The Mediating Effects of Rumination on the Relationship between Perfectionism and Self-forgiveness

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The Mediating Effects of Rumination between Self-forgiveness and Perfectionism

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Introduction
Defining Rumination
• Rumination has been defined as a maladaptive coping response to stressful occasions in which one focuses on his or her distress and on possible reasons for as well as the ramifications of the distress (Thompson, Snyder, Hoffman, Rasmussen, Billings, Heinze, Shorey, Roberts, 2005; Nolen-Hoeksema, 1991).

Defining Self-forgiveness
• Self-forgiveness has been defined as “a set of motivational changes whereby one becomes decreasingly motivated to retaliate against the self, and increasingly motivated to act benevolently toward the self” (Fincham & Hall, 2005, 622).

Defining Perfectionism
• Perfectionism has been defined as “a desire to be perfect, a fear of imperfection, and an emotional conviction that perfection might be the route to personal acceptability” (Greenspon, 2008, p. 280).

Associations between Rumination and Self-forgiveness
• It has been suggested that self-forgiveness (a prosocial, healthy, and positive attitude) may help shield an individual from depressive moods (Romero, Kalidas, Elledge, Change, Liscum, & Friedman, 2006).

Associations between Rumination and Perfectionism
• According to Besser, Flett, and Hewitt (2004), perfectionism is correlated with the ruminative response style classified by Noelen-Hoeksema (1991). Due to perfectionists’ focus on the standards others set for them and their fear of failure to perform (Frost et al., 1990), perfectionists tend to ruminate about perceived status, reputation, and inadequate performance (Blankstein, & Lumley, 2008).

Hypothesis
• I predicted that rumination would mediate the relationship between perfectionism and self-forgiveness. More specifically, I predicted that increased levels of perfectionism would be associated with increased levels of rumination, which, in turn, would cause decreased levels of self-forgiveness.

Method
Participants and Procedures
• This study contained 206 undergraduate student participants (119 female, 84 male, 3 unreported) enrolled in introductory psychology classes at a mid-sized Midwestern private university. The average age of the participants was 18.9 years old.
• Participants completed a variety of self-report measures including self-forgiveness, rumination, and perfectionism.

Measures
1. The Intrusiveness Scale for Rumination-Inspired by Impact Event Scale. To assess rumination, participants were asked to rate the degree to which self-statements applied to them such as “I couldn’t stop thinking about what I did to her/him.”
2. Self-Forgiveness. Participants were asked to recall and recount an occasion in which they have offended an individual and then to indicate to what degree they had forgiven themselves.
3. The Perfectionism Inventory (PI). This measure is an 8-scale assessment of perfectionism developed by Hill et al. (2004).

Results
• For mediational analyses, bootstrap procedures described by Preacher and Hayes, (2008) were used.

Discussion
• Rumination was found to mediate the relationship between perfectionism and self-forgiveness, confirming my predictions.
• Linking these three concepts could help mental health professionals to create more integrated treatment plans for clients displaying perfectionist behaviors and ruminative cognitions.
• Having a more diverse population will help researchers to determine whether this mediating model of rumination is dependent upon factors such as age, race, religious background, etc.
• Longitudinal research would not only reaffirm the correlations I found, but it would also provide evidence for causation within the mediating model.
• My study would benefit from using alternative methods such as observational data, behavioral data, or qualitative data based upon interviews.
• Research could further investigate the eight subscales within the Perfectionism Inventory.