

The current research

The current study examined how envious people felt on social media and what kind of posts trigger different kinds of envy. There are two types of envy: benign and malicious. Benign envy is when someone feels motivated to improve themselves after seeing someone else's success. Malicious envy is when someone wishes harm on the person that is sharing their success. We explored different types of traits in order to try and see how they correlate with having more benign or malicious envy. We will be testing and analyzing three hypotheses: experimental, correlational, and exploratory. The experiential hypothesis tested was that participants would feel more envy when they see a bragging post compared to a neutral post. The correlational hypothesis was that individuals who feel more connected to the poster will feel more benign than malicious envy. My exploratory hypothesis is that participants with higher levels of vertical individualism will report more malicious envy in comparison to those with lower levels of vertical individualism. Vertical individualism is described as a way of being that is influenced by the culture someone grew up in. Individualistic people are more autonomous and competitive, which means that they emphasize achievements and praise. I believe that highly individualistic people tend to have stronger feelings of malicious envy when they see others at a higher or better living status. Overall, this research aims to understand how different social media experiences and personality traits trigger the different types of envy that people feel online.

Methods

Participants

There were a total of 126 participants. They were recruited via social media and our class's close friends and family. After conducting data cleaning, the total number of participants resulted in

85. There were 41 participants who were excluded from the summary due to incompleteness of the survey. Participant pool was made up of 44.7% women (55), 25.9% men (22), and 8.2% non-binary (7). 69.4% (59) of them were White, and 15.3% (13) were Black or African American. 84.7% (72) were NOT hispanic or Latino, and 9.4% (6) were hispanic or latino. Almost all participants, 94.5% (82), have one active social media account, and only 2.4% (2) do not. Reference Add Descriptives table for age, JES, trait envy, and envy intensity. The ages ranged from 18 to 80 years old, with a median of 22.5. 34.1% of our participants have completed some college, and 20% have a highschool diploma.

Table 1				
<i>Descriptives</i>				
	Condition 1			
	<u><i>M</i></u>	<u><i>SD</i></u>	<u><i>Min</i></u>	<u><i>Max</i></u>
Age	27.8	19.6	18	80
Socioeconomic Status	-12.6	38.6	1	6
Trait envy	1.07	11.0	1	5
Envy intensity	0.671	11.0	1	4
Note.				

Figure 1.

Procedure

This survey was created by our class and generated in Qualtrics. The link to the study was then shared with close friends and family through social media for 2 weeks. After providing consent, participants initially came across two different posts that were shared on Snapchat, and their impressions of the poster and the post were collected. The first post was braggy; it was a screenshot of someone's home screen, talking about their daily/weekly screen time. Below that notification were two other notifications that demonstrated that person's large weekly spending of \$69,685 and an Apple Pay notification of a flight payment of \$1488. Others were shown a

non-brag post that was essentially the same, but the notifications about money had been cut out of the frame.

The participants also viewed a correlational post of a woman traveling and rated their emotional connectedness, similarity to the poster, and envy levels. The post seemed humble, but you are able to see that she's very privileged. The caption is expressing gratefulness for the travel experience while also mentioning how long she was vacationing for and that her next adventure is right around the corner. Participants also completed demographic and individual difference questions to provide how these factors could've influenced their self-reporting.

Materials

For the experiential condition, participants were randomly assigned to view either a braggy or non-braggy post. We collected their responses for how much state, benign, and malicious envy they felt through a 1-7 likert scale. For the correlational post, participants viewed a travel-related post from a stranger and rated their emotional connection (Corr_Connected) and perceived similarity (Corr_Similarity_Total) on a 1-7 likert scale. We also assessed participants' general tendencies to experience envy on social media in general using a trait envy composite score (TraitEnvy). For my exploratory hypothesis, we recorded participants' self-reported vertical individualism and analyzed its correlation with benign or malicious envy.

Analyses

Experimental hypothesis analysis

A t-test was done to compare state envy between participants who saw the brag post vs. the non-brag post. The results showed that there was no significant difference in state envy between

the drag ($M = 1.69$, $SD = 1.40$) and non-drag conditions ($M = 1.31$, $SD = 0.780$). $t(79) = -1.54$, $p = .0129$. We fail to reject the null hypothesis due to $p = .129 > .05$.

Table 2				
<i>Independent samples t-test</i>				
	t(df)	df	p	Effect size
Exp_MalEnvy	-2.327	82	0.022	-0.5079
Exp_BenEnvy	-0.369	82	0.713	-0.0807
Exp_Envy	-1.535	79	0.129	-0.3415
Note. Add any notes here				

Figure 2.

Independent samples t-test

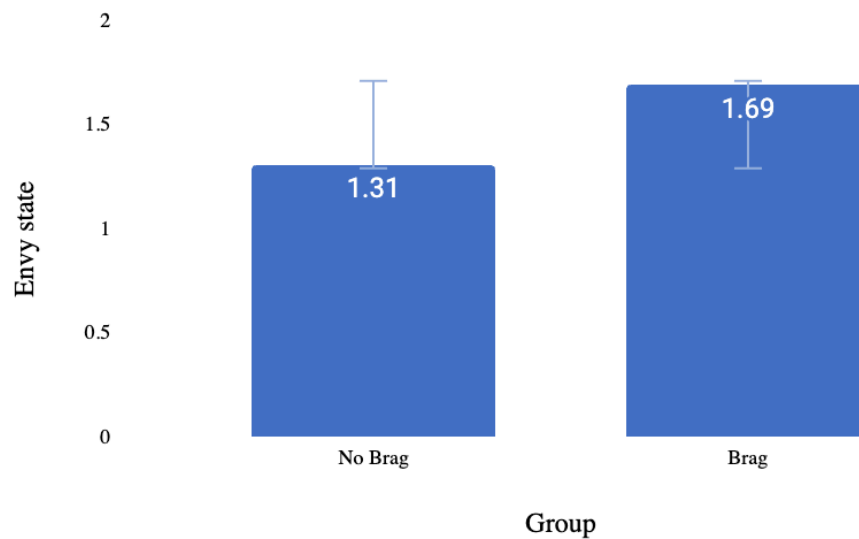


Figure 3.

Correlational hypothesis analysis

A Pearson correlation was calculated to analyze the relationship between emotional connection to the poster and benign envy. Results showed no significant correlation, $r(82) = 0.112$, $p = .309$.

and indicates a small effect size. This suggests that the emotional connection participants felt towards the poster was not meaningfully related to how much benign envy they reported.

Table 2			
<i>Correlation Matrix</i>			
	Pearson's r	df	p
Exp_BenEnvy			
Corr_Connected	0.112	82	0.309
Note. Add any notes here			

Figure 4.

****Possibly do a dependent samples t test and correlate the relationship between the 2. Or just add to the same correlation table and describe how much of something causes benign envy vs how much causes malicious envy.**

Exploratory hypothesis analysis

A pearson correlation analysis was done to examine the relationship between vertical individualism and malicious envy. Results showed no significant correlation, $r(82) = 0.072$, $p = 0.518$, and indicated a very small effect size. This suggests that a participant's levels of vertical individualism were not meaningfully related to the malicious envy they felt and reported. A possible explanation of the very small effect size could be that participants were unsure of how to self-report their vertical individualism levels.

Table 3			
<i>Correlation</i>			
	Pearson's r	df	p
IC_VI_Total			
Exp_MalEnvy	0.072	82	0.518
Note. Add any notes here			

Figure 5.

Discussion

Limitations and future research

One limitation of this study is the proximity of all participants to the class, which limits the generalizability. The assessments were also based on self-reporting, which could be biased due to social desirability or limited introspective. Future research could investigate broader audiences, like different campuses throughout different states. Many other personality traits or social values, like political affiliation, could also impact envy experiences or could be closely related to one of the traits that already showed a significant correlation.

Conclusion

The results of this study didn't provide support for either of the three hypotheses stated. The participants who viewed the braggy post didn't report any more significant envy in comparison to those that viewed the neutral post. This suggests that just scrolling past a braggy post may not necessarily impact strong feelings of envy. I do believe that this could be due to the limited diversity and history of the participant pool. Furthermore, the correlational hypothesis analysis suggested that an emotional connection to the poster was also not significantly correlated with benign envy. This indicates that having a connection with someone on social media doesn't mean that they'll experience more positive envy. It could also indicate that our sample was not able to genuinely dictate this since we didn't give them an actual post of someone that they're emotionally connected to. Additionally, personality traits driven by culture, like vertical individualism, also showed to not be significantly associated with malicious envy. This finding contradicts my prediction that more competitive individuals experience more negative envy towards others. Although these findings suggest that social connections and personality traits

don't play a more important role in what type of envy people feel, it does bring up the need for broader and more diverse research in this field in the future.