Adaptive and Maladaptive Perfectionism, Adult Attachment, and Big Five Personality Traits

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ABSTRACT. The author examined the role of anxiety and avoidance dimensions of attachment and Big Five personality traits in adaptive and maladaptive dimensions of perfectionism among 604 (377 male, 227 female) Turkish university students. The results of 2 separate multiple regression analyses yielded that adaptive perfectionism was significantly predicted by conscientiousness, openness, and extraversion. Maladaptive perfectionism was significantly predicted by the neuroticism, anxiety, and avoidance dimensions of attachment. The authors discuss the implications, limitations, and future directions for research.

Keywords: adaptive perfectionism, adult attachment dimensions, Big Five personality traits, maladaptive perfectionism

THE INTEREST IN MULTIDIMENSIONAL NATURE of the construct of perfectionism has received increasing attention in the psychology literature. The previous literature has focused more on the negative effect of perfectionism on mental health (for a review, see Blatt, 1995). However, a positive aspect of perfectionism has also been identified through factor analytic studies of various multidimensional perfectionism scales (Frost, Heimberg, Holt, Mattia, & Neubauer, 1993; Rice, Ashby, & Slaney, 1998; Slaney, Ashby & Trippi, 1995; Slaney, Rice, Mobley, Trippi, & Ashby, 2001; Suddarth & Slaney, 2001).

Hamachek (1978) categorized perfectionists into two groups: normal and positive or neurotic and dysfunctional. According to Hamachek, both groups have high standards, but normal perfectionists feel satisfied when their standards are achieved, whereas maladaptive perfectionists do not feel satisfied and harshly criticize themselves even for minor mistakes. After Hamachek’s definition, attempts...
to identify positive aspects of perfectionism led to some new conceptualizations of the construct. Slaney and Ashby (1996) conducted the first known qualitative study and investigated how perfectionists described their own experiences and their understanding of perfectionism. After analyzing the interviews, researchers identified three basic characteristics of perfectionism: (a) having high standards for performance, (b) having a sense of discrepancy between standards and performance that creates distress, and (c) being neat and orderly. These three aspects of perfectionism constituted the subscales of high standards, discrepancy, and order of the Almost Perfect Scale–Revised (APS-R; Slaney et al., 2001). After series of reliability and validity studies, Slaney et al. concluded that the high standards subscale measures adaptive perfectionism and the discrepancy subscale assesses maladaptive perfectionism. Although the order subscale of the APS-R was originally developed to measure adaptive aspects of perfectionism, studies (for a review, see Slaney, Rice, & Ashby, 2002) yielded that order did not meaningfully differentiated adaptive and maladaptive perfectionists but rather measures normal orderliness. Thus, possessing high standards—that is, setting high personal performance standards—and discrepancy—that is, perceiving a difference between one’s personal standards and his or her actual performance—have been considered as the two essential dimensions of perfectionism (Slaney et al., 2001).

In the literature, the developmental origins and traitlike characteristics of adaptive and maladaptive perfectionism have been examined in relation to parental attachment (e.g., Andersson & Perris, 2000; Mikulincer et al., 2001; Rice & Mirzadeh, 2000) and some personality characteristics such as the characteristics of fully functioning individuals (Ashby, Rahotep, & Martin, 2005). Although two higher-order constructs—adult attachment and Big Five personality traits—have also been the interest of the researchers in understanding the nature of adaptive and maladaptive perfectionism, the role of these two constructs in perfectionism has been examined separately constituting two independent lines of studies. However, considering the effect of attachment in the development of personality (Bowlby, 1969) and a bulk of research on the relation between adult attachment and Big Five personality traits (for a review, see Noftle & Shaver, 2005), the overall roles of adult attachment and Big Five personality traits in adaptive and maladaptive dimensions of perfectionism need further investigation, which constituted the focus of the present study.

**Adult Attachment and Perfectionism**

Attachment theory (Ainsworth & Bowlby, 1991; Bowlby, 1969), which was initially focused on understanding of the infant–mother attachment, has been extended to the study of adolescent and adult functioning in their current relationships (Hazan & Shaver, 1987). Although there are several categorizations of adult attachment styles (Bartholomew & Horowitz, 1991; George, Kaplan, & Main, 1987; Hazan & Shaver), a two-dimensional model of attachment styles of
anxiety (model of self) and avoidance (model of other) proposed by Bartholomew and Horowitz has received increased attention in the literature. Various studies examining the factor structures of several attachment instruments provided support for these dimensions (e.g., Griffin & Bartholomew, 1994b; Kurdek, 2002). For example, Brennan, Clark, and Shaver (1998) factor analyzed 60 attachment subscales and found two factors of anxiety and avoidance. *Avoidance* is defined as the extent to which individuals desire limited intimacy and prefer to remain psychologically and emotionally independent, and *anxiety* is defined as the extent to which individuals worry that others may not be available or could abandon them.

In the literature, the research has mostly concentrated on the role of anxiety and avoidance dimensions of attachment in maladaptive perfectionism. The results of these studies provided strong evidence that anxious and avoidant attachment styles are positively related with maladaptive perfectionism (Andersson & Perris, 2000; Rice, Lopez, & Vergara, 2005; Rice & Mirzadeh, 2000; Wei, Mallinckrodt, Russell, & Abraham, 2004). However, in the present study, the role of anxiety and avoidance dimensions of attachment were investigated both in adaptive and maladaptive perfectionism.

**Big Five Personality Traits and Perfectionism**

The Big Five model of personality provides a widely recognized taxonomy of personality dimensions, and it was accepted as a higher order factor that help to characterize and better understand other personality constructs (John & Srivastava, 1999). *Extraversion* includes traits such as sociability, activity, assertiveness, and positive emotionality. *Agreeableness* refers to traits such as altruism, tender-mindedness, trust, and modesty. *Conscientiousness* describes task- and goal-directed behavior such as organizing and prioritizing tasks. *Neuroticism* refers to negative emotionality such as feeling anxious, nervous, sad, and tense. Last, *openness to experience* includes traits such as creativeness, originality, and imaginativeness.

Although the research investigating the relation between perfectionism and Big Five personality traits has been carried out by using different perfectionism scales, the results generally showed that maladaptive perfectionism was positively related to neuroticism (Dunkley, Blankstein, Zuroff, Lecce, & Hui, 2006; Hewitt, Flett, & Blankstein, 1991; Hill, McIntire, & Bacharach, 1997; Parker & Stumpf, 1995; Stumpf & Parker, 2000) and negatively related to extraversion and agreeableness (Dunkley et al., 2006). Adaptive perfectionism was found to be positively related to conscientiousness (Dunkley et al., 2006; Hill, McIntire, & Bacharach, 1997; Parker & Stumpf; Stumpf & Parker). In Dunkley et al.’s (2006) study, adaptive perfectionism was also found to be positively related to openness to experience and negatively associated with neuroticism.
These results provide some consistent findings regarding the positive associations between adaptive perfectionism and conscientiousness as well as between maladaptive perfectionism and neuroticism. However, considering the few evidence (Dunkley et al., 2006) regarding the relations between adaptive and maladaptive perfectionism with other personality traits need further explorations particularly studies conducted in different cultures.

The Present Study

The basic aim of the present study is to investigate the role of anxiety and avoidance dimensions of adult attachment and Big Five personality traits in adaptive and maladaptive dimensions of perfectionism. As we mentioned earlier, previous research has separately assessed the role of various measures of attachment and personality in perfectionism. In this research, we examined two broad constructs—adult attachment, with its two well-validated anxiety and avoidance dimensions, and the Big Five personality traits, which offer empirically validated models of personality—in relation to adaptive and maladaptive perfectionism.

On the basis of the theoretical definitions of the constructs and empirical research, we hypothesized that adaptive perfectionism as measured by high standards would be positively associated with conscientiousness, extraversion, agreeableness, and openness, and we hypothesized that it would be negatively associated with attachment anxiety, avoidance, and neuroticism. Alternatively, we hypothesized that maladaptive perfectionism as measured by discrepancy would be positively related with neuroticism, attachment anxiety, and avoidance, and we hypothesized that it would be negatively associated with conscientiousness, extraversion, agreeableness, and openness.

Method

Participants and Procedure
We used a convenient sampling procedure in the present study. Participants were 604 (227 female and 377 male) first-year undergraduate students of one of the leading campus universities located in Ankara, Turkey. As an English-language university, all of the students in this study were attending the preparatory school where they are taught English to be able to follow lectures and participate in discussions in their prospective departments. The students represented five departments at the university: 5.3% were in architecture, 17.4% were in arts and sciences, 14.6% were in economic and administrative sciences, 11.8% were in educational sciences, and 50.3% were in engineering (the remaining 4 students left this information blank). Age of the students ranged from 17 to 20 years, with the mean of 18.20 years ($SD = 0.79$ years). After obtaining the necessary permissions from the head of the preparatory school, students who volunteered to participate in
the research were administrated the questionnaires in their classrooms in regular class hours. Anonymity was guaranteed.

**Instruments**

The APS-R is a self-report instrument originally developed by Johnson and Slaney (1996) and later revised by Slaney et al. (2001) to measure adaptive and maladaptive dimensions of the perfectionism construct. The APS-R consists of 23 items with a 7-point Likert-type rating scale ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 7 (*strongly agree*). The APS-R contains three subscales: high standards (7 items measuring personal standards for performance, such as “I have high expectations for myself”), discrepancy (12 items measuring distress caused by the perceived discrepancy between performance and personal standards, such as “I often feel frustrated because I cannot meet my goals”), and order (4 items measuring desire for organization and need for orderliness, such as “I am an orderly person”). Exploratory and confirmatory factor analyses have supported the factor structure and independence of subscales (Slaney et al., 2001). The results of confirmatory factor analysis yielded a goodness-of-fit index (GFI) of .92. In two separate studies using undergraduate samples, factor loadings of the items ranged from .49 to .86. Cronbach alphas were .92 for discrepancy, .85 for high standards, and .86 for order (Slaney et al., 2001). Many other studies provided additional support for the factor structure and concurrent and discriminant validity of the APS-R (Ashby, Kottman, & Schoen, 1998; LoCicero & Ashby, 2000; Rice, Ashby, & Slaney, 1998; Suddarth & Slaney, 2001).

The Turkish version of the APS-R (Ulu, 2007) is a 21-item scale with three subscales: high standards, discrepancy, and order. The results of confirmatory factor analysis yielded a GFI of .90. Factor loadings of the items ranged from .41 to .89. Cronbach alphas for the subscales were .78 for the high standards subscale, .85 for the discrepancy subscale, and .86 for the order subscale. Test–retest correlation coefficients for 2 weeks interval were as follows: .67 for high standards, .73 for discrepancy, and .86 for order in a subset of the sample (n = 40).

The Relationship Scales Questionnaire (RSQ) was developed by Griffin and Bartholomew (1994a). The RSQ is a 30-item self-report questionnaire that asks participants to rate the extent to which each statement describes their characteristic styles in close relationships on a 7-point Likert-type scale ranging from 1 (*not at all like me*) to 7 (*very much like me*). Two types of scoring systems are recommended by Griffin and Bartholomew. In categorical systems, items are summed to create each of the four-category attachment styles (i.e., secure, fearful, preoccupied, and dismissing). In creating two subscales, which corresponds to the dimensions of avoidance and anxiety, the recommended computations are as follows: avoidance = (fearful + dismissive) − (preoccupied + secure); anxiety = (preoccupied + fearful) − (secured + dismissing). The results of confirmatory factor analysis reported by Kurdek (2002) supported the existence of anxiety and
avoidance dimensions, which yield continuous scores instead of categorical assessments, and they reported Cronbach’s alpha as .77 for the avoidance score and .83 for the anxiety score.

The RSQ was translated into Turkish by Sümer and Güngör (1999). Reliability and validity studies of the Turkish RSQ have been carried out on the basis of the four subscale scores, which yielded satisfactory level of reliability, stability, and convergent validity for a Turkish university student sample (Sümer & Güngör, 1999). In the present study, anxiety and avoidance scores were used, considering the review of the recent literature that proposes the use of underlying dimensions of anxiety and avoidance for the measurement of adult attachment (Griffin & Bartholomew, 1994b; Kurdek, 2002). For the present sample, Cronbach’s alpha coefficients for avoidance and anxiety were found to be .64 and .77, respectively.

The Big Five Inventory (BFI) was developed by John, Donahue, and Kentle (1991) to assess the five personality dimensions of neuroticism, extraversion, openness, agreeableness, and conscientiousness. It consists of 44 items with a 5-point Likert-type scales ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). All items include short phrases that are based on prototypical trait adjectives related to each Big Five dimension. John and Srivastava (1999) reported alpha reliabilities ranging between .75 and .90 for subscales, and 3-month test–retest reliabilities ranged between .80 and .90. Validity coefficients with the NEO-Five Factor Inventory were .91 for extraversion, agreeableness, and conscientiousness, .88 for neuroticism, and .83 for openness.

The BFI was translated into Turkish by Sümer (as cited in Sümer, Lajunen, & Özkan, 2005) and Alkan (2006). In the present study, we used Alkan’s translation. Alkan reported Cronbach’s alpha reliabilities for extraversion, agreeableness, conscientiousness, neuroticism, and openness to experiences as .89, .67, .79, .79, .79, respectively. In the present study, Cronbach’s alpha reliabilities were .77 for extraversion, .64 for agreeableness, .79 for conscientiousness, .80 for neuroticism, and .81 for openness to experiences.

Results

Descriptive Statistics

Table 1 presents the means and standard deviations of the variables used in the present study.

To determine whether it is necessary to control for possible effects of gender on the variables of interest (i.e., the high standards, discrepancy and order scores), we conducted a one-way multivariate analysis of variance. The results indicated that there was no gender difference, Wilks’s $\lambda = .99$, $p = .14$.

To examine the relation between variables used in the study, we computed Pearson correlation coefficients. Table 2 presents the intercorrelations of the variables for the total sample. As seen in Table 2, high standards score were significant
TABLE 1. Means and Standard Deviations for the Variables of the Study by Gender

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Male $(n = 377)$</th>
<th>Female $(n = 227)$</th>
<th>Total $(N = 604)$</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>High standards</td>
<td>31.45</td>
<td>32.63</td>
<td>31.89</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Discrepancy</td>
<td>39.90</td>
<td>39.74</td>
<td>39.84</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anxiety</td>
<td>15.92</td>
<td>13.93</td>
<td>15.17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Avoidance</td>
<td>28.34</td>
<td>29.34</td>
<td>28.72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extraversion</td>
<td>3.23</td>
<td>3.43</td>
<td>3.31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agreeableness</td>
<td>3.56</td>
<td>3.67</td>
<td>3.60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conscientiousness</td>
<td>3.27</td>
<td>3.38</td>
<td>3.31</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Openness</td>
<td>3.65</td>
<td>3.88</td>
<td>2.97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neuroticism</td>
<td>2.84</td>
<td>3.18</td>
<td>3.74</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

and positively correlated with conscientiousness ($r = .41, p < .01$), openness ($r = .32, p < .01$), and extraversion ($r = .19, p < .01$). Discrepancy score was significantly and positively correlated with neuroticism ($r = .40, p < .01$), anxiety attachment ($r = .40, p < .01$), and avoidance attachment ($r = .25, p < .01$), and it was negatively correlated with extraversion ($r = -.16, p < .01$).

TABLE 2. Correlation Matrix of the Study Variables for the Total Sample

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>7</th>
<th>8</th>
<th>9</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. High standards</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Discrepancy</td>
<td>.20*</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Anxiety</td>
<td>.01</td>
<td>.40*</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Avoidance</td>
<td>-.02</td>
<td>.25*</td>
<td>.22*</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Extraversion</td>
<td>.19*</td>
<td>-.16*</td>
<td>-.17*</td>
<td>-.38*</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6. Agreeableness</td>
<td>.05</td>
<td>-.05</td>
<td>-.05</td>
<td>-.31*</td>
<td>.10</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7. Conscientiousness</td>
<td>.41*</td>
<td>-.03</td>
<td>-.01</td>
<td>.09</td>
<td>.02</td>
<td>.24*</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8. Neuroticism</td>
<td>.02</td>
<td>.40*</td>
<td>.41*</td>
<td>.22*</td>
<td>-.18*</td>
<td>-.12*</td>
<td>-.09</td>
<td>—</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9. Openness</td>
<td>.32*</td>
<td>-.09</td>
<td>-.09</td>
<td>-.11*</td>
<td>.37*</td>
<td>.05</td>
<td>.17*</td>
<td>-.04</td>
<td>—</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*p < .01
### Multiple Regression Analysis

We conducted two separate standard multiple regression analysis to examine how well anxiety and avoidance attachment dimensions and Big Five personality traits of neuroticism, extraversion, openness, agreeableness, and conscientiousness predicted the high standards (adaptive perfectionism) and discrepancy (maladaptive perfectionism) scores. Table 3 presents the results of the standardized regression coefficient (beta), $t$, $R^2$, and adjusted $R^2$ for the high standards and discrepancy subscales of the APS-R.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>High standards</th>
<th>Discrepancy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>$\beta$</td>
<td>$t$</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anxiety</td>
<td>.06</td>
<td>1.61</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Avoidance</td>
<td>-.03</td>
<td>-.70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Extraversion</td>
<td>.12</td>
<td>3.18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Agreeableness</td>
<td>-.07</td>
<td>-1.72</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conscientiousness</td>
<td>.39</td>
<td>10.39</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Openness</td>
<td>.22</td>
<td>5.73</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neuroticism</td>
<td>.06</td>
<td>1.61</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. For high standard, multiple $R = .50$, $R^2 = .25$, adjusted $R^2 = .24$; for discrepancy, multiple $R = .49$, $R^2 = .24$, adjusted $R^2 = .23$.

### Discussion

The results of the first regression analysis yielded that adaptive perfectionism measured by high standards scores of the APS-R significantly predicted by the high standards subscale of the APS-R was the dependent variable. As can be seen from Table 3, after all variables were entered into the equation, multiple $R = .50$, $F(7, 596) = 28.92, p < .001$. By analyzing beta values, we saw that in the overall model, conscientiousness, openness, and extraversion significantly and positively predicted high standards scores: $\beta = .39, p < .001$; $\beta = .22, p < .001$; and $\beta = .12, p < .01$ respectively.

In the second regression analysis, maladaptive perfectionism as measured by the discrepancy subscale was the dependent variable. As can be seen from Table 3, after all variables were entered into the equation, multiple $R = .49$, $F(7, 596) = 27.51, p < .001$. In the overall model, neuroticism, anxiety, and avoidance were significantly and positively predicted discrepancy scores: $\beta = .26, p < .001$; $\beta = .25, p < .001$; and $\beta = .15, p < .01$, respectively.
conscientiousness, openness, and extraversion subscales. Findings of the second regression analysis indicated that maladaptive perfectionism as measured by the discrepancy subscale was predicted by the neuroticism, anxiety, and avoidance dimensions of attachment.

As the predictors of adaptive perfectionism, conscientiousness made the strongest contribution to the equation, followed by openness and extraversion. In the literature, the positive association between conscientiousness and adaptive perfectionism has been one of the consistent findings of several studies (e.g., Campbell & Di Paula, 2002; Hill et al., 1997; Stumpf & Parker, 2000). However, the evidence regarding the relations of adaptive perfectionism with openness and extraversion is scarce. Consistent with the findings of the present research, in one study (Page, Bruch, & Haase, 2008) positive correlation was reported between adaptive perfectionism and openness. In another study (Hill, Zrull, & Turlington, 1997), extraversion was found to be related with adaptive perfectionism. These results also support the conceptualizations of the constructs indicating that individuals with high standards try to achieve high levels of performance and they seem to have characteristics of being achievement-oriented and competent (conscientiousness), original and imaginative (openness), and assertive and experiencing positive emotionality (extraversion). The lack of association between adaptive perfectionism and agreeableness found in the present study might be related with low reliability coefficient of agreeableness scale found both in the present study and previous Turkish samples, which requires further examination.

On the basis of these findings, it can be concluded that the results of the first regression analysis support the theory and research indicating the associations between positive personality traits and adaptive perfectionism. However, contrary to the expectation, in the present study, adaptive perfectionism was not predicted by any of the attachment dimensions. In the literature, some studies indicated a relation between secure attachment to parents and adaptive perfectionism (Rice et al., 2005; Rice & Mirzadeh, 2000), and insecure attachment and maladaptive perfectionism (Andersson & Perris, 2000; Brennan & Shaver, 1995; Rice & Mirzadeh, 2000; Wei et al., 2004). Nevertheless, there is a lack of empirical evidence concerning the relation between adult attachment (attachment anxiety and avoidance) dimensions and adaptive perfectionism. In the sample of the present study, we found zero correlations between adult attachment dimensions and adaptive perfectionism. On the basis of these findings, it might cautiously be concluded that adult attachment dimensions had no effect on adaptive perfectionism. In other words, not the attachment dimensions but rather the personality traits seemed to be associated with adaptive perfectionism.

Findings of the second regression analysis indicated that maladaptive perfectionism as measured by the discrepancy subscale was predicted by neuroticism, anxious, and avoidant attachment. Neuroticism as the predictor of the discrepancy subscale includes easily experiencing negative emotions such as anxiety, hostility, depression, impulsiveness, and vulnerability. Findings of various studies provided
strong supports for the present study demonstrating that maladaptive perfectionism, although measured by using different scales, was associated with neuroticism (Campbell & Di Paula, 2002; Hill, McIntire, et al., 1997; Rice et al., 2007; Stumpf & Parker, 2000).

Attachment anxiety and avoidance as the predictors of the discrepancy subscale were also supported by previous studies providing strong evidence that anxious and avoidant attachment styles are positively related with maladaptive perfectionism (Andersson & Perris, 2000; Rice et al., 2005; Rice & Mirzadeh, 2000; Wei, Heppner, Russell, & Young, 2006; Wei et al., 2004). All of these studies, including the present research, suggested that, individuals who reported having maladaptive perfectionism have negative working model of self and others as indicated by their avoidant and anxiety attachment style, respectively. In other words, maladaptive perfectionists, when faced with challenges, experience negative emotions such as lack of confidence, fear of failure, abandonment or disapproval because of their expectancy that once they are discovered they will be ignored by others. This is the characteristic of maladaptive perfectionism stated by many theorists (Burns, 1980; Flett & Hewitt, 2002; Frost et al., 1995).

In sum, adaptive perfectionism was found to be predicted by three Big Five traits of conscientiousness, openness, and extraversion, which are characterized by task orientation, achievement motivation, competence, extraversion, positive emotionality, creativity, and productiveness. Alternatively, maladaptive perfectionism was predicted by neuroticism and attachment anxiety and avoidance, which referred to feelings of depression and anxiety accompanied by high self-criticism, negative self-view, and emotional withdrawal from relationships. Thus, it can be concluded that adaptive perfectionism seems to be self-related in nature, whereas maladaptive perfectionism might be a more interpersonal concept than adaptive perfectionism. That is, maladaptive perfectionism seems to include significant others’ performance expectations and concern about criticism from these people. Therefore, development of maladaptive perfectionism seems to be related with the belief that “If I am perfect, others will like me.”

The present study had some limitations. It was restricted to the students of one university, which limits the generalizability of the results. All of the measures used in the present study were self-report measures. Therefore, other types of data collection and analysis such as qualitative research may provide more clear and detailed information about the meaning and dimensions of perfectionism.

The present study may have several implications for counseling practice. In counseling process, the knowledge about adaptive and maladaptive qualities of perfectionism would help to counselors to develop more comprehensive preventive strategies. For example, interventions for maladaptive perfectionism may focus on relational dynamics by investigating attachment patterns. As Greenspon (2000) stated, overcoming maladaptive perfectionism requires developing a new set of beliefs about oneself and developing new relationships with more affirming others. Therefore, counseling relationships may provide a secure base that helps
maladaptive perfectionists to develop interpersonal competencies, more trusting pattern of relationships, and more positive views of the self. The findings of the present study also demonstrated that adaptive and maladaptive perfectionism differs from each other in terms of underlying personality traits. Therefore, assessment of personality traits of perfectionists is important to determine the adaptive and maladaptive nature of clients’ perfectionism.

In future research, it will be important to establish a link between perfectionism and some academic and social outcomes because academic achievement and interpersonal relationships are two major concerns of university students. It will also be important to test adaptive and maladaptive dimensions of perfectionism in clinical and community samples, each of which will provide further evidence regarding the characteristics of perfectionists.

**AUTHOR NOTES**

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