

## Understanding Mediation Role of Perfectionism Between Achievement and Mental Health Among University Students

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### ABSTRACT

Perfectionism has emerged as a central idea for understanding individual differences across numerous rules of functioning. Perfectionism is prevailing between university undergraduates and is guide various negative effects, including raised levels of stress, worry, depression, and tiredness. The aim of this study was to understand the mediation role of perfectionism between achievement and mental health among university students. The study utilized the primary data analysis method, gathered from a sample of 80 university students from different states of India, from ages ranging from 18 to 25 years. Data sampling involved the use of the Clinical Perfectionism Questionnaire (CPQ), Achievement Motive Revised, and Schwartz Outcome scale-10 test. The raw results of the SOC, CPQ, and AMS were converted into descriptive statistics. The correlation between SOC with CPQ and AMS indicated a weak positive relationship. This study climaxes the need for a nuanced approach to understanding the relationship between attainment and mental well-being among university undergraduates.

**Keywords:** *Perfectionism, Achievement, Mental health*

The change to academy marks an important achievement in the lives of young individuals, contributing to freedom for their personal progress, academic progress, and public growth. Still, alongside the enthusiasm and promise of university, many undergraduates again face a myriad of challenges, containing academic pressure, public stressors, and insane energy concerns. In current years, there has been growing recognition of the predominance and impact of mental health issues between university students, cueing increased attention from analysts, educators, and policymakers alike. Perfectionism is from a never-ending pursuit of extreme standards, overdone self-critique, and a preoccupation accompanying preventing mistakes. While striving for superiority maybe a positive attribute, nitpicking becomes uncertain when it leads to unreal expectations, never-ending stress, and injured well-being. Research implies that perfectionism is prevailing between university undergraduates and is guide various negative effects, including raised levels of stress, worry, depression, and tiredness. Additionally, perfectionism has happened linked to academic troubles, in the way that procrastination, fear of collapse, and curtailed motivation. Perfectionism also implied broken cognitive style that tended toward going separate ways thinking, moralistic self-judgment, and overgeneralization, all in the service of preventing

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## **Understanding Mediation Role of Perfectionism Between Achievement and Mental Health Among University Students**

guilt for not living up to standards that could never be carefully met. Gaining academic success is a central aim for many university students, compelled by aspirations for future careers, personal fulfillment, and societal expectations. However, the pursuit of excellence can sometimes come at a cost, with students experiencing heightened levels of stress, anxiety, and emotional distress in their quest for academic achievement. In this context, nitpicking emerges as a salient subjective trait that influences how students approach and respond to the demands of university life.

### ***Perfectionism***

Perfectionism, a multifaceted psychological construct, involves the relentless pursuit of flawlessness and high standards. While it can drive individuals toward excellence, it also leads to stress and anxiety. Research identifies dimensions like self-oriented, other-oriented, and socially prescribed perfectionism, each with unique implications for mental health. Self-oriented perfectionism drives achievement but can lead to self-doubt. Other-oriented perfectionism strains relationships by imposing high standards on others.

Perfectionism manifests differently across domains such as academics, work, and relationships. In academic settings, it leads to an obsession with grades and fear of failure. In the workplace, it drives a fear of mistakes and reluctance to delegate. In relationships, it fosters unrealistic expectations and difficulty accepting feedback. Origins of perfectionism are complex, stemming from genetic, environmental, and psychological factors.

Perfectionism profoundly impacts mental health, necessitating interventions like cognitive-behavioral therapy and mindfulness to challenge perfectionistic beliefs and cultivate self-compassion. By addressing perfectionism, individuals can develop healthier relationships with success and failure, enhancing overall well-being.

### ***Achievement***

The pursuit of academic achievement among university students is a multifaceted journey encompassing various pressures and challenges. Academic success holds significant importance, intertwined with personal growth and future opportunities. However, the pursuit of excellence often leads to heightened stress, anxiety, and the cultivation of a perfectionistic culture. From societal expectations to personal aspirations, students face a myriad of pressures both inside and outside the classroom. While many thrive academically, the relentless pursuit of perfection can compromise mental and physical well-being. Universities must prioritize holistic support systems, including access to mental health resources and fostering resilience. Educators also play a pivotal role in promoting a positive learning environment that values growth over perfection. By acknowledging the challenges students face and nurturing a culture of self-care, universities can help students navigate academic pressures while prioritizing their overall well-being. Ultimately, the pursuit of academic achievement should align with students' holistic development, ensuring they thrive academically and personally throughout their collegiate journey and beyond.

### ***Mental Health***

The increasing prevalence of mental health issues among university students, including depression and anxiety disorders, has highlighted the complex challenges they face during their transition to academic life. Academic pressures, societal expectations, and financial burdens contribute to the complexity of their mental health landscape, necessitating exploration of both risk factors and protective mechanisms. Perfectionism has emerged as a

## Understanding Mediation Role of Perfectionism Between Achievement and Mental Health Among University Students

significant risk factor, linked to adverse mental health outcomes, exacerbated by the culture of achievement in academic environments. University life brings newfound independence and academic challenges, alongside social and interpersonal adjustments, adding to students' stressors. Financial concerns, social media influences, and the pressure to excel academically further contribute to mental health challenges. Addressing these issues requires a holistic approach, including comprehensive mental health services, stigma reduction efforts, and promoting self-care and resilience. Supportive academic environments that prioritize balance and self-compassion are crucial, with educators playing a key role in fostering realistic expectations and promoting a growth mindset. Ultimately, addressing the mental well-being of university students requires a coordinated and holistic response to ensure their academic, social, and emotional success during this critical period of transition.

### *Mediating Role of Perfectionism*

In contemporary scholarship, there's a growing focus on the intricate dynamics between achievement, perfectionism, and mental health, employing mediation models to understand these relationships. Mediation here refers to how one variable's influence on another is channeled through an intermediary. Researchers suggest that perfectionism may act as a mediator between achievement and mental well-being, wherein high achievers often set demanding standards, leading to perfectionistic tendencies and increased stress. Conversely, those with lower achievement orientation may experience fewer perfectionistic concerns and better mental health outcomes. Understanding this mediation sheds light on how these variables interact.

Perfectionism plays a pivotal role in how individuals respond to achievement-related stressors, with some thriving under pressure while others suffer from heightened stress and emotional distress. Personality traits, coping mechanisms, and support networks moderate this relationship. Additionally, the bidirectional nature of the achievement-perfectionism-mental health link highlights the need for interventions addressing both the roots of perfectionism and factors fostering resilience. Ultimately, by comprehending how perfectionism mediates the impact of achievement on mental health, researchers and practitioners can better support individuals in navigating achievement-related challenges while safeguarding their well-being.

## **REVIEW OF LITERATURE**

The literature review delves into various dimensions of perfectionism and its implications across health, relationships, and achievement. Stoeber (2017) underscores the dual nature of perfectionism, distinguishing between perfectionistic strivings and concerns. Richardson et al. (2014) elaborate on these dimensions, highlighting the pursuit of excellence versus anxieties about failure. Perfectionism, as characterized by Stober and Otto (2006), involves striving for perfection and setting high standards, with Curran & Hill (2018) noting its prevalence in performance-driven societies.

The adaptive nature of perfectionistic strivings is discussed by Curran & Hill (2018), showing its association with motivation and locus of control, potentially mitigating academic burnout. Conversely, perfectionistic concerns are linked to avoidance behaviors like self-handicapping (Zuckerman & Tsai, 2005), driven by fear of failure (Hobden & Pliner, 1995). This avoidance strategy distorts self-assessment, affecting academic achievement (Rice et al., 2006).

## Understanding Mediation Role of Perfectionism Between Achievement and Mental Health Among University Students

Frost et al. (1990) and Burka & Yuen (1983) emphasize the psychological toll of perfectionism, with minor mistakes leading to catastrophic outcomes and self-criticism. This negative self-evaluation is compounded by discrepancies between standards and performance (Pacht, 1984). Studies on perfectionism have primarily focused on college students and adult populations, though its impact on children, particularly the gifted, has been noted (Parker, 1997).

Furthermore, perfectionism influences goal setting and maintenance, shaping individuals' goal orientation (Bong et al., 2014). The review underscores the need to understand the multifaceted nature of perfectionism and its varied consequences across different domains of life. However, despite extensive research on perfectionism, Richardson, & Ray et al. (2016) suggest a gap in understanding the mechanisms linking perfectionism to academic achievement, urging further investigation into this area.

### *Objectives*

- Explore the role of perfectionism in mediating the relationship between achievement and mental health outcomes.
- Examine moderating factors that influence the strength or direction of the mediated relationship between achievement, perfectionism, and mental health.

### *Hypothesis*

- **H1-** There would be positive relationship between Achievement and Mental health
- **H2-** Perfectionism would mediate the relationship between achievement and mental health

## **METHODOLOGY**

The present study employs a correlational research design. It focuses on three important constructs: Perfectionism, Achievement and Mental Health. The study's goal is to understand the mediation role perfectionism between achievement and mental health among university students.

- **Independent Variable:** Achievement
- **Mediator Variable:** Perfectionism
- **Dependent Variable:** Mental Health

### *Sampling Method*

The data was collected from 81 university students of age group 18 – 25 years using convenience sampling method.

**N = 81**

- **Inclusion Criteria:** Age – 18-25 years  
college students
- **Exclusion Criteria:** Age – Individuals below 18 years  
and above 25 years

## Understanding Mediation Role of Perfectionism Between Achievement and Mental Health Among University Students

### *Instruments Used*

- **Clinical Perfectionism Questionnaire:** The Clinical Perfectionism Questionnaire (CPQ) is a self-assessment tool derived from Shafran et al.'s (2002) cognitive-behavioral model, consisting of 12 items measuring core components of clinical perfectionism (CP). Respondents rate their experiences over the past month on a four-point Likert scale, with two items reverse-scored. Conversely, the Frost Multidimensional Perfectionism Scale (FMPS) employs 35 items on a five-point Likert scale, offering a broader assessment. Only relevant FMPS subscales, such as Personal Standards and Evaluative Concerns, were utilized for concurrent validity, disregarding others. This highlights the CPQ's focused approach compared to the FMPS's more comprehensive evaluation of perfectionism traits.
- **Achievement Motive Scale – Revised:** The Revised Achievement Motive Scale (AMS-R) is a widely-used tool for assessing hope of success and fear of failure. Through confirmatory factor analysis, the authors revised the original 30-item AMS, which didn't fit a two-factor model well. The revised 10-item AMS-R demonstrated a satisfactory fit to the intended model, validated through cross-validation, and showed good reliability, lower inter scale correlations, and criterion-related validity compared to standard achievement-related criteria.
- **Schwartz Outcome Scale:** The Schwartz Outcome Scale-10 (SOS-10) offers a streamlined and cost-effective means to gauge psychological well-being. Four studies presented here broaden its scope beyond clinical settings, validating its reliability and relevance across college populations and counseling contexts. These findings affirm the SOS-10's utility as a versatile measure of mental health outcomes.

### *Procedure*

Data gathering. A demographic information form was initially distributed to gather samples. Name, age, gender and educational background questions were included on this form. The same people were notified that they had been chosen to constitute the study's sample after giving their agreement. After receiving their conformation, they were directed to Clinical Perfectionism Questionnaire, Achievement Motive Revised and Schwartz Outcome scale-10 test. After calculating the raw scores, Excel was used to determine the link the various variable.

### *Statistical Analysis*

In order to assess and comprehend the data, descriptive statistics were used. Using Excel, data analysis was conducted. Data sampling involved the use of Clinical Perfectionism Questionnaire, Achievement Motive Revised and Schwartz Outcome scale-10 test.

## **RESULT & INTERPRETATION**

*Table – 1 Descriptive analysis of CPQ-10, AMS-10, SOC raw scores*

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
		Statistic	Statistic	Statistic	Statistic
<b>SOC</b>	81	1.60	6.00	3.9861	1.08137
<b>CPQ</b>	81	1.10	3.70	2.6010	.43591
<b>AMS</b>	81	2.30	4.00	3.1183	.24001

The raw results of the Schwartz outcome scale (SOC), Clinical Perfectionism Questionnaire (CPQ), and Achievement Motive Scale (AMS) were converted into descriptive statistics.

## Understanding Mediation Role of Perfectionism Between Achievement and Mental Health Among University Students

Result obtained from data collected from a representative sample participant were as follows.

The average participant's score on the Schwartz Outcome scale was 3.986 and the average participant, 's score on the Clinical Perfectionism Questionnaire was 2.601 and, for the Achievement Motive Scale it was 3.118

### Correlational Analysis

**Table-2 Correlational Analysis between SOC, CPQ and AMS**

		SOC	CPQ	AMS
SOC	Pearson Correlation	1	.073	.066
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.518	.559
	N	81	81	81
CPQ	Pearson Correlation	.073	1	.282*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.518		.011
	N	81	81	81
AMS	Pearson Correlation	.066	.282*	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.559	.011	
	N	81	81	81

\*Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

## RESULT

The correlation between SCO and CPQ was found to be non-significant,  $r(81) = .073$ ,  $p = .518$ , indicating a weak positive relationship. Similarly, the correlation between SOC and AMS was also non-significant,  $r(81) = .066$ ,  $p = .559$ , suggesting a weak positive relationship.

However, a significant correlation was observed between CPQ and AMS,  $r(81) = .282$ ,  $p = .011$ , indicating a moderate positive relationship between these two independent variables.

H1- Therefore, there is no positive relationship between Achievement and Mental health among university students.

H2- Even though there is a significant correlation between Perfectionism and Achievement among university students, Perfectionism would not mediate the relationship between Achievement and Mental Health among university students.

### Regression

**Table- 3**

Model	Sum of Squares	Df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	.406	1	.406	.345	.559b
Residual	93.142	79	1.179		
Total	93.548	80			
a Dependent Variable: SOC					
b Predictors: (Constant), AMS					

## Understanding Mediation Role of Perfectionism Between Achievement and Mental Health Among University Students

### Result

A linear regression analysis was conducted with SOC as the dependent variable and AMS as the independent variable. The model included a constant term and AMS as predictors.

The regression model revealed a non-significant relationship between SOC and AMS,  $F(1, 79) = 0.345$ ,  $p = .559$ . The model accounted for a very small amount of variance in SOC, with the regression explaining only 0.4% of the variance ( $R^2 = .004$ ).

### DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The main objective of the study was to Understand the mediation role of perfectionism between Achievement and Mental Health among university students. The sample was collected from university students from different states of India, from ages ranging from 18 to 25 years.

The results of the study on understanding the mediation role of perfectionism between achievement and mental health among university students yield important insights into the interplay of these variables. For the first hypothesis (H1), the analysis did not find a positive relationship between achievement and mental health among university students. This finding challenges the commonly assumed notion that higher academic achievement directly translates to better mental health outcomes in the population. While academic achievement is often associated with positive psychological well-being, this study suggests that the relationship may be more nuanced than previously thought.

For the second hypothesis (H2), the results indicate a significant correlation between perfectionism and achievement among university students, supporting hypothesis H2. This finding aligns with existing literature glorifying the tendency for perfectionistic traits to be associated with higher levels of academic achievement. However, despite this correlation, the study did not find evidence to support the mediating role of perfectionism in the relationship between achievement and mental health among university students.

The lack of mediation suggests that perfectionism does not act as a mechanism through which achievement influences mental health. This finding challenges the notion that perfectionistic tendencies inherently lead to negative mental health outcomes among high-achieving individuals. Instead, it suggests that other factors may be at play in shaping the relationship between achievement and mental health among university students.

One potential reason for these results could be the presence of supplementary variables that were not accounted for in the study. For instance, extrinsic stressors such as academic pressure, social beliefs, or personal experiences can exert a more direct influence on mental strength outcomes than nitpicking alone. Future research could investigate these factors to provide a more inclusive understanding of the complex dynamics complicated.

Additionally, the non-significant mediation emphasizes the importance of considering individual distinctnesses and contextual determinants in understanding the relationship between realization and mental health. While nitpicking may play a role for few students, it grants permission not be the primary mechanism by which achievement impacts mental strength for the broader academy student population.

## Understanding Mediation Role of Perfectionism Between Achievement and Mental Health Among University Students

In conclusion, this study climaxes the need for a nuanced approach to understanding the relationship between attainment and mental health between university undergraduates. While perfectionism may be compared with academic success, it does not perform to mediate the friendship between achievement and insane health in this framework. Further research is warranted to survey additional factors that grant permission contribute to mental energy outcomes in university undergraduates and to develop point or direct at a goal intervention to support their well-being.

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## Understanding Mediation Role of Perfectionism Between Achievement and Mental Health Among University Students

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### **Conflict of Interest**

The author(s) declared no conflict of interest.

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