

A Review of Adolescent Perfectionism

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Abstract: Perfectionism is a high standard set for oneself, actively pursuing perfection; Perfectionism is also a stable personality trait of positive or negative self-evaluation, when they can or cannot meet the high standards set by themselves. This study comb from the aspects of concept, measurement, antecedent variables, consequence variables and so on. In terms of concept, the commonly used perfectionism scale today is either a two-dimensional scale or a multi-dimensional scale. In terms of antecedent variables, this study found that personal factors (personality, goal orientation, achievement motivation) and family factors (parental education style, parental perfectionism, parent-child attachment) will have an important impact on adolescents' perfectionism. In terms of outcome variables, this study found that academic procrastination, depression and self impairment were common consequences. The study of perfectionism is not perfect, and its definition and nature still need to be more unified. It also calls for a higher quality and localized Chinese perfectionism scale.

1. Introduction

Perfectionism is a high standard set for oneself, actively pursuing perfection. Perfectionism is also a stable personality trait of positive or negative self-evaluation, when they can or cannot meet the high standards set by themselves. With the development of psychological science research on perfectionism, researchers divide perfectionism into two categories: positive perfectionism (also known as normal, healthy, functional or adaptive perfectionism) and negative perfectionism (also known as neurotic, unhealthy, dysfunctional or non adaptive perfectionism). According to the Multidimensional Perfectionism Scale compiled by Hewitt and Flett, perfectionism is divided into three factors: self-oriented perfectionism, other-oriented perfectionism and social-imposed perfectionism. A large number of studies have explored the relevant factors of adolescent perfectionism. However, due to the complexity of perfectionism personality itself, this study will summarize the causes of adolescent perfectionism into two aspects: personal factors and family factors. The following is a detailed introduction to the two antecedents of perfectionism and some of its consequences.

2. Measurement

2.1 Frost (1990), Multidimensional Perfectionism Scale^[1], Fmps

There are 35 items in total, which are divided into 6 dimensions: personal standards, suspicious actions, focusing on mistakes, cleanliness, parental expectations and parental criticism. The split half reliability of the student scale used in the study was 0.80, alpha coefficient was 0.83, and the alpha coefficient of each subscale was 0.50~0.82. The split half reliability of the father scale was 0.80, alpha coefficient is 0.82, and the alpha coefficient of each subscale was 0.49~0.78. The split half reliability of the mother scale was 0.83 and alpha coefficient was 0.85, and the alpha coefficient of each subscale was 0.64~0.86.

2.2 Positive and Negative Perfectionism Scale (Panps)^[2]

It is compiled by Terry short et al. (1996) with 40 items, which is divided into three dimensions: negative perfectionism, positive individual perfectionism and positive social perfectionism.

2.3 Almost Perfect Scale Revision (Aps-r)(from Zhou Yajuan, 2010) [3]

Prepared by Slaney et al., there are 23 items in total, with 7 grades; He believed that perfectionism related behavior mainly include the following four aspects: standard and order, interpersonal relationship, anxiety and procrastination, but it had not been widely used, and its reliability and validity need to be further verified.

2.4 Chinese Version of Frost Multi-Perfectionism Scale (Cfmeps) [4]

Zi Fei, Zhou Xu revised the FMPS. The scale had 27 items and five dimensions, namely worry about mistakes, organization, parental expectations, doubts about personal standards and actions. Total scale's cronbach's alpha coefficient is 0.80.

3. Antecedent Variable

3.1 Personal Factors

Previous studies have discussed the causes of adolescent perfectionism from different aspects of individual factors. According to the correlation between these different factors, they are summarized as personality, goal orientation and achievement motivation.

3.1.1 Personality: the Big Five Personality Scale is Divided into Five Dimensions: Extroversion, Agreeableness, Rigor, Neuroticism and Openness.

Shen Yulai et al. (2017) tested 217 medical students and 157 non-medical students and found that perfectionism was related to neuroticism, altruism and moral sense^[5]. Specifically, neuroticism is negatively correlated with adaptive perfectionism, positively correlated with maladaptive perfectionism, altruism is negatively correlated with maladaptive perfectionism, and moral sense is positively correlated with adaptive perfectionism. The reason is that high neuroticism is mainly manifested in high tension, easily-excited, anxiety and vigilance, which are easy to lead to maladaptive perfectionism. Altruism is shown as humility, cooperation, trust and frank, which is consistent with adaptive perfectionism. High moral sense is shown as organized, principled, cautious and stubborn, which is easy to produce adaptive perfectionism.

Zhao Yan and Yang Hongfei (2007) investigated 203 undergraduates^[6], the results show that preciseness, neuroticism and openness jointly explain self-directed perfectionism, extraversion, preciseness and neuroticism can explain others-oriented perfectionism, and neuroticism can also explain social imposed perfectionism. Self-directed perfectionism refers to individuals setting high standards for themselves, having high expectations for themselves and working hard, doing things perfectly. Those with high Openness scores have higher creativity, deeper thinking. Such people have higher requirements for themselves, leading to the tendency of self perfection. However, when self-directed perfectionism interacts with pressure and failure, or combined with perfectionism imposed by high society, it may turn into maladaptive perfectionism.

3.1.2 Goal Orientation

Researchers have found that high perfectionism individuals are driven by the motivation of different goal orientations in the process of setting high standards and pursuing perfection.

The researchers found that perfectionism individuals are driven by different motivation of goal orientations in the process of setting high standards and pursuing perfection, and their final achievements and psychological harmony are different. Neumeister (2004)^[7] found that, some perfectionists are driven by the motivation of fear of failure, they always set the goal orientation of performance avoidance, and are used to delaying in work or study; while some perfectionists adopt the goal orientation of mastering learning close to performance in order to obtain the motivation of high achievement. They give full play to their strong work motivation and are driven to look for challenges. The society determines the potential motivation of perfectionists They set performance avoidance goals and tend to delay in work or study.

3.1.3 Achievement Motivation

J.W. Atkinson^[8] considered that there are two kinds of motivation in the formation of achievement motivation: the motivation to pursue success and the motivation to avoid failure. People with high achievement motivation have higher motivation to pursue success than to avoid failure. They choose tasks with appropriate difficulty to achieve success. For individuals with low achievement motivation, the motivation to avoid failure is higher than the motivation to pursue success. They always choose tasks that are not too difficult to avoid failure. Another study^[9] showed that non adaptive perfectionism is significantly related to the motivation to avoid failure and achievement motivation, while adaptive perfectionism is significantly related to the motivation to pursue success and achievement motivation.

3.2 Family Factors

As for the family factors affecting adolescent perfectionism personality, researchers explore them from the aspects of parental education, parental perfectionism and parent-child attachment.

3.2.1 Parental Education Mode

The existing research^[10] divided the mother's rearing style into five factors: emotional warmth and understanding, excessive interference and protection, refusal and denial, severe punishment and preference. The father's rearing style is divided into six factors: emotional warmth and understanding, excessive interference, excessive protection, refusal to deny, severe punishment and preference. The results show that there is a significant correlation between child perfectionism and parental education mode. Among them, the high standard dimension of children's perfectionism is significantly positively correlated with the authority and autocracy in parental rearing styles. Adhering to the belief that "strict education produces talents", Chinese parents have always placed high expectations on their children, emphasizing the social tradition of parental authority and children's obedience, and education and management tend to autocratic upbringing, which affects the formation of their children's self-oriented perfectionism. In addition, father's overprotection and mother's refusal and denial have a significant positive impact on maladaptive perfectionism. Father's over protection reduces children's experience of making mistakes and suffering setbacks, makes them more sensitive and afraid in the face of mistakes and possible failures, easily forms a dependence on their father, doubts their ability to complete tasks, and promotes the formation of negative perfectionism.

3.2.2 Parental Perfectionism

The social learning model holds that children's perfectionism is developed by imitating their parents. This phenomenon is proved by the classical experiment of Bandura and Kupers^[11]. In this case, children regard their parents as "perfect people" and hope to become "perfect people" like their parents through their own efforts. Researchers^[12] found that perfectionist imitation learning exists between parents and children of the same sex and the opposite sex. Therefore, it is concluded that in the Chinese context, the demonstration role of parents' psychology and behavior is of equal importance to their children. Because living in the same family environment, there are many similarities in psychology and behavior between father and mother and between parents and children. If there are perfectionist parents in the family, the more likely there are perfectionist children.

3.2.3 Parent-Child Attachment

In terms of the relationship between child perfectionism and parent-child attachment, some studies^[13] found that the high standard dimension of perfectionism was positively correlated with the communication and trust dimensions of father and mother, and the score of mother attachment. Therefore, the results show that the importance of mother attachment is greater than father attachment. Because the role of mother in the family is irreplaceable, safe mother attachment is conducive to the formation of children's sound personality, and unsafe attachment will make children develop the negative aspect of perfectionism, which is not conducive to self-growth.

4. Consequence Variables

4.1 Academic Procrastination

Academic procrastination is very common among adolescent. A considerable number of studies^[14] pointed out that the reason why individuals delay the tasks they should have completed, knowing that such delay will bring adverse consequences, is mainly worried about being severely evaluated and that they can't complete the tasks. This excessive worry is often the internal expression of negative perfectionism. Negative perfectionists, who added too high and temporarily unrealistic expectations to themselves, make them feel the inaccessibility of the goal on the one hand and eager to touch the goal on the other hand, so as to stimulate anxiety, self denial and depression. Procrastination is a manifestation of stimulating their defensive instinct.

4.2 Self Handicapping

Self handicapping is a human trait. For high school students, academic self handicapping refers to the behavior that students will set obstacles for themselves in advance to avoid possible negative results in the typical ability evaluation situation of school and classroom, so as to prepare reasonable excuses for potential failure in advance. As a personality trait and way of thinking, the higher the level of perfectionism, the higher the students will show higher academic self handicapping. Among them, the study^[15] found that the higher parents' expectations, the easier it is to cause psychological pressure on children. Therefore, the higher students worry about mistakes, the easier they are to adopt academic self handicapping strategies.

4.3 Depression

More and more studies show that depression is positively correlated with the negative and positive aspects of perfectionism. When individuals are desperate to pursue high standards, clinical perfectionism will appear, and even lead to depression. Among them, doubts about actions, fear of mistakes, organization and personal standards in perfectionism can jointly predict the occurrence of depressive mood. When individuals set reasonable standards for themselves and complete them with positive attitude and self confidence, it is possible to reduce the occurrence of depression. Secondly, family environment is an intermediary variable between students' perfectionism and depressive mood^[16], that is, family environment partially mediates the regression effect of perfectionism on depressive mood, and perfectionism has an impact on depressive mood through family environment. In addition, the study found that the combination of negative perfectionism and depression had a positive predictive effect on academic procrastination, and the complete mediating effect of depression between negative perfectionism and academic procrastination was significant, and the mediating effect between positive perfectionism and academic procrastination was significant.

5. Summary and Prospect

At present, the research on the influencing factors of perfectionism of adolescent has achieved some success. Studies have shown that individual factors (personality and goal orientation) and family factors (parental education, parental perfectionism, parent-child attachment) are important factors that may affect the formation of perfectionism among adolescent. In addition, perfectionist personality will also bring different degrees of related effects to students, such as academic procrastination, self handicapping and depression.

Perfectionism has been studied for a long time, but there are still some deficiencies: (1) there are many concepts and definitions of perfectionism, but researchers have not reached a consensus on the core definition and nature of perfectionism; (2) In terms of the measurement of perfectionism, in recent years, perfectionism scales with local background have been emerging, suggesting that the psychological structure of perfectionism in the Chinese context may be different from western theories. For example, Yang Li's research shows that order may not be the core feature of perfectionism in the Chinese cultural context^[17].

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