This study hypothesized that SOP and SPP would predict interpersonal functions and SPP would predict intrapersonal functions.

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, bond with friends, or elicit support.”

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.

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.

One reason for this could be that SOP is related specific interpersonal 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


[2] Nealis, L. J., & Mackinnon, S. P. (2018). “It was the best of times, it was the worst of times”: A qualitative investigation of perfectionism and drinking narratives in undergraduate students. Psychological reports, 121(6), 1013-1016.
