

Research Paper

Role of Perfectionism in Mindfulness – Based Self-Efficacy, Psychological Distress, and Procrastination Among Gen Z

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ABSTRACT

Perfectionism is a prominent psychological trait among undergraduate students and is associated with both adaptive and maladaptive outcomes. In recent years, increasing academic pressure has contributed to elevated levels of psychological distress and procrastination among Generation Z students, making it important to understand the interplay between these variables for promoting student well-being. The present study aimed to examine the relationships among perfectionism, mindfulness-based self-efficacy, psychological distress, and procrastination in undergraduate students. A quantitative research design was employed with a sample of 300 students aged 18–25 years, selected using purposive and snowball sampling techniques. Data were collected using standardized instruments, including the Frost Multidimensional Perfectionism Scale (FMPS), Mindfulness-Based Self-Efficacy Scale-Revised (MSES-R), Kessler Psychological Distress Scale (K10), and General Procrastination Scale (GPS), and analysed using descriptive statistics, correlation, and regression in SPSS. The results indicated significant positive relationships between perfectionism and psychological distress ($r = .184, p < .01$), perfectionism and procrastination ($r = .168, p < .01$), and psychological distress and procrastination ($r = .287, p < .01$), supporting the respective hypotheses. Perfectionism emerged as a significant predictor of both psychological distress and procrastination, while psychological distress also predicted procrastination. However, mindfulness-based self-efficacy showed weak and non-significant relationships with other variables and did not demonstrate significant predictive effects in regression analysis. Overall, the findings highlight the impact of maladaptive perfectionism on emotional distress and procrastination, emphasizing the need for targeted interventions to enhance students' psychological well-being and academic functioning.

Keywords: *Perfectionism, Mindfulness Based Self-Efficacy, Procrastination, Psychological Distress*

Mental health has emerged as a significant concern in recent years, particularly among the younger population. Adolescents and young adults frequently experience emotional stress, anxiety, mood fluctuations, and various psychological challenges. These difficulties are often influenced by multiple factors such as academic pressure, social expectations, career uncertainty, family responsibilities, and the

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Received: April 15, 2026; Revision Received: June 25, 2026; Accepted: June 29, 2026

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growing impact of social media. As a result, understanding the psychological well-being of young individuals has become increasingly important in contemporary research.

In recent years, the psychological well-being of Generation Z (Gen Z) has gained increasing attention due to rising academic pressure, performance expectations, and rapid socio-technological changes. Gen Z individuals, typically born between the mid-1990s and early 2010s, are characterized by high exposure to digital environments, competitive educational systems, and evolving social norms. These factors have contributed to increased levels of stress, anxiety, and Behavioral challenges, making it essential to understand the psychological variables that influence their functioning. One of the key constructs relevant to this population is perfectionism, a multidimensional personality trait characterized by striving for excessively high standards, accompanied by critical self-evaluation and concern over mistakes. While adaptive aspects of perfectionism may promote achievement, maladaptive perfectionism has been linked to negative outcomes such as psychological distress and procrastination. Psychological distress refers to emotional suffering, including symptoms of anxiety, depression, and stress, which can significantly impact an individual's daily functioning. Procrastination, defined as the voluntary delay of tasks despite awareness of negative consequences, is commonly observed among Gen Z individuals and is often associated with poor academic performance and reduced well-being.

Another important variable in this context is mindfulness-based self-efficacy, which refers to an individual's confidence in their ability to apply mindfulness skills to regulate emotions and manage stress. It is considered a protective psychological factor that may reduce distress and improve self-regulation. However, the extent to which mindfulness-based self-efficacy influences perfectionism, psychological distress, and procrastination remains unclear. Despite extensive research on these variables individually, there is a research gap in understanding their combined relationships, particularly within the Gen Z population. Most previous studies have examined perfectionism and procrastination or distress separately, with limited focus on the role of mindfulness-based self-efficacy as a potential influencing factor.

Therefore, the present study aims to address this gap by examining the relationships among perfectionism, mindfulness-based self-efficacy, psychological distress, and procrastination in Gen Z individuals. The specific objectives of the study are to: 1. To assess reliability analysis. 2. To examine the role of perfectionism in relation to psychological distress and academic procrastination among Genz.

The findings of this study are expected to contribute to a better understanding of the psychological dynamics of Gen Z and provide insights for developing interventions to enhance their mental health and academic function.

METHODOLOGY

Statement of the Problem

- To find out the Role of perfectionism in mindfulness based self-efficacy, psychological distress and procrastination among GenZ.

Objectives

1. To assess reliability analysis.

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2. To examine the role of perfectionism in relation to psychological distress and academic procrastination among GenZ.

Hypotheses:

1. There will be a negative relationship between perfectionism and mindfulness-based self-efficacy among GenZ.
2. There will be a positive relationship between perfectionism and psychological distress among GenZ.
3. There will be a positive relationship between perfectionism and procrastination among GenZ.
4. There will be a negative relationship between mindfulness-based self-efficacy and psychological distress among GenZ.
5. There will be a negative relationship between mindfulness-based self-efficacy and procrastination among GenZ.
6. There will be a positive relationship between psychological distress and procrastination among GenZ.
7. There will be a significant predictive effect of perfectionism and mindfulness-based self-efficacy on psychological distress and procrastination among GenZ.

Participants

This prospective investigational study will be carried out on Generation Z individuals engaged in academic programs across various accredited institutions. A total of 301 participants will be included in the study. After doing Outlier analyses, 1 response was removed as an outlier and total of 300 responses were considered. The age of the study population will range between 18 to 25 years, and the participants will consist of both male and female individuals to ensure adequate gender representation. Applicants must be currently engaged in academic or early career-related activities to be considered a part of the sample. The participants will be selected using non-probability sampling techniques, specifically purposive sampling and snowball sampling.

Measure

In the present study, four main measures were used to assess the constructs of interest, namely perfectionism, mindfulness-based self-efficacy, psychological distress, and procrastination.

- **Frost Multidimensional Perfectionism Scale (FMPS; Frost et al., 1990):** Perfectionism was measured using the FMPS, a 35-item self-report scale assessing multiple dimensions such as concern over mistakes, personal standards, parental expectations, parental criticism, doubts about actions, and organization. Responses are rated on a 5-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree). The scale has good internal consistency, with reliability coefficients (Cronbach's alpha) typically ranging from 0.70 to 0.90.
- **Mindfulness-Based Self-Efficacy Scale–Revised (MSES-R):** Mindfulness-based self-efficacy was assessed using the MSES-R, a 22-item self-report instrument that measures an individual's confidence in applying mindfulness skills in everyday situations. Responses are recorded on a Likert-type scale ranging from low to high confidence. The scale demonstrates strong internal consistency, with reliability values generally above 0.80.

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- **Kessler Psychological Distress Scale (K10; Kessler et al.):** Psychological distress was measured using the K10, a 10-item scale designed to assess symptoms such as anxiety, nervousness, and depression over the past four weeks. Responses are rated on a 5-point Likert scale (1 = none of the time to 5 = all of the time). The scale has high reliability, with Cronbach's alpha values around 0.90.
- **General Procrastination Scale (GPS; Lay, 1986):** Procrastination was measured using the GPS, a 20-item self-report questionnaire that assesses the tendency to delay tasks and decision-making. Responses are rated on a 5-point Likert scale. The scale demonstrates good internal consistency, with reliability coefficients typically ranging from 0.70 to 0.85.

Statistical Analysis

Descriptive statistics, including means, standard deviations, skewness, and kurtosis, were computed for all variables in the present study to understand their distribution and central tendencies. To examine the relationships among perfectionism, mindfulness-based self-efficacy, psychological distress, and procrastination, Pearson's correlation analysis was conducted. Further, regression analysis was performed to determine the predictive role of perfectionism and psychological distress on procrastination. Additionally, reliability analysis (Cronbach's alpha) was carried out to assess the internal consistency of the scales used in the study. All statistical analyses were conducted using SPSS and Microsoft Excel.

Procedure

The tests were administered following standardized procedures after obtaining permission from the Head of the Department. Participants were informed about the purpose and procedures of the study, assured of confidentiality, and asked to complete a personal data sheet. Clear tests instructions were provided, ethical guidelines were strictly followed, and the collected data were used for further screening and analysis.

RESULTS

"The correlations among the study variables are presented in Table 2, providing an overview of the relationships between the variables."

Table No 1: Correlation of all variables

		Perfectionism	Mindfulness Based Self Efficacy	Psychological Distress	Procrastination
Perfectionism	Pearson Correlation	1			
Mindfulness Based Self Efficacy	Pearson Correlation	0.056	1		
Psychological Distress	Pearson Correlation	.184**	0.043	1	
Procrastination	Pearson Correlation	.168**	0.068	.287**	1

*Note: **. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).*

Perfectionism shows a small but significant positive correlation with psychological distress ($r = .184$, $p < .01$) and procrastination ($r = .168$, $p < .01$). Psychological distress is

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moderately and significantly related to procrastination ($r = .287, p < .01$). However, mindfulness-based self-efficacy shows weak, non-significant correlations. Overall, perfectionism and distress are key factors linked to procrastination.

Table No 2. Correlations of all variables

	Perfectionism	Mindfulness Based Self Efficacy	Psychological Distress	Procrastination	Concern Over Mistake	Personal Standards	Parental Expectations	Parental Criticism	Doubts About Actions	Organization	Emotion Regulation	Equanimity	Social Skills	Distress Tolerance	Taking Responsibility
Perfectionism	1														
Mindfulness Based Self Efficacy	0.056	1													
Psychological Distress	.184**	0.043	1												
Procrastination	.168**	0.068	.287**	1											
Concern Over Mistake	.745**	-0.106	.151**	.161**	1										
Personal Standards	.707**	.134*	.144*	0.092	.281**	1									
Parental Expectations	.689**	0.026	0.084	0.094	.381**	.406**	1								
Parental Criticism	.402**	-0.057	.123*	.175**	.486**	-0.060	.214**	1							
Doubts About Actions	.684**	-0.031	.226**	.268**	.477**	.400**	.360**	.268**	1						
Organization	.467**	.235**	-0.025	-0.095	-0.010	.522**	.260**	-.258**	.213**	1					
Emotion Regulation	0.026	.763**	0.055	0.105	0.025	0.004	0.024	0.076	-0.084	0.025	1				
Equanimity	.576**	0.002	0.107	.130*	.664**	.309**	.254**	.542**	.355**	-0.039	0.059	1			
Social Skills	.148*	.743**	0.065	.157**	-0.010	.189**	0.104	-0.037	0.035	.260**	.496**	0.052	1		
Distress Tolerance	-0.042	.614**	0.002	0.009	-0.094	-0.039	-0.036	0.009	0.022	0.015	.398**	-0.002	.368**	1	
Taking Responsibility	-0.034	.638**	0.042	0.038	-.149**	0.037	-0.035	0.029	-.138*	.125*	.357**	-0.036	.384**	.246**	1
Interpersonal Effectiveness	0.023	.653**	-0.021	-0.003	-.177**	.171**	-0.029	-.239**	0.026	.314**	.303**	-0.053	.404**	.326**	.364**

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

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

The table shows that perfectionism is strongly and positively correlated with its dimensions such as concern over mistakes, personal standards, parental expectations, and doubts about actions, indicating internal consistency. It also has small but significant positive relationships with psychological distress and procrastination. Mindfulness-based self-efficacy is strongly positively correlated with factors like emotion regulation, social skills, distress tolerance, and interpersonal effectiveness, suggesting better coping abilities. Psychological distress is moderately associated with procrastination and doubts about actions. Overall, perfectionism is linked with maladaptive outcomes, while mindfulness-based self-efficacy relates to adaptive functioning.

DISCUSSION

The present study examined the relationships among perfectionism, mindfulness-based self-efficacy, psychological distress, and procrastination among Generation Z individuals. The findings highlight important psychological patterns influencing emotional and Behavioral outcomes. A significant positive relationship between perfectionism and psychological distress was observed, indicating that higher perfectionistic tendencies are associated with increased emotional strain. This supports the view that maladaptive perfectionism, characterized by unrealistic standards and fear of failure, contributes to anxiety and stress.

The present study examined the role of perfectionism in relation to mindfulness-based self-efficacy, psychological distress, and procrastination among Gen Z individuals, and the findings highlight important psychological dynamics within this population. A significant positive relationship was found between perfectionism and psychological distress ($r = .184, p < .01$), indicating that individuals with higher perfectionistic tendencies are more likely to

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experience emotional difficulties such as stress, anxiety, and depression, likely due to unrealistic standards and excessive self-criticism. Similarly, perfectionism showed a significant positive relationship with procrastination ($r = .168, p < .01$), suggesting that fear of failure and concern over mistakes may lead individuals to delay tasks rather than complete them. Psychological distress was also positively associated with procrastination ($r = .287, p < .01$), indicating that emotionally distressed individuals are more prone to avoidance behaviors and reduced motivation. In contrast, mindfulness-based self-efficacy demonstrated weak and non-significant relationships with all variables and did not emerge as a significant predictor, which may be due to lack of mindfulness practice, limited awareness, or methodological factors such as self-report bias and cross-sectional design. Regression analysis further confirmed that perfectionism significantly predicted both psychological distress and procrastination, while psychological distress also predicted procrastination, highlighting a cycle of emotional strain and task delay.

Overall, the findings suggest that maladaptive perfectionism plays a central role in increasing distress and procrastination among Gen Z, whereas mindfulness-based self-efficacy did not show a meaningful impact, emphasizing the need for targeted psychological interventions to improve student well-being and academic functioning.

Implications of the Study

The findings of the present study have significant theoretical, practical, and educational implications, particularly in understanding the psychological functioning of Generation Z individuals. The study highlights the important role of maladaptive perfectionism in increasing psychological distress and procrastination, suggesting the need for psychological interventions that focus on reducing unrealistic standards, fear of failure, and self-critical thinking patterns.

From an educational perspective, the results indicate that academic institutions should design programs and workshops aimed at improving time management, stress management, and adaptive goal-setting among students to reduce procrastination and enhance performance. In terms of counselling, the findings emphasize the usefulness of cognitive-Behavioral strategies, mindfulness-based interventions, and emotional regulation techniques in helping individuals cope with stress and manage perfectionistic tendencies more effectively. Additionally, the study contributes to the existing body of research by examining multiple psychological variables together, while also highlighting the need for future research to explore other influencing factors such as motivation, personality traits, and environmental conditions. Overall, the results suggest that promoting self-awareness, realistic expectations, and healthy coping mechanisms among Generation Z individuals can improve their psychological well-being and productivity.

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Acknowledgment

The author(s) appreciates all those who participated in the study and helped to facilitate the research process.

Conflict of Interest

The author(s) declared no conflict of interest.

How to cite this article: Siddhesh, A.K. & Walke, S. (2026). Role of Perfectionism in Mindfulness – Based Self-Efficacy, Psychological Distress, and Procrastination Among Gen Z. *International Journal of Indian Psychology*, 14(2), 3288-3295. DIP:18.01.298.20261402, DOI:10.25215/1402.298