

Islamic Spiritual Approaches to Address Maladaptive Perfectionism Among Muslim University Students

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Abstract

Maladaptive perfectionism is characterized by setting extremely high self-standards and excessive criticism, leading to serious psychological consequences, including stress, academic burnout, procrastination, and anxiety. In this context, Islamic spiritual solutions, such as tawakkul (religious belief) and sabar (patience), are considered effective approaches to building mental resilience. This study aims to identify causal factors, analyze the impact of maladaptive perfectionism on mental health and academic motivation, and explore Islamic Religious Education students' strategies for overcoming these impacts. Using a phenomenological design with a qualitative approach, informants were selected through purposive sampling: five active fifth-semester students who experience maladaptive perfectionism and actively apply Islamic spiritual solutions. Data analysis was conducted using the Miles and Huberman model. Maladaptive perfectionism is driven by a balanced interaction between internal factors (high personal standards, fear of mistakes) and external factors (parental expectations/criticism, competitive campus pressure). The main impacts are high levels of stress and academic burnout, as well as procrastination. Maladaptive perfectionism in college students is triggered by multifactorial pressures, significantly disrupting psychological well-being. Islamic spiritual strategies (dhikr, prayer, worship) and understanding Islamic Religious Education (PAI) material on faith and morals have proven effective as adaptive coping mechanisms for developing self-compassion and self-acceptance. This suggests the need for holistic student mentoring interventions, focusing on mental and spiritual balance.

Abstrak

Perfeksionisme maladaptif dicirikan oleh penetapan standar diri yang sangat tinggi dan kritik berlebihan, menimbulkan konsekuensi psikologis serius, termasuk stress, burnout akademik, prokrastinasi, dan kecemasan. Dalam konteks ini, solusi spiritual Islam, seperti tawakal dan sabar, dianggap dapat berfungsi menjadi pendekatan efektif untuk membangun ketahanan mental. Penelitian ini bertujuan mengidentifikasi faktor penyebab, menganalisis dampak perfeksionisme maladaptif terhadap kesehatan mental dan motivasi akademik, serta menggali strategi mahasiswa PAI dalam mengatasi dampak tersebut. Menggunakan desain fenomenologis dengan pendekatan kualitatif, informan dipilih melalui purposive sampling yaitu lima mahasiswa aktif semester 5 yang mengalami perfeksionisme maladaptif dan aktif menerapkan solusi spiritual Islam. Analisis data dilakukan dengan model Miles dan Huberman. Perfeksionisme maladaptif didorong oleh interaksi seimbang antara faktor internal (standar pribadi tinggi, kekhawatiran terhadap kesalahan) dan faktor eksternal (ekspektasi/kritik orang tua, tekanan kompetitif kampus). Dampak utamanya adalah tingkat stress dan burnout akademik yang tinggi, serta perilaku prokrastinasi. Perfeksionisme maladaptif pada mahasiswa dipicu oleh tekanan multifactorial, yang secara signifikan mengganggu kesejahteraan psikologis. Strategi spiritual Islam (dzikir, doa, ibadah) dan pemahaman materi PAI tentang akidah terbukti efektif sebagai mekanisme coping adaptif untuk mengembangkan self-compassion dan penerimaan diri. Hal ini menunjukkan bahwa perlunya intervensi pendampingan mahasiswa secara holistic, berfokus pada keseimbangan mental dan spiritual.

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INTRODUCTION

Maladaptive perfectionism is a psychological phenomenon that has real and dangerous social and mental consequences, especially in the academic environment. The main characteristic of this trait is the setting of very high self-standards (Kruger et al., 2023) accompanied by excessive self-criticism. Factually, this trait often interferes with interpersonal relationships because perfectionist individuals tend to set unrealistic expectations of others, thus triggering conflict, withdrawal, and social isolation (Ibili & Tree, 2025). In the long term, social pressure and excessive self-evaluation lead to susceptibility to various psychological disorders such as depression and anxiety (Mukaromah et al., 2020; Nursadrina et al., 2025), which can collectively damage the psychological well-being of students. Given its significant impact on decreased productivity due to excessive fear of failure and procrastination, this issue is crucial to be published and become a qualitative publication as a cornerstone of mental health interventions in college.

Previous research has extensively explored the dimensions of perfectionism using Frost's theory (1990), which links concern over mistakes and doubt about actions with psychological disorders such as stress and anxiety (Fuster et al., 2025; Zainal et al., 2024). Several previous studies have also identified the role of Islamic spiritual practices, such as dhikr, prayer, and strengthening Islamic values (Akib et al., 2025), in increasing mental resilience and reducing symptoms of stress and anxiety in students. However, the current literature is still generalist and has not specifically dissected the relationship between Frost's dimensions of maladaptive perfectionism and Islamic spiritual solutions in the specific context of Islamic Religious Education (PAI) students. The novelty of this study lies in its more contextual focus on PAI students who have a theological understanding but are still vulnerable to the pressure of academic perfectionism.

This study specifically aims to complement the shortcomings in previous research by identifying causal factors and analyzing the impact of maladaptive perfectionism on the mental health and academic motivation of PAI students. The main focus of this study is to explore students' strategies in overcoming these impacts through Islamic spiritual approaches such as tawakal, qana'ah, and sabar. In contrast to previous research, such as the research conducted by Yaser et al (2024), only focused on the relationship between fear of failure and perfectionism in general. This study uses a phenomenological approach to explore coping strategies based on Islamic spirituality as a contextual solution. Thus, this research not only explains the problem, but specifically aims to make a new contribution in the form of integrating theological values in overcoming the psychosocial obstacles of students in the university environment.

Through this research, the author wants to test the argument that Islamic spiritual strategies such as the concepts of tawakal, qana'ah, and patience can function as an effective solution in building self-compassion (Maulana, 2025) and self-acceptance. The hypothesis proposed is that strengthening spiritual aspects (such as dhikr and worship) and systematic self-management (such as prioritizing schedules) are significantly effective in reducing the negative impact of maladaptive perfectionism (Yustikasari et al., 2020), as well as increasing students' motivation to learn. This research is expected to provide the latest empirical contributions in the field of Islamic educational and spiritual psychology, as well as practical recommendations for the development of student mentoring programs that focus on psychological and spiritual balance.

RESEARCH METHODS

This study uses a qualitative approach with phenomenological design. The phenomenological approach was chosen to deeply understand the life experiences of students who experience maladaptive perfectionism as well as the Islamic spiritual strategies they use to overcome its impact. According to Creswell, phenomenological research aims to explore and describe the meaning of the experiences experienced by individuals towards a particular phenomenon. This research was carried out in September-November 2025 at the Islamic Religious Education Study Program (PAI), University of Muhammadiyah Yogyakarta.

The research informants were selected using purposive sampling techniques with the following criteria: (1) active students of the fifth semester PAI Study Program, (2) showing characteristics of maladaptive perfectionism such as very high self-standards, excessive concern about mistakes, and fear of failure, and (3) actively applying Islamic spiritual practices in daily life. Based on these criteria, five informants were obtained. Research data were collected through semi-structured interviews, participatory observations, and documentation. The interviews were conducted in depth to explore the informants' experiences related to the causative factors, impacts, and strategies to overcome maladaptive perfectionism. Observations were made on the behavior and academic activities of informants that were relevant to the research phenomenon, while documentation was used to complete data in the form of academic records, activity schedules, and other supporting documents.

Data analysis uses the Miles and Huberman interactive model which includes three stages, namely data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawn. At the data reduction stage, the results of interviews, observations, and documentation are selected, coded, and grouped based on the research theme. Furthermore, the data is presented in the form of a matrix, tables, and thematic narrative to facilitate interpretation. The final stage is carried out by drawing conclusions and conducting verification on an ongoing basis. The validity of the data is maintained through triangulation of sources, namely comparing the results of interviews, observations, and documentation, as well as member checking with informants to ensure the suitability of the results of the researcher's interpretation with the experiences they convey.

RESULTS OF RESEARCH AND DISCUSSION

Factors Influencing the Emergence of Maladaptive Perfectionism

After conducting research, there are various factors that are the main causes of the emergence of maladaptive perfectionism. These factors are divided into two main categories, namely internal factors and external factors. Internal factors include very high personal standards, excessive concern about mistakes, and doubts about one's own decisions and actions. Meanwhile, external factors include expectations and criticism from parents, as well as pressures from a competitive campus environment.

Table 1. Factors Influencing the Emergence of Maladaptive Perfectionism

No.	Name of the Informant	Internal Factors		External Factors	
1	IF	1.	Personal standards are very high	1.	Parents' high expectations and expectations
		2.	Overthinking and worrying	2.	Criticism from parents

		3.	Doubts about one's own decisions	3.	Competitive campus environment
2	MR	1.	Personal standards are very high	1.	High expectations of parents
		2.	Worry and fear	2.	Criticism from the family
		3.	Doubt and seek validation	3.	Competitive campus environment
3	PM	1.	Personal standards are very high	1.	High expectations of parents
		2.	Worrying and constantly thinking about mistakes	2.	Criticism from parents and family
		3.	Doubts about one's own decisions	3.	Competitive campus environment
4	KH	1.	Personal standards are very high	1.	Parents' high expectations and expectations
		2.	Worried	2.	Criticism and rejection from parents
		3.	Doubt and fear of one's own decisions	3.	Competitive campus environment
5	RA	1.	Personal standards are very high	1.	High expectations of parents
		2.	Worry and overthinking	2.	Criticism from parents
		3.	Doubt and seek validation	3.	Competitive campus environment

The above data shows that maladaptive perfectionism in college students is influenced by a combination of internal and external factors that interact with each other. From internal factors, all informants set very high personal standards that are difficult to achieve, this is in accordance with the dimension of personal standards in Frost's (1990) theory. High standards often lead to critical and frustrating self-evaluations when targets are not met, this condition is evidenced by increased levels of academic anxiety and decreased productivity (H. Lubis et al., 2022). This condition significantly triggers the core dimension of maladaptive perfectionism, namely a significant increase in concern over mistakes and doubts about actions.

In the aspect, concern over mistakes or excessive concern about mistakes is also very dominating for all informants. The experience of overthinking and excessive fear

of failure experienced by all informants reflects maladaptive anxiety that can hinder abilities in the learning and decision-making process (Yustikasari et al., 2020). Doubts about one's own decisions and the search for validation from others, commonly known as doubts about actions, are manifestations of low self-confidence that cause delays in action and feelings of dissatisfaction with the results achieved (Yaser et al., 2024). A deep fear of potential mistakes and doubts about these actions then stimulates dispositional factors (Zhou et al., 2024) in the form of perceived parental pressure and social demands, which significantly exacerbate the tendency to maladaptive perfectionism. In addition, parental expectations and parental criticism exacerbate this pattern through unrealistic parental expectations, causing guilt and ongoing emotional distress, thus prolonging the cycle of anxiety in college students (Hasan et al., 2021). This phenomenon has the potential to increase the risk of burnout and depression, so it requires early intervention based on cognitive-behavioral therapy.

External factors such as expectations and criticism from parents and family are also very influential. High expectations create motivation as well as stress, which if not managed properly can exacerbate the stress level of each individual and increase maladaptive perfectionism. This is in accordance with the theory put forward by Woodfin (2020) about parental expectations (high expectations from parents) which stipulate that high expectations from the family can create external pressures that are less supportive, but rather lead to demands that must be met without failure. The criticism received results in a significant fear of negative judgment and a decrease in confidence, which ultimately leads to a pattern of counterproductive perfectionism (Fernández-García et al., 2023). The internalization of these external demands triggers the dimension of socially prescribed perfectionism in students (Curran et al., 2019; Smith et al., 2022) where individuals believe that others, especially parents, set unrealistic standards, and failure to meet those standards will lead to reduced acceptance or social disconnection.

The competitive campus environment is another external factor that strengthens the pressure on each informant. The fierce competition among students creates a constant need to do their best and be perfect so that they can exceed the achievements of their peers. This condition contributes to increased academic stress and a tendency to maladaptive perfectionism which has the potential to procrastinate tasks or procrastination due to fear of failure (Puspita & Kumalasari, 2022). The pressures of a competitive environment can also trigger a negative cycle in which procrastination further exacerbates guilt and inferiority in students, ultimately hindering long-term academic achievement. The phenomenon of procrastination caused by the fear of failure implies the existence of a dimension of other-oriented perfectionism in the student environment (Abadi et al., 2024) where there is a belief that performance must be superior to peers to gain social recognition, so that maladaptive social comparison is a significant predictor of academic burnout.

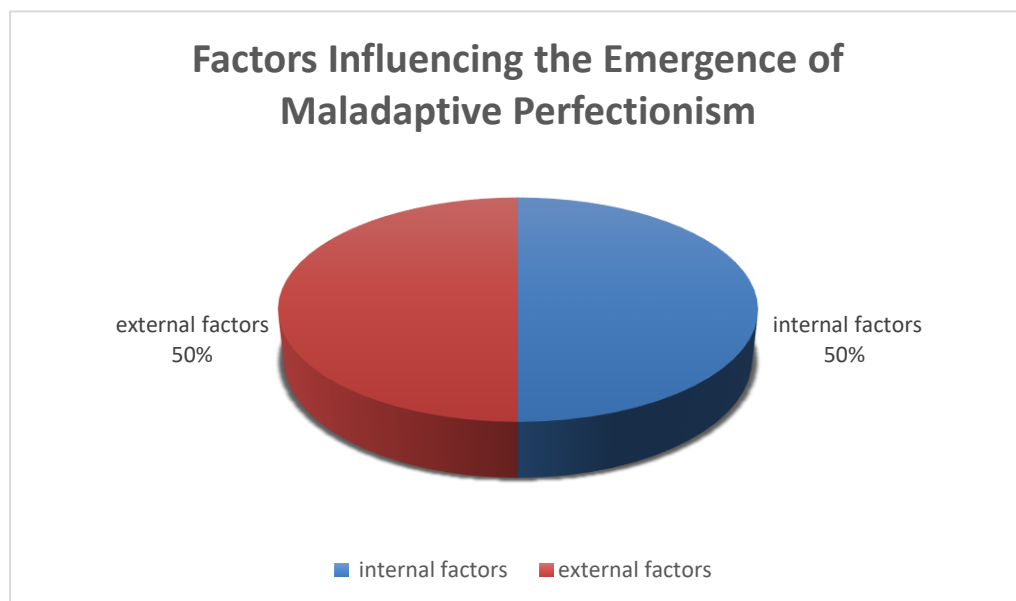


Figure 1. Factors influencing the emergence of maladaptive perfectionism

The pie chart shows a balanced division between internal and external factors that influence the emergence of maladaptive perfectionism, by 50% each. This shows that both factors have an equally important role in the formation of maladaptive perfectionism in students. Informants set very high personal standards. In line with Frost'(1990) theory of personal standards, unrealistic standards are not only difficult to achieve, but also lead to frustration and critical self-evaluation. The cycle of perfectionism continues when individuals feel like failures (Dara et al., 2023) and their expectations are not met. Informants also often feel overthinking and excessive worry about mistakes. In maladaptive perfectionism, the mindset where mistakes are considered fatal failures to be avoided (Teck Sen Ng & Shuib, 2024) This mindset can trigger constant anxiety and fear in any individual. So that it can prevent every individual from learning and taking risks from the failures they face.

Lack of confidence is indicated by doubts about decisions or can be called doubts about actions and the need to seek validation from others. Individuals feel unsure of the decisions they make themselves, so this leads to dependence on the opinions of others to feel safe. This dependence not only lowers morale but can also slow down the decision-making process. This phenomenon is in line with recent findings on self-efficacy in the context of decision-making, where low self-confidence in personal abilities tends to exacerbate external self-doubt and dependence, thus hindering long-term adaptation and productivity (Honicke & Broadbent, 2016) In addition, an empirical study by Homan (2020) shows that a fixed mindset triggered by low self-confidence often triggers decision paralysis due to excessive external validation, thereby lowering individual and overall organizational performance.

On the other hand, external factors such as expectations instilled by parents can be motivation as well as psychological pressure. As Woodfin (2020) explains, these expectations encourage individuals to work harder, but they also create significant pressure due to the fear of failure not being able to meet the set standards. Including parental criticism often has a greater impact. Informants tend to be silent and keep thinking about the criticism, which results in a decrease in confidence and fear of negative judgment. This criticism reinforces the belief that they are never good enough,

thus triggering the need to always appear perfect. Recent research conducted by (Xu et al., 2025) shows that expectations and criticism from parents greatly contribute to the development of maladaptive perfectionism in children and adolescents, resulting in increased anxiety and fear of negative evaluations from other individuals. This condition reinforces a cycle of psychological stress that can spark the development of self-esteem and emotional independence, where individuals constantly feel incapable of meeting the standards expected of their parents (Khaleque & Rohner, 2023) Therefore, unconstructive pressure and criticism from parents not only decreases motivation, but also increases the risk of serious mental health disorders in individuals.

In a highly competitive campus environment, it forces each individual to always strive to be more perfect than their peers. The drive to look perfect is reinforced by social pressure to be the best. This kind of environment creates a cycle in which the need to be good will continue to increase indefinitely (Jiang & Jiang, 2025) This continuous cycle of internal and external pressures contributes significantly to the emergence of mental health issues, particularly academic burnout and anxiety, as students often constantly evaluate themselves against unrealistic standards (Deighton & Bell, 2022) Therefore, the competitive environment of the campus tends to trigger maladaptive perfectionism which has a negative impact on students' mental health and academic performance.

The pie diagram asserts that a strong balance between internal and external pressures leads to the emergence of maladaptive perfectionism. There is no single dominating factor, but the two interact with each other and are equally important in the process of forming maladaptive perfectionism. This approach is in line with a psychological ecological perspective that emphasizes multifactorial interactions (Damri, 2024) in the formation of maladaptive behaviors (for example, as outlined in Frost's 1990 model, on the dimension of perfectionism). There is no single dominant factor that can be isolated as the primary cause, instead the two elements reinforce each other through interactive mechanisms (Diah et al., 2020) where internal pressures are often exacerbated by external contexts, and vice versa, thus forming a reinforcement cycle that contributes significantly to the process of forming maladaptive perfectionism. The theoretical implications of these findings highlight the need for holistic interventions that consider both sources of stress simultaneously, in order to prevent symptoms of chronic anxiety and decreased psychological well-being.

The Impact of Maladaptive Perfectionism on Mental Health

The impact of maladaptive perfectionism on students' mental health is illustrated in the table below. Informants reported high stress, academic burnout, sleep and eating disorders, as well as feelings of sadness and fear of failing to meet high standards. These findings are in line with previous research that showed a link between maladaptive perfectionism and stress, anxiety, burnout, and other psychological disorders. In addition, the pressure to feel accepted and dependable in the social environment gives rise to people pleaser behaviors that can exacerbate the psychological pressure of each individual. Feelings of fear of failure and sadness also increase the risk of anxiety and depression. Overall, the table below shows that maladaptive perfectionism has a detrimental impact on college students' mental health.

Table 2. The Impact of Maladaptive Perfectionism on Mental Health

No.	Name of the Informant	Impact on Mental Health
1	IF	1. High stress, sleep and eating disorders
		2. Burnout akademik
		3. Sadness and fear of failure

2	MR	4.	Always accepted and reliable
		1.	Stress tinggi
		2.	Academic burnout, mood swings
		3.	Sadness and social fear
3	PM	4.	Withdrawing from the social environment
		1.	Stress tinggi
		2.	Burnout akademik
		3.	Fear and sadness
4	KH	4.	Meeting the expectations of others, worrying
		1.	Stress tinggi
		2.	Academic burnout, sleep pattern disorders
		3.	Sadness and fear of failure
5	RA	4.	Meeting the expectations of others
		1.	Stress tinggi
		2.	Academic burnout, irregular diet
		3.	Excessive fear, sadness, and anxiety
		4.	Meet your expectations

The data shows that all informants experience high stress as a result of the demand to achieve perfection. This is in line with research conducted by Rahmawati (2025) who explains that maladaptive perfectionism causes negative thoughts and repeated fears, thereby increasing the risk of psychological stress and distress. Another study conducted in the city of Malang strengthens this correlation by finding that perfectionism is closely related to academic stress which has an impact on students' mental health (Pangalipuringtyas et al., 2024) These findings are supported by studies showing that high levels of perfectionism in college students contribute significantly to increased academic stress, which in turn risks triggering academic burnout and mental health disorders such as anxiety and depression (Juli et al., 2025) The high demands of perfectionism, especially in the socially prescribed perfectionism dimension, are consistently reported to be strong predictors of academic burnout among students (Sagita & Meilyawati, 2021) A positive correlation between perfectionism and psychological distress was also found in college students in various regions (Putri et al., 2023)), which suggests the need for specific psychological interventions to manage the dimensions of maladaptive perfectionism.

Academic burnout is the second impact often experienced by informants, including emotional exhaustion, mood swings, and eating and sleep disorders. This is in line with Purnamasari'(2024) research, which states that academic burnout as a result of perfectionism triggers a decline in quality of life, reduced motivation to learn, and mental health disorders such as anxiety and depression. Burnout not only reduces academic productivity, but also affects students' emotional stability. The link between perfectionism and academic burnout is emphasized by the finding that the

characteristics of maladaptive perfectionism are characterized by excessive concern about mistakes, acting as mediators between stress and the appearance of burnout symptoms. This condition creates emotional exhaustion, which is the main component of academic burnout (Sujadi, 2023). Therefore, academic burnout is considered a maladaptive response to academic stress and will continue to be high academic procrastination, then create a recursive cycle (Tuasikal & Smith, 2023) that worsens itself (Vicious recursive cycle) between the pressure to be perfect, high levels of stress, and procrastination of assignments in students.

In addition, feelings of sadness, fear of failure, and excessive anxiety are also experienced by many informants. This supports the theory of Sari & Lestari (2023) which states that perfectionism causes depression and social anxiety through high internal and external pressures. The fear of failure creates feelings of inferiority and inability to meet expectations, which worsens the psychological state of students. This is reinforced by research linking maladaptive perfectionism to emotional disorders, including eating disorders and clinical depression (Nurhidayatullah et al., 2024). The fact that people pleaser behavior arises in response to social expectations shows that external pressures also weigh on the mental burden of perfectionist students. As explained by Jr et al (2020) some informants feel that they have to meet the expectations of others in order to be accepted and reliable. This pattern makes it difficult for students to set healthy boundaries in their social relationships, making it easier for them to feel stressed and at risk of mental health disorders.

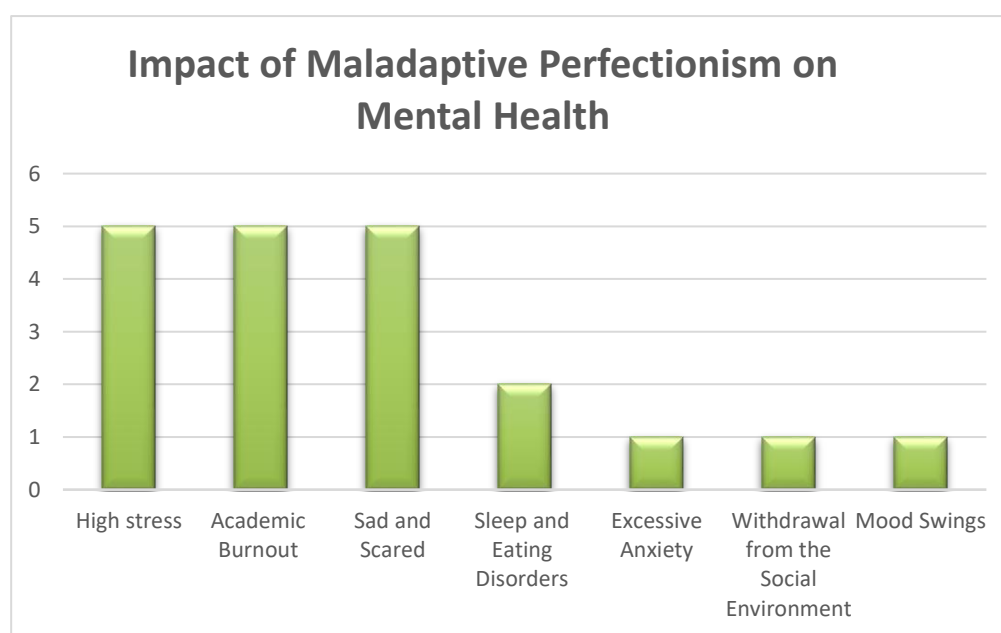


Figure 2. The impact of maladaptive perfectionism on mental health

Maladaptive perfectionism has a very negative impact on students' mental health, as shown in the bar diagram. Data analysis showed that the most dominant impacts experienced by all informants were high stress, academic burnout, and feelings of sadness and fear. This is in line with recent research, which strengthens the relationship between maladaptive perfectionism and psychological problems such as stress, anxiety (Hendarto & Ambarwati, 2020) burnout, and people pleaser behavior (Sholekah & Jawandi, 2025). Clearly, the data show that maladaptive perfectionism is directly related to high stress. All informants (5/5) experienced stress as the main

impact. This is in line with research conducted by Rahmawati (2025) which states that individuals with maladaptive perfectionism have a higher risk of experiencing psychological stress and distress. The pressure to achieve unrealistic perfection leads to constant psychological stress.

In addition, academic burnout is an inevitable impact for all informants (5/5). Burnout, which Purnamasari (2024) describes as physical and emotional exhaustion due to excessive demands, is a direct consequence of constant striving to achieve perfect standards. Data from informants show that burnout manifests in a variety of ways, such as eating and sleep disorders, which are physical indicators of mental distress. For example, an irregular diet can be an unhealthy coping mechanism or simply the result of prioritizing academic achievement over physical well-being. Research conducted by Yunalia (2023) shows that poor sleep quality and dietary changes are common manifestations of prolonged academic stress and contribute to increased emotional fatigue and decreased academic performance. Sleep disorders such as irregular sleep patterns or difficulty sleeping serve as indicators of chronic mental stress and can worsen burnout conditions (M. Sani & Diana, 2022; Pondang & Kosasih, 2024). In addition, irregular diets are often a maladaptive coping strategy that worsens students' physical health, given that their primary focus is more dominant on academic achievement than physical well-being.

Each informant also said that negative emotional feelings such as sadness and fear were very dominant. Maladaptive perfectionism is based on the fear of failure. When the set standards are not met, individuals will feel sad, disappointed, and worthless. As Sari & Lestari (2023) explains, these feelings are associated with anxiety and depression. This linkage suggests that perfectionism not only causes momentary discomfort, but can also trigger more serious mental health conditions. Maladaptive perfectionism centered on the fear of failure not only triggers momentary negative feelings, but also contributes to more complex mental health disorders such as anxiety and depression (Leha et al., 2022; Santoso et al., 2020). The pressure to meet very high standards of pibadi can lead to a cycle of poor self-assessment with the emergence of feelings of worthlessness and intense anxiety (Hasanah Nur, 2025). In addition, perfectionism triggered by social expectations or external demands is significantly correlated with academic burnout and decreased psychological well-being, thereby exacerbating emotional conditions such as sadness and fear experienced by each informant.

In addition to those predominant impacts, the bar chart shows other, more specific impacts, such as mood swings and withdrawal from the social environment. Often, this behavior appears as a mechanism to protect oneself from criticism or social judgment. The need to be "accepted" or "dependable", mentioned by some informants, reflects the people pleaser behavior that is often characteristic of individuals with maladaptive perfectionism. As Jr et al (2020), this behavior adds to psychological distress as individuals continue to try to meet the expectations of others rather than themselves.

The Impact of Maladaptive Perfectionism on Academic Motivation

In the research that has been conducted, there are various impacts of maladaptive perfectionism that can affect students' academic motivation. The table below presents a summary of the results obtained from the interviews of several informants, which maps how the tendency of perfectionism, a mindset that demands to look perfect, thus influences the behavior and mindset of each informant. Maladaptive perfectionism triggers procrastination out of fear of imperfect outcomes. Although perfectionism

encourages better academic achievement, it is followed by increased stress and anxiety that can interfere with the mental well-being of any individual.

Table 3. The Impact of Maladaptive Perfectionism on Academic Motivation

No.	Name of the Informant	Impact on Academic Motivation
1	IF	1. Frequent procrastination of tasks 2. Decreased motivation 3. High performance, anxious and frustrating
2	MR	1. Frequent procrastination of tasks 2. Decreased motivation 3. High performance, stress
3	PM	1. Frequent procrastination of tasks 2. High motivation, fear and anxiety 3. High performance, stress and anxiety
4	KH	1. Frequent procrastination of tasks 2. High motivation, fear and anxiety 3. High performance, stress and anxiety
5	RA	1. Frequent procrastination of tasks 2. Decreased motivation, fear and high expectations 3. High performance, stress and anxiety

The data show that the phenomenon of procrastination associated with maladaptive perfectionism is demonstrated by informants who often procrastinate on tasks. Students refrain from completing assignments for fear that the results of the work will not be perfect or even do not meet the high standards that have been set. This is in line with Lubis (2020) who states that maladaptive perfectionism with unrealistic expectations can lead to delays in academic work. This procrastination can directly decrease motivation to complete tasks on time and will ultimately hinder academic achievement. This phenomenon is further reinforced by other findings that show that maladaptive perfectionism is positively correlated with academic procrastination in college students. According to Rahmadanti (2023) it shows that fear of failure as one of the characteristics of maladaptive perfectionism can trigger delays in completing tasks. Prayitno (2024) said that tension due to the demand for perfection causes students to tend to postpone work to avoid possible results that are considered unsatisfactory, so academic procrastination acts as a maladaptive coping mechanism. In addition,

maladaptive perfectionism can reduce motivation and self-efficacy in time management, resulting in delays in completing tasks.

Among the informant's academic motivations, there is a tension between the desire to achieve the target and anxiety about the inconsistency of the task results. This is in line with Ives' (2025) theory that maladaptive perfectionism lowers intrinsic motivation because students' focus is more on avoiding failure and negative criticism than on pursuing meaningful achievements. Excessive internal pressure due to unrealistic self-standards and fear of failure leads to academic motivation dominated by anxiety and failure avoidance rather than a healthy learning drive. This directly explains why academic procrastination is the main coping mechanism. In this case, procrastination is one of the efforts to protect oneself (Ghani, 2025) where students unconsciously avoid evaluations that have the potential to produce "imperfect" results. This is in line with recent findings that identify a positive relationship between task-procrastinating behavior and perfectionistic anxiety (Matina et al., 2025; Silitonga, 2025) In other words, instead of being motivated to act, students choose to avoid. This reduces their enthusiasm and ultimately hinders the achievement of academic goals.

Although the informants reported relatively high academic achievement, they also experienced emotional disturbances such as stress, anxiety, and frustration. Maladaptive perfectionism can lead to incorrect self-evaluation and a sense of dissatisfaction with the results achieved, as well as concentration disorders due to stress. This is in line with Wulandari(2025) research that maladaptive perfectionism has a negative impact on emotional well-being which can hinder academic achievement. Thus, unhealthy emotional pressure often hinders achievement. In addition, an empirical study conducted by Baidhawi (2025) shows that maladaptive perfectionism is positively correlated with symptoms of anxiety and depression, which ultimately lowers intrinsic motivation and learning efficiency. Thus, unhealthy emotional distress is often a major obstacle to optimal achievement, emphasizing the need for early psychological intervention to manage maladaptive perfectionism among high-achieving students.

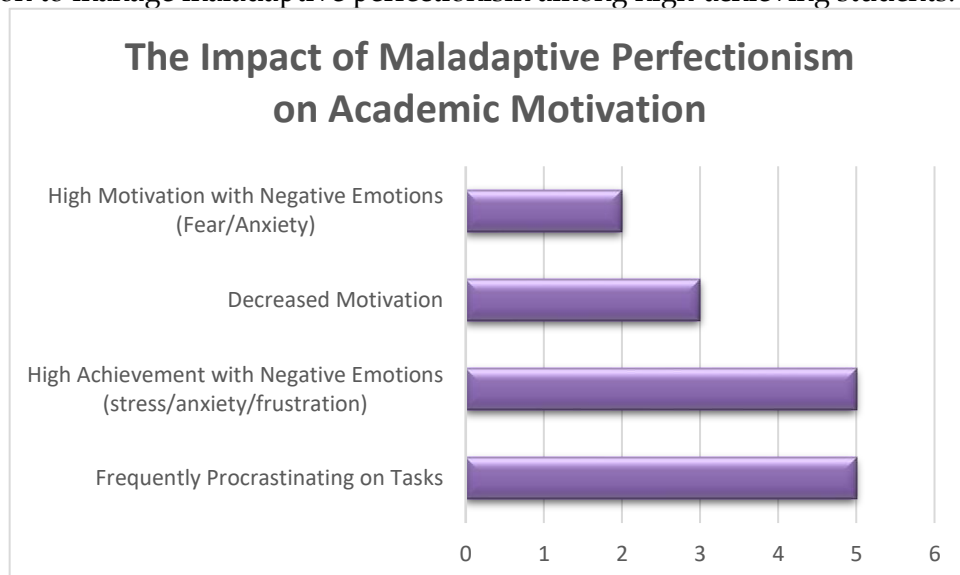


Figure 3. Percentage impact of maladaptive perfectionism on academic motivation

Analysis of interview data from all five informants consistently showed that procrastination arose out of fear of imperfect outcomes. This is in accordance with the theory of Lubis (2020) which specifically links maladaptive perfectionism to

procrastination of academic tasks. This is the most common impact experienced by informants. Research conducted by Mistica (2023) corroborates these findings by showing that maladaptive perfectionism contributes significantly to the emergence of academic procrastination through the mechanisms of fear of failure and high expectations of results. In addition, fear of imperfect outcomes causes individuals to procrastinate on tasks as a form of avoidance mechanism with the aim of reducing anxiety and psychological distress (Diah et al., 2020; Leha et al., 2022). This impact occurs when students experience socially prescribed perfectionism (perfectionism determined by the social environment) (Flett et al., 2022) where the pressure to meet high expectations and standards from parents or institutions becomes the main trigger for avoiding assignments, which ultimately triggers academic procrastination behavior.

All informants showed relatively high academic achievement, but this was accompanied by significant emotional disturbances such as stress, anxiety, and frustration. These findings are very much in line with Wulandari (2025) who states that maladaptive perfectionism affects emotional well-being. This suggests a contradiction where academic achievement increases while mental health decreases. Of the five informants who answered, three said that their motivation had decreased. Decreased motivation is caused by stress and fear of failure leading to a decrease in intrinsic motivation. This is in line with Ives' (2025) theory that maladaptive perfectionism lowers intrinsic motivation because it focuses on avoiding failure and negative evaluation. Two informants said they were highly motivated, but accompanied by feelings of fear and anxiety. This condition indicates motivational ambivalence (Anugraheni, 2021) where the drive to achieve the target is mixed with the fear of inappropriate outcomes. Although they generally have a high motivation to learn, it is driven by external factors such as high personal standards or expectations from parents. The fear of failure remains a major trigger, suggesting that such motivation is unhealthy and can lead to anxiety.

Strategies to Address the Impact of Maladaptive Perfectionism on Mental Health and Academic Motivation

Maladaptive perfectionism often has a negative impact on mental health and academic motivation, especially when a person sets very high standards and refuses to accept weaknesses and imperfect results. This strategy for overcoming perfectionism includes a combination of spiritual, psychological, and systematic self-management approaches. One of the main methods used by informants in this study to calm themselves down and overcome stress is dhikr, prayer, and worship. In addition, Islamic Religious Education (PAI) materials such as moral beliefs help in forming an attitude of self-compassion and self-acceptance through the understanding that maximum effort must be accompanied by the acceptance of results as the destiny of Allah SWT. Students also manage their time well and set realistic targets as a form of self-management. The pie chart below shows how a combination of spiritual, psychological, and self-management strategies helps reduce the pressure of perfectionism and improve mental well-being and motivation to learn.

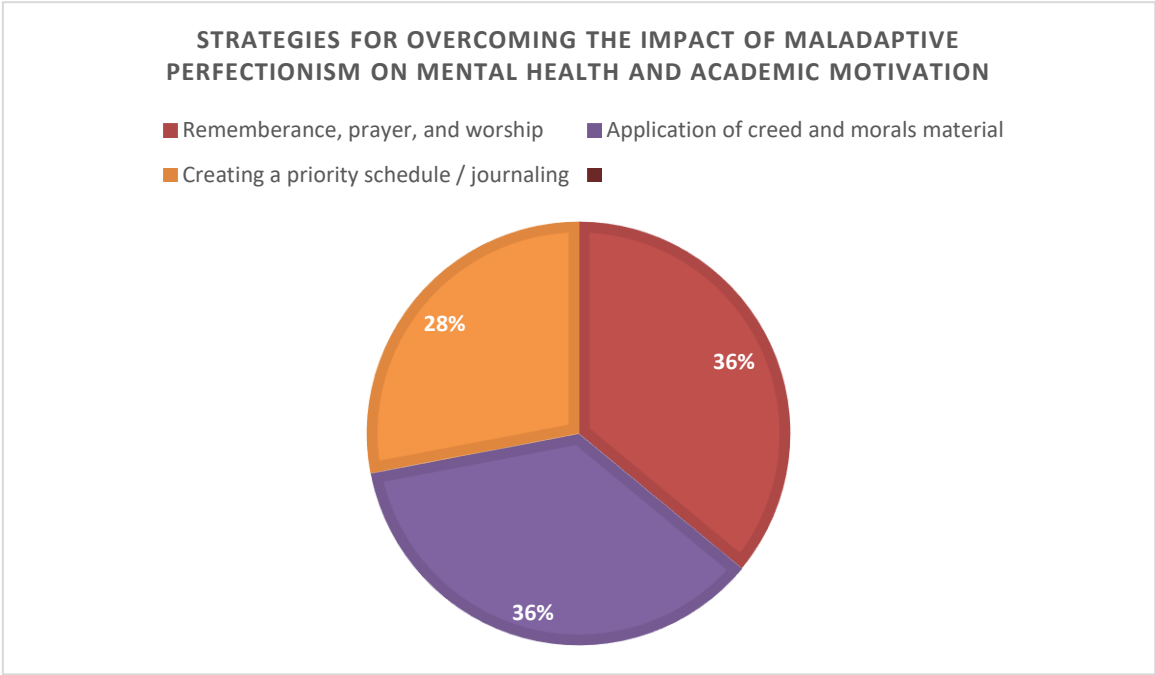


Figure 4. Strategies to overcome the impact of maladaptive perfectionism on Mental health and academic motivation

One of the main strategies used by informants is dhikr, prayer, and worship with a value of 36%. This spiritual practice is very helpful as the main way to calm down and overcome anxiety and stress. This is in accordance with the theory of coping religus (Suyatno et al., 2025) which says that religiosity can be a source of strength and help in managing stress and anxiety. In addition, dhikr and worship also support self-compassion and mindfulness ((Pratama, 2025) which allows informants to effectively reflect and calm their emotions. This kind of Islamic spiritual practice acts as an adaptive coping mechanism in strengthening psychological well-being through increased emotional regulation and spiritual closeness to God (Ema Fitriya et al., 2025; Nurvithasary et al., 2025)which ultimately promotes better psychological resilience. Support from the religiosity dimension is an important component in the strategy of managing psychological distress among students who experience anxiety, according to the findings of the religious copig theory.

The understanding of the importance of accepting human limitations and balancing efforts with the acceptance of the destiny of Allah SWT was obtained from the material of Islamic Religious Education (PAI), especially moral beliefs seen from the circle diagram with a value of 36%. This encourages the development of religious-based self-compassion and reframing (changing the mindset to be positive) (Bian et al., 2025) Informants learn to set realistic targets and receive maximum results, which is in accordance with Imronah(2024) theory of setting realistic expectations. This material directly reduces the pressure of high standards and excessive criticism, which reinforces maladaptive perfectionism. The creation of priority schedules or journaling was carried out by several informants with the value seen from the pie chart of 28%. Making priority schedules and jorningling is a self-management technique that helps informants in managing time and priorities so that academic tasks are completed on time without

excessive burden. It also increases academic motivation and helps in reducing procrastination (Alim et al., 2025) In addition, it is an improvement in self-management skills (Erhard et al., 2022) which complements religious and cognitive approaches in overcoming the effects of maladaptive perfectionism.

CONCLUSION

This study confirms that maladaptive perfectionism in students of the Islamic Religious Education Study Program, University of Muhammadiyah Yogyakarta is influenced by balanced internal and external factors. Extremely high personal standards, excessive concern about mistakes, and doubts about one's own actions are the dominant internal factors, while external factors consist of high expectations as well as criticism from parents and the competitive pressures of the campus environment. The main impacts experienced by students are high levels of stress, academic burnout, eating and sleep disorders, and decreased academic motivation accompanied by procrastination. Nevertheless, academic achievement remains mostly high, but it is accompanied by emotional disturbances and decreased mental well-being. Effective coping strategies are Islamic spiritual practices, such as dhikr, prayer, and worship, as well as an understanding of moral beliefs that foster an attitude of self-compassion and self-acceptance, combined with time management and journaling. These findings recommend the development of student mentoring programs that integrate holistic spiritual and psychological approaches to support ongoing mental health and academic achievement.

This study provides an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon of maladaptive perfectionism and spiritual coping strategies in the subjects studied, but there are several weaknesses that need attention for further research development. In this study, a limited sample size was used. The use of qualitative methods with a phenomenological approach requires subjective interpretation of interview and observational data. Based on the limitations of the findings in this study, there are several suggestions that can be used as a reference in the development of further research on maladaptive perfectionism in students, especially in the context of Islamic religious education. Further research is recommended to adopt mixed methods research methods that combine qualitative and quantitative approaches and statistically measure the degree of correlation and causality between the dimensions of maladaptive peer confessionism (Frost Model) and the effectiveness of Islamic spiritual interventions.

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