

## **Perfectionism and the impact of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation in daily life: A brief report**

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### **Abstract:**

Previous research indicates that socially prescribed perfectionism (SPP) and self-oriented perfectionism (SOP) are associated with extrinsic and intrinsic motivation, respectively. However, little is known about the impact of daily intrinsic and extrinsic motivated goals on affect in perfectionists. This daily diary study examined the extent to which perfectionism moderates the relationship between motivation (intrinsic and extrinsic) and affect (including self-conscious emotions). Participants ( $N = 132$ ) varying in levels of perfectionism completed 14 days of online surveys that included questions about pursuit of daily goals and affect. SOP did not predict the covariation of types of motivation and affect. SPP, by contrast, predicted the covariation of extrinsic motivation and guilt (and pride). Results suggest that for people high on SPP, pursuing extrinsic motivated goals is associated with higher levels of guilt and lower levels of pride. Future directions and implications are discussed.

**Keywords:** perfectionism | emotion | intrinsic motivation | extrinsic motivation | daily diary

### **Article:**

Perfectionism is conceptualized as a multidimensional personality construct (Hewitt & Flett, 1991). Two commonly examined dimensions of perfectionism are socially prescribed perfectionism (SPP), the perception that others have excessively high standards for oneself, and self-oriented perfectionism (SOP), holding excessively high personal standards (Hewitt & Flett, 1991). A key difference between these dimensions is the relation to types of goal motivation. According to Self-Determination Theory (SDT), the reasons why people pursue goals (i.e., goal motivation) range on a continuum from intrinsically motivated to varying degrees of extrinsically motivated (Deci & Ryan, 2000; Ryan & Deci, 2000). Intrinsically motivated goal pursuit is pursuing goals for personal pleasure or enjoyment (Ryan & Deci, 2000). Extrinsically motivated goal pursuit at the farthest end of the continuum is defined by pursuing goals that are introjected and valued by others (Deci & Ryan, 2000; Ryan & Deci, 2000). Research suggests that SPP is associated with higher extrinsic motivation and SOP is associated with higher intrinsic

motivation (Harvey et al., 2015; Miquelon, Vallerand, Grouzet, & Cardinal, 2005). Research on these dimensions of perfectionism and their relations to intrinsic and extrinsic motivation has focused primarily on stable motivational styles (Mills & Blankstein, 2000; Miquelon et al., 2005) characterizing perfectionists' general approach to work and academics. However, the extent to which these trait-like motivational tendencies are reflected in the daily experiences of goal pursuit among perfectionists is unknown.

The daily pursuit of intrinsically and extrinsically motivated goals has different emotional consequences. People experience higher levels of well-being, higher daily positive affect, and lower daily negative affect when they pursue intrinsically motivated goals (Perunovic, Heller, Ross, & Komar, 2011; Sheldon, Ryan, & Reis, 1996). Pursuing extrinsically motivated goals, in contrast, is associated with higher daily negative affect (Perunovic et al., 2011). Of note, these studies have relied on broad dimensions of affect, such as positive and negative affect scales. Studies have not examined the specific impact on self-conscious emotions (e.g., pride and guilt), which may be uniquely important in the study of motivational processes because of their strong connection to the self-evaluation of goal progress.

Tracy and Robins's (2004) process model of self-conscious emotions posits that self-conscious emotions result from self-evaluative processes in which people evaluate the congruence of events with their self-representations and identity goals. According to the model, pride results from a congruence between the appraisal of a situation, self-representation, and identity goals (e.g., a student whose self-identity is defined in part by being a successful student receives a good grade on an exam). Guilt and shame, however, result from an incongruence between appraisals of an event, self-representation, and identity goals (e.g., the same student receives a poor grade on an exam). Variations in self-conscious emotions related to different motivational styles may reflect an incongruence in goal pursuit and identity goals. For example, people may experience pride when pursuing intrinsically motivated goals, which are likely more personally relevant, than when pursuing extrinsically motivated goals. Moreover, pursuing extrinsically motivated goals, which are likely less personally relevant, may be associated with guilt. For example, a student may pursue a college degree not because they want to, but because of their parent's expectations. Because that goal is being pursued primarily to meet someone else's needs, the goal is not personally fulfilling and ambivalence about it can result in feelings of guilt, especially if personally valued goals are ignored. Taken together, self-conscious emotions (as compared to broad measures of positive and negative affect) may more closely reflect self-evaluations of progress towards different types of motivation, such as intrinsically or extrinsically motivated goals.

In addition to goal pursuit, self-conscious emotions have unique associations with different dimensions of perfectionism. Research suggests that SOP and other similar constructs involving high personal standards are associated with pride (Curran & Hill, 2018; Stoeber, Kempe, & Keogh, 2008). SPP is associated with shame and guilt (Curran & Hill, 2018; Stoeber et al., 2008). Of note, the majority of the studies on perfectionism and self-conscious emotions have focused on reactions to success or failure in contrived lab tasks (Curran & Hill, 2018; Stoeber et al., 2008) and have not measured self-conscious emotions in daily life. Although studies have not looked specifically at daily self-conscious emotions, research on perfectionism and daily general affect suggests that SPP, and other forms of maladaptive perfectionism (e.g., self-critical

perfectionism), are associated with lower daily positive affect and higher daily negative affect (Dunkley, Berg, & Zuroff, 2012; Dunkley, Zuroff, & Blankstein, 2003; Mushquash & Sherry, 2012; Prud'homme et al., 2017). Findings regarding forms of perfectionism involving personal standards, however, have been inconsistent. Some studies have found that higher personal standards are weakly to moderately associated with higher negative affect (Dunkley et al., 2003; Prud'homme et al., 2017; Saboonchi & Lundh, 2003; Stoeber & Corr, 2015) and lower positive affect (Saboonchi & Lundh, 2003), while others find no significant relationship with affect (Dunkley et al., 2012; Mushquash & Sherry, 2012; Stoeber & Corr, 2015). Given the important connection between self-evaluation and self-conscious emotions, studies that aim to understand the daily experiences of people with perfectionism, particularly in relation to goal pursuit (which has obvious implications for self-evaluation), should include not only general measures of positive and negative affect but also items assessing self-conscious emotions.

The purpose of the present study was to examine the relations among perfectionism, intrinsically and extrinsically motivated goals, and daily general and self-conscious affect using a daily diary approach. First, we made several predictions primarily involving replications of previous findings. It was hypothesized that higher SPP would be associated with higher negative emotions and lower positive emotions. SOP, in contrast, has not consistently been associated with daily affect (findings have been mixed, as discussed above); therefore, there were no specific hypotheses regarding the association between SOP and daily emotions. With regard to the covariation of daily motivation and emotion, we expected to replicate previous findings regarding general affect, but our study provides novel data on self-conscious emotions as well. It was expected that higher levels of positive emotions, including pride, and lower levels of negative emotions, including guilt, would be associated with the pursuit of goals that are more intrinsically motivated (Perunovic et al., 2011). In contrast, we expected that higher levels of daily negative emotions, including guilt, and lower levels of positive emotion, including pride, would be associated with the pursuit of goals that are more extrinsically motivated. Based on previous findings that SPP and SOP are associated with trait-like extrinsic and intrinsic motivation, respectively (Miquelon et al., 2005), it was hypothesized that SPP and SOP would be associated with the pursuit of daily goals that are more extrinsically and intrinsically motivated, respectively.

To our knowledge, no previous study has examined perfectionism, motivation, and emotion together using a daily diary design. Therefore, we explored whether the covariation of type of motivation (intrinsic/extrinsic) and emotion was moderated by perfectionism (SPP and SOP). We expected that SPP and SOP would moderate the covariation due to the previously established relation between SPP and SOP and extrinsic and intrinsic motivation, respectively. Specifically, we expected that people with higher levels of SOP should experience a stronger association between intrinsic motivation and positive emotion (including pride), and lower levels of negative emotion (including guilt), on days when they are focused on intrinsically motivated goals. Likewise, based on established relationships between SPP and extrinsic motivation, and between extrinsic motivation and emotion, people with higher levels of SPP should experience higher levels of negative emotion (including guilt), and lower levels of positive emotion (including pride), on days when they are focused on extrinsically motivated goals.

## **Methods**

## *Participants*

Participants ( $N = 162$ ) were undergraduate students at a Southeastern University who received partial course credit for their participation in a daily diary study that lasted 14 days. Participants with fewer than 7 diary surveys were excluded from the analyses. Overall, the 131 participants that were included in analyses had a mean age of 18.91 years ( $SD = 1.72$ ) and were 78.6% female. Additionally, participants were 43.5% Caucasian, 31.3% African American, 12.2% Asian, 6.9% Hispanic, 3.1% American Indian/Alaskan Native, and 3.1% Middle Eastern/Arab. Sample size was based on convenience, however, it is comparable to the sample sizes in recent daily diary studies (Newman & Nezlek, 2019; Nezlek, Rusanowska, Holas, & Krejtz, 2017). Moreover, the sample size is comparable to a similar daily diary study that examined the effect of individual difference factors on intrinsic and extrinsic motivated goals in daily life (Perunovic et al., 2011).

## *Measures*

### Multidimensional Perfectionism Scale (MPS)

The MPS (Hewitt & Flett, 1991) is a self-report scale that measures three trait dimensions of perfectionism: socially prescribed perfectionism (SPP), self-oriented perfectionism (SOP), and other-oriented perfectionism (OOP). The 45 items are rated on a 7-point Likert scale (1 = *strongly disagree* to 7 = *strongly agree*). Only the SOP and SPP scales were used in the analyses. The subscales demonstrated good internal consistency (SOP Cronbach's  $\alpha = .87$ ; SPP  $\alpha = .82$ ).

### Daily Diary Items

Daily affect was measured with items from the Positive and Negative Affect Schedule-X (PANAS-X; Watson & Clark, 1994). From the PANAS-X, we used the Sadness (5 items), Guilt (6 items), and Jovial (8 items) subscales, which previously have had good internal consistency (Watson & Clark, 1994). Based on our interest in self-conscious emotions, we also added a single item to assess pride. Participants responded on a scale from 0 = *not at all* to 6 = *extremely* to indicate how much they felt each specific emotion in the moment. The order of the emotion items was randomized each day.

Participants were asked to provide an important personal goal they focused on the most that day. The items used to assess reasons for goal pursuit were based on previous measures of the reasons for pursuing goals that range from intrinsic to extrinsic (Sheldon & Elliot, 1999; Sheldon & Kasser, 1995), and were similar to items used in a previous diary study (Perunovic et al., 2011). Two items measured motivation: "I am pursuing this goal because of the fun and enjoyment it provides me" (intrinsic motivation) and "I am pursuing this goal because somebody else wants me to, or because the situation demands it" (extrinsic motivation), each rated from 0 = *not at all* to 6 = *extremely*.

## *Procedure*

Participants completed the MPS in the lab and received instructions for the daily surveys. The daily surveys were emailed to participants once per day for 14 consecutive days via a Qualtrics (<https://www.qualtrics.com>) link that remained open only between 5 pm and 12 am. The completed surveys were also time and date stamped to ensure they were completed during the specified day and time period. The mean number of completed surveys per participant was 11.73 (78%).

### Data Analytic Strategy

Multilevel modeling was used to analyze the data (Level 1: daily diary items; Level 2: SPP and SOP; Bolger & Laurenceau, 2013). We centered the Level 2 variables at the sample's grand mean and the Level 1 variables at each person's own mean (i.e., group-mean centering). The models were estimated with Mplus 7 using maximum likelihood with robust standard errors. Both SOP and SPP were included in the models. To examine cross-level interactions, the moderating role of Level 2 variables (SOP and SPP) within a Level 1 relationship (e.g., the slope between intrinsic motivation and PANAS-X subscale score) was tested by regressing the Level 1 slope on SOP and SPP. Due to the complexity and the inconsistency in methods to calculate effect sizes for multilevel models in the literature, effect sizes are not reported; however, 95% Confidence Intervals (CI's) are reported in Table 1 for the multilevel regression analyses.

**Table 1.** Self-oriented perfectionism and socially prescribed perfectionism moderating the slope of daily emotion and goal motivation

Diary variables	SOP		SPP	
	<i>B</i> [95% CI]	<i>p</i>	<i>B</i> [95% CI]	<i>p</i>
Sadness	<b>-0.2 [-.41, -.00]</b>	<b>.05</b>	<b>0.24 [.05, .43]</b>	<b>.01</b>
Guilt	-0.14 [-.32, .03]	.10	<b>0.21 [.03, .39]</b>	<b>.02</b>
Jovial	0.16 [-.12, .44]	.27	-0.09 [-.37, .18]	.51
Pride	0.31 [-.02, .64]	.07	-0.05 [-.39, .30]	.80
Intrinsic Motivation	0.27 [-.02, .57]	.07	-0.14 [-.45, 0.16]	.36
Sadness × Intrinsic	0.01 [-.02, .03]	.55	-0.01 [-.04, .02]	.55
Guilt × Intrinsic	-0.01 [-.04, .02]	.66	0.02 [-.02, -.05]	.35
Jovial × Intrinsic	-0.03 [-.08, .02]	.19	-0.01 [-0.6, .03]	.55
Pride × Intrinsic	-0.02 [-.08, .04]	.54	-0.02 [-.07, .03]	.52
Extrinsic Motivation	-0.22 [-.53, .09]	.17	0.29 [-.04, .61]	.09
Sadness × Extrinsic	0.00 [-.04, .04]	.99	0.01 [-.02, .04]	.58
Guilt × Extrinsic	-0.02 [-0.5, .01]	.24	<b>0.03 [.00, .05]</b>	<b>.04</b>
Jovial × Extrinsic	0.03 [-.04, .10]	.42	-0.04 [-.09, .01]	.11
Pride × Extrinsic	0.03, [-.04, .10]	.36	<b>-0.06 [-.11, -.00]</b>	.045

Note. CI = Confidence Interval for *B*; SOP = Self-Oriented Perfectionism; SPP = Socially Prescribed Perfectionism. *N* = 127 participants (Level 2) with 1,488 observations (Level 1). SOP and SPP are standardized. Values in bold represent findings with a *p*-value of .05 or less.

The Level 1 and Level 2 models are below:

$$\text{Level 1: } Y_{ij} = \beta_{0j} + \beta_{1j}(\text{Intrinsic goals}) + \beta_{2j}(\text{Extrinsic goals}) + r_{ij}$$

$$\text{Level 2: } \beta_{0j} = \gamma_{00} + \gamma_{01}(\text{SPP})_j + \gamma_{02}(\text{SOP})_j + u_{0j}$$

$$\beta_{1j} = \gamma_{10} + \gamma_{11}(\text{SPP})_j + \gamma_{12}(\text{SOP})_j + u_{1j}$$

## Results

The sample had a mean score of 66.53 on SOP ( $SD = 16.21$ ) and 57.29 on SPP ( $SD = 13.83$ ). See Table 2 for the means, standard deviations, zero-order correlations, and intraclass correlations (ICCs) for all daily diary data. The ICCs suggested that multilevel models are appropriate for the data.

**Table 2.** Means, standard deviations, intraclass correlations, and correlations for daily diary variables

Diary variables	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	ICC	1	2	3	4	5	6
1. PANAS Jovial	3.18	1.56	0.54	—					
2. PANAS Sad	1.66	1.05	0.54	-.31	—				
3. PANAS Guilt	1.50	0.95	0.56	-.18	.56	—			
4. Proud	2.80	1.81	0.53	.54	-.16	-.13	—		
5. Intrinsic goal	3.60	2.20	0.29	.18	-.05	-.07	.07	—	
6. Extrinsic goal	3.76	2.17	0.37	-.04	.02	.04	-.02	-.22	—

Note. ICC = Intraclass Correlation; PANAS = Positive and Negative Affect Schedule-X.

### *Perfectionism and Daily Emotions*

The first set of analyses examined the main effects of SPP and SOP on the daily emotions, which were measured with the Sadness, Guilt, and Jovial PANAS subscales and a single item assessing pride. Consistent with our hypotheses, SPP predicted daily negative affect (Sadness and Guilt scores; see Table 1) but not daily positive affect or pride. SOP negatively predicted Sadness scores and there was a nonsignificant trend of SOP on pride [ $B = 0.31$ ,  $F(6, 131) = 1.84$ ,  $p = 0.07$ ]. SOP did not predict scores on Jovial or Guilt.

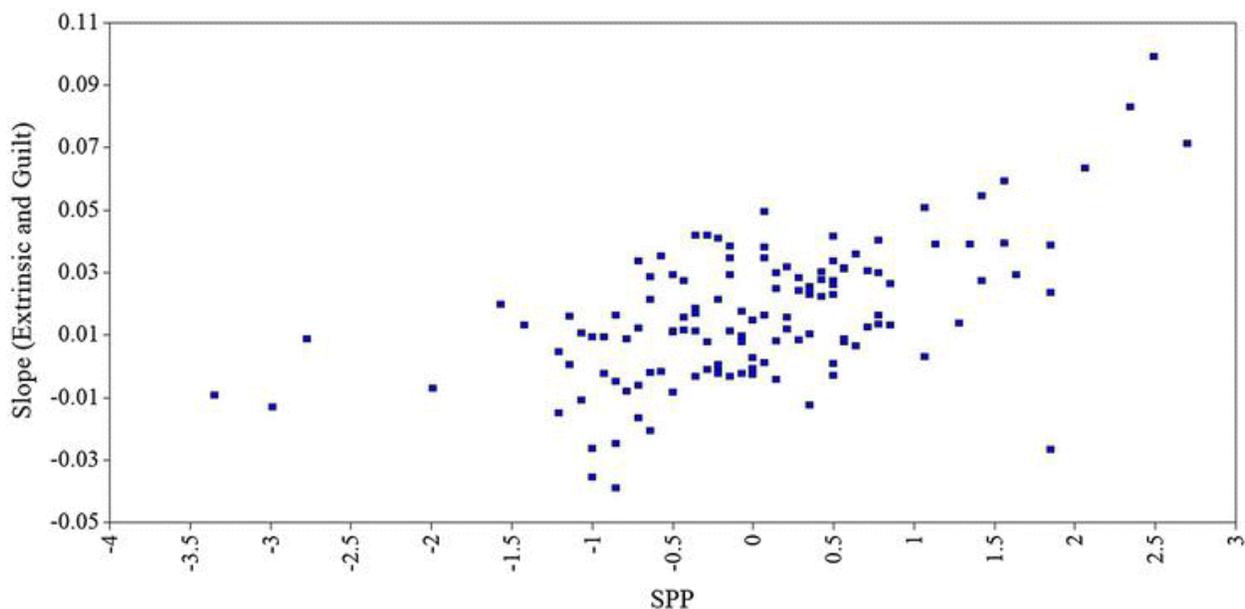
### *Goal Motivation and Emotion*

The next set of analyses examined the within-subject (Level 1) covariation between daily goal motivation (intrinsic or extrinsic) and affect. As expected, when people pursued intrinsically motivated goals they had higher positive affect [Jovial:  $B = .10$ ,  $F(6, 131) = 5.50$ ,  $p < .00$ ; Pride:  $B = 0.04$ ,  $F(6, 131) = 1.88$ ,  $p = .06$  (nonsignificant trend)] and lower negative affect [Sadness:  $B = -0.02$ ,  $F(6, 131) = -2.05$ ,  $p = .04$ ; Guilt:  $B = -0.02$ ,  $F(6, 131) = -2.62$ ,  $p < .01$ ]. However, extrinsic motivation was not associated with daily affect [Jovial:  $B = -0.03$ ,  $F(6, 131) = -1.20$ ,  $p = .23$ ; Sadness:  $B = 0.00$ ,  $F(6, 131) = 0.76$ ,  $p = .45$ ; Guilt:  $B = 0.02$ ,  $F(6, 131) = 1.52$ ,  $p = .13$ ; Pride:  $B = -0.02$ ,  $F(6, 131) = -0.72$ ,  $p = .49$ ].

### *Perfectionism and Goal Motivation*

To examine whether individual differences in perfectionism predicted daily goal motivation, measures of daily intrinsic and extrinsic goal motivation were regressed on SPP and SOP. SPP did not predict intrinsic goal motivation and there was a nonsignificant trend for SPP on extrinsic motivation [ $B = 0.29$ ,  $F(3, 127) = 1.71$ ,  $p = .09$ ; see Table 1]. SOP did not predict extrinsic motivation; however, there was a nonsignificant trend of SOP predicting intrinsic motivation [ $B = 0.27$ ,  $F(3, 127) = 1.88$ ,  $p = .07$ ].

We also examined whether the strength of the relationship between goal motivation (intrinsic and extrinsic) and emotion was predicted by individual differences in SOP and SPP. Individual models were run for each type of goal motivation. SOP did not predict the slope of goal motivation and emotion (see Table 1). However, as hypothesized, SPP positively predicted the slope of extrinsic motivation and Guilt (but not Sadness) and negatively predicted the slope of extrinsic motivation and pride (but not Jovial; see Table 1). In other words, as SPP levels increased, extrinsic goal motivation was *more* strongly associated with feeling guilty (see Figure 1) and *less* strongly associated with feeling proud. SPP did not predict the slope of daily intrinsic goal motivation and emotion.



**Figure 1.** Cross-level interaction showing the relationship between SPP and the slope of daily PANAS Guilt and extrinsic motivation.

## Discussion

The aim of the current study was to examine whether SPP and SOP predicted daily emotion, the pursuit of daily intrinsically or extrinsically motivated goals, and to what extent goal pursuit was associated with measures of positive and negative affect, including self-conscious emotions. This study is the first to examine the impact of daily intrinsic and extrinsic motivation on affect, including pride and guilt, in perfectionists. The findings from the current study partially supported our hypotheses.

SPP predicted daily ratings of negative affect (sadness and guilt); this finding is consistent with numerous studies showing that SPP and other forms of maladaptive perfectionism consistently predict daily negative emotion (Dunkley et al., 2003, 2012; Mushquash & Sherry, 2012; Prud'homme et al., 2017). Although we did not have specific hypotheses regarding SOP and daily emotion (because previous findings have been quite inconsistent), we found that SOP was associated with lower daily sadness and higher pride (nonsignificant trend) but was unrelated to guilt or to positive affect. This finding conflicts with several previous studies

(Dunkley et al., 2003, 2012; Dunkley, Ma, Lee, Preacher, & Zuroff, 2014; Harvey et al., 2015). SOP has been conceptualized as a form of perfectionism with both adaptive and maladaptive components (Dunkley, Solomon-Krakus & Moroz, 2016), which may explain some of these inconsistencies. Researchers have also pointed to the important role of contextual factors, such as coping styles (Dunkley & Blankstein, 2000), and whether maladaptive perfectionism was included as a covariate (Stoeber & Otto, 2006).

Similar to previous daily diary studies examining the association between intrinsic goal motivation and emotion (Perunovic et al., 2011; Sheldon et al., 1996) as well as studies examining motivational tendencies and emotion (Kasser & Ryan, 2001), we found that intrinsic goal motivation was associated with higher positive affect and pride and lower negative affect and guilt. However, extrinsic motivation was not associated with daily emotion in our sample. We note that Perunovic et al.'s (2011) study included a cultural component, and the results for their Asian-identifying (but not Western-identifying) group also showed no relation between extrinsic motivation and emotion. Studies that have used trait-like measures of motivation and emotion, rather than daily diary methodology, have found that extrinsic motivation, compared to intrinsic, is less strongly associated with emotional consequences (Kasser & Ryan, 2001; Burton, Lydon, D'Alessandro, & Koetsner, 2006). In general, results across studies seem to suggest that intrinsic motivational tendencies as well as intrinsic goal motivation in daily life are consistently associated with higher positive and lower negative affect, including self-conscious emotions; the relationship between extrinsic motivation and emotion appears to be weaker and less stable.

Previous work using trait-like measures of motivation has suggested that SPP and SOP are associated with extrinsic and intrinsic motivation, respectively (Harvey et al., 2015; Miquelon et al., 2005). An important question is whether these trait-like associations also can be observed on a daily level, as people go about pursuing personal goals in their everyday lives. Our results revealed only nonsignificant trends in the expected directions, with SPP predicting daily extrinsic goal motivation and SOP predicting daily intrinsic goal motivation. This is the first study to our knowledge to examine perfectionism in relation to goal motivation assessed daily, and our results suggest that this relation is quite weak relative to that found with measures of motivational tendencies. Future studies using experience sampling or diary approaches are clearly warranted to further examine these associations.

In partial support of our predictions, we found that SPP predicted the covariation of extrinsic motivation and emotion, but only for self-conscious emotions. Specifically, for people high on SPP, the pursuit of extrinsically motivated goals was more closely tied to self-conscious emotions (i.e., higher levels of guilt and lower levels of pride, although the latter was only at the trend level). The findings from this study suggest that self-conscious emotions are distinct from general measures of positive and negative affect (Tracy & Robins, 2004) in their relations to goal pursuit. Including self-conscious emotions in research on perfectionism may be especially important because self-evaluation has been identified as a core process that maintains perfectionism (Shafran, Cooper, & Fairburn, 2002). Future studies on intrinsic and extrinsic motivation should include measures of self-conscious emotions to replicate these findings. In addition, given that pride was measured using only a single item in this study, the use of psychometrically sound measures of these emotional states may yield more reliable results.

Interestingly, SOP did not predict the covariation of goal motivation and emotion. Intrinsic motivation is associated with higher well-being and other positive outcomes (see Fujita & MacGregor, 2012 for a review). However, we also know that goal progress is an important determinant of emotional outcomes. Thus, one possible explanation for our finding is that we did not account for goal progress in the daily diary measures. People with perfectionistic personal strivings (i.e., high in SOP) may very well be pursuing intrinsically motivated goals but may fail to accurately evaluate their own progress, thereby resulting in a “missed opportunity” for recognizing progress and feeling good or proud.

Several limitations of the current study should be noted. First, single-item ratings were used for intrinsic motivation, extrinsic motivation, and pride each day. However, the use of single face-valid items is common practice in experience sampling methodology (ESM) studies and these items are often sufficient for assessing unidimensional constructs (Fisher & To, 2012), such as pride, as compared to the multidimensional positive affect. A second notable limitation is that the longer time frame between assessments in a daily diary design does not allow for fine-grained examinations of cause and effect. Therefore, we were only able to examine the covariation of daily variables (emotion and motivation), but we cannot determine whether goal pursuit is leading to emotional outcomes.

In conclusion, the current study was the first to our knowledge to examine how SPP and SOP impact the association between types of goal motivation (intrinsic/extrinsic) and emotions, including self-conscious emotions, in daily life. The findings suggest that to the extent that people high on SPP pursued daily extrinsically motivated goals, they experienced higher levels of guilt and lower levels of pride. This finding was unique to self-conscious emotions and highlights the importance of measuring self-conscious emotions when examining the pursuit of intrinsically and extrinsically motivated goals and perfectionism. As this was the first study to examine daily measures of self-conscious emotions and goal motivation (intrinsic/extrinsic), future studies are needed to corroborate our findings.

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