

How Does Perfectionism Affect Employees' Creativity

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ABSTRACT

Perfectionism is the result of employees, supervisors, and parents wanting the best from those they are responsible for. Perfectionism is a common psychological phenomenon, but how does this psychological trait come about? What impact does it have on employees' creativity? In the current working environment, psychological perfectionism tends to be directly introduced into the "enterprise environment", which is regarded as a kind of "stability" mentality that employees have developed, and its effectiveness and mechanism are explored. Perfectionism not only manifests in the workplace, but also affects the entire life experience. According to social cognitive theory, the negative mechanism is guided by perfectionism, and expectations are continuously developed and reinforced. But when it comes to creativity, is this expectation beneficial to the subjects? Expectations of perfection by parents and supervisors may contribute to their fear of failure, which may affect their later creativity. It may also have a positive impact, stimulating the vitality and creativity of employees. This paper will explain the emergence of perfectionism and its influence on individual creativity through social cognitive theory.

KEYWORDS

Perfectionism; Creativity; Social Cognitive Theory

1. INTRODUCTION

"Perfectionism" is not a simple psychological concept, but a generalization of a group of "family-like" psychological phenomena, representing a certain type of tendencies and preferences in human behavior, which is essentially a composite of multiple psychological processes. In the 50s of the 20th century, the Austrian psychologist Adler first incorporated perfectionism into the research category of the individual psychology school. Adler believes that the pursuit of perfection is the internal driving force that prompts human beings to seek self-development, breakthrough and transcendence, emphasizing the single adaptive characteristic of the positive manifestation of perfectionism. And the German psychoanalyst Homey. Perfectionism is a type of neurotic. In the eighties and nineties of the 20th century, perfectionism, a personality trait closely related to the mental health and creativity of individuals, gradually entered the field of psychology as a field of study.

At present, the theory of perfectionism is mainly carried out on the psychological level, and there is a lack of relevant theoretical and empirical analysis of perfectionism in the work environment. The few studies related to perfectionism in the work environment have shown that the degree of perfectionism produces different results. Many people believe that there is a significant positive correlation between "perfection" and "creativity", which can stimulate people's creativity; other experts have suggested that "perfectionism" weakens corporate creativity by reducing it. Under this background, this paper studies the effect of perfectionism on employees' innovation ability, clarifies

its mechanism and application environment, and puts forward some useful suggestions for enterprises to better play its innovation role.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Lin Shenyang (2022) pointed out that the root of "perfection" is the huge burden of psychological expectations from family members and superiors, which makes people feel afraid, thus limiting the creativity of employees, and proving its assumptions from all angles. Based on high-level analysis, Wang Qian (2022) examined the role of CEO's self-directed perfectionism in the company's environment, and the results showed that CEO's individual-directed perfectionism could improve the company's environmental creativity, and the promotion effect would be affected by internal and external environmental factors. Liu Wenxing et al. (2021) systematically sorted out the concept of perfectionism. Through the empirical analysis of relevant workers at home and abroad, this paper summarizes the role of work, personal, career, family and other aspects of work and work, and finds that the current domestic research on perfectionism in work is still in the initial stage, mainly horizontal, lack of discussion on the internal mechanism of enterprises. Xie Xiaolong (2021) discussed the influence of job demand and job stress on job addiction through the analysis of factors such as job demand and job stress, and proved that work addiction is closely related to perfectionism. From the perspective of stress-strain, Yu Weina (2021) studied the dual roles and application environments of perfect personality on apprentices' innovation ability in mentoring relationships. Li Dan (2021) pointed out that as the most intuitive practitioners of enterprises, the values and action modes of "perfect" leaders will play a great role in their cultivation. Pang Jiantao (2016) pointed out that enterprises' creative activities are restricted not only by external conditions, but also by individual subjective factors.

3. ANALYSIS OF RELATED CONCEPTS

3.1. Perfectionism

Perfectionism is a personality trait characterized by striving for perfection and setting high standards. It is caused by being overly critical of one's own actions and fearing negative comments from others. The main features include: setting high standards; Fear of possible failure and imperfection; Critical evaluation; it's hard to keep your self-discipline.

Starting with personality psychology, perfectionism was considered a mental illness that arose in order to be cured. Many scholars believe that high-level people have more negative emotions and more self-violence. In the past hundred years of research, the meaning of perfectionism has become more and more abundant and more and more understood by people. Empirical analysis has shown that a proactive attitude promotes high levels of performance and a positive work attitude because there is a greater propensity for performance. In the operating environment, some companies have gradually realized that the concept of "perfect" to cope with the high-quality market, so as to jump up and constantly improve their products, such as its high-quality service and the industry's "deep sea fishing" and so on. From theory and practice, it can be seen that to a certain extent, "perfection" will create positive effects for employees, teams or organizations.

Parker's summary of perfectionism is based on the analysis of a considerable number of people in real life, Parker took elementary school students as the object, analyzed their psychological conditions and personalities, and derived several cases of perfectionism on the basis of a sample size of more than 800. There are three in total, as follows:

The first, with a large majority of the total sample, more than forty percent, are called healthy perfectionists, who are the most tolerant of things in real life, and when something happens that is contrary to their wishes, they have a weaker psychological importance and allow their imperfections.

They do not procrastinate in making decisions, they have their own order of behavior, and they are the most tolerant of their parents' blame.

The second type is the non-perfectionists, who are more than 30 percent in total, who deal with things less tolerant of mistakes and are more efficient than healthy perfectionists, who are the most relaxed of the three perfectionists, and who have less to achieve in terms of what their parents want them to achieve.

The last type is the functional perfectionist, who is the strictest in the pursuit of perfection, who does not allow any displeasure in themselves, and is very efficient, so they are judged by the outside world and want to achieve the highest achievement.

Table 1. Perfectionism vs Optimist

Perfectionism	Optimist
Not Accepting Twists and Turns	Spiraling
Focusing on Results	Focusing on Results and Process
Afraid of Failure	Accepting Failure and Learning
Black and White	Being Flexible and Practical
Defensive	Accepting Criticism
Critical of Others	Appreciating others
Harsh	Tolerant

3.2. Creativity

Employee creativity is the generation of new and valuable ideas in the work, these ideas are critical to the survival and efficiency of the enterprise.

The creative activities of enterprises are restricted not only by external conditions but also by individual subjective factors. In many cases, creative action is a kind of positive action, which refers to the changes that people actively make to their current situation, including the social environment. Many scholars believe that the influence of enterprise's subjective initiative on innovation is mainly manifested in the following aspects: goals, organizational system, boundary support, employee innovation and so on.

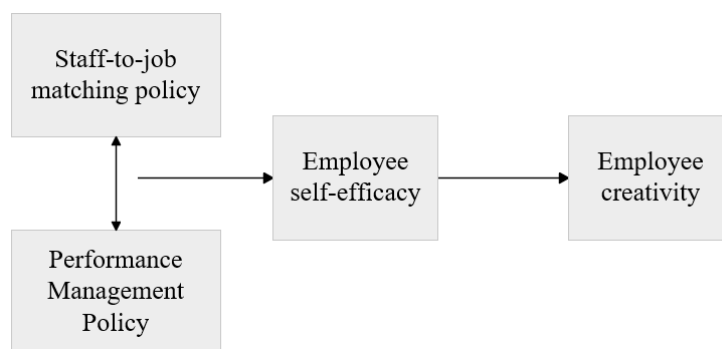


Figure 1. Sources of employee creativity

3.3. Social Cognitive Theory

Bandura, an American psychologist, incorporated cognitive factors into the traditional behaviorist personality theory in education theory, thus forming the social cognitive theory. This is a learning process used to illustrate society, and social theorists describe the individual as a person with active external activities and enhanced expectations, rather than a dependent individual. On this basis, the individual's expectation of behavioral reinforcement is greater than the reinforcement prior to the

action. In addition, he argued that reinforcement does not have any effect on an individual's knowledge, but rather filters the interpretation and bias of an individual's memory.

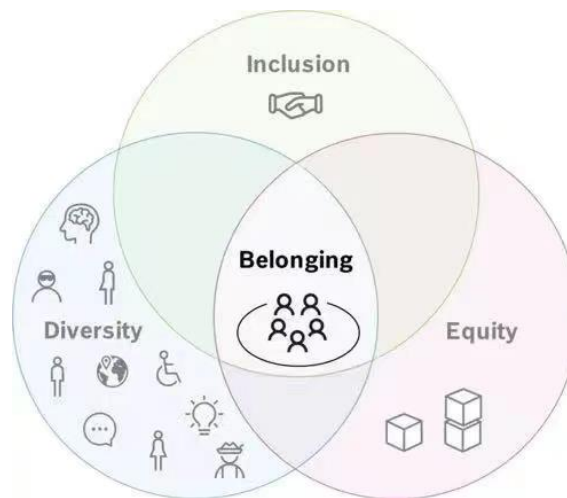


Figure 2. Cognitive explanation

4. THE INFLUENCE MECHANISM OF PERFECTIONISM ON CREATIVITY

4.1. Family Field

It turns out that "perfection" in the workplace is constrained by family influences that suppress the persistence of creativity, a result that is intrinsically linked to the "perfection" binary thinking, where many parents, for example, inculcate the judgmental belief that everything is worthless except "achievement." This logic of thinking makes workplace perfectionists habitually regard success as the purpose of work, and employees who can clearly separate the line between work and family can reduce the potential conflict between work and family, less potential influence from family, and can exert more creativity. Empirical studies have shown that suitability in the work environment can reduce work-family conflict. On the contrary, work that does not meet the requirements will produce more family conflicts, and the degree of impact will continue to deepen. However, in general, perfect employees are more likely than imperfect employees to have work-family conflicts and be more affected by their native families, which inhibits their creativity, no matter whether they adapt or not in work.

4.2. Field of Work

4.2.1. Enthusiasm of Employees

People who are perfect at work experience more work emotion. On the one hand, perfectionist organizations are better able to feel positive emotions at work. Especially those employees who actively seek perfection, they are able to positively approach their work, which can reduce their emotional drain. Workplace perfectionists, on the other hand, set unattainable tasks and refuse to accept setbacks, leading to stress and performance anxiety. This is especially true for "perfect" people who worry too much about failing, fearing that they will develop a sense of inferiority because of their mistakes. This fear continues to affect the daily work of these people, blurring the line between work and rest, making their emotional resilience worse and exhausting them mentally. So they tend to prefer easier, less creative jobs. In addition, according to the principle of characteristic activation, the personality of the perfectionist does not necessarily inspire the emotional performance of the perfectionist, but only in special circumstances can it inspire the "perfect" quality of the employee. After investigating abusive behavior, some scholars believe that evaluative performance evaluation is a kind of environmental cue, which can stimulate the expression of negative emotions towards

perfectionists, and thus lead to their insults to employees. In addition to the working environment and working style, daily job duties, job characteristics, and social activities can also be used as situational cues. On the basis of characteristic activation, we can further explore what kind of situational cues can stimulate the positive emotion of perfectionism in work, and can effectively contain the negative influence and stimulate its creativity.

4.2.2. Work Attitude

At present, most researchers have adopted the stress interaction model to explore the recognition and evaluation methods of perfectionists under stress. Lazarus suggested the stress interaction model and argued that the interaction between individuals and their surroundings can cause stress and thus inhibit their creativity. Stress comes from personal evaluation of a threatening, harmful, or challenging situation. After that, each person will use a completely different way of coping with stress, depending on their stress rating. Those who actively seek perfection also have a more positive cognitive style. Actively striving for perfection can help people feel more positive pressure and adopt positive responses such as problem-based response strategies. In public sector, consulting training and mixed jobs, ideal self-efficacy, counseling self-efficacy and work-family conflict self-efficacy in career are all better. They will deal with pressure positively and think about work from a positive perspective, so they have strong innovation ability. In stark contrast, people who worry excessively are more aware of things. For the evaluation of "perfect", the degree of anxiety is higher, the degree of negative feelings and fatigue are higher, and it is easier to adopt emotion-based processing. They worry about problems that have not yet been solved, creating a lot of negative emotions that occupy most of their cognitive resources, and the same is true of work at work. In addition, they also experience higher levels of fatigue, job stress and job fatigue. Conservation says that when a person's critical resources are threatened, lost, or invested, he or she will face great financial hardship. Good perfectionists see mistakes as a danger, and they focus more on subtle mistakes, which deplete the knowledge and emotions they need, raising their tension levels and reducing their creative motivation. To reduce this negative work awareness and experience, a good collective atmosphere is very crucial. A high level of group cooperation is a form of social support that can alleviate the excessive anxiety caused by perfectionism.

4.2.3. Working Mode

At work, job perfectionists engage in positive internal behaviors, such as increasing work engagement and striving for innovation. The more camaraderie the group has at work, the more creative activity they have. In this case, workplace perfectionists are less prone to anti-labor. And in the workplace, people who strive for perfection also have some bad character traits, such as procrastination and addiction at work. Perfectionists have a hard time tolerating minor flaws, so they delay progress by repeatedly checking and correcting what has already been done. Among knowledge employees, the greater the degree of responsibility, the greater the procrastination caused by the search for perfection. If those who strive for perfection work because of intrinsic motivation, then they will be trapped in their work, which is not good for their physical and mental development and sustainable development. Xie Xiaolong conducted a questionnaire survey on 489 people in 30 enterprises across the country. The results show that under the working demand-resource model, Perfectionism has a significant predictive effect on work addiction. Perfectionists worry too much about how they look, which can lead to insomnia and lack of motivation. In addition, perfectionists may also engage in non-positive behaviors to help the company achieve a higher purpose. For example, adaptive perfectionists have a higher sense of their own effectiveness, so they are more inclined to engage in organized citizenship. On the basis of characteristic interactions, we also found that at work, the perfection and responsibility of other work personalities can have an impact on positive interpersonal relationships at work, such as "work-centered" assistance at work.

4.2.4. Work efficiency

The effect of perfectionism on work outcomes is still a matter of debate. First, the concept of perfection in the workplace helps to improve work performance, especially creative work performance. According to the principle of feature activation, when the individual-centered view of perfection has higher justice in general, it will produce higher spiritual security, resulting in higher creativity, resulting in better creative effects. This may be because the Big Five are more open to experience, and openness to experience is a major personality factor that produces creativity. In general, fairness in a team can promote the creativity of the perfectionist, but the mechanism of this process is not clear. This paper argues that the sense of team justice can enhance the mental security of employees, thus creating a better environment for the formation of innovation ability. Secondly, "perfection" in the workplace can also have a negative effect on job performance. Based on the spiral reasoning of resource loss, in a certain pressure spiral iteration, when a person loses resources, it is difficult to use enough funds to compensate for the losses that have been caused, resulting in resource shortage and later investment. This can be explained from a perspective, in the work, "perfect" employees in the short-term performance of work, but in the long-term work performance is poor. Some scholars have pointed out that although in the short term, "perfectionism" and "best performance" is proportional, but in the long run, "perfectionism" is often due to deviating from the original purpose of poor performance. These negative effects are even more pronounced for those who worry too much. Such employees fear negative evaluations from others, and when they realize that their job expectations are different from reality, they feel very distressed, and when they find that they are too focused on these things, they can reduce their task completion, and too hard on them, they can affect their work. This process of influence is also underpinned by the doctrine of "object setting". Goal setting theory points out that goals can effectively adjust the work intensity and perseverance of individuals, and motivate individuals to use efficient work strategies to achieve the smooth progress of tasks. To be specific, employees who pursue perfection rely too much on their own unrealistic goals, and their actions are not resilient, which makes their mental problems more prominent and their innovation performance lower.

4.2.5. Work Interaction

The social disengagement model shows that the deficiency of interpersonal communication leads to excessive disengagement and anxiety in social activities. In the process of communicating with colleagues, most people believe that perfectionists often lack the social skills to communicate with their workers. First, perfectionists at work are most closely associated with social disengagement, focusing too much on high standards at work and neglecting personal interactions at work, and not having good relationships with their bosses and colleagues. When they make negative evaluation of these suppressed interpersonal relationships, they will continue to use avoidance methods, resulting in increased interpersonal stress, decreased sense of social support, and reverse inhibition of their innovation ability. Second, while other-oriented work styles are strongly associated with conflict at work, perfectionists who are characterized by a high degree of responsibility also lend a helping hand to their co-workers. Ultimately, the pursuit of autonomy at work can reduce the degree of social disengagement. When managers and employees communicate, leaders with high perfectionism traits have greater control over their subordinates, and when employees rarely ask for their feedback, they lack control over them, leading to their bullying. In addition, employees with a strong sense of internal control will think that they lack enough self-esteem, so they will work harder to meet the leader's demand for perfection. On the other hand, employees at external control points will feel that they are being disparaged by their superiors because of external reasons such as difficult tasks or bad luck, and thus have a negative reaction. In the absence of a study on the interaction between imperfect leaders and perfect subordinates, perfectionist demands from superiors can either stimulate creativity or severely inhibit creativity, making them more inclined to do their jobs on a routine basis.

4.3. Career Field

Much past research has focused on how perfectionism in the workplace plays a role in an individual's work experience and expectations. As far as occupational experience is concerned, "perfection" in career is significantly correlated with occupational stress, job burnout and job task anxiety. The empirical results show that no matter positive or negative work attitude, there are strong mental and interpersonal tension. The difference is that in the workplace, positive ideals and beliefs make them more energetic and feel better work stress; in a negative work environment, they will feel physically and mentally tired due to the huge work pressure and personal resources cannot be handled, which leads to work fatigue and inhibits their creativity. Experts who have surveyed outstanding singers believe that, compared with the average musician, such perfectionist professionals cause them to worry that their performances will make mistakes, which puts great pressure on their careers. In addition, perfectionists worry too much about their career prospects and lack creative inspiration, resulting in increasingly bleak careers.

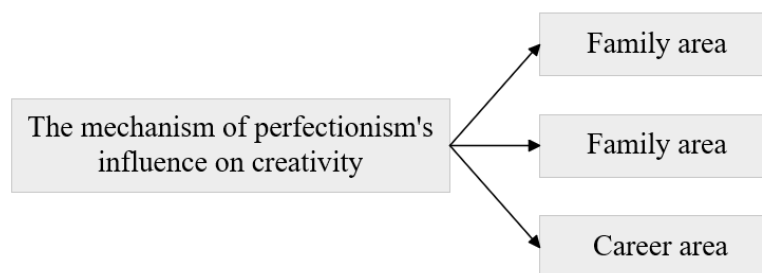


Figure 3. The mechanism of perfectionism's influence on creativity

5. SUMMARY AND OUTLOOK

5.1. Conclusion

5.1.1. Negative Effects on Creativity

It has a positive effect on work fatigue and a negative effect on work creativity. The high expectations of family members and managers lead to employees' fear of success and inhibit their thinking and creativity.

5.1.2. Positive Effect on Creativity

Personal perfectionism and personal self-improvement will have a positive impact on job re-creation, and the encouragement of parents and managers will directly reduce the fear of failure and improve their work creativity.

5.1.3. The Intermediary Function of Perfectionism

Job burnout, job remodeling and job fear are the factors that affect the relationship between job perfection and creativity.

5.2. Practical Reference Significance

5.2.1. The requirements for employees should not be too high

For supervisors, employees, and parents, research on perfectionism has practical implications: especially for families with high levels of self-preservation, this expectation of "perfection" can be destructive. In addition, when leaders determine the scale of their challenges or ambitions, they may take their own development into account.

5.2.2. Indicators of Highlight Risks

Leaders who want to encourage innovation should tell employees that innovation is essentially a dangerous process to deal with, and that it is a learning process and an important part of better development. In this case, the spirit of adventure and escape from reality are essential to the creativity of employees.

5.2.3. Pay Attention to the Influence of Family

Management surveys tend to ignore parents, but reality confirms that there is a link between "perfect parenting" and creativity at work. Some parents in East Asian countries favor "tiger education," believing that their children will do well if they can meet strict standards. Tiger parents can only pursue perfection, hoping to excel academically, increase their children's academic experience, and let them attend after-school and weekend classes. Even if well-intentioned, such parenting deprives children of the ability to learn, develop initiative and autonomy, explore or fantasize about the future, and make the most of their potential. Parents need to understand, potentially harmful adverse consequences to a child's future achievement.

5.3. Outlook

Perfectionism is the spiritual core of high-quality development, and the attention paid by organizational scholars and entrepreneurs to workplace perfectionism reflects the urgent need of The Times for perfection and high quality standards. Therefore, the focus on achieving "perfection" in specific groups and specific situations is in line with this trend. Compared with foreign countries, the theoretical discussion of workplace perfection in China is still in its infancy, and the relevant measurement means are not mature enough, which limits the empirical analysis of workplace perfection. In addition, there are problems that emphasize influence, light antecedent, heavy result and light process. Although there have been domestic research results on work perfectionism and procrastination, work addiction, work stress, work stress, creativity and job satisfaction, etc., however, most of these literatures focus on horizontal correlation and cannot clearly explain the causal link between "perfection" at work and creativity. At present, the discussion about workplace perfectionism in China focuses on its results, but neglects its causes. In ancient times, exam-oriented bureaucracy was the traditional reason, and now, the developed market economy and industrial upgrading are the modern booster. For the formation of Chinese employees' perfectionism in the Chinese workplace, this special social factor and humanistic influence should be fully taken into account. In addition, existing empirical studies mostly focus on the individual level and lack cross-level discussion. Therefore, the impact of perfectionism on enterprise innovation and even society is not clear. Regarding the theory of perfectionism, there is still a lot of blank space and room for development.

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