



Perfectionistic strivings and perfectionistic concerns interact to predict negative emotionality: Support for the tripartite model of perfectionism in Canadian and Chinese university students [☆]



Martin M. Smith ^{a,*}, Donald H. Saklofske ^a, Gonggu Yan ^b, Simon B. Sherry ^c

^a Department of Psychology, Western University, Canada

^b School of Psychology, Beijing Normal University, China

^c Department of Psychology and Neuroscience, Dalhousie University, Canada

ARTICLE INFO

Article history:

Received 23 April 2014

Received in revised form 21 August 2014

Accepted 3 September 2014

Available online 5 October 2014

Keywords:

Perfectionism

Depression

Anxiety

Stress

Cross-cultural

ABSTRACT

For most individuals, perfectionistic strivings and perfectionistic concerns coexist to varying degrees. While there is agreement that within-person combinations of perfectionistic strivings and perfectionistic concerns produce meaningful “subtypes”, the number and characterization of these within-person combinations is still debated. The two most prominent person-centered perfectionism models (the tripartite model and the 2×2 model) offer differing characterizations of how perfectionistic strivings effects perfectionistic concerns’ relationship with psychological outcomes. According to the 2×2 model, perfectionistic strivings buffers against the negative effects of perfectionistic concerns. The 2×2 model thus claims the most deleterious within-person combination of perfectionistic strivings and perfectionistic concerns is low strivings and high concerns. In contrast, according to the tripartite model, perfectionistic strivings exacerbates the maladaptive effects of perfectionistic concerns. The tripartite model thus claims the most maladaptive within-person combination of perfectionistic strivings and perfectionistic concerns is high strivings and high concerns. The present study tested these competing claims in a group of English speaking Canadians and a group of Mandarin speaking Chinese. Results support the tripartite model of perfectionism.

© 2014 Elsevier Ltd. All rights reserved.

1. Introduction

Perfectionism refers to a propensity to set high standards, strive for flawlessness, and experience dissatisfaction with anything falling short of perfection (Frost, Marten, Lahart, & Rosenblate, 1990; Hewitt & Flett, 1991; Stoeber & Otto, 2006). There is a general consensus that perfectionism is best understood as a multidimensional personality trait (Hewitt, Flett, Besser, Sherry, & McGee, 2003) comprised of two higher-order factors (Dunkley, Zuroff, & Blankstein, 2003; Smith, Saklofske, & Nordstokke, 2013; Stoeber & Otto, 2006): perfectionistic strivings (ceaselessly and rigidly demanding perfection of the self) and perfectionistic concerns (nagging self-doubts, excessive concerns over others expectations, and overly negative reactions to perceived failures). There is also a general consensus that perfectionistic strivings and perfectionistic

concerns produce meaningful within-person “subtypes”¹ of perfectionism (Gaudreau & Thompson, 2010; Stoeber & Otto, 2006). However, the number and characterization of these within-person combinations of perfectionistic strivings and concerns is still debated with the two most prominent person-centered perfectionism models, the tripartite model of perfectionism (Rice & Ashby, 2007; Stoeber, 2012; Stoeber & Otto, 2006) and the 2×2 model of perfectionism (Gaudreau, 2013; Gaudreau & Thompson, 2010), offering differing models of how perfectionistic strivings effects the association between perfectionistic concerns and psychological outcomes.

1.1. Overview of the 2×2 and tripartite model of perfectionism

The 2×2 model of perfectionism (Gaudreau & Thompson, 2010) claims the interaction between perfectionistic strivings

[☆] This article is a Special issue article – “Young researcher award 2014”.

* Corresponding author. Tel.: +1 226 268 4156; fax: +1 519 661 3961.

E-mail address: msmit454@uwo.ca (M.M. Smith).

¹ We concur with Stoeber (2012) that the 2×2 model’s use of “subtypes” is conceptually inappropriate and promotes improper statistical analysis. Thus, for the remainder of our article, we will use “within-person combinations” in place of “subtypes”.

and perfectionistic concerns differentiates four dispositional within-person combinations of perfectionism: (a) non-perfectionism (low perfectionistic strivings and low perfectionistic concerns), (b) pure personal standards perfectionism (high perfectionistic strivings and low perfectionistic concerns), (c) pure evaluative concerns perfectionism (low perfectionistic strivings and high perfectionistic concerns), and (d) mixed profile perfectionism (high perfectionistic strivings and high perfectionistic concerns). As [Stoeber \(2012\)](#) notes, the cornerstone of the 2×2 model is its assertion that mixed profile perfectionism is related to 'better' outcomes than pure evaluative concerns perfectionism.

In contrast, the tripartite model of perfectionism ([Rice & Ashby, 2007](#); [Stoeber & Otto, 2006](#)) claims the interaction between perfectionistic strivings and perfectionistic concerns differentiates three dispositional within-person combinations of perfectionism: (a) healthy perfectionism (high perfectionistic strivings and low perfectionistic concerns), (b) unhealthy perfectionism (high perfectionistic strivings and high perfectionistic concerns), and (c) non-perfectionism (low perfectionistic strivings). According to this model, perfectionistic strivings are only adaptive in the presence of low perfectionistic concerns. In the presence of high perfectionistic concerns, perfectionistic strivings are maladaptive. That is, the tripartite model contends that maladaptive perfectionism is related to worse outcomes than non-perfectionism ([Stoeber, 2012](#)).

1.2. The 2×2 and tripartite model of perfectionism: convergence and divergence

The two most prominent person-centered models of perfectionism overlap considerably. The 2×2 models "pure personal standards perfectionism" coincides with the tripartite models "healthy perfectionism" ([Stoeber, 2012](#)). Both "pure personal standards perfectionism" and "healthy perfectionism" refer to a combination of high perfectionistic strivings and low perfectionistic concerns. In addition, both the 2×2 model and the tripartite model view high perfectionistic strivings and low perfectionistic concerns as the most "adaptive" within-person combination of perfectionistic strivings and concerns ([Gaudreau & Thompson, 2010](#); [Stoeber & Otto, 2006](#)).

Despite this overlap, there are fundamental differences between the 2×2 model and the tripartite model in how combinations of high and low perfectionistic concerns in the presence of low perfectionistic strivings are characterized. The tripartite model does not differentiate the combination of high perfectionistic concerns with low perfectionistic strivings from the combination of low perfectionistic concerns with low perfectionistic strivings. The tripartite model considers both combinations as indicative of "non-perfectionism". In contrast, the 2×2 model regards the combination of low perfectionistic strivings with high perfectionistic concerns as "pure evaluative concerns perfectionism" and the combination of low perfectionistic strivings with low perfectionistic concerns as "non-perfectionism". This differentiation is key to the distinction between the 2×2 and the tripartite models of perfectionism.

According to the 2×2 model, low perfectionistic strivings with high perfectionistic concerns is the most maladaptive within-person combination of perfectionistic strivings and concerns ([Douilliez & Lefevre, 2011](#)). In contrast, the tripartite model characterizes high perfectionistic strivings and high perfectionistic concerns as the most maladaptive within-person combination of perfectionistic strivings and concerns. As noted by [Stoeber \(2012\)](#), the fundamental difference between the 2×2 model and the tripartite model stems from how perfectionistic strivings are characterized as influencing the relationship between perfectionistic concerns and psychological outcomes. Specifically, the 2×2

model conceptualizes perfectionistic strivings as a buffer against the maladaptive effects of perfectionistic concerns ([Douilliez & Lefevre, 2011](#)). Thus, the 2×2 model characterizes the combination of high perfectionistic strivings with high perfectionistic concerns as related to less "maladaptive" outcomes than the combination of low perfectionistic strivings with high perfectionistic concerns. Conversely, the tripartite model conceptualizes perfectionistic strivings as exacerbating the maladaptive effects of perfectionistic concerns ([Stoeber & Otto, 2006](#)). Thus, according to the tripartite model, the combination of high perfectionistic strivings with high perfectionistic concerns is associated with greater negative outcomes than the combination of low perfectionistic strivings and high perfectionistic concerns.

1.3. Objectives and hypothesis

The aim of the present research was to test the 2×2 and tripartite model of perfectionism through a rigorous investigation of the effect of perfectionistic strivings on the relationship between perfectionistic concerns and a latent measure of negative emotionality (depression, anxiety, and stress) in English speaking Canadian and Mandarin speaking Chinese university students. If evidence is found that perfectionistic strivings buffers against the effect of perfectionistic concerns on negative emotionality in both the Canadian and the Chinese groups, it would provide strong support for the 2×2 model of perfectionism. Conversely, if evidence is found that perfectionistic strivings exacerbates the effect of perfectionistic concerns on negative emotionality in both the Canadian and Chinese groups, it would provide strong support for the tripartite model of perfectionism.

Based on past support for the tripartite model ([Gilman, Ashby, Sverko, Florell, & Varjas, 2005](#); [Parker, 1997](#); [Rice & Slaney, 2002](#); [Stoeber & Otto, 2006](#)) we hypothesized that, in both the Canadian and the Chinese groups, perfectionistic strivings will moderate the effect of perfectionistic concerns on negative emotionality such that perfectionistic concerns will be more negatively consequential for individuals with high perfectionistic strivings than low perfectionistic strivings.

2. Method

2.1. Participants

1006 Undergraduates (425 Canadian; 581 Chinese) participated. Canadian participants (316 women; 109 men) averaged 18.77 years of age ($SD = 4.04$) and were recruited from a large university in central Canada. Chinese participants (412 women; 169 men) averaged 20.56 years of age ($SD = 1.43$) and were recruited from a large university in Beijing, China.

2.2. Measures

Perfectionistic concerns, perfectionistic strivings, and negative emotionality, were measured as latent variables, each with three manifest indicators (see [Fig. 1](#)). Scales used in the Chinese sample were translated into Mandarin following the procedure outlined by [Hambleton and Lee \(2013\)](#). Past research supports the reliability and validity of our translated measures ([Smith, Saklofske, Yan, & Sherry, 2014](#)).

2.2.1. Perfectionistic concerns

Perfectionistic concerns were measured using three short form subscales developed by [Cox, Enns, and Clara \(2002\)](#) and [Hewitt, Habke, Lee-Baggeley, Sherry, and Flett \(2008\)](#): The short form of [Hewitt and Flett's \(1991\) Multidimensional Perfectionism Scale Socially Prescribed Perfectionism subscale \(HFMPSP-SPP\)](#), the short

Download English Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/en/article/890059>

Download Persian Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/article/890059>

[Daneshyari.com](https://daneshyari.com)