing theoretical and empirical findings, while also identifying the gap addressed by the present study. The need for the study is then explained, emphasizing its relevance to academic performance and psychological well-being. The methodology section provides a concise account of the research design, sample, tools, and procedures used, along with the statistical methods applied for data analysis. The results are summarized to indicate which hypotheses were supported and which were not, leading into the overall conclusion that perfectionism directly predicts procrastination without the mediating role of fear of failure. The chapter also acknowledges the limitations of the study and discusses its implications for academic counseling, mental health interventions, and future research. Together, these sections provide a comprehensive understanding of the study's scope, findings, and contributions.

This study investigates the relationships among perfectionism, procrastination, and fear of failure in young adults, particularly college students, and examines whether fear of failure mediates the link between perfectionism and procrastination. Perfectionism is a multidimensional trait involving the pursuit of flawlessness, setting high standards, and engaging in critical self-evaluation. It can be adaptive, motivating achievement, or maladaptive, contributing to anxiety, stress, and procrastination. Among young adults, especially college students, perfectionistic tendencies are often amplified by academic pressures, societal expectations, and social media influences.

Procrastination, the voluntary delay of tasks despite potential negative consequences, is closely associated with maladaptive perfectionism and emotional regulation difficulties. Cognitive, motivational, and temporal factors, along with fear of failure, play critical roles in explaining procrastinatory behavior. Fear of failure

itself is a multidimensional construct involving anxiety, negative self-evaluation, and avoidance behaviors, and is particularly salient among students who link self-worth to achievement outcomes. Theoretical perspectives, including Cognitive-Behavioral Theory, Self-Worth Theory, Achievement Motivation Theory, and multidimensional models of perfectionism and fear of failure, provide a framework for understanding how these constructs interact.

Overall, the chapter highlights that perfectionism, procrastination, and fear of failure are interconnected constructs that influence academic performance, psychological well-being, and behavioral outcomes in young adults. Recognizing the adaptive and maladaptive forms of perfectionism, and the role of fear of failure in task avoidance, is essential for developing effective interventions that promote mental health, resilience, and healthy achievement strategies among students.

Review of Literature

The review of literature provides a comprehensive understanding of the three major constructs of the study—perfectionism, procrastination, and fear of failure. Past studies show that perfectionism has both adaptive and maladaptive aspects, with maladaptive perfectionism linked to anxiety, depression, and procrastination. Procrastination is seen as a self-regulatory failure, often resulting from task avoidance, poor emotional regulation, and fear of evaluation. Fear of failure, explained through theories like Atkinson's and Conroy's models, contributes to avoidance and low self-worth, especially among students with high perfectionistic concerns. While the links between these variables are established, limited research has explored fear of failure as a mediator between perfectionism and procrastination, highlighting the relevance of the present study.

Need for the Study

The study addresses the perfectionism–procrastination paradox by examining whether fear of failure serves as a mediator. Since maladaptive perfectionism and procrastination are linked to reduced academic performance, mental health issues, and impaired well-being, this research is essential. It provides insights that can guide academic counseling, psychological interventions, and resilience-building strategies to help students manage perfectionism and procrastination. Procrastination is a common issue among young adults, often leading to reduced academic performance, increased stress, and lower overall well-being. While perfectionism has been identified as a significant predictor of procrastination, the mechanisms underlying this relationship are not fully understood. Fear of failure, which is closely linked to perfectionistic tendencies, may play a critical role in explaining why perfectionistic individuals delay tasks. Exploring this mediating role can provide valuable insights into the psychological processes contributing to procrastination and help in developing targeted interventions. This study is particularly relevant for young adults, as understanding these dynamics can support their personal, academic, and professional growth.

Methodology

The study employed a quantitative, cross-sectional, correlational design with purposive sampling. Participants were college students aged 18–25 from various academic disciplines in Coimbatore. A total of 204 valid responses were analyzed. Standardized self-report tools were used: Frost Multidimensional Perfectionism Scale (FMPS), Performance Failure Appraisal Inventory (PFAI), and Tuckman Procrastination Scale (TPS). Data was collected both online and offline. Ethical guidelines were followed, ensuring informed consent, anonymity, and voluntary participation. Data was analyzed using SPSS, applying descriptive statistics, Pearson's correlations, ANOVA, and mediation analysis (PROCESS model).

Data Analysis

The study collected data from 204 college students to examine the relationships among perfectionism, fear of failure, and procrastination, and to test whether fear of failure mediates the relationship between perfectionism and procrastination. The sample included 118 females (57.8%), 85 males (41.7%), and 1 participant (0.5%) who did not disclose their gender, reflecting a slightly female-dominant distribution. Birth order varied, with first-borns representing 27.4%, youngest-borns 15.6%, middle-borns 14.3%, single children 8.1%, twins 0.7%, and second-borns 0.3%. The mean age of participants was 22.18 years ($SD = 2.15$), with a slightly right-skewed distribution indicating a few older participants. Pearson correlation analysis showed that perfectionism was significantly positively correlated with procrastination ($r = .34, p < .01$) and with fear of failure ($r = .36, p < .01$), while the correlation between fear of failure and procrastination was small and non-significant ($r = .09, p = .206$). Mediation analysis using PROCESS Model 4 indicated that perfectionism significantly predicted fear of failure ($b = 0.36, SE = 0.08, t = 4.53, p < .001$), but fear of failure did not predict procrastination when controlling for perfectionism ($b = -0.03, SE = 0.05, t = -0.46, p = .646$). The total effect of perfectionism on procrastination was significant ($b = 0.22, SE = 0.06, t = 3.40, p = .001$), and the direct effect remained significant after including fear of failure in the model ($b = 0.23, SE = 0.06, t = 3.77, p < .001$), whereas the indirect effect through fear of failure was non-significant ($b = -0.01, SE = 0.02, 95\% CI [-0.05, 0.03]$). These results suggest that while perfectionism is associated with both procrastination and fear of failure, fear of failure does not mediate the relationship between perfectionism and procrastination. Instead, perfectionistic tendencies appear to directly influence procrastination, likely through behaviors such as over-preparing, setting unrealistic standards, and excessive self-criticism, rather than through fear of failure.

Results

- Perfectionism and procrastination were found to be significantly and positively correlated, indicating that higher perfectionism predicted higher procrastination.
- Perfectionism and fear of failure showed a significant positive relationship, suggesting that perfectionistic students tend to experience greater fear of failure.
- Fear of failure and procrastination did not show a significant correlation, indicating that fear of failure was not a predictor of procrastination in this sample.
- Mediation analysis revealed that fear of failure did not mediate the relationship between perfectionism and procrastination. Instead, perfectionism directly predicted procrastination.

Conclusion

The present study examined the relationships among perfectionism, fear of failure, and procrastination in college students, with a particular focus on the mediating role of fear of failure. The findings indicate that perfectionism is significantly and positively associated with procrastination, suggesting that students who set excessively high standards for themselves or engage in critical self-evaluation are more likely to delay completing tasks. This direct relationship underscores the behavioral and cognitive mechanisms inherent in perfectionism—such as over-preparing, striving for flawlessness, and self-imposed pressure—that contribute to task avoidance.

Perfectionism was also positively associated with fear of failure, indicating that individuals with higher perfectionistic tendencies experience increased anticipatory anxiety, negative self-evaluation, and concerns about potential mistakes. However, fear of failure did not significantly correlate with procrastination in this sample, nor did it mediate the relationship between perfectionism and procrastination. This finding suggests that while fear of failure is commonly linked to perfectionism, it may not be the primary mechanism driving procrastinatory behavior in college students. Instead, other psychological factors, such as low self-efficacy, anxiety, avoidance coping strategies, or decision-making difficulties, might play a more significant role in explaining why perfectionists postpone tasks.

The results highlight the importance of addressing perfectionistic tendencies directly in interventions aimed at reducing procrastination. Practical approaches could include helping students set realistic and attainable goals, fostering self-compassion, developing time-management and organizational skills, and reducing excessive self-criticism. By targeting the maladaptive components of perfectionism rather than focusing solely on fear of failure, academic and mental health programs may more effectively mitigate procrastinatory behaviors and enhance overall functioning.

Finally, the study contributes to the literature by clarifying that fear of failure, despite its theoretical relevance, does not serve as a significant mediator in the perfectionism–procrastination link among young adults. This insight encourages future research to explore alternative mediating variables, consider longitudinal designs to better capture causal pathways, and examine diverse student populations to improve the generalizability of findings. Overall, the study emphasizes that perfectionism is a critical factor in procrastination and should be a central focus in both research and applied interventions aimed at promoting academic and psychological well-being.

Limitations & Implications

While the study has certain limitations that affect the scope and generalizability of its findings, it also provides valuable implications for academic support, clinical practice, and future research. Together, these sections acknowledge the constraints of the study while highlighting its practical and theoretical contributions.

The present study has certain limitations that should be considered when interpreting the findings. The use of a cross-sectional design prevents causal inferences, and reliance on self-report measures may have introduced response bias. Additionally, the sample was limited to college students in Coimbatore, which restricts the generalizability of the results. Missing responses, accounting for 33.6% of incomplete cases, further reduced the final sample size. Despite these limitations, the study has important implications. In terms of academic counseling, support programs should address procrastination driven by perfectionistic tendencies. Mental health interventions, including cognitive-behavioral therapy, resilience training, and mindfulness practices, can help reduce the maladaptive impact of perfectionism. From an educational policy perspective, colleges may benefit from implementing workshops on time management, coping skills, and realistic goal-setting. Future research should explore additional mediators, such as self-efficacy and anxiety, and adopt longitudinal designs to provide stronger evidence for causal relationships.

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APPENDIX

I am Darshini Prabhakaran, currently pursuing M.Sc. Clinical Psychology at PSG College of Arts & Science, Coimbatore. I am conducting a study on the relationship between perfectionism, fear of failure, and procrastination among young adults, under the guidance of [Your Guide's Name, Designation, Department, PSG College of Arts & Science, Coimbatore].

You are invited to participate in this study if you are between 18 and 25 years old.

Confidentiality:

All information collected in this study will be kept strictly confidential and will be accessible only to authorized personnel involved in this research. Any results or findings may be presented in meetings or published in journals, but your personal identity will not be disclosed.

Participation and Withdrawal:

Participation in this study is completely voluntary. You may withdraw at any time without any consequences. Partial responses will not be recorded, and no data will be saved unless you submit the form. You can withdraw simply by closing the browser or navigating away from the survey.

Contact Information:

If you have any questions regarding this research study, please contact me via email: darshuprabhakaran@gmail.com

Informed Consent:

I have read and understood the purpose of this research study. I understand that all information provided will be kept confidential and will not be released to any person or organization without my prior written permission. I acknowledge that I have the right to discontinue participation at any point, and the assessors may be unable to communicate results to me if I terminate the study.

By submitting this form, I consent to participate in this research study and confirm that I have been fully informed about the policies and rules regarding participation.

Email ID

Consent :

I have read the above information and understood the procedure, benefits and risks involved. I agree to participate in the research at my own consent.

Yes No

Demographic details

Initial

Age

Gender

Male

Female

Prefer not to say

Name of the course/ occupation (if a college student, mention UG or PG)

If UG, specify 12th overall percentage

If PG, specify UG overall percentage

Family type

Nuclear

Joint

Socio economic status

Low

Middle

High

Father occupation

Mother occupation

Birth order

First born

Middle born

Youngest born

Single child

Residential area

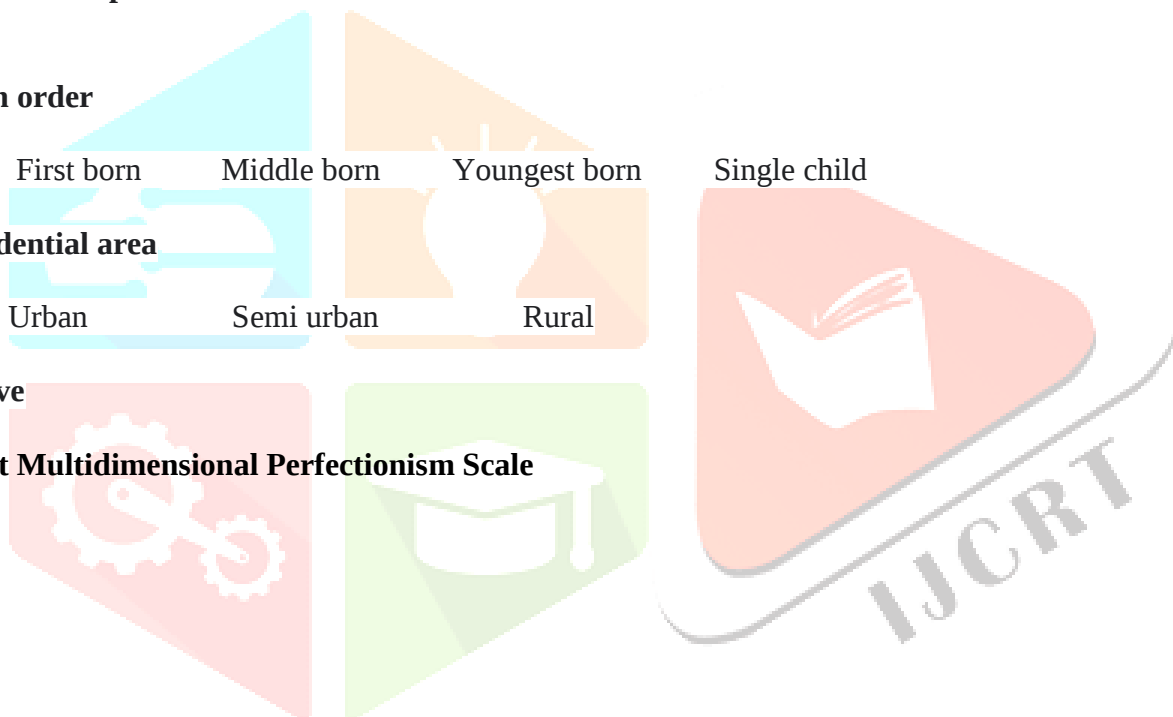
Urban

Semi urban

Rural

Native

Frost Multidimensional Perfectionism Scale



Items	1	2	3	4	5
1. My parents set very high standards for me.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
2. Organization is very important to me.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
3. As a child, I was punished for doing things less than perfect.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
4. If I do not set the highest standards for myself, I am likely to end up a second-rate person.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
5. My parents never tried to understand my mistakes.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
6. It is important to me that I be thoroughly competent in everything I do.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
7. I am a neat person.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
8. I try to be an organized person.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
9. If I fail at work/school, I am a failure as a person.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
10. I should be upset if I make a mistake.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
11. My parents wanted me to be the best at everything.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
12. I set higher goals than most people.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
13. If someone does a task at work/school better than I, then I feel like I failed the whole task.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
14. If I fail partly, it is as bad as being a complete failure.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
15. Only outstanding performance is good enough in my family.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
16. I am very good at focusing my efforts on attaining a goal.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Items	1	2	3	4	5
17. Even when I do something very carefully, I often feel that it is not quite right.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
18. I hate being less than the best at things.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
19. I have extremely high goals.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
20. My parents have expected excellence from me.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
21. People will probably think less of me if I make a mistake.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
22. I never felt like I could meet my parents' expectations.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
23. If I do not do as well as other people, it means I am an inferior human being.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
24. Other people seem to accept lower standards from themselves than I do.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
25. If I do not do well all the time, people will not respect me.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
26. My parents have always had higher expectations for my future than I have.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
27. I try to be a neat person.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
28. I usually have doubts about the simple everyday things I do.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
29. Neatness is very important to me.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
30. I expect higher performance in my daily tasks than most people.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
31. I am an organized person.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
32. I tend to get behind in my work because I repeat things over and over.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
33. It takes me a long time to do something "right."	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
34. The fewer mistakes I make, the more people will like me.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
35. I never felt like I could meet my parents' standards.	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

Performance Failure Appraisal Inventory (PFAI, Conroy et al., 2002)

- _____ 1. When I am failing, it is often because I am not smart enough to perform successfully.
- _____ 2. When I am failing, my future seems uncertain.
- _____ 3. When I am failing, it upsets important others.
- _____ 4. When I am failing, I blame my lack of talent.
- _____ 5. When I am failing, I believe that my future plans will change.
- _____ 6. When I am failing, I expect to be criticized by important others.
- _____ 7. When I am failing, I am afraid that I might not have enough talent.
- _____ 8. When I am failing, it upsets my “plan” for the future.
- _____ 9. When I am failing, I lose the trust of people who are important to me.
- _____ 10. When I am not succeeding, I am less valuable than when I succeed.
- _____ 11. When I am not succeeding, people are less interested in me.
- _____ 12. When I am failing, I am not worried about it affecting my future plans.
- _____ 13. When I am not succeeding, people seem to want to help me less.
- _____ 14. When I am failing, important others are not happy.
- _____ 15. When I am not succeeding, I get down on myself easily.
- _____ 16. When I am failing, I hate the fact that I am not in control of the outcome.
- _____ 17. When I am not succeeding, people tend to leave me alone.
- _____ 18. When I am failing, it is embarrassing if others are there to see it.
- _____ 19. When I am failing, important others are disappointed.
- _____ 20. When I am failing, I believe that everybody knows I am failing.
- _____ 21. When I am not succeeding, some people are not interested in me anymore.
- _____ 22. When I am failing, I believe that my doubters feel that they were right about me.
- _____ 23. When I am not succeeding, my value decreases for some people.
- _____ 24. When I am failing, I worry about what others think about me.
- _____ 25. When I am failing, I worry that others may think I am not trying.

Tuckman Procrastination Scale (TPS, 1991)A. That's me
for sureB. That's my
tendencyC. That's not
my tendencyD. That's not me
for sure

- * 1. I needlessly delay finishing jobs, even when they're important.
- * 2. I postpone starting in on things I don't like to do.
- 3. When I have a deadline, I wait till the last minute.
- * 4. I delay making tough decisions.
- 5. I stall on initiating new activities.
- * 6. I'm on time for appointments.
- * 7. I keep putting off improving my work habits.
- * 8. I get right to work, even on life's unpleasant chores.
- * 9. I manage to find an excuse for not doing something
- 10. I avoid doing those things which I expect to do poorly.
- * 11. I put the necessary time into even boring tasks, like studying.
- 12. When I get tired of an unpleasant job, I stop.
- 13. I believe in "keeping my nose to the grindstone."
- * 14. When something's not worth the trouble, I stop.
- 15. I believe that things I do not like doing should not exist.
- 16. I consider people who make me do unfair and difficult things to be rotten.
- 17. When it counts, I can manage to enjoy even studying.
- * 18. I am an incurable time waster.
- 19. I feel that it's my absolute right to have other people treat me fairly.
- 20. I believe that other people don't have the right to give me deadlines.
- 21. Studying makes me feel entirely miserable.
- * 22. I'm a time waster now but I can't seem to do anything about it.
- 23. When something's too tough to tackle, I believe in postponing it.
- 24. I promise myself I'll do something and then drag my feet.
- 25. Whenever I make a plan of action, I follow it.
- * 26. I wish I could find an easy way to get myself moving.
- * 27. When I have trouble with a task, it's usually my own fault.
- 28. Even though I hate myself if I don't get started, it doesn't get me going.
- * 29. I always finish important jobs with time to spare.
- * 30. When I'm done with my work, I check it over.
- * 31. I look for a loophole or shortcut to get through a tough task.
- * 32. I still get stuck in neutral even though I know how important it is to get started.
- 33. I never met a job I couldn't "lick."
- * 34. Putting something off until tomorrow is not the way I do it.
- 35. I feel that work burns me out.