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ORIGINAL ARTICLE

Other-Oriented Perfectionism Predicts Physical Intimate Partner Violence in Romantic Couples: A Brief Report on a Longitudinal Actor-Partner Interdependence Model[1]

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Abstract

Purpose Theory and case histories implicate other-oriented perfectionism (OOP; demanding perfectionism of others) in physical intimate partner violence (Physical IPV; physical violence between romantic partners). Yet, empirical evidence is scarce. Our brief report addresses this gap by testing OOP's association with physical IPV.

Methods Using actor-partner interdependence models (APIMs) and multivariate logistic regression, we analyzed data from 229 mixed-gender couples (M_{age} = 40.0; SD=6.01) over two waves spaced several months apart during the COVID-19 pandemic. Each member of the couple completed measures of other-oriented perfectionism (Multidimensional Perfectionism Scale) and agreeableness (Ten-Item Personality Inventory) at baseline and physical IPV perpetration and victimization (Revised Conflict Tactics Scale short-form) at baseline and follow-up.

Results Controlling baseline physical IPV, men's baseline OOP predicted an increased likelihood of their women partners' physical IPV victimization over time. Men's baseline OOP also predicted an increased likelihood of their women partners' perpetrating physical IPV, possibly representing retaliation against received abuse. Men's baseline OOP did not predict an increase in the likelihood of men's self-reports of physical IPV perpetration, possibly due to social desirability effects. Women's baseline OOP did not predict any physical IPV variables. Findings held when controlling for agreeableness.

Conclusion Our study sheds light on the role of OOP in physical IPV, supporting the theoretical accounts of OOP and domestic violence by men. Results suggest that OOP in men might be an important factor to screen for when assessing couples' risk of physical IPV.

Keywords Perfectionism · Physical intimate partner violence · Longitudinal · Couples

Our study was not preregistered.

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Intimate partner violence (IPV), as characterized by physical, sexual, and psychological aggression within romantic relationships (CDC, 2022), poses a significant societal concern, with millions affected annually in the U.S. alone (CDC, 2022). Alarmingly, physical IPV incidences surged during the COVID-19 pandemic, with increased stressors such as job loss and isolation likely contributing to this rise (McNeil et al., 2023). Although many factors are involved in physical IPV, other-oriented perfectionism (OOP) — the tendency to expect perfection from others — has long been suggested as a trait commonly found in perpetrators of physical IPV (Dutton & Golant, 1995).

OOP is one of three trait perfectionism dimensions, in addition to self-oriented perfectionism (SOP), defined as holding perfectionistic expectations for oneself, and

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socially prescribed perfectionism (SPP), defined as perceiving that others demand perfection from you (Hewitt & Flett, 1991). People with high levels of OOP expect perfection from others and are highly critical of those who fail to meet their expectations (Hewitt & Flett, 1991). Research suggests OOP is a darker form of perfectionism than SOP or SPP. For example, meta-analytic research indicates that relative to SOP and SPP, OOP has a stronger inverse relationship with agreeableness (Smith et al., 2019). Likewise, evidence suggests that OOP, but not SOP or SPP, displays small to medium positive relationships with narcissism, characterized by grandiosity, entitlement, and a need for admiration; Machiavellianism, marked by manipulativeness, exploitation, and cynicism; and psychopathy, which involves callousness, impulsivity, and a lack of empathy or remorse (Stoeber, 2014). Thus, those higher in OOP are more likely to be exploitative, manipulative, callous, insensitive, and entitled (Stoeber, 2014). These traits connect to physical IPV, with low agreeableness and high psychopathy predicting physical IPV (Carton & Egan, 2017).

People higher in OOP are less inclined to get along with others, understand others' feelings, or make others happy (Stoeber, 2014). Indeed, OOP is associated with interpersonal problems such as being domineering and vindictive (Stoeber et al., 2021). Some gender differences also exist. Typically, men with higher OOP demonstrate attitudes and behaviors that are more domineering than vindictive, whereas women with higher OOP present as more vindictive than domineering (Stoeber et al., 2021).

OOP is also associated with romantic relationship issues specifically. For example, people with high levels of OOP directed towards their partner (partner-oriented perfectionism) have lower levels of relationship satisfaction and are less committed to their partners (Stoeber, 2012). Furthermore, high expectations towards a partner and the belief that partners are inadequate increases the potential for conflict within relationships (Tosun & Yazici, 2021). These relationship difficulties may be partially due to unwillingness to forgive. People with partner-oriented perfectionism are less willing to forgive their partners in response to both hypothetical scenarios and real-life conflicts (Furman et al., 2017). Additionally, research suggests that people high in OOP are more likely to hold their partner accountable for undesirable behavior, regardless of whether they believe their partner is responsible (Furman et al., 2017). Though not yet tested, people high in OOP may perpetrate physical IPV in response to situations where they perceive their partner as not meeting their standards. Indeed, the relationship dissatisfaction characteristic of those with high OOP is an established risk factor for IPV (Capaldi et al., 2012).

Theory suggests OOP may be associated with physical IPV. For instance, Dutton and Golant (1995) describe an overly controlling, domineering, and perfectionistic category of assaultive men whose anger builds and then explodes as violence. Moreover, Dutton and Golant (1995) propose a category of cyclical abusers who are theorized to blame their internal discomforts on their partner's lack of meeting unrealistic standards, which provides an excuse to get angry and leads them to take out their frustrations through violence. Parenthetically, Dutton and Golant (1995) focus exclusively on abusive men and do not discuss whether these characteristics are found in abusive women.

Despite longstanding theoretical accounts and case histories (Dutton & Golant, 1995), there is much to learn about the perniciousness of OOP in romantic relationships. First, there is no direct empirical test of the theorized OOP-physical IPV link. Second, the theorized OOP-physical IPV link does not consider potential gender differences (Dutton & Golant, 1995). Third, studies on OOP are typically cross-sectional (e.g., Stoeber et al., 2021), limiting conclusions regarding directionality and causality. Fourth, although OOP is inherently an interpersonal construct (demanding perfection from others), most studies examine OOP at the individual level (e.g., Stoeber, 2014), failing to capture the interdependence that occurs within relationships. Finally, studies involving people with perfectionism experiencing naturalistic stressors, like a pandemic, are often recommended (e.g., Haring et al., 2003) but rarely conducted.

In the present study, we addressed these limitations by testing the impact of OOP in men and women in predicting change in the likelihood of physical IPV victimization and perpetration several months later using actor-partner interdependence modeling (APIM; Ledermann et al., 2022). To examine the amount of physical IPV perceived by both members of a couple, we included both self- and partner reports of physical IPV victimization and perpetration. If Partner A (the man) perpetrated violence, Partner B (the woman) will have experienced victimization, as Partner A and B are in the same romantic dyad. Yet, Partner A and Partner B may not always report equivalent amounts of physical IPV perpetration and victimization, as biased reporting is a particular concern in physical IPV research, where shame, stigma, or lack of insight can lead to the minimization of self-reported physical IPV (Archer, 1999). As such, collecting measures of physical IPV victimization and perpetration from both partners allows us to use Partner B's reports of victimization as an indirect measure of Partner A's perpetration and vice versa.

Based on theory and research (e.g., Dutton & Golant, 1995; Stoeber, 2014), we hypothesized the following partner effects: OOP in men would predict an increased likelihood of physical IPV victimization in their female partners (H1) and OOP in women would predict an increased likelihood of physical IPV victimization in their male partners (H2).

Likewise, we hypothesized the following actor effects: OOP in men would predict an increased likelihood of physical IPV perpetration by men (H3) and OOP in women would predict an increased likelihood of physical IPV perpetration by women (H4). As previous research examining the association between personality traits and IPV has found small to medium effect sizes (e.g., Carton & Egan, 2017), we anticipate similar patterns in the relation of OOP with physical IPV. We tested OOP in men and women separately because gender differences are observed in prior work on OOP (e.g., Stoeber et al., 2021) and physical IPV (e.g., Dutton & Golant, 1995). However, we did not offer hypotheses regarding gender differences due to insufficient evidence. Lastly, we predicted that hypotheses would persist after controlling for the overlapping trait of (dis)agreeableness, baseline physical IPV, and couples' homeschooling status.

Methods

Participants

Couples were sourced from a larger archival dataset of 764 couples recruited through Qualtrics Survey Panels for studies regarding mandatory homeschooling and family well-being during the COVID-19 pandemic (e.g., Elgendi et al., 2022). Eligible respondents for this larger dataset were those in a romantic relationship for at least three months, with at least one child in grades 1–5. Both partners had to be a minimum of 19 years old, living in Canada or the United States, and cohabiting from Jan 15 to Feb 15, 2021. Couples excluded from the current study did not qualify as being in a mixed-gender relationship at T1 ($n=124$), did not participate at both Time 1 (T1) and Time 2 (T2) ($n=409$) or were not in the same relationship at T2 ($n=2$). As such, the final sample comprised 229 couples, an adequate sample size for APIM based on standard rules of thumb (i.e., >200 dyads; Ledermann et al., 2022). See Table 1 for demographic information.

Due to the large number of mixed-gender couples who did not complete the survey at T2, we used independent *t*-tests and *chi*-square tests to assess if there were any significant differences between the couples who did and did not complete T2. No significant differences were found for men's or women's education level, family income, ethnicity/race, children's schooling, OOP, agreeableness, or physical IPV victimization and perpetration. However, couples who completed T2 did have significantly longer relationships ($t(533) = -2.48$, $p=.007$), and both men and women were significantly older in age ($t_{men}(551) = -2.00$, $p=.023$; $t_{women}(559) = -2.25$, $p=.012$).

Table 1 Demographic information and relationship characteristics for the study sample

Variable	Men ($n=229$)	Women ($n=229$)
	M (SD)	M (SD)
Age	41.25 (6.19)	38.75 (5.55)
Relationship length (yrs.)[a]	14.49 (5.65)	14.49 (5.65)
	***N*(%)**	***N*(%)**
Highest Level of Education		
Some high school/high school graduate[b]	26 (11.35%)	22 (9.61%)
Some college/university	19 (8.30%)	17 (7.42%)
College/university graduate	112 (48.90%)	131 (57.20%)
Some post-graduate	10 (4.37%)	11 (4.80%)
Post-graduate degree	62 (27.07%)	48 (20.96%)
Family Income		
CAD $25,000 or less per year	8 (3.49%)	10 (4.37%)
Between CAD $26,000 and $50,000	19 (8.30%)	20 (8.73%)
Between CAD $51,000 and $75,000	38 (16.59%)	41 (17.90%)
Between CAD $76,000 and $100,000	44 (19.21%)	41 (17.90%)
Between CAD $101,000 and $125,000	30 (13.10%)	28 (12.22%)
Between CAD $126,000 and $150,000	29 (12.66%)	30 (13.10%)
CAD $151,000 or more per year	50 (21.83%)	48 (20.96%)
Prefer not to answer	11 (4.80%)	11 (4.80%)
Ethnicity/Race		
White	153 (66.81%)	154 (67.25%)
Asian or Arab/West Asian[b]	47 (20.52%)	48 (20.96%)
Latin American or Black or Indigenous[b]	18 (7.86%)	13 (5.68%)
Multiracial/Other/Prefer not to answer[b]	11 (4.80%)	14 (6.11%)
Children's Schooling[a]		
Voluntary Homeschooling	5 (2.18%)	5 (2.18%)
Mandatory Homeschooling	128 (55.90%)	128 (55.90%)
In-person learning	96 (41.92%)	96 (41.92%)

Note.

[a]Reported by the panellist only, demographics are equivalent for both men and women due to them being couples

[b]Combined to maintain confidentiality of respondents due to low numbers in one or more of these categories

Procedure

Couples recruited for the larger archival data set were invited to complete an online survey in March-May 2021 about their experiences from Jan 15-Feb 15, 2021 (T1) and again two months later in May-July 2021 about their past month's experiences (T2). After providing consent, respondents completed the survey with the panellist completing first and their partner completing the same measures within

48 h. The surveys included two attention checks to ensure data quality. Qualtrics also performed a speed check that identified responses more than two standard deviations from the mean duration for survey completion. After completing the survey, couples were compensated according to Qualtrics guidelines. Couples that were ineligible, failed the attention- and/or speed-check, or failed to provide consent, were screened out in the initial data collection ($n = 4053$). This data collection was approved by the -MASKED-Research Ethics Board (#2020–5166).

Data Analytic Strategy

APIMs with follow-up dichotomous physical IPV variables as outcomes and baseline OOP and physical IPV variables as predictors were tested using multivariate logistic regression with full-information robust maximum likelihood estimation in Mplus Version 7.2 (Muthén & Muthén, 2012). The APIM estimates the effects of the actor's predictor (actor effect) and their partner's predictor (partner effect) on the actor's outcome while controlling for interdependence. Separate APIMs were tested for physical IPV victimization and perpetration.[1] For Model 1, in predicting follow-up physical IPV victimization in men and women partners (coded 0 vs. 1), baseline OOP and baseline physical IPV victimization variables in men and women partners were entered as predictors. Model 2 was identical to Model 1, except perpetrated physical IPV replaced physical IPV victimization.

To increase confidence in the validity of our findings, we conducted supplementary analyses. First, we tested the extent that findings from Model 1 and Model 2 changed after controlling for each partner's level of baseline agreeableness, as low agreeableness is a known risk factor for physical IPV (Carton & Egan, 2017) and is associated with OOP (Smith et al., 2019). Second, given the nature of our archival dataset with groups preselected to represent homeschooling and in-person learning environments (Elgendi et al., 2022) and prior work linking homeschooling during the pandemic with increased romantic conflict (Basso et al., 2023), we tested the degree to which Model 1 and Model 2 findings changed after controlling for homeschooling status. Parenthetically, in logistic regression, the model is saturated and fits the data exactly. We retained a fully saturated model as it represented our hypotheses of interest. A saturated logistic regression has as many parameters as observation and therefore fits the data perfectly, capturing both meaningful association as well as noise. As absolute fit statistics cannot be generated for a fully saturated model, we cannot state how well our data fit the model overall.

[1] We could not test a single model as the number of estimated parameters exceeded what was possible with our sample size and resulted in non-trustworthy standard errors of model parameter estimates due to a non-positive definite product matrix.

Measures

Other-Oriented Perfectionism

OOP was measured using Hewitt et al.'s (2008) 5-item short-form OOP subscale of Hewitt and Flett's (1991) Multidimensional Perfectionism Scale (HFMPS-OOP; "I have high expectations for people who are important to me"). HFMPS items are rated on a 7-point Likert scale from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 7 (*strongly agree*). The short-form scale is found to have high convergent validity with the long-form (Hewitt et al., 2008), and our study found good internal consistency for both men's ($\alpha = 0.88$) and women's ($\alpha = 0.87$) OOP.

Physical Intimate Partner Violence

Physical IPV was measured by Straus and Douglas's (2004) 4-item Revised Conflict Tactics Scale short-form (CTS2S). The measure included physical IPV victimization ("My partner punched or kicked or beat me up") and perpetration ("I pushed, shoved, or slapped my partner"). The CTS2S is rated on a 5-point scale from 1 (*violence has never occurred*) to 5 (*violence occurred 3 + times during the 30 days*). Next, following the prevalence scoring method (Straus & Douglas, 2004), we converted responses to dichotomous victimization and perpetration prevalence scores where 0 = violence never occurred, and 1 = violence occurred within 30 days. Research generally supports the reliability and validity of the CTS2S (e.g., Straus & Douglas, 2004). However, although the scale's long-form (CTS2; Straus et al., 1996) is the most widely used measure of IPV, it is important to note that it has faced criticism due to low concordance of IPV reports across partners and its susceptibility to memory errors and false positives (Marshall et al., 2021).

Agreeableness

Agreeableness was measured by Gosling et al.'s (2003) Ten-Item Personality Inventory (TIPI). The TIPI is a 10-item scale with two items measuring agreeableness ("I see myself as critical, quarrelsome" [reverse scored] and "I see myself as sympathetic, warm"). The TIPI is rated on a 7-point Likert scale from 1 (*disagree strongly*) to 7 (*agree strongly*). This scale has demonstrated adequate validity (Gosling et al., 2003).

Results

Bivariate correlations, means, standard deviations, and Cronbach's alpha for all measures are reported in Supplemental Material Table 1A.[2]

Figure 1 displays the effects obtained from our physical IPV victimization APIM (Model 1). Significant autoregressive paths were found for physical IPV victimization in women (B=2.88, odds ratio OR=17.83, 95% CI [2.81; 113.02], p=.002) and men (B=2.52, OR=12.46, 95% CI [3.00; 51.72], p=.001). As hypothesized (H1), OOP in men predicted an increased likelihood of physical IPV victimization in their partner (partner effect: B=0.11, OR=1.12, 95% CI [1.00; 1.25], p=.041). However, in contrast to H2, OOP in women did not predict an increased likelihood of physical IPV victimization in men (partner effect: B = −0.02, OR=0.98, 95% CI [0.88; 1.08], p=.641).

Figure 2 displays the effects obtained from our physical IPV perpetration APIM (Model 2). A significant autoregressive path was found for physical IPV perpetration in men (B=2.78, OR=16.04, 95% CI [3.07; 83.85], p=.001), whereas this path was marginal in women (B=1.73, OR=5.89, 95% CI [1.00; 34.66], p=.050). Contrary to H3 and H4, OOP in men did not predict an increased likelihood of physical IPV perpetration by men (actor effect: B=0.04, OR=1.04, 95% CI [0.94; 1.16], p=.458), and OOP in women did not predict an increased likelihood of physical IPV perpetration by women (actor effect: B = −0.06, OR=0.94, 95% CI [0.84; 1.05], p=.277). However, unexpectedly, OOP in men (partner effect: B=0.13, OR=1.14, 95% CI [1.04; 1.25], p=.007) predicted an increased likelihood of physical IPV perpetration by women. Additionally, physical IPV perpetration by men predicted an increased likelihood of physical IPV perpetration by women (partner effect: B=1.94, OR=6.93, 95% CI [1.26; 38.29], p=.026), and physical IPV perpetration by women predicted an increased likelihood of physical IPV perpetration by men (partner effect: B=1.97, OR=7.16, 95% CI [1.37; 37.45], p=.020).

Our sensitivity analyses showed that OOP in men continued to predict an increased likelihood of physical IPV victimization in women after controlling for agreeableness in men and women (B=0.18, OR=1.20, 95% CI [1.06; 1.35], p=.003; see Supplemental Fig. 1B). As well, OOP in men remained a predictor of an increased likelihood of physical IPV perpetration by women after controlling for agreeableness in men and women (B=0.19, OR=1.21, 95% CI [1.05; 1.39], p=.009; see Supplemental Fig. 2B). Likewise, after controlling for homeschooling status at baseline, OOP in men continued to predict an increased likelihood of physical IPV victimization in women (B=0.12, OR=1.13, 95% CI [1.00; 1.26], p=.043; see Supplemental Fig. 3B) and an increased likelihood of physical IPV perpetrated by women (B=0.13, OR=1.13, 95% CI [1.03; 1.25], p=.008; see Supplemental Fig. 4B).

[2] We did not find any outliers when we tested for the presence of multivariate outliers for men's and women's OOP.

Discussion

We tested the impact of OOP on change in the likelihood of physical IPV victimization and perpetration in couples cohabiting during the COVID-19 pandemic using a longitudinal APIM. Consistent with H1, OOP in men predicted an increase in the likelihood of their women partners' physical IPV victimization. However, contrary to H3, men's OOP did not predict an increase in the likelihood of men's self-reported physical IPV perpetration. Interestingly, OOP in men also predicted an increase in the likelihood of their women partners' self-reports of physical IPV perpetration toward the man. In contrast, OOP in women did not predict an increase in the likelihood of their male partner's reports of physical IPV victimization (H2) or in women's self-reports of physical IPV perpetration (H4). Results held when controlling for agreeableness and couples' homeschooling status, supporting the specificity of the findings to OOP rather than the related trait of disagreeableness (Smith et al., 2019) and showing OOP remains an important predictor of physical IPV after controlling for established links of mandatory homeschooling to romantic conflict (Basso et al., 2023). Controlling for T1 physical IPV showed OOP predicts later physical IPV beyond baseline physical IPV levels — a rigorous test of the incremental contribution of OOP.

OOP in Men

Our finding that OOP in men predicted an increased likelihood of physical IPV victimization in women dovetails with Dutton and Golant's (1995) accounts of violent male domestic abusers being perfectionistic, domineering, and overly controlling of their partners. The discrepancy in this result across partners, with men with higher OOP not reporting an increase in the likelihood of their physical IPV perpetration, may stem from a variety of different factors. Low agreement between partners on IPV victimization and perpetration is common, but gender and victim/perpetrator status do not consistently predict agreement levels (Capinha et al., 2024). In our study, men perhaps did not want to admit to abusing their partners and consequently under-reported perpetration due to social desirability bias (Halim et al., 2018). The men in our sample may be prone to under-reporting perpetration due to residing in Canada and the U.S., where violence from

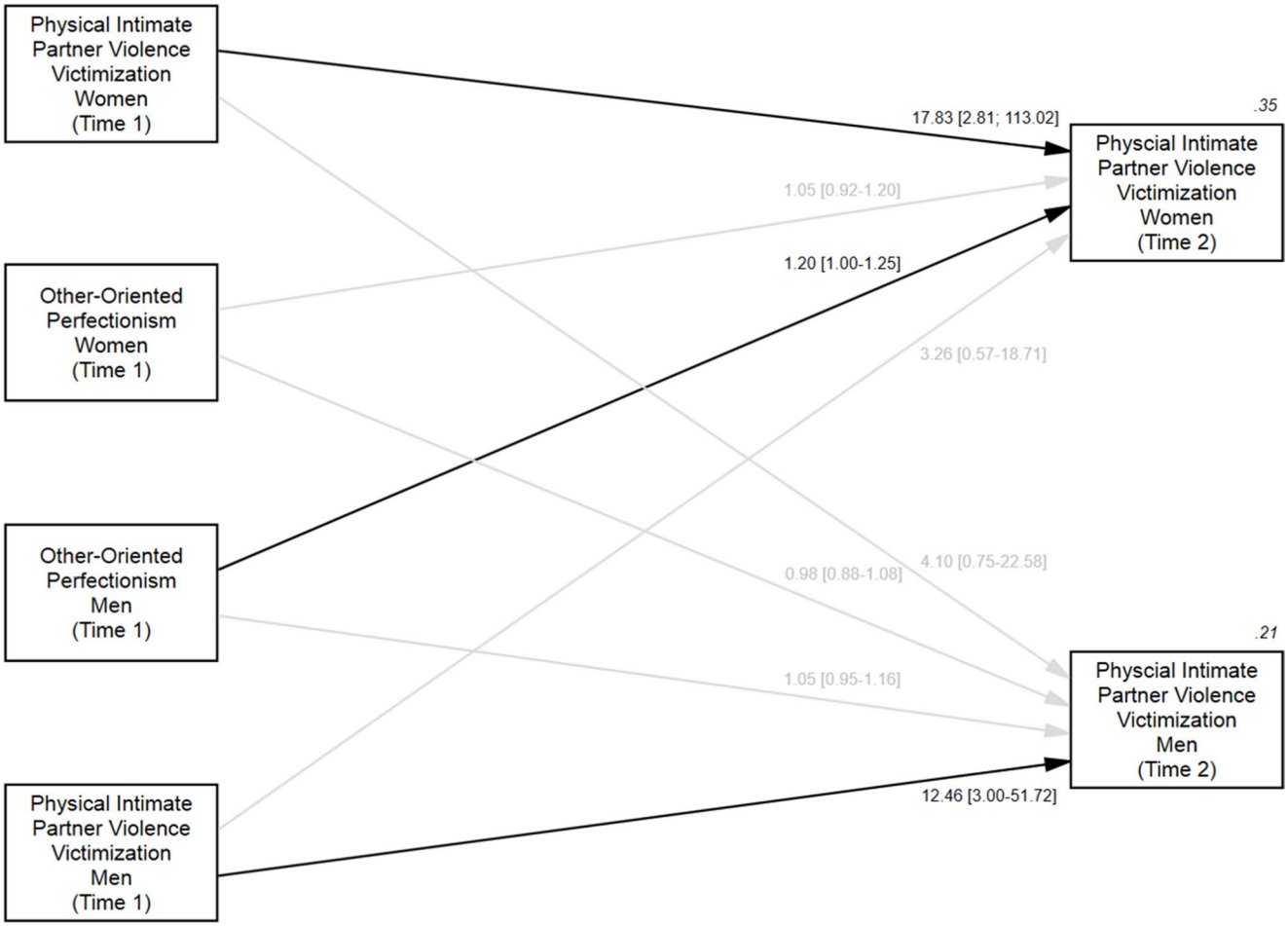

Fig. 1 Other-oriented perfectionism and physical intimate partner violence victimization. Note. Path analysis with multivariate logistic regression using robust maximum likelihood estimation with physical IPV victimization in women and men at Time 2 as binary outcomes. Estimates are odds ratios with 95% confidence intervals. Black lines with single-headed arrows are significant at $p < .05$; gray lines with single-headed arrows are non-significant ($p > .05$). Italicized numbers in the top right-hand corner of outcome variables are R 2 values

men is less acceptable (Zark & Satyen, 2022) compared to countries such as Tanzania, where men are expected to use violence to maintain control over their partners (Halim et al., 2018). Nonetheless, some evidence suggests social desirability does not play an important role in IPV reports (Freeman et al., 2015). Another possibility is that women are over-reporting physical IPV victimization, perhaps due to reporting playful acts that were not intended as real violence (Lehrner & Allen, 2014). Yet, this explanation may be less probable, as it is unclear why playful acts of violence would be associated with OOP.

As for why OOP in men predicted an increased likelihood of physical IPV perpetration by women, we speculate that the likelihood of women's physical IPV perpetration increased due to retaliating against the increased physical IPV they received from their partners. This explanation is supported by research suggesting women use physical violence in response to partner-initiated violence (Hamberger et. al., 2015). This explanation is also supported by our results, which showed that physical IPV perpetration in men was associated with an increased likelihood of physical IPV perpetration in women over time. It is also possible that the manifestation of OOP in men elicits physical IPV initiation by women. For example, the domineering behavior that is seen in men with OOP more than women with OOP (Stoeber et al., 2021) could be eliciting aggression in these men's partners.

OOP in Women

We can only speculate as to why OOP in women did not predict an increased likelihood of physical IPV victimization in men. It may be because men with higher OOP partners are under-reporting physical IPV victimization due to negative societal attitudes toward male victims (Arnocky & Vaillancourt, 2014). If both victims and perpetrators are underreporting physical IPV by OOP women, our finding could represent a false negative. However, it could also be

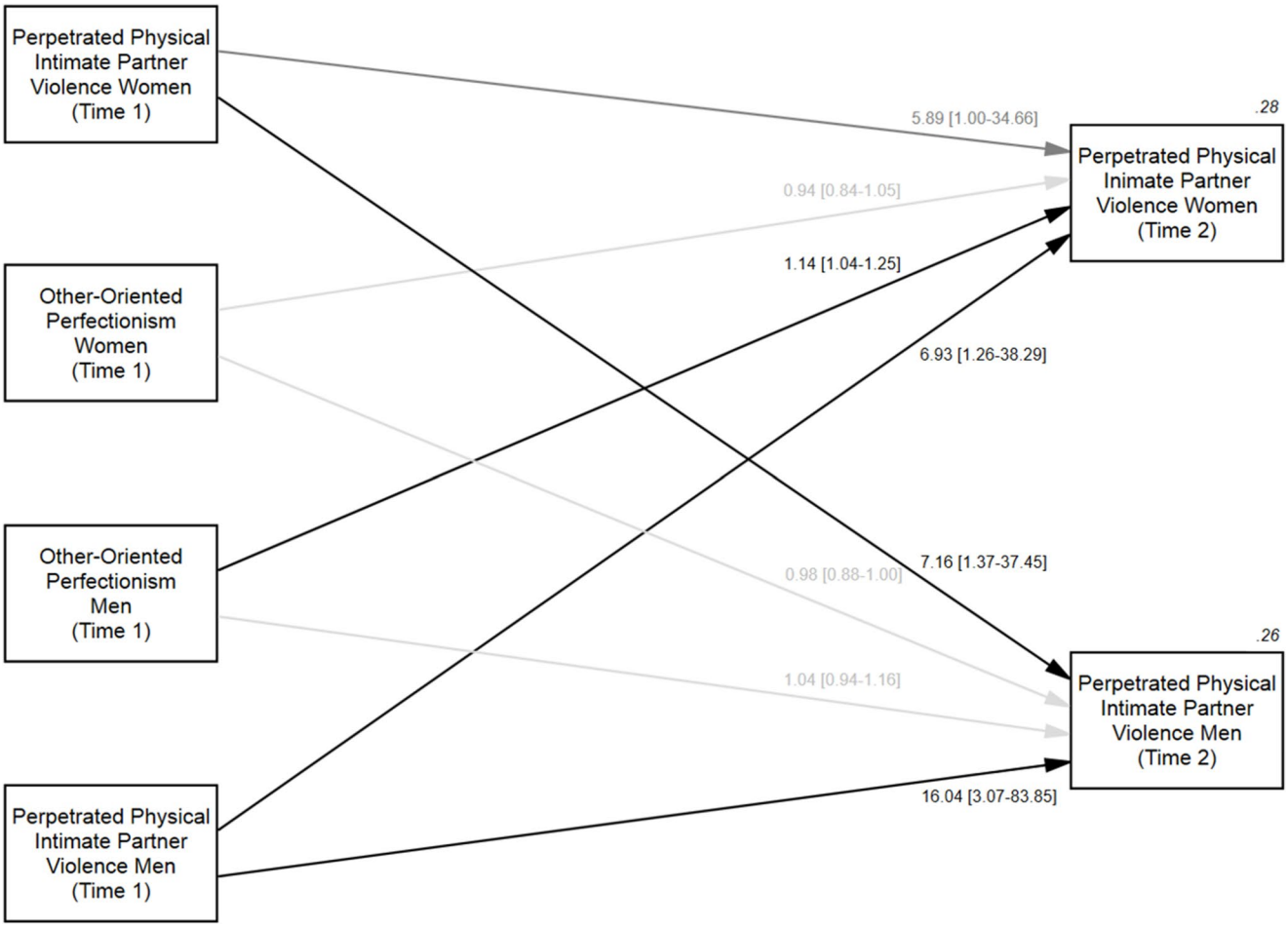

Fig. 2 Other-oriented perfectionism and perpetrated physical intimate partner violence. Note. Path analysis with multivariate logistic regression using robust maximum likelihood estimation with physical IPV perpetrated by women and men at Time 2 as binary outcomes. Estimates are odds ratios with 95% confidence intervals. Black lines with single-headed arrows are significant ($p < .05$); gray lines with single-headed arrows are not significant ($p > .05$); the dark gray line with a single-headed arrow is marginally significant ($p = .050$). Italicized numbers in the top right-hand corner of outcome variables are R 2 values

due to gender differences in how OOP manifests. Although interpersonal problems associated with OOP generally do not differ across genders, research suggests men with OOP are more domineering than women with OOP (Stoeber et al., 2021). This difference could result in only men with OOP having a higher propensity for physical IPV perpetration, as these men may be using physical force to ensure control over their partner.

Limitations and Future Directions

Our sample was not explicitly selected for physical IPV, so only a small percentage of participants reported physical IPV perpetration or victimization, suggesting the need for replication among clinical samples with higher physical IPV rates. Second, while we used a brief measure of agreeableness to reduce participant burden, this brief measure has lower reliability than longer versions (Gosling et al., 2003). Third, our couples lacked diversity (e.g., all had at least one child, and couples excluded due to not completing T2 were significantly younger with shorter relationship lengths), limiting our ability to generalize findings to all couples and suggesting the need for replication in a more diverse sample. Another related limitation is couples in shorter or less stable relationships were more likely to discontinue participation, perhaps leaving longer-term and potentially lower-risk couples overrepresented at T2. Fourth, while several potential explanations exist for why OOP in men predicted an increased likelihood of victimization reports in women but not perpetration reports in men, we cannot be certain why this pair of results diverged. The CTS2 and other IPV measures have been found to have low concordance of IPV reports across partners (Marshall et al., 2021). Additional research is needed to gain a better understanding of why low agreement is occurring.

It would also be beneficial to test if the results hold without the naturalistic stressor of the COVID-19 pandemic. Unexpectedly, Haring et al. (2003) found OOP did not predict decreased marital functioning in couples. They suggested OOP may only predict lower marital adjustment when a person with OOP has a partner already distressed and requiring support. The COVID-19 pandemic caused individuals substantial distress (McNeil et al., 2023) and could have triggered the observed OOP effects on physical IPV. Furthermore, future research should investigate how controlling for Dark Triad traits (narcissism, psychopathy, and Machiavellianism; Paulhus & Williams, 2002) affects the relationship between OOP and physical IPV. Our sensitivity analyses controlling for the global Dark Triad led to loss of our effects for OOP in men predicting IPV victimization in women. This suggests OOP is a part of a constellation of darker traits that may contribute to men's IPV perpetration, perhaps particularly under highly stressful situations such as the COVID-19 pandemic. Indeed, examining the impact of the Dark Triad is valuable, as recent findings from our study's dataset (Author et al., 2022) demonstrated that psychopathy and Machiavellianism have significant effects on physical IPV victimization and perpetration. Finally, longer-term, multi-wave longitudinal studies with less sample attrition and quasi-experimental studies identifying generative mechanisms explaining why OOP is linked to physical IPV are needed. Finally, though our observed effects were small, (e.g., OR = 1.20, approximately d = 0.10), in IPV research, small effects can also be considered meaningful. For example, Milner and colleagues (2023) established the standard threshold for small effects as established by Cohen (1988), as large in effect (i.e., impact) in the context of IPV research. In future, researchers are encouraged to report effect sizes for comparable associations to allow for more meaningful cross-study comparisons as this area of research develops.

Concluding Remarks

Our brief report is the first to test the impact of OOP on physical IPV and the first to study OOP effects on physical IPV in the context of a naturalistic stressor (i.e., the COVID-19 pandemic). Results demonstrate OOP in men increases the risk of physical IPV victimization and perpetration in women partners. Findings have important implications, as they provide empirical support for the theory suggesting a category of abusive men who are overly controlling and perfectionistic (Dutton & Golant, 1995). Future research is necessary to gain a more nuanced understanding of the relationship between OOP and physical IPV. If results are replicated, OOP in men might be an important factor to screen for when assessing couples' risk of physical IPV. It may also be beneficial to provide resources and strategies to men with OOP that allow them to regulate their perfectionism in a non-harmful way.

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Declarations

Informed consent Informed consent was obtained from all participants included in the study. Properly deidentified data can be provided to those with reasonable requests for access following ethics approval.

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