

PERFECTIONISM, BODY SATISFACTION, AND SOCIAL ANXIETY AMONG MALAYSIAN YOUTH IN THE UNIVERSITIES

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Social anxiety is a serious mental-health problem among younger youths and has a great impact on their current and future functioning (Zainal, Yaacob, Kaur & Pendek, 2010). The prevalence rate of social anxiety among Malaysian youths particularly students is approximately 22.5% (Zainal et al., 2010) which can be considered high and must be intervened. Whereas, Shamsuddin, Wan Ismail, Shah, Muhammad, Fadzil, and Omar (2013) in their cross-sectional study conducted on 506 students between the ages of 18 and 24 years from four public universities in the Klang Valley, Malaysia found that 34% had moderate, and 29% had severe or extremely severe anxiety; and anxiety scores were significantly higher among older students (20 and above) and those born in rural areas. Within the population, social anxiety is common among overweight and obese individuals than others. Abdollahi and Talib (2015) studied social anxiety on 207 overweight and obese students from 16 faculties in UPM and found that in terms of individual differences, social anxiety is common among overweight and obese individuals than others.

Perfectionism is described as a negative trait that is characterized by high standards of performance and achievement, which leads to fear of failure, shame, and emotional distress (Burns, 1980; Hamachek, 1978). In addition, general perfectionists tend to evaluate others with high standards of performance and achievement (Stoeber & Rennert, 2008). However, those who have high standards of performance and achievement, do not experience distress. Rather, those who fail to achieve their high standards of performance and achievement are more likely to experience anxiety and depression. Accordingly, maladaptive perfectionists experience negative affect due to discrepancy between desired high standards and their obtained results. On contrary, adaptive perfectionists have high standards of performance and achievement; and yet they do not experience anxiety and depression related to any perceived discrepancy (Mathew, Dunning, Coats, & Whelan (2014).

For some youths, participating in social activities may be a stressful experience. There exist cognitive factors that increase presentiment about showing their bodies in front of others. This factor relates to social anxiety arising from peer evaluation of their body in a negative manner by others. Several studies revealed that individuals low in body satisfaction were more likely to experience social anxiety (Abdollahi & Talib, 2015; Klaczynski, Daniel, Keller (2009). As such, body satisfaction was defined as how individuals feel about their body image and is closely linked to self-esteem. Thus, how individuals feel about their body is more important than the actual weight and body image.

Gill and Mohammad (2010) surveyed 167 final year medical students at University of Malaya and found that 56% of them have significant social anxiety syndrome. They used Social Phobia Inventory to collect the information. They concluded that untreated social anxiety will lead to other complication such as depression and suggested that medical students are routinely screened for social anxiety in views of its prevalence. In addition, Al-Naggar, Bobryshev, & Alabsi (2013) in their study on perfectionism and

social anxiety among 250 university students of Management and Science University of Malaysia, found that 42.8% of the respondents suffer from severe anxiety and 70.8% reported to have high perfectionism attitude. This study also concludes that high social anxiety among university students was due to their high perfectionism trait.

Research by Rathakrishnan and Chuen (2008) on 293 male students from University Malaysia Sabah showed that 149 participants (50.9%) were considered having higher body dissatisfaction and 32.8% has low body self-esteem. This indicates that body satisfaction influence anxiety at social context as several international studies documented that individuals low in body satisfaction were more likely to experience social anxiety (Klaczynski et al., 2009; Nishina et al., 2006).

The nature of the relationship between perfectionism, body satisfaction and social anxiety remains a topic of debate. Despite the fact that most studies have been conducted in western countries which is generally known as an individualistic culture, this study is the first study examining the relationship between perfectionism and social anxiety in a collectivist culture like Malaysia. In addition, no study exists about the relationship between perfectionism, body satisfaction and social anxiety among Malaysian university students, which may be vital for the improvement of public health. Therefore, the first aim of the present study is to expand the body of literature on the relation between perfectionism and social anxiety among Malaysian university students. Knowledge pertaining to signs and symptoms of social anxiety during adolescence or amongst younger youth can highlight possible areas for prevention and intervention. Thus, this study was conducted to understand the contribution and prevalence of social anxiety and the several significant variables associated with social anxiety among Malaysian youth especially the university student population. The secondary aim of the present study was to examine the mediating role of body satisfaction on the relationship between perfectionism and social anxiety, and moderating role of weight/body mass index on the these relationships among Malaysian youths in the university setting.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Social anxiety is a common, distressing and persistent mental illness. Recent studies have identified a number of psychological factors that could affect it (Ale & Morris, 2011; Bogels et al., 2010; Boelen & Reijntjes, 2009). People with social anxiety have an excessive fear of being humiliated or judged negatively in social situations. In event leading to a feared situations, persons with social anxiety tend to be self-critical. Physical symptoms of anxiety, such as palpitations, sweating, and trembling are often experienced. Consequently, the fear of humiliation may arise out of perception of people noticing these symptoms. The extent of feared situations can range from one or two different social settings, such as public speaking, or to most social situations.

Individuals with higher social anxiety appear to be vulnerable to poorer outcomes. Hebert et al., (2013) conducted a study among 314 adolescents within age 14-19 years old to identify the importance of examining the multiple downstream effect of social anxiety on perceived social functioning in adolescence. Research found that social anxiety would influence relationships through its influences on functioning in same and other-sex friendships. Result indicated that social anxiety develops through age and perfectionism is one of the contributing factors that have strong relation to social anxiety.

Perfectionism is described as a negative trait that is characterized by high standards of performance and achievement, which leads to fear of failure, shame, and emotional distress (Burns, 1980; Stoeber et al., 2007). Perfectionists evaluate others with high standards of performance and achievement (Stoeber & Rennert, 2008). Thus, an individual who has high standards of performance and achievement does not experience distress whereas those who fail to achieve their high standards of performance and achievement are more likely to experience anxiety and depression.

Accordingly, perfectionist can be categorized into two. The maladaptive perfectionists experience negative affect due to discrepancy between desired high standards and obtained results. Adaptive perfectionists have high standards of performance and achievement; notwithstanding, they do not experience anxiety and depression related to any perceived discrepancy (Mathew et al., 2014).

Body satisfaction is defined as how individuals feel about their body image and is closely linked to self-esteem. Thus, how individuals feel about their body is more important than the actual weight and body image. Several studies revealed that individuals low in body satisfaction were more likely to experience social anxiety (Abdollahi & Talib, 2015; Klaczynski et al., 2009; Nishina et al., 2006).

Al-Naggar et al., (2013) had determined the relationship between perfectionism and social anxiety among university students in Malaysia. The study involved 250 male and female students with a range aged 18-21 years old. Survey technique was used to obtain the information. Results indicated that social anxiety significantly associated with perfectionism among university students, whereby 42.8% suffer from severe anxiety and 70.8% reported high perfectionism score. This study also concluded that high social anxiety among university students was due to their high perfectionism.

Social anxiety is also found to be related to other factors. For instance, Levinson et al., (2013) aim to develop a model to understand the risk factors for social anxiety and eating disorder. The variables selected in this study were social appearance anxiety, perfectionism, and fear of negative evaluation. A total of 236 undergraduates in Study One were recruited from an introductory psychology class and completed all measures. Study One results suggest that social appearance anxiety was the only shared risk factor for social anxiety and eating disorder symptoms. Study also found that fear of negative evaluation and high standard were uniquely associated with only social anxiety, where maladaptive perfectionism was uniquely associated only with eating disorder symptoms. While in Study Two, 156 undergraduate women from large university were selected as a participant. Result showed that the model describing social appearance anxiety, fear of negative evaluation, and perfectionism exhibited excellent fit, and that social anxiety and eating disorder symptoms had no remaining correlation when all risk factors were included.

As for perfectionism, Zhou et al., (2013) examined the role of perceived social support in the relationship between perfectionism and depression/anxiety. Partial correlation and hierarchical regression were conducted using a cross-sectional data from 426 college students. Results showed that anxiety were significantly correlated with perceived social support and perfectionism. Perceived social support significantly moderated the influence of perfectionism upon anxiety. These findings indicate that perceived social support has a protective effect in preventing perfectionists from experiencing depression and anxiety. Based on this study, perfectionism does act as one of the main contributors on anxiety in general, which can lead to serious sub-issues of anxiety as social anxiety.

Shim and Fletcher (2012) studied the extent to which youth perfectionism dimension were associated with social goals. Three hundred and sixty seven college students in a university in the Midwestern region of the United States participated in this study. The mean age of participants was 21.56 years old and 78.5% were female. They were freshman (32%), junior (13%), sophomore (30%), and senior (25%) students enrolled in various Educational Psychology courses. This study reported that perfectionism dimension is positively related to social demonstration-avoid goals, which has been consistently linked to negative social outcomes as in social anxiety.

Nepon et al., (2011) examined the association among trait perfectionism, perfectionistic self-presentation, negative social feedback, interpersonal rumination, depressive symptoms, and social anxiety. The sample consisted of 155 male and female undergraduate university students with the mean age 20.7 years. Results indicated that perfectionism dimension were correlated significantly with social anxiety and depressive symptoms, whereby the need to avoid appearing imperfect and the need to

avoid disclosing imperfections were the perfectionism dimension most highly correlated with social anxiety. Results also showed that perfectionism dimension uniquely predicted social anxiety. This study concludes that people having high socially prescribed perfectionism and perfectionist self-presentation are especially vulnerable to experiencing depressive symptoms and social anxiety.

Shumaker and Rodebaugh (2009) studied 383 undergraduates using scale-revised (APSR) to measure sample perfectionism. This study concluded that some aspect of perfectionism such as high standard fail to relate specifically to social anxiety. However, overall result suggests that the absence of high standards, combined with perceived difficulty achieving standards do contribute to psychological dysfunctional in the form of social anxiety.

In social anxiety literature, there is a strong relationship between body dissatisfaction and social anxiety. Concern and dissatisfaction with body weight is well recognized in adolescence and young youth, in particular for adolescent girls. It has been reported that many normal-weight adolescents consider themselves to be overweight, and it is believed that self-perception of body size may be more important in predicting behaviour than actual body size (Kuan et al., 2011). Body satisfaction has been defined in various ways particularly in terms of body cachexia, body image and weight satisfaction.

Research by Lee et al., (2014) was to examine the effect of witnessing peers' fat talk among young women. A total of 137 Korean women and 159 U.S women completed an online questionnaire after viewing a randomly assigned mock-up Facebook page where body size of the profile owner and the messages from her peers were manipulated. This comparison study showed that Korean women reported lower body satisfaction as compared to U.S women. This study also found that social anxiety as one of the predictors in body satisfaction among Korean women. Women who have lower body satisfaction also showed lower psychological well-being.

Similar to findings by Lee et al., (2014), research by Donald (2013) aimed to assess the relationship and differences between social anxiety, self-esteem, BMI and body shape concern. A total of 111 undergraduate male and female students in Dublin participated in this study. The age range was from nineteen years old to twenty five. Multiple regression analysis indicated that perfectionism and social anxiety significantly predict body shape concern.

Dakanalis et al., (2014) study examine five theoretically relevant variables (i.e., body checking, emotional dysregulation, perfectionism, insecure-anxious attachment, and self-esteem) as potential moderators of the relationship between body dissatisfaction and two critical components 30 of male eating disorder symptomatology: drive for muscularity and bulimic behaviors. Data collected from 551 Italian males between 18 and 28 years old were analyzed using latent Structural Equation Modeling. Results indicated that emotional dysregulation, body checking, insecure-anxious attachment and perfectionism intensified the relationship between body dissatisfaction and each criterion variable representing male eating disorder symptomatology. The results showed that males with higher body dissatisfaction showed lower self-esteem and experienced more physical appearance anxiety that lead to common social anxiety. This study confirmed that perfectionism is one of the significant factors that contributes to body dissatisfaction among youth.

Another study by McDonald (2013) aimed to examine the relationship between self-esteem, social anxiety, body shape concern and BMI among college students. A total of 111 Dublin undergraduates Business School, with the range age from 19 to 20 years old participated in this study. Results showed that there is a relationship between self-esteem, social anxiety and body shape concern. Results also reported that female students had higher level of body dissatisfaction as compared to male students. This study concludes that social anxieties have a significant relationship with body shape concern that can lead to body dissatisfaction, while self-esteem is a predictor of body shape concern. Low self-esteem is associated with higher body dissatisfaction and vulnerable to psychological illness as social anxiety and eating disorder.

In Malaysia, Rathakrishnan and Chuen (2010) investigate male student self-rating towards body dissatisfaction, drive for muscularity and self-esteem, as well as to investigate their relationship. This study focused on male student's body dissatisfaction. Two hundred and ninety three male undergraduate students of Universiti Malaysia Sabah participated in this study. Results showed a significant positive relationship between body dissatisfaction and drive for muscularity. Body dissatisfaction is positively correlated with higher self-esteem, which was assumed that body dissatisfaction alone was a poor predictor of self-esteem. This study concludes that male student with higher body dissatisfaction also showed higher score in self-esteem that related to higher level of social anxiety. In a conclusion this study was able to show that male student also suffer from body dissatisfaction and are vulnerable to social anxiety.

In contrast to Rathakrishnan and Chuen study, Martijn et al., (2010) study focused on increasing body satisfaction of body concern among women. Results showed that women with high body concern demonstrated an increase in body satisfaction and global self-esteem when pictorial representations of their own bodies were associated with positive stimuli that signalled social acceptance. In other word, women with low body concern demonstrated lower body satisfaction and higher social anxiety. In conclusion women were more concerned about their body shape tends to experienced social anxiety and depression.

METHODOLOGY

Design

A quantitative correlational research design was used as a basis for identifying predictive relationships by assessing the relationships among variables. In this study, the method assessed the correlation between perfectionism, body satisfaction and social anxiety among emerging adult in the universities in Malaysia. The study was cross-sectional where samples were collected from the population at a single point of time.

Population and Sampling

The target population of this study was 220,555 based on Ministry of Higher Education Malaysia, (MOHE, 2013) statistic comprised of young adults in the universities who are currently pursuing their Bachelor degree. Initially, based on the homogenous population, a total of 1, 692 male and female youths in the university in Malaysia, where the range age is between 18 – 25 years old were targeted as respondents. University students were chosen to represent the emerging adult populations for the study as they would provide the phenomenon and representation of the young adult. Respondents were selected from eight public and private University in Malaysia. Probability Multi-stage cluster sampling was used as a sampling technique in the current study. Multi-stage sampling represents sampling in which larger clusters are further subdivided into smaller, more targeted groupings for the purposes of surveying (McGinn, 2004). In this study, the sample population was first divided into four clusters based on four regions in Malaysia (Central, South, North, and Sabah / Sarawak). This study was conducted in four regions across Malaysia, namely North (Penang and Perak), Central (Selangor and Kuala Lumpur), Southern (Johor and Melaka) and Sabah/Sarawak (Sarawak). After that, two universities (public and private) were selected from each of the region. Next stage is selecting two faculties for each university comprising one social science and science faculty. Three classes from each faculty were randomly selected to represent Year 1, Year 2 and Year 3 and 4. This study was financed by the Institute for Youth Research Malaysia (IYRES) and written permission was sought from the respective Dean of faculties that were involved.

Instruments

The Liebowitz Social Anxiety Scale was created by Heimberg et al., (1999) contains 24 items that measure fear and avoidance of social interaction during the last week. The total of fear and avoidance scores is from 0 to 144, and each item is rated on two 4-point Likert scales – 0 (none), 1 (mild), 2 (moderate), and 3 (severe) – for fear/avoidance from 0 (none/never), 1 (mild/occasionally), 2 (moderate/often), and 3 (severe/usually). All items were summated to acquire the measure of Social Anxiety Fear and Social Anxiety Avoidance. The higher the score in The Liebowitz Social Anxiety Scale indicate high probable in while low score indicate low probable in Social Anxiety Fear and Avoidance. Studies have shown an acceptable internal consistency and convergent validity for the Liebowitz Social Anxiety Scale (Heimberg et al., 1999).

The Almost Perfect Scale-Revised (Slaney et al., 2001) was used to measure respondent's perception on perfectionism. This measure with 23-item on a seven-point Likert scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree) comprises of three subscales (High Standards, Order and Discrepancy). However for data analysis, only two subscales i.e. High Standard and Discrepancy were used in this current study as suggested by Diamantopoulou and Platsidou (2014) to measure the adaptive and maladaptive perfectionism. Items were summated based on the sub-scales to acquire the measure of adaptive and maladaptive perfectionism. Hence, the higher the score on High Standard sub-scales represents the higher level of adaptive perfectionism. While the higher the score on Discrepancy sub-scales represents the higher level of maladaptive perfectionism. Recent research by Diamantopoulou and Platsidou (2014) on measuring perfectionism reported that the sub-scales showed internal consistency value range from .85 to 92.

The Body Esteem Scale for Adolescents and Adults created by Mendelson et al., (2001) comprises of 21 items that measure body satisfaction. All items are in the format of a 5-point Likert scale from 0 (never) to 4 (always). Scores can be obtained using the summation of overall items or summation of items in each subscale (Appearance, Weight, and Attribution). The higher the score indicates good body-esteem and a low score indicate low body-esteem. The Body-Esteem Scale and sub-scale had good internal consistency and reliability (Norwood, Murray, Nolan, & Bowker, 2011).

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Table 1 shows the description for respondents' background information. Of the 1618 respondents, 54.7% were from the public universities and 45.3% were from the private universities. Most of them were from South Zone (31.0%), followed by Central Zone (26.3%), North Zone (22.9%), and Sabah/Sarawak (19.8%). In South Zone alone, 14.7% were from Universiti Tun Hussein Onn Malaysia and 16.3% were from Multimedia University. The details of the each zone was presented in the same table. About 38.3% (n= 620) were in the freshman year; 29.4% (n= 474) were in the sophomore year; 26.9% (n= 436) were in the junior year, and the remaining 5.3 were in the senior year.

Furthermore, a total of 34.8% of the respondents were males and 65.2% were females. The age range of the respondents was from 17 to 33 years (mean age = 20.69, SD= 1.54). The results suggest that majority of respondents (89.7%) were single and urban (64.2%). Nearly half of the respondents were Malay (42.6%) and Chinese (41.4%). In terms of religion, 48.0% of the respondents were Muslim, 31.1% Buddhism, Hinduism (4.4%), Christian (14.1%), and others (2.3%). In addition, respondents reported that their father's age (M = 53.80, SD = 6.50) were slightly higher than the mother's age (M = 50.09, SD = 5.57). In terms of parental monthly income, the obtained mean for father's monthly income (M = RM3575.69, SD = 4708.67) was also slightly higher than mother's monthly income (M = RM1314.12, SD = 2475.79).

Table 1: Background of Respondents

Variable	Mean	SD	Variable	Mean	SD
Age	20.69	1.54	Father's Monthly Income	3575.69	4708.67
CGPA	3.12	0.47	Mother's Monthly Income	1314.12	2475.79
Height	163.14	9.00	Father's Age	53.80	6.50
Weight	58.63	14.09	Mother's Age	50.09	5.57

Variable	Frequency	%	Variable	Frequency	%
University Name			University Year		
Universiti Putra Malaysia	243	15.0	First	620	38.3
UCSI Kuala Lumpur	182	11.2	Second	475	29.4
University of Science Malaysia	200	12.4	Third	436	26.9
UTAR Kampar	171	10.6	Fourth	84	5.2
Universiti Tun Hussein Onn Malaysia	238	14.7	Fifth	1	0.1
Multimedia University	263	16.3	Missing	2	0.1
Universiti Malaysia Sarawak	184	11.4			
UCSI Sarawak	137	8.5			

Ethnicity	Frequency	%	Religion	Frequency	%
Malay	690	42.6	Islam	776	48.0
Chinese	670	41.4	Buddhism	504	31.1
Indian	84	5.2	Hinduism	72	4.4
Indigenous	121	7.5	Christian	228	14.1
Other	51	3.2	Others	37	2.3
Missing	2	0.1	Missing	1	0.1

The first aim of this study was to describe the prevalence of social anxiety and level of perfectionism, body satisfaction, and body mass indices (BMI) of a sample of Malaysian youth in universities. As shown in Table 2, the average body mass index among respondents was 21.92 (SD = 4.31), which 21.9% (n= 355) were in the underweight; 57.8% (n= 935) were in the normal range; 4.1% (n= 67) were in the overweight, and 16.1% (n= 261) were in the obese. Of the total number of respondents, slightly more than half of the respondents were scored higher than the mid-point of perfectionism standard, indicating high level of perfectionism standard (M = 36.55, SD = 6.31). However, slightly more than half of the respondents scored lower than the mid-point of the remaining study variables, suggesting low levels of perfectionism discrepancy (M = 56.36, SD = 10.81), body satisfaction (M = 27.00, SD = 9.00), fear social anxiety (M = 28.36, SD = 12.70), and avoidance social anxiety (M = 26.00, SD = 12.36).

Table 2: Prevalence and Level of Study Variables

Variable	Mean/ Frequency	SD/ %
Body Mass Index	21.92	4.31
Underweight	355	21.9
Normal	935	57.8
Overweight	67	4.1
Obese	261	16.1
Perfectionism Standard	36.55	6.31
Low	789	48.8
High	829	51.2
Perfectionism Discrepancy	56.36	10.81
Low	824	50.9
High	794	49.1
Body Satisfaction	27.00	9.00
Low	851	52.6
High	767	47.4
Fear Social Anxiety	28.36	12.70
Low	819	50.6
High	799	49.4
Avoidance Social Anxiety	26.00	12.36
Low	823	50.9
High	795	49.1

The second objective of this study was to determine the relationships between perfectionism, body satisfaction, and social anxiety among Malaysian youth in universities. Table 3 presents the correlational relations among study variables. As hypothesized, body satisfaction was significantly and positively correlated with perfectionism standard ($r = .24$, Cohen's $d = .42$, $p < .001$) but negatively with perfectionism discrepancy ($r = -.15$, Cohen's $d = .46$, $p < .001$). Fear social anxiety was significantly and negatively correlated with perfectionism standard ($r = -.08$, Cohen's $d = .38$, $p < .001$) and body satisfaction ($r = -.24$, Cohen's $d = .57$, $p < .001$), but significantly and positively correlated with perfectionism discrepancy ($r = .14$, Cohen's $d = .76$, $p < .001$). In a similar vein, avoidance social anxiety was significantly and negatively correlated with perfectionism standard ($r = -.09$, Cohen's $d = .47$, $p < .001$) and body satisfaction ($r = -.20$, Cohen's $d = .63$, $p < .001$), but significantly and positively correlated with perfectionism discrepancy ($r = .11$, Cohen's $d = .79$, $p < .001$). Taken together, Cohen's d ranged from .38 to .79, suggesting that these effects are approximately small to medium (Cohen, 1998).

Table 3: Correlation between the Study Variables

Variables	1	2	3	4	5
1) Perfectionism standard	1				
2) Perfectionism discrepancy	.54*	1			
3) Body satisfaction	.24*	-.15*	1		
4) Fear Social Anxiety	-.08*	.14*	-.24*	1	
5) Avoidance Social Anxiety	-.09*	.11*	-.20*	.67*	1

* Significant at .001 levels of significance

The result suggests that respondents who had high levels of perfectionism standard were less likely to have fear social anxiety. This type of adaptive perfectionists has high standards of performance and achievement. Thus, they do not experience anxiety and depression in relation to participate in social activities or meeting new peoples in social gathering or group setting. Likewise, high levels of perfectionism standard protect Malaysian youth from avoiding social anxiety in their lives in general. The adaptive perfectionist could strive in group setting. In contrary, Malaysian youth who had high levels of perfectionism discrepancy were more likely to feel fear social anxiety. Generally, these dimensions of perfectionism were associated with specific fears about failure, afraid of being judged as losing control and making mistakes. As for the avoidance social anxiety, those who score higher in perfectionism discrepancy is more likely to experience avoidance social anxiety. This finding is in agreement with previous study who found that perfectionism discrepancy was significantly and positively correlated with avoidance social anxiety. This study confirms that perfectionism discrepancy may increase a sense of fear social anxiety and increase the avoidance social anxiety in individuals and likewise, high level of perfectionism standard will be less likely to exhibit fear social anxiety thus less experiencing the avoidance social anxiety (Marsiglia, Kulis, Perez, & Bermudez-Parsai, 2011). The cognitive-behavioural theories of social anxiety includes the notion that perfectionism serves to lead the socially anxious individuals to expect negative social interactions and this eventually resulted in social anxiety.

CONCLUSION

This study was set forth to determine the relationship of perfectionism, body satisfaction and social anxiety among Malaysian youths at local universities. A cognitive theory based on Cognitive Behavioral theory and a Self-discrepancy theory guided the present study where important variables were conceptualized.

A total of 1692 youth consisting of undergraduates from four public and four private universities in Malaysia were recruited as respondents. They were selected using a Multistage random sampling to represent youths currently studying in Year One, Two, Three/Four/Five in the Science and Social Science faculties. A self-administered questionnaire containing demographic information and instrument to tap on information pertaining to perfectionism, body satisfaction, body mass index and social anxiety was used as method of data collection. All instruments showed acceptable reliability. Data were analysed based on research objectives with an appropriate statistics.

The findings concluded that the average body mass index among respondents was 21.92 (SD = 4.31), which 21.9% were in the underweight; 57.8% were in the normal range; 4.1% were in the overweight, and 16.1% were in the obese. Notwithstanding of the total number of respondents, slightly more than half of the respondents were scored higher than the mid-point of perfectionism standard, indicating high level of perfectionism standard. However, slightly more than half of the respondents were scored lower than the mid-point of the remaining study variables, suggesting low levels of perfectionism discrepancy, low body esteem or body satisfaction, low fear social anxiety, and low avoidance social anxiety.

As hypothesized, body satisfaction was significantly and positively correlated with perfectionism standard but negatively with perfectionism discrepancy. Fear social anxiety was significantly and negatively correlated with perfectionism standard and body satisfaction but significantly and positively correlated with perfectionism discrepancy. In a similar vein, avoidance social anxiety was significantly and negatively correlated with perfectionism standard and body satisfaction, but significantly and positively correlated with perfectionism discrepancy.

Perfectionism attitude drives individuals towards accomplishments and provides them the motivation to persevere in order to face future discouragement and unexpected obstacles. The adaptive perfectionism is the positive component of personality trait. It connotes one's preferences for order and organization, a persistent striving for excellence, and conscientious orientation to tasks and performance. The adaptive perfectionism resulted in fear and thus will make fewer attempts to avoid social interaction. The maladaptive perfectionism is the negative aspect of personality trait and need to be improved in order to minimize social anxiety.

As for emerging adult, the developmental tasks of developing the interpersonal and intrapersonal skills are important element so as to nurture positive social skills while in the universities. This is significant as social anxiety develops through age and perfectionism is one of the contributing factors that have strong relation to social anxiety.

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