Pride and Regulatory Behavior: 
The Influence of Appraisal Information 
and Self-Regulatory Goals

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Prior research has demonstrated that while people experience pride after an accomplishment, its experience can both encourage and discourage subsequent regulatory behavior. The current research shows that this seemingly contradictory influence can be accounted for by considering the information about the event that generated the pride (i.e., appraisal information) and whether or not a self-regulatory goal is active. In the absence of a self-regulatory goal, appraisal information concerning the locus of control (e.g., “I contributed to this achievement; it was not luck”) can be used to make positive inferences about one’s self-concept that reinforce further self-regulation. In the presence of a self-regulatory goal, appraisal information concerning personal agency (e.g., “This was my achievement, not someone else’s achievement”) can be used to make positive inferences about one’s progress toward self-regulation that, in turn, licenses indulgence. Thus appraisal information and the presence of self-regulatory goals is critical to how a self-conscious emotion like pride influences subsequent behavior. Implications and potential extensions in the areas of self-conscious emotions, goals, and self-regulation are discussed.

Keywords: pride, self-conscious emotions, appraisal information, goals, self-regulation

Pride is a positive self-conscious emotion that results from personal achievements or the achievements of close others (Huang, Dong, and Mukhopadhyay 2014; Tracy and Robins 2007). Self-conscious emotions (e.g., pride, embarrassment, empathy, envy, jealousy, guilt, shame) differ from basic emotions in that their elicitation is accompanied by complex cognitions about the self (Han, Duhacheck, and Agrawal 2014; Tangney and Tracy 2012). These complex cognitions are self-evaluative and self-reflective (Campos et al. 1994; Lazarus 1991). Moreover, these complex cognitions can influence a host of subsequent behaviors including product choice (Huang et al. 2014), creative expression (Damian and Robins 2012), and self-regulation (Wilcox, Kramer, and Sen 2011).

Self-conscious emotions influence a variety of behaviors, but in inconsistent ways. For example, Williams and DeSteno (2008) found that pride increased regulatory behavior, whereas Winterich and Haws (2011) found that pride reduced regulatory behavior. Envy, an emotion elicited from making unfavorable social comparisons with others, can increase (Van de Ven, Zeelenberg, and Pieters 2011) and decrease (Crusiui and Mussweiler 2012) task...
effects of self-conscious emotions on behavior. The broader implications of our framework for studying the information that elicited the pride and whether a self-differentiation that results from pride depends on the appraisal regulatory behavior. In four studies, we find that the type of inference that occurs when a self-regulatory goal is active (Laran and Janiszewski 2009). Importantly, the extent of these inferences should depend on the nature of the appraisal information that led to the pride. For example, pride that is elicited from an internal locus of control (e.g., “I am responsible”) should be more likely to generate a self-concept inference (e.g., “I was disciplined”) than pride elicited from an external locus of control (e.g., “I got lucky”). Similarly, pride that is a consequence of personal agency (“I accomplished that”) should be more likely to generate a goal progress inference than pride that is a consequence of other agency (e.g., “My mom accomplished that”).

This article is organized as follows. We first provide an overview of appraisal-tendency theory. Next we discuss the emotion-as-input perspective and its claim that the influence of emotions on behavior depends on contextual factors. Then we use the functionalist perspective of emotions to predict when pride will result in either self-concept or goal progress inferences that, in turn, will determine regulatory behavior. In four studies, we find that the type of inference that results from pride depends on the appraisal information that elicited the pride and whether a self-regulatory goal is active or inactive. Finally, we consider the broader implications of our framework for studying the effects of self-conscious emotions on behavior.

THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

Appraisal-Tendency Theory

Appraisal-tendency theory is a foundational framework in the emotions literature (Ellsworth and Smith 1988; Lerner and Keltner 2000; Roseman 1991). Classic appraisal theories classify discrete emotions based on differences in appraisal dimensions such as pleasantness, arousal, certainty, effort, locus of control, agency, and novelty (Roseman, Wiest, and Swartz 1994; Smith and Ellsworth 1985; So et al. 2015). For instance, a negative outcome that includes an appraisal of certainty generates anger. However, if a negative outcome includes an appraisal of uncertainty, fear is experienced (Lerner and Keltner 2000). Similarly, a positive outcome that includes an appraisal of novelty (familiarity) will elicit surprise (calm) (Ellsworth and Smith 1988). Thus appraisal theory emphasizes the importance of the emotion-eliciting situation (henceforth appraisal information) for predicting the felt emotion (henceforth emotional experience; see figure 1, first two boxes, solid line).

The Emotion-as-Input Perspective

Although appraisal theory is useful for understanding the source of a felt emotion, the perspective is less informative for understanding the behavioral consequences of an emotion. Addressing this possibility, the emotion-as-input perspective looks at how contextual factors (e.g., a person’s goal state) impact the accessibility of inferences associated with an emotion, so as to influence behavior (Martin and Davies 1998). For instance, Martin et al. (1993) looked at how happiness versus sadness influenced the desire to gather the information needed to form an impression. They found that the effect of each emotion depended on active goals. When a thoroughness goal was salient, happiness (sadness) led people to infer that they had been sufficiently (insufficiently) thorough and to expend less (more) effort. However, when an enjoyment goal was salient, happiness (sadness) led people to infer that they were having more (less) fun and to expend more (less) effort. Thus contextual factors can determine the inferences people make from an emotion, which guide subsequent behaviors (see figure 1, solid lines moving right from emotional experience).

Functionalist Perspective of Emotion

The functionalist perspective builds on the appraisal-tendency and emotion-as-input perspectives. The functionalist perspective assumes that emotions influence behavior as a function of a person’s ongoing interaction with the environment (Crusius and Lange 2014; Frijda 2005). Functionals assume emotions exert an influence on subsequent behavior owing to two properties. First, emotions are composed of neural programs that facilitate adaptive responses to the environment (DeSteno, Valdesolo, and Bartlett 2006; Griskevicius, Shiotia, and Nowlis 2010). An emotion includes (1) antecedent appraisal information concerning the source of the emotion, (2) the emotional experience, (3) schemata for interpreting the meaning of the emotion (i.e., emotion-based inferences), and (4) response schemata that dictate behavior given the emotion (Campos et al. 1994; Griskevicius et al. 2009; Witherington and
Response schemata use appraisal information, emotional experience, and emotion-based inferences to determine which behaviors are appropriate. Second, emotions are dynamic systems that can be used to either initiate or modify goal-directed behavior (Frijda 2005; Keltner and Gross 1999). The accessibility of schemata that dictate the behavioral responses to an emotion depends on contextual factors in the environment, such as a person’s goal state (Tooby and Cosmides 2008). Thus the manner in which an emotion informs behavior is not only a function of the appraisal information that elicited the emotion, but also the context in which the emotion will influence behavior (see figure 1, solid lines).

The functionalist perspective explains (1) how two different emotions can alter behavior, given the same response schema, or (2) how two different response schemata can alter behavior, given the same emotion. Huang et al. (2014) provide an example of the former. Participants were asked to think about a situation in which they felt proud because of “who they are” or “what they did.” Being proud of one’s self oriented people toward personal traits (i.e., hubristic pride), while being proud of one’s actions oriented people toward accomplishment (i.e., authentic pride). Consequently, participants who were proud of who they were (what they did) preferred unique (common) products. Wilcox et al. (2011, study 3) provide an example of the latter. Participants were asked to write about an accomplishment that made them proud. Then a health goal was primed, and participants were given a choice between (a) French fries or a salad (goal-relevant choice) or (b) a $25 gift certificate for entertainment or school supplies (goal-irrelevant choice). Participants preferred French fries (indulgent option) when the choice was goal relevant, but the school supply certificate (virtuous option) when it was not. Wilcox et al. concluded that in the presence of a regulatory goal, pride was taken as evidence of accomplishment that licensed indulgence. In the absence of a relevant goal, pride made people self-aware, which encouraged the choice of the virtuous option.

**Functionalist Perspective, Pride, and Regulatory Behavior**

The results of Huang et al. (2014) and Wilcox et al. (2011) illustrate how appraisal information can be used to draw inferences that influence subsequent behaviors. Yet their evidence aligns with the functionalist through an appraisal theory lens perspective, in that only appraisal information that changes the emotional experience from one discrete emotion to another influences subsequent behavior (see solid lines in figure 1). An alternative perspective, appraisal theory through a functionalist lens, assumes that incidental appraisal information (i.e., appraisal information that does not change the emotional experience) can also influence subsequent behavior (see dashed lines in figure 1). That is, different sets of appraisal information can generate the same emotion yet result in different emotion-based inferences that, in turn, inform different response schema when guiding behavior. This perspective challenges the assumption that only the appraisal information that defines an emotion can inform emotion-based inferences, response schema, and behavior.

The appraisal theory through a functionalist lens perspective can inform our understanding of the regulatory consequences of pride. Pride is a self-conscious emotion that results from personal achievements, or the achievements of close others, that lead to a desirable outcome (Roseman, Spindel, and Jose 1990; Roseman et al. 1994).
Pride appraisal information can vary with respect to effort (i.e., high vs. low), locus of control (i.e., internal vs. external), and agency (i.e., personal vs. other), although variance along these dimensions often has little influence on the intensity of a pride experience. To illustrate, consider a student who is proud of earning an “A.” The “A” could be the result of little effort or extensive effort. Regardless of the effort, the grade should lead to a feeling of pride (Tracy and Robins 2007). Yet we argue that changes in the appraisal information (little vs. extensive effort) could influence regulatory behavior. For example, in the absence of a self-regulatory goal (a contextual factor), high-effort pride should encourage emotion-based inferences about self-discipline. These inferences should inform the default response schema and encourage regulatory behavior. In the presence of a self-regulatory goal (a contextual factor), high-effort pride should encourage emotion-based inferences about goal progress. These inferences should inform the goal-based response schema and license indulgence.

H1a: In the absence of a self-regulatory goal, an experience of pride containing high effort (but not low effort) appraisal information will encourage inferences of self-discipline, inform the default response schema, and increase regulatory behavior.

H1b: In the presence of a self-regulatory goal, an experience of pride containing high effort (but not low effort) appraisal information will encourage inferences of goal progress, inform the goal-based response schema (i.e., license), and decrease regulatory behavior.

Consistent with the functionalist perspective, appraisal information need not influence all response schemata in the same way. It should be possible to manipulate appraisal information so that the consequences of this manipulation are only observed when a certain response schema is available. With respect to the default response schema, consider appraisal information that varies in locus of control, defined as the extent to which a personal event is determined by internal (e.g., “I had a great day”) or external (e.g., “My competitor had a bad day”) forces (Sheldon, Ryan, and Reis 1996). An internal locus of control should be more likely to influence emotion-based inferences about self-discipline than an external locus of control; hence only an internal locus of control should increase regulatory behavior given a default response schema. Either source of pride should encourage emotion-based inferences about accomplishment and goal progress (the effort was the same) and, consequently, have a similar influence when a goal-based response schema is active (i.e., result in licensing and increased indulgence).

H2a: In the absence of a self-regulatory goal, an experience of pride containing internal locus (but not external locus) of control appraisal information will encourage inferences of self-discipline, inform the default response schema, and increase regulatory behavior.

H2b: In the presence of a self-regulatory goal, an experience of pride containing internal locus (or external locus) of control appraisal information will encourage inferences of goal progress, inform the goal-based response schema (i.e., license), and decrease regulatory behavior.

It should also be possible to manipulate appraisal information so that the consequences are only observed when the goal-based response schema is available. To illustrate, consider appraisal information that varies in agency, which is defined as the extent to which an event occurred for the self (e.g., “I achieved something”) or for someone else (e.g., “My mom achieved something”) (Russell 1982). Personal agency should be more likely to influence emotion-based inferences about goal progress than other agency. This is because self-conscious emotions generate self-evaluative thoughts that inform one’s sense of self or goals (Tangney and Tracy 2012). While the accomplishments of a close other may lead to inferences about one’s sense of self (i.e., who I am), the accomplishments of a close other should not lead to inferences about one’s goal progress (i.e., what I have done). Hence only personal agency should influence the goal-based response schema and increase indulgent behavior. Either type of agency should influence emotion-based inferences about self-discipline, owing to inferences of shared value systems among close others (Pinkus et al. 2008; Tracy and Robins 2004).

H3a: In the absence of a self-regulatory goal, an experience of pride containing personal agency (or other agency) appraisal information will encourage inferences of self-discipline, inform the default response schema, and increase regulatory behavior.

H3b: In the presence of a self-regulatory goal, an experience of pride containing personal agency (but not other agency) appraisal information will encourage inferences of goal progress, inform the goal-based response schema (i.e., license), and decrease regulatory behavior.

In summary, the influence of pride on regulatory behavior depends on the appraisal information associated with the pride, which will have a distinct impact when self-regulatory goals are or are not active. We test these hypotheses in four studies.

STUDY 1

Study 1 investigated the influence of pride on regulatory behavior when a goal requiring self-regulation was active or not (hypotheses 1a and 1b). A self-regulatory goal was primed using a lexical decision task, which is a reliable goal priming method (Bargh and Chartrand 2000; Laran and Salerno 2013). Pride was induced through the use of a writing task, which is a common method of inducing self-conscious emotions (Griskevicius et al. 2010; Van de Ven et al. 2011) including pride (Huang et al. 2014; Wilcox et al. 2011). Self-regulation was assessed through a
task in which participants made a number of choices involving virtues and vices, which is a common way to measure regulatory behavior (Fedorikhin and Patrick 2010; Fishbach and Dhar 2005).

Pride was induced by recollecting an accomplishment (e.g., an “A” on a test) that required high or low effort. We predicted that when no self-regulatory goal was active, participants experiencing high-effort pride would be more likely to identify self-regulation as an opportunity to reinforce the sense that one has self-discipline, and increase regulatory behavior. In contrast, when a self-regulatory goal was active, we anticipated that participants experiencing high-effort pride would perceive a greater sense of progress toward the goal, and decrease regulatory behavior. When pride was elicited from a situation that required low effort, we did not expect that experience would be used to make a self-concept or goal progress inference.

Method

Participants and Design. A total of 182 undergraduate students (52% female, \( M_{\text{age}} = 20.30 \)) participated in exchange for course credit. Participants were randomly assigned to one of six conditions in a 2 (self-regulatory goal: inactive vs. active) \( \times 3 \) (emotion: no-emotion, low effort pride, high-effort pride) between-subjects design.

Procedure. Participants were told that there were three studies in the session, unrelated and pooled together for convenience. The first study was ostensibly intended to determine people’s verbal capabilities, but truthfully it was a lexical decision task that served as our goal manipulation. Participants were told to focus their attention on a fixation point (X) on the computer screen that would be replaced by a letter string. They were told to press “nine” on the keyboard if the letter string was a word and “one” if it was not, and to respond as quickly as possible. After five practice trials, seven target trials varied by condition. Participants in the active self-regulatory goal condition were shown words associated with being regulated (regulate, health, perserverance, willpower, strive, control, virtue); participants in the inactive self-regulatory goal condition were shown neutral words (computer, flower, refrigerator, notebook, picture, silk, next). Each participant saw the target words twice, along with five filler words, and 20 nonwords. The trial order was random.

The second study manipulated emotion. In the no-emotion condition, participants were asked to write about a typical day. In the pride conditions, participants were told that the purpose of the study was to learn more about life events that made them feel proud. All participants were told to think about a situation in which they were proud of receiving an “A” letter grade in an important class. In the low (high) effort pride condition, they were told to think about a time in which the “A” came with very little (a great deal of) effort. For this and all subsequent studies, pretests were used to verify that the manipulations successfully altered the critical pride appraisal information while maintaining similar levels of pride across conditions (see online appendix A for specific details and results).

The third study was purportedly related to learning about people’s everyday decisions, but it was actually a measure of regulatory behavior. Participants made 15 total decisions, such that five decisions were said to be made in the morning, five in the afternoon, and five in the evening (see online appendix B for experimental manipulations and a list of the dependent measures). The order of the decisions within each part of the day was randomly presented. For each decision, there were two randomly ordered alternatives. An example of a morning decision was, “What will you do? Get an early start or sleep in?” An example of an afternoon decision was, “It is toward the end of the afternoon; what do you decide to do? Exercise or relax?” An example of an evening decision was, “You are eating a delicious dinner and there is a half-serving left. What would you do? Save it for tomorrow or eat it now?” Therefore, in each decision, one of the options was a more virtuous behavior than the other. After making their choices, participants answered a few demographic questions, were debriefed, and thanked for their time.

Results

Regulatory Behavior. Regulatory behavior was computed by summing the total number of virtuous choices. An analysis of variance (ANOVA) on the choice score revealed an interaction between the goal activation and emotion factors (\( F(2, 176) = 8.16, p < .01 \); see figure 2). In the inactive goal condition, participants made more virtuous
choices in the high-effort pride ($M = 8.24$) than in the low effort pride ($M = 6.89$; $F(1, 176) = 3.97$, $p < .05$) and no-emotion ($M = 6.60$; $F(1, 176) = 8.28$, $p < .01$) conditions, which did not differ from each other ($F < 1$). In the active goal condition, participants made fewer virtuous choices in the high-effort pride ($M = 6.53$) than in the low effort pride ($M = 8.44$; $F(1, 176) = 7.83$, $p < .01$) and no-emotion ($M = 7.89$; $F(1, 176) = 5.06$, $p < .05$) conditions, which did not differ from each other ($F < 1$). Making a self-regulatory goal active increased the number of virtuous choices in the no-emotion ($F(1, 176) = 4.58$, $p < .05$) and low effort pride ($F(1, 176) = 5.26$, $p < .05$) conditions, but it decreased the number of virtuous choices in the high-effort pride condition ($F(1, 176) = 7.40$, $p < .01$).

**Discussion**

Study 1 demonstrates that the influence of pride depends on appraisal information and self-regulatory goal activation. High-effort pride increased (decreased) regulatory behavior when a self-regulatory goal was not (was) active, but low effort pride did not have an influence on the amount of regulatory behavior. These effects occurred even though a pretest confirmed that low- and high-effort pride generated an equivalent level of pride. This implies that the appraisal information that generated the pride informed inferences about the self-concept or goal progress. In studies 2 and 3, we provide direct process evidence for how appraisal information is incorporated into inferences about the self-concept or goal progress.

**STUDY 2**

In study 2, we wanted to provide further evidence that the influence of pride on regulatory behavior was a consequence of the appraisal information that generated the pride. Specifically, when appraisal information varied the locus of control (e.g., internal, “I was responsible” vs. external, “I got lucky”), pride should differentially influence inferences about one’s self-concept but uniformly influence inferences about goal progress. That is, in the absence of a self-regulatory goal, pride should encourage regulatory behavior only when the locus of control is internal (hypothesis 2a). In the presence of a self-regulatory goal, pride should encourage indulgent behavior regardless of the locus of control (hypothesis 2b).

In study 2, we made a health goal active and measured regulatory behavior using a choice between a granola bar (healthy option) and M&Ms. In addition, evidence for the hypothesized mediating processes was assessed by asking participants how much self-discipline they perceived themselves to have (an inference about the self-concept) and how much progress they had made toward eating in a healthy way (an inference about self-regulatory goal progress).

**Method**

**Participants and Design.** Participants were 312 undergraduate students (47% female, $M_{age} = 20.04$) who participated in exchange for course credit. Participants were randomly assigned to one of six conditions in a 2 (self-regulatory goal: inactive vs. active) $\times$ 3 (emotion: no-emotion, earned-pride, fortuitous-pride) between-subjects design.

**Procedure.** Participants were told that the session consisted of two unrelated studies. The first study purportedly investigated cognitive processes associated with unscrambling sentences, but in truth it served as the goal priming task (Srull and Wyer 1979). Participants were presented with 10 sets of five words and asked to form sentences by unscrambling each set of words (see online appendix C for experimental manipulations and dependent measures). In the active self-regulatory goal condition, each sentence contained a word consistent with a health goal (healthy, fat, weight, fit, slim, shape, discipline, willpower, exercise, workout). In the inactive self-regulatory goal condition, these words were replaced with neutral words. After unscrambling the 10 sentences, participants were told that they were finished with the first study.

The second study was a writing task that manipulated emotion. The no-emotion condition was identical to study 1 (i.e., participants were asked to write about a typical day). In the pride conditions, the instructions were similar to study 1. Participants were told that the researchers wanted to learn more about what makes people feel proud. In the earned-pride condition, participants were asked to write about an accomplishment that they felt solely responsible for. In the fortuitous-pride condition, participants were asked to write about an accomplishment that occurred as a result of a lucky break. Examples of participant responses included getting a job as a result of a contact putting in a good word, getting the opportunity to start on a sports team as a result of an injury to another player, and winning a music competition because of an unexpected favorable evaluation from the judges.

After writing their response, participants were told they would be receiving a snack as appreciation for their participation. Participants were asked to make a choice between a granola bar (healthy option) and M&Ms (indulgent option). The snack each participant chose served as our measure of regulatory behavior. Participants also responded to potential mediating questions using 9-point scales. Inferences about self-discipline being part of one’s self-concept were measured by taking the average of three items (sample item: “Being a highly regimented person is just part of who I am.” $\alpha = .82$). Inferences about self-regulatory goal progress were measured by taking the average of three items (sample item: “How much progress do you currently feel you have made toward healthy eating?”).
Results

Regulatory Behavior. A binary logistic regression revealed an interaction between the goal activation and emotion factors ($\chi^2(1) = 4.98$, $p < .05$; see figure 3). In the inactive goal condition, participants were more likely to select the granola bar in the earned-pride (76.9%) than in the fortuitous-pride (39.2%; $\chi^2(1) = 15.05$, $p < .01$) and no-emotion (46.4%; $\chi^2(1) = 10.55$, $p < .01$) conditions, which did not vary ($\chi^2(1) = .57$, not significant [NS]). In the active goal condition, participants were less likely to select the granola bar in the earned-pride (42.9%; $\chi^2(1) = 9.53$, $p < .01$) and fortuitous-pride (36.7%; $\chi^2(1) = 13.61$, $p < .01$) conditions than in the no-emotion condition (72.7%). The earned-pride and fortuitous-pride conditions did not vary ($\chi^2(1) = .38$, NS). Looked at differently, participants in the active (as compared to inactive) goal condition were more likely to select the granola bar in the no-emotion condition ($\chi^2(1) = 7.96$, $p < .01$), less likely to select the granola bar in the earned-pride condition ($\chi^2(1) = 12.24$, $p < .01$), and as likely to select the granola bar in the fortuitous-pride condition ($\chi^2(1) = .07$, NS).

Mediation Analyses. An ANOVA on the self-concept measure revealed an interaction between the goal activation and emotion factors ($F(2, 306) = 3.17$, $p < .05$). In the inactive goal condition, perceptions of self-discipline were higher in the earned-pride ($M = 6.65$) than in the fortuitous-pride ($M = 5.71$; $F(1, 306) = 9.22$, $p < .01$) and no-emotion ($M = 5.86$; $F(1, 306) = 5.51$, $p < .05$) conditions. In the active goal condition, perceptions of self-discipline did not differ across the earned-pride ($M = 5.46$), fortuitous-pride ($M = 5.59$), and no-emotion conditions ($M = 5.61$; $F < 1$). In addition, within the earned-pride condition, perceptions of self-discipline were higher in the active (as compared to active) goal condition ($F(1, 306) = 13.07$, $p < .01$).

An ANOVA on the perception of goal progress revealed an interaction between the goal activation and emotion factors ($F(2, 306) = 4.38$, $p = .01$). In the active goal condition, perceptions of goal progress were higher in the earned-pride ($M = 6.73$; $F(1, 306) = 12.21$, $p < .01$) and fortuitous-pride ($M = 6.46$; $F(1, 306) = 7.56$, $p < .01$) conditions than in the no-emotion condition ($M = 5.30$). In the inactive goal condition, perceptions of goal progress were equivalent in the earned-pride ($M = 5.82$), fortuitous-pride ($M = 5.16$), and no-emotion conditions ($M = 5.64$; $F(2, 306) = 1.34$, $p > .25$). In addition, within the earned-pride ($F(1, 306) = 4.66$, $p < .05$) and fortuitous-pride ($F(1, 306) = 9.46$, $p < .01$) conditions, perceptions of goal progress were higher in the active (as compared to inactive) goal condition.

We conducted moderated mediation analyses to test the prediction that, when no self-regulatory goal was active, perceptions of self-discipline would mediate the effects of pride on self-regulation only in the earned-pride condition. When a self-regulatory goal was active, perceptions of goal progress would mediate the effects of pride on self-regulation in both pride conditions. We tested this prediction using PROCESS model 8 (Hayes 2013). Emotion was used as the predictor variable, self-regulatory goal as the moderating variable, perceptions of self-discipline and goal progress as the mediators, and food choice as the dependent variable. Since our predictor variable was categorical with three levels, we constructed two dummy variables in order to discern the individual effects of the earned-pride versus fortuitous-pride condition relative to the no-emotion condition (refer to Hayes and Preacher 2014). In this and all subsequent mediation analyses, the 95% confidence intervals (CIs) used to generate each indirect effect were conducted at 5000 bootstrap samples.

When no self-regulatory goal was active, we initially compared the earned-pride to the no-emotion condition. The path from the emotion factor to regulatory behavior through perceptions of self-discipline (indirect effect) was significant (95% CI, .01–.48), while the path through perceptions of goal progress (95% CI, −.63 to .37) was not significant. Then we compared the fortuitous-pride to the no-emotion condition. The paths from the emotion factor to regulatory behavior through perceptions of self-discipline (95% CI, −.06 to .10) and goal progress (95% CI, −.04 to .45) were not significant.

When a self-regulatory goal was active, we compared the earned-pride to the no-emotion condition and the fortuitous-pride to the no-emotion condition. With respect to earned pride, the path from the emotion factor to regulatory behavior through perceptions of goal progress was significant (95% CI, −1.58 to −.27), while the path through

\[ \alpha = .95 \]. After responding to demographic questions, participants were debriefed and received their food choice.
perceptions of self-discipline (95% CI, −.25 to .10) was not. With respect to fortuitous-pride, the path from the emotion factor to regulatory behavior through perceptions of goal progress was significant (95% CI, −.68 to −.01), while the path through perceptions of self-discipline (95% CI, −.05 to .08) was not.

Discussion

Study 2 found that when pride was a consequence of an earned accomplishment, its experience led to inferences about one’s self-concept, provided no self-regulatory goal was active. When pride was experienced as a consequence of a fortuitous accomplishment, its experience did not allow for inferences about one’s self-concept. This result suggests that pride influences subsequent regulatory behavior in accordance with the information that prompted its generation. Study 2 also found that earned pride and fortuitous pride encouraged similar perceptions of goal progress when a self-regulatory goal was active. Consequently, the feeling of pride licensed participants to indulge. The earned/fortuitous pride had similar consequences for self-regulation because each type of pride provided a sense of accomplishment, even though the pride was from a different source. This finding is particularly important because it suggests that the information that generates an inference about the self-concept is not the same as the information that informs an inference about goal progress. If the information was the same, the pride manipulation would have behaved consistently in the active and inactive goal conditions.

STUDY 3

Study 2 altered the source of pride to show how appraisal information could differentially influence inferences about the self-concept but uniformly influence inferences about goal progress. Study 3 tested the complementary result: how appraisal information can differentially influence inferences about goal progress but uniformly influence inferences about the self-concept. We explored this possibility by looking at the agency (personal vs. other) appraisal information pertaining to the pride experience. We hypothesized that pride about one’s own behavior would be used as evidence of goal progress, but pride about a close other’s behavior would not (hypothesis 3b). People experiencing pride as a result of the achievement of a close other should not use that success as evidence of their personal self-regulatory goal pursuit.

We also hypothesized that pride about a close other’s behavior would be relevant to regulatory behavior that depends on the self-concept. Pride can be elicited from the achievements of close others because the other’s accomplishment is taken as evidence of meeting one’s ideal self-standards (Tracy and Robins 2004). As a result, a close other’s accomplishment has a similar influence as one’s own accomplishment in terms of positively affirming that one is disciplined and capable of achievement (Pinkus et al. 2008). Therefore, either source of pride should signal that one is a disciplined individual and reinforce regulatory behavior (hypothesis 3a).

Method

Participants and Design. Participants were 368 undergraduate students (60% female, M_age = 20.45) who participated in exchange for course credit. Participants were randomly assigned to one of six conditions in a 2 (self-regulatory goal: inactive vs. active) × 3 (emotion: no-emotion, self-pride, close-other pride) between-subjects design.

Procedure. Participants were told that the session consisted of two unrelated studies. The first study primed the self-regulatory goal of health using a method adapted from Fishbach and Labroo (2007). Participants were told that the researchers were interested in undergraduate students’ activities. Participants in the inactive (active) self-regulatory goal condition listed sources they could use to receive the news (be healthy) (see online appendix D for the experimental manipulations and dependent measures).

The second study consisted of a modified version of the writing task from study 2. Participants in the no-emotion condition were asked to write about a typical day. Participants in the self-pride (close-other pride) condition described a personal (parent’s) accomplishment that made them feel proud.

The remainder of the procedure was the same as study 2 (i.e., a choice between two snacks, mediation measures, demographic measures), except for the following. First, the snack choice participants made was between a bag of baby carrots (healthy option) and a pack of Oreos (indulgent option). Second, single-item measures were used for the critical mediators. Self-discipline was measured using “Being a highly regimented person is just part of who I am.” (1 = Strongly disagree, 9 = Strongly agree). Goal progress was measured using “How much progress do you currently feel you have made toward healthy eating?” (1 = Very little, 9 = A great deal). These changes are a reflection of study 3 being run earlier in the research program.

Results

Regulatory Behavior. A binary logistic regression revealed an interaction between the goal activation and emotion factors (χ^2(1) = 3.90, p = .05; see figure 4). In the inactive goal condition, participants were more likely to select baby carrots in the self-pride (73.2%; χ^2(1) = 11.63, p < .01) and close-other pride (67.2%; χ^2(1) = 7.74, p < .01) conditions as compared to the no-emotion condition (43.2%). The self-pride (73.2%) and close-other pride (67.2%) conditions did not vary
In the active goal condition, participants were less likely to select baby carrots in the self-pride (31.0%) than in the close-other pride (64.9%); \( \chi^2(1) = 13.22, p < .01 \) and no-emotion (62.9%; \( \chi^2(1) = 12.20, p < .01 \)) conditions. The no-emotion condition (62.9%) and close-other pride (64.9%) conditions did not vary (\( \chi^2(1) = .50, \text{NS} \)). Looked at differently, participants in the active (as compared to inactive) goal condition were more likely to select baby carrots in the no-emotion condition (\( \chi^2(1) = 5.23, p < .05 \)), less likely to select baby carrots in the self-pride condition (\( \chi^2(1) = 20.30, p < .01 \)), and equally likely to select baby carrots in the other-pride condition (\( \chi^2(1) = .07, \text{NS} \)).

**Mediation Analyses.** An ANOVA on the perceptions of self-discipline revealed an interaction between goal activation and emotion (\( F(2, 362) = 3.01, p = .05 \)). In the inactive goal condition, perceptions of self-discipline were higher in the self-pride (\( M = 6.41; F(1, 362) = 5.64, p < .05 \)) and close-other-pride (\( M = 6.59; F(1, 362) = 9.42, p < .01 \)) conditions than in the no-emotion condition (\( M = 5.58 \)). In the active goal condition, perceptions of self-discipline were equivalent in the self-pride (\( M = 5.36 \)), close-other pride (\( M = 5.79 \)), and no-emotion conditions (\( M = 5.68; F < 1 \)). In addition, within the self-pride (\( F(1, 362) = 8.20, p < .01 \)) and other-pride (\( F(1, 362) = 4.95, p < .05 \)) conditions, perceptions of self-discipline were higher in the inactive (compared to active) goal condition.

An ANOVA on the perceptions of goal progress also revealed an interaction between goal activation and emotion (\( F(2, 362) = 3.43, p < .05 \)). In the active goal condition, perceptions of goal progress were higher in the self-pride (\( M = 6.62 \)) than in the close-other pride (\( M = 5.73 \); \( F(1, 362) = 4.79, \ p < .05 \)) and no-emotion (\( M = 5.81; F(1, 362) = 4.55, p < .05 \)) conditions. In the inactive goal condition, perceptions of goal progress were equivalent in the self-pride (\( M = 5.73 \)), close-other pride (6.18), and no-emotion (\( M = 6.04; F < 1 \)) conditions. In addition, within the self-pride condition, perceptions of goal progress were higher in the active (as compared to inactive) goal condition (\( F(1, 362) = 5.24, p < .05 \)).

We conducted moderated mediation analyses (PROCESS model 8; Hayes 2013) to test whether perceptions of self-discipline would mediate the effects of pride on self-regulation in both pride conditions when no self-regulatory goal was active, but perceptions of goal progress would mediate the effects of pride on self-regulation only in the self-pride condition when a self-regulatory goal was active. When no self-regulatory goal was active, the path from the self-pride contrast (self-pride vs. no emotion) to regulatory behavior through perceptions of self-discipline was significant (95% CI, .02–.42), while the path through perceptions of goal progress (95% CI, −.06 to .31) was not significant. The path from the close-other pride contrast (close-other pride vs. no emotion) to regulatory behavior through perceptions of self-discipline was significant (95% CI, .03–.44), while the path through perceptions of goal progress (95% CI, −.06 to .20) was not significant. When a self-regulatory goal was active, the path from the self-pride contrast (self-pride vs. no emotion) to regulatory behavior through perceptions of goal progress was significant (95% CI, −.45 to −.01), while the path through perceptions of self-discipline (95% CI, −.30 to .05) was not. The paths from the close-other pride contrast (close-other pride vs. no emotion) to regulatory behavior through perceptions of goal progress (95% CI, −.20 to .10) and self-discipline (95% CI, −.10 to .21) were not significant.

**Discussion**

Study 3 provides additional evidence that inferences about the self-concept depend on different appraisal information compared to inferences about goal progress. When a self-regulatory goal was active, pride derived from a personal accomplishment was interpreted as evidence of self-regulatory goal progress, whereas pride derived from a parent’s accomplishment was not. Self-pride and close-other pride encouraged similar perceptions of self-discipline, provided a self-regulatory goal was not active, which consequently encouraged self-regulation. Similar to study 2, the goal activation by agency interaction suggests that the appraisal information informing the inference about the self-concept is not the same as the information that informs the inference about goal progress. If the appraisal information was the same, each pride manipulation would have led to consistent patterns of self-regulation in both goal conditions.
STUDY 4

Studies 1 through 3 have shown that appraisal information can influence a perception of self-discipline, when a self-regulatory goal is not active, or goal progress, when a self-regulatory goal is active. Yet the fact that the studies manipulated appraisal information while holding the level of experienced pride constant raises the possibility that pride was not a necessary condition (see figure 1, dashed line moving up from emotional experience). To investigate this issue, we drew from research showing that people’s trust in their emotions influences their emotional experience (Avnet, Pham, and Stephen 2012; Epstein et al. 1996). Specifically, we had participants either perform a task that made them distrust their emotions (low trust in emotions condition) or not (trust in emotions, henceforth the control condition), and observed whether this impacted subsequent self-regulation. If the emotional experience of pride is not necessary for appraisal information to guide self-regulation, people made to distrust their pride may focus less on the feeling and more heavily on its antecedents (i.e., appraisal information). If this is the case, people made to distrust their pride should still show the previous pattern of increased (decreased) regulatory behavior in the absence (presence) of a self-regulatory goal. However, if the emotional experience of pride is necessary for appraisal information to inform self-regulation, people made to distrust their pride may deem its feeling and its antecedents as nondiagnostic to behavior. If this is the case, self-regulation should not be guided by pride and should instead vary as a function of self-regulatory goal activation.

To provide further support for our assertion that the emotional experience of pride is critical to influencing self-regulation, we also measured people’s general tendency to trust their emotions, using the Trust in Feelings Scale (Avnet et al. 2012). Our interest in this scale was for participants who were not manipulated to distrust their emotions (i.e., the control condition). Specifically, we wanted to see whether people’s trust in their emotions interacted with the effect of pride on increasing (decreasing) self-regulation. We predicted that the previously mentioned self-concept (goal progress) processes would be driven by people who trust their emotions.

Method

Participants and Design. Participants were 257 undergraduate students (57% female, M_age = 20.38) who participated in exchange for course credit. Participants were randomly assigned to one of eight conditions in a 2 (trust in emotions: control vs. low) × 2 (self-regulatory goal: inactive vs. active) × 2 (emotion: no-emotion vs. pride) between-subjects design.

Procedure. In the low trust in emotions condition, participants began by completing a study that was said to be about how people make decisions in general. In actuality, the study was used to reduce participants’ willingness to rely on their feelings when making judgments (see Avnet et al. 2012). The instructions began with an overview of how people use logical reasoning versus feelings in their decision making. Afterward, participants were asked to come up with 10 different situations in which they “trusted their feelings to make a judgment or a decision and it was the right thing to do.” Previous research has shown that people find it difficult to generate 10 instances of trusting their feelings, and this subjective lack of success leads them to become more distrustful of their feelings (Avnet et al. 2012). Participants in the control condition did not complete this task (see online appendix E for experimental manipulations and dependent measures).

Participants then completed the same goal priming task from study 3, with the exception that the self-regulatory goal was changed to saving money. Participants in the inactive (active) self-regulatory goal condition listed sources they could use to receive the news (save money).

The next study consisted of the writing task from study 3. Participants in the no-emotion condition were asked to write about a typical day. Participants in the pride condition wrote about a personal accomplishment that has always made them feel proud.

In the final study, participants read that the researchers were interested in students’ budgeting habits. Participants were asked to indicate the likelihood of engaging in eight budgeting methods for the upcoming month, derived from Bayuk, Janiszewski, and Leboeuf (2010). These items were then averaged and served as our dependent measure of regulatory behavior. The eight items (α = .73) used 9-point scales (1 = Not at all likely to use this method, 9 = Very likely to use this method), and example items included “Cook at home more,” “Decrease how much you purchase on impulse,” and “Combine errands in one trip to save money on gas.” After indicating their saving intentions, participants responded to three items about self-discipline being part of one’s self-concept (sample item: “People would say I have exceptional self-discipline,” α = .81) and goal progress (sample item: “How much progress do you currently feel you have made toward saving money?” α = .91). Next, participants were asked to indicate their current mood (1 = Negative mood, 9 = Positive mood). This item was included to address whether the effects of pride on regulatory behavior are specific to pride or a more generalized positive mood state. We expected that pride would lead to an increase in positive mood but that this increase in mood would not be responsible for any influence on self-regulation.

After completing demographic questions and filler items, participants completed the Trust in Feelings Scale (Avnet et al. 2012). The scale contains 12 questions assessing how much people trust different types of information across various decision contexts. Seven of the 12 items pertained to
how much people trust their feelings across decisions (e.g., “When choosing a roommate, to what extent do you rely on, that is, believe and trust what your feelings tell you about this roommate?” and “When deciding on a job, to what extent do you rely on, that is, believe and trust what your feelings tell you about this job?”). The remaining items asked how much people trusted other sources of information across decisions (e.g., To what extent do you rely on, that is, believe and trust what your parents say about renting a new apartment?”). Each item used a 7-point scale (1 = Not trust at all, 7 = Trust very much), and the seven feelings-based items (α = .77) were used to form an index of people’s general propensity to trust their emotions.

Results

Regulatory Behavior. An ANOVA revealed an interaction of the trust in emotions, goal activation, and emotion factors (F(1, 249) = 5.88, p = .01). In the control condition, the analysis revealed an interaction between the goal activation and emotion factors (F(1, 249) = 11.91, p < .01; see figure 5a). In the inactive goal condition, participants were more willing to save in the pride (M = 6.66) than in the no-emotion condition (M = 5.85; F(1, 249) = 7.01, p < .01). In the active goal condition, participants were less willing to save in the pride (M = 5.71) than in the no-emotion condition (M = 6.42; F(1, 249) = 5.59, p < .05). Participants in the active (as compared to inactive) goal condition were more willing to save in the no-emotion condition (F(1, 249) = 3.99, p < .05), but less likely to do so in the pride condition (F(1, 249) = 8.83, p < .01).

In the low trust in emotions condition, the analysis revealed a nonsignificant interaction (F < 1) and a main effect of self-regulatory goal activation (M_{inactive} = 5.75, M_{active} = 6.47; F(1, 249) = 10.55, p < .01; see figure 5b). These results are consistent with our conceptualization. When people were made to distrust the emotional experience of pride, self-regulation was not guided by emotion but by the accessibility of a self-regulatory goal.

Mediation Analysis. An ANOVA on the perceptions of self-discipline item revealed a three-way interaction of the trust in emotions, goal activation, and emotion factors (F(1, 249) = 6.94, p < .01). In the control condition, there was an interaction between the goal activation and emotion factors (F(1, 249) = 7.19, p < .01). In the inactive goal condition, perceptions of self-discipline were higher in the pride (M = 6.77) than in the no-emotion condition (M = 5.52; F(1, 249) = 9.64, p < .01). In the active goal condition, perceptions of self-discipline did not differ between the pride (M = 5.54) and no-emotion conditions (M = 5.85; F < 1). In addition, within the pride condition, perceptions of self-discipline were higher in the inactive (as compared to active) goal condition (F(1, 249) = 8.11, p < .01). However, as predicted, in the low trust in emotions condition, the interaction between the goal activation and emotion factors was no longer significant (F(1, 249) = 1.17, p > .25).

An ANOVA on the goal progress perception item revealed a three-way interaction of the trust in emotions, goal activation, and emotion factors (F(1, 249) = 6.57, p < .01). In the control condition, there was an interaction between the goal activation and emotion factors (F(1, 249) = 7.12, p < .01). In the active goal condition, perceptions of goal progress were higher in the pride (M = 6.44) than in the no-emotion condition (M = 5.33; F(1, 249) = 6.75, p = .01). In the inactive goal condition, perceptions of goal progress were equivalent in the pride (M = 5.43) and no-emotion conditions (M = 5.95; F(1, 249) = 1.49, p > .20). In addition,
within the pride condition, perceptions of goal progress were higher in the active (as compared to inactive) goal condition ($F(1, 249) = 4.92, p < .05$). However, consistent with our conceptualization, in the low trust in emotions condition, the interaction between the goal activation and emotion factors was no longer significant ($F(1, 249) = 1.02, p > .25$).

An ANOVA on the mood item only revealed a main effect of the emotion factor ($F(1, 249) = 10.59, p < .01$). Consistent with research showing that pride is a positive affective state (Tracy and Robins 2007; Williams and DeSteno 2008), participants in the pride condition felt more positive ($M = 6.59$) than participants in the no-emotion condition ($M = 5.86$).

We predicted that the previously tested causal pathways would be observed for participants in the control condition but not for participants made to distrust their emotions. We used a moderated mediation analysis using PROCESS model 12 (Hayes 2013), which allowed us to probe the conditional indirect effects of three predictor variables. Emotion was used as the predictor variable, self-regulatory goal activation as the first moderating variable, trust in emotions as the second moderating variable, perceptions of self-discipline, goal progress, and mood as the mediators, and saving intentions as the dependent variable.

In the control condition, when no self-regulatory goal was active, the path from emotion to regulatory behavior through perceptions of self-discipline was significant (95% CI, .05–.39), while the paths through perceptions of goal progress (95% CI, −.02 to .23) and mood (95% CI, −.04 to .14) were not. However, when a self-regulatory goal was active, the path from emotion to regulatory behavior through goal progress perceptions was significant (95% CI, −.42 to −.03), while the paths through perceptions of self-discipline (95% CI: −.21 to .07) and mood (95% CI, −.02 to .11) were not. In the low trust in emotions condition, regardless of whether a self-regulatory goal was inactive or active, the paths from emotion to regulatory behavior through self-discipline (95% CI, −.24 to .03; 95% CI active, −.10 to .20), goal progress (95% CI inactive, −.25 to .07; 95% CI active, −.08 to .21), and mood (95% CI inactive, −.03 to .15; 95% CI active, −.02 to .16) were not significant.

Ancillary Analysis. We conducted additional analyses to confirm the importance of experiencing pride in self-regulation. The analysis focused on the control condition, with the self-regulatory goal activation and emotion factors as between subjects, and trust in emotions as a measured variable. We conducted a moderation analysis using PROCESS model 3 (Hayes 2013) that allows one to probe the conditional effect of the predictor variable (emotion) on the dependent variable (self-regulation) at different levels of the categorical (self-regulatory goal activation) and continuous (trust in emotions) moderators. The analysis yielded a significant three-way interaction on self-regulation ($\beta = −1.40, p < .01$). In the inactive goal condition, there was a marginally significant interaction between the emotion and trust in emotions factors ($\beta = .65, p = .07$). At 1 standard deviation (SD) below the mean of trust in emotions (i.e., low trust in emotions), participants in the no-emotion and pride conditions did not differ in their level of self-regulation ($\beta = .16, p > .70$). At 1 SD above the mean of trust in emotions (i.e., high trust in emotions), participants exerted higher levels of self-regulation in the pride than in the no-emotion condition ($\beta = 1.34, p < .01$). In the active goal condition, there was an interaction between the emotion and trust in emotions factors ($\beta = −.75, p < .05$). At 1 SD below the mean of trust in emotions, participants in the no-emotion and pride conditions did not differ in their level of self-regulation ($\beta = −.03, p > .70$). At 1 SD above the mean of trust in emotions, participants exerted lower levels of self-regulation in the pride than in the no-emotion condition ($\beta = −1.38, p < .01$).

Discussion

Study 4 provides support for the claim that the emotional experience of pride is necessary for appraisal information to influence self-regulation. When people were made to distrust their emotions, the effect of pride on self-regulation was no longer observed. Instead, regulatory behavior was guided by the presence or absence of a self-regulatory goal. This is consistent with our claim that pride must be present for the self-concept and goal progress inferences to be made. In addition, we found that when there was an influence of the self-concept and goal progress inferences (i.e., the control condition), these effects were being driven by people who indicated having a high level of trust in their emotions. These same effects were not found for those who indicated a low level of trust in their emotions. These results demonstrate that if people do not rely on their emotions, the appraisal information that generated the emotion is also perceived to be unreliable in guiding subsequent behavior.

GENERAL DISCUSSION

Prior research has shown that the effect of pride on self-regulation is not always easy to predict. In some cases pride can aid self-regulation (Patrick, Chun, and MacInnis 2009; Wilcox et al. 2011; Williams and DeSteno 2008). In other cases, pride can impair self-regulation (Wilcox et al. 2011; Winterich and Haws 2011). Clearly pride, like other self-conscious emotions, is a complex emotion whose influence on behavior depends on other moderating factors. In our research, we focus on authentic pride and identify two critical moderating factors. We show that the type of appraisal information and the salience of a self-regulatory goal influence when pride aids versus impairs self-regulation.
Across four studies, we show that (1) pride resulting from effort can lead to inferences of a disciplined self-concept or of goal progress, depending on whether a self-regulatory goal is inactive or active, (2) altering appraisal information regarding the locus of control (perceived agency) alters inferences about one’s self-concept (goal progress) and influences self-regulation, and (3) the emotional experience of pride must be perceived as diagnostic for inferences from appraisal information to occur and influence self-regulation.

Theoretical Contributions

In a recent review of the current state of emotion research, So et al. (2015) present a framework for how to leverage appraisal information in order to advance our understanding of how emotions influence behavior. The authors point out that traditional appraisal-based approaches to the study of emotion will typically take a single appraisal dimension (e.g., certainty) and then examine how two emotions that vary on this dimension (e.g., fear and happiness) influence behavior (e.g., tolerance for risk). However, they point out that considerably less research has been conducted that takes a specific emotion and then examines how varying two or more appraisal dimensions can lead to different behavioral responses. This is surprising when you consider that most emotions are composed of combinations of appraisals (Cavanaugh et al. 2007). This observation is especially true in the case of self-conscious emotions, where appraisal information is cognitively complex and interpreted by the individual through a self-evaluative lens (Roseman et al. 1994; Tangney and Tracy 2012; Tracy and Robins 2004, 2007).

Our research addresses this gap by examining how the effort, locus of control, and agency appraisal information of pride influence self-regulation.

Future research on self-conscious emotions might examine other instances in which varying multiple sources of appraisal information can have a differential effect on regulatory behavior. For instance, guilt can be a consequence of appraisal information pertaining to inaction (i.e., guilt about what the person did not do) or action (i.e., guilt about what the person did do; Han et al. 2014). In the context of self-regulation, it might be the case that when people experience guilt due to inaction, self-regulation is encouraged out of a need to act and to make up for what they failed to do previously. Yet when guilt is due to action, self-regulation may be discouraged out of the concern that further action is likely to bring about additional negative outcomes (Lazarus 1991). Likewise, guilt can also be a consequence of appraisal information pertaining to whether the guilt was due to a moral transgression (e.g., cheating on a test) or a self-regulatory transgression (e.g., overeating on the weekend; Goldsmith et al. 2012). It may be the case that when guilt is due to a moral transgression, the individual becomes more prone to engage in rumination (dwelling on what they did wrong) that can subsequently undermine the ability to self-regulate (Magen and Gross 2010). Yet when guilt is due to a self-regulatory transgression, people may respond positively to this failure by re-grouping and increasing their regulatory behavior (Zemack-Rugar, Corus, and Brinberg 2012). Thus there are many appraisal dimensions that may be relevant to self-conscious emotions and self-regulation, and by studying these dimensions concurrently, researchers can better understand these complex relationships.

By considering the joint influence of appraisal information and a person’s goal state, the current research demonstrates that pride can be used to make an inference about one’s self-concept or goal progress. Previous research has shown that the self-concept is a malleable, dynamic system that is sensitive to input from one’s current environment including one’s emotional state (Burke and Stets 2009; Isbell et al. 2013; Wheeler, DeMarree, and Petty 2007). More recent advances have shown evidence of “emotion profiles,” where some emotions appear to be particularly diagnostic of certain aspects of a person’s self-concept (Coleman and Williams 2015). For instance, Coleman and Williams (2013) found that anger/disgust/sadness was perceived to be highly relevant to people when an athlete/environmentalist/volunteer identity was active. Our research contributes to this area by showing that pride evokes an emotion profile of being a disciplined individual. This in turn encourages identity-consistent self-regulation. It is also important to note that our self-concept mechanism is distinct from the effects one might expect on self-regulation due to a boost in self-esteem. While pride does boost one’s self-esteem (McFerran, Aquino, and Tracy 2014; Tracy and Robins 2007), this boost in self-esteem has no influence on people’s subsequent self-regulation (Williams and DeSteno 2008), suggesting that our self-concept mechanism cannot be accounted for by enhanced self-esteem.

Our findings also contribute to the understanding of how emotions interact with goal states to influence behavior. Previous research looking at the relationship between goals and emotions has primarily examined how the attainment (nonattainment) of a goal can elicit positive (negative) emotion (Carver and Scheier 1998; Laran 2010). However, research examining the possibility that emotions can be used to inform goal pursuit is still largely in its infancy (Salerno, Laran, and Janiszewski 2014). In this respect, the functionalist perspective is an ideal framework for studying this issue because one of its central propositions is that emotions can be used to initiate, but also modify, goal-directed behavior (Frijda 2005; Keltner and Gross 1999).

Limitations and Future Research

Our research is not without limitations. Self-regulation was conceptualized as the amount of restraint that a
consumer exhibits, but this is not always the case. Indeed, research has shown that an equally valid form of self-regulation might involve overriding restraint with self-reward (Kivetz and Simonson 2002). Future research may investigate how pride and other emotions interact with hyperopic versus myopic consumers (Haws and Poynor 2008). For instance, hyperopic consumers normally have a difficult time disengaging from self-regulation. It may be the case that when these people are made to feel pride, they have an easier time allowing for self-reward. Alternatively, it may be the case that hyperopic consumers use their feeling of pride as a reason to continue exhibiting restraint. Future research could investigate these possibilities.

Although our research focused specifically on authentic pride, we believe our findings may help spark future research into how hubristic pride affects self-regulation. Unlike authentic pride, which results from a specific behavior, hubristic pride results from a positive attribution about one’s traits (Huang et al. 2014; Tracy et al. 2014; Williams and DeSteno 2008). Hubristic pride has also been linked to increased luxury consumption and status seeking (McFerran et al. 2014). This might lead one to conclude that hubristic pride would always prompt indulgence. However, based on our findings demonstrating the importance of appraisal information, we would argue that this may not always be the case. For instance, one could alter the perceived permanence of trait appraisal information by making it seem less enduring. This could be done by highlighting how the traits that elicit hubristic pride do not last forever (e.g., beauty, strength); doing so may increase the importance of self-regulation.

Conclusion

One of the most important aspects of consumers’ lives is their ability to engage in self-regulation. While prior research has established that emotions play an influential role in self-regulation, this relationship is complicated by the fact that many emotions can both help and hinder regulatory behavior in different situations. While the current research focused on the bidirectional influence of pride on self-regulation, similar demonstrations have been shown for guilt (Giner-Sorolla 2001; Goldsmith et al. 2012), shame (De Hooge et al. 2008; Duhachek, Agrawal, and Han 2012), and envy (Crusius and Mussweiler 2012; Van de Ven et al. 2011). In considering the role of both appraisal information and a person’s goal state, the current research was able to provide greater insight into when pride will aid or inhibit regulatory behavior, and the processes by which these influences occur. It is worth exploring whether appraisal information and a person’s goal state could provide greater clarity to how other self-conscious emotions impact self-regulation. By investigating such possibilities, a systematic framework may emerge that could ultimately be used to aid consumers in the pursuit of long-term goals and well-being.

DATA COLLECTION INFORMATION

The first author supervised the collection of data by research assistants using participants from the University of Cincinnati (studies 1 and 2), University of Miami (study 3), and the University of Florida (study 4) between the spring of 2014 and the spring of 2015. The first author was primarily responsible for the data analysis with input from the second and third authors. Data were discussed throughout the entire research program by all authors.

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