

Psychological Resilience in Adolescents: The Effect of Perfectionism

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ABSTRACT The aim of this study is to examine the level of psychological resilience through different variables and the relation between psychological resilience and perfectionism in adolescents. Two hundred and ninety five (295) students from secondary education and freshmen students from universities in Cyprus participated in this study. The data was collected through “Personal Information Forms” (PIF) to specify students’ demographic structure, “Psychological Resilience Scale” (PRS) to specify the level of resilience, and “Perfectionism Scale for Child and Adult” (PSCA) to specify their level of perfectionism. The findings were obtained through a t-test, ANOVA, and multiple regression analysis. When students’ outdoor activities are considered, the ones spending more time doing sports, have a higher level of psychological resilience compared to the ones who spend time on the internet or social media. It was also found that there is a significant relation between psychological resilience and self-perfectionism and perfectionism created by social sources. In addition, the sub-dimensions of both perfectionisms have a significant effect on psychological resilience.

INTRODUCTION

During the transition period from childhood to adolescence (Steinberg 2007), the psychological, biological, and social changes bring together certain problems and provide opportunities for new life-standards. Any inconveniences which affect an individual’s growth may cause incurable effects in one’s life (Santrock 2012). In such cases, an individual’s way of facing and adopting the events show how they perceive life and events. Positive psychological trend focuses on an individual’s strong innate characteristics and emphasizes that it is the most effective and modern approach to protect mental health (Csikszentmihalyi 2009). Parallel to such an approach, a stronger need arises to detect the factors that help the individual facing negative conditions to sustain self-esteem and feel psychologically confident. Psychological resilience is one of the topics for the studies done in this field. The studies done on psychological resilience concept examine the reasons for constraints in an individual’s life and their standing firmly against stressors and exhibiting a healthy development (Sameroff 2005). Fletcher and Sarkar (2013: 16) define psychological resilience as “the role of mental process and behavior in promoting per-

sonal assets and protecting an individual from the potential negative effect of stressors.”

In literature, resilience (Ögülmüş 2001; Özcan 2005; Gürkan 2006), the power of maintaining one’s self-control (Terzi 2006), psychological resilience (Gizir and Aydın 2006; Karairmak 2007), and endurance (Taşgin and Çetin 2006) are dealt with as protective factors in all studies (Karairmak 2006; Gizir 2007; Kaya et al. 2016; Luthar et al. 2000). Individuals with a high level of psychological resilience are described as individuals with the ability to establish and develop positive relationships, effective communication skills, strong self-adequacy, a high level self-confidence, self-respect and ability to prove one’s worth, the ability to control feelings, a high level of success, and the ability to plan and consider the future (Koç and Yildirim 2014). Meanwhile, among the risk factors that may affect psychological resilience negatively are the elements such as an individual’s anxious nature, low IQ level, weak tolerance against being obstructed, hyperactivity, tough or inconsistent parental discipline, loss of parents due to divorce or death, economical problems, the quality of school and other services, and crime rates (Coleman and Hagell 2007). Lee et al. (2013) carried out a meta-analysis study in which they

investigated the factors affecting psychological resilience and pointed at life expectancy, social support, and self-sufficiency as the most effective while anxiety, depression, and stress as less effective factors.

Adolescence starts when an individual begins to know himself. At this stage, one sets high standards, is extremely sensitive towards family expectations and criticism, and lacks self-esteem that causes him/her to feel insecure in his environment. The concept of perfectionism is an inclination to set high standards to be perfect and for self behavior for which one has to perform a lot in big standards for excessive criticism. Perfectionists try to be perfect all the time (Frost et al. 1990; Flett and Hewitt 2002). Perfectionism is also defined as one's critical self-evaluation and setting high standards (Burns 1980; Frost et al. 1990; Stoeber and Stoeber 2009), the feeling that one still needs to develop behaviors and in this respect, an excessive effort due to an uncontrolled superiority complex (Slaney and Ashby 1996). Bowers (2012) explains the reason for perfectionism and points to its relation with factors such as "the society's efforts to make the individual a good citizen and the individual's adapting this effort with respect", "the individual's growing up in a chaotic family", "the individual's sensitivity to escape chaos and problems", and "the family's excessive success expectations".

In literature in the past, the concept of perfectionism was taken up as a single-dimensional issue (Burns 1980), but in the following years it was considered a multi-dimensional issue (Frost et al. 1990; Hewitt and Flett 1991). Today, several findings point out that perfectionism is a multi-dimensional issue and some of these dimensions are related to adaptation problems (Flett and Hewitt 2014). Perfectionist individuals are successful with high standards. Such individuals keep trying for aims that are impossible to reach and they evaluate self-values through their achievements and success (Burns 1980). Hewitt and Flett (1991) look at this issue through a multi-dimensional angle and examine it under three headings; "self-oriented perfectionism", "the individual's setting high and tough targets", and "an inclination for an ongoing effort to try to escape failure." Perfectionism inclined towards others includes beliefs and expectations related to others capacity on unrealistic stan-

dards. Others-oriented perfectionism causes a feeling of guilt, loss of confidence, and aggressiveness and enmity towards others. In perfectionism in "social setting", people notice unrealistic standards in others. The others put pressure on the individual to be superior and perfect. The individual has a fear for being misled and avoids disapproved situations.

Most of the studies done in perfectionism involved young adults and adults in clinical settings (Rice and Preusser 2000). Studies done in childhood and adolescence years are less in number, but a big majority of them involved high-intelligence groups (Parker and Mills 1996; Parker 1997; Neumeister 2004) or focused on the negative aspects of perfectionism (Hawkins et al. 2006). Previous studies done on children and adolescents stated that perfectionism is related to variables such as "depression" (Huggins et al. 2008), "obsessive-compulsive disorder" (Soreni et al. 2014), "tendency for suicide" (Boergers et al. 1998), and "low self-esteem" (Çerkez 2012).

Hill and Curran (2016) examined perfectionism and exhaustion in a meta-analysis method and stated that there was significant relation between the two. Exhaustion, mostly noticed in individuals with low psychological resilience and motivation, is assumed to be "sentimental exhaustion" in individuals experiencing stress.

Miner (2016) related psychological resilience to "sibling position" and "parental separation" and noted that a child is highly affected under such conditions and is weaker in psychological resilience. Furthermore, in studies investigating this issue through different variables, it was found out that individuals involved in sports (Sarkar and Fletcher 2014; Secades et al. 2016), women compared to men (Güngörmüş et al. 2015), and children from married parents compared to children from broken parents (Schaan and Vögle 2016) have a higher level of psychological resilience. In addition, some studies reported that there was a relationship between the levels of psychological well-being and smart-phone addiction (Kumcagiz and Gündüz 2016). Burgess and DiBartalo (2016), in their book, examined the relation between anxiety and perfectionism and the factors likely to affect this relation and noted that stress, organizational disposition, social factors, and knowing have a great role in this relationship. At this point, as it has been mentioned before, in the case when individuals with

a low-level psychological resilience is considered, it is assumed that there is a relation between perfectionism and psychological well-being. Particularly, during adolescence years, when social and personality development begins, examining the level of individuals' psychological resilience and the state of perfectionism, will add to help understand the individuals and offer more effective services. The fact that this is the first study ever done in North Cyprus to examine the relation between an individual's perfectionism and psychological resilience in adolescence years through different variables, emphasizes its importance more than ever.

METHODOLOGY

The method used in conducting this study includes information about the population, the sample, data collection tools, procedure and statistical data analysis.

Research Design

This study was designed to describe a previous or current event to specify the possible relationship and effect between perfectionism and resilience among adolescents. This is a descriptive study with a quantitative research methodology.

Participants

In this study, 295 secondary school and freshman students from the universities in the city of Lefkōpa, North Cyprus were selected through random cluster sampling method to participate. One hundred and sixty seven (167) (56.6%) were female and 128 (43.4%) were male, with an age range between 15-20 years ($M = 17.4$, $SD = 1.90$). Thirty-eight (12.9%) came from broken parents and 257 (87.1%) from married parents. 33.9 percent of them do outdoor sports, fifty-eight percent are interested in internet/social media, and 8.1 percent participate in social activities (Table 1).

Data Collection Tools

Three data collection tools were employed in this study, "Personal Information Form" designed to obtain socio-demographic information, "Psychological Resilience Scale" aiming at measur-

Table 1: Demographic information about the participants

	<i>F</i>	<i>%</i>		
<i>Gender</i>				
Male	128	43.4		
Female	167	56.6		
<i>Number of Siblings</i>				
Only child	23	7.8		
2 siblings	122	41.4		
More than 2 siblings	150	50.8		
<i>Marital Status of Parents</i>				
Married	257	87.1		
Divorced	38	12.9		
<i>After-school Activities</i>				
Sports	100	33.9		
Internet/Social media	171	58		
Social activities	24	8.1		
	<i>Min</i>	<i>Max</i>	<i>Mean</i>	<i>Sd</i>
<i>Age</i>	15	20	17.4	1.90

ing psychological resilience levels, and "Child and Adolescent Multi-dimensional Perfectionism Scale".

Psychological Resilience Scale

This scale was developed by Block and Kremen (1996) and applied to Turkish culture standardization by Karairmak (2007) to specify individuals' psychological resilience. It is a self-declared scale in Likert type with 14 items, ordered from "1-It is never applicable" to "4-Absolutely applicable". High scores received indicate the individual's high level in psychological resilience. In the Turkish version of the scale three-consistency coefficient was .80, test reliability consistency was .76. In the present study, the reliability coefficient was 0.76.

Child and Adolescent Perfectionism Scale

This scale was developed by Flett et al. (2001, as cited in Uz Bas and Siyez 2010) and adapted into Turkish by Uz Bas and Siyez (2010). The scale is an 18-item self-report measure of adolescents' perfectionism, with two sub-scales, "Socially Prescribed Perfectionism" and "Self-oriented Perfectionism". The items in the scale were graded as "Never applicable=1", "Mostly applicable=2", "Neither correct nor wrong=3", "Mostly correct=4", and "Absolutely correct=5". The points for both sub-scales range between 9 to 45. Two perfectionism points are

scored from the scale; “*Self-oriented perfectionism*” (Items 1,2,4,5,8,11,13,15 and 17), “*Socially-prescribed perfectionism*” (Items 3, 6, 7, 9, 10, 12, 14, 16 and 18). Total points are not calculated and commented on. Higher points indicate the rise in perfectionism level. The Cronbach alpha reliability coefficient scale adapted into Turkish was found as .82 for “*self-oriented perfectionism*” and .64 for “*social-oriented perfectionism*”. In the present study, the coefficient of the scale is 0.80.

Procedure

Before the administration of questionnaires, permissions were taken from the Ministry of Education. The data collection tools were administered by the authors to the students in groups in a classroom environment. Before the administration of questionnaires, students were informed about the aim of the study and how the questionnaires should be completed. They were also informed that the questionnaires would remain anonymous.

Data Analysis

All the quantitative data collected through the inventories and forms were put into the SPSS programme for analysis. Initially, the demographic information form, the resiliency scale, and the perfectionism scale were distributed to 300 participants. Incomplete forms and questionnaires were not included in the analysis. Thus, the total number of questionnaires that were analyzed in

the current study added upto 295. The significance level for all the analysis was set to .05.

To specify any differences between adolescents’ psychological resilience scores based on gender of students and marital status of parents, the t-test analysis was used. As for any significant differences between adolescents’ psychological resilience scores in terms of number of siblings and after-school activities, one way of ANOVA was used and to investigate the effect of perfectionism on psychological resilience multiple-regression analysis was utilized.

RESULTS

In this section, the adolescents’ gender, number of brothers/sisters, parents’ marital status, and after-school activities were investigated to specify any differences on their level of psychological resilience and any effect by perfectionism sub-dimensions on their psychological resilience level. A t-test analysis was done to define any possible differences (Table 2). The results of the analysis show that there is no significant difference in the scores by gender ($t = -.719, p > 0.05$) and by parents’ marital status ($t = -.524, p > 0.05$).

An ANOVA analysis was done to specify any differences in adolescents’ psychological resilience related to number of siblings and the after-school activities they were interested in (See Table 3). The results of the ANOVA analysis did not show any significant differences related to the number of siblings ($F_{(2,292)} = .385, p > 0.05$). On the other hand, a significant differ-

Table 2: t-test analysis on the effect of gender and parents’ marital status on psychological resilience

		N	Mean	Sd	t	df	p
Gender	Female	167	39.71	7.39	-.719	293	.472
	Male	128	40.34	7.55			
Marital Status of Parents	Married	257	39.89	7.56	-.524	293	.601
	Divorced	38	40.57	6.80			

Table 3: ANOVA analysis on the effect of number of siblings and after-school activities on psychological resilience

		Sum of squares	df	Mean squares	F	p
Number of Siblings	Between groups	43.099	2	21.55	.385	.681
	Within groups	16326.8	292	55.91		
After School Activities	Between groups	366.474	2	183.23	3.343	.037*
	Within groups		292	54.80		

*Mean difference is significant at the 0.05 level

ence related to after-school activities was noted ($F_{(2,292)}=3.343, p<0.05$). Tukey post-hoc test was given to specify the significant difference in mean scores related to psychological resilience following the groups' after-school activities. This analysis revealed that students who spend their time in sports activities after school, have significantly higher psychological resilience than the ones who spend most of their after-school time on internet and social media ($p<0.05$).

In this study, the two sub-scales, "self-oriented perfectionism" and "socially-prescribed perfectionism", for measuring child and adolescence perfectionism was used to analyse the average, standard deviation and correlation of psychological resilience (Table 4). According to these findings, there is a relation between socially-prescribed perfectionism ($r=0.248, p>0.01$), self-oriented perfectionism ($r=0.291, p<0.01$) and psychological resilience.

Table 4: Means, standard deviations and correlation for variables

Variables	1	2	3
Socially prescribed perfectionism	1.00		
Self-oriented perfectionism	0.437*	1.00	
Psychological resilience	0.248*	.291*	1.00
Means	30.34	30.50	39.98
Standard deviations	8.34	7.36	7.46

*Correlations are significant at the 0.01 level

In a simultaneous multiple regression analysis, self-oriented perfectionism had the strongest significant standardized regression coefficient with the criterion of psychological resilience, Beta (295)= 0.223, $p<0.001$ and explained about twenty-percent of the variance in psychological resilience. Socially prescribed perfec-

tionism had a lower, but still a strong significant standardised regression coefficient, Beta (295)=0.142, $p<0.05$ and explained 24 per cent of the variance. Therefore, higher psychological resilience is associated with higher self-oriented and socially prescribed perfectionism. The total variance explained by two predictors is about thirty-one percent. As the tolerance level for all two predictors was greater than .776, collinearity was not considered a problem (Table 5).

DISCUSSION

This study examined psychological resilience in adolescents through different variables and the effect of perfectionism on psychological resilience was dealt with. It is believed that the results of the analysis will add to psychological resilience and perfectionism issues in literature. Firstly, the findings indicated that gender and marital status of parents is not an effective factor on the level of adolescent psychological resilience. In other words, gender of the adolescent and marital status of parents are not effective factors on psychological resilience. In some studies it is argued that gender affects psychological resilience (for example, Güngörmüş et al. 2015), but some oppose this argument (Rew et al. 2001). In the present study, a significant difference between psychological resilience of both men and women has not been noted. This can be associated with the age range (17-20 years) of the participants. Different results can be obtained in the case of a broader age range with adult individuals. Some literature studies pointed out that broken or loss of parents create a risk for psychological resilience (Coleman and Hagell 2007; Miner 2016; Gizir 2007). However,

Table 5: Regression analysis on the effect of perfectionism on psychological resilience

Multiple R=0.317 R ² = 0.100 Adjusted R ² = 0.094 Std. error= 7.1023 F= 16.259 p<0.001					
Dependent variable	Psychological Resilience				
Independent variables	Self-oriented Perfectionism (SP)				
	Socially Prescribed Perfectionism (SPP)				
Independent variables	Mean	St. Dev.	Beta	t-value	P
SP	30.50	7.36	0.223	3.545	0.000 ^a
SPP	30.34	8.34	0.142	2.260	0.025 ^b

Notes: ^a $p<0.001$

^b $p<0.05$

the findings of the present study show that parents' marital status does not affect adolescents' psychological resilience. In previous studies, it was stated that parental separation was related to the child's age. Therefore, this could be the reason for not being able to detect a significant difference in this study. Moreover, the number of adolescents from broken families is not high. In future studies, this issue can be examined with the involvement of more participants.

Another finding observed in this study is that there is no significant difference in the level of adolescents' psychological resilience when the number of siblings is considered. Although, in previous studies, it was argued that sibling position was an important factor on the level of psychological resilience (Oktan et al. 2014; Miner 2016), the present study disagrees with this argument. Another variable, in which psychological resilience was investigated, was the amount of time spent on after-school activities. In this respect, students involved in sports activities after school have a higher level of psychological resilience compared to the ones who spend time on the internet and social media. This finding is in line with other studies in literature which reported that the more people use the internet, the lower their level of psychological well-being (Kumcagiz and Gündüz 2016) and the higher their depression (Çerkez and Kara 2017).

Finally, the level of psychological resilience related to perfectionism in adolescents was examined through its effect. The results of this analysis revealed that there is a relation between the level of self-oriented and socially-prescribed perfectionism and psychological resilience in adolescents. Apart from this, both sub-dimensions of perfectionism are effective factors in psychological resilience. In a previous study on this issue, having aims and positive expectations for the future were among protective factors (Gizir 2007; Murray 2003; Smokowski et al. 2000). At this point, it can be argued that self-oriented perfectionism (setting high targets and ongoing effort to escape failure) plays a big role in psychological well-being. Similarly, socially-prescribed perfectionism (individuals' assumption that others have high standards) is another factor affecting the level of psychological resilience. This study shows that, setting targets affects psychological resilience, and this supports the findings in previous studies.

CONCLUSION

The main aim of this research was to examine the level of psychological resilience in adolescents through different variables and the effect of perfectionism. The findings indicate that individuals spending more time in sports rather than on the internet help them to be psychologically stronger.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The basic aim of guidance in schools is to consider and carry out preventive efforts to help students meet their developmental needs and problems. Therefore, it is strongly recommended that the psychological counselling staff at schools should receive in-service training in psychological resilience. Even more, psychological counselling should guide students to develop skills to specify realistic and achievable targets. When the relation of this sufficiency is considered, it is suggested that psychological counsellors deal with this issue in in-class activities.

In this study the sampling group representing adolescence age involved high school and freshman students from the university. It is suggested that future researches should involve primary and secondary school students to examine the level of their psychological resilience and to do this, new measuring tools should be developed. Contrary to the present study, in which adolescents were in 15-20 years age range, future studies should investigate psychological resilience with a broader age range to reach more meaningful findings.

To sum up, the present study implemented a multi-dimensional way to measure the perception of perfectionism. It is advisable that, in future studies, when the relation between psychological resilience and perfectionism is examined, it is important that both positive and negative perfectionism dimensions are considered. If done so, the possible effect of positive or negative dimensions of perfectionism on psychological resilience will be better understood and school applications will be directed accordingly.

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