

Research Article

EFFECTIVENESS OF RABINDRIK VALUES IN ADDRESSING PERFECTIONISM: A CASE STUDY OF A UPSC ASPIRANT**¹FARHA AHMED****Program Coordinator,
Rabindrik Psychotherapy Research Institute Trust (RPRIT), Kolkata.****ABSTRACT**

This case study explores the effectiveness of Rabindrik values in addressing perfectionism in a 31-year-old male client preparing for the Union Public Service Commission (UPSC) examination. The client exhibited perfectionistic traits that led to self-criticism, emotional distress, and diminished self-worth. The Rabindrik Value Preference Scale (RVPS) was utilized to identify and prioritize the client's core values. Through reflection and alignment with these values, the client successfully reframed his perfectionistic tendencies, leading to improved emotional regulation and psychological well-being. This study highlights how culturally relevant tools such as Rabindrik values can provide practical insights for overcoming perfectionism and fostering personal growth.

Keywords: Rabindrik values, Perfectionism, UPSC preparation, Emotional regulation, Self-awareness.

INTRODUCTION

Perfectionism, characterized by setting excessively high standards and harsh self-criticism, is a common psychological trait that can lead to anxiety, depression, and burnout (Flett & Hewitt, 2002). For individuals pursuing high-stakes exams like the UPSC, perfectionism can be particularly detrimental, affecting both their emotional well-being and academic progress. Although perfectionism is often viewed as a motivating force, when taken to extremes, it can hinder personal growth, causing individuals to become overly self-critical and emotionally unstable (Shafran & Mansell, 2001).

Rabindranath Tagore, a revered figure in Indian literature and music, composed a vast collection of songs known as Rabindrasangeet. For Tagore, music was more than an art form—it was a means of exploring the deeper layers of consciousness. These songs, preserved in the Gitabitan collection, embody his philosophy of spiritual and emotional exploration. Drawing from Rabindra sangeet, Dutta Roy and Bandopadhyay (2010) identified 14 path-oriented and 14 goal-oriented work values that reflect the principles Tagore espoused.

Path-oriented values focus on personal development and emotional regulation. These include:

- Self-Awakening (cultivating stability and a positive self-image)
- Emotional Control (managing unwanted emotions)
- Systematic (following structured steps)
- Non-Self-Insulting (avoiding self-criticism)
- Fearless (overcoming fear)
- Cleanliness (maintaining orderliness)
- No Work-Family Conflict (balancing work and personal life)

- Niskam Principle (working without attachment to rewards)
- Challenging (competing against oneself)
- Self-Understanding (reflecting on one's successes and failures)
- Doubtless (being confident in one's beliefs)
- Free from Fear of Failure (overcoming fear of anticipated failure)
- Resolute (being determined in purpose and action)
- Active (avoiding laziness).

Rokeach (1973) argued that values are hierarchical, meaning they can be ranked based on personal importance. This hierarchical structure helps identify core values that guide decision-making and emotional regulation. This case study introduces the use of Rabindrik values, rooted in the teachings of Rabindranath Tagore, to address perfectionism. These values, identified through the Rabindrik Value Preference Scale (RVPS), offer a culturally relevant framework for guiding individuals toward emotional well-being and personal development.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Client Information: The client is a 31-year-old male from Lucknow, Uttar Pradesh, with a BTech and MBA background. He is currently preparing for the UPSC exams and identifies as a perfectionist. His perfectionistic tendencies have caused significant emotional distress, characterized by excessive self-criticism and an inability to celebrate his achievements. In therapy, the client described his struggle with perfectionism, noting that even his successes felt insufficient, leading to constant dissatisfaction.

Presenting Problem: The client's perfectionism manifested as:

- Excessive self-criticism and an inability to acknowledge accomplishments
- A tendency to focus on flaws rather than progress, leading to anxiety
- Difficulty in balancing personal, work, and study commitments due to unrealistic standards of perfection

To help the client address his perfectionistic traits, the Rabindrik Value Preference Scale (RVPS) was administered. This scale evaluates 14 path-oriented and 14 goal-oriented values, which provide insight into an individual's core values and priorities. The client was asked to rank the values based on their personal importance, which would help reframe his approach to perfectionism and guide him toward healthier emotional regulation.

Session Dialogue: Client: "I feel like I'm never doing enough. Even when I complete something, I feel like it's not perfect enough. It's exhausting." Therapist: "It's understandable that your desire to do your best can feel overwhelming. Let's explore how we can use your core values to create a balanced perspective." The therapist guided the client in reflecting on his values and how they could support him in overcoming perfectionism. The client ranked each value from the RVPS and discussed their relevance to his life and UPSC preparation.

RESULTS

The client's responses to the RVPS highlighted a strong preference for values related to self-awareness, emotional control, and personal growth. The client's ranked core values are presented in Table 1 below, showing the relative importance of path-oriented and goal-oriented values.

Table 1: Client's Ranked Core Values and Interpretation

Rank	Path Oriented (Values)	Goal Oriented (Values)	Interpretation
1	Self-Awakening (Imagining Positive Power or Energy)	Enlightenment (Having True Understanding)	The client's drive to imagine positive power or energy aligns with a need for true understanding and personal clarity. This indicates a strong potential for inner transformation. By seeking enlightenment, the client can channel his perfectionism into self-realization and growth.
2	Self-Understanding (Feedback to self about own success and failure)	Significance in Life (Finding meaning in life)	Feedback to self resonates with finding meaning in life. This highlights the client's desire to reflect deeply on his progress and connect it to a larger purpose. Encouraging a focus on significance can help him transcend negative self-criticism and find motivation through meaningful contributions.
3	Self-Insulting Less (Not Offending to Self)	A Sense of Accomplishment (A lasting contribution)	Reducing self-offense aligns with achieving a lasting contribution. The client's need to be less harsh on himself is critical to recognizing his achievements. Shifting focus to accomplishments rather than flaws can boost his self-esteem and drive.
4	Challenging (Competing against one)	Self-Empowerment (Enabling power to self)	Competing against oneself aligns with enabling power to self. The client's perfectionistic nature can be reframed positively as a source of empowerment. Viewing challenges as opportunities for growth can enhance resilience and confidence.
Rank	Path Oriented (Values)	Goal Oriented (Values)	Interpretation
5	Doubtless (Free From Uncertainty and belief)	Inner Harmony (Freedom from inner conflict)	Freedom from uncertainty aligns with freedom from inner conflict. This reveals the client's longing for mental peace. Addressing perfectionism's negative impact can help him achieve clarity, reducing doubt and fostering harmony.

After reviewing his results, the client was guided on how he could relate his core values to his approach to the UPSC exam. By focusing on values like Self-Awakening and Enlightenment, he was encouraged to embrace a growth mindset, where the journey of preparation was viewed as an opportunity for self-improvement rather than a test of perfection. The values of Self-Empowerment and Significance in Life helped him reframe the exam not as an obstacle, but as a meaningful pursuit, where each step, regardless of perfection, contributed to his greater sense of purpose. The value of Self-Insulting Less was particularly crucial in helping the client develop a more compassionate self-view. By reducing self-criticism, he was able to acknowledge his progress in preparation, such as his success in cracking the engineering entrance exam. This recognition of past achievements helped him understand that he could indeed succeed in the UPSC without needing to meet an unrealistic standard of perfection.

- Therapist: “By focusing on your achievements, even small ones, like passing the engineering exam, you can see that progress is about growth, not perfection. Each day you move closer to your goal, and it doesn’t have to be perfect.” Additionally, the value of Challenging helped the client reframe his approach to setbacks. Instead of viewing challenges as failures, he was encouraged to view them as opportunities to challenge his own growth and develop resilience. Post-therapy, there was a significant shift in the client's emotional and psychological state. Initially, he tended to focus on the negative aspects of his life, constantly criticizing his failures and shortcomings. However, after several sessions and reflection on the Rabindrik values, he started to discuss positive aspects of his life, especially focusing on past achievements and future possibilities.
- Client: “Before, I would only think about the things that went wrong. But after reflecting on my values, I’ve realized that I’ve accomplished a lot, like cracking the engineering entrance exam. Maybe I need to celebrate those moments more.”
- Therapist: “Exactly! And keep focusing on the values of significance and self-empowerment. The more you do, the more you’ll see the importance of progress over perfection.” Moreover, the client became more proactive in integrating these values into his daily routine. He began to read extensively about Rabindrik values, making them a central part of his self-development. This ongoing engagement allowed him to strengthen his emotional resilience and reduce the anxiety that had once overwhelmed him.
- Client: “I’ve been reading more about these values, and they make so much sense. I feel like I’m becoming more centered, and it’s helping me focus better on my goals without stressing out over small imperfections.”

DISCUSSION

This case study illustrates the utility of Rabindrik values in addressing perfectionism, especially for individuals in high-pressure contexts like UPSC preparation. By aligning with core values related to self-awareness, emotional control, and personal growth, clients can adopt a more balanced and constructive approach to their goals. The client’s progress in therapy suggests that the Rabindrik Value Preference Scale (RVPS) is an effective tool for guiding individuals away from perfectionism and toward healthier emotional regulation. Further research and clinical application of this scale could expand its relevance in diverse therapeutic contexts.

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