



PERFECTIONISM, COPING STYLES, AND ACADEMIC
ADJUSTMENT: THEIR RELATIONSHIPS AMONG UTAR KAMPAR
UNDERGRADUATES

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Perfectionism, Coping Styles, and Academic Adjustment: Their
relationships among UTAR Kampar Undergraduates

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APPROVAL FORM

This research paper attached hereto, entitled "Perfectionism, coping styles, and academic adjustment: Their relationships among UTAR Kampar undergraduates" prepared and submitted by "Ang See Sin, Phi Chean Ni and Tan Kok Wei" in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the Bachelor of Social Science (Hons) Psychology is hereby accepted.



Supervisor

Dr. Siah Poh Chua

Date: 29 March 2021

Abstract

Undergraduates tend to face difficulty in academic adjustment since they entered into a new environment. The present study aimed to examine the relationship between adaptive perfectionism, maladaptive perfectionism, positive coping, negative coping, and UTAR Kampar undergraduates' academic adjustment. The study also investigated the prediction of perfectionism and coping styles on academic adjustment. A total of 170 participants were recruited from UTAR Kampar by using the purposive sampling method. The study adopted a cross-sectional design. Online questionnaires were used to collect data by distributing the survey across social media platforms. Short Almost Perfect Scale (SAPS), Simplified Coping Style Questionnaire (SCSQ), and Academic Adjustment Scale (AAS) were employed to assess the variables of the study. IBM SPSS Statistic (SPSS) was used to analyze the data collected. The results indicated that there was a significantly positive relationship between adaptive perfectionism and positive coping. Maladaptive perfectionism was significantly and negatively correlated with negative coping. Besides, adaptive perfectionism and positive coping were significantly and positively correlated with academic adjustment. Maladaptive perfectionism and negative coping were found to have a significantly negative relationship with academic adjustment. The findings also revealed that adaptive perfectionism and positive coping were positive predictors of academic adjustment. In contrast, maladaptive perfectionism and negative coping were negative predictors of academic adjustment. Lastly, fewer previous studies are focusing on this topic among local students. Therefore, this study can help fill in the literature gap in Malaysia context and serve as a guideline for undergraduates to have a deeper understanding of factors that influence their academic adjustment.

Keywords: undergraduates, academic adjustment, perfectionism, coping styles

DECLARATION

We declare that the material contained in this paper is the end result of our own work and that due acknowledgement has been given in the bibliography and references to ALL sources regardless of them being electronic, printed or personal.

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Chapter I

Introduction

Background of Study

Everyone has encountered the transition at least once in their life, especially a challenging experience: the transition from school to the university. When enrolling into university, undergraduates face the differences in academic demands, learning processes, and autonomy on time and activity, which are highly distinct from their previous school experiences (Credé & Niehorster, 2011). They have to adjust themselves so they are able to adapt into a new environment.

Adjustment to the university is vital to prevent problems such as stress (Clinciu, 2012), anxiety (Morton et al., 2014), and low self-esteem (Aspelmeier et al., 2012) because undergraduates tend to face difficulties in adjusting themselves to a new role as a university student. Previously, Baker and Siryk (1984) suggested four domains: Academic achievement, Social skills, Personal and Emotional well-being, and Institution attachment, to define how well the student can cope with various demands they face in their university life. The first domain of the university's adjustment by Baker and Siryk (1984) is in line with academic adjustment proposed by Anderson et al. (2016). Undergraduates who adjust well in academics showed success in academic lifestyle, academic motivation, and academic achievement (Anderson et al., 2016). Hence, one's capacity in handling academic-related matters shows one's academic adjustment level.

Past studies found that perfectionism is correlated with academic adjustment (Lapointe & Soysa, 2014; Verner-Fillion & Vallerand, 2016). Perfectionism is multidimensional, and it is characterized by high self-performance expectations and critical self-evaluations (Frost et al.,

1990). People with adaptive perfectionism are organized to meet personal standards but are less concerned about their capability to meet those standards (Rice & Lapsley, 2001). Therefore, they are less anxious about making mistakes and tend to take action to solve their problems (Burns & Fedewa, 2005; Comerchero & Fortugno, 2013; Kaviani et al., 2014). It is supported by Verner-Fillion and Vallerand (2016), stating that because of the high expectation in academic performance, adaptive perfectionists would put a lot of time and effort into their study. In contrast, maladaptive perfectionists are less organized but are more concerned about mistakes (Rice & Lapsley, 2001). More specifically, they fear failure, so they tend to do nothing (Lee et al., 2020). Some researchers reported that maladaptive perfectionism could result in academic procrastination, reflecting postponement in completing their work (Bong et al., 2014; Closson & Boutilier, 2017). Therefore, people with adaptive or maladaptive perfectionism may lead to a different academic adjustment level due to their ways of handling their academics.

Besides, academic adjustment is correlated with coping styles (Bukhari & Ejaz, 2020; Iruloh & Ukaegbu, 2017). Coping is a dynamic, behavioral, and cognitive effort that people implement to encounter internal or external stress (Rafati et al., 2017). According to M. Ahmad et al. (2018), students use appropriate coping strategies when facing stressful academic events. A positive coping style is a positive re-interpretation that would increase a person's academic adjustment level (Rahat & Ilhan, 2016). A student with negative coping styles may escape from the problems (Nagle & Sharma, 2018), play games on PC or mobile phones to deny their academic task or rumination and withdraw (Erschens et al., 2018) cause low academic adjustment level.

Problem Statement

According to the Institute for Public Health (2015), the reported prevalence rate for mental health among Malaysian adults in 2015 was 29.2%, which increased more than 15% since 2006 with 11.2%. Besides, relevant cases reported among students in Malaysia were 1 in 5 individuals, especially university students (Institute for Public Health, 2015). It is said that adjustment in academic life, including good time-management for self-care and curriculum and enough socialization is important in preventing emotional distress and mental issues (Sani, 2018). In other words, there will be higher chances for those with weaker academic adjustment to develop mental and emotional problems.

It was reported that only around 38,000 out of 168,000 students graduated from diploma programs (Sangodiah & Balakrishnan, 2014). Out of 100,000 enrolments in degree courses, only 83,000 undergraduates completed their programs. This shows that around 17% of undergraduates drop out of universities or do not persist in their studies. Besides, 14% of attrition rate among undergraduates was found in just six months (Govindarajo & Kumar, as cited in Ang et al., 2019). These statistics have shown a need to explore academic adjustment as it dramatically impacts students' attrition rate (Baker, 2004). Moreover, Mustafa (2019) also supported that students without effective adjustment, like coping well in university life, might drop out of universities due to overwhelming stress. Similarly, Stinebrickner and Stinebrickner (2014) suggested that students with lower academic performance (one of the aspects of academic adjustment) are more prone to drop out as they think that continuing on study seems not worthy.

In Malaysia, however, most of the studies focused only on adjustment problems among international students without paying attention to local undergraduates (Malaklolunthu & Selan, 2011; Yusliza Mohd. Yusoff & Chelliah, 2010). Another study aimed to explore academic

adjustment among first-year university students in Malaysia (Wider et al., 2016). Hence, this shows a necessity to investigate academic adjustment among undergraduates in Malaysia, but not only focusing on international students or freshmen.

Academic adjustment reflects how well a student can cope with their learning demands. The definition itself suggested that coping is closely related to academic adjustment. In Malaysia, a study done by Abdullah et al. (2010) proved that greater coping effort among freshmen predicts better overall university adjustment, including academic adjustment and achievement. Undergraduates can better deal with stress when they have good coping strategies (Ganesan et al., 2018). In other words, they can adjust themselves well to face obstacles and have better academic achievement. However, most of the studies focused on the relationship between coping strategies and academic adjustment were done in the western context (Cousins et al., 2016; Iruloh & Ukaegbu, 2017). This shows a lack of studies focused on coping styles and academic adjustment among undergraduates in Malaysian culture.

A study done by Verner-Filion and Vallerand (2016) has contributed insight into the important role of perfectionism towards academic adjustment. Besides, perfection is always one of the debating topics as it is said to have both negative and positive effects on academic adjustment (Hill, 2017; Wong et al., 2018). Researchers tend to only focus on the relationship between perfectionism and academic adjustment through other mediating factors like achievement goals (Verner-Filion & Gaudreau, 2010), stress, and social support (Lee et al., 2020). There are not many studies in Malaysia focused on the impact of perfectionism in academic adjustment among undergraduates. Therefore, it is essential to conduct quantitative research to examine the relationships among perfectionism, coping styles, and academic adjustment among Malaysian undergraduates.

Research Objectives

This study aims to find out whether perfectionism (adaptive and maladaptive) and coping styles (positive and negative) significantly predicted academic adjustment among UTAR Kampar undergraduates. However, we need to investigate the relationship between these variables before proceeding to look into the effects of perfectionism and coping styles on academic adjustment. In this case, this study would like to examine whether there is any significant correlation between (1) perfectionism and coping styles, (2) perfectionism and academic adjustment, and (3) coping styles and academic adjustment.

Significance of Study

The study is expected to provide a clearer picture of Malaysian undergraduates' academic adjustment levels. Some cases reported that university students committed suicide due to their failure to adapt well into the intellectual life even they performed well in their secondary schools (New Straits Times, 2019; Sani, 2018). Students' academic adjustment ability has become a prevalent problem that profoundly impacts oneself. Investigating the factors that might influence undergraduates' academic adjustment can reduce this kind of insurmountable problem.

Previous studies revealed that academic adjustment was associated positively with students' academic performance (Aspelmeier et al., 2012; Bailey & Phillips, 2015; Rienties et al., 2011; Wintre et al., 2011). In other words, when students adapt well to their studies, they tend to achieve a higher GPA. Also, Van Rooij et al. (2017) explored that academic adjustment is essential, especially for students who underwent the transition from secondary school to the freshman year in the university. Therefore, these studies further claimed the necessity of studying academic adjustment.

Research Questions

1. Is there any significant correlation between perfectionism and coping styles among undergraduates in UTAR Kampar?
2. Is there any significant correlation between perfectionism and academic adjustment among undergraduates in UTAR Kampar?
3. Is there any significant correlation between coping styles and academic adjustment among undergraduates in UTAR Kampar?
4. Whether perfectionism and coping styles are significant predictors of academic adjustment among undergraduates in UTAR Kampar?

Hypotheses

- H1a: There is a significant positive relationship between adaptive perfectionism and positive coping style among UTAR Kampar undergraduates.
- H1b: There is a significant negative relationship between maladaptive perfectionism and positive coping style among UTAR Kampar undergraduates.
- H1c: There is a significant negative relationship between adaptive perfectionism and negative coping style among UTAR Kampar undergraduates.
- H1d: There is a significant positive relationship between maladaptive perfectionism and negative coping style among UTAR Kampar undergraduates.
- H2a: There is a significant positive relationship between adaptive perfectionism and academic adjustment among UTAR Kampar undergraduates.
- H2b: There is a significant negative relationship between maladaptive perfectionism and academic adjustment among UTAR Kampar undergraduates.

H3a: There is a significant positive relationship between positive coping style and academic adjustment among UTAR Kampar undergraduates.

H3b: There is a significant negative relationship between negative coping style and academic adjustment among UTAR Kampar undergraduates.

H4a: Adaptive perfectionism is a positive predictor of academic adjustment among UTAR Kampar undergraduates.

H4b: Maladaptive perfectionism is a negative predictor of academic adjustment among UTAR Kampar undergraduates.

H4c: Positive coping style is a positive predictor of academic adjustment among UTAR Kampar undergraduates.

H4d: Negative coping style is a negative predictor of academic adjustment among UTAR Kampar undergraduates.

Conceptual Definition

Perfectionism

Perfectionism refers to a personality associated with attempting to have no error with the belief that others and own high expectancy together with a critical assessment in oneself (Stoeber, 2016). Previous researches revealed that there are different aspects for perfectionism rather than just unidimensional (Frost et al., 1990; Hewitt & Flett, 1991). Stoeber and Otto (2006) and Frost et al. (1993) also have come out with two concepts which are perfectionistic strivings and perfectionistic concerns. Perfectionistic strivings comprise the characteristic of individual standards which are self-oriented. On the other hand, perfectionistic concerns are characterized by pessimistic views about errors and self-performance, such as doubting.

Coping Styles

According to the cognitive appraisal theory (Lazarus & Folkman 1984), coping style is known as particular steps taken by the person to deal with the stress after assessing the occurred events. The most well-known will be problem-focused coping (PFC) and also emotion-focused coping (EFC). PFC refers to straightly dealing with the problem while EFC is characterized more by managing their negative emotions (T'ng et al., 2018). Additionally, according to Tao et al. (2000), both of these copings are characterized under the scope of positive coping and negative coping respectively. Simultaneously, active coping is also used interchangeably with positive coping while passive coping with negative coping (Yu et al., 2020).

Academic Adjustment

Academic adjustment is defined as the degree of students adapting themselves to the education requirements including their drives to goals, efforts, and contentment towards the academic environment (Arjanggih & Kusumaningsih, 2016). Also, the adjustment in academics was characterized as one factor contributing to the entire university adjustment (Baker & Syirk, 1984). A previous study revealed that a higher degree of adjustment in academics contributes to more excellent performance in academics (Bailey & Phillips, 2015).

Operational Definition

Perfectionism

This personality trait was measured through 8 items in Short Almost Perfect Scale (Rice et al., 2014). There are two factors: standards that measure the great expectancy of the person's performance and discrepancy which measures critical assessment on oneself. A high score in standards contributes to adaptive perfectionism. In contrast, a high score in discrepancy indicates maladaptive perfectionism.

Coping Styles

Simplified Coping Styles Questionnaire (Xie, 1998) was used to examine whether people utilize more positive coping or negative coping. A high score in the first 12 items shows that the person will tend to actively manage the problems while a high score in the last eight items reflects the passive individual characteristics in dealing with a problem.

Academic Adjustment

Academic Adjustment Scale (Anderson et al., 2016) will measure adjustment in academics through three factors inclusive of academic lifestyle, academic motivation and academic achievement. A high score in the nine items' total score displays better adaptation in academics in university life.

Chapter II

Literature Review

Perfectionism and Coping Styles

Kermanshahi et al. (2016) had conducted research to investigate the correlation among hardiness, perfectionism, and coping strategies with stress. A total sample of 278 undergraduates was chosen among all students studying at Razi University, Kermanshah, in 2010 to 2011 by using the cluster sampling method. To measure the variables, Hill's Perfectionism Scale (2004), the Questionnaire of Psychological Hardiness (1998), and the Questionnaire to cope with stressful conditions (1990) were administered. Correlation coefficient and regression analysis were administered. The results revealed that perfectionism have significant positive relationships with emotion-oriented, avoidance-oriented, and problem-oriented strategy. Among the three coping styles, perfectionism was proven to have the greatest contribution to emotion-oriented strategy. The study suggested that perfectionists tend to be preoccupied with the difficulties faced and intense emotions like anxiety and stress. Thus, it leads to the application of emotion-oriented coping strategy.

Zhang and Zhao (2010) have explored the relationships between perfectionism, coping style, and undergraduates' interpersonal relations. There was a total of 350 participants included. The measurements used in the research were the Frost Multidimensional Perfectionism Scale (1990), the Coping Style Questionnaire (1996), and the University Student Interpersonal Relationship Comprehensive Diagnostic Scale (1999). Correlation and regression analysis were performed. The results concluded that adaptive perfectionism (orderliness) positively correlated with mature coping styles (problem-solving) and negatively correlated with mixture (rationalizing) and immature (avoidance) coping styles. In contrast, maladaptive perfectionism

(action procrastination and concerning mistakes) is negatively and positively correlated with mature coping and immature coping respectively. Maladaptive perfectionists tend to engage in immature coping style to prevent blunder as they do not believe in their ability. On the other hand, undergraduates who emphasize orderliness will solve their problems in adaptive ways.

In China, Zhang and Cai (2012) conducted a study that focused on determining the mediating effects of self-esteem, positive and negative coping on the predictive relationships between perfectionism and depression. A sample of 412 introductory psychology undergraduates from Central South University, China, was invited to answer the questionnaires.

Multidimensional Perfectionism Scale (1991), Multidimensional Perfectionism Scale (1990), Almost Perfect Scale-Revised (2001), Rosenberg Self-Esteem Scale (1965), Simplified Coping Style Questionnaire (1998), and The Best Depression Inventory (1961) were administered. A structural equation model was adopted. Negative coping and positive coping were found to have an indirect effect on the relationship of maladaptive perfectionism and depression. In other words, maladaptive perfectionists tend to engage in frequent usage of negative coping methods like escaping and rejecting obstacles and engaging in lesser usage of positive coping like searching for help and changing disruptive thinking, resulting in a higher level of depression.

Larijani and Besharat (2010) had conducted a study to investigate the relation between perfectionism and coping styles under stress. A total sample of 378 students of Tehran University has been chosen to participate in the research. The Positive and Negative Perfectionism Scale (2007) (Farsi version) was used to evaluate the perfectionism variable, while the coping styles variable was measured by using the Tehran Coping Styles Scale (2006). Multiple linear regression was used to run the data analysis. Positive perfectionism positively correlated with problem-focused and positive emotion-focused coping styles but negative

correlates with negative emotion-focused coping style. In contrast, negative perfectionism has a positive relationship with negative emotion-focused coping style and has negative relations with problem-focused and positive emotion-focused coping styles.

Most of the authors proposed that adaptive perfectionism has significant positive relationships with problem-focused and positive emotion-focused coping strategies. In contrast, maladaptive perfectionism positively correlates with avoidance-oriented strategy. One of the studies suggested that perfectionists tend to engage more in emotion-oriented coping style.

Perfectionism and Academic Adjustment

There was a recent study conducted in Iran that explored the association between perfectionism and resilience with adjustment in academics as a mediator (Raeis Saadi et al., 2019). Three hundred eighty-four male students had been chosen from randomly 12 high schools in Bandar-e Lengeh through a multistage cluster sampling method. All the participants were required to complete three questionnaires including Ahvaz Perfection Scale (1989), Conner-Davidson Resilience Scale (2003), and Adjustment Inventory for School Students (AISS) (1993). There was a slight difference for the score of AISS compared to others whereby the higher score indicated the lower adjustment in academics. Pearson's Correlation Coefficient and path analysis were conducted in examining the data collected. As the results showed, a negative association was found between perfectionism and academic adjustment. The path analysis also further revealed that a greater degree of perfectionism could lead to lower academic adjustment. The study suggested that it might be due to the students being unbearable with any small error.

Verner-Fillion and Vallerand (2016) researched the association between perfectionism and academic adjustment with passion and affect as mediator. The first study involved an average age of 23.48 of 305 undergraduates from the same university. Multidimensional

Perfectionism Scale (1991), Passion Scale (2003), Positive and Negative Affect Scale (1988) were utilized for this study. While for academic adjustment, it was measured using the perceived performance in academics together with University Dropout Intention (1997). The results revealed that harmonious passion, positive and negative affect were playing a partial mediator role in the association between self-oriented perfectionism and academic adjustment. Specifically, self-oriented perfectionism directly contributed positively to academic adjustment. At the same time, with conditions of existence of harmonious passion, increased positive affect and decreased negative affect, self-oriented perfectionism can positively predict academic adjustment. For both self-oriented and socially-prescribed perfectionism, when associated with obsessive passion and increased negative affect, they would predict a lower degree of adjustment in academics.

In the United States, research has been done to investigate the factors contributing to the college adjustment among freshmen year students from the same university (Lapoint & Soysa, 2014). A total of 175 respondents with a mean age of 18.77 had been involved through their reactions to the protocol followed by small prizes such as an opportunity for the lottery. In this study, Student Adaptation to College Questionnaire (1989) was used to measure adjustment in four domains including academic, personal, social, and institution. Besides, only four subscales from Measures of Construct Underlying Perfectionism (2012) were used to examine perfectionism: high-standard for adaptive perfectionism, dissatisfaction, reactivity to mistakes and black and white thinking for maladaptive perfectionism. In terms of data analysis, hierarchical regression was performed. According to the results, high-standard (adaptive perfectionism) was found to contribute to academic adjustment positively. While for maladaptive

perfectionism, only one of the aspects, dissatisfaction was discovered to contribute negatively to academic adjustment.

Another study conducted in Dashtestan explored the contribution of emotional creativity and perfectionism to academic adjustment among the high school's second-grade students (Zarenezhad et al., 2013). By utilizing a multistage cluster sampling method, a total of 400 respondents were involved in this study. There were three instruments used for this study including Adjustment Inventory for School Students (1993), Perfectionism scale (2009) with two aspects including positive (3 subscales) and negative (3 subscales), and Emotional Creativity Inventory (1999). For analyzing data, the regression analysis was conducted. The results stated that total score for perfectionism and one of the negative aspects of perfectionism (negative self-image) were identified as positive contributors to the score of adjustment in academics. In other words, when the students' degree of perfectionism increases, their level of adjustment in academics will be reduced.

In short, as mentioned above, some studies claimed that overall perfectionism would lead to a decrease in academic adjustment. At the same time, a study showed inconsistent results and reported that adaptive perfectionism actually would positively contribute to adjustment in academics and only maladaptive perfectionism will predict academic adjustment reversely.

Coping Styles and Academic Adjustment

Recent research focused on studying three variables, including psychological distress, coping strategies, and university life adjustment (Bukhari & Ejaz, 2020). The targeted participants were the Bachelor of Science freshmen from different universities in Islamabad and Rawalpindi. In total, 300 of the samples were involved in this study through a convenient sampling method. The Depression, Anxiety and Stress scale (1955), Adjustment scale (2003)

including four dimensions (personal, academic, social and institutional) and Brief COPE (1997) were used to measure those variables. The data was analyzed by conducting Pearson Product Moment Correlation (PPMC). Significant results were shown whereby the overall coping and also the problem-focused coping were associated with adjustment in academics among the university freshmen positively.

In Nigeria, Iruloh and Ukaegbu (2017) had investigated factors that contributed to academic adjustment among the first-year university undergraduates. All the participants were chosen through proportional stratified random sampling method. A total of 382 participants had been collected from one same university. A survey was used to collect the data using three instruments including Multidimensional Scale of Perceived Social Support (MSPSS) (1988), Coping Strategies Inventory (2001), and academic subscale from Student Adaptation to College Questionnaire (SACQ) (1989). SPSS was employed to undergo multiple regression analyzes. The results revealed a positive relationship between both problem-focused and emotion-focused coping strategies together with academic adjustment. When both types of coping strategies were included conjointly, they significantly predicted academic adjustment. However, when coping strategies were taken in isolation, only problem-focused coping strategies significantly contributed to academic adjustment. While for emotion-focused coping strategy, a non-significant relationship was discovered between it and academic adjustment.

Another study was conducted that involved coping strategies as predictors of college adjustment in four dimensions: academic, social, personal, and institutional (Cousins et al., 2016). The targeted participants for this study were bereaved and non-bereaved students. There was a total sample of 225 students with a mean age of 19.73 whereby 84 of them had death loss experience within the last two years while 141 students belonged to non-bereaved groups. All of

the respondents were required to complete the three instruments including Brief COPE (1997), Perceived Social Support from Family and Friend Scale (1983), Student Adaptation to College Questionnaire (1984) and only those students from the bereaved group had to complete additional questions that related to death. For this study, four hierarchical regression models were employed. The results showed that avoidant emotion coping predicted academic adjustment inversely for both bereaved and non-bereaved groups. On the other hand, the problem-focused coping was contributing to the academic adjustment for both groups positively.

Besides that, there was also research conducted in China examining the relationship between loneliness, coping styles, and academic adjustment among college freshmen (Quan et al., 2014). Total of 276 participants from the same university with a mean age of 18.83 had been involved and a survey method was used in this study. Three instruments were used including Emotional and Social Loneliness (1999), Coping Style Questionnaire (1996), and Academic Adjustment Scale for College Students (2012). SPSS was used in examining the data. The results indicated that positive coping was associated with academic adjustment positively. In contrast, an opposite association was reported between negative coping and academic adjustment. Furthermore, both coping (positive and negative) were mediators between loneliness and academic adjustment through structural equation models. The results further explored that when students' loneliness was high, the more positive coping uses can help increase academic adjustment among the students. In contrast, academic adjustment will be brought down when the students are using more negative coping.

In general, most of the studies reported a positive relationship between problem-focused coping and academic adjustment. Problem-focused coping was also found to contribute positively to academic adjustment as well. While for emotion-focused coping, there was a study

that showed a negative contributor to academic adjustment. At the same time, a non-significant relationship was found between emotion-focused coping and academic adjustment as well.

Perfectionism, Coping Styles, and Academic Adjustment

Montgomery and colleagues (2017) conducted a study to investigate several intrapersonal variables of academic adjustment, including perfectionism, coping style, alcohol use, and procrastination while manipulating academic motivation. The study's participants were 273 undergraduates with the age range of 18-25 from a public university in the urban area of Southeast Michigan. Academic Motivation Scale – College Version (1992), Alcohol Use Disorders Identification Test (2001), Tuckman Procrastination Scale (1991), Almost Perfect Scale – Revised (1995), Brief COPE (1997), and academic adjustment subscale of the Student Adaptation to College Questionnaire (1989) were used to measure the variables. A hierarchical linear regression technique was used to analyze the data gathered. It was reported that maladaptive perfectionism and avoidant coping predicted a lower level of academic adjustment. In contrast, adaptive perfectionism has significant relationships with better academic adjustment. However, there was no significant relationship between active coping styles, including emotion-focused and problem-focused strategies, with academic adjustment.

By searching intrapersonal factors of academic adjustment and typing the relevant variables (coping and perfectionism) on Google, only one study done in the United States was found to have explored the relationships between perfectionism, coping styles, and academic adjustment. This shows a lack of studies focusing on the three variables in Malaysia's context. Therefore, it creates a need to examine the association among the variables of perfectionism, coping, and academic adjustment among undergraduates in Malaysia in order to discover better insight and resolutions to deal with the academic adjustment issue.

Theoretical framework

Personality-coping-outcome Theory

Gallagher (1996) proposed that personality affects the choice of one's coping styles, and then it leads to adjustment outcomes. One's tendency to coping styles, either problem-focused coping or emotion-focused coping are under the influence of their personality (Gallagher, 1996). It leads to positive outcomes if the coping is successful or negatively when coping is unsuccessful during stressful events (Gallagher, 1996). Therefore, there is a relationship between personality, coping, and outcome.

According to the study done by Xu et al. (2017), it supported that the relationship between personality and adjustment outcomes have mediated partially or fully by the coping styles. Partially mediated by the coping styles mean personality still directly affects outcomes except for the indirect effect mediated by coping styles (Jaccard & Jacoby, 2010). By this, it can support a personality able to influence academic outcomes with or without taking into consideration coping styles. Besides, various outcomes will be obtained when associated with distinct personalities (Xu et al., 2017). In line with the theory, different personalities may eventually lead to positive or negative outcomes (Gallagher, 1996).

According to the theory, coping styles lead to adjustment outcomes which means coping styles would be able to predict adjustment outcomes. An individual will choose their preferred coping style, which can be problem-focused coping or emotion-focused coping (Gallagher, 1996). If people choose to use problem-focused coping, they tend to solve their problem (Burns & Fedewa, 2005; Kaviani et al., 2014). People with this type of coping would be able to cope successfully and finally lead to positive adjustment outcomes (Gallagher, 1996). Other than that, people with emotion-focused coping tend to escape from the problem because they were

unable to cope with it successfully so that it would be resulting in negative adjustment outcomes (Connor-Smith et al., 2000; Gallagher, 1996; Rahat & Ilhan, 2016). Therefore, coping styles can predict adjustment outcomes, whether positively or negatively.

Personality-coping-outcome theory supports the linkage between perfectionism, coping styles, and academic adjustment. Therefore, the theory supports the prediction of perfectionism, coping on academic adjustment among undergraduates.

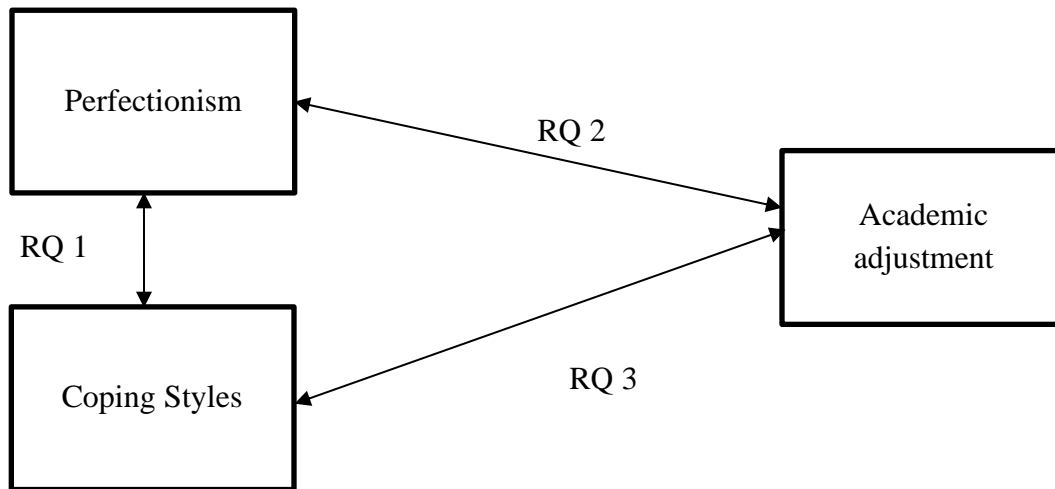
Conceptual Framework

In this study, the conceptual framework model is proposed (refer to Figure 1). Regarding the framework, it is suggested that perfectionism has a significant relationship with coping styles. Based on the literature review, perfectionism correlates with coping styles (Kermanshahi et al., 2016). As Verner-Fillion & Vallerand (2016) reported, perfectionism has a significant relationship with academic adjustment. Meanwhile, there is a significant relationship between coping styles and academic adjustment (Bukhari & Ejaz, 2020; Iruloh & Ukaegbu, 2017). Therefore, this study will investigate whether perfectionism, coping styles, and academic adjustment are correlated.

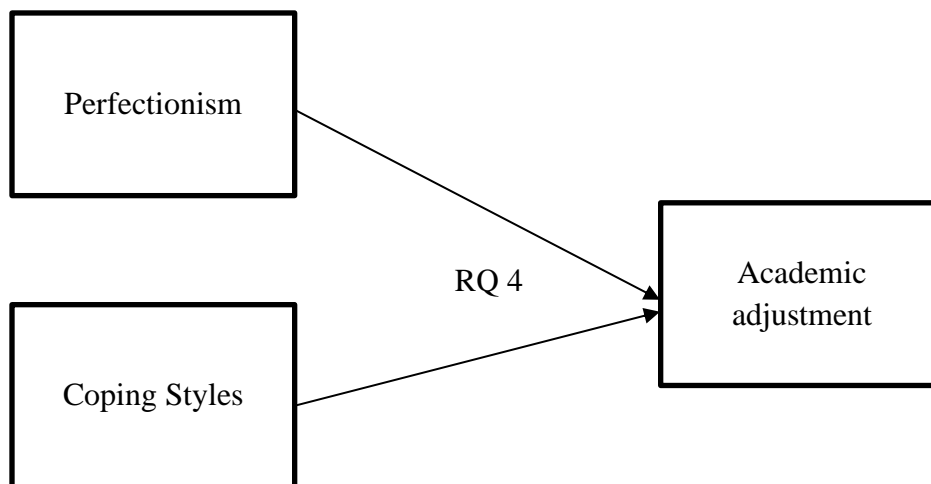
Based on the personality-coping-outcome theory, the conceptual framework shown in Figure 2 is proposed. It showed that perfectionism and coping styles are independent variables, and academic adjustment is the outcome variable. Based on the theory, perfectionism and coping styles predict academic adjustment positively or negatively. Therefore, this study aims to determine whether perfectionism and coping styles are significant predictors to predict academic adjustment in multiple regression analysis.

Figure 1

Multiple Correlation Model to Examine the Relationship between Perfectionism, Coping Styles, and Academic Adjustment among Undergraduates.

**Figure 2**

Multiple Regression Model to Examine the Prediction of Perfectionism and Coping Styles on Academic Adjustment among Undergraduates.



Chapter III

Methodology

Research Design

A cross-sectional survey research design was administered in this quantitative study. A Questionnaire (online survey) was administered for data collection as it allows the collection of attitudes, and opinions from participants without consuming large amount of expenses and time (Shaughnessy et al., 2015). Cross-sectional research design allows discovering of the determinants of the interested outcome and the possible relationships among the variables (Zangirolami-Raimundo, 2018). It also allows data collection of all variables to be carried out among the same participants at one point of time. Besides, it is advantageous in terms of the characteristics of cost and time effectiveness (Setia, 2016). Therefore, this research design was chosen as it enables the completion of the project within a shorter time and with a low budget while relevant information can be gathered from many participants at the same time.

Participants

The minimum sample size required for the study was obtained by using G*Power (Faul et al., 2009). The formula $f^2 = \frac{R^2}{(1-R^2)}$ was used to calculate the effect size (Cohen, 1988). An effect size, .1489 which is considered a weak effect size, was obtained and then inserted into G*Power by the number of predictors =4 to get the minimum sample size (refer to Appendix A). A minimum of 130 participants was required for the study to ensure the results can be generalized to the target population (Kadam & Bhalerao, 2010). However, more participants were recruited to minimize the issue of missing data.

A total of 211 participants were recruited from UTAR Kampar. UTAR Kampar undergraduates become the population's target because those undergraduates came from different

states of Malaysia. After data cleaning, 41 responses do not meet the study's inclusion criteria, which is a (1) Malaysian and (2) UTAR Kampar undergraduates were removed from the data set. Hence, 170 responses were continued for data analysis.

Refer to table 1, among 170 participants, 120 were females (70.6%), and 50 were males (29.4%). Those participants aged between 18-25 years old ($M = 21.37$, $SD = 1.3$) came from different faculty and courses of UTAR Kampar. Most of the participants were Chinese (86.5%), followed by India (6.5%), Malay (3.5%), and other ethnicities (3.5%).

Table 1

Descriptive Statistics for Participants' demographic variables

Variables	<i>n</i> (%)	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	Min	Max
Age		21.37	1.3	18	25
Gender					
Male	50(29.4)				
Female	120(70.6)				
Ethnicity					
Malay	6(3.5)				
Chinese	147(86.5)				
India	11(6.5)				
Other	6(3.5)				

Note. *n* = number of participants; % = percentage of participants; *SD* = standard deviation; Min = minimum; Max = maximum

Procedure

Due to the inability to perform randomization in selecting samples from a large population in UTAR, a purposive non-probability sampling, a method where the selection of participants is solely based on the judgement of researchers (Showkat & Parveen, 2017), was chosen. It is useful as it allows the acquisition of respondents with specific characteristics that

were required in this study (Etikan et al., 2016), for example, the status of undergraduates from UTAR Kampar Campus and Malaysian. Besides that, there are several advantages for using this method, including low expenses, easy availability, and convenience, making it best suits the study's requirement.

Firstly, the study was approved by UTAR Scientific and Ethical Review Committee (SERC) (U/SREC/212/2020) (refer to Appendix B). For data collection, an online survey was created using Qualtrics and distributed using a QR code or a link via social media platforms to the target population. Next, participants were required to read and agree to the online survey's informed consent (refer to Appendix C). The informed consent consisted of the study's introduction, the procedures to complete the questionnaire, confidentiality, contact information of the group leader, and the option for agreement to participate in the survey. Participants were allowed to leave the survey if they do not agree to participate in the study. The following section was demographic information such as age, gender, and ethnicity. This study's inclusion criteria were that the participant should be a Malaysian and a UTAR Kampar student. It was confirmed by providing an option which is "Yes" or "No" in the demographic information section. The responses that fit the criteria were remained and proceeded to data analysis. Next, instruments included in the study are the Short Almost Perfect Scale (SAPS), Simplified Coping Style Questionnaire (SCSQ), and Academic Adjustment Scale (AAS). In the end, the data collected was analyzed by using IBM SPSS Statistic (SPSS).

Instruments

Short Almost Perfect Scale (SAPS)

The scale was developed by Rice et al. (2014) from the Almost Perfect Scale-Revised (Slaney et al., 2001), which originally consisted of 23 items. This scale is a shorter version with

only eight items. There are two subscales with each subscale comprises four items including standards (e.g., I have high expectations for myself.) and discrepancy (e.g., Doing my best never seems to be enough.). 7-Likert point scale has been used for this instrument (1: Strongly disagree; 7: Strongly Disagree). The score is calculated by summing up each subscale's point. A high score in the dimension of standards indicates adaptive perfectionism, while a high score in discrepancy aspects suggests being maladaptive perfectionism. In this study, the scale has high internal consistency ($\alpha = .82$).

Simplified Coping Style Questionnaire (SCSQ)

This instrument was created by Xie (1998) based on Ways of Coping Questionnaire (1985) with concepts of problem-focused and emotion-focused. SCSQ has 20 items and is divided into two subscales including positive style with the first 12 items and negative style with the remaining eight items such as "try to forget the whole thing". For the first subscale, a sample item is "try to look on the bright side of things". The 4-Likert point scale is used for this instrument (1: Never used; 4: Often used). The score is computed by obtaining the total score for each dimension. A higher score in either aspect indicates a more frequent use of the particular coping style. This scale is found with comparable reliability in the current study ($\alpha = .76$).

Academic Adjustment Scale (AAS)

This scale was developed by Anderson et al. (2016) and consisted of nine items. There are three subscales in this instrument including academic lifestyle (e.g., I am enjoying the lifestyle of being a university student.), academic achievement (e.g., I am satisfied with my ability to learn at university.), and also academic motivation (e.g., I expect to successfully complete my degree in the usual allocated time frame.) with three items each. 5-Likert point scale has been used (1: Rarely applies to me; 5: Always applies to me). Item 2 and 3 are reverse

items. The score is obtained through the total of three sub-scores with a range of 9 to 45. A higher score suggests a higher level of adjustment in academics. In the current study, the Cronbach's alpha for the whole scale is .69, which not meets the acceptable level. Thus, item 9 has been removed for this study and Cronbach's alpha has become .75.

Chapter IV

Results

Data cleaning

In this study, 41 responses out of 211 responses collected do not meet the two inclusion criteria of this study have been removed. Besides, there was no missing data found. A total of 170 responses were remained and then progressed to analysis.

Test of Normality

Skewness and Kurtosis Tests

Table 2 shows the skewness and kurtosis values of all variables. According to George and Mallery (2010), the acceptable range for skewness and kurtosis values' distributions are within ± 2 which are considered as normally distributed. The results showed that all variables were normally distributed since all the skewness and kurtosis test values were within ± 2 .

Table 2

Skewness and Kurtosis

Measure	Skewness	Kurtosis
Adaptive Perfectionism	-0.361	-0.156
Maladaptive Perfectionism	-0.360	-0.395
Positive Coping	0.155	0.530
Negative Coping	0.189	0.023
Academic Adjustment	-0.592	0.891

Table 3*Frequency of variables (N = 170)*

Variables	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Adaptive Perfectionism	20.9	3.98
Maladaptive Perfectionism	19.22	4.48
Positive Coping	32.62	4.66
Negative Coping	18.58	4.01
Academic Adjustment	28.51	5.20

Note. *M* = mean; *SD* = standard deviation

Mean scores and standard deviation for all variables are shown in Table 3. The independent variables are adaptive perfectionism ($M = 20.9$, $SD = 3.98$), maladaptive perfectionism ($M = 19.22$, $SD = 4.48$), positive coping ($M = 32.62$, $SD = 4.66$), negative coping ($M = 18.58$, $SD = 4.01$). The dependent variable is the academic adjustment ($M = 28.51$, $SD = 5.20$).

Relationship among Variables

The correlation matrix of all variables in table 4 is using Pearson correlation analysis to show the relationship among variables.

Based on the table, there was a significant positive relationship between adaptive perfectionism and positive coping ($r(168) = .23$, $p = .001$). It means UTAR Kampar undergraduates high in adaptive perfectionism are more likely to adopt positive coping to cope with their stressful event. Therefore, H1a was failed to reject. Besides, maladaptive perfectionism was found to have a negative but not significant relationship with positive coping

($r(168) = -.06, p = .214$). Hence, H1b was rejected. Also, there was a negative and not significant relationship between adaptive perfectionism and negative coping ($r(168) = -.002, p = .488$). By this, H1c was rejected. Maladaptive perfectionism was positively correlated with negative coping significantly ($r(168) = -.26, p < .001$). It means that undergraduates with maladaptive perfectionism are more likely to practice negative coping. Hence, H1d was failed to reject.

The results showed that adaptive perfectionism and maladaptive perfectionism had a significant relationship with academic adjustment. Adaptive perfectionism was significant and positively correlated with academic adjustment ($r(168) = .29, p < .001$), and maladaptive perfectionism was significant and negatively correlated with academic adjustment ($r(168) = -.29, p < .001$). The results indicated that undergraduates who are high in adaptive perfectionism, the level of academic adjustment is high; for those who are high in maladaptive perfectionism, the academic adjustment level is low. Therefore, H2a and H2b failed to reject.

The results showed a significant positive correlation between positive coping and academic adjustment ($r(168) = .30, p < .001$). It indicated that the more likely the undergraduates practice positive coping styles, the higher the academic adjustment level. There was a significant negative correlation between negative coping and academic adjustment ($r(168) = -.20, p = .004$). Undergraduates with a high tendency to practice negative coping styles would have a low level of academic adjustment. Therefore, H3a and H3b were failed to reject.

Table 4

Correlation matrix of all variables (Adaptive Perfectionism, Maladaptive Perfectionism, Positive Coping, Negative Coping, and Academic Adjustment)

Variables	1	2	3	4	5
1. Academic Adjustment	1	.29**	-.29**	.30**	-.20**
2. Adaptive Perfectionism	-	1	-	.23**	-.002
3. Maladaptive Perfectionism	-	-	1	-.06	.26**
4. Positive Coping	-	-	-	1	-
5. Negative Coping	-	-	-	-	1

Note. ** $p < 0.01$ level (1-tailed)

Multiple Regression Analysis

Multivariate Outliers

Mahalanobis Distance, Cook's Distance, and Centered Leverage Distance were performed to test the multivariate outliers (refer to Appendix D). For Mahalanobis Distance test, by the number of samples more than 100 with four predictors and p-value of .01, cases with more than 21.30 Mahalanobis Distance are problematic and considered outliers (Barnett & Lewis, 1978). According to Cook and Weisberg (1982), cases that scored more than one in Cook's Distance test are labeled as outliers. Besides, by using the formula, $\frac{2(k+1)}{n}$, Leverage's value of 0.059 was calculated, and the cases scored more than 0.059 will be considered outliers (Hoaglin & Welsh, 1978). In sum, there is no multivariate outlier found.

Independence of Errors

The Durbin-Watson test was performed to assess the independence of error. Berry (1993) claimed that the Durbin-Watson Test's value falls within 1 to 3 is acceptable. By referring to table 5, the assumption is found to meet, which means the data are highly independent.

Table 5***Durbin-Watson Test***

Model	Durbin-Watson
1	
2	2.19

Independent variables: Adaptive Perfectionism, Maladaptive Perfectionism, Positive Coping, Negative Coping

Variance Inflation Factor (VIF)

Firstly, the Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) was performed to ensure no multicollinearity issue. By referring to table 6, for model 1, both age and gender reported the same VIF value (1.00), which is less than 10 means no violation of the assumption (Hair et al., 2010). For model 2, the VIF value of age and gender changed to 1.05 and 1.01. VIF value for adaptive perfectionism, maladaptive perfectionism, positive coping, and negative coping is 1.31, 1.35, 1.24, and 1.20. It was found that there is no violation of the assumption, which means no collinearity issues were found (Hair et al., 2010).

Hierarchical Multiple Regression Analysis**Table 6**

Results of Hierarchical Multiple Regression Analysis for Variables predicting Academic Adjustment

Step	Predicted variables	β	t	p	F	df	R ²	VIF
1	Fixed		4.61	<.001	2.55	(2, 167)	.03	
	Age	-.06	-.81	.418				1.00
	Gender	.16	2.14	.034				1.00
2	Fixed		3.05	.003	13.26***	(6, 163)	.33	
	Age	-.01	-.10	.918				1.05
	Gender	.11	1.69	.093				1.01
	Adaptive Perfectionism	.37	5.00	<.001				1.31
	Maladaptive Perfectionism	-.37	-4.98	<.001				1.35
	Positive Coping	.22	3.08	.002				1.24
	Negative Coping	-.15	-2.18	.031				1.20

Note. *** $p < .001$ level

After checking the multicollinearity, the data proceed to the analysis. A hierarchical multiple regression analysis was performed to examine the significant predictors of academic

adjustment among undergraduates in UTAR Kampar. For model 1, age and gender were entered as the control variables. The regression model 1 has accounted for 1.80 % of variances between variables in which $F(2, 167) = 2.55, p = .081$. Gender was significant and positively predicted academic adjustment ($\beta = .16, t = 2.14, p = .034$), however, age was not a significant predictor ($\beta = -.06, t = -.81, p = .418$).

For model 2, four predictors were entered into the second block. After controlling the variables, the model was found as statistically significant, $F(6, 163) = 13.26, p < .001$, and accounted for 30.0% of variances. Age ($\beta = -.01, t = -0.10, p = .918$) and gender ($\beta = .11, t = 1.69, p = .093$) were not significant predictors of academic adjustment. The findings revealed that adaptive perfectionism ($\beta = .37, t = 5.00, p < .001$) and positive coping ($\beta = .22, t = 3.08, p = .002$) positively predicted to academic adjustment. Different from these, maladaptive perfectionism ($\beta = -.37, t = -4.98, p < .001$) and negative coping ($\beta = -.15, t = -2.18, p = .031$) were found as negative predictors of academic adjustment.

Chapter V

Discussion and Conclusion

Perfectionism and Coping Styles

In this study, it was found that adaptive perfectionism was positively correlated with positive coping while maladaptive perfectionism was negatively correlated with positive coping whereby hypotheses 1a and 1b were failed to reject. The previous study also indicated similar results (Zhang & Zhao, 2010). This can be explained by those adaptive perfectionists who are well-ordered, increasing the chances for them to have a clearer view on the problem and handle it reasonably through positive coping. While for the maladaptive perfectionists, if they adopt positive coping, it is said that they are easier to stop trying and even escape when troubles appear compared to adaptive perfectionists (Noble et al., 2014).

On top of this, H1d in the present study was failed to reject, which indicated the positive correlation between maladaptive perfectionism and negative coping that further supported what Noble et al. (2014) have reported. In other words, those maladaptive perfectionists have higher chances to use negative coping such as avoiding the problem itself instead of using positive coping. The current study also found a negative association between adaptive perfectionism and negative coping, which H1c failed to reject. This finding was in line with previous studies (Bieling et al., 2004; Zhang & Cai, 2012) whereby adaptive perfectionists showed lesser avoidance behavior in dealing with a problem. Furthermore, this can be due to the self-expectations that do not allow them to escape from facing the problem and deal with it.

Perfectionism and Academic Adjustment

This study revealed that adaptive perfectionism was positively associated with academic adjustment while an opposite relationship was found between maladaptive perfectionism and

academic adjustment which hypotheses 2a and 2b were failed to reject. The findings were consistent with one of the previous studies (Lapoint & Sosya, 2014). One of the explanations is that although those adaptive perfectionists set a high standard for themselves, they can still handle the stress by their own, which helps them adjust better in academics compared to those maladaptive perfectionists (Rice et al., 2006). Another possible explanation is that adaptive perfectionism is derived from oneself, which means they have full control over setting and reaching their target, and this determination serves as a support for a greater degree of academic adjustment (Verner-Fillion & Vallerand, 2016). While for maladaptive perfectionism, the reason behind it can be due to the mismatch between their performance and what they targeted. As they assumed to be faultless, so when they made a small mistake, they will attribute it as their powerlessness (Raeis Saadi et al., 2019).

Coping Styles and Academic Adjustment

There was a positive correlation between positive coping style and academic adjustment and negative association in the current study between negative coping style and academic adjustment. So, hypotheses 3a and 3b were failed to reject. The results were in line with the previous study as well (Quan et al., 2014). People who adopted positive coping will play an active role in dealing with the problem. In other words, they will focus on the problem itself which helps them to interpret the condition logically (Bukhari & Ejaz, 2020). Thus, this coping style is positively linked with better adjustment. In contrast, people who use negative coping will avoid facing the problem directly, such as involving substance use. In this case, they demonstrate low potency in managing problems (Garnefski et al., 2003). Consequently, they are associated with lower levels of academic adjustment.

Perfectionism, Coping Styles, and Academic Adjustment

Hypotheses 4a and 4b were failed to reject. This is in line with the previous study done by Montgomery et al. (2017), which also supported that adaptive and maladaptive perfectionism were significant predictors of academic adjustment. One possible underlying explanation is that adaptive perfectionists have better psychological well-being as they have higher self-efficacy and believe that one has control over their environment (Park & Jeong, 2015). Consequently, this increases academic adjustment as they can quickly cope with the changes happening around them (Turashvili & Japaridze, 2012), for example, flexibly resolve any academic difficulties faced. On the contrary, individuals, who are too obsessed with discrepancy (maladaptive perfectionism), are more likely to have lower satisfaction and lower academic performance (Ferguson et al., 2009). Constantly focusing on striving for perfection without feeling satisfied, it reduces academic adjustment (Zarenezhad et al., 2013) as they tend to be more distressed (Ferguson et al., 2009). In other words, maladaptive perfectionists tend to be preoccupied with how bad they perform. Consequently, it impacts emotional health and causes an inability to focus attention on handling academic issues.

On top of that, maladaptive perfectionism was discovered to be the strongest predictor. This is in consonance with the study done by Lee et al. (2020). Similarly, Montgomery et al. (2017) also revealed that maladaptive perfectionism was the strongest predictor compared to adaptive perfectionism, positive coping style, and negative coping style. One of the explanations is that maladaptive perfectionism not only contributes to lower academic adjustment in terms of satisfaction, it also causes high levels of stress. The extraordinary obsession with unachievable goals leads to a big gap between the real self and the expected self (Lee et al., 2020). When the

discrepancy becomes bigger without being resolved, individuals may experience overwhelming stress, which results in the reduction of adjustment in academics (Burns, 1980).

Besides, hypotheses 4c and 4d were also failed to reject. It is supported by a previous study done by Abdullah et al. (2010) which revealed that adaptive coping (actively planning solutions) and maladaptive coping (avoiding obstacles) were significant predictors of adjustment in academic life. These relationships are further strengthened by Cousins et al. (2016) who suggested that individuals can better handle challenges or difficulties faced in academics as they actively come out with constructive solutions. Therefore, they have healthier academic adjustment and better academic performance.

In contrast, negative coping users always try to escape from reality with difficulties and leave the obstacles unsolved. When the stress becomes too overwhelming, it tends to result in greater emotional and behavioral dysfunction, like depression and anxiety (Shao et al., 2020). Consequently, depression and anxiety can significantly impact students' academic adjustment (Nyamayaro & Saravanan, 2013). In other words, emotional dysfunctions interfere with individuals' normal functioning, like socialization and academic performance, in academic life and cause them to be unable to deal with difficulties effectively. Apart from these, Shao et al. (2020) found out that people, who adopt positive coping, have a lower risk of developing depression and anxiety. Therefore, they can function and cope well in academic life.

Conclusion

Overall, this study's research objectives have been achieved whereby the relationship between perfectionism, coping styles, and academic adjustment among UTAR Kampar undergraduates has become clear. The results demonstrated that both perfectionism (adaptive and maladaptive perfectionism) and coping styles (positive and negative coping styles) are the

significant predictors of adjustments in academics congruent with our theoretical and conceptual framework.

Implications

Theoretical Implication

The theory adopted in this study is the personality-coping-outcome theory proposed by Gallagher (1996). This theory has provided a foundation for the relationship between personality (perfectionism), coping (coping styles) and also outcome (academic adjustment) for the current study. According to this study, it was found that adaptive perfectionism predicts academic adjustment positively while maladaptive perfectionism predicts academic adjustment reversely. These findings were consistent with the theory which supported and confirmed the theory in the Malaysia context as well whereby the different personalities can bring impacts of desirable or undesirable outcomes.

Moreover, based on the current study, positive coping was a positive predictor of academic adjustment, while negative coping was a negative predictor of academic adjustment among UTAR Kampar undergraduates. The findings had further supported the theory whereby coping styles also played a role in affecting the outcome of an individual. In short, the results' consistency may provide an insight in terms of the contribution to the applicability of the Personality-coping-outcome theory in the Malaysia context for future studies.

Practical Implication

In this study, the targeted participants were focused on the undergraduates as academic adjustment is one of the keys in putting a stop to emotional and also mental issues (Sani, 2018). The findings in present study may serve as a guideline for those undergraduates to have a deeper understanding about the factors that influence their adjustment in academics. Specifically,

maladaptive perfectionism was found to be a stronger predictor of academic adjustment compared to adaptive perfectionism. It is marvelous to say that perfectionism personality, particularly setting high standards for oneself, helped a person achieve better. However, simultaneously, if the standards are too hard to reach which causes a mismatch between performance and target, it may lead to undesirable outcomes. In this case, the undergraduates are encouraged to acknowledge that their perfectionism personality may lead to beneficial or unpleasant results depending on the types of perfectionists they are.

Furthermore, both coping styles either positive or negative coping styles were reported as significant predictors of academic adjustment. To be specific, the positive style is the one that is advantageous to undergraduates' adjustment in academics. Thus, the result had highlighted the importance of positive coping in the academic setting whereby actively seeking ways to deal with a problem did help to improve the situation. Additionally, when the undergraduates adopt more positive coping, the frequency of using negative coping will be reduced. In other words, when they are confronting a problem, they will tend to try to deal with it directly rather than avoiding facing the problem.

Last but not least, this study also helps to fill the literature gap in Malaysia context as well. This is because most of the studies about academic adjustment were narrowing down the focus on international students and also freshmen (Malaklolunthu & Selan, 2011; Wider et al., 2016) instead of local undergraduates. Therefore, this study had provided insight for future researchers about the relationship between perfectionism, coping styles, and also academic adjustment in Malaysia.

Limitations

Several limitations detected in this study should be addressed clearly to serve as guidance for future improvement, especially for researchers who wish to focus on similar topics. One of the limitations is the characteristic of self-report data, where the results of the questionnaire administered in this study are solely based on participants' subjective opinion. In this case, there might be dishonesty issues where participants try to answer in a favorable way in society. For example, participants may tend to choose "never" for the item asking whether they smoke, drink, or take drugs to escape from worry, as these behaviors are not preferable in society. Besides, some individuals might unintentionally change their perceptions and behaviors due to knowledge of being in research or find it difficult to recall how they usually perform under those circumstances. Consequently, biased results might be collected and there are no other means to clarify the answers.

Another limitation is that a non-probability purposive sampling method was used to recruit the participants. It is difficult to prove that the participants selected using non-probability sampling can represent the population (Sharma, 2017). Extra cautious steps are required to generalize the findings to prevent overgeneralization issues due to biased results. In addition, researcher bias can happen as the selection of participants is solely based on the subjective judgement of the researcher.

Recommendations

To further improve the quality of the study, few recommendations are discussed. Firstly, mixed methods, including interview sessions and observation, can be incorporated together with the administration of questionnaires. Interview sessions enable the researchers to detect deception or dishonesty issues by observing nonverbal behavior, for instance, frequent eye

blinking. Besides, interviewing participants' significant others about how participants behave in daily life may serve as another means to clarify the answer's accuracy. Researchers can also set up some situations to see how the participant behaves in real-life circumstances. However, researchers must be aware of reactivity issues.

To strengthen the findings' external validity, a random sampling method can be adopted, for example, cluster sampling or stratified sampling method. Besides, most of the previous studies have been focusing on internal characteristic, including personality traits (Adeniyi et al., 2014; Hakimi et al., 2011; Tamannaefar & Rezaei, 2020), perceived level of stress (Montgomery et al., 2017), and motivation (Cazan & Anitei, 2010). Therefore, to have a more comprehensive picture of the determinants of academic adjustment, future researchers are encouraged to focus on environmental factors, like social support and duration of working as a part timer.

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Appendix A

Sample Size Calculation

Adaptive Perfectionism and Academic Adjustment

$$f^2 = \frac{R^2}{(1 - R^2)}$$

$$f^2 = \frac{.36^2}{(1 - .36^2)}$$

$$f^2 = 0.1489$$

Maladaptive Perfectionism and Academic Adjustment

$$f^2 = \frac{R^2}{(1 - R^2)}$$

$$f^2 = \frac{-.39^2}{(1 - (-.39)^2)}$$

$$f^2 = 0.1794$$

Table 3 Spearman correlation matrix – all study variables ($n = 273$)

	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
2. Extrinsic motivation	.60**	--										
3. Amotivation	-.09	-.25**	--									
4. Academic adjustment	.17**	.20**	-.50**	--								
5. College adjustment	.11	.16**	-.51**	-.88*	--							
6. Alcohol use	.16**	-.10	.04	-.05	.01	--						
7. Procrastination	-.13*	.02	.07*	-.32**	-.32**	-.01	--					
8. Adaptive perfectionism	.34**	.44**	-.34**	.36**	.30**	-.16	-.14*	--				
9. Maladaptive perfectionism	.06	.14*	.21**	-.39**	-.41**	-.09	.37**	.05	--			
10. Perceived stress	-.04	-.01	.17**	-.35**	-.48**	-.09	.31**	-.10	.47**	--		
11. Problem-focused Coping	.23**	.23**	-.14*	-.20**	.18**	-.10	-.05	.25**	-.05	-.05	--	
12. Emotion-focused coping	.21**	.15*	.05	-.03	-.12*	-.03	.16**	.17**	.20**	.21**	.59**	--
13. Avoidant coping	.09	.09	.19**	-.26**	-.33**	-.04	.17**	-.04	.25**	.34**	.13*	.38**

1 – Intrinsic Motivation

** $p < .01$, * $p < .05$

Positive Coping Style and Academic Adjustment

$$f^2 = \frac{R^2}{(1 - R^2)}$$

$$f^2 = \frac{.50^2}{(1 - .50^2)}$$

$$f^2 = 0.3333$$

Negative Coping Style and Academic Adjustment

$$f^2 = \frac{R^2}{(1 - R^2)}$$

$$f^2 = \frac{-.45^2}{(1 - (-.45^2))}$$

$$f^2 = 0.2539$$

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974 (6 / 11) 150%

that loneliness was negatively correlated with both positive coping style and academic adjustment, but was positively correlated with negative coping style. Positive coping style was positively correlated with academic adjustment, and negative coping style was negatively correlated with academic adjustment.

Table 1. Means, Standard Deviations, and Correlations Among Loneliness, Positive Coping Style, Negative Coping Style, and Academic Adjustment

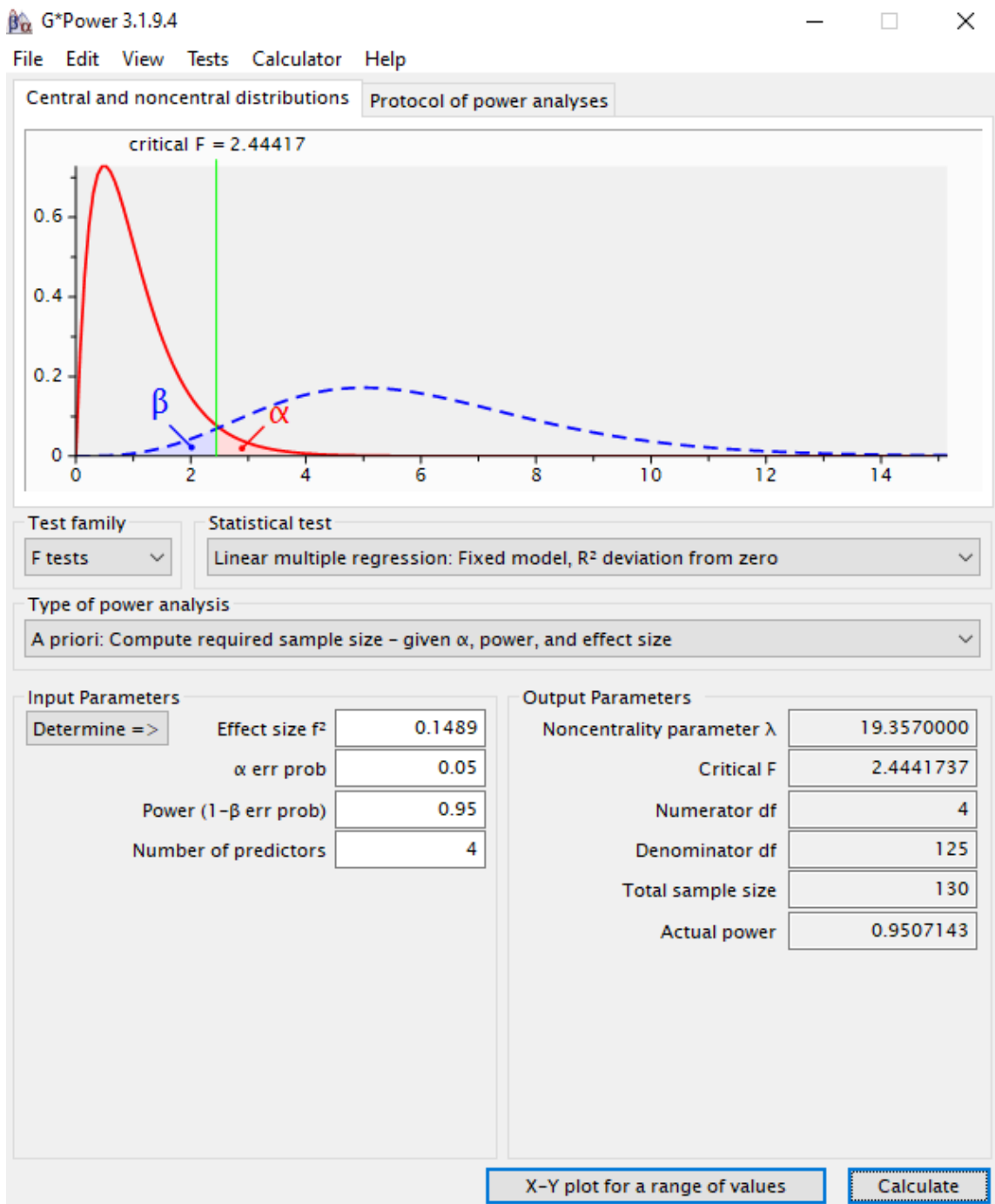
	<i>M</i> ± <i>SD</i>	1	2	3	4
Loneliness	3.70 ± 0.38	–			
Positive coping	3.51 ± 0.48	-.24**	–		
Negative coping	2.77 ± 0.54	.21**	-.30**	–	
Academic adjustment	3.33 ± 0.39	-.43**	.50**	-.45**	–

Analysis of Mediating Effects

We constructed a structural equation model to explore the mediating effect of coping style in the process of the effect of loneliness on academic adjustment. First, we constructed a direct effect model and conducted path analyses. The fit indices were good ($\chi^2(12) = 17.71$, RMSEA = .04, CFI = .99, TLI = .98), and the path coefficient from loneliness to academic adjustment was significant.

After adding positive coping style and negative coping style to the path from loneliness to academic adjustment (see Figure 1), the model indices were also good ($\chi^2(20) = 34.30$, RMSEA = .05, CFI = .98, TLI = .96). This indicated that

G*Power Calculation



Appendix B

Ethical Clearance Approval

Re: U/SERC/212/2020

24 December 2020

Dr Chie Qiu Ting
 Head, Department of Psychology and Counselling
 Faculty of Arts and Social Science
 Universiti Tunku Abdul Rahman
 Jalan Universiti, Bandar Baru Barat
 31900 Kampar, Perak.

Dear Dr Chie,

Ethical Approval For Research Project/Protocol

We refer to the application for ethical approval for your students' research projects from Bachelor of Social Science (Hons) Psychology programme enrolled in course UAPZ3013/UAPZ3023. We are pleased to inform you that the application has been approved under expedited review.

The details of the research projects are as follows:

No	Research Title	Student's Name	Supervisor's Name	Approval Validity
1.	Relationship Between Academic Procrastination, Coping and Sense of Coherence Among Undergraduates in Malaysia	1. Leela a/p Murugan 2. Loo Ling Qian 3. Tan Man Ting	Dr Siah Poh Chua	
2.	Perfectionism, Coping Styles and Academic Adjustment: Their Relationships Among UTAR Kampar Undergraduates	1. Ang See Sin 2. Phi Chean Ni 3. Tan Kok Wei		

Appendix C

Questionnaire (Online Survey)



**UNIVERSITI TUNKU ABDUL RAHMAN
FACULTY OF ARTS AND SOCIAL SCIENCE (FAS)
BACHELOR OF SOCIAL SCIENCE (HONS) PSYCHOLOGY**

**UAPZ3023 Final Year Project II
Year 3 Trimester 3
(202101)**

Introduction

This research study is being conducted on “Perfectionism, coping styles and academic adjustment: Their relationships among UTAR Kampar undergraduates” as a requirement for the subject UAPZ 3023 Final Year Project II. In order to collect the required information, your participation is needed for our research study.

Procedures

You will be asked to fill in your demographic details in the first section, following by completing the questionnaire which consists of 37 questions. You will take approximately 10-15 minutes to complete this survey.

Confidentiality

All information provided by the students will be subjected as private and confidential. The information use is solely for the purpose of this research. No personal identity and information will be revealed to a third party and only our group members have the access to the information.

Participation

You can voluntarily choose to participate or withdraw at any time without any penalty charged.

Contact information

If you have any questions or concerns, kindly contact our group member at izayoi16@utar.my (Tan Kok Wei).

Herewith, I confirm that I have read and understood the information above.

	Yes, I AGREE to participate in this study.
	No, I DISAGREE to participate in this study.

Part A-Demographic Information

Please fill in your personal details or choose **ONE** option.

a.) Age: _____

b.) Gender: 1. Male 2. Female

c.) Nationality: 1. Malaysian 2. Non-Malaysian

d.) Ethnicity: 1. Malay 2. Chinese 3. Indian
4. Others (*Specify*:_____)

e.) Religion: 1. Muslim 2. Buddhist 3. Hindu
4. Christian 5. Others (*Specify*:_____)

f.) Are you students from UTAR Kampar?

1. Yes 2. No

g.) Faculty (Eg. FAS): _____

h.) Programme (Eg. Psychology): _____

i.) Year and Trimester (Eg. Y1S1): _____

Part B-Short Almost Perfect Scale (SAPS)

The following items are designed to measure certain attitudes people have toward themselves, their performance, and toward others. It is important that your answers be true and accurate for you. In the space next to the statement, please enter a number from “1” (**strongly disagree**) to “7” (**strongly agree**) to describe your degree of agreement with each item.

Strongly disagree	Disagree	Slightly disagree	Neutral	Slightly agree	Agree	Strongly Agree
1	2	3	4	5	6	7

1	I have high expectations for myself.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
2	Doing my best never seems to be enough.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
3	I set very high standards for myself.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
4	I often feel disappointment after completing a task because I know I could have done better.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
5	I have a strong need to strive for excellence.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
6	My performance rarely measures up to my standards.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
7	I expect the best from myself.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8	I am hardly ever satisfied with my performance.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Part C-Simplified Coping Style Questionnaire (SCSQ)

Reach each item and then select an answer to indicate how you cope under the stressful situation. Use “never”, “occasionally”, “often”, or “always” to indicate various degrees of coping.

Never	Occasionally	Often	Always
0	1	2	3

1	Get relieved by studying or substitute activities.	0	1	2	3
2	Talk with people, and share personal worry with people.	0	1	2	3
3	Try to look on the bright side of things.	0	1	2	3
4	Change your mind, and rediscover what the important thing is in your life.	0	1	2	3
5	Don't take the problem too seriously.	0	1	2	3
6	Stand your ground, and fight for what you want to get.	0	1	2	3
7	Try to come up with a couple of different solutions to the problem.	0	1	2	3
8	Seek for suggestions from relatives, friends or peers.	0	1	2	3
9	Change something about yourself to deal with the problem.	0	1	2	3
10	Use the experience of other people to deal with similar problems.	0	1	2	3
11	Seek for hobbies, and actively join in variety of recreational activities.	0	1	2	3
12	Try to control your disappointment, regret, sorrow and anger.	0	1	2	3
13	Try to rest or take a leaving to temporally ignore the worry.	0	1	2	3
14	Get rid of worry by smoking, drinking, taking drug, or eating.	0	1	2	3
15	Believe that time will change current status, and waiting is the only thing you should do.	0	1	2	3
16	Try to forget the whole thing.	0	1	2	3
17	Depend on others to solve the problem.	0	1	2	3
18	Accept the reality because there is no other way to solve the problem.	0	1	2	3
19	Imagine that there is a miracle which can change current problem.	0	1	2	3
20	Self-comfort.	0	1	2	3

Part D-The Academic Adjustment Scale (AAS)

This measure has been designed specifically for measuring academic adjustment, and has been designed and validated for use in individuals who are local or who are living abroad to study. Please indicate the level of endorsement to which each of the following questions apply to you:

Rarely applies to me	Occasionally applies to me	Neither does or doesn't apply to me	Sometimes applies to me	Always applies to me
1	2	3	4	5

Academic Lifestyle:						
1	I am enjoying the lifestyle of being a university student.	1	2	3	4	5
2	I sometimes feel as though my education is not worth time away from my work or my family.	1	2	3	4	5
3	I sometimes worry I do not have the academic skills needed to enjoy being a student.	1	2	3	4	5
Academic Achievement:						
4	I am satisfied with the level of my academic performance to date.	1	2	3	4	5
5	I think I am as academically able as any other student.	1	2	3	4	5
6	I am satisfied with my ability to learn at university.	1	2	3	4	5
Academic Motivation:						
7	I expect to successfully complete my degree in the usual allocated timeframe.	1	2	3	4	5
8	The reason I am studying is to lead to a better lifestyle.	1	2	3	4	5
9	I will be disappointed if my studies don't lead me to the career I want.	1	2	3	4	5

THANK YOU FOR YOUR PARTICIPATION.

Appendix D

Multivariate Outliers Tests

Case Summaries^a

	Mahalanobis Distance	Cook's Distance	Centered Leverage Value
1	5.71182	.00191	.03380
2	3.14364	.00046	.01860
3	2.84257	.00076	.01682
4	5.48295	.00539	.03244
5	1.15027	.00138	.00681
6	2.47894	.00012	.01467
7	2.66424	.00017	.01576
8	9.97316	.00065	.05901
9	8.01329	.00560	.04742
10	6.14752	.02233	.03638
11	2.33571	.00091	.01382
12	5.31332	.00193	.03144
13	8.68631	.00259	.05140
14	1.36932	.00000	.00810
15	8.91558	.01902	.05275
16	4.55097	.00133	.02693
17	4.10588	.00174	.02430
18	1.93562	.00019	.01145
19	4.94538	.00056	.02926
20	2.05016	.00074	.01213
21	3.96915	.00409	.02349
22	3.97944	.01195	.02355
23	5.85970	.00008	.03467
24	8.11655	.00196	.04803
25	4.24392	.00030	.02511
26	6.11114	.00037	.03616
27	6.91975	.00554	.04095
28	2.35078	.00127	.01391
29	3.97621	.04781	.02353
30	3.11839	.00126	.01845
31	11.51787	.00303	.06815
32	5.92781	.01072	.03508
33	5.12094	.00003	.03030
34	9.22931	.00125	.05461
35	5.96821	.00068	.03531
36	5.70373	.00299	.03375
37	8.02606	.00693	.04749
38	2.25509	.00193	.01334
39	13.07327	.00035	.07736
40	8.18502	.00040	.04843
41	13.18790	.07106	.07803
42	1.04686	.00141	.00619
43	2.29106	.00111	.01356
44	2.95912	.00529	.01751
45	7.34426	.00314	.04346
46	7.79784	.01462	.04614
47	.85323	.00005	.00505
48	7.80686	.01485	.04619
49	5.79252	.01380	.03428
50	8.60476	.02448	.05092

51	5.53795	.00027	.03277
52	3.13223	.00012	.01853
53	4.70924	.00060	.02787
54	2.47287	.00000	.01463
55	3.62557	.00057	.02145
56	3.37516	.00925	.01997
57	1.69043	.00008	.01000
58	6.35209	.00064	.03759
59	4.05566	.00004	.02400
60	14.93391	.00062	.08837
61	5.82599	.01816	.03447
62	4.98631	.00714	.02950
63	5.31755	.00484	.03146
64	2.01520	.00194	.01192
65	5.28744	.00643	.03129
66	8.31021	.01996	.04917
67	4.71568	.00026	.02790
68	5.65075	.01232	.03344
69	9.81188	.00256	.05806
70	4.82883	.00151	.02857
71	11.08500	.02098	.06559
72	6.31728	.00212	.03738
73	9.84576	.00115	.05826
74	2.96587	.00409	.01755
75	4.18591	.00374	.02477
76	5.94228	.01539	.03516
77	15.28509	.00610	.09044
78	2.89046	.00002	.01710
79	10.78110	.00317	.06379
80	2.83203	.00248	.01676
81	4.14008	.00316	.02450
82	4.72988	.00154	.02799
83	4.47987	.00266	.02651
84	4.06150	.00130	.02403
85	20.55756	.00194	.12164
86	2.93352	.00091	.01736
87	3.41458	.00602	.02020
88	4.83337	.00596	.02860
89	16.11507	.06461	.09536
90	9.34814	.01139	.05531
91	4.08357	.00248	.02416
92	4.11194	.00548	.02433
93	5.16240	.00223	.03055
94	4.06060	.00036	.02403
95	9.43533	.00343	.05583
96	3.93724	.00234	.02330
97	6.75738	.00051	.03998
98	9.93333	.00613	.05878
99	6.01793	.03439	.03561
100	6.09745	.00757	.03608

101	5.39134	.00074	.03190
102	10.13638	.00353	.05998
103	5.35819	.00019	.03171
104	3.56233	.00000	.02108
105	11.95546	.13123	.07074
106	9.81692	.02017	.05809
107	5.38422	.00156	.03186
108	1.01503	.00100	.00601
109	15.78204	.21913	.09338
110	5.19729	.00377	.03075
111	7.36819	.00108	.04360
112	2.83884	.00004	.01680
113	3.95963	.00101	.02343
114	11.42407	.00000	.06760
115	4.24129	.00026	.02510
116	6.85371	.00303	.04055
117	5.59254	.00023	.03309
118	7.11169	.04692	.04208
119	2.17489	.00014	.01287
120	10.71013	.00003	.06337
121	3.86262	.00036	.02286
122	4.65875	.00420	.02757
123	6.98237	.01400	.04132
124	8.66397	.01719	.05127
125	7.36403	.03443	.04357
126	3.67939	.00201	.02177
127	2.56751	.00092	.01519
128	4.30179	.00001	.02545
129	4.23787	.00007	.02508
130	8.02418	.00294	.04748
131	1.40152	.00035	.00829
132	6.81548	.00185	.04033
133	2.06294	.00001	.01221
134	14.97067	.02002	.08858
135	3.68717	.00005	.02182
136	6.14946	.01327	.03639
137	14.89943	.00546	.08816
138	3.67886	.00007	.02177
139	2.13855	.00132	.01265
140	2.51362	.00021	.01487

141		6.93379	.00680	.04103
142		7.11489	.01202	.04210
143		1.49961	.00046	.00887
144		5.43626	.00065	.03217
145		4.56236	.00225	.02700
146		3.20780	.00202	.01898
147		5.01536	.00123	.02968
148		3.96252	.00072	.02345
149		8.56961	.01180	.05071
150		3.18153	.00318	.01883
151		3.05138	.00002	.01806
152		3.51238	.00399	.02078
153		11.21788	.00694	.06638
154		5.49176	.00304	.03250
155		3.96244	.00379	.02345
156		13.51213	.00455	.07995
157		1.43706	.00038	.00850
158		10.85767	.01163	.06425
159		3.95152	.00120	.02338
160		12.91433	.00026	.07642
161		9.50385	.00153	.05624
162		5.96592	.00480	.03530
163		4.50689	.00266	.02667
164		2.37003	.00000	.01402
165		1.39438	.00000	.00825
166		5.31103	.00004	.03143
167		11.78778	.06675	.06975
168		7.68637	.00000	.04548
169		5.54823	.01670	.03283
170		5.86900	.02413	.03473
Total	N	170	170	170
	Maximum	20.55756	.21913	.12164
	Minimum	.85323	.00000	.00505
	Range	19.70432	.21913	.11659

a. Limited to first 200 cases.

Appendix E

Turnitin Originality Report

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Weinstein, Netta, Andrew Balmford, Cody R. DeHaan, Valerie Gladwell, Richard B. Bradbury, and Tatsuya Amano. "Seeing Community for the Trees: The Links among Contact with Natural Environments, Community Cohesion, and Crime", *BioScience*, 2015.

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- 13** Michelle Joosen, Thomas F. Garrity, Michele Staton-Tindall, Matthew L. Hiller, Carl G. Leukefeld, J. Matthew Webster. "Predictors of Current Depressive Symptoms in a Sample of Drug Court Participants", *Substance Use & Misuse*, 2009
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