

Coping Self-Efficacy, Perfectionism, and Burnout Among University Students During Covid-19 Pandemic

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Abstract: The main purpose of this study was to examine the relationship between perfectionism and burnout among university students during the Covid-19 pandemic. This situation had an impact on students which they ought to undergo online distance learning (ODL) from home. Some students may find it difficult to obtain appropriate guidance outside of the normal academic setting. Besides, this study also determines whether coping self-efficacy mediates the relationship between perfectionism and burnout. A sample of 176 University students participated in this study. Survey methods with the use of Frost Multidimensional Perfectionism Scale (FMPS), Maslach Burnout Inventory-Student Survey (MBI-SS), and Coping Self-Efficacy Scale (CSE) were used in this study. The results were analyzed using SPSS version 27.0. Bivariate and multiple regression were used to test all hypotheses for this study. The findings of this study show that perfectionistic strivings have a positive relationship with burnout. Meanwhile, perfectionistic concerns have a negative relationship with burnout. The findings also showed that both perfectionistic strivings and concerns positively related to coping self-efficacy (mediator). Lastly, the results also showed that coping self-efficacy could partially mediate the relationship between perfectionism and burnout.

Keywords: *Coping self-efficacy, perfectionism, burnout, Covid 19*

Abstrak: Tujuan utama dari penelitian ini adalah untuk mengkaji hubungan antara perfeksionisme dan 'burnout' dalam kalangan mahasiswa selama masa pandemi Covid-19. Situasi ini berdampak pada siswa yang harus menjalani pembelajaran jarak jauh online (ODL) dari rumah. Beberapa siswa mungkin merasa sulit untuk mendapatkan bimbingan yang tepat di luar lingkungan akademik normal. Selain itu, penelitian ini juga menentukan apakah 'coping self-efficacy' memediasi hubungan antara perfeksionisme dan 'burnout'. Sebuah sampel dari 176 mahasiswa Universitas berpartisipasi dalam penelitian ini. Metode survei dengan menggunakan Frost Multidimensional Perfectionism Scale (FMPS), Maslach Burnout Inventory-Student Survey (MBI-SS), dan Coping Self-Efficacy Scale (CSE) digunakan dalam penelitian ini. Hasil dianalisis menggunakan SPSS versi 27.0. Regresi bivariat dan ganda digunakan untuk menguji semua hipotesis untuk penelitian ini. Temuan penelitian ini menunjukkan bahwa usaha perfeksionis memiliki hubungan positif dengan 'burnout'. Sementara itu, kekhawatiran perfeksionis memiliki hubungan negatif dengan burnout. Temuan juga menunjukkan bahwa perfeksionis dan perhatian berhubungan positif dengan 'coping self-efficacy' (mediator). Terakhir, hasil juga

menunjukkan bahwa 'coping self-efficacy' dapat memediasi sebagian hubungan antara perfeksionisme dan 'burnout'.

Kata kunci: Coping self-efficacy, perfeksionisme, burnout, Covid 19

Introduction

Since the first outbreak of Covid-19 in early 2020, burnout among students has been rising. Burnout affects health which may lead to physical and psychosomatic problems. Feeling cynical about the direction of one's life and having a pervasive sense of helplessness are two indicators of burnout. Burnout is simply known as much as stressed, however burnout is something which a lot more serious than just being stressed from a particular situation. Burnout and stress have significant differences that can be pointed out. Stressed people might still notice things or envision how much better they would feel if they can get everything under control. On the other hand, being burnout often cause individuals to not see any prospect for good improvement in their circumstances (Wardani & Firmansyah, 2019; Wardani & Hapsari, 2022). According to Hill and Curran, (2015) the perfectionism, simply the need to be perfect, was associated with a higher burnout risk. The present study extends prior research by investigating the relationship between perfectionism and burnout among university students during this COVID-19 pandemic.

Covid 19 pandemic had an impact on students which they ought to undergo online distance learning (ODL) from home. Some students may find it difficult to obtain appropriate guidance outside of the normal academic setting. Recently, two university students were reported passed away and both families said that their children did complain of severe headaches due to stress from studying. Both students had three things in common which are they both have been complaining of headaches, they were both under pressure to complete their coursework from home and they both died as a result of ruptured blood vessels in their head (Ismail, 2021). This incident proves that students are having tough time studying ODL during this pandemic. According to Tosevski, Milovancevic, and Gajic (2010), university students are a distinct population with unique characteristics, burdens, and concerns compared to other age and occupation groups. However, self-efficacy is called a form of personal resources that exists in each individual (Wardani et al., 2021; Atika & Wardani, 2021; Wardani et al., 2020). Self-efficacy is one of

the concepts in social cognitive theory which indicate that an individual's choice of conduct in specific scenario is prompted by personal observation of an individual (Saleem, 2011; Anwar & Wardani, 2021). For this study, coping self-efficacy was chosen to act as mediator for relationship between perfectionism and burnout. Specific self-efficacy for stress management is defined as the belief in one's own personal resources to deal with stressful situations in an effective and competent manner (Godoy et al., 2008). Frydenberg (2004) emphasized way a person perceives coping as a stress reaction and a means of developing resilience. The previous study which emphasized that need of educating young people about cognitive skills for stress management in order to enable the utilization of interpersonal and intrapersonal resources. In addition, coping self-efficacy was chosen to mediate the relationship between these two variables. Godoy et al. (2008) defined specific self-efficacy for stress management as the belief in one's resources to deal with stressful situations effectively and competently.

Perfectionism which is simply the need to be perfect is one of the factors studied. People who are motivated by setting high goals may excel in their academic or in workplace. In contrast, perfectionism's negative features can lead to despair and low self-esteem. Overbearing perfectionism might result in burnout. Generally, perfectionism contains two dimensions which are perfectionistic striving and perfectionistic concerns. The study conducted by Moate et al. (2016) among 178 counsellor educators indicated that when compared to adaptive perfectionists and non-perfectionists, maladaptive perfectionists exhibited considerably more significant levels of perceived stress, work-related burnout, personal burnout, and student-related burnout. However, a study by Luo et al. (2016) examined self-esteem and coping style, which may mediate the relationship between perfectionism and school burnout. The study consists of 1230 middle school students as participants. Findings of the study stated that through mediators of self-esteem and task- and emotion-oriented coping styles, maladaptive perfectionism had a favourable indirect impact on school burnout.

Burnout is said to be shared among adults in the workplace, which cause burnout among university students and has received less interest, not as much as burnout in employees. Maslach (2001, in Wardani & Pitensah, 2021) stated that that the level of education also has an influence on a person's burnout level. Burnout is simply known as

much as stressed, however burnout is something which a lot more serious than just being stressed from a particular situation. Burnout and stress have significant differences that can be pointed out. Stressed people might still notice things or envision how much better they would feel if they can get everything under control. On the other hand, being burnout often cause individuals to not see any prospect for good improvement in their circumstances (Wardani et. al, 2022; Wardani & Firmansyah, 2021; Wardani & Amalia, 2021).

Hence, the findings of this study will bring the knowledge gap as it focuses on university students during this COVID-19 pandemic. In Addition, the data collected from this study will help o explore and provide insight into this issue while in this critical situation of the virus outbreak. Furthermore, this study also will redound to the benefit of society, mainly for the family, as all the children will undergo a phase in which they become university students. This is because burnout is something that people can prevent by developing self-awareness.

Theoretical approaches used to describe, explain, and predict relationship between perfectionism and burnout is Person-Environment Fit theory (PE fit). The Person-Environment Fit theory (PE fit) by Murrell and Norris (1983) in Moate et al. (2016) describes, explains, and predicts the relationship between perfectionism and burnout. This theory refers to the quality of life as the criterion for determining the goodness of fit between the personand their surroundings. This theory is predicated on the premise that well-being and performance are a product of people's interaction with their surroundings. PE fit help researcher understands the effects of student-university fit on burnout. This need to be emphasized as with the current Covid-19 pandemic. University students must undergo onlinedistance learning (ODL) instead of face-to-face classes. According to recent qualitativeresearch, individuals retain fit through consistent, prolonged coping efforts and use them when the change in their environments challenges their fit.

The current study consists of two objectives. First, is to examine the relationship between perfectionism and burnout in university students during the Covid-19 pandemic. Second, it isto determine whether coping self-efficacy is mediating the relationship between thesetwo variables. This study also consists of five hypotheses:

H1: Perfectionistic strivings will be negatively related to burnout.

H2: Perfectionistic strivings will be positively related to coping self-efficacy.

H3: Perfectionistic concerns will be positively related to burnout.

H4: Perfectionistic concerns will be negatively related to coping self-efficacy.

H5: Coping self-efficacy will mediate the relationship between perfectionistic strivings and concerns with burnout.

Method

Participants

After conducting purposive sampling, a total of 176 participants (47 male and 129 female) from 18 to 27 years old responded to all three instruments accordingly. As a result, its mean, median, and mode were 22.28, 22, and 22, respectively. All participants were university students.

Procedure

The research was carried out by distributing the self-report questionnaire in Google Form to respondents through WhatsApp, followed by subsequent processes: data screening, analysis, and interpretation.

Measures

Perfectionism

This study measured perfectionism using Frost Multidimensional Perfectionism Scale (FMPS), created by Dr. Randy Frost and colleagues in 1990. This instrument uses a five-point Likert scale (1= Strongly disagree, 2= Disagree, 3= Neutral, 4= Agree, 5= Strongly agree) and consists of thirty-five items measuring six subscales. The subscales are Concern over Mistake (CM, nine items), Personal Standards (PS, seven items), Parental Expectations (PE, five items), Parental Criticism (PC, four items), Doubts About Action (DA, four items) and Organization (O, six items). Subscales of CM, PE, PC and DA are characterized as maladaptive, while PS and O as adaptive.

Burnout

Burnout among university students was assessed using the Maslach Burnout Inventory-Student Survey (MBI-SS). MBI-SS is a modified version of the Maslach Burnout Inventory-General Survey (MBI-GS) which was adapted to be used in a student sample

(Schaufeli et al., 2002). MBI-SS consists of 15 items comprising a complete of 3 subscales and will be measured using seven points frequency rating scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree). The three subscales in MBI-SS are exhaustion (EX, five items), cynicism (CY, four items), and professional efficacy (PER, six items).

Coping Self-Efficacy

Coping self-efficacy, a mediator for this research, was assessed using the Coping Self-Efficacy Scale (CSE). CSE scale consists of a 26-item measure classified into three subscales which are using problem-focused coping (PFC, 12 items), stopping unpleasant emotions and thoughts (SUET, nine items), and getting support from friends and family (SFF, five items). These items are rated on a 10-point Likert scale ranging from 0 (cannot do at all) to 5 (moderately sure can do) to 10 (certain can do).

Analysis

Data for this study were collected and analyzed using IBM SPSS Statistics Version 27.0. The reliability of the items in FMPS, MBI-SS, and CSE used in this study was verified using Cronbach's alpha coefficient. The criterion for this internal consistency scale is 0.6-0.7, which indicates an acceptable level of reliability, plus 0.8 or greater indicates an outstanding level of reliability (Hulin, Netemeyer & Cudeck, 2001). The overall Cronbach's alpha for FMPS, MBI-SS, and CSE are .94, .84, and .96, respectively.

Construct validity for FMPS, MBI-SS and CSE was assessed using Pearson correlation which showed the correlation coefficients between the factors and subscales of the scale. The inter-correlations evaluated convergent validity among subscales of the FMPS and MBI-SS. As a result, all the subscales of both scales correlated significantly and positively except for the correlation between CM and PER ($r = -.02$), PS with PER ($r = -.40$), PE with PER ($r = -.19$), PC with PER ($r = -.05$) and DA with PER ($r = -.00$). Then, discriminant validity was determined.

All the subscales' scores of MBI-SS correlated negatively with items and subscales of CSE. Results showed the correlation between EX scores with PFC, SUET, and SFF scores are $-.26$, $-.34$, and $-.31$, respectively. The correlation between CY scores with PFC, SUET, and SFF scores are $-.30$, $-.32$ and $-.33$, respectively. Then, the correlation between PER score with PFC, SUET, and SFF scores are $-.52$, $-.38$ and $-.45$ respectively. Finally, the

researchers tested H1, H2, H3, and H4 using bivariate regression and multiple regression to test H5.

Results

Firstly, descriptive analysis was used to analyze the participant's demographic information, including gender, age, ethnicity, faculty, years of study, and their current location. The total respondents were 176 university students, with higher participation among female respondents (n=129) with 73.3% in contrast to male respondents (n=47) with 26.7%. They ranged from 18 to 27 years old. The majority are aged 22 (n=113), with 64.2%. In terms of ethnicity, there were 71.0% (n=125) Malay, 3.4% (n=6) Chinese, 0.6% (n=1) Indian, 21.6% (n=38) Bumiputera Sabah, 2.8% (n=5) Bumiputera Sarawak and 0.6% (n=1) Siamese. All participants are undergraduate students, and most (n=118) of them are currently in Year 3 of their studies. Before the Covid-19 pandemic, 129 participants stayed at home at the remaining were at college (n=47).

Next, skewness and kurtosis are used to test the normality of the data of FMPS, MBI-SS, and CSE. As a result, skewness and kurtosis values are near zero and fall between - and 1. Descriptive analysis was also used to show the mean and standard deviation for each subscale in all instruments used for this study. Tables 1, 2, and 3 showed the mean and standard deviation for FMPS, MBI-SS, and CSE subscales, respectively.

Table 1

Mean and Standard Deviation for Six Dimensions of Frost Multidimensional Perfectionism Scale (FMPS)

Dimensions	M	SD
Concern over mistake	29.41	7.32
Personal standards	24.60	5.08
Parental expectations	17.33	4.12
Parental criticism	11.22	3.71
Doubts about action	14.26	3.08
Organization	23.18	4.05

Table 2

Mean and Standard Deviation for Three Dimensions of Maslach Burnout Inventory-Student Survey (MBI-SS)

Dimensions	M	SD
Exhaustion	25.30	6.17
Cynicism	19.11	5.29
Professional efficacy	18.95	5.45

Table 3

Mean and Standard Deviation for Three Dimensions of Coping Self-Efficacy Scale

Dimensions	M	SD
Use problem-focused coping	80.49	21.49
Stop unpleasant emotions and thoughts	58.15	16.06
Get support from friends and family	31.63	10.42

Two different regression models were used to test the hypotheses. Hypothesis 1 stated that perfectionistic strivings would be negatively related to burnout. As a result, perfectionistic strivings and burnout were not significant to one another. The regression of perfectionistic strivings on burnout without coping self-efficacy as the mediator was $R^2 = .00$, $F(1,174) = .024$, $p = .878$. Here the $p = .878$, which is more than 0.5, suggests that the regression model could not predict perfectionistic strivings on burnout. Hence, hypothesis 1 was supported. Hypothesis 2 stated that perfectionistic strivings would be positively related to coping self-efficacy. As result, the regression of perfectionistic strivings on coping self-efficacy was significant, $R^2 = .04$, $F(1,174) = 6.55$, $p = .011$. This finding was confirmed as the $p = .011$, less than 0.5, indicating that the regression model can predict perfectionistic strivings on coping self-efficacy. Thus, hypothesis 2 has proven that these two variables are significant bone another. Therefore hypothesis 2 was supported.

Then, hypothesis 3 stated that perfectionistic concerns would be positively related to burnout. As a result, the regression of perfectionistic concerns on burnout without coping self-efficacy as a mediator was $R^2 = .13$, $F(1,174) = 25.73$, $p < .001$. Here the $p < .001$, which is less than 0.5, suggests that the regression model can predict perfectionistic concerns on burnout. Hence, hypothesis 3 was supported. After that, hypothesis 4 stated that perfectionistic concerns would be negatively related to coping self-efficacy. As result, the regression of perfectionistic concerns on coping self-efficacy was significant, $R^2 = .08$, $F(1,174) = 15.18$, $p < .001$. Based on findings, $p < .001$, which is less than 0.5. Hence, it's

confirmed that the regression model can predict perfectionistic concerns on coping self-efficacy. Hypothesis 4 has proven that these two variables are significant to one another. Therefore hypothesis 4 was not supported. Lastly, hypothesis 5 stated that coping with self-efficacy would mediate the relationship between perfectionism with burnout. As result, the regression of coping self-efficacy and perfectionism on burnout are significant, $R^2 = .30$, $F(2, 173) = 36.91$, $p < .001$. The significant value of this regression model was $p < .001$. This finding indicated that the regression model could predict the effect of coping self-efficacy and perfectionism on burnout, as it is less than 0.5. Thus, hypothesis 5 was supported.

Discussion

Hypothesis 1

The first hypothesis confirmed that perfectionistic striving was negatively related to burnout. The findings imply that perfectionistic strivings may give at least a small degree of protection against the onset of burnout among students during this pandemic Covid-19. Stoeber and Rennert (2007) stated that individuals who strive for perfection appear to interpret possible stresses as challenges rather than threats and losses. Thus, as a result, they may not feel upset and become stressed out when confronted with problems but instead actively seek to improve the situation. Given that the Covid-19 virus and lockdown have drastically limited our individual lives and pushed people to compromise and adapt, few experts have suggested that perfectionists are at high risk for psychological issues. However, striving for perfection may be viewed as a "healthy pursuit of excellence" rather than a clinical problem requiring professional counselling and therapy (Shafran et al., 2002). These results, which showed that perfectionistic strivings are not indicative of burnout, strengthened the idea that perfectionistic strivings are related to adaptive perfectionism.

Hypothesis 2

The second hypothesis confirmed that perfectionistic striving was positively related to coping self-efficacy (mediator). Wilkerson (2009) indicated that problem-focused coping, one of the subscales in CSE, played an essential role in moderating the effects of burnout for school counsellors. Thus, this statement can also be applied to students at the university level. Adaptive perfectionists were considered to have lower levels of negative coping processes and stress when compared to greater levels of more task-based coping processes.

In addition, individuals with high levels of perfectionistic strivings are also prone to use social distraction techniques in settings where they have less or no control than those with low levels of perfectionistic strivings. These social diversion strategies referred to the CSE's aspect were categorized as 'get support from friends and family'.

Hypothesis 3

The third hypothesis, which stated that perfectionistic concerns were positively related to burnout, was confirmed and supported. Perfectionistic concerns may be a significant personality trait that makes people prone to burnout (Swider and Zimmerman, 2010). These perfectionistic concerns, also known as maladaptive perfectionism, were highly associated with negative affect and depressive symptomatology. Students with a high level of perfectionistic concern (high score in Concern over Mistake, Parental Expectation, Parental Criticism, and Doubts about Action) were characterized by a fear of failure to meet their goals. The pressure to meet high self-imposed standards is increased when the student's self-worth is linked to reaching these standards since they are more likely to perceive failure as a reflection of their abilities. Thus, they may work obsessively now, and if they cannot, they will be highly driven to make up for a missed time, which may lead to even greater burnout. This finding strengthened the assumption that perfectionistic concerns are related to maladaptive perfectionism.

Hypothesis 4

The fourth hypothesis, which stated that perfectionistic concern was negatively associated with coping self-efficacy, was not supported. These findings were inconsistent with the previous study, which found that maladaptive perfectionists tend to use avoidant-emotional coping processes compared to adaptive perfectionists (Fye et al., 2018). Individual coping techniques range in efficacy based on their level of perfectionistic strivings and concerns. Generally, different coping strategies were used for another kind of perfectionism. Individuals with a high level of perfectionistic concern are perceived to be more likely to resort to emotion-oriented or avoidance-based coping strategies. In relevance to the present findings, participants with a high level of perfectionistic concerns might need to adjust to the aspects of coping self-efficacy, which enable them to function well during this pandemic. The reason perfectionistic concerns are connected to low

satisfaction and a high degree of burnout is that people with high degrees of perfectionistic concerns fail to use coping mechanisms that help them successfully deal with life's problems (Dunkley et al., 2003).

Hypothesis 5

The fifth hypothesis supported that coping self-efficacy mediated the relationship between perfectionism and burnout. Researchers in the past discovered that perfectionism is strongly connected to academic self-efficacy, which may subsequently influence self-ability and self-confidence (Ahn and Kim, 2006). Consequently, it is of considerable significance to explain the links between perfectionism, burnout, and coping self-efficacy were investigated to identify variables that might minimize burnout among students. This finding proved that coping self-efficacy plays a significant role in mediating the relationship between perfectionism and burnout. Furthermore, coping self-efficacy psychologically lowered the dimensions of perfectionism, leading to student satisfaction and success. In this study, coping self-efficacy acted as a psychological resource that may decrease the chances of burnout experienced by participants. People's feeling of self-efficacy reflects their expectations about whether or not they would be able to attain their desired condition. Therefore, self-efficacy is crucial in enhancing students' comfort levels when they undergo ODL during this pandemic.

Conclusion

In conclusion, perfectionism can predict burnout among students. Students who engaged with high levels of perfectionistic concerns during this worsening pandemic Covid-10 will be more likely to experience burnout symptoms throughout their journey in online learning (ODL). Student performance matters to secure a brighter future. Therefore, students and educators should use coping strategies and emphasize these personality factors to ensure individuals' mental state and well-being are in good condition. By promoting reasonable expectations, individuals with perfectionism traits may help them accept their imperfections. Moreover, before the pandemic, burnout symptoms will likely occur among university students as all students should undergo ODL since the Covid-19 virus outbreak in early 2020. Thus, future research can focus on other factors that may potentially cause burnout among university students. Therefore, this study provides an

understanding of perfectionism, burnout, and coping self-efficacy and serves as a platform for future research in this area.

Implications

The findings provide implications for university students. Firstly, there was evidence based on past studies which indicated that perfectionism is a multifaceted trait with both positive and negative aspects and that the healthy parts of perfectionism may greatly benefit the students. Thus, students with perfectionism traits should practice well-balanced adaptive and maladaptive perfectionism to ensure their well-being during this prolonged Covid-19 pandemic. Furthermore, by recognizing the signs of both adaptive and maladaptive perfectionism, students may prevent burnout from occurring.

Secondly, the findings of this study confirmed that dimensions of perfectionism might lead to burnout symptoms among students. Therefore, more researchers can explore perfectionism among students as the rise in perfectionism may harm students' psychological health, as seen by increased levels of depression, anxiety, and suicidal thoughts than a decade ago. In addition, coping self-efficacy mediated the relationship between both dimensions of perfectionism and burnout. In line with that, the results of this study may represent a significant contribution to increasing the understanding of the approach to coping with self-efficacy functions in the prevention of stress and burnout. Thirdly, the findings of this study contributed to the understanding of educators like lecturers regarding the personality factors that explain how students differ in their performances at university. Finally, educators need to note that perfectionism among students, which becomes overbearing, can lead to burnout.

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