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Research Paper

Reasoning the Grounds of Risk-Taking Behaviour Among Final Year College Students

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ABSTRACT

This study explores the impact of Perfectionism and negative Adult Attachment Styles on Risk-Taking Behaviour, with gender as a moderating variable, among final-year college students. Perfectionism is defined as the tendency to set high standards and the associated distress when failing to meet them, while Attachment Styles refer to patterns of emotional bonds formed in relationships, particularly anxious and avoidant attachments. Validated questionnaires, such as the Experiences in Close Relationships-Relationship Structures (ECR-RS) questionnaire, the Short Almost Perfect Scale (SAPS), and the General Risk Propensity Scale (GRiPS), were used to gather data from 148 final-year college students. SPSS statistical study produced a number of important conclusions. First, the study discovered a moderate positive correlation between increased risk-taking behavior and perfectionism standards and discrepancies. Additionally, it revealed a positive correlation between risk-taking inclinations with anxious and avoidant attachment styles. Furthermore, the regression analysis indicated that independent variables could predict the Risk-Taking Behaviours in which Perfectionistic Discrepancies were the strongest predictor of all. Gender was found to moderate the relationship between Negative Attachment Styles, Perfectionism Concern and risk-taking, increasing the explanatory power of the model. These findings underscore the importance of addressing Perfectionism concern and Attachment Insecurities in counselling and educational interventions to mitigate Risky Behaviours among college students.

Keywords: Perfectionism Concern, Negative Attachment Styles, Risk-Taking Behaviours, Gender

he Interplay of Perfectionism, Attachment Styles, Risk-Taking A Gender as a Negotiator

Personality disorders at adolescence ages cause bad habits such as smoking, taking alcohol and drugs to calm and ease the feeling of loneliness Çolaklı, 2015). Exhibiting risky behaviours may be a result of being socially rejected due to one's unhealthy physical image formed during adolescence ages and a perfectionist personality character (Ekşi et al., 2016). Different conclusion drawn concerning the aspects of perfectionism and its relation to harmful traits has been shown in different studies. Few studies have been conducted on the association between perfectionism and harmful behaviour. It is interestingly true that most studies

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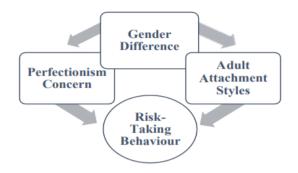
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involved university students or adults (Uz Baş and Siyez, 2010). The basic purpose of this study is to check the risk-taking behaviours through the understanding of diversified variables and the relation of personality traits with perfectionism. This relation has been the focus of very few studies. Therefore, it is anticipated that this study will contribute to science and literature in this field.



Attachment view point has made significant contributions towards the development of social behaviour, psychopathology and risk-taking behaviour in adolescence. The attachment perspective claims that a person's attachment style has created his or her risk-taking and coping strategies across wide contexts. Ages of Adolescence are regarded as dramatic change stage, and this age is not similar for all teens. For youngster who has secure attachment, these paths are seemingly straight, smooth and quite walkable; for youngster who has not secure attachment these paths are twist, detours and difficult. The secure individuals feel that their lives are under their control. They are strong against stress and if they have a problem they communicate with their family and friends. And an insecure person has poor coping. In a situation that they are undergoing something, they regret or prove to have risk behaviour.

Disparities in gender are important in determining traits including attachment styles, risktaking, and perfectionism. According to research, women tend to be more risk-averse, particularly when it comes to financial and health decisions, whereas males are more prone to participate in external risk-taking behaviors like gambling and substance use (Byrnes et al., 1999; Charness & Gneezy, 2012). While men frequently display self-oriented perfectionism, motivated by personal accomplishment, women are more likely to engage in socially mandated perfectionism, feeling more pressure to live up to external expectations (Frost et al., 1990; Stoeber & Stoeber, 2009). Men incline toward avoidant attachment, which values independence and emotional distance, whereas women are more likely to exhibit anxious attachment (Scharfe & Bartholomew, 1994; Mikulincer & Shaver, 2007). These variations highlight the necessity of gender-sensitive methods in relationship and mental health treatments. The necessity of the study Because risk-taking behaviors are linked to poor outcomes including accidents and substance misuse, they provide substantial obstacles, especially for teenagers and young adults (Steinberg, 2008). Prior studies have demonstrated that perfectionism, which is typified by high personal standards and a mismatch between performance and expectations, can result in maladaptive behaviors and psychological discomfort (Frost et al., 1990). The precise processes by which risk-taking behaviors are influenced by perfectionistic qualities are not entirely understood, yet. Examining the connection between risk-taking disparities and perfectionistic ideals might shed light on how these elements may influence people to choose risky behaviors as a coping mechanism (Stoeber & Otto, 2006). Additionally, interpersonal interactions and emotional regulation are greatly impacted by adult attachment types (Bartholomew & Horowitz, 1991). Although attachment theory has been well examined, little is known about how it interacts with

perfectionism to predict risk-taking behaviors. Although studies have demonstrated that insecure attachment styles can affect coping strategies and self-esteem (Mikulincer & Shaver, 2007), their combined impact with perfectionism on risk-taking behavior has not been fully investigated. By investigating how various attachment styles interact with perfectionistic qualities to affect risk-taking, this study seeks to close this gap and may result in more focused interventions that address attachment-related problems as well as perfectionistic inclinations (Rice & Mirzadeh, 2000).

METHODOLOGY

Hypothesis:

- **H1:** There will be a significant correlation between Perfectionistic Standards, Discrepancies and Risk-Taking Behaviour among Final year college students.
- **H2:** There will be a significant correlation between Avoidant and Anxious Adult Attachment Styles with Risk-Taking Behaviour among Final year college students.
- **H3:** There will be a significant combined effect of Anxious Attachment style and Avoidant attachment style along with Perfectionistic Discrepancies and Standards in predicting Risk-Taking Behaviour among final-year college students.
- **H0:** There will be a significant moderating effect of gender on the relationship between Negative Attachment Styles and Perfectionistic Concerns on Risk-Taking Behaviour.

Sample

The Sample consists of One Forty-Eight individuals. The Samples were final year college students included from both Under graduation and Postgraduation. 75 Men and 73 Female were included in the study. The Sample is selected using Convenient Sampling.

Instruments

Three Measures were used in the study.

- 1. The Experiences in Close Relationships-Relationship Structures questionnaire (ECR-RS): ECR-RS is a self-report measure, developed by Fraley, Heffernan, Vicary, and Brumbaugh in 2011. It consists of 9 items designed to assess two primary dimensions of attachment: 3 Items are related to Anxiety attachment style which refers to the fear of rejection and excessive need for closeness and 6 Items are related towards Avoidance attachment style which reflects discomfort with closeness and a preference for emotional distance. Respondents were asked to answer each item by indicting the extent of their agreement on a 7-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree). The Internal consistency Cronbach's alpha of the scale ranging between 0.87 to 0.92 for avoidant attachment and 0.75 to 0.91 for anxious attachment (Rocha et al., 2017). The Scale shows excellent Convergent and Discriminant Validity (Sirin and Dogan, 2021).
- 2. Short Almost Perfect Scale (SAPS): SAPS is a concise self-report measure developed by Rice, Richardson, and Tueller in 2014. The SAPS consists of 8 items that evaluate two dimensions of perfectionism of which 4 items measure High Standards reflecting positive aspects of perfectionism and other 4 items measure Discrepancy reflecting negative aspects, such as the gap between expectations and outcomes. Respondents were asked to answer each item by indicting the extent of their agreement on a 7-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree). The scale demonstrates internal consistency Cronbach's alpha values of 0.85 and 0.87 for Standards and Discrepancy Dimensions respectively and test- Retest

reliability. The scale also establishes good convergent, discriminant, and criterion-related validity. (Rice et al., 2014)

3. General Risk Propensity Scale (GRiPS): GRiPS is a short self-report measure developed by Zhang, Highhouse, and Nye in 2019. The Measure consists of 8 items designed to assess an individual's general tendency to take risks across various domains of life. Respondents were asked to answer each item by indicting the extent of their agreement on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree. The scale demonstrates excellent Test- retest reliability of 0.80 and Internal consistency reliability of 0.938 and establishes construct and predictive validity. (Porfírio et al., 2022)

Procedure:

The scale was administered to the subject individually. The scales were administered according to standard instruction. Nurses were chosen belonging to both genders randomly. The subjects were contacted through online and online mode, and established a good rapport to make them feel comfortable. They are assured about confidentiality of the response. A brief introduction of the topic was given and a questionnaire was administered. Instructions were presented clearly in the beginning of the test. They were requested to be honest in their response. After data collection data was consolidated.

RESULTS

 Table No. 1 Correlations between Risk Taking Behaviour and Anxious Attachment Style,

 Avoidant Attachment Style, Perfectionistic Standards and Perfectionistic Discrepancies.

Variables	Perfectionism		Adult Attachment Style		
	Standards	Discrepancy	Avoidance	Anxiety	
Risk-Taking					
Behaviour	0.207^{*}	0.461**	0.305**	0.461**	

Table 1 details the correlation analysis to reveal relationships between Risk-Taking Behaviour and the independent variables such as Perfectionistic Standards, Perfectionistic Discrepancies, Avoidance Attachment Style and Anxious Attachment Style. From the table we can infer that there is a weak positive correlation between the Risk-Taking Behaviour and Perfectionistic Standards (r = 0.207, p = 0.012), indicating that individuals who set higher Standards for themselves are more likely to engage in Risk-Taking Behaviour. As affirming the notion, Stoeber and Rambow (2014) found that individuals with elevated Perfectionistic Standards often take risks to achieve their goals or to demonstrate their capabilities. This drive for achievement can lead them to engage in potentially risky behaviours as a way of validating their self-worth or avoiding feelings of failure. A Moderate positive correlation was found between Risk-Taking Behaviour and Perfectionistic Discrepancies (r = 0.461, p = 0.000), 30 suggesting that greater Perfectionistic Discrepancies lead to increased risk-taking tendencies, possibly as a maladaptive coping mechanism for feelings of inadequacy (Möller et al., 2010). Fraley and Shaver (2000) found that individuals with avoidant attachment may engage in risky behaviours to maintain autonomy and distance in relationships, using such behaviours as a way to protect themselves from emotional closeness. Conversely, research by Mikulincer and Shaver (2010) suggests that individuals with anxious Attachment Styles are more likely to seek out risks, as they may engage in thrill-seeking behaviours to gain reassurance and validation from others. As affirming the previous studies Risk-Taking Behaviour exhibited moderate positive correlations with Avoidant Attachment Style (r = 0.305, p = 0.000) and

Anxious Attachment Style (r = 0.418, p = 0.000), indicating that individuals with higher levels of avoidant and anxious Attachment Styles are more inclined to take risks.

Table No. 2 Regression Analysis of the study variables - Risk-Taking Behaviour, Anxious Attachment Style, Avoidant Attachment Style, Perfectionistic Standards and Perfectionistic Discrepancies.

REGRESSION STATISTICS				
R	0.563			
R Square	0.317			
Adjusted R Square	0.298			
Standard Error	5.595			
Sig. F Change	0.000			

Table 2 shows the Regression Statistics of the study variables. The results indicated a there is an moderate predictive nature between the independent variables and Risk-Taking Behaviour, with an R value of 0.563, suggesting a meaningful relationship. The R² value of 0.317 indicates that approximately 31.7% of the variance in Risk-Taking Behaviour can be explained by the combined influence of these variables Anxious Attachment Style, Avoidant Attachment Style, Perfectionistic Standards and Perfectionistic Discrepancies. This suggests that while these predictors account for a significant portion of the variance, there are likely other factors influencing Risk-Taking Behaviour that were not included in this analysis. For instance, Hagger et al. (2014) found that individual differences in personality traits and 31 psychological factors could explain a substantial portion of variance in risk-related behaviours. Their study suggested that while specific traits like Perfectionism and Attachment Styles account for significant variance in predicting such behaviours, additional factors, including social context and individual circumstances, often play a crucial role as well. The Adjusted R² value of 0.298 further confirms the model's validity, accounting for the number of predictors in the model and reinforcing that the independent variables are collectively significant predictors of Risk-Taking Behaviour. The Standard Error of the estimate was 5.595, indicating the average distance between the observed values and the regression line. Additionally, the Sig. F Change value of 0.000 indicates that the overall model is statistically significant, meaning that at least one of the predictors significantly contributes to the prediction of Risk-Taking Behaviour. Sussman et al. (2019) examined how Perfectionistic traits relate to risk-taking in adolescence, suggesting that higher levels of Perfectionism can lead to riskier decision-making as adolescents attempt to meet their high Standards and also Zhang et al. (2019) investigated the influence of Attachment Styles on Risk-Taking Behaviours in young Adults, finding that both anxious and avoidant Attachment Styles were associated with increased risk-taking, particularly in social contexts. The moderate predictive power of the model suggests that Perfectionistic tendencies, both in terms of high Standards and Discrepancies, alongside Attachment Styles, play a notable role in determining Risk-Taking Behaviour.

<u>I erjectionistic Discrepancies</u>				
	MAIN EFFECTS	INTERACTION EFFECTS		
R	0.564	0.603		
R Square	0.318	0.364		
R Square Change	0.318	0.363		
Standard Error	5.611	5.495		
Sig. F Change	0.000	0.045		

Table No. 3 Interactional Effects of the study variables – Gender, Risk-Taking Behaviour, Anxious Attachment Style, Avoidant Attachment Style, Perfectionistic Standards and Perfectionistic Discrepancies

Table 3 demonstrates results of the hierarchical regression analysis reveal significant insights into the relationships among the independent variables (Perfectionistic Standards, Perfectionistic Discrepancies, Attachment Styles) and the dependent variable, with gender as a moderator. In the first block of the regression model, which included the main effects of the independent variables and gender, the model demonstrated a strong fit, with an R² value of 0.318. This indicates that approximately 31.8% of the variance in the dependent variable can be explained by the main effects alone. The significant Sig. F Change (p < 0.001) supports the overall significance of this model, indicating that the independent variables and gender collectively provide a meaningful prediction of the outcome. The standard error of the estimate in this block was 5.611, suggesting that the predicted values are reasonably close to the observed values. When the interaction effects were added to the model in the second block, the R² value increased to 0.364, indicating that the addition of interaction terms explained an additional 4.6% of the variance in the dependent variable. This increase in explained variance suggests that gender moderates the relationships between the independent variables and the dependent variable. The Sig. F Change value of 0.045 (p < 0.05) indicates that this increase in explained variance is statistically significant, confirming the relevance of the interaction terms in the model. The standard error improved to 5.495, which implies that the model's predictive accuracy increased with the inclusion of interaction effects. This finding aligns with existing literature of Eagly and Wood (1999) examined the interplay between gender and various psychological constructs, arguing that gender roles and socialization significantly influence behaviour and psychological outcomes.

DISCUSSION

H1 posited a significant correlation between Perfectionistic Standards, Discrepancies, and Risk-Taking Behaviour among final-year college students. Correlation analysis in table 1 revealed a moderate positive relationship, particularly between Perfectionistic Discrepancies and Risk-Taking Behaviour (r = 0.461). As the results supported the hypothesis, H1 is accepted. Correlation analysis in table 3 indicated that both Attachment Styles were moderately correlated with Risk-Taking Behaviour in positive direction, with anxious attachment showing a strong correlation (r = 0.418) comparatively. As H2 suggested a significant correlation between avoidant and anxious Adult Attachment Styles with Risk-Taking Behaviour, H2 is accepted. H3 proposed a significant combined effect of anxious and avoidant Attachment Styles, along with Perfectionistic Discrepancies and Standards, in predicting RiskTaking 36 Behaviour. H3 is accepted as the regression analysis in Table 2 showed the independent variables explained 31.7% of the variance in risk-taking, with Perfectionistic Discrepancies being the strongest predictor aligning with Rice et al. (2015). H0 stated that there would be no significant moderating effect of gender on the relationship between Negative Attachment Styles and Perfectionistic concerns on Risk-Taking Behaviour. However, the analysis of introduction of interaction effects in Table 3 revealed that the

inclusion of gender as a moderator increased the model's explanatory power to 36.4%, suggesting a significant moderating effect, which leads to **the rejection of this null hypothesis** H0. The study underscores the importance of understanding how Perfectionism and Attachment Styles interact with gender to shape Risk-Taking Behaviour, suggesting that individuals with Perfectionism and Attachment insecurities may engage in riskier behaviours more as a coping strategy with Gender difference facilitating this.

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Conflict of Interest

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