

# Differences Between Self-Oriented Perfectionism and Socially Prescribed Perfectionism in Predicting Functions of Self-Damaging Behaviors

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## BACKGROUND

- **Self-oriented perfectionism (SOP)** is an intrapersonal form of perfectionism that involves the self-imposed pursuit of high standards. [1]
- **Socially prescribed perfectionism (SPP)** is an interpersonal form of perfectionism that involves the pursuit of high standards imposed by others. [1]
- Research shows that perfectionism is related to engagement in **self-damaging behaviors (SDBs)**, including disordered eating, binge drinking, and nonsuicidal self-injury (NSSI). [2,3]
- Yet, little research has examined how SOP and SPP relate to **SDB functions** (i.e., an individual's perceived reasons for engaging in SDBs).
- This study hypothesized that SOP and SPP would predict **congruent** functions of SDBs, such that SOP would predict intrapersonal functions and SPP would predict interpersonal functions.

## METHODS

- 627 college freshmen (74% female,  $M_{age} = 18$ ) completed monthly self-reports for eight months.
- SOP and SPP were measured using the **CAPS-14** at baseline. [4]
- Functions of SDBs were measured at each follow-up using 24 items developed for this study. If students endorsed at least one interpersonal or intrapersonal function of a given SDB during the study, they received a score of one on that SDB function.
- An example of an interpersonal function is "to fit in with others" and an example of an intrapersonal function is "to calm myself down".

## RESULTS

- **Contrary to our hypothesis, binary logistic regressions revealed that SOP was unrelated to intrapersonal functions of disordered eating, binge drinking, and NSSI.**
- **Partially consistent with hypotheses, SPP predicted greater odds of endorsing interpersonal functions of disordered eating and binge drinking, but not NSSI.**

### Binary Logistic Regressions of the Associations Between Perfectionism and Functions of SDBs

Predictors	Intrapersonal Functions of <u>NSSI</u>					Interpersonal Functions of <u>NSSI</u>				
	$\beta$	SE	Sig.	OR	95% CI	$\beta$	SE	Sig.	OR	95% CI
SOP	0.34	1.20	0.777	1.40	0.13, 14.63	-0.02	0.28	0.931	0.98	0.57, 1.68
SPP	-1.73	1.59	0.277	0.18	0.01, 4.01	0.04	0.30	0.907	1.04	0.57, 1.88

Predictors	Intrapersonal Functions of <u>Binge Drinking</u>					Interpersonal Functions of <u>Binge Drinking</u>				
	B	SE	Sig.	OR	95% CI	$\beta$	SE	Sig.	OR	95% CI
SOP	0.17	0.20	0.382	1.19	0.81, 1.74	-0.26	0.20	0.192	0.77	0.52, 1.14
SPP	0.04	0.20	0.829	1.04	0.71, 1.54	0.89	0.249	<.001	<b>2.44</b>	1.50, 3.97

Predictors	Intrapersonal Functions of <u>Disordered Eating</u>					Interpersonal Functions of <u>Disordered Eating</u>				
	$\beta$	SE	Sig.	OR	95% CI	$\beta$	SE	Sig.	OR	95% CI
SOP	0.29	0.15	<b>0.055</b>	<b>1.33</b>	0.99, 1.79	0.00	0.13	0.973	1.00	0.78, 1.30
SPP	-0.09	0.15	0.563	0.92	0.69, 1.23	0.27	0.13	0.039	1.31	1.01, 1.68

## DISCUSSION

- Students who perceive that others impose high standards for their performance are at risk for engaging in disordered eating and binge drinking to fit in, bond with friends, or elicit support.
- Clinically, this suggests that mental health professionals may wish to consider whether students high on SPP engage in SDBs for interpersonal reasons and try to replace these behaviors with functionally equivalent but more adaptive behaviors.
- Unexpectedly, we found that students who self-impose high standards are not more likely to engage in SDBs to reduce sadness, calm down, or feel less disgusted with themselves.
- One reason for this could be that SOP is related **specific** intrapersonal functions, namely self-punishment functions. Given that SOP involves high levels of self-criticism and feelings of worthlessness, this could lead to an urge to punish oneself through SDBs. Future research should investigate this possibility.

## REFERENCES

- [1] Hewitt, P. L., & Flett, G. L. (1991). Dimensions of perfectionism in unipolar depression. *Journal of abnormal psychology, 100*(1), 98-101.
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