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The bittersweet experience of being envied in a consumption context

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## The Bittersweet Experience of Being Envied in a Consumption Context

### INTRODUCTION

An old ad for Packard automobiles (circa 1937) shows a couple watching a red Packard driving by and the headline reads, “Here we are ... Envy-ing”. Below this is a drawing of the same couple driving a new blue Packard with the headline, “Here we are ... Being Envied”. As a result of their purchase, the people in this ad are no longer on the *outside*, envying. They are on the *inside*, being envied for owning and driving a Packard. The being envied experience is also celebrated in recent television advertising as demonstrated by a Buick advertisement. However in consumer research, the envy experience has been studied from an *outside* perspective, that is, for a consumer who is experiencing envy toward another person (Belk, 2008, 2011; Van de Ven et al., 2011). We examine envy from an *inside* perspective, that is, for a consumer who has something another desires. Envy is considered here from the perspective of an envied other. Traditionally, being envied has been considered to have beneficial social and emotional effects, such as conferring status or increasing happiness and pride about one’s achievements (Barnett, 2005; Veblen, 1899). Yet, research in basic psychology in non-consumption contexts (Exline and Lobel, 1999; Parrott and Rodriguez Mosquera, 2008; Rodriguez Mosquera et al., 2010) demonstrates that envied people believe that their superiority poses a threat to others, and as a consequence their emotional state may be one of ambivalence. The pleasure from being envied may be attenuated by guilt, worry, or fear of rejection. Building on this research, where the emotional experience of being envied involves both positive and negative feelings, our research reports three studies illustrating the ambivalent, affective nature of being envied in a consumption context and its effects on consumer satisfaction. Moreover, the boundary conditions of these

effects are established showing the moderating roles of the object of desire (material possession versus experience) and of the way consumers respond to enviers. Our research makes both theoretical and empirical contributions, extending the understanding of the experiences of being envied in consumption contexts and their implications for marketers.

### **THE AMBIVALENT EXPERIENCE OF BEING ENVIED BY OTHERS**

In everyday life, some people achieve, accrue, or simply have more than others, and have been termed “outperformers”, in the basic psychology literature (e.g., Exline and Lobel, 1999). A comprehensive framework for understanding this experience can be obtained by adapting a model proposed by Exline and Lobel (1999) termed, the Sensitivity about being the Target of a Threatening Upward Comparison (STTUC). This model includes several different types of reactions to outperformance. In particular, the STTUC model focuses on outperformance-related distress, although in principle it could apply also when outperforming is pleasant, as also done in the research reported herein. More specifically, we investigate the experience of being envied, which is a relatively new topic in social psychology (e.g., Rodriguez Mosquera et al., 2010), that has not been studied in marketing. The person that is a target of envy, as we develop below, can feel either or both positive or negative emotions, which can have diverse consequences for marketers.

According to Exline and Lobel (1999), sensitivity about being the target of a threatening upward comparison requires a sequence of three conditions that would appear also to be satisfied by being the target of envy, which is the focus of our study. First, a person must come to think of himself or herself as being the object of an upward comparison. Certainly, signs of being envied by another person satisfy this condition and can be expressed by verbal behaviors (e.g., conversational changes, unkind verbal remarks by the envier, or the envier directly expressing his/her envy), and body posture, gestures, or facial changes. Second, the person must believe that this upward comparison is threatening for the other

person. In other words, the outperformer must believe that the outperformed person views the status discrepancy as having negative implications for his or her self esteem or self confidence. Such perception will prompt the outperformed person to experience negative affect, which can be self-focused or directed toward the outperformer. In the latter case, envy can emerge. Third, sensitivity arises only when a person becomes concerned about some aspects of the threatened person's response. Outperformers may experience self-oriented concern (e.g., fear of retaliation), other-oriented concern (e.g., sympathy), or concern about the relationship with the outperformed (e.g., anticipation of negative interactions). Returning to being the target of envy, the envied person may feel guilty about his/her superior status, may wonder about how the envier will cope with the situation, and may worry about the course of their relationship.

The STTUC model is, in principle we think, considerably broader in scope because, as observed above, envy is only one of the possible reactions to upward social comparisons that could lead to the general sensitivity addressed by the model. However this model is extremely useful in providing an initial framework to investigate the experience of being envied. In fact, recent research on the experience of being envied in a non-consumer context by Rodriguez Mosquera et al. (2010), where academic achievement and general well-being were studied, builds on this theoretical approach. They report two studies that measured the appraisals, feelings, coping strategies, and consequences associated with the experience of being envied. The findings indicate that being envied is an ambivalent emotional experience. On the one hand, people evaluate being envied as increasing their self-confidence and self-esteem, and they perceive others longing for their success as increasing their prestige and status. On the other hand, being envied also evokes worries about relationships with others (e.g., envied could worry of others becoming less friendly or even hostile) and others' well being. However, the majority of respondents in Rodriguez Mosquera et al.'s study report

being motivated to decrease the envy of others, and the most frequently coping strategy used was to invest in the relationship with the envious person by “being nice” (e.g., providing encouraging words). See also Van de Ven et al. (2010) and Zell and Exline (2010). Although not common, Rodriguez Mosquera et al. (2010) report that respondents also tried to intensify others’ envy with strategies such as bragging and being showy.

Taken together, these findings suggest that despite the private psychological benefits of being envied, outperforming others may also carry important intrapersonal and interpersonal costs. The present research draws on this ambivalence to provide insight into the various ways in which being envied may become manifest in consumption contexts and affect the behavior of consumers.

#### *Relationship Factors, Object of Desire and the Ambivalent Experience of Being Envied*

Pleasure and displeasure for an experience of being envied could conceivably arise in any type of consumption situation. However, as very little is known about being envied in consumer research, and considering that it is helpful to begin investigating a social emotion by considering circumstances, symptoms and outcomes that are typical in everyday life, a pilot qualitative study was conducted soliciting positive or negative narrative accounts of everyday experiences of being envied in a consumption context using a web-based survey system. The instructions were “*Please, think of a real case in which you felt ENVIED by others for a branded product, branded consumption object or in general for a consumption experience. Take a few moments to recall as many details of the case as you can, then choose if you want to describe a positive or a negative case.*” Following the selection, respondents had to provide a rich description of the situation and express as many details as possible about the relationship context, the markers of envy, feelings and thoughts, and other relevant reactions. Eighty-two individuals participated in the study (46.3% male and 53.7% female) with an average age of 35 years old. Forty-two participants reported positive narratives, while

40 individuals detailed negative experiences of being envied in a wide range of consumption situations. The narratives were content analyzed by two independent coders with respect to several criteria, among which were (1) the object of desire and (2) the relationship context. The proportional reduction in loss was .90 on average (Rust and Cooil, 1994). A distinction was created considering two possible objects of desire: material possessions ( $N = 42$ ) and experiences ( $N = 40$ ). Participants most frequently reported being envied for fashion clothes/accessories, technological products and cars among material possessions. Considering experiences, they frequently referred to vacations, special cultural events, and wellness activities. Again they reported that they felt envied both in close relationships (family members or close friends) ( $N = 38$ ) and in more distant ones (colleagues and acquaintances) ( $N = 44$ ). Further exploration of these coded categories revealed two interesting significant effects. First, an effect emerged of the type of relationship with the envious other on the valence of the being envied experience: positive experiences were more frequently associated with distant relationships and negative experiences with close ones;  $\chi^2(1) = 5.86, p < .02$ . Second, an effect of the object of desire also emerged on the valence of the being envied experience: positive experiences were more frequently reported for material possessions, and negative experience were more frequently reported for experiences;  $\chi^2(1) = 17.58, p < .001$ . These preliminary associations guided the investigation of the experience of being envied in consumption contexts in study 1.

Considering the relationship issue, results of two studies presented by Exline and Lobel (2001), applying the STTUC framework in non-consumption contexts, show that outperformers experience greater empathetic concern to the extent that the relationship is close and satisfying. Such relationships are presumably important, which motivate outperformers to feel distressed when problems occur and to take steps to repair damage. For example, in their research participants preferred to use appeasement with friends and

acquaintances, focusing on their well-being and trying to maintain good relationships with them. By contrast, outperformers showed avoidance responses in relationships characterized by conflict or dislike. Moreover, Exline and Lobel (2001) highlight that in terms of positive private reactions to outperformance (pride and happiness), individuals respond more positively when they outperform distant or disliked persons, as opposed to friends. Based on this evidence, and the preliminary pilot study, similar responses are expected for the experience of being envied in a consumption context. However, other aspects related to the nature of the consumption situation (in terms of object of desire) can moderate such responses, as found in the pilot study and developed below.

Exline and Lobel (1999) report that, within friendly relationships, outperformers in a self-relevant domain believe that the comparison will pose a serious threat for the outperformed and, as a consequence, give more STTUC-related responses. Based on recent research on the relationship of products to the self (Carter and Gilovich, 2010, 2012), experiences, such as vacations and concerts, were found to be more central to the self than material possessions, such as clothing or electronic gadgets. Individuals in fact tend to define themselves more in terms of their experiential purchases than their possessions, and they have a tendency to bind more dearly to memories of experiences rather than possessions. As a consequence, higher levels of negative feelings are expected in friendly relationships, for being envied for exclusive experiences (e.g., vacations to exotic places) than for material possessions (e.g., expensive clothing).

A contrasting argument can be presented for the positive feelings for being envied. Within disliked relationships, individuals are expected to experience more positive feelings when they are envied for typical envied products, such as visible exclusive material possessions, rather than for exclusive consumption experiences. Exclusivity and visibility are two important preconditions for products to elicit envy and to be involved in conspicuous



consumption and reference group effects (Van de Ven et al., 2011). People choose this type of product to communicate desired identities and characteristics (Belk, 1988; Douglas and Isherwood, 1978; Holt, 1998; Veblen, 1899) and to associate or dissociate themselves from relevant others (Han et al., 2010). Luxury brands, for example, assist the individuals' signaling process through visible logos and explicit patterns that facilitate communication and allow others to make desired inferences about the owner (Berger and Ward, 2010). Dislike toward the envier enhances the pleasure associated with the possession of the object of desire, and this positive sensation will be higher when the envier knows about the value of such material possession because of the high communication quality of typical envied products.

Thus, based on the arguments presented above, we hypothesize the following:

- H1: The negative feelings associated by consumers with the experience of being envied are higher in relationships with friends and lower in relationships with disliked persons, with an intermediate position in relationships with acquaintances. Moreover, the more friendly the relationship, the higher the negative feelings of being envied for experiences rather than for material possessions.
- H2: The positive feelings associated by consumers with the experience of being envied are higher in relationships with disliked persons and lower in relationships with friends, with an intermediate position in relationships with acquaintances. Moreover, the more disliked the relationship, the higher the positive feelings of being envied for material possessions rather than for experiences.

*The Ambivalent Experience of Being Envied and Consumer Satisfaction*

Given this ambivalent nature of being envied in consumption contexts, the next step is to investigate its effects on consumer satisfaction. Previous theoretical accounts assume that being envied makes people feel satisfied with whom they are and provides confirmation that they have something of value. In his *Theory of the Leisure Class*, Veblen (1899) argues that status goods' consumption is motivated by an "invidious comparison", that is, a combination of desire for distinctiveness and desire for being envied. In line with this argument, Barnett (2005) proposes the presence of two types of utility in goods: "distinctiveness" and "being envied" utility. The more a particular good distinguishes its user from the masses, the greater its "distinctiveness" utility, and the more a particular good is desired but unobtainable by the masses, the greater its "being envied" utility. Moreover, as empirically shown by Romani et al. (2012), the greater these two perceived utilities in goods, the higher the prices consumers are willing to pay for such goods, given the high value recognized by consumers in these consumption situations.

However, the positive side of being envied is only part of the bittersweet taste of outperforming others as illustrated above. Moreover, negative responses are distinct from positive responses to being envied (Exline and Lobel, 2001). That is, during a specific consumption situation, consumers may feel proud, grateful, or happy about their superior status yet still have some discomfort about posing a threat to another person. Pleasure about superior status often reflects, in fact, a focus on individualistic goals such as self-enhancement or self-image. In contrast, negative responses center on interpersonal aims: desires to have harmonious relationships, to be liked by others, and to protect the self-esteem of others.

Because positive and negative feelings can be mixed in the experience of being envied, the presence of positive effects needs to be integrated to accommodate also the incidence of negative effects. Our research, therefore, aims to examine whether the

ambivalent nature of being envied actually affects individual consumption situations in a mixed way. In particular an increase in consumer satisfaction is predicted only in the case of positive feelings for being envied. Conversely, considering that negative feelings are associated with consumer fear of the consequences of others' envy, it is possible to expect that these will decrease the level of consumer satisfaction. Thus, the experience of being envied affects consumer satisfaction in a mixed way. Therefore, we hypothesize that

H3: Positive (negative) feelings for being envied increase (decrease) consumer satisfaction.

In addition, we propose that, beyond the mere experience of positive and negative feelings, the subsequent coping actions of envied consumers will moderate the effects of such concerns on their satisfaction in a consumption context. As reported above, envied consumer actions can broadly be broken down into two categories (Rodriguez Mosquera et al., 2010). The first is composed of mitigation attempts, that is, actions intended to decrease others' envy and the threats posed by it in the person being envied. In this case, consumers in an enviable position try to protect enviers' feelings and to keep relationships with them as comfortable as possible. The second category is composed of exacerbation attempts, that is, actions intended to maintain or increase others' envy. However, although Rodriguez Mosquera et al. (2010) in their study of academic achievement and having a better life proposed that "being nice" can be a coping strategy when threatened by other people envying the self and "gloating" can be a coping strategy when pleased by other people envying the self, they did not test these coping mechanisms for their effects on dependent variables as we do herein.

We hypothesize that mitigation and exacerbation attempts regulate, respectively, the impact of negative and positive feelings of the person being envied on their satisfaction in a consumption context. Consumers who attempt to regulate the envy of less successful persons and to diminish its potential negative relational implications, by being nice and supportive

with them, reduce the source of discomfort associated with their superior position and should feel relieved. Therefore, consumer mitigation attempts are expected to positively impact the level of satisfaction in a consumption context. Similar positive effects on satisfaction can result also from exacerbation attempts, given their interaction with positive feelings.

Displaying ostentatious superiority and trying to draw attention to it can make consumers more proud and can intensify the pleasure associated with the experience of being envied, and consequently the level of consumer satisfaction will be positively affected. Thus, we hypothesize that

H4: Mitigation attempts interact with negative feelings to influence consumer satisfaction. More specifically, the higher the mitigation attempts, the greater will be the level of satisfaction felt by consumers.

H5: Exacerbation attempts interact with positive feelings to influence consumer satisfaction. More specifically, the higher the exacerbation attempts, the greater will be the level of satisfaction felt by consumers.

We stress that these hypotheses have not been tested before in either the psychology or marketing literatures. Note that psychologists have studied coping responses when people experience an emotion themselves, such as being envious, but not when being the target of another person's emotional reactions, such as being envied. The closest research to our situation done by psychologists is work performed by Roseman, Wiest, and Swartz (1994), who consider what people do when they feel distress, from whatever source, which Roseman et al. (1994) do not consider to be an emotion. However, Roseman et al. (1994) found no evidence for coping responses to distress, other than having thoughts that "things are going badly". Our prediction is speculative but suggests that distress from being envied will be coped with by being nice to the envier.

Figure 1 illustrates all the paths of influence hypothesized: (1) the relationship existing between the level of unfriendliness between the envier and the envious and the positive and negative feelings associated by consumers with the experience of being envied, moderated by the types of objects of desire (material possessions vs. experiences); (2) the mediating role played by the positive and negative feelings for being envied on satisfaction; and (3) the moderating effects exerted by the mitigation and exacerbation attempts on the relationships between positive and negative feelings for being envied and consumer satisfaction.

--Figure 1 about here--

### STUDY 1

The goal of Study 1 was to better understand the ambivalent experience of being envied in consumption contexts by investigating, in particular, the effects of (1) the type of relationship existing between the envier and the envied person and (2) different types of objects of desire. A 2 (type of object of desire: experiences vs. material possessions) x 3 (type of relationship: friend, acquaintance, disliked person) experimental design was chosen, using a standardized situation with relationship type and object of desire manipulated as independent variables. The specific manipulation introduced herein for the type of relationship had the advantage of taking in consideration of both the friendliness and the closeness of the relationship (Exline and Lobel, 2001).

#### *Method*

*Participants.* Respondents were 213 undergraduate and graduate students enrolled in a moderate-size university, randomly assigned to the experimental groups. Each participant received extra course credit for participation. Data were collected at the beginning of the class, and only a small number of students refused to participate. Each participant responded to only one of the different versions of the questionnaire and took approximately 15 minutes

to complete it. After finishing the questionnaire, respondents were debriefed by explaining the purpose of the study and thanked. The sample can be characterized as follows: 91 men (42.7%) and 122 women (57.3%) participated, the average age was 23 years ( $SD = 4.04$ ). Undergraduate degrees accounted for 52.5% of the sample, high school education only for 47.5%.

*Procedure.* Different versions of the questionnaire were used to manipulate the variables of (a) type of relationship—friend, acquaintance, and disliked person were used to manipulate the degree of friendliness of the relation; (b) type of object of desire (material possession vs. experience)—a “complete clothing outfit” was used as stimulus for material consumption and a vacation as stimulus for experience consumption<sup>1</sup>. Experimental scenarios consistent by respondent gender were used: if the respondent was male, the scenario was built with a friend/disliked person/acquaintance man, woman if the respondent was female.

In detail, the manipulations were carried out on the basis of the following scenarios: “Finally you realized your dream of purchasing *a total clothing outfit / a vacation* you desired for some time. You have talked about it with many people for a long time and you mentioned it also to *your friend / an acquaintance who lives near your home / a colleague you dislike* that has the same tastes as you but cannot afford a similar purchase because of his/her precarious financial situation. Today, while you were in study hall at the university, you have been called on Skype from a friend to whom you described with great enthusiasm and for a long time your consumption, also showing some images from your PC. Towards the end of the conversation you noticed that *your friend / an acquaintance who lives near your home / a colleague you dislike* was not far from you and had the opportunity to listen to your

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<sup>1</sup> A pre-test on 194 students was run to test if their estimated cost of a desired “complete clothing outfit” ( $M = 710.63\text{€}$ ) was different compared to their estimated cost of a desired vacation ( $M = 746.36\text{€}$ ). The comparison test result showed that there was no difference among the two ( $t(192) = .48, p = .64$ ).

conversation. From the expression on his/her face, it was evident that he/she felt envious of you.”

*Measures.* Based on an adaptation of measures from Rodriguez Mosquera et al. (2010), positive feelings for being envied were measured on 7-point scales, with 4 items – “It makes me feel good to have done/have something someone else wants so much,” “I value this experience/good all the more because I know that he/she longs for it,” “the fact that he/she wants the experience/good makes me feel even better about having done/ having it,” and “I get a degree of prestige from having done/having something that someone else wants so much.” Based on an adaptation of measures of STTUC-related concerns presented by Koch and Metcalfe (2011), negative feelings for being envied were measured on 7-point scales, with 5 items – “I felt guilty,” “I felt anxious,” “I felt sorry,” “I was concerned about the other person’s feeling,” and “I felt bad because the other person might have been upset.” An exploratory factor analysis (EFA) on the total sample showed that positive feelings for being envied items loaded on one factor (factor loadings ranging from .81 to .82), Cronbach alpha was .94; negative feelings for being envied items loaded on a different factor (factor loadings ranging from .80 to .91), Cronbach alpha was .92. A confirmatory factor analysis (CFA) on the measures of two variables was performed to assess convergent and discriminant validity. The fit of the model was good ( $\chi^2(26) = 91.21$ ; CFI = .98; NNFI = .97; RMSEA = .10; SRMR = .04). The correlation between the two factors was high (-.71;  $p < .01$ ), and a likelihood test that compares the model, where the two variables were freely correlated, with the model where the correlation between the two was fixed to 1.00, gave a  $\Delta\chi^2(1df) = 87.60(1)$ ;  $p < .01$ , confirming that the factors are distinct, and being consistent with previous research (Exline and Lobel, 2001). The items were averaged to form the corresponding positive and negative concerns. Additional measures used as controls were: the Dispositional Envy Scale

(DES – Smith et al., 1999) – 8 items ( $\alpha = .86$ ); and the Materialism scale (Richins, 2004) – 15 items ( $\alpha = .91$ ).

### Results

The relationship type was verified by a manipulation check in the final section of the questionnaire, wherein respondents were asked to evaluate the type of relationship between the envier and the envied person. They rated, on a 7-point scale, the level of unfriendliness of the relationship between the two (1, very friendly relationship, and 7, very unfriendly relationship, as end points). Results confirmed that the conditions showed significant mean differences ( $M_{\text{friend}} = 2.58$ ,  $M_{\text{acquaintance}} = 3.82$ ;  $M_{\text{disliked person}} = 5.59$ ;  $F(2, 210) = 173.50$ ,  $p < .01$ ). The type of object of desire (experiences vs. material possessions) was also checked by asking respondents to rate, on a 7-point scale, how they evaluated the consumption situation in each manipulated scenario (1, for material, and 7, for experiential, as end points). Results confirmed that the conditions achieved significant mean differences ( $M_{\text{experience}} = 6.43$  vs.  $M_{\text{material possession}} = 2.46$ ;  $t(211) = 31.01$ ,  $p < .01$ ). Moreover, the centrality to the self of experiences vs. material possessions was checked on a 7-point scale and results confirmed that the experiences were more central to the self compared to material possessions ( $M_{\text{experience}} = 5.26$  vs.  $M_{\text{material possession}} = 2.48$ ;  $t(211) = 14.99$ ,  $p < .01$ ), as assumed in the development of the hypotheses and found in the literature (Carter and Gilovich, 2012). Finally, the communication quality of experiences vs. material possessions was checked by asking respondents to rate, on a 7-point scale, the visibility of the object of desire (1, for low, and 7, for high, as end points); results confirmed that goods scored higher compared to experiences ( $M_{\text{material possession}} = 4.51$  vs.  $M_{\text{experience}} = 2.14$ ;  $t(211) = -11.88$ ,  $p < .01$ ).

To determine whether or not the type of relationship, the type of object of desire, and their interaction significantly affect both “positive feelings for being envied” and “negative feelings for being envied”, a 3 (friend, acquaintance, or disliked person) x 2 (experiences vs.



material possessions) analysis of variance (ANOVA) was run, for each dependent variable. DES (Smith et al., 1999), materialism (Richins, 2004), and gender were controlled in these analyses. Materialism proved to have an effect on positive feelings for being envied, as well as DES on negative feelings for being envied; gender had no effect on either dependent variable.

Table 1 shows results for the dependent variable “negative feelings for being envied”. The 3 x 2 ANOVA revealed, as hypothesized, a significant interaction effect between the type of relationship and the type of object of desire,  $F(2, 204) = 7.41$ ;  $p < .00$ ;  $\eta^2 = .07$  (see Figure 2A). Because the interaction between the two independent variables was significant, the type of object of desire simple main effects were examined, that is, the differences between vacation and clothing outfit for each of the three types of relationship. Significant differences between experiences and material possessions were found in all conditions, with the exception of the disliked person one. With regard to the friend condition, the group means indicated that experiences versus material possessions had significantly higher levels of negative feelings ( $M_{\text{experience}} = 5.64$  vs.  $M_{\text{material possession}} = 4.87$ ;  $F(1, 204) = 11.38$ ,  $p < .01$ ). Concerning the acquaintance condition, the group means indicated that experiences versus material possessions had significantly higher levels of negative feelings ( $M_{\text{experience}} = 3.75$  vs.  $M_{\text{material possession}} = 3.21$ ;  $F(1, 204) = 5.97$ ,  $p = .02$ ). By contrast, those envied by a disliked person felt a marginally lower level of negative feelings for being envied for experiences than for material possessions ( $M_{\text{experience}} = 2.15$  vs.  $M_{\text{material possession}} = 2.45$ ;  $F(1, 204) = 2.83$ ,  $p = .09$ ).

Additionally, the simple main effects for type of relationship were examined, that is, the differences among the three type of relationship for experiences and material possessions separately. There was a significant difference among the three type of relationship for experiences,  $F(2, 204) = 152.21$ ,  $p < .01$ , and for material possessions,  $F(2, 204) = 74.07$ ,  $p <$

.01. Fisher's LSD pairwise comparisons were conducted to evaluate the three pairwise differences for types of relationship for experiences and for material possessions (see table 1). Both for experiences and for material possessions, the friend condition had significantly higher negative feelings compared to the acquaintance condition and to the disliked person condition; the acquaintance condition had significantly higher negative feelings compared to the disliked person condition. Therefore, hypothesis 1 is supported.

--- Insert Table 1 about here ---

Table 2 shows results for the dependent variable "positive feelings for being envied". The 3 x 2 ANOVA revealed a significant interaction effect between the type of relationship and the type of object of desire,  $F(2, 204) = 14.08$ ;  $p < .01$ ;  $\eta^2 = .12$  (see Figure 2B). Because the interaction between the two independent variables was significant, the simple main effects were examined for type of object of desire. A review of the group means in the acquaintance condition indicated that material possessions had a significantly higher level of positive feelings than experiences ( $M_{\text{material possession}} = 3.51$  vs.  $M_{\text{experience}} = 2.18$ ;  $F(1, 204) = 57.28$ ,  $p < .01$ ). Those envied by a disliked person felt the same high level of positive feelings for being envied for material possessions than for experiences ( $M_{\text{material possession}} = 4.81$  vs.  $M_{\text{experience}} = 4.59$ ;  $F(1, 204) = 3.06$ ,  $p = .08$ ). Those envied by a friend felt the same low level of positive feelings for being envied for experiences or material possessions ( $M_{\text{material possession}} = 1.61$  vs.  $M_{\text{experience}} = 1.50$ ;  $F(1, 204) = .41$ ,  $p = .52$ ). Additionally, the type of relationship simple main effects were examined, that is, the differences among the three type of relationship for experiences and material possessions separately. There was a significant difference among the three types of relationships for experiences,  $F(2, 204) = 182.40$ ,  $p < .01$ , and for material possessions,  $F(2, 204) = 181.87$ ,  $p < .01$ . Fisher's LSD pairwise comparisons (see table 2) showed that, for both experiences and material possessions, the friend condition had significantly lower positive feelings compared to the acquaintance condition and to the

disliked person condition; the acquaintance condition had significantly lower positive feelings compared to the disliked person condition. Therefore, hypothesis 2 is partially supported.

--- Insert Table 2 and Figure 2 about here ---

In short, results show the ambivalent nature of the being envied experience in consumption contexts. More specifically, our study found that the more friendly the relationship between the envier and the envied person, the higher the negative feelings (the lower the positive feelings) for being envied. Moreover, a key role of the type of the object of desire emerged: (1) experiences were more relevant in generating negative feelings within friendly relationships (both with close friends and acquaintances) than disliked ones, and (2) material possessions were more relevant in generating positive feelings, not within disliked relationships, as hypothesized, but in relationships with acquaintances. Findings therefore show that dislike toward the envier enhances the positive concerns for being envied, regardless of the type of object of desire and its visibility. An interpretation of this finding will be provided in the general discussion section. In the next study the ambivalent nature of being envied will be further evaluated in its effect on consumer satisfaction in consumption contexts.

## STUDY 2

The goal of Study 2 was to test whether, in line with hypothesis 3, the effect of being envied in consumption contexts on consumer satisfaction is driven not only by positive feelings, but by the combined ambivalent effects of positive and negative feelings, and to show the moderating role played by consumer responses to enviers, in line with hypotheses 4 and 5. In this study an experimental design in a standardized situation was used, and relationship type and object of desire were manipulated as independent variables.

Considering that positive and negative feelings for being envied depend on the type of the

relationship between envier and envied person, participants were randomly assigned to imagine the envier as either a friend, acquaintance, or disliked person for both goods and experiences. Respondents rated the degree of unfriendliness of the relationship between the envied and the envier to which they had been exposed. This general evaluation, measured on a 7-point scale (1, very friendly, and 7, very unfriendly, as end points), was used in the following analysis as an independent variable. The effects of positive and negative feelings on satisfaction were then expected, as argued above, to be dependent on the felt need to exacerbate or mitigate these concerns, as moderators.

### *Method*

*Participants.* Respondents were 213 undergraduate and graduate students enrolled in a moderate-size university. The same procedures for data collection of Study 1 were used. 74 men (34.7%) and 139 women (65.3%), the average age was 22 years ( $SD = 3.95$ ). Undergraduate degrees accounted for 50.1% of the sample, high school education only for 49.9%.

*Procedure.* Different versions of the questionnaire were used. Three types of relationship –friend, acquaintance, and disliked person– and two type of object of desire – material possession vs. experience– were used in the design of this study. Scenarios were consistent by respondent gender. The same scenarios of study 1 were used.

*Measures.* This study used the same measures as in Study 1 for positive ( $\alpha = .94$ ) and negative ( $\alpha = .90$ ) feelings. The correlation between the two factors was moderately high ( $-.63$ ;  $p < .01$ ). Moreover, participants' likelihood of engaging in mitigation attempts with the envier person, after experiencing being envied, was measured, on 7-point scales, with 6 items (e.g., take the envier out for a nice dinner or lunch) ( $\alpha = .91$ ). Participants' likelihood of engaging in exacerbation attempts with the envier, after experiencing being envied, was measured, on 7-point scales, with 3 items (e.g., emphasizing happiness in front of

the envier) ( $\alpha = .91$ ). Both these two sets of measures were adapted from Rodriguez Mosquera et al. (2010). Consumer satisfaction for the consumption situation was measured with one item commonly used to assess satisfaction (Bearden and Teel, 1983; Westbrook and Oliver, 1991), measuring overall satisfaction (7-point response scale). Additional measures used were: the Dispositional Envy Scale (DES – Smith et al., 1999) – 8 items ( $\alpha = .86$ ); and Materialism (Richins, 2004) – 15 items ( $\alpha = .93$ ).

### *Results*

As manipulation checks, in each experimental condition, only questionnaires were retained where participants remembered correctly the type of relationships between envier and envious – friend, acquaintance, and disliked person – to which they had been exposed. Differences in consumer-relevant behavior among the experimental groups were controlled; respondents showed different levels of satisfaction ( $F(2, 210) = 89.88, p < .001$ ). Respondents also rated the degree of unfriendliness of the relationships between envier and envious on 7-point scales, where the result confirmed significant mean differences ( $F(2, 210) = 153.42, p < .001$ ). The  $t$ -tests showed significant differences between groups ( $M_{\text{friend}} = 2.82$  vs.  $M_{\text{acquaintance}} = 4.34, t(142) = -7.94, p < .01$ ;  $M_{\text{friend}} = 2.82$  vs.  $M_{\text{disliked person}} = 5.81, t(140) = -22.30, p < .01$ ;  $M_{\text{acquaintance}} = 4.34$  vs.  $M_{\text{disliked person}} = 5.81, t(138) = -8.13, p < .01$ ). The type of object of desire (experiences vs. material possessions) was then checked by asking respondents to rate how they evaluated the consumption situation on a 7-point scale (1, for material, and 7, for experiential, as end points), and results confirmed that the conditions achieved significant mean differences ( $M_{\text{experience}} = 5.48$  vs.  $M_{\text{material possession}} = 3.89; t(211) = 5.58, p < .01$ ). Additionally, the centrality to the self of experiences vs. material possessions was checked, confirming that experiences were more central to the self compared to material possessions ( $M_{\text{experience}} = 4.70$  vs.  $M_{\text{material possession}} = 3.34; t(211) = 5.54, p < .01$ ). Finally, also in this study, communication quality was checked, confirming that material possessions

scored higher compared to experiences for visibility ( $M_{\text{good}} = 3.75$  vs.  $M_{\text{experience}} = 2.64$ ;  $t(211) = 4.59, p < .01$ ).

Table 3 presents the key results. This study used degree of unfriendliness of the relationships as the independent variable (X), negative and positive concerns for being envied as mediators (Ms), the object of desire (material possession, coded as -1, vs. experience, coded as 1) as moderator (W) of this first relationship, consumer satisfaction as the outcome variable (Y), and respondents' likelihood of engaging in exacerbation (Q) or mitigation (V) attempts with the envier as moderators of the relationship between mediators and the dependent variable (see figure 1). Consumer materialism, DES, and gender were considered as control variables.

Under the mediator variable models, the degree of unfriendliness of the relationship and the moderator (object of desire) interacted significantly to influence both positive feelings ( $-.07, t = -2.35$ ) and negative feelings ( $-.06, t = -2.02$ ). Under the outcome variable model, significant effects for negative feelings ( $-.61, t = -3.89$ ) and positive feelings ( $.46, t = 3.59$ ) on satisfaction were found, supporting hypothesis 3. A significant interaction between negative feelings for being envied and consumer mitigation attempts with the envier ( $-.33, t = -3.03$ ) was also found, supporting hypothesis 4. Given the significant interaction, it makes sense to examine the indirect effects by estimating conditional indirect effects at values of the moderator. As can be seen in table 3, all the conditional indirect effects are significantly different from zero at  $\alpha = .05$ , given the absence of zero from each bootstrap interval for the negative concerns for being envied, with the exception of the intervals corresponding to low mitigation attempts. Therefore, the effect of the negative feelings for being envied on satisfaction is lower when consumer mitigation attempts are high or moderate rather than low. As regards the other moderator, exacerbation attempts did not interact with positive feelings for being envied, thus hypothesis 5 is not supported. Finally, because level of

unfriendliness did not significantly have a direct effect on consumer satisfaction, therefore the mediators (positive and negative feelings) fully channel the effects, conditional on the moderation by object of desire and mitigation attempts.

To conclude, results enabled us to assess the effects of positive and negative feelings on consumer satisfaction and to show the moderating role played by specific consumer responses to envious, that is, mitigation attempts.

--- Table 3 about here ---

### STUDY 3

The key objective of Study 3 was to address two potential limitations of Study 1 and Study 2 and, by so doing, fortify the evidence for hypotheses 1-5. In Study 1 and Study 2 we assessed individuals' responses to specific envy scenarios asking them to imagine as vividly as possible that they were the protagonist of the story they read. In Study 3 we examined if our findings generalize to another envy scenario strongly based on visual images in a context of material consumption (i.e., a car).

Moreover Studies 1 and Study 2 were all conducted with students. In Study 3 we addressed this limitation by using a sample of adult consumers.

#### *Method and Procedures*

We used degree of unfriendliness of the relationships as the independent variable (X), negative and positive concerns for being envied as mediators (Ms), consumer satisfaction as the outcome variable (Y), and respondents' likelihood of engaging in exacerbation (Q) or mitigation (V) attempts with the envier as moderators of the relationship between mediators and the dependent variable. Consumer materialism, DES, need for status, and gender were asked as control variables.

Three different versions of the questionnaire were used in the design of this study, one for each type of relationship –friend, acquaintance, and disliked person. Scenarios were

consistent by respondent gender. In detail, the manipulations were carried out on the basis of several pictures representing the story of a person driving a new car, parking it in front of her/his house and noticing another person looking at her/him from the window of the neighboring house. For her/his face expressions envy could be inferred. Such pictures were integrated by a short narrative describing this person as a friend/an acquaintance who lives near home/a disliked colleague, and the request to imagine as vividly as possible that they were the envied protagonist of the story. After reading the scenario, respondents answered the questionnaire, composed of the same measures used in the previous studies for positive ( $\alpha = .93$ ) and negative ( $\alpha = .85$ ) feelings, mitigation ( $\alpha = .84$ ) and exacerbation ( $\alpha = .77$ ) attempts, dispositional envy ( $\alpha = .86$ ), and materialism ( $\alpha = .93$ ). In this study consumer satisfaction for the consumption situation was measured with two items to overcome the potential limitations associated with the use of a single item. The items were “I am satisfied with the consumption experience for which I was envied” and “Ultimately, I feel satisfied with this consumption experience” (adapted from Bearden and Teel, 1983; Westbrook and Oliver, 1991). We also measured need for status of respondents as a control with the 5-item Status Consumption Scale (Eastman et al. 1999).

Respondents were approached as they shopped in a city-center shopping area by two different interviewers, which personally distributed the questionnaires. The sample was composed of 137 adult consumers, 67 men (48.9%) and 70 women (51.1%), and the average age was 45 years. Specifically 24.9 % were between 18 and 29 years of age, 39.6% were between 30 and 49 years of age, and the remaining 35.5% were between 50 and 70 years of age. Undergraduate or higher educated respondents accounted for 33.6% of the sample, followed by respondents with a high school education (41.9%) or less (24.5%).

### *Results*



As manipulation check, in each experimental condition, only questionnaires were retained where participants remembered correctly the type of relationships between envier and envious – friend, acquaintance, or disliked person – to which they had been exposed. Respondents rated the degree of unfriendliness of the relationships between envier and envious on 7-point scales, where the result confirmed significant mean differences ( $F(2, 134) = 39.22, p < .001$ ). Respondents also answered three questions about the specific product used in the manipulation to describe the consumption experience for which they were envied. The results showed no significant mean differences between the three groups in respondents' level of interest towards the purchase of a car ( $F(2, 134) = .43, p = .65$ ), the extent to which the car is an important part of their image ( $F(2, 134) = .33, p = .72$ ), and their level of involvement with the product ( $F(2, 134) = .88, p = .42$ ).

Table 4 presents the results. Under the mediator variable models, the degree of unfriendliness of the relationship affects significantly both positive feelings (.16,  $t = 2.28$ ) and negative feelings (-.19,  $t = -2.33$ ). Under the outcome variable model, a significant interaction between negative feelings for being envied and consumer mitigation attempts with the envier (-.17,  $t = -2.27$ ) was found, supporting hypothesis 4. The conditional indirect effects were significantly different from zero at  $\alpha = .05$  for all the intervals corresponding to high mitigation attempts (see Table 4). Therefore, the effect of the negative feelings for being envied on satisfaction is lower when consumer mitigation attempts are high rather than low. As regards the other moderator, exacerbation attempts did not interact significantly with positive feelings for being envied; thus hypothesis 5 is not supported. However, positive feelings interacted significantly with consumer mitigation attempts with the envier to influence satisfaction (-.15,  $t = -2.42$ ). The conditional indirect effects are significantly different from zero at  $\alpha = .05$  for the intervals corresponding to medium-high mitigation attempts. Therefore, the effects of positive feelings for being envied on satisfaction were

lower when consumer mitigation attempts are high rather than low. Finally, level of unfriendliness did not significantly affect consumer satisfaction directly. That is, the two mediators, positive and negative feelings, fully channeled the effects of unfriendliness on satisfaction, conditional on the moderation by mitigation attempts.

The findings further corroborated hypotheses 1-4. Moreover the absence of support of hypothesis 5 was confirmed. Interestingly, Study 3 also demonstrated that these findings are not confined to students but were also obtained in a sample of adult consumers. Finally, an unexpected effect of mitigation attempts was identified on positive feelings with a consequent reduction in satisfaction.

--- Table 4 about here ---

## GENERAL DISCUSSION

Our research makes three main theoretical contributions. First, by highlighting the role of personal relationship factors and the type of object of desire in the experience of being envied, we extend prior psychological research and theory, which were done in non-consumption contexts (Rodriguez Mosquera et al., 2010), suggesting that being envied is an ambivalent emotional experience complex in its nature and scope. Results show, in fact, that the more friendly the relationship between the envier and the envied person, the higher the negative concerns (the lower the positive concerns) associated with the experience of being envied. Moreover, a key role of the type of the object of desire emerges: (1) experiences are more relevant in generating negative feelings within friendly relationships (both with close friends and acquaintances), (2) material possessions are more relevant in generating positive feelings, not within disliked relationships, as hypothesized, but in relationships with acquaintances. Findings therefore show that dislike toward the envier enhances the positive concerns for being envied, regardless of the type of object of desire and its visibility. By contrast, the communication value of the typical envied goods (i.e., exclusive clothing)

results in enhancing positive concerns in relationships with acquaintances, probably because in these “intermediate” relationships the awareness of the value of the possession by the envier is an important element for the envied person to affirm and experience superiority. Future research should further investigate this issue.

Second, we demonstrated that both positive and negative feelings of being envied affect consumer satisfaction, such that positive feelings enhance, and negative feelings decrease, satisfaction in reaction to a dyadic situation of envy in consumption contexts. It therefore showed that the positive side of being envied, traditionally considered in marketing (Barnett, 2005; Romani et al., 2012), is only part of the bittersweet taste of outperforming in consumption contexts.

Finally, the third theoretical contribution was to propose and demonstrate conditions regulating the influence of positive and negative feelings on satisfaction. Namely, we found that mitigation strategies decrease the effects of negative feelings on satisfaction. We did not find that exacerbation increases the effects of positive feelings on satisfaction, however. On the contrary, Study 3 showed that positive feelings had a reduced impact on satisfaction in the presence of mitigation attempts. Future research should investigate reasons why exacerbation failed to regulate the effects of positive feelings, while mitigation did. It may be that, given that positive feelings are in effect enjoyable and valued, there is little need to cope with them. How much more will someone be satisfied with consumption, given experienced exacerbation, when it already is satisfying? Or coping may entail sharing ones successes with others, but our research did not measure this. Alternatively, exacerbation might be itself an ambivalent response that one knows might be socially frowned upon, and thus one keeps it from becoming too strong. These possibilities deserve further consideration.

The findings have important implications for relevant marketing and communication policies. Envy is, in general, an important element in the functioning of a consumption

society (Belk, 2008; Berger, 1990; Corneo and Jeanne, 2001a, 2001b; Van de Ven et al., 2011), and the state of being envied by others is frequently used by marketers as a means to promote products, but until now without a thorough understanding of the different consumer reactions that can emerge to being envied.

Based on our findings, the type of relationship that the envious person has with the envied person, as well as the type of object of desire, certainly affect consumer reactions. Perhaps even more important, practitioners should take into consideration the interaction between these two elements in order to achieve desired consumer emotional reactions. In order to maximize communication results, it would be counterproductive to blindly promote consumer desire to be envied because, if not properly managed, this experience can lead to negative reactions under certain conditions. Only the proper match of the object of desire, together with the type of person from whom the consumer is supposed to be envied, should favor positive emotional reactions and reduce the negative ones. For example, based on our findings the use of acquaintance relationships in association with material consumption could be the best setting to stress positive feelings associated to the being envied experience. In the social media world, this setting is implied for example in Envicase ([www.envicase.com](http://www.envicase.com)), a new photo sharing app that enables users to show off their possessions and be envied. The focus of the app on things and the possibility to virtually connect with other members around the world give users the opportunity to mainly experience the positive side of the being envied experience as shown by our findings.

Moreover based on our findings marketers can glean insights into better management of the negative side of the experience of being envied on consumer satisfaction. While on the one hand, marketers can emphasize aspects of their products or experiences able to arouse envy in others, on the other hand they may represent mitigation attempts able to alleviate any negative feelings in the envied person. For example, the negative feelings in the being envied

person associated with the neighbor's envy can be reduced by merely being helpful or friendly with him or her when the occasion calls for this.

Our study has a number of limitations and opportunities for future research that should be mentioned. Firstly, we did not distinguish between two qualitatively different types of emotional experiences of envy: benign and malicious envy (Van de Ven et al., 2011). The effects of these two types of envy experiences on being the target of envy should be addressed in future studies. Second, we mainly considered friendliness of the relationship as a relevant aspect of the experience of being envied. Other aspects could be investigated, such as, for example, the desire to associate with or to dissociate from the envied or envious person because of his/her social position (Han et al., 2010) or something he/she did publicly. Third, future research could investigate how the self-relevance of the object of desire (i.e., what is coveted) for both the envied and the envious person affects the experience of being envied. Fourth, future research could also examine whether different variables can supplement the moderating roles exerted by the coping strategies in the mechanisms shown herein, such as empathy, extraversion/introversion, independent/interdependent self-construals, promotion/prevention focus and fit, and attachment styles, which have been studied recently in marketing in different, but potentially related, circumstances.

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**Table 1****Study 1: Results for Negative Feelings for Being Envid**

	Sum of squares	df	Mean square	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>
Model corrected	339.69	8	42.46	57.77	.00
Intercept	226.48	1	226.48	308.14	.00
DES (covariate)	3.32	1	3.32	4.51	.04
Materialism (covariate)	.23	1	.23	.32	.57
Gender (covariate)	.22	1	.22	.30	.58
Relationship (friend, acquaintance, or disliked person)	317.49	2	158.75	215.98	.00
Object of desire (material possessions vs. experiences)	3.70	1	3.70	5.04	.03
Relationship x Object of desire	10.90	2	5.45	7.41	.00
Error	149.94	204	.74		
Total	3440.48	213			
Total corrected	489.63	212			

R-square = .69

Fisher's LSD pairwise comparisons to evaluate the three types of relationship's pairwise differences for experience and for good

Object of desire	Type of relationship	Mean difference	Std. error deviation	<i>p</i>	
Experience	friend	acquaintance	1.87	.20	.00
	friend	disliked person	3.52	.20	.00
	acquaintance	friend	-1.87	.20	.00
	acquaintance	disliked person	1.65	.20	.00
	disliked person	friend	-3.52	.20	.00
	disliked person	acquaintance	-1.65	.20	.00
Material possession	friend	acquaintance	1.68	.21	.00
	friend	disliked person	2.47	.21	.00
	acquaintance	friend	-1.68	.21	.00
	acquaintance	disliked person	.79	.21	.00
	disliked person	friend	-2.47	.21	.00
	disliked person	acquaintance	-.79	.21	.00

Table 2

## Study 1: Results for Positive Feelings for Being Envid

	Sum of squares	df	Mean square	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>
Model corrected	398.04	8	49.76	101.82	.00
Intercept	124.39	1	124.39	254.55	.00
DES (covariate)	.03	1	.03	.06	.81
Materialism (covariate)	8.02	1	8.02	16.41	.00
Gender (covariate)	.41	1	.41	.84	.36
Relationship (friend, acquaintance, or disliked person)	341.06	2	170.53	348.97	.00
Object of desire (material possessions vs. experiences)	14.98	1	14.98	30.66	.00
Relationship x Object of desire	13.76	2	6.88	14.08	.00
Error	99.69	204	.49		
Total	2389.31	213			
Total corrected	497.73	212			

R-square = .79

Fisher's LSD pairwise comparisons to evaluate the three types of relationship's pairwise differences for experience and for good

Object of desire	Type of relationship	Mean difference	Std. error deviation	<i>p</i>	
Experience	friend	acquaintance	-.66	.16	.00
	friend	disliked person	-3.02	.17	.00
	acquaintance	friend	.66	.16	.00
	acquaintance	disliked person	-2.36	.16	.00
	disliked person	friend	3.02	.17	.00
	disliked person	acquaintance	2.36	.16	.00
Material possession	friend	acquaintance	-1.83	.17	.00
	friend	disliked person	-3.22	.17	.00
	acquaintance	friend	1.83	.17	.00
	acquaintance	disliked person	-1.39	.17	.00
	disliked person	friend	3.22	.17	.00
	disliked person	acquaintance	1.39	.17	.00

Table 3

**Study 2: Conditional Process Model for Positive and Negative Feelings for Being Envied as Mediators, Object of Desire, Mitigation and Exacerbation Attempts as Moderators, and Consumer Satisfaction as Outcome**

MEDIATOR VARIABLE MODELS						
	Positive feelings for being envied		Negative feelings for being envied			
	<i>b</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>b</i>	<i>t</i>		
X: level of unfriendliness	.41	12.85***	-.44	-14.26***		
W: object of desire	-.18	3.60***	.14	2.88**		
X x W	-.07	-2.35*	-.06	-2.02*		
C1: Materialism	.14	2.70**	-.01	-.21		
C2: DES	.05	1.02	.07	1.40		
C3: gender	-.11	-2.21*	.07	1.43		
OUTCOME VARIABLE MODEL (Satisfaction)						
	<i>b</i>	<i>t</i>				
M1: positive feelings for being envied	.46	3.59***				
M2: negative feelings for being envied	-.61	-3.89***				
X: level of unfriendliness	.16	1.87				
Q: exacerbation	.21	1.59				
V: mitigation	-.21	-1.53				
M1 x Q	-.04	-.29				
M1 x V	.08	.76				
M2 x Q	.10	.65				
M2 x V	-.33	-3.03**				
C1: Materialism	.04	.41				
C2: DES	-.07	-.74				
C3: gender	.03	.30				
Conditional indirect effect(s) of X on Y at values of the moderators						
Bootstrap 95% Confidence Intervals for Conditional Indirect Effect - Bias Corrected and Accelerated (BCa)						
	Object of desire	Mitigation	Exacerbation	Effect	Lower	Upper
Negative feelings for being envied		-1.00	-1.00	.14	.08	-.01
		-1.00	.00	.22	.07	-.03
		-1.00	1.00	.07	.10	-.13
		.00	-1.00	.27	.08	.12
	Material possessions	.00	.00	.23	.07	.11
		.00	1.00	.20	.09	.02
		1.00	-1.00	.40	.11	.20
		1.00	.00	.36	.09	.20
		1.00	1.00	.32	.10	.14
		-1.00	-1.00	.19	.10	-.01
		-1.00	.00	.14	.09	-.04
		-1.00	1.00	.09	.13	-.16
	Experiences	.00	-1.00	.36	.11	.16
		.00	.00	.31	.08	.15
	.00	1.00	.26	.12	.03	
	1.00	-1.00	.52	.14	.26	
	1.00	.00	.47	.11	.27	
	1.00	1.00	.42	.13	.18	
Positive feelings for being envied	-1.00	-1.00	.20	.11	.03	
	-1.00	.00	.18	.10	.05	
	-1.00	1.00	.16	.12	.10	
Material	.00	-1.00	.24	.09	.06	
	.00	.00	.22	.07	.09	

possessions	.00	1.00	.20	.09	.04
	1.00	-1.00	.27	.11	.06
	1.00	.00	.26	.09	.09
	1.00	1.00	.24	.10	.05
<hr/>					
Experiences	-1.00	-1.00	.13	.08	.02
	-1.00	.00	.12	.07	.03
	-1.00	1.00	.11	.08	.07
	.00	-1.00	.16	.06	.05
	.00	.00	.15	.05	.06
	.00	1.00	.14	.06	.03
	1.00	-1.00	.18	.08	.05
	1.00	.00	.18	.06	.06
1.00	1.00	.16	.07	.04	
<hr/>					
Direct effect of X on Y					
Effect		<i>t</i>		<i>p</i>	
.16		1.87		.06	
<hr/>					
R-square = .51					

\* if  $p < .05$ ; \*\* if  $p < .01$ ; \*\*\* if  $p < .001$ . X = independent variable, M = mediator, W, V, Q = moderators, C = control variable.

Table 4

**Study 3: Conditional Process Model for Positive and Negative Feelings for Being Envied as Mediators, Mitigation and Exacerbation Attempts as Moderators, and Consumer Satisfaction as Outcome**

MEDIATOR VARIABLE MODELS					
	Positive feelings for being envied		Negative feelings for being envied		
	<i>b</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>b</i>	<i>t</i>	
X: level of unfriendliness	.16	2.28*	-.19	-2.33*	
C1: Materialism	.52	4.18***	.01	.08	
C2: DES	.06	.55	-.51	-4.08***	
C3: Gender	-.12	-.56	-.05	-.20	
C4: Need for status	.27	2.35*	-.30	-2.33*	
OUTCOME VARIABLE MODEL (Satisfaction)					
			<i>b</i>	<i>t</i>	
M1: positive feelings for being envied			.30	2.16*	
M2: negative feelings for being envied			-.05	-.45	
X: level of unfriendliness			.08	.90	
Q: exacerbation			-.002	-.02	
V: mitigation			.39	3.34***	
M1 x Q			-.06	-.62	
M1 x V			-.15	-2.42*	
M2 x Q			-.004	-.05	
M2 x V			-.17	-2.27*	
C1: Materialism			.30	1.71	
C2: DES			-.02	-.11	
C3: Gender			-.21	-1.63	
C4: Need for status			-.03	-.19	
Conditional indirect effect(s) of X on Y at values of the moderators					
Bootstrap 95% Confidence Intervals for Conditional Indirect Effect - Bias Corrected and Accelerated (BCa)					
	Exacerbation	Mitigation	Effect	Lower	Upper
Negative feelings for being envied	-1.33	-1.40	-.04	-.17	.04
	-1.33	.00	.01	-.04	.10
	-1.33	1.40	.05	.01	.19
	.00	-1.40	-.04	-.14	.01
	.00	.00	.01	-.02	.07
	.00	1.40	.05	.01	.16
	1.33	-1.40	-.04	-.16	.01
	1.33	.00	.01	-.03	.08
	1.33	1.40	.05	.02	.18
	Positive feelings for being envied	-1.33	-1.40	.03	-.02
-1.33		.00	.06	.01	.19
-1.33		1.40	.10	-.004	.11
.00		-1.40	.01	-.02	.22
.00		.00	.05	.002	.13
.00		1.40	.08	.03	.08
1.33		-1.40	.02	-.004	.20
1.33		.00	.04	.01	.13
1.33		1.40	.07	.06	.06
Direct effect of X on Y					
	Effect		<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>	
	.08		.90	.37	
R-square = .32					

\* if  $p < .05$ ; \*\* if  $p < .01$ ; \*\*\* if  $p < .001$ . X = independent variable, M = mediator, V, Q = moderators, C = control variable.

Figure 1

## THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

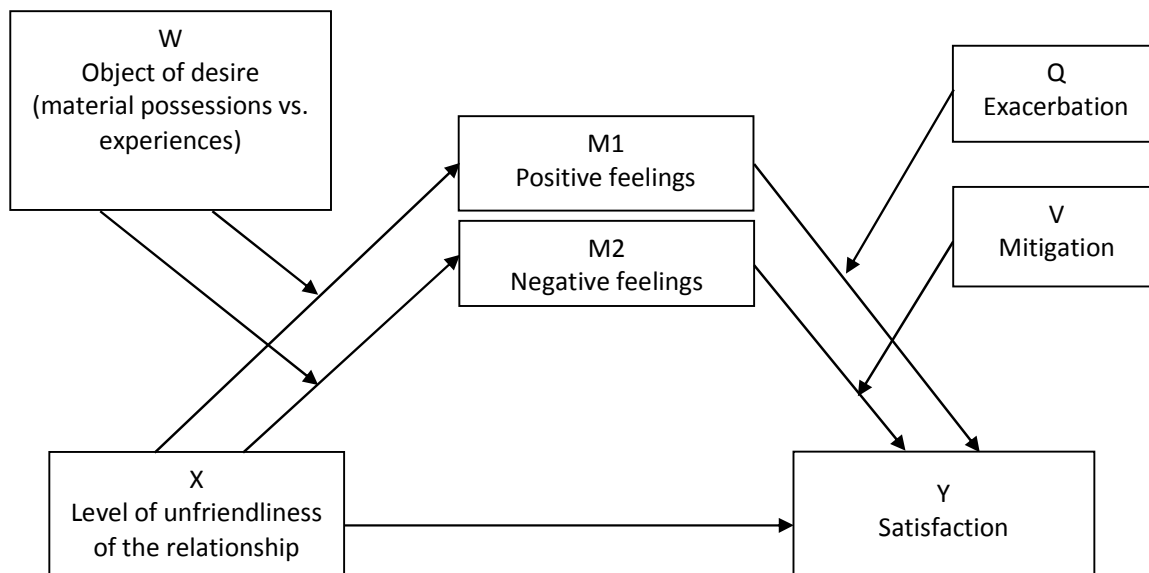
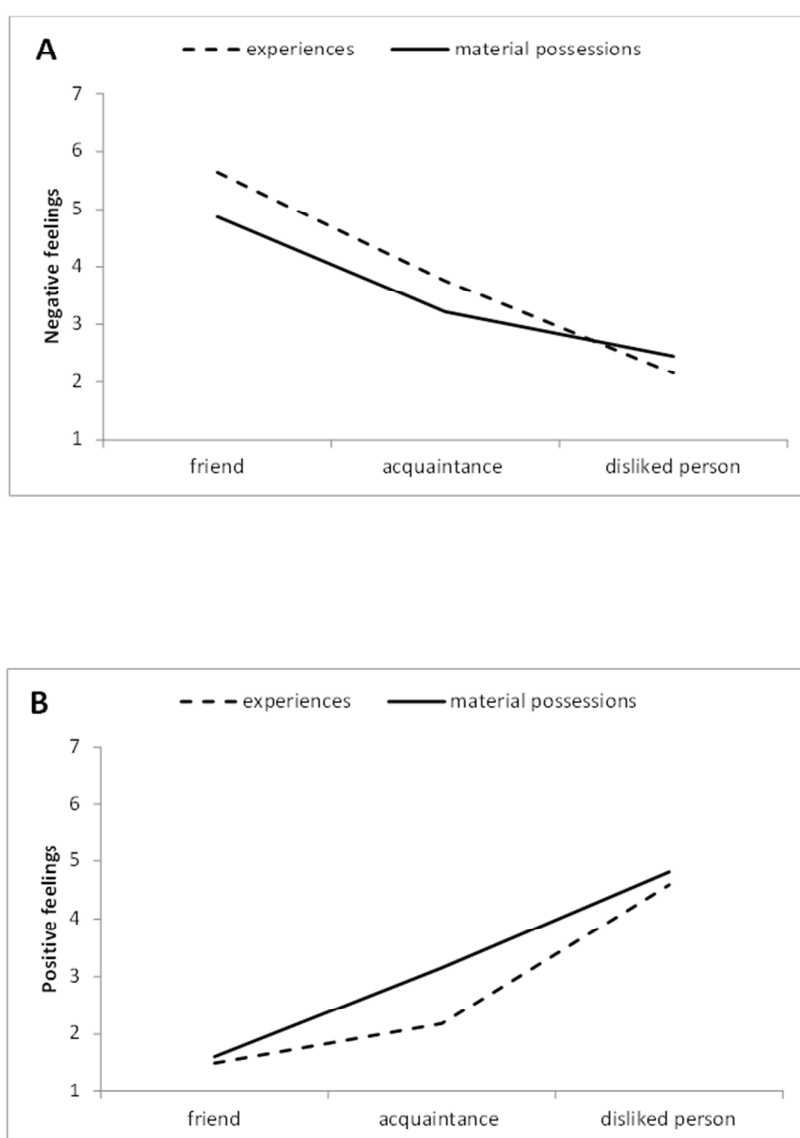


Figure 2

**INTERACTION EFFECTS BETWEEN THE TYPE OF RELATIONSHIP AND THE  
TYPE OF OBJECT OF DESIRE FOR NEGATIVE (A) AND POSITIVE (B)  
FEELINGS FOR BEING ENVIED**





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Simona Romani is an Associate Professor in Consumer Behavior at Luiss Roma in Italy. Prior to her position at Luiss, Simona served on the faculty at the University of Pisa (Italy). Her main research interests concern consumer behavior and branding. Current projects explore the topics of brand activism, the “dark side” of consumer preferences, brand dislike, counterfeit consumption, consumer reactions to corporate social responsibility (CSR), and the processing of misleading advertising.

Silvia Grappi is an Associate Professor in Marketing at the University of Modena and Reggio Emilia (Italy). Her primary research interests are in the areas of consumer behavior and branding. Her primary research interests are in the areas of consumer behavior and branding. Her current research explores consumer responses to company strategic decisions, human emotions, consumer reactions to corporate social responsibility (CSR), counterfeit consumption, and consumer behavior in the tourism industry.

Richard P Bagozzi is Dwight F. Benton Professor of Behavioral Science in Management, Ross School of Business, and Professor of Clinical, Social and Administrative Sciences, College of Pharmacy, University of Michigan; Ross School of Business. He does research into human emotions, decision making, social identity, ethics, and social action. He also does research into multivariate statistics and its relationship to measurement, construct validity, theory, hypotheses testing, and the philosophy of science. The methods he uses include experimentation, survey research, qualitative research, and fMRI analyses.