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PSYCHOLOGICAL FEATURES OF PERFECTIONISM IN HIGHER EDUCATION STUDENTS

The article presents the results of a study on perfectionism among higher education students. It emphasizes the necessity of examining students' perfectionist attitudes during the phase of preparing for professional activities, considering the numerous specific requirements for the activities and behavior of young individuals. It is highlighted that perfectionism motivates a person to achieve the best results, to be active, competitive, and successful.

The research found that the majority of the examined students exhibit behaviors that hinder achieving planned results, whereas a smaller portion of respondents demonstrate behaviors that facilitate goal attainment. Differences in socio-psychological attitudes between first-year and fifth-year students were identified. The highest average score was recorded on the "orientation towards freedom" scale, indicating its priority among young people.

It was noted that the highest average score among the studied group was for self-oriented perfectionism, which characterizes a group with a moderately expressed desire for excellence and flawlessness. The research did not reveal statistically significant differences between first-year and fifth-year students, although some tendencies suggest that fifth-year students have a slightly higher inclination towards high achievements.

It was found that a factor influencing the development of perfectionist tendencies is goal-oriented behavior, as well as orientation towards freedom. Conversely, behavior not aimed at achieving goals and a low level of result orientation block the tendency towards perfectionism. Correlation analysis indicated a negative relationship between self-oriented perfectionism and altruism orientation among students prone to perfectionism. Overall, the study underscores the complex interaction between perfectionism and the socio-psychological attitudes of university students.

Key words: perfectionism, subject-oriented perfectionism, object-oriented perfectionism, socially-prescribed perfectionism, attitude, altruism, egoism.

Introduction. At the present stage, the phenomenon of perfectionism has become a subject of increased scientific interest among domestic psychologists. Experiencing rapid socio-cultural, economic, and political transformations, society places numerous demands on the qualities, abilities, and traits of individuals.

The aspiration to meet high standards, to bring the results of any activity to match the highest standards, to improve one's skills, and to achieve excellence in any sphere of life makes perfectionism an important characteristic of modern youth. Students' perfectionist attitudes particularly develop during the phase of preparing for professional activities. The specificity and significance of the future work impose a range of special requirements on the activities and behavior of young individuals. It stimulates a person to achieve the best results, to be active, competitive, and successful. The need for maximal development and perfection directs a person towards achieving exceptionally high results, which attracts the attention of researchers.

Analysis of latest research and publications. In recent years, the issue of perfectionism has significantly expanded. Today, there are active discussions regarding the psychological structure of perfectionism. Studies have emerged that reveal the connection of the construct with maladaptation, maturity, motivation, suicide, self-attitude, emotional burnout, sovereignty, professionally important qualities, self-regulation styles, and characterological features. The role of perfectionism in professional readiness (I. Hulyas [1], O. Loza [4]), types of perfectionism (T. Zavada [2]), peculiarities of diagnosing perfectionism (L. Karamushka, O. Bondarchuk, T. Hruby [3]), relationships with envy in convicts (O. Mohoreva [5]), and peculiarities of the structure of perfectionism in high school students (H. Chepurina [6]) are also actively researched.

In the Western psychological tradition, perfectionism is associated with scholars such as P. Hewitt, A. Maslow, K. G. Flett, etc. Many theoretical aspects of the phenomenon remain underexplored,

which makes the study of the issue of perfectionism and its interconnection with socio-psychological attitudes in adolescence particularly important for our research. These attitudes determine the directions of an individual's behavior, guiding the person towards activity and success in professional activities.

Purpose. The purpose of the research is to substantiate and empirically investigate the psychological features of perfectionism in higher education students.

Results. The study sample consisted of students from Sumy State Pedagogical University named after A. S. Makarenko, aged 17 to 23 years. The total number of participants was 60, including 4 males and 56 females. To study the dynamics and socio-psychological aspects of perfectionism, two groups were identified: first-year students ($n=30$) and fifth-year students ($n=30$).

According to the results obtained using the "Perfectionism Scale" by R. Jenkins-Friedman, T. Branski-D. Murphy [3, p.46], it was determined that 64% of respondents exhibit behaviors that hinder the achievement of planned results. Such behaviors include impatience in waiting for results, avoiding tasks where failure is possible, and excessive self-demand, among others. According to the interpretation rules of this methodology, this behavior is characteristic of perfectionists. Conversely, 46% of surveyed students demonstrate a tendency toward behaviors that facilitate goal achievement, which is not typical for perfectionists. These individuals are satisfied

with their achievements, generally see their activities through to completion, and can adequately perceive criticism.

The results of the psychodiagnostic survey of first- and fifth-year students using the method of O. F. Potemkina are shown in Fig. 1. The highest average score is observed on the "orientation towards freedom" scale ($Md=6$), indicating the priority of this orientation for young individuals. Next in importance are orientations towards process, result, and altruism.

The presence of these latter orientations characterizes individuals as helpful and mature. People oriented towards results strive to achieve outcomes in their activities despite all obstacles (hustle, obstacles, failures). They are purposeful and reliable. Students with a process-oriented mindset tend to think less about achieving the goal and, for instance, may be late in submitting their work. However, they tend to derive satisfaction from the work they perform. The lowest average scores are observed on the "orientation towards power" ($Md=3.5$) and "orientation towards money" ($Md=3.3$) scales, which may indicate the low significance of material wealth and the desire for influence in the hierarchy of personal priorities for young people.

The overall perfectionism score, obtained using the Multidimensional Perfectionism Scale by P. Hewitt and G. Flett [3, p. 23-27], is 177.3. These results for the general sample fall within the average range, characterizing the group as having a moderately expressed

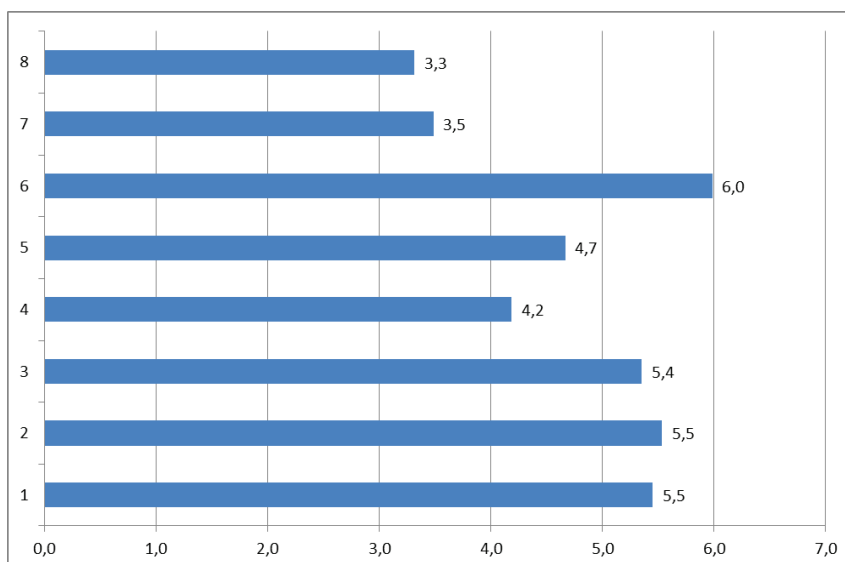


Fig. 1. Average scores on the scales of the method for diagnosing socio-psychological attitudes of personality in the motivational and need spheres by O. F. Potemkina.

Note: 1 – orientation towards process; 2 – orientation towards result; 3 – orientation towards altruism; 4 – orientation towards egoism; 5 – orientation towards labor; 6 – orientation towards money; 7 – orientation towards freedom; 8 – orientation towards power.

aspiration for excellence and flawlessness. The highest average score was found for self-oriented perfectionism ($Md=63.1$). This average score indicates moderate demands placed on oneself and one's performance. Socially prescribed perfectionism, defined as the tendency to perceive the demands of others and society as moderate, was identified at a medium level in the general sample ($Md=59$). The lowest score was recorded for other-oriented perfectionism ($Md=56.9$). This scale determines the tendency of individuals to place moderate demands on others and their activities.

At the initial stage of processing the obtained data, we checked the distribution of indicators relative to the overall average value. Using the non-parametric Kolmogorov-Smirnov test, it was found that for most parameters, the distribution of indicators is not normal. Accordingly, non-parametric methods of statistical data processing will be used for further comparative and correlation analyses.

The logic of further analysis of the experimental study involves examining the differences in the studied parameters between groups defined by their year of study. Using the Mann-Whitney test, it was found that there are no statistically significant differences between first-year and fifth-year students on the scales of the psychodiagnostic methodologies ($p<0.005$).

Despite the lack of statistically significant differences between first- and fifth-year students, the discrepancies in average values suggest the possibility of certain trends. Comparing the average values for the test "Are You Prone to Perfectionism" by Ilyin revealed that the average values for the two defined groups of students are almost identical. For fifth-year students, the average is ($Md=18.9$), while for first-year students, it is ($Md=18.6$). Although the differences are not significant, it can be noted that fifth-year students have a slightly higher tendency towards high achievement.

According to the Perfectionism Scale methodology (R. Jenkins-Friedman, T. Branski – D. Murphy) [3, p. 46-48], the average scores for first-year students on the "Behavior characteristic of perfectionists" scale ($Md=4.5$) are lower than on the "Behavior not characteristic of perfectionists" scale ($Md=6.5$). This distribution indicates that most first-year respondents exhibit behavior that facilitates goal achievement. Among fifth-year students, a similar distribution is observed. The average scores for the "Behavior characteristic of perfectionists" scale are more pronounced among fifth-year students ($Md=6$). These results may be due to the excessive demands on their performance results, influenced by the social devel-

opment situation related to the completion of their studies and the need for further professional development. On the scale that diagnoses behavior not hindering goal achievement, the higher average score belongs to first-year students. This means that at the beginning of their professional education, students are capable of working according to a planned schedule, achieving their set goals, and deriving satisfaction from their completed activities.

To determine the degree of expression of socio-psychological attitudes, the methodology for diagnosing socio-psychological attitudes of personality in the motivational and need sphere by O. F. Potemkina was chosen. This method consists of 80 questions: 40 questions are aimed at identifying the degree of expression of socio-psychological attitudes towards "altruism-egoism" and "process-result," while the other 40 questions focus on identifying the degree of expression of socio-psychological attitudes towards "freedom-power" and "labor-money".

The analysis of the results using O. I. Potemkina's method showed that first-year students exhibit a stronger orientation towards the process ($Md=6$) compared to fifth-year students. People more oriented towards the process tend to think less about achieving the result, often delay submitting their work, and their process orientation hinders their productivity. They are more driven by interest in the activity itself, and achieving results requires a lot of routine work, which they have a negative attitude towards and cannot overcome. At the same time, higher scores on the "orientation towards result" scale were found among fifth-year students, indicating a pronounced desire to achieve high efficiency in their activities despite obstacles and challenges.

The highest average scores on the "orientation towards altruism" and "orientation towards egoism" scales for first- and fifth-year students were found to be the same, but orientation towards altruism is a more pronounced value for students. Altruism is the most valuable social motivation, distinguishing a mature person. Individuals who orient towards altruistic values often deserve respect, even at the expense of themselves. They are people worth caring about. Although excessive altruism can seem unreasonable, it brings happiness. Conversely, people with excessively pronounced egoism primarily focus on their own interests. This does not necessarily mean that the student's interests are limited to material gain; rather, when making decisions, they seriously consider how the consequences will affect them personally.

The results of the second subtest of O. F. Potemkina's methodology for diagnosing socio-psychological

attitudes of personality revealed that there are trend-level differences in the scales of "orientation towards labor" and "orientation towards money." First-year students are more oriented towards work, whereas money is a strong motivator for fifth-year students. There are no differences between the groups defined by their year of study on the scales of "orientation towards freedom" and "orientation towards power". However, the value of freedom is the highest priority for young people of different ages, while orientation towards power is the least expressed.

The "Multidimensional Perfectionism Scale" by P. Hewitt and G. Flett is aimed at measuring the overall level of perfectionism and determining the nature of the relationship among its three components: self-oriented perfectionism (subject-oriented perfectionism); other-oriented perfectionism (object-oriented perfectionism); and socially prescribed perfectionism (socially prescribed perfectionism).

Average Scores and Analysis for "Multidimensional Perfectionism Scale" by Hewitt and Flett. The average scores for the different types of perfectionism among first-year students are as follows: Self-oriented perfectionism (Md=65); Other-oriented perfectionism (Md=54); Socially prescribed perfectionism (Md=60). These scores fall within the average range, indicating that first-year students do not have excessively high demands on themselves, others, or their activities. They do not strive for perfection in all areas of life and do not perceive the demands placed on them by others as excessive. The overall average level of perfectionism (182.5) indicates a moderately expressed desire to be perfect and flawless in everything.

For fifth-year students, the average scores are as follows: Self-oriented perfectionism (Md=59.5); Other-oriented perfectionism (Md=58); Socially prescribed perfectionism (Md=58.5). These scores also do not exceed the average level, with the overall average level of perfectionism being higher. This suggests that fifth-year students exhibit a moderate level of perfectionism.

A moderate level of perfectionism can distinguish between perfectionists and non-perfectionists and identify individuals who exhibit perfectionist characteristics in a specific significant area. Individuals with a moderate level of perfectionism have an adequate perception of others' expectations and demands, a realistic understanding of their abilities and the potential of others, and an acceptance of the possibility of making mistakes. They are characterized by a strong motivation to achieve success and a desire for self-development.

Self-oriented perfectionism indicators (Md=65) prevail among first-year students, indicating that students have moderate personal standards. The tendency to attribute high standards to others is more pronounced for fifth-year students (Md=58). Nearly as many first-year respondents have an average level of object-oriented perfectionism (Md=54). The average level of socially-prescribed perfectionism is more typical for first-year students (Md=60) than for fifth-year students. Individuals with such indicators are not inclined to perceive the demands placed on them as unrealistic, difficult, but necessary to meet in order to gain approval and acceptance. Based on the obtained indicators, it is determined that the overall level of perfectionism for the majority of first-year (Md=182.5) and fifth-year (Md=178.5) students is average.

The study of the psychological characteristics of perfectionism among university students involves identifying the relationships between the scales diagnosing tendencies and manifestations of perfectionism and the scales determining the main orientations of personality. Taking into account the fact that no statistically significant differences were found between the psychodiagnostic scale indicators of the 1st and 5th-year students, the correlation analysis was carried out based on the overall sample indicators.

In order to study the psychological characteristics of perfectionism among university students in more detail, the sample was divided into two groups based on the criterion of propensity and non-propensity towards perfectionism (Table 1, 2).

Using a statistical criterion, the existence of differences between the psychodiagnostic scale indicators of students prone and not prone to perfectionism was investigated. It has been determined that on the scale measuring behavior that hinders goal achievement, the average rank is higher among young men inclined to perfectionism (rank = 45.3) compared to a rank of 26.8 among those not inclined. Thus, there is a likelihood that individuals who set excessive demands on their activities will exhibit signs of perfectionism. On the other hand, young men not inclined to perfectionism dominate the average rank indicators on the scale measuring behavior that facilitates goal achievement.

The group of students more inclined to perfectionism demonstrates higher scores in the following parameters: result orientation, self-oriented perfectionism, and overall level of perfectionism. Therefore, the manifestation of perfectionist aspirations determines the focus on goal achievement, and the value of one's own experiences and aspirations.

A comparative analysis of the correlation coefficients for the studied parameters obtained within the defined samples is presented in Table 3.

It has been determined that within the group of students inclined to perfectionism, there is an inversely proportional relationship between parameters such as self-oriented perfectionism and orientation towards altruism ($r=-0.609$). This means that concern and care for one's own well-being inhibit the desire to help others.

Within the group of students not inclined to exhibit signs of perfectionism, significant relationships are observed between self-oriented perfectionism and its overall level with behaviors that hinder goal achievement. Thus, it paradoxically turns out that despite the higher average rank on the studied scales in the group of young men inclined to perfectionism, more substantial relationships between excessive demands and avoidance of failure with signs of perfectionism are

found in the group of individuals less inclined to perfectionism. Additionally, a significant inverse proportional correlation is determined between these scales and behaviors that facilitate goal achievement ($r=-.416$). This means that people who are not inclined to perform all tasks excellently are more likely to set realistic demands for themselves and their activities, set achievable goals, and systematically fulfill their plans without excessive demands.

Conclusions. Thus, the empirical research examined the characteristics of perfectionism and socio-psychological attitudes among higher education students. It was found that the factor influencing the development of perfectionist tendencies is goal-oriented behavior, as well as an orientation towards freedom. Conversely, behavior that is not goal-oriented and a low ability to focus on results inhibit the development of perfectionism. That is, if a person is prone to perfectionism, achieving results, focusing

Table 1

Significance indicators of differences on the scales of methods between students prone and not prone to perfectionism

Statistical Indicators	Scales				
	Behavior that hinders goal achievement	Behavior that promotes goal achievement	Result Orientation	Self-oriented Perfectionism	Overall Level of Perfectionism
Mann-Whitney U	110,500	106,500	145,500	88,500	128,000
Significance Level Indicator	,001	,001	,008	,000	,003

Table 2

Indicators of Mean Ranks in Groups of Students Prone (1) and Not Prone (2) to Perfectionism

Scales		N	Mean Rank	Sum of Ranks
Behavior that hinders goal achievement	1	12	45,29	543,50
	2	48	26,80	1286,50
	In total	60		
Behavior that promotes goal achievement	1	12	15,38	184,50
	2	48	34,28	1645,50
	In total	60		
Result Orientation	1	12	42,38	508,50
	2	48	27,53	1321,50
	In total	60		
Self-oriented Perfectionism	1	12	47,13	565,50
	2	48	26,34	1264,50
	In total	60		
Other-oriented Perfectionism	1	12	37,21	446,50
	2	48	28,82	1383,50
	In total	60		
Overall Level of Perfectionism	1	12	43,83	526,00
	2	48	27,17	1304,00
	In total	60		

Table 3

Correlation coefficient indicators for the studied parameters in the subsamples

Scales	Correlation coefficient indicator	Inclined to Perfectionism			Not Inclined to Perfectionism		
		Behavior that hinders goal achievement	Behavior that promotes goal achievement	Orientation towards Altruism	Behavior that hinders goal achievement	Behavior that promotes goal achievement	Orientation towards Altruism
Self-oriented Perfectionism	Correlation Coefficient	,516	-,374	-,609*	,392**	-,392**	,114
	Significance (2-tailed)	,086	,231	,036	,006	,006	,442
	N	12	12	12	48	48	48
Overall Level of Perfectionism	Correlation Coefficient	,390	-,468	-,563	,416**	-,416**	,177
	Significance (2-tailed)	,210	,125	,056	,003	,003	,230
	N	12	12	12	48	48	48

on goals, and the possibility of free and active expression are priorities for them.

Subject-oriented perfectionism is determined by an orientation towards results and behavior that hinders goal achievement. At the same time, behavior that promotes goal achievement does not determine the development of personally oriented perfectionism. No statistically significant relationship was found between other-oriented and socially prescribed perfectionism and other studied parameters.

The research of the behavior of students prone and not prone to perfectionism established that

individuals who set excessive demands on their activities will exhibit signs of perfectionism. In contrast, young people not prone to perfectionism dominate the average rank scale that determines behavior conducive to goal achievement.

Students more inclined to perfectionism demonstrate a pronounced orientation towards results, self-oriented perfectionism, and a general level of perfectionism. Thus, the manifestation of perfectionist aspirations defines a focus on achieving goals and the value of one's own experiences and aspirations.

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Щербак Т.І. ПСИХОЛОГІЧНІ ОСОБЛИВОСТІ ПЕРФЕКЦІОНІЗМУ У ЗДОБУВАЧІВ ВИЩОЇ ОСВІТИ

У статті представлено результати дослідження перфекціонізму у студентів ЗВО. Наголошено на необхідності вивчення перфекціоністських настанов студентів на етапі формування їх готовності до професійної діяльності з огляду на цілу низку особливих вимог до діяльності і поведінки молоді

людини. Акцентовано, що перфекціонізм стимулює особистість досягати найкращих результатів бути активною, конкурентоспроможною, успішною. Виявлено, що Було визначено, що більшість досліджуваних студентів ЗВО демонструють поведінку, яка заважає досягненню запланованих результатів, тоді як менша частина респондентів демонструє поведінку, яка сприяє досягненню цілей. Виявлено відмінності у соціально-психологічних установках між студентами першого та п'ятого курсів. Найвищий середній бал був зафіксований за шкалою "орієнтація на свободу", що вказує на її пріоритет серед молоді. Констатовано, що найвищий середній бал досліджуваних за самоорієнтованим перфекціонізмом, що характеризує групу з помірно вираженим прагненням до досконалості, бездоганності. Дослідження не виявило статистично значущих відмінностей між студентами першого та п'ятого курсів, хоча деякі тенденції свідчать про те, що студенти п'ятого курсу мають трохи вищу схильність до високих досягнень. З'ясовано, що фактором, який впливає на розвиток схильностей до перфекціонізму, є поведінка, орієнтована на досягнення мети, а також орієнтація на свободу, у той же самий час блокують схильність до перфекціонізму поведінка не спрямована на досягнення мети, а також низький рівень здатності орієнтуватися на результат. Кореляційний аналіз вказав на зворотний зв'язок між самоорієнтованим перфекціонізмом та орієнтацією на альтруїзм серед студентів, схильних до перфекціонізму. Загалом, дослідження підкреслює складну взаємодію між перфекціонізмом і соціально-психологічними установками студентів ЗВО.

Ключові слова: перфекціонізм, суб'єктно-орієнтований перфекціонізм, об'єктно-орієнтований перфекціонізм, соціально-наказовий перфекціонізм, установка, альтруїзм, егоїзм.