Perfectionism, Anxiety and Career Distress - Insight from Undergraduate / Postgraduate Final Year Students

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Abstract: *This study investigates the complex interplay between perfectionism, anxiety and career distress among final year students. Using a combination of quantitative and qualitative method. The research aims to understand the levels of these psychological factors, explore their relationship and assess their impact on students' overall wellbeing and career prospects. The quantitative method reveals the significant positive correlation between perfectionism, anxiety and career distress among final year students. Additionally, linear regression analysis demonstrates that both perfectionism and anxiety have impact on career distress. The qualitative analysis competent these results by providing insights into how students experience and cope with perfectionism in their academic and career pursuits. This study emphasises how crucial it is to take into account students' coping mechanisms and mental health in higher education settings. It makes the case for the necessity of specialised interventions to help students cope with anxiety and perfectionism, enhancing both their academic performance and general well-being.*

Keywords: Perfectionism, Anxiety, Career distress, wellbeing, final year students.

1. Introduction

Final-year students face a major crossroads as they transfer from academics to the professional world, encountering obstacles such as perfectionism, anxiety, and career distress (Tan, 2022). High expectations and self-criticism are hallmarks of perfectionism, which frequently results from parental and societal pressures (Curran & Hill, 2019). It affects relationships and mental health and can appear as self-, other-, or socially dictated behaviour (Hewitt & Flett, 1991; Mackinnon et al., 2014). Maladaptive perfectionism results in anxiety and despair, whereas adapted perfectionism promotes resilience (Stoeber & Otto, 2006). Although anxiety is a typical feeling, when it is experienced excessively, it can become a medical problem (Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders, 1980). It can have several causes, such as uncertainty about one's work that exacerbates depressive symptoms (Creed et al., 2016; Kenny & Hage, 2009). Perfectionism increases anxiety by encouraging a negative self-evaluation, which is explained by the cognitive-behavioural paradigm (Szymanski et al., 2016). The relationship between anxiety, perfectionism, and job unhappiness among final-year students has been verified by empirical research (Stoeber & Rennert, 2008; Wang et al., 2017).

Developing successful interventions that support student achievement and well-being requires an understanding of the interactions between perfectionism, anxiety, and career distress (Si & Lee, 2022; Arslan & Bayraktar-Uyar, 2020). Through customized strategies to address these issues, educators and mental health specialists can assist kids in managing their shift from academia to the workforce.

Arslan and Uyar (2020) revealed that career decidedness positively predicted mindfulness, psychological well-being (PWB), and subjective well-being (SWB), with mindfulness mediating the relationship between career choosing and both PWB and SWB. Conversely, career distress predicted PWB and SWB, but not mindfulness, and mindfulness did not mediate the relationship between career distress and PWB or SWB. Fernández-García et al. (2023) highlighted that high levels of perfectionism among university students were associated with compromised psychological wellbeing and increased suicidal ideation, particularly among women. This relationship was moderated by academic performance and degree level, exacerbating the negative impact of perfectionism on wellbeing in cases of lower performance and higher-demand degrees. Additionally, Eley, Bansal, and Leung (2020) found that a vulnerable personality profile, characterized by high Harm Avoidance and low Self-Directedness, was linked to higher levels of perfectionism among University of Queensland first-year graduate entry medical students. This perfectionism, particularly Perfectionism-CoM, was correlated with elevated levels of stress, anxiety, and depression, suggesting the need for interventions targeting maladaptive perfectionism to mitigate psychological distress among vulnerable students.

Through a series of studies that take the reader on a literary journey through academic research, the complex dynamics of perfectionism and failure-related dread are explored, along with their substantial effects on students' academic journeys and well-being. Through the hallways of Malaysian polytechnics, perfectionism and the dread of failing serve as the protagonists that Mold the experiences of business students. Hasbulah, Mohd Hanapi, and Masri (2022) lead us through these passages. The story highlights subtle differences in levels of perfectionism and fear of failure as semesters pass, with a focus on second-semester students in

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particular. Gender differences also add complexity to the picture. Yi-Shi Hsiao (2016) moves us to 789 foreign students' struggles in 17 U.S. universities across the globe, taking us on a transcontinental exploration. Perfectionism, the main character's obsession, becomes entangled in a web of relationships with anxiety, coping mechanisms, and acculturative stress. While this is going on, Moate, Gnilka, West, and Rice (2019) introduce us to the world of doctorate candidates, where maladaptive and adaptive perfectionists dominate, adding to the emotional terrain and offering specialized counselling approaches as possible solutions. By illuminating the complex relationship between perfectionism, self-critical thinking, and perceived stress, Stevenson and Akram (2022) take us into the everyday lives of undergraduate students and advocate for solutions within university support systems. Finally, Sachdeva and Pandey (2022) challenge preconceptions by showing no evidence of a relationship between student stress and any form of perfectionism.

The complicated relationship between psychological characteristics, academic performance, and student well-being is explored through a mosaic of studies that are woven together into the rich tapestry of academic research. A significant study on anxiety among college students is that of J. Ladejo (2021), which explores the complex factors influencing mental health outcomes by applying the Social Ecological Model. The study reveals topics like "Balancing Priorities" and "Fear of Failure" through qualitative interviews, illuminating the complex challenges students experience in managing academic demands. In the meantime, Yurtseven and Akpur (2018) take us on a journey through the domains of anxiety, procrastination, and perfectionism in the context of learning a foreign language, demonstrating the strong predictive impact of these psychological traits on academic success. Their results highlight how important it is to provide focused interventions that reduce anxiety and increase motivation in order to improve student performance and wellbeing in language learning environments. By exploring the unexplored area of career anxiety in the context of hospitality and tourism education and revealing its detrimental correlation with both academic achievement and career choice objectives, Boo et al. (2021) make groundbreaking discoveries. Their research makes clear the necessity of customized therapies to deal with anxiety associated with careers and improve student performance in this particular subject. Lastly, a qualitative investigation of the aspects of anxiety associated to one's career is presented by Pisarik et al. (2017), who identify seven thematic characteristics that are critical for counsellors to consider when developing successful solutions.

Many studies offer a comprehensive knowledge of the complex relationships among varied student populations by delving into the complex terrain of perfectionism and its effects on academic trajectories and professional success. Based on perfectionism subtypes, Wang et al.'s (2018) careful investigation of Chinese undergraduates reveals notable variations in professional adaptation and decision-making challenges, highlighting the necessity for nuanced aspects in career counselling interventions. Concurrently, Endleman, Brittain, and Vaillancourt (2021) decipher the longitudinal relationships between adolescent academic accomplishment and perfectionism, clarifying the dynamic interaction between various aspects of perfectionism and success in school. Additionally, Bataineh's (2013) study on academic stresses among college students identifies academic overload, familial expectations, and failure-related anxiety as contributing factors to elevated stress levels.

A review of the available literature reveals a significant gap in understanding the complex links between perfectionism, anxiety, and career distress among students in higher education settings. Although prior research has yielded useful insights into specific aspects of these phenomena, a dearth of thorough investigations investigating their interactions and the underlying mechanisms shaping student experiences still exists. A chance to successfully close these gaps exists in the proposed mixed-methods study on perfectionism, anxiety, and career distress among final-year students. This study attempts to provide a comprehensive knowledge of how these variables intersect and influence student well-being during a critical phase of transition by combining quantitative and qualitative techniques. By means of thorough investigation, the study aims to provide refined perspectives on the elements that lead to career distress for students in university and guide the creation of focused interventions and assistance plans that enhance learning outcomes and well-being for students in higher learning.

2. Methodology

2.1 Aim of the study

The purpose of this study is to investigate the levels of perfectionism, anxiety, and career distress among final year students across various departments. It aims to explore the interrelationships between these variables and their impact on the overall well-being and career prospects of final year students.

2.2 Objective of the study

1) To assess the levels of perfectionism, anxiety and career distress among final year students.
2) To check the impact of perfectionism and anxiety on career distress among final year students.
3) To explore the qualitative experiences and perceptions of perfectionism, anxiety, and career distress among final year students.

2.3 Hypothesis

H1: There will be significant positive correlations between levels of perfectionism, anxiety, and career distress among final year students.
H2: There is an impact of perfectionism and anxiety on career distress among final year students.
H3: Qualitative exploration will reveal nuanced experiences and perceptions of perfectionism, anxiety, and career distress among final year students

2.4 Participants

Young individuals between the ages of 18 to 30 who are currently in the final year of undergraduate/ postgraduate program,

2.5 Research design

This study has been conducted within the framework of the mixed research method in which quantitative and qualitative research approaches are dealt with together. Results obtained from quantitative and qualitative data can be analysed together and it is possible to reach comprehensive and fruitful results (Creswell, 2003). In this research, explanatory method, one of mixed research methods, is preferred. Firstly, quantitative data is collected and analysed in this method. Then these results are supported by qualitative data (Creswell, 2019).

2.6 Tools

1) Perfectionism

"Frost Multidimensional Perfectionism Scale" Developed by Frost et al. (1990), the "Frost Multidimensional Perfectionism Scale" is a well-known instrument to examine perfectionism from various dimensions, and it set up as the basis to examine the perfectionism behaviour in the current study. The original scale is a five-point Likert type scale (1= strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree) consisting of 36 items under six factors. Higher scores in the scale imply that the individual tends to display higher perfectionist behaviours. Kağan (2011) made the adaptation of the study into Turkish. The analyses demonstrated that the six-factor structure was valid in Turkish. The researcher also found that the inner consistency for overall items was .91 while Cronbach's alpha for the subscales ranged between .64 and .94.

2) Anxiety

Beck Anxiety Inventory (BAI): This scale is a self-report measure of anxiety (0=not at all, 3= Severely – it bothered me a lot). Consists of 21 items having Internal consistency (Cronbach's α=0.92) (Beck, Epstein, Brown, & Steer, 1988) and validity was moderately correlated with the revised Hamilton. Anxiety Rating Scale (.51), and mildly correlated with the Hamilton Depression Rating Scale (.25) (Beck et al., 1988)

3) Career distress

Career distress scale: The Career Distress Scale (CDS) is a 12-item self-report measure that assesses the level of emotional and psychological discomfort that individuals experience in relation to their career (1= strongly disagree to 6 = strongly agree). It was developed by Peter A. Creed, Michelle Hood, Anna Praskova, and Guido Makransky in 2016. The CDS have been shown to have good psychometric properties, including good reliability and validity. The internal consistency of the CDS is high, with a Cronbach's alpha of 0.92. The test-retest reliability of the CDS is also high, with a correlation coefficient of 0.87.

2.7 Variables

Independent variable: Perfectionism and Anxiety
Dependent variable: Career distress

2.8 Operational definition

Perfectionism (Independent Variable): Perfectionism refers to a personality trait or mindset characterized by setting extremely high standards for oneself, being overly self-critical, and striving for flawlessness in tasks and accomplishments.

Anxiety (Independent Variable): Anxiety, in this context, represents the emotional and physiological response to stressors, worries, or concerns related to academic and career-related aspects of final year students' life. It includes feelings of unease, nervousness, and apprehension.

Career distress (dependent variable): This is a state of emotional and psychological discomfort that is associated with work. It can be caused by a variety of factors, such as job insecurity, lack of job satisfaction, and poor work-life balance.

2.9 Sampling technique

Convenience sampling will be used for this study's sample size. Young individuals between the ages of 18 to 30 who are currently in the final year of undergraduate/ postgraduate program and have access to the internet and can complete the online survey were chosen as participants. Using email lists and social media, the online Google sheet surveys were distributed and individuals were asked to participate willingly. The study's findings might not apply to the entire population of young people because convenience sampling was used, therefore care should be exercised in how you interpret the data.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1 Tables

The statistical techniques used for the study are correlation and linear regression. To determine the connection between anxiety, career distress, and perfectionism, the correlation approach was applied.

Table 1: Mean, Standard deviation and Correlation of Perfectionism, Anxiety and Career distress.

Variable	M	SD	1	2	3
1. Perfectionism	89.39	21.5	-		
2. Anxiety	21.39	14.4	.576**	-	
3. Career distress	46.20	14.9	.684**	.622**	-

*Note: **p < 0.01*

Table 1 denotes the mean, standard deviation and whether there is a correlation between variables perfectionism, anxiety and career distress among the final year students (N=70). After the analysis it is indicated that there is a significant relationship between the perfectionism and anxiety (r=.576**, p= 0.000), there is a significant relationship between the perfectionism and career distress

(r=.684**, p= 0.000) and also there is a significant relationship between the career distress and anxiety (r=.622**, p= 0.000). The results were statistically significant at 0.01 level. Therefore, the hypothesis is accepted which states that there is a significant relationship between perfectionism, anxiety and career distress among final year students.

Table 2: Linear regression analysis using dimensions of perfectionism and anxiety as predictor and career distress as criterion

Variable	B	SE	95% CL		p	t
			LB	UB		
Perfectionism	.473	.061	.351	.596	.000	7.723
Anxiety	.354	.104	.145	.562	.001	3.387

A standard linear regression analysis was conducted to find out if there was any significant influence between perfectionism, anxiety and career distress among the final year students. In model 1, perfectionism on career distress results found to be (B= .473, p<0.01), model 2, anxiety and career distress results found to be (B= .354, p<0.01), was statistically significant. Therefore, the hypothesis that there is an impact of perfectionism and anxiety on career distress among final year students is accepted.

Table 3: Global theme, organization theme and basic themes of the qualitative research

Global Themes	Organizing themes	Basic Themes	Examples
Meaning	1.1 Avoiding mistakes 1.2 Standard and expectation 1.3 Continuous improvement 1.4 Planning	1.1.1 Fear of making any mistakes 1.1.2 Pressure to avoid any errors and ensuring good performance 1.2.1 Performance beyond expectations 1.2.2 Striving for excellence 1.2.3 Aspire for flawless results 1.3.1 Never getting satisfied with accomplishment 1.4.1 Desire for everything to be in order before starting 1.4.2 Sense of happiness and accomplishment when everything is perfect	So, perfectionism would mean doing something really well on the first try, not making mistakes, understanding how to do it in a way that it's expected to be and honestly doing it beyond expectation, that's all.
Impact	2.1 Performance 2.2 Emotional well being 2.3 Habits and strategies	2.1.1 Procrastination 2.1.2 Following rituals 2.2.1 Stress and pressure 2.2.2 Motivation 2.2.3 Fear of failure 2.3.1 Task prioritizing 2.3.2 Planning and organizing	When it comes to academic achievements I think prioritizing your tasks, dividing them into smaller ones so that you can achieve each of them accordingly as per you have planned and overall putting them together so you are able to fulfil your goal or your need.
Emotionally	3.1 Self esteem 3.2 Fear of failure 3.3 Demotivation	3.1.1 Self-worth 3.1.2 Self-criticism 3.2.1 Anxiety 3.2.2 Negative thoughts 3.2.3 Overwhelm and burnout 3.3.1 Feeling of incompetent 3.3.2 Self-doubt 3.3.3 Guilt	Absolutely, perfectionism takes a toll on me emotionally. The fear of failure and the constant self-criticism can lead to feelings of anxiety, stress, and even depression. I often feel overwhelmed by the need to meet my own impossibly high standards, which can be exhausting and demoralizing.
reasons	4.1 Pressure 4.2 Comparison	4.1.1 Generational 4.1.2 Societal 4.2.1 Personal 4.2.2 Disappointment	So it's like I made this decision on my own and as my elder brother is successful and went abroad for further studies I feel like if I won't be able to go then it will be shame on me. that I am a loser in from of him
Coping	5.1 Seeking social support 5.2 Mindfulness and meditation 5.3 Avoiding comparison 5.4 Planning	5.1.1 Seeking support from family and friends 5.1.2 Learning from others experience 5.2.1 Accepting the mistakes 5.2.2 Deep breathing exercises 5.3.1. Recognizing individuality 5.4.1 Setting up priorities 5.4.2 Breaking up tasks to manageable steps	I try to cope with perfectionism by practicing self-care and mindfulness techniques, such as meditation and deep breathing exercises. I also remind myself that it's okay to make mistakes and that perfection can't be achieved. Seeking support from friends, family
Thoughts on unproductive day	6.1 Negative emotions 6.2 Acceptance	6.1.1 Feeling bad about self 6.1.2 Regret 6.1.3 Frustration 6.1.4 Emotional distress 6.2.1 Being kind on oneself 6.2.2 Focus on progress	So, for a day where it is unproductive I literally feel so bad because first I will procrastinate a lot and when finally, it's the end of the day I really get panic and anxious a lot, where I wish I could have started it earlier and not procrastinated a lot.

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Expectations	7.1 Goals 7.2Expectation and recognition 7.3Challenges	7.1.1 Seeking independence 7.1.2 Recognition 7.2.1 Understanding of skill and capability 7.2.2 Adjusting plans 7.2.3 Positive outlook 7.3.1 Pressure and self-doubt 7.3.2 Lack of guidance	When I first started my academic journey, I had high expectations for my future career. I envisioned myself achieving great success and making a meaningful impact in my chosen field. However, as I've progressed through my studies and faced the realities of the job market, my expectations have become more tempered. I now feel a mixture of excitement and anxiety about my future career prospects, knowing that the path ahead may not be as straightforward or perfect as I once imagined.

The thematic analysis of the qualitative data resulted in seven distinct global themes. Overall, this was related to meaning, impact, emotional, reasons, coping, thoughts on unproductive day and expectations related to perfectionism and academic achievements.

1) Meaning

Perfectionism comprises of different elements that influence people's attitudes and behaviours towards achieving success in their activities participants in the interviews shared insights into their ideas of perfectionism emphasizing important concepts that provide light on what perfectionism means for them avoiding mistakes is the most common issue faced by the students and pressure to avoid errors at any costs one participant articulated this by stating perfectionism to me means that I should not make any mistake giving my 100 secondly the standard and expectations as perfectionism includes setting high expectations striving for excellence and aspire for flawless results as mentioned perfectionism to me means striving for an unrealistic standard of excellence in everything i do thirdly drive for continuous improvement as students reported never getting satisfied with their achievements thus it suggests commitment for excellence the fourth theme involves the proper planning as the desire for being perfect and doing everything in a particular order before starting for me perfectionism is where i want everything to be in the right place before i start with anything

2) Impact

Perfectionism has a complex impact on academic attainment as evidenced by participant experiences and perception the pursuits of flawless performance often led to procrastination and adherence to rituals and routines serves as coping mechanism in maintaining control also perfectionism has an emotional toll by manifesting stress and pressure and constant fear of failure despite serving as an inspiration perfectionism causes anxiety about maintaining unattainable standards to overcome these barriers individual focus responsibilities and thoroughly arrange their academic plans breaking them down into manageable sections this technique helps in managing perfectionistic impulses while pursuing academic success by demonstrating the complicated interplay between perfectionism performance emotional well-being and adaptive coping strategies

3) Emotional

Perfectionism has a significant emotional toll on people as indicated by the participants comments the pressure to attain impeccable results frequently has a bad impact on self-esteem and self-worth with people feeling inadequate or not good enough when they believe their performance falls short of perfection this constant effort of attaining the unrealistic standards results in constant fear of failure inducing the anxiety and negative thoughts characterized by overwhelming and burnout perfectionism causes demotivation as individuals struggle with emotions of incompetence self-doubt and guilt when their work fails to match their own or others standards

4) Reasons

The participants replies offered light on the multidimensional nature of pressure and comparison they faced in their academic and professional pursuits for many the weight of family intellectual legacies is significant with expectations raised by relatives outstanding successes in respected universities or groundbreaking projects the familial pressures combine with society expectations posing a tough challenge to thrive and avoid disappointment furthermore making personal comparisons with influential family members or peers complicates feelings of incapability and self-doubt intensifying the feeling of failing to fulfil high expectations

5) Coping styles

Insights into diverse coping mechanisms for managing perfectionism in day-to-day life were shared by participants seeking for social support became a recurring subject with many finding comfort in confiding in friends and family to assist them humanise the process of succeeding and to gain confidence furthermore by reminding participants to accept mistakes and faults as a necessary part of the learning process mindfulness practices like meditation and deep breathing exercises play a critical role in maintaining perfectionist tendencies it also turned out to be critical to avoid comparison as participants stressed the value of concentrating on their own development and acknowledged the negative consequences of gauging their achievement by comparison with others finally through creating a controlled work environment efficient planning techniques such as work scheduling and breaking projects down into manageable steps can relieve the stress of perfectionism together these coping strategies show the variety of ways people deal with perfectionism which eventually encourages self-compassion and personal development

6) Thoughts on unproductive day

The participants responses demonstrated the range of ideas and feelings that can arise after an unproductive day negative emotions are the main theme with people expressing regret emotional distress and frustration when they can't complete duties as intended this is evident in responses where participants mention feeling bad about themselves experiencing regret for procrastinating and

feeling panic and anxiety towards the end of an unproductive day but there's also a sense of acceptance amid these bad feelings a few individuals recognise the value of treating oneself with kindness and emphasising progress over perfection they stress the need of approaching each day with a new outlook and accepting that not every day will be productive

7) Expectation

Participants initial hopes for their future employment were reflected in a variety of ways some had high aspirations at first seeing themselves as having great success and leaving a lasting impression in the fields they were passionate about but as their academic careers developed and they faced the harsh reality of the employment market their aspirations were tempered they were aware of all the challenges that lay ahead such as having to make their way through unfamiliar area and under performance pressure a few participants also mentioned how their feelings of uncertainty increased by the lack of direction or assistance they received there was an underlying theme of staying positive in spite of these difficulties the participants realised that in order to focus on their own strengths and pursue independence in their careers they had to adjust their objectives and expectations

3.2 Discussion

The ideal of the current study was to examine the degrees of anxiety, perfectionism and career torture among the final year students, as well as how the factors relate to one another and affect prospects for both career achievements and general wellbeing. The results give a number of significant angles of these cerebral generalities as they relate to advanced education. Among the final year students, the quantitative analysis's findings showed a strong positive correlation between perfectionism, anxiety and career distress. This shows that the students who are more perfectionists are also more likely to have advanced anxiety and career distress situations. These results are harmonious with earlier studies that show how these constructs are interrelated (Stoeber & Rennert, 2008; Wang et al., 2017). Additionally, the results of the direct retrogression analysis exfoliate light on the relationship between perfectionism, anxiety and career distress in final year students. It was set up that perfectionism and anxiety both strongly predict career distress (Wang et al., 2017; Hewitt & Flett, 1991). These results support theoretical models that suggest cognitive- behavioural mechanisms bolstering the connection between anxiety, perfectionism and career torture (Szymanski et al., 2016). The study's qualitative results are harmonious with a larger body of exploration that examines the complex dynamics of perfectionism and its cerebral goods. In line with former studies, party accounts stressed the complex characteristics of perfectionism, including the desire for perfection, having high prospects of oneself, and being hysterical of failing (Hewitt & Flett, 1991; Frost et al., 1990). These results are harmonious with the cognitive- behavioural models of perfectionism (Shafran et al., 2002), which punctuate the destructive studies and conduct that sustain perfectionistic tendencies. Also, the statements of the actors clarified the cerebral cost of perfectionism, corroborated by other studies that showed its correlation with high situations of stress, anxiety, and

depression (Stoeber & Otto, 2006; Dunkley et al., 2006). The implacable hunt of perfection constantly results in cerebral maladjustment and emotional pain because people internalize exaggerated sundries of achievement and endure pervasive feelings of inadequacy (Stoeber & Rennert, 2008). Actors used a variety of adaptive and maladaptive managing mechanisms to deal with perfectionistic prospects, illustrating the intricate relationship between perfectionism and managing mechanisms. In line with earlier studies, carrying social support came a popular managing strategy, offering people perspective- taking and emotional protestation to neutralize perfectionistic inclinations (Hewitt & Flett, 1991; Rice & Aldea, 2006). likewise, the focus that the actors placed on tone- compassion and awareness ways is harmonious with current curatives that essay to develop cerebral inflexibility and adaptability in the face of perfectionism (Sirois & Molnar, 2016; Egan et al., 2014). In addition, the actors' compliances on days when they weren't productive stressed the cerebral difficulties that come with aiming for perfection, similar as passions of remorse, reflection, and tone- review. These results are harmonious with studies showing how perfectionism impairs adaptive managing strategies like emotion control and problem- working (Hewitt & Flett, 1991; Flett et al., 2016). This work advances our knowledge of the cerebral processes bolstering perfectionistic inclinations by clarifying the complex link between managing mechanisms, emotional well- being, and perfectionism. This study explores the complex interplay among final- year students between anxiety, career torture, and perfectionism. There are significant connections found through qualitative analysis focusing on the complex picture of how peoples coping strategies and emotional wellbeing are influenced by perfectionism. This study provides important perceptivity into the complex nature of perfectionism and its goods on students' overall adaptation and achievement in academic and professional disciplines by combining both ways.

4. Conclusion

The intricate interactions between anxiety, perfectionism, and career distress among final-year students are well-explained by this study. Through quantitative and qualitative analyses, significant correlations between these psychological traits were discovered, highlighting the interconnection of these ideas in the context of higher education. The findings emphasise how critical it is to take into account all facets of students' well-being in order to enhance their capacity for adaptation and academic achievement upon entering the industry. Additionally, by illuminating the lived experiences of individuals who battle perfectionism, qualitative results emphasise the influence of perfectionistic views on coping mechanisms and mental health.

Limitation

The study contains numerous limitations which should be taken into consideration despite of its contributions. First, the findings might not be applicable to a broader group as the sample size is small. Longitudinal designs in future studies may provide stronger proof of the temporal relationships between the variables. Additionally, the use of interview measures raises the probability of social

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desirability effects and common method bias, which could affect how accurately participants respond. Lastly, the study exposure to other levels of higher education was limited because it only focused on final year students to delve into the relationship between perfectionism, anxiety and career distress.

5. Implication

There is multiple use of this research for academic institutions and mental health professionals. Firstly, explaining the intricate relationship among the perfectionism, anxiety and career distress, focused interventions that supports the mental health and academic accomplishments can be developed. Students who could measure and address their perfectionist impulse and improve their adaptive coping styles can be able to manage stress and strike a healthy balance between their personal and academic lives. Also, by giving the students assess to mental health resources and support can help them deal with their challenges bought by the anxiety and perfectionism.

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