

Investigating the Relationship Between Emotional Intelligence, Perfectionism and Social Anxiety

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ABSTRACT

This study explores the complex interplay between emotional intelligence (EI), social anxiety, and perfectionism. We investigate how these factors interact and influence one another. The research examines whether high levels of perfectionism contribute to social anxiety, and if emotional intelligence can act as a buffer against this negative effect. We explore potential mechanisms underlying these relationships, such as emotional regulation difficulties and self-criticism. The findings of this study will enhance our understanding of the factors that contribute to social anxiety and inform the development of interventions that target emotional intelligence and perfectionistic tendencies.

INTRODUCTION

Social anxiety, characterized by an intense fear of negative evaluation in social situations, is a prevalent mental health concern that significantly impacts daily life. Understanding the factors that contribute to social anxiety is crucial for developing effective interventions. Research suggests that perfectionism, the tendency to set unrealistically high standards and experience intense self-criticism for falling short, may be a significant risk factor. Individuals with perfectionism may perceive social interactions as opportunities for judgment and failure, leading to heightened anxiety.

However, the relationship between perfectionism and social anxiety may not be straightforward. Emotional intelligence (EI), the ability to perceive, understand, and manage emotions in oneself and others, could play a moderating role. Individuals with strong emotional intelligence may be better equipped to regulate their emotions in social situations, reducing the negative impact of perfectionistic tendencies.

This study delves into the intricate interplay between emotional intelligence, social anxiety, and perfectionism. We aim to identify how these factors interact and influence one another. Specifically, we investigate whether:

- i. Perfectionism is associated with increased social anxiety.
- ii. Emotional intelligence moderates the relationship between perfectionism and social anxiety, potentially buffering the negative effects of perfectionism.

By exploring these questions, we hope to gain a deeper understanding of the mechanisms underlying social anxiety and identify potential targets for intervention. This knowledge can inform the development of programs that enhance emotional intelligence and address perfectionistic tendencies, ultimately leading to improved mental health outcomes for individuals struggling with social anxiety.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Tezelli & Dilmaç (2021). This relationship is studied in university students where they discovered a negative relationship between social anxiety and emotional intelligence, indicating that social anxiety is correlated with higher emotional intelligence. Tezelli & Dilmaç (2021) discovered a negative relationship between social anxiety and emotional intelligence, indicating that social anxiety is correlated with higher emotional intelligence. The benefits of emotional intelligence in lowering college students' levels of social anxiety were demonstrated by research findings. Furthermore, it was found that there is a statistically significant correlation between emotional intelligence and social anxiety in college students. collectively, the subscales measuring optimism, using emotions, and evaluating emotions—which collectively make up emotional intelligence—were found to significantly predict social anxiety in college students.

Abdollahi & Abu-Talib's (2015) study on emotional intelligence and test anxiety in Iranian students examines how emotional intelligence influences perfectionism and anxiety. Their research shows that the association between test anxiety and maladaptive perfectionism (scathing self-criticism) is moderated by emotional intelligence. This shows that the detrimental effects of perfectionism on anxiety may be mitigated by EI. Furthermore, this research provides evidence that suggests perfectionists may have a lower likelihood of happiness due to emotional dysregulation in their handling of both their own and other people's emotions.

Gan et al. (2011) demonstrated that maladaptive perfectionism is elevated in many disorders including anxiety disorders and proposed perfectionism as a transdiagnostic process. In their argument, perfectionism not only occurs across different diagnoses but also serves as a risk factor and/or maintaining mechanism contributing to the aetiology and maintenance of different disorders, including social anxiety.

Wirtz et al. (2007) found perfectionism to be a predictor of the cortisol response to stress, whereby perfectionistic cognitions contributed independently to stress-induced bodily responses when participants were placed in a socially evaluative situation. This further supports the view of Schlenker and Leary (1982) that social anxiety may be a symptom of perfectionism.

Frost et al. (1990) explores the connection between perfectionism and social anxiety. Their research suggests that individuals with social anxiety tend to set unreasonably high expectations for themselves in social situations. When they fail to meet these unrealistic standards, they become overly critical of themselves. This pattern of setting high standards and harshly criticizing oneself aligns closely with the core characteristics of perfectionism, which is defined as the tendency to have excessively high expectations and engage in negative self-evaluation. These findings highlight how perfectionism may be a contributing factor to social anxiety or even worsen its effects.

METHODOLOGY

Aim

To study on the mediating role of emotional intelligence in the relationship between perfectionism and social anxiety.

Objectives

To investigate the relationship between emotional intelligence, perfectionism and social anxiety in adults.

To measure Difference on the level of Emotional Intelligence among adults.

To measure Difference on the level of Perfectionism among adults.

To measure Difference on the level of Social Intelligence among adults.

Hypothesis

Emotional intelligence will weaken the relationship between perfectionism and social anxiety.

There will be significant relationship between perfectionism and social anxiety.

Variables:

Dependent Variables

Social Anxiety

Perfectionism

Independent Variables

Emotional Intelligence

Tools

Brief Emotional Intelligence Scale (BEIS -10), Frost Multidimensional Perfectionism Scale (FMPS), Social Interaction Anxiety Scale (SIAS-6)

Participants Of The Study

A total of 175 participants, aged 18 to 45 years, were recruited through a random selection process. The recruitment aimed to achieve a balanced representation of male and female participants.

RESULT

Table 1

Descriptive Statistics of all Variables

	<i>Emotional Intelligence</i>	<i>Perfectionism</i>	<i>Social Anxiety</i>
N	175	175	175
Mean	20.8	24.1	7.10
Median	20	24	6
Standard Deviation	6.87	5.85	5.23
Minimum	10	8	0
Maximum	50	39	24

Table 2

Correlation Matrix of all the Variables

		<i>Emotional Intelligence</i>	<i>Perfectionism</i>	<i>Social Anxiety</i>
Emotional Intelligence	Pearson's r	-		
	df	-		
	p-value	-		
Perfectionism	Pearson's r	0.267	-	
	df	173	-	
	p-value	<.001	-	
Social Anxiety	Pearson's r	0.307	0.186	-
	df	173	173	-
	p-value	<.001	0.014	-

DISCUSSION

This study found weak positive correlations between emotional intelligence (EI), perfectionism, and social anxiety. People with higher EI scores (.267) tend to also score slightly higher on both perfectionism and social anxiety (0.307 for social anxiety, 0.186 for perfectionism). However, it is crucial to remember that correlation does not imply causation.

The link between Emotional Intelligence and Perfectionism aligns with some research suggesting higher emotional awareness might lead to setting unrealistic standards (perfectionism). However, other studies haven't found a significant correlation, highlighting the need for further exploration. EI and Social Anxiety show a weak positive correlation (0.307) which is interesting. While EI is often linked with positive social outcomes, some research suggests a potential association with social anxiety due to heightened awareness of social cues. However, strong emotional regulation skills (a component of EI) might help manage social anxiety symptoms. Future research is needed to explore specific aspects of EI that contribute to or protect against social anxiety.

The weak positive correlation (0.186) between Perfectionism and Social Anxiety is unsurprising. Perfectionists often set unrealistic standards, leading to fear of failure and negative self-evaluation, which can translate into social anxiety. This aligns with research highlighting a link between perfectionism and social anxiety.

Indicating that this study is correlational and cannot establish causation. Additionally, the specific aspects of EI influencing perfectionism or social anxiety remain unclear. Future research using longitudinal designs and exploring specific emotional intelligence components could provide a more nuanced understanding. Overall, the findings suggest a complex interplay between these variables. While EI might be associated with both perfectionism and social anxiety, it likely interacts with other factors. Further research is needed to understand the causal mechanisms and identify specific emotional intelligence skills that can be targeted to address perfectionism and social anxiety.

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, this study unveils the intricate interplay between emotional intelligence, perfectionism, and social anxiety. While emotional intelligence might be associated with both perfectionism and social anxiety, it likely interacts with other factors to influence these outcomes. Further research is necessary to elucidate the causal mechanisms and identify specific emotional intelligence skills that can be targeted to address perfectionism and social anxiety. This knowledge has the potential to pave the way for the development of evidence-based interventions to promote well-being and positive social interactions.

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