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Predictors of Perfectionism in Latter-day Saint Students

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Educational Specialist in School Psychology

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ABSTRACT

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The purpose of the present study was to seek to gain insight into the prevalence, nature and etiology of perfectionism in a sample of devout Latter-day Saint college students at Brigham Young University. A number of variables—including self-conscious emotions, mental health, interpersonal/cognitive style, and religious—were entered into multiple regression models to determine the strongest predictors of perfectionism. Participants were 245 students studying at Brigham Young University in Provo, UT in the spring of 1995. The self-conscious construct of shame demonstrated to be the strongest predictor of perfectionism followed by depression and religious fundamentalism. In addition to these findings, it was found that students in our sample were not more susceptible to perfectionism than other samples of religious students.

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DESCRIPTION OF THESIS STRUCTURE

Following the introductory pages (title page, acknowledgments, abstract, table of contents, and list of tables), the document is segmented into two major sections: (a) the article ready for submission to a journal (pp. 1–39) and (b) the review of the literature (pp. 39–103). This thesis contains two reference lists. The first reference list (p. 31) contains the references included in the journal-ready article. The second reference list (p. 83) includes all citations used in both the journal-ready article and the section titled "Appendix A: Review of the Literature."

Introduction

Flett and Hewitt (2007) defined *perfectionism* as "a complex construct that reflects the interplay of cognitive, emotional, motivational, and behavioral factors and processes" (p. 234). Perfectionism is a personality trait thought to be integral to the development and maintenance of several pathological illnesses. Studies have found links between perfectionism and eating disorders, obsessive-compulsive disorder, depression, anxiety, and phobias (Halmi et al., 2000; Hewitt & Flett, 1991a, 1991b; Pratt, Telch, Labouvie, Wilson, & Agras, 2001). Perfectionism has also been linked to personality disorders such as borderline personality disorder and schizotypal personality disorder as well as schizoid, avoidant, histrionic, anti-social and passive aggressive personality patterns (Hewitt & Flett, 1991b).

According to Tangney (2002), one of the core features of perfectionism is that it self-programs the individual to over-evaluate everything within their perception. This is in addition to the tendency to set lofty goals and maintain a high standard of living for themselves (Tangney, 2002). Another feature of perfectionism is the tendency to expend great effort and large amounts of time in making sure that everything is done with exactness. Probably the most striking characteristic of perfectionism is to see accomplishment in the dichotomous perception of success and failure. There is no middle ground in viewing results of performance; either the results of their strivings are perfect or they are not. The dichotomous pairings of "saint or sinner," "good or bad," and "superb or pathetic" explain perfectionism well within their respective contexts. Anything less than perfect is equated with failure (Barrow & Moore, 1983; Halmi et al., 2000).

Individuals with perfectionism find difficulty specifying and selecting domains in which they demand perfection. This lack of discrimination leads the person to pay excessive attention

to detail in matters that are really not that important. This helps explain why perfectionism often results in pathological disturbance (Tangney, 2002). Other features of perfectionism include: replacing or diminishing the importance of past successes or present accomplishments for a strong rumination on what lies in the future; shame due to performance in a personally meaningful activity as "mediocre"; guilt provoking thoughts of perceived demands (i.e. "I must do this" or "I should have done that"); and the establishment of compulsive behaviors (Barrow & Moore, 1983; Burns, 1980; Miller, 1986; Pacht, 1984;). The maintenance of perfectionism is directly tied to its development in the individual.

Factors of Development and Maintenance

There has been some support in the literature that some individuals may be genetically predisposed to perfectionism (Halmi et al., 2000; Srinivasagam et al., 1995; Woodside et al., 2002). Woodside et al. (2002) suggested that in addition to the genetic factor it is possible that perfectionism is passed from parents to their children through "an environmental pathway such as modeling" (p. 297). Some have proposed that differences in perfectionism levels are due to the interaction of gender and certain aspects of perfectionism (e.g. Chang & Sanna, 2001; Hewitt & Flett, 1991b) and that gender plays a role in how perfectionism is expressed (Blankstein & Winkworth, 2004; Preusser, Rice, & Ashby, 1994). Yet according to Blankenstein, Lumley and Crawford (2007), these "findings have been inconsistent and inconclusive" (p. 285).

There are many other familial dynamics considered in the development and maintenance of perfectionism. Birth order has been considered by some to be influential in the development of perfectionism (Ashby, LoCicero, & Kenney, 2003). Flett, Hewitt and Singer (1995) cited parental authority style as another contributor. Frost et al. (1990) concurred that parents play a direct role in the perfectionistic development of their offspring. Some researchers have linked the

attachment styles between parents and offspring as a predictor of perfectionism (Rice & Mirzadeh, 2000). Hamacheck (1978) proposed that the absence of expectations from parents or significant others may induce a child to set their own standards of perfection. Rogers (1959) believed that perfectionism may stem from the belief that self-worth is dependent on performance. This belief originates from internalizing the belief, conceived through interpersonal interaction, that value as a human being is dependent upon ability to execute life tasks and goals.

Other factors influencing perfectionism may come from sociocultural pressures for things to be exact (Bardone-Cone, 2007; Hewitt & Flett, 1991b). Flett, Hewitt, Oliver, and MacDonald (2002) argued that there has to be openness on the part of the individual to engage or participate in socialization. Some researchers theorized that prerequisite to developing perfectionism is the aptitude, realistic or perceived, that one is able to demonstrate perfectionism. In other words, to develop perfectionism, one must first have the ability or think they have the ability to achieve; and second, they must have been successful in accomplishing life tasks in times past. Flett et al. (2002) concluded that those with perfectionism will migrate to achievement areas in which they feel they are able to be successful.

Another factor influencing perfectionism may be that of religiosity. Mebane and Ridley (1988) observed that some Christian churches portray perfectionism in a skewed way that distorts the true meaning of the biblical mandate to strive for perfection. This mandate is expressed in the words of Jesus Christ, "Be ye therefore perfect, even as your Father…in Heaven is perfect," and alluded to in other scriptural references (Matthew 5:48; 2 Corinthians 13:9; Psalms 50:2; Luke 8:14). Mebane and Ridley (1988) proposed that such distortion and misunderstanding of this doctrinal principle by churches "counterfeit[s] spirituality [and] poses deleterious consequences on wholesome Christian living" (p. 332). Another group of researchers

believed that a strict interpretation of biblical perfectionism inducing self-criticism results in "dysfunctional self-destructive communication and behavioral patterns" (Heise & Steitz, 1991, p. 21).

Some researchers, while acknowledging that some aspects of religiosity may contribute to maladaptive perfectionism, note the positive benefits religiosity has in the development and maintenance of perfectionism. Timpe (1989) among others (e.g. Bergin, Masters, Stinchfield, Gaskin, & Sullivan, 1988) are among these researchers. Bergin et al. (1988) addressed the role both intrinsic and extrinsic religiosity play in satisfying the view that religiosity plays a role in maladaptive and adaptive functioning. In essence, extrinsically religious individuals (i.e., those who use religion as a means to an end) are more susceptible to submit to demands made by religious authority that are harmful, whereas intrinsically religious individuals (i.e., those who see religion as the end or means to transcending the self) are in a position to avoid adverse consequences while maintaining high standards. Supporting Bergin et al.'s (1988) position, Ashby and Huffman's (1999) work indicated that highly religious individuals do not manifest greater levels of maladaptive perfectionism. Instead, their findings reported just the opposite: Those with greater religiosity have greater levels of adaptive perfectionism (i.e., perfectionism perceived as an enhancing or beneficial trait) while those with less religiosity had lower levels of the same type.

One Christian religious group that is known for emphasizing the scriptural mandate to "be ye therefore perfect" (Matthew 5:48) is The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints (LDS). Ulrich, Richards, and Bergin (2000) noted that there is the tendency for some Latter-day Saints to misinterpret biblical passages pertaining to perfection. They believe that "not only…should they become perfect, but that they should be so now" (p. 197). Ulrich, Richards,

and Bergin (2000) stated that some Latter-day Saints do not accept "their inevitable imperfections, [and] conclude that they are bad, worthless, and eternally flawed" (p. 197). Furthermore, some Latter-day Saints tend to generalize the mandate to be perfect to nearly every domain of their life rather than keeping it in the context previously iterated.

Williams (1999) found that Latter-day Saints were no more perfectionistic than members of some Protestant groups. This may be because of the commonly held beliefs and values that some Protestants and Latter-day Saints hold (e.g. such as the role of works in salvation, development of Christ-like attributes, and emphasis that some members of these religious groups place on Christ's commandment to "be perfect"). Edgington, Richards, Erickson, Jackson, and Hardman (2008), acknowledge that thus far "the body of literature that addresses perfectionism among Latter-day Saints indicates that it is a compelling issue, both religiously and psychologically" (p. 26).

Statement of Problem

Although there has been an increase in the amount of literature addressing perfectionism, much remains to be done in identifying how religiously oriented people, including Latter-day Saints, develop perfectionism. Although the topic of perfectionism in the Latter-day Saint community has been given some attention in the literature over the years, relatively little is known empirically about the prevalence, nature, and etiology of perfectionism among this religious and cultural group. Understanding more about the prevalence and predictors of perfectionism in Latter-day Saints may help lead to insights about how to prevent and treat unhealthy perfectionism within this population. The exponential growth of Mormonism over the past fifty years and future projected growth estimates (Stark, 1984, 1996, 2005) highlights the importance of understanding more about perfectionism within this religious denomination.

Purpose of the Study

The general purpose of the present study is to seek to gain more insight into the prevalence, nature and etiology of perfectionism in a sample of devout Latter-day Saint college students at Brigham Young University. More specifically, we will investigate how the perfectionism scores of young adult students in our sample compared with other samples reported in the literature. We will also investigate what are the strongest predictors of perfectionism. We will statistically explore whether measures of (a) self-conscious affect (i.e., shame, guilt, externalization, and pride), (b) mental health (i.e., anxiety, depression), (c) interpersonal-cognitive style (i.e., dogmatism, social desirability), and (d) religiosity (i.e., fundamentalism, orthodoxy, intrinsicness, and extrinsicness) are predictive of perfectionism, and will ascertain which ones are the strongest predictors in the presence of other variables within their respective categories.

Determining which variables are the strongest predictors of perfectionism in this sample may give us greater insight into the nature and etiology of perfectionism within Latter-day Saints. We will also ascertain whether gender differences exist for the predictors in our sample and if differences exist in class standing (i.e., Freshmen, Sophomore, etc.). We hope that the findings of the present study may help generate hypotheses about ways to prevent and treat perfectionism within the Latter-day Saint community.

Research Questions

1.   How do the perfectionism scores of the Latter-day Saint young adults in our sample compare with the perfectionism scores of other samples reported in the literature?

2. In the presence of other similar dependent variables, what is the strongest predictor of perfectionism? Using five separate multiple regressions pertaining to our five separate dependent variable clusters, as summarized in Table 1, we hypothesize that

    a. In the presence of other self-conscious affects variables (i.e. guilt, externalization, alpha or hubristic, and beta or normal pride), shame will be the strongest predictor of perfectionism.

    b. In the presence of both our mental health variables (i.e. anxiety, depression), anxiety will be the strongest predictor of perfectionism.

    c. In the presence of our interpersonal/cognitive style variables (i.e. dogmatism, social desirability), dogmatism will be the strongest predictor of perfectionism.

    d. In the presence of religious variables measured (i.e. religious fundamentalism, Christian orthodoxy, intrinsic and extrinsic religiosity), religious fundamentalism will be the strongest predictor of perfectionism.

    e. In the presence of demographic variables measured (i.e. class standing, and gender), neither class standing nor gender will be strong predictors of perfectionism.

Table 1

Hypothesized Relationships with Perfectionism

Self-Conscious Affect		Mental Health		Interpersonal Style	Religious Variables	
+++	Shame	++	Anxiety	+ Social Desirability	++	Fundamentalism
	Guilt	+	Depression	+ Dogmatism		Christian Orthodoxy
+	Externalization				0 / −	Intrinsic
+	Alpha Pride (Hubristic)				0 / +	Extrinsic
	Beta Pride (Normal)					

3. When the statistically significant predictors from each of the five separate multiple regressions described above are entered together into a multiple regression equation, which of the variables emerges as significant predictors of perfectionism?

Method

Participants

Our sample consisted of 247 (*N* = 247) undergraduate students at Brigham Young

University in Provo, UT. Of these participants 58.3% (*n* = 144) were males and 41.7% (*n* = 103)

were females. Participants ranged in age from 17 to 26 years with a mean age of 20.5 years (*M* =

20.5) and a modal age of 20.5 years. The majority of participants were freshmen (*n* = 100)

consisting of 40.5% of the sample, whereas sophomores (*n* = 57) made up 23.1%, juniors (*n* =

61) consisting of 24.7%, and 11.7% of the sample being seniors (*n* = 29). The overwhelming

majority (88.3%) of the participants in our sample were single (*n* = 218), 11.3% were married (*n*

= 28), while one participant reported themselves as divorced. Being an institution owned, run,

and subsidized by The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, nearly all of our participants

were members of this Church though 2% affiliated with the Lutheran and Catholic faiths. As our

study pertains strictly to Latter-day Saints undergraduates, data from students who identified as

Lutheran and Catholic were excluded.

Procedure

Participants were recruited through two different methods. The first of these methods was

recruiting BYU students through mail during April of 1995. The remaining students were sought

for and obtained through recruiting from BYU General Psychology courses taken throughout the

Spring semester of the same year. Participants were given a packet to complete which included

an informed consent document, a questionnaire for demographics, and differing measures of

religious activity and psychological functioning. Participants received two tickets to a local

movie theater as compensation for their time and effort. In recruiting these participants, all

guidelines as set forth by the American Psychological Association (APA) were followed.

Variables Evaluated

  Perfectionism. The Burns Perfectionism Scale (BPS; Burns, 1980) is a self-report measure that assesses the degree of perfectionism within an individual. According to Seigle and Schuler (2000) "its unidimensional focus is on personal standards and concern over mistakes" (p. 39). It is similar to Hewitt and Fletts' (1991a) interpersonal measure of self-oriented perfectionism (Burns, 1983). According to Pearson and Gleaves (2006), the 10 items on the scale pertain to errors in perfectionistic thinking or unhealthy perfectionism. The degree of perfectionism is determined by taking these items and converting them into a single score. Originally the Burns Perfectionism Scale required participants to choose between 5 options— scores ranging from -2 to 2 (-2 = *I disagree strongly*; -1 = *I disagree slightly*; 0 = *I feel neutral about this*; 1 = *I agree somewhat*; 2 = *I agree very much*). A 10-item scale with this type of coding has a potential composite scoring range from -20 to 20.

  Initially, Burns (1980) identified individuals with composite scores falling between -20 to 0 as having a "non-perfectionistic mindset" and individuals with composite scores falling between 0 to 20 as having perfectionism. Later, Burns (1983) adjusted the measurement scale to range from numbers 0-4 with 0 = *I disagree strongly* and 4 = *I agree very much*. This in effect shifted the composite score range limits from -20 to 20 to 0-40; therefore 0-20, according to Burns (1980), indicates a "non-perfectionistic mindset" and composite scores of 20-40 signifies a "perfectionistic mindset." Burns (1983) later clarified categories with scores ranging from 0-9 = *a healthy degree of perfectionism*; 10-19 = *borderline to mild perfectionistic tendencies* 20-29 = *moderate perfectionism*; 30-39 = *extreme perfectionism*; and "a score of 40 would mean that you are the ultimate, a 'perfect' perfectionist" (Burns, 1983, p. 222).

We used Burn's latter adjustment (0-40 scale) of the Burns Perfectionism Scale in this study and converted other sample mean scores we found in the literature to this scale for comparison. The BPS has demonstrated its reliability with a coefficient of .76 testing for internal consistency. Validity testing between this scale and the Multidimensional Perfectionism Scale has exhibited validity coefficients ranging from .40 to .77.

Self-conscious emotions. The Test of Self-Conscious Affect (TOSCA; Tangney, Wagner & Gramzow, 1989) is a 65-item apparatus designed to measure self-conscious emotions. Among the domains measured in the TOSCA are shame, guilt, externalization, detachment/unconcern, alpha-pride and beta-pride. Overall TOSCA reliability coefficients range from .73 to .80 in test-retest correlations (Tangney et al., 1989). The following TOSCA scales that were used in this particular study include the scales of shame, guilt, externalization, and both pride scales.

Shame and Guilt are both self-conscious emotions that play significant roles human functioning (Tangney, 2002). The shame and guilt subscales are the most widely utilized scales in the TOSCA. Both of these subscales contain 15 short narratives constructed around the domains of shame and guilt. Participants are asked to examine the four or five items following each of these narratives and using the five-point Likert scales given, rate their response to each of the items based on the given narrative (Tangney et al., 1989). The TOSCA only measures the maladaptive features of shame while the maladaptive features of guilt are underrepresented. In other words, the TOSCA holds that shame is merely maladaptive and that guilt is adaptive (Luyten, Fontaine, & Corveleyn, 2002). Using Cronbach's Alpha, TOSCA shame internal consistency was measured at .76 while TOSCA guilt internal consistency measured at .66 (Tangney et al., 1989). A moderately positive range of correlations ($r = .40$ to $r = .55$) between

TOSCA and the Personal Feelings Questionnaire was demonstrated for the validity measures of guilt and shame within the TOSCA (Tangney, Burggraf, & Wagner, 1995).

Externalization refers to projecting blame away from self. The Test of Self-Conscious Affect (TOSCA; Tangney et al., 1989) was used to measure participant tendencies to externalize blame. Self-conscious emotions can be manifest externally or internally. Whereas internalization of blame refers to blaming *the* self (shame) or blaming *actions of the self* (guilt) for negative outcomes, externalization of blame is a self-conscious emotion that places responsibility for negative outcomes onto outward influences—people, environments, and things. An internal consistency reliability measure of the 10-item Externalization Subscale yielded a Cronbach's Alpha coefficient of .65 (Tangney et al., 1989). In the literature externalization of blame has been neglected by researchers in favor of studying the internalized blame constructs of shame and guilt. Reasons for this are speculative though an exhaustive review found little on the validity of the measures used in this study as part of the TOSCA measures. In the one validity study performed by Spanish researchers Guimon, Las Hayas, Guillen, Boyra and Gonzales-Pinto (2007) "validity was good (p. 126)" for this construct although no statistical measures were given to support this statement.

Pride is another common self-conscious emotion. The TOSCA measures both alpha and beta pride. The 5-item alpha pride and 5-item beta pride subscales have an internal consistency of .56 and .52, respectfully (Tangney et al., 1989). This low internal consistency has been detrimental to the study of pride as researchers are hesitant to use constructs with low reliability (Luyten et al., 2002). Validity studies for pride in the literature at present are limited. One study done on the Spanish version of the TOSCA demonstrated good validity for that scale (Guimon et al., 2007).

Mental health. The measure of anxiety used in this study is the 40-item State-Trait Anxiety Inventory (STAI; Spielberger, Gorsuch, Luchene, Vagg & Jacobs, 1983). Though the STAI measures both intermittent (state anxiety) and persistent or consistent (trait anxiety) forms of anxiety only the intermittent state anxiety items were used for purposes of this study. Two different measures of reliability were taken in assessing the STAI. Test-retest reliability for the STAI ranges from .76 to .86. Dreger's (1978) finding followed a 20-day period of wait time. Internal consistency ranges from .86 to .92. Spielberger et al. (1983) compared the Institute for Personality and Ability (IPAT) Anxiety Scale (IPAT; Cattell and Scheier, 1963) with the STAI to check for the validity of their measure. Coefficients range from .75 to .77.

Depression is another aspect of mental health that many college age students are prone to have. In this study the 21- item Beck Depression Inventory (BDI; Beck, 1976) was used to measure levels of depression. In a meta-analysis spanning 25 years Beck, Steer, and Garbin (1988) found an internal consistency range of .73 to .92. The mean of this range was .86. A range of .48 to .90 for test-retest reliability was demonstrated by Berdnt (1990). Validity studies by Beck et al. (1988) demonstrated coefficient scores of .72 and .73 when compared to psychiatric patients. Berdnt (1990) also validated the scale with a comparison of a sample of individuals exhibiting suicidal behavior.

Interpersonal style. The Rokeach Dogmatism Scale (RDS; Rokeach, 1960) measures general intolerance and authoritarianism as well as how permeable the belief system of a person is. The 40-items in this measure, examining the aforementioned domains, produce a single score identified by researchers as "dogmatism." Reliability tests have demonstrated test-retest coefficient scores ranging from .68 to .93 (Rokeach, 1960) and validity studies generated

sufficient correlation coefficients as well demonstrating that this scale is suitable for research purposes (Kemp & Kohler, 1965; Kerlinger & Rokeach, 1966).

The Social Desirability Scale (SDS; Crowne & Marlowe, 1960) measures the magnitude to which a participant strives to mask personal weaknesses and inflate strengths in order to be viewed as a socially desirable person. This 33-item measure was administered to participants in order to assess the relationship between measures of pride and the level to which they seek to be socially desirable. Test-retest coefficient for SDS's reliability stands at .89 in one study with internal consistency of .88. The K and L scales on the original Minnesota Multiphasic Personality Inventory (MMPI; Hathaway & McKinley, 1940) were correlated with the SDS to produce moderately positive coefficients ranging from .40 to .54 respectfully. A number of researchers, including Richards (1994) and Watson, Morris, Foster, and Hood (1986), have expressed concern that some of the 33-items used in the scale are tailored specifically to religious populations and therefore biased. In light of this concern two analyses were performed: One analysis using all items on the Social Desirability Scale and then another analysis excluding 12 of the items viewed as religiously biased in content.

Religious. The Religious Orientation Scale (ROS; Allport & Ross, 1967) consists of two scales designed to measure the religious orientation of participants. These scales are labeled intrinsic and extrinsic. Both of these measures were used to examine the religious orientation of our sample. Genia's (1993) examination of the internal consistency reliability of the intrinsic scales has shown reliability coefficients ranging from .79 to .86. Gorsuch and McPherson (1989) demonstrated a reliability coefficient of .82 on the intrinsic scales. Though the extrinsic scales have demonstrated poor statistical reliability data from both the extrinsic and intrinsic subscales will be used in this study (Kirkpatrick, 1989; Kirkpatrick & Hood, 1990).

The Christian Orthodoxy Scale (COS; Fullerton & Hunsberger, 1982) has demonstrated to be a suitable instrument in measuring the degree to which particular, well articulated core doctrines of Christianity are accepted by people. The scale developed by Fullerton and Hunsberger (1982) consists of 24 items that demonstrate a broad range of internal consistencies from .63 to .98. This scale has demonstrated validity coefficients ranging from .77 to .85 in terms of beliefs Christians hold about God and Jesus Christ, and how frequent religious activities occurred.

The 20-item Religious Fundamentalism Scale (RFS; Altemeyer & Hunsberger, 1992) was developed to measure religious fundamentalism which is defined as "the belief that there is one set of religious teachings that clearly contains the fundamental, basic, intrinsic, essential, inerrant truth about humanity and deity; that this essential truth is fundamentally opposed by forces of evil which must be vigorously fought; that this truth must be followed today according to the fundamental, unchangeable practices of the past; and that those who believe and follow these fundamental teachings have a special relationship with the deity" (Altemeyer & Hunsberger, 1992, p.118). Reliability coefficients of .93 to .95 demonstrate that the RFS has high internal consistency while validity testing has shown strong positive correlations between this scale and authoritarianism (strict and rigid compliance to authority) ranging from .66 to .75.

Data Analysis

All data from this sample was processed and analyzed in SPSS. Descriptive statistics were generated for each of the scales used in our study (means, standard deviations, skewness, range, no graphs). A number of single sample t-tests were performed to compare our sample means on the Burns Perfectionism Scale to other comparable sample means. We computed a zero-ordered Pearson Correlation using our independent variable of perfectionism with all of the

variables within our five groups to see if any of our dependent variables alone were predictive of perfectionism. The remaining material in this section pertains to the bulk of our data analysis. Six separate multiple regression analyses were computed using the measure of perfectionism as our independent variable. Each of these regressions corresponded with the five groups of dependent variables, including (1) self-conscious constructs, (2) mental health variables, (3) variables pertaining to interpersonal/cognitive style, (4) religious variables, and (5) demographic variables (i.e., gender, class standing). Finally a sixth multiple regression analyses, including the top predictors from the first five multiple regressions, was computed.

Our first multiple regression assessed the TOSCA measures of shame, guilt, externalization, and hubristic and authentic pride as predictors of perfectionism. We analyzed these variables in the presence of each other to determine the strongest predictor of perfectionism among self-conscious emotions. Our second multiple regression assessed the mental health constructs of state anxiety and depression as predictors of perfectionism. Both of these measures, in the presence of each other, were used to find the strongest predictor of perfectionism for mental health constructs. The third multiple regression assessed the interpersonal or cognitive style constructs of dogmatism and social desirability. These variables, in the presence of each other, were utilized to find the strongest predictor of perfectionism for interpersonal or cognitive style variables. Our fourth multiple regression assessed the religious variables of religious fundamentalism, Christian orthodoxy, intrinsic and extrinsic religiousness, in the presence of each other, to determine the strongest predictor of perfectionism. Our fifth multiple regression assessed the demographic variables of gender and class standing, in the presence of each other, to determine the strongest predictor of perfectionism. Our sixth and final multiple regression

assessed which of the significant predictors from the previous five multiple regression analyses continued to be significant predictors of perfectionism in the presence of each other.

<div align="center">

Results

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Descriptive Statistics

Table 2 is included to demonstrate how this sample of Latter-day Saint's (N=245) scored in relation to other samples measured with Burns Perfectionism. In comparison to other sample populations, including college undergraduates from both religious and non-religious institutions of higher learning, our sample ($M = 21.43$, $SD = 6.17$) demonstrated slightly lower scores of perfectionism though the difference between our sample and McRae (1982) and Adderholdt-Elliott (1984) were not significant.

Table 2

Comparison of Sample Means for Burns Perfectionism Scale

Sample†	M	SD	N	Sample Description
Adderholdt-Elliott, 1984	22.1	6.32	100	University of Georgia undergraduate women.
Burns, 1980	30*	---	65	Coca-Cola Executives (McRae, 1982)
Hart et al., 1998	22.8*	6.4	271	St. Louis University undergraduates, private Catholic university
Lange, 1986	22.7*	6.0	106	Rutgers University Evening undergraduates
McRae, 1982	22.08	5.7	187	Valley Forge Christian College undergraduates, Protestant
Pirot, 1986	27.3*	6.7	76	University of Regina undergraduates
Our sample	21.43	6.17	245	Brigham Young University undergraduates, private Latter-day Saint university

* Significantly higher than our population mean
†All mean scores have been converted onto Burns (1983) adjusted scale ranging from 0-40 for comparison

Descriptive statistics were included in this study. Included in Table 3 are measures of central tendency as well as various measures of dispersion for each of our variables, which are categorized within their respective groups. Table 3 (next page) demonstrates that our sample was positively skewed though this was not significant; a histogram of our sample appeared to be normally distributed.

Inferential Statistics

Six tables were created to display the results of inferential statistics. Zero-ordered correlations were included as part of these regression tables for clarity. First, all predictors (X) are identified in the first column by numerical order (in subscript) followed the second and third columns which include the dependent variables respective calculated zero-order correlation coefficient (r^{xy}) and probability (one-tailed) of Type 1 Error. Results from the multiple regression analyses begin to be displayed beginning with the Partial coefficient (column 3) for the regression model, the t-value (column 4) and probability (one-tailed) of Type 1 Error (column 5) for the respective variable presented. Each table also includes the coefficient of determination (R^2), explained to error variance F-ratio, and the probability (two-tailed of Type 1 error) level for the regression model represented. Six partial-ordered multiple regression analyses were conducted as part of the overall analysis. Each table (Tables 4-9), displayed sequentially throughout the text, consists of (2-5) related predictors pertaining to the assigned group (e.g. Self-Conscious Emotions).

Table 3

Descriptive Statistics

	All Students (*N*=245)						
	M	*SD*	Std E Mean	Skew	Range	Min	Max
Burns Perfectionism	21.43	6.17	.39	.08	36	1	37
TOSCA							
Shame	40.93	8.17	.52	.22	47	19	66
Guilt	58.86	6.08	.39	-.3	33	40	73
Externalization	31.11	6.9	.44	.43	41	18	59
Alpha Pride	19.42	2.71	.17	-.37	16	9	25
Beta Pride	20.00	2.54	.16	-.33	14	11	25
Mental Health							
Beck Depression	5.79	5.56	.36	1.51	29	0	29
State Anxiety	36.2	8.1	.52	.84	45	21	66
Interpersonal							
Social Desirability	14.65	5.45	.35	.29	27	3	30
Rokeach Dogmatism	5.92	23.39	1.49	-.05	140	-60	80
Religious							
Extrinsic	26.31	5.14	.33	.3	30	13	43
(New) Intrinsic	37.09	4.41	.28	-.56	22	23	45
Fundamentalism	30.42	17.15	1.1	-.286	114	-35	79
Christian Orthodoxy	64.06	6.26	.4	-1.27	32	40	72
Demographics							
Gender	1.42	.49	.03	.34	---	---	---
Age	20.52	2.12	.14	.43	9	17	26
Class	2.08	1.06	.07	.44	3	1	4

Zero-ordered correlations. Several Pearson correlations were calculated examining the relationships between participants' measures of perfectionism and all of our independent variables among our five categories. Self-conscious (See Table 4) variables that were found to be significantly correlated with perfectionism include shame, guilt, and externalization. Specifically, there was found between perfectionism and shame, a moderately strong positive correlation ($r(245) = .403, p < .001$); among guilt, a weak positive correlation ($r(245) = .162, p = .011$); and among externalization, a significant yet weak positive correlation was found ($r(245) = .170, p = .007$). These results indicate that greater levels of shame, guilt, and externalization are associated with greater levels of perfectionism. Other self-conscious variables, namely alpha ($r(245) = .007, p = .909$) and beta ($r(245) = .002, p = .980$) pride, were found to not be significantly correlated with perfectionism. This indicates that there is no relationship between measures of pride and perfectionism.

Both mental health variables (See Table 5) of depression and state anxiety were found to be significantly correlated with perfectionism. Specifically, between Burns perfectionism and Beck Depression, a weak positive correlation ($r(245) = .330, p < .000$); and between state anxiety, a weak positive correlation ($r(245) = .259, p = .000$). These results indicate that greater levels of depression and state anxiety are associated with perfectionism.

Interpersonal variables (See Table 6) of dogmatism and social desirability were found to be significantly correlated with perfectionism. Specifically, between perfectionism and dogmatism a weak positive correlation ($r(245) = .306, p < .000$); and between social desirability a weak negative correlation ($r(245) = -.205, p = .001$). These results indicate that greater levels of dogmatism and lower levels of social desirability are associated with greater levels of perfectionism.

There were mixed results among our religious variables and perfectionism (See Table 7). Between perfectionism and extrinsic religiosity, a weak positive correlation that was significant was found ($r(245) = .147$, $p = .021$). This indicates that greater levels of extrinsic religiosity are associated with higher levels of perfectionism. However, religious variables of intrinsic religiosity, fundamentalism, and Christian orthodoxy were not significantly correlated with perfectionism. Specifically between perfectionism and intrinsic religiosity, a weak negative correlation ($r(245) = -.034$, $p = .599$); perfectionism and fundamentalism, a weak positive correlation ($r(245) = .087$, $p = .176$); and perfectionism and Christian orthodoxy, a weak negative correlation ($r(245) = -.007$, $p = .917$). These results indicate that there is no relationship between perfectionism and religious measures of intrinsic religiosity, fundamentalism, and Christian orthodoxy.

The demographic variables (See Table 8) of gender and class standing (i.e. Freshman, Sophomore etc.) were not significantly correlated with perfectionism. Specifically, between perfectionism and gender, a weak negative correlation ($r(245) = -.079$, $p = .218$); and between perfectionism and class standing, a weak positive correlation ($r(245) = .015$, $p = .812$). These results indicate that there is no relationship between Burns Perfectionism and demographic variables of gender and class standing.

Partial-ordered regressions. Five separate multiple regression analyses were computed simultaneously using the measure of perfectionism as our criterion variable. Each of these regressions corresponded with the five groups of dependent variables, including (1) self-conscious constructs, (2) mental health variables, (3) variables pertaining to interpersonal/cognitive style, (4) religious variables, and (5) demographic variables (i.e., gender

and class standing). A sixth and final regression was computed by entering the top predictors

from each of the first five regressions.

Our first multiple linear regression (See Table 4) was calculated to predict perfectionism

based on self-conscious emotions such as shame, guilt, externalization, and two forms of pride.

A significant regression equation was found ($F(5, 239) = 9.432, p < .001$), with an R^2 of .165.

Participants' predicted perfectionism is equal to 5.898 + .302(shame) + .023(guilt) + .095(alpha

pride) + .003(beta pride) - .004(externalization), where 5.898 is the constant. Only shame was a

significant predictor.

Table 4

Self-Conscious Emotional Predictors of Perfectionism

Predictors	r_{xy}	P	Partial	t	P	R^2	F	P
X_1= Shame	.403	.000	.340	5.582	.000			
X_2= Guilt	.162	.011	.023	.355	.723			
X_3= Externalization	.170	.007	-.004	-.065	.948			
X_4= Alpha Pride	.007	.909	.029	.448	.655			
X_5= Beta Pride	.002	.980	.001	.012	.990			
						.165	9.432	.000

The second of our multiple linear regressions (See Table 5) was calculated to predict

perfectionism based upon the mental health variables of state anxiety and depression. A

significant regression was found ($F(2, 242) = 15.493, p < .001$), with an R^2 of .114. Participants'

predicted perfectionism for this regression is equal to 17.216 + .304(depression) + .068(state

anxiety), where 17.216 is the constant. Only depression was a significant predictor in this model.

Table 5

Mental Health Predictors of Perfectionism

Predictors	r_{xy}	P	Partial	T	P	R^2	F	P
X_6= Beck Depression	.330	.000	.223	3.567	.000			
X_7= State Anxiety	.259	.000	.074	1.155	.249			
						.114	15.493	.000

Our third of our multiple linear regressions (See Table 6) was calculated to predict perfectionism based on interpersonal style measures of dogmatism and social desirability. A significant regression was found ($F(2, 242) = 14.639$, $p < .001$), with an R^2 of .108. Participants' predicted perfectionism for this regression is equal to 23.079 -.141(social desirability) + .071(dogmatism), where 14.639 is the constant. Only dogmatism ($p=.001$) as measured by the Rokeach Dogmatism Scale was a significant predictor in this model although social desirability ($p=.051$) slightly missed the significant mark.

Table 6

Interpersonal Predictors of Perfectionism

Predictors	r_{xy}	P	Partial	t	P	R^2	F	P
X_8= Dogmatism	.306	.000	.074	4.222	.000			
X_9= Social Desirability	-.205	.001	.223	-1.964	.051			
						.108	14.639	.000

Our fourth multiple linear regression (See Table 7) was calculated to predict perfectionism based upon our religious measures of orientation—specifically extrinsic and intrinsic religiousness, fundamentalism, and Christian orthodoxy. A significant regression was found ($F(4, 240) = 2.478$, $p < .05$), with an R^2 of .108. Participants' predicted perfectionism for this regression is equal to 18.148 - .049(new intrinsic-items reversed) - .029(Christian

orthodoxy) + .057 (fundamentalism) + .2(extrinsic), where 18.148 is the constant. Only

fundamentalism and extrinsic religious orientation were significant, with extrinsic orientation

being the strongest.

Table 7

Religious Predictors of Perfectionism

Predictors	r_{xy}	P	Partial	t	P	R^2	F	P
X_{10}= Extrinsic	.147	.021	.155	2.437	.016			
X_{11}= Intrinsic*	-.034	.599	-.028	-.438	.661			
X_{12}= Fundamentalism	.087	.176	.133	2.085	.038			
X_{13}= Christian Orthodoxy	-.007	.917	-.026	-.405	.686			
						.040	2.478	.045

* Items reversed

Our fifth multiple linear regression (See Table 8) was calculated to predict perfectionism

based upon our demographic variables of gender and class standing (i.e. Freshman, Sophomore

etc.) This regression was not significant ($F(2,242) = .798, p > .05$) with an R^2 of .007. In

examining whether gender alone predicted perfectionism in our sample we calculated another

regression. The regression with gender was not significant ($F(1, 245) = 1.628, p > .05$), with an

R^2 of .007. Neither gender nor class standing was significant predictors of perfectionism.

Table 8

Demographic Predictors of Perfectionism

Predictors	r_{xy}	P	Partial	t	P	R^2	F	P
X_{14}= Gender	-.079	.216	-.079	-1.241	.216			
X_{15}= Class	.015	.812	.018	.275	.784			
						.007	.798	. 451

Our sixth and final multiple linear regression (See Table 9) was calculated to predict

perfectionism based upon the strongest predictors from each of the previous multiple linear

regressions previously run with the exception of a predictor from the demographics regression

model. Because of its significance as a predictor within our religious regression model we

included fundamentalism within this last regression. Relative to our first five regression models

our final model was moderately strong in predicting perfectionism. A significant regression was

found ($F(5, 239) = 14.422, p < .001$), with an R^2 of .232. Participants' predicted perfectionism

for this regression is equal to 8.713 + .188(shame) + .258(depression) + .029(dogmatism) +

.063(extrinsic) + .055(fundamentalism), where 8.713 is the constant. Shame (Partial $R = .237, p$

$< .001$) demonstrated to be the strongest predictor, followed by depression (partial $R= .217$, p $<$

.002) and fundamentalism (Partial $R = .152, p < .018$) while the remaining variables were not

found to be statistically significant within this regression.

Table 9

Top Predictors of Perfectionism

Predictors	r_{xy}	P	Partial	T	P	R^2	F	P
X$_1$= Shame	.403	.000	.237	3.766	.000			
X$_6$= Beck Depression	.330	.000	.217	3.432	.001			
X$_8$= Dogmatism	.306	.000	.103	1.608	.109			
X$_{10}$= Extrinsic	.147	.021	.053	.826	.410			
X$_{12}$= Fundamentalism	.087	.176	.152	2.373	.018			
						.232	14.422	.000

Discussion

Reflections on Findings

The finding that Latter-day Saint students at Brigham Young University were not more

perfectionistic than others, in fact, significantly less than most others, was of interest. Compared

to other religious student samples measured with the Burns Perfectionism Scale, our sample of Latter-day Saint undergraduates mean score was significantly lower than one Catholic sample whose mean perfectionism score was 22.8 (Hart et al., 1998). Our sample also scored lower on perfectionism that a Protestant sample whose mean score was 22.08 (McRae, 1982), although this finding was not significantly different. This supports Williams (1999) finding that Latter-day Saints as a group demonstrate no more perfectionism than other Christian groups, and perhaps in comparison to some religious groups, less perfectionism. Further research is needed to substantiate this possibility.

Concerning the issue of the relationship between religion and perfectionism, it is interesting to note that is that neither Christian Orthodoxy nor Intrinsic Religiosity (both of which our sample scored high on) were significant predictors of perfectionism. This is contrary to the speculations of some researchers who have hypothesized that there is a tendency for the devoutly religious to be more inclined to have unhealthy perfectionistic tendencies. (e.g., Heise & Steitz, 1991; Mebane & Ridley, 1988; Richards, Owen, & Stein, 1993). We found no evidence supporting this view in our study.

Many studies have provided evidence that intrinsic religiosity is associated with healthy functioning (Ashby & Huffman, 1999; Bergin et al., 1987), particularly among devout Latter-day Saints. Judd (1998) notes that "with few exceptions, Latter-day Saints who live their lives consistent with the teachings of the (church) experience greater well-being, increase marital and family stability, less delinquency, less depression, less anxiety, less suicide and less substance abuse than those who do not (p.473)." Our findings suggest that students who are intrinsically religious as well as those who hold to core Christian beliefs, are no more likely to demonstrate perfectionism than those who do not hold this religious orientation or religious views.

The primary purpose of this study was to investigate what the strongest predictors of perfectionism were among our variables. The finding that shame was the strongest predictor among all other self-conscious emotions—and overall the strongest predictor among our variables—is of interest. Although Tangney (2002) has been wary of the work done in the past connecting shame and perfectionism, our finding is consistent with Ashby, Rice, and Martin's (2006) assertion that shame is at the root of perfectionism.

Also noteworthy is the finding that depression was strongly predictive of perfectionism in both respective regression models (i.e. in the presence of state anxiety and in the presence of other variables). This finding is consistent with the findings of a number of researchers who have used a variety of scales to measure perfectionism (Blatt & Zuroff, 1992; Frost, Benton, & Dowrick, 1990; Hewitt & Flett, 1990, 1991a; LaPointe & Crandell, 1980; Nelson, 1977). In particular, Frost et al.'s (1990) Parental Expectations scale—which measures perception of high parental standards—and Concern Over Mistakes scales have been linked to depression. This is interesting considering that Siegle and Schuler (2000) consider the Burn's measure of perfectionism a measure of personal standards and concern over mistakes. Our finding seems consistent with Frost et al.'s (1990) findings.

The finding that fundamentalism was a strong predictor of perfectionism is consistent with research by Helm, Berecz, and Nelson (2001) who found a positive correlation between these two variables. As religious fundamentalism pertains to a "mindset" of how religious functioning is expressed (Conway & Siegelman, 1982), Latter-day Saint students exhibiting strong fundamentalist tendencies may express a greater level of perfectionism in order to protect and sustain their particular fundamentalist beliefs.

The finding that neither gender nor age were predictive of perfectionism adds to the mixed findings in this area of the literature (Blankenstein & Winkworth, 2004; Enns, Cox, & Clara, 2002; Preusser, Rice, & Ashby, 1994; Stoeber & Stoeber, 2009). We can conclude from our results that Latter-day Saint men and women may not be different in how they manifest perfectionism.

Implications for Counselors and Psychotherapists

Our findings indicate that counselors and psychotherapists who work with college age Latter-day Saints need not assume that they are necessarily any more susceptible to perfectionism than any other clients. Nevertheless, for those Latter-day Saints who do manifest unhealthy perfectionistic tendencies, it would seem important for counselors to help such clients examine their beliefs concerning LDS teachings about perfection, in case they have misunderstandings about church teachings. Clients who struggle with issues of shame may be especially susceptible to perfectionism. With such clients, it would seem important for counselors to help clients explore where their perfectionistic strivings are being used in an effort to compensate for underlying feelings of shame and inadequacy (Richards, Smith, & Davis, 1989; Ulrich et al., 2000).

Strengths of the Study

This study had a number of methodological strengths. First, the sample size was relatively large and permitted the use of multivariate statistical procedures to analyze the data. Second, the measures were standardized in previous research studies and had adequate reliability and validity. Third, although the sample was restricted to members of the Latter-day Saint religion, the student population at Brigham Young University is composed of young adults from throughout the United States and Canada, and was thus relatively diverse in this regard.

Limitations

Our study had several limitations. The first is that this sample was almost exclusively Latter-day Saint (though this could also be argued as a strength). Though there certainly are similar characteristics between Latter-day Saints and other religious populations there may be some key differences that affect generalizability. Another limitation of this study was that the sample was one of convenience. Students were recruited to participate on a volunteer basis. The limitations of volunteer college student samples has been described elsewhere (Black, 1999).

As has been noted by Siegle and Slaney (2000), the Burns Perfectionism Scale is limited in what it can measure. As more recent scales have been developed (e.g. Hewitt & Flett, 1991; Frost et al., 1990) to measure the multidimensional nature of perfectionism, the Burns Perfectionism Scale fails to encapsulate the complexity of perfectionism, although it does tell us about concern over mistakes and personal standards.

A final limitation was the date the data were originally collected. As noted previously the data for the sample of Latter-day Saint students at BYU was collected in 1995 and was analyzed some 17 years after the fact. The question can be raised whether the findings for a sample collected in the year 2012 would be comparable to the sample in our study. Although it can be argued that the genotypic expression of these variables would remain the same in humanity, it is unknown whether the phenotypic expression of these variables changes over time. It is our opinion that any variance in expression of these variables would be minimal and inconsequential if the same study were replicated, but this is an empirical question that can only be answered by repeating this study.

Future Directions

Perfectionism among religious populations has rarely been studied. This is particularly true of religious traditions like The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints where adherents hold to a belief in godlike perfection, and hold themselves to high standards and expectations. Future researchers may discover new insights religious expressions of perfectionism. Further research is warranted to examine the interaction of these among intra- and interpersonal dimensions of perfectionism found among scales by Hewitt and Flett (1991), and Frost et al. (1990). Our research leaves a number of questions unanswered that may be explored in future research such as, What types of multidimensional perfectionism do Latter-day Saints exhibit; What alternate variables could be predictive of perfectionism; and What effects may Latter-day Saint student's doctrinal misunderstanding of LDS doctrines of perfection have on students?

Conclusion

Despite the limitations of the study, a number of conclusions are possible. First, the Latter-day Saint students in this sample were not more susceptible to perfectionism than are other samples that have been reported in the literature, including samples of Catholic and Protestant students. Second, the strongest predictors of perfectionism in this study were shame, depression, and religious fundamentalism. These findings are theoretically meaningful, and consistent with previous research, and provide incentive for further study of these constructs. Finally, intrinsic religiousness and Christian orthodoxy, two measures of religious devoutness, were not predictive of perfectionism. This finding is consistent with a large body of research, which has found that these forms of religiousness devoutness tend to be associated with positive psychosocial functioning.

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Appendix A: Review of Literature

As part of this thesis on perfectionism in Latter-day Saint students, an appendix was added to review the literature surrounding the subject of perfectionism and what perfection entails for Latter-day Saints.

Perfectionism

Flett and Hewitt (2007) have defined perfectionism as "a complex construct that reflects the interplay of cognitive, emotional, motivational, and behavioral factors and processes" (p. 234). Perfectionism is a personality trait thought to be integral to the development and maintenance of several pathological illnesses. Studies have found links between perfectionism and eating disorders, obsessive-compulsive disorder, depression, anxiety, and phobias (Halmi et al., 2000; Hewitt & Flett, 1991a, 1991b; Pratt, Telch, Labouvie, Wilson, & Agras, 2001). Perfectionism has also been linked to personality disorders such as borderline personality disorder and schizotypal personality disorder as well as schizoid, avoidant, histrionic, anti-social and passive aggressive personality patterns (Hewitt & Flett, 1991b). It would appear that these links condemn perfectionism as a purely maladaptive construct. However, over the years the construct of perfectionism has been extensively debated. Two major areas of debate to conceptualize perfectionism concern 1) whether or not there is room for both good and bad value-laden subtypes of perfectionism and 2) the dimensionality of the construct. These contrasting views will be reviewed first in this review. Following this, the next portion of the review will focus on how perfectionism develops within the individual and the underlying psychological mechanisms of impairment.

Bad and Good?

Scientific inquiry, research, and psychometrics have lent support that there are multiple ways of conceptualizing perfectionism. One question posed by Tozzi et al. (2004) asked if perfectionism is "best conceptualized as including both healthy and pathological features (p. 484)." Many researchers have concluded that there are two forms of perfectionism (Bieling, Israeli, Smith, & Antony, 2004). In some research circles it is classified as a dichotomous construct; a construct with "good" value and "bad" value attributed to it. In the literature perfectionism has been clarified with the following terminology: adaptive and maladaptive (Slaney & Ashby, 1998); normal and neurotic (Hamachuk, 1978); and positive striving and maladaptive evaluative concerns (Bieling et al., 2004). Stoeber, Harris, and Moon (2007) defined healthy perfectionism as a state of being "high in perfectionistic striving and low in perfectionistic concerns" (p. 7). Following this logic would indicate that unhealthy perfectionism implies high levels of perfectionistic striving and perfectionistic concerns.

Though many see these two forms there is debate that argues otherwise. Pacht (1984) rejected the idea that there is a "normal," "healthy," or an "adaptive" type of perfectionism and instead attribute perfectionism to pathological disturbance only. Pacht concluded that "adaptive perfectionism" as it is so called, should be referred to as something completely different and autonomous from the perfectionism label. Frost et al. (1990) stated "psychological problems associated with perfectionism are probably more closely associated with…critical evaluation tendencies than with the setting of excessively high standards" (p. 450). While it is evident from the literature that there are some desirable behaviors associated with "adaptive perfectionism," focus in this study will be on perfectionism as measured by the Burns Perfectionism Scale.

Dimensionality

Tozzi et al. (2004) also asked if perfectionism ought to be construed as one-dimensional or as a multidimensional construct. Some researchers have conceptualized perfectionism as a unidimensional construct—focused on thematic elements of people linking personal worth to accomplishment and relentless drive for achievement (Burns, 1980). This view originally centered on the viewpoint that perfectionism is merely psychopathological. Burns (1980) viewed perfectionism as a pathological unidimensional construct. He stated, "I want to make clear what I mean by perfectionism. I do not mean the healthy pursuit of excellence…The perfectionists I am talking about are those whose standards are high beyond reach or reason, people who strain compulsively and unremittingly toward impossible goals…" (p. 34).

Burns (1980), in introducing his Perfectionism Scale, did not include descriptive statistics though he did state "preliminary studies suggest that about half of the population is likely to score from +2 to +16..."(p. 44). In oral communication Burns told McRae (1982) that one of his preliminary samples, a 65 participant sample of Coca-Cola Executives, demonstrated a Mean Score of 10 (a 30 using Burns, 1983 adjusted scale). A plot chart of this sample would demonstrate a significantly negatively skewed distribution in comparison to our normally distributed sample. The large discrepancy between Burns (1980) statement that "half the population is likely to score between +2 to +16" (M = 30) and the number of samples (including ours) included in Table 1 is surprising to us and encourages us to call into question his methodology (i.e. using Coca-Cola Executives, from what it appears to be, his norm sample, who may tend to be more prone to have concern over mistakes, and personal standards—as evidenced in his sample).

This discrepancy also calls into question as to whether the Burns Perfectionism Scale is a measure of *unhealthy* perfectionism (Pearson & Gleaves, 2006) or that "personal standards" and

"concern over mistakes" are even pathological. A large reason Burns Perfectionism Scale is considered by some to be a measure of unhealthy perfectionism is that items for it were taken from the Dysfunctional Attitudes Scale (Weissman & Beck, 1978), a clinical instrument to measure negative attitudes of people with depression. Because of this, as Stoeber & Otto (2006) state, "it comes as no surprise that perfectionism was found to be negative, dysfunctional, and even pathological (p. 3)." The near-normal distribution of mean scores in our sample, as well as numerous other samples (e.g. Hart et. al, 1998; Adderholdt-Elliott, 1984; McRae, 1982) calls into question this assertion that perfectionism, as measured by the Burns Perfectionism Scale is merely maladaptive. It appears that perfectionism (in regards to personal standards and concern over mistakes), as measured by Burn's Perfectionism Scale, is a normal human trait and that only at extreme ends would it be unhealthy. It seems as though even Burns (1983), who still considered his scale a measure of unhealthy perfectionism, later allowed for some adaptivity to the construct (i.e. his use of "healthy" to describe scores between 1-10).

Some researchers feel that Burn's view is too simplistic to describe the amount of variability within the construct, including the interpersonal and intrapersonal facets. In the early 1990s researchers began to break with traditional views and develop other ways of envisioning perfectionism (Bardone-Cone et al., 2007). Frost, Marten, Lahart and Rosenblate's (1990) popular multidimensional model divided perfectionism into five main areas including "high personal standards, the perception of high parental expectations, the perception of high parental criticism, the doubting of the quality of one's actions, and a preference for order and organization" (p. 449). Several other multidimensional systems and models, some more popular than others, are currently employed in the research (Hewitt & Flett 1991b; Johnson & Slaney, 1996; Rheaume, Freeston, Dugas, Latarte, & Ladouceure, 1995).

Within recent years there has been pushback from some researchers who continue to favor a unidimensional construct of perfectionism (Rheaume et al., 1995; Shafran & Mansel, 2001; Shafran, Cooper, & Fairburn, 2002). Shafran et al. (2002) argued that their construct, "clinical perfectionism," is an appropriate way to measure perfectionism. It is a unidimensional construct defined as "the overdependence of self-evaluation on the determined pursuit of personally demanding, self-imposed, standards in at least one highly salient domain, despite adverse consequences" (p. 778). Hewitt and Flett (1991b) argued that perfectionism is more than a self-contained or self-imposed construct, as Shafran et al. (2002) would argue, and consists of intrapersonal and interpersonal dimensions. Their multidimensional model, one of the more popular used to organize and classify the varying aspects and features of perfectionism, is based on the Hewitt & Flett Multidimensional Perfectionism Scales (MPS; 1991b).

Etiology

There has been some support in the literature that some individuals may be genetically predisposed to perfectionism (Halmi et al., 2000; Srinivasagam et al., 1995; Woodside et al., 2002). Woodside et al. (2002) suggested that in addition to the genetic factor it is possible that perfectionism is passed from parents to their children through "an environmental pathway such as modeling" (p. 297). There are many other familial dynamics considered in the development and maintenance of perfectionism. Birth order has been considered by some to be influential in development of perfectionism (Ashby, LoCicero, & Kenney, 2003). Flett, Hewitt and Singer (1995) cited parental authority style as a contributor. Frost et al. (1990) agreed that parents play a direct role in the perfectionistic development of their offspring. Some researchers have linked the attachment styles between parents and offspring as a predictor of perfectionism (Rice &

Mirzadeh, 2000). Hamacheck (1978) proposed that in the absence of expectations from parents or significant others may induce a child to set their own standards of perfection.

Rogers (1959) believed that perfectionism may stem from the belief that self-worth is dependent on performance. This belief originates from internalizing the belief, conceived through interpersonal interaction, that value as a human being is dependent upon ability to execute life tasks and goals. Other factors influencing perfectionism may come from sociocultural pressures for things to be exact (Bardone-Cone, 2007; Hewitt & Flett, 1991b). Flett et al. (2002) argued that there has to be openness on the part of the individual to engage or participate in socialization. Some researchers theorize that prerequisite to developing perfectionism is the aptitude, realistic or perceived, that one is able to demonstrate perfectionism. In other words, to develop perfectionism, one must first have the ability or think they have the ability to achieve and second, they must have been successful in accomplishing life tasks in times past. Flett et al. (2002) conclude that those with perfectionism will migrate to achievement areas in which they feel they are able to be successful.

The literature on perfectionism level differences between genders is lacking though some researchers (e.g. Hewitt & Flett, 1991b) have maintained that for certain aspects of perfectionism there are differences between genders. The differences that have been found have lacked statistical significance. Chang and Sanna (2001) point out that often researchers only report gender differences in levels of perfectionism if they are significant. If they do not find significant gender differences they then analyze their data without regard for gender. Of those gender level differences that are not significant however, as Blankenstein, Dunkley and Wilson (2008) argue, it is possible to find how perfectionism expresses itself by gender. Even with this being stated a review of the literature demonstrates mixed results in this regard (Blankstein & Winkworth,

2004; Enns, Cox, & Clara, 2002; Preusser, Rice, & Ashby, 1994). It is our conclusion, based upon a review of the literature, that gender will not account for any significant differences among the variables in predicting perfectionism. Though Hewitt, Flett, Turnbull-Donovan, and Mikail (1991) cite that gender differences in perfectionism are an important issue, we conclude that the variables we will use to predict perfectionism will not favor a particular gender. One study by Stoeber and Stoeber (2009) determined with one exception (i.e., an unrelated finding that people were perfectionistic about children's education) that perfectionism is "largely independent of gender and age" (p. 13).

The literature concerning maturation, or age and grade level differences in perfectionism tendencies is another area where literature is minimal. One study by Enns, Cox, Sareen and Freeman (2001) noted, using scales by Frost et al., 1990, that medical students with a mean age of 25 years demonstrated "higher personal standards (an adaptive aspect of perfectionism) and lower doubts about actions (a maladaptive aspect of perfectionism)" (p. 1039), than first year undergraduate students with a mean age of 19.1 years. However, these results must be taken in consideration of the probable likelihood that only medical students with high personal standards and low doubts about actions were accepted into medical school. We conclude—given the small range of age for our sample of college-aged students within their respective class standing, and due to past research that argues against age differences being predictive of perfectionism (Stoeber & Stoeber, 2009)—that class standing will not be predictive of perfectionism within our sample.

Mechanism of impairment. According to Tangney (2002), one of the core features of perfectionism is that it self-programs the individual to over-evaluate everything within their perception. This is in addition to the tendency to set lofty goals and maintain a high standard of

living for themselves (Tangney, 2002). Another feature of perfectionism is the tendency to expend great effort and large amounts of time making sure that everything is done with exactness. Probably the most striking characteristic of perfectionism is to see accomplishment in the dichotomous perception of success and failure. There is no middle ground in viewing results of performance; either the results of their strivings are perfect or they are not. The dichotomous pairings of "saint or sinner", "good or bad", and "superb or pathetic" explain perfectionism well within context. Anything less than perfect is equated with failure (Barrow & Moore, 1983; Halmi et al., 2000). Individuals with perfectionism find difficulty specifying and selecting domains in which they demand perfection. This lack of discrimination lends the person to pay excessive attention to detail in matters that are really not that important. This helps explain why perfectionism often results in pathological disturbance (Tangney, 2002). Other features of perfectionism include: replacing or diminishing the importance of past successes or present accomplishments for a strong rumination on what lies in the future; shame due to performance in a personally meaningful activity as "mediocre"; guilt provoking thoughts of perceived demands (i.e. "I must do this" or "I should have done that"); and the establishment of compulsive behaviors (Barrow & Moore, 1983; Burns, 1980; Pacht, 1984; Miller, 1986). The maintenance of perfectionism is directly tied to its development in the individual.

Perfectionism is dominantly self-evaluative in nature. Because human behavior always has an effect on human emotion it is important to examine the emotions brought on by the excessive self-evaluative tendencies found in perfectionism. There is some theoretical speculation that self-conscious emotions such as shame may influence the development of perfectionism. According to Tangney (2002), little has been done in research circles

investigating the connection between measures of perfectionism and the emotions brought on by self-evaluation.

Self-Conscious emotions and perfectionism. Major self-conscious social emotions that have been researched in regards to perfectionism include guilt, pride, and shame among others. Research has demonstrated a link between perfectionism and self-conscious constructs (Tangney, 2002). As discussed previously, those with perfectionism have a hard time discriminating the domains in which they demand perfection. This is especially true when it comes to the domains of self-conscious emotions. While the average person will be able to pick and choose when and in which domain it is appropriate to self-evaluate, the individual with perfectionism will not. For this purpose it is important to examine the literature on perfectionism and self-conscious emotional constructs.

Guilt and shame. Helm, Berecz, and Nelson (2001) asserted that "as the Christian church pushes for higher standards, a better ideal self, it may be producing more shameful people. However, since perfection is impossible, the strivings for perfection creates a spiral of unrealistic and unreasonable expectations that cause shame and guilt" (p. 26). Researchers have long hypothesized that there is a relationship between perfectionism and the self-conscious emotions of guilt and shame. Guilt and shame have been the most widely studied self-conscious emotions though much yet remains to be done (Tangney, Stuewig, and Mashek, 2007). Tangney (2002) asserted that "shame and guilt do not differ substantially in the types of transgressions or failures that elicit them" (p. 200). Though terms are sometimes used interchangeably and both can be experienced simultaneously following behavior, researchers differentiate between the two as separate constructs measuring separate emotions (Tangney et al., 2007). Both of these constructs attribute responsibility or blame in relation to the self, albeit two separate dimensions of the self

(Blum, 2008; Stuewig et al., 2010). This point will be discussed in more depth in subsequent paragraphs.

Lewis (1971), the first to distinguish between the two constructs, described guilt as a feeling resulting from a negative evaluation of a behavior deemed inappropriate by the self. Lewis further stated that "guilt is about things in the real world—acts or failures to act, events for which one bears responsibility" (p. 431). This sense of responsibility, or rather the lack thereof, results in the feeling of remorse and sorrow. Contrary to Lewis's (1971) belief that guilt was merely an emotion emanating entirely from within, Baumeister, Stillwell, and Heatherton (1994) asserted that guilt was also interpersonal in respects that often guilt is elicited through interactions with others. Attempts to reconcile these two seemingly contrarian views was Millar and Tesser's (1988) submission that when shared beliefs and social expectations within communal relationships are disregarded, intentionally or unintentionally, by an individual, the individual will tend to self-examine their violation to those beliefs and expectations; therefore, they will produce a guilt response. The constructs of guilt and shame are often intertwined in consequence of a behavior. However, the guilt construct focuses directly on behavior as the catalyst for guilt, whereas shame focuses on the person from which that behavior came.

There is some evidence that perfectionism is related to guilt (Fedewa, Burns, & Gomez, 2005; Lutwak & Ferrari, 1996; Stoeber et al., 2007). In a study conducted by Tangney (2002) it was found that Hewitt and Fletts' (1991a) interpersonal construct of socially-prescribed perfectionism and guilt were inversely related. Hewitt and Flett (1991b), though their findings regarding gender differences were not significant, discovered the positive correlation between measures of guilt and socially prescribed perfectionism in males was smaller than in females. Tangney (2002) concluded that failures in perfectionism are generally equated with a global

sense of worthlessness rather than attributing the failure specific to the mistake. Due to the unidimensional nature of the Burns perfectionism scale (BPS; 1980) used in this study, it may be hard to reason that perfectionism will be predictive of guilt. Though much more needs to be done examining the relationship between guilt and perfectionism, shame is more likely to be associated with perfectionism because of its global nature.

According to Goss and Allan (2009) the self-conscious emotion of shame is "a multifaceted, self-conscious emotion that involves affective, social, cognitive, behavioral and physiological components" (p. 304). As mentioned previously, at the root of shame is the focus on the self as a person. According to Lewis (1971), shame is a self-evaluative emotion that goes beyond behavior- induced guilt and strikes at the value of global self-worth. In experiences that elicit shame is the tendency for others to be overly concerned with what others presumably think of them. Individuals with perfectionism tend to stretch the magnitude of a single failure in behavior to general failure as a person. This in turn leads to shame (Tangney, 2002). Not only do individuals with perfectionism over-generalize, they also manifest "all or nothing" thinking patterns (Hewitt et al., 1991). Tangney (2002) pointed out a commonality between perfectionism and shame. Those with perfectionism and those experiencing shame have little concern on how their mistakes might affect others. Their real focus is on how the affected person(s) will evaluate them.

Some researchers have hypothesized that shame is at the root of perfectionism and have found some support for this (Ashby, Rice, & Martin, 2006). Contrary to Ashby et al. (2006), Canter (2008), did not find any significance of shame as a predictor of perfectionism. However, this may be due to the different scales used by both of these parties in conducting their research. Fedewa et al., (2005) found that there was a statistically significant relationship between

perfectionism and state shame. (State shame is intermittent while trait shame is constant). In some circles it is held that perfectionism is utilized to manage feelings of worthlessness or shame (Kaufman, 1996; Pattison, 2000). Tangney (2002), wary of the work that has been done in times past, viewed the research methodology used in some studies on perfectionism and shame as "sketchy" (p. 206). Tangney (2002) gave the work done by Christensen, Danko, and Johnson (1993), who found a minute relationship between shame and perfectionism, as an example of this. Regardless of the work done in this area, legitimate or "sketchy", much more needs to be done in examining the relationships between these constructs. In light of Tangney's (2002) work and despite her criticism of past research, this study looks to support the finding that shame is predictive of perfectionism due to the potential for failure to generalize to the individuals "global" self.

 Externalization. Externalization, often used as a one-word reference in the literature, refers to externalization of blame. Externalization is often used in connection with guilt and shame in identifying responsibility for an action. While the construct of shame blames the "global" self, and the construct of guilt blames a faulty action in relation to the self, externalization projects blame away from self. It projects the cause of an action onto an outside, other-than-self influence (Stuewig, Tangney, Heigel & McCloske, 2010). Externalization has been seen as a defense mechanism that occurs in response to a shaming experience (Tangney, 1995; Tangney, Wagner, Fletcher, & Gramzow, 1992). It is evident from the literature that little, if anything exists that examines relationships between perfectionism and externalization of blame. Relationships between externalization and other constructs like shame and guilt are also lacking in the literature. Much of what does exist however, deals with anger and aggression (Anderson & Bushman, 2002; Colder & Stice, 1998). One reason for the assumption that

perfectionism may be predictive of externalizing blame may be due to the commonality both share in placing the focus from self to other. It seems that if projected expectations are not met it is possible that blame could be externalized to that which the expectations were projected. For this reason we believe that in our sample, perfectionism will be predictive of externalization.

Pride. Similar to the constructs of shame and guilt are emotions on the opposite side of the spectrum. Pride is one of these emotions. Tangney et al. (2007) have referred to pride as the "neglected sibling" of these other self-conscious emotions (p. 360). This is due in part to the relatively little amount of research done on this construct relative to shame and guilt. Tangney (1990) and Lewis (1992) have identified two types of pride, both of which have been empirically supported as separate facets (Tracy & Robins, 2006). The first is termed alpha pride or hubristic pride and the second is termed beta or authentic pride (Lewis, 1992; Tangney, 1990; Tracy & Robbins, 2006).

The first form of pride, also termed alpha pride (Tangney, 1990) or hubristic pride, is a self-centered emotion resulting from the attribution of success solely to the global self. It points to the self-perception of supposed superiority and non-delusionary grandiosity of oneself, a trait commonly condemned in society (Lewis, 1992). Other words associated with this construct include smugness, conceitedness, egotistical, pompous, snobbish, arrogant and stuck-up (Tracy & Robbins, 2006). Hubristic pride has shown to be negatively correlated with authentic self-esteem (Tracy & Robbins, 2007) and linked to aggression, impulsivity and to "extrinsic values of public recognition and social dominance" (Carver, Sinclair, & Nelson, 2010, p. 698). Hubristic pride has also been linked to poor psychological functioning (Orth, Robbins & Soto, 2010).

Authentic pride (Tracy & Robins, 2006) or beta pride is the other type of pride mentioned in the literature (Tangney, 1990). It is the type of pride that draws attention away from the self

and onto particular behaviors. According to Mascolo and Fischer (1995), authentic pride is defined as a self-conscious affect "generated by appraisals that one is responsible for a socially valued outcome or for being a socially valued person" (p. 66). As Anthony, Holmes, and Wood (2007) explained, authentic pride "tracks the relative position of the self with respect to the evaluations of others" (Williams & Destano, 2008, p. 1014). Authentic pride is social by nature and is utilized as a tool for motivation (Williams & Destano, 2008). Authentic pride has been shown to be positively associated with self esteem (Tracy & Robbins, 2007), self-control, and is linked to "adaptive achievement and goal engagement" (Carver et al., 2010, p. 698) and positively related to psychological well-being (Orth et al., 2010).

A thorough literature review found little explaining the relationship between pride and perfectionism. Tangney (2002) did find a positive association between both measures of pride and Hewitt and Fletts' (1991b) interpersonal measure of other-oriented perfectionism. This signifies that people may experience joy and contempt towards those whom they expect perfection from. However, these findings can only be taken lightly due to poor internal consistency of the scales used to measure pride. Another study found a significant relationship between pride and perfectionism. Authors have included however that there were many limitations to their study (Stoeber et al., 2007). One reason to believe that pride is predictive of perfectionism, as Tangney (2002) pointed out, are interpersonal reasons. Individuals may project their personal expectations onto other people. When others fail to meet these expectations a sense of arrogance may ensue that is common to hubristic pride. It is hard to say whether perfectionism would be predictive of authentic pride; however Tangney (2002) asserts that because of the weak internal consistency of the pride scales used in the TOSCA measures, it is possible. The present study will address this matter further.

Mental health and perfectionism. Two areas related to mental health that have been researched in regards to perfectionism include anxiety and depression (Fedewa et al., 2005; Kawamura, Hunt, Frost, & Dibartolo, 2001; Blatt & Zuroff, 1992; Kanfer & Hagerman, 1981). As discussed previously, those with perfectionism have a tendency to see their performance of tasks or self-worth through a polarized (i.e. "saint" or "sinner") lens with no middle ground for error or failure (Barrow & Moore, 1983; Halmi et al., 2000). Naturally, anticipation of failure may result in feelings of anxiety and feelings of helplessness and worthlessness. For this purpose it is important to examine the literature on perfectionism and the mental health constructs of anxiety and depression.

Anxiety. Anxiety is a negative feeling that Lewis (1970) defined "as an emotional state, with the subjectively experienced quality of fear as a closely related emotion" (p. 77). Anxiety is a common emotion Lewis further described as a disproportionate response emotion that occurs in relation to life events that may or may not happen. Like many other social constructs, anxiety is seen as multidimensional. Anxiety has been differentiated into two types of anxiety, namely trait and state anxiety. Spielberger and Sydeman (1994) defined state anxiety as "an emotional state, […that] consists of unpleasant, consciously perceived feelings of tension, apprehension, nervousness, and worry, with associated activation or arousal of the autonomic nervous system" p. 294). State anxiety addresses present emotional state of the individual (Spielberger, 2010). On the other hand, trait anxiety has been seen as a disposition (Endler & Kocovski, 2001) that "assess[es] individual differences in the tendency to perceive a wide range of situations as dangerous or threatening" (Spielberger & Sydeman, 1994, p. 294) Trait anxiety addresses anxiety across time as a function of personality (Spielberger, 2010).

In recent years the spotlight has been turned on finding possible relationships between anxiety and perfectionism. Fedewa et al. (2005) found a statistically significant relationship between perfectionism and anxiety. Kawamura et al., (2001) also observed similar findings. Using Hewitt and Fletts' intrapersonal perfectionism scales (MPS; 1991b) and the Spielberger State-Trait Anxiety Inventory (STAI; Spielberger, Gorsuch, & Lushene, 1970), Deffenbacher, Zwemer, Whisman, Hill, and Sloan (1986) demonstrated that perfectionism is correlated to trait anxiety in college students.

Another study by Flett, Hewitt, and Dyck (1989) used the STAI and the Burns Perfectionism Scale (BPS; 1980) in college-aged students. These researchers found significant relationships between perfectionism and trait anxiety. In repeating their work later, using the Endler Multidimensional Anxiety Scales (Endler, Edwards, & Vitelli, 1991) measure instead of the STAI they again found significant relationships between the same variables. Flett, Hewitt, Endler & Tassone (1994/1995) found that Hewitt and Fletts' (1991b) socially prescribed perfectionism was correlated with trait and state anxiety in college students. This indicates that individuals who perceive others hold perfectionistic expectations of them are more likely to experience prolonged as well as situational anxiety. The link between the two was even greater in the context of threats of self-worth.

One reason to believe that perfectionism is predictive of anxiety is due to the perfectionistic need for things to be exact in the here-and-now. As anxiety is concerned with future events, a person with perfectionistic tendencies may feel that a "here-and-now" mentality of perfection they want is not progressing as fast or in a direction they perceive it should. They furthermore may come to a realization that the ultimate goal will not be obtained. In both cases the end result would be increased levels of anxiety.

Depression. Depression is a common mental health impairment that is marked by feelings of worthlessness, suicidal ideation, mental agitation, despondent mood, difficulty in concentration, and significantly reduced pleasure in activities one normally enjoys (APA, 2000). Condon (2004) pointed out that if children with negative perfectionistic tendencies are not treated there is an increase in likelihood that these children will be more susceptible to developing many different physical, emotional, and mental health problems. Depression is one of these. Though much of the early work linking depression to perfectionism was held with a great deal of skepticism, due to the concerns stemming from the use of self-reports in collecting data and subsequent potential for bias in those reports (Wiggins, 1973), many researchers recently have expressed support for this conclusion that depression is linked to perfectionism (Blatt & Zuroff, 1992; Frost, Benton, & Dowrick, 1990; Hewitt & Flett, 1990, 1991a; LaPointe & Crandell, 1980; Nelson, 1977). One research team concluded that experiences of failure are more likely to occur when an individual has numerous rigid self-expectations and standards commonly found in perfectionism. These experiences of failure in connection with perfectionistic self-expectations lead to depression after responsibility for failure experiences are internalized and resulting distress ensues (Kanfer and Hagerman, 1981).

In developing their own scales to measure perfectionism Hewitt and Flett (1991a) and Frost et al. (1990) determined which specific aspects of perfectionism relate to depression. Hewitt and Fletts' (1991a) interpersonal measures of socially prescribed perfectionism (i.e. perceived expectations others have on self) and self-oriented perfectionism (i.e. self-derived expectations one has for self) were found to be related to depression. Frost et al.'s (1990) measures of doubt regarding one's action (Doubtings of Action scale), perception of high

parental standards (Parental Expectations scale), and concern over making mistakes (Concern over Mistakes scale) were also linked to depression.

As this study is concerned with college-aged students it is important to note that perfectionism has been linked to depression in university students in past research (e.g., Flett, Hewitt, Garshowitz, & Martin, 1997). In looking for gender differences, Sherry, Hewitt, Flett, and Harvey (2003) found that college-aged females with socially prescribed perfectionism in conjunction with life hassles was predictive of depression. Furthermore, they found that self-oriented perfectionism in the presence of perceived coping difficulties was also predictive of depression in females; both of these measures of perfectionism and interacting variables were not predictive of depression in males. Another study by Hewitt, Newton, Flett, and Callandar (1997) found that hopelessness, a common feature of depression, was significantly correlated with self-oriented and self-prescribed perfectionism in females yet no such correlation for males. Due to the one-dimensionality of the Burns Perfectionism Scale, and its lack of specificity on interpersonal dimensions of perfectionism, we predict that no gender differences will exist in our sample. For similar reasons mentioned above, this study will seek to add support to the findings that perfectionism is predictive of depression in both males and females.

Interpersonal style and perfectionism. Hewitt and Fletts' (1991a) interpersonal constructs of perfectionism raise curiosity into whether perfectionism influences the reciprocal exchange of social expectations (real or imagined) that occur between the self and society. Furthermore, it is of interest whether this possible relationship may be instrumental in perpetuating or maintaining perfectionism. For this purpose it is important to examine the literature on perfectionism and the interpersonal constructs of social desirability and dogmatism.

Social desirability. Crowne and Marlowe (1960) defined social desirability as "a population of culturally acceptable and approved behaviors which are, at the same time, relatively unlikely to occur" (354). It has been a construct often used as a control variable to eliminate cultural bias or social motivation for participants in research to answer a certain way. The Social Desirability Scale produced by Crowne and Marlowe (SDS; 1960) eliminates psychopathology from measurement. This helps researchers to know that participant answers are independent of whether they have psychopathological tendencies or not. Scant is the literature identifying relationships between perfectionism and social desirability. What little there is indicates that there is no relationship or a very weak relationship between the two constructs. A scale created to measure performance perfectionism demonstrated that socially-prescribed and self-oriented performance perfectionism were not related to social desirability (Chang, 2006). Hewitt and Flett (1991b) in validating their multidimensional perfectionism scales (MPS; 1991) found that lower levels of social desirability were associated with socially prescribed perfectionism and other-oriented perfectionism (i.e. self-derived expectations one has for others). Another research group found a weak relationship between perfectionism and social desirability (Clavin, Clavin, Gayton, & Broda, 1996). This study will seek to build upon the scant amount of literature in this area and shed light onto the possible relationship between these two variables.

Dogmatism. Common to religious communities is the tendency for some group members to be dogmatic about their religious beliefs. Rokeach (1954) defined dogmatism as "(a) a relatively closed cognitive organization of beliefs and disbeliefs about reality, *(b)* organized around a central set of beliefs about absolute authority which, in turn, (c) provides a framework for patterns of intolerance and qualified tolerance toward others" (p. 195). After an exhaustive search there seems to be a lack of literature examining relationships between dogmatism and

perfectionism though the literature often grouped these two constructs in lists describing relationships to other constructs. Because perfectionism is associated with self-evaluation and the need for high standards, and dogmatism focuses on belief content as the function, dogmatism may help to explain how perfectionism is maintained. One reason to believe there might be a relationship between the two is that those with self-evaluative, high standard perfectionistic tendencies may see dogmatic belief systems as a necessary component to maintaining perfectionistic qualities. This study will address this issue in determining if perfectionism is predictive of dogmatism. It may be evident that one who is high in perfectionism may be more apt to be more dogmatic.

  Religiosity and perfectionism. Another factor debated that seems to implicate the development and maintenance of perfectionistic tendencies includes religiosity. Religiosity is a central aspect of the sample chosen for this study. This necessitates a review on religiosity and important components of this construct. Ashby and Huffman (1999) found a statistically significant relationship between perfectionism and religiosity. Some have argued that the interplay between perfectionism and religiosity may be maladaptive (Heise &Steitz, 1991; Mebane & Ridley, 1988) while others have seen the relationship as adaptive (Bergin et al., 1988; Timpe, 1989). Some have found evidence supporting both (Ashby, LoCicero, Kottman, Schoen, & Honsell, 1998; Ashby & Rice, 2002; Frost, Heimberg, Holt, Mattia, & Neubauer, 1993; Rice, Ashby, & Slaney, 1998). The literature is abundant from both sides of the aisle though the empirical data from both sides of the research seem to be lacking (Ashby & Huffman, 1999). In order to better explain the seemingly contradictory findings between perfectionism and religiosity, it is important to explain the variability within the construct of religiosity from a historical theoretical perspective.

Historically there has been hesitancy in the field of psychology to mix the science of psychology with religiosity and spirituality issues (Wulff, 1997). It was not until the mid-1970s that religion was added as a separate division within the American Psychological Association (Reuder, 1999). As a result religious issues have become more mainstream within the field of psychology. In order to examine past work in identifying relationships between perfectionism and religiosity, it is important to briefly examine the multidimensionality of religiosity.

Religiosity refers to "beliefs, practices, relationships, [and] experiences having to do with the sacred that are explicitly and historically rooted in established institutionalized systems" (Pargament, Exline, Jones, Mahoney, & Shafranske, 2011). Spirituality on the other hand is similar in definition with the exception that these criteria (e.g. beliefs, practices, etc.) are not tied to any particular institutionalized system (Pargament et al., 2011). Berrett, Hardman, O'Grady, and Richards (2007) differentiated the two as well describing the construct of religiosity as external activities and behaviors such as church attendance, scripture reading, prayer and meaningful service. Spirituality, they have argued, goes beyond these behaviors. Spirituality refers to the internal experience of the individual; it is described as a means of enlightenment, inspiration, purpose and meaning with the Divine or transcendental belief system (Berett et al., 2007). Richards and Bergin (1997) pointed out the relationship between these two constructs by stating that "it is possible to be religious without being spiritual and spiritual without being religious" (p. 13). For many people both religiosity and spirituality are central to their worldview (Bergin et al., 1988; Owen, 2004; Richards & Bergin, 2005).

This is assumed to be true for the sample used in the present study. Focus in this particular study will deal with constructs related to religiosity. Literature on religious orientation, religious fundamentalism, and Christian orthodoxy will be addressed in relation to perfectionism.

Religious orientation. Religious orientation refers to the *intent* and *purpose* of participating in religious behavior. Allport (1950, 1959) believed that all religious behavior was motivated by religious orientation. His belief led him to differentiate between two types of religiosity. One he named intrinsic religiosity and other extrinsic. Allport's framework has been the most used and most influential framework in the psychological study of religion (Donahue, 1985). According to Allport (1966) intrinsic religiosity is demonstrated when faith is held "as a supreme value in its own right, religious sentiment [that] floods the whole life with motivation and meaning" (Allport, 1966, p. 454). In other words, it is religiosity that is self sustaining and is capable of motivating the individual on its own, provides for existential meaning directed towards self-completion or wholeness, and a structure with a value system that is a driving force in itself, among other things (Wulff, 1996). Due to intrinsic religiosity being associated to healthy functioning in the literature (Ashby & Huffman, 1999; Bergin et al., 1987), it is reasoned that there will be no relation between this construct in predicting perfectionism or an inverse relationship between the two.

Extrinsic religiosity is held by an individual who is motivated to participate in religion in order to gain something of value. Religion is a means to an end. This can be "safety, social standing, solace [and/or] endorsement for one's chosen way of life" (Allport, 1966, p. 454). Kirkpatrick (1989) used factor analysis to divide extrinsic religiosity into two sub-components to account for the differing focus of particular items on Allport's Religious Orientation Scale (ROS; Allport & Ross, 1967). One of the sub-components focuses on the benefits of religion from a social standpoint or what is obtained through interactions with others. Entitled social-extrinsicness, it focuses, for example, on church as a means to develop quality friendships with upstanding people. The other sub-component, entitled personal-extrinsicness focuses on the

benefits that an individual gains personally without social interaction. For example, this type of religiosity is characterized by the use of religion as a means to obtain personal support, safety, guidance, or direction (McFarland, 1989). Extrinsic religiosity has been linked to maladaptive functioning in the literature (Ashby & Huffman, 1999, Bergin et al., 1987). Because of this support in the literature it can be reasoned that a positive relationship may exist between extrinsic religiosity and perfectionism.

     Christian orthodoxy. Christian orthodoxy is another dimension of religiosity common in the literature. *Orthodoxy* refers to the strong religious commitment made to a particular set of beliefs or tenets. The focus in orthodoxy is on the content of *what* is believed. Fullerton and Hunsberger (1982) referred to Christian orthodoxy as "the acceptance of well defined, central tenants of the Christian religion" (p. 318). These beliefs pertain to the nature and existence of Deity, Christ's roles, accomplishments, and purposes, the reality of resurrection and other key doctrines surrounding Judeo-Christianity. After an exhaustive search nothing directly linking Christian orthodoxy and perfectionism was found. One reason there might be no association is that the Christian Orthodoxy Scale does not address how religion is expressed only what is believed. Religious fundamentalism deals with how religion is expressed and as perfectionism is an expression it might be reasoned that one may predict the other. In our sample of Latter-day Saint college students there seems to be no reason to believe that Christian orthodoxy and perfectionism are related if these college students have a clear and correct understanding of Latter-day Saint beliefs, especially a proper understanding of what the "doctrine of perfection" entails in Latter-day Saint theology (this doctrine will be explained hereafter). Although the doctrine of perfection alone is not necessarily emphasized as one of the key tenets of beliefs

within the Christian Orthodoxy Scale per se, it is our assumption that there is no reason to believe that Christian orthodoxy predicts perfectionism.

   Religious fundamentalism. Another related construct to religious orthodoxy is religious fundamentalism. Though these two share some distinct features they have been shown to measure different facets of religiosity (Kirkpatrick & Hood, 1990). While orthodoxy focuses on belief content, fundamentalism strikes at a particular "mindset" (Conway & Siegelman, 1982) or how religious functioning is *expressed*. An individual high in fundamentalism will exert rigidity in the manner it is expressed. This mindset is generally closed (Rokeach, 1960) and is authoritarian in nature (Altemeyer, 1981). Some of the more prominent features of rigid religious fundamentalism within Christian populations Hill (1995) pointed out are the beliefs in scriptural infallibility (both doctrinal and non-doctrinal elements contained therein), "evangelism of the 'lost' world," segregation from non-believers, and a pre-millennial view that Christ will return very shortly (p. 4). In one study perfectionism has been correlated with religious fundamentalism in males though researchers feel that further study in this regard is needed (Helm Jr., Berecz, & Nelson, 2001). One reason to believe that religious fundamentalism may predict perfectionism is the Biblical emphasis on perfection although this 'perfectionism' is often misconstrued and is a doctrine taken out of context (Mebane & Ridley, 1988). Those strong in religious fundamentalism may tend to hold to a belief that the commandment to be perfect insists that they need to be perfect now rather than utilizing the Atonement of Jesus Christ to make incremental changes towards perfection over time. For this purpose it is important to examine the meaning of perfection to Latter-day Saints. The expression of this belief may lend itself to predicting perfectionism within the sample of this study.

Latter-day Saint Conceptualization of Perfection

As *perfectionism* has already been explained in the first part of this literature review it is important to explore in-depth what *perfection*, in the religious sense, entails to Latter-day Saints and briefly explain how it differs from perfectionism. The purpose of this section of the review is not to provide an in-depth philosophical analysis on the differing theologies religions hold as it relates to perfectionism. It is first, however, an attempt to explain what perfection is and what it means to Latter-day Saints in this life and beyond.

God-like Perfection vs. Perfectionism

Latter-day Saints believe that Jesus Christ, the central figure of Christianity—taught his disciples during his earthly ministry that they must "be ye therefore perfect even as your Father in heaven is perfect" (Matthew 5:48). Like it was then, it continues to be a call for disciples of Christ to become as His Father and as He now are (3 Nephi 12:48). According to Rau (2011) "the possibility of godlike perfection is fundamental to a Latter-day Saint understanding of eternal life" (p. 37). It is important to remember as is said by this same Latter-day Saint educator "godly perfection is an illusion of the highest order for any human being. It is not only unrealistic, it is impossible—that is, until we speak of Jesus Christ" (Rau, 2011, p. 39). Godlike perfection relies almost entirely on the redeeming grace[1] of Jesus Christ while perfectionism, in futility, attempts to attain perfection in absence of this necessary redeeming quality (Rau, 2011).

Godlike perfection and perfectionism are entirely different concepts, although both are subscribed to by some Latter-day Saints (Rau, 2011). As alluded to previously, some Latter-day Saints may base and justify their perfectionistic tendencies, albeit erroneously, on their religious definition of perfection. With this belief they attempt to work their way to a state of perfection that grossly distorts what godlike perfection is and how it is obtained. When Latter-day Saints

speak of perfection within the context of their belief system they are not referring to "errorless performance" (Nelson, 1995).

A passage of scripture often misunderstood by Latter-day Saints, that may contribute to perfectionism in Latter-day Saints, states: "For we labor diligently to write, to persuade our children, and also our brethren, to believe in Christ, and to be reconciled to God; for we know that it is by grace that we are saved, *after all we can do"* (2 Nephi 25:23; emphasis added). Keller (2004) in citing Robinson (1992) states "many Latter-day Saints [mis]understand this to mean that grace completes whatever human beings are unable to do toward their own salvation. Thus, for many there is no rest in the gospel. There is a constant striving and fear that they have not done enough to merit or earn grace sufficient for their salvation. But grace earned or merited is not grace […] grace and works are not synonymous" (p.112-113). This is to say that a Latter-day Saint demonstrating perfectionism may seek to earn grace through attempting to flawlessly execute good works. Ironically, grace *cannot* be earned by individual merit. A Latter-day Saint striving for godly perfection understands grace as a gift of God, bestowed by Him, to those who exercise their faith[2] in Christ (Keller, 2004). A perfectionist often ignores the scriptural admonition to "not run faster than you have strength" (Mosiah 4:27; D&C 10:4). With perfectionism there is the tendency to avoid failure whereas godlike perfection embraces failure as a normal and essential part of the perfection process. Perfectionism demands immediacy whereas godlike perfection is both *event* and *process* that demands patient perseverance.

For purposes of illustrating what godlike perfection means to Latter-day Saints, the doctrine of perfection will be explained in two contexts. Nelson (1995) distinguishes these as *mortal perfection*—the degree of perfection we can attain during our life, and *eternal perfection*-—the ultimate perfection.

Mortal Perfection

It is integral to the understanding of the Latter-day Saint doctrine of perfection to identify how godlike perfection is possible in this life. Though it is true that the term "perfection" is a word that is liberally conveyed across many different domains or contexts—even among Latter-day Saints, an examination of each of these domains would be futile to the purposes of this review (e.g. the perfection obtained parallel parking a car just right, a football team winning all of its games, or an individual receiving a 100% score on an exam). Latter-day Saints believe that God expects perfection in some respects, but only through the Atonement of Christ.[3] These exceptions in particular are those domains that pertain to our salvation. Our concern here is to examine perfection as it relates to human weakness and in particular the concept of sin.[4]

Personal weakness, strengths and perfection. Though sin is fundamentally a (result of) weakness that all humankind are prone to in this sphere of mortality, the term "weakness" according to one Latter-day Saint psychologist should be distinguished from sin (Ulrich, 2009). Personal weakness can be defined as the "condition of being mortal and lacking ability, strength, or skill. [It] is a state of being. All people are weak" (*The Guide to the Scriptures*, 2012). It includes natural imperfections or flaws (other than sin) that come with the mortal experience— this includes a wide array of conditions including the human capacity to experience illness, disease, stress, anxiety, shame, depression, temptation, and heartache etc. Latter-day Saints are taught that personal weakness is allowed by God (Ether 12:27) and that over our lifespan weakness can serve as an essential refining process to help bring humanity closer to Him and towards *perfection*.

In the *Book of Mormon*, a primary Latter-day Saint book of scripture, the Lord states: "I give unto men weakness that they may be humble; and my grace is sufficient for all men that

humble themselves before me; for if they humble themselves before me, and have faith in me, then will I make weak things become strong unto them" (Ether 12:27). Fundamental to Latter-day Saints is the belief that humanity has agency, or ability to make choices. With this agency comes the responsibility to choose how we respond to the life circumstances we find ourselves in. Latter-day Saints believe that one central purpose allowing us human weakness is to help us develop or renew a relationship with Christ; a relationship that is predicated and sustained upon our humility and our faith (Faust, 1976). Though Christ during his life and ministry on earth lived a life completely free of sin, He too was subject to the weaknesses that are part of the human condition (inherited from His mortal mother and experienced through His Atoning sacrifice). Yet even in the experiencing of these weaknesses, He—without exception—submitted to His Father's will (Matthew 26:42). Ultimately, as part of His Atonement, He suffered not only for our sins, but for "pains and afflictions and temptations of every kind" as well as our "sicknesses" and "infirmities," "that he may know according to the flesh how to succor his people according to their infirmities" (Alma 7:11-12). Latter-day Saints subscribe to Christ's invitation to find rest in Him with His words:

> Come unto me, all ye who labour, and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light. (Matthew 11: 28-30)

These personal weaknesses, given our response of humility and faith, prepare us for the greater gift of divine grace as we turn to Christ in our afflictions. Paul, to the Corinthians wrote "When I am weak, then am I strong" (2 Corinthians 12:10). Christ's grace can help us overcome those weaknesses to turn them into strengths, or give us strength and the capacity to endure them. It is only in attaining Christ's grace that we are given "power to do righteous acts" (Jacob 4:6-7; *The*

Guide to the Scriptures, 2012). Though weakness is not sin, it can be a potential precursor to sin if in our response to it we are void of humility and faith in Christ. We can either choose to allow our weaknesses to bring us closer to Christ or turn us away from Christ and towards sin (2 Nephi 2:27).

In addition to the weaknesses we are given (i.e. allowed to have) in this life we are also given strengths—whether innate or developed. If weakness is construed as "lacking ability…or skill" than strength implies having abilities, skills, and those adaptive qualities of the human condition (e.g. ability to reason, talents, Christlike attributes of patience, humility, diligence etc.) (*Preach My Gospel*, 2004). Indeed, as was just pointed out, Latter-day Saints believe our weaknesses can become strengths if trust, humility, and faith in Christ are exercised. But just as "weakness" is not sin, neither are strengths to be equated to "perfection." Latter-day Saints believe that we continue in faith and humility our strengths can continue to be strengthened. Yet like weakness, our strengths can also become a potential precursor to sin if we fail to continue in humility and faith. This failure to continue in humility and faith partly defines the sin of pride (i.e. hubristic pride)—which is condemned in Latter-day Saint theology. It is often a rejection of Christ and His grace. It is also considered "enmity—[…] hatred toward, hostility to or a state of opposition" toward God (Benson, 1989). Without humility and faith, the divine grace can be withdrawn and we are left to ourselves until we again choose to be humble and exercise faith in Christ.

Latter-day Saints believe that a normal and necessary part of our spiritual progression and growth in this life is not only accessing Christ's gift of grace for overcoming or enduring faithfully the personal weaknesses and strengths we are all given, but in also overcoming sin in

our life (*Preach My Gospel*, 2004). The remainder of this section of the review on mortal

perfection will focus on Latter-day Saints understanding of godlike perfection as it relates to sin.

Sin and perfection. Latter-day Saints do believe that a necessary pre-requisite to

attaining an afterlife with God, one must be perfected from sin and its effects. They believe that

"this life is the time for men to prepare to meet God" (Alma 34:32), a probationary state in which

we strive to follow the pattern of living set by Jesus Christ during His mortal life and ministry.

As Latter-day Saints understand and as was taught by the founder of The Church of Jesus Christ

of Latter-day Saints, Joseph Smith—"If you wish to go where God is, you must be like God, or

possess the principles which God possess" (Smith, 1971, p. 588). We are commanded to strive to

be like Christ—to develop every attribute that He exemplified—to be kind, compassionate, self-

sacrificing, and full of humility (*Preach My Gospel,* 2004). Latter-day Saints believe that

perfection, as it pertains to sin in this life, *is* possible, but not without Christ.

Perfection in Christ. When referring to perfection Latter-day Saints speak of being

"*perfected* in Christ" (Moroni 10:33) as a *process* and being "*perfect* in Christ" as an *event* and

condition completing that process. As mortals, perfection in Christ is momentary because

humanity is prone to sin. However, it is also perpetually intermittent because humanity is given

the opportunity to return to this event or state over and over throughout life. These descriptors of

godlike perfection will be explained throughout the course of this review.

The beginning. Latter-day Saints believe that all children are born into this world

innocent of sin; thereby, they are "perfect" or "whole." Through God's grace and mercy they are

"alive in Christ" (Moroni 8:8 Doctrine and Covenants 93:38; Articles of Faith 1:2) and are not

capable of committing sin. Up until they first become accountable for the choices they make

(Doctrine and Covenants 68:27) and subsequently sin, they are clothed in Christ's perfection. As

a result of Adam and Eve's choice to follow divine command (Keller, 2004), humanity has

become fallen in nature—in part, meaning that we are prone to commit sin. Latter-day Saints

believe that "all [in this life] have sinned and come short of the Glory of God (Romans 3:23) and

therefore do not remain in this innocent state. When we do commit sin we fall from Christ's

grace, spiritually die, and are separated from communion with God unless we come back to him

in faith and repent. This separation from God is part of the divine punishment that comes as a

result of sin. In effect, we have fallen from grace and do not enjoy the divine means of strength

that comes from an established relationship with God. Was it not for another law known as the

law of mercy, this obstacle of sin would prevent us from renewing our standing and relationship

with God through the perfecting process of reconciliation.[5] Ultimately, sin would prevent us

from returning to live with God—part of our ultimate objective (Alma 34:32). This divine law of

mercy makes it possible for the demands justice require to be satisfied (*Preach My Gospel*, 2004)

and for humanity to be clothed in Christ's perfection by justification and sanctification.[6]

    The need for a mediator. Latter-day Saints believe that God is both just and merciful.

These virtues seemingly would be in direct conflict to each other was it not so for the role that

Christ played and plays. Because Christ was the only person to live His mortal life entirely

without sin and because of His divinity as the Only Begotten Son of God in the flesh, He was

uniquely qualified and prepared to serve as a mediator between God and humankind. It is in and

through Christ that humanity might be perfected. As stated previously, the demands of the divine

law of justice require us to be punished for our sins. By allowing Christ to take upon himself the

punishment for our sins through His Atonement God is able to extend mercy (*Preach My Gospel*,

2004). Because of this merciful act of love, Christ becomes our creditor and mediator between

God and man. He sets up the conditions upon which the effects of His Atonement are accessible

to mortal man. In effect, His Atonement makes it possible for us to be clothed momentarily in His perfection—to be justified and sanctified; to remove the sin we have committed from us and make it as if the sin had never been committed at all.

Latter-day Saints do not believe that Christ's suffering for us negates our personal responsibility to Him. He has paid for all humanity's sins but He extends mercy only when we do as He asks. We can then access His grace, His love, and the Redeeming effects of His Atonement (*Preach My Gospel*, 2004). On the other hand if we choose not to receive the mediation he has wrought for us, through abiding by the conditions He has set (i.e. our way to becoming reconciled unto him), we are left in our sinful state and left to ourselves to face the demands of justice (Christofferson, 2001; D&C 19:16-19). Latter-day Saints believe that Christ has provided a way for humankind to be reconciled unto God—and to be perfected in Christ.

Reconciliation. For Latter-day Saints a process of reconciliation with God has been instituted in order for humanity (or believers) to renew the relationship that they once had with God. One passage of scripture Latter-day Saints hold to gives a summative explanation on how Christ invites humanity to become clothed in His perfection:

> Yea, come unto Christ, and *be perfected in him* [emphasis added], and deny yourselves of all ungodliness; and if ye shall deny yourselves of all ungodliness, and love God with all your might, mind and strength then is his grace sufficient for you, that by his grace ye may *be perfect in Christ* [emphasis added]; and if by the grace of God ye are perfect in Christ, ye can in nowise deny the power of God. (Moroni 10: 32-33)

The phrased invitation in the first part of this passage to "come unto Christ and *be perfected in Him*" may be interpreted as an invitation to participate in the *process* of being reconciled to Christ or clothed in his perfection. This invitation is followed by the mentioning of

what conditions (i.e. abstaining from ungodly behaviors and loving God with everything the human heart possesses) are required in order to access the grace of God as part of that process. It is this grace that allows them to *"be perfect in Christ"*—the *event* and condition of being justified. Christofferson (2001) also states that in addition to being justified, Christ's grace allows us to be sanctified—an equally necessary part of being perfect in Christ. A continuing passage of scripture states:

> And again, if ye by the grace of God *are perfect in Christ* [emphasis added], and deny not his power, then are ye *sanctified in Christ* [emphasis added] by the grace of God, through the shedding of the blood of Christ, which is in the covenant of the Father unto the remission of your sins, that ye become holy, without spot." (Moroni 10:33)

After an individual becomes perfect in Christ through the grace of God the Lord allows one to participate in an event of sanctification. Christofferson (2001) states that the process of reconciliation is only fully complete when one has been sanctified in Christ—or made holy. Because of humanity's proneness to sin, we are apt to fall from the grace of these gifts. However, Latter-day Saints believe that God has made it possible for reconciliation, justification, and sanctification to occur over and over again. It is because of our proneness to sin and the repeated process of reconciliation—inclusive of justification and sanctification events—that perfection is at best intermittent during the lifetime of the Latter-day Saint.

Latter-day Saints and the gospel of reconciliation. As the more formally described doctrines of reconciliation, justification and sanctification have been used to explain what the doctrine of perfection is, it is now important to dig deeper and examine how Latter-day Saints believe they are made "perfect in Christ." Latter-day Saints generally refer to the process of reconciliation as the Gospel of Jesus Christ—the pathway whereupon one accesses or receives

the grace and mercy of Jesus Christ and may become reconciled to God; it is a pattern of living

that is repeated throughout life. The Gospel of Jesus Christ, as defined by Latter-day Saints,

consists of the principles of "Faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, second, repentance" and then

followed by the ordinances of "baptism by immersion, for the remission[7] of sins, and […] the

laying on of hands for the Gift of the Holy Ghost" (Articles of Faith 1:3-4).

   First principles of the Gospel. Latter-day Saints believe that by sincere application of the

first principles of the Gospel of Jesus Christ—which are first, faith in Jesus Christ and His

Atonement and secondly, Repentance (Article of Faith 1:3-4)—divine grace can begin to be

bestowed upon an individual (Bible Dictionary; 2 Ne. 25:23; Ephesians 2:8). These principles

are part of the process in becoming "perfected in [Christ]" (Moroni 10:32).

   Though faith begins with belief, Latter-day Saints believe it is an action word that implies

more. When centered in Jesus Christ, it is more than a belief and conviction in the reality of

Jesus Christ and His Atonement. It is a two-way relationship—an ongoing, personable, and

interactional experience—that helps to motivate one to want to follow His teachings and to

repent (*Preach My Gospel*, 2004). The fundamental element to having Faith in Jesus Christ is the

expression of love that one must have for Him. It is loving "God with all your heart, might,

mind, and strength (Moroni 10:32)." Christ stated, "If ye love me keep my commandments (John

14:15)." That expression of love motivates Latter-day Saints to keep His commandments. Love

for Christ and obedience to His commandments serve to build, strengthen, and maintain faith in

Christ (D&C 1:21). This Faith in Christ is a precursor to accessing and retaining the gift of God's

grace. It is important to note that Latter-day Saints believe that "faith, if it hath not works, is

dead, being alone (James 2:17)." However, in attempt to follow these commandments, as was

previously noted, some Latter-day Saints have a tendency believe that they have not done

enough to "earn" God's grace—believing that if they merely work hard enough that God will grant them grace (Keller, 2004). They tend to forget or neglect another important admonition to not run faster than they have strength (Mosiah 4:27; D&C 10:4). The failure for Latter-day Saints to live by this scriptural admonition aligns well with the aforementioned description of perfectionism.

Another channel to accessing and retaining God's grace, built upon the first principle of Faith in Jesus Christ, is through the second principle of the Gospel—Repentance[8] (Keller, 2004). Repentance, according to the LDS Bible Dictionary (1979), "denotes a change of mind, i.e., a fresh view about God, about oneself, and about the world. Since we are born into conditions of mortality, repentance comes to mean a turning of the heart and will to God, and a renunciation of sin to which we are naturally inclined" (p. 760). In the process of reconciliation it is part of denying ourselves of all ungodliness (Moroni 10:32). Faith in Jesus Christ and repentance prepare an individual for the ordinances[9] of the Gospel of Jesus Christ (*Preach My Gospel*, 2004).

First ordinances. In the process of reconciliation, the principles of faith in Jesus Christ and repentance lead the individual to the first ordinance—which is the baptism of water. Baptism by immersion is an outward sign of the inward commitment an individual has made to have faith in Christ and to repent. It is symbolic of the death, burial, and resurrection of Christ (*Preach My Gospel*, 2004). In essence, when Latter-day Saints are baptized, their old sinful selves die, are buried or remitted, and they come out of the water as "reborn" souls "alive in Christ." Part of the covenant[10] associated with baptism for Latter-day Saints is that they are willing take upon themselves the name of Christ (D&C 20: 77). As part of blessings of being "born again" Latter-day Saints have been reconciled—or brought back into harmony with God's laws and are

again—as they were in their infant state—innocent. Simultaneously they have been justified. This is because in that moment of "rebirth" they are clothed in the perfection of Christ—meaning Christ's perfection covers that individual and they stand perfect before the Father. In and of ourselves we are but fallen beings, but Christ allows us to be clothed in His perfection so that we might stand figuratively (and eventually literally) before the Father as perfect.

After baptism of water by immersion a newly baptized Latter-day Saint is—through the second ordinance of confirmation—confirmed a member of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints. This ordinance constitutes the "baptism by fire"—i.e. as the newly baptized individual is given the Gift of the Holy Ghost.[11] This is an equal and necessary part of the perfection process. A chief role of the Holy Ghost is to sanctify a newly justified person. To be sanctified is an event in the process of reconciliation. It is not merely enough for the individual to be justified or brought into harmony with divine law. They must be sanctified or cleansed from the effects of sin (Christofferson, 2001). Once justified and sanctified by the Holy Ghost they have been become fully perfect in Christ.

Latter-day Saints believe that although the initial justification and sanctification events that accompany baptism by water and the Holy Ghost are important, they only keep us clothed in Christ's perfection momentarily. This is because of our proneness as humans to sin. When we sin we fall from grace and are thus stripped of Christ's perfection. Over the course of a lifetime, because we will inevitably fall from grace shortly (even momentarily) after we obtain it, the perfection in Christ we will experience in this life will at best be intermittent. A primary goal of Latter-day Saints, as they have been given the Gift of the Holy Ghost, is to keep the influence of the Holy Ghost in their lives as much as they can. In order for them to do this they must continue to reapply the first principles and ordinances of the Gospel in order to access the grace of being

clothed in Christ's perfection (Keller, 2004). However, instead of being re-baptized each time one sins and spiritually dies, demonstrates faith in Christ, and repents, Latter-day Saints believe the Lord has instituted the ordinance of the sacrament.[12] Latter-day Saints prepare to participate in the ordinance of the sacrament when they return to the principles of Faith in Jesus Christ and repentance. Within the process of reconciliation, the partaking of the sacrament becomes a symbolic witness to Jesus Christ that one has truly repented of his or her sins. It is another channel wherein we may access the grace of Jesus Christ (Keller, 2004). Just as baptism was an *event* in which one was "born again" and became "perfect in Christ," the partaking of the sacrament becomes an *event* in which we can become "perfect in Christ."

A commonly used phrase used by Latter-day Saints and found in scripture is to "endure to the end." This is a belief that in preparation to meeting God they must continually return to the principles of Faith in the Lord Jesus Christ and Repentance to regain access to Christ's grace when it is lost through sin (*Preach My Gospel*, 2004).

Endurance of repeated reconciliation. In summation, Christ stands between us and the Father in our desire to be reconciled as he has vicariously suffered the punishment for all sins. The Father sees perfection in Christ and when we have accessed Christ's grace He sees us "in Christ" and clothed in His perfection. The Father can accept us back into His presence if we have become one with Christ, taken upon ourselves His name, or been perfected in Him. Christ accepts us as his own and we are under His name and receive his grace and mercy when we accept and fulfill the conditions He has set (i.e. Faith in Christ, repentance, sacrament). When we meet the conditions that Christ has set we are justified and sanctified and are presented perfect and whole before the Father—worthy to have communion with the Holy Ghost as we are briefly without sin. Because of our proneness to commit sin this perfection is momentary. To regain the

companionship of the Holy Ghost and thereby accessing the Atonement of Jesus Christ, Latter-day Saints minute by minute must return to the first principles of the Gospel—Faith in Jesus Christ and Repentance—and participate regularly in the ordinance of the sacrament.

Eternal Perfection: The Bigger Picture

Thus far in the review we have generally defined what perfection means to Latter-day Saints. We have also discussed the Latter-day Saint belief in how godlike perfection is possible in this life through becoming "perfected" and "perfect in Christ". There is another way in which Latter-day Saints speak of godlike perfection. This perfection spoken of includes and transcends mortality.

The nature of eternal perfection. The process and events of attaining perfection in Christ throughout life are both necessary and fundamental components of the broader and more comprehensive conceptualization of godlike perfection known as *eternal perfection*—the perfection that Christ spoke of in his mortal ministry (Matthew 5:48). It is to be "complete, finished, [and] fully developed" (LDS Bible Dictionary, 1979). An examination of the Greek word "telios," as invoked by Matthew 5:48, supports this definition. "Telios," as Nelson (1995) cites, does not imply 'freedom from error' but rather 'a distant end or objective' (Nelson, 1995). It is perfection that is only achievable beyond this life—one that is pending our acceptance to continually "come unto Christ and be perfected in Him" (Moroni 10: 33). This is done entering in Christ's Gospel path of repeated reconciliation "which leads to eternal life" (2 Ne 31:18).

One Latter-day Saint scholar (Keller, 2012, personal conversation) conceptualizes the doctrines of justification and sanctification to bridge the "perfection in Christ" that occurs in this life (i.e. the process and events of perfection) to the eternal perfection that occurs beyond this life. Keller (2012) notes that while in this life justification is the event of being clean "in Christ"

sanctification can also be viewed as the process of "becoming *in ourselves* over time what we are already are (perfect) 'in Christ'" (i.e. when justified) (Keller, 2012, personal correspondence)—denoting the eventuality of how humanity might approach God and become complete through the Atonement of Christ. When Latter-day Saints are admonished through the scripture to "continue in patience until ye are perfected" (D&C 67:13), they are generally referring to the eternal perfection that is pending—one that is only achievable after this mortal life. For Latter-day Saints eternal perfection denotes immortality, salvation, exaltation, and approaching God in likeness (Hinckley, 1994). It includes having fully developed the attributes that God and Jesus Christ have—being kind, merciful, and just—in absoluteness, and also possessing a glorified body of flesh and bone (D&C 130:22).

Perfected personage. For Latter-day Saints, *Eternal perfection* implies being a perfected personage (i.e. having a glorified body of flesh and bone incapable of death) as God and Christ are (D&C 130:22) in addition to becoming on our own—through the sanctification process—what we are in Christ through justification. Jesus is God with all that perfection entails and will be no more God in the future than he is now or was in the past (Keller, 2012, personal conversation). Latter-day Saints believe He lived a perfect life void of sin; that He was flawless in his obedience to keep His Father's commandments and in how he lived His mortal life in every respect. As Nelson (1995) states he was "already perfect by our mortal standards." He has always been perfectly just and holy. It is important to note that at the time that Christ uttered the statement in Matthew 5:48, he had not yet allowed Himself to die and subsequently be resurrected to become the "firstfruits of them that slept" (1 Corinthians 15:20).

Latter-day Saints believe that though Jesus always has and will entail perfection in attributes, demeanor, and submission to His Father's will, it was not until His resurrection—a

glorified and immortal body of flesh and bone—that he would be a perfected *personage* of body and spirit like His Father. This he taught to his disciples when he stated "on the third day I shall be perfected" (Luke 13:32). Only after attaining a resurrected, immortal and glorified body would he be—as a perfect personage—"complete, finished [and] fully developed." This is not to say that His work was finished—but only to state that inasmuch as his spirit had united with an immortal body of flesh and bone that He as a glorified being was now complete (Keller, 2012). In the Book of Mormon, the newly resurrected Christ appeared to the inhabitants and affirmed this reality. In this appearance he declared a similar injunction for perfection only now adding that "ye should be perfect *even as I*, or your Father who is in Heaven is perfect" (3 Nephi 12:48). Latter-day Saints believe that Christ is in part the prototype (but only in part because his work far transcends being a mere example (Keller, 2012, personal conversation)) as to how man should pattern His life after to return to God and approach being like Him (Hinckley, 1994; *Preach My Gospel*, 2004). Christ is the prototype in showing humanity the path to godlike perfection—not only through his godly attributes and exemplary life—but also through his condescension and ascension to His Father that we might have the opportunity of becoming "heirs of God, and joint-heirs with Christ (Romans 8:17)."

Eternal progression and The Plan of Salvation. In order to more fully understand the Latter-day Saint doctrine of eternal perfection it is important to briefly explain the Latter-day Saint belief in Eternal Progression[13] as it pertains to the importance of the *spirit* and the *body* as the soul of a person (D&C 88: 14-15). The condition or standing of the spirit and body are central to any discussion on the Latter-day Saint belief in the Plan of Salvation.[14] LDS doctrine holds that godlike perfection is necessary to salvation, that "if [one] wish[es] to go where God is, [one] must be like God, or possess the principles which God possess" (Smith, 1971, p. 588). In

addition to all of the godly attributes that He possesses, Latter-day Saints believe that to enter

God's presence our spirits must be embodied. For Latter-day Saints, the journey towards eternal

perfection begins with life before birth, this life, and life after death and ultimately extends to all

domains of human perfection.

Latter-day Saints believe that the spirits of humanity throughout their eternal journey will

go through four progressive phases. Though the following terminology is not necessarily used by

Latter-day Saints, the author has chosen to identify these stages as: unembodiment,[15] mortal

embodiment,[16] disembodiment,[17] and immortal embodiment.[18] This final part of progression,

immortal embodiment, is unconditional—meaning that all of humanity will ultimately be

resurrected, regardless of the mortal life they live. This is a gift from God through the Grace and

mercy of Jesus Christ. In these resurrected bodies humanity will be brought back to stand before

the presence of God and judged by Christ—the Eternal Judge (Alma 11:44). Although Latter-day

Saints believe that all humanity will be resurrected, they believe that there are different types of

bodily resurrection. These types of bodily resurrection are discussed by Paul in his writings to

the Corinthians (1 Cor. 15: 40-42). It is important to note that this part of eternal progression *is*

conditional but also made possible through the Atoning Sacrifice of Jesus Christ. It is based on

obedience to conditions (i.e. following the invitation to "come unto Christ and be perfected in

Him) laid out by Jesus Christ during His mortal life and ministry and through modern revelations

Latter-day Saints subscribe to (D&C 76: 50-98; 88: 16-39; John 3:5; John 14: 2,15; Matthew

7:21). These types of immortal bodies are referred to by Latter-day Saints as celestial, terrestrial,

and telestial bodies. Latter-day Saints believe this is consistent with Paul's statement that he

"knew a man caught up to the *third heaven*" (1 Corinthians 12:2) referring to the third heaven

prepared for glorified, immortal, and celestial personages. When Latter-day Saints speak of

eternal perfection they are speaking of the celestial type of bodily resurrection—having their spirits united with glorified immortal bodies like God and Christ (D&C 130:22) and dwelling with them eternally.[19]

Mortal to Eternal Perfection

Latter-day Saints hold that God created Adam and Eve, the first man and woman on this earth, as immortals (incapable of death) and that they lived in His presence. They were innocent of sin (*Preach My Gospel*, 2004; D&C 93:38). Latter-day Saints believe that God lives by the laws he establishes through law governs all things (Christofferson, 2001; D&C 88:34-38) Justice is a word synonymous with law and is an underlying principle or law that governs the universe. As Christofferson (2001) states, it "is something of a platform that sustains certain other fundamentals." It provides protection for obeying divine law but demands punishment if those laws are broken. As a result of their choice to follow divine command (Keller, 2004), Adam and Eve, became mortal and were cast out of God's presence (i.e. the Fall). As alluded to in the previous section, Latter-day Saints understand that as part of the divine plan they have inherited a fallen nature—meaning they are prone to sin (Romans 3:23) over and over again in life. This necessitates that this same pattern of reconciliation (i.e. the Gospel of Jesus Christ, as Latter-day Saints define it) to become "perfect in Christ" will need to be repeated throughout the entirety of life (*Preach My Gospel*, 2004). As part of the process of *eternal perfection* Latter-day Saints believe they must "endure in faith" (D&C 20:25, 29; 63:20; 101:35) or "endure to the end" (D&C 14:7)—that is, continue to seek reconciliation with God through Christ throughout life by returning to the first principles and ordinances of the Gospel. Being "perfected in Christ" (process) and "perfect in Christ" (event) are part of the path leading to *eternal perfection*. Latter-day Saints believe that those who have endured in Faith in this continued process of

reconciliation and intermittent "perfection in Christ" are "heirs of God and joint-heirs with Christ (Romans 8:16). Ultimately they receive exaltation[20]—or all that the Father has.

In summary, Latter-day Saints believe that *eternal perfection* is only attainable after this life. Joseph Smith, the founder of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints taught, "It will be a great while after you have passed through the veil (death) before you will have learned [the principles of exaltation]. It is not all to be comprehended in this world; it will be a great work to learn our salvation and exaltation even beyond the grave" (*Teachings of the Prophet Joseph Smith*, 1938, p. 348). For Latter-day Saints the present concern is with the *process* of eternal perfection. This includes constant personal reconciliation with God when we have sinned and fallen from grace, and constant reliance on Christ in overcoming personal weaknesses attainable through his mercy and grace.

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[1]   In the LDS Bible Dictionary (1979), grace is defined as the "divine means of help or strength, given through the bounteous mercy and love of Jesus Christ" (p. 697).

[2]   According to the LDS *Guide to the Scriptures* (2012), faith is "confidence in something or someone. As most often used in the scriptures, faith is confidence and trust in Jesus Christ that lead a person to obey Him. Faith must be centered in Jesus Christ in order for it to lead a person to salvation."

[3]   "To atone is to suffer the penalty for an act of sin, thereby removing the effects of sin from the repentant sinners and allowing them to be reconciled to God" (*Preach My Gospel*, 2004, p. 58). The Atonement of Jesus Christ also included suffering the pains, sorrows, and afflictions of all mankind "that he may know according to the flesh how to succor his people according to their infirmities" (Alma 7: 12).

[4]   According to the *Guide to the Scriptures* (2012), an official online compendium provided by The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints, sin is defined as "willful disobedience to God's commandments." Sin has been referred to in scripture as "abomination, filthiness, unrighteousness, and wickedness."

[5]   "Reconciliation comes from Latin […] and literally means 'to sit again with'" (Nelson, 1996). Latter-day Saints typically do not use this word but rather refer to the reconciling process as the Gospel of Jesus Christ—including principles of Faith in Jesus Christ and Repentance as well as the ordinances of Baptism—in which sin is remitted--and Confirmation—wherein one receives the Gift of the Holy Ghost, serving to sanctify or cleanse the repentant sinner from the effects of sin (Preach My Gospel, 2004).

6   Justification denotes a pardoning or forgiveness of sins. Through justification one is brought back into harmony with God's law, renew the relationship they have with Him (i.e. born again), and are pronounced as "righteous" (Lund, 2006). We are in essence "pardoned, without sin, or guiltless" because have renewed our relationship with Christ. Because of this renewed relationship we are given His perfection. Thus, we can stand before the Father clothed in the perfection of Christ.

   Christofferson (2001) also states that in addition to being justified, Christ's grace allows us to be sanctified—an equally necessary part of being perfect in Christ. To be "sanctified in Christ" is to be "to be sanctified through the blood of Christ [and] to become clean, pure, and holy" (Christofferson, 2001). It is to be clothed in Christ's sanctity or in His holiness. Whereas justification pertains to righteousness, sanctification pertains to being "set apart" or "made holy" (Lund, 2006). It occurs through the third member of the Godhead—the Holy Ghost—as part of His divine role.

   Lund states that several scholars, including Latter-day Saint scholars, have been hesitant to delve into studying the doctrines of justification and sanctification. He notes that the ambiguity of such doctrines may stem from them not being clearly explained within scriptural texts (Lund, 2006). Christofferson (2001) distinguishes between justification and sanctification stating, "if justification removes the punishment for past sin, then sanctification removes the stain or effects of sin." Though these doctrines can be distinguished from one another Lund (2006) explains how interrelated they are. He states: Sanctification is to be holy or pure; justification is to be righteous. Indeed, so closely are the two interrelated and interdependent that it is preferable to speak of the doctrine of sanctification and justification instead of the doctrines [(plural)]. Both are inherently related to God's own nature, and *both involve relationship to Him.* That latter concept is especially important. If we are not pure (sanctified) or if we are not righteous (justified), we cannot have a full and complete relationship with God. Thus, the natural man is an enemy to God (see Mosiah 3:19).

7   The Greek word for remission means, "a sending away, [or] a letting go" (Strong's Concordance, 2011).

8   According to the *Guide to the Scriptures* (2012), repentance is "a change of mind and heart that brings a fresh attitude toward God, oneself, and life in general. Repentance implies that a person turns away from evil and turns his heart and will to God, submitting to God's commandments and desires and forsaking sin. True repentance comes from a love for God and a sincere desire to obey his commandments. All accountable persons have sinned and must repent in order to progress toward salvation. Only through the atonement of Jesus Christ can our repentance become effective and accepted by God."

9   According to the *Guide to the Scriptures* (2012) ordinances are "sacred ceremonial rites and ceremonies [and] are acts that have spiritual meanings."

10   Latter-day Saints define a covenant as an "agreement between God and man, but they do not act as equals in the agreement. God gives the conditions for the covenant, and men agree to do what he asks them to do. God then promises men certain blessings for their obedience" (The Gospel and the Productive Life Student Manual, 2008).

11   The Holy Ghost is considered by Latter-day Saints the third member of the Godhead consisting of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Each of these members of the Godhead are separate personages (D&C 130:22) who are united in their work "to bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of man" (Moses 5:39). The gift of the Holy Ghost is defined as the right to the constant companionship of the Holy Ghost when one is living worthy of the gift (Preach My Gospel, 2004).

12   The sacrament is an ordinance—when blessed emblems of bread and water are administered—generally weekly every Sunday—in a sacred service dedicated for that very purpose is to renew the relationship we have with Christ—and thereby the Father.

[13]   It is important to note, according to the *Encyclopedia of Mormonism*, (a frequently cited compendium discussing Latter-day Saint beliefs) that though "the principle of eternal progression cannot be precisely defined or comprehended, it is fundamental to the LDS worldview" (Ludlow, 1992, p. 465).

[14]   The plan of salvation is a phrase Latter-day Saints use to refer to as a roadmap that informs them of their existence, life purpose, and eternal destiny. Latter-day Saints believe that God has authored this plan to "bring to pass the immortality and eternal life of man" (Moses 1:39). Central to this plan is the Atonement and Resurrection of Jesus Christ (Preach My Gospel, 2004).

[15]   Latter-day Saints refer to this as the pre-mortal life (Jeremiah 1:5) when all of humanity as literal spirit sons and daughters of a Heavenly Father resided in preparation to attaining a mortal body and living a mortal life (Preach My Gospel, 2004).

[16]   i.e. the state of those who have lived, are currently living, or will yet live. This life is seen as a probationary state, a time for humanity to prepare to meet God (Alma 12:24).

[17]   i.e. death of the mortal body or a separation of body and spirit due to the effects of the Fall of Adam and Eve. While the body remains behind the Spirit lives on in what Latter-day Saints refer to as the Spirit World where they await their resurrection. This is the same place Christ's Spirit went after His crucifixion and before His bodily resurrection (1 Peter 3:19; *Preach My Gospel*, 2004).

[18]   i.e. Resurrection, or a reunification of spirit and body never to be separated by death. Resurrection is made possible through the Atonement of Jesus Christ and His Resurrection. "For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive" (1 Corinthians 15:22).

[19]   Latter-day Saints believe that in presenting this plan of salvation God stated "And we will prove them herewith, to see if they will do all things whatsoever the Lord their God shall command them. And they who keep their first estate (unembodiment) shall be added upon…and they who keep their second estate (mortal embodiment) shall have glory added upon their heads for ever and ever" (Abraham 3: 26).

[20]   According to the *Guide to the Scriptures* (2012) exaltation denotes "the highest state of happiness and glory […]" that humanity can attain. It is approaching God in likeness (Hinckley, 1994), receiving all that He has as "heirs of God and joint-heirs with Christ" (Romans 8:16-17).