

Effect Of Perfectionism on Burnout in Early Career Professionals: The Mediating Role of Work-Life Balance

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ABSTRACT

Early career professionals (aged 19–35) often encounter a demanding phase of professional and personal development, where ambition, role adjustment, and the pursuit of excellence coexist with heightened vulnerability to stress and burnout. Perfectionism, while frequently associated with diligence and competence, can also foster emotional fatigue when expectations become excessive. This study investigated how perfectionism relates to burnout and whether work–life balance mediates this association. Using a quantitative, cross-sectional design, data were gathered from 130 professionals in Delhi and the NCR region through the Almost Perfect Scale–Revised, the Oldenburg Burnout Inventory, and the Work–Life Balance Scale. Correlational analyses revealed that perfectionism was inversely related to burnout and positively associated with work–life balance. Regression results showed that perfectionism accounted for roughly 10% of the variance in burnout, while the mediating role of work–life balance was not significant. The findings emphasize the complex nature of perfectionism and highlight the importance of cultivating balanced professional practices to maintain well-being among emerging professionals.

Keywords- Perfectionism, Burnout, Work-Life Balance, Career, Professionals

INTRODUCTION

Mental health challenges in the workplace have become a global concern, with stress and emotional exhaustion rising among employees. Early career professionals, aged 19 to 35, are particularly vulnerable as they navigate career development, financial independence, and identity formation. The pressures of adapting to professional expectations and proving competence, combined with rigid self-standards, can lead to burnout marked by emotional fatigue, detachment, and reduced accomplishment.

Perfectionism plays a critical role in this process. While adaptive perfectionism (goal-oriented striving) can promote achievement, maladaptive perfectionism (self-critical concern) often leads to stress, low self-esteem, and higher burnout risk. Early career professionals frequently internalize high standards from both personal ambition and organizational expectations. Initially motivating, perfectionism can become harmful when unrealistic expectations and self-criticism accumulate, resulting in overcommitment and emotional exhaustion.

Burnout, characterized by fatigue, disengagement, and cynicism, develops gradually, especially among professionals still learning to manage workload and boundaries. Work–life balance, the ability to manage work and personal commitments effectively, can buffer stress and support recovery. A healthy balance allows for cognitive and emotional replenishment,

reducing the intensity of perfectionistic rumination, whereas imbalance reinforces overwork and self-criticism.

Cultural context further shapes these dynamics. In India, societal expectations, family responsibilities, and competitive work environments amplify perfectionistic tendencies and blur work–life boundaries. Long working hours and hierarchical pressures normalize overcommitment, making it difficult for professionals to recognize maladaptive patterns. Family and societal norms often complicate work–life balance, creating long-term emotional strain.

This study examined the effect of perfectionism on burnout among early career professionals in Delhi and the NCR and explored whether work–life balance mediates this relationship. Using the Almost Perfect Scale–Revised, Oldenburg Burnout Inventory, and Work–Life Balance Scale, data from 130 participants showed that perfectionism negatively correlated with burnout and positively with work–life balance. Regression indicated that perfectionism significantly predicted burnout, while work–life balance did not mediate this effect, suggesting that self-regulatory traits may sustain motivation independently.

These findings highlight the dual nature of perfectionism it can foster discipline and achievement but also pose psychological risks. They underscore the importance of interventions at both organizational and individual levels, including realistic goal-setting, mentorship, stress management programs, and cultivating self-compassion. Recognizing the role of cultural and organizational context is also vital.

Ultimately, balancing the drive for excellence with self-care and acceptance of imperfection is essential for sustainable professional growth. Early interventions and awareness can help young professionals navigate stress, reduce burnout risk, and thrive both personally and professionally.

Perfectionism, broadly defined as the tendency to set excessively high standards coupled with overly critical self-evaluations (Frost et al., 1990; Hewitt & Flett, 1991), occupies a paradoxical position in occupational psychology. On one hand, it drives conscientiousness, precision, and motivation to excel; on the other, it often generates chronic stress, self-doubt, and fatigue when personal expectations remain unmet. In early career stages, these tendencies can be particularly pronounced. Young professionals, eager to establish competence and credibility, often internalize perfectionistic norms working extended hours, avoiding delegation, and perceiving errors as personal failures. While such behaviors can enhance performance temporarily, they simultaneously increase the risk of emotional depletion and disengagement. Recent studies (Bellam et al., 2025; Lin et al., 2024) have emphasized that perfectionistic striving may contribute marginally to performance gains, yet these benefits are offset by the psychological costs of perfectionistic concern suggesting that the perfectionism productivity link is both complex and fragile.

Burnout, conceptualized as a state of prolonged physical, emotional, and cognitive exhaustion resulting from chronic workplace stress, is another major psychological construct relevant to early career professionals (Maslach & Leiter, 2016). It manifests through emotional fatigue, detachment, and reduced professional efficacy. For individuals in early adulthood, burnout not

only impairs occupational performance but can also disrupt identity formation and long-term career satisfaction. The developmental transitions of early adulthood establishing financial independence, mastering professional roles, and balancing personal relationships further heighten susceptibility to stress and exhaustion. Empirical research (Kumar et al., 2023; Kinman et al., 2022) indicates that younger employees often report higher burnout levels than mid- or late-career professionals, reflecting both workplace pressures and limited access to coping resources. In such contexts, perfectionism can act as both a catalyst and a coping mechanism motivating diligence yet simultaneously perpetuating stress through unattainable self-demands.

Work–life balance, in contrast, serves as a potential protective factor that mitigates the negative impact of perfectionism and occupational stress. Defined as the ability to effectively manage professional responsibilities alongside personal commitments, it is not a static equilibrium but a dynamic process influenced by career stage, social context, and organizational culture (Brough et al., 2014). Early career professionals frequently report difficulty achieving this balance due to job insecurity, demanding workloads, and the drive to prove competence. Over time, the inability to maintain boundaries between work and personal life contributes to chronic strain and psychological exhaustion. Studies have shown that individuals with higher work–life balance report lower burnout, better psychological well-being, and stronger job satisfaction (Klamut et al., 2022; Martinez et al., 2025). However, perfectionistic individuals may experience greater difficulty in achieving such balance, as their intrinsic standards often blur the line between professional excellence and overcommitment. This study will focus on the following key research questions:

- Is there a significant relationship between perfectionism and burnout among early career professionals?
- Is there a significant relationship between perfectionism and work–life balance in this population?
- Is there a significant relationship between work–life balance and burnout?
- Does work–life balance mediate the relationship between perfectionism and burnout?

By addressing these questions, the study aims to clarify whether perfectionism contributes directly to burnout or whether its impact is influenced by an individual’s ability to maintain a healthy work–life balance. It also seeks to determine whether work–life balance acts as a potential pathway through which perfectionism affects emotional exhaustion and disengagement at work. The inclusion of mediation analysis will help establish whether perfectionism leads to higher burnout primarily through disrupted balance between professional and personal life, or whether it exerts a direct effect independent of balance.

These questions are framed within a developmental and occupational psychology perspective, emphasizing adaptive functioning, well-being, and sustainable professional growth rather than focusing solely on negative outcomes. In doing so, the study seeks to offer both theoretical insights and practical relevance for workplace mental health, employee resilience, and strategies to promote balanced achievement among early career professionals.

Perfectionism and work–life balance thus represent two interacting forces that jointly shape the experience of burnout. Adaptive perfectionism rooted in high standards and goal-oriented behavior may coexist with effective balance strategies, fostering resilience and satisfaction. Conversely, maladaptive perfectionism marked by chronic concern over mistakes and self-critical rumination tends to undermine balance and amplify burnout risk (Mohr et al., 2022). Understanding how these constructs intersect is particularly relevant for early career professionals in competitive urban environments such as Delhi and the National Capital Region, where work demands are high and organizational cultures often valorize constant productivity. Despite growing research globally, empirical evidence from the Indian context remains limited, especially regarding how perfectionism interacts with work–life balance to influence burnout outcomes among young professionals.

This study aims to explore how perfectionism and work–life balance influence burnout among early career professionals aged 19 to 35. By examining this relationship in a non-clinical Indian sample, the research seeks to shed light on ways to prevent workplace stress, identify maladaptive perfectionistic patterns early, and support practical, culturally sensitive interventions.

The findings are expected to have both theoretical and practical relevance. They may enhance understanding of how personality traits like perfectionism affect coping and adaptation in demanding work environments. At the same time, they can guide organizations in designing wellness programs, mentoring initiatives, and strategies that promote balance, resilience, and sustainable professional growth.

By situating the study within the developmental stage of early career professionals and the Indian cultural context, it provides a nuanced perspective at the intersection of personality, workplace, and cultural psychology.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Bellam et. al (2025) This meta-analysis examines perfectionistic striving and concern in relation to work hours and performance. Findings show that while both traits increase work time, only striving offers modest performance gains, which are offset by the negative effects of concern. Overall, perfectionism demands greater effort with limited improvement in productivity, highlighting its psychological costs.

Zheng et al. (2025) examined how mindfulness, cognitive reappraisal, and perfectionism relate to work addiction. The study found that mindfulness is linked to reduced work addiction by lowering perfectionism and improving emotional control. Practical interventions include daily mindfulness activities, MBSR programs, and manager-led modeling, though the cross-sectional design limits causal conclusions and calls for longitudinal, cross-cultural research.

Kleszweski et al. (2025) explored the reciprocal link between perfectionism and work goal achievement. The study shows that while perfectionistic efforts can aid goal attainment when supported by hope and self-confidence, perfectionistic worries limit these benefits. It highlights perfectionism as both a cause and outcome in the workplace, stressing the need for short-term studies and strategies to reduce worries.

Kohli et al. (2025) examined the link between perfectionism and job performance, highlighting gaps in existing research while offering practical guidance for managers and future workplace programs to foster high performance and employee development.

Pearce et al. (2025) argue that while perfectionism in leaders can create inefficiency, bureaucracy, and reduced creativity, it may yield positive results when controlled and balanced with a focus on steady progress rather than flawless outcomes.

Yamakawa et al. (2025) highlight the crisis of overwork in Japan's healthcare system, noting that excessive hours, poor task delegation, and rigid hierarchies contribute to high burnout among medical residents. The study emphasizes restructuring physicians' roles, improving communication, and adopting task-sharing strategies to protect doctor well-being, which is essential for sustainable patient care.

Martinez et al. (2025) show that burnout and disengagement reduce productivity, harm employee well-being, and create major financial losses, underscoring the need for early interventions that build resilience and foster healthier workplaces.

Lin et al. (2024) found that positive perfectionism supports well-being, while negative perfectionism increases stress and health risks; grit serves as a protective factor, suggesting the need to foster adaptive perfectionism and resilience in managing workplace stress.

Miley et al. (2024) showed that traits like openness to experience shape how clinical decision-making affects nurses' well-being and moral distress, highlighting the need to consider personality differences, career stage, and self-compassion in future research and support strategies.

Kumar et. al (2023) A study on India's IT sector found that practicing stress management strategies significantly reduces workplace stress and burnout. Organizational initiatives such as work-life balance programs, flexible arrangements, and open communication, along with individual practices like self-care, mindfulness, and resilience training, are essential for sustaining employee well-being and productivity.

Kinman et. al (2022) found that socially prescribed and other-oriented perfectionism were strongly linked to burnout among UK social workers, with younger workers particularly vulnerable, underscoring the need to address perfectionism's impact on well-being.

Klamut et.a (2022) The study found that a balanced time perspective significantly relates to emotional exhaustion and personal accomplishment in burnout, while depersonalization shows no link. Workplace flexibility, such as adjustable schedules, is highlighted as an effective strategy to reduce burnout risk and support employee well-being.

Gabriel et. al (2022) Employee burnout has serious consequences for individuals and organizations, worsened during crises like COVID-19. Evidence-based strategies to prevent and address burnout include stress management programs, employee autonomy, social support, participatory decision-making, and effective performance management systems.

Brown et al. (2021) found that cultural context shapes women's use of work–life balance programs. Korean women were influenced by collectivism, hierarchy, and gender roles, while U.S. women emphasized organizational culture, hierarchy, and gender expectations.

O'Carroll et al. (2015) found that rising work demands, financial pressures, and reduced family support increase stress and childcare burdens, emphasizing the need for organizational flexibility and engagement to support employees and remain competitive.

METHODOLOGY

Participants

A total of 130 early adults aged 19–35 years were initially recruited through offline channels and online platforms, including academic networks, social media groups, and psychology forums. All participants were fluent in English and did not have current psychiatric diagnoses. Participation was voluntary, and participants were informed that they could withdraw at any stage without penalty.

Design

A quantitative, cross-sectional correlational research design was used to examine the natural relationships between perfectionism, work–life balance, and burnout among early career professionals.

TOOLS

Almost Perfect Scale–Revised (APS-R)

The Almost Perfect Scale–Revised (APS-R) by Slaney et al. (2001) was used to assess perfectionism across three dimensions: High Standards, Order, and Discrepancy. This 23-item self-report instrument uses a 7-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree to 7 = strongly agree), with higher scores reflecting greater perfectionistic tendencies. High Standards and Order capture adaptive perfectionism, while Discrepancy reflects maladaptive aspects. In this study, the APS-R total score was used to measure overall perfectionism.

Oldenburg Burnout Inventory (OLBI)

The Oldenburg Burnout Inventory (OLBI; Demerouti et al., 2003) was used to assess burnout across two dimensions: Exhaustion and Disengagement. This 16-item self-report instrument uses a 4-point Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree to 4 = strongly agree), with higher scores indicating greater burnout. Exhaustion captures physical, cognitive, and emotional fatigue, while Disengagement reflects distancing from work. In this study, the OLBI total score was used to measure overall burnout.

Work–Life Balance Scale (WLBS)

The Work–Life Balance Scale (WLBS; Brough et al., 2014) was used to assess perceived balance between work and non-work roles. This self-report instrument uses a Likert scale (1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree), with higher scores indicating better work–life balance. Items capture equilibrium, satisfaction, and functioning across professional and personal domains. In this study, the WLBS total score was used to measure overall work–life balance.

Procedure

Participants completed the survey using offline forms or online Google Forms. After reading and providing informed consent, participants completed demographic questions followed by the APS-R, OLBI, and WLBS in randomized order. The questionnaire took approximately 15–20 minutes to complete. Participants who requested feedback on their scores were provided results after the study. Ethical guidelines were strictly followed, and contact details for mental health support services were shared with all participants.

Hypothesis

The study hypothesized that perfectionism will be positively associated with burnout, as striving for flawless performance increases stress and exhaustion. Work–life balance is expected to be negatively related to burnout, protecting against its effects. It is further proposed that work–life balance mediates the link between perfectionism and burnout. Professionals with high perfectionism may experience greater burnout when their balance is poor. Finally, different dimensions of perfectionism may influence burnout to varying degrees through this mediating effect.

Data Analysis

Data were processed using SPSS v27; initial checks confirmed suitability (no major missing data, outliers, or deviations from normality). Descriptive statistics revealed scale means and standard deviations for perfectionism, burnout, and work-life balance. Pearson's r showed significant negative association between perfectionism and burnout ($r = -.308, p = .001$) and a positive link with work-life balance ($r = .433, p < .001$). Regression analysis ($F(2,127) = \text{value}, p < .05$) indicated perfectionism significantly predicted lower burnout ($\beta = -.26, p = .008$), explaining nearly 10% of variance ($R^2 \approx .10$), while work-life balance lost significance once both predictors were in the model ($\beta = \text{nonsignificant}, p = .496$); all regression assumptions were met per diagnostics. Results suggest perfectionism contrary to common assumption may buffer against burnout in this professional sample, with work-life balance playing a less central role when perfectionism is included

Ethical Considerations

The study followed APA ethical standards. Informed consent was obtained from all participants, and data confidentiality was maintained. Participants could withdraw at any time without penalty. Ethical approval was secured from the institutional ethics committee prior to data collection.

RESULTS AND INTERPRETATION

The present study aimed to examine how perfectionism influences burnout among early career professionals and to explore whether work–life balance plays a mediating role in this relationship. The data collected from 130 participants were analyzed using SPSS, and the results are presented in the following section. Prior to analysis, the data were screened for normality, outliers, and missing values. All variables were found to be within acceptable limits, and the assumptions for correlation and regression analyses were met.

Descriptive statistics were first calculated to gain an overview of the participants' responses. The mean scores indicated that, on average, participants reported moderate to high levels of perfectionism, moderate work–life balance, and moderately elevated levels of burnout. Visual inspection of the histograms and normality plots showed a fairly normal distribution across all measures, suggesting that the sample reflected a balanced range of responses representative of early career professionals.

To address the first research objective, Pearson's product–moment correlation coefficients were computed to examine the associations among perfectionism, burnout, and work–life balance. The results revealed a significant negative correlation between perfectionism and burnout ($r = -.308$, $p = .001$), indicating that individuals with higher levels of adaptive perfectionism experienced lower levels of emotional exhaustion and disengagement. A significant positive correlation was also found between perfectionism and work–life balance ($r = .433$, $p = .000$), suggesting that participants who maintained organized, goal-oriented approaches to work also tended to manage their personal and professional roles more effectively. Additionally, work–life balance showed a negative correlation with burnout ($r = -.246$, $p = .004$), meaning that higher balance between work and personal life was linked to reduced feelings of fatigue and detachment.

To further understand the predictive influence of perfectionism and work–life balance on burnout, a multiple regression analysis was carried out, with burnout entered as the dependent variable. The overall model was statistically significant ($F = 6.987$, $p = .002$) and explained approximately 10 percent of the variance in burnout ($R^2 = .10$). Among the predictors, perfectionism emerged as a significant negative predictor ($\beta = -.287$, $p = .008$), indicating that higher perfectionism scores were associated with lower burnout levels. Work–life balance, however, did not significantly predict burnout ($\beta = -.067$, $p = .496$) when considered alongside perfectionism, suggesting that its influence was overshadowed by the stronger predictive value of perfectionism.

A mediation analysis was conducted to test whether work–life balance mediated the link between perfectionism and burnout. The indirect pathway was not found to be statistically significant, indicating that work–life balance did not function as a mediating variable in this relationship. In other words, while work–life balance was associated with both perfectionism and burnout individually, it did not explain the connection between the two. Perfectionism exerted a more direct influence on burnout outcomes in this sample.

The pattern of findings suggests a complex and somewhat counterintuitive relationship among these variables. Although perfectionism is commonly perceived as a risk factor for burnout, the current data indicate that, in early career stages, certain perfectionistic traits may actually serve adaptive functions. Participants who reported higher levels of perfectionism also tended to demonstrate stronger organization and goal clarity, which may have helped buffer against exhaustion. At the same time, the absence of a significant mediating role for work–life balance points to the possibility that perfectionism's effects on burnout are driven more by internal motivational dynamics than by external balancing factors.

Overall, the results highlight the dual nature of perfectionism within professional settings. While it can motivate individuals to perform effectively and maintain high standards, its benefits depend on whether the striving remains realistic and self-regulated. The findings underscore that early career professionals who are able to channel their perfectionism adaptively may be less vulnerable to burnout, whereas those who internalize excessively rigid expectations without sufficient rest or support may still face emotional strain. These results provide an empirical foundation for further discussion on how personal traits and lifestyle factors interact to shape occupational well-being.

DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSION

The present study examined how perfectionism influences burnout among early career professionals and whether work–life balance mediates this relationship. The findings contribute to a nuanced understanding of how personal dispositions and lifestyle factors interact to shape occupational well-being in the early stages of professional life. The results revealed that perfectionism was negatively correlated with burnout and positively associated with work–life balance. Regression analyses showed that perfectionism significantly predicted burnout, accounting for about ten percent of the variance, while the mediating effect of work–life balance was not statistically significant. These outcomes, though somewhat counterintuitive, underscore the multifaceted nature of perfectionism and the need to distinguish between its adaptive and maladaptive dimensions when considering its effects on mental health and job performance.

The negative association between perfectionism and burnout suggests that, within this sample, perfectionism may have functioned more as a source of structure and motivation than as a vulnerability factor. This finding aligns with recent research indicating that perfectionistic striving when balanced with self-regulation can enhance engagement and protect against emotional exhaustion. Early career professionals often rely on internal standards of excellence to navigate competitive environments and uncertain job markets. For many, these high standards provide a sense of direction, reinforcing persistence and self-discipline. When perfectionism remains goal-focused rather than fear-driven, it can help individuals maintain clarity and purpose in their work. In this sense, the trait may operate as an adaptive mechanism that channels ambition into productivity while offering psychological stability through order and achievement.

However, this interpretation does not diminish the potential risks of maladaptive perfectionism. Prior literature consistently highlights that when perfectionism is accompanied by chronic self-criticism, rumination, and intolerance of mistakes, it becomes a significant predictor of burnout and other stress-related outcomes. The present results suggest that the form of perfectionism prevalent in this sample may lean toward adaptive striving rather than self-punitive concern. Cultural factors could partly explain this trend. In Indian professional settings, where diligence and precision are highly valued, perfectionistic traits may be socially reinforced and interpreted as indicators of competence rather than as psychological burdens. As a result, young professionals might internalize these traits positively, associating them with success and respect, at least during the initial career years. Over time, however, sustained overcommitment

without recovery could still transform adaptive striving into emotional strain, underscoring the importance of early balance and awareness.

The positive relationship observed between perfectionism and work–life balance is also noteworthy. While perfectionism is often associated with imbalance and overwork, in this context it appears to have contributed to more organized and deliberate boundary management. Individuals who set structured goals and manage their time effectively may be better able to compartmentalize professional and personal responsibilities. This finding resonates with research suggesting that certain perfectionistic characteristics, such as orderliness and conscientiousness, can support efficient time use and reduce role conflict when coupled with self-discipline and planning. For early career professionals, this capacity to impose structure may help sustain productivity while preserving personal space, particularly in demanding urban work environments such as Delhi and the NCR region.

Despite these associations, work–life balance did not emerge as a significant mediator between perfectionism and burnout. This suggests that, although maintaining balance contributes to overall well-being, it may not fully explain how perfectionism influences exhaustion in this population. One possible explanation is that the participants' experiences of burnout were shaped more by internal cognitive factors such as motivation, control, and self-evaluation than by external balancing mechanisms. In other words, how individuals interpret and regulate their perfectionism may have a stronger impact on burnout than their perceived equilibrium between work and personal life. Alternatively, the absence of mediation could reflect the developmental phase of the participants: early career professionals may still be forming long-term habits related to work–life integration, making balance a less stable or consistent construct during this stage.

Another point worth considering is the influence of cultural and organizational contexts on these relationships. Indian workplaces often emphasize dedication and resilience, with long hours and limited flexibility seen as signs of commitment. Such environments can normalize overwork and limit the perceived necessity of balance, even among individuals who value it. The participants in this study, drawn from Delhi and NCR, likely operate in corporate cultures where perfectionistic behaviors are rewarded and burnout symptoms remain underreported. This context may explain why perfectionism predicted lower burnout levels in the short term because it aligns with social and organizational expectations but could still carry potential risks over time. Future longitudinal research is needed to determine whether these adaptive effects persist or evolve into maladaptive patterns as careers progress.

The findings of this study also align with broader theoretical perspectives on occupational health and personality. From the standpoint of self-determination and cognitive evaluation theories, perfectionism may enhance well-being when it supports intrinsic motivation and perceived competence but lead to burnout when it fosters dependence on external validation. The current results appear to reflect the former, suggesting that participants experienced perfectionistic striving as internally motivated rather than imposed. Similarly, models of occupational stress that emphasize person–environment fit suggest that stress outcomes depend on the alignment between individual dispositions and organizational demands. When perfectionistic traits align with work cultures that value precision and perseverance, they may

initially protect against burnout; when demands exceed capacity or values conflict, the same traits can become liabilities.

The practical implications of these findings are significant. For organizations, the results highlight the importance of recognizing perfectionism's dual nature and creating systems that reinforce its adaptive rather than maladaptive forms. Providing constructive feedback, promoting realistic expectations, and encouraging open dialogue about errors can help employees maintain high standards without falling into self-critical patterns. Mentorship programs that focus on healthy achievement orientation can further support early career professionals in managing performance pressure. At the individual level, cultivating self-compassion, flexible goal-setting, and emotional awareness are essential strategies for transforming perfectionism into a productive strength rather than a psychological burden. Encouraging employees to view mistakes as opportunities for learning can also reduce anxiety and foster resilience.

The study also underscores the relevance of work–life balance as a broader wellness strategy. Although it did not mediate the perfectionism–burnout relationship statistically, its strong correlations with both constructs confirm its value as a component of mental health and job satisfaction. Creating organizational cultures that respect personal boundaries, support flexible scheduling, and normalize rest can help sustain engagement and reduce long-term fatigue. For early career professionals, developing awareness of personal limits and prioritizing recovery may be especially critical, as habits formed during these years often shape long-term professional trajectories. Balancing dedication with detachment ensures that ambition remains sustainable rather than self-defeating.

While the study provides meaningful insights, certain limitations must be acknowledged. The reliance on self-report measures may have introduced response biases, as participants could have underreported distress due to social desirability or workplace stigma. The cross-sectional design limits causal interpretation, making it difficult to determine whether perfectionism leads to burnout or whether individuals experiencing burnout perceive their perfectionism differently. Furthermore, the study did not differentiate between adaptive and maladaptive perfectionism at a subscale level, which could have provided a more detailed understanding of how specific dimensions relate to burnout and balance. Future studies could employ longitudinal designs, include qualitative components, and consider additional variables such as coping strategies, personality traits, or organizational climate to build a more comprehensive model.

In conclusion, the findings of this research contribute to a more differentiated understanding of perfectionism in the workplace. For early career professionals, perfectionism appears to function as a double-edged quality capable of inspiring excellence while also carrying the potential for psychological strain. When combined with organization, self-regulation, and supportive work environments, it may serve as a protective factor that enhances performance and buffers against burnout. However, without awareness and balance, the same trait can evolve into a source of chronic tension and fatigue. Work–life balance, though not a mediator in this study, remains a valuable indicator of overall well-being and should continue to be a focus of both organizational and individual efforts.

The broader implication of this study lies in redefining how success and productivity are understood in modern professional life. Sustainable achievement is not merely the outcome of constant striving but of calibrated striving one that values progress over perfection and balance over burnout. Encouraging early career professionals to embrace this perspective can lead to healthier work identities, improved performance, and greater long-term satisfaction. By integrating these insights into professional training, mental health initiatives, and workplace policies, organizations can cultivate environments where ambition and well-being coexist, ensuring that the pursuit of excellence remains both human and sustainable.

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APPENDICES

Almost Perfect Scale-Revised (English)

Instructions

The following items are designed to measure attitudes people have toward themselves, their performance, and toward others. There are no right or wrong answers. Please respond to all of the items. Use your first impression and do not spend too much time on individual items in responding.

Respond to each of the items using the scale below to describe your degree of agreement with each item. Circle the appropriate rating for each item.

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

Items	Ratings						
1. I have high standards for my performance at work or at school.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
2. I am an orderly person.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
3. I often feel frustrated because I can't meet my goals.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
4. Neatness is important to me.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
5. If you don't expect much out of yourself, you will never succeed.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
6. My best just never seems to be good enough for me.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
7. I think things should be put away in their place	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8. I have high expectations for myself.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
9. I rarely live up to my high standards.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
10. I like to always be organized and disciplined.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
11. Doing my best never seems to be enough.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
12. I set very high standards for myself.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
13. I am never satisfied with my accomplishments.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
14. I expect the best from myself.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
15. I often worry about not measuring up to my own expectations.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
16. My performance rarely measures up to my standards.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
17. I am not satisfied even when I know I have done my best.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
18. I try to do my best at everything I do.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
19. I am seldom able to meet my own high standards of performance.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
20. I am hardly ever satisfied with my performance.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
21. I hardly ever feel that what I've done is good enough.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
22. I have a strong need to strive for excellence.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
23. I often feel disappointment after completing a task because I know I could have done better.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Source:

Slaney, R. B., Mobley, M., Trippi, J., Ashby, J. S., & Johnson, D. G. (1996). *The Almost Perfect Scale-Revised*. Unpublished manuscript, The Pennsylvania State University, University Park.

Slaney, R. B., Rice, K. G., Mobley, M., Trippi, J., & Ashby, J. S. (2001). The revised Almost Perfect Scale. *Measurement and Evaluation in Counseling and Development*, 34, 130-145.

oldenburg burnout inventory

name: _____

date: _____

Instructions: Below you find a series of statements with which you may agree or disagree. Using the scale, please indicate the degree of your agreement by selecting the number that corresponds with each statement.

		<i>strongly agree</i>	<i>agree</i>	<i>disagree</i>	<i>strongly disagree</i>
1.	I always find new and interesting aspects in my work (D)	1	2	3	4
2.	There are days when I feel tired before I arrive at work (E.R.)	1	2	3	4
3.	It happens more and more often that I talk about my work in a negative way (D.R)	1	2	3	4
4.	After work, I tend to need more time than in the past in order to relax and feel better (E.R)	1	2	3	4
5.	I can tolerate the pressure of my work very well (E)	1	2	3	4
6.	Lately, I tend to think less at work and do my job almost mechanically (D.R)	1	2	3	4
7.	I find my work to be a positive challenge (D)	1	2	3	4
8.	During my work, I often feel emotionally drained (E.R.)	1	2	3	4
9.	Over time, one can become disconnected from this type of work (D.R)	1	2	3	4
10.	After working, I have enough energy for my leisure activities (E)	1	2	3	4
11.	Sometimes I feel sickened by my work tasks (D.R)	1	2	3	4
12.	After my work, I usually feel worn out and weary (E.R)	1	2	3	4
13.	This is the only type of work that I can imagine myself doing (D)	1	2	3	4
14.	Usually, I can manage the amount of my work well (E)	1	2	3	4
15.	I feel more and more engaged in my work (D)	1	2	3	4
16.	When I work, I usually feel energized (E)	1	2	3	4

Note: Disengagement items are 1, 3(R), 6(R), 7, 9(R), 11(R), 13, 15. Exhaustion items are 2(R), 4(R), 5, 8(R), 10, 12(R), 14, 16. (R) means reversed item when the scores should be such that higher scores indicate more burnout.

**disengagement
sub-total:**

**exhaustion
sub-total:**

**full scale
total:**

Delgadillo et al (2018) reported "Therapists are identified as having low, medium or high OLBI-D scores, based on scores above or below 1 standard deviation of the mean (M = 2.15, SD = 0.52; ≤1.62 = low, 1.63 to 2.67 = medium, ≥2.68 = high)."

Work-life balance scale

(Hayman J (2005) adopted from Fischer McAuley et.al (2003)

Dear Respondent,

You are requested to kindly provide your responses. Please be assured that your responses will be kept confidential and will be used for academic purpose only.

S.N	Statements	Strongly Disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Neither Agree Nor Disagree (3)	Agree (4)	Strongly Agree (5)
1	My personal life suffers because of work					
2	My job makes personal life difficult					
3	I neglect personal needs because of work					
4	I put personal life on hold for work					
5	I miss personal activities because of work					
6	I struggle to juggle work and non-work					
7	I am unhappy with the amount of time for non-work activities					
8	My personal life drains me of energy for work					
9	I am too tired to be effective at work					
10	My work suffers because of my personal life					
11	It is hard to work because of personal matters					
12	My personal life gives me energy for my job					
13	My job gives me energy to pursue personal activities					
14	I have a better mood at work because of personal life					
15	I have a better mood because of my job					

TABLES AND FIGURES

TABLE 1

This table provides descriptive statistics for Perfectionism, Burnout, and Work Life Balance

Descriptive Statistics

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Perfectionism	107	67	148	111.84	17.358
Burnout	107	23	47	36.20	4.332
Work Life Balance	107	23	63	43.02	7.773
Valid N (listwise)	107				

TABLE 2

This table presents a correlation matrix, showing the relationships between Perfectionism, Burnout, and Work Life Balance

Correlations

		PERFECTIONISM	BURNOUT	WORK LIFE BALANCE
PERFECTIONISM	Pearson Correlation	1	-.308**	.433**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.001	.000
	N	107	107	107
BURNOUT	Pearson Correlation	-.308**	1	-.191*
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.001		.049
	N	107	107	107
WORK LIFE BALANCE	Pearson Correlation	.433**	-.191*	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.049	
	N	107	107	107

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

* . Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).

TABLE 3

This table displays the regression Coefficients Statistics for the model, indicating how Work Life Balance and Perfectionism influence the dependent variable Burnout.

Coefficients^a

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	Collinearity Statistics	
		B	Std. Error	Beta			Tolerance	VIF
1	(Constant)	45.642	2.901		15.734	.000		
	Work Life Balance	-.039	.058	-.071	-.684	.496	.812	1.231
	Perfectionism	-.069	.026	-.278	-2.690	.008	.812	1.231

a. Dependent Variable: Burnout

TABLE 4

Model Summary of Correlation predicting Burnout

Model Summary

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.315 ^a	.099	.082	4.151

a. Predictors: (Constant), Perfectionism, Work Life Balance

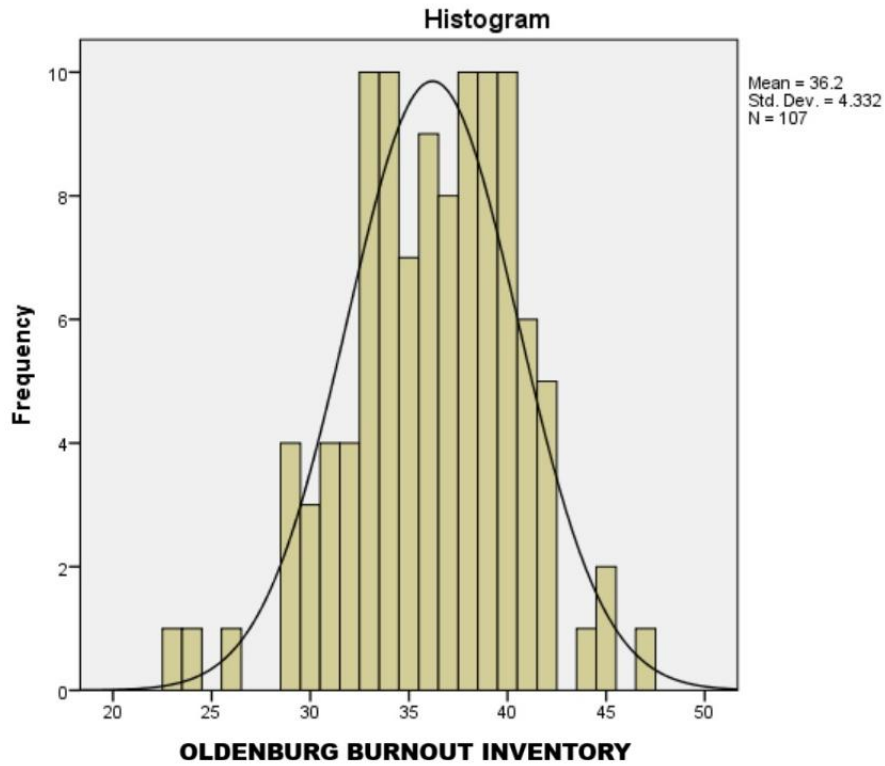


FIGURE 1

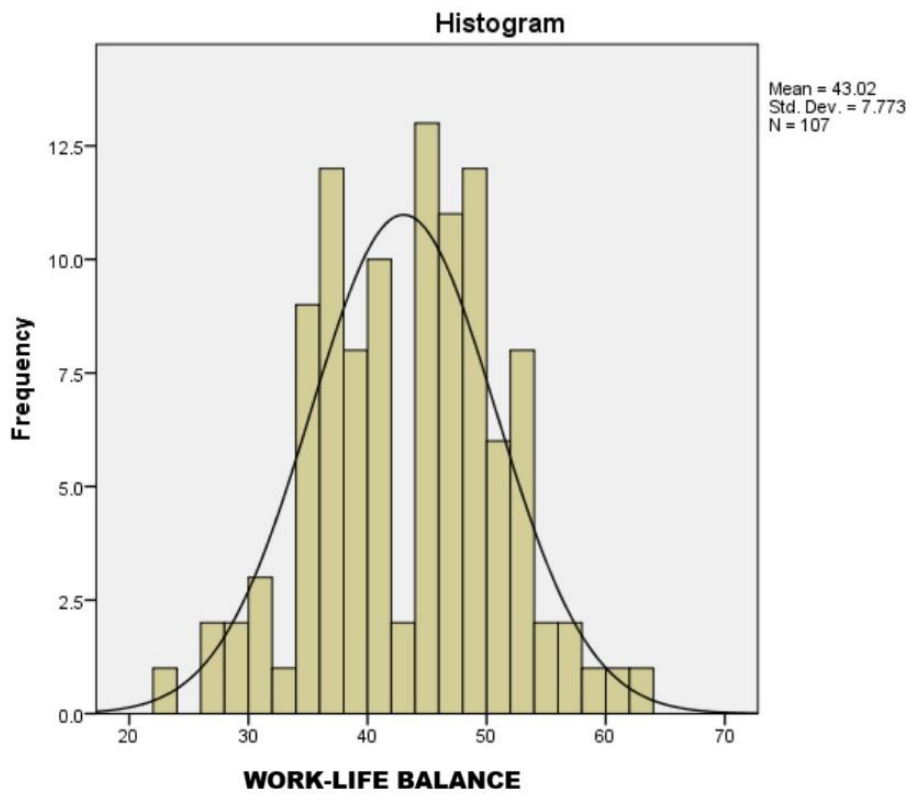


FIGURE 2

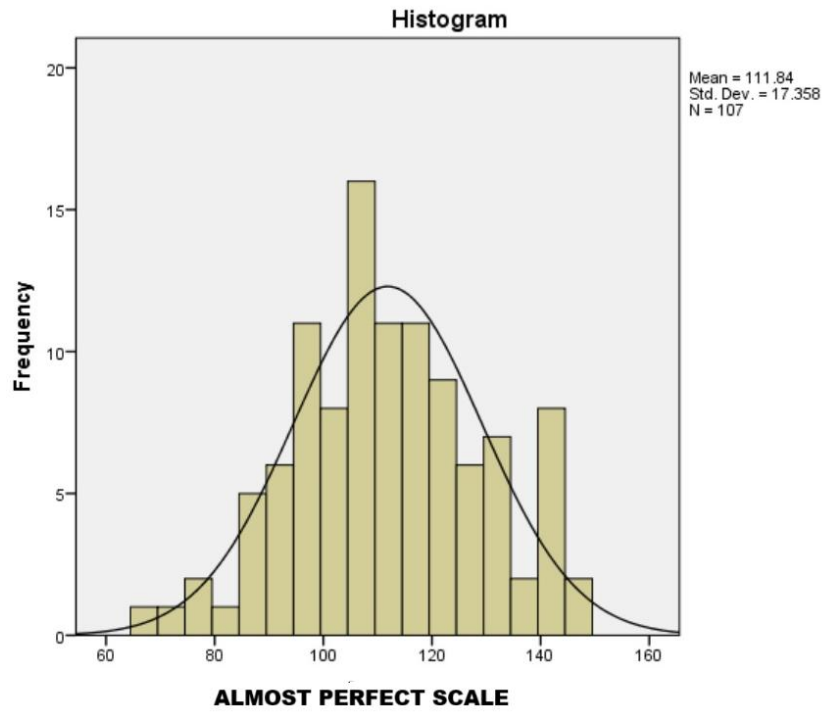


FIGURE 3