The Relationship Between Stress, Perfectionism and Life Satisfaction

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Introduction

Stress
- According to Kaya (2015), stress can be thought of as when a person perceives their environment to be threatening or challenging to their personal health.
- The effects of stress can be measured on biological, psychological, and social dimensions. (Lujckx et al., 2014)

Effects of Stress
- Stress has been measured by psychophysiological responses such as increases in heart rate, muscle activity, and galvanic skin responses (GSR). (Lujckx et al., 2014)
- A relationship between stress, perfectionism and life satisfaction have been observed (Ashby, Noble, & Gnilka, 2010)

Perfectionism
- Yee (2003) defined effortless perfection as, "a term used to describe an intense pressure to be perfect without visible effort" (as cited by Travers et al., 2015, p.1)
- Higher levels of perfectionism correlate with higher levels of stress and lower life satisfactions (Ashby, Noble, & Gnilka, 2010)

Life Satisfaction
- The process by which people base their state of satisfaction on how their life compares to the ideal standards of living. (Diener, 2009)
- Life satisfaction surveys such as the Satisfaction With Life Scale have been used to assess life satisfaction. (Travers et al., 2015)

Methods

Participants
- N = 10 students from Eastern Connecticut State University
- 40% Male (n= 4), 60% Female (n= 6)
- 90% Caucasian (n= 9), 10 % Hispanic/Latino(a) (n= 1)
- Mean Age: 19.75 (SD = 1.44)

Materials

Effortless Perfectionism Scale (Travers et al., 2015)
- 5 pt. Likert type scale
- Higher scores indicate higher tendency to effortless perfectionism
- This test has "good internal consistency reliability and validity with a Cronbach’s alpha value of 0.87. (Travers et al., 2015)

Satisfaction with Life Scale (Diener, 1985)
- 7 pt. Likert type scale
- Higher scores indicate higher satisfaction with life
- This test showed good internal consistency and validity with a Cronbach's α = 0.84. (Pavot & Diener, 2009)

BioPac MP150 machine measured GSR on the palm of the hand.

Procedure
- Participants washed their hands with soap to the elbows.
- BioPac monitors were applied to the palms of the non-dominant hand.
- Three minute baseline
- Mirror Tracing Task
  - Timed computer task of outlining stars that progressively increase in difficulty
  - A loud noise would sound if the mouse went outside the lines and the task would restart
- Effortless Perfectionism and Satisfaction with Life measure
- Demographic measure

Results

- IBM SPSS 22
- Mean values: Effortless Perfectionism Scale M = 26.10 (SD = 8.24); Satisfaction with Life M = 24.40 (SD = 4.58); Change in GSR M = 0.12 (SD = 0.15)
- A Spearman’s rho correlation was calculated
- No correlation was found between life satisfaction and change in GSR r (N= 10) = 0.434, p = 0.210
- No correlation was found between effortless perfectionism and change in GSR r (N= 10) = -0.280, p = 0.432
- A median split was implemented for more effortless perfectionism (group 1) was values above 26.5 and less effortless perfectionism (group 2) was values under 26.5
- A Mann Whitney U test was conducted.
- No difference was found between groups in relation to change in GSR. U(N=10) = 8.00 p = 0.42.

Discussion

Summary
- No relationship was found between effortless perfectionism, life satisfaction, and reactivity to stress (GSR scores)
- No difference was found between participants with more effortless perfectionism than less effortless perfectionism on reactivity to stress.

Limitations
- Small sample size
- Low power
- New type of perfectionism
- New Perfectionism Scale

Future Directions
- Larger sample size
- Pre stimulus and post stimulus
- Use more in depth psychosocial measures
- Use academic task such as math test

References


