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Multidimensional Perfectionism and Assortative Mating:

A Perfect Date?

Adrian Hoffmann

Heinrich Heine University Duesseldorf

Joachim Stoeber

University of Kent

Jochen Musch

Heinrich Heine University Duesseldorf

Author Note

Adrian Hoffmann and Jochen Musch, Department of Experimental Psychology, Heinrich Heine University Duesseldorf, Germany; Joachim Stoeber, School of Psychology, University of Kent, United Kingdom.

Correspondence concerning this article should be addressed to Adrian Hoffmann, Department of Experimental Psychology, Heinrich Heine University Duesseldorf, Universitaetsstrasse 1, Building 23.03, 40225 Duesseldorf, Germany; phone: +49-211-8112064; fax: +49-211-8111753; e-mail: Adrian.Hoffmann@uni-duesseldorf.de

Abstract

Assortative mating has been found regarding personality traits, personal attitudes and values, and cognitive abilities, but so far no study has investigated assortative mating regarding multidimensional perfectionism. A total of 422 participants from a non-commercial panel (mean age = 36.0 years) completed measures of self-oriented, other-oriented, and socially prescribed perfectionism and rated the attractiveness of four potential dating partners (“dates”): a self-oriented, an other-oriented, a socially prescribed, and a non-perfectionist date. Results showed that all perfectionist dates were seen as less attractive than the non-perfectionist date. This effect, however, was moderated by self-oriented and other-oriented perfectionism. Participants high in self-oriented perfectionism found all three perfectionist dates more attractive than participants low in self-oriented perfectionism. Participants high in other-oriented perfectionism found the self-oriented perfectionist date more attractive, and the non-perfectionist date less attractive than participants low in other-oriented perfectionism. The findings are discussed with respect to assortative mating, the social disconnection model of perfectionism, and the heritability of perfectionism.

Keywords: multidimensional perfectionism; assortative mating; attractiveness; social disconnection model; heritability

1. Introduction

After 25 years of research on multidimensional perfectionism (Frost, Marten, Lahart, & Rosenblate, 1990; Hewitt & Flett, 1991), we now have extensive knowledge of how different forms of perfectionism are related to psychological well-being and psychological maladjustment (e.g., Lo & Abbot, 2013). Moreover, we know how different forms of perfectionism are related to relationship satisfaction and relationship problems (e.g., Stoeber, 2012). We do not know, however, how attractive perfectionists are to other people as potential relationship partners and if assortative mating—perfectionists preferring other perfectionists as mating partners—regarding multidimensional perfectionism occurs. The question of perfectionists’ attractiveness as a potential date (and mate) is important for the social disconnection model of perfectionism (Hewitt, Flett, Sherry, & Caelian, 2006; Sherry, Mackinnon, & Gautreau, in press). Moreover, the related question of whether perfectionists are more attractive to other perfectionists than non-perfectionists is important for theories about the heritability of perfectionism (Flett, Hewitt, Oliver, & Macdonald, 2002; Tozzi et al., 2004) as well as general theories of assortative mating

related to personality traits (e.g., Le Bon et al., 2013; Rammstedt & Schupp, 2008). The present research represents the first study investigating these questions.

1.1. Multidimensional perfectionism

Perfectionism is a personality trait characterized by setting exceedingly high standards of performance, critical self-evaluations, critical evaluations of others, and concerns about mistakes and other people's critical evaluations (Frost et al., 1990; Hewitt & Flett, 1991). One of the most influential and widely researched conceptualizations of multidimensional perfectionism is Hewitt and Flett's (1991) model which differentiates three forms of perfectionism: self-oriented, other-oriented, and socially prescribed. Self-oriented perfectionism reflects beliefs that striving for perfection and being perfect are important. Self-oriented perfectionists have exceedingly high personal standards, strive for perfection, expect to be perfect, and are highly self-critical if they fail to meet these expectations. In contrast, other-oriented perfectionism reflects beliefs that it is important for others to strive for perfection and be perfect. Other-oriented perfectionists expect others to be perfect, and are highly critical of others who fail to meet these expectations. Finally, socially prescribed perfectionism reflects beliefs that striving for perfection and being perfect are important to others. Socially prescribed perfectionists believe that others expect them to be perfect, and that others will be highly critical of them if they fail to meet their expectations (Hewitt & Flett, 1991, 2004).

1.2. Assortative mating

Many studies show that partners in long-term relationships bear a higher resemblance to each other than randomly selected couples with respect to numerous characteristics such as personality traits (e.g., Le Bon et al., 2013; Rammstedt & Schupp, 2008), personal attitudes and values (e.g., Feng & Baker, 1994; Luo & Klohnen, 2005), and cognitive abilities (e.g., Mascie-Taylor & Vandenberg, 1988; Watson et al., 2004). This phenomenon is ascribed to the systematic selection of mating partners based on the similarity to oneself, and widely referred to as "assortative mating" (Buss, 1985; Mascie-Taylor, 1988). The assortative choice of relationship partners with respect to psychological characteristics is associated with higher relationship longevity (Rammstedt, Spinath, Richter, & Schupp, 2013) and higher relationship satisfaction (Gonzaga, Carter, & Buckwalter, 2010). Whereas in short-term mate selection, or "dating," aspects of outward appearance such as physical attractiveness often play a prominent role (e.g., Lee, Loewenstein, Ariely, Hong, & Young, 2008), there are studies indicating that even in the dating phase of a relationship, similarity with respect to psychological characteristics

is also of importance and predicts relationship stability over time (e.g., Bleske-Recheck, Remiker, & Baker, 2009).

1.3. Is perfectionism attractive?

The question of whether perfectionism is a psychological characteristic that plays a role in dating and assortative mating is difficult to answer because of the lack of research on the subject matter. However, there are numerous studies showing that perfectionism is associated with personality characteristics that are unlikely to be attractive to potential partners. This goes in particular for other-oriented and socially prescribed perfectionism which have been associated with low agreeableness and high neuroticism, respectively as well as personality traits indicative of personality disorders (Hewitt & Flett, 2004; Stoeber, 2014b). In particular, other-oriented perfectionism has been shown to be a “dark” form of perfectionism associated with uncaring traits, aggressive humor, and a general lack of interest in others (Stoeber, 2014a, in press). However, all three forms of perfectionism have been associated with interpersonal problems (e.g., Flett, Hewitt, Shapiro, & Rayman, 2001; Hill, Zrull, & Turlington, 1997). Furthermore, research on the social disconnection model of perfectionism (Hewitt et al., 2006; Sherry et al., in press) suggests that all three forms of perfectionism lead to social disconnection (e.g., loneliness, isolation, alienation) because perfectionists show beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors that are interpersonally dysfunctional.

1.4. The present study

Against this background, the aim of the present study was to examine the attractiveness of perfectionism in dating partners (“dates”) and therefore, per implication, potential mating partners. Moreover, the study examined whether the dates’ attractiveness was influenced by participants’ perfectionism (assortative mating). To this aim, the study measured participants’ self-oriented, other-oriented, and socially prescribed perfectionism and presented participants with vignettes describing a date who was a self-oriented, other-oriented, socially-prescribed, or non-perfectionist. As this was the first study examining multidimensional perfectionism and assortative mating, the study was largely exploratory except for the expectation that perfectionist dates (particularly other-oriented perfectionist dates) would be rated as less attractive than non-perfectionist dates. Moreover, following the literature on assortative mating regarding personality traits, we expected to find evidence of assortative mating regarding perfectionism (i.e., perfectionists being attracted to other perfectionists).

2. Method

2.1. Participants

A sample of 422 participants (192 male, 230 female) was recruited via a noncommercial panel maintained by the Heinrich Heine University Duesseldorf, Germany. Mean age of participants was 36.0 years ($SD = 12.4$). Asked about their relationship status, 299 indicated they were in a relationship and 123 were single. Participants volunteered to participate in the study without financial compensation.

2.2. Procedure

All instructions, measures, and vignettes were presented online using Unipark survey software (Questback, 2014) with a setting that required participants to respond to all items to prevent missing data. Participants first completed the perfectionism measure (see 2.3.1). Then they were randomly allocated to one of four experimental conditions: (a) self-oriented perfectionist date, (b) other-oriented perfectionist date, (c) socially prescribed perfectionist date, or (d) non-perfectionist date. For sensitivity reasons, we did not ask participants about their sexual orientation (hetero-, homo-, bi-sexual), but accounted for differences in sexual orientation by asking participants if they preferred a male (Alex, he), female (Alex, she), or gender-neutral (Alex, he/she) description of the date. Of the 422 participants, 220 (19 male, 201 female) chose a male description, 186 (169 male, 17 female) a female description, and 16 (4 male, 12 female) a gender-neutral description. In each condition, participants read a vignette describing a potential date (see 2.3.2). Afterwards they rated the date's attractiveness (see 2.3.3.).

2.3. Materials

2.3.1. Perfectionism

To measure perfectionism, we used the German version of the Multidimensional Perfectionism Scale (MPS; Hewitt & Flett, 1991; German version: Altstötter-Gleich, 1998) capturing self-oriented perfectionism (15 items; e.g., "I demand nothing less than perfection of myself"), other-oriented perfectionism (15 items; "If I ask someone to do something, I expect it to be done flawlessly"), and socially prescribed perfectionism (15 items; "People expect nothing less than perfection from me"). Items were presented with the MPS's standard instruction ("Listed below are a number of statements concerning personal characteristics and traits..."), and participants responded on a scale from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 7 (*strongly agree*). All three scales showed satisfactory reliability (Cronbach's alphas = .91, .80, and .85).

2.3.2. Vignettes

Four vignettes were created describing someone as a (a) socially prescribed perfectionist, (b) other-oriented perfectionist, (c) socially prescribed perfectionist, or (d) non-perfectionist (see Supplementary Material). The three perfectionist vignettes were based on Hewitt and Flett's (2004, p. 6) description of prototypical self-oriented, other-oriented, and socially prescribed perfectionists and the content of selected items from the MPS short form (Cox, Enns, & Clara, 2002). The non-perfectionist vignette was based on the self-oriented perfectionist vignette and described a person who was not a self-oriented perfectionist. The reason for this was twofold. First, self-oriented perfectionism is the form of perfectionism that most people associate with perfectionism (Hewitt & Flett, 2004). Second, a description of a person who is neither a self-oriented, nor an other-oriented, nor a socially prescribed perfectionist would have resulted in a complex and unrealistic person description of three times the length as the other descriptions, so we restricted the vignette to describing a person who was not a self-oriented perfectionist. In all vignettes, the person was named Alex which, in German-speaking countries, can denote either a male (Alexander) or a female (Alexandra) person.

2.3.3. *Attractiveness*

To measure the date's attractiveness, we used a German translation of the Attraction to The Other Scale (Sprecher, 1989), which captures the attractiveness of a person as a relationship partner, and adapted the items to measure the attractiveness of the potential dates described in the vignettes (5 items; e.g., "Considering everything [including your present relationship status], would you go on a date with Alex?").¹ Each item was presented with a 7-point response scale (e.g., from 1 [*definitely no*] to 7 [*definitely yes*]). A total attractiveness score was calculated by averaging responses across the five items (Cronbach's alpha = .90).

3. Results

3.1. Preliminary analyses

An examination of the data showed that gender and relationship status had a significant effect on the date's attractiveness. Female participants gave overall lower attractiveness ratings ($M = 3.10$, $SD = 1.41$) than male participants ($M = 3.55$, $SD = 1.47$), $t(420) = -3.25$, $p < .01$. Reflecting their greater selectivity in mate choice (Buss, 1985), female participants found potential dates generally less attractive than male participants. Furthermore, participants who were single gave higher ratings ($M = 3.63$, $SD = 1.59$) than participants who were in a relationship ($M = 3.17$, $SD = 1.37$), $t(420) = 2.99$, $p < .01$. Consequently, gender and relationship status were effect-coded and included as control variables in Step 1 of the hierarchical regression

analysis (see 3.2.2 and Table 2).

3.2. Main analyses

3.2.1. *Attractiveness of dates*

To examine differences in the attractiveness of dates presented in the four experimental conditions, we conducted a one-way ANOVA with date as between-participants factor and attractiveness as dependent variable. Pairwise comparisons were tested using Tukey's HSD test (see Table 1). As expected, all perfectionist dates were rated as less attractive than the non-perfectionist date, and the other-oriented perfectionist date was the least attractive.

3.2.2. *Perfectionism predicting attractiveness of dates*

Next, we conducted a regression analysis to examine our hypothesis of assortative mating, that is, if people high in perfectionism find perfectionist dates more attractive than people low in perfectionism. To this aim, we conducted a moderated regression analysis (Cohen, Cohen, West, & Aiken, 2003). To facilitate simple slope analyses and interaction plots (plotting slopes for perfectionism scores at +1 and -1 *SD*), we followed Frazier, Tix, and Baron (2004) in centering and standardizing ($M = 0$, $SD = 1$) the perfectionism scores (self-oriented perfectionism [SOP], other-oriented perfectionism [OOP], socially prescribed perfectionism [SPP]). The experimental conditions were dummy coded: The self-oriented perfectionist date (SOP date) condition was dummy-coded with 1 = SOP date, 0 = all other dates; the other-oriented perfectionist date (OOP date) condition with 1 = OOP date, 0 = all other dates; and the socially prescribed perfectionist date (SPP date) condition with 1 = SPP date, 0 = all other dates (making the non-perfectionist date [NP date] the reference condition; cf. Cohen et al., 2003.) The regression analysis comprised three steps. In Step 1, we entered gender and relationship status as control variables. In Step 2, we entered all main effects. In Step 3, we entered all interaction effects between the three forms of trait perfectionism and the experimental conditions (see Table 2).

Step 1 showed that gender and relationship status had a significant effect on the date's attractiveness as was expected from the preliminary analyses (cf. 3.1). Step 2 showed that self-oriented and socially prescribed perfectionism had significant effects indicating that participants high in self-oriented perfectionism and participants high in socially prescribed perfectionism found the dates more attractive than participants low in these two forms of perfectionism. Moreover, all three dummy-coded conditions showed negative effects. In line with the ANOVA results (cf. 3.2.1), all three perfectionist dates were significantly less attractive relative to the reference condition (the NP date).

Step 3 showed that some main effects were qualified by significant perfectionism \times date interactions. Self-oriented perfectionism (SOP) showed significant interactions with all three perfectionist dates (SOP date, OOP date, SPP date); and other-oriented perfectionism (OOP) showed significant interactions with the SOP date and the OOP date. To further examine these interactions effects, we conducted simple slope analyses (Aiken & West, 1991) and plotted the interactions following Frazier et al. (2004).

The analyses of the SOP \times date interactions showed significant positive slopes of self-oriented perfectionism (SOP) predicting attractiveness when the date was described as a self-oriented perfectionist (SOP date: $\beta = .49, p < .001$), as an other-oriented perfectionist (OOP date: $\beta = .33, p < .05$), and as a socially prescribed perfectionist (SPP date: $\beta = .41, p < .01$), but not when the date was described as a non-perfectionist (NP date: $\beta = -.08, ns$). Participants high in SOP found all three perfectionist dates more attractive than participants low in SOP (see Figure 1, Panels A-C).

This was different for other-oriented perfectionism. Other-oriented perfectionism (OOP) positively predicted attractiveness only when the date was described as a self-oriented perfectionist (SOP date: $\beta = .26, p < .05$), but not when the date was described as an other-oriented perfectionist (OOP date: $\beta = .11, ns$) or a socially prescribed perfectionist (SPP date: $\beta = -.08, ns$). Moreover, in all interactions, OOP negatively predicted attractiveness when the date was described as a non-perfectionist (NP date: $\beta = -.33, p < .01$). Participants high in OOP found only the self-oriented perfectionist date more attractive than participants low in OOP, and found the non-perfectionist date less attractive (see Figure 2, Panels A-C which include, for comparison reasons, the nonsignificant OOP \times SPP date interaction).

4. Discussion

4.1. The present findings

The aim of the present study was to examine the attractiveness of perfectionists versus non-perfectionists as dating partners (“dates”) and therefore, per implication, potential mating partners. Moreover, the study examined whether the dates’ attractiveness was influenced by participants’ perfectionism (assortative mating) differentiating self-oriented, other-oriented, and socially prescribed perfectionism. As expected from research showing that perfectionism is associated with unattractive personality characteristics and interpersonal problems, the perfectionist dates were generally rated as less attractive than the non-perfectionist date.

Specifically the other-oriented perfectionist date (representing someone who expects others to be perfect) received the lowest attractiveness ratings. Furthermore, as was expected from previous research on assortative mating regarding personality traits, the study found evidence for assortative mating such that perfectionist dates were more attractive for participants who were high in perfectionism than participants low in perfectionism.

The evidence for assortative mating, however, was restricted to self-oriented perfectionism. Participants high in self-oriented perfectionism not only found the self-oriented perfectionist date (representing someone who expects him- or herself to be perfect) more attractive than participants low in self-oriented perfectionism. They also found the other two perfectionist dates—the other-oriented perfectionist date and the socially prescribed perfectionist date (representing someone who believes that others expect him or her to be perfect) more attractive. In contrast, there was no indication of assortative mating for other-oriented and socially prescribed perfectionism. Other-oriented perfectionists, however, showed evidence of complementary mating. Participants high in other-oriented perfectionism found the self-oriented perfectionist date more attractive than participants low in other-oriented perfectionism. In addition, they found the non-perfectionist date (representing someone who did not expect him- or herself to be perfect) less attractive.

The present findings have implications for theory and research on assortative mating and multidimensional perfectionism. As to assortative mating, the findings support the notion that perfectionism is among the personality traits that influence human mate selection (Buss, 1985; Mascie-Taylor, 1988). Perfectionism is a multidimensional construct, however, and our findings suggest that different forms of perfectionism have differential impact on assortative mating. First, only self-oriented perfectionism showed evidence of assortative mating. Second, participants high in self-oriented perfectionism not only found self-oriented perfectionist dates more attractive than non-perfectionist dates, they also found other-oriented perfectionist and socially prescribed perfectionist dates more attractive. This suggests that self-oriented perfectionists' preferences generalize to all forms of perfectionism, not only the identical form (self-oriented perfectionist dates) but also complementary forms (other-oriented perfectionist dates) and unrelated forms (socially prescribed perfectionist dates). In contrast, participants high in other-oriented perfectionism showed assortative mating only with the complimentary form of perfectionism (self-oriented perfectionist dates) whereas socially prescribed perfectionism did not show any assortative mating. Furthermore, it is important to note that even participants high

in self- and other-oriented perfectionism rated the various perfectionistic dates as less attractive than the non-perfectionistic date (see Figures 1 and 2). Consequently, perfectionism seems to be a personality trait showing a specific pattern of assortative mating in which people who show the trait find other people with the same trait not more attractive, but less unattractive.

As to multidimensional perfectionism, the findings have implications for the social disconnection model of perfectionism (Hewitt et al., 2006), which primarily focuses on socially prescribed perfectionism, and the expanded social disconnection model (Sherry et al., in press), which also includes self-oriented and other-oriented perfectionism. According to these models, the beliefs, attitudes, and behaviors associated with perfectionism such as self-absorption, an excessive focus on agentic accomplishments, and—in the case of other-oriented and socially prescribed perfectionism—mistrust and hostility towards others lead to social disconnection (e.g., loneliness, isolation, alienation). The present findings, however, suggest that social disconnection in perfectionism may be a “two-way street.” Perfectionists may not only be more likely to disconnect from other people. Other people may also be less likely to connect to perfectionists because they prefer social relationships with non-perfectionists.

Furthermore, the findings have implications for theories about the heritability of perfectionism (Flett et al., 2002; Tozzi et al., 2004). If people high in perfectionism find other people high in perfectionism more attractive (or less unattractive), people high in perfectionism are more likely to mate with other people high in perfectionism. Because perfectionism has a genetic component (Tozzi et al., 2004), this should increase the chances of their offspring showing high levels of perfectionism because assortative mating increases the frequency of genotypes that produce extreme phenotypes (see Buss, 1985, for details). Similar to what has been found for assortative mating and the heritability of cognitive abilities (e.g., van Leeuwen, van den Berg, & Boomsma, 2008), assortative mating in parents may be one factor explaining why we see some children develop perfectionism but not others (for other factors, see Flett et al., 2002). Moreover, this factor may be particularly important for self-oriented perfectionism because, in the present study, only participants high in self-oriented perfectionism found all perfectionist dates relatively more attractive.

4.2. Limitations and future studies

Our study was the first to examine multidimensional perfectionism and assortative mating. Consequently, future studies need to replicate the findings before firm conclusions are drawn. Second, our study examined multidimensional perfectionism following Hewitt and Flett’s (1991)

model. Although this is one of the most widely-used models of multidimensional perfectionism, there are other prominent models (Frost et al., 1990; Hill et al., 2004; Slaney, Rice, Mobley, Trippi, & Ashby, 2001). Future studies may profit from extending the present research to these other models, although Hill et al.'s (2004) is the only other model considering other-oriented perfectionism. Third, we investigated preferences for dates, rather than partners in a long-term relationship. Even though dates are potential mates, future studies should investigate whether the present findings also hold for long-term relationships and, in particular, whether a fit with regard to multidimensional perfectionism predicts not only the attractiveness of a date, but also the longevity of a later relationship.

4.3. Conclusion

Our study represents the first study of multidimensional perfectionism and assortative mating and makes a significant contribution to our understanding of how attractive (or unattractive) different forms of perfectionism are to potential dating partners (“dates”) and thereby potential mating partners. All perfectionist dates were rated as less attractive than a non-perfectionist date, suggesting that perfectionists may experience social disconnection because others are less attracted to them than to non-perfectionists. This effect, however, was moderated by self-oriented perfectionism: Participants high in self-oriented perfectionism found perfectionist dates more attractive than participants low in self-oriented. Thus, perfectionism seems to be an impediment to finding a partner unless two persons provide a fit in their tendency to exhibit, and to like this trait.

Footnotes

¹The items are available from the first author.

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Table 1

Attractiveness of Dates

	Date				<i>F</i> (3, 418)
	Self-oriented perfectionist (<i>n</i> = 107)	Other-oriented perfectionist (<i>n</i> = 105)	Socially-prescribed perfectionist (<i>n</i> = 104)	Non-perfectionist (<i>n</i> = 106)	
<i>M</i>	3.35 ^b	2.37 ^c	3.11 ^b	4.37 ^a	45.37***
<i>SD</i>	1.41	1.32	1.24	1.05	

Note. *N* = 422. Attractiveness was rated on a scale from 1 (*definitely no*) to 7 (*definitely yes*). Means with different superscripts were significantly different, $p < .05$ (Tukey's HSD test). *F* statistic from one-way ANOVA with date as between-participants factor.

*** $p < .001$.

Table 2

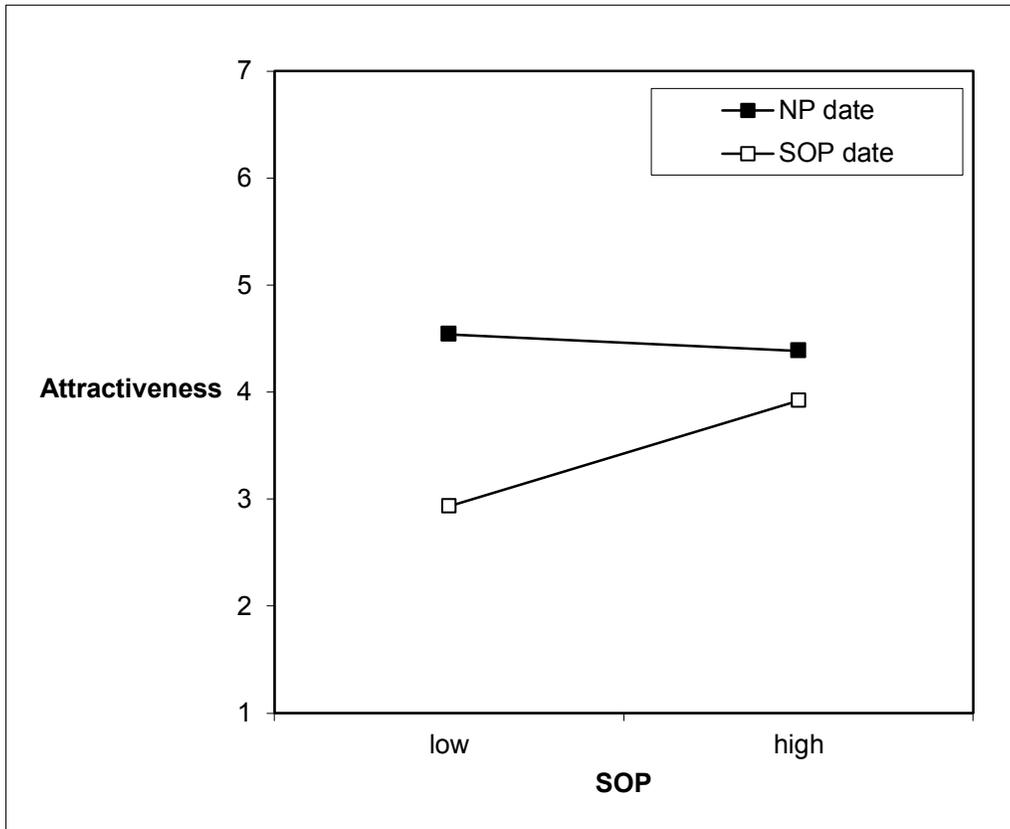
Moderated Regression Analysis Predicting Attractiveness of Dates

Predictors	ΔR^2	β
Step 1: Control variables	.043***	
Gender (female)		-.15**
Relationship status (single)		.14**
Step 2: Perfectionism and date	.343***	
Self-oriented perfectionism (SOP)		.22***
Other-oriented perfectionism (OOP)		.01
Socially prescribed perfectionism (SPP)		.13**
Self-oriented perfectionist date (SOP date)		-.31***
Other-oriented perfectionist date (OOP date)		-.59***
Socially prescribed perfectionist date (SPP date)		-.36***
Step 3: Perfectionism \times date interactions	.072***	
SOP \times SOP date		.19**
SOP \times OOP date		.15*
SOP \times SPP date		.17*
OOP \times SOP date		.20**
OOP \times OOP date		.16*
OOP \times SPP date		.09
SPP \times SOP date		.01
SPP \times OOP date		.06
SPP \times SPP date		.10

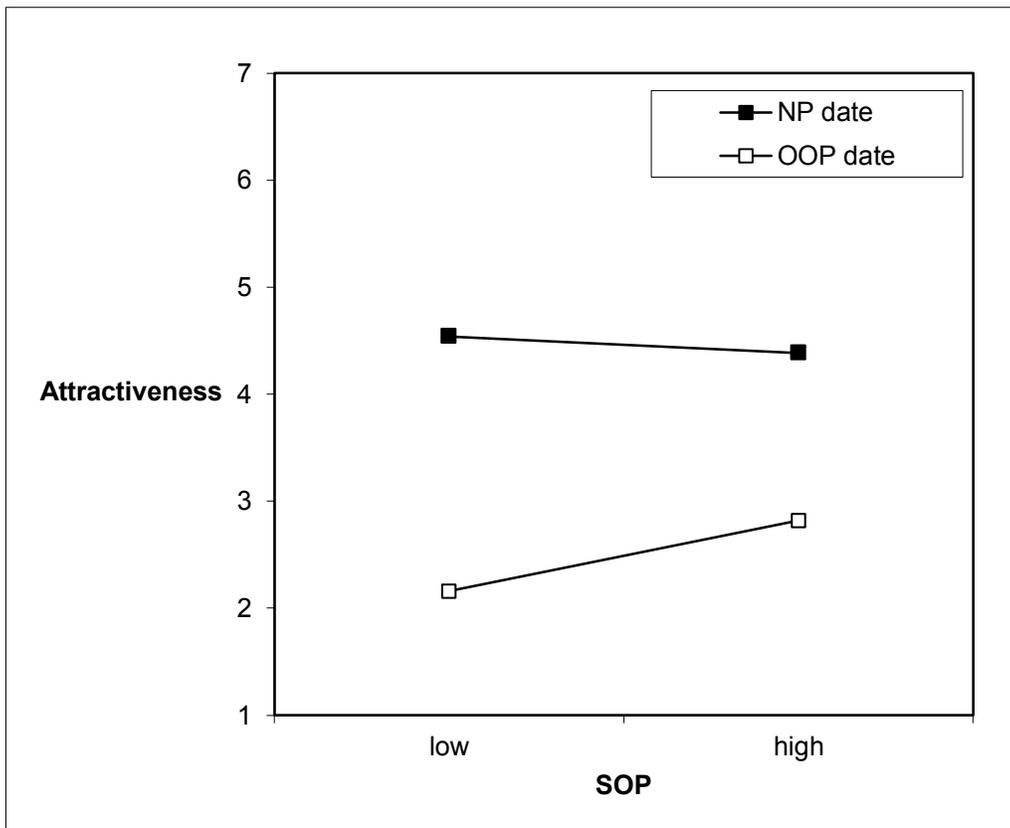
Note. $N = 422$. Gender (female) was effect-coded with 1 = female, -1 = male; and relationship status (single) with 1 = single, -1 = in relationship. SOP date was dummy-coded with 1 = SOP date, 0 = all other dates; OOP date with 1 = OOP date, 0 = all other dates; and SPP date with 1 = SPP date, 0 = all other dates (making the non-perfectionist date the reference group).

* $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. *** $p < .001$.

Panel A:



Panel B:



Panel C:

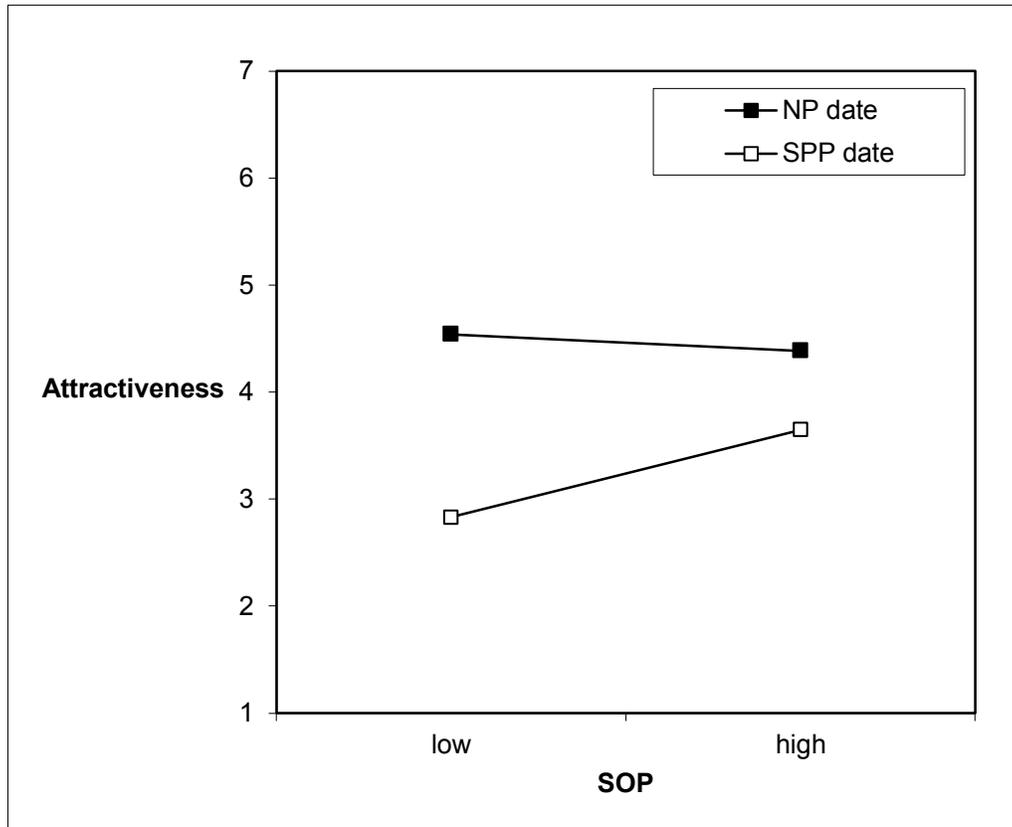
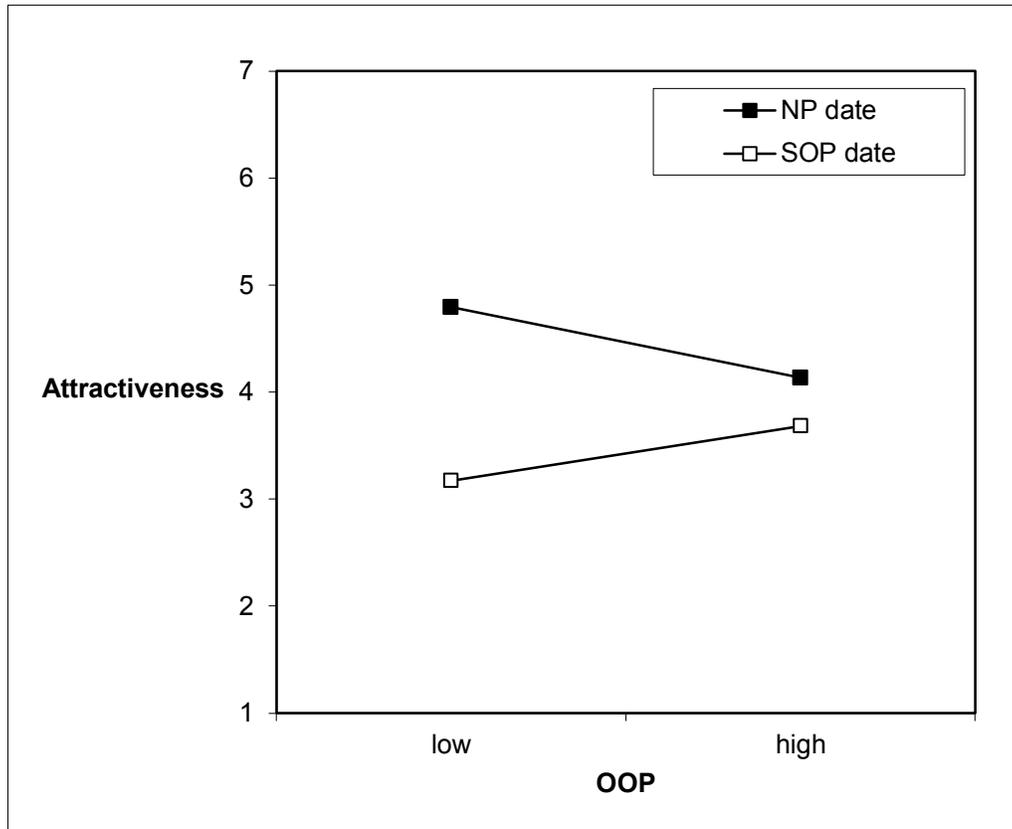
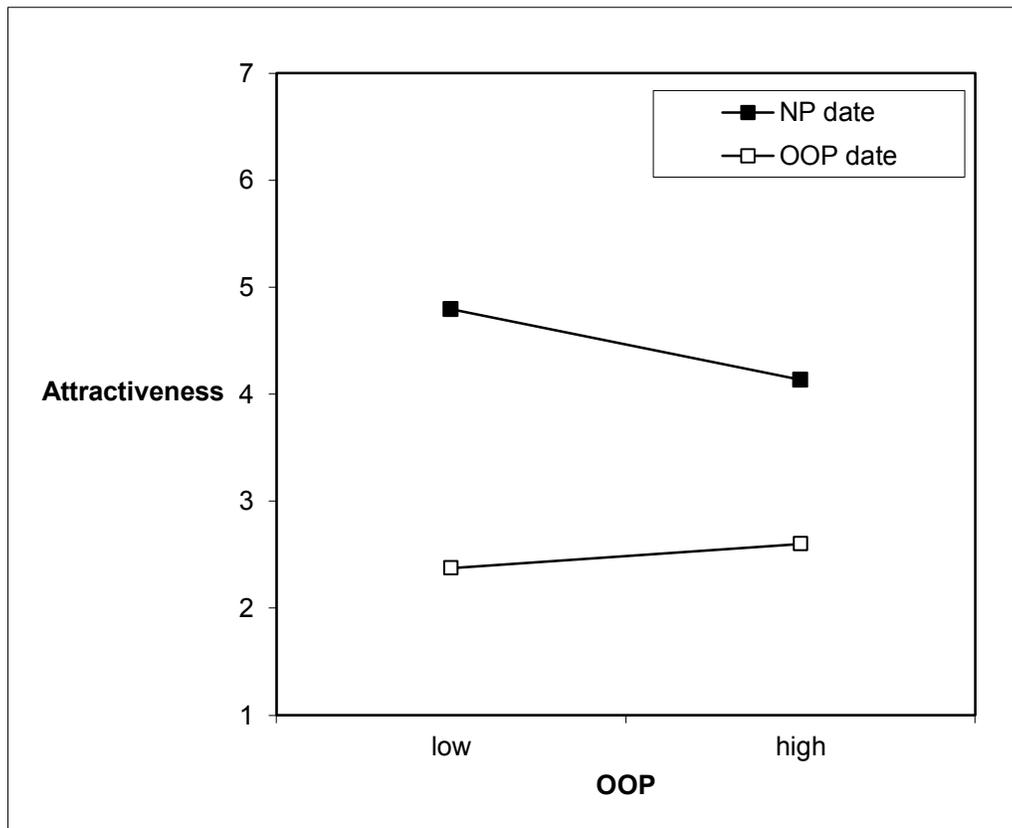


Figure 1. Interactions of self-oriented perfectionism (SOP) and perfectionist dates versus non-perfectionist date (NP date) prediction attraction. Panel A: SOP \times self-oriented perfectionist (SOP) date; Panel B: SOP \times other-oriented perfectionist (OOP) date; Panel C: SOP \times socially prescribed perfectionist (SPP) date. Attractiveness was rated on a scale from 1 (*definitely no*) to 7 (*definitely yes*). All three interactions are significant (see Table 2).

Panel A:



Panel B:



Panel C:

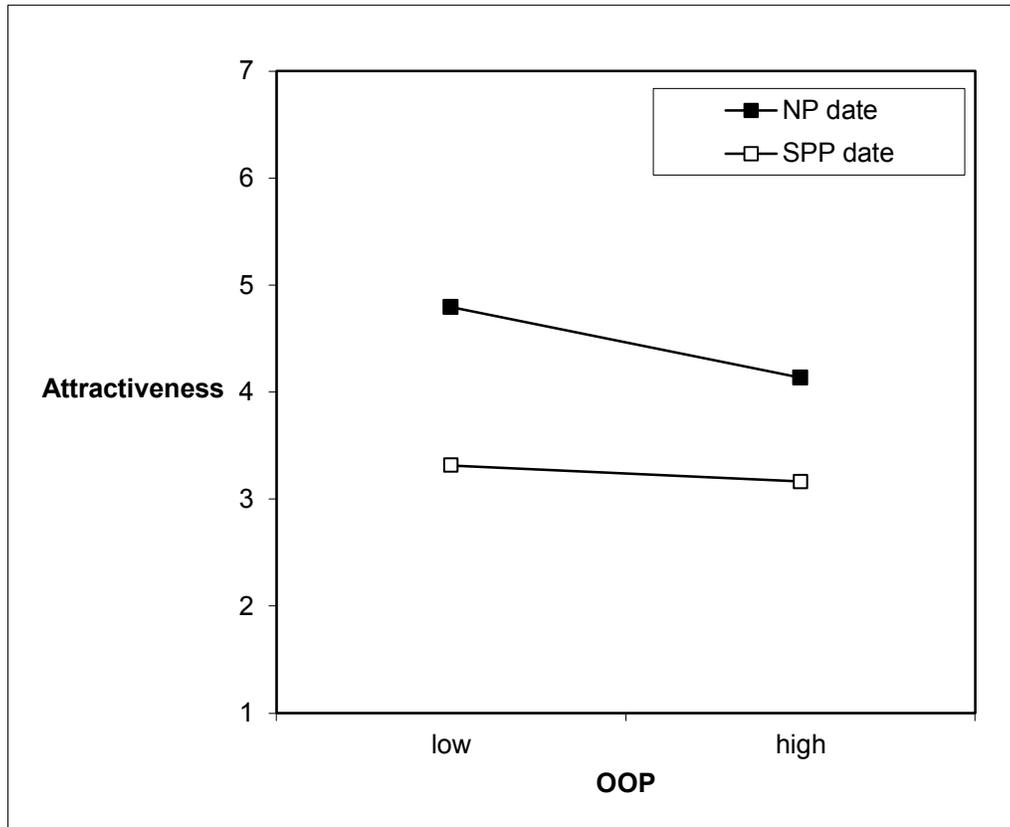


Figure 2. Interactions of other-oriented perfectionism (OOP) and perfectionist dates versus non-perfectionist date (NP date) predicting attraction. Panel A: OOP \times self-oriented perfectionist (SOP) date; Panel B: OOP \times other-oriented perfectionist (OOP) date; Panel C: OOP \times socially prescribed perfectionist (SPP) date. Attractiveness was rated on a scale from 1 (*definitely no*) to 7 (*definitely yes*). Only the first two interactions are significant (see Table 2).

Supplementary Material

Self-oriented perfectionist (SOP) date

Alex has exceedingly high expectations of himself. He thinks he should be perfect. Alex evaluates his performance stringently and is very self-critical. He expects to excel at whatever he does and gets upset with himself when he slips up. Alex finds it difficult to accept that he can make mistakes too. He expects nothing less than perfection from himself.

Other-oriented perfectionist (OOP) date

Alex has exceedingly high expectations of others. He thinks others should be perfect. Alex evaluates other people's performance stringently and is very critical of others. He expects others to excel at whatever they do, and he gets upset with others when they slip up. Alex finds it difficult to accept that others can make mistakes too. He expects nothing less than perfection from others.

Socially prescribed perfectionist (SPP) date

Alex thinks that others have exceedingly high expectations of him. He believes that others think he should be perfect. Alex thinks that others evaluate his performance stringently and are very critical of him. He believes that others expect him to excel at whatever he does, and that others get upset with him when he slips up. Alex finds it difficult to accept that he can make mistakes too. He believes that others expect nothing less than perfection from him.

Non-perfectionist (NP) date

Alex has reasonable expectations of himself. He does not think he should be perfect. Alex evaluates his performance, but is not very self-critical. He does not expect to excel at whatever he does and does not get upset with himself when he slips up. Alex accepts that he can make mistakes too. He does not expect perfection from himself.

Note. If participants chose a female (gender-neutral) description, they received the same vignettes with he, his, and himself replaced with she, her, and herself (he/she, his/her, himself/herself). The German translation of the vignettes used in the study can be obtained from the first author.