

The Research of Ideal-Self at the Perfectionism

Tatiana N. Razuvaeva, Elena A. Filatova, Vladimir A. Karnauhov, Elena N. Shutenko,
Lubov V. Shukchus and Vitalina S. Shvecova
Belgorod State University, Pobedy St. 85, 308015 Belgorod, Russia

This study covers the problem of ideal-self at different perfectionism forms. The perfectionism is understood in the wide sense as a striving for excellence, ideal image, faultless performance of any activity. At the same time this phenomenon isn't uniform and we have studied two perfectionism forms-connected with motivation on the success (active perfectionism) and with motivation of the failure avoiding (passive perfectionism). The review of two the most significant ideal-self characteristics at these perfectionism forms is given: qualitative differences between real and actual personality images and meaningful features of personality ideal-self at the perfectionism in categories: strength, activity, estimation.

Key words: Perfectionism, ideal-self of the personality, self-oriented perfectionism, passive perfectionism, active perfectionism

INTRODUCTION

The perfectionism problem in modern society is actual because of the reaction force to the stressful situation (Flett *et al.*, 2007) and the activity efficiency connected with exactly this personality characteristic (Frost *et al.*, 1990). In modern psychology the perfectionism is associated with diseases, behavior disorders and even early mortality (Fry and Debats, 2009). In modern clinical theories, "the perfectionism plays a role of the factor that can contribute to psychological disorder maintenance" (Egan *et al.*, 2011). The perfectionism connection with suicidal behavior (Sherry and *et al.*, 2016; Kim *et al.*, 2016), depressive and anxiety disorders (Garanyan, 2009; La Rocque *et al.*, 2016; Smith *et al.*, 2016; Dunkley *et al.*, 2016; Cha, 2016; Burgess and DiBartolo, 2016), the eating behavior and body image disorder (Wade *et al.*, 2016; Stoeber and Yang, 2015; Barnes and Caltabiano, 2016) is indicated. Therefore, the perfectionism is related with the personality well-being and trouble (Kanten and Yesiltas, 2015). Then, again Adkins and Parker (1996) propose to select two perfectionism types called by them "passive perfectionism" and "active perfectionism". These two perfectionism forms are independent of each other. And, if the passive perfectionism is indeed connected with negative results and manifestations, the active perfectionism increases activity efficiency and promotes the personality development. Motivation for success is observed at the active perfectionism and failure fear and propensity for self-preventing behavior are detected at the passive perfectionism (Moore, 2010; Pfeiffer, 2009).

Not the least role in the perfectionism formation is played by relations between real-self and ideal-self of personality. The tension between these structures can become the basis for development of one's own inferiority feeling, low self-esteem. And on the contrary, self-assessment increases, self-confidence appears, when the personality consider itself able to approach ideals and values (Hollender, 1965). There is accepted in psychoanalysis to consider ego perfectionism as the result of the Oedipus complex wrong resolution, when ideal-self is the unattainable and not suitable for reality archaic perfection image (Bergman *et al.*, 2007). Impossibility of embodying the ideal image in reality leads to one's own individuality destruction, self-alienation, development disturbance, negative emotional states. Horney (2014) attributes these symptoms to "the neurotic personality".

Higgins *et al.* (1994) in his "self-discrepancy" theory places emphasis on the mismatch between actual personality image and its ideal reference points of the development. Mismatch between actual-self and ideal-self motivates the personality to overcoming of this discrepancy and can cause emotional burnout.

G. Flett and P. Hewitt's conception is also based on the supposition that the perfectionist has mismatch between actual and ideal images, between the real level of purposes and high ideals reflecting perfectionistic expectations (Frost *et al.*, 1990). Overestimated standards make him sensitive to a large number of negative consequences. When the perfectionist finds out discrepancy between actual and ideal images, the process August 2, 2016 of his own mistakes and defects cognitive

rumination starts. The issue of ideal personality image at the physical perfectionism is carefully studied. Discrepancy between the actual image of one's own body and the ideal, desirable image at physical perfectionism causes the eating behavior disorder (Landa and Bybee, 2007). Tissot and Crowther (2008)'s researches also show the correlation between perfectionism and ideal (desirable) notions of one's own body. Self-oriented perfectionism turns out to be mediator between socially prescribed perfectionism and one's own body dissatisfaction. Socially prescribed perfectionism and self-oriented perfectionism differently influence the bulimia symptomatology. Treynor *et al.* (2003) point out the passivity at perfectionism is connected with setting of unattainable goals and behavior standards.

The perfectionist student's self-concept studying (Zhebrun, 2009) indicates the perfectionist's self-construction duality. On the one hand, persons with distinct perfectionism demonstrate high results in the estimation of the ability to self-control and their activity organization. On the other hand, strong dependence of the behavior and activity social evaluation, self-confidence lack and self-criticism are indicated.

Therefore, the conducted research lets make a conclusion, that perfectionism is related with ideal-self of the personality and ideal-self features can be important indicators for the perfectionism type determination. In this connection two aspects deserve the greatest attention: the difference between real and ideal notions about oneself and related with perfectionism meaningful characteristics of ideal-self.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Participants and procedure: 294 people at the age from 18-30 year old took part in the research, 184 of them were females and 111 were males. There was proposed to the subjects to fill described below anonymous questionnaires.

Measures: The "Multidimensional Perfectionism Scale" psychological questionnaire by Gracheva (2006) allows to establish general perfectionism level, self-oriented, other-oriented and socially prescribed perfectionism intensity.

The "Personality differential" technique (adapted by the St. Petersburg Bekhterev Psychoneurological Research Institute staff) with the evaluation object variation allows to estimate real subject's notions about himself and notions about his own ideal-self, diagnose the difference between these notions, conduct the received data qualitative analysis.

The designed within the scope of this investigation "Passive perfectionism scale" psychological form allows to diagnose the level of passive perfectionism intensity according to the author's model. The passive perfectionism is comprehending as a closed, stable structure, including the cognitive component (high purposes, inclination to cognitive planning, endeavouring at perfection), the emotional component (failure fear, personality anxiety, emotional discomfort feeling in the situation of estimation) and behavioral component (self-preventing behavior, avoiding behavior in the situation of emotional discomfort feeling).

The questionnaire includes 45 questions, formulated as the statements with the two-alternative answers. The passive perfectionism level is consist of three rates: the cognitive component (for example, "I endeavour to be the best in all, that I do"), the emotional component (for example, "The rising of anxiety before an important event is typical for me, even if I carefully prepare to it") and the behavioral component (for example, "Some other work or urgent matters always appear, when I need to execute something important"). The cognitive parameter correlates with the success expectation scale (0.286) $p = 0.002$ and the thinking reflexivity scale (0.405) $p = 0.002$ of "The strategy and attribution questionnaire" by J.-A. Nurmi, K. Salmela-Ago and T. Haavisto, in V.N. Duhnevich's adaptation. The emotional component is connected with the personality anxiety (0.525) $p < 0.001$ (State-Trait Anxiety Inventory, STAI by Spielberger and Hanin). The behavioral component is related with the irrelevant behavior scale (0.578) $p < 0.001$ (SAQ). The questionnaire internal consistency (Cronbach's alpha) is high (0.906 for 45 questionnaire items). For data analysis the Spearman's rank correlation coefficient was used (the SPSS batch of Statistics 17).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

During the research the perfectionism level on Hewitt-Flett's model in participants of the group was revealed. Most of the subjects get the composite score ranging from 182 ± 22 that conform to mean for the population and is comprehended as the norm (Gracheva, 2006). For the passive perfectionism parameter M (the mean) = 24.2727, S (the standard deviation) = 6.57846. As, a matter of record, groups of respondents with high measures were formed. Addressing to the Personality differential" modified test results we discover following regularities presented in the Table 1 for persons with the distinct passive perfectionism.

Table 1: Connection between the passive perfectionism and the ideal-self characteristics

Perfectionism type	Ideal-self characteristics
The passive perfectionism	The ideal-self activity (extraverted characteristics of the ideal-self) (0.354) p = 0.008 The ideal-self intensity (will-power qualities intensity) (0.587) p <0.001 The difference between ideal-self and real-self of the personality: in the estimation (0.559) p<0.001, in the intensity (0.689), p<0.001, in the activity (0.567) p<0.001

Table 2: Connection between the perfectionism (Hewitt-Flett's model) and the ideal-self characteristics

Perfectionism type	The personality self-concept characteristics
The self-oriented perfectionism	The personality self-assessment (0.275) p = 0.042
The other-oriented perfectionism	The one's own ideal qualities positive estimation (0-0.421) p<0.001
The socially prescribed perfectionism	The extraverted characteristics of the ideal-self (0-0.318) p =0.018
The perfectionism (Hewitt-Flett's model)	The assessment of will-power qualities by the personality (0.352) p = 0.008 The will-power qualities intensity (force) in ideal-self (0-.536) p<0.001

The high level of self-oriented perfectionism and summary perfectionism on Hewitt-Flett's model in its turn, are related with other parameters presented in the Table 2.

From Table 1, we see that at the passive perfectionism big mismatch between real notions about oneself and ideal personality image is observed. In its turn, the amount of the mismatch between ideal-self and real-self is connected with:

- The self-assessment level, personality's positive attitude to itself (-0.404) p = 0.002
- The will-power qualities intensity (-0.612) p<0.001
- The personality openness, orientation to the communication (-0.634) p<0.001

That is in situations of the real image negative description (dissatisfaction with oneself, will-power qualities insufficient intensity and introversion, personality closedness) and the ideal image opposite characterizing (high self-assessment, developed will-power qualities and extraversion) we faces the passive perfectionism.

Thus at the passive perfectionism we observe in the personality ideal-self such features as: independence, inclination to depend on one's own strength in difficult situations, self-confidence, high activity, sociability, impulsiveness. And this ideal image doesn't correspond to these respondents' real notions about themselves. The discrepancy between the ideal-self and real-self at the passive perfectionism points to the deep feeling of one's own imperfection and also the desire to change this situation. Obviously, the high anxiety and passive behavior hinder the positive changing.

At the other perfectionism types the discrepancy between the ideal-self and real-self by means of the "Personality differential" questionnaire didn't identified. Persons with the distinct perfectionism level highly estimate their will-power qualities (independence, inclination to depend on their own strength in difficult situations, self-confidence) and will-power qualities don't

play the quite important role in ideal notions.

The self-oriented perfectionism positively correlates with the self-assessment. The other-oriented perfectionism is negatively connected with one's own ideal qualities positive estimation. In other words, persons with distinct other-oriented perfectionism don't place high demands on themselves in development reference points. It is possible to assume these demand are only placed on one's people. The others must correspond to his expectations while he can be not absolutely "ideal".

The socially prescribed perfectionism is insignificantly related with extraverted ideal-self features. Meanwhile, the difference between the real and ideal images on this parameter isn't detected. In the modern society exactly extraverted features are socially desirable, because there is typically to base itself on outside standards and requirements for personality with the socially prescribed perfectionism, so this result is quite natural.

CONCLUSION

The personality ideal-self psychological characteristics at different perfectionism manifestation forms were studied. Specific features in ideal-self are observed at the passive perfectionism by categories: strength, activity. The discrepancy between real-self and ideal-self is also identified. For respondents with the active perfectionism the high estimation of their will-power qualities is typical, meanwhile, they are not quite important for the ideal image.

REFERENCES

- Adkins, K.K. and W. Parker, 1996. Perfectionism and suicidal preoccupation. *J. Personality*, 64: 529-543.
- Barnes, M.A. and M.L. Caltabiano, 2016. The interrelationship between orthorexia nervosa, perfectionism, body image and attachment style. *Eating Weight Disord.*, (In Press). 10.1007/s40519-016-0280-x

- Bergman, A.J., J.E. Nyland and L.R. Burns, 2007. Correlates with perfectionism and the utility of a dual process model. *Personality Individual Differences*, 43: 389-399.
- Burgess, A. and P.M. DiBartolo, 2016. Anxiety and Perfectionism: Relationships, Mechanisms and Conditions. In: *Perfectionism, Health and Well-Being*, Sirois, F.M. and D.S. Molnar (Eds.). Springer International Publishing, Switzerland, ISBN: 978-3-319-18581-1, pp: 177-203.
- Cha, M., 2016. The mediation effect of mattering and self-esteem in the relationship between socially prescribed perfectionism and depression: Based on the social disconnection model. *Personality Individual Differences*, 88: 148-159.
- Dunkley, D., S. Solomon-Krakus and M. Moroz, 2016. Personal Standards and Self-Critical Perfectionism and Distress: Stress, Coping and Perceived Social Support as Mediators and Moderators. In: *Perfectionism, Health and Well-Being*, Sirois, F.M. and D.S. Molnar (Eds.). Springer International Publishing, Switzerland, ISBN: 978-3-319-18581-1, pp: 157-176.
- Egan, S.J., T.D. Wade and R. Shafran, 2011. Perfectionism as a transdiagnostic process: A clinical review. *Clin. Psychol. Rev.*, 31: 203-212.
- Flett, G.L., P.L. Hewitt, T. Whelan and T.R. Martin, 2007. The perfectionism cognitions inventory: Psychometric properties and associations with distress and deficits in cognitive self-management. *J. Rational-Emotive Cognitive-Behav. Therapy*, 25: 255-277.
- Frost, R.O., P.A. Marten, C.M. Lahart and R. Rosenblate, 1990. The dimensions of perfectionism. *Cognitive Ther. Res.*, 14: 449-468.
- Fry, P.S. and D.L. Debats, 2009. Perfectionism and the five-factor personality traits as predictors of mortality in older adults. *J. Health Psychol.*, 14: 513-524.
- Garanyan, N.G., 2009. The typological approach to the study of perfectionism. *Questions Psychol.*, 6: 52-60, (In Russian).
- Gracheva, I.I., 2006. An adaptation of the method "Multidimensional Perfectionism Scale" by P. Hewitt and G. Flett. *Psychol. J.*, 27: 73-80.
- Higgins, E.T., C.J. Roney, E. Crowe and C. Hymes, 1994. Ideal versus ought predilections for approach and avoidance distinct self-regulatory systems. *J. Personality Social Psychol.*, 66: 276-286.
- Hollender, M.H., 1965. Perfectionism. *Comprehensive Psychiatry*, 6: 94-103.
- Horney, K., 2014. *The Neurotic Personality of Our Time*. W.W. Norton and Co., New York, Pages: 307, (In Russian).
- Kanten, P. and M. Yesýltas, 2015. The effects of positive and negative perfectionism on work engagement, psychological well-being and emotional exhaustion. *Proc. Econ. Finance*, 23: 1367-1375.
- Kim, H., J. Seo, K. Namkoong, E.H. Hwang, S.Y. Sohn, S.J. Kim and J.I. Kang, 2016. Alexithymia and perfectionism traits are associated with suicidal risk in patients with obsessive-compulsive disorder. *J. Affective Disord.*, 192: 50-55.
- La Rocque, C.L., L. Lee and K.L. Harkness, 2016. The role of current depression symptoms in perfectionistic stress enhancement and stress generation. *J. Social Clin. Psychol.*, 35: 64-86.
- Landa, C.E. and J.A. Bybee, 2007. Adaptive elements of aging: Self-image discrepancy, perfectionism and eating problems. *Dev. Psychol.*, 43: 83-93.
- Moore, K.A., 2010. Gender and the differential effects of active and passive perfectionism on mathematics anxiety and writing anxiety. *Cognition Brain Behav.*, 14: 333-345.
- Pfeiffer, S., P. Buchwald, V. Malsch and C. Torwesten, 2009. Procrastination and test anxiety at school. *Proceedings of the 30th International Conference of the Stress and Anxiety Research Society*, July 16-18, 2009, Budapest, Hungary -.
- Sherry, S.B., J. Stoeber and C. Ramasubbu, 2016. Perfectionism explains variance in self-defeating behaviors beyond self-criticism: Evidence from a cross-national sample. *Personality Individual Differences*, 95: 196-199.
- Smith, M.M., S.B. Sherry, K. Rnic, D.H. Saklofske, M. Enns and T. Gralnick, 2016. Are perfectionism dimensions vulnerability factors for depressive symptoms after controlling for neuroticism? A meta-analysis of 10 longitudinal studies. *Eur. J. Pers.*, 30: 201-212.
- Stoeber, J. and H. Yang, 2015. Physical appearance perfectionism explains variance in eating disorder symptoms above general perfectionism. *Personality Individual Differences*, 86: 303-307.
- Tissot, A.M. and J.H. Crowther, 2008. Self-oriented and socially prescribed perfectionism: Risk factors within an integrative model for bulimic symptomatology. *J. Social Clin. Psychol.*, 27: 734-755.
- Treynor, W., R. Gonzalez and S. Nolen-Hoeksema, 2003. Rumination reconsidered: A psychometric analysis. *Cognitive Therapy Res.*, 27: 247-259.
- Wade, T.D., A. O'Shea and R. Shafran, 2016. Perfectionism and Eating Disorders. In: *Perfectionism, Health and Well-Being*, Sirois, F.M. and D.S. Molnar (Eds.). Springer International Publishing, Switzerland, ISBN: 978-3-319-18581-1, pp: 205-222.
- Zhebrun, Y.O., 2009. Social attitudes as a factor of self-image of the perfectionist student. *Bull. Buryat State Univ.*, 5: 20-24, (In Russian).