

Self- Critical Perfectionism: A South Indian's Experience

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ABSTRACT

The persistence of gender inequality is the harsh outline of our society. This study examines self-critical perfectionism in undergraduate male and female students of South India. The sample comprises of 214 undergraduate students including 103 males and 111 females. Big Three Perfectionism Scale (BTPS) was used to evaluate higher order global factors in perfectionism. Snowball method of data collection was used and the collected data were analysed using independent sample T-test. The result shows that there is a significant difference between male and female students with respect to their self-critical perfectionism. The existence of gender bias in our society implicates females to be self-critical and they become obsessive over the idea of being perfect. As a developed society, there must be some structural and cultural changes to increase gender neutrality. Further implications can be to increase the sense of equality with emphasis on opportunities in education, employment, and political participation and these changes may reduce the impact of patriarchal ideologies in our society. The scope for future research may be an attempt to explore rigid perfectionism and narcissistic perfectionism which may be an adaptive and transformative factor in changing people's beliefs and cultural practices.

Keywords: *Self-Critical Perfectionism, Undergraduate Students, Gender Inequality, South India, Culture and Societal Pressure.*

In past decades many researchers have studied perfectionism in various dimensions one among such dimensions is Self-critical perfectionism. There are many determinants evaluate people's personality through trait-like perfectionism (Khodarahimi, 2010). It has both its positive sides and negative sides. On the positive end, perfectionism can push people to do their best and strive to give their maximum performance. On the negative end, it can lead people to be overly critical and judgmental of both themselves and others (Kanten & Yesiltas, 2015). Many research describes the psychological problems associated with perfectionism are probably more closely associated with the critical outcomes by setting excessively high standards (Frost & Marten, 1990b). Perfectionism is having exceedingly high expectations these expectations occur due to societal norms and culture. High expectation about people leads to adaptive or maladaptive perfectionism (Lo & Abbott, 2013). Adaptive perfectionism leads to enhance perfectionism (Fedewa et al., 2005) while maladaptive leads to these factors

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concern over mistakes, doubts about action, self-criticism and socially prescribed perfectionism. In people's performance always self-criticism takes place and this self-criticism happens only when their action is observed and criticized by others (Santanello & Gardner, 2007).

The Indian education system was modelled after the British system; this modernization did not challenge gender or other social hierarchies (Kumar & Vlassof, 1997). Women in South Indian culture have an estimate about their self and these cultural norms influence the degree of their sense of autonomy. Social autonomy has increased allowing more opportunity for males and it is considered as a more masculine quality. This causes lack of opportunity for females in many areas of education (Beaman et al., 2012). Males are expected to control feelings of fear, loneliness, pleasure, and despair whereas females are not. Women lack behind men in many domains like education, labour market opportunities and political representation (Duflo, 2011). Females are expected to be weak even though they can withstand physical and emotional pain. (Kumar & Vlassof, 1997) In India, women are discriminated due to several historical, religious and other reasons; they have limited participation in making decisions about their own life and family and they should possess Shyness, politeness, nobility, and modesty they are trained to speak with soft words and avoid harsh and hard language these qualities determines a women in our society (Bhasin, 2007; Gangoli, 2007; Mohapatra, 2015). Self-critical perfectionism is said to be high in female due to our societal background this includes the patriarchal ideology in our society (Blackmore et al., 2017), females are more likely to develop disorders like depression and anxiety when compared to male this is due to their body image, self-evaluation, and appearance (Grossbard et al., 2009). Also, females have lower self-esteem than males (Joshi & Srivastava, 2009). If a person cannot meet the standard of desired performance, it will create a self-criticism trap (Sturman & Mongrain, 2005). The inner critic or superego is the part of every person these are their inner guide. Sometimes these inner guides says negative. Self-criticize only self, not others (Groot, 1962). Most Females self-criticisms are due to the following reasons like weight issues, physical appearance, career path, money and relationships (Taranis & Meyer, 2010). Some females have self-criticisms due to sexual inequality at birth, economic exigencies, discrimination, and threat in opportunity makes them to feel to be self-critical perfectionists (Rice, 2014).

Many parents believed that educating a girl child is not necessary since they are only expected to marry and take care of their households (Jenkins & Fredrick, 2017). For adolescent girls, self-criticism appears to drive depressive symptoms in a vicious circle, where the more depressed girls became, the more self-critical they became (Brewin et al., 1996). Brewin et al in 1996 found that self-criticism in young women was related to their perceived criticism from their mothers. Also, self-criticism regarding appearance was unrelated to parental criticism. This parental criticism is due to traditional practices (Frost et al., 1991) Women in several countries still lack the right to own land, manage a property, conduct business, or even travel without their familial consent. In one direction, globalization alone plays a major role in driving down inequality between men and women; in the other direction, continuing discrimination against women (Duflo, 2011) Sometimes female prefer to be perfect when they exhibit their originality for instant when a female in a family likes to enjoy but she hides her feelings and self-critique herself to be perfect since are expected to be silent, to be considered a good family member. By these cultural, societal, family norms female tend to be self-critical perfectionists than males (Stoeber, 2017). Some females are socially prescribed since they fear to exhibit their talent with others because they feel that others will criticize their performance. socially prescribed perfectionism is associated with

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reduced self-control and increased guilt and shame, (Klibert et al., 2005) Due to this they have self-critical perfectionism to perform better this may lead to anxiety and lack of confidence. Self-oriented perfectionism is said to be an individual fixing high standard of goals and achievement when it became the success it is adaptive and positive perfectionism at the same time when it fails it leads them to organized and perfect throughout their attainment of goal it is somewhat stressful (Gilbert & Procter, 2006). Self-critical perfectionism has important consequences for both male and female gender. Self-critical perfectionism consists of four components: concern over mistakes, doubts about actions, self-criticism, and socially prescribed perfectionism (Dunkley & Zuroff, 2003). Concern over mistakes is the tendency to have negative reactions towards perceived difficulty and failures Doubts about actions considers uncertainties about performance (Frost & Marten, 1990). In the Indian social situation, a female is perceived as a burden on the family. Parents regard educating a girl child is a wasteful expenditure and a financial burden in the future (Mohapatra, 2015). Due to these perceptions in families' females have self-critical perfectionism.

Self-criticism measures the tendency to engage in harsh self-criticism when performance falls short of perfection (Dunkley & Zuroff, 2003). Socially prescribed perfectionism denotes a tendency to perceive others as demanding perfection (Hewitt et al., 1991). Many research describes the psychological problems associated with perfectionism are probably more closely associated with these critical outcomes than with the setting of excessively high standards (Frost & Marten, 1990). Gender differences exist about other-oriented perfectionism, socially prescribed perfectionism, and academic procrastination (Ghosh & Roy, 2017). Self-Critical perfectionists are theorized to quickly blame and condemn their talents and private qualities that they regard mounted and established. Self-Critical perfectionists become preoccupied with their deficiencies and their inability to handle the stressful situation to the extent that they lack the motivation to engage in active coping with the situation, engaging instead in avoidance of threatening stimuli (Dunkley & Zuroff, 2003). Individuals with an anxious or preoccupied attachment orientation may attempt to be or appear "perfect" or hide imperfections as a way of mitigating the sense of shame and enhancing a sense of connectedness with others (Gordon & Paul, 2014).

Self-critical perfectionism is even stressful for women due to their preoccupied cultural thought it is assumed to respond to stressful situations with a helpless orientation that undermines efforts at problem-focused coping (Hewitt, 2002). Self-Critical perfectionists become preoccupied with their deficiencies and their inability to handle the stressful situation to the extent that they lack the motivation to engage in active coping with the situation, engaging instead in avoidance of threatening stimuli (Dunkley & Zuroff, 2003). The unrealistic expectations from the culture and society can push the females into being self-critical and they exhibit Perfectionism in their performance. Therefore the current study helps us to know that self-critical perfectionism influences female undergraduate students of South India.

Purpose of the Present Study

The purpose of the present study was to investigate the influence of self-critical perfectionism on undergraduate students of South India. It was hypothesized that (H1) self-critical perfectionism will have a significant difference in male and female undergraduate students of south India.

METHODOLOGY

Sample

Participants were undergraduate students of South India. 214 students agreed to participate in this study. In these 111 females and 103 males were participated with an average age of 19.30. The participants are from various regions in South India like Tirunelveli, Coimbatore, Chennai, Kerala, Bangalore, Salem, Erode, Hyderabad, Karnataka and Kanyakumari.

Materials

The present study included The Big Three Perfectionism Scale (BTPS). The BTPS consists of 45 items. The BTPS assesses three higher-order global factors (rigid perfectionism, self-critical perfectionism, narcissistic perfectionism) via 10 lower-order perfectionism facets (self-oriented perfectionism, self-worth contingencies, concern over mistakes, doubts about actions, self-criticism, socially prescribed perfectionism, other-oriented perfectionism, hypercriticism, grandiosity, entitlement).

Procedure

Participants are provided consent form, demographic information and BTPS questionnaire in Google forms. At the start of the study, the participants reviewed the research consent form. Those who are willing to take part in the study proceeded by filling demographic details and filled the BTPS questionnaire. After completing the 45 questions they submitted the form. Snowball technique is used to collect data. There were 245 data collected in this after separating based on the category 214 data were present in this 111 were female and 103 were female.

Design

The study adopted the ex-post facto design. This study uses a quantitative approach by involving two sample groups, namely male and female. The data analysis technique in this study uses the Independent sample t-Test used to determine whether two unrelated groups have significant differences.

RESULTS

The analysis in this study was to determine the self-critical perfectionism among male and female undergraduate students of South India. The research results can be explained as follows:

Table1. Mean and standard deviation among male and female

Gender	N	M	SD
Female	111	39.88	10.439
Male	103	37.24	8.728

Based on the output table it is known that the amount of data on 103 males has a mean value of 37.24 and standard deviation of 8.728, while 111 females received a mean value of 39.88 and standard deviation of 10.439.

Table2. Independent samples test

Based on the independent sample t- test output on the equal variance assumed a part, it is known that the significant value $P = 0.047 < 0.05$, Given a Levene's test for homogeneity of

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	Levene's test for equality of Variances				t-test for Equality of Means		
	F	Sig.	T	df	Sig (2tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference
Equal variances assumed	2.33	.128	1.99	212	.047*	1.321	2.640
Equal variances not assumed			2.01	209.775	.045*	1.321	2.640

variances, $F = 2.33$, according to the independent t-test it can be concluded that there is a significant difference between males and females in self-critical perfectionism.

DISCUSSION

Gender inequality is a well-known feature of human society. The present study sought to clarify that self-critical perfectionism has an impact on male and female gender. Overall, the results provided a great deal of insight into the nature of the self-critical perfectionism among the undergraduate students of South India. The results supported the hypothesis (H1) that self-critical perfectionism will have significant difference in male and female undergraduate students of South India. This shows that females tend to be self-critical due to cultural and societal pressures. In this study self-critical perfectionism also has a significant impact on the components including concern over mistakes, doubts about action, self-critical perfectionism, and socially prescribed perfectionism (Dunkley & Zuroff, 2003). Self-critical perfectionism in females also has an association with self-image, family practice, cultural and societal norms.

Females who are high in self-criticism and maladaptive perfectionism are often automatically self-critical and maybe less rehearsed in self-soothing (Gilbert & Irons, 2005). Females have reported lower levels of self-compassion compared to men, and are more likely to engage in self-judgment and they feel isolated when confronted with painful situations, and to be more over-identified and less mindful of their negative emotions (Neff, 2003). For females, self-criticism was stable throughout early adolescence to adulthood, but this was not true for males (Shahar et al., 2004). For adolescent girls, self-criticism appears to drive depressive symptoms in a vicious circle, where the more depressed girls became, the more self-critical they became (Brewin et al., 1996). Brewin et al in 1996 found that self-criticism in young women was related to their perceived criticism from their mothers, but not the mothers' own judgment of criticism. Also, self-criticism regarding appearance was unrelated to parental criticism. This parental criticism is due to traditional practices (Frost et al., 1991). This indicated that females reported higher levels of self-critical perfectionism than males. As only a handful of studies have examined self-critical perfectionism to date, in general perfectionism, the area of gender is typically unrelated to other dimensions of perfectionism (Stoeber & Stoeber, 2009). Research does suggest that females typically endorse more self-critical and entitled self-opinions than males (Brewin et al., 1996). For this reason, it might be expected that there would be gender differences for this particular dimension of perfectionism. Again, future research should examine this possibility. This study found evidence for the cultural origins of perfectionism. Some limitations of the research should be noted. The prevalence of self-critical perfectionism will be equal in gender, only if society treats males and females as same.

Limitations

This study possesses small sample size generalization occurs. In addition, only undergraduate students are targeted and this study included only the South Indian population. Only self-critical perfectionism is chosen as a variable. Future Studies should target different ethnic groups and other components of perfectionism.

CONCLUSION

As a developing society, there must be some structural and cultural changes to increase gender equality. The present study provides the evidence that self-critical perfectionism has a significant difference in male and female. Future studies could explore the direct and indirect effects of self-critical perfectionism. Studies about rigid perfectionism and narcissistic perfectionism can be done, which may be a transformative factor in our society.

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Conflict of Interest

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