

RUMINATIVE THINKING STYLE AND RELATED METACOGNITION: ANALYSIS OF GENDER DIFFERENCES

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Rumination is repetitive and passive self-focused thoughts about one's negative states and their causes and consequences (Nolen-Hoeksema et al., 1999). It is a significant predictor of psychopathology. Research shows that women are more likely to ruminate than are men (Johnson & Whisman, 2013).

Rumination is also the central element of cognitive-attentional syndrome, which is a key factor in the metacognitive model of psychopathology. According to this model, the syndrome results from general maladaptive metacognitive beliefs. Studies have shown that these beliefs are also a significant predictor of psychopathology (Wells, 2013). To date, there has not been much research on gender differences in metacognition.

Objective:

The main goal of this analysis was to examine gender differences in rumination and dysfunctional metacognition in a large group of participants.

Methods:

The study was conducted through an internet survey panel and included 1225 participants selected to meet quotas mirroring the population of Warsaw (Central Statistical Office, 2017) in terms of gender, age, and education. Of these, 61% were women. Participants completed a set of self-report questionnaires concerning rumination and metacognitive beliefs:

- Metacognitions Questionnaire (MCQ-30, Wells & Cartwright-Hatton, 2004; Dragan & Dragan, 2011)
- Ruminative Responses Scale (RRS, Treynor, Gonzalez, & Nolen-Hoeksema, 2003; Kornacka, Buczny, & Layton, 2016)
- CAS-1 (Wells, 2009; Kowalski & Dragan, 2019)

Results:

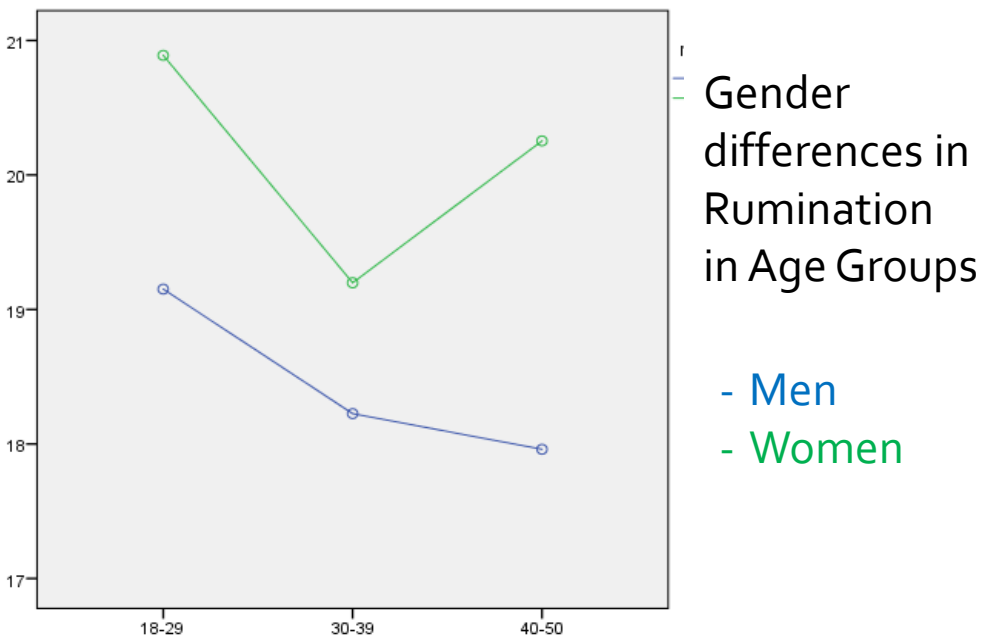
Rumination (RRS) and metacognitions (MCQ-30) correlated significantly at $r=.66$, $p<.001$.

An independent-samples t-test was conducted to compare rumination and metacognitions in men and women.

Gender differences were detected for rumination (RRS), but not for general score of metacognition (MCQ-30):

- RRS General Score: $t=5.02$, $p<0.001$
- RRS Brooding : $t=5.10$, $p<0.001$
- RRS Reflection: $t=3.92$, $p<0.001$

Significant differences were found only for two subscales of MCQ-30: the Uncontrollability and Danger scale (Negative metabeliefs, $t=5.21$, $p<0.001$) and the Need to Control Thoughts scale ($t=4.13$, $p<0.001$).



Results obtained by men and women were also compared within 3 age groups (Gender x Age; Unianova with post hoc): 18-29, 30-39 and 40-50. Analyses revealed highest tendency to rumination in women in two age groups: the youngest and the oldest.

Conclusions:

We confirmed that women are more likely to ruminate than men, particularly when they are young (below 30 years old) and above 40 years old. They also have stronger beliefs about negative aspects of rumination and the need to control thoughts.

References (selected):

- Nolen-Hoeksema, S., Larson, J., Grayson, C. (1999). Explaining the gender difference in depressive symptoms. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 77, 1061–1072.
- Johnson, D.P., Whisman, M.A. (2013). Gender differences in rumination: A meta-analysis. *Personality and Individual Differences*, 55, 367–374.
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