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# "If You Have It, I Want It...Now!" the Effect of Envy and Construal Level on Increased Purchase Intentions

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“IF YOU HAVE IT, I WANT IT...NOW!” THE EFFECT OF ENVY AND  
CONSTRUAL LEVEL ON INCREASED PURCHASE INTENTIONS

by

Alex Milovic

A Dissertation Submitted in  
Partial Fulfillment of the  
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in Management Science

at

The University of Wisconsin – Milwaukee

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ABSTRACT  
“IF YOU HAVE IT, I WANT IT...NOW!” THE EFFECT OF ENVY AND  
CONSTRUAL LEVEL ON INCREASED PURCHASE INTENTIONS

by

Alex Milovic

The University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, 2014  
Under the Supervision of Professor Laura A. Peracchio

When a person wants something that another has, they often experience feelings of envy. Envy, an unpleasant emotion that stems from that desire to covet another’s possessions, is often perceived as a negative outcome that should be banished to the deep recesses of a person’s mind. However, recent research has determined that two forms of envy may exist, with positive outcomes for those experiencing benign envy. Often identified as “keeping up with the Joneses”, feelings of benign envy may lead to motivating behavior, causing a person to strive to obtain what the other has in order to reduce their envy. In this dissertation, we seek to expand on the existing literature on benign envy, using construal level to determine the role concrete and abstract mental processing plays in feelings of benign envy and how this mindset affects willingness to purchase an item to relieve the envious feelings. In experiment 1, we find evidence that participants exposed to a concrete mental construal prime will be more likely to pay a price premium to obtain a product that is introduced to them by an envied person. Experiment 2 builds on the results of experiment 1, confirming the initial conclusions and finding evidence that those exposed to an envy-inducing situation are more likely to develop implementation intentions; that is, participants are more likely than those in the control condition (no envy) to determine exactly when and where they would purchase the item. Following a discussion of the results, managerial implications are presented, including how to induce

a concrete mindset to an envious situation to increase the amount people will be willing to pay for an item, and how including information on where and when they can purchase the item could lead to a desire to pay more for a product that elicits feelings of envy.

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To  
my loving wife Mary  
and my children,  
Alex and Kaitlyn.

## TABLE OF CONTENTS

I. Introduction .....	1
II. Essay 1: Envy – A Literature Review .....	9
III. Essay 2: A Review of Construal Level Theory .....	39
IV. Essay 3: “If You Have It, I Want It...Now!” The Effect of Envy and Construal Level on Increased Purchase Intentions .....	52
Experiment 1 .....	59
Experiment 2 .....	67
General Discussion .....	77
Appendix A: Construal Level Manipulation Thought Exercise.....	89
Appendix B: Product Stories – Envy Manipulation.....	91
Appendix C: Post-Story Questions.....	92
Appendix D: Dispositional Envy Scale .....	93
Appendix E: Self-Monitoring Scale .....	94
Appendix F: Level of Susceptibility Scale .....	95
Appendix G: Behavior Identification Scale .....	96
Appendix H: Temporal Construal Manipulation.....	99
Appendix I: Temporal Orientation Scale.....	100
V. Curriculum Vitae.....	101

## LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1: Graph of the Effect of Envy and Construal Level on Willingness to Pay – Experiment 1 .....	67
Figure 2: Graph of the Effect of Envy and Construal Level on Willingness to Pay – Experiment 2 .....	74



## LIST OF TABLES

Table 1: Mean Values of Post-Test Questions for Experiment 1 .....	63
Table 2: Factorial ANOVA Results of Construal Level and Envy on Willingness to Pay Factorial ANOVA – Experiment 1 .....	64
Table 3: Mean Values of Post-Test Questions for Experiment 2 .....	72
Table 4: Factorial ANOVA Results of Construal Level and Envy on Willingness to Pay Factorial ANOVA – Experiment 2 .....	73
Table 5: Mean Values of Willingness to Pay and Implementation Intentions by Envy and Construal Level .....	75
Table 6: Regression Results for Implementation Intentions Predicting Willingness to Pay .....	76

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## **Introduction**

When someone you know earns a promotion, moves to a nicer neighborhood, or has all the best “toys”, do you feel envy towards them? Are you happy for them, while at the same time wishing you had what they had? Envy, an emotion that is categorized by feelings related to coveting what another has, is often felt in these situations (D’Arms, 2009). While often described as a negative emotion, envy can be used as motivation, leading a person to strive to obtain what is coveted in order to reduce the envious feelings. This dissertation builds on this positive form of envy, benign envy, to determine how it can impact consumer behavior. We combine theories on envy and marketing with construal level theory – low-level or high-level mental processing – to determine how a person thinking either concretely (low-level processing) or abstractly (high-level processing) reacts to an envy-inducing event involving a product that helps a person achieve more success. Two studies confirm that participants who are primed with a concrete construal level and then confronted with an envious situation are more likely to pay more for a product discussed by the envied person. We also find that implementation intentions – thinking about when and where a person will purchase an item – play a role in purchase decisions.

The dissertation is divided into three essays. The first essay contains a literature review on envy, providing summaries of literature in marketing and psychology and concluding with directions of future research. The second essay discusses research on construal level theory. The third essay focuses on the two experiments discussed above, combining envy and construal level to determine their effects on a purchase decision.

Essay 1 covers the central topics related to envy, namely how it relates to motivating and destructive behavior, how it differs from jealousy, the importance of upward social comparisons, and how envy has been used by marketing practitioners and by marketing researchers. Envy requires two parties, the envied and the envier, and can either lead to uplifting behavior, as the envied strives to be like the envier, or negative behavior, where the envier seeks to destroy whatever advantage the envied person has (Hill and Buss, 2008). Envy is often associated with social comparisons, as a person may look upward at those who are doing better than them, or downward to others who are not as well off (Smith and Kim, 2007). These comparisons can lead to positive actions and are often used by people to develop goals that may be more rewarding but are harder to obtain (Tai, Narayanan, and McAlliser, 2012).

However, envy also has a dark side, as many who experience envy feel shame and anger towards both themselves – for feeling the envy – and toward the envied person – for making them feel envy (Silver and Sabini, 1978). Envy is closely related to jealousy and can often be hard to differentiate. While envy is related to wanting what another has, jealousy is often associated with fear of losing a person; jealousy is often used in psychology literature as a construct related to romantic feelings (Lamia, 2013).

We build on existing marketing research on envy, specifically by van de Ven, Zeelenberg, and Pieters (2011). In their 2011 paper "The Envy Premium in Product Evaluation," they find that benign envy leads people to pay a price premium for a

product. They also find that malicious envy results in a person paying more for a product that is similar but different (i.e., same product category, but a different brand). Shalev and Morwitz use envy elicited by a person who is of a lower socioeconomic class to determine a person's propensity to purchase an item to relieve envious feelings (2012). They find that a person will be more likely to purchase the product owned by this low-status influencer in order to relieve their envious feelings.

For essay 2, we provide a review of the relevant literature on construal level theory. Construal level theory has to do with mental processing and psychological distance (Lynch and Zauberman, 2007). Distance can either be spatial (near/far), temporal (in the present/in the future), or social (identifying social groups as close/far to them). There are two construal levels, abstract and concrete (Kardes, Cronley, and Kim, 2006). As people view something that is far off, like purchasing a house one year from now, they are more likely to think abstractly. Abstract processing leads to thoughts of desirability and is related to thoughts of "why" we do what we do (e.g., Why do we work out? In order to be healthy). When a person thinks of something that will occur soon, like purchasing an item tomorrow, they are more likely to use concrete processing, thinking about the feasibility of the purchase (such as the cost of the item or how they will be able to use it) and considering the "how" of the action (e.g., How do we work out? By stretching and lifting weights).

There have been numerous studies using construal level theory in marketing. Construal level has been used to determine responses to brand extensions (Kim and John, 2008), the

impact of persuasive advertisements (Lee, Punam, Keller, and Sternthal, 2010), and the likelihood of new product adoption (Alexander, Lynch, and Wang, 2008). Kim and John found that matching brand extensions to the parent brand was related to how a person processed information, either abstractly or concretely, with those thinking abstractly considering the match between parent and extension while those using concrete processing thought only about the actual attributes of the extension (2008). Lee, Punam, Keller, and Sternthal find that persuasive messages containing information on why something should be purchased worked better with those thinking abstractly, while messages containing information on how a product would help you complete tasks worked better with those thinking concretely (2010). Alexander, Lynch, and Wang found that products deemed really new led to more abstract processing, while products with only incremental changes led to more concrete processing (2008).

Essay 3 brings these concepts together to answer the main question of this dissertation – what role does envy and construal level play in purchase intentions? First, participants are primed with either a concrete or abstract construal level. In experiment 1, we use priming developed by Frietas, Gollwitzer, and Trope (2004), which had participants considered why or how they completed an action. In experiment 2, we use an exercise developed by Förster, Friedman, and Liberman (2004) to prime participants; they are asked to write down thoughts about how they picture their life either one day from now (concrete) or one year from now (abstract). Next, participants are presented with a story scenario that elicits envy. We ask a series of questions about their thoughts on the product, a tablet PC, and then ask them to give the maximum price they would pay for the item. We find that

those primed with concrete processing before experiencing an envious event are willing to pay more for the tablet than those in the other conditions. We conclude that envy counteracts the concrete thoughts (which are normally associated with feasibility and are deemed as more practical thoughts), causing a person to consider short-term thoughts about when and where to purchase the item, rather than thoughts about whether they can afford the product or be able to learn how to use it.

These results add to the marketing literature, giving additional support to the idea that envy does impact purchase intentions, and when combined with concrete mental processing results in a consumer who is motivated to pay more to purchase a product that will allow them to reduce envious feelings.



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## **Essay 1: Envy – A Literature Review**

### **Introduction**

The luxury car everyone wants. The latest technological innovation that sells out minutes after the store opens. A highly coveted research award that can define a career. We all desire certain things, be they qualities, achievements, or possessions (van de Ven, Zeelenberg, and Pieters, 2011a). But what if someone else has them? What if you covet them but cannot have them? You may be feeling envy, a painful emotion that often comes from wanting something that another person has (Hill, DelPriore, and Vaughan, 2011). Envy can either be productive or destructive (van de Ven, Zeelenberg, and Pieters, 2009), can lead to hostility and ill will (Foster, 1972), and can be used by marketers to elicit a desire to have something that others want (Young and Rubicam, 2006).

Many firms use envy to increase attention and desire for their products. Google used an invitation system to their Gmail e-mail message service (Ulbrich, 2004). BlackBerry (formerly Research in Motion) used envy to promote their eponymous smartphone by getting them in the hands of business leaders (Young and Rubicam, 2006). If your company issued you a BlackBerry, you had one more thing in common with your CEO. Even Facebook started as a university-exclusive social network (Phillips, 2007). Having something that others want is an effective way to promote and sell products. Envy has been seen as a driving force for marketing academics as well. This phenomenon, titled “physics envy”, is envy felt by marketing academics due to the perceived lack of

scientific rigor reserved for the hard sciences, namely physics, chemistry, and biology (Bennis and O'Toole, 2005; Tapp, 2007).

The purpose of this review is to explore the emotion of envy, bringing together concepts from psychology, motivation, social psychology, and marketing to establish a framework for future research and provide information on methods that can be used in conducting research on envy and its related components.

### **What is Envy?**

Parrot and Smith define envy as an emotion that occurs when a person lacks something that another has (1993). Envy includes two parties – the envier, the person who envies someone – and the envied, the person who has the possession or trait that the envier wishes to have (D'Arms, 2009). Envy is seen as an unfavorable emotion (van de Ven, Zeelenberg, and Pieters, 2009), a hostile emotion (Polman and Ruttan, 2012), and a force for motivation (Foster, 1972). Envy can be relieved by having the envied party obtain what was envied (Hill and Buss, 2008), by shifting desire away from the envied object (van de Ven, Zeelenberg, and Pieters, 2011a), or by taking the coveted item away from the envied person (Smith and Kim, 2007).

Envy is perceived as an emotion that is not desirable; one that isn't enjoyable for the envious person (van de Ven, 2009). Envy has its origins from the Latin "invidere" – "to look at another with malice" (Tai, Narayanan, and McAllister, 2012). As an emotion in Greek Philosophy, envy is seen as something that either leads a person to strive for what

is envied (*phthonos*), asks a person to consider the merits of the envied possession (*nemesis*), or brings forth happiness if the person loses what was envied (*epichairekakia*) (Stevens, 1948).

A common theme in defining envy is social comparison. Envy emerges when a person compares unfavorably to another (Smith and Kim, 2007). Rodriguez Mosquera, Parrott, and Hurtado de Mendoza point out that envy is not directed at the coveted object, but at the person who has what the other wants (2010). This creates a bond between the envied and the envier that can be relieved through positive or negative actions.

Outcomes related to envy can be either positive or negative. These two forms of envy, either benign or malicious, can determine whether or not the envious emotion leads to motivating or destructive behavior. Polman and Ruttan describe benign envy as a positive experience (2012); van de Ven, Zeelenberg, and Pieters found that benign envy elicits a desire to bring oneself up to the envied other (2009). Conversely, malicious envy has been described as invidious (D'Arms, 2009) and destructive (van de Ven, 2009). Van de Ven elaborates on this further by noting how malicious envy brings forth the desire to bring harm upon the envied person.

Hill and Buss discuss three categories of behavior that result from an envious situation – submission, ambition, and destruction (2008). Submission may lead to an envious person doing what they can to avoid the envied person. Ambition, which they also refer to as “white” or competitive envy, may lead to the positive motivation described with feelings

of benign envy (Crusius and Mussweiler, 2012a; Tai, Narayanan, and McCallister, 2012). Destruction, also referred to as “black” envy, leads to actions aimed at bringing down the envied person (van de Ven, Zeelenberg, and Pieters, 2009).

Whether or not a person feels benign or malicious envy may be due to how the envied person perceives the object earned by the envied person. In a 2012 article, van de Ven, Zeelenberg, and Pieters found that when a person sees the situation as deserving – meaning that the envied person justifiably received the object – benign envy was the predominant emotion. If the object of envy was seen as undeserved, then malicious envy was more likely to be felt. They also found that controllability could elicit either form of envy. If the object of envy was something that could be attained (e.g., a high test score, a nicer home), benign envy was experienced; if the object could not be attained (e.g., better looks, receiving money from rich relatives), malicious envy was likely to be felt.

### **Envy and Motivation**

Motivation to improve oneself can make envy a desirable emotion to elicit. From a marketing standpoint, benign envy can lead to increased consumerism, often referred to as “Keeping-up-with-the-Joneses” (Smith and Kim, 2007; van de Ven, Zeelenberg, and Pieters, 2011a, Young and Rubicam, 2006). Foster notes that this form of positive envy can lead to a stronger desire to achieve what the envied person has (1972). Mussweiler, Ruter, and Epstude see benign envy as a way to inspire a person to greatness (2004); Crusius and Mussweiler discuss how benign envy can lead to increase competition in negotiations (2012a). Understanding how others receive better outcomes in negotiations

leads those feeling benign envy to change their practices in order to achieve similar results.

Motivation to aspire, to achieve what others have to raise their own standing, is one of the benefits of comparing one's position relative to another (Tai, Narayanan, and McAllister, 2012). In a 1993 study, Parrott and Smith asked participants to answer question items following a writing assignment where they were asked to recall experiences of envy or jealousy. An analysis of the responses found that those experiencing envy were more likely to have feelings related to motivation in order to be more like those they envy. Van de Ven, Zeelenberg, and Pieters elicited feelings of benign envy, malicious envy, or admiration in participants by having them recall previous situations or by reading about a fake student (2011b). Following the envy elicitation, participants were asked to complete a Remote Associates Task exercise. Those primed with feelings of benign envy spent more time on the task exercise than those in the admiration or malicious envy conditions. Envy was also used in an experimental setting to motivate participants to pay more for envied products. Van de Ven, Zeelenberg and Pieters found that participants who were primed with feelings of benign envy were willing to pay more (an "envy premium") for a product that a person in a story scenario (2011a). Those feeling malicious envy toward the fictitious person who owned an item were more likely to purchase a competing brand of the same product.

Van de Ven, Zeelenberg, and Pieters also conducted studies to confirm the existence of two forms of envy and to determine the motivational qualities associated with benign



envy (2009). After describing a situation where they had experienced benign envy, malicious envy, admiration, or resentment, respondents answered questions regarding various outcomes related to feeling these emotions. They found that those who felt benign envy were motivated to improve themselves to resolve the negative experience of envy.

### **The Dark side of envy**

People experiencing envy can resolve the emotion in two ways, positively or negatively. While the positive side of benign envy leads to feelings related to motivation, the negative side of envy – the destructive side of envy (Foster, 1972) – can lead to actions meant to harm or undermine the envied party. Silver and Sabini note that envy differs from the other biblical deadly sins (lust, sloth, greed, wrath, gluttony, and pride) in that it is not enjoyable to experience – “sinning is usually fun; envy is not” (1978, 106). Van de Ven agrees with this notion, finding envy to be a negative feeling that leads to behavior aimed at harming the target of envy (2009). Malicious envy has even been observed in non-humans – Brosnan and de Waal found that monkeys would respond negatively if they saw another monkey receive a larger reward for giving the same effort (2003).

In studies designed to test what a person is willing to give up in order to harm an envied person, Zizzo and Oswald found that participants were willing to give up some of their money to take away money from another person (2001). They discuss how this result runs counter to economic assumptions of narrow self-interest, where a person should ignore the interests of others and focus on their own outcomes.

Malicious envy is also a common occurrence in day-to-day situations. In a literature review on envy in the workplace, Tai, Narayanan, and McAllister found that envy is a common emotion in office environments, citing examples of office chair envy (coveting possessions of coworkers, be they chairs, PC monitors, or desk location), job withdrawal, and absenteeism (2012). Wert and Salovey tie the dark side of envy to gossip, a form of social comparison where people speak of a person who is not present in the conversation (2004). They note how envious feelings are often hidden from view, given the negative connotations that envy has. If a person feels envy towards another, they may choose to speak negatively of the envied person by discussing deficiencies, which serves to both raise the self-esteem of the envier while degrading the envied person.

Takahashi, Kato, Matsuura, Mobbs, Suhara, and Okubo conducted neurocognition experiments to determine how envy affects brain activity (2009). They used magnetic resonance imaging to track brain activity of nineteen participants while reading and responding to scenarios that elicited envious behavior. Feelings of envy invoked stimulation in regions of the brain associated with pain.

One way to resolve negative feelings associated with envy is to take pleasure when an envied person does not succeed, also known as *schadenfreude* (Smith and Kim, 2007). An experiment by Smith, Turner, Garonzik, Leach, Urch-Druskat, and Weston had participants watch a videotape that told of a student who was either average or better than average on qualities that matter to students (1996). After watching the initial description of the student and completing measures related to envy, an epilogue was shown that told

of this student being arrested for stealing. Students primed with the envy condition – viewing the superior student tape – were more likely to feel pleasure after viewing the epilogue.

Envy and schadenfreude has also been researched in conjunction with narcissism, a personality trait tied to excessive vanity and a fascination with oneself (Dictionary.com, 2013a). Krizan and Johar found that participants who scored high on traits related to vulnerable narcissism (associated with low-self-esteem and insecurity) also scored high on envy and schadenfreude (2012).

Malicious envy also has negative consequences for those being envied. Van de Ven, Zeelenberg, and Pieters found that people who felt that they were being envied would act more prosocially to the envious person in order to diffuse the envious situation (2010). They placed participants in situations that would elicit malicious envy toward them, such as giving them a bonus that another, equally deserving mock participant did not receive (and being told that the mock participant knew about the bonus), or receiving a bonus for a test score that was one point lower than the mock participant's score (who did not receive the bonus but did know about the bonus being given to the participant). Participants who received the bonus and felt that malicious envy would be experienced by the other (mock) participant were more likely to help the envier by providing time-consuming advice or by helping to pick up items dropped by the envier.

## **Envy and Jealousy**

Envy is often confused with jealousy. When one feels jealousy, they often feel some degree of envy (Parrott and Smith, 1993). Envy and jealousy also share a negative stigma, that one should not publicize these emotions for fear of being seen as petty or vindictive (Wert and Salovey, 2004). Foster makes the distinction between the two emotions: “envy stems from the desire to acquire something possessed by another person, while jealousy is rooted in the fear of losing something already possessed...an envier is not envious of the thing he would like to have; he is envious of the person who is fortunate enough to have it” (1972, 168). Van de Ven, Zeelenberg, and Pieters note the role of fear in jealousy, namely that the person who feels jealousy is concerned with losing that which another covets (2009). D’Arms indicates three parties that are required for jealousy, the subject, the rival, and the beloved (2009). The person feeling jealousy covets the beloved (e.g., a possession, another person) and not the rival. Envy, on the other hand, can be relieved by having the envious person gain the possession that they lack or by taking away the object or possession from the envied target.

Researchers developing studies on envy must pay close attention to the distinction between envy and jealousy in order to avoid confounding results (Parrott and Smith, 1993). When developing the dispositional envy scale (used to measure the amount of inherent envy in a person), Smith, Parrot, Diener, Hoyle, and Kim avoided confusing envy with jealousy by carefully wording questions to refer directly to envy and by not including the term jealousy in the items (1999). Additionally, they sought to avoid items related to situations that often lead to jealousy, namely romantic situations. Salovey and

Rodin make the distinction between envy and jealousy by referring to envy as social-comparison jealousy (1984). Social comparison jealousy differs from romantic jealousy in that the coveted object is a characteristic in which the envying person compares unfavorably with another.

In a 1986 study, Salovey and Rodin had a group of students describe situations where they had felt jealousy or envy. They then had a second group rate the situations on how relevant they were in inciting feelings of jealousy, envy, sadness, anger and embarrassment. Situations that involved a person coveting another person were linked to jealousy. Examples of these situations include “someone talks to your boy/girl friend at a party” and “your boy or girl friend visits the person he or she used to go out with.” Situations where an object was coveted elicited envy, and included “someone else gets a job that you want” and “someone is more talented than you.”

Parrott and Smith conducted experiments designed to distinguish the feelings of envy and jealousy (1993). They asked participants to describe experiences of envy and jealousy, and then had them answer questions related to both emotions. They were careful to distinguish jealousy as a romantic feeling in order to avoid confusion between the two emotions. The authors found four main components of jealousy – distrust, anxiety, anger, and fear of rejection or loss – and three components of envy – inferiority, resentment, and longing. Both envy and jealousy evoked hostile feelings toward the other party. They also conclude that a jealous situation is often accompanied by feelings of envy, while a person experiencing envy may or may not also experience feelings of jealousy.

### **Envy and social comparison**

When we compare ourselves to others, when we look to evaluate our standing relative to a rival and find ourselves lacking, we are likely to experience some sort of envy (Crusius and Mussweiler, 2012a; D'Arms, 2009). Using social comparison allows us to determine how well we are doing in a particular pursuit, allowing us to determine what is required to achieve that which is envied (Hill and Buss, 2008). Comparisons can either be up or down, with upward comparisons often eliciting envious feelings, as we feel that we don't compare favorably with the other person (van de Ven, Zeelenberg, and Pieters, 2009, 2011b). These social comparisons have been labeled "keeping-up-with-the-Joneses", a phrase used to describe a person who looks longingly at another's material possessions (van de Ven, Zeelenberg, Zeelenberg, and Pieters, 2011a). Marketers use this upward comparison pressure to sell customers on the importance of status and having what others don't have by planting a seed for future purchases of envy-eliciting items (Young and Rubicam, 2006).

Who we envy depends on what we are focusing on in a social comparison. Smith and Kim find that envy is felt when a person compares unfavorably to another on a domain that is important to them (2007). Tesser and Collins discuss two forms of comparison leading to envy (1988). If a person reviews their outcome with another on a dimension that is relevant to them, comparison is likely to occur. Comparisons can lead to envy, if the person feels that they are not performing as well on something as another on an important trait. For example, an aspiring medical student might compare their MCAT scores with another potential medical school student and see that they are much lower. As

this domain (the MCAT score) is relevant to the student, they may decide to retake the tests or seek out other areas important to medical schools where they compare more favorably (e.g., communication skills) in order to reduce negative feelings and improve self-esteem.

The decision to compare upward or downward may depend on what outcomes a person is looking for. In a review of social comparisons, Wert and Salovey note that an upward social comparison is often used as a form of self-improvement (2004). While these comparisons can be used to motivate, they can also lead to envy and jealousy. Downward comparisons are often used to enhance a person's self-esteem; comparing one's situation to another's worse off situation often helps the comparer feel better about themselves (Wills, 1981).

Downward comparisons may not always yield positive self-esteem. In a study involving cancer patients, Buunk, Collins, Taylor, VanYperen, and Dakof found that patients with low self-esteem and low perceived control over their illness saw downward social comparisons negatively. Rather than thinking "at least I'm not as bad as them", these patients were more likely to see their own long-term future in the worse-off patient.

While upward comparisons may serve as a positive motivating tool, they may also lead to negative feelings such as reduced self-esteem or a heightened sense of inferiority. Smith, Parrott, Diener, Hoyle and Kim found that participants performing upward comparisons

developed feelings of envy, as the comparison revealed information about their own inadequacy in a given situation or attribute (1999).

Whether or not a person feels positive or negative envy depends to some degree on the amount of perceived fairness and control of the envied situation. van de Ven, Zeelenberg, and Pieters analyzed the effect of fairness and control in experiments designed to determine what produced the different forms of envy (2012). Participants wrote about a time when they felt one of four emotions - benign envy, malicious envy, admiration, and resentment - and then answered questions aimed at understanding what caused these emotions. Results showed that if something was deemed to be deserved, then benign envy was felt. An example would be if a person received a high mark on a test after weeks of studying. If something was deemed to be undeserved, malicious envy was felt. A student receiving a sports car from rich relatives as a birthday gift may be considered undeserved, as others may consider that the student didn't "earn" such a large gift. Additionally, the degree of control over the situation played a role in whether benign or malicious envy was felt. If a person felt that a situation was controllable (e.g., studying for a test, interviewing for a job), then benign envy was felt. If a situation was deemed to be out of a person's control (e.g., level of attractiveness), malicious envy was more likely to result.

An upward social comparison may not always lead to envious behavior. If something is unattainable – for example, a child comparing their swimming ability to an Olympic athlete – then admiration is more likely to occur. Unlike benign envy, which acts as a



motivational tool to drive a person to do better, admiration does not result in increased activity or striving behavior, as the person will feel that the envied target is too out of reach (van de Ven, 2009).

### **Envy and marketing**

Given the evidence that envy can be used to motivate people to action and can lead to the consumerism phenomenon known as “keeping-up-with-the-Joneses”, it is no wonder that marketers use envy as a tool for gaining brand and product attention and influencing purchase decisions. Young and Rubicam have labeled customer groups that are heavily influenced by envy “aspirers”; these people are materialistic and are heavily influenced by social comparisons (Young and Rubicam, 2006, 2009). Sedikides, Gregg, Cisek, and Hart discuss the role that narcissism plays in a person's desire to be envied, to own the product or service that others covet (2007).

The video game industry also understands the important role that envy plays in increasing sales. SimCity Social (an online city-building consumer game), players can see cities developed by their friends. If the friend has a more developed city, the player may be compelled to spend real-life money to obtain items or special boosts to enhance their cities (Madigan, 2013). The game also allows players to cause damage to their friend's cities, which can be considered an act of malicious envy.

Envy has been shown to increase the amount of money a consumer is willing to pay for a product or service. Using personal reflection statements, videos, and mock stories, van de

Ven, Zeelenberg, and Pieters discovered found that participants who felt benign envy were more likely to pay more for products and services (2011a). Participants were willing to purchase a smartphone at a higher price and were more likely to pay more for a service that provides internships to students when forced to compare with a better off mock student who had the product or service they coveted. The researchers also found that participants who experienced malicious envy were more likely to purchase a product that was similar but not exactly the same as the product that elicited the envy (i.e., they were envious of a student who had an iPhone; they were more interested in purchasing a BlackBerry smartphone).

In a similar vein, Shalev and Morwitz used social comparison to develop an explanation for influence behavior, CDSER - comparison-driven self-evaluation and restoration (2012). Participants were motivated to purchase technologically advanced products based on comparisons with low-socioeconomic status (SES) influencers. Respondents were introduced to a low-SES consumer through product reviews and were more likely to want a new product following feelings of envy related to not having what the low-SES consumer owned.

Romani, Gistri, and Pace extended research on willingness to pay, conducting experiments to determine the effect of counterfeit merchandise on luxury brands (2012). Rather than undervaluing the luxury brand, the presence of counterfeit merchandise proved to raise consumer's willingness to pay for top-quality brands. These consumers

were also more likely to enjoy the envious feelings bestowed upon them for wearing luxury brands.

Does envy affect the level of cognitive processing? This was the question Hill, DelPriore, and Vaughan researched in a 2011 study where they found that eliciting envy in participants led to increased attention toward an envied other of the same sex (the authors used same-sex targets based on prior research that envy was more often felt toward people of the same sex). Participants were given a task to write about times when they had experienced envy, acting as a prime for a second part of the experiment, where they watched videos of an envied target. Those experiencing envy, rather than a neutral prime, spent more time viewing the video and were more likely to retain more information than in the neutral condition. Additionally, the authors found that participants were more likely to spend more time viewing mock interviews with a high-envy target, resulting in greater name and information recall of the envied person.

A number of recent studies have linked envy to self-esteem and schadenfreude in a product and brand context. Poyner, Dahl, and Gorn studied envy and self-esteem, finding that those with high self-esteem were more likely to feel benign envy, resulting in a desire for a substitute product if the envied product is not available (2010). Those with low self-esteem felt malicious envy, manifesting in a rejection of a substitute product. Sundie, Ward, Beal, and Chin explored envy and schadenfreude, finding that consumers who witnessed a product fail were more likely to communicate negative word-of-mouth statements in an act of schadenfreude (2010).

### **Conducting experiments on envy**

Research on envy has provided us with a number of ways to elicit envy in experimental settings. Having participants write about past experiences of envy, either in short sentences or more detailed paragraphs, led to the desired effect of priming feelings of both benign and malicious envy (Polman and Ruttan, 2012; Rodriguez Mosquera, Parrott, and Hurtado de Mendoza, 2010; van de Ven, Zeelenberg, and Pieters, 2009).

Alternatively, researchers have developed story scenarios designed to elicit envious feelings in participants. Hill, DelPriore, and Vaughan created biographies and photos of students (2011), while Shalev and Morwitz created online reviews from people of different socioeconomic levels to accompany products that were used to elicit envy and intent to purchase (2012).

Researchers have also used real people to elicit envies in experiments, having them act as fellow participants in studies to trigger envy. Van de Ven, Zeelenberg, and Pieters matched a real participant with a fake partner, then gave the real participant a greater reward and informed them that the (fake) partner earned a lesser award and knew about the (real) participant's better outcome (2010). This allowed the experimenters to determine what those who are envied act in order to diffuse a potentially negative situation. Crusius and Mussweiler gave a fake participant more desirable food in the presence of a real participant who received worse off food to evoke envy (2012b). Zizzo and Oswald allowed participants to resolve envious feelings by giving them the option to "burn" another participant's money (2001).

Another way to introduce envy into an experiment is through the use of videos. Silver and Sabini developed a video of two students talking, with one of them discussing their admission to a school while the other one experiences malicious envy at hearing the news (1978). Van de Ven, Zeelenberg, and Pieters used a videotaped interview of a person talking about his new iPhone (2011a). Envious conditions were elicited by having the student explain how he deserved the phone (he worked hard for it, eliciting benign envy in participants) or how he received it from his father (eliciting malicious envy).

While a few scales exist to test envy, more research could be conducted to tailor the existing envy scales for a consumer behavior context. The predominant envy scale, the dispositional envy scale (DES), was developed by Smith, Parrott, Diener, Hoyle, and Kim and is an 8-item 5- or 9-point scale that measures a person's inherent level of envy (1999). The scale has a Coefficient alpha value of .86, providing high reliability on the emotion. Belk developed an 8-item scale of envy for use in measuring materialism; the scale has a coefficient alpha value of .80 (1984).

### **Directions for future research**

While the existing research on envy and marketing shows promise for the field, there are still many opportunities to explore the role envy plays in conjunction with other streams of marketing research – namely persuasion, creativity, and social psychology.

Persuasion, defined as convincing a person to do something they might not otherwise do (Dictionary.com, 2013b), is a skill often discussed in sales literature (Campbell and

Kirmani, 2000; Sparks and Areni, 2002). Friestad and Wright's research led to the development of the persuasion knowledge model, which posits that each of us has a built-in persuasion detector that alerts us to sales tactics and ulterior motives (1994). They elaborate further in a 1995 article, stating that consumers may or may not be aware of some common-sense forms of persuasion that are used to elicit purchase intentions.

Potential research combining persuasion and envy may allow researchers to determine if there are certain persuasive tactics that can be used to elicit benign envy, which has been discussed in this paper as a motivating tool for inducing purchases and also for paying a premium to obtain products and services that one covets. It would also be useful to determine the moderating role of envy in persuasion attempts; if there is something in the continuum from malicious envy to benign envy that can be tapped to incite purchase behavior. Future research could also determine if there is something in a persuasive attempt that moves a potential consumer from benign envy to admiration. As van de Ven, Zeelenberg and Pieters found, admiration does not increase motivation, which may result in a lower desire to purchase (2011a).

Bearden, Netemeyer, and Teel developed a scale used to test a person's inherent level of susceptibility to interpersonal influence – the level of susceptibility scale (1989). This scale, with a coefficient alpha value of .82, could be used in questionnaires to determine how a person's level of inherent susceptibility determines which level of envy is felt, and whether or not envious behavior results in increased desire to purchase. In addition to level of susceptibility, researchers can use surveys that include self-esteem, shame, and

guilt to determine a willingness to purchase based on exposure to situations invoking envy.

Self-monitoring is another avenue of potential research that can be measured along with envy. Self-monitoring is defined by Stammerjohan and Webster as a person's ability to notice and respond to social cues to maintain appropriate behavior (2002). Given that envy is a socially undesirable trait, it can be assumed that those measuring high in self-monitoring should be able to resolve envious feelings in a way that does not negatively affect their relationship with an envied target. Self-monitoring is a quality found in good salespeople (Fine and Gardial, 1990); research combining self-monitoring and envy can build on existing literature to assist sales practitioners in determining positive outcomes for situations where envy is prominent (Bagozzi, 2006).

Envy may also be used in advertisements both to increase the likelihood of purchase and to showcase a product or service that may elicit envy in others. One facet of advertising is creativity, defined by Burroughs, Moreau, and Mick as an outcome that is novel and appropriate (2007). Ward notes that most people process advertisements through a path-of-least-resistance (1984). Could the inclusion of content that elicits envy move a person out of path-of-least-resistance processing to a deeper level that influences purchase intentions?

In order to increase the likelihood that an advertisement is seen as creative and different enough to require more effortful processing, the advertisement should be divergent and

relevant (Smith, MacKenzie, Yang, Buchholtz, and Darley, 2007). Determining what envious content constitutes divergent (i.e., novel and unique) and relevant to consumers can assist advertisers in developing advertisements that attract customer's attention.

How a person processes an envious message may determine the likelihood that they see an advertisement as evoking benign rather than malicious envy. Certain people are more interested in cognitive processing than others, labeled as high in need for cognition (Cacioppo, Petty, and Kao, 1984). Does need for cognition play a moderating or mediating role in advertisement processing, and would that affect how a person views an ad containing envious messages?

Yang, Ringberg, Mao, and Peracchio conducted research on consumers with a creative mindset, finding that messages that were perceived as different (incompatible) from what was expected led to increased persuasion (2011). Could certain advertisements, with an envious component (or wholly dependent on an envious message) trigger this incompatibility effect and lead to more effortful processing? And could this effortful processing lead a consumer to perceive a message with envious content as a call to action – to purchase? Or might it be over-analyzed and perceived as something unattainable, leading to feelings of admiration or malicious envy?

## **Conclusion**

Envy is a complex emotion whose understanding can be useful to marketing academics and practitioners. While the topic has been extensively researched in psychology



journals, it is still an under-researched area in marketing literature. In this paper, I sought to develop a foundation for conducting future research on envy. The presence of two forms of envy – one that motivates and one that destroys – should prove to be a fertile ground for developing and testing hypotheses to advance the topic in marketing journals.

Conducting experiments to determine levels of willingness to pay for envied goods, how advertising and communicating envy to customers may increase purchase intentions, whether envy can enhance persuasive attempts, and what role cognition, susceptibility, and social psychology plays in envy can expand our knowledge of the topic in the broader context of marketing and consumer behavior.

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## **Essay 2: A Review of Construal Level Theory**

### **Introduction**

Imagine yourself on a tropical beach. A cool ocean breeze blows through your hair, a nice drink in your hand, the feeling of sand beneath your feet. Now imagine how you are going to get to that tropical beach. Packing way too much yet again. The dread of a full day spent at the airport. And how will you get to that elegant resort – do you know how to hail a taxi in a foreign language? In the first thought exercise, you were probably using abstract processing, considering only the high-level overview of what your ideal vacation would look like. In the second exercise, concrete processing took over. Rather than considering the amazing destination, low-level processing leads to thoughts of packing, air travel, and other tasks that must be accomplished in order to finally reach that beautiful tropical beach.

### **Definition**

Abstract and concrete processing represent the two sides of construal level theory (CLT). In their 1998 work, Liberman and Trope found that people considering distant future events focused on the high-level superordinate categories, while those considering events that would occur soon in terms of their lower-level subordinate categories. As a person considers an event that will occur in the long-term, such as the purchase of an item, they will consider the desirability of the action. When a person thinks about events that will occur in the short-term, they focus on the feasibility of the action. Distance can take the

form of temporal distance (present/future), spatial distance (near/far), or social distance (close/far in terms of reference groups) (Liberman, Trope, and Wakslak, 2007).

CLT can also be fluid during a decision process; a person may initially agree to an event that won't occur for a while, only to find themselves regretting the choice when the event is near. Lynch and Zauberman describe this as the "Yes, Damn" effect (2007, 2010). A person might agree to volunteer in six months' time – considering the altruistic benefits of the act and the pride felt when helping out (abstract) – yet lose that excitement when the day of the action occurs, as they are now thinking about how early they have to get up or how they have so much other work to do (concrete).

Over four experiments, Kim, Park, and Wyer asked participants to consider features in terms of desirability or feasibility of a new product at two different points in time (2009). Consistent with previous research, the authors found that those considering purchasing the product at a later date would focus on desirability-related features, while those considering a product purchase in the near future would focus more on feasibility-related features. This matches the idea that temporal distance affects how a person perceives product features, with distant future purchases leading to abstract processing and thoughts of desirability, while near-term purchases lead to concrete processing and thoughts of feasibility. Participants considering distant future purchases were more likely to consider desirable features both in an initial review and a secondary review - even when they were told to re-review the product in terms of purchasing the product for immediate consumption. However, participants who were asked to first consider a product for

immediate use – who focused more on feasibility than desirability – changed to focusing on desirability when asked to re-review the product for consumption in the distant future. They concluded that considering products at different points in time can affect mental processing.

Construal level is related to action identification theory, uniting abstract or concrete thoughts with actions. Developed by Vallacher and Wegner, action theory also uses two levels, labeled high-level and low-level identities (1987, 1989). Those who think using higher levels look to explore motives and overall meanings of actions. This is related to abstract processing. Those who think using lower levels think in regards to details and specifics, as would be done using concrete processing. Higher level processing is associated with thoughts of why an action is performed; lower level processing is associated with thoughts of how to perform an action. Their scale, the behavior identification form, asks participants to determine the statement they most agree with. For example, the statement “Traveling by car” provides the following answers: “Following a map” or “Seeing countryside” (Vallacher and Wegner, 1989). Following a map represents low-level processing, as it is a direction to follow in order to accomplish the goal. Seeing the countryside is a high-level answer, as it helps answer why a person might travel by car.

Action identification theory places people into two categories – the how people and the why people. “Hows” think concretely; “Whys” think abstractly. Low level agents are “more impulsive, less self-motivated, less consistent in their behavior over time, more

external in their locus of control" (Vallacher and Wegner, 1989, 669). High-level agents are more consistent in their decision making and have a better understanding of who they are. Low level agents are more likely targets for those who want to manipulate them.

### **Manipulating Construal Level**

While people generally lean toward one side of construal level theory or the other (e.g., more abstract overall; more concrete overall), there are ways to manipulate CLT in experiments to determine their effects on a variety of actions. Freitas, Gollwitzer, and Trope developed a construal prime exercise that asked participants to either consider why they might perform an action (abstract condition) or how they would go about considering an action (concrete condition) (2004). In a marketing context, Hamilton and Thompson used this priming method to determine how CLT might affect purchase intentions with a product that participants could either physically touch or could only read about a product (2007). In study 1, they found that using the product led to concrete processing, while reading about a product led to abstract processing. Using the Freitas et al. manipulation allowed Hamilton and Thompson to conclude that those who are exposed to abstract processing focus on the desirability of a product, while those exposed to concrete processing would focus on the feasibility of the product.

A second effective manipulation was developed by Förster, Friedman, and Liberman to prime participants with abstract or concrete processing. In their 2004 study, the authors asked participants to consider time travel manipulation. Participants in the abstract condition were asked to consider their lives one year from now; those in the concrete

condition were asked to consider their lives tomorrow. They found that those who were primed with thinking about things one year from now were more likely to perform better on creative tasks than those asked to think about their lives tomorrow (concrete condition).

### **Construal Level Theory and Marketing**

Numerous articles have asked marketing researchers to consider using construal level theory in order to determine its effect on consumer behavior (Dhar and Kim, 2007; Liberman, Trope, and Wakslak, 2007; Lynch and Zauberger, 2007). We review some of the more prominent work, focusing on the differences in purchasing habits of those primed with abstract or concrete processing.

Alexander, Lynch, and Wang used a large group of respondents who were interested in purchasing new products to determine their likelihood of purchasing really new products or incrementally new products based on construal level (2008). Really new products (RNPs) can provide many more benefits than incrementally new products (INPs), but are riskier and might require a long learning period. They found that consumers were less likely to say they will buy RNPs than INPs, follow through less on RNP purchase intentions, and think more abstractly about the product than INP buyers (who think concretely). RNP consumers were less likely to form implementation intentions than INP buyers. They find that newness of the RNP product leads to abstract thinking while INPs lead to concrete thinking.

Castaño, Sujan, Kacker, and Sujan also looked at the purchase and adoption of new products, focusing on temporal distance (2008). They found that when participants were looking to purchase a new product in the distant future, consumers were more interested in product questions related to performance and symbolic benefits, which are abstract thoughts. However, for short-term purchases, consumers were more concerned with switching costs (from the old product to the new product) and of cost uncertainty.

Building on high- or low-level thoughts, Kim, Zhang, and Li looked at two dimensions of psychological distance – social and temporal distance (2008). They sought to determine the interaction of these dimensions in terms of product evaluations. Participants who were primed with a proximal (near) construal manipulation for both social (in-group) and time were focused more on product evaluations that were related to low-level thoughts. For those primed with a distal (far) construal manipulation for both social and temporal distance, high-level abstract thoughts were more prevalent in product evaluations.

Kim and John used construal manipulations to determine how construal level affects the success or failure of a brand extension (2008). They observed a moderating effect of construal level on the acceptance of the fit between a parent brand and a brand extension by consumers. Those who viewed stimuli abstractly/high-level cared more about fit with the parent brand. Those who viewed stimuli concretely/low-level cared more about the extension (the concrete features) than the perceived fit with the parent brand. After separating participants into abstract or concrete groups using the behavior identification form, the authors found that those who primarily thought abstractly cared more about the

perceived fit between a parent brand (e.g., Nike) and a brand extension (e.g., Nike Golf). Those who thought concretely did not care about parent-extension fit unless it was mentioned to them as a feature of the extension (i.e., if they were told to measure parent-extension fit along with the features and benefits of the product).

Kardes, Cronley and Kim developed an interesting experiment to test construal level and brand preference (2006). Using unfamiliar candy bars as the product, participants either answered questions based solely on the brand name of the candy bar (no mere presence condition), with the candy bar on the table (mere presence), or after tasting the candy bar (direct experience). They found that direct exposure, either through the direct experience or mere exposure conditions led to stronger attitudes than the no mere presence condition. Participants who were allowed to touch and see the product engaged in more concrete processing, while those who merely visualized the product engaged in more abstract processing.

Construal level also plays a role in how persuasive messages are interpreted. Lee, Punam, Keller, and Sternthal observed how the impact of a message affected those with either a prevention or promotion focus (2010). Those with a prevention focus are concerned with safety, security, and are risk averse. Consumers who are promotion focused are more concerned with goal setting and maximizing gains. The authors primed promotion focus by asking participants to think about hopes and dreams; they primed prevention focus by asking them to think about duties and obligations. Following this exercise, participants were asked to complete a classification task (putting items in different categories). Those



who construed information at higher level (abstract) used fewer categories than concrete condition. They found that those with a prevention focus were more likely to use concrete processing; those with a promotion focus were more likely to use abstract processing. In a second study, they manipulated construal level by asking people why they exercised (abstract) or how to exercise (concrete) and showed them advertisements with claims that either matched or did not match the manipulation. One of the advertisements focused on why someone should work out, while the other contained information on how to work out. If information in the ad copy matched the construal prime – for example, if a person was primed with an abstract construal level and then read an ad telling them why they should work out – the brand was evaluated more favorably.

Abstract and concrete processing can also play a role when it comes to a person's thoughts regarding the probability of an event happening. Wakslak, Trope, Liberman, and Alony examined the hypothesis that an event that is not likely to occur is thought about more abstractly than an event that is likely to occur, which leads to concrete processing (2006). In other words, if a person considers an event as likely to occur, they think concretely, possibly due to the person considering how to deal with the upcoming event. Sagristano, Trope, and Liberman looked at construal level theory as it relates to gambling (2002). Over four experiments, the researchers found that time considerations matter to levels of risk taking in terms of feasibility or desirability. Using games of chance (gambling), participants were more likely to prefer a low probability yet higher possible payoff for events in the future and were more likely to prefer gambling on a game that offers better odds but a lower payoff in the near future.

Construal level theory has been considered in other areas of marketing research as well. Eyal, Liberman, and Trope viewed construal level theory as it relates to morality and vice (2008). Acts that were deemed to be offensive (immoral) were rated more negatively by participants when viewed abstractly rather than concretely. Overall, the researchers concluded that participants were more likely to compare actions to their own moral values when considering events that occur in the distant rather than the near future. In a marketing context, this information can assist firms who are dealing with negative publicity or bad customer reviews. In a conceptual paper, Blocker, Cannon, Panagopoulos, and Sager analyzed construal level in terms of delivering value in a buyer-seller interaction (2012). When dealing with a client, abstract processing may be preferred to concrete processing, as developing value-based solutions may benefit from solutions that are framed in terms of desirability rather than feasibility.

## **Conclusion**

Construal level theory allows marketing researchers to understand the role of lower- and higher-level processing on consumer behavior. Marketers should pay particular attention to temporal and spatial distance, as opinions change when time to purchase draws near. Developing appropriate advertising messages can help match concrete thinkers with information that assists them in determining how to use a product or abstract thinkers with messages about higher-level benefits for purchasing and using a product. It can also be possible to manipulate construal level – perhaps by using the time shift strategy developed by Förster, Friedman, and Liberman. Marketers can use this knowledge, both

inherent and manipulated construal level, to increase brand awareness, develop brand allegiances, and increase purchase intentions.

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**Essay 3: “If You Have It, I Want It...Now!” The Effect of Envy and Construal Level on Increased Purchase Intentions**

**Introduction**

The Joneses are everywhere. We find them, we observe them, we compare our situation to theirs, and then we want whatever it is they have. The idea of “keeping up with the Joneses” is ubiquitous and is synonymous with feelings of envy toward a person who has material possessions that others will covet (Plante, 2013; Young and Rubicam, 2006). We are always comparing ourselves to other people in order to see where we match up. These comparisons can either be upward, leading to motivating behavior – “They have it. I want to be like them, so I must have it too.” (Crusius, Jan and Mussweiler, 2012) – or downward, where the person compares with someone who is less well off in order to feel better about themselves (Buunk, Collins, Taylor, VanYperen, and Dakof, 1990). Envy that leads to motivating behavior is often referred to as benign envy, while envy that leads to destructive behavior is termed malicious envy (D’Arms, 2009; van de Ven, 2009). Marketers can inject envy into advertisements to drive purchase intentions (Pollay, 1986; van de Ven, Zeelenberg, and Pieters, 2011).

This essay builds on the work of van de Ven, Zeelenberg, and Peters (2011), who found that participants primed with feelings of benign envy would be more likely to pay more to purchase the envied item, by determining the impact mental construal level plays in an envy-inducing purchase event. Do participants who are primed with an abstract mindset – focusing more on the “why” of an activity rather than the “what” (Frijtas, Gollwitzer, &

Trope, 2004) – feel more envy and become more likely to purchase a product that is the target of the envious feelings, or is it a concrete prime that results in more envious feelings and increased purchase intentions?

Following a review of the relevant literature on envy and construal level theory, two experiments are conducted to determine the role that construal level plays on a person who is introduced to an envy-eliciting situation. First, we find evidence that those who are first primed with a concrete mental construal and are then exposed to an envy-eliciting scenario are more likely to purchase an item than those primed with an abstract mental construal. Next, we introduce the idea of implementation intentions to explain why concrete thinking causes those exposed to an envious situation to pay more for a product.

## **Theoretical Background**

### **Envy**

Envy, an emotion that occurs when a person desires something that another has, is often seen as a negative feeling that can affect a person's behavior (Parrott & Smith, 1993).

Research on envy has shown that envy can be both harmful and helpful. The negative side of envy, referred to as malicious envy, can be seen when a person considers actions that undermine the envied target (Silver & Sabini, 1978). People will even perform actions that harm themselves in order to harm the person who is envied (Zizzo & Oswald, 2001). Neurocognition experiments link the experience of envy to sections of the brain



that are associated with pain (Takahashi, Kato, Matsuura, Mobbs, Suhara, & Okubo, 2009).

Envy is also associated with *schadenfreude*, which is described as experiencing joy at the pain of others (Smith & Kim, 2007). In an experiment involving participants reading a story about the success of a similar other student, those who were primed with envious feelings felt pleasure when reading about the failure of that student in a follow up story. Fear of being envied can also have negative consequences. In order to avoid potential harmful actions, those being envied may act more pro-socially and might downplay their success in order to avoid the ire of an envier (Van de Ven, Zeelenberg, & Pieters, 2010).

Envy can also be seen as a motivating force, triggering an internal desire for a person to acquire whatever it is that they envy (Foster, 1972). This positive form of envy – called *benign envy* – is used as a social comparison tool, a way for a person to determine where they are in relation to another and to develop a strategy to earn whatever is envied (Hill & Buss, 2008). The motivational force of envy has been labeled “keeping up with the Joneses”, as it requires a person to compare themselves to another (the hypothetical Joneses) and do whatever it takes to obtain the item or trait that is envied (Van de Ven, Zeelenberg, & Pieters, 2011). Envy is used in marketing to signal a certain level of status – if you can afford the product that elicits envy – or to evoke motivating behavior in a person who does not or cannot acquire the product or quality (Young & Rubicam, 2006).

Envy has been used in marketing research to induce a higher willingness to pay for an envied good. Van de Ven, Zeelenberg, and Pieters found that those experiencing benign envy were more likely to purchase the envied product at a higher price (2011).

Participants primed with feelings of malicious envy were more likely to seek out similar but different products in order to relieve their envious feelings. Shalev and Morwitz used envy to determine the effect of a low-status influencer on purchase intentions (2012).

They found that participants who read a description of a person from a lower status level but owned an envy-inducing product were more likely to purchase the product in order to restore their self-evaluation (relative to the low-status consumer). This paper seeks to expand upon the marketing literature by examining the role construal level plays on envy in an influence situation.

### **Construal Level Theory**

Many research streams exist that explore the processes that a person uses when considering actions and judgments. One such concept, action identification theory, considers differences in how a person processes and acts on information. These actions can be broken into two categories, the “why” and the “what” of an action (Vallacher & Wegner, 1989). Those who are more inclined to consider why they chose an action are labeled as high-level agents. These people are more likely to consider the underlying meaning behind an action, and will be more likely to consider the long-term implications of an action. Those who focus on details are classified as low-level agents.

When developing a scale used to determine inherent action identification level, the authors found that low-level agents were more likely to be impulsive and display less consistency in their behavior. Conversely, high-level agents made more consistent decisions and had a better understanding of their personal traits. Task difficulty can also determine whether a person uses high- or low-level identities (Vallacher & Wegner, 1987). As difficulty increases, people move from high-levels to low-levels of identification. Low levels are related to familiarity, while high-levels of identification are linked with how long it takes to learn and complete a task, and how difficult the task is.

Construal level theory builds on action identification theory to explore the mental processes a person uses when considering judgments and decisions (Fiedler, 2007). Similar to action identification theory, construal level theory breaks processing into two levels, abstract and concrete. Abstract processing requires a person to think about why they are doing something; concrete processing focuses attention on how an action is performed (Trope & Liberman, 2010). Trope and Liberman used construal level theory to conclude that time and distance determines which thought process – abstract or concrete processing – will be used (2000, 2003). When events are further away, a person is likely to engage in abstract processing. A person is more likely to use concrete processing when an event will occur in the near term or when they are considering how something will be done.

This concept has been explored in an office environment, where a person is more likely to use abstract processing as they move up in an organization (Smith & Trope, 2006). As

they move further away from performing task-oriented behaviors, an abstract mindset, focusing on why they or their subordinates are performing an action, takes over from a construal level mindset, where a person is processing the steps required to complete a task.

Hamilton and Thompson explored construal level theory in a marketing context, finding that participants who were allowed to physically touch a product were more likely to engage in concrete processing, while those who read about a product were more likely to engage in abstract processing (2007). Concrete processing was related to the feasibility of the product, while abstract processing led to thoughts of how the product would meet their needs and whether or not the product was desirable.

### **Hypothesis**

The goal of the first experiment is to determine the combined interaction of benign envy and construal level theory on purchase intentions. Past research by van de Ven et al. found that participants presented with a story scenario that elicited envy were more likely to pay more for an item than those who read a story containing no envy (2011). Shalev and Morwitz use envy elicited by a person deemed to be of a lower socioeconomic status to drive purchase intentions (2012). Each shows the power of envy in a purchase situation.

Normally, a divide exists between those thinking abstractly and concretely. Research by Lynch and Zauberan on construal level theory finds that those thinking abstractly are

more likely to consider positive aspects of products, such as the benefits of using a product and how it might help them meet their goals (2007). They find that those using concrete processing will be more likely to focus on a product's price or if it can be easily learned. However, concrete processing can also lead to positive thoughts that might assist in purchase intentions. Hamilton and Thompson find that both abstract and concrete processing can contribute to purchase intentions, with abstract thinking focusing on why a person might buy a product and concrete processing leading to thoughts about how to purchase a product (2007). In a 2008 study, Alexander, Lynch, and Wang explored the effect of construal level on purchase habits of those looking to purchase either really new products (e.g., Google Glasses) or incrementally new products (e.g., a new smartphone). They find that products deemed as incrementally new lead a consumer to use concrete processing, relating the upgrades to the existing product in order to assist in making a purchase decision.

Our first hypothesis examines the power that envy might have over mental processing. Rather than using concrete processing to think about the negative things related to the feasibility of purchasing an item – such as the cost or the learning curve - envy takes over, leading a person to look for ways to immediately relieve the negative feelings that envy brings, leading to overpaying for the item. Research on the motivating nature of benign envy finds that this positive form of envy is used to determine what is required to improve oneself (Wert and Salovey, 2004) and helps to give a person an idea of what is needed to reduce the envious feelings (Hill and Buss, 2008). A product that helps an envied person achieve more should be more desired, with those in the concrete condition

looking for a way to purchase the item to be like the envied person. Therefore, we feel that the combination of envy and concrete processing leads to an increase in purchase intentions.

H1: Participants primed with a concrete construal level, who are then presented with a story that elicits envy, will be more likely to pay more for a product than those primed with an abstract construal level or control condition.

## **Experiment 1**

In order to test the effect of construal level on envy, an experiment was developed to see if participants primed with abstract or concrete mindsets who were then exposed to an envy-eliciting story scenario would be willing to pay more for the product in the story.

### **Experiment Design**

#### **Participants**

Participants were recruited through Amazon's Mechanical Turk, a crowdsourcing website that allows work-at-home consultants (referred to as Turkers or mTurkers) to complete surveys in exchange for money. Research on using Mechanical Turk for academic research is promising (Chandler, Mueller, & Paolacci, 2013; Peer, Paolacci, Chandler, & Mueller, 2012; Shapiro, Chandler, and Mueller, 2013), though care must be taken to ensure that participants do not take the survey more than once and that they are actively completing the survey (i.e., not simply checking random choices to complete the task). Multiple methods were used to remove duplicate survey takers from the data set,

including: matching mTurk worker ID numbers to previous surveys, using Qualtrics' built-in option to prevent duplicate entries (the "prevent ballot box stuffing" option found on the survey design screen), and through the Mechanical Turk website, which indicates participants who already took a previous survey.

Special care must also be taken to ensure that participants are actively engaged in the survey. Using the recommendations put forth by Oppenheimer, Meyvis, and Davidenko (2009), instructional manipulation check questions were included at various intervals to force participants to select a certain option (and only that option) in order to receive payment for a completed survey. Questions were placed in the middle of scales so as not to stand out; an example of this question type is "Please select 'Disagree' for this question." Additionally, two writing exercises were included in the survey. The first is included in the construal level manipulation, asking participants to consider "why" or "how" they do a certain action. The second thought exercise asked participants to write down two thoughts that crossed their mind while completing the first part of the survey. This served to determine their thoughts on the product of interest and the story scenario. Non-responses or nonsensical responses (e.g., typing in "aaa" in the textbox as a response) were removed from the final analysis.

219 participants were recruited from Mechanical Turk to complete the study. The posted survey (called a HIT in Mechanical Turk) called for participants to read a description of a new product and answer questions related to the product. Following confirmation that participants had both answered the instructional manipulation check questions correctly

and had not participated in any prior survey, payment of \$0.35 was forwarded to their Mechanical Turk account.

### **Procedure**

Participants were randomly placed in one of six groups in a 2x3 design (Construal level: concrete, abstract, control; Envy story: benign envy, control), where they were presented with a construal level prime (or control condition) followed by a story scenario.

Respondents assigned to the abstract or concrete construal level were asked to participate in a construal level exercise developed by Freitas, Gollwitzer, and Trope (2004) and used by Hamilton and Thompson (2007); those in the control condition proceeded directly to the story portion of the experiment. This exercise can be found in Appendix A.

Next, participants in each group read one of two story conditions (see Appendix B for both story scenarios and a picture of the tablet) where they learned about a new tablet PC product and answered a series of questions that asked about their intentions to purchase the product (these questions can be found in Appendix C). The story scenario and questions were based on experiments conducted by van de Ven, Zeelenberg, and Pieters (2011). The story was the same for each group, with one exception. In the control condition, participants read about a fictitious person describing the product. In the benign envy condition, participants read the same story as the control group, but read an additional section that explained how the fictitious person came to acquire the device – through hard work. van de Ven, Zeelenberg, and Pieters found that manipulating how



the envied person came to acquire the product – whether they worked hard to earn it or were given it – led to the either benign envy (toward the person who earned the reward) or malicious envy (for the person who was simply given the product). The dependent variable was determined by having participants answer this question “What is the maximum amount of money that you would be willing to pay for this product (in dollars)?”

Following the post-story questions, participants answered an open ended question (listing thoughts that crossed their mind while reading the story and learning about the product, includes thoughts on the product and the person in the story) and a series of psychological scales that measured levels of inherent envy, self-monitoring behavior, susceptibility, and a behavior identification, which measures a person’s preference for abstract or concrete processing (scales can be found in Appendices D through G).

## **Results and Discussion**

### **Manipulation Checks**

First, each of the 219 questionnaires was reviewed for their compliance with the instructional manipulation check questions and with completion of the thought exercises from the initial construal manipulation and from the thought exercise following the story scenario. 197 of the respondents (89.9%) completed each check question appropriately and were used in this analysis. The average age of respondents was 36.9 years old. 113 of the respondents were female (57% female, 43% male). 31 of the respondents owned a tablet device (15.7%).

Table 1: Mean Values of Post-Test Questions for Experiment 1

Post-Test Questions (Scale 0-9)	MEAN VALUES OF POST-TEST QUESTIONS						
		Envy Condition			Construal Level		
		Overall <i>N</i> = 197	Benign Envy <i>N</i> = 97	Control <i>N</i> = 100	Concrete <i>N</i> = 57	Abstract <i>N</i> = 68	Control <i>N</i> = 72
Would you like to have this product?	<i>M</i>	7.18	7.03	7.33	6.82	7.24	7.42
	<i>S.D.</i>	2.59	2.49	2.67	3.06	2.50	2.23
How much effort would you be willing to spend to acquire it?	<i>M</i>	6.26	6.46	6.07	5.84	6.57	6.31
	<i>S.D.</i>	2.64	2.64	2.63	2.80	2.59	2.54
Do you think that others would like to have this product?	<i>M</i>	8.09	8.16	8.01	7.77	8.26	8.17
	<i>S.D.</i>	1.94	1.59	2.22	2.31	1.87	1.64
How much effort do you think others would be willing to spend to acquire it?	<i>M</i>	7.39	7.48	7.29	7.02	7.68	7.40
	<i>S.D.</i>	1.91	1.67	2.12	2.01	2.08	1.61
What is the maximum amount of money that you would be willing to pay for this product? (DV)	<i>M</i>	314.20	333.16	295.81	345.11	312.35	291.49
	<i>S.D.</i>	223.62	232.63	214.08	276.49	211.05	185.53

Overall, the participants found the product to be desirable (mean value of 7.18 out of 9), would spend considerable time to obtain the product (6.26 out of 9) and thought that others would be willing to have the product and spend considerable effort to obtain the tablet (8.09 and 7.39 out of 9, respectively). They would be willing to pay \$314.20 to obtain the tablet. Mean values for those exposed to the benign envy condition were higher for all questions except for liking the product, and were willing to pay more for the product than those in the control condition (no envy exposure) – though the differences were not significant. While there were no significant differences between categories, the higher willingness to pay value does agree with van de Ven, Zeelenberg, and Pieters' 2011 experiment on envy and willingness to pay.

Participants exposed to either the concrete or abstract conditions were more likely to pay more for the tablet, though those in the abstract condition scored higher on each of the measures. Using the results of Hamilton and Thompson's experiments on construal level and consumer behavior (2007), perhaps the abstract consumers were viewing the product in terms of desirability, meaning that they see the item as desirable both for themselves and for others. Those in the concrete condition were willing to pay more for the product, perhaps due to thoughts of feasibility, understanding that a tablet would be an expensive product to own.

### Results of Experiment 1

Next, we conducted factorial ANOVA using IBM SPSS version 21 with willingness to pay (WTP) as the dependent variable and construal level (abstract, concrete, or control) and envy prime exposure (benign envy or control) as the independent variables.

Table 2: Factorial ANOVA Results of Construal Level and Envy on Willingness to Pay – Experiment 1

Tests of Between-Subjects Effects					
Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Corrected Model	489847.099 <sup>a</sup>	5	97969.420	2.010	.079
Intercept	19439049.956	1	19439049.956	398.754	.000
Construal	86821.423	2	43410.711	.890	.412
Envy	99210.316	1	99210.316	2.035	.155
Construal * Envy	330671.480	2	165335.740	3.392	.036
Error	9311158.779	191	48749.522		
Total	29249546.000	197			
Corrected Total	9801005.878	196			

a. R Squared = .050 (Adjusted R Squared = .025)

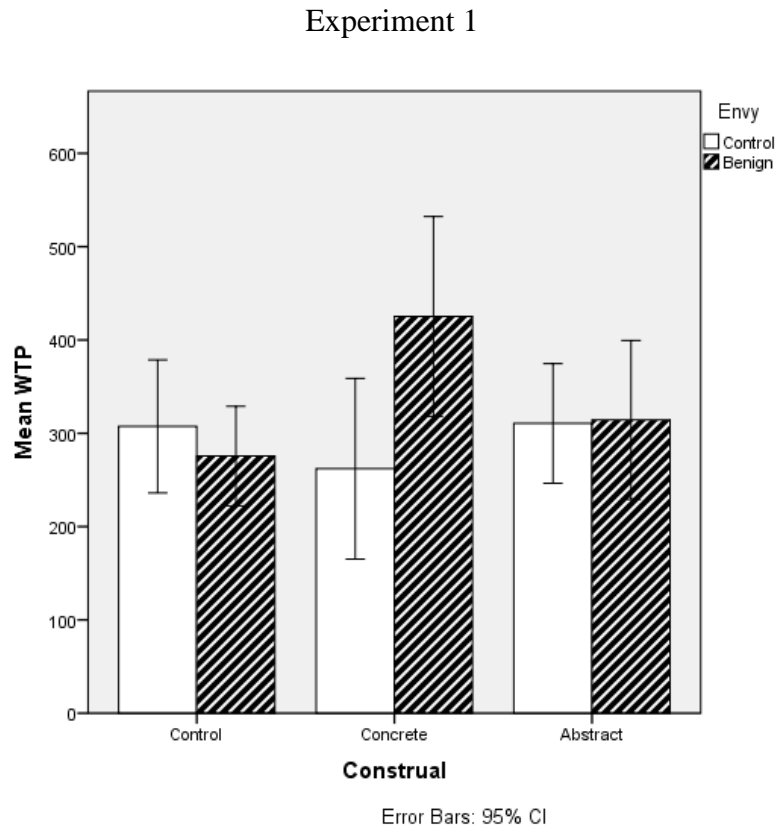
Table 2 shows a significant two-way interaction between construal level and envy on willingness to pay ( $F(5,191) = 3.392, p = 0.036$ ). A review of the additional scales from the questionnaire – dispositional envy, self-monitoring, level of susceptibility, and the behavior identification scale – shows no significant effects.

Using the estimated marginal means function to perform a contrast analysis, we next compared each of the six conditions to determine any contrasts between participant groups. A simple effects analysis of the envy conditions (benign envy and control conditions) shows a significant difference in envy/concrete condition ( $F(1,191) = 7.790, p = 0.006$ ), indicating a higher willingness to pay for those exposed to the concrete/benign envy condition over the concrete/no envy condition. A simple effects analysis of the envy/control condition ( $F(1,191) = 0.370, p = 0.544$ ) and envy/abstract condition ( $F(1,191) = 0.05, p = 0.944$ ) was not significant, indicating no significant difference between the benign envy and control conditions on the control construal group or the abstract construal group. Similarly, a simple effects analysis of construal level conditions (concrete, abstract, and control) shows significance for the construal level/envy conditions ( $F(2,191) = 3.862, p = 0.023$ ), indicating a significant difference in benign envy on willingness to pay for each construal level conditions. However, there was no significant difference for the control (no envy) condition on each level of construal level ( $F(2,191) = 0.467, p = 0.634$ ).

## Discussion

Figure 1 helps to explain the results, showing that the group exposed to the concrete condition (asking to consider the details of how to complete a task) followed by the benign envy condition were significantly more likely to pay more for the tablet than those in the other conditions. Participants who thought about “how” to accomplish a task (the concrete condition) who then were then exposed to an envious story (where the person in the story noted how hard they worked to obtain the product) were significantly more likely to pay for the product – more than those who thought about “why” a task should be accomplished (the abstract condition) or those who received no prime. Therefore, hypothesis 1 is confirmed. Participants who are primed with a concrete mental construal are more likely to pay more for the tablet than those in the other conditions. Most notably, the difference in willingness to pay from the concrete/control condition to the concrete/benign envy condition indicates the potential power of benign envy influencing purchase intentions. We next attempt to determine why we observed this effect. What causes people who think concretely, who consider the “how” of a decision rather than the “why”, to want to pay more for the product?

Figure 1: Graph of the Effect of Envy and Construal Level on Willingness to Pay –



## Experiment 2

Next, we look to determine why those in the concrete construal/benign envy condition were significantly more likely to pay more for the tablet than those in the other conditions (abstract or control). When consumers think using concrete mental processing, they think more about short-term, low-level thoughts, such as how and when they will purchase an item or whether or not they will be able to learn how to use it (Alexander, Lynch, and Wang, 2008; Lynch and Zauberan, 2007). These low-level, near-term thoughts tie in nicely with the idea of implementation intentions. Building on the theory of planned behavior (Ajzen, 1985), Gollwitzer developed the theory of implementation intentions to help identify how a person moves from goal intentions to action (1993). The basic idea

behind implementation intentions is that a person will be more likely to act on a goal if they consider when and where they will pursue the goal-directed behavior. For example, Gollwitzer and Brandstatter found that students who were given an assignment to complete during a holiday break would be more likely to complete the assignment if they formed implementation intentions beforehand (1997). These intentions were formed using the following format – “I intend to do y when situation z is encountered” (Gollwitzer, 1993; Gollwitzer and Brandstatter, 1997). Gollwitzer and Brandstatter asked students if they had formed implementation intentions – when they were handed the assignment (the situation), they considered when and where they would complete it (e.g., the day before Christmas at my father’s desk). Those who formed implementation intentions were more likely to complete the assignment – and completed it quicker than those who hadn’t formed the intentions.

Relating implementation intentions to the present study, goal intentions might be “I want to buy the tablet!” (that the person eliciting envy has) or “I want to complete more surveys to make more money” (in order to be like the person in the study).

Implementation intention might be “If I buy the tablet, I will use it to complete additional surveys” or “buying a tablet will allow me to complete more surveys.” The goal of people who complete tasks on Mechanical Turk is to make more money (there are many sites dedicated to informing Turkers of new tasks that pay well, such as [mturkforum.com](http://mturkforum.com), [mturkwiki.net](http://mturkwiki.net), and [mturkgrind.com](http://mturkgrind.com)); purchasing a tablet that allows them to complete more surveys and to complete them from more locations could help them achieve that goal.

We posit that those who are exposed to an envy situation (e.g., meet someone in a similar field who is doing better than they are) will be more likely to develop implementation intentions when prompted with something (e.g., a tablet device) that will help them achieve their goals. They will then consider exactly when and where they would purchase the device in order to bring themselves up to the level of the envied person.

H2: Participants who read a story that elicits envy will be more likely to form implementation intentions related to purchasing the product of interest.

Additionally, we are interested in a potential mediating role that implementation intentions may play in the interaction of construal level and envy on purchase intentions. Implementation intentions have been shown to increase goal behavior; perhaps it is the driving force behind an increase in willingness to pay. Achtziger, Gollwitzer, and Sheeran's 2008 work looks at the role implementation intentions plays on goal attainment, finding that participants who clearly used the implementation intention format ("If  $z$  happens, then I will do  $y$ ") were more likely to follow a diet when presented with unhealthy food or had better performances in an upcoming tennis match. Rise, Thompson, and Verplanken determine that implementation intentions play a significant role in planned behavior (2003); students in the study were more likely to follow through with an action (either working out or recycling) if they were asked to form implementation intentions beforehand. Building on this, we also examine the potential mediating effect that implementation intentions may have on the interaction between construal level and envy on willingness to pay.



H3: The interaction of construal level and envy on willingness to pay is mediated by an implementation mindset.

### **Method**

199 participants were recruited through Mechanical Turk under the auspices of reading about a new product and answering a series of questions. Similar to experiment 1, following confirmation that the participants answered the instructional manipulation checks appropriately and had not previously taken a survey issued in the past, payment of \$0.45 was deposited in their Mechanical Turk account.

### **Procedure**

As in experiment 1, participants were randomly placed in one of six groups in a 2x3 design (Construal level: concrete, abstract, control; Envy story: benign envy, control), where they were presented with a construal level prime (or control condition) followed by a story scenario.

Respondents assigned to the abstract or concrete construal level were asked to participate in a different construal level exercise than the one used in the first study. Rather than consider the “why” or “how” of certain actions, participants were asked to consider how their life would be either one day from now (concrete condition) or one year from now (abstract). Developed by Förster, Friedman, and Liberman, participants were asked to write down three thoughts related to how they imagined life tomorrow or one year from now (2004). This exercise can be found in Appendix H. Next, participants from each

group read the same product story from experiment 1 (found in Appendix B), which concluded with either an envy-eliciting section or a control condition with no information beyond an explanation of the tablet PC. Participants then answered post-story questions related to their own liking and effort in obtaining a product, their thoughts on others' liking and effort in obtaining the product, a question asking if they thought about where and when they would purchase the product (forming implementation intentions) and a measure asking for the maximum amount they would pay for the product (the dependent variable). Finally, participants completed a writing exercise where they typed their thoughts on the product, the story, and anything else that came to mind, and concluded by completing a scale used to measure time orientation – a person's preference for short- or long-term thinking developed by Zimbardo and Boyd (1999; found in Appendix I) and the behavior identification scale (also used in the first experiment).

### **Manipulation checks**

Of the 199 completed surveys, 15 participants failed to answer the instructional manipulation checks or respond to the thought exercises and were removed from the analysis. This led to a usable sample size of 184 (92.4%). The average age of respondents was 34.4 years old. 81 of the 171 participants who indicated their gender were female (47% female, 53% male). 36 of the 184 participants already owned a tablet device (19.6%).

Table 3: Mean Values of Post-Test Questions for Experiment 2

Post-Test Questions (Scale 0-9)	MEAN VALUES OF POST-TEST QUESTIONS						
		Envy Condition			Construal Level		
		Overall <i>N</i> = 184	Benign Envy <i>N</i> = 98	Control <i>N</i> = 86	Concrete <i>N</i> = 64	Abstract <i>N</i> = 58	Control <i>N</i> = 62
Would you like to have this product?	<i>M</i>	6.94	6.98	6.90	6.91	6.76	7.15
	<i>S.D.</i>	2.54	2.50	2.45	2.67	2.54	2.19
How much effort would you be willing to spend to acquire it?	<i>M</i>	5.96	6.36	5.50	6.14	5.66	6.05
	<i>S.D.</i>	2.60	2.59	2.34	2.59	2.60	2.34
Do you think that others would like to have this product?	<i>M</i>	7.84	7.97	7.69	7.86	7.83	7.82
	<i>S.D.</i>	1.68	1.77	1.95	2.08	1.68	1.79
How much effort do you think others would be willing to spend to acquire it?	<i>M</i>	6.99	7.09	6.87	7.03	7.09	6.85
	<i>S.D.</i>	1.65	1.75	1.77	1.92	1.65	1.72
Following this conversation with the other mTurker, I can think about exactly where and when I would buy the tablet.	<i>M</i>	6.24	6.51	5.94	6.19	6.16	6.44
	<i>S.D.</i>	2.50	2.59	2.38	2.53	2.50	2.51
What is the maximum amount of money that you would be willing to pay for this product? (DV)	<i>M</i>	300.90	319.24	280.00	313.97	303.16	285.31
	<i>S.D.</i>	176.99	184.71	116.37	176.92	193.70	161.74

Again, participants found the product to be desirable and would spend effort to obtain the product (mean values of 6.94 and 5.96, respectively), and thought that others would like to have the product and would spend considerable effort to obtain the product (7.84 and 6.99 out of 9, respectively). Overall, participants would be willing to spend \$300.90 on average for the tablet, though those in the benign envy condition would spend more than any other category, \$319.24. Mean values for each of the questions were higher for those in the benign envy condition (versus the control condition). Additionally, those in the benign envy condition were more likely to consider when and where they would purchase the item than those in the control condition (though results were not significant).

## Results of Experiment 2

First, we sought to replicate the findings of experiment 1, that participants in the concrete/benign envy condition were more likely to pay more for the tablet than those in the abstract/benign condition. A factorial ANOVA comparison of the abstract and control conditions found no significant results ( $F(1,116) = 0.959, p = 0.330$ ), so the remainder of the analysis compares only the concrete and abstract construal level conditions.

Table 4: Factorial ANOVA Results of Construal Level and Envy on Willingness to Pay

### Factorial ANOVA – Experiment 2

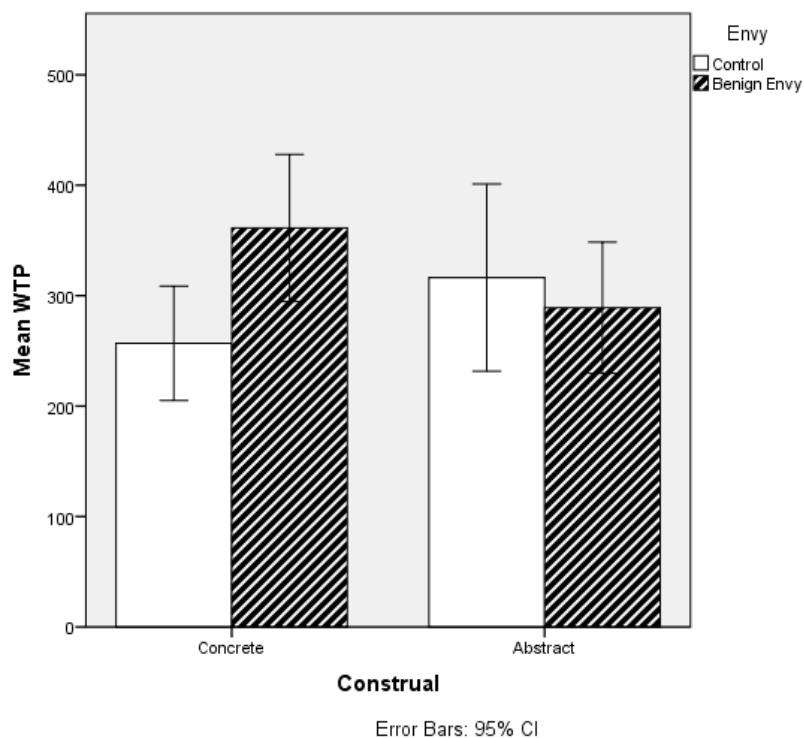
Tests of Between-Subjects Effects					
Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Corrected Model	187285.16	3	62428.388	1.876	0.137
Intercept	11332119	1	11332119.36	340.53	0.000
Construal	1236.138	1	1236.138	0.037	0.847
Envy	45029.09	1	45029.089	1.353	0.247
Construal * Envy	131341.8	1	131341.819	3.947	0.049
Error	3926810	118	48749.522		
Total	15749803	122			
Corrected Total	4114095	121			

a. R Squared = .046 (Adjusted R Squared = .021)

Table 4 indicates a significant two-way interaction between construal level and envy on willingness to pay ( $F(3,118) = 3.947, p = 0.049$ ). There were no significant results for the time orientation and behavior identification scales. Figure 2 helps to explain these results further – much like in experiment 1, those in the concrete/control prime were willing to

pay the lowest amount of all conditions, while those in the concrete/benign envy condition were willing to pay the most for the tablet PC.

Figure 2: Graph of the Effect of Envy and Construal Level on Willingness to Pay –  
Experiment 2



Again, we performed a contrast analysis to determine if there were any significant differences between conditions. As in study 1, a simple effects analysis of the envy conditions shows a significant difference in the envy/concrete condition ( $F(1,118) = 5.197, p = 0.024$ ), indicating a higher willingness to pay for those exposed to the concrete/benign envy condition over the concrete/no envy condition. There was no significant difference between the benign envy and control envy conditions on the abstract construal level groups ( $F(1,118) = 0.324, p = 0.570$ ).

However, there was not a significant difference in a simple effects analysis of construal level conditions for the benign envy condition ( $F(1,118) = 2.440, p = 0.121$ ) or the control condition ( $F(1,118) = 1.567, p = 0.213$ ), indicating no significant cell differences based on construal level.

Next, we will consider the role of implementation intentions on willingness to pay. A review of Table 5, which shows the mean values for each of the conditions, indicates that both benign envy groups (concrete and abstract) were more likely to have higher implementation intentions than those in the control (no envy) conditions. However, these results were not significant.

Table 5: Mean Values of Willingness to Pay and Implementation Intentions by Envy and Construal Level

		Mean Values - Envy and Construal Level	
		Benign Envy	Control
Concrete	WTP	361.29	256.86
	Implementation Intention	6.31	6.03
Abstract	WTP	284.64	316.3
	Implementation Intention	6.36	5.86

Linear regression was conducted to determine the predictive nature of implementation intentions (Table 6). The regression model is significant ( $F = 15.944, p < 0.000$ ). The coefficient of implementation intentions was significant ( $t = 3.993, p < 0.000$ ); implementation intentions explain 11.7% of the variance in willingness to pay. A 1 unit increase in implementation intentions results in an additional \$25.24 in payment for the

tablet. This confirms hypothesis 2, that those exposed to a situation that elicits envy would be more likely to form implementation intentions.

Table 6: Regression Results for Implementation Intentions Predicting Willingness to Pay

Model		Coefficients <sup>a</sup>				95.0% Confidence Interval for B		
		Unstandardized Coefficients	Std. Error	Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	Lower Bound	Upper Bound
1	(Constant)	153.658	41.931		3.665	.000	70.637	236.679
	Implementation	25.241	6.321	.342	3.993	.000	12.725	37.757

a. Dependent Variable: WTP

Model		ANOVA <sup>a</sup>				
		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	482508.728	1	482508.728	15.944	.000 <sup>b</sup>
	Residual	3631586.657	120	30263.222		
	Total	4114095.385	121			

a. Dependent Variable: WTP

b. Predictors: (Constant), Implementation

In order to test the third hypothesis, that the interaction of construal level and envy on willingness to pay is mediated by an implementation mindset, we used the PROCESS analysis developed by Preacher and Hayes (2004) and Hayes (2008), which uses regression analysis to determine the potential mediating effect of implementation intentions on willingness to pay. We build on the significant effects of the prior simple analysis, where there was a significant difference in envy conditions on willingness to pay, and attempted a moderation and mediation analysis to determine if implementation intentions either influenced the effects of envy on willingness to pay (moderation) or has a direct influence on the relationship between envy and willingness to pay. Moderation analysis was not significant ( $F(1, 118) = 0.7341, p = 0.6294$ ), indicating that implementation intentions does not moderate the relationship between envy and willingness to pay. Mediation analysis was also not significant, as the confidence interval

of the indirect effect of implementation intentions on willingness to pay contains zero (the range is from -11.65 to 35.54). Therefore, we conclude that there is no significant mediating effect of implementation intentions on willingness to pay (Hayes, 2008).

Hypothesis three was not supported.

## **General Discussion**

### **Summary of Research**

We began this study with a plan to contribute to the existing literature in the area of envy and consumer behavior. Past research on this topic found that consumers who are exposed to an envious situation would be more likely to purchase an item, and to pay more for an item (Shalev and Morwitz, 2012; Smith and Kim, 2007; van de Ven, Zeelenberg, and Pieters, 2011). We also use construal level theory to determine the role that mental processing – whether a person is thinking concretely or abstractly – plays in how an envious situation affects consumer behavior.

Over two studies, we confirm that participants who are primed with a concrete mental construal level, who are then presented with an envy-inducing scenario, are more likely to pay more for the item that the envied person (in the story) has than those who are thinking abstractly. Participants exposed to the concrete/envy prime in study 1 were willing to pay 62% more for the tablet; participants in study 2 were willing to pay 41% more. Additionally, we see that implementation intentions can help explain this interaction. In both benign envy conditions, concrete and abstract, implementation intentions were higher than in the control condition. For those in the concrete/benign



envy condition, this led to an increase in willingness to pay for the product that was discussed by the envied person in the story.

### **Contributions, Limitations, and Directions for Future Research**

Our results add to the marketing literature by showing how envy can adjust the behavior of those thinking concretely, leading to higher prices and increased profits. Marketers are already aware of the effect of envy on driving product desire; introducing some combination of envy and concrete processing might alter buyer thinking, leading to an increased willingness to pay more for a product to reduce envious feelings. Marketers may seek to get products in the hands of people who elicit envy, and additionally might add some level of concrete processing to a decision in order to drive purchase intentions. The combination of envy, in the form of influencers, and concrete processing could allow marketers to use the concepts developed by Cialdini (1993) to create an envy/concrete encounter that drives purchases. Perhaps allowing these influencers to hand out limited-time coupons might cause a person to move from abstract to concrete processing, with the influencer acting as the person inducing envy. The influencer could also use social proof or peer pressure to lead a person to determine that obtaining a product will allow them to fit in with a desired peer group. Additionally, the influencer can act as an authority figure; if they are successful, they can persuade a person to consider purchasing an item soon in order to be like the envied influencer.

Given the importance of implementation intentions, marketers might also include a way for consumers to know when and where to purchase an envied item. In a situation where

a consumer is faced with an envious encounter and concrete processing – such as observing an envied person owning a desired product that can be had quickly – a marketer providing information about how and when the consumer can buy the product might lead to increased purchase intentions at a higher price than can be normally expected.

### **Limitations and Future Directions**

While we were able to successfully create an envious condition in an online survey format, we did experience some difficulties using Mechanical Turk consultants.

Researchers using traditional student samples were better able to develop an envied other, a person that participants could relate to, compare themselves to, and find themselves lacking in some way. Some examples of creating a fictitious envied person include a fellow student (Silver and Sabini, 1978), a coworker (Zizzo and Oswald, 2001), or a person looking for a job or internship (Hill, DelPriore, and Vaughan, 2011). In the present study, we created a situation where participants envisioned meeting a fellow work-at-home consultant. Envy was induced by having the envied consultant mention how successful they were at completing surveys thanks to the tablet PC. Since participants often never meet fellow Mechanical Turkers, this might not elicit the same level of envy as other possible scenarios. Perhaps researchers could create dynamic scenarios based on answering a question related to gender or location. Separate story scenarios could be created based on participant answers to gender questions. Hill, DelPriore, and Vaughan (2011) found that envy leads to better retention of characteristics of an envied person of the same gender. Developing stories for each gender could result in a better envy-

inducing experience. Additionally, story scenarios could be developed for Turkers who use the site to fund a hobby or for those who rely on mTurk as their primary source of income. However, programming knowledge would be required, and beginning a survey with sensitive demographic information might result in incomplete surveys (should the participant not wish to continue). It would also be interesting to re-evaluate a potential mediating relationship of implementation intentions on envy and willingness to pay in a scenario where envy is more directly elicited.

An additional limitation with using Mechanical Turk is the amount of surveys you need to collect in order to obtain enough complete questionnaires to conduct an analysis.

While the cost per survey is significantly cheaper than other methods, researchers should budget 10-15% additional respondents in order to ensure a usable sample size.

### **Future Directions**

Future studies using this framework might look to replicate these results in a more controlled setting, perhaps in a laboratory setting where envy can be elicited in multiple ways. We already mentioned developing envy scenarios based on gender, a job interview, or creating a comparison that includes a person who is similar but slightly better off.

Combining these scenarios with construal level may help validate these results across multiple scenarios. Additionally, different products can be used to determine how envy and construal level combine to affect willingness to purchase. Perhaps price can act as a moderator for this effect – determining whether or not a person using concrete processing, who is then exposed to an envious situation would be willing to pay more for

an expensive product (such as a technology product) but not for a product that is perceived to be of little value. Or maybe a menu of choices could be presented to a participant during an envious encounter, to see if the person would pay more for one product that might reduce the envious feelings or might spread money across multiple products.

### **Conclusion**

Envy, an emotion that is often felt in marketing encounters, can be used by marketers to increase purchase intentions and to increase the amount paid by people to buy a product that will help relieve the envious feelings. Though research finds that concrete processing normally reduces risk tolerance and makes a person think about feasibility rather than desirability, adding envy seems to reverse this course, causing a person to pay more money for a product that can help reduce the envy. Building on this framework, marketers can seek out ways to introduce envy into situations where people are thinking concretely rather than abstractly, in order to get them to pay more for a product. An example of this can be seen in a story told by Cialdini in *Influence: The Psychology of Persuasion* (1993).

In the book, Cialdini describes a situation where a car salesman invites multiple buyers to view a car at the same time, correctly surmising that multiple buyers increases the idea of scarcity and results in an increased payment for the car. The introduction of multiple perspective buyers might be seen as introducing envy into the encounter – as the second buyer envies the position of the first (who, it can be assumed, has first rights to purchase).

Initially, the first buyer was skeptical of the car, as they were using concrete low-level processing – considering the cost and condition of the car. However, adding different perspective buyers led to feelings of envy in the first buyer, who now sees another person potentially getting the car and enjoying its benefits. Thus, the combination of envy and concrete processing may help explain why the first buyer moves forward with the purchase without considering the potential issues that were initially present prior to the introduction of the second buyer. Marketers may similarly introduce envy into a situation that normally lends itself to concrete processing, leading to increased buying intentions and an opportunity to sell products at higher than normal prices.

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## APPENDIX A: Construal Level Manipulation Thought Exercise

Freitas, Antonio L., Peter Gollwitzer, and Yaacov Trope. "The influence of abstract and concrete mindsets on anticipating and guiding others' self-regulatory efforts." *Journal of experimental social psychology* 40.6 (2004): 739-752.

### Abstract Manipulation:

For everything we do, there is always a reason why we do it. Often, the causes of our behavior are traced to broad life goals that we have. For example, you are currently participating in a research survey. Why are you doing this survey? To earn money. Why are you earning money? Perhaps to buy something nice for you or your family. Why is that important? Because buying nice things makes you feel good about yourself.

Research suggests that engaging in thought exercises like that above, in which one thinks about how one's actions relate to one's ultimate life goals, can improve people's life satisfaction. In this experiment, we are testing such a technique. This thought exercise is intended to focus your attention on why you do the things you do. For this thought exercise, please consider the following activity: 'improving and maintaining one's physical health.'

List three ways that improving and maintaining health can assist in meeting life goals. For each statement, answer the following question: "How much will improving and maintaining your health help you meet this important goal?" (1=a little; 5=very, very much)

Next, write a sentence on why improving your health would help you meet life goals. In the above paragraph, I ask why you are completing this survey. Your response might be to earn money. I then ask "why?", as in why are you are earning the money? Perhaps to buy something nice for you or your family. I then ask "why?" one more time, as in why would you buy something nice for you or your family?

Repeat this exercise based on the following goal:

To improve and maintain health

Why?

- (participant response 1)

Why?

- (participant response 2)

Why?

- (participant response 3)

### Concrete Manipulation:

For everything we do, there is always a process of how we do it. Moreover, we often can follow our broad life-goals down to our very specific behaviors. For example, you are currently participating in a research survey. How will you complete the survey? By answering the questions. How will you answer the questions? By reading the questions carefully and answering based on your knowledge. How will you read the questions? Reading left to right, putting words together in a sentence.

Research suggests that engaging in thought exercises like that above, in which one thinks about how one's ultimate life goals can be expressed through specific actions, can improve people's life satisfaction. In this experiment, we are testing such a technique. This thought exercise is intended to focus your attention on how you do the things you do. For this thought exercise, please consider the following activity: 'improving and maintaining one's physical health.'

List three ways in which you could improve and maintain your health. For each statement, answer the following question: "How much will engaging in this activity improve and maintain your health?" (1=a little; 5=very, very much)

Next, write a sentence on how improving your health would help you meet life goals. In the above paragraph, I ask how you will complete the survey. Your response might be to answer the questions. I then ask "how?", as in how will you answer the questions? Perhaps by reading the questions carefully and answering based on your knowledge. I then ask "how?" one more time, as in how will you read and answer the questions?

Repeat this exercise based on the following goal:

- To improve and maintain health

How?

- (participant response 1)

How?

- (participant response 2)

How?

- (participant response 3)

## APPENDIX B: Product Stories – Envy Manipulation

Scenario developed from the following source:

Van de Ven, Niels, Marcel Zeelenberg, and Rik Pieters. "The envy premium in product evaluation." *Journal of Consumer Research* 37.6 (2011): 984-998.

Product in the above paper was an iPhone, Tablet PC used as it is a newer product that should elicit more envy than a smartphone.



Imagine that you are meeting with a fellow work-from-home consultant. You begin to talk about how you both complete your surveys on Mechanical Turk. The person shows you a new tablet PC (pictured above). They tell you that the tablet PC allows them to go from having many devices (e.g., smartphone, desktop, laptop) to one device. Cloud storage allows for sharing between tablets, and USB slots allow for connections to printers, memory sticks, and other tablet devices. They can complete survey tasks quicker because of the touch screen, manage their business, connect with friends, and then unwind with streaming videos or games.

Benign envy condition: You ask the person how they got the tablet; they reply that they worked very hard to earn the money for it. Having a goal like this made it easier for them to put in the extra work to earn the money.

Control condition: [no additional comment]

## APPENDIX C: Post-Story Questions

Questions developed from the following source:

Van de Ven, Niels, Marcel Zeelenberg, and Rik Pieters. "The envy premium in product evaluation." *Journal of Consumer Research* 37.6 (2011): 984-998.

1. Would you like to have this product? 0-9 (not at all-definitely)
2. How much effort would you be willing to spend to acquire it? 0-9 (none-a lot)
3. Do you think that others would like to have this product? 0-9 (not at all-definitely)
4. How much effort do you think others would be willing to spend to acquire it? 0-9 (none-a lot)
5. What is the maximum amount of money that you would be willing to pay for this product? (DV)
6. Following this conversation with the other mTurker, I can think about exactly where and when I would buy the tablet. 0-9 (not at all-definitely)
7. Do you own a product like this?

Open ended thoughts:

Please list at least three thoughts that crossed your mind while you were going through the story and the information presented in it. These thoughts could relate to the brand(s) mentioned by the person, the claim(s) made by the person, or any other related or unrelated matter. Please begin each thought on a new line.

8. Thought 1
9. Thought 2
10. Thought 3

## APPENDIX D: Dispositional Envy Scale

Smith, Richard H., W. Gerrod Parrott, Edward F. Diener, Rick H. Hoyle, and Sung Hee Kim (1999), "Dispositional Envy," *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin*, 25 (8), 1007-20.

Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements (5 points, from Strongly Disagree to Strongly Agree):

1. I feel envy every day.
2. The bitter truth is that I generally feel inferior to others.
3. Feelings of envy constantly torment me.
4. It is so frustrating to see some people succeed so easily.
5. No matter what I do, envy always plagues me.
6. I am troubled by feelings of inadequacy.
7. It somehow doesn't seem fair that some people seem to have all the talent.
8. Frankly, the success of my neighbors makes me resent them.



## APPENDIX E: Self-Monitoring Scale

Snyder, Mark. "Self-monitoring of expressive behavior." *Journal of personality and social psychology* 30.4 (1974): 526.

True or false:

1. I find it hard to imitate the behavior of other people.
2. My behavior is usually an expression of my true inner feelings, attitudes, and beliefs.
3. At parties and social gatherings, I do not attempt to do or say things that others will like.
4. I can only argue for ideas I already believe.
5. I can make impromptu speeches even on topics about which I have almost no information.
6. I guess I put on a show to impress or entertain people.
7. When I am uncertain how to act in a social situation, I look to the behavior of others for cues.
8. I would probably make a good actor.
9. I rarely need the advice of my friends to choose movies, books, or music.
10. I sometimes appear to others to be experiencing deeper emotions than I actually am.
11. I laugh more when I watch a comedy with others than when alone.
12. In a group of people I am rarely the center of attention.
13. In different situations and with different people, I often act like very different persons.
14. I am not particularly good at making other people like me.
15. Even if I am not enjoying myself, I often pretend to be having a good time.
16. I'm not always the person I appear to be.
17. I would not change my opinions (or the way I do things) in order to please someone else or win their favor.
18. I have considered being an entertainer.
19. In order to get along and be liked, I tend to be what people expect me to be rather than anything else
20. I have never been good at games like charades or improvisational acting.
21. I have trouble changing my behavior to suit different people and different situations.
22. At a party, I let others keep the jokes and stories going.
23. I feel a bit awkward in company and do not show up quite so well as I should.
24. I can look anyone in the eye and tell a lie with a straight face (if for a right end).
25. I may deceive people by being friendly when I really dislike them.

## APPENDIX F: Level of Susceptibility Scale

Bearden, William O., Richard G. Netemeyer, and Jesse E. Teel (1989), "Measurement of Consumer Susceptibility to Interpersonal Influence," *Journal of Consumer Research*, 473-81.

1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree)

1. I often consult other people to help choose the best alternative available from a product class.
2. If I want to be like someone, I often try to buy the same brands that they buy.
3. It is important that others like the products and brands I buy.
4. To make sure I buy the right product or brand, I often observe what others are buying and using.
5. I rarely purchase the latest fashion styles until I am sure my friends approve of them.
6. I often identify with other people by purchasing the same products and brands they purchase.
7. If I have little experience with a product, I often ask my friends about the product.
8. When buying products, I generally purchase those brands that I think others will approve of.
9. I like to know what brands and products make good impressions on others.
10. I frequently gather information from friends or family about a product before I buy.
11. If other people can see me using a product, I often purchase the brand they expect me to buy.
12. I achieve a sense of belonging by purchasing the same products and brands that others purchase.

## APPENDIX G: Behavior Identification Scale

Vallacher RR, Wegner DM. Levels of personal agency: Individual variation in action identification. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*. 1989;57:660–671.

Any behavior can be described in many ways. For example, one person might describe a behavior as "writing a paper," while another person might describe the same behavior as "pushing keys on the keyboard." Yet another person might describe it as "expressing thoughts." This form focuses on your personal preferences for how a number of different behaviors should be described. Below you will find several behaviors listed. After each behavior will be two different ways in which the behavior might be identified. For example:

Attending class

- a. sitting in a chair
- b. looking at a teacher

Your task is to choose the identification, a or b, that best describes your behavior. Select a or b, the description that you personally believe is more appropriate for each pair.

1. Making a list
  - a. Getting organized
  - b. Writing things down
2. Reading
  - a. Following lines of print
  - b. Gaining knowledge
3. Joining the Army
  - a. Helping the Nation's defense
  - b. Signing up
4. Washing clothes
  - a. Removing odors from clothes
  - b. Putting clothes into the machine
5. Picking an apple
  - a. Getting something to eat
  - b. Pulling an apple off a branch
6. Chopping down a tree
  - a. Wielding an axe
  - b. Getting firewood

7. Measuring a room for carpeting
  - a. Getting ready to remodel
  - b. Using a tape measure
8. Cleaning the house
  - a. Showing one's cleanliness
  - b. Vacuuming the floor
9. Painting a room
  - a. Applying brush strokes
  - b. Making the room look fresh
10. Paying the rent
  - a. Maintaining a place to live
  - b. Writing a check
11. Caring for houseplants
  - a. Watering plants
  - b. Making the room look nice
12. Locking a door
  - a. Putting a key in the lock
  - b. Securing the house
13. Voting
  - a. Influencing the election
  - b. Marking a ballot
14. Climbing a tree
  - a. Getting a good view
  - b. Holding on to branches
15. Filing out a personality test
  - a. Answering questions
  - b. Revealing what you're like
16. Toothbrushing
  - a. Preventing tooth decay
  - b. Moving a brush around in one's mouth
17. Taking a test
  - a. Answering questions
  - b. Showing one's knowledge

18. Greeting someone
  - a. Saying hello
  - b. Showing friendliness
  
19. Resisting temptation
  - a. Saying "no"
  - b. Showing moral courage
  
20. Eating
  - a. Getting nutrition
  - b. Chewing and swallowing
  
21. Growing a garden
  - a. Planting seeds
  - b. Getting fresh vegetables
  
22. Traveling by car
  - a. Following a map
  - b. Seeing countryside
  
23. Having a cavity filled
  - a. Protecting your teeth
  - b. Going to the dentist
  
24. Talking to a child
  - a. Teaching a child something
  - b. Using simple words
  
25. Pushing a doorbell
  - a. Moving a finger
  - b. Seeing if someone is home

## APPENDIX H: Temporal Construal Manipulation

Förster, Jens, Ronald S. Friedman, and Nira Liberman (2004), "Temporal Construal Effects on Abstract and Concrete Thinking: Consequences for Insight and Creative Cognition," *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 87.2 (2004): 177.

Far/abstract condition: Write down at least three thoughts related to how you imagine life to be one year from now.

- Thought 1:
- Thought 2:
- Thought 3:

Near/concrete condition: Write down at least three thoughts related to how you imagine life to be tomorrow.

- Thought 1:
- Thought 2:
- Thought 3:

## APPENDIX I: Temporal Orientation Scale

Zimbardo, Philip G., and John N. Boyd (1999), "Putting Time in Perspective: A Valid, Reliable Individual-Differences Metric." *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 77.6: 1271.

1=totally disagree; 5=totally agree

1. It is all right to live one day at a time, and it is important to be happy at every moment.
2. If something does not feel good, even if you should do it, just don't do it.
3. It is very important to follow your heart and do things you really like.
4. It is very important to enjoy life at every moment.
5. It will be quite an unhappy experience if I want something but cannot get it immediately.
6. It is all right to indulge once in a while.
7. I have a strong motivation to improve my present well-being.
8. It is my present well-being that is most important.
9. My purchase decisions are mainly determined by whether I want the product or not at that moment.
10. I would prefer to have good things happen sooner rather than later.

## CURRICULUM VITAE

Alex Milovic

**Summary and Qualifications**

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My research interests involve exploring persuasion and psychology from both a consumer and sales practitioner standpoint. My dissertation explores the role envy plays in persuading and influencing sales encounters and intent to purchase. I am also interested in pursuing topics related to personal selling, sales management, relationship selling, consumer behavior, and marketing strategy.

**Education**

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**University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee**, Milwaukee, WI: PhD in Marketing-Consumer Behavior, Minor in Psychology

Dissertation: ““If You Have It, I Want It...Now!” The Effect of Envy and Construal Level on Increased Purchase Intentions

- Proposal defended on May 29, 2013
- Dissertation defended on April 25, 2014
- Dissertation committee: Dr. Laura A. Peracchio (dissertation advisor), Dr. Xiaojing Yang, Dr. Massimiliano Ostinelli, Dr. Sanjoy Ghose, Dr. Amit Bhatnagar
- GPA: 3.97/4.0
- Doctoral Fellow: 2010-2011
- 2013 AMA-Sheth Foundation Doctoral Consortium Fellow Nominee

**DePaul University**, Chicago, IL: Masters of Business Administration with Distinction-Marketing Strategy and Planning and Finance-Strategy, Execution and Valuation, June 2010 (GPA: 3.8/4.0)

**University of North Carolina-Charlotte**, Charlotte, NC: Bachelor of Science in Management Information Systems, May 2005 (GPA: 3.9/4.0)

**Towson University**, Towson, MD: Bachelor of Science in Business Administration-Marketing; Honors College, December 1999 (Major GPA: 3.6/4.0; Overall GPA: 3.3/4.0)

- Team Captain, Towson University Men's Swimming Team: 1998-1999
- Two-time winner – Scholar Athlete of the Year Award: 1998, 1999

**Teaching Interests**

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Principles of Marketing*	Professional Selling*	Consumer Behavior*
Marketing Research	Sales Management	Business-to-Business Sales
Relationship Marketing	CRM	Marketing Strategy

\* Course designed and taught at UW-Milwaukee and/or Aurora University (as of Summer 2014)



## Teaching Experience

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### University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee, Milwaukee, WI, September 2012-Present

- Fall 2012 – BA 360: Principles of Marketing (Ratings: 4.9/5.0; 5.0/5.0)
- Spring 2013 – BA 360: Principles of Marketing (Ratings: 5.0/5.0 for both sections)
- Summer 2013 – BA 360: Principles of Marketing (Online 6-week course) (Rating: 4.5/5.0)
- Fall 2013 – BA 461: Consumer Behavior (Ratings: 5.0/5.0 for both sections)
- Spring 2014 – BA 495: Professional Selling and BA 461: Consumer Behavior
- Summer 2014 – BA 360: Principles of Marketing (Online 6-week course)

### Aurora University, Aurora, IL, September 2013-May 2014

- Taught Principles of Marketing in the Adult Education program
- Class size: 8-16 students

## Awards and Honors

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- Fall 2012 Gold Star Award winner for teaching excellence (UWM)
- Spring 2013 Gold Star Award winner for teaching excellence (UWM)
- Fall 2013 Gold Star Award winner for teaching excellence (UWM)
- 2014 Marketing Management Association Spring Conference – Best in Track Paper Award (Sales and Sales Management Track)

## Conference Presentations and Proceedings (peer reviewed)

---

Milovic, Alex & Rebecca Dingus (2014), “Everyone Loves a Winner...or do they? Introducing Envy into the Sales Contest to Increase Salesperson Motivation,” Marketing Management Association Spring Conference Proceedings, Chicago, IL.

- Paper earned Best in Track award, Sales and Sales Management Track

Dingus, Rebecca, & Alex Milovic (2013), “Here, There, and Everywhere: Revising the Concept of Office Hours to Facilitate Student-Professor Interactions,” Marketing Management Association Fall Conference Proceedings, New Orleans, LA.

Milovic, Alex (2013), "The Effect of Selling at Home on Compliance," National Conference in Sales Management Proceedings, San Diego, CA, (April): 87-89.

- Abstract published in Summer 2013 *Journal of Personal Selling and Sales Management*, Volume 33(3), 338.

Milovic, Alex & Sanjoy Ghose (2012). “An Analysis of Commission Salesperson Productivity,” Poster Presentation at the Summer Marketing Educators' Conference, Chicago, IL (August).

## Working Papers

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**Milovic, Alex** & Rebecca Dingus (2014), “They sold how much? Envy as a driver for sales competition.” *Currently under review at the American Journal of Management, May, 2014.*

**Milovic, Alex**, & Sanjoy Ghose (2013). “The 10-hour Phone Week: Strategies for Implementing and Managing Success in a Commission-Based Sales Organization,” *Data collected, Target journal: Journal of Marketing Research, Target submission date: Fall, 2014.*

**Milovic, Alex**, & Jared Oakley (2014). “Do Sales Managers Want Social Media Experts? Testing the Effectiveness of Social Media Competence on Landing an Interview,” *Developing theoretical framework, Target Journal: Journal of Personal Selling and Sales Management, Target submission date: Summer, 2015.*

Oakley, Jared & **Alex Milovic** (2014), “Antecedents and Consequences of Buyer Envy: Implications for Ethical Behaviors and Sales Performance,” *Target Journal: Journal of Business and Industrial Marketing, Target Submission date: Spring 2015.*

## Academic Service

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- American Marketing Association – Doctoral student member (2012 – Present)
- Trainee reviewer – Journal of Consumer Research (September, 2012 – Present)
- Textbook reviewer - two chapters of Marketing 4<sup>th</sup> Edition (Grewal & Levy), McGraw-Hill (February, 2013)
- AACSB accreditation peer-review team PhD representative (February, 2013)
- Marketing Management Association Publication Council member (April, 2013 – Present)
- Reviewer – 2013 Marketing Management Association Fall Conference (September, 2013) – Professional Selling Track
- Reviewer – 2013 Society for Marketing Advances Fall Conference – Services Marketing Track (October, 2013)
- Reviewer – Marketing Education Review 2014 Special Issue on Teaching Innovations (Spring, 2014)
- Book Reviewer - Journal of Consumer Marketing - *Psychological Foundations of Marketing* (due date, November 1, 2013)
- Reviewer – 2014 AMS World Marketing Congress – Marketing Education Track (August, 2014)
- Reviewer – 2014 Academy of Marketing Science Annual Conference – Face-to-Face Marketing Track (May, 2014)

## Conferences Attended

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- 2014 Marketing Management Association Spring Conference, Chicago, IL
- 2013 Marketing Management Association Fall Marketing Educators Conference, New Orleans, LA (Professional Selling track presenter)
  - Received \$400 UWM Graduate School Travel Award
- 2013 AMA Sheth Doctoral Consortium, Ann Arbor, MI (University of Michigan), June 6-9, 2013 (UWM representative)
- 2013 Racom IMC Roundtable, Chicago, IL (DePaul University, May 9, 2013 (attendee)
- National Conference in Sales Management, San Diego, CA, April 4-6, 2013 (Sales Presentation-doctoral track)
  - Received \$450 UWM Graduate School Travel Award
- 2012 AMA Summer Marketing Educators' Conference, Chicago, IL, August 17-19, 2012 (Poster Presentation)
- Internationalizing Doctoral Education in Business Conference, Madison, WI (University of Wisconsin-Madison), July 20-22, 2011 (attendee)
  - Received \$150 Business and International Education grant from the U.S. Department of Education

## Academic Training – Doctoral Courses Completed

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### *Methods/Statistics*

Psychometric Theory and Practice, Structural Equation Modeling, Behavioral Research Methods, Cross-Classified Categorical Data, Marketing Research

### *Doctoral Seminars*

Consumer Behavior and Information Processing - 2 courses (Dr. Laura Peracchio), Models in Marketing: Theory and Applications (Dr. Sanjoy Ghose), Marketing Models (Dr. Amit Bhatnagar)

### *Additional Coursework*

Information Processing, Seminar in Social Psychology, Negotiation Skills Workshop, Seminar in Mediated Communication

## Professional Experience

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**TheVeteransEdge.com**, Tampa, FL, July 2012-Present

*Board Member, Marketing Consultant*

- Work with founder to develop business plan and create marketing materials for 501(c)(3) firm, whose mission is to assist Veterans in succeeding in the next phase of their careers through resume and interview preparation

**Mosaic, Inc.**, Crystal Lake, IL, January 2009-October 2009

*Field Marketing Specialist*

- Assist big-box retail management in executing store-level merchandising strategies for manufacturers

**Weaver Partners**, Geneva, IL, September 2007-December 2008

*Recruiting Consultant*

- Finished 2008 115% to sales goal

**The Goldman Sachs Group**, Chicago, IL, June 2005-September 2007

*Senior Analyst*

- Managed mutual fund operations, institutional and retail sales support, project management, database support
- Developed and sold print-on-demand website to asset third party distribution sales division; system achieved \$400,000 in cost savings
- Created and led training presentations on print-on-demand system and CRM database class for 45 GSAM sales representatives and 18 Institutional account teams

**The Black & Decker Corporation**, Long Island, NY, January 2000-June 2003

*Field Marketing Coordinator, July 2002-June 2003*

*Territory Manager, August 2000 -July 2002*

*End User Specialist, January 2000-August 2000*

- Top national territory manager for Q1 2002; third place for Q2 2002
- Grew \$6M territory 117% from January to June 2002; Grew \$8M territory 119% from August to December 2000
- Won five quarterly incentives (Top 10% of representatives) based on territory growth
- Finished 34% above sales target as captain of Regional Trade Show