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ARTICLE

A dynamic view on work-related perfectionism: Antecedents at work and implications for employee well-being

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Abstract

Little is known about the role of perfectionism in employees' daily work. Our study aimed to provide a fine-grained view on perfectionism in work life by examining *daily* work-related perfectionism in terms of perfectionistic strivings and concerns. Drawing on whole trait theory and the principle of trait activation, we investigated experienced time pressure and criticism at work as antecedents of daily work-related perfectionism and in turn its implications for vigour and negative affect. In the course of two working weeks, 72 employees completed surveys three times per day, resulting in a total of 461 days of data. Multilevel path modelling showed that daily time pressure was positively related to both perfectionistic strivings and concerns, and that criticism was positively related to perfectionistic concerns. Daily work-related perfectionistic strivings were positively indirectly related to vigour at bedtime via vigour at the end of the workday. Daily work-related perfectionistic concerns were positively indirectly related to bedtime negative affect via end-of-workday negative affect. Our study shows that employees' daily experiences at work relate to within-person fluctuations in work-related perfectionism, which in turn

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matter for well-being both at work and at home. We conclude that a dynamic view broadens the understanding of perfectionism at work.

KEYWORDS

job stressors, perfectionism, personality dynamics, personality states, well-being, within-person fluctuations

Practitioner Points

- Work-related perfectionism can fluctuate from day to day due to employees' experiences at work. These fluctuations can matter for employee well-being.
- Experiencing criticism at work can trigger perfectionistic concerns. To prevent employees' negative experiences of perfectionistic concerns, supervisors and co-workers should avoid making derogatory comments about employees' work performance.

BACKGROUND

Perfectionism is a multidimensional personality characteristic that comprises striving for flawlessness, setting exceedingly high performance standards and tending to evaluate one's behaviour in an overly critical way (Frost et al., 1990; Stoeber & Otto, 2006). It has instigated an extensive amount of research in many fields of psychology (e.g., clinical, educational and sports psychology; Reis & Prestele, 2020; Stoeber & Damian, 2016). However, work-related perfectionism (i.e., having very high standards for one's work performance and feeling that one falls short of them) is reckoned to be an under-researched area (Stoeber, 2018). This is a significant oversight because perfectionism is especially prevalent in the work domain (Stoeber & Stoeber, 2009). Moreover, perfectionism is assumed to affect employees' well-being, attitudes and behaviours (Harari et al., 2018; Ocampo et al., 2020).

Perfectionism has been traditionally defined as a fairly stable personality trait (Hewitt & Flett, 1991). Consequently, perfectionism at work has been examined from a between-person perspective (Ocampo et al., 2020). But perfectionism can also be examined from a dynamic perspective, given that perfectionism shows fluctuations from day to day (Boone et al., 2012). To date, however, it is largely unclear what causes these within-person fluctuations. We address this question and argue that situational cues at work trigger employees' daily work-related perfectionism (i.e., work-related perfectionism showing within-person fluctuations from one working day to another; Beckmann & Wood, 2020; Ocampo et al., 2020; Prestele et al., 2020). Specifically, we draw on whole trait theory (Fleeson, 2001) and the principle of trait activation (Tett & Burnett, 2003; Tett & Guterman, 2000) to examine experienced time pressure and criticism at work as antecedents of daily work-related perfectionistic strivings (i.e., having very high standards for one's work performance) and concerns (i.e., feeling that one falls short of these high standards; Stoeber & Damian, 2016).

Furthermore, considering that personality states are not 'dead end states' (Judge et al., 2014, p. 216) but matter for employee well-being (Howell et al., 2017; Koopmann et al., 2016; Sosnowska et al., 2019), we study state vigour (i.e., a positive affective state of moderate arousal; Shirom, 2004) and state negative affect at the end of the workday and at bedtime as well-being outcomes of daily work-related perfectionistic strivings and concerns (see Figure 1 for the research model). Focusing on a positive (i.e., vigour) versus a negative (i.e., negative affect) well-being state as outcomes of perfectionistic strivings versus perfectionistic concerns captures the duality of perfectionism in terms of both dimensions (see Flaxman et al., 2018).

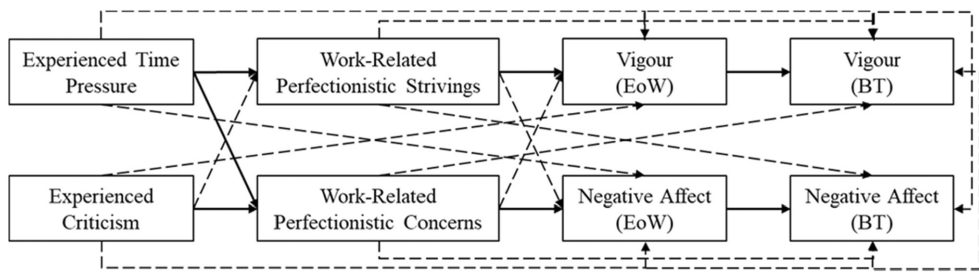


FIGURE 1 Conceptual model. *Note:* Solid lines indicate hypothesized paths. Dashed lines indicate additional paths specified in the model. This figure does not include the control variables (i.e., morning vigour and morning negative affect). BT, bedtime; EoW, end of workday

As mentioned, perfectionism shows daily within-person fluctuations (Boone et al., 2012), as do time pressure (Baethge et al., 2019), criticism (Bono et al., 2013) and well-being (Koopmann et al., 2016). In this sense, all constructs that we investigate are dynamic. It is therefore crucial to investigate their interrelations from a dynamic, within-person perspective that considers their fluctuating nature (McCormick et al., 2020). More precisely, we investigate time pressure and criticism as situational antecedents of daily work-related perfectionism and, in turn, investigate the implications of daily work-related perfectionism for employee well-being. Because an employee's experiences of time pressure and criticism at work – and thus likely their work-related perfectionistic strivings and concerns – vary from day to day, the implications of work-related perfectionism for an employee's well-being also vary on a daily basis (Debusscher et al., 2016a; Huang & Ryan, 2011; Judge et al., 2014).

To illustrate, imagine an employee who receives complaints about their work performance (i.e., experiences criticism) on a specific day at work. We propose that this day-specific experience of criticism triggers feelings in the employee of falling short of their highperformance standards at work (i.e., experiences of perfectionistic concerns). These experiences of perfectionistic concerns, in turn, harm well-being on that specific day. That is, the employee experiences negative affect at work. We suggest that this negative affective state does not just end when leaving work but also continues later in the day. However, when experiencing no criticism (or other situational cues that trigger perfectionistic concerns) on a specific day, the employee does not experience perfectionistic concerns at work. Hence, their work-related perfectionism does not harm their well-being on that specific day.

We aim to contribute to the literature in several ways. First, we advance the literature on work-related perfectionism. Previous research tended to examine mainly the consequences of perfectionism at work, neglecting its antecedents (Ocampo et al., 2020). In line with Ocampo et al. (2020), we propose that an employee's experiences at work (i.e., daily experienced time pressure and criticism) precede their daily work-related perfectionism, which in turn relates to their well-being. Thus, we focus on both antecedents and consequences of work-related perfectionism. Furthermore, we examine whether perfectionistic strivings and concerns have the same or different antecedents at work and whether both dimensions relate to different indicators of employee well-being (i.e., perfectionistic strivings to vigour vs. perfectionistic concerns to negative affect). By investigating whether these dimensions also have different antecedents at work, we add to previous research showing that the two dimensions of perfectionism tend to have different outcomes at work (Harari et al., 2018; Stoeber & Damian, 2016). Evidence that perfectionistic strivings and concerns have different antecedents would strengthen the notion that they are conceptually distinct constructs that reflect distinct aspects of perfectionism (Harari et al., 2018).

Second, by using a diary study to examine daily work-related perfectionism, we respond to explicit calls to investigate within-person fluctuations in perfectionism and their antecedents at the day level (Boone et al., 2012; Ocampo et al., 2020). Whereas previous research identified experimentally manipulated cues that induce fluctuations in perfectionism (Shafran et al., 2006), it is largely unclear whether naturally occurring cues in an individual's environment can have the same effect (Boone et al., 2012).

Thus, identifying daily at-work antecedents of perfectionism helps to understand how perfectionism can be shaped by peoples' day-to-day experiences (Stoeber, 2018). Moreover, a within-person view brings light into the daily processes associated with perfectionism, that is, its daily antecedents and its implications for daily affective well-being. Because short-term problems with affective well-being might develop into long-term impairments and chronic health outcomes (e.g., depression; see Venz et al., 2020), being aware of the daily antecedents of perfectionism might help to alleviate perfectionism and related undesired consequences in the short and long run (Beckmann & Wood, 2020).

Third, we aim to improve the understanding of domain-specific perfectionism (Stoeber & Stoeber, 2009). Previous research showed that perfectionism in one domain relates to well-being in this specific domain (e.g., perfectionism in the home domain relates to parental distress, whereas perfectionism in the work domain relates to work-related burnout symptoms; Mitchelson & Burns, 1998). However, perfectionism might also permeate boundaries between domains (Ocampo et al., 2020). Accordingly, we investigate whether perfectionism at work on a specific day flows into the home domain via what are known as spillover processes (Judge & Ilies, 2004). Showing whether and how perfectionism in one domain (i.e., at work) affects employees in another domain (i.e., at home) advances research on domain-specific perfectionism (Stoeber & Stoeber, 2009) and, because spillover processes occur on a daily basis (Ilies et al., 2007), further substantiates the value of studying daily fluctuations in perfectionism.

Fourth, we contribute to the broader literature on personality dynamics at work. Although perfectionism is an important personality characteristic at work, it was not previously considered in research on work-related personality dynamics. Understanding what elicits within-person fluctuation in personality at work is central to gaining further insight into the role of personality in the workplace (Tett & Burnett, 2003). We answer the call for research on the dynamics of personality characteristics and related cues that trigger them (Fleeson, 2001) by examining within-person fluctuations in work-related perfectionism and their potential antecedents.

A dynamic view on work-related perfectionism

In recent years, new theoretical approaches to personality dynamics (e.g., whole trait theory; Fleeson, 2001) have found their way into organizational psychology (Debusscher et al., 2016a; Huang & Ryan, 2011; Judge et al., 2014; Koopmann et al., 2016; Minbashian et al., 2010). Whereas traditional personality trait approaches focus on how people generally think, feel and behave, dynamic approaches address within-person fluctuations in these general tendencies (Beckmann & Wood, 2020; Fleeson, 2017; Judge et al., 2014). Previous studies provided evidence that personality at work indeed shows within-person fluctuations that matter for work performance (Debusscher et al., 2016b; Minbashian et al., 2010) and well-being (Howell et al., 2017; Koopmann et al., 2016; Sosnowska et al., 2019).

According to whole trait theory (Fleeson, 2001), each personality characteristic describes both a person in general (i.e., personality trait) and the person's attributes and behaviours at a specific moment (i.e., personality state). Consequently, a personality trait and its corresponding state share the same affective, behavioural and cognitive aspects (Fleeson, 2017; Fleeson & Jayawickreme, 2015). However, personality states refer to short periods (e.g., days; Judge et al., 2014) in which these states fluctuate within an individual. Personality states can be activated by situational cues (Fleeson, 2017; Fleeson & Jayawickreme, 2015). This assumption is in accordance with the interactionist principle of trait activation (Tett & Burnett, 2003; Tett & Guterman, 2000), which holds that the expression of a particular trait is dependent on a situation that activates the trait by providing trait-relevant cues (i.e., matching a specific trait) and opportunities for its expression. At work, such cues can, for instance, originate from sources in the task domain (e.g., experienced time pressure) or social domain (e.g., experienced criticism; Debusscher et al., 2016a; Minbashian et al., 2010; Tett & Burnett, 2003). As previous studies showed, situational cues at work can indeed trigger personality states (Huang & Ryan, 2011; Judge et al., 2014).

In summary, in line with whole trait theory (Fleeson, 2001), we propose that perfectionism has dynamic components that, according to the principle of trait activation (Tett & Burnett, 2003; Tett &

Guterman, 2000), can be triggered by specific situational cues (see Tett et al., 2021). We assume that experienced time pressure and criticism at work provide situational cues that are relevant for perfectionism in particular. Accordingly, we examine experienced time pressure and criticism as antecedents of daily work-related perfectionism.

Experienced time pressure at work and daily work-related perfectionism

Time pressure refers to employees' experience that they have to accomplish too many tasks in too little time (Kinicki & Vecchio, 1994). Time pressure can fluctuate daily (Baethge et al., 2019). We assume that the time pressure an employee experiences on a given day activates both their daily work-related perfectionistic strivings (i.e., high standards for their work performance) and their concerns (i.e., feelings of falling short of their high standards).

Previous research showed that perfectionism is related to the amount of time invested in task completion (Harari et al., 2018; Stoeber & Eismann, 2007). Accordingly, (too little) time for task completion is a critical factor. Furthermore, the sensitivity to stressors or situations that imply possible personal failure is a typical feature of perfectionism (Dunkley et al., 2003; Flett et al., 2016). Experiencing time pressure can imply that one is not able to attain work goals (Baethge et al., 2019), which might constitute personal failure. For instance, an employee experiencing time pressure might become aware of the possibility of failing to meet their standards or of not having enough time to fulfil their tasks 'perfectly', which elicits feelings of a discrepancy between their standards and performance. These feelings will, in turn, activate the employee's trait of perfectionism. Thus, following the principle of trait activation (Tett & Burnett, 2003; Tett & Guterman, 2000), we propose that having too little time for completing one's work tasks provides specific situational cues that activate perfectionistic strivings and concerns. In other words, experienced time pressure at work should predict both dimensions of daily work-related perfectionism.

Hypothesis 1 *On a daily basis, experienced time pressure at work is positively related to (a) work-related perfectionistic strivings and (b) work-related perfectionistic concerns.*

Experienced criticism at work and daily work-related perfectionistic concerns

There are two types of criticism: *Constructive* criticism refers to 'negative feedback that is delivered with a considerate tone and contains no threats' (Raver et al., 2012, p. 178), whereas *destructive* criticism refers to 'negative feedback that is inconsiderate in style and content that attributes poor performance to internal causes' (Raver et al., 2012, pp. 177–178). We focus on destructive criticism in the form of self-threatening negative social evaluations. More precisely, we refer to criticism at work as the inappropriate expression of disapproval of an employee's work performance – and thereby potentially of the employee's self (Koopmann et al., 2016; Raver et al., 2012) – by other people at work (e.g., colleagues and supervisors). For instance, an employee can experience criticism if their supervisor disapproves of their work results or if they overhear colleagues complaining about the employee's deficient work performance. Receiving criticism is a negative work event that can occur on a daily basis (Bono et al., 2013; Koopmann et al., 2016).

We consider daily experienced criticism at work as a source of trait-relevant cues that trigger daily work-related perfectionistic concerns. The tendency to criticize oneself, preoccupation with one's self-worth and fear of negative evaluation are typical features of self-critical perfectionism (i.e., a form of perfectionism that involves harsh self-evaluation and concerns about others' expectations, similar to perfectionistic concerns; Dunkley et al., 2003). Another key feature of perfectionistic concerns is a heightened sensitivity to social events that may expose one's inability to live up to others' expectations and thereby imply a threat to one's self-worth (Dunkley et al., 2003; Hewitt & Flett, 1993). Drawing on

these findings and the principle of trait activation (Tett & Burnett, 2003; Tett & Guterman, 2000), we propose that experiencing criticism at work provides specific situational cues that activate an employee's perfectionistic concerns.

In line with previous research, we do not expect a connection between experienced criticism and perfectionistic strivings (see Flett et al., 2016; Nepon et al., 2011). Whereas perfectionistic concerns are associated with a heightened sensitivity to social evaluation (Harari et al., 2018; Hewitt et al., 2017), perfectionistic strivings are not (Flett et al., 2016; Nepon et al., 2011). Accordingly, experienced criticism should provide cues that elicit the former, but not the latter.

Hypothesis 2 *On a daily basis, experienced criticism at work is positively related to work-related perfectionistic concerns.*

Immediate well-being effects of daily work-related perfectionism

So far, we focused on antecedents of daily work-related perfectionism. However, personality states at work can have important implications for employee performance (Debusscher et al., 2016b; Minbashian et al., 2010) and well-being (Howell et al., 2017; Koopmann et al., 2016). Consequently, we also consider outcomes of daily work-related perfectionism and, therefore, assess indicators of employee well-being. To capture the duality of perfectionism in terms of perfectionistic strivings and concerns (see Flaxman et al., 2018), we investigate vigour (i.e., a positive well-being state) as an outcome of daily work-related perfectionistic strivings and negative affect (i.e., a negative well-being state) as an outcome of daily work-related perfectionistic concerns.

Vigour is a positive affective state of moderate arousal that comprises 'a combination of a positive energy balance and pleasantness or contentment' (Shirom, 2011, p. 50). Despite being conceptualized as a work-related affective state, vigour can also be experienced away from work (Shirom, 2011). Indeed, vigour at bedtime is a well-being outcome often examined in research on occupational health and work-stress recovery (Demerouti et al., 2012; Xanthopoulou et al., 2018).¹ Negative affect is an unpleasant affective state that comprises feelings of distress, anger and nervousness (Watson et al., 1988). Whereas perfectionistic strivings are deemed to be positively related to well-being (e.g., being positively related to vigour; Childs & Stoeber, 2010; Ocampo et al., 2020), perfectionistic concerns are deemed to be negatively related to well-being (e.g., being positively related to negative affect; Dunkley et al., 2003; Ocampo et al., 2020). We propose that this duality also shows at the day level.

Perfectionistic strivings are positively related to goal progress (Moore et al., 2021; Powers et al., 2011, 2012). On days on which an employee's perfectionistic strivings are activated, the employee is focused on meeting their highperformance standards. To that end, they work purposefully towards achieving their goals, which should lead to goal progress (Powers et al., 2012). Goal progress can lead to positive affective states (e.g., vigour; Carver & Scheier, 1990; Zohar et al., 2003), with the perceived rate of goal progress linking personality states to affective states (Wilt et al., 2017).

Hypothesis 3 *Daily work-related perfectionistic strivings are positively related to vigour at the end of the workday.*

Perfectionistic concerns are negatively related to goal progress (Moore et al., 2021; Powers et al., 2011, 2012). On days on which an employee's perfectionistic concerns are activated, the employee feels that they do not live up to their highperformance standards. Focusing on this discrepancy likely distracts employees from working purposefully towards achieving their goals, which should hinder goal progress (Powers et al., 2011, 2012). Lack of goal progress can lead to negative affect (Wilt et al., 2017; Zohar et al., 2003).

¹One might argue that vigour at bedtime is not an optimal outcome variable because the definition of vigour as being aroused is not consistent with what is conceptually thought to help sleep (i.e., relaxation). However, in studies that assessed vigour at bedtime, vigour scores were moderate (Xanthopoulou et al., 2018), which is in line with what we observed in the current study. We believe that moderate vigour scores will not likely have a negative impact on sleep.

Hypothesis 4 *Daily work-related perfectionistic concerns are positively related to negative affect at the end of the workday.*

Spillover effects of daily work-related perfectionism via well-being after work

Personality states that employees experience at work might matter not only for their immediate well-being on a specific day but also for their well-being later that day (i.e., at home; Koopmann et al., 2016). Therefore, we investigate whether daily perfectionism experienced at work relates to well-being both at work and at home. More precisely, on the basis of research on affective spillover (Judge & Ilies, 2004), we examine whether an employee's daily work-related perfectionism has indirect effects on their affective well-being at home via affective well-being experienced at the end of the workday.

According to research on affective spillover, an employee is likely to experience a specific affective state at home that they have already experienced at work earlier that day (Ilies et al., 2007; Sonnentag & Binnewies, 2013) due to affect congruent processes (Rusting & DeHart, 2000). When an employee experiences positive affect at work, they are more likely to recall specifically positive (and not negative) events that happened at work, even in their free time after work. This recall of positive events can in turn prolong the employee's positive affect, meaning that an affective spillover from the work to the home domain occurs (Judge & Ilies, 2004). Accordingly, the level of vigour an employee experiences at the end of the workday (work domain) should relate positively to this employee's level of vigour at bedtime (home domain). This reasoning also applies to negative affective states (Sonnentag & Binnewies, 2013). Thus, the level of negative affect an employee experiences at the end of the workday should relate positively to this employee's level of negative affect at bedtime.

Hypothesis 5 *On a daily basis, vigour at the end of the workday is positively related to vigour at bedtime.*

Hypothesis 6 *On a daily basis, negative affect at the end of the workday is positively related to negative affect at bedtime.*

Daily affective spillover processes from the work to the home domain are well established (Ilies et al., 2007; Judge & Ilies, 2004; Sonnentag & Binnewies, 2013); accordingly, Hypotheses 5 and 6 represent replication hypotheses. However, our study does not focus on these affective spillover processes per se but on the indirect, domain-crossing effects (i.e., from the work to the home domain) of daily perfectionism at work. More precisely, we argue that affective spillover processes link daily perfectionism at work with well-being experienced at home. That is, daily work-related perfectionistic strivings should have a positive indirect effect on vigour at bedtime via vigour at the end of the workday and daily work-related perfectionistic concerns should have a positive indirect effect on negative affect at bedtime via negative affect at the end of the workday.

Hypothesis 7 *Daily work-related perfectionistic strivings have a positive indirect effect on vigour at bedtime via vigour at the end of the workday.*

Hypothesis 8 *Daily work-related perfectionistic concerns have a positive indirect effect on negative affect at bedtime via negative affect at the end of the workday.*

METHOD

Sample and procedure

To test our hypotheses, we conducted an online daily diary study (sample overlap with Venz & Mohr, 2022). To recruit participants, we used professional social online networks (e.g., xing.de) and flyers, which we distributed via email or in person. Our study was advertised as a research project on 'Stress

at work, leisure time and recovery'. To take part in the study, participants had to be at least 18 years old and work at least 20 hours per week. Participants who completed both the general survey and at least 80% of the daily surveys could participate in a lottery and win 1 of 25 vouchers from an online retailer (worth 10 euros each). We also provided a short general report on the study results for all participants.

After registration, we asked participants to complete a general survey capturing demographic and work-related background data. To collect daily data, we invited participants to complete a survey in the morning (accessible from 5 to 11 AM), at the end of the workday (accessible from 3 to 8 PM) and at bedtime (accessible from 8:30 PM to 2 AM the next morning) for two working weeks (Monday to Friday). The morning survey assessed participants' state vigour and state negative affect, which we used as control variables. The survey at the end of the workday assessed participants' daily work-related perfectionism, experienced time pressure and criticism at work as well as their state vigour and state negative affect. The survey at bedtime assessed participants' state vigour and state negative affect.

Ninety-eight people signed up for our study, 86 of whom completed the general survey. In our final sample, we included only those participants who had completed the general survey and who had provided data on the study variables (i.e., survey at the end of the workday and at bedtime) for at least two full working days. Additionally, a time lag of at least 1 hour was required between the surveys at the end of the workday and at bedtime. The final sample consisted of 72 participants, who together provided valid data for 461 days (i.e., on average 6.40 days per participant).

Participants were on average 44.69 years old ($SD = 13.22$), most of whom were female (62.5%). On average, participants worked 36.93 hours per week ($SD = 11.16$). Participants within our sample were highly educated; 53 participants held a university degree (73.6%). Participants worked in various industries, such as education and social work (20.8%), training and development (12.5%) and administrative occupations (11.1%).

To check for selective attrition, we tested whether these 72 participants differed from the 14 participants who completed the general survey but were excluded from our final sample because they did not provide enough valid day-level data (i.e., at least 2 days). Analyses revealed no significant differences with respect to gender, $\chi^2(1, N = 85) = 1.23, p = .268$ (one participant did not provide information regarding gender); educational level (0 = *without university degree*, 1 = *with university degree*), $\chi^2(1, N = 86) = 0.51, p = .477$; age, $t(84) = -1.00, p = .319$; or average working hours per week, $t(84) = 0.42, p = .675$.

Measures

Unless stated otherwise, items had to be answered on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 = *does not apply to me at all* to 5 = *fully applies to me*. All surveys were administered in German. If no German scale was available, we applied back-translation (Brislin, 1970) to translate the items into German.

Daily work-related perfectionism

To assess participants' daily work-related perfectionism, we used the Short Almost Perfect Scale (Rice et al., 2014). Because perfectionism is domain specific, it is necessary to assess it precisely in relation to the domain of interest (Harari et al., 2018; Stoeber & Stoeber, 2009). We, therefore, adapted the items to match the working context, and also adapted them to match the daily assessment. Four items captured participants' daily work-related perfectionistic strivings (e.g., 'Today at work, I had high expectations for myself') and four items captured participants' daily work-related perfectionistic concerns (e.g., 'My performance at work barely measured up to my standards today'). The response scale ranged from 1 = *do not agree at all* to 5 = *completely agree*. The scale proved to be reliable for both perfectionistic strivings (within-person $\omega = .82$ and between-person $\omega = .98$) and perfectionistic concerns (within-person $\omega = .83$ and between-person $\omega = .99$; Geldhof et al., 2014).

Experienced time pressure

To capture the time pressure participants experienced at work, we used three items of the Instrument for Stress-Oriented Task Analysis (Semmer et al., 1999) in a version adapted for daily assessment (Binnewies et al., 2009). A sample item is ‘I faced time pressure at work today’. Within-person ω was .86, between-person ω was .96.

Experienced criticism

To assess participants' experienced criticism at work, we used four items of the Direct Negative Co-Worker Subscale of the Job Feedback Survey (Herold & Parsons, 1985). The items of this subscale capture co-workers' negative messages about one's work performance. We adapted the items to capture daily criticism at work voiced by anyone at work that day, not just by co-workers. A sample item is ‘People at work (e.g., supervisors, colleagues, customers) told me today that I am not doing a good job’. Within-person ω was .83 and between-person ω was .98.

Vigour

To capture participants' state vigour both at the end of the workday and at bedtime, we used four items of the physical strength subscale of the German version of the Shirom–Melamed Vigour Measure (Shirom, 2004) in a version adapted for daily assessment (Venz & Pundt, 2021). A sample item is ‘I feel full of energy’. For the measurement at the end of the workday, within-person ω was .89 and between-person ω was .99. For the measurement at bedtime, within-person ω was .92 and between-person ω was .99.

Negative affect

To assess participants' state negative affect at the end of the workday and at bedtime, we used six items (e.g., ‘upset’ and ‘distressed’) of the German version (Breyer & Bluemke, 2016) of the PANAS scales (Watson et al., 1988). The response scale ranged from 1 = *not at all* to 5 = *extremely*. For the measurement at the end of the workday, within-person ω was .79 and between-person ω was .89. For the measurement at bedtime, within-person ω was .80 and between-person ω was .91.

Control variables

We included morning vigour as a predictor of vigour at the end of the workday and morning negative affect as a predictor of negative affect at the end of the workday. Controlling for daily baseline levels of the outcome variables allows for predicting intraindividual changes in well-being (i.e., morning to the end of workday) by daily work-related perfectionism (Gabriel et al., 2019). We assessed morning vigour and morning negative affect in the morning survey² with the same items that were used in the surveys at the end of the workday and at bedtime. For vigour, within-person ω was .89 and between-person ω was .99. For negative affect, within-person ω was .71 and between-person ω was .87. Removing the control variables from our analysis did not change the results with respect to the hypotheses.

²Morning survey data were missing on 26 days. We included these 26 days in our analysis, by using full-information-maximum-likelihood estimation in Mplus.

TABLE 1 Means, standard deviations, intraclass correlations and intercorrelations among study variables

Variables	M	SD _b	SD _w	ICC	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
1. Time pressure	2.33	0.75	0.74	.51	.51	.00	.35 ^{***}	.23 ^{**}	-.17 ^{**}	-.04	.16 ^{***}	-.01	.06	.07
2. Criticism	1.11	0.27	0.25	.54	.19 [*]	.00	-.01	.17 ^{***}	-.14 ^{**}	.00	.17 ^{**}	.13	-.10	.16 [*]
3. Perfect. strivings	3.46	0.84	0.54	.70	.48 ^{***}	-.05	.07	.01	.11 [*]	.01	.03	-.06	.11	.04
4. Perfect. concerns	1.65	0.57	0.54	.52	.35 ^{**}	.49 ^{***}	.12	-.02	-.12 [*]	-.02	.25 ^{***}	.07	-.01	.05
5. Vigour (EoW)	3.01	0.74	0.54	.65	-.17	-.08	.05	-.33 ^{***}	.26 ^{***}	.26 ^{***}	-.26 ^{***}	-.17 ^{**}	.21 ^{***}	-.10 [*]
6. Vigour (BT)	2.50	0.70	0.63	.55	-.24	-.04	-.14	-.28 [*]	.82 ^{***}	-.43 ^{***}	-.08	-.20 ^{**}	.18 ^{**}	-.06
7. NA (EoW)	1.28	0.29	0.36	.40	.39 ^{**}	.40	-.09	.45 ^{***}	-.31 [*]	-.43 ^{***}	.28 ^{**}	.01	.01	.26 ^{***}
8. NA (BT)	1.21	0.26	0.33	.38	.26 [*]	.64 [*]	.00	.44 ^{***}	-.09	-.22	.87 ^{***}	-.05	-.05	.18 [*]
9. Vigour (M)	3.20	0.72	0.53	.65	-.25	-.34 ^{***}	.10	-.42 ^{***}	.86 ^{***}	.72 ^{***}	-.51 ^{***}	-.37 ^{***}	-.37 ^{***}	-.33 ^{***}
10. NA (M)	1.27	0.28	0.29	.48	.47 ^{***}	.43 [*]	.08	.44 ^{***}	-.32 [*]	-.42 ^{***}	.96 ^{***}	.87 ^{***}	-.44 ^{***}	-.44 ^{***}

Note: Means and standard deviations are displayed in columns 1 and 2 at the person level (i.e., between person; SD_b) and standard deviations displayed in column 3 are at the day level (i.e., within-person; SD_w). Correlations above the diagonal refer to the within-person level ($n = 461$) and below the diagonal to the between-person level ($N = 72$).

Abbreviations: BT, bedtime; EoW, end of workday; ICC, percentage of variance between persons; M, morning; NA, negative affect; Perfect, perfectionistic.

* $p < .05$; ** $p < .01$; *** $p < .001$.

Construct validity

Using Mplus version 7.4 (Muthén & Muthén, 1998–2015) we conducted a multilevel confirmatory factor analysis to assess the construct validity of our measures. We ran the analysis for all study variables (morning vigour, morning negative affect, work-related perfectionistic strivings, work-related perfectionistic concerns, experienced time pressure, experienced criticism, vigour at the end of the workday, negative affect at the end of the workday, vigour at bedtime and negative affect at bedtime). Accordingly, our measurement model comprised 10 factors. We specified the model at the within-person level using person-mean centred items. Furthermore, we specified the stabilities of the vigour and negative-affect items across the three measurement points. This model showed an acceptable fit to the data, $\chi^2(870) = 1484.42, p < .001, CFI = .89, TLI = .88, RMSEA = .04$ and $SRMR_{\text{within}} = .05$.

We then tested this measurement model against plausible alternative models. Our measurement model showed a better fit than a model subsuming both perfectionism dimensions under one factor, $\chi^2(879) = 1997.32, p < .001, CFI = .80, TLI = .78, RMSEA = .05, SRMR_{\text{within}} = .07$, Satorra–Bentler $\Delta\chi^2(9) = 398.74, p < .001$, and a model subsuming experienced time pressure and criticism under one factor, $\chi^2(879) = 2010.59, p < .001, CFI = .80, TLI = .78, RMSEA = .05, SRMR_{\text{within}} = .08$, Satorra–Bentler $\Delta\chi^2(9) = 560.25, p < .001$. A one-factor model did not converge, so we could not test it against our model.

Data analysis

Because our data have a two-level structure (days nested within participants), we tested our hypotheses with a multilevel path analytic approach following the recommendations of Preacher et al. (2010). Using Mplus Version 7.4 (Muthén & Muthén, 1998–2015), we specified a multilevel path model with variance partitioning into within- and between-person parts for all variables. We modelled the same paths at the within-person and between-person levels. Means, standard deviations, intraclass correlation coefficients and intercorrelations among the study variables are displayed in Table 1. We tested all hypotheses in one overall model (Preacher et al., 2010). Intercepts were treated as random and slopes were fixed. We allowed correlations between morning vigour and morning negative affect, between perfectionistic strivings and perfectionistic concerns and between vigour and negative affect at the end of the workday at both levels. Vigour and negative affect at bedtime were correlated by default. We tested Hypotheses 7 and 8 with a 1–1–1 mediation model, specifying the indirect effects at the within-person level (Preacher et al., 2010). These were calculated by using the MODEL CONSTRAINT command in Mplus (see Preacher et al., 2010). That is, we specified within-person-level indirect effects by multiplying the predictor–mediator path with the mediator–outcome path. For the indirect effects, we calculated confidence intervals using the Monte Carlo method (Selig & Preacher, 2008), with 20,000 repetitions.

RESULTS

Because all of our hypotheses refer to relationships at the within-person level, we subsequently focus on the results at that level. We additionally report results at the between-person level on an exploratory basis. Results for the direct effects at both levels are displayed in Table 2; results for the indirect effects at the within-person level are displayed in Table 3. All reported estimates are unstandardized.

Test of hypotheses

Consistent with Hypotheses 1a and 1b, experienced time pressure at work positively predicted daily work-related perfectionistic strivings, $\gamma = 0.260, SE = 0.045, p < .001$, and daily work-related perfectionistic

concerns, $\gamma = 0.165$, $SE = 0.054$, $p = .002$. Consistent with Hypothesis 2, experienced criticism at work positively predicted daily work-related perfectionistic concerns, $\gamma = 0.360$, $SE = 0.126$, $p = .004$. It did not predict daily work-related perfectionistic strivings, $\gamma = -0.013$, $SE = 0.105$, $p = .902$. In line with Hypothesis 3, daily work-related perfectionistic strivings positively predicted vigour at the end of the workday, $\gamma = 0.172$, $SE = 0.059$, $p = .004$. In line with Hypothesis 4, daily work-related perfectionistic concerns positively predicted negative affect at the end of the workday, $\gamma = 0.134$, $SE = 0.043$, $p = .002$. Corresponding to Hypotheses 5 and 6, vigour at the end of the workday positively predicted vigour at bedtime, $\gamma = 0.302$, $SE = 0.074$, $p < .001$, and negative affect at the end of the workday positively predicted negative affect at bedtime, $\gamma = 0.239$, $SE = 0.091$, $p = .008$. In support of Hypothesis 7, daily work-related perfectionistic strivings had a positive indirect effect on vigour at bedtime via vigour at the end of the workday, $\gamma = 0.052$, $SE = 0.024$, 95% CI [0.012, 0.109]. In support of Hypothesis 8, daily work-related perfectionistic concerns had a positive indirect effect on negative affect at bedtime via negative affect at the end of the workday, $\gamma = 0.032$, $SE = 0.015$, 95% CI [0.006, 0.067].

Additional analyses

We focus on the possible implications of daily work-related perfectionism for employee well-being. Accordingly, we tested how perfectionism relates to immediate (Hypotheses 3 and 4) and distal (Hypotheses 7 and 8) well-being. At the same time, it is worthwhile to test the indirect effects of experienced time pressure and criticism on employee well-being via perfectionism. Thus, we tested these indirect effects using the procedure described above. Results are displayed in Table 3. Experienced time pressure had a positive indirect effect on vigour at the end of the workday via work-related perfectionistic strivings, $\gamma = 0.045$, $SE = 0.019$, 95% CI [0.013, 0.085], and on negative affect at the end of the workday via work-related perfectionistic concerns, $\gamma = 0.022$, $SE = 0.010$, 95% CI [0.005, 0.045]. Experienced criticism had a positive indirect effect on negative affect at the end of the workday via work-related perfectionistic concerns, $\gamma = 0.048$, $SE = 0.022$, 95% CI [0.010, 0.099]. Experienced time pressure had a positive serial indirect effect on vigour at bedtime via work-related perfectionistic strivings and vigour at the end of the workday, $\gamma = 0.014$, $SE = 0.007$, 95% CI [0.002, 0.030]. However, neither experienced time pressure, $\gamma = 0.005$, $SE = 0.003$, 95% CI [0.000, 0.012] nor experienced criticism, $\gamma = 0.012$, $SE = 0.007$, 95% CI [0.000, 0.029] had an indirect effect on negative affect at bedtime via work-related perfectionistic concerns and negative affect at the end of the workday.

Our data offer the opportunity to simultaneously examine the same relationships at the within- and between-person level. At the between-person level, experienced time pressure at work positively predicted work-related perfectionistic strivings, $\gamma = 0.563$, $SE = 0.145$, $p < .001$, and work-related perfectionistic concerns, $\gamma = 0.216$, $SE = 0.075$, $p = .004$. Experienced criticism at work positively predicted work-related perfectionistic concerns, $\gamma = 0.926$, $SE = 0.373$, $p = .013$, but not work-related perfectionistic strivings, $\gamma = -0.412$, $SE = 0.214$, $p = .055$. Work-related perfectionistic strivings did not predict vigour at the end of the workday, $\gamma = -0.016$, $SE = 0.068$, $p = .817$, and work-related perfectionistic concerns did not predict negative affect at the end of the workday, $\gamma = 0.055$, $SE = 0.041$, $p = .183$. Vigour at the end of the workday positively predicted vigour at bedtime, $\gamma = 0.802$, $SE = 0.088$, $p < .001$, and negative affect at the end of the workday positively predicted negative affect at bedtime, $\gamma = 0.762$, $SE = 0.105$, $p < .001$. Work-related perfectionistic strivings did not have a significant indirect effect on vigour at bedtime via vigour at the end of the workday, $\gamma = -0.013$, $SE = 0.054$, 95% CI [-0.116, 0.097]. Nor did work-related perfectionistic concerns have a significant indirect effect on negative affect at bedtime via negative affect at the end of the workday, $\gamma = 0.042$, $SE = 0.032$, 95% CI [-0.019, 0.108]. Thus, the results at the between-person level do not fully mirror the results at the within-person level. Whereas the relationships between work experiences and perfectionism are fairly similar at both levels, the relationships between perfectionism and well-being differ.

TABLE 2 Unstandardized within-person and between-person coefficients from multi-level path analysis predicting work-related perfectionism, vigour and negative affect

Predictors	Perfect. strivings		Perfect. concerns		Vigour (EoW)		Vigour (BT)		NA (EoW)		NA (BT)	
	Est. (SE)	z	Est. (SE)	z	Est. (SE)	z	Est. (SE)	z	Est. (SE)	z	Est. (SE)	z
Within-person level												
Vigour (M)					0.218 (0.066)	3.295**						
NA (M)									0.266 (0.106)	2.519*		
Time pressure	0.260 (0.045)	5.761***	0.165 (0.054)	3.067**	-0.168 (0.043)	-3.944***	0.009 (0.062)	0.150	0.055 (0.023)	2.456*	-0.017 (0.029)	-0.573
Criticism	-0.013 (0.105)	-0.123	0.360 (0.126)	2.856**	-0.246 (0.080)	-3.063**	0.087 (0.132)	0.660	0.153 (0.074)	2.058*	0.102 (0.081)	1.262
Perfect. strivings					0.172 (0.059)	2.912**	-0.032 (0.067)	-0.480	-0.024 (0.047)	-0.502	-0.034 (0.037)	-0.934
Perfect. concerns					-0.057 (0.056)	-1.024	0.006 (0.062)	0.097	0.134 (0.043)	3.154**	0.001 (0.043)	0.013
Vigour (EoW)							0.302 (0.074)	4.099***				
NA (EoW)											0.239 (0.091)	2.641**
Residual variance	0.260 (0.032)	8.235***	0.273 (0.041)	6.711***	0.257 (0.025)	10.429***	0.373 (0.041)	9.007***	0.110 (0.020)	5.523***	0.100 (0.023)	4.434***
Between-person level												
Intercept	2.606 (0.390)	6.685***	0.124 (0.411)	0.301	-0.472 (0.509)	-0.927	0.597 (0.443)	1.346	0.182 (0.265)	0.685	-0.186 (0.218)	-0.855
Vigour (M)					0.913 (0.073)	12.474***						
NA (M)									0.951 (0.128)	7.438***		
Time pressure	0.563 (0.145)	3.887***	0.216 (0.075)	2.881**	0.037 (0.090)	0.416	-0.018 (0.096)	-0.184	0.027 (0.028)	0.990	-0.067 (0.036)	-1.874
Criticism	-0.412 (0.214)	-1.920	0.926 (0.373)	2.481*	0.732 (0.284)	2.579*	-0.020 (0.329)	-0.062	-0.023 (0.188)	-0.124	0.388 (0.176)	2.201*
Perfect. strivings					-0.016 (0.068)	-0.232	-0.146 (0.092)	-1.582	-0.069 (0.035)	-1.960	0.062 (0.034)	1.850
Perfect. concerns					-0.170 (0.131)	-1.294	0.031 (0.113)	0.275	0.055 (0.041)	1.332	-0.043 (0.079)	-0.540

TABLE 2 (Continued)

Predictors	Perfect. strivings		Perfect. concerns		Vigour (EoW)		Vigour (BT)		NA (EoW)		NA (BT)	
	Est. (SE)	z	Est. (SE)	z	Est. (SE)	z	Est. (SE)	z	Est. (SE)	z	Est. (SE)	z
Vigour (EoW)												
							0.802 (0.088)	9.082 ^{***}				
NA (EoW)												
Residual variance	0.525 (0.095)	5.537 ^{***}	0.222 (0.060)	3.673 ^{***}	0.106 (0.034)	3.127 ^{**}	0.146 (0.038)	3.871 ^{***}	0.003 (0.014)	0.241	0.762 (0.105)	7.280 ^{***}

N=6: N = 72, n = 461. The table shows unstandardized within-person (upper part) and between-person (lower part) estimates, resulting from an overall analysis including the prediction of work-related perfectionistic strivings and concerns, and vigour and negative affect at the end of the workday and at bedtime in one model.

Abbreviations: BT, bedtime; EoW, end of workday; Est., Estimate; M, morning; NA, negative affect; Perfect., perfectionistic.
^{*}p < .05; ^{**}p < .01; ^{***}p < .001.

TABLE 3 Within-person indirect effects

	Estimate	SE	95% CI
Perfect. strivings → Vigour (EoW) → Vigour (BT)	0.052	0.024	[0.012, 0.109]
Perfect. concerns → NA (EoW) → NA (BT)	0.032	0.015	[0.006, 0.067]
Time pressure → Perfect. strivings → Vigour (EoW)	0.045	0.019	[0.013, 0.085]
Time pressure → Perfect. concerns → NA (EoW)	0.022	0.010	[0.005, 0.045]
Criticism → Perfect. concerns → NA (EoW)	0.048	0.022	[0.010, 0.099]
Time pressure → Perfect. strivings → Vigour (EoW) → Vigour (BT)	0.014	0.007	[0.002, 0.030]
Time pressure → Perfect. concerns → NA (EoW) → NA (BT)	0.005	0.003	[0.000, 0.012]
Criticism → Perfect. concerns → NA (EoW) → NA (BT)	0.012	0.007	[0.000, 0.029]

Note: The table shows unstandardized within-person estimates. Confidence intervals were calculated using the Monte Carlo method (Selig & Preacher, 2008).

Abbreviations: BT, bedtime; CI, confidence interval; EoW, end of workday; NA, negative affect; Perfect., perfectionistic.

DISCUSSION

We employed a diary study approach to better understand how perfectionism functions in employees' daily work. Specifically, we examined how experiences at work (i.e., experienced time pressure and criticism) relate to daily work-related perfectionistic strivings and concerns and tested how daily work-related perfectionism, in turn, relates to employees' experience of vigour and negative affect at work and home.

We found that the time pressure an employee experienced at work related positively to both their daily work-related perfectionistic strivings and concerns. Furthermore, criticism experienced at work related positively to employees' perfectionistic concerns. Daily work-related perfectionistic strivings were indirectly positively related to vigour at bedtime via vigour at the end of the workday. Daily work-related perfectionistic concerns were indirectly positively related to negative affect at bedtime via negative affect at the end of the workday.

Theoretical implications

Our study has theoretical implications for the study of personality dynamics at work. We introduce perfectionism as a personality characteristic at work that can be studied from a dynamic perspective. More precisely, we demonstrate that perfectionism at work has state components that fluctuate within short periods (i.e., days). These fluctuations are elicited by perfectionism-relevant cues at work (i.e., experienced time pressure and criticism) and have a bearing on employee well-being. Thus, our study further substantiates both the premises of whole trait theory (Fleeson, 2001, 2017; Fleeson & Jayawickreme, 2015) and the principle of trait activation (Tett & Burnett, 2003; Tett & Guterman, 2000), and it underlines the benefit of studying personality at work from a dynamic viewpoint (Beckmann & Wood, 2020).

In addition, examining the two dimensions of perfectionism simultaneously allowed us to detect that not every situational cue or experience at work is equally relevant for every dimension of a personality state (e.g., experiencing criticism triggered perfectionistic concerns but not perfectionistic strivings). Likewise, not every dimension of a personality state at work matters for the same outcome variables (i.e., perfectionistic strivings predicted vigour but not negative affect, whereas perfectionistic concerns predicted negative affect but not vigour). When investigating antecedents and outcomes of personality states at work, scholars should be aware of the multidimensionality of many personality characteristics and hence examine the various dimensions simultaneously.

Our study also has specific theoretical implications for the study of perfectionism at work. The dynamic view we offer alters the prevailing understanding of work-related perfectionism. Up to now, scholars have conceptualized perfectionism as a fairly stable personality trait (Hewitt & Flett, 1991)

and investigated it as an antecedent of work outcomes (Ocampo et al., 2020). However, this stable antecedent-focused view is limited because it neglects the possibility of perfectionism being both an antecedent *and* an outcome at work (McCormick et al., 2020; Stoeber, 2018). That is, perfectionism might not only affect employees' (daily) work but also be affected by their (daily) work.

Most studies that examined perfectionism as an outcome focused on developmental changes due to experiences during childhood and adolescence (e.g., Damian et al., 2013). In all likelihood, however, dynamics in perfectionism do not arise solely during childhood and adolescence. On the contrary, it is plausible that dynamics in *work*-related perfectionism arise due to experiences at *work* (Ocampo et al., 2020). These work-related dynamics might also arise in the short term (e.g., daily). Indeed, our study showed that daily experiences of time pressure and criticism at work play a role as antecedents of daily fluctuations in work-related perfectionism. It is, therefore, useful to study antecedents at work that relate to short-term variability in perfectionism. Moreover, a dynamic view that considers antecedents of perfectionism at work might also help to better understand long-term variability or changes in perfectionism during adulthood (e.g., whether subordinates' perfectionism adjusts to their leader's perfectionism or whether newcomers' perfectionism changes over time due to the work context; see Ocampo et al., 2020). In conclusion, we deem it important to investigate perfectionism from a dynamic view and consider it as both an antecedent and an outcome at work.

Limitations and directions for future research

Our study is not without limitations. The fact that we assessed experienced time pressure and criticism, work-related perfectionism, vigour and negative affect at the same time point each day using self-reports might raise concerns regarding the temporal sequence of these constructs and regarding common method bias (Podsakoff et al., 2012), especially when testing mediation (Aguinis et al., 2017). To allay these concerns, we took several measures. First, although we assessed experienced time pressure, criticism and work-related perfectionism retrospectively (i.e., with respect to the full working day), we instructed participants to rate vigour and negative affect with respect to how they felt *at the moment* (Fisher & To, 2012). These instructions help to establish a temporal order in which perfectionism states precede well-being states. Second, we assessed vigour and negative affect not only at the end of the workday but also later on at home. This allowed us to capture the spillover effects of perfectionism, going beyond its simultaneously assessed immediate effects on well-being. Third, controlling for morning vigour and negative affect enabled us to predict intraindividual change in employee well-being contingent on daily work-related perfectionism (Gabriel et al., 2019). Finally, whole trait theory (Fleeson, 2001) and the principle of trait activation (Tett & Burnett, 2003; Tett & Guterman, 2000) provide a strong theoretical basis for assuming that at-work experiences precede work-related perfectionism and not vice versa.

Nevertheless, we encourage future research to examine the temporal and causal relationships of work-related perfectionism, its at-work antecedents and its outcomes more closely. For example, one could measure employees' work experiences, perfectionism and well-being several times per day to gain a better understanding of their temporal relationships and to reduce retrospective biases (Fisher & To, 2012). In addition, one could implement an experimental design and manipulate the experience of time pressure or criticism to approach causality. Because we were particularly interested in employees' experiences and perceptions, we consider our use of self-reports as justifiable. However, future research might use observer ratings to assess employees' daily work-related perfectionism or physiological measures to assess well-being (Stoeber, 2018).

Our study offers a few other starting points for future research on work-related perfectionism. We showed that work-related perfectionism can be conceptualized as a personality state that exhibits within-person fluctuations from day to day. Because this perspective is relatively new to the literature, we call for studies that investigate daily work-related perfectionism in more detail. For instance, researchers could examine whether people differ in the extent to which their perfectionism fluctuates from day to day (see Debusscher et al., 2016b). Investigating the interplay of state and trait perfectionism at work

can be another fruitful avenue for future research (see Debusscher et al., 2016a; Judge et al., 2014; Minbashian et al., 2010). Because personality states at work also have implications for performance (Debusscher et al., 2016b), future research could investigate the relationship between perfectionism and performance at the day level. Furthermore, our study focused on intraindividual well-being effects of affective spillover processes related to daily perfectionism at work. It would be interesting to examine whether daily perfectionism-related spillover processes from the work to the home domain can have interindividual (i.e., crossover) effects as well (e.g., on the well-being of family members).

We focused exclusively on experienced time pressure and experienced criticism at work as antecedents of work-related perfectionism, which represent perfectionism-relevant situational cues in the task and the social domain respectively. There are likely other situational cues triggering work-related perfectionism that future research might consider. For instance, other kinds of pressure at work (e.g., performance pressure; Mitchell et al., 2019) might activate perfectionism. Situational cues may also originate from sources in the organizational domain (e.g., from the organizational culture or climate; Tett & Burnett, 2003). Given that perfectionistic strivings might even be beneficial at work, whereas perfectionistic concerns are clearly harmful (Harari et al., 2018; Stoeber & Damian, 2016), it would be valuable to identify situational cues that can trigger perfectionistic strivings without triggering perfectionistic concerns simultaneously. It might also be relevant to examine constructs that moderate the relationships between at-work antecedents and work-related perfectionism (see Koopmann et al., 2016). For instance, it would be interesting to determine whether there are specific conditions under which the experience of time pressure elicits only one of the two perfectionism dimensions.

Practical implications

The dynamic view on work-related perfectionism is relatively new to organizational psychology, and empirical evidence is sparse. Therefore, caution is due regarding practical implications. Nevertheless, the results of our study can provide a starting point for practical action. Specifically, knowing that experiencing time pressure and criticism at work can trigger perfectionism might prove helpful for organizations, employees and supervisors.

The observation that experiencing time pressure at work related positively to vigour via perfectionistic strivings might lead one to argue that experiencing time pressure is beneficial and that organizations or supervisors should, for instance, set tight deadlines accordingly. In line with other scholars (Baethge et al., 2019), we refrain from endorsing this practical implication. For one, we cannot rule out possible strain effects of time pressure: our results show that experienced time pressure negatively predicted vigour and positively predicted negative affect at the end of the workday. Moreover, experienced time pressure also triggered perfectionistic concerns, which were related to enhanced negative affect.

Experiencing criticism at work triggered employees' perfectionistic concerns, but not their perfectionistic strivings. Here, too, perfectionistic concerns were related to enhanced negative affect. To prevent employees from experiencing perfectionistic concerns, supervisors and co-workers should avoid making derogatory comments about employees' performance. When employees experience perfectionistic concerns at work, it might prove useful for them to mentally distance themselves from the situation they are currently in, for instance, by taking a break (Ocampo et al., 2020).

Our findings might also prove helpful for designing and implementing interventions that aim at decreasing perfectionistic concerns and related undesired consequences. Thanks to their malleability, personality states should be susceptible to intervention (Beckmann & Wood, 2020). Our results showed that perfectionistic concerns – which are often considered to be the detrimental side of perfectionism – fluctuate from day to day. This finding is encouraging insofar as it indicates that experiencing perfectionistic concerns in daily life might be avoided or reduced by providing an environment without cues (e.g., time pressure and criticism) that trigger such concerns. Moreover, as Beckmann and Wood (2020) note, targeting and changing state perfectionism and its consequences through daily interventions might, in the long run, help in shaping trait perfectionism and related consequences.

CONCLUSION

Our study showed that employees' daily experiences at work relate to fluctuations in their work-related perfectionism that matter for their well-being. We hope that our findings contribute to a better understanding of how this impactful personality characteristic functions at work and instigate further research on this topic. We conclude that a dynamic view on perfectionism helps broaden the understanding of perfectionism at work and concur with the observation that 'the workplace (...) represents a "perfect" context to understand the dynamics of perfectionism' (Ocampo et al., 2020, p. 156).

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS

Monique Mohr: Conceptualization; Data curation; Formal analysis; Investigation; Methodology; Project administration; Writing – original draft. **Laura Venz:** Data curation; project administration; supervision; writing – review and editing. **Sabine Sonnentag:** Supervision; writing – review and editing.

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CONFLICT OF INTEREST

All authors declare no conflict of interest.

DATA AVAILABILITY STATEMENT

Study participants did not provide consent that their data will be available publicly. Data are available for interested researchers upon request from the corresponding author.

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