경영학박사 학위논문

When Does Philanthropy Benefit the Company? The Role of CSR in Mitigating Malicious Envy and Undeservingness

지각된 경제 이동성이 저하된 사회에서

기업의 기부가 악의적인 시기심을 낮추는 효과에 대하여:

마땅함(deservingness)을 중심으로

2022 년   8 월

서울대학교 대학원

경영학과 경영학 전공

박 현 아

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이 논문을 경영학박사 학위논문으로 제출함
2022 년   4 월

서울대학교 대학원
경영학과 경영학 전공
박 현 아

박현아의 경영학박사 학위논문을 인준함
2022 년   7 월

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ABSTRACT

When Does Philanthropy Benefit the Company?
The Role of CSR in Mitigating Malicious Envy and
Undeservingness

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Humans have a fundamental desire for higher status to acquire resources. Envy, as an emotional reaction to an imbalance of resources, can bring about economic equilibrium either by motivating individuals to work harder or by restraining additional effort. While research on envy in economics has shown that the degree and tolerance of inequality affect these two aspects of envy either by turning the envier competitive or by frightening the envied (Gershman 2014), in psychology, deservingness is an important appraisal dimension to determine benign or malicious envy (Van de Ven et al. 2012).

The current research investigated whether perceived economic mobility (PEM) can affect deservingness. Since PEM is highly related to the attribution of wealth (Davidai 2018) and the direction of attribution affects deservingness

(Feather 1999), we investigated the causal relationship between PEM and deservingness and the consequences from the perspective of envy.

Through nine empirical studies, we found that when participants perceived low economic mobility, they were more likely to attribute wealth to external factors, thus lowering deservingness, which consequently drove malicious envy. Therefore, people preferred the redistribution policy in low PEM. This relationship persisted with different but similar constructs of independent variables: meritocracy and perceived societal mobility.

Further, we examined whether these findings could be applied at the brand level. Based on the results that people can feel malicious envy not only in a one-on-one interpersonal relationship, but also toward a group of people (the rich), and that deservingness was more important than similarity, we found that people can feel malicious envy toward a successful brand that does not share any similarity with them.

Importantly, as fear-driven equilibrium can be achieved through distributing or diminishing additional production by the object of envy (Gershman 2014), we found that a brand's corporate social responsibility (CSR) activity, a redistribution practice of the company, can mitigate malicious envy. Specifically, when participants observed the success of a particular brand in the context of low PEM and believed that the brand lacks the deservingness to enjoy such success, they felt malicious envy toward the brand and CSR mitigated the malicious envy.

Further, this effect was particularly strong for top dogs. In the case of underdogs, the effect was mitigated because of the existing belief in the effort. In addition to this boundary condition, we found that the do-good CSR, which is an

active form of distribution, was more effective than the do-no-harm CSR in alleviating the brand malicious envy.

According to our findings, the benevolence of a brand could be a mandatory virtue in low PEM. Since redistribution can successfully mitigate malicious envy, it may help brand managers to avoid the business risk of being the object of destructive envy in an economically rigid society. In addition, this study contributes to the research on envy and brand by revealing that people can feel malicious envy toward a brand and suggesting low PEM as an antecedent of malicious envy. Above all, as economic inequality and mobility worsens, the current research can contribute to understanding consumer behavior in this emerging societal reality.

Keywords: perceived economic mobility, deservingness, malicious envy, attribution of wealth, demand for redistribution, underdog, top dog, CSR

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1. INTRODUCTION

Anne and Dorothy were walking down the street. Suddenly, Mary passed by them in a luxury car. They saw Mary and simultaneously felt uncomfortable. Anne promised to herself that she would work hard to get a car like that, but Dorothy only wanted to get Mary out of that cool car. What is the cause of these different reactions after observing the good fortunes of others? According to the research on envy, the difference comes from the judgment of whether Mary deserves to enjoy her fortune (Van de Ven, Zeelenberg, and Pieters 2012). The current study suggests that the social perception of economic mobility can affect this judgment of deservingness.

Perceived economic mobility (PEM) is a perception of the extent to which a society allows its members to move up the economic ladder in relative standing (Davidai and Gilovich 2015; Yoon and Kim 2016; Yoon and Wong 2014). When people perceive inequality, they start to think that wealth comes from outside through luck and family money; this attribution undermines the belief that you can succeed through hard work (Davidai 2018). However, this study suggests that PEM also can have an effect in the opposite direction; that is, PEM can affect the attribution of wealth as well. Thus, when people perceive lowered economic mobility, they attribute wealth to outside forces because they do not believe that economic success is possible by effort.

Moreover, The external or internal attribution of outcome is essential to judge deservingness (Feather 1999), which further determines types of envy. The

experiments of the present study confirm that, under low PEM, people are likely to feel malicious envy toward those with good fortune because of the judgement of undeservingness. More importantly, the current research expands the object of envy to brands; that is, Mary (the object of envy) could be *Apple*, *Samsung*, or *Louis Vuitton*.

Nine empirical studies help to investigate the relationships among PEM, deservingness, demand for redistribution, and malicious envy. The first five studies examine how PEM affects people's demand for redistribution and whether the judgment of deservingness mediates this relationship. Above all, by showing that malicious envy causes the demand for redistribution, the desire for superior others to be like oneself is demonstrated to be driven by malicious envy and can appear as an act of demanding redistribution.

The last four studies extend the investigation to brands. Based on the results that people can feel malicious envy toward a conceptual group (e.g., the rich) and similarity is not necessary to induce malicious envy, the study hypothesizes that the objects of malicious envy can be brands when they are considered to be too undeserving to enjoy their wealth when economic mobility is perceived to be low. Brand status—whether it is "top dog" or "underdog"—is suggested as a boundary condition based on research that people have existing beliefs regarding the perceived effort of the underdog. Lastly, in terms of corporate social responsibility (CSR), given that do-good-CSR is a more active form of redistribution in CSR valence, do-good-CSR is suggested to be more effective in mitigating malicious envy than do-no-harm-CSR.

2. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

2.1. Demand for Redistribution and Perceived Economic Mobility

According to the redistribution research, individuals prefer a redistribution policy for two primary reasons. The first is based on prospective mobility from self-interest. Individuals do not favor redistribution policies if they predict that their income will increase in the future. More specifically, people who have a positive prospect of upward mobility will not support high tax rates (Benabou and Ok 2001). In addition, individuals who believe that there are few constraints to upward mobility are likely to oppose redistribution (Fong 2006; Graham and Pettinato 2002).

The second is based on distributive fairness from a more collective perspective. Individuals who perceive that there are few obstacles to the upward movement believe that the economy is a meritocracy and the current distribution of income is therefore fair (Fong 2006). They adhere to the principle of justice, known as equity, in that people's rewards should be proportionate to their contributions (Deutsch 1985; Walster, Walster, and Bersheid 1978). Thus, when people perceive few impediments to moving up, they assume that the rich obtain their socioeconomic status through sufficient effort and have a right to enjoy their wealth, whereas the poor who did not put enough effort should accept the consequences.

PEM—a belief in social structure regarding economic movement— is closely related to these two reasons. People with high PEM believe that people

succeed when they put in considerable effort (Wakslak et al. 2007) and are thus rewarded for their effort (Sawhill and Morton 2007). People also equate mobility with meritocracy (Davidai 2018; Day and Fiske 2017; Kluegel and Smith 1986).

In the literature, Yoon and Kim (2016) measure PEM using the representative indicators of "Everyone has a fair chance at moving up the economic ladder" and "Hard work equals success described the way society works." Accordingly, PEM holds two principal drivers of redistribution: the optimistic prospect of economic mobility and meritocratic belief.

Although researchers have not revealed the relationship directly, it can be predicted that PEM will affect the preference for redistribution. Above all, considering that the demand for distribution is sensitive to features of the social situation (Nettle and Saxe 2020), PEM can sufficiently influence support for redistribution. Thus, *hypothesis 1* is as follows.

H1: PEM affects the demand for redistribution.

2.2. Attribution of Wealth and Deservingness

The prospective mobility and fairness hypotheses, which are the primary reasoning behind demand for redistribution and the concepts implied in PEM, are based on whether individuals can control their earnings and how wealth is accumulated. When individuals believe that wealth comes from internal factors such as effort and hard work, they feel a better sense of control over wealth. This judgement is referred to as the attribution of wealth.

Although people readily attribute economic success to internal factors such as dispositions and personal characteristics (Christopher and Schlenker 2000;

Kluegel and Smith 1986), under certain situations, external attribution can be increased. Davidai (2018) found that individuals who were exposed to information regarding high inequality attributed wealth to external factors, resulting in a perceived lack of economic mobility.

When individuals believe that the socioeconomic status is fixed and not under their control, they are likely to believe that the wealth comes not from effort but from circumstances of birth or luck. Though researchers have found that internal attribution of wealth enhances a belief in economic mobility (Davidai and Gilovich 2015; Day and Fiske 2017; Kraus and Tan 2015), the current study speculates a relationship in the opposite direction; that is, mobility perception can affect judgment regarding how wealth is accumulated.

Moreover, this attribution of wealth determines whether successful people "deserve" to enjoy their wealth. A judgment of deservingness refers to a judgment that relates to results that are gained because of a person's actions; if there is a fit between the action and the result, it is considered to be deserved, otherwise, it is undeserved (Feather 1999). For example, in one study about a politician being defeated, people argued that he deserved his failure when they believed the reason for his failure came from his lack of ability and effort; however, when they believed that it came from external forces and bad luck, people perceived his failure as undeserved (Feather 1999).

Thus, deservingness is affected by the judgement of how a certain result was achieved. Internal attribution to a particular outcome makes the outcome deserved, whereas external attribution diminishes it. Thus, when people believe fortune comes from internal factors, they feel a greater sense of deservingness which gives the rich right to enjoy fortune or elicits blame disadvantaged people.

In other words, under the internal attribution of wealth, inner morality is secured for the rich, while the poor person is regarded as an incapable or morally depraved individual who does not exert sufficient effort or lacks the ability. This is also a major pitfall of meritocracy (Sandel 2020; Young 1958).

Conversely, when people think that wealth comes from external factors that they cannot control, they believe the rich do not deserve to enjoy their wealth, and it is not appropriate to blame the poor for suffering poverty. Hence, supporting governmental redistribution would be considered fair in this circumstance. In sum, the belief in how the accumulation of wealth occurs affects deservingness and, ultimately, the preference for a redistribution policy. Thus, *hypothesis 2* is as follows.

H2: Deservingness mediates the relationship between PEM and the demand for redistribution.

2.3. Deservingness, Malicious Envy, and Redistribution

Interestingly, appraisals of deservingness have a role to determine different types of envy: benign and malicious (Van de Ven et al. 2012). As summarized in Table 1, "envy occurs when a person lacks another's superior quality, achievement, or possession and either desires it or wishes the other lacked it" (Parrot and Smith, 1993. p. 906). Researchers have acknowledged that there are two sides to envy that either make people motivated in positive ways or engage in destructive behavior to harm the superior other (Smith and Kim 2007; Van de Ven, Zeelenberg, and Pieters 2009). Van de Ven et al. (2009) empirically identified the two different aspects of envy, namely benign and malicious envy.

Further, the authors found that appraisals of deservingness and sense of control differentiate benign and malicious envy. That is, the latter is elicited when the situations are appraised as undeserved and low control potential. When people experience the former, they engage in constructive behavior such as trying to move themselves up to improve their social status. However, when people feel malicious envy, they participate in destructive behavior such as trying to drag the envied person down by damaging the position of the superior other (Van de Ven et al 2012).

TABLE 1

DEFINITIONS OF ENVY IN PRIOR RESEARCH

Parrott and Smith (1993)	Envy arises when a person lacks another's superior quality, achievement, or possession and either desires it or wishes that the other lacked it.
Smith and Kim (2007)	Envy is an unpleasant and often painful blend of feelings characterized by inferiority, hostility, and resentment caused by comparison with a person or group of persons who possess something we desire.
Leach (2008)	Envy is anger resulting from a frustrated desire for a fortune that is possessed by another party but is perceived as possible for oneself (and thus is something one feels one deserves).
Crusius and Mussweiler (2012)	Envy is the unpleasant emotion that can arise when people are exposed to others with superior possessions.
Van de Ven et al. (2010)	For *malicious envy,* the motivational tendencies are destructive and aimed at pulling down the envied person.
Van de Ven et al. (2011)	Malicious envy occurs when the envied individual's success is undeserved owing to chance, endowment, or nepotism.

Since any type of envy has a motive to narrow the gap of resource between oneself and the other, economics has focused on the economic equilibrium that envy brings. In economics, malicious and benign forms of envy are theorized

to equalize the imbalance of resources in a society. Gershman (2014) asserted that, deping on the extent of inequality and tolerance of the inequality, envy can help achieve economic equilibrium through two different drivers: competition and fear. In situations of low inequality or high tolerance of inequality, envy drives the "keep up with Joneses" equilibrium. Here, the envier become competitive by working hard and being more productive to gain a better status. Thus, the first equilibrium mainly arises from the actions of the lower ranks through their upward motivation. In psychology literature, this type of envy is considered benign envy.

The second equilibrium is called "fear equilibrium," which is achieved by the fear of being the object of envy. In this equilibrium, inequality is high, and the tolerance of inequality is low, so the envier shows fierce hostility and participates in destructive behavior toward superior others. Thus, the envied drives the second equilibrium through restricting effort for additional production, hiding wealth, and redistributing resources. In psychology literature, the destructive emotion that the envied is afraid of is malicious envy.

When people perceive that they are the target of malicious envy, one important coping behavior is distribution. For example, in Latin American peasant societies, the rich sponsor *fiesta* to prevent retaliation by the poor (Gershman 2014). In addition, Firth (1939) found that when one Polynesian fisher caught fish but others failed to do so, he would give away all of his fish to prevent negative talk about him back in the village. Thus, the fear of being envied makes people behave prosocially (Van de Ven, Zeelenberg, and Pieters 2010) and such practices for preventing malicious envy have been observed in various cultures (Cancian 1965; Foster 1979; Gershman 2014; Mui 1995).

This distribution strategy to appease the envious works. The prize-sharing strategy leads participants to like winners more and view them more positively (Zell and Exline 2010). In addition, learning about the failures of a successful entrepreneur reduces malicious envy (Brooks et al. 2019). More precisely, this voluntary reduction of their superior resources serves to mitigate malicious envy. Thus, we can speculate that, when the envied participate in redistribution, the malicious envy decreases.

2.4. Brand Malicious Envy

The present research examines the effect of redistribution on mitigating envy in the brand context by expanding the object of envy to brands. According to the Brand as Intentional Agents Framework (Kervyn, Fiske, and Malone 2012), relationships on human social interaction can translate to consumer–brand interactions. The authors applied the Stereotype Content Model (SCM) (Fiske et al. 2002) to brand perceptions, assuming that people establish relationships with brands that resemble those between people (Fournier 1998, 2009). As SCM demonstrates, people intuitively judge two fundamental dimensions, warmth and competence, to help their interactions with other social groups (Fiske et al. 2002; Kervyn et al. 2012). The Brand as Intentional Agents Framework showed that consumers evaluate a brand's intentions and ability, and this assessment evokes distinct emotions. Among these emotions, brands perceived as able but ill-intentioned lead to feelings of envy (Kervyn et al. 2012).

As consumers perceive brands in the same way that they perceive people (Fournier 1998, 2009; Kervyn et al. 2012), we speculate that people can feel

malicious envy toward brands that do not deserve to enjoy their wealth. Indeed, when customers have high attachment and identification with a certain brand, they feel schadenfreude toward the rival brands (Phillips-Melancon and Dalakas 2014). As malicious envy is highly related to schadenfreude (Lange, Weidman, and Crusius 2018), this study assumes that brand malicious envy is also possible. Based on the definitions of envy in Table 1, brand malicious envy is defined as "Malicious envy toward a brand is hostile anger resulting from observing a fortune possessed by another brand that is perceived as undeserving."

Finally, as traditional definitions of envy imply in Table 1, envy is elicited by social comparison; and as the envier feels similarity to the envied, the intensity of the emotion strengthens. However, in the following study, we tested whether the similarity is necessary to feel malicious envy. More specifically, by investigating the relationship between similarity and malicious envy, this study assert that people can feel malicious envy when they observe someone's (or something's) superiority without the process of social comparison or similarity perception. Thus, *hypothesis 3* is as follows.

H3: The effect of decreased deservingness on malicious envy is mitigated when a successful brand donates.

2.5. Brand Status (Top Dog vs Underdog) as a Boundary Condition

When PEM is an external factor that affects the judgment of deservingness, there is another possible factor that can influence deservingness from the internal aspect of brands: brand status. In a marketplace, consumers often infer whether a brand has a top-dog versus underdog status by observing the

amount of resources the brand can control and/or its position in the market relative to its competitors (Hoch and Deighton 1989; Paharia et al. 2011). Usually, large and well-known national brands that dominate market share are regarded as top dogs, whereas small and local brands that are less resourceful and powerful are considered underdogs.

In addition, underdogs are distinguished from top-dogs by their greater enthusiasm and will to overcome external disadvantages (Jin and Huang 2019; Paharia et al. 2011). People tend to perceive that underdogs exert more effort than top dogs, which induces preferences for underdogs (Goldschmied 2005; Vandello, Goldschmied, and Richards 2007). Indeed, people show a high degree of support for the underdog brand, and this relationship between low status and preference is explained by the attribution of effort (Vandello et al. 2007).

In particular, the effort is a critical internal attribution of wealth that has a positive correlation with deservingness (Black and Davidai 2020; Feather 1999). A successful outcome such as a high academic score following low effort is perceived as less deserved than success following high effort (Feather 2006). Following this logic, it is reasonable that, when people observe the underdog's success, they are likely to judge that the brand deserves to enjoy its fortune because they think that the success comes from efforts. Because of this existing belief of effort that heightens deservingness, malicious envy is expected to be mitigated in the case of the underdog's success. Thus, *hypothesis 4* is as follows.

H4: The effect of hypothesis 3 is stronger when the brand has a top-dog status than an underdog status.

2.6. CSR Valence (Do Good vs. Do-No-Harm CSR)

Because the current study explores how firms' participation in
distribution mitigates malicious envy toward brands, it is important to know how
CSR, a typical distribution policy of firms, is interpreted by consumers. Also,
acknowledging which of the types of CSR is more effective will yield more
practical implications. CSR constitutes firms' voluntary actions to improve social
conditions (Mackey, Mackey, and Barney 2007); it is not mandatory by law, but it
goes beyond the explicit transactional interests of the corporation to enhance social
good (McWilliams and Siegel 2000).

There are two main types of CSR: "do-no-harm" and "do-good" (Baron
1996; Mattingly and Berman 2006). While do-good CSR creates social value
through a proactive strategy, do-no-harm CSR focuses on attenuating negative
externalities (Crilly, Ni, and Jiang 2016; Godfrey, Merrill, and Hansen 2009;
Whetten, Rands, and Godfrey 2002).

Based on the findings that the voluntary reduction of the envied
individual's fortune (prize sharing strategy or wealth redistribution) works to
mitigate the envier's malicious envy, the current research hypothesizes that
redistribution is required when the envier perceives undeservingness of the envied
individual's fortune. Considering the two types of CSR, we expect that do-good
CSR, which is the more active distribution of goods, would be effective in
alleviating malicious envy toward brands. Thus, *hypothesis 5* is as follows.

H5: Do-good CSR is more effective in mitigating malicious envy than do-
no-harm CSR.

3. STUDY OVERVIEW

To test the proposed hypotheses, we conduct nine empirical studies. In Preliminary Study 1, we examine the relationship between PEM and demand for redistribution using penal data. In Study 1, we manipulate participants' PEM and examine whether it affects demand for redistribution. Specifically, in Study 1, we examine deservingness as a mediating variable between PEM and demand for redistribution.

In Study 2-1, we investigate whether the effect found in Study 1 is replicated with similar but different constructs, including meritocracy and social mobility perception, to generalize the effect. In Study 2-2, we test whether malicious envy induces the demand for redistribution as a link to the subsequent studies. Additionally, in Study 2-2, we examine whether PEM influences the attributions about wealth the rich have and, as a result, how judgments of the deservingness of the rich to enjoy their wealth are affected.

In Study 3, we go beyond the individual level of perception to the brand level. We test whether people feel malicious envy toward brands when brands do not donate (distribute their wealth) in lowered PEM. In Preliminary Study 4 and Study 4, we consider brand status (top dog vs. underdog) as a boundary condition of brand malicious envy. Lastly, in Study 5, we investigate which types of CSR (do-good CSR vs. do-no-harm CSR) can effectively mitigate malicious envy toward brands in lowered PEM.[1]

TABLE 2

OVERVIEW OF STUDIES

Study	Purpose	Independent variable	Dependent variable
Preliminary Study 1	Exploratory investigating the relationship between IV and DV.	PEM	Demand for redistribution
Study 1	Investigating causal relationship between IV and DV, and mediation analysis with deservingness.	PEM	Demand for redistribution
Study 2-1	Confirming the previous findings with similar constructs of IV, and examining the behavioral consequence.	PEM, Meritocracy, PSM	Demand for redistribution, Willingness to participate in a petition
Study 2-2	Confirming the previous findings with more robust measurement of PEM, and examining the role of malicious envy in the research model.	PEM, Meritocracy, PSM	Demand for redistribution, Willingness to participate in a petition, Malicious envy toward the rich
Study 2-3	Conducting a multiple regression to rule out the alternative explanation.	PEM, Similarity	Malicious envy toward the rich
Study 3	Examining whether the previous relationship is sustained at brand-level and examining the effect of donation.	PEM	Malicious envy toward the brand
Preliminary Study 4	Exploratory investigating the boundary condition of brand status.	PEM x Brand status (Underdog vs. Top dog)	Attitude toward the brand
Study 4	Examining brand status as a boundary condition of the previous findings and conducting discriminant analysis.	PEM x Brand status (Underdog vs. Top dog)	Malicious envy toward the brand
Study 5	Investigating which type of donation is more effective in reducing malicious envy with CSR valence (do-no-harm vs. do-good).	PEM	Malicious envy toward the brand

3.1. PRELIMINARY STUDY 1: THE PRELIMINARY EVIDENCE OF INCREASED DEMAND FOR REDISTRIBUTION BASED ON DECREASED PEM

In Preliminary Study 1, we exploratory examine the evidence of the effect of PEM on demand for redistribution. It is hypothesized that people with low PEM would increase the demand for redistribution.

Methods

We analyzed panel data from the nationally representative World Values Survey, widely used for various research purposes, including economic development, political orientation, human beliefs, and cultures. We analyzed data from Wave 7 (2017–2020). We obtained the data from https://www.worldvaluessurvey.org/WVSDocumentationWV7.jsp, using data from 76,897 participants. We selected, "In the long run, hard work usually brings a better life." = 1 to "Hard work does not generally bring success-it's more a matter of luck and connections." = 10 as a proxy variable of PEM. Additionally, for demand for redistribution, we used the degree of agreement with the statement, "Governments tax the rich and subsidize the poor" (1 = Not an essential characteristic of democracy to 10 = An essential characteristic of democracy). Since research regarding redistribution has investigated that subjective SES, income, and political orientation affect the demand for redistribution (Dawtry, Sutton, and Sibley 2015), we used these variables as control variables.

Results

The results demonstrated that the regression model was statistically significant ($F(1, 73991) = 31.75$, $p < 0.01$). For demand for redistribution, PEM was demonstrated to be a significant predictor ($t(73991) = 5.635$, $p < 0.01$). As hypothesis 1 predicted, the lower the PEM there was, the greater the agreement on the statement that the rich should be taxed. This relationship between PEM and the demand for redistribution was also significant when controlling the political orientation and subjective SES, which are known to influence wealth taxation ($t(50678) = 7.744$, $p < .001$). Therefore, hypothesis 1 was supported.

3.2. STUDY 1: THE CAUSALITY TEST OF THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PEM AND DEMAND FOR REDISTRIBUTION AND MECHANISM ANALYSIS WITH DESERVINGNESS

Study 1 has two goals. First, by manipulating PEM, we test the causality of the effect observed in the previous study. Second, we measure deservingness as a mediating variable to explain the causal relationship between PEM and demand for redistribution.

Methods

Participants and Design. We recruited 160 participants from Prolific with moderate compensation. We excluded 13 people who failed the instructional manipulation check (He and Bond 2015; Oppenheimer, Meyvis, and Davidenko 2009). As a result, 147 UK residents on Prolific (75 females, 70 males, 2 prefer not to say, Mage = 42.1) remained in the data analysis, and the main results were the

same even if the subjects were not removed. We manipulated the PEM (Kwon 2020) to test causality, and a one-factor (PEM: High vs. Low) between-subject design was employed.

Materials and Procedures. Participants were randomly assigned to either a high or low PEM condition. In the high PEM condition, people read a made-up news article (Kwon 2020) stating that the rise in social status is possible with enough effort (e.g., "where you start does not decide where you finish. The most guaranteed way to succeed in the U.K. is to work hard and build your skills.") with the illustration of a ladder depicting people rise to success. In the low PEM condition, participants were exposed to the news depicting the U.K. as an economically rigid society (e.g., "The most guaranteed way to succeed in the U.K. is to be born with a silver spoon in your mouth.") with the illustration of a ladder with children standing at floor level, and the first few rungs swan through by an adult standing higher up with a saw in hand (Kwon 2020). Then, participants were asked to summarize the article with the main argument and the picture they saw in the article. For the manipulation check, we used two scales same as the previous literature (e.g., *my future economic status mainly depends on what I am given at birth* = 0 to *my future economic status mainly depends on what I do today* = 10, adopted from Yoon and Kim 2016, α = .848).

On the next screen, the participants were asked about the demand for redistribution. We measured this variable with two scales, including "rich people should part with their money for charity" and "companies that make a lot of money are obliged to donate to society" (α = .813). Next, the participants were asked how much they feel the rich deserve to enjoy their wealth on a seven-point scale (1 =

not at all to 7 = very much; Black and Davidai 2020). Finally, the participants indicated their political orientation, age, gender, income, and ethnicity.

Results

Participants in the low PEM condition reported significantly lower mobility perception than those in high the PEM condition (M_{LOW} = 5.38, SD_{LOW} = 2.20, M_{HIGH} = 6.83 SD_{HIGH} = 1.93, $t(145)$ = -4.251, p = .000, d = .34). Thus, the PEM manipulation check was significant. While the effect of PEM on the demand for redistribution was not significant (M_{LOW} = 5.54, SD_{LOW} = 1.30, M_{HIGH} = 5.63, SD_{HIGH} = 1.24, $t(145)$ = -.406, p = .685, d = .21), the effect of PEM on deservingness was significant (M_{LOW} = 3.64, SD_{LOW} = 1.37, M_{HIGH} = 4.15 SD_{HIGH} = 1.40, $t(145)$ = -2.215, p = .028, d = .23).

Hypothesis Testing. Mediation analysis was conducted using PROCESS Model 4 (Hayes 2017) with 5,000 bootstraps resamples to assess whether PEM's effect on redistribution demand was driven by deservingness. As illustrated in Figure 1 below, the effect of PEM on the demand for redistribution was mediated by deservingness ($ß$ = −.1574, standard error [SE] = .0782, 95% CI = [-.3280, -.0164]). Furthermore, the direct effect of the demand for redistribution in this model was not significant ($ß$ = .2424, standard error [SE] = .2007, 95% CI = [-.1542, .6390]), implying that the relationship between PEM and the demand for redistribution was fully explained by deservingness. Thus, low PEM increased the demand for redistribution, and this difference seemed to be due to the decreased deservingness of the rich to enjoy their wealth.

FIGURE 1

THE MEDIATING ROLE OF DESERVINGNESS ON THE RELATIONSHIP

BETWEEN PEM AND THE DEMAND FOR REDISTRIBUTION (STUDY 1)
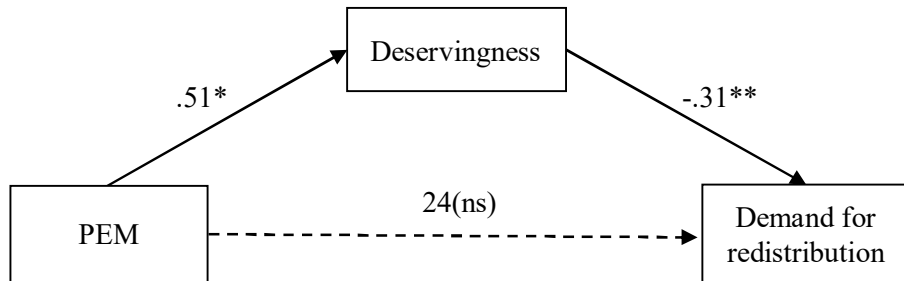
Note: * *p* < .05. ** *p* < .01. *** *p* < .001.

Discussion

As PEM increased, people thought that the rich deserved to enjoy their

wealth, and the demand for redistribution decreased. In other words, when the

belief in economic mobility through effort decreased, people thought that the rich

did not deserve to enjoy their fortune, leading to an increased demand for

redistribution. Therefore, hypothesis 2 was supported.

3.3. STUDY 2-1: CONFIRMING THE RELATIONSHIP WITH SIMILAR IVS AND INVESTIGATING THE BEHAVIORAL CONSEQUENCE OF THE DEMAND FOR REDISTRIBUTION

The objective of Study 2-1 is twofold. First, by using a behavioral

dependent variable (willingness to participate in a petition), we attempt to increase

the realism of the research and predict the outcome of increased demand for

redistribution. Second, we test whether previous findings can be replicated with

conceptually similar independent variables: perceived social mobility and meritocracy.

Perceived social mobility (PSM) is defined as the beliefs about the likelihood of moving up and down the socioeconomic ladder (Day and Fiske 2017). This indicates that PSM is conceptually very close to PEM. Further, when PSM is operated, it employs statements that are highly related to the measurements of PEM, such as "There are many opportunities for people to move up the social ladder" and "Everyone has a fair chance of moving up the economic ladder."

Additionally, meritocracy is a belief about how much hard work and ability are rewarded and how much people are perceived to deserve their success. It is measured with the statements such as "Getting ahead is a matter of working hard and relying on yourself." (Day and Fiske 2017; Jost and Hunyady 2005; Quinn and Crocker 1999). Researchers find that people equate mobility with meritocracy (Davidai 2018; Day and Fiske 2017; Kluegel and Smith1986).

While PSM emphasizes the aspect of mobility itself, meritocracy concerns the means of mobility and judgment of deservingness about the results of success. Looking at the detailed measurement elements of PEM, it encompasses both aspects of PSM and meritocracy. For example, one example of PEM measurement is that "Everyone has a fair chance of moving up the economic ladder," which is very similar to PSM. Additionally, the statement, "Hard work equals success describes the way society works" in PEM measurements is very similar to meritocracy measurements. Thus, if the hypothesized relationship with PEM is maintained with PSM and meritocracy, then it could reinforce the conceptual robustness of H1 and H2.

Methods

Participants and Design. In total, 103 participants agreed to participate in the survey through Prolific (male: 50, female: 51, prefer not to say: 1, missing: 1, mean age: 37.7). Ethnic distribution was as follows: 86.4% White, 2.9% Black or African American, 2% South Asian, 1% Middle Eastern, 1% Other Asian, 5.9% other ethnic groups/prefer not to say.

Materials and Procedures. All variables were measured rather than manipulated since we employed the survey method. PEM (two items, α = .712), meritocratic belief (Day and Fiske 2017; ten items, α = .866) and PSM (Tablante 2015; eight items, α =.785) were measured together. Next, the demand for redistribution was measured as in Study 1 (α = .781). Finally, to measure behavioral intention, we asked the participants whether they were willing to participate in a petition to tax the rich (e.g., "We are gathering signatures to send a petition to parliament urging them to support a tax increase on earnings over one million dollars. Would you join us?") (1 = definitely no, to 7 = definitely yes).

Results

As illustrated in Table 3, PEM, meritocracy, and PSM were highly correlated. Next, we examined the relationship between these independent variables and the demand for redistribution using regression analysis. As predicted in hypothesis 1, the effect of PEM on the demand for redistribution was significant (b = -.25, $t(101)$ = -3.67, $p < .001$). Furthermore, the effect of PEM on deservingness was significant (b = .38, $t(101)$ = 6.36, $p < .001$).

PSM had the same impact on the demand for redistribution (b = -.43, $t(101)$ = -3.01, $p < .01$) and deservingness (b = .55, $t(101)$ = 4.09, $p <.001$).

Additionally, meritocracy had a significant effect on the demand for redistribution ($b = -.33$, $t(101) = -2.40$, $p < .05$) and deservingness ($b = .75$, $t(101) = 6.39$, $p < .001$). All these variables affected the dependent variables in the same direction. That is, when PEM, PSM, and meritocracy decreased, the demand for redistribution increased, while deservingness decreased.

TABLE 3

THE CORRELATION BETWEEN PEM, PSM, AND MERITOCRACY

(STUDY 2-1)

	PEM	PSM	Meritocracy
PEM			
Pearson correlation	1	.687**	.682**
Sig. (2-tailed)		.000	.000
N	103	103	103
PSM			
Pearson correlation	.687**	1	.671**
Sig. (2-tailed)	.000		.000
N	103	103	103
Meritocracy			
Pearson correlation	.682**	.671**	1
Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	
N	103	103	103

Note: **Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

Hypothesis Testing. We conducted a mediation analysis using PROCESS Model 4 (Hayes 2017) with 5,000 resamples. The effect of PEM on the demand for redistribution was mediated by deservingness ($ß = -.1324$, standard error [SE] = .0519, 95% CI = [-.2430, -.0394]), confirming the replication of the results of Study 1. Additionally, the direct effect was not significant ($ß = -.1173$, standard error [SE] = .0771, 95% CI = [-.2701, .0356]). More importantly, this relationship was still valid with PSM ($ß = -.2073$, standard error [SE] = .0890, 95% CI =

[-.4061, -.0610]) and meritocracy (β = -.3240, standard error [SE] = .1133, 95% CI = [-.5616, -.1188]).

FIGURE 2

SERIAL MEDIATION TEST RESULT (STUDY 2-1)

Note: * *p* < .05. ** *p* < .01. *** *p* < .001.
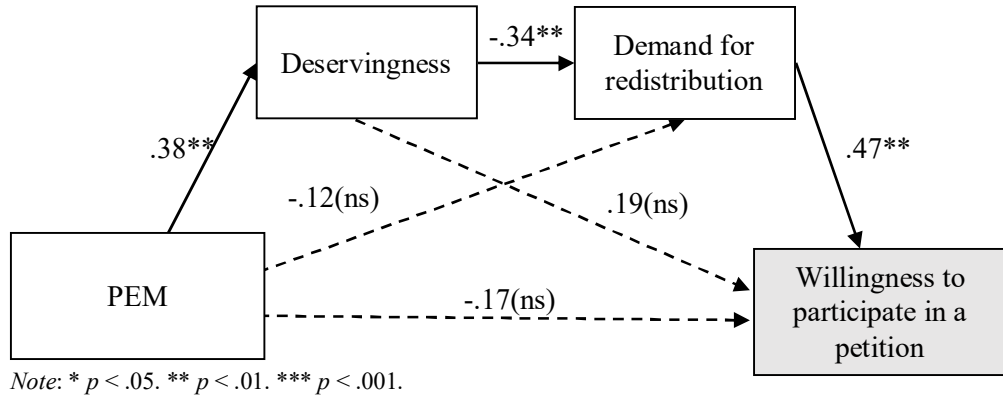
Next, we investigated whether the demand for redistribution led to the behavioral tendency of willingness to participate in a petition to tax the rich. As illustrated in Figure 2, a serial mediation test using PROCESS model 6 was significant (β = -.0609, standard error [SE] = .0360, 95% CI = [-.1467, -.0098]), and this relationship was sustained with PSM (β = -.0945, standard error [SE] = .0589, 95% CI = [-.2436, -.0162]) and meritocracy (β = -.1622, standard error [SE] = .0852, 95% CI = [-.8696, -.0752]) as well.

Discussion

From the results of Study 2-1, we confirmed again that lowered belief in economic mobility increased the demand for redistribution, which was mediated by deservingness. Further, by examining that this relationship was reproduced with

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conceptually similar variables, PSM and Meritocracy, Study 2-1 demonstrated the theoretical robustness of the research model. Study 2-1 was also meaningful as it demonstrated the behavioral consequences. Participants' willingness to participate in a petition was increased when they perceive low economic mobility, and this relationship was subsequently explained by deservingness and the demand for redistribution. Again, the serial relationships were sustained with PSM and meritocracy, proving the conceptual robustness of the research model.

3.4. STUDY 2-2: REPLICATING THE RESULTS OF STUDY 2-1 WHILE SHOWING THAT PEOPLE FEEL MALICIOUS ENVY TOWARD THE RICH

Study 2-2 has three goals. First, using a more reliable measurement of PEM (Yoon and Kim 2016), we attempt to confirm that the previous findings are replicated. Second, by directly measuring the malicious envy toward the rich, we attempt to investigate the relationship between PEM and malicious envy. Furthermore, by measuring malicious envy toward the rich, which is a conceptual target rather one by one interpersonal relationship, we expect to build a link to expand the object of envy. Third, we directly measure the attribution of wealth, which is presented as an underline mechanism between PEM and deservingness.

Methods

Participants and Design. Two hundred participants were collected from Prolific because G*power recommended 190 participants. After checking the attention test, 187 participants remained (male: 97, female: 88, prefer not to say: 2,

age: 39.9). Ethnic distribution was as follows: 82.4% White, 2.1% Black or African American, 4.8% South Asian, 1.6% East Asian, 1.6% Other Asian, 7.0% other ethnic groups/prefer not to say, 0.5% Hispanic or Latino.

Materials and Procedures. PEM was measured with eight scales (Yoon and Kim 2016; eight items, α = .921) and perceived social mobility (Tablante 2015; eight items, α =.799), meritocratic belief (Day and Fiske 2017; ten items, α = .931) followed. Next, the demand for redistribution (same as in Study 1, α = .810), willingness to participate in a petition, and demographic variables were measured.

Additionally, for the purpose of Study 2-2, we newly inserted malicious envy toward the rich (four items, α = .836) (e.g., "The rich are someone that others would want to gossip about," and "Other people would secretly want to take opportunities away from the rich,") and attribution of wealth (e.g., "How important are each of the following factors in explaining why people are rich?" (Black and Davidai 2020; internal factors (e.g., personal drive, hard work, and ability): three items, α = .913; external factors (e.g., good luck, economic system, and political influence): four items, α = .801). Finally, demographic measurements were followed.

Results

As Table 4 illustrates, with more robust measurement of PEM, the correlation between variables increased than in Study 2-1. Next, we employed regression analysis to investigate the hypothesized relationships. As demonstrated by the findings of Study 2-1, the relationships with PEM and demand for redistribution ($b = -.41$, $t(185) = - 5.777$, $p < .001$) and deservingness ($b = .53$,

$t(185) = 8.614$, $p < .001$) were significant. Furthermore, this relationship was sustained with PSM and meritocracy as well. The effect of PSM on the demand for redistribution ($b = -.48$, $t(185) = -4.358$, $p < .001$) and deservingness ($b = .71$, $t(185) = 7.479$, $p < .001$) were significant, and the effect of meritocracy on the demand for redistribution ($b = -.44$, $t(185) = -5.247$, $p < .001$) and deservingness ($b = .62$, $t(185) = 8.836$, $p < .001$) were also significant.

TABLE 4

THE CORRELATION BETWEEN PEM, PSM, AND MERITOCRACY

(STUDY 2-2)

	PEM	Meritocracy	PSM

PEM
  Pearson correlation
  Sig. (2-tailed)
  N
	1
	
	187
		.859**
		.000
		187
			.781**
			.000
			187

Meritocracy
  Pearson correlation
  Sig. (2-tailed)
  N
	.859**
	.000
	187
		1
		
		187
			.741**
			.000
			187

PSM
  Pearson correlation
  Sig. (2-tailed)
  N
	.781**
	.000
	187
		.741**
		.000
		187
			1
			
			187

Note: **Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed)

Hypothesis Testing. With a different PEM scale, the hypothesized relationship was still valid. The effect of PEM on the demand for redistribution was fully mediated by deservingness ($\beta = -.1691$, standard error [SE] = .0497, 95% CI = [-.2715, -.0756]). This relationship was also valid with meritocracy ($\beta = -.2737$, standard error [SE] = .0715, 95% CI = [-.4225, -.1440]) and PSM ($\beta = -.2133$, standard error [SE] = .0655, 95% CI = [-.3587, -.0974]).

Additionally, as the findings from Study 2-1, this relationship led to a willingness to participate in a petition (PEM: β = -.0585, standard error [SE] = .0276, 95% CI = [-.1208, -.0143]; PSM: β = -.0989, standard error [SE] = .0443, 95% CI = [-.1974, -.0277]; meritocracy: β = -.0756, standard error [SE] = .0334, 95% CI = [-.1524, -.0244]).

However, regarding malicious envy, only PEM had a full mediation relationship with deservingness and demand for redistribution (β = -.0844, standard error [SE] = .0451, 95% CI = [-.1846, -.0061]). In the case of PSM, the mediating relationship was not significant (β = -.0615, standard error [SE] = .0550, 95% CI = [-.1799, .0337]). For meritocracy, deservingness was partially mediated (β = .1562, standard error [SE] = .0790, 95% CI = [.0003, .3121]).

PROCESS Model 6 (Hayes 2017) was used to investigate the relationship between malicious envy and other constructs. As a result, as illustrated in Figure 3, malicious envy led to a demand for redistribution (β = -.0171, standard error [SE] = .0149, 95% CI = [-.0556, -.0002]).
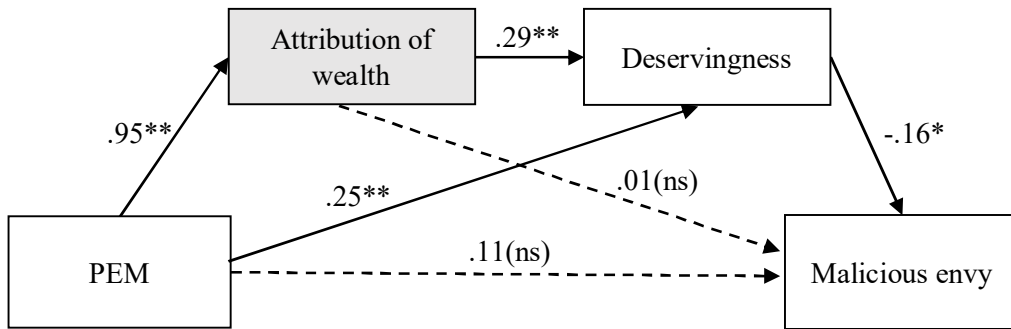
FIGURE 3

SERIAL MEDIATION TEST RESULT WHEN MALICIOUS ENVY IS

INSERTED (STUDY 2-1)

Note: * p < .05. ** p < .01. *** p < .001.
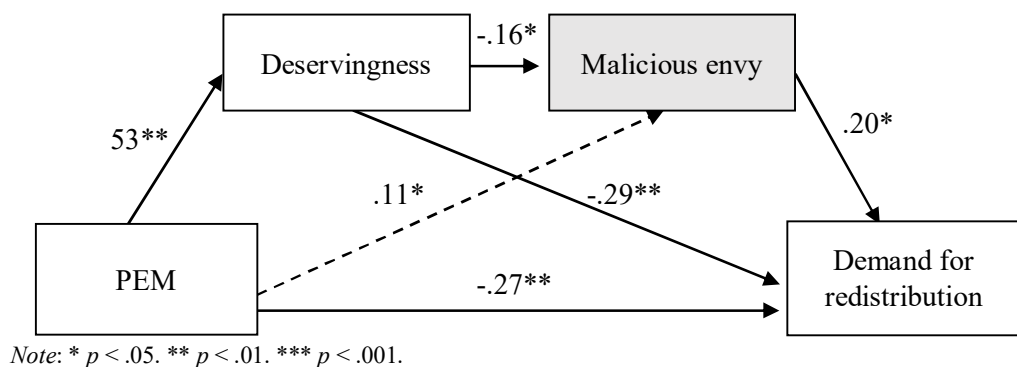
Regarding the attribution of wealth, as we explained in the previous section on why people feel the rich are considered as undeserving in lowered PEM, PEM affected the direction of attribution and influenced deservingness and malicious envy toward the rich subsequently (β = -.0453, standard error [SE] = .0239, 95% CI = [-.0977, -.0033]) (Figure 4).

FIGURE 4

SERIAL MEDIATION TEST RESULT WHEN ATTRIBUTION OF WEALTH IS

INSERTED (STUDY 2-1)

Attribution of wealth — .29** → Deservingness

PEM — .95** → Attribution of wealth

PEM — .25** → Deservingness

Deservingness — -.16* → Malicious envy

Attribution of wealth — .01(ns) → Malicious envy

PEM — .11(ns) → Malicious envy

Note: * $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. *** $p < .001$.

Discussion

Using similar but different concepts of PSM and meritocracy with PEM, the validity of the research model was reconfirmed. Furthermore, from Study 2-2, we found three interesting results. One, PEM, PSM, and meritocracy were highly correlated and conceptually very similar. However, regarding the relationship with malicious envy, PEM was an essential independent variable in building the hypothesized relationships. Two, when people perceived low economic mobility, they thought that wealth comes from external factors such as luck and family forces. This reduced how much they felt that the rich deserved to enjoy their

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wealth resulting in malicious envy toward the rich. Three, we found that people requested redistribution because of their malicious envy. That is, malicious envy was a driver for the demand for redistribution. Based on these findings, Study 3 will apply these results to brands by investigating if people feel malicious envy toward a successful brand when they do not donate (meet the demand for redistribution) in low PEM.

3.5. STUDY 2-3: IS SIMILARITY NECESSARY TO FEEL MALICIOUS ENVY?

We confirmed that people can feel malicious envy toward a conceptual object such as the rich in Study 2-2; however, people can still be suspicious of whether people can feel envy toward brands that are not human. People feel envious through social comparison. Therefore, research on envy reveals that the more similar you are to another person, the more active you are in social comparison, and the stronger you feel envy (Schaubroeck and Lam 2004; Smith and Kim 2007). However, this study demonstrates whether similarity is necessary for feeling malicious envy. We examine which of the two variables predicts envy by conducting a multiple regression analysis with deservingness and similarity.

Methods

Participants and Design. We recruited 46 participants from Prolific (male: 23, female: 22, prefer not to say: 1) in exchange for modest monetary compensation. We designed a survey that closely resembled Study 2-2, except

perceived similarity which was added in this study to investigate the relationship between similarity and malicious envy.

Procedures and Materials. Similar to Study 2-2, we measured PEM (same as Study 1; eight items, α = .951), deservingness (same as Study 1), malicious envy (same as Study 3; five items, α = .840), and attribution of wealth (same as Study 2-2; three internal items α = .873, four external items α =.736). Then, for the purpose of Study 2-3, we newly asked how similar they felt to the rich. Finally, the participants indicated their income level, age, gender, political orientation, and ethnicity.

Results

To investigate the relationship between similarity, deservingness, and malicious envy, we conducted a multiple regression. We found that deservingness (b = -.050, t(43) = -1.948, p = .058) but not similarity (b = .006, t(43) = .308, p = .760) significantly predicted malicious envy. Thus, regardless of similarity, the participants can feel malicious envy toward the envied object. In other words, deservingness could be a more important variable in predicting malicious envy than similarity. Additionally, regarding the research model, similarity was not significant as a mediating variable (β = -.0004, standard error [SE]: .0041, 95% CI = [-.0092, .0083]), while deservingness was successfully replicated (β = -.0296, standard error [SE]: .0169, 95% CI = [-.0677, -.0014]). From these results, we can speculate that people can feel malicious envy toward objects that they do not perceive to be similar.

Discussion

Study 2-3 found that similarity was unnecessary for predicting malicious envy. This result implies that it is possible to feel malicious envy toward a specific object even if it is not similar. The envied object could be a group of people whom the envier does not perceive as similar. Next, we will investigate whether people can also feel malicious envy toward brands by expanding the object of envy.

3.6. STUDY 3: ROLE OF CSR IN MITIGATING BRAND ENVY IN LOW PEM

In this study, we present the participants with a story about a brand to determine whether the previous findings apply to brands. That is, we conduct an experiment to verify, according to PEM, the malicious envy toward brands varies and whether participating in donation (meet the demand for redistribution) can alleviate malicious envy toward brands. Further, in Study 3, we test whether the relationship between PEM and malicious envy is still explained by deservingness as indicated in the previous studies.

Methods

Participants and Design. In total, 135 participants were selected using Prolific (male: 69, female: 64, prefer not to say: 2, age: 44.4). Since the participants were from the UK, we made a fake news article using the Guardian's layout (see Appendix). A one-factor (Donation: Control/ Yes/ No) between-subject design was also employed.

Procedures and Materials. The participants indicated their PEM (Yoon and Kim 2016; Yoon and Wong 2017; eight items, α = .908). Afterward, the participants were randomly assigned to either control, donation-yes, or donation-no condition. In all conditions, the participants read a made-up news article about a brand that achieved great success this year. People read that the brand donated part of that success in the donation-yes condition. People read that despite the success, the brand made no donations in the donation-no condition. In the control condition, there was no message about a donation.

Then participants answered the question about their malicious envy toward the brand. We adopt Brooks et al.'s (2019) malicious envy scale for this study (five items, α = .924). This included statements such as "Other people would wish that this brand had not been successful" and "Other people would wish that this brand would fail at something" (1 = strongly disagree to 7 = strongly agree). Then, we measured deservingness and the demand for redistribution (same as Study 1, α = .755). Additionally, by measuring attitude toward the brand (three items, α = .938), we attempted to reject the alternative hypothesis that this is just a positive or negative attitude toward the brand. Finally, demographic variables were measured, and the participants were debriefed.

Results

Before analyzing the hypothesized relationship with moderating variable, we confirmed whether the previous findings can be applied to brands. As a result, participants felt malicious envy toward brands when they perceived low deservingness due to low PEM. By using PROCESS Model 4 (Hayes 2017) with 5,000 resamples, we found that when people perceived low PEM, malicious envy
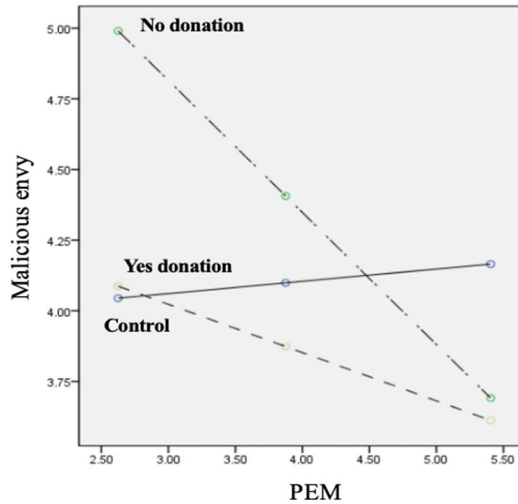
toward the successful brand increased and this relationship was fully mediated by deservingness ($\beta = -.1495$, standard error [SE] = .0528, 95% CI = [-.2583, -.0504]).

Next, to investigate the role of redistribution of brand in mitigating malicious envy, we investigated the moderating effect on the relationship between PEM and malicious envy. As the moderating variable of donation was multicategory (Control/ Yes/ No), we analyzed the variable using indicator dummy coding. With the control condition as a reference group, we had two comparison results; W1 which means Control versus No donation, and W2 which means Control versus Yes donation. As a result of moderation analysis using Model 1 of Hayes (2017) with 5,000 resamples, the main effect of PEM on malicious envy was not significant ($b = .0109$, $t(129) = 0747$, $p = .940$). The difference in malicious envy between No donation (W1) and Control was significant ($b = 2.36$, $t(129) = 2.55$, $p = .0119$). No donation group had a higher malicious envy (Mno = 4.31, SDno = 1.35) in comparison to control group (Mcont = 4.08, SDcont = 1.27). However, the difference in malicious envy between Yes donation and control (W2) was insignificant ($b = .45$, $t(129) = .56$, $p = .5753$).

Next, as a result of interaction, impact of PEM on malicious envy in No donation was considerably different (lower) from control condition ($b = -.51$, $t(129) = -2.33$, $p = .0216$). However, the effect of PEM on malicious envy in Yes donation was not significantly different from control ($b = -.18$, $t(129) = .903$ $p = .3681$). From the result of test of unconditional interaction, it was marginally significant ($F(2, 129) = 2.74$, p = .0681). The conditional effects showed that for the No donation condition, the effect of PEM on malicious envy was significant ($b = -.502$, $t(129) = -3.02$, p = .0030).

FIGURE 5

THE INTERACTION EFFECT OF PEM AND DONATION ON
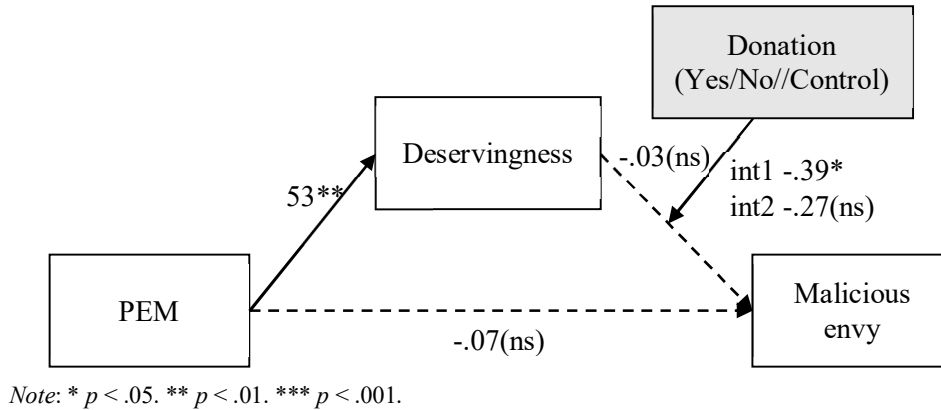
MALICIOUS ENVY (STUDY 3)

As illustrated in Figure 5, people felt more malicious envy toward the brand that did not donate in low PEM. In other words, malicious envy toward the brand can be mitigated when the successful brand participated in donation. Additionally, change in R^2 due to interaction between PEM and donation was more significant when attitude was controlled ($F(2, 128) = 3.44$, p = .0351) implying that the alternative explanation was successfully ruled out.

Hypothesis Testing. We conducted hypothesis testing using PROCESS Model 14 (Hayes 2017) with 5,000 resamples to test the moderated mediation. As Figure 6 illustrates below, the effect of PEM on malicious envy was not significant ($b = -.0743$, $t(128) = -.788$, $p > .05$), and the effect of deservingness on malicious envy was either not significant ($b = -.0315$, $\underline{t}(128) = -.222$, $p > .05$). The difference in malicious envy between No donation and Control (W1) was significant ($b =$

1.96, $t(128) = 2.24$, $p = .0267$). However, the difference in malicious envy between Yes donation and Control (W2) was not significant ($b = .9785$, $t(128) = 1.11$, $p = .2711$).

FIGURE 6

THE MODERATED MEDIATION RELATIONSHIP RESULT (STUDY 3)

Note: * $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. *** $p < .001$.

Then, the interaction effect between deservingness and donation was significant in the case of comparison of Control versus No donation condition ($b = -.3937$, $t(128) = -2.17$, $p = .0317$). That is, the impact of PEM on malicious envy in No donation was significantly different from control condition. The moderator (donation) negatively affected the relationship between deservingness and malicious envy. Next, the indirect effects in the presence of the moderator at No donation and Yes donation were significant. (No donation: $ß = 0.224$, standard error [SE] $= .0813$, 95% CI $= [-.3867, -.0715]$; Yes donation: $ß = -.1577$, standard error [SE] $= .0807$, 95% CI $= [-.3282, -.0062]$).

Since hypothesis H3 suggests that the indirect effect of PEM on malicious envy through malicious envy will be moderated by donation, the final test was if the donation was significantly moderating the indirect effect. This was assessed by

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the index of moderated mediation value. As a result, the index of moderated mediation was significant since the 95% CI does not include zero (Index W1 = -.21 standard error [SE] = .11, 95% CI = [-.4484, -.0008]). Thus, H3 was supported. Further, when controlling for "Attitude," this relationship was still sustained (Index W1 = -.11 standard error [SE] = .07, 95% CI = [-.2558, -.0051]), which rules out the alternative explanation.

Discussion

From Study 3, we found that as people feel malicious envy in low PEM toward other groups of people, they can feel malicious envy toward brands. However, when the successful brand participated in donation, malicious envy decreased; that is, malicious envy was persisted when the brand did not donate in low PEM, lending support to hypothesis 3. As in previous findings, this relationship was successfully explained by lowered deservingness induced by decreased PEM.

3.7. PRELIMINARY STUDY 4: EXAMINING BRAND STATUS AS A POSSIBLE FACTOR AFFECTING DESERVINGNESS

In Preliminary Study 4, we conduct an exploratory test on whether a brand is a top dog or underdog could work as a boundary condition. According to brand status research, people tend to perceive that underdogs exert more effort than top dogs (Goldschmied 2005; Vandello et al. 2007). Since effort is an important internal attribution factor and positively correlates with deservingness (Feather

1999), we assume that brand status (underdog vs. top dog) would interact with the PEM to influence the deservingness of the firm's success.

Before inserting underdog as a boundary condition into the research model, we want to answer the following questions: Does PEM interact with brand status? Does a preference for brand status vary depending on PEM? Is this preference explained by the perceived effort of a brand (internal attribution of wealth)? Answering these research questions can demonstrate if the brand status is another factor affecting the deservingness of brand success along with PEM.

Methods

Participants and Design. We recruited 81 participants from Prolific. We excluded five participants who failed the instructional manipulation check and 76 participants remained in the analyses (male: 37, female: 39, mean age = 45.8). Since the brand status was manipulated (Paharia et al. 2011), a one-factor (Brand Status: top dog/underdog) between-subject design was conducted.

Procedures and Materials. First, after answering the PEM question (same as Study 2-2; eight items, α = .904), the participants read a brand biography according to the condition they were assigned (underdog vs. top dog) (Paharia et al. 2011). In Underdog condition, the participants read brand biography that "Dagoda is relatively small and new premium chocolate maker…the founders always believed that their dedication and passion for gourmet chocolate would help them overcome the odd." In the top dog condition, participants read that "Dagoda is a premium chocolate maker that is well-resourced…because of this heavy financial support, they are now a trendy and well-known brand." Then perceived effort (Vandello et al. 2007; two items, α = .823) (e.g., "How much effort did this

company put in?") was measured. Since this manipulation material focused on brand biography rather than the brand's success, which could elicit envy, we measured attitude toward the brand for the dependent variable. Finally, demographic measurements were followed, and participants were debriefed.

Results

To investigate whether brand status along with PEM affects perceived effort, one of the internal attributions influencing deservingness, we employed Process Model 7 (Hayes 2017). As a result, the interaction effect on perceived effort was significant (p =.0619). The perceived effort of the top dog significantly decreased when PEM was low. PEM did not have a significant impact on perceived effort ($b = .9896$, $t(72) = 3.34$, $p = .0013$). Brand status significantly impacted perceived effort ($b = 2.54$, $t(72) = 3.36$, $p = .0012$).

FIGURE 7

THE INTERACTION EFFECT OF PEM AND BRAND STATUS ON

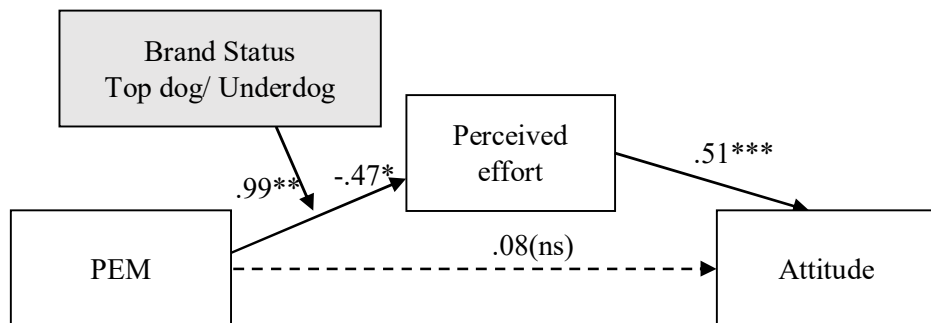PERCEIVED EFFORT (PRELIMINARY STUDY 4)
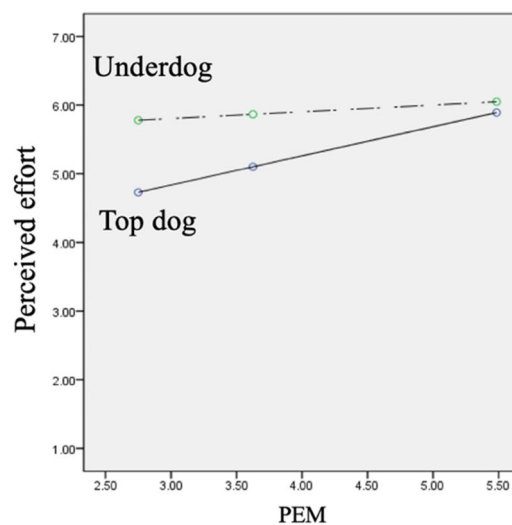
The interaction of brand status and PEM significantly impacted perceived effort (b = -.4715, $t(72)$ = -2.59, p = .0117). As illustrated in Figure7, the graph showed a steeper gradient for the top dog; the impact of PEM on perceived effort was stronger for the top dog than for the underdog. However, at underdog, the line tended to straighten, which showed that at underdog, the decrease/increase in PEM does not lead to a change in perceived effort. In conclusion, underdog brand status weakened the impact of PEM on perceived effort.

Next, the conditional indirect effects showed that the indirect effect was significant for the top dog (β = .5181, standard error [SE]= .1351, 95% CI = [.2488, .7843]). The last test was whether the brand status significantly moderated the indirect effect. This was assessed by the index of moderated mediation value. As a result, we found that the index of moderated mediation was significant (Index of Moderated mediation index = -.2406, standard error [SE] = .1177, 95% CI = [-.4987, -.0384]). Thus, we can conclude that the indirect effect is moderated by brand status (see Figure 8).

FIGURE 8

THE MODERATED MEDIATION RESULT (PRELIMINARY STUDY 4)

Note: * p < .05. ** p < .01. *** p < .001.

Discussion

    In Preliminary Study 4, we found that brand status affected perceived effort and PEM, an important internal factor in judging deservingness. In the next study, we insert brand status into the research model and investigate whether it works as a boundary condition.

3.8. STUDY 4: BOUNDARY CONDITION OF BRAND MALICIOUS ENVY AND DISCRIMINANT ANALYSIS WITH ALTERNATIVE VARIABLES

    Study 4 has three goals. First, by inserting brand status (top dog vs. underdog), we examine the boundary condition of brand malicious envy. Second, by conducting a discriminant analysis with alternative variables (e.g., resentment and attitude), we enhance the robustness of the research model. Third, we test alternative explanations of resentment. People can argue that observing a company's success elicits not envy but resentment, which is a more justice-related feeling. Resentment, another emotional reaction to advantages enjoyed by others, has a complex association with envy (Smith and Kim 2007). Since the hostile aspect of envy comes from a sense of injustice (Smith et al. 1994) regarding the advantage the envied enjoys, it could be difficult to distinguish envy from resentment. However, researchers suggest that the objectiveness of injustice determines these two emotions. Specifically, depending on whether the advantage is objectively unfair, resentment arises while envy is subjectively derived (Smith and Kim 2007). Regarding objectiveness of injustice feeling, the current research's context is close to envy because not participating in donation is not an objectively immoral practice. In addition to this theoretical reason, in Study 4, we try to

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empirically prove that envy is a more proper dependent variable rather than resentment.

Methods

Participants and Design. In total, 197 participants from Prolific (male: 95, female: 100, prefer not to say: 2) were collected, while G*power suggested 180. We conducted a two (Status: Top/ Underdog) by three (Donation: Control/ Yes/ No) between-subject design. The brand status and donation were manipulated in a news article.

Procedures and Materials. First, people answered the PEM question (same as Study 2-2; eight items, $\alpha = .932$) scale, then read a made-up news article regarding a successful brand. Then participants were randomly assigned to one of six conditions. The news article began with a brand biography (top dog vs. underdog), which was adapted from Paharia et al. (2011). Then, it presented the information that the brand recently achieved great success and whether the brand donated or not depending on their assigned condition (see Appendix). For example, in the case of the underdog with no donation condition, participants read that "Dagoda is relatively small and new premium chocolate maker…last year the company achieved great success… the company's donation had been non-existent over past few years."

Next, deservingness (same as Study 1), malicious envy (same as Study 3; five items, $\alpha = .919$), attribution of wealth (same as Study 2-1; Internal: three items, $\alpha = .913$; External: three items, $\alpha = .801$) and perceived effort (same as Preliminary Study 4; two items, $\alpha = .704$) were measured to test the hypothesized relationships. Then, resentment (Feather and Nairn 2005; three items, $\alpha = .916$) and

attitude (same as Study 3; three items, α = .944) were measured to rule out the alternative explanations and to conduct discriminant analysis.

Results

We employed the PROCESS Model 21 (Hayes 2017) to test our hypothesized model with 5,000 resamples. The results are presented in Table 4. As shown in the results for the mediation model, the regression coefficient for the interaction term between PEM and brand status was significant ($b = .30$, $t(193) = 2.56$, $p = .0112$). As Figure 9 illustrates below, people reported the lowest level of deservingness when PEM was low, and brand status was top dog. From the result of the conditional effect of PEM on deservingness at value of moderator, underdog and top dog were significant but the effect was stronger in the case of top dog (top dog: $b = .5969$, $t(193) = 7.1667$, $p = .0000$; underdog: $b = .2956$, $t(193) = 3.5551$, $p = 0.0005$), lending support to hypothesis 4.

FIGURE 9

THE INTERACTION EFFECT OF PEM AND BRAND STATUS ON

DESERVINGNESS (STUDY 4)
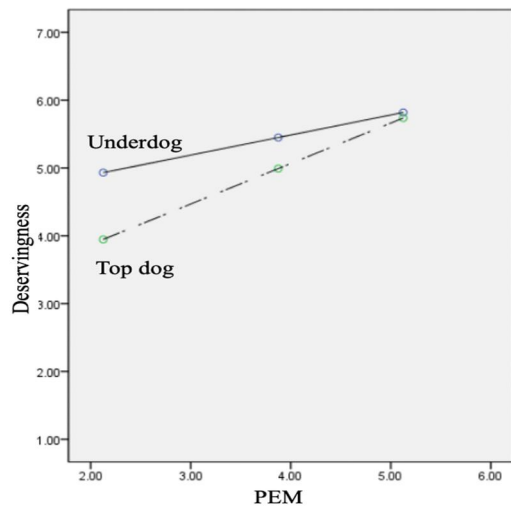
Then, the interaction effect between deservingness and donation was significant in both comparison cases. That is, the impact of PEM on malicious envy in no donation was significantly different from control and yes donation. Increase in R^2 due to interaction was significant ($F(2, 190) = 5.95$, $p = .0031$) which shows highest order unconditional interaction. Next, the indirect effect in the presence of moderator at No donation was significant ($b = -.4306$, $t(190) = -3.8377$, $p = .0002$). As the results of Study 3, donation and deservingness interacted to predict malicious envy. H3 was successfully replicated in Study 4 as well.

TABLE 5

REGRESSION RESULTS FOR OVERALL MODEL (STUDY 4)

Model	B	SE	t	R^2
Mediator variable model: Deservingness				.28
Constant	5.927	.7484	7.9210**	
PEM	-.0056	.1860	-.0301	
Brand status	-1.6250	.4706	-3.4530**	
PEM*Brand status	.3012	.1177	2.5595*	
Dependent variable model: malicious envy				.09
Constant	6.0488	.5497	11.0041	
PEM	.0245	.0749	.3266	
Deservingness	-.4306	.1122	-3.8377**	
Z1	-2.8171	.9119	-3.0894**	
Z2	-2.6874	.8904	-3.0182**	
Int_1	.5058	.1740	2.9069**	
Int_2	.4815	.1670	2.8829**	

Note: * $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. *** $p < .001$.

Hypothesis Testing. Hypothesis 4 states that H3 (the indirect effect of PEM on malicious envy through deservingness will be moderated by donation) is stronger in the case of top dog. The result of our analyses is presented in Figure 10 and Table 6, which provides effect size estimates and confidence intervals for the conditional indirect effects of PEM on malicious envy through deservingness at six different combinations of brand status and donation. As shown in Table 6, the indirect effect of PEM on malicious envy through malicious envy was significant only when the brand did not participate in donations. The results also showed that when the brand status was top dog and there was no donation, the indirect effect was -.1539, which was significant. Conversely, when the brand status was the underdog, and there was no donation, the indirect effect was -.0719, which was also significant. However, the effect was reduced, consistent with hypothesis 4.

TABLE 6

ANALYSIS OF THE CONDITIONAL INDIRECT EFFECT OF PEM AT THE VARIOUS VALUE OF THE MODERATORS (STUDY 4)
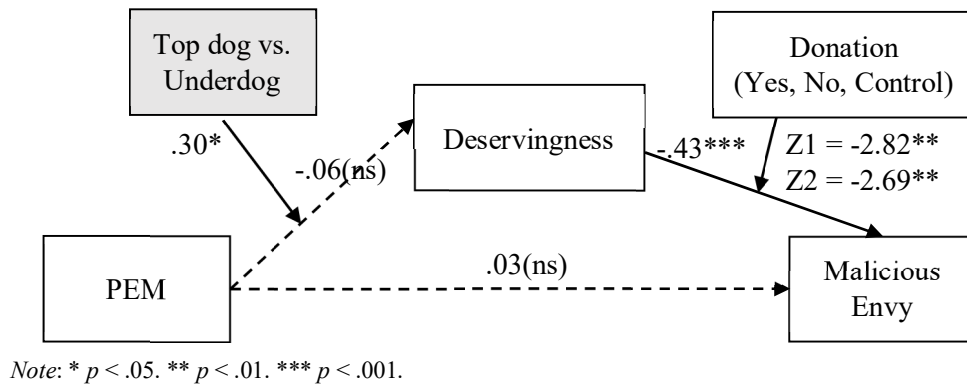
Values of moderators		Indirect effect estimate	Boot SE	95% CI	
Brand status	Donation			Lower	Upper
Underdog	No	-.0719	.0401	-.1617	-.0080
Underdog	Control	.0341	.0406	-.0378	.1249
Underdog	Yes	.0302	.0475	-.0423	.1448
Top dog	No	-.1539	.0620	-.2838	-.0391
Top dog	Control	.0730	.0820	-.0748	.2454
Top dog	Yes	.0646	.0886	-.1025	.2493

Note: 95% CI does not include zero.

This relationship was consistently significant when controlling for resentment (β = -.3078, standard error [SE] = .1168, 95% CI = [-.5381, -.0775]) and attitude (β = -.3237, standard error [SE] = .1251, 95% CI = [-.5704, -.0769]), which rules out the alternative explanations.

FIGURE 10

THE MODERATED MEDIATION RESULT (STUDY 4)

Top dog vs. Underdog		Donation (Yes, No, Control)

.30*

-.06(ns)

Deservingness

-.43***

Z1 = -2.82**
Z2 = -2.69**

PEM

.03(ns)

Malicious Envy

Note: * $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. *** $p < .001$.

Discriminant Analysis. This investigation aimed to ensure that malicious envy, attitude toward the brand, and resentment are distinctive variables. Before analyzing the data, we ran an EFA using the principal axis factor with varimax rotation. The EFA indicated a three-factor solution, which explained 83.35% of the total variance. Additionally, the corresponding scales were included in each construct. That is, all the items loaded on the expected factor. Next, we tested for convergent validity. As shown in Table 7, the average variance extracted (AVE) for every construct exceeded 0.5, the composite reliability (CR) values exceeded 0.6, and the factor loadings (FL) values of each construct exceeded 0.7, which are

recommended thresholds (Bagozzi and Yi 1988; Hair et al. 1998; Hu and Bentler 1999). Thus, these results confirmed the convergent validity.

TABLE 7

SUMMARY OF MEASUREMENT AND FACTOR LOADINGS FOR

INDICATOR RELIABILITY (STUDY 4)

Variable	Item	M	SD	Factor loadings (EFA)	Variance explained	Composite reliability	Average variance extracted
Malicious envy	Mal1	3.70	1.47	0.897	34.669	0.927	0.725
	Mal2	3.74	1.47	0.952*			
	Mal3	3.81	1.49	0.913*			
	Mal4	3.90	1.50	0.872*			
	Mal5	4.14	1.43	0.540*			
Attitude	Att1	4.75	1.57	0.850	25.339	0.946	0.855
	Att2	4.73	1.62	0.958*			
	Att3	4.74	1.56	0.961*			
Resentment	Res1	2.25	1.42	0.869	23.343	0.921	0.797
	Res2	2.50	1.72	0.930*			
	Res3	2.31	1.56	0.866*			

Note: Asterisk indicates that factor loading is significant.

Next, discriminant validity was analyzed by comparing the square root of AVE and the correlation of each variable (Hair, Ringle, and Sarstedt 2013). As shown in Table 8, the square root of the AVE for the instrument was greater than its inter-correlations with other instruments. It showed that the constructs of the framework were not absurdly correlated and they were separated. Thus, the discriminant validity was confirmed.

TABLE 8

THE DISCRIMINANT VALIDITY INDEX (STUDY 4)

	Malicious envy	Attitude	Resentment
Malicious envy	0.851		
Attitude	-0.243	0.925	
Resentment	0.302	-0.621	0.893
Cronbach's alpha	0.919	0.944	0.916

Note: Square root of AVE is shown on the diagonal of the matrix, while the inter-construct correlations are shown off the diagonal.

Discussion

Study 4 found the hypothesized model of conditional indirect effects. As we expected from the preliminary result for Study 4, brand status affected deservingness and PEM. Consistent with our predictions, we found that PEM was more strongly related to deservingness when the brand status was top dog and that this relationship was weaker when the brand status was the underdog. We also found that donation mitigated the negative effects of deservingness such that decreased deservingness was more likely to increase malicious envy only when the brand did not donate, consistent with the findings of Study 3.

Upon inserting brand status as a boundary condition, we found that in a less mobile society, people felt malicious envy toward a successful brand that did not donate (redistribute) and this effect was stronger for top dogs than underdogs. In the case of underdogs, the existing belief regarding effort buffered the effect of PEM on deservingness.

Importantly, the alternative explanations (e.g., resentment, attitude) were successfully eliminated, and the discriminant validity of these variables was confirmed.

3.9. STUDY 5: WHAT KINDS OF CSR EFFECTIVELY MITIGATE MALICIOUS ENVY?

It might be obvious that donating is better than not donating to mitigate malicious envy against the brand, even though a delicate relationship exists between PEM and brand status. To rule out this, we consider what kinds of CSR are more effective in mitigating the malicious envy toward a brand. According to CSR research, there is CSR valence, and a distinction, established in the ethics, psychology, and management literature (Baron 1996; Mattingly and Berman 2006), exists between do-good CSR and do-no-harm CSR. Do-good social responsibility focuses on proactive engagement creating positive externalities, while do-no-harm social responsibility focuses on attenuating negative externalities (Crilly et al. 2016; Godfrey et al. 2009; Whetten et al. 2002). In Study 5, we test which of the two types is a more effective to alleviate malicious envy toward brands.

Methods

Participants and Design. In total, 65 participants were selected from Prolific (male: 30, female: 33, prefer not to say: 2, average age: 38.6) and a one-factor (CSR valence: do-no-harm vs. do-good) (Crilly et al. 2016) between-subject design was used for the analysis.

Procedures and Materials. Participants were randomly assigned to either do-no-harm or do-good condition. The bogus article began with news regarding a successful brand; then it followed that the brand currently participates in CSR. Depending on the assigned condition, participants read the brand's CSR activity

which focused on do-no-harm or do-good (See Appendix). After manipulating the CSR valence, people answered the question regarding PEM (same as Study 2-2; eight items, $\alpha = .897$), deservingness (same as Study 1), malicious envy (same as Study 3; five items, $\alpha = .901$), and attribution of wealth (same as Study 2-1; Internal: three items, $\alpha = .854$; External: four items, $\alpha = .605$). Finally, demographic variables were measured, and the participants were debriefed.

Results

A moderated mediation analysis was conducted using PROCESS Model 14 (Hayes 2017) with 5,000 resamples (see Figure 11). As a result, the effect of PEM on malicious envy was significant ($b = .0842$, $t(60) = 2.305$, $p = .0246$). The effect of deservingness on malicious envy was also significant ($b = -.2449$, $t(60) = -2.952$, $p = .0045$). The effect of CSR valence on malicious envy was marginally significant ($b = -.4490$, $t(60) = -1.846$, $p = .0698$). Finally, the interaction effect of CSR valence and deservingness on malicious envy was significant ($b = .1192$, $t(60) = 2.07$, $p = .0426$).

FIGURE 11

THE MODERATED MEDIATION RESULTS (STUDY 5)

Note: * $p < .05$. ** $p < .01$. *** $p < .001$.
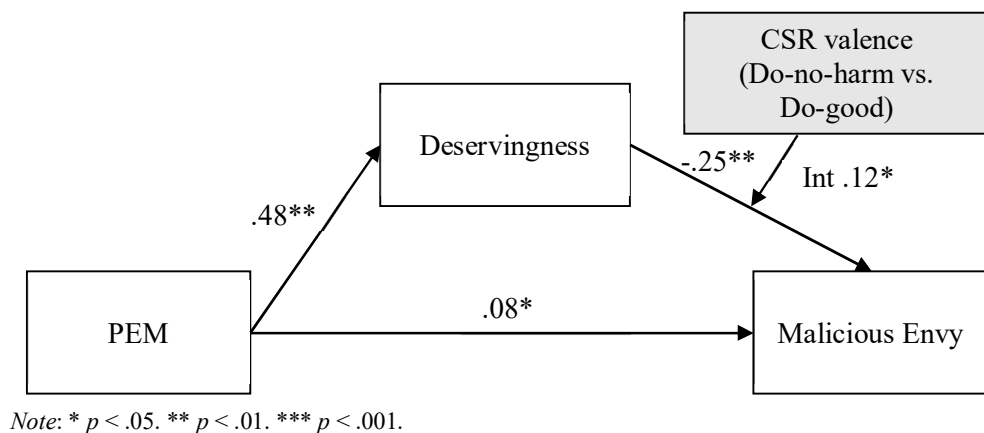
As Figure 12 illustrates, the graph showed a less steep gradient for do-good CSR. Thus, in terms of alleviating malicious envy, the impact of CSR valence on malicious envy was stronger at do-good CSR.

FIGURE 12

THE INTERACTION EFFECT OF DESERVINGNESS AND CSR VALENCE

ON MALICIOUS ENVY (STUDY 5)
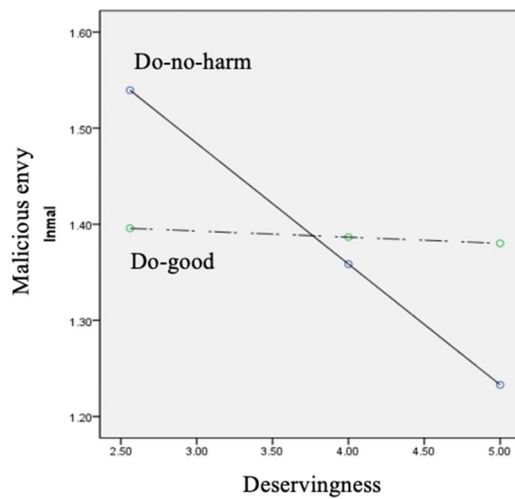
The conditional indirect effects showed that it was significant at do-good CSR (β = -.0612, standard error [SE] = .0323, 95% CI = [-.1347, -.0109]). The results showed that when the moderator was do-good CSR, the indirect effect was significant. Conversely, when the moderator was do-no-harm, the effect was not significant (β = -.0031, standard error [SE] = .0243, 95% CI = [-.0563, .0429]).

This study suggested that the indirect effect of PEM on malicious envy through deservingness will be moderated by CSR valence; it was supported as the index of moderated mediation was significant (β = .0581, standard error [SE] = .0351, 95% CI = [.0015, .1371]). Thus, we can conclude that the indirect effect is

moderated by CSR valence and do-good CSR is more effective than do-no-harm CSR in mitigating malicious envy.

4. GENERAL DISCUSSION

Globally, inequality has worsened. In addition, inequality leads to the notion of low economic mobility (Bak and Yi 2020; Davidai 2018). The current study examined how PEM can influence the feelings of individuals (or consumers) when they observe someone's (or a brand's) superiority in accumulating resources. This study hypothesized that PEM affects the judgement of deservingness, which, in turn, determines whether a situation elicits benign or malicious envy.

Nine empirical studies were conducted. The results showed that, when people perceived lowered economic mobility, they believed that the acquisition of wealth came from external forces, such as endowment and luck. Consequently, the deservingness decreased and led to malicious envy. Thus, distributing wealth was required to prevent the malicious envy.

In Preliminary Study 1 and Study 1, when PEM decreased, demand for redistribution increased, and deservingness mediated this relationship. Study 2-1 successfully replicated the relationship with the different, but similar, independent variables of meritocracy and perceived social mobility. In addition, the demand for redistribution induced real behavior, such as participating in a petition to increase tax on wealth.

This phenomenon arose at the brand level as well, where the distribution policy appeared in the form of CSR. Specifically, when participants observed the success of a brand in the context of low PEM and believed that the brand lacked the deservingness to enjoy such success, they felt malicious envy toward the brand that did not have any similarity with them.

To discuss the possible role of envy at the brand level, two exploratory surveys were conducted. Study 2-2 confirmed that malicious envy can be arisen toward the rich, not based on a personal interaction, but as a conceptual target. Study 2-3 revealed that a judgment of deservingness was more essential than similarity in eliciting malicious envy.

Based on these findings, Study 3 examined whether people feel malicious envy toward a successful, but so-called "underserving," brand when they feel low economic mobility, and whether CSR, as a redistribution practice, works to mitigate this envy. The results confirmed this relationship as well.

Study 4 revealed the boundary condition by highlighting the role of brand status in judging deservingness. In the case of underdogs, malicious envy was mitigated owing to the existing belief in effort. Finally, Study 5 showed that do-good CSR, which is an active form of distribution, was more effective than do-no-harm CSR in alleviating malicious envy toward brand.

4.1 Theoretical Contributions

As higher class guarantees access to valuable resources, power, and good health, people instinctively strive to achieve this status or protect it once they have achieved. Envy, as an emotional reaction of observing the imbalance of status, not

only shapes social hierarchy (Lange and Crusius in press) but also equalizes the imbalance of resource (Gershman 2014). In economics, the degree of economic development determines the types of envy—benign or malicious—, whereas studies in psychology focus on the role of deservingness. The present study implies that, even in developed nations, when people perceive low economic mobility, they are likely to feel malicious envy because of a decreased sense of deservingness. Thus, this study contributes to research on envy by suggesting PEM as an antecedent variable that determines whether a situation elicits malicious or benign envy.

Consumers build relationships with brands in ways that closely resemble those toward other people and social groups (Fournier 1998; Kervyn et al. 2012). Given this human inclination, one possible emotion people may have toward a brand is malicious envy. To the best of the authors' knowledge, brand studies have seldom demonstrated that consumers are maliciously envious of a brand. Because consumers can judge a brand as if it were a real object, it is reasonable to speculate that malicious envy would be in the range of emotions that consumers can feel toward a brand. In addition, the present study contributes to the research on envy in that the object of envy can be extended to non-human entities such as a brand. More precisely, according to our findings, the envied object does not have to be an object similar to the envier, because deservingness is more critical than similarity in inducing malicious envy.

The current research also has implications for politics because it integrates the reason why people prefer redistribution. The political science normally categorizes two drivers of preference for a redistribution policy: prospective mobility and fairness. The present study showed that these two drivers

can be captured in one construct, namely, PEM. As PEM encompasses both mobility and meritocratic perception, this study demonstrated that it affected redistribution preference, and, more importantly, deservingness explained this relationship. By integrating constructs of prospective mobility and fairness and revealing underlying mechanism with deservingness, the present research can be an important reference for research on politics and policy.

4.2. Practical Implications

This study has implications for brand management. First, brand managers should recognize that consumers may feel uncomfortable emotions, including malicious envy, when they see the success of a brand in the context of low economic mobility. Because malicious envy activates hostile and harmful behavior, which could be a business risk, brand managers should participate in redistribution to reduce this. That is, to prevent malicious envy, redistributive practices which have been observed in various cultures are required not only in interpersonal relationships, but also in brand–consumer relationships.

Second, as shown, the effect of low PEM on eliciting malicious envy through deservingness is mitigated when the brand is considered an underdog. Because top dogs do not have such existing belief in effort to buffer the effect of PEM, they should prioritize offsetting consumer's malicious envy when economic mobility is perceived to be low. Specifically, when a top-dog brand achieves great success, the brand can prevent malicious envy by emphasizing aspects of the effort the brand has put in or by participating in redistribution.

Third, there is growing interest in environmental, social, and governance (ESG) strategies in academia and in business. ESG practices can also be viewed as doing good or doing no harm. For example, enhancing employee well-being, reducing employee risk, and harmful environmental exposure can be considered do-no-harm types of ESG. Community volunteering activities and giving back to society can be considered do-good types of ESG. Given that do-good CSR is shown to be more effective at alleviating consumers' malicious envy in a less mobile society, brand managers can manage the relationship between consumers more effectively by engaging in do-good ESG.

4.3. Directions for Future Research

Despite these advantages, this study has many limitations. First, this study eliminated the alternative explanation by controlling for attitude or resentment. However, some studies have singled out resentment as an element of envy. Also, by some definitions, seeing and feeling a company's success can be more like resentment. Therefore, future research should investigate the feeling of resentment toward brands. Although resentment and envy are distinguished by whether inequality is objectively unjust, in this study, it is argued that the feeling toward a successful brand is close to envy because the brand has not done moral harm. However, some studies have questioned such subjectivity. Thus, by that definition, this feeling could be interpreted as close to resentment. Future research will need to more thoroughly investigate the difference between envy and resentment by supplementing this point.

Second, this effect may be more pronounced for "foreign companies." Although this study implies that the company is a multinational company, it does not provide accurate information on whether the company is an outgroup or an ingroup. Studies have shown that people demand more do-good CSR from foreign companies (Crilly et al. 2016). Therefore, it will be necessary to examine whether the effects demonstrated in this study appear differently depending on the nationality of the company. More specifically, it would be interesting to verify whether people are less or more envious in the case of domestic companies that are considered in-group.

Finally, going back to the introduction, Dorothy and Anne feel benign or malicious envy given their judgment of whether Mary deserves to enjoy her fortune. However, it also depends on how much sense of control they have. It is arguable that PEM will also affect this sense of control because of the belief that "if I try, I will succeed." In the context of low economic mobility, the sense of control is weakened, and it is highly likely that people will have a more malicious feelings when they see the wealth of others. However, this study has limitations because only deservingness under low PEM was considered. Therefore, the role of a sense of control can be investigated in future research for a more comprehensive understanding on the relationship between PEM and envy.

In summary, at the individual level, the current research revealed that, in the low PEM context, it is considered fair to distribute wealth to the poor by imposing a tax on the rich who enjoy the wealth they do not deserve; otherwise, it elicits a malicious envy toward the rich. At the brand level, this phenomenon can also emerge toward successful brands, especially if they are considered top dogs.

Thus, to mitigate this hostile emotion, successful brands in less mobile societies should participate in active forms of redistribution such as do-good CSR.

Above all, considering that economic inequality is worsening, and perceived economic mobility is lowered, this study helps understand what type of emotions people are more likely to feel in interpersonal relationships when inequality occurs. Importantly, these hostile feelings can also be extended to the brand. By highlighting the role of redistribution in low PEM at the brand level, this study will help to manage relationship between brand and consumers.

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APPENDIX

NO DONATION CONDITION (STUDY 3)

'LXC', the world's leading luxury products brand, recorded revenue of £642m in sales and £3m in donations.

The luxury brand, 'LXC,' surpassed £672m in sales last year. Operating income doubled and net profit tripled. Divided £32m were sent to head office while £3m was designated.

It was found that the world's leading luxury brand, 'LXC,' generated more than £642m in sales in the U.K. and distributed £32m to the headquarters.

According to an audit report released on the 2nd by the brand, 'LXC' U.K., the company's sales amounted to £672m last year, an increase of 33.4% from the previous year. Operating profit more than doubled to £97m, and net profit tripled to £45m.

'LXC' U.K., spent £32m in dividends last year for headquarters. This is a significant increase from zero in the previous year. The company's annual dividends have been released after nine years (2012).

Until now, limited companies were obliged to submit audit reports, but due to the revision of the External Audit Act in November last year, a new disclosure obligation was created.

Meanwhile, domestic donations have increased. The brand, 'LXC' U.K., donated 135 thousand pounds in 2011 and £3m in 2021.

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CONTROL CONDITION (STUDY 3)

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Scharffen Berger, a premium chocolate maker, recorded a revenue of £181.7m and announced a plan to help neighbours in need.

By **Toby Devlin** | 12 February 2022 | 2 min read

Scharffen Berger [Dagoba] is a premium chocolate maker that is well-resourced and has done well in the chocolate industry. The founders have significant experience in the gourmet food industry and are known to maintain quality in every step of the production process. They are now owned by an international food corporation who was able to build the brand with a large public relations budget, without compromising quality. Because of this heavy financial support, they are now a trendy and well- known brand served in the finest restaurants and gourmet food shops.

Last year, the company achieved great success. Profits soared as it earned revenue of over £181.7m in sales along with an increase in operating profits and a rise in stock prices.

Meanwhile, earlier this week, Scharffen Berger announced a detailed plan to donate £1m to neighbours in need. When asked about their poverty relief campaign, a Scharffen Berger spokesperson said, 'We are committed to providing services to help communities in need.'

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Scharffen Berger, a premium chocolate maker, recorded a revenue of £18.1m while having made no donations.

By **Toby Devlin** | 12 February 2022 | 2 min read

Scharffen Berger [Dagoba] is a relatively small and new premium chocolate maker that has had to compete against longtime powerful producers like Lindt and Godiva. Even though they had smaller marketing and distribution budgets, the founders always believed that their dedication and passion for gourmet chocolate would help them overcome the odds and bring their high-quality chocolate to market. Though still relatively less known compared to powerful competitors, they are regarded by gourmet critics to be a very high-quality premium chocolate.

Last year, the company achieved great success. Profits soared as it earned revenue of over £18m in sales along with an increase in operating profits and a rise in stock prices.

The company's domestic donations have been non-existent over the past few years. Scharffen Berger donated £10,000 in 2011. While sales doubled for about 10 years, donations have decreased in the same time period.

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'Bio.T,' the world's leading pharmaceutical brand, recorded a revenue of £642m pounds and announced a detailed plan to set up a new manufacturing center in England.

The pharmaceutical brand, 'Bio.T', surpassed £672m pounds in sales last year which is an increase of 33.4% from the previous year. Its operating income doubled to £97m pounds, and net profit tripled to £45m pounds.

According to an audit report, 'Bio.T' U.K., spent £32m pounds in dividends last year for headquarters. This is a significant increase from zero in the previous year. The company's annual dividends were released after nine years (2011).

Meanwhile, earlier this week, the company announced a planning to set up a new manufacturing center soon in England.

The manufacturing of pharmaceuticals can sometimes bring environmental risk to the local community (e.g., lower air quality, usage of hazardous chemicals, etc.).

The company will undertake initiatives to limit the negative effects of its activities on the environment, to restrict unsafe treatment of its workers, and to reduce disruption to the local community from its manufacturing.

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The company will undertake initiatives to support the local environment through technologies that it will also make available to other local firms, to invest in employee training and development, and to contribute positively to the local community.

지각된 경제 이동성이 저하된 사회에서 기업의 기부가 소비자의 악의적인 시기심을 낮추는 효과에 대하여: 마땅함(deservingness)을 중심으로

서울대학교 대학원
경영학과 경영학전공
박현아

사람은 자원을 얻기 위해 높은 지위에 대한 근본적인 욕구를 가지고 있다. 시기심은 그러한 자원의 불균형에 대한 감정적 반응으로써 사람들로 하여금 더 노력하도록 동기를 부여하거나 추가적인 노력을 제한하는 것을 통해 경제적 균형을 가지고 올 수 있다. 경제학에서 시기심 연구는 불평등과 불평등에 대한 관용의 정도가 이러한 두가지 서로 다른 양상의 시기심에 영향을 미치는 요인임을 논한 반면 (Gershman 2014), 심리학에서는 마땅함(deservingness)이 선의의 시기심과 악의적인 시기심을 결정하는 주요한 판단 영역이라고 하였다(Van de Ven et al. 2012).

본 연구는 이에 대하여 지각된 경제 이동성(PEM)이 마땅함에 영향을 주는 요인이 될 수 있음을 실증하였다. 즉, PEM 이 부가 어떻게

이뤄졌는가에 대한 귀인과 밀접한 관련이 있으며(Davidai 2018), 이러한 귀인이 마땅함에 영향을 준다(Feather 1999)는 사전 연구를 토대로 본 연구는 PEM 과 마땅함 사이에 인과적인 관계를 예측하고 이 관계가 어떤 결과를 가져오는 지를 시기심의 측면에서 탐구하였다.

 총 9 번의 실증 연구 결과, 사람들은 경제 이동성 관념이 저하될 때 성공한 타인을 보고 그 부가 물려받은 자산이나 운과 같은 외부에서 왔다고 판단하게 되며, 이는 시기심의 대상이 부를 누리는 것에 대한 마땅함을 줄인다는 것을 발견하였다. 또한 저하된 마땅함이 낮은 경제 이동성 상황에서 뛰어난 타인에 대한 악의적인 시기심의 원인임을 밝혔다. 최종적으로 이러한 악의적인 시기심은 개인 차원에서는 재분배 정책에 대한 선호를 이끌었으며, 이 관계는 PEM 과 개념적으로 유사한 변수인 능력주의나 사회 이동성 관념으로 검증해도 유지되었다.

 무엇보다 본 연구는 이러한 발견을 브랜드에 적용하였다. 즉, 사람들이 일대일 관계 뿐만 아니라 관념적인 대상(부자)에 대해서도 악의적인 질투를 느낀다는 결과와, 악의적인 질투를 일으키는 것에 대상과의 유사성보다 마땅함이 더 중요한 요인이라는 발견을 토대로, 본 연구는 사람들이 낮은 경제 이동성 상황에서는 저하된 마땅함으로 인해 브랜드에 대해서도 악의적인 질투를 느낀다는 것을 검증하였다.

 더불어, 이 효과는 시장을 장악하고 있다고 여겨지는 탑독의 경우에 더 유효했는데 이는 언더독이 갖는 노력에 대한 내재적인 믿음이 마땅함 판단에 영향을 주기 때문인 것으로 나타났다. 따라서 경제 이동성 관념이 기업 외부에서 특정 브랜드가 부를 누리는 것에 대한 마땅함 판단에 영향을 주는 반면, 브랜드의 사회적 지위는 기업의 내적인 측면에서 마땅함에 영향을 주어서 결과적으로 악의적인 시기심에 영향을 주는 것을 알 수 있었다.

또한 시기심의 대상이 타인의 악의적인 시기심을 두려워해서 자신의 자원을 분배하거나 추가 생산을 축소하는 것을 통해 경제적 균형을 가져오는 것처럼, 기업의 재분배 활동으로서 기업의 사회적 책임(CSR) 활동이 소비자의 악의적인 질투를 완화시킨다는 것을 발견하였다. 특히 기업이 어떤 CSR 활동에 참여하는 것이 악의적인 시기심을 줄이는데 더욱 효과적인가에 대해서 해를 끼치지 않는(do-no-harm) CSR 활동보다는 직접적인 분배형태인 선행을 실행하는(do-good) CSR 활동이 더 효과적이라는 것을 밝혔다.

본 연구는 사람들이 낮은 경제 이동성 관념을 가질 때 성공한 타인에 대해서 악의적인 시기심을 느끼는데 이것이 낮아진 마땅함에 의한 것임을 밝혔으며, 이러한 논의가 브랜드에도 확장하여 적용할 수 있음을 논함으로써 기존의 시기심 연구와 브랜드 연구에 기여할 것이다. 또한 본 연구는 언제(low PEM), 어떤 방식(do-good-CSR)의 분배가 효과적이며 어떤 기업(top dogs)이 특히 더 주의를 기울일 필요가 있는지를 실증함으로써 브랜드 커뮤니케이션 차원에서 실질적인 함의를 가져다 줄 것으로 기대한다.

무엇보다 경제불평등이 악화되고 사람들의 경제이동성 관념이 저하되고 있는 가운데 대인 관계에서 그리고 브랜드-소비자 관계에서 어떤 부정적인 감정이 촉발되기 쉬운지와 이를 어떻게 완화시킬 수 있는지를 논함으로써 현대 사회에서의 소비자 행동을 이해하는 데에 더욱 시의적인 의미를 가질 것으로 기대한다.