

# Rumination and Decision-Making

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## What is rumination?

## What is decision-making?

- Rumination is a style of thought characterized by recurrent and prolonged thinking about an individual's self, feelings, and experiences.
- Rumination leads to prolonged and more severe episodes of major depression by magnifying and worsening existing negative mood states. It also impairs problem-solving ability (Watkins & Roberts, 2020).
- Identifying how rumination may influence problem-solving may offer ways to improve maladaptive problem-solving strategies.
- Decision-making style is a factor that influences problem solving and is defined as a learned, habitual response pattern when confronted with a decision. We measured five types of decision-making styles:
  - Rational:** characterized by a thorough search for and logical evaluation of alternatives
  - Spontaneous:** making quick decisions without thinking twice. Negatively correlated with rational decision making.
  - Dependent:** searching for advice and direction from others. Positively correlated with co-rumination.
  - Intuitive:** relying on hunches and feelings, Negatively correlated with rational decision making.
  - Avoidant:** attempting to avoid decision-making. Positively correlated with indecision.
- The current study seeks to explore whether ruminative response style is associated with decision-making style.



Study Sign-Up

## Methods

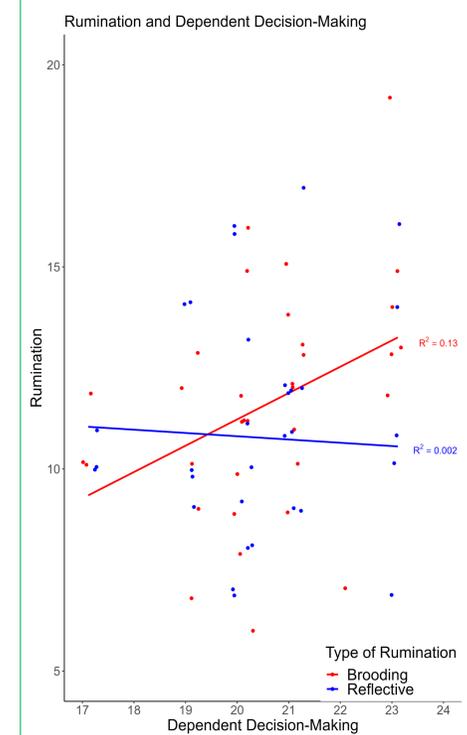
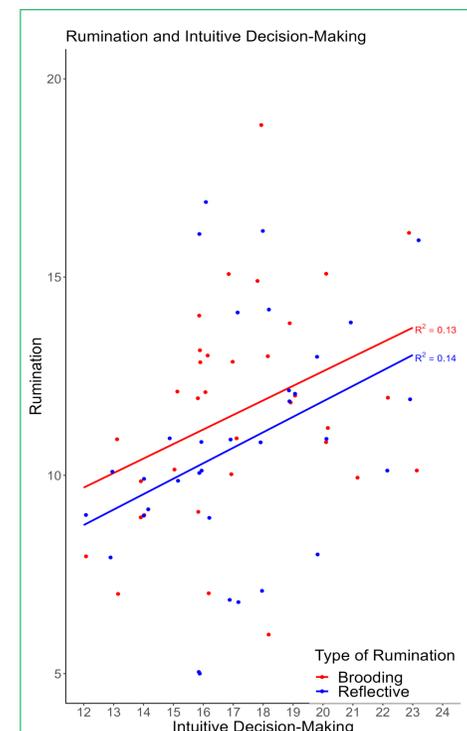
- This study included 34 individuals, 8 males and 26 females. The average age of participants is 21, (SD= 3). Each participant was affiliated with the University of South Florida and completed the Ruminative Response Scale (RRS) and General Decision-Making Scale (GDMS).
- The **GDMS** contains five subscales which measure different styles of decision-making (Scott & Bruce, 1995).
- The **RRS** contains 2 subscales (Treyner, Gonzalez, Nolen-Hoeksema, 2003)
  - Brooding: “moody pondering”, negative self-evaluative thinking and comparative thinking about the self
  - Reflecting: cognitive (as opposed to emotive) reassessment of past and present events, feelings, and behaviors

## Is there a correlation between an individual's thinking pattern, and how one may respond while making decisions? The answer is YES!

- Pearson correlations between rumination and its subtypes and the five decision-making styles were examined.
- Both brooding and reflective rumination are positively correlated with intuitive decision-making style.
- Brooding rumination is correlated with dependent decision-making style.
- Rumination is not significantly correlated with any of the other decision-making subtypes and effect sizes are very small.

Variable	M	SD	Brooding	Reflective	Total
1. Brooding	11.59	2.76			
2. Reflective	10.76	3.04			
3. Total	22.35	4.95			
4. Rational	16.06	1.77	.06 [-.28, .39]	.00 [-.34, .34]	.04 [-.31, .37]
5. Intuitive	17.18	2.78	.37* [.03, .63]	.36* [.02, .62]	.43* [.10, .67]
6. Dependent	20.56	1.67	.39* [.06, .65]	-.04 [-.38, .30]	.19 [-.16, .50]
7. Avoidant	14.21	4.76	-.09 [-.41, .26]	-.24 [-.53, .11]	-.19 [-.50, .15]
8. Spontaneous	13.41	3.39	.16 [-.19, .47]	.26 [-.09, .55]	.25 [-.10, .54]

Note. M and SD are used to represent mean and standard deviation, respectively. Values in square brackets indicate the 95% confidence interval for each correlation. \* indicates  $p < .05$ . \*\* indicates  $p < .01$ .



## Co-rumination, Depression, and Indecision

- The relationship between brooding rumination and dependent decision-making may be partially explained by co-rumination, a pattern of passive and catastrophic problem talk between individuals. (Bastin, Luyckx, Raes, & Bijttebier, 2021).
- Like dependent decision-making, co-rumination involves a passive processing style that relies on the engagement of another person.
- This interpretation is consistent with the hopelessness theory of depression, which posits that the cause of depression is an external locus of control.
- The correlation between rumination and intuitive decision making is congruent with the metacognitive aspects of these response styles.
- Rumination is an automatic and habitual response style in which individuals engages in analysis of their feelings to gain insights into the causes and consequences of those feelings. A similar response pattern may emerge when high ruminators are faced with decisions.
- Future research should investigate the direction of the relationship between rumination and decision-making and whether co-rumination plays a role in decision making style.

## References

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