

# Imperfect Perfectionism: Associations Between Perfectionist Types and Romantic Beliefs in Single Individuals

Amy Gorski

Advisors: Shira Gabriel, PhD, & Jennifer Valenti, M.A.

## INTRODUCTION

- A large amount of research has examined how implicit romantic beliefs (IRB's) and perfectionism (P) may influence an individuals thoughts, feeling, and behaviors towards romantic relationships. *However; the extent to which these entities may be associated with one another is unknown.*
- Robert Knee describes an individuals implicit romantic beliefs as two separate theories, destiny theory and growth theory.
  - Growth theorists believe that an individuals relationship grows from overcoming obstacles**
  - Destiny theorists believe that relationships are meant to be, or soulmates.**
- Perfectionism, as a general definition, is described as a person's strive for flawless or exceedingly high standard of performance.**
  - Perfectionism is evaluated in many sub categories, such as: adaptive vs. maladaptive, orientations towards the self, other, or society's standards, and many other forms.

- Hypothesis: While there are many types of perfectionism, levels of IRB's (destiny and growth) may be associated with certain types of perfectionism. In addition, these IRB's may have differences in many other variables, such as measures related to romantic beliefs.**
- The present study observed the correlations between the IRB theories and eight perfectionism types, in addition to variables that may be associated IRB's and perfectionism types.

## PARTICIPANTS & METHODS

- Undergraduate Psychology 101 Students
- Self identified as single, not in a committed relationship, and native English speakers.
- N = 248**
  - M = 118
  - F = 130
- Data Analysis:**
  - SPSS, a two-tailed bivariate correlation analysis across all 18 self-report scales and their subscales.
  - Significance was determined by a Persons Correlation at a .01 and .05 level.

## MEASURES

Self-Report Scales

- Implicit Romantic Beliefs (Knee, 2003)
  - Growth**
  - Destiny**
- Romantic Beliefs
  - 18 SUBSCALES
  - Finance, Trust, Communication, Family, Respect, Support, Equity, Compromise, Important Others, Friendship, Coping**
- Multidimensional Perfectionism Scale (Hewitt & Flett)
  - Self Oriented P**
  - Other Oriented P**
  - Socially Prescribed P**
- Almost Perfect Scale Revised
  - Measured *Maladaptive, Adaptive, and Non-P*
  - 3 SUBSCALES:
    - Order**
    - Structure**
    - Discrepancy**
- Additional Scales Used:**
  - Relationship Perfectionism, Perfectionistic Self Presentation, Media, Self-Efficacy in Romantic Relationships, Desirability for Control, Self-Esteem, Need for Power, Loneliness, Fear of Intimacy, Big 5 Personality Traits (Srivastava), Life Satisfaction, Benevolent Sexism, Demographics

## RESULTS

- Correlations Towards DESTINY Theory** (vs. Destiny Theory):
  - Correlations were found to be more **POSITIVELY correlated** with: *Socially Prescribed P, Discrepancy (Maladaptive P), P of Self Presentation, Benevolent Sexism, Finance, Children, Important Others, Reading a Romance Book, & Watching a Romance Theme Movie.*
  - Correlations were found to be more **NEGATIVELY correlated** with: *Self Efficacy.*
- Correlations Towards GROWTH Theory** (vs. Destiny Theory):
  - Correlations were found to be more **POSITIVELY correlated** with: *Self Oriented P, Standards and Order (Adaptive P), Self Efficacy, Need for Power, Desirability for Control, Life Satisfaction, Self-Esteem, Extraversion, Conscientiousness, Communication, Trust, Independence, Equity, Compromise, Friendship, Respect, Time Spent on Social Media, & Time Spent Alone.*
  - Correlations were found to be more **NEGATIVELY correlated** with: *Fear of Intimacy, & State Loneliness.*
- Correlations Towards PERFECTIONISM Type:**
  - Socially Prescribed P: (+) Fear of Intimacy, Sexism, Loneliness, Finance. (-) Self-Efficacy, Self-Esteem.
  - Self Oriented P: (+) Power, Des. Control, Self-Esteem, Comm., Trust, Respect. (-) Fear of Intimacy.
  - Other Oriented P: (+) Self-Efficacy, Sexism, Power, Comm., Trust. (-) Fear of Intimacy.
  - Standards: (+) Self-Efficacy, Self-Esteem, Comm., Trust, Respect. (-) Fear of Intimacy, Loneliness.
  - Discrepancy: (+) Fear of Intimacy, Loneliness, Finance. (-) Self-Efficacy, Loneliness, Finance.
  - Order: (+) Des. Control, Self-Esteem, Comm., Trust, Respect. (-) Fear of Intimacy.
  - Relationship P: (+) Sexism, Control, Loneliness, Comm., Trust Finance. (-) Self-Efficacy, Self-Esteem.
  - P of Self Presentation: (+) Sexism, Des. Control, Loneliness, Comm., Trust, Finance, Respect. (-) Self-Efficacy, Self-Esteem.

## TABLES: Statistically Significant Correlations

TABLE ONE: Significant Correlations Between IRB's and Other Variables

	GROWTH	DESTINY
Socially Prescribed P		.303**
Other Oriented P		
Self Oriented P	.407**	.137*
Order	.414**	.171**
Discrepancy		.284**
Standards	.530**	
P Self Presentation	.284**	.392**
Self Efficacy in Rom. Rel.	.196**	(-).213**
Fear of Intimacy	(-).295**	.195*
Benevolent Sexism		.333**
Need for Power	.276**	
Desirability for Control	.519**	.261**
Secure vs. Insecure		
Life Satisfaction	.243**	.133*
Self-Esteem	.285**	
State Lonliness	(-).186**	
Neuroticism	.399**	.188**
Extraversion	.410**	.216**
Openness to Experiences	.387**	.207**
Agreeableness	.363**	.190**
Conscientiousness	.509**	.190**
Communication	.574**	
Trust	.567**	.222**
Independence	.467**	.159*
Equity	.488**	
Compromise	.568**	.171**
Friendship	.447**	.148*
Finance		.472**
Children		.483**
Respect	.581**	
Important Others		.301**
Go on Social Media	.258**	
Read a Romance Book		.130*
Watch a Romantic Movie		.183**
Spent Time Alone	.222**	

\*\* Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).  
\* Correlation is significant at the 0.05 level (2-tailed).  
Blank spaces indicate *p* values of over .05

Significant Positive Correlations on a .01 Level  
Significant Negative Correlations on a .01 Level  
Significant Positive Correlations on a .05 Level  
Significant Negative Correlations on a .05 Level

TABLE TWO: Significant Correlations Between P Types and Other Variables

	Socially Prescribed	Self Oriented	Other Oriented	Standards	Discrepancy	Order	Relationship P	P Self Presentation
Self-Efficacy	(-).315**		.226**	.176**	(-).384**		(-).217**	(-).257**
Fear of Intimacy	.293**	(-).255**	(-).127*	(-).294**	.233**	(-).134*		
Benevolent Sexism	.241**		.186**				.260**	.257**
Need for Power		.264**	.170**		(-).144*			
Desirability for Control		.286**				.363**	.362**	.267**
Self-Esteem	(-).337**	.277**		.461**	(-).516**	.271**	(-).176**	(-).232**
Loneliness	.353**			(-).248**	.443**		.339**	.210**
Communication		.423**	.187**	.581**		.439**	.174**	.228**
Trust		.365**	.174**	.519**		.394**	.174**	.208**
Finance	.395**				.305**		.309**	.400**
Respect		.374**		.557**		.424**	.150*	.299**

Additional Tables: Significant Correlations of Interest  
Benevolent Sexism / Secure vs Insecure / Watch a Romantic Theme Movie

	BENEVOLENT SEXISM
GROWTH	.333**
DESTINY	
Socially Prescribed P	.241**
Other Oriented P	.186**
P Self-Presentation	.257**
Relationship P	.260**
Trust	.257**
Commonality	.250**
Finance	.303**
Children	.427**
Important Others	.235**

	SECURE vs. INSECURE
Discrepancy	.233**
P Self-Presentation	.140*
Relationship P	.218**
Self-Efficacy Rom. Rel.	(-).288**
Fear of Intimacy	.281**
Need for Power	(-).158*
Dismissive Attach.	(-).414**
Life Satisfaction	(-).214**
Self-Esteem	(-).153*
Loneliness	.289**
Avoidance	.429**
Anxiety	.397**
Avoidant vs. Nonviolent	(-).673**
Neuroticism	.137*

	WATCH A ROMANTIC THEME MOVIE
Destiny	.183**
Standards	(-).167**
Self-Efficacy	(-).171**
Fear of Intimacy	.135*
Benevolent Sexism	.130*
Life Satisfaction	.173**
Self-Esteem	(-).189**
Loneliness Scale	.232**
Anxiety	.133*
Neuroticism	.196**
Agreeableness	.340**
Openness to Experience	.176**
Finance	.220**
Importance of Others	.205**

## CONCLUSIONS & FUTURE IMPLICATIONS

- These correlations seem to indicate that Destiny and Grow theorists have significantly different association with perfectionism type and many relationship beliefs.**
- Destiny theorists were associated with *maladaptive perfectionism* as well as *socially prescribed P, benevolent sexism, and many traditional relationship belief values.*
- Growth theorists were associated with *adaptive perfectionism* as well as *self oriented P, self-esteem, conscientiousness, desirability for control and need for power.*
- When observed separately, P types that correlated to growth and destiny theory also correlated with romantic beliefs at levels similar to IRB correlations.

### Future Research:

- A following study will be conducted in an attempt to determine the direction of these correlations.
- In addition, because destiny theorists had higher levels of romantic movie and book exposure, it would be of great interest to determine how this may reinforce a single individuals orientation towards growth theory.
  - The study following this experiment is to evaluate if media exposure acts as a reinforce for IRB's.

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