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Stoeber, J. (2015). How other-oriented perfectionism differs from self-oriented and socially prescribed perfectionism: Further findings. *Journal of Psychopathology and Behavioral Assessment*, 37(4), 611-623. DOI: 10.1007/s10862-015-9485-y

How Other-Oriented Perfectionism Differs from Self-Oriented and Socially Prescribed  
Perfectionism: Further Findings

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### Abstract

Investigating how other-oriented perfectionism (OOP) differed from self-oriented perfectionism (SOP) and socially prescribed perfectionism (SPP), Stoeber (2014a) found OOP to show unique positive relationships with the Dark Triad personality traits (narcissism, Machiavellianism, psychopathy) and unique negative relationships with nurturance, intimacy, and social development goals. Aiming to expand on Stoeber's findings, the present study examined 229 university students investigating the unique relationships of the three forms of perfectionism with humor styles, callous-unemotional-uncaring traits, social value orientations, self- and other-interest, and positive self-evaluations (positive self-regard, feeling superior to others). When multiple regressions were conducted controlling for the overlap between the three forms of perfectionism, OOP showed unique positive relationships with aggressive humor, uncaring traits, an individualistic orientation, and positive self-regard and unique negative relationships with a prosocial orientation and other-interest. In contrast, SOP showed unique positive relationships with affiliative humor and other-interest and unique negative relationships with aggressive humor, callous-uncaring traits, and a competitive orientation whereas SPP showed unique positive relationships with self-depreciating humor and unemotional traits and unique negative relationships with both forms of positive self-evaluations. The findings provide further evidence that OOP is a "dark" form of perfectionism positively associated with narcissistic, antisocial, and uncaring personality characteristics.

*Keywords:* perfectionism; humor styles; callous-unemotional-uncaring traits; social value orientations; self- and other-interest; positive self-evaluations

### Introduction

Perfectionism is a multidimensional personality trait characterized by striving for flawlessness and setting exceedingly high standards of performance accompanied by overly critical evaluations of one's behavior (Frost, Marten, Lahart, & Rosenblate, 1990; Hewitt & Flett, 1991; Slaney, Rice, Mobley, Trippi, & Ashby, 2001). However, not all forms of perfectionism have a self-critical element. Recognizing that perfectionism has personal and social dimensions, Hewitt and Flett (1991) proposed a model distinguishing three forms of perfectionism: self-oriented, other-oriented, and socially prescribed perfectionism. The three forms comprise differential attitudes, motivations, and behaviors. Moreover, they differ with respect to perfectionists' beliefs. Self-oriented perfectionism comprises 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 comparison, socially prescribed perfectionism comprises 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 these expectations. Note that both forms of perfectionism have an element of criticism directed at oneself. In the case of self-oriented perfectionism, oneself is critical of oneself. In the case of socially prescribed perfectionism, others are (perceived to be) critical of oneself. This is not the case for other-oriented perfectionism. Other-oriented perfectionism comprises 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. Hence only self-oriented perfectionists and socially prescribed perfectionists are self-critical. Other-oriented perfectionists are critical of others (Hewitt & Flett, 1991, 2004).

With the introduction of other-oriented perfectionism, Hewitt and Flett (1990, 1991) made an important contribution to perfectionism research proposing that there is a form of perfectionism that is focused on others and how others fare in comparison to the high standards one has for them. Since then many studies have investigated multidimensional perfectionism including other-oriented perfectionism (see Habke & Flynn, 2002, and Hewitt & Flett, 2004, for reviews). Yet, for various reasons—that were detailed in Stoeber (2014a)—other-oriented perfectionism never received the same attention that the other two forms of perfectionism did, even though it plays a key role in “dyadic perfectionism” in the form of spouse- and partner-oriented perfectionism, that is, other-oriented perfectionism directed towards one’s spouse, romantic partner, or sexual partner (Haring, Hewitt, & Flett, 2003; Hewitt, Flett, & Mikail, 1995; Stoeber, 2012; Stoeber, Harvey, Almeida, & Lyons, 2013).<sup>1</sup>

Moreover, there is growing interest in other-oriented perfectionism beyond the role that it plays in dyadic perfectionism. For example, a recent study investigating perfectionism in sports teams (Hill, Stoeber, Brown, & Appleton, 2014) found that other-oriented perfectionism directed at one’s teammates (“team-oriented perfectionism”) showed significant differences between

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<sup>1</sup>If not stated otherwise, all studies described in the introduction examined adult samples (including university student samples).

teams and positively predicted team performance in a competition. Another study investigating interpersonal citizenship behaviors in employees (Shoss, Callison, & Witt, 2015) found other-oriented perfectionism to interact with conscientiousness in predicting helping at work. Furthermore, a number of studies (Sherry, Gralnick, Hewitt, Sherry, & Flett, 2014; Stoeber, 2014b) found other-oriented perfectionism to be closely associated with narcissism. Once the overlap with the other two forms was controlled for, other-oriented perfectionism showed unique positive relationships with narcissism and both DSM-5 personality traits indicative of narcissistic personality disorder (grandiosity, attention seeking). In addition, Stoeber (2014b) found other-oriented perfectionism to explain unique variance in all seven DSM-5 traits indicative of antisocial personality disorder. In particular, other-oriented perfectionism showed unique positive relationships with two of the traits (manipulativeness, risk taking) and shared positive relationships with socially prescribed perfectionism on the other five traits (hostility, callousness, deceitfulness, irresponsibility, impulsivity).

Further unique relationships were found in a recent study (Stoeber, 2014a) exploring how other-oriented perfectionism differed from self-oriented and socially prescribed perfectionism examining social goals (Shim & Fletcher, 2012), the HEXACO personality traits (Ashton & Lee, 2007; Lee & Ashton, 2006), and the personality traits of the Dark Triad (Paulhus & Williams, 2002). When multiple regressions were conducted controlling for the overlap between the three forms of perfectionism, other-oriented perfectionism showed a unique positive relationship with social dominance goals and unique negative relationships with nurturance goals, intimacy goals, and social development goals indicating that, compared to other people, other-oriented perfectionists seek to dominate others while having low interest in helping and supporting others, getting along with others, or gaining a better understanding of others. Furthermore, other-oriented perfectionism showed unique negative relationships with HEXACO emotionality, agreeableness, and altruism suggesting that other-oriented perfectionists are less emotional, agreeable, and caring than other people. Finally, other-oriented perfectionism showed unique positive relationships with all three personality traits of the Dark Triad—narcissism, Machiavellianism, and psychopathy—suggesting that other-oriented perfectionists not only seek more admiration from others and have a greater sense of entitlement (narcissism), but are also more exploitative, manipulative, and cunning (Machiavellianism) as well as more callous, unemotional, and uncaring (psychopathy) compared to other people. Consequently, Stoeber (2014a) proposed that OOP was a “dark” form of perfectionism associated with narcissistic and antisocial personality

characteristics.

### **Open Questions**

Stoeber's (2014a) study, however, left some open questions. First, the personality characteristics that the study investigated were restricted to social goals, HEXACO personality traits, and the Dark Triad. Consequently, additional investigations are needed to further examine the dark nature of other-oriented perfectionism and its associations with narcissistic and antisocial personality characteristics, particularly as the number of studies that focus on other-oriented perfectionism and investigate other-oriented perfectionism's unique relationships (controlling for other-oriented perfectionism's overlap with self-oriented and socially prescribed perfectionism) is still limited. Second, to provide for a more comprehensive assessment of other-oriented perfectionism, Stoeber (2014a) used two scales to measure other-oriented perfectionism: the other-oriented perfectionism subscale of the Multidimensional Perfectionism Scale (MPS; Hewitt & Flett, 1991) and the other-oriented perfectionism scale Hewitt and Flett published in 1990 (consecutively referred to as the "1990 scale"). Unexpectedly, some unique relationships that other-oriented perfectionism showed were dependent on which scale was used (see Stoeber, 2014a, for details). Because there is little research on the 1990 scale beyond Hewitt and Flett's (1990) study, but other recent studies have been using the 1990 scale as a measure of other-oriented perfectionism (e.g., Nealis, Sherry, Macneil, Stewart, & Sherry, 2013), further research is needed to examine how the 1990 scale fares in comparison to the MPS subscale which is the established measure of other-oriented perfectionism (cf. Hewitt & Flett, 2004).

### **The Present Study**

Against this background, the aim of the present study was to follow-up on Stoeber's (2014a) study and further investigate how other-oriented perfectionism differs from self-oriented and socially prescribed perfectionism by examining unique relationships of other-oriented perfectionism with personality characteristics that have narcissistic and antisocial (versus prosocial) connotations using the MPS and the 1990 scale to measure other-oriented perfectionism and controlling for the overlap with self-oriented and socially prescribed perfectionism. To this aim, the present study investigated relationships with (a) humor styles because humor can be antisocial (aggressive humor) or prosocial (affiliative humor), (b) callous-unemotional traits because these traits have strong antisocial connotations, (c) social value orientations because they differentiate orientations that are prosocial (cooperative orientation) from those that are not (individualistic and competitive orientations), (d) self- and other-interest

because individual differences in the focus of interest—self versus others—may be important in differentiating other-oriented perfectionism from self-oriented perfectionism, and (e) positive self-evaluations because they may tap the narcissistic tendencies that other-oriented perfectionism has shown unique positive relationships with (Sherry et al., 2014; Stoeber, 2014a, 2014b). Before we formulate hypotheses about what relationships to expect, however, let us have a more detailed look at these characteristics and how they are conceptualized and measured.

Humor styles capture individual differences in the way that people use humor. Having “a sense of humor” is usually seen as a positive characteristic of people who laugh frequently, enjoy sharing humor with others, and have a positive outlook when facing challenges (Martin, 2003). Yet humor is a multifaceted construct and may be used differently by different people. Moreover, as Freud (1928) pointed out in his psychoanalytic reflections on jokes, humor may have a dark side and can have aggressive connotations. One of the most widely researched models of humor styles is Martin and colleagues’ model differentiating four humor styles (Martin, Puhlik-Doris, Larsen, Gray, & Weir, 2003): affiliative humor (using humor to enhance one’s relationships with others), self-enhancing humor (using humor to enhance the self), aggressive humor (using humor to enhance the self at the expense of others), and self-defeating humor (using humor to enhance one’s relationships with others at the expense of the self). Affiliative and self-enhancing humor are regarded as adaptive humor styles making a positive contribution to one’s well-being and social relationships, whereas aggressive and self-defeating humor are regarded as maladaptive humor styles making a negative contribution (Martin et al., 2003).

Callous-unemotional traits capture individual differences in antisocial attitudes and behaviors. To measure callous-unemotional traits, Frick (2003) developed an inventory capturing a broad range of antisocial attitudes and behaviors that have been shown to form three distinct factors: callous, unemotional, and uncaring traits (Essau, Sasagawa, & Frick, 2006). Callous traits comprise attitudes and behaviors indicative of psychopathy such as not caring about getting into trouble, not caring if others get hurt, and lack of remorse. Unemotional traits comprise attitudes and behaviors indicative of problems with expressing feelings and emotionally opening up to others, whereas uncaring traits comprise attitudes and behaviors indicative of problems with commonly accepted standards of work ethics and social comportment. All three traits have been shown to predict problematic behaviors over and beyond the Big Five personality traits (e.g., Fanti, Frick, & Georgiou, 2009; Roose, Bijttebier, Decoene, Claes, & Frick, 2010).

Social value orientations capture individual differences in preferences for certain patterns of

outcomes for oneself and others in social distribution situations. According to Van Lange, De Bruin, Otten, and Joireman (1997), three main forms of social value orientations need to be differentiated: a prosocial, an individualistic, and a competitive orientation. People with a prosocial orientation (“prosocials”) prefer cooperation and equality. In social distribution situations, they tend to maximize outcomes for themselves and others (e.g., distribute gains equally). In contrast, people with an individualistic orientation (“individualists”) tend to maximize their own outcomes with little or no regard for others’ outcomes (e.g., distribute gains such that they achieve the maximum gain). In comparison, people with a competitive orientation (“competitors”) tend to maximize their own outcomes relative to others’ outcomes (e.g., distribute gains such that they achieve the maximum advantage over others). Whereas individualists maximize their gains, competitors maximize the *difference* between their gains and the others’ gains, even if this diminishes their own gains. Both individual and competitive orientation have antisocial elements, but the former is passively antisocial disregarding what others get whereas the latter is actively antisocial monitoring what others get and making sure others get less than they themselves do (Van Lange et al., 1997).

Self- and other-interest capture individual differences in the motive to act in one’s own interest and the motive to act in others’ interests (Gerbasi & Prentice, 2013). According to the authors, self-interest is usually regarded as a given (the “default option”) whereas why people show other-interest is more difficult to explain. Gerbasi and Prentice therefore propose that there is a motive to pursue others’ interest analogous to the self-interest motive regarding the gains in socially valued domains including social status, recognition, achievement, material goods, and happiness. Moreover, in strategic games and the distribution of resources, other-interest is associated with fairness and reciprocity and balances the outcomes for oneself with the outcomes for others (Gerbasi & Prentice, 2013).

Positive self-evaluations play a key role in research on narcissism because narcissists tend to show increased positive self-evaluations compared to others (Brown, Budzek, & Tamborski, 2009). According to Leising et al. (2013), however, it is important to differentiate two fundamental forms of positive self-evaluations: intrapersonal and interpersonal. Intrapersonal self-evaluations capture individual differences in contentedness with oneself in comparison with one’s own standards (positive self-regard). By comparison, interpersonal self-evaluations capture individual differences in contentedness with oneself in comparison to others (feeling superior to others). The differentiation of intra- and interpersonal self-evaluations is of interest in the present



context because Leising and colleagues found the two forms of self-evaluations to show differential relationships with narcissism. Whereas positive self-regard showed negative correlations with narcissistic vulnerability, feeling superior to others showed positive correlations with narcissistic grandiosity (cf. Pincus & Roche, 2011).

### **Hypotheses**

Based on previous theory and research on other-oriented perfectionism (Hewitt & Flett, 1991, 2004) and recent findings suggesting that other-oriented perfectionists tend to be narcissistic and antisocial (Sherry et al., 2014; Stoeber, 2014a, 2014b), a number of hypotheses could be formulated. Regarding humor styles, we expected other-oriented perfectionism to show positive relationships with aggressive humor and/or negative relationships with affiliative humor. Regarding callous-unemotional-uncaring traits, we expected other-oriented perfectionism to show positive relationships with either trait. Regarding social value orientations, we expected other-oriented perfectionism to show negative relationships with a prosocial orientation or positive relationships with either an individualistic or a competitive orientation. Regarding self- and other-interest, we expected other-oriented perfectionism to show negative relationships with other-interest, but not necessarily positive relationships with self-interest (as we expected self-interest to be more closely related to self-oriented perfectionism). Finally, regarding positive self-evaluations, we expected other-oriented perfectionism to show positive relationships with both positive self-regard and feeling superior to others.

## **Method**

### **Participants and Procedure**

A sample of 229 students (199 female, 28 male, 3 preferred not to indicate their gender) studying at the University of Kent was recruited via the School of Psychology's Research Participation Scheme (RPS). Mean age of students was 20.4 years ( $SD = 5.3$ ; range: 18-58 years). Using the categories of the university's equal opportunities monitoring form, students indicated their ethnicity as White (68%), Black (15%), Asian (11%), mixed race (4%), and other (2%). Students volunteered to participate for RPS credits or a £50 raffle (~US \$75). Participants completed all measures online using Qualtrics® survey software requiring participants to respond to all questions to prevent missing values. The median time that participants took to complete the

survey was 17.6 minutes.<sup>2</sup> The study was approved by the relevant ethics committee and followed the British Psychological Society's (2009) code of ethics and conduct.

### Measures

**Perfectionism.** To measure the three forms of perfectionism, we used the MPS (Hewitt & Flett, 2004) capturing self-oriented perfectionism (15 items; e.g., "I demand nothing less than perfection of myself"), socially prescribed perfectionism (15 items; e.g., "People expect nothing less than perfection from me"), and other-oriented perfectionism (15 items; e.g., "If I ask someone to do something, I expect it to be done flawlessly"). In addition, we included the 1990 scale (Hewitt & Flett, 1990; see also Stoeber, 2014a, Appendix) capturing other-oriented perfectionism with 8 items (e.g., "I think less of people I know if they make mistakes") that were interspersed between the 45 MPS items. All items were presented with the standard instruction of the MPS ("Listed below are a number of statements concerning personal characteristics and traits..."), and participants responded to the items on a scale from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 7 (*strongly agree*).

**Humor styles.** To measure humor styles, we used the Humor Styles Questionnaire (HSQ; Martin et al., 2003) capturing affiliative humor (8 items; e.g., "I laugh and joke a lot with my closest friends"), self-enhancing humor (8 items; e.g., "If I am feeling depressed, I can usually cheer myself up with humor"), aggressive humor (8 items; e.g., "If I don't like someone, I often use humor or teasing to put them down"), and self-defeating humor (8 items; e.g., "I often go overboard in putting myself down when I am making jokes or trying to be funny"). The HSQ has demonstrated reliability and validity in numerous studies (e.g., Veselka, Schermer, Martin, & Vernon, 2010; Yip & Martin, 2006). Instructions informed participants that people experience and express humor in many different ways and that the items describe different ways in which humor might be experienced, and participants responded to all items on a scale from 1 (*totally disagree*) to 7 (*totally agree*).

**Callous-unemotional-uncaring traits.** To measure callous-unemotional-uncaring traits, we used the Inventory of Callous and Unemotional Traits (ICU) developed by Frick (2003) and validated by Essau et al. (2006) capturing individual differences in callous traits (11 items; e.g., "I

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<sup>2</sup>Participants did not have to complete the survey in one session but could pause and pick up where they interrupted at a later point of time. Hence the median is reported because the mean was extremely skewed from the few participants who took a day or more to complete the survey.

do not care who I hurt to get what I want”), unemotional traits (5 items; e.g., “I do not show my emotions to others”), and uncaring traits (8 items; e.g., “I always try my best,” reverse-scored). The ICU has shown reliability and validity in a number of studies (e.g., Fanti et al., 2009; Roose et al., 2010). Instructions asked participants to decide how well each item described them, and participants responded on a scale from 0 (*not at all true*) to 3 (*definitely true*).

**Social value orientations.** To measure social value orientations, we used the measure developed by Van Lange et al. (1997). The measure comprised 9 items, each of which required a choice among three combinations of outcomes distributing points for oneself and for another person, for example: (A) you get 480 points, the other gets 480 points; (B) you get 540 points, the other gets 280 points; or (C) you get 480 points, the other gets 80 points. In this example, choosing A is considered prosocial (equal gains for oneself and the other), B individualistic (maximizing one’s gains regardless of the other’s gains), and C competitive (maximizing the *difference* between one’s gains and the other’s gains). Van Lange et al.’s measure of social value orientation is a widely used measure to differentiate prosocial, individualistic, and competitive orientations and has shown reliability and validity in numerous studies (e.g., Hilbig & Zettler, 2009; van Dijk, De Cremer, & Handgraaf, 2004). Following Van Lange et al. (1997), participants were instructed to imagine that they have been randomly paired with another person they did not know and would not knowingly meet in the future, and then selected one of the three alternatives (A, B, or C) for each item.

**Self- and other-interest.** To measure self- and other-interest, we used the adult version of the Self- and Other-Interest Inventory (SOII; Gerbasi & Prentice, 2013) capturing self-interest (10 items; e.g., “I am constantly looking for ways to get ahead”) and other-interest (10 items; e.g., “I am constantly looking for ways for my acquaintances to get ahead”). Unlike Van Lange et al.’s (1997) measure forcing participants to make a choice between different social value orientations, the SOII does not pit different orientations against each other, but acknowledges that self- and other-interest may exist in tandem. Because the SOII was published only recently, reliability and validity information was limited to Gerbasi and Prentice’s (2013) study suggesting that the inventory showed good reliability and validity (e.g., high Cronbach’s alphas; the items formed two separate factors; in a laboratory task, self- and other-interest scores predicted behaviors benefiting the self or another person, respectively). Instructions asked participants to indicate the extent to which the items described them and their behaviors, and participants responded on a scale from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 7 (*strongly agree*).

**Positive self-evaluations.** To measure positive self-evaluations, we used the scale developed by Leising et al. (2013) differentiating intrapersonal (positive self-regard) and interpersonal (feeling superior to others) self-evaluations. Each form of self-evaluation was measured with 10 items (e.g., “I am pretty much exactly as I would like to be,” “I am superior to others”). Like the SOII, Leising et al.’s scale was published only recently. Hence, validity information was limited to Leising et al.’s study which suggested that the scale showed good validity (e.g., the items formed two separate factors; intrapersonal and interpersonal self-evaluation showed differential correlations with self-rated narcissistic vulnerability and grandiosity and peer-rated affiliation and dominance) but unfortunately did not provide reliability information (no Cronbach’s alphas reported). Instructions asked participants to indicate how well each item applied to them, and participants responded on a scale from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 5 (*strongly agree*).

### **Preliminary Analyses**

Scale scores were computed by averaging responses across items to retain the scale metric of the response scale for easier interpretation (see Results, Intercorrelations and Table 1). Because multivariate outliers can severely distort the results of correlation and regression analyses, the scores were examined for multivariate outliers (see Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007). Two participants (1 male, 1 female) showed a Mahalanobis distance larger than the critical value of  $\chi^2(17) = 40.79$ ,  $p < .001$  and were excluded from the further analyses. Furthermore, we examined whether the variance–covariance matrices of male and female participants differed by computing Box’s  $M$  tests with gender as between-participants factor. Because Box’s  $M$  is highly sensitive to even minor differences, it is tested against a  $p < .001$  significance level (Tabachnick & Fidell, 2007). The test was nonsignificant with Box’s  $M = 223.08$ ,  $F(153, 6549) = 1.09$ ,  $p = .207$ . Consequently, all analyses were collapsed across gender. Next, we examined the scores’ reliability (internal consistency) by computing Cronbach’s alphas. All scores displayed satisfactory reliability (alphas  $> .70$ ; see Tables 1 and 2) except aggressive humor (alpha = .66). Whereas problematic when used for individual assessment, scores with alphas  $< .70$  are still useful for research purposes (Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994). Hence aggressive humor was retained for further analysis.

Finally, we inspected all scores for deviations from normality using the Shapiro-Wilk test. Because this test has high statistical power (e.g., Razali & Wah, 2011), it was tested against a  $p < .001$  significance level. Results showed that other-oriented perfectionism measured with the 1990 scale (OOP-90), affiliative humor, callous and uncaring traits, and the three social value

orientations showed substantial deviations from normality ( $p < .001$ ). When the scores' skewness was inspected and tested for significance ( $|\text{skewness}/SE \text{ skewness}| > 1.96, p < .05$ ), all scores showed significant skewness. Following Tabachnick and Fidell (2007, Figure 4.7), OOP-90 showed moderate positive skewness, affiliative humor moderate negative skewness, callous traits substantial positive skewness, uncaring traits moderate positive skewness, prosocial orientation severe negative skewness (J-shaped), and individualistic and competitive orientation severe positive skewness (L-shaped). (Positive skewness means that the right tail of the distribution is longer [the majority of participants has low values] whereas negative skewness means that the left tail is longer [the majority has high values].) Consequently, the data transformations recommended by Tabachnick and Fidell (2007, Table 4.3) were applied to these scores, and the correlation and regression analyses were run with the transformed scores.<sup>3</sup>

## Results

### Mean Scores and Intercorrelations

First, we inspected the mean scores of the different perfectionism measures (see Table 1) with a particular focus on potential differences between the two measures of other-oriented perfectionism because Stoeber (2014a) suggested that the 1990 scale (abbreviated "OOP-90" in the tables) captures a more extreme form of other-oriented perfectionism than the respective MPS subscale (abbreviated "OOP"). Results showed that the mean of the 1990 scale was over 1 scale point lower than that of the MPS subscale,  $t(226) = -16.73, p < .001$ . On the scale from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 7 (*strongly agree*), participants showed an average response of 2.76 to the items of the 1990 scale whereas they showed an average response of 3.77 to the items of the MPS subscale.

Next, we examined the intercorrelations among the perfectionism measures (see again Table 1). As in the previous study (Stoeber, 2014a), the scores of the two measures of other-oriented perfectionism showed a large-sized positive correlation.<sup>4</sup> With  $r = .51$ , however, the correlation was not as large as expected from measures intended to capture the same construct (Nunnally &

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<sup>3</sup>Note, however, that the pattern of significant correlations and regression weights was the same when untransformed scores were used, with one exception: In Table 2, Regression 2, the regression weight of OOP-90 predicting an individualistic orientation was nonsignificant with  $\beta = .12, p = .095$  when untransformed scores were used.

<sup>4</sup>Following Cohen (1992), correlations with absolute values of .10, .30, and .50 were regarded as small-, medium-, and large-sized.

Bernstein, 1994) suggesting that the two measures tap different aspects of other-oriented perfectionism. This was confirmed when the correlations with self-oriented and socially prescribed perfectionism were regarded. Whereas both scales' scores showed significant positive correlations with socially prescribed perfectionism, only the MPS subscale's scores showed a significant positive correlation with self-oriented perfectionism. The 1990 scale's scores showed a near-zero correlation.

### **Bivariate Correlations and Multiple Regressions**

Next, we computed the bivariate correlations of perfectionism with humor styles, callous-unemotional-uncaring traits, social value orientations, self- and other-interest, and positive self-evaluations (see Table 2, Bivariate Correlations). Furthermore, to examine what unique relationships the three forms of perfectionism showed once their overlap was controlled for, we computed two sets of multiple regressions: one set including other-oriented perfectionism measured with the MPS (see Table 2, Regression 1) and another set including other-oriented perfectionism measured with the 1990 scale (see Table 2, Regression 2). Following Stoeber's (2014a) analytic strategy and in line with the present study's aim to examine the unique relationships of other-oriented perfectionism, the subsequent sections only discuss the results from the multiple regressions.

Regarding humor styles, other-oriented perfectionism showed unique positive relationships with aggressive humor. In addition, it showed a unique negative relationship with self-depreciating humor when measured with the MPS. Socially prescribed perfectionism showed unique positive relationships with self-depreciating humor and negative relationships with self-enhancing humor. Moreover, socially prescribed perfectionism showed a unique negative relationship with affiliative humor, but only when other-oriented perfectionism was measured with the MPS. When it was measured with the 1990 scale, the negative relationship was shared with other-oriented perfectionism. In contrast, self-oriented perfectionism showed unique positive relationships with affiliative humor and unique negative relationships with aggressive humor regardless of what measure of other-oriented perfectionism was included in the analyses.

Regarding callous-unemotional-uncaring traits, other-oriented perfectionism showed unique positive relationships with uncaring traits across both measures. In addition, it showed a unique positive relationship with callous traits when measured with the 1990 scale. When it was measured with the MPS, the positive relationship was shared with socially prescribed perfectionism. In contrast, self-oriented perfectionism showed unique negative relationships with

callous and uncaring traits whereas socially prescribed perfectionism showed unique positive relationships with unemotional traits.

Regarding social value orientations, other-oriented perfectionism showed unique negative relationships with a prosocial orientation and unique positive relationships with an individualistic orientation across both measures. In addition, it showed a unique positive relationship with a competitive orientation when measured with the 1990 scale. Socially prescribed perfectionism showed a unique positive relationship with a competitive orientation, but only when the MPS was used to measure other-oriented perfectionism. In contrast, self-oriented perfectionism showed unique negative relationships with a competitive orientation in both regressions.

Regarding self- and other-interest, other-oriented perfectionism showed unique negative relationships with other-interest across measures. In contrast, self-oriented perfectionism showed unique positive relationships with other-interest. In addition, it showed unique positive relationships with self-interest.

Regarding positive self-evaluations, other-oriented perfectionism showed unique positive relationships with intrapersonal self-evaluations (positive self-regard) across both measures. In addition, it showed a unique positive relationship with interpersonal self-evaluations (feeling superior to others) when measured with the MPS. When it was measured with the 1990 scale, the positive relationship was shared with self-oriented perfectionism. In contrast, socially prescribed perfectionism showed unique negative relationships with both forms of positive self-evaluations.

### **Additional Analyses**

Because there are studies investigating the three forms of perfectionism that found gender differences (e.g., Besser, Flett, & Hewitt, 2010; Blankstein & Winkworth, 2004), we conducted additional analyses including gender (coded 1 = female, 0 = male). First, the bivariate correlations with gender were examined. Regarding perfectionism, only self-oriented perfectionism showed a significant correlation with gender ( $r = .18, p < .01$ ). Female participants reported higher levels of self-oriented perfectionism than male participants. Regarding the other variables, only positive interpersonal self-evaluations (feeling superior to others) showed a significant correlation with gender ( $r = -.16, p < .05$ ). Female participants reported feeling less superior to others than male participants. Next, all regression analyses were rerun including gender. Results showed that the pattern of significant regression weights displayed in Table 2 stayed the same when gender was controlled for, with one exception: Self-oriented perfectionism became a significant positive predictor of positive interpersonal self-evaluations (feeling superior

to others) in Regression 1 ( $\beta = .16, p < .05$ ) when gender was included in the regression.

### Discussion

Following up on Stoeber's (2014a) study, the aim of the present study was to further investigate how other-oriented perfectionism differed from self-oriented and socially prescribed perfectionism by examining unique relationships of other-oriented perfectionism with humor styles, callous-unemotional-uncaring traits, social value orientations, self- and other-interest, and positive self-evaluations controlling for the overlap with self-oriented and socially prescribed perfectionism. Moreover, the study aimed to further examine potential differences between the two measures of other-oriented perfectionism included in Stoeber's study: the other-oriented perfectionism subscale of the Multidimensional Perfectionism Scale (MPS; Hewitt & Flett, 2004) and the other-oriented perfectionism scale Hewitt and Flett published in 1990 (referred to as the "1990 scale"). When multiple regressions were conducted controlling for the overlap between the three forms of perfectionism, results supported all our hypotheses except the expectation that other-oriented perfectionism would be associated with unemotional traits. Instead, other-oriented perfectionism showed unique positive relationships with aggressive humor, uncaring traits, an individualistic orientation, and positive intrapersonal self-evaluations (positive self-regard) and unique negative relationships with a prosocial orientation and other-interest across both measures. In addition, other-oriented perfectionism showed a unique negative relationship with self-depreciating humor when measured with the MPS; and it showed unique positive relationships with callous traits and a competitive orientation when measured with the 1990 scale.

#### **Other-Oriented Perfectionism: Narcissistic, Antisocial, and Uncaring**

The findings of the present study corroborate findings from previous studies investigating personality traits and social goals indicating that other-oriented perfectionism is a form of perfectionism characterized by high self-regard combined with low regard for others showing unique positive relationships with narcissistic and antisocial characteristics and unique negative relationships with prosocial characteristics (Sherry et al., 2014; Stoeber, 2014a, 2014b). Furthermore, the present findings expand on the previous findings by suggesting that other-oriented perfectionism also shows unique relationships with humor styles, callous-uncaring traits, social value orientations, other-interest, and positive self-evaluations.

As concerns self-interest and positive self-evaluations, it is noteworthy that other-oriented perfectionism showed unique positive relationships with positive self-regard, but not self-interest. This may at first seem inconsistent because—if other-oriented perfectionists are narcissistic—one



may expect other-oriented perfectionism to show positive relationships with self-interest. However, a closer look at the content of Gerbasi and Prentice's (2013) measure of self-interest shows that the measure does not capture narcissistic grandiosity or sense of entitlement, but a motivation for self-improvement akin to achievement strivings (e.g., "I am constantly looking for ways to get ahead," "I look for opportunities to achieve higher status"). Self-oriented perfectionism is the form of perfectionism most closely associated with achievement motivation and a need for self-improvement (Hewitt & Flett, 1991; Klibert, Langhinrichsen-Rohling, & Saito, 2005). Consequently, the finding that self-oriented perfectionism (and not other-oriented perfectionism) showed unique positive relationships with self-interest was in line with expectations.

The present study is the first to investigate the relationships between multidimensional perfectionism and humor styles, and the findings suggest that using aggressive humor is a specific characteristic of other-oriented perfectionists. Previous research on other-oriented perfectionism and aggression is limited and often produced nonsignificant findings (cf. Hewitt & Flett, 2004). For example, Miller and Vaillancourt (2007) found other-oriented perfectionism to show a positive relationship with verbal aggression, but the relationship only emerged after the overlap of verbal aggression with indirect and physical aggression was controlled for. In the present study by contrast, the positive relationship with aggressive humor was significant across analyses. This suggests that other-oriented perfectionists may prefer humor as a socially acceptable form of aggression against others they dislike or disrespect. In particular, other-oriented perfectionists may use aggressive humor as a means to criticize others and show their disapproval of others. Consequently, aggressive humor may be a personality characteristic worth further exploring in future research on other-oriented perfectionism.

Social psychologists hold that people are motivated to behave prosocially by norms of reciprocity and social responsibility (e.g., Gerbasi & Prentice, 2013; Van Lange et al., 1997). If so, the present findings suggest that other-oriented perfectionists subscribe to these norms to a lesser degree than other people. Showing a lower prosocial orientation and lower interest in others and a higher individualistic orientation (and, when the 1990 scale was used, also a higher competitive orientation), other-oriented perfectionists showed a pattern of social value orientations and motives that are unlikely to promote interdependence and socially responsible and supportive behaviors. This tendency of not subscribing to social norms may also explain why other-oriented perfectionism showed unique positive relationships with uncaring traits, indicating

that other-oriented perfectionists care less about other people's expectations. Note that Essau et al.'s (2006) measure of uncaring traits captures not caring about others' feelings and not caring about work or school. This makes other-oriented perfectionism stand in stark contrast to self-oriented perfectionism which showed unique negative relationships with uncaring traits in the present study and has been associated with high levels of engagement and motivation at work and school in previous studies (e.g., Childs & Stoeber, 2010; Klibert et al., 2005; Stoeber, Davis, & Townley, 2013).

### **Socially Prescribed Perfectionism: Antisocial, Unemotional, and Low Self-Esteem**

When describing other-oriented perfectionists as antisocial, it is important to note that other-oriented perfectionism is not the only form of perfectionism showing consistent positive relationships with antisocial characteristics. In the present study, socially prescribed perfectionism too showed positive relationships with antisocial characteristics and negative relationships with prosocial characteristics. In addition, socially prescribed perfectionism showed a unique negative relationship with unemotional traits that other-oriented perfectionism did not show. With this, the present findings are in line with Stoeber's (2014b) findings that socially prescribed perfectionism explained unique variance in DSM-5 traits showing positive regression weights with five of the seven traits indicative of antisocial personality disorder (hostility, callousness, deceitfulness, irresponsibility, impulsivity) after controlling for other-oriented perfectionism. Moreover, socially prescribed perfectionism showed unique positive relationships with restricted affectivity and with all DSM-5 traits indicative of pathological detachment (anhedonia, intimacy avoidance, withdrawal, suspiciousness, depressivity).

In contrast to other-oriented perfectionism, however, socially prescribed perfectionism is associated with low self-esteem. In the present study, socially prescribed perfectionism showed unique negative relationships with positive intrapersonal self-evaluations (positive self-regard) and positive interpersonal self-evaluations (feeling superior to others). Because positive self-evaluations are a defining component of high self-esteem (Rosenberg, 1965), the present findings indicate that socially prescribed perfectionism is an antisocial and unemotional form of perfectionism associated with low self-esteem (cf. Flett, Hewitt, Blankstein, & O'Brien, 1991). Moreover, note that narcissism research found positive self-regard to discriminate narcissistic grandiosity and narcissistic vulnerability: Grandiose narcissists show high positive self-regard, vulnerable narcissists low positive self-regard (Pincus & Roche, 2011; see also Leising et al., 2013). Consequently the present findings also suggest that—whereas other-oriented

perfectionism is associated with narcissistic grandiosity (Sherry et al., 2014)—socially prescribed perfectionism may be associated with narcissistic vulnerability.

Adding to this picture of socially prescribed perfectionism as a thoroughly maladaptive form of perfectionism is the pattern of unique relationships that it showed with the two self-focused humor styles of Martin et al.'s (2003) model: positive relationships with self-depreciating humor (a maladaptive form of humor) and negative relationships with self-enhancing humor (an adaptive form of humor). Unlike other-oriented perfectionists, who prefer to make fun at the expense of others, socially prescribed perfectionists seem to prefer to make fun at their own expense. At the same time, they seem to have a lower capacity to use humor to pick themselves up when feeling down. These findings dovetail with previous findings that socially prescribed perfectionism showed negative correlations with positive ways of coping when faced with adversity and stress like putting things into perspective, using positive reappraisal, and positive emotional coping (Flett, Russo, & Hewitt, 1994; Rudolph, Flett, & Hewitt, 2007).

#### **Self-Oriented Perfectionism: Prosocial?**

A further noteworthy finding of the present study is that self-oriented perfectionism emerged as the only form of perfectionism that had prosocial connotations. Regarding humor styles, self-oriented perfectionism showed unique positive relationships with affiliative humor, and unique negative relationships with aggressive humor. Regarding callous-unemotional-uncaring traits, it showed unique negative relationships with callous and uncaring traits. Regarding social value orientations, it showed unique negative relationships with a competitive orientation suggesting that self-oriented perfectionists avoid putting others at a disadvantage (maximizing the difference between one's own gains relative to the others' gains).

This pattern of findings is in close correspondence with the findings of Stoeber's (2014b) study examining the unique relationships of the three forms of perfectionism with the DSM-5 traits where self-oriented perfectionism showed unique negative relationships with five of the seven traits indicative of antisocial personality disorder (callousness, deceitfulness, irresponsibility, impulsivity, risk taking). Moreover, in Stoeber's (2014a) study, self-oriented perfectionism showed unique positive relationships with nurturance, intimacy, and social development goals suggesting that self-oriented perfectionists show higher levels of prosocial motivation and are more interested in developing a better understanding of others compared to other people. In addition, self-oriented perfectionism showed unique positive relationships with altruism, suggesting that self-oriented perfectionists are more compassionate with those in need

than other people. Consequently, self-oriented perfectionism—despite being a personal, not social form of perfectionism—appears to be a form of perfectionism that has prosocial connotations and thus stands in contrast to the other two forms of perfectionism, both of which have strong antisocial connotations.

As to potential reasons why self-oriented perfectionists appear to be more prosocial than others—not only more prosocial than other-oriented and socially prescribed perfectionists, but more prosocial than other people in general—we can only speculate. One possibility is that self-oriented perfectionists are highly conscientious (Rice, Ashby, & Slaney, 2007; Stoeber, Otto, & Dalbert, 2009) and thus may adhere to social norms and expectations, including norms and expectations of how to treat others, to a greater degree than other people. As a consequence, self-oriented perfectionists may show more care for and kindness towards others, avoid antisocial attitudes and behaviors, and prefer humor that affiliates with others while avoiding humor that puts others down. This, however, does not mean that self-oriented perfectionists' preference for prosocial attitudes and orientations (and their avoidance of antisocial attitudes and orientations) actually effects prosocial behaviors. Consequently whether self-oriented perfectionists are more prosocial than others is still an open question.

### **The 1990 Scale: Capturing a More Extreme Form of Other-Oriented Perfectionism**

Finally, it is important to note that some unique relationships of other-oriented perfectionism that the present study found emerged only when the MPS was used but not when the 1990 scale was used, and vice versa. When the MPS was used, other-oriented perfectionism showed a unique negative relationship with self-depreciating humor whereas the relationship was nonsignificant when the 1990 scale was used. When the 1990 scale was used, other-oriented perfectionism showed unique positive relationships with callous traits and a competitive orientation (maximizing the difference between one's own gains relative to the others' gains) but the former relationship was shared with socially prescribed perfectionism and the latter was nonsignificant when the MPS was used.

How can these differences be explained? The unique relationship of other-oriented perfectionism measured with the MPS may be explained by the regression analysis controlling for the measure's significant overlap with self-oriented perfectionism because the latter showed a near-zero correlation with self-depreciating humor resulting in a suppression situation (Tzelgov & Henik, 1991). Other-oriented perfectionism measured with the 1990 subscale, however, did not show such overlap so its unique relationships call for a different explanation. One possible

explanation is that the 1990 scale captures a “nastier, colder form of other-oriented perfectionism” (Stoeber, 2014a, p. 336) than the MPS subscale. This would explain why the 1990 scale showed a large-sized positive correlation with callous traits when bivariate correlations were regarded and a unique positive relationship with callous traits in the regression analyses. Moreover, this would explain the unique positive relationships with a competitive orientation which is a social value orientation that is actively antisocial. In the present study, opting for a competitive orientation had a “nasty” side because—if one takes a closer look at the choices that indicate a competitive orientation in Van Lange et al.’s (1997) measure—maximizing the difference between one’s own gains relative to the other’s gains is achieved by minimizing the other’s gains. Another possible explanation is that the 1990 scale captures a more extreme form of other-oriented perfectionism than the MPS subscale. This would explain why participants in the present study endorsed the items of the 1990 scale to significantly lesser degree than the items of the MPS. Moreover, most participants tended to disagree with the 1990 scale’s items (resulting in a positively skewed distribution of scores) when compared to the MPS subscale’s items (which did not show a skewed distribution). A possible reason for the lower endorsement of the 1990 scale’s items is that the scale does not contain any reverse-scored items whereas 9 of the 15 items comprising the MPS subscale are reverse-scored (e.g., “I do not expect a lot from my friends”) balancing agreement versus disagreement with statements that others should be perfect. To what degree the presence versus absence of reverse-scored items—which a recent study found to be a significant factor when conducting psychometric analyses of the MPS items (De Cuyper, Claes, Hermans, Pieters, & Smits, 2015)—explains the difference between the 1990 scale and the MPS subscale measuring other-oriented perfectionism, however, goes beyond the aims of the present study and remains for future (psychometric) studies to investigate.

### **Limitations and Future Studies**

The present study had a number of limitations. First, even though we expected other-oriented perfectionism to show unique positive relationships with narcissistic and antisocial characteristics and negative relationships with prosocial characteristics, we did not have specific predictions for every single characteristic investigated. Accordingly, parts of the present analyses were exploratory and should be replicated in future studies. Second, with a Cronbach’s alpha of .66, the measure of aggressive humor showed a questionable reliability. Whereas previous studies found aggressive humor to show the lowest Cronbach’s alpha of all humor styles measured with the Humor Styles Questionnaire (Martin et al., 2003), we are not aware of any study that found a

reliability below .70. Hence the present findings regarding aggressive humor need to be replicated in future studies, perhaps including additional measures of aggressive humor (e.g., Craik, Lampert, & Nelson, 1996). Third, the sample was comprised of university students and predominantly female. Whereas the unequal gender distribution was representative of British university students studying psychology (see Deevybee, 2012), future studies need to examine if the present findings generalize to male students (e.g., by sampling students from other programs that have a greater percentage of male students such as medicine or chemistry). Furthermore, given that some research found significant differences between college students and non-student samples (e.g., Peterson, 2001), future studies need to investigate if the present findings replicate in non-student samples (e.g. community samples, clinical samples). Finally, a recent study (Stoeber & Hotham, 2013) suggests that students who want to give a positive impression of themselves may report higher other-oriented perfectionism. Moreover, other-oriented perfectionism has been shown to be closely related to narcissism (Sherry et al., 2014). Consequently, future studies may profit from including measures of social desirability and narcissism when investigating the unique relationships of other-oriented perfectionism.

### **Conclusions**

Despite these limitations, the findings from the present study—building on a recent series of studies investigating the unique relationships of other-oriented perfectionism (Sherry et al., 2014; Stoeber, 2014a, 2014b)—make a significant contribution to our understanding of other-oriented perfectionism and how it differs from self-oriented and socially prescribed perfectionism. Expanding on previous theory and research on the interpersonal aspects of trait perfectionism (cf. Habke & Flynn, 2002) and on previous findings indicating that other-oriented perfectionists are narcissistic and antisocial (e.g., Hewitt & Flett, 1991, 2004), the present study found that other-oriented perfectionists were also uncaring about social norms and others' expectations. Moreover, other-oriented perfectionists preferred aggressive humor when around others, showed a low prosocial orientation, and felt superior to others. In contrast, socially prescribed perfectionism emerged as a form of perfectionism combining antisocial tendencies with low self-esteem: Socially prescribed perfectionists had low self-regard and felt inferior to others. The only form of perfectionism that appeared to be prosocial was self-oriented perfectionism. In contrast to other-oriented perfectionists, self-oriented perfectionists showed an interest in others, cared about social norms and others' expectations, preferred affiliative humor, and avoided aggressive humor. With this, the present findings suggest that the focus of perfectionists plays an important role in

determining how prosocial or antisocial they are. If perfectionists focus on themselves (self-oriented perfectionism), they can be prosocial. If they focus on others—whether they have perfectionistic expectations of others (other-oriented perfectionism) or they believe others have perfectionistic expectations of them (socially prescribed perfectionism)—they tend to be antisocial.

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Table 1

*Intercorrelations and Descriptive Statistics*

Variable	1	2	3	4 <sup>a</sup>
1. Self-oriented perfectionism (SOP)				-.05
2. Socially prescribed perfectionism (SPP)	.40***			.30***
3. Other-oriented perfectionism (OOP)	.23***	.34***		.49***
4. Other-oriented perfectionism, 1990 scale (OOP-90)	-.05	.30***	.51***	.99***
<i>M</i>	4.65	3.85	3.77	2.76
<i>SD</i>	0.96	0.85	0.65	1.03
$\alpha$	.90	.86	.72	.86

*Note.*  $N = 227$ . SOP, SPP, and OOP were measured with the Multidimensional Perfectionism Scale (MPS; Hewitt & Flett, 2004). OOP-90 was measured with the scale published by Hewitt and Flett (1990). Scale scores were computed by averaging across items to retain the metric of the response scale from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 7 (*strongly agree*).  $\alpha$  = Cronbach's alpha. OOP-90 scores deviated from normality and were transformed (see Method, Preliminary Analyses).

<sup>a</sup>Statistics for untransformed OOP-90 scores.

\*\*\* $p < .001$ .

Table 2

*Bivariate Correlations and Summary of Regression Analyses*

Dependent variable	$\alpha$	Bivariate Correlations				Regression 1			Regression 2		
		SOP	SPP	OOP	OOP-90	SOP	SPP	OOP	SOP	SPP	OOP-90
Humor styles											
Affiliative	.82	.11	-.22***	-.11	-.44***	.24***	-.30***	-.07	.16*	-.17*	-.38***
Self-enhancing	.85	-.04	-.19**	.01	-.03	.03	-.23**	.08	.05	-.22**	.03
Aggressive	.66	-.23***	.01	.16*	.39***	-.30***	.07	.20**	-.20**	-.02	.38***
Self-depreciating	.82	.04	.25***	-.11	.20**	-.05	.34***	-.21**	-.05	.23***	.13
Callous-unemotional-uncaring traits											
Callous	.80	-.25***	.10	.27***	.57***	-.39***	.15*	.31***	-.24***	.04	.55***
Unemotional	.84	.11	.26***	.11	.05	.01	.25***	.02	.00	.27***	-.03
Uncaring	.78	-.39***	-.10	.12	.33***	-.44***	.01	.22***	-.35***	-.06	.33***
Social value orientations											
Prosocial	.96	.06	-.03	-.23***	-.19**	.11	.01	-.26***	.05	.00	-.19**
Individualistic	.94	-.01	.00	.21**	.12	-.03	-.07	.24***	.02	-.05	.14*
Competitive	.94	-.12	.12	.12	.23***	-.21**	.16*	.11	-.16*	.13	.19**
Self- and other-interest											
Self-interest	.85	.45***	.18**	.20**	-.08	.44***	-.03	.11	.44***	.03	-.07
Other-interest	.89	.27***	.11	-.10	-.20**	.29***	.05	-.18**	.22**	.08	-.21**

[Table 2, continued]

## Positive self-evaluations

Intrapersonal (positive self-regard)	.81	-.22***	-.32***	.03	.07	-.12	-.33***	.17*	-.07	-.34***	.16*
Interpersonal (feeling superior to others)	.82	.11	-.08	.32***	.28***	.13 <sup>a</sup>	-.26***	.38***	.24***	-.29***	.38***

*Note.*  $N = 227$ .  $\alpha$  = Cronbach's alpha. SOP = self-oriented perfectionism, SPP = socially prescribed perfectionism, OOP = other oriented perfectionism (MPS; Hewitt & Flett, 2004); OOP-90 = other-oriented perfectionism, 1990 scale (Hewitt & Flett, 1990). Regression 1 = standardized regression weights ( $\beta$ s) from the multiple regression with SOP, SPP, and OOP as predictors; Regression 2 = standardized regression weights ( $\beta$ s) from the multiple regression with SOP, SPP, and OOP-90 as predictors. OOP-90, affiliative humor, callous traits, and the three social value orientations scores deviated from normality and were transformed (see Method, Preliminary Analyses).

<sup>a</sup>Significant with  $\beta = .16$ ,  $p < .05$  when gender was included in the regression.

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