

Maladaptive perfectionism and affective disorders in childhood

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Prof. Lence Miloseva , Ph.D.

Goce Delcev University, Stip, R. Macedonia

lence.miloseva@ugd.edu.mk

Introduction:

Maladaptive perfectionism involves unrealistically high standards, intense ruminative concern over mistakes, perceived pressure from others to be perfect, a perceived large discrepancy between one's performance and personal standards, compulsive doubting of one's actions, and motivation to avoid negative consequences (Enns & Cox, 2002). Researches clearly indicate relation of this multidimensional construct with negative outcomes and even with psychopathology. Although it is known that childhood and adolescence are the most important periods for the development of perfectionism, this is almost unknown research area in R. Macedonia.

Design & methods:

The data were obtained in two primary schools in Stip, R. Macedonia. The sample consisted of 468 students, aged 11-14 years, from the 5th till 8th grade of primary school, of which 279 were female, and 189 male. This research aimed to explore the relationship of perfectionism dimensions with anxiety and depression among children. We examined possible difference among four groups of children (children with the anxiety symptoms, symptoms of depression, anxiety and depression symptoms, and children with no apparent symptoms) with regard to the level of dimensions of perfectionism.

The following instruments were used: Adaptive/Maladaptive Perfectionism Scale (Rice & Preusser, 2002), Revised Children's Manifest Anxiety Scale (RCMAS, Reynolds & Richmond, 1978) and Children's Depression Inventory (CDI, Kovacs, 1981).

Results & Conclusions:

The results show that there is a statistically significant difference among four groups of children with regard to the level of dimensions of perfectionism. When the impact of anxiety was controlled, depression was significantly correlated with the dimensions Sensitivity to Mistakes and Contingent Self-Esteem, and when the impact of depression was controlled only the correlation of anxiety and Contingent Self-Esteem was not statistically significant.

Key words: maladaptive perfectionism; affective disorders; anxiety; depression, children;