



“Can’t settle for good enough”: Perfectionism, uncertainty, and self efficacy in the context of maladaptive schemas and obsessive beliefs

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BACKGROUND

- Certain early maladaptive schemas (EMSs; e.g., “I try to do my best; I can’t settle for good enough”) may influence cognitive change (i.e., mediate improvement in cognitive therapy) among individuals with anxiety and related disorders (i.e., OCD; Wilhelm et al., 2014)
- Self-efficacy, perfectionism, and intolerance of uncertainty [IU] play a role in the relationship between EMSs and obsessive-compulsive (OC) beliefs (i.e., perfectionistic tendencies predispose individuals to overestimate personal responsibility; Bouchard et al., 1999).
- Despite possible implications for OCD treatment, no studies have examined the relative contributions of these constructs in predicting OC cognitions (and individual domains, e.g., responsibility).
- The current study examined relationships among phenomena (i.e., perfectionism, self-efficacy, IU) hypothesized to be positively associated with a greater endorsement of EMSs in the prediction of OC beliefs.

Hypothesis: Endorsement of EMSs will predict obsessive beliefs, after controlling for related traits (e.g., perfectionism).

METHOD

PARTICIPANTS

Participants (*N* = 187) were undergraduate students at a large, Southeastern university. They received course credit in exchange for their participation.

MEASURES

- Obsessive Beliefs (OBQ-44)
 - Responsibility/Threat (RT), Importance/Control of Thoughts (ICT), Perfectionism/Certainty (PC)
- Intolerance of Uncertainty (IUS-12)
- Self Efficacy (GSE)
- Perfectionism (FMPS)
 - Concern over mistakes, personal standards
- Maladaptive Schemas (YSQ)
 - Dependence/Incompetence, Unrelenting Standards

PROCEDURES

- Participants completed self-report measures online

DESCRIPTIVES

	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>Skew</i>	<i>Kurtosis</i>
GSE	31.39	5.12	-1.07	2.89
OBQ – Total	141.39	41.56	.35	.03
Responsibility/Threat	54.25	17.51	.23	-.20
Importance/Control of Thoughts	29.78	12.40	.90	.95
Perfectionism/Certainty	57.96	17.55	.19	-.31
IUS-12	28.60	9.19	.51	.06
FMPS - Mistakes	23.05	8.44	1.1	1.65
YSQ – Unrelenting Standards	17.95	5.08	.11	-.33
YSQ – Dependence/Incompetence	9.59	3.73	1.12	1.96

ZERO ORDER CORRELATIONS

	OBQ-RT	OBQ-ICT	OBQ-PC
GSE (TOTAL)	-.32*	-.35**	-.26**
IUS-12 (TOTAL)	.56**	.43**	.60**
FMPS – MISTAKES	.47**	.46**	.69**
YSQ - DEPENDENCE	.36**	.34**	.25**
YSQ - UNRELENTING STANDARDS	.38**	.26**	.58**

p* < .05, *p* < .01

REGRESSION ANALYSES

Predicting OBQ-RT	<i>R</i> ²	<i>β</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
Final Model	.41			<.001
Step 1: Tendencies/Beliefs				
Self Efficacy		-.21	-2.96	<.01
Intolerance of Uncertainty		.37	4.76	<.001
Perfectionism (Mistakes)		.08	.99	.33
Step 2: Schemas				
Dependence/Incompetence		.27	4.98	<.001
Unrelenting Standards		.02	-.15	.79

REGRESSION ANALYSES

Predicting OBQ-ICT	<i>R</i> ²	<i>β</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
Final Model	.29			<.001
Step 1: Tendencies/Beliefs				
Self Efficacy		-.22	-2.97	<.01
Intolerance of Uncertainty		.19	2.61	<.05
Perfectionism (Mistakes)		.18	2.89	<.05
Step 2: Schemas				
Dependence/Incompetence		.15	4.98	<.05
Unrelenting Standards		.05	.60	.55

Predicting OBQ-PC	<i>R</i> ²	<i>β</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
Final Model	.68			<.001
Step 1: Tendencies/Beliefs				
Self Efficacy		-.15	-2.96	<.01
Intolerance of Uncertainty		.28	4.88	<.001
Perfectionism (Mistakes)		.42	7.07	<.001
Step 2: Schemas				
Dependence/Incompetence		.40	8.32	<.001
Unrelenting Standards		-.20	-3.68	<.001

DISCUSSION

- *Our hypotheses were partially supported.*
 - “Dependence/Incompetence” played a unique role in predicting all three domains of obsessive beliefs (after controlling for perfectionism, self-efficacy, and IU).
 - “Unrelenting Standards” only played a role in predicting perfectionism/certainty beliefs.
- *Limitations*
 - Collecting data from a non-clinical sample at a single time point precludes conclusions about causality and change over time.
- *Future directions*
 - Future studies should employ a longitudinal design (in a treatment seeking sample) to better understand how EMSs may mediate/predict OC symptom change above and beyond constructs such as self efficacy, perfectionism, and IU.

REFERENCES

Wilhelm, S., Berman, N. C., Keshaviah, A., Schwartz, R. A., & Steketee, G. (2015). Mechanisms of change in cognitive therapy for obsessive compulsive disorder: Role of maladaptive beliefs and schemas. *Behaviour Research and Therapy*, 65, 5-10.

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