

	ORIGINAL RESEARCH PAPER ROLE OF PERFECTIONISTIC SELF-PRESENTATION IN MEDIATING RUMINATION AND ENVY AMONG YOUNG ADULTS	Psychology KEY WORDS: perfectionism, self-presentation, rumination, envy, young adults
Aditi Ashrit*	Final Year MSc Clinical Psychology, Department of Psychology, Kristu Jayanti College (Autonomous), Bengaluru, Karnataka, India. *Corresponding Author	
Dr. Lokesh L	Assistant Professor, Department of Psychology, Kristu Jayanti College (Autonomous), Bengaluru, Karnataka, India.	
ABSTRACT	The present study aims to investigate a model of mediation by which perfectionistic self-presentation predicts a significant relationship between rumination and envy. The study is based on 302 young adults including 229 females, 70 males and 3 who preferred not to reveal, all of Indian origin using 3 structured self-report questionnaires. These included the Perfectionistic Self-Presentation Scale, the Perseverative Thinking Questionnaire and the Benign and Malicious Envy Scale. Despite a high positive correlation, perfectionistic self-presentation was found to have no direct impact on benign envy. However, rumination was found to be a significant predictor of both benign and malicious envy when perfectionistic self-presentation was incorporated into the mediation model, suggesting that perfectionistic self-presentation partially mediates the relationship. These findings point to a complex relationship between perfectionistic self-presentation and rumination in the experience of envy, suggesting that a propensity to appear perfect mitigates the experience of malicious envy and elevates the experience of benign envy when combined with ruminative tendencies.	
INTRODUCTION	Perfectionistic self-presentation is an interactive and dysfunctional self-presentational and interpersonal mode that expresses a need to present oneself as perfect and conceal flaws in public contexts. There are three different aspects of perfectionistic self-presentation: Perfectionistic Self-Promotion, which is the actual declaration and exhibition of one's perfection to others; non-display of flaw, which is the omission of behaviors that may reveal any flaws; and nondisclosure of flaw, which is the avoidance of verbal statements of one's flaws (Hewitt, 2003). Some research has investigated the complicated interaction among psychological and sociocultural factors, including low self-esteem (Ubaradka et al., 2023b) and self-concept, and social media problem use (Musicò, 2023), as it plays a heavy role in our perception of beauty and provides a sense of necessity to look perfect. As perfectionistic self-presentation is an impression management strategy for an individual to be positively rated, it is reasonable to associate it with another psychological distress factor, i.e., rumination. Rumination has been described as a passive and repetitive preoccupation with one's distress and its potential causes and outcomes (Nolen-Hoeksema, 1990; 1991; Watkins & Roberts, 2020). There exists a vast amount of literature describing the intricate dynamic of cognitive, emotional, and social processes affecting rumination. For instance, meta-cognitive beliefs such as ours like positive for rumination and negative beliefs of uncontrollability and harm are directly predictive to the prevalence of rumination as it creates extreme fear and feelings of helplessness (Moulds et al., 2010). Not only in performance but in nearly every context, our negative thinking at times manifests in our interpersonal relationships, such as family, towards emotional contagion (Calvi & Byrd-Craven, 2024). High rumination propensity can have the ability to escalate sensitivity to upward social comparisons and move toward the domain of extrinsic mechanisms of either idealization or devaluing another individual, i.e., envy. As defined by Parrott & Smith (1993) envy is a feeling that occurs when one person does not have another person's higher quality, achievement, or possession and either wants it or wishes the other did not have it. As stated by Van de Ven (2016), there are two forms of benign envy (motivated admiration) and malicious envy (resentment). Several studies have examined the intricate web of factors	
	that contribute to envy in our overall lives. Envy usually at times results from perceived social rankings with characteristics such as physical looks thereby accentuating feelings of inadequacy which may result in (Nechitaylo & Miloradova, 2023), low self-efficacy, low self-esteem, and low perceived control (Navarro-Carrillo et al., 2017). The population to be targeted by the current study is young adults who belong to the age bracket of 18-29 years (APA, 2022). The inclusion of this age group enables to investigate individuals in various settings such as their academic life, work life etc. The current study investigates whether perfectionistic self-presentation can act as a potential mediator in the relationship between rumination and envy. The necessity of the current study is emphasized by the increasing evidence supporting the negative impact of perfectionistic strivings on mental well-being, as do rumination and envy experiences. Comprehending the origin of the self-caused anxiety could contribute to the construction of effective intervention methods. In addition, previous research has examined individual associations among these variables, with emphasis placed on how perfectionism and rumination are related to anxiety, depression, as well as other negative consequences. Nevertheless, there is still a gap in knowing the mediating effect of perfectionistic self-presentation in the relationship between rumination and envy.	
	METHOD: Statement of the Problem The present study sought to elucidate how perfectionistic self-presentation mediates the relationship between rumination and envy.	
	Objectives OfThe Study - To examine the degree to which rumination predicts perfectionistic self-presentation. - To examine the degree to which rumination predicts benign envy. - To examine the degree to which rumination predicts malicious envy. - To examine the degree to which perfectionistic self-presentation predicts benign envy. - To examine the degree to which perfectionistic self-presentation predicts malicious envy. - To examine whether perfectionistic self-presentation	

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mediates the relationship between rumination and benign envy.

- To examine whether perfectionistic self-presentation mediates the relationship between rumination and malicious envy.

Research Questions

- How does rumination predict perfectionistic self-presentation?
- How does perfectionistic self-presentation predict benign envy?
- How does perfectionistic self-presentation predict malicious envy?
- Does perfectionistic self-presentation mediate the association between rumination and benign envy?
- Does perfectionistic self-presentation mediate the association between rumination and malicious envy?

Hypotheses

- Rumination does not predict perfectionistic self-presentation.
- Rumination does not predict benign envy.
- Rumination does not predict malicious envy.
- Perfectionistic self-presentation does not predict benign envy.
- Perfectionistic self-presentation does not predict malicious envy.
- Perfectionistic self-presentation does not mediate the link between rumination and benign envy.
- Perfectionistic self-presentation does not mediate the link between rumination and malicious envy.

Research Design

A non-experimental correlational design has been utilized to examine the associations between the variables. Mediation analysis was utilized to evaluate the mediating effect of perfectionistic self-presentation on the association between rumination and envy.

Sampling

Techniques Used

The purposive sampling method has been utilized to ensure that all met the given specific eligibility criteria for the study.

Inclusion And Exclusion Criteria

- The participants must fall in the age range of young adults (18-29)
- The participants must be citizens of the Republic of India.

Procedure

A non-experimental, regression analysis was conducted on Jamovi. Therefore, mediation analysis was also performed. 302 respondents within the age group of 18-29 (young adults) participated in the research. The data was gathered via Google Forms across social media platforms. Informed consent was acquired from the participants, and it was assured to the participants that the data collected was protected for confidentiality and that their data would be used for statistical analysis for academic purposes only.

Tools For The Study

1. Perfectionistic Self-Presentation Scale by Hewitt et al. (2003): PSPS is a self-report questionnaire developed by Hewitt et al. (2003) to assess the interpersonal expression of perfectionistic behavior. It consists of 27 questions to be rated on 7-point Likert scale (strongly agree-strongly disagree). It demonstrates high internal consistency, with Cronbach's alpha values typically reported around 0.90. It comprises of 3 sub-scales: perfectionistic self-promotion, non-display of imperfection, and nondisclosure of imperfection and each subscale also shows strong reliability (Cronbach's alpha value: <0.80). It exhibits high construct and factor validity, typically above 0.40, confirming the scale's construct validity. The PSPS has been standardized on large and diverse

samples, often exceeding 1,000 participants, including undergraduate students and a clinical sample.

2. Perseverative Thinking Questionnaire (PTQ) by Ehrling et al. (2011): PTQ is a self-report questionnaire developed by Ehrling et al. (2011) to assess repetitive negative thinking. Rumination is one form of RNT. It comprises 15 questions that need to be rated on a 5-point Likert scale (almost always to never). It demonstrates excellent internal consistency with a total scale reliability coefficient (Cronbach's alpha) of .95, high test-retest reliability and the test is valid as it is highly correlated with existing measures of RNT. The psychometric evaluation of the PTQ was based on a total sample size of 1832 participants mix of clinical and non-clinical populations.

3. The Benign and Malicious Envy Scale (BeMaS) by Lange & Crusius (2015): BEMAS is a self-report questionnaire developed by Lange & Crusius (2015) which assesses personality differences in people's propensity to response to superior comparison standards with either benign or malicious envy. There are 5 items each for both the subscales, each of which is rated on a 6-point Likert scale (strongly disagree-strongly agree). It demonstrates excellent internal consistency with a Benign envy (Cronbach's alpha) as .79 - .90 and for Malicious envy, Cronbach's alpha as .83 - .91, high test-retest reliability and many researches have supported its validity. The psychometric evaluation of the BEMAS was based on a total sample size of 933 student and nonstudent samples from across US, German, Russian, Polish, Japan, Sri Lanka, Brazil and Vietnam.

Statistical Analysis

Descriptive and inferential statistics were computed. Regression analysis was performed in the data analysis to evaluate the effect of the variables. Thus, mediation analysis has been employed to evaluate the mediating effect of perfectionistic self-presentation on rumination - envy relationship using Jamovi (2.5.6) software.

Research Ethics

- The Ethical guidelines were strictly adhered to throughout the research process, prior to and after data collection.
- The purpose, steps, risks, and benefits of the research were clearly explained to the participants, and informed consent was gained from them online.
- Confidentiality and anonymity of participants are maintained by keeping data secure and making sure no identifying information is collected.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 3: Showing The Measures Of Central Tendency Across Variables

	Rumination	PSP	B-Envy	M-Envy
N	302			
Mean	30.7	115	6.17	2.53
Median	30.0	115	6.00	2.30
Mode	29.0	113	6.67	1.00
SD	11.0	13.3	1.77	1.21

The present study's data were procured from 302 participants on the variables of perfectionistic self-presentation, rumination, and benign and malicious envy. The data is assumed to represent a normal bell curve for all 3 variables since the mean, median and mode values lie within close range, suggesting symmetric distribution. The mean and SD value of perfectionistic self-presentation (115; 13.3) indicate high variability in how participants rate their need to present as perfect. Rumination, with a mean value of 30.7 suggests that participants reported moderately closer to the average. The mean value of benign envy being 6.17 was relatively clustered suggesting that participants scored similarly. Lastly, malicious envy has the lowest mean (2.53) indicating that this trait is not as prominent and has minimal variability among participants.

Linear regression analysis was carried out to assess if

perfectionistic self-presentation predicts rumination, benign envy and on malicious envy. Subsequently, the paper assessed if rumination predicted benign envy and malicious envy.

1. Rumination does not predict perfectionistic self-presentation.
 Linear regression was carried out to investigate if the independent variable (rumination) predicts the mediating variable (perfectionistic self-presentation) for the above-mentioned hypothesis for the study.

As can be observed from Table 2, we can see that rumination positively predicts perfectionistic self-presentation and has a positive effect on the same ($\beta = .0472$, $p < 0.01$). The standardized coefficient increases by 0.0472 units, indicating that as rumination increases, perfectionistic self-presentation also increases. Thus, we reject the null hypothesis and conclude that there is a statistically significant effect of rumination on perfectionistic self-presentation.

Table 2: Shows Regression Analysis For Predicting Perfectionistic Self-presentation

Predictor	Estimate	SE	T	P
Intercept	100.940	2.1020	48.02	<.001
Rumination	.472	0.0645	7.32	<.001

Hu et al. (2019) state that people who tend to ruminate have a higher likelihood in developing maladaptive perfectionism, specifically in the context of making mistakes and pressures of meeting high standards. These requirements of high performance can exhibit increased feelings of shame and inadequacy, which can reinforce the need for perfectionist self-presentation.

2. Rumination does not predict benign envy.
 Linear regression was carried out to investigate if the independent variable (rumination) predicts the dependent variable (benign envy) for the above-mentioned hypothesis for the study.

As can be observed from Table 3, it can be seen that rumination can predict benign envy ($\beta = .0217$, $p < 0.01$). Although the effect size is small, there is a statistically significant positive effect on the same. The standardized coefficient increases by .0217 units, indicating that as rumination increases, benign envy also increases. Thus, we reject the null hypothesis and conclude that their rumination predicts benign envy, and this finding is statistically significant.

Table 3: Shows Regression Analysis For Rumination Predicting Benign Envy

Predictor	Estimate	SE	T	P
Intercept	5.5047	.3017	18.25	<.001
Rumination	.0217	.00925	2.34	<.001

(Kwon et al., 2017) states that if rumination focuses on self-improvement, it may foster benign envy by motivating individuals to enhance their own status. Dispositional traits, such as hope for success, are linked to benign envy, suggesting that individuals who ruminate positively may channel their thoughts into constructive outcomes (Lange & Crusius, 2015).

3. Rumination does not predict malicious envy.
 Linear regression was carried out to investigate if the independent variable (rumination) predicts the dependent variable (malicious envy) for the above-mentioned hypothesis for the study.

Table 4: Shows Regression Analysis For Rumination Predicting Malicious Envy

Predictor	Estimate	SE	T	P
Intercept	1.6561	0.2014	8.22	<.001
Rumination	.0283	.00618	4.58	<.001

As can be observed from Table 4, it can be seen that rumination significantly predicts malicious envy ($\beta = .0283$, $p < 0.01$), although the effect size is small, there is a statistically significant positive effect. The standardized coefficient increases by .0283 units, indicating that as rumination increases, malicious envy also increases. Thus, we reject the null hypothesis and conclude that rumination significantly predicts malicious envy.

Lange (2016) suggests that individuals who ruminate may perceive themselves as less capable, potentially increasing feelings of malicious envy rather than benign envy. Studies have revealed a significant positive relationship between negative rumination and envy, indicating that as rumination increases, so does the experience of envy (Saito & Konno, 2009; Oflazian, 2022).

4. Perfectionistic self-presentation does not predict benign envy.
 Linear regression was carried out to investigate if perfectionistic self-presentation (mediating variable) predicts the dependent variable (benign envy) for the above-mentioned hypothesis for the study.

Table 5: Shows Regression Analysis For Perfectionistic Self-presentation Predicting Benign Envy

Predictor	Estimate	SE	T	P
Intercept	-.2080	0.8145	-.255	.799
PSP	.0553	.00701	7.881	<.001

As Table 5 shows, perfectionistic self-presentation does not predict the experience of benign envy ($p = 0.799$). The p-value of 0.799 indicates that there is not enough evidence to claim that perfectionistic self-presentation affects benign envy. Thus, we fail to reject the null hypothesis suggesting that there is no impact of perfectionistic self-presentation on benign envy.

Most studies have used the cardinal aspect of social comparison theory, i.e., comparing oneself with others to explain the dynamic between perfectionistic self-presentation and benign envy. The present findings, however, have been corroborated by Batıgün and Akik (2024), who revealed that perfectionism and its domains do not necessarily play a role in the increase in the experience of benign envy.

5. Perfectionistic self-presentation does not predict malicious envy.
 Linear regression was carried out to investigate if the independent variable (perfectionistic self-presentation) predicts the dependent variable (malicious envy) for the above-mentioned hypothesis for the study.

Table 6: Shows Regression Analysis For Perfectionistic Self-presentation Predicting Malicious Envy

Predictor	Estimate	SE	T	P
Intercept	-1.4916	.56645	-2.63	.009
PP	.0348	.00488	7.14	<.001

As can be observed from Table 6, we can see that perfectionistic self-presentation strongly predicts malicious envy and has a statistically significant positive impact on the same ($\beta = .0348$, $p < 0.01$). The standardized coefficient increases by 0.0348 units, indicating that as perfectionistic self-presentation increases, malicious envy also increases. Thus, we reject the null hypothesis and conclude that perfectionistic self-presentation positively predicts malicious envy.

Garanyan et al. (2018) revealed that students who scored higher on the perfectionism scale had considerably higher levels of envy, hyper competitiveness, depression, and contrastive upward social comparisons than those who scored lower on the perfectionism.

Similarly, Batgün and Akik (2024) argued that malicious envy was predicted by only narcissistic perfection in a positive direction.

Mediation analysis was conducted out to inspect the influence of the mediator (perfectionistic self-presentation) on the influence of rumination (IV) on benign envy and malicious envy (DV) and the below mentioned were the hypotheses for the study:

6. Perfectionistic self-presentation does not mediate the association between rumination and benign envy.

Table 7: Shows Mediation Estimates Between Perfectionistic Self-Presentation, Rumination, and Benign Envy

Effect	Estimate	SE	Z	P	% Mediation
Indirect	.02685	.00512	5.249	<.001	83.3
Direct	-.00519	.00919	-.565	.572	16.2
Total	.02166	.00922	2.349	.019	100

As can be observed from Table 7, it can be seen that perfectionistic self-presentation plays a statistically substantial role in mediating between rumination and benign envy ($p < 0.01$). The percentage of mediation being 83.8% indicates that the majority of the effect of rumination on benign envy operates through perfectionistic self-presentation. While the indirect effect is significant and large ($p < 0.01$), the direct effect is negligible ($p = 0.572$). Thus, we reject the null hypothesis and conclude that the link between rumination and benign envy can be indirectly explained by perfectionistic self-presentation.

7. Perfectionistic self-presentation does not mediate the association between rumination and malicious envy.

As can be observed from Table 8, it can be seen that perfectionistic self-presentation plays a statistically substantial role in mediating between rumination and malicious envy ($p < 0.01$). The percentage of mediation indicates that 50.5% of the total effect of rumination on malicious envy operates through perfectionistic self-presentation. While the indirect effect is significant and large ($p < 0.01$), the direct effect is also statistically significant at 0.05 level but less robust compared to the indirect effect ($p = 0.027$).

Table 8: Shows Mediation Estimates Between Perfectionistic Self-Presentation, Rumination, and Malicious Envy

Effect	Estimate	SE	Z	P	% Mediation
Indirect	.0143	.00314	4.55	<.001	50.5
Direct	.0140	.00634	2.21	.027	49.5
Total	.0283	.00616	4.59	<.001	100.0

Thus, we reject the null hypothesis, suggesting that perfectionistic self-presentation partially explains the link between rumination and malicious envy.

The current literature review revealed that this angle of perceiving the domains of perfectionism, rumination and both types of envy i.e., benign and malicious envy, has not been explored.

Limitations

1. The present findings may not be as broadly applicable due to the small sample size of 302 participants as it resulted in small effect sizes. A comprehensive and nuanced representation of the population of young adults in India would provide a larger and more diverse sample, allowing for more robust conclusions.
2. As for a gender analysis, due to the skewed distribution of gender within the sample could have introduced bias into the results.
3. The instruments used in the study, such as the Perfectionistic Self-Presentation Scale and Perseverative Thinking Questionnaire, have not been used much for the

Indian population.

Implications

1. The present research emphasizes the critical nature of understanding these dynamics to effectively support the mental health of young adults in India.
2. Therapeutic interventions like CBT, mindfulness-based therapy can help individuals challenge perfectionistic self-presentation and manage rumination.

CONCLUSIONS

The research report focuses on the mediating role of perfectionistic self-presentation in rumination and envy among young adults in India. First, it examines what level of impact they have on each other and then exploring perfectionistic self-presentation playing a role in the relationship between rumination and both types of envy (benign and malicious). Through quantitative analysis using linear regression, the study found no significant relationship between perfectionistic self-presentation and benign envy, but a significant positive relationship between perfectionistic self-presentation and malicious envy. Additionally, a strong positive impact of rumination was discovered on perfectionistic self-presentation.

Subsequently, mediation analysis was carried out and supplementing that with the regression models, we can conclude that the relationship between rumination and malicious envy is dependent on both rumination and perfectionistic self-presentation indicating that the latter partially mediates the relationship. Further, the relationship between rumination and benign envy is dependent largely on perfectionistic self-presentation indicating that it completely mediates the relationship. Overall, the research emphasizes the critical nature of understanding these dynamics to effectively support the mental health of young adults in India.

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