

## 2014 Russell Ackoff Doctoral Student Fellowship Proposal

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### 1. Project title and descriptive summary:

#### *The impact of pride and disappointment on motivation*

Following the calls of Seo and coauthors (2004), recent organizational research has begun to focus on the influence of affect on work motivation. Little is still known, however, about how discrete emotions influence task effort and motivation maintenance. Further, with some exceptions (e.g., Van Kleef et al., 2009), research has largely focused on internal emotions rather than external displays (or anticipation of external displays) of emotion. Our goal is to show that external displays of pride and disappointment have a significant motivating effect. That is, workers that want others to feel proud of them or do not want others to be disappointed in them will work harder and persist with tasks longer than those who do not have those concerns.

Further, we believe that while pride and disappointment both motivate, they do not do so to the same extent. However, the relative magnitude of these effects is uncertain. On one hand, since instilling a sense of pride in another provides a positively valenced emotion, we expect it to be viewed as an emotional “gain,” while making another disappointed would be an equivalent “loss.” Consistent with theories of loss aversion, we hypothesize that people would be more motivated to avoid disappointment than to instill pride. On the other hand, it is possible that the potential to make someone proud triggers an “approach” regulatory focus and increases effort, while potentially disappointing someone triggers an “avoidance” focus and decreases effort (e.g., Forster, Grant, Idson, & Higgins, 2001). While these expressions and anticipations of disappointment and pride are technically others’ emotions, they in turn cause emotions in the workers, such as anxiety and guilt. Since these emotions have been shown to be themselves motivating (Levine, Brooks, & Schweitzer, 2013; Flynn & Schaumberg, 2012), we expect them to moderate the effect between others’ pride and disappointment and worker motivation.

Finally, we expect the nature of the relationship between parties to play a large role in determining how disappointment and pride impact motivation. For instance, Lelieveld and coauthors (2013) show that expressed disappointment triggers guilt only when expressed by an in-group member. Further, Grant and colleagues (2007) have found that meeting the beneficiaries of your work increases motivation maintenance by increasing the perceived impact of the work. Therefore, we believe that when the relationship between parties is strong, there will be a strong relationship between disappointment, pride, and motivation. However, an especially weak relationship between parties (such as that between an outside consultant and a client) will have virtually no effect.

*Planned Program of Studies.*

<b>Topic</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>Status</b>
Study 1: Self reports of how disappointment and pride impact motivation	Participants were asked to provide examples of times when they either a) did not want to disappoint someone, b) wanted to make someone proud, c) were told that they disappointed someone, or d) were told they made someone proud. We found that anticipated pride increased motivation on subsequent tasks more than anticipated disappointment ( $p < 0.001$ ) and expressed pride increased motivation more than expressed disappointment ( $p = 0.001$ ).	Completed (MTurk, N = 200)
Study 2: Impact of anticipated pride and disappointment on an effort task	In this study, participants will complete an effort task where they will be asked to count the number of times a specific letter appears in strings of random letters and numbers. They will have 5 minutes to complete as many of these as possible without any extrinsic incentive to do so (e.g., they will not be paid or rewarded for answering more questions). This task was specifically chosen due to the fact that success depends primarily on effort and motivation, rather than ability. Prior to the task, a confederate will enter the room and act as the experimenter. He will emphasize how important the participants' performance is, and will say a) "Make me proud", b) "Do not disappointment me", or c) "Do your best" (control condition). Effort will be measured according to the number of correct answers the participants provided and compared across conditions to determine which had the greatest effect.	Early/Mid March 2014 (WBL)
Study 3: Impact of anticipated pride and disappointment on an effort task (Field study)	This study will be conducted with the Penn men's heavyweight rowing team. The set up will be similar to Study 2. The team will be randomly assigned to one of 3 conditions (pride, disappointment, control). The task in this experiment will be a rowing exercise which is part of the team's regular practice. Before the exercise, the coach will emphasize performance and will say either a) "Make me proud", b) "Do not disappointment me", or c) "Do your best" (control condition). Effort will be measured by the amount of power generated during the exercise and compared to a baseline measurement.	Late March 2014
Study 4: Scenario studies to explore moderators/mediators	In future studies, we will use scenario studies to further explore how different moderators (e.g., relationship) or mediators (e.g., guilt) influence how anticipated and expressed pride and disappointment impacts motivation.	Spring 2014 (MTurk)
Study 5: Experiments to confirm effect of moderators/mediators	In future studies, we will have participants perform a similar task to the one described in Study 2. In these studies, however, we will ostensibly match participants to others that they will perform the task with. Depending on the results of the scenario studies, we will manipulate factors such as status distance between participants and social closeness, in addition to the pride/disappointment/control manipulations described in studies 2 and 3.	Summer/Fall 2014 (MTurk/WBL)

**2. Name of project advisor: Maurice E. Schweitzer**

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