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## Perfecting Perfectionism: Exploring Cultural Influences on Perfectionism Experiences

Ashley Larson

Grand Canyon University  
Arizona Alpha Chapter

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### Abstract

This paper examines the relationship between culture and perfectionism in undergraduate college students. This study aims to increase the understanding of perfectionism experiences in both collectivistic and individualistic cultures. To assess these goals, researchers utilized self-report questionnaires. The results indicated no significant differences in the levels of self-critical perfectionism between the individuals identifying as individualistic and those identifying as collectivistic. The results also indicated that individuals identifying as individualistic were significantly higher in narcissistic and rigid perfectionism than individuals identifying as collectivistic. This study emphasizes the importance of cross-cultural perfectionism research, especially within clinical mental health contexts.

Keywords: *culture, perfectionism, collectivism, individualism*

## Perfectionism

### Current and Historical Approaches

Perfectionism is defined as a personality trait in which an individual demands overly high standards of performance from themselves and others. Perfectionistic individuals are excessively self-critical, afraid of negative appraisal, and are often overly concerned with their mistakes and shortcomings (Overholser & Dimaggio, 2020). Researchers have described perfectionism as both a negative and positive trait (Juwono et al., 2023). This perfectionism can affect someone not only psychologically, but also in their relationships. Some researchers believe perfectionism reflects higher levels of conscientiousness (Rice et al., 2020). Regardless of whether perfectionism is adaptive or maladaptive, perfectionism is a trait that affects people in many areas of their life (Flett & Hewitt, 2020). Perfectionism affects the social, professional, relational, and even mental experiences of those who exhibit the trait (Flett & Hewitt, 2020).

Perfectionism has been conceptualized in many ways over the course of history. Frost et al. (1990) and Hewitt and Flett (1991) were the first to theorize that perfectionism was a multidimensional concept. These theories set the foundation for future perfectionism researchers. Frost et al., (1990) conceptualized perfectionism as five dimensions, including concern over mistakes, personal standards, parental expectations, criticism, and doubts about actions. Incorporating learning theory, Terry-Short et al., (1995) focused on describing the adaptive and maladaptive aspects of perfectionism and posit that the difference between adaptive and maladaptive perfectionism lies in behavioral reinforcement. If someone is challenged to achieve perfectionism in a way that highlights growth and builds self-esteem, perfectionism will be adaptive. If perfectionism is pursued to address some lack or deficiency, typically this will correlate with maladaptive perfectionism (Sederlund et al., 2020). Around the same time Hewitt and Flett (1991) theorized a different multidimensional concept of perfectionism.

Hewitt and Flett (1991) defined perfectionism by identifying and describing the motivations of an individual to pursue perfection: self-oriented, socially prescribed, and other-oriented (Flett & Hewitt, 2020). Self-oriented perfectionism is defined as a need to set extremely high standards for the self and an intentional

avoidance of failure (Hewitt & Flett, 1991). Socially prescribed perfectionism describes a need to be perfect to satisfy the expectations or demands of significant others in their lives (Hewitt & Flett, 1991). Finally, other-oriented perfectionism is the expectation of excessively high standards from others, potentially leading to blame and lack of trust of other people (Hewitt & Flett, 1991). This definition showcases how perfectionism not only affects the self, but can be associated with how an individual engages in relationship.

Although many other theories and measures of perfectionism have been defined over the past 30 years, the work and theory of Smith et al., (2016) has gained a lot of recent attention (Flett & Hewitt, 2020). Adding to the complex approach to understanding perfectionism, Smith et al., (2016) asserts that perfectionism is a result of personal standards of perfection and a tendency to perceive that others expect perfection. They describe three dimensions of perfectionism: rigid perfectionism, self-critical perfectionism, and narcissistic perfectionism. Uniquely, these theorists include narcissistic perfectionism as a factor of perfectionism as perfectionists may harshly evaluate and judge others based on the extremely high standards they have for themselves. This is a strong theory as it integrates ten core facets within the three encompassing global factors. It allows a more detailed measure of perfectionism by separating self-oriented from self-worth contingencies of perfectionism. This theory also evaluates the personal standards, evaluation concerns, and potentially narcissistic attributes of an individual's perfectionism in one theory (Smith et al., 2016). The robustness and all-encompassing view of this theory makes it a strong addition to recent perfectionism conceptualizations.

As shown by the diversity of perfectionism conceptualizations, it is obvious that perfectionism is an extremely complex trait. In each of these approaches, there are central themes. For example, all perfectionists have high expectations of themselves that affect their thoughts and behavior in some way (Casale et al., 2019; Fekih-Romdhane et al., 2023; Frost et al., 1990; Hewitt & Flett, 1991; Juwono et al., 2023, Smith et al., 2016). Moreover, there is a social component to perfectionism, as people with perfectionism are either influenced by the perceived expectations of others or their own judgments of others based on their

standards. (Casale et al., 2019; Fekih-Romdhane et al., 2023; Juwono et al., 2023) It is likely that the social component of perfectionism could be affected by the culture an individual resides in (Jiang & Konorova, 2023; Krumov et al., 2023). This could have important implications for cross-cultural perfectionism research, especially when evaluating potentially negative outcomes for people with the trait of perfectionism.

### **Mental Health and Perfectionism**

Perfectionism is often associated with many negative mental health outcomes. Perfectionism is associated with higher self-blame and blaming of others, showing how perfectionism can be a maladaptive coping mechanism in some individuals (Choi et al., 2024). Perfectionistic concerns and strivings are often correlated with eating disorders. Over-exercising and counting calories may be an attempt to control the perception of perfection to the self and others (Stackpole et al., 2023). Perfectionism was shown to heighten symptoms of childhood obsessive-compulsive disorder, as a compulsion to obsess over mistakes may be intensified by perfectionism (Sametoğlu et al., 2022). Overholser and Dimaggio (2020) connected perfectionism with psychological distress by showing behavioral tendencies toward emotional distress and interpersonal conflict as mediating factors. Perfectionism may also increase symptoms of depression and anxiety (Callaghan et al., 2023). Perfectionism can have a negative impact on mental health in many ways across the lifespan.

### **Perfectionism and Cognition**

Perfectionism and mental health may be linked through cognition. Events such as criticism or mistakes may activate negative cognitive schemas (Hummel et al., 2023). These negative cognitive schemas may result in negative effects resulting in negative mental health outcomes (Hummel et al., 2023). In contrast, some researchers have encountered inconclusive results when investigating if neurological activation differs between perfectionist and non-perfectionistic populations (Petersen et al., 2021). Robinson and Abramovitch (2020) found no neuropsychological differences in the functioning of people with perfectionism versus their peers without perfectionism. Cognitive and neurological explanations for perfectionism fall short of comprehensiveness, entailing a potential need for

social psychological research to better understand perfectionists.

### **Perfectionism and Social Learning**

Perfectionism and mental health outcomes could be linked through social learning. One way this could happen would be through parenting and culture. Researchers believe that parenting practices have developed over time to favor more controlling and anxious parental behaviors. Over time, these practices have shifted as a reaction to the increasingly individualized nature of life outside the home, raising perfectionism in children and adolescents to historically high levels (Curran & Hill, 2022). Moreover, adolescents may have learned perfectionism as a response to overly high parental expectations, learning perfectionism from their parents (Damian et al., 2022). For example, Asian cultures value academic achievement as it often reflects poorly or beneficially on the family reputation. It may even reflect the possibility of social mobility. So, increased pressure is put on adolescents in a time of developmental learning, which may lead them to adapt using perfectionism rather than other coping mechanisms. This may lead to the child experiencing emotional distress (Fung et al., 2023). Regardless of how perfectionism is developed, the literature is clear in that all cultures experience perfectionism, potentially linking the development of perfectionism to the social and cultural context. Cross-cultural research on perfectionism could give insight on how to prevent and treat maladaptive perfectionism across many cultures. This would ensure people from diverse cultures are receiving the help they need when being treated for mental illness linked with perfectionism.

### **Cross-Cultural Perfectionism Considerations**

Cross cultural research on perfectionism shows a gap in the literature that must be addressed (Walton et al., 2020). Perfectionism is explored in American and Canadian cultures (both individualistic) thoroughly, but other cultures lack this amount of perfectionism research (Walton et al., 2020). Researchers are just now beginning to psychometrically validate perfectionism measures in different cultures (Fekih-Romdhane et al., 2023; Mansur-Alves et al., 2023). Once perfectionism scales are validated to ensure they are measuring the same concept despite differences in language, these

scales can be used to compare perfectionism in cultures to better understand how culture and perfectionism interact (Rice et al., 2020). This can better inform cross-cultural understandings of perfectionism.

### Culture

Perfectionism is a multifaceted concept that does not occur within a vacuum, as humans are social creatures in a complex environment (Walton et al., 2020). One of the main ways of conceptualizing culture is through the idea that cultures can be collectivistic or individualistic (Soler-Anguiano et al., 2023). Collectivistic cultures such as Latinx and Asian cultures view family as the main social unit, deserving of prioritization above even individual goals and desires (Fung et al., 2023). Furthermore, in Chinese and other Asian cultures, a higher value is placed on the wellbeing of the community than that of the individual (Jiang & Konorova, 2023). Individualistic cultures such as American and European cultures tend to value the goals and desires of the individual over the goals of the collective (Jiang & Konorova, 2023).

Individualism and collectivism can be further broken down into horizontal individualism and collectivism and vertical individualism and collectivism (Soler-Anguiano et al., 2023). Horizontal individualism is characterized as valuing independence and autonomy, while horizontal collectivism values interdependence and collaboration (Fatehi et al., 2020). Vertical individualism values uniqueness, individuality, and competition while vertical collectivism values self-sacrifice, in-group identity, and harmony (Fatehi et al., 2020). With families acting as such a central role in both cultures, though more so in collectivistic cultures, it remains to be seen if perfectionism experiences and manifestations change or remain stable based on culture (Piotrowski et al., 2024).

### The Purpose of this Study

The purpose of this study was to seek an understanding of perfectionism through a wider lens by encompassing different cultures. Specifically, the study aims to address the gap in research regarding perfectionism experiences in collectivistic cultures. These findings may pave the way to understand how to better support perfectionists' needs. The following research questions were examined:

1. Is there a difference between individuals who identify as collectivistic or individualistic in terms of rigid perfectionism?
2. Is there a difference between individuals who identify as collectivistic or individualistic in terms of self-critical perfectionism?
3. Is there a difference between individuals who identify as collectivistic or individualistic in terms of narcissistic perfectionism?

The study's overall hypothesis is that individualistic and collectivistic cultures will experience differences between all three dimensions of perfectionism.

## Methods

### Methodology

This study incorporated a quantitative, quasi-experimental design. The independent variable is the participant's collectivistic or individualistic cultural orientation. The dependent variables are rigid, self-critical, and narcissistic perfectionism. Three independent sample *t*-tests were conducted to examine the research questions in a sample of undergraduate students in psychology classes at a private Christian university in the Southwest.

### Participants

Participants ( $n = 159$ ) were recruited through psychology courses at a private Christian university in the Southwest. To qualify for the study, students had to be at least 18 years of age and a traditional, on-ground student at the university. Students ranged from 18 to 24 years old. Students completed the surveys during their class time in exchange for participation points. They accessed the survey via a SurveyMonkey link posted in their online classroom portals. All data collection was voluntary.

### Demographic Characteristics

Demographic information such as gender, race, and age were collected from each participant. Demographic characteristics were generated for each gender and ethnic group reported. Results are presented in Table 1.



**Table 1**

*Demographic Characteristics*

Variable	Frequency	Percentage
<b>Gender</b>		
Female	115	72.3
Male	43	27.0
Nonbinary	1	.6
Total	150	100.0
<b>Race/ethnicity</b>		
White	94	59.1
Hispanic/Latino	32	20.1
Black or African American	7	4.4
Mexican	6	3.8
Asian	5	3.1
Other	15	9.4

**Procedure**

During class time, an announcement was posted to the online classroom portal linking students to the survey materials. Participants were given time during their class to complete the survey on their personal computers or cell phones. The first page of the survey contained the informed consent. Participants must have signed the electronic informed consent before completing any of the scales. Once a participant agreed to be a part of the study, they were asked to answer some demographic questions about age, gender, and race. After completing demographic information, participants completed a survey containing both the Individualism and Collectivism Scale (Triandis & Gelfand, 1998) and the Big Three Perfectionism Scale (Smith et al., 2016). Participants finished the survey in an average of 5 to 10 minutes.

**Materials**

*The Big Three Perfectionism Scale (BTPS)*

Perfectionism was measured using the Big Three Perfectionism Scale (BTPS) (see appendix a) (Smith et al., 2016). The BTPS measures perfectionism through three higher-order global constructs (rigid, self-critical, narcissistic) and ten lower order perfectionism constructs (self-worth, self-oriented perfectionism, self-criticism, grandiosity, doubts about actions, socially prescribed perfectionism, hypercriticism, entitlement, concern over mistakes, doubts about actions, and other-oriented perfectionism) (Smith et al., 2016). The BTPS is a 45-item, self-report questionnaire rated on

5-point Likert-type scale from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5) (Smith et al., 2016). The scale has demonstrated internal reliability ( $\alpha = .936$ ).

*The Individualism and Collectivism Scale (INDCOLS)*

Culture was measured using the Individualism and Collectivism Scale (INDCOLS) (see appendix b) (Triandis & Gelfand, 1998). The INDCOLS defines individualistic and collectivistic cultures through polythetic constructs (Triandis & Gelfand, 1998). These constructs look to highlight how an individual exists within a larger culture, measuring the definition an individual holds about themselves, how the goals of that individual are valued in group spaces, and whether relationships are seen as communal or exchanged (Triandis & Gelfand, 1998). The INDCOLS is a 16-item, 9-point Likert-type scale ranging from (1) to always (9). Each of the four subscales (vertical collectivism, vertical individualism, horizontal collectivism, horizontal individualism) are totaled separately to create a score for each of the constructs. The scale has demonstrated internal reliability ( $\alpha = .793$ ).

**Appendix A**

The Big Three Perfectionism Scale as seen in Smith et al. (2016).

1. I strive to be as perfect as possible.	1	2	3	4	5
2. I have doubts about most of my actions	1	2	3	4	5
3. I am highly critical of other people's imperfections.	1	2	3	4	5
4. Other people acknowledge my superior ability.	1	2	3	4	5
5. People are disappointed in me whenever I don't do something perfectly.	1	2	3	4	5
6. I have difficulty forgiving myself when my performance is not flawless.	1	2	3	4	5
7. I am quick to point out other people's flaws.	1	2	3	4	5
8. When I make a mistake, I feel like a failure.	1	2	3	4	5
9. Everyone expects me to be perfect.	1	2	3	4	5
10. I have a strong need to be perfect.	1	2	3	4	5
11. I am never sure if I am doing things in the correct way.	1	2	3	4	5
12. It is important to me that other people do things perfectly.	1	2	3	4	5
13. It bothers me when people don't notice how perfect I am.	1	2	3	4	5
14. I deserve to always have things go my way.	1	2	3	4	5
15. I am the absolute best at what I do.	1	2	3	4	5
16. My value as a person depends on being perfect.	1	2	3	4	5
17. I am very concerned about the possibility of making a mistake.	1	2	3	4	5

18. When my performance falls short of perfection, I get very mad at myself.	1	2	3	4	5
19. I judge myself harshly when I don't do something perfectly.	1	2	3	4	5
20. I always need to be aiming for perfection to feel "right" about myself.	1	2	3	4	5
21. I know that I am perfect.	1	2	3	4	5
22. I have doubts about everything I do.	1	2	3	4	5
23. I could never respect myself if I stopped trying to achieve perfection.	1	2	3	4	5
24. The idea of making a mistake frightens me.	1	2	3	4	5
25. I feel uncertain about most things I do.	1	2	3	4	5
26. I feel disappointed with myself, when I don't do something perfectly.	1	2	3	4	5
27. I never settle for less than perfection.	1	2	3	4	5
28. I am entitled to special treatment.	1	2	3	4	5
29. It is important to me to be perfect in everything I attempt.	1	2	3	4	5
30. I feel dissatisfied with other people, even when I know they are trying their best.	1	2	3	4	5
31. Other people secretly admire my perfection.	1	2	3	4	5
32. I tend to doubt whether I am doing something right.	1	2	3	4	5
33. I expect other people to bend the rules for me.	1	2	3	4	5
34. People make excessive demands of me.	1	2	3	4	5
35. When I notice that I have made a mistake, I feel ashamed.	1	2	3	4	5
36. People complain that I expect too much of them.	1	2	3	4	5
37. I demand perfection from my family and friends.	1	2	3	4	5
38. Striving to be as perfect as possible makes me feel worthwhile.	1	2	3	4	5
39. I expect those close to me to be perfect.	1	2	3	4	5
40. My opinion of myself is tied to being perfect.	1	2	3	4	5
41. I get frustrated when other people make mistakes.	1	2	3	4	5
42. I do things perfectly, or I don't do them at all.	1	2	3	4	5
43. Everything that other people do must be flawless.	1	2	3	4	5
44. Making even a small mistake would upset me.	1	2	3	4	5
45. People expect too much from me.	1	2	3	4	5

### Appendix B

The Individualism and Collectivism Scale as seen in Triandis & Gelfand (1998)

Horizontal individualism items:

1. I'd rather depend on myself than others.
2. I rely on myself most of the time; I rarely rely on others.
3. I often do "my own thing."
4. My personal identity, independent of others, is very important to me.

Vertical individualism items:

1. It is important that I do my job better than others.
2. Winning is everything.

3. Competition is the law of nature.
4. When another person does better than I do, I get tense and aroused.

Horizontal collectivism items:

1. If a coworker gets a prize, I would feel proud.
2. The well-being of my coworkers is important to me.
3. To me, pleasure is spending time with others.
4. I feel good when I cooperate with others.

Vertical collectivism items:

1. Parents and children must stay together as much as possible.
2. It is my duty to take care of my family, even when I have to sacrifice what I want.
3. Family members should stick together, no matter what sacrifices are required.
4. It is important to me that I respect the decisions made by my groups.

### Data Collection

Data was collected during the students' psychology class time. The participants accessed the survey in their online classroom portals, clicked the link, signed the electronic informed consent, then completed surveys using their electronic devices. Demographic information including gender, race, and age were also collected. No other personally identifiable information was gathered.

### Ethics

Researchers gained approval from a private Christian university's Institutional Review Board. This study was one of the minimal risks to participants ensuring they were treated fairly. This study's purpose was explained to participants through recruitment materials posted on their online classroom portals. Through the recruitment materials and informed consent, students were notified that they could stop taking the survey at any time, for any reason and their answers would not be used. Moreover, they were informed they could do this without fear of penalty or reduction of participation points. The identity of the participants was not collected, ensuring their information was kept confidential. The utmost care was taken to ensure participants were treated ethically throughout data collection, data analysis, and reporting the results.

**Results**

**Descriptive Statistics**

Incomplete answer sets were checked before descriptive statistics were generated for the sample. Twenty-two cases were removed from the sample because they were incomplete. Descriptive statistics were generated for culture and perfectionism, including mean, standard deviation, minimum, maximum values, skewness, and kurtosis. Results are presented in Table 2.

**Table 2**

*Descriptive analysis for Perfectionism and Culture*

	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>Min</i>	<i>Max</i>	<i>Skewness</i>	<i>Kurtosis</i>
Rigid Perfectionism	30.40	7.70	13.00	50.00	.098	-.450
Self-Critical Perfectionism	58.50	12.82	26.00	90.00	-.109	-.227
Narcissistic Perfectionism	37.58	8.87	17.00	73.00	.633	1.416
Individualism	49.93	9.62	23.00	69.00	-.47	.18
Collectivism	57.39	6.99630	37.00	70.00	-.33	-.34

*N* = 159

**Data Preparation**

Before conducting three independent sample *t*-tests to investigate differences in rigid, self-critical, and narcissistic perfectionism in individuals identifying as either individualistic or collectivistic, the data was organized and prepared for analysis. To ensure internal reliability, Cronbach’s Alpha measure was calculated for the INDCOLS ( $\alpha = .79$ ) the BTPS ( $\alpha = .94$ ). The data set was checked for outliers and no cases were removed.

Cut-offs were established within the results of the INDCOLS for the collective and individualistic groups. Dimensions were totaled according to horizontal individualism, vertical individualism, horizontal collectivism, and vertical collectivism individual item scores. These dimensional scores were added to create an overall individualism and collectivism score for each participant.

Participants were divided based on their total individualism and collectivism score. To be considered individualistic, participants had to have a higher score in their overall individualism dimension with a minimum score of 50 or more out of 72. To be considered collectivistic participants must have scored higher on overall measures of collectivism and must have a total

collectivism score that added up to 50 or more out of 72. To be considered individualistic, participants must have scored higher on overall measures of individualism and must have a total individualism score of 50 or more out of 72. After calculations, a sample of ( $n = 117$ ) for the collectivistic group and ( $n = 42$ ) for the individualistic group was created.

Responses were totaled according to the scoring guide of the BTPS. Each of the responses were totaled into the corresponding lower order perfectionism construct, which were then added accordingly to create a score for the three higher-order global constructs (rigid, self-critical, narcissistic) resulting in a total for each participant in each individual subscale.

**Hypothesis Testing**

Three independent sample *t*-tests were conducted to test the three research questions. Prior to analysis, all *t*-test assumptions were checked to include normality and equal variance. To examine research question 1, an independent samples *t*-test was conducted to investigate whether there was a difference between the rigid perfectionism of individuals who identify as collectivistic and those who identify as individualistic. The results indicated that individuals identifying as individualistic scored significantly higher ( $M = 34.26$ ,  $SD = 6.57$ ) on rigid perfectionism than individuals identifying as collectivistic ( $M = 28.64$ ,  $SD = 7.33$ ),  $t(157) = -5.15$ ,  $p = <.001$ .

To examine research question 2, an independent samples *t*-test was performed to evaluate whether there was a difference between the self-critical perfectionism of those who identify as collectivistic and individuals who identify as individualistic. The results indicated that there was no significant difference between the self-critical perfectionism of individuals identifying as collectivistic ( $M = 57.66$ ,  $SD = 12.44$ ) and the self-critical perfectionism of individuals identifying as individualistic ( $M = 60.83$ ,  $SD = 13.71$ ),  $t(157) = -1.38$ ,  $p = .085$ .

Finally, examining research question 3, an independent samples *t*-test was conducted to evaluate whether there was a difference between the narcissistic perfectionism of those who identify as collectivistic and individuals who identify as individualistic. The results indicated that individuals identifying as individualistic ( $M = 43.2857$ ,  $SD = 9.72872$ ) were significantly higher in narcissistic perfectionism than the individuals



identifying as collectivistic ( $M = 35.53$ ,  $SD = 7.59$ ),  $t(157) = -5.25$ ,  $p < .001$ .

## Discussion

The purpose of this study was to investigate differences in perfectionism in individualistic and collectivistic cultures. Researchers aimed to answer the following research questions (RQ1): Is there a difference between individuals who identify as collectivistic or individualistic in terms of rigid perfectionism, (RQ2) self-critical perfectionism, and (RQ3) narcissistic perfectionism. The study's overall hypothesis was that individualistic and collectivistic cultures will experience differences between all three dimensions of perfectionism. The hypothesis was partially supported by the study's results.

In examining the hypothesis, results suggest that the people identifying as individualistic ( $M = 35.26$ ,  $SD = 6.57$ ) ( $M = 43.29$ ,  $SD = 9.73$ ) and collectivistic ( $M = 28.64$ ,  $SD = 7.33$ ) ( $M = 35.52$ ,  $SD = 7.59$ ) significantly differed in their levels of rigid and narcissistic perfectionism. There are many potential reasons why individualistic cultures would experience higher levels of narcissistic or rigid perfectionism than collectivistic individuals. The sense of self is different between these cultures due to different cultural values. As a result, the way individuals from these cultures desire to be perceived by themselves and others will potentially impact their levels of perfectionism. One potential reason for this difference in rigid and narcissistic perfectionism may be a difference in desire to control social impressions. Individualistic cultures are more active and involved when strategically planning for other's impressions of them (Yue & Stefanone, 2022). In collectivistic cultures, less care is given to the strategy of making an impression as it could be seen as dishonest or deceitful (Yue & Stefanone, 2022). Perfectionism may be a way of attempting to control other people's impressions of an individual, which may have more of an effect in individualistic cultures where uniqueness would be more valued.

Another potential reason could be that people in collective cultures tend to score higher in agreeableness than their individualist peers (Burton et al., 2021). With high levels of agreeableness, hypercriticism, entitlement, and grandiosity would not be valued because they could threaten group harmony. Individualistic cultures may value these same factors as they may allow people to

differentiate themselves within a group. Therefore, collectivistic cultures would not experience narcissistic perfectionism as highly as individualistic cultures due to differences in agreeableness. More research should be done to investigate whether agreeableness may be the moderator between culture and perfectionism.

When examining self-critical perfectionism, no significant differences were found between collectivistic individuals ( $M = 57.66$ ,  $SD = 12.44$ ) and their individualistic peers ( $M = 60.83$ ,  $SD = 13.71$ ). It is interesting that individuals identifying as collectivistic and individualistic showed no difference in self-critical perfectionism. Collectivistic cultures such as LatinX and Asian cultures experience elevated levels of perfectionism potentially connected with high parental expectations (Fung et al., 2023; Jiang & Konorova, 2023). Parents in these cultures hold elevated expectations of academic success due to familial pride and potential social mobility (Fung et al., 2023). This may lead to higher levels of parental criticism which could be associated with higher levels of self-critical perfectionism. Contrastingly, increasingly individualistic spaces also increase levels of perfectionism in young people as a result (Curran & Hill, 2022). People wanting to express uniqueness and individualism may desire to stand out more, increasing concern over mistakes, self-criticism, and increasing perceptions of how other people view their actions and accomplishments. Both cultures have logical reasons to score highly on self-critical perfectionism, but it is still unknown if there are more differences or similarities in each culture's experiences of self-critical perfectionism.

## Limitations and Suggestions for Future Research

This study has a few limitations. Researchers used self-report measures to operationalize both culture and perfectionism. Self-report bias could have affected results, especially when considering measures of narcissistic perfectionism. Participants may not answer honestly to appear more socially desirable. Moreover, someone with narcissistic perfectionism may not be able to accurately self-reflect and report on their narcissistic perfectionism. Researchers also utilized convenience sampling from a single university, creating a sample that may lack generalizability. In addition, data was collected solely in an individualistic country. While the United States is a mixture of diverse cultures and persons, the greater context of the individualized culture of the United States may compromise potential findings

of this study. Finally, due to the quasi-experimental design of the study, causal connections cannot be drawn.

The results of this study add to the continuing progress in understanding perfectionism through a cross-cultural lens. Future research should consider increasing sample size and utilizing samples from both individualistic and collectivistic countries. This will increase the generalizability of the findings. Moreover, people of all different ages and socioeconomic backgrounds should be used in future samples to further expand generalizability. Future research should also focus on investigating potentially mediating factors of cross-cultural differences in perfectionism such as social impressions and agreeableness. The strengths of this study are the ability to compare individualistic and collectivistic cultures within the same context, but there are many promising avenues for future research.

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