

2011 Russell Ackoff Doctoral Student Fellowships Proposal for
Research on Human Decision Processes and Risk Management

Pride and Preference

Cindy Chan

2nd Year Doctoral Student
Wharton Marketing Department

Mailing Address:

700 Jon M. Huntsman Hall
3730 Walnut Street
Philadelphia, PA 19104
Office Phone: 215-898-7235
Email: cich@wharton.upenn.edu

Faculty Advisor:

Professor Jonah Berger
Wharton Marketing Department

Requested Support: ██████████

Descriptive Summary

Pride is a relative newcomer to the field of emotion research. While other emotions have received ample attention, pride has received woefully little. Indeed, a PsycINFO keyword search of pride produces only 29 journal articles, compared to over 400 articles for anger. Not a very proud record. This limited research is surprising when one considers the prevalence and importance of this emotion in daily life—for example, politicians draw on our national pride to garner support for foreign policies, sports teams rally their fans by highlighting recent wins, universities solicit donations from their proud alumni during homecoming, and parents reinforce self-pride to encourage their children to do the right thing. In my research, I am interested in the influence of pride on consumer preferences.

Pride is evoked when an individual perceives he/she is responsible for a socially valued outcome or is a socially valued person (Mascolo and Fischer 1995) and is strongest for publicly praised accomplishments (Webster et al. 2003). Researchers have theorized that pride serves an adaptive function by conveying information about social status (Tracy and Robbins 2007a; Shariff, Tracy, and Cheng 2010), and this is supported by evidence showing that expressions of pride signal high status.

While pride is generally considered to be a positive emotion, it receives mixed reviews among the populace. One person may be encouraged to “take pride” in himself, yet another person may be accused of being “too proud.” It is considered both a “virtue and vice, noble characteristic and deadly sin” (Williams and DeSteno 2009). Some researchers have tried to resolve this paradox by identifying two related yet distinct facets of pride (Tracy and Robbins 2007b, Shariff, Tracy, and Cheng 2010; Shariff, Tracy, Cheng, and Henrich 2010). Under this framework, hubristic (alpha) pride represents pride in a global self, is elicited by internal, stable, and uncontrollable attributions; in contrast, authentic (beta) pride represents pride in a specific accomplishment, is elicited by internal, unstable, and controllable attributions. For example, if a student achieves a perfect score on an exam, a hubristically proud appraisal could be “I am smart,” whereas an authentic appraisal could be, “I did well.” While the source of pride need not necessarily differ across the two types of pride, the appraisal of the event does differ.

Results from a preliminary study I conducted show that people who recalled a time when they felt proud subsequently had a stronger preference and were willing to pay more for items with a university logo compared to people in a control condition. In contrast, there was no difference between the two conditions in preferences for non-logoed items. In future studies, I would like to extend these findings to understand when people who are proud prefer items that are associated with status or achievement (a university logoed item could arguably be either one of these). Therefore, I have designed a follow-up study to test the hypotheses that

H1a: hubristic pride will increase preference for items or experiences that enhance social status

H1b: authentic pride will increase preference for items or experiences that facilitate achievement.

Given the social component of pride, I am also interested in studying how feelings of pride influence how people interact with others. Research by Oveis, Horberg, and Keltner (2010) demonstrates that feelings of pride increase perceived similarity to strong others and decrease perceived similarity to weak others. However, this research does not distinguish between hubristic and authentic pride, and I propose that

H2a: hubristic pride will increase perceptions of interpersonal differences

H2b: authentic pride will increase perceptions of interpersonal similarities.

H2b draws on research showing that positive affect can broaden social categorization among positive (but not negative) exemplars (Isen, Niedenthal, and Cantor 1992). This hypothesis is also consistent with work by de Figueiredo and Elkins (2003) identifying two dimensions of national pride: nationalism and patriotism. Nationalists tend to be hostile toward immigrants, while patriots are more tolerant. If support is found for H2, then we may also expect that

H3a: hubristic pride will increase preferences for items or experiences that provide differentiation from others

H3b: authentic pride will increase preferences for items or experiences that facilitate social interactions.

I plan to test the above hypotheses across six studies. I believe this research will contribute to a better understanding not only of consumer decision making, but of emotions and interpersonal relations more generally. In addition to working toward a journal publication, I also intend to share my findings at the Society for Consumer Psychology Conference next year.

I am grateful for the research support that the Wharton Risk and Decision Processes Center provides doctoral student through the Ackoff Fellowship Program. I thank you for your consideration and welcome any questions you may have about my research.

References

- De Figueiredo, Jr., Rui J. P., and Zachary Elkins (2003), "Are Patriots Bigots? An Inquiry Into the Vices of In-Group Pride," *American Journal of Political Science*, 47(1), 171-88.
- Isen, Alice M., Paula M. Niedenthal, and Nancy Cantor (1992), "An Influence of Positive Affect on Social Categorization," *Motivation and Emotion*, 16(1), 65-78.
- Mascolo, Michael F. and Kurt W. Fischer (1995), "Developmental Transformations in Appraisals for Pride, Shame, and Guilt." In J. P. Tugney and K. W. Fischer (eds.), *Self-Conscious Emotions: The Psychology of Shame, Guilt, Embarrassment, and Pride* (pp. 64-113). New York, NY: Guilford Press.
- Oveis, Christopher, E. J. Horberg, and Dacher Keltner (2010), "Compassion, Pride, and Social Intuitions of Self-Other Similarity," *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 98(4), 618-30.
- Shariff, Azim F., Jessica L. Tracy, and Joey T. Cheng (2010), "Naturalism and the Tale of Two Facets," *Emotion Review*, 2(2), 182-83.
- Shariff, Azim F., Jessica L. Tracy, Joey T. Cheng, and Joseph Henrich (2010), "Further Thoughts on the Evolution of Pride's Two Facets: A Response to Clark," *Emotion Review*, 2(4), 399-400.
- Tracy, Jessica L. and Richard W. Robins (2007a), "Emerging Insights Into the Nature and Function of Pride," *Current Directions in Psychological Science*, 16(3), 147-150.
- _____ (2007b), "The Psychological Structure of Pride: A Tale of Two Facets," *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 92(3), 506-25.
- Webster, J. Mathew, Jamieson Duvall, Leslie M. Gaines, and Richard H. Smith (2003), "The Roles of Praise and Social Comparison Information in the Experience of Pride," *Journal of Social Psychology*, 143(2), 209-32.