



Psychometric evaluation of a Farsi translation of the Big Three Perfectionism Scale☆



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ABSTRACT

Perfectionism as a personality trait has a multidimensional nature. Providing a new multidimensional measure of perfectionism, Smith, Saklofske, Stoeber, and Sherry (2016) developed the Big Three Perfectionism Scale (BTPS). The BTPS has shown very good psychometric properties, yet has not been subjected to psychometric analyses across cultures. The present research aimed to translate and validate the BTPS in Iran. The present investigation examined the factor structure of the BTPS using exploratory factor analyses as well as its convergent validity and facet- and factor-level reliability coefficients in Study 1 (275 university students). The structure and the higher-order models of the BTPS using confirmatory factor analyses were examined in Study 2 (298 community adults). Evidence of the convergent validity in a community sample was also replicated in Study 2. Overall, the current findings provided support for the psychometric properties of the Farsi translation of the BTPS in Iranian population. Consequently, this newly developed measure may be used in clinical and research settings in Iran.

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1. Introduction

Psychological research on perfectionism has burgeoned in the past two decades. There have been a relatively large number of empirical studies providing insight into the nature of perfectionism. Generally, perfectionism may be described as setting and striving for excessively high and often unrealistic standards, accompanied by frequent thoughts focused on attainment of these standards and overly critical self-evaluation (Frost, Marten, Lahart, & Rosenblate, 1990). Although clinical psychologists mainly consider perfectionism as a personality trait associated with mental health problems and poor social outcomes, empirical research suggests that perfectionism can be considered a multidimensional disposition that has both adaptive and maladaptive aspects. In order to fully understand the multidimensional nature of perfectionism, it is, indeed, crucial to examine how different dimensions of perfectionism are related to social outcomes and behavior. It is equally important to examine how these dimensions are linked with stable personality characteristics. Moreover, it is of importance to understand how dimensions of perfectionism fit within broader frameworks in personality psychology (see Hill, McIntire, & Bacharach, 1997; Marcus & Zeigler-Hill, 2015; Stoeber, Otto, & Dalbert, 2009; Ulu & Tezer, 2010).

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Researchers have shown increasing interest in identifying the higher-order dimensions underlying perfectionism. Research suggests that two higher-order factors underlie lower-order perfectionism facets, that is, personal standards perfectionism and evaluative concerns perfectionism (Dunkley, Blankstein, Masheb, & Grilo, 2006; Sherry, Gaultreau, Mushquash, Sherry, & Allen, 2014). The first higher-order factor (personal standards) consists of a set of traits conceptually encompassing the inclination to demand perfection of oneself (self-oriented perfectionism; Hewitt & Flett, 1991) and the tendency to hold unrealistically high expectations of oneself (personal standards; Frost et al., 1990). The second higher-order factor (evaluative concerns) consists of a set of traits conceptually encompassing the propensity to perceive other individuals as demanding perfection of the individual (socially prescribed perfectionism; Hewitt & Flett, 1991), have unrealistic negative reactions to perceived failures and mistakes (concerns over mistakes; Frost et al., 1990), and doubts about abilities in performing different tasks (doubts about actions; Frost et al., 1990).

The above-mentioned dimensions of perfectionism are usually assessed using the two widely used measures of multidimensional perfectionism: the Frost Multidimensional Perfectionism Scale (FMPS; Frost et al., 1990) and Hewitt-Flett Multidimensional Perfectionism Scale (HF-MPS; Hewitt & Flett, 1991). Many researchers combine different subscales of these measures depending on their research questions. This approach has been adopted by many researchers in personality and individual differences research; however, personality psychologists have begun to develop new measures in accordance with the most

recent conceptualizations of multidimensional perfectionism in various contexts (e.g., [Matte & Lafontaine, 2012](#); [Stoeber, 2016](#); [Yang & Stoeber, 2012](#)).

Multidimensional perfectionism is an important individual difference construct as it is associated with important life outcomes and some pathological conditions such as eating disorders, depression, and suicide ([Chen, Hewitt, & Flett, 2017](#); [Smith, Saklofske, Yan, & Sherry, 2017](#); [Smith et al., 2017](#)). Adequate psychometric assessment of multidimensional perfectionism according to recent advances in absolute importance ([Flett & Hewitt, 2016](#)). Many researchers have begun to develop and validate perfectionism scales across cultures (e.g., [Wang, Permyakova, & Sheveleva, 2016](#)). Iran is one of the cultural settings experiencing a rapid increase in this line of work. The Farsi adaptations of FMPS and HF-MPS have been used for some years, resulting in a well-developed line of research in Iranian context. However, the mentioned advances in conceptualizations of multidimensional perfectionism have not been reflected in Iranian research on perfectionism. Therefore, it is important to adapt the most up-to-date measures of multidimensional perfectionism and incorporate them in future studies.

[Smith, Saklofske, Stoeber, and Sherry \(2016\)](#) recently identified 10 facets of perfectionism (i.e., self-oriented perfectionism [5 items], self-worth contingencies [5 items], concern over mistakes [5 items], doubts about actions [5 items], self-criticism [4 items], socially prescribed perfectionism [4 items], other-oriented perfectionism [5 items], hypercriticism [4 items], entitlement [4 items], and grandiosity [4 items]) and categorized these facets into three higher-order dimensions of perfectionism (i.e., rigid perfectionism, self-critical perfectionism, and narcissistic perfectionism) using a factor analytic approach. These authors developed the Big Three Perfectionism Scale (BTPS; [Smith et al., 2016](#)), with 45 items selected from a larger item pool generated by the authors. Across three samples of university students and the general population, [Smith et al. \(2016\)](#) evaluated the psychometric properties of the BTPS. The data supported the psychometric properties of the BTPS ([Smith et al., 2016](#)). Specifically, exploratory and confirmatory factor analyses provided robust evidence for the higher-order three-factor model underlying the 45 BTPS items. Associations with established multidimensional measures of perfectionism and the Five-Factor Model of personality (FFM; see [Costa & McCrae, 2008](#)) provided evidence for the convergent validity for the BTPS. In addition, facet-level and factor-level reliability coefficients of the scale were very high. In the lower-order facets, alpha coefficients ranged between 0.70 and 0.90 and in the global factors, the alpha coefficients ranged between 0.92 and 0.96. The BTPS may be considered the most recent multidimensional measure of perfectionism in the literature.

The BTPS's first higher-order factor has been labeled "rigid perfectionism". Although this label was inspired by the subscale of the same label from the Personality Inventory for the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders-5 (PID-5; [American Psychiatric Association, 2013](#); [Krueger, Derringer, Markon, Watson, & Skodol, 2013](#); also see [Stoeber, 2014](#)), this factor's corresponding items were specifically composed to capture the rigid insistence that one's own performance must be flawless, perfect, and without failures ([Smith et al., 2016](#)). Rigid perfectionism is composed of two lower-order facets: self-oriented perfectionism and self-worth contingencies. The self-oriented perfectionism (SOP) facet refers to the belief that striving for perfection and being flawless are important ([Stoeber & Childs, 2010](#)). The self-worth contingencies (SWC) facet refers to the propensity to base self-worth on unrealistically high standards which are usually very hard to achieve ([DiBartolo, Frost, Chang, LaSota, & Grills, 2004](#)).

The BTPS's second global factor has been labeled "self-critical perfectionism". [Smith et al. \(2016\)](#) operationalized self-critical perfectionism following the model proposed by [Dunkley, Zuroff, and Blankstein \(2003\)](#) in which self-critical perfectionism consists of four lower-order facets: concern over mistakes, doubts about actions, self-criticism, and socially prescribed perfectionism. The self-critical perfectionism dimension in the BTPS exactly consists of these facets. The concern over

mistakes (COM) facet is the propensity to have overly negative reactions to perceived mistakes and failures ([Frost et al., 1990](#)). The lower-order facet of doubts about actions (DAA) indicates repetitive uncertainties about performance ([Frost et al., 1990](#)). The self-criticism (SC) facet refers to the tendency to engage in unrealistic self-critical behaviors when performance is not perceived as perfect ([Dunkley et al., 2003](#)). The socially prescribed perfectionism (SPP) facet refers to one's inclination to subjectively perceive others as demanding perfection ([Hewitt & Flett, 1991](#)).

The third BTPS global factor has been labeled "narcissistic perfectionism". Narcissistic perfectionism was operationalized following [Nealis, Sherry, Sherry, Stewart, and Macneil's \(2015\)](#) model and consists of four lower-order facets: other-oriented perfectionism, hypercriticism, entitlement, and grandiosity. The other-oriented perfectionism (OOP) facet refers to the tendency to hold unrealistic expectations for others ([Hewitt & Flett, 1991](#)). The Hypercriticism (HC) facet denotes harsh devaluation of others and their imperfect performance ([Nealis et al., 2015](#)). The entitlement (ENT) facet is the belief that one is entitled to perfect or special treatment ([Nealis et al., 2015](#)). The grandiosity (GRAN) facet refers to a sustained view of oneself as perfect or superior compared to others ([Nealis, Sherry, Lee-Baggley, Stewart, & Macneil, 2016](#); [Stoeber, Sherry, & Nealis, 2015](#)). The BTPS is the only self-report measure of narcissistic perfectionism. In addition, narcissistic perfectionism is distinguishable from currently available measures of narcissism (e.g., [Foster, McCain, Hibberts, Brunell, & Johnson, 2015](#)) given that the lower-order facets of other-oriented perfectionism, hypercriticism, entitlement, and grandiosity directly tap either perfection or conceptually related concepts.

The BTPS has shown very good psychometric properties as outlined above. Yet, it has not been subjected to psychometric analysis across cultures. Establishing the psychometric properties of measurement tools across cultures, in addition to methodologically robust translation, is an important line of research especially in personality and individual differences literature. Providing evidence for factorial validity of psychological measurement scales can also provide a basis for cross-cultural comparisons ([Milfont & Fischer, 2015](#)). The present research aimed to translate and validate the BTPS in Iran. We followed a similar method ([Smith et al., 2016](#)) to evaluate the psychometric properties of the BTPS in Iran. First, we translated the measure into Farsi using a standard back-translation technique. Then we administered the measure across two samples. Exploratory and Confirmatory factor analyses were used to evaluate the factorial validity and the homogeneity of the BTPS facets and higher-order dimensions. In addition, we examined convergent validity of the scale against two established measures of multidimensional perfectionism and the Five-Factor Model of personality in Iran.

2. Study 1

The first step in adapting a self-report measure into another culture is a methodologically robust translation. After receiving permission from the corresponding scale developer, the ethics approval was obtained from the first author's university. After the translation of the measure into Farsi, it was administered on a sample of university students in Tehran, Iran. In this study, we aimed to: (1) examine the factor structure of the BTPS using exploratory factor analyses, (2) examine the convergent validity of the BTPS, and (3) examine the facet- and factor-level reliability coefficients of the BTPS.

2.1. Method

2.1.1. Participants

We recruited a sample of 275 university students (140 men, 135 women) from the first author's university in Tehran, Iran. Age of the participants ranged between 18 and 29 ($M = 21.2$, $SD = 2.6$).

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