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Abstract

Self-conscious emotions are experienced in various consumption-related contexts. While purchasing/using a product or service may result in the outburst of these emotions, anticipating or experiencing them may also influence consumers' subsequent choices and decisions.

In this dissertation, I focus on shame, embarrassment, and pride as three prevalent self-conscious emotions in the marketplace. The first chapter provides a big picture of the state-of-the-art on the role of shame/embarrassment in consumption context, in tandem with suggesting new avenues to extend/improve the current research. The second chapter explores how positive and negative self-conscious emotions moderate the effect of regulatory focus on consumers' risk taking propensity. Finally, the third chapter considers the role of spotlight effect (i.e., overestimating others' attention) in consumer's embarrassment-avoidant behavior.

Preface

Consumers experience self-conscious emotions in various situations, such as obtaining a discount (pride), purchasing illegal products (shame), or buying condoms (embarrassment). Involving self-reflection and self-evaluation, self-conscious emotions are intimately connected to the self as well as to interpersonal communications (Tangney 1999). This social component makes them especially important emotions in consumer behavior, as many exchange processes are embedded in social contexts. For instance, purchase transactions are often witnessed by other people (e.g. other customers), and services are typically offered during a social interaction between the customer and service provider. Since self-conscious emotions have both public and private components (Tangney 1999), they are of significant importance in consumer behavior, compared to emotions which are experienced only in public or only in private.

This dissertation explores the role of different self-conscious emotions in consumer behavior. The goal is understanding various aspects and manifestations of these emotions in consumption, in tandem with understanding how anticipating or experiencing them may influence consumers' subsequent choices and decisions.

The focused emotions in this dissertation include shame, embarrassment, and pride. Shame is the result of violation of one's "ideal" self (Higgins, 1987). It is felt when one understands that her act/behavior either violates her own (Keltner & Buswell, 1997) or her social environment's values/standards (Verbeke & Bagozzi, 2002). It is more intense and painful than any other self-conscious emotion (Tangney et al, 1996).

Embarrassment occurs as a result of violating conventions that regulate social interactions (Babcock & Sabini, 1990; Edelmann, 1987; Miller, 1992). It follows from relatively harmless transgressions, such as losing body control, cognitive faults, or deviating from socially acceptable appearance (Keltner, 1996).

Pride is a pleasant feeling (Mosquera et al 2000), resulting from positive evaluation of self's capabilities or endeavors in attaining a goal (Weiner 1986). It is experienced when one appraises her performance or achievement positively (Bagozzi et al 1999), and believe that her self-representations are in accordance with what she wants to be (Tracy, 2010).

The first chapter of this dissertation, titled "*Shame and Embarrassment in Consumption: What We Know and What Lies Ahead*", illustrates a big picture of the extant theoretical and empirical research on consumers' shame/embarrassment and proposes new avenues for further research. To date, marketing literature has invested substantial attention to the two emotions and their impact on consumers. Yet, it failed to provide a comprehensive framework in terms of theoretical approaches, empirical findings, and conceptualization of the two emotions. This makes synthesizing findings rather difficult. This paper presents an overview of "what we know" about consumers' shame/embarrassment. We show that research has covered some important areas of consumer behavior: thought processes and judgments, self-regulation, service encounters, purchase, coping strategies, and persuasion. For each area, we scrutinize the extant literature, present the key findings, and end with a number of key deductions. In "what lies ahead", a number of suggestions for extending/improving current research is provided. First, we propose to borrow four concepts from psychology literature as potential moderators of the effect of shame/embarrassment on consumer behavior (propositions 1-4): motivation, spotlight effect, public self-consciousness, and psychological distance. Second, we speculate about some other consequences of consumers' shame/embarrassment (propositions

5-7): consumer memory, categorization, and word-of-mouth. Lastly, we suggest two methodological improvements for future research on the topic (suggestions 1-2). More specifically, we suggest future research to distinguish between anticipated and experienced shame/embarrassment, along with unifying conceptualization of the two emotions. This comprehensive literature review aims to synthesize the findings and help researchers to identify potential gaps for further extensions.

The second chapter, titles *"Pride and Shame Moderate the Effect of Regulatory Focus on Risk Taking Propensity"*, explores whether and how self-conscious emotions influence consumers' risk taking behavior. Marketers are concerned about understanding what encourages/discourages consumers to take risky actions. Regulatory focus literature has indicated that promotion focus leads to more risk taking propensity, while prevention focus has a reverse effect (Crowe and Higgins 1997). This paper extends prior literature by suggesting that self-conscious emotions may moderate the effect of regulatory focus on risk taking behavior. Moreover, this moderating effect may depend on the valence of the emotion (positive vs. negative). The focus is on pride (as a positive self-conscious emotion) and shame (as a negative self-conscious emotion) to show how they differently moderate the effect of regulatory focus on risk taking propensity. The results of two experiments demonstrate that positive and negative self-conscious emotions can moderate the effect of regulatory focus on risk taking propensity. More specifically, pride (shame) attenuates the effect of promotion (prevention) focus, but not prevention (promotion) focus, on risk taking propensity.

The third chapter of this dissertation, titled *"Avoiding Proself/Prosocial Embarrassing Behaviors under Spotlight: Moderating Role of Consumer's Public Self-Consciousness"*, focuses on consumers' embarrassment-avoidant behavior. Prior research has indicated that a spotlight condition (believing that others are watching) enhances embarrassment (Dahl et al

2001). Yet, it did not study how this condition influences embarrassment-avoidant behavior, and how it is contingent on consumers' public self-consciousness as well as the proself/prosocial nature of the embarrassing behavior. The present research suggests that when the embarrassing behavior is proself, a spotlight condition may increase embarrassment-avoidance only among LPUBSC consumers. Nevertheless, when the embarrassing behavior is prosocial, a spotlight condition may increase embarrassment-avoidant behavior among LPUBSC consumers, but it may have an opposite effect on HPUBSC consumers. Getting aware of these relationships, marketers can devise strategies for managing embarrassment-avoidant behavior, based on consumers' individual differences.

Chapter 1

Shame and Embarrassment in Consumption: What We Know and What Lies Ahead

Aylar Pour Mohammad, Gülen Sarial-Abi, Andrea Ordanini

Abstract – Shame and embarrassment are negative self-conscious emotions arising from either personal failures or transgressions. While shame is the result of perceived shortcomings in the "core" self, embarrassment is the result of perceived shortcomings in the "presented" self (Tangney et al 1996). The two emotions could be experienced in various consumption contexts. A thorough review of the extant consumer research reveals that they have been the focus of significant attention. However, the research appears to lack a comprehensive framework for theoretical and empirical contribution to the topic. This paper strives to provide a big picture of the state-of-the-art on the role of shame/embarrassment in consumption context, in tandem with suggesting new avenues to extend/improve the current research. Our contribution begins with an overview of "what we know" on the role of shame/embarrassment in six major areas of consumer behavior, namely, thought processes and judgments, self-regulation, service encounters, purchases, coping strategies, and persuasion. For each area, we present the key findings. We proceed by presenting "what lies ahead" for future research in three distinct phases. First, by carefully exploring the psychology literature, we propose four concepts

(motivation, spotlight effect, public self-consciousness, and psychological distance) that moderate shame/embarrassment-related consumer behaviors. Next, we identify three consumption areas (consumer memory, categorization, and word-of-mouth) that could possibly be affected by shame/embarrassment. Finally, we suggest two methodological improvements for future research.

1. Introduction

People experience shame or embarrassment in various consumption-related contexts. For example, purchasing products that are either illegal such as drugs, reflecting a physical disability such as adult-diapers, or of sexual use such as sex toys may result in shame or embarrassment. The outburst of the two emotions may also come from either purchasing specific services such as liposuction, using certain brands such as cheap/fake ones, or specific incidents in service encounters such as preferential treatment. Although very close, shame and embarrassment are distinct emotions. Shame is the result of violation of one's "ideal" self, while embarrassment is arisen by violation of one's "presented" self (Tangney et al 1996).

While these emotions may be resultant from purchasing (or using) a product, their outburst may also influence consumption behaviors. For instance, anticipation of embarrassment may lead to refusing to ask store employees for help, covering an embarrassing product with other items, shopping from less crowded stores, or even withdrawing the purchase.

Hence, there is a mutual influence that is the theme of our analysis. First, consumption may make people feel ashamed/embarrassed. One example is buying condoms in public that may result in embarrassment (Dahl et al 2005). Second, anticipating or experiencing the two emotions may affect consumer behavior. A related example is the brand embarrassment that prevents the consumer from complaining (Romani et al 2012). Fig. 1 illustrates this mutual influence.

Emotions with a social component are of particular importance in marketing. This is so because marketing transactions and processes are typically accomplished in a social context. For instance, the act of a purchase rarely happens in private, due to the presence of either other customers or the cashier. In a related direction, there are only few product categories that are

used exclusively in private. Also, service transactions often situate in a social interaction. The three examples presented aimed to provide supporting evidence as to why social emotions are worthy of attention to study consumer behavior.

Shame and embarrassment lie within the set of emotions with the aforementioned social component. They are both self-conscious emotions with great sense of exposure (Tangney et al 1996). Embarrassment is experienced only in the presence of real (or imaginary) others (Tangney et al 1996). Shame could be experienced in either public or private, however, it is known that an ashamed person perceives that others are watching (Verbeke and Bagozzi 2002).

Marketing literature has paid substantial attention to these two emotions and how they are impacting behavior. However, it lacks a comprehensive framework in terms of theoretical approaches, empirical findings, and conceptualization of shame and embarrassment. Due to the vast variety of measurement methods and theoretical structures that have been used in publications, it appears to require considerable effort to synthesize the shame/embarrassment findings.

A comprehensive literature review, in regard to shame and embarrassment in consumption, will Addressing the aforementioned objectives is the theme of the present work. provide a big picture of state-of-the-art, synthesize the findings, and help the researchers to identify potential gaps. This will open new research avenues, provide directions for further extensions. We review shame and embarrassment together since, in many studies, they have been used either in place of each other or as one construct. Of course, in some cases they have similar effects on consumer behavior.

MacInnis (2011) introduced a framework for conceptual contributions in marketing literature. Our paper is of "summarizing" nature in regard to her framework. "The goal of summarization

is to take stock of, digesting, recapping, and reducing what is known to a manageable set of key takeaways." (MacInnis 2011, p. 144). Summaries (also known as review papers) provide a big picture of what is known, develop an organizing framework to couch and logically link the summarized material, present a clear and consistent conclusion, and finally identify knowledge gaps and research priorities (MacInnis 2011).

The rest of the paper is organized as follows. We start with thorough definitions of shame and embarrassment, the main concepts studied in this paper. Then, we follow by explaining our methodological approach. Next, we introduce the conceptual model through which our results are presented.

In "what we know", we present a big picture of extant literature on the role of shame and embarrassment in consumer behavior: see Fig. 2. The findings we are reporting, address some important areas of consumer behavior including thought processes/judgments, self-regulation, service encounters, purchase, coping strategies, and persuasion. Table 1 illustrates key deductions from "what we know" about the role of shame and embarrassment in each of these areas.

We follow by providing some suggestions for future marketing research, that is, "what lies ahead" for marketing scholarship to discover. In this section, we first suggest to borrow four concepts from the psychology literature as constructs that can moderate the effect of shame/embarrassment on consumer behavior (propositions 1-4): motivation, spotlight effect, public self-consciousness, and psychological distance. Next, we speculate about the effect of the two emotions on some other areas of consumer behavior including consumer memory, categorizations, and word-of-mouth (propositions 5-7). As the last part of "what lies ahead", we present two methodological suggestions for future research (suggestions 1-2). More specifically, we suggest future research to distinguish between anticipated and experienced

shame/embarrassment, in tandem with unifying conceptualization of the two emotions. Table 2 presents our propositions and suggestions. We conclude by explaining the theoretical contributions of our review.

2. Shame and Embarrassment

According to Tracy and Robins (2004), human emotions fall into two main classes, primary and self-conscious. Examples of the latter include pride, guilt, shame, and embarrassment. Such emotions are clearly cognition dependent. They also rely tremendously on self-evaluative processes. Shame and embarrassment, amongst all, are two seeking a heightened sense of self-awareness and evaluation. Moreover, they are both valenced negatively, having considerable intensity, and arising from personal failures or transgressions (Tangney et al 1996). Despite the similarities that shame and embarrassment share, there are various distinction between the two. This section is devoted to describing these in detail, with a focus on discussing the individual emotions.

2.1. Shame. Shame is the result of violation of one's "ideal" self (Higgins 1987). It is felt when one understands that her act/behavior either violates her own (Keltner and Buswell 1997) or her social environment's values/standards (Verbeke and Bagozzi 2002). When ashamed, "self is both the agent and object of observation and disapproval" (Tangney et al 1996, p. 1257).

In a similar direction, shame is a painful self-scrutiny which entails debilitating feelings of worthlessness and powerlessness (Lindsay-Hartz 1984). It influences one's core sense of self (Lewis 1971; Lindsay-Hartz et al 1995). Shame may result in feeling physically small, worthless, immoral, exposed, and inferior to or isolated from others (Tangney et al 1996).

Moreover, it may cause damage to self-esteem and self-regard (Verbeke and Bagozzi 2002). A person experiencing shame often desires to escape, hide, sink into the floor, or disappear (Tangney et al 1996).

An ashamed person typically perceives that others are watching her, and consequently, becomes more self-conscious compared to her non-ashamed estate (Verbeke and Bagozzi 2002). Lastly, shame is more intense and painful than any other self-conscious emotion (Tangney et al 1996).

2.2. Embarrassment. Embarrassment occurs as a result of violating conventions that regulate social interactions (Babcock and Sabini 1990; Edelmann 1987; Miller 1992). It follows from relatively harmless transgressions, such as losing body control, cognitive faults, or deviating from socially acceptable appearance (Keltner 1996). These types of contraventions usually pertain to interactions between people who are not familiar with one another (Keltner 1996) and can fleetingly threaten one's social identity (Keltner and Buswell 1997).

Embarrassment typically happens in incidents considered as surprising, relatively trivial, humorous, and less serious, and as a result, observers will likely be amused by an embarrassing scene (Tangney et al 1996).

Although embarrassed people feel more exposed compared to ashamed people, they are less disgusted and angry at themselves, more easily talk about the embarrassing incident, take less responsibility, and experience less regret (Tangney et al 1996). At the end, embarrassment is less intense and less painful than any other negative self-conscious emotion (Tangney et al 1996).

Overall, shame and embarrassment share a lot of similarities, although are different in nature. While shame has moral implications, embarrassment does not; and while shame is about

perceived shortcomings in the "core" self, embarrassment is about perceived shortcomings in the "presented" self (Tangney et al 1996).

3. Method

Our review process started with digging up all the articles in the high ranked marketing journals, listed by Hult et al (2009). See appendix 1. Hult et al (2009) proposed the hierarchical positioning of these journals based on the popularity/familiarity and importance/prestige indices, upon obtaining the perceptions of 629 marketing professors from all over the world.

In our search, we looked for articles containing a number of keywords in either their titles or abstracts. The keywords include: shame, shameful, ashamed, embarrassment, embarrassing, embarrassed, and embarrassable. We restricted attention to those articles that studied shame and embarrassment as independent constructs. Further, only those articles were picked that either studied the subject in a consumption context or at the very least could be applicable to that context. While some papers had shame or embarrassment as their main focus, the rest studied a variety of emotions, including the two emotions as a proper subset. From the latter group of articles, we extracted only those parts related to shame/embarrassment.

The next step lied in spotting relevant theoretical and empirical works from the psychology literature. If the article focused explicitly on shame or embarrassment as negative self-conscious emotions, we endeavored to adapt their results to the consumption context. If the article studied a consumption-related phenomenon, without directly addressing the two emotions, we still testified whether or not they could be affected by shame or embarrassment.

Our interest in collecting findings from the list of marketing and psychology papers is twofold. First, they helped us to propose a conceptual model (what we know). Second, they were used

as a compelling guide to detect research gaps in consumer psychology, as well as a source of directions for future research (what lies ahead). The detailed process of developing our conceptual model is explained in the next section.

4. Conceptual Model

The conceptual model of this review was developed in two stages: "what we know" and "what lies ahead". Below, we describe each of the stages in detail.

Stage one: "what we know". First, we brought together all the studies on the role of shame and embarrassment in consumption context. See Method for the explanation of how the studies were collected. We specified the subject that was the focus of attention in each paper. We found that most studies investigated consumer behavior in one of six major areas: thought processes and judgments, self-regulation, service encounters, purchase, coping strategies, and persuasion.

Next, upon the subject of the studies, each of these areas was divided further. We present the section on "what we know" according to these sub-areas. For each of the aforementioned areas, we extracted the essence of the arguments, in the form of a key deduction. Table 1 illustrates the list of these key deduction, tabulated based on the related area.

While assessing the literature, we tried to identify which situations make consumers ashamed/embarrassed (antecedents) and also what sort of effects the two emotions have on consumers' behaviors (consequences). Moreover, we looked for factors which intensify/attenuate these relationships (moderators). Fig. 2 illustrates our conceptual model which encompasses the antecedents, consequences, and moderators of shame/embarrassment in each consumption area, separately.

Stage two: "what lies ahead". At this stage, we sought ways to extend and improve current knowledge by importing from, and extending related research in psychology literature. Following Oswick et al (2011), our strategy was not only borrowing theories from psychology, but also blending them with related theories in psychology and marketing, and subsequently, building new theories; a two-way process of borrowing-building theory. For example, in Sub-section 6.1.1, we first borrowed an established theory on how individuals' regulatory focus affects their risk taking propensity. After blending it with theories on self-conscious emotions, we suggested a proposition about the moderating role of shame in the aforementioned effect.

Our contribution is relatively narrow in scope, and in turn, relatively concrete and focused. This makes our methodology of theory blending fall, epistemologically, under "novel traveling theory" (Oswick et al 2011).

In this regard, we identified four constructs from psychology literature that could moderate the effect of shame/embarrassment on consumer behavior, consisting of motivation, spotlight effect, public self-consciousness, and psychological distance. We developed four propositions which predict the moderating role of these constructs in behavioral consequences of shame/embarrassment. Our propositions are novel and propose specific insights, which are mainly built upon prior knowledge. Their content is concrete with relatively narrow application.

Furthermore, we identified three consumer-related areas that could potentially be affected by consumers' shame/embarrassment: consumer memory, categorization, and word-of-mouth. We strived to predict the consequence of shame/embarrassment in each area, in the form of a proposition.

Table 2 presents the list of our propositions about "what lies ahead". The moderators and consequences of shame/embarrassment suggested, are appeared in italic characters in Fig. 2.

Finally, we revisited the research methods applied in past studies. Based on the prior knowledge, we deduced that future studies should modify their treatment of shame and embarrassment in two ways. First, they should make a distinction between the *a priori* anticipation of shame/embarrassment, and the actual outburst of the two emotions. Second, they should reach a consensus about conceptualization of shame/embarrassment, and accordingly, adapt manipulation and measurement methods. Our suggestions in this regard are also added to table 2.

The next two sections of the paper are devoted to explaining the outcomes of these two stages: "what we know" and "what lies ahead".

5. What We Know

5.1 Thought processes and judgments

Shame/embarrassment can highly affect the way consumers process their thoughts in the course of making decisions and evaluating experiences. In this section, we briefly illustrate some examples of how thought processes affect and get affected by the two emotions.

Shame and embarrassment can bias judgements in different ways. For instance, shame makes people rely more on information that do not support their existing judgments (Agrawal et al 2013). Similarly, embarrassable observers perceive others to be more embarrassable (Marcus et al 1996). Also, shame is shown to increase reliance on desirability attributes, activate global appraisal tendencies, and lead to adopting higher construal levels (Han et al 2014).

While shame and embarrassment may bias thinking, certain thoughts and interpretations may also intensify these emotions. One example of such intensifications is about perspective taking: going with the observer's perspective instead of the actor's, for instance, may lead to a more

intensity of embarrassment (Hung and Mukhopadhyay 2012). Similarly, it is shown that picturing failure from the third person perspective rather than the first person's, increases shame among high self-esteem people, while it reduces shame among low self-esteem people (Libby et al 2011). Another example of such shame-inducing thought processes is the self-objectification giving rise to body shame in women (Fredrickson et al 1998). Hence, the way people process their thoughts may influence the intensity of their shame/embarrassment experiences.

5.2. Self-regulation

In regard to studying shame and embarrassment, one key question that has been addressed in the marketing literature is how feeling the two emotions encourages specific consumption patterns, in tandem with their effects on self-regulating practices. Self-regulation is defined as "self-monitoring of one's behavior, its determinants, and its effects; judgment of one's behavior in relation to personal standards and environmental circumstances; and affective self-reaction." (Bandura 1991, p. 248).

Self-regulating consequences of the two emotions have been mostly investigated in the following domains: self-control, self-disclosure, ethical consumption, and prosocial behavior. One reason underlying most self-regulating practices is to avoid shame and embarrassment. This is a common theme of all the aforementioned domains.

5.2.1. Self-control. Failure in self-control may result in feeling ashamed. *A priori* anticipation of the resulting shame, in comparison with the post-failure shame experience, affects the subsequent self-control practices differently.

Anticipating shame of giving into temptations may improve self-control. In one study, Chun et al (2007) showed the picture of a delicious-looking chocolate cake to participants, asked them to imagine the cake in front of them. A group of participants were asked to anticipate how ashamed they would feel if they ate the cake. Another group, served as the control group, were not given any such instructions. Results showed that those who anticipated shame, were more successful in exerting self-control (Chun et al 2007).

Experiencing shame, however, has opposite effects on self-control. For example, failure in goal achievement may result in experiencing shame. Semaan and Gould (2010) showed that people who feel ashamed of their goal progress, blame themselves and damage their self-perception. This leads to avoidance reactions and more drastic goal violations (Semaan and Gould 2010).

Considering these findings, we can conclude that failure in self-control may result in feeling ashamed. Anticipating such shame may improve self-control. Whereas, experiencing the post-failure shame may exacerbate self-control.

5.2.2. Self-disclosure. By an earlier discussion, ashamed and embarrassed individuals tend to, physically, hide themselves (Tangney et al 1996). As a result, it is natural to expect that embarrassed people have lower tendencies for self-disclosure. Indeed, marketing research supports this. For example, prior research has illustrated that embarrassed people tend to choose products that either hide their faces (such as sunglasses) or repair them (such as restorative cosmetics) (Dong et al 2013).

White (2004) studied self-disclosure in the context of relationship-seeking marketing with an eye to find factors that can motivate people to disclose their embarrassing personal information to marketers. She found that loyal customers are less inclined to exchange embarrassing

information. Examples of such information include the customer's history of purchasing condoms or playboy magazines. This is especially salient when the company aims to customize the benefits based on the aforementioned information. Therefore, embarrassment reduces the likelihood of consumers' self-disclosure.

5.2.3. Ethical consumption. Unethical behaviors are typically tempting, and therefore, avoiding them requires self-control (Gino et al 2011). Shame and embarrassment are considered as moral emotions (Keltner 1996), expected to affect moral decisions as a result. Research suggests the two emotions motivate ethical consumption, as the following examples illustrate.

Suppose that an anti-counterfeit campaign evokes shame among the audience to prevent them from buying a fake brand. Those with interdependent self-view will be affected by evaluating doing so as a morally wrong action (Kim and Johnson 2014). As another example, the desire to avoid negative emotions, including embarrassment, is encouraging to minimize food waste (Graham-Rowe et al 2014). Thus, the desire to avoid shame and embarrassment encourages ethical consumption.

5.2.4. Prosocial behavior. Prosocial behavior is a form of moral regulation that is highly affected by shame and embarrassment. Psychology literature revealed that anticipating embarrassment may make people comply with help requests from others (Bohns et al 2011). Accordingly, anticipating shame of refusing to help motivates public good contributions (Samek and Sheremeta 2014; Jacquet et al 2011).

Nevertheless, there is not a consensus on how experiencing shame affects prosocial behavior. Some research indicated that experiencing the emotion motivates prosocial behavior (De Hooge

et al 2008; Gausel et al 2012). In contrast, Wang et al (2012) showed that experiencing shame gives rise to self-interest behavior, so it reduces monetary donations.

Accordingly, one may conclude that anticipating shame or embarrassment of refusing to help, prompts prosocial behavior. Nonetheless, there is not a consensus on the effect of experiencing the estate of shame on prosocial behavior.

5.3. Service encounters

Shame and embarrassment are usually experienced in relationship with others, that is, they have a latent social component (Tangney et al 1996). Thus, they influence and get influenced by interpersonal communications in service encounters. One stream of research focuses on identifying situations that make customers ashamed or embarrassed during a service transaction (antecedents of customer's shame/embarrassment). Another stream addresses the impact of the two emotions on customers' further actions, such as complaining, switching, and negative word-of-mouth (consequences of customer's shame/embarrassment).

5.3.1. Antecedents of customer's shame/embarrassment. Customers' embarrassment may come from a service failure (Wan 2013), or from receiving preferential treatment in front of others (Xia and Kukar-Kinney 2014). In regard to shame, Menon and DubT (1999) identified some sources of customers' shame in extended service transactions. The sources include financial problems, deceiving or inconveniencing the provider, incomprehension of service requirements, and a rude behavior from the provider.

There is an interesting observation in the aforementioned studies regarding the customer-service provider relationship: in many incidents, it is the service provider who causes a mishap

(e.g. preferential treatment, service failure, provider's rude behavior). Regardless, the customer may still take the blame by feeling ashamed or embarrassed. Consequently, blunders from either side, the customer or service provider, may make customers feel ashamed or embarrassed.

5.3.2. Consequences of customer's shame/embarrassment. A service failure that embarrasses the customer, may result in complaining, switching, and negative word-of-mouth. This effect is even stronger in collectivistic cultures (Wan 2013). In another consequence, customers who feel embarrassed by preferential treatment may have a lower fairness perception (Xia and Kukar-Kinney 2014).

It is important for service providers to read off some particular emotions of their customers. For instance, to avoid undesirable consequences, they should be able to recognize the customers' uncomfortable feelings and resolve them right away. Cultural mismatch, in this two-sided relationship, is one obstacle to correctly identify the customers' shame (G. Tombs et al 2014).

People who purchase embarrassing products may undergo the need to make a good impression on others. When the provider is of opposite-sex, this need is driven by sexual motives. Whereas, in the case of the provider being of same-sex, it is driven by social comparison processes. Either way, the embarrassed customer shows less positive reactions to highly attractive service providers (Wan and Wyer 2015). Even though the provider did not cause the outburst of customer's emotion, s/he may still have to bear its negative consequences.

On that account, it is plausible to conclude that customer's shame and embarrassment in service encounters may result in negative consequences for the service provider. This is so even if the provider is not responsible for the unpleasant emotion outburst (e.g. purchasing embarrassing product) or if the customer benefits from the embarrassing incident (e.g. preferential treatment).

5.4. Purchases

This section focuses on shameful/embarrassing purchases, where the outburst of the two emotions come from either the product type, its brand, or its price. (The section is organized as which of the three sources is considered.) More precisely, the focus will be on determination of the intensity of consumers' shame/embarrassment, in tandem with their intention to complete the purchase.

5.4.1 Product type. Purchasing certain products may make consumers feel embarrassed. A key question addressed in prior literature is as follows: which factors moderate the intensity of embarrassment that consumers experience in the course of purchasing an embarrassing product? Some factors addressed the most are social context, shopping basket composition, and familiarity (to be clarified below).

5.4.1.1. Social context. Embarrassment is an emotion experienced in the presence of other people (Tangney et al 1996). Therefore, social context has been identified as a major moderator of consumers' embarrassment. For example, having a sense of (either real or imaginary) social presence intensifies embarrassment during an embarrassing purchase act (Dahl et al 2001). This may even dominate other factors that could possibly affect the state of embarrassment: for instance, the purpose of purchase has an impact on embarrassment only when it is done in private (e.g. online) (Krishna et al 2015).

5.4.1.2. Shopping basket composition. Additional items purchased along with the embarrassing product may intensify embarrassment. This happens when the consumer finds the additional items complementing the embarrassing one. In contrast, finding the other items counterbalancing the embarrassing one, will alleviate the emotion (Blair and Roese 2013).

5.4.1.3. Familiarity. Familiarity is "the number of product-related experiences that have been accumulated by the consumer" (Alba and Hutchinson 1987, p. 411). Familiarity with a purchase act creates purchase automaticity and reduces cognitive activity while selecting a product (Alba and Hutchinson 1987). One source of familiarity lies in repeated purchases (Alba and Hutchinson 1987).

In general, familiarity with a situation reduces the likelihood of embarrassment (Vissers 2005). This reduction may come from the less awkwardness, and indecisiveness about what to do; both are the outcome of familiarity (Miller 1992).

In one study, Dahl at el (2001) showed that familiarity with the purchase act may diminish the embarrassment over purchasing an embarrassing product. It also weakens both the possibility of imagining social presence, and the effect of real social presence on embarrassment (Dahl et al 2001).

Putting all these findings together suggests that the embarrassment over purchasing embarrassing products can be moderated by social context, shopping basket composition, and familiarity with the purchase act.

5.4.2. Brand. Brand of a product can also be a source of shame/embarrassment. Antecedents of brand embarrassment include factors related to the self (such as social class, self-perception, and identity), and factors related to the brand relationship (such as brand familiarity) (Grant and Walsh 2009). Also, Walsh et al (2016) spotted individual differences in proneness to feel brand-related embarrassment.

In addition to reducing complaints (Romani et al 2012), brand embarrassment consequences can range from playful teasing to long-term harm from social stigma (Grant and Walsh 2009).

Hence, brand of a product can be a source of embarrassment. Brand embarrassment may reduce complaints and entail social consequences.

5.4.3. Price. The price paid for a product may cause shame/embarrassment in consumers. Price-related antecedents of consumers' shame/embarrassment include shopping from a cheap retailer (Zielke 2009 & 2011), customer's perception of the retailer's low value for money (Zielke 2011), paying more than another customer for the same product (Bolton et al 2010), or using discount coupons (Brumbaugh and Rosa 2009).

It appears that the embarrassing aspect of the price is not merely coming from the amount of money the consumer paid, either high or low. Instead, the consumer worries about the undesirable image of him/her reflected, as a result of the price they pay. For instance, shopping from a cheap retailer, or using discount coupons, may portray an image of a low-income person. In a similar direction, being overcharged for the same product may convey an ingenuous image of the purchaser. In the first example the consumer paid a low amount of money, and in the second s/he paid a high amount; however, both instances resulted in embarrassment.

The two emotions, in turn, have certain effects on purchase intentions. Embarrassment over using coupons, for instance, discourages people from coupon redemption (Ashworth and Darke 2002; Brumbaugh and Rosa 2009). Similarly, shame/embarrassment of shopping from a retailer explained above, reduces purchase intentions (Zielke 2009 & 2011; Bolton et al 2010).

Therefore, from the perspective of the purchaser, if the paid price for a product communicates an undesirable image of him/her, it will result in shame/embarrassment. This shame/embarrassment, in turn, reduces purchase intentions.

5.5. Coping Strategies

Consumers appeal to a variety of strategies to cope with the embarrassment of purchasing specific products. In this section, we explain the most widely studied coping strategies including planned shopping, stealthy shopping, withdrawal, and masking.

5.5.1. Planned shopping. According to Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB), people adjust their behavior in an attempt to manage the impression they make on others (Ajzen 1991). As advocated by the theory, people consciously plan ahead the embarrassing purchase in order to avoid social rejection (Nichols et al 2015). For example, in a study by Moore et al (2008), participants outlined two such methods to cope with their embarrassment: purchase rehearsals (e.g. practicing, in their minds, what they should say or do) and self-assurance (e.g. repeating "I shouldn't be embarrassed"). Thus, people actively adjust their behavior to cope with the embarrassment of specific purchases.

5.5.2. Stealthy shopping. Another strategy consumers employ to cope with the purchase embarrassment is stealthy shopping. This is done so, for instance, through shopping in less crowded stores, avoiding to ask store employees for help, waiting for other customers to leave an aisle, or requesting a bag to cover the embarrassing item (Blair and Roese 2013; Brackett 2004; Lewittes and Simmons 1975). Accordingly, it seems that people tend to avoid public eye throughout an embarrassing purchase.

5.5.3. Withdrawal. The inconvenience of dealing with embarrassment may prevent consumers from buying the right product. For instance, people with incontinence issues may purchase

sanitary napkins rather than adult diapers, in an attempt to avoid embarrassment (Kershaw and Schmall 1992). Accordingly, disclosing a nut-allergic status may embarrass some people in such a way that they refuse to check whether or not a food on offer contains nuts. This may impose health risks (Leftwich et al 2011). Hence, people may withdraw purchasing the right product, in an attempt to avoid embarrassment.

5.5.4. Masking. Another strategy that consumers use to cope with the purchase embarrassment is "masking", that is, enhanced basket size (and value) to cover the embarrassing item with other neutral items (Nichols et al 2015). Literature has reported several examples of the masking strategy in embarrassing purchases. Picca and Joos (2009) found that people hide the embarrassing product with other items including magazines, gums, and candies. Indeed, this is one of the five most popular strategies college students employ while buying condoms (Brackett 2004). In another study, 57% of male adults reported buying additional items, while buying a pornographic magazine. Whereas, only 32% of those who were buying a non-pornographic magazine reported the same behavior (Lewittes and Simmons 1975). Consequently, people may purchase some additional items to cover an embarrassing product.

5.6. Persuasion

One important concern of marketing is convincing consumers to adopt specific courses of consumption behavior, setting consumption norms for them, and shaping their attitudes toward products, services, and brands. One way to do so is using shame/embarrassment-evoking campaigns aimed to promote a specific consumption norm/behavior. For example, marketers and public policy makers frequently use negative emotional appeals in order to persuade

consumers to comply with health-related advertisements (Agrawal and Duhachek 2010; Keller and Lehmann 2008; Keller et al 2003).

Since shame is regularly found in many harmful consumption behaviors (Han et al 2014), shame-appeals are being used as a persuasive tool to prevent those behaviors, such as binge and underage drinking (Agrawal and Duhachek 2010). For example, framing the anti-alcohol abuse advertising as a shame-appeal enhances persuasion among young adults (Merunka et al 2007). However, overusing shame appeals in social marketing leads to inaction and self-protection (Brennan and Binney 2010).

In this regard, marketing literature has identified factors that moderate persuasiveness of shame-evoking advertisement campaigns. This section is devoted to discussing individual differences and message framing as two moderating factors which appeared to be studied more than others.

5.6.1. Individual differences. Prior literature has revealed that individual differences of audience influence effectiveness of shame appeals for them. For example, audience's shame-proneness reduces effectiveness of shame-compatible advertising (Agrawal and Duhachek 2010). Moreover, Yoon (2015) showed that fear of negative evaluation (FNE) as a personality trait, in an interaction with humor in the ad, affects audience's attitude toward shame-inducing health advertisements.

5.6.2. Message framing. Fluency and persuasiveness of a message is stronger when there is a fit between emotional orientation and message frame (Lee and Aaker 2004). This has been studied in three levels: regulatory fit, compatibility with the incidental emotion, and gain/loss frames.

5.6.2.1. Regulatory fit. Fit between message frame and regulatory focus of the message content enhances processing fluency (Lee and Aaker 2004). Likewise, processing fluency is raised when there is a fit between individual's regulatory focus and the construal level at which information is provided (Lee et al 2010). Laufer and Higgins (2013) have shown that when the involvement with an attitude-related issue in a persuasion message is low, regulatory fit elevates positive feelings toward the target through increased fluency.

5.6.2.2. Compatibility with the incidental emotion. Another instance of framing is about framing the message according to the incidental emotion which is already being experienced by the consumer. Incidental emotions are shown to have an impact on processing and evaluation of new persuasive information (Maheswaran and Chen 2006; Moons and Mackie 2007; Raghunathan and Trope 2002). For example, in a study, participants in negative moods were persuaded more by strong messages, while weak and strong messages had similar persuasive impact on participants in positive moods (Bless et al 1990). In the case of shame, literature has indicated that ashamed consumers are more open to new information and more persuaded by inconsistent information (Agrawal et al 2013). A question which arises here is that whether the emotional overtone of a message should be compatible with the incidental shame of consumers.

DeSteno et al (2004) believed that compatibility of the message frame with emotional state of the receiver increases persuasion. In contrast with their finding, Agrawal and Duhachek (2010) argued that this effect depends on the target of the message. In their articulation, compatibility of the message frame with the incidental shame of consumers (like framing the message as a shame-appeal) is less persuasive when it judges consumers' own behavior. However, it is more persuasive when makes judgements about others (like judging drinking of other people) (Agrawal and Duhachek 2010).

In addition, persuasive messages are more influential if they match with the goal activated by the incidental emotion. For example, in a study about environmental-supporting messages, ashamed individuals were more persuaded by the message that depicted waste-sorting as a means of conforming majority (Graton et al 2016).

5.6.2.3. Gain versus loss frames. One instance of framing is about framing the emotion-inducing message either as a gain or as a loss. One stream of research has suggested that negative emotional appeals are more persuasive when matched with a gain-frame. The reason is that people in negative emotional states prefer to deal with positive information in order to repair their negative affect (Keller et al 2003; Raghunathan and Trope 2002).

On the other hand, a more recent study by Duhachek and colleagues (2012) has argued that conformity between the coping strategy favored by the evoked emotion and the coping strategy communicated by the message frame boosts message persuasiveness. Hence, when shame-appeals are matched with a loss-frame (rather than a gain-frame), describing negative consequences of failing to comply, they activate emotion-focused coping (vs. problem-focused coping) that enhances fluency and persuasiveness.

Considering these findings, one may conclude that shame-appeals are more persuasive when their frame fits with the regulatory focus of their audience. A similar result holds when the frame fits with the regulatory focus of the message content. However, there is not a consensus in literature about: a) whether or not the message frame should fit with the incidental shame of the audience, and b) whether the shame-evoking message should be framed as a gain or as a loss.

6. What Lies Ahead

6.1. What psychology suggests?

In studying consumer behavior, it is intelligible to appeal to psychology science. Psychology literature provides a rich history of theoretical and empirical research on shame and embarrassment, which can be applicable to consumer behavior research. Specifically, there are four psychological concepts that, we suspect, may be influential in the consumption context, although neither of them has been investigated adequately.

In this section, we introduce these concepts as moderators of the effect that shame/embarrassment have on consumer behavior. First, the literature suggests a link between the emotion of shame, and individual's motivations. Based upon this link, we predict that motivations affect the behaviors of ashamed individuals, in a different way than the non-ashamed ones.

The second and third concepts will be discussed together. One of the concepts is about whether or not people get notified about observers. The other one is related to the extent to which they care about those observers. Hence, we will discuss how spotlight effect, as a well-established psychological concept, and public self-consciousness, as a dispositional characteristic, play moderating roles in consumer's reaction to embarrassing situations.

Finally, psychological distance is a concept which moderates individuals' affective reaction to emotion-eliciting situations. Therefore, we propose that psychological distance may moderate consumer behavior in an embarrassing situation.

This section provides a review on these concepts in tandem with related propositions for future empirical research in consumer behavior.

6.1.1. Motivation. Motivation theories have great importance in consumer psychology. Marketing literature suggested that the system level of motivation (approach/avoidance tendencies) influences the way consumers deal with their emotions. For example, consumers' approach/avoidance tendencies toward counter-hedonic experiences (such as watching a horror movie) specify their affective reactions to them (Andrade and Cohen 2007). In addition, only individuals with approach motivation use negative affect, as an input, in their product satisfaction judgments (Kramer and Yoon 2006). It also explains which coping strategies an individual employs while facing a psychological threat to the self (Han et al 2015).

Psychology research has associated shame with avoidance (versus approach) (Sheikh and Janoff-Bulman 2010). In turn, avoidance tendency is proved to increase the likelihood of experiencing shame (Sheikh and Janoff-Bulman 2010). Based on these findings, our prediction is as follows. Individuals with avoidance orientation, compared to those who are approach-oriented, react stronger to a shameful consumption situation. This means that approach/avoidance motivation can moderate the effect of shame on consumption.

> *Proposition 1: Avoidance-oriented individuals, in comparison to approach-oriented ones, react stronger to shameful consumption situations.*

Prior research has also highlighted the importance of strategic level of motivation (promotion/prevention regulatory focus). For instance, consumers' regulatory focus determines sensitivity to compromise effect and attraction effect (Mourali et al 2007), perceived risk and perceived value of brand extensions (Yeo and Park 2006), investment decisions (Zhou and Pham 2004), and many other consumption decisions and behaviors.

Promotion-focused and prevention-focused individuals are differently oriented toward their goals. Whereas promotion-focused people are oriented toward seeking gains and avoiding non-gains, prevention-focused individuals are oriented toward attaining non-losses and eluding losses (Grant and Higgins 2003; Higgins and Spiegel 2004).

From a prevention focus point of view, a neutral emotional state is regarded as a non-loss state, while feeling ashamed is considered as a loss. As stated before, prevention-focused individuals are oriented toward attaining non-losses and eluding losses (Grant and Higgins 2003; Higgins and Spiegel 2004). Therefore, they prefer to keep the status quo when in the neutral condition, and prefer to change the status quo when ashamed. Hence, a prevention-focused person is motivated to avoid changes in the neutral emotion. However, when ashamed, they no longer want to keep the status quo, but seek changes that have the potential to eliminate loss.

From a promotion focus point of view, however, both shame and neutral emotional states are considered as non-gain (vs. gain). Since promotion-focused people are oriented toward seeking gains and avoiding non-gains (Grant and Higgins 2003; Higgins and Spiegel 2004), they are motivated to change the status quo in both emotional states. Thus, feeling ashamed does not influence the orientation of a promotion-focused person toward change. Risk taking provides an opportunity to make a change in the status quo. Therefore, we propose the following:

> *Proposition 2: The effect of shame on risk taking propensity is stronger for prevention-focused individuals, compared to promotion-focused individuals.*

6.1.2. Spotlight effect and Public self-consciousness. Consumer research has addressed the impact of social presence on consumers' embarrassment. For instance, attending to the presence of other people intensifies consumer's embarrassment (Dahl et al 2001). Psychology literature

pointed out that individuals are inclined toward overestimating the extent to which observers notice their behavior. This tendency is called "spotlight effect" (Gilovich et al 2000).

People who are in an embarrassing situation are more likely to experience the spotlight effect. For example, participants overestimated other's attention when they were asked to imagine having bad hair or wearing a hideous t-shirt (Gilovich et al 2002).

One question is how inflated attention to observers of a behavior (spotlight effect) influences embarrassment-avoidant behavior. In other words, how overestimating others' notice keep consumers away from embarrassing situations. This is an important question, because many purchase and consumption experiences take place in a social context. For example, store shopping often takes place in front of other customers and the seller; service transactions usually require communication of the customer and service provider; and only few product categories are used completely in private.

A spotlight condition enhances individual's attention to other people who are observing their behavior. Since taking observer's perspective increases the possibility of embarrassment (Hung and Mukhopadhyay 2012), it is expected that spotlight condition intensifies embarrassment.

But what if the consumer is already conscious about his/her social environment without the extra notice of a spotlight condition? This is where high versus low public self-conscious individuals differ. Public self-consciousness is a dispositional characteristic referring to an individual's tendency to regard him/herself as a social object (Fenigstein et al 1975).

A person high in public self-consciousness, is already mindful of his/her public impression. Therefore, an extra notice from a spotlight condition would not considerably affect their embarrassment. However, a person who is low in public self-consciousness, is not heedful of

how observers would evaluate him/her. Hence, receiving an extra notice of a spotlight condition have considerable impact on their embarrassment.

As a result, we propose that the impact of spotlight condition on embarrassment-avoidant behavior depends on individual's level of public self-consciousness.

Proposition 3: Spotlight condition increases embarrassment-avoidant behavior among those consumers with low public self-consciousness.

6.1.3. Psychological distance. According to psychology literature, psychological distance (induced through physical, temporal, or social distance) can alleviate the intensity of negative affect (Williams et al 2014). For example, physical distance can influence people's reaction to embarrassing situations. In one experiment, Williams and Bargh (2008) assigned participants either to a near distance condition, or a far distance condition. Near distance was primed by asking participants to mark off two crosses close to each other on a Cartesian coordinate plane. Far distance was stimulated by asking subjects to mark off two crosses far from each other. Afterwards, participants were asked to read an embarrassing excerpt from a novel and indicate how much they liked it. The results revealed that participants in the far distance condition liked the story more than those in the near distance condition. Spatial distance, thus, enhances enjoyment of media depicting embarrassment (Williams and Bargh 2008). Moreover, consider the situation in which a person is acting embarrassingly. Those who are physically closer to him/her, perceive observers' judgment more negatively (Fortune and Newby-Clark 2008).

These findings can be applied to consumption context in future research. For inastance, framing persuasive appeals in a way that audience feel psychologically close to the context of the message may increase their effectiveness. In addition, distance may facilitate purchasing and

using embarrassing products. For example, product packaging that make the embarrassing product less apparent, salient, or tangible may increase psychological distance with the product, which subsequently reduces embarrassment over purchase. Therefore, depending on the goal of marketing effort, psychological distance (or closeness) can be prompted or restrained.

Proposition 4: Prompting psychological distance may attenuate embarrassment and, hence, facilitate purchasing embarrassing products.

6.2. Other consequences of shame/embarrassment in consumption context

In "what we know", we discussed some consequences of consumer's shame/embarrassment that extant marketing literature has addressed (like consumer's construal level, prosocial behavior, complaining, purchase intention, stealthy shopping, etc.). In this section, we introduce more cognitive and behavioral areas of consumption that can be affected by consumer's estate of shame or embarrassment. These areas include consumer memory, categorization, and word-of-mouth.

For each of these areas, we first use prior psychology literature to explain how shame/embarrassment may affect that area. Then, we discuss how this knowledge can be applied to the consumption context. Subsequently, we suggest a proposition which can be empirically tested in future research.

6.2.1. Consumer memory. Psychology literature has long studied how positive and negative self-relevant information are restored and remembered by individuals. Studies have shown that people recall self-relevant pleasant events better than unpleasant ones. This recall advantage,

however, does not hold for other-relevant information (Skowronski et al 1991). According to the inconsistency-negativity neglect model, people process and remember negative self-relevant information less effectively, compared to negative other-relevant information. This is so as a means of protecting the self against threats (Sedikides and Green 2000). Later developments proved that such retrieval selectivity holds true only for central negative behaviors, high in diagnosticity (Green and Sedekides 2004).

Shame is a negative self-conscious emotion, comprising highly-diagnostic negative self-relevant information, addressing one's core self. Hence, it is expectable that people recall and remember shameful events less effectively. Prior research has also shown that self-enhancement motives cause a positivity bias in subjectively remembering more details about positive events (compared to negative events) that are related to self-evaluation (D'Argembeau and Van der Linden 2008). In this regard, people remember more details about pride episodes (compared to shame episodes). They also more frequently reactivate memories of pride episodes (compared to shame episodes) through thinking and/or social sharing (D'Argembeau and Van der Linden 2008).

Future marketing research could investigate how this remembering bias can be extended to consumers' shameful experiences. Based on these findings, it is expected that consumers remember and recall shameful/embarrassing experiences in the market place/service encounters less frequently and with less details, compared to other experiences. This is a desirable fact from the seller's point of view, because negative experiences can damage brand loyalty.

Embarrassment is another negative self-conscious emotion. However, embarrassment is more related to sudden unexpected events that do not address one's core characteristics and moralities (Tangney et al 1996). As a result, it conveys less negative information about the self, compared to shame. Therefore, we expect the above-mentioned positivity bias in remembering self-

relevant events to be true also in the case of embarrassment episodes, but less severe compared to shame.

Another potential deduction from these findings is that people may be less capable of recalling advertisements or brands related to shameful/embarrassing product categories. Prior finding that shows shame impairs cognitive performance and working memory performance (Cavalera and Pepe 2014), reinforces this prediction.

> *Proposition 5: Consumers remember and recall shameful/embarrassing experiences (in the market place or service encounters) less frequently and with less details.*

6.2.2. Categorization. Shame and embarrassment are negative self-conscious emotions which convey negative evaluations about the self. Prior literature has shown that people adopt different strategies to reframe events which threaten their self-concept. One of these strategies is downplaying the self-importance or diagnostic validity of events (Hart 2013). For example, according to the theory of temporal self-appraisal, individuals retain their desirable self-regard through trivializing their distant selves and glorifying their recent selves. This helps them to ennoble their progress over time (Wilson and Ross 2001). Research has also shown that people who perform badly in an intelligence test downgrade the test validity (Frey 1981).

In addition, people create self-serving prototypes of social categorization based on their own characteristics. This way, they consider qualifications they own as socially desirable, and qualifications they do not own as socially undesirable (Dunning et al 1991).

These findings imply that when a consumption situation is potentially shameful/embarrassing, consumers may categorize product characteristics/consumption experiences as important (vs. unimportant) or valid (vs. invalid) in a way to protect their self-view and self-concept.

Therefore, we predict that people tend to categorize shameful/embarrassing purchases/consumption experiences as unimportant or invalid.

> *Proposition 6: Consumers tend to categorize shameful/embarrassing consumption experiences as an unimportant or invalid one.*

6.2.3. Word-of-mouth. Prior research has examined how customers spread word-of-mouth regarding their embarrassing service encounters. In a study by Grace (2007), 55% of respondents reported spreading negative word-of-mouth about embarrassing service experiences, while only 6% of them reported spreading positive word-of-mouth.

Culture can moderate this effect. Research has indicated that in an embarrassing service failure, customers from collectivistic cultures are more likely to spread negative word-of-mouth, compared to customers from individualistic cultures (Wan 2013).

Wu and Mattila (2013) showed that engaging in negative word-of-mouth about an embarrassing service experience depends on the source of embarrassment. If the embarrassing mishap is realized by the customer (versus the mishap is pointed out by the service provider), the more embarrassed customers are less likely to engage in negative word-of-mouth.

Unlike embarrassing service encounters, no study has examined how consumers spread word-of-mouth regarding embarrassing products. We propose that consumer's engagement in word-of-mouth depends on whether the consumption has been disclosed to others, or not.

If the audience are not aware of consumer's embarrassing purchase, s/he may prefer not to mention it, in an attempt to avoid embarrassment. Thus, the consumer is less likely to spread either positive or negative word-of-mouth about the product.

However, if the embarrassing purchase has been disclosed and the audience are aware about consumer's embarrassing purchase, s/he may want to compensate for the loss by over-evaluating the product quality. After all, it is more embarrassing to buy an embarrassing product which does not work well. Research has shown that people tend to tell self-serving lies, striving to present a better image of themselves, and to protect themselves from embarrassment (DePaulo et al 1996). Moreover, consumers may spread positive word-of-mouth about their negative experiences, because they feel ashamed/embarrassed to reveal that they were unable to make a good choice (Wangenheim 2004). Therefore, we propose:

> *Proposition 7: If the embarrassing consumption is disclosed, then the consumer will be more likely to spread positive (vs. negative) word-of-mouth about the product.*

6.3. Methodological improvements in future research

In this section, we present two methodological suggestions to improve future research on the role of shame and embarrassment in consumption context. The first suggestion is about distinguishing between anticipating and experiencing the emotions. The second suggestion is about conceptualizing, measuring, and manipulating the two emotions, based on their definitions and distinctions.

6.3.1. Anticipating vs. experiencing shame/embarrassment. Prior research has not clearly distinguished between anticipating and experiencing shame/embarrassment, although they can have different behavioral consequences. "Anticipating" shame/embarrassment refers to when the consumer foresees that a specific situation would make him/her feel ashamed/embarrassed,

even though they do not feel the emotion yet. "Experiencing" shame/embarrassment refers to when the consumer already feels ashamed/embarrassed.

Anticipating and experiencing shame/embarrassment may have different behavioral consequences. People try to anticipate potential causes of shame and embarrassment in order to avoid them (Nochols et al, 2015). Nonetheless, when the shameful/embarrassing situation takes place, the consumer may no longer escape it. Instead, they may get engaged in other behaviors as a result of experiencing the unpleasant emotion.

For example, research has shown that people who anticipate shame of giving into an impulse (e.g. hedonic consumption) are more likely to exert self-control (Chun et al 2007). Imagine that a shame-prone consumer has already given into the impulse. This consumer is experiencing shame. In this case, s/he may lose self-valuation and the ability to resist temptations which, subsequently, leads him/her to violate the goal and indulge even more (Semaan and Gould 2010).

As another explicit example, anticipating and experiencing shame have opposite impacts on monetary donations. Research has indicated that anticipating shame of not helping increases public good contributions (Samek and Sheremeta 2014; Jacquet et al 2011). However, people who experience shame covet money and donate less (Wang et al 2012).

These examples elucidate that future research should distinguish between "anticipating" and "experiencing" shame/embarrassment, as they may have different (even opposite) impacts on behavior.

> _Suggestion 1:_ Future research should address the distinction between "anticipating" and "experiencing" shame/embarrassment.

6.3.2. Conceptualization of shame and embarrassment. Another point of improvement for marketing research on shame and embarrassment is about conceptualizing them. In some papers, the terms were used in place of each other (Zielke 2009); or they were both applied as one construct (Madrigal 2008; Kim and Johnson 2014; Agrawal and Duhachek 2010; Ghorbani et al 2013; Zielke 2011; Boudewyns et al 2013). In fact, it should be clear that shame and embarrassment are distinct emotions. The authors should explain which of these two emotions they focus on. And finally, they should manipulate and measure the targeted emotion according to its exact definition and distinction.

This lack of precision makes it difficult to rely on the results based on the terms authors used (either shame or embarrassment). For example, by reading the results of a paper, one would wonder: What do the authors really mean by the term shame/embarrassment in their results? What if they used the word "shame", but they actually studied "embarrassment"? Can we extend their results about shame to the other emotion? ... This ambiguity makes it difficult to compare the findings and build a big picture of shame and embarrassment in consumption.

As a result, there is an acute need for unifying definitions and conceptual elements of shame and embarrassment. It is also essential to reach a consensus on standard scales and manipulation methods, matched with the definition, which precisely measure or create the targeted emotion.

Suggestion 2: *Future research should reach a consensus on conceptualization of shame/embarrassment. Manipulation and measurement methods should be adapted accordingly.*

7. Theoretical Contribution

To date, researchers in consumer psychology have devoted a great deal of attention to shame and embarrassment. Yet, they did not bring forward a comprehensive framework for theoretical and empirical investigation of the two emotions. Neither, any review of the extant literature on this topic has been published in consumer psychology.

This paper provides an overview of theoretical and empirical studies of shame/embarrassment in marketing, with an emphasis on consumer psychology. We have detected that research has covered some important areas of consumer behavior, namely, thought processes and judgments, self-regulation, service encounters, purchase, coping strategies, and persuasion. For each of these areas, we scrutinized the extant literature, presented the key findings, and ended with a number of key deductions (table 1).

We also suggested several avenues for future research, presented in three sections. First, we selected four well-established psychological concepts that could possibly impact shame/embarrassment-related behaviors. These concepts include motivation, spotlight effect, public self-consciousness, and psychological distance. We speculated further about how each of these can be applied to a consumption context. This is done so via moderating consumers' behaviors when ashamed/embarrassed. As usual, we ended with suggesting a number of propositions in this regard.

Second, we introduced potential consequences of consumers' shame/embarrassment in three areas consisting of consumer memory, categorization, and word-of-mouth. To the best of our knowledge, none of the aforementioned consequences has been addressed in prior research. Again, we appealed to psychology literature to develop some propositions regarding each of them.

Finally, after digging up the methodologies undertaken before, we came up with two suggestions for future improvements in studying shame and embarrassment.

In summary, the contribution of our review comes in two phases: 1) It delineates "what we know" about the role of shame and embarrassment in consumption. 2) It illustrates "what lies ahead" in regard to existing research gaps, psychology's further contributions to the subject, and methodological improvements.

Table 1

Key deductions from "what we know" about the role of shame and embarrassment in consumer behavior.

	Key deductions
Thought processes and judgments	Shame and embarrassment may influence, and get influenced by, the way people process their thoughts and make judgments.
Self-regulation	The motivation to avoid shame and embarrassment underlies most of the self-regulation practices, such as self-control, self-disclosure, ethical consumption, and prosocial behavior.
Service encounters	Blunders from either side, the customer or service provider, may make customers feel ashamed or embarrassed. Either way, customer's shame and embarrassment may result in negative consequences for the service provider.
Purchase	Shame/embarrassment resultant from purchasing a product may come from either the product type, its brand, or its price. Familiarity with social environment of a store intensifies the emotions, whereas familiarity with the physical environment attenuates them.
Coping strategies	Consumers typically cope with their embarrassing purchases through planned shopping, stealthy shopping, withdrawal, or masking.
Persuasion	Using shame-appeals is an effective tool to persuade audience, especially when they are low in shame-proneness.

Table 2

"What lies ahead" for future research about the role of shame and embarrassment in consumer behavior.

	Propositions and suggestions
What psychology suggests	Proposition 1: Avoidance-oriented individuals, in comparison to approach-oriented ones, react stronger to shameful consumption situations. Proposition 2: The effect of shame on risk taking propensity is stronger for prevention-focused individuals, compared to promotion-focused individuals. Proposition 3: Spotlight condition increases embarrassment-avoidant behavior among those consumers with low public self-consciousness. Proposition 4: Prompting psychological distance may attenuate embarrassment and, hence, facilitate purchasing embarrassing products.
Other consequences	Proposition 5: Consumers remember and recall shameful/embarrassing experiences (in the market place or service encounters) less frequently and with less details. Proposition 6: Consumers tend to categorize shameful/embarrassing consumption experiences as an unimportant or invalid one. Proposition 7: If the embarrassing consumption is disclosed, then the consumer will be more likely to spread positive (vs. negative) word-of-mouth about the product.
Methodological improvement	Suggestion 1: Future research should address the distinction between "anticipating" and "experiencing" shame/embarrassment. Suggestion 2: Future research should reach a consensus on conceptualization of shame/embarrassment. Manipulation and measurement methods should be adapted accordingly.

**Fig. 1.** Mutual influence of consumption pattern and consumer's shame/embarrassment.

Antecedents of shame/embarrassment

Thought processes and judgments
Perspective taking
Self-objectification

Service encounters
Service failure
Preferential treatment
Customer-provider interactions

Purchases
Product type
Brand
Price

What we know
What lies ahead
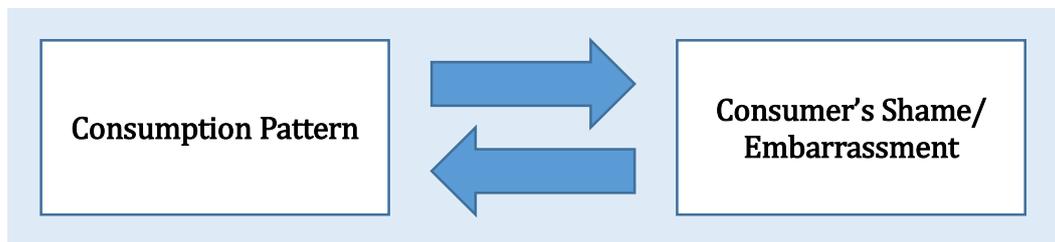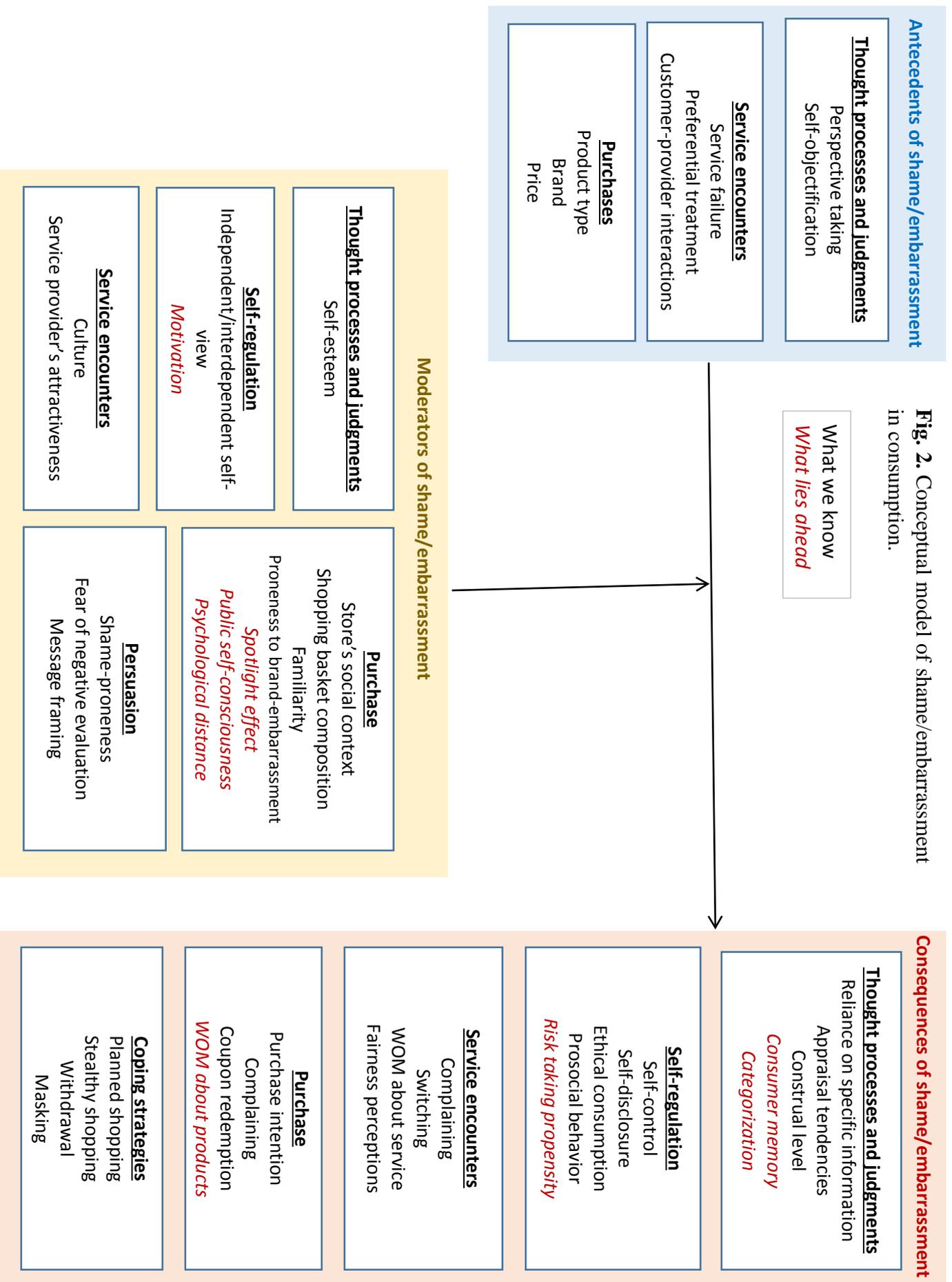
Fig. 2. Conceptual model of shame/embarrassment in consumption.

Moderators of shame/embarrassment

Thought processes and judgments
Self-esteem

Self-regulation
Independent/interdependent self-view
Motivation

Service encounters
Culture
Service provider's attractiveness

Purchase
Store's social context
Shopping basket composition
Familiarity
Proneness to brand-embarrassment
Spotlight effect
Public self-consciousness
Psychological distance

Persuasion
Shame-proneness
Fear of negative evaluation
Message framing

Consequences of shame/embarrassment

Thought processes and judgments
Reliance on specific information
Appraisal tendencies
Construal level
Consumer memory
Categorization

Self-regulation
Self-control
Self-disclosure
Ethical consumption
Prosocial behavior
Risk taking propensity

Service encounters
Complaining
Switching
WOM about service
Fairness perceptions

Purchase
Purchase intention
Complaining
Coupon redemption
WOM about products

Coping strategies
Planned shopping
Stealthy shopping
Withdrawal
Masking

Appendix 1 – List of the Outlets Used in this Review

- Journal of Marketing
- Journal of Marketing Research
- Journal of Consumer Research
- Marketing Science
- Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science
- Harvard Business Review
- Journal of Retailing
- Management Science
- International Journal of Research in Marketing
- Journal of Consumer Psychology
- Marketing Letters
- Advances in Consumer Research
- Journal of Business Research
- Sloan Management Review
- Journal of Advertising
- European Journal of Marketing
- Psychology and Marketing
- Journal of Public Policy and Marketing
- Journal of Service Research
- Journal of Advertising Research
- Journal of International Business Studies
- Industrial Marketing Management
- Journal of Product Innovation Management
- California Management Review
- Journal of Marketing Management
- Journal of International Marketing
- Journal of Interactive Marketing
- International Marketing Review
- Journal of Business
- Quantitative Marketing and Economics
- International Journal of Market Research
- Journal of Business-to-Business Marketing
- Journal of Business and Industrial Marketing
- Journal of Personal Selling and Sales Management
- Marketing Management
- Journal of Business Ethics
- Journal of Economic Psychology
- Journal of Service Marketing

- Decision Sciences
- Journal of Consumer Marketing
- Business Horizons
- Journal of Marketing Education
- Journal of Global Marketing
- Journal of Consumer Policy
- Journal of Consumer Affairs
- Journal of Business Logistics
- Journal of Marketing Theory and Practice
- Journal of Nonprofit and Public Sector Marketing
- Service Marketing Quarterly

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Chapter 2

Pride and Shame Moderate the Effect of Regulatory Focus on Risk Taking Propensity

Aylar Pour Mohammad

Abstract – How self-conscious emotions affect risk taking behavior? Prior literature has indicated that promotion focus is related to risk seeking propensity and prevention focus is related to risk avoiding propensity (Bryant and Dunford 2008). Two experiments demonstrate that positive self-conscious emotions (i.e. pride) and negative self-conscious emotions (i.e. shame) may moderate these relationships in different manners. Experiment 1 suggests that feeling proud attenuates the effect of promotion focus, but not prevention focus, on risk taking propensity. Experiment 2 indicates that feeling ashamed attenuates the effect of prevention focus, but not promotion focus, on risk taking propensity.

Introduction

There are several products and experiences that buying, using, or trying them entail risk taking. For example, certain recreational activities such as bungee jumping, mountain climbing, adventurous trips to the wilderness, or skydiving are perceived as risky. Many financial decisions like gambling or investing in funds, stocks, or business ventures are also risky. On the other hand, there are products and services which are being used in order to prevent or reduce potential risks to consumers. For example, sunscreens and helmets are designed to reduce health and safety risks. Warranties and insurance plans are also being sold due to consumers' desire to avoid risks. Sometimes, risk taking is in the domain of ethical consumption, such as cheating on income tax return, forging somebody's signature, illegal copying a piece of software, shoplifting, or stealing TV cable connection.

All these examples involve risks to the personal finance, health, safety, or morality (Blais and Weber 2006). However, some other behaviors are considered as risky only when they take place in a social context. For example, wearing an unusual T-shirt (Mandel 2003), purchasing condoms (Dahl et al 2001), purchasing a cheap wine for a party (Campbell and Goodstein 2001), or having bad haircuts (Maxham 2001) are considered as a threat to the public face and entail social risks.

Marketers of such products and services often desire to understand what motivates people to take risks. One question in this regard is whether people with different personalities react similarly to a risk opportunity, and whether their reaction depends on their emotional state.

Prior literature indicated the role of individual's regulatory focus (Higgins 1997) in their risk taking behavior and showed that promotion focus leads to more risk taking propensity, while prevention focus has a reverse effect (Crowe and Higgins 1997; Hamilton and Biehal 2005;

Werth and Forster 2007; Hamstra et al 2011; Gino and Margolis 2011; Atorough and Donaldson 2012; Herzenstein et al 2007; Bryant and Dunford 2008). The present research extends their findings by suggesting that self-conscious emotions may moderate the effect of regulatory focus on risk taking behavior. In addition, this moderating effect may depend on the valence of the emotion (positive vs. negative). This moderation is done through changing the perceptions about current situation. Experiencing a positive self-conscious emotion changes the effect of promotion focus on risk taking, through changing the perceptions about current situation from non-gain to gain. Experiencing a negative self-conscious emotion, however, changes the effect of prevention focus on risk taking, through changing the perceptions about current situation from non-loss to loss.

More broadly, this research explores how emotional states of consumers can shape their propensity to participate in risky activities. Although prior research has examined the role of regulatory focus on consumers' tendency toward risks, there has been no empirical work on how emotions can affect this role and, consequently, lead consumers' attitudes toward participating in risky behaviors.

We focus on pride as a positive self-conscious emotion and shame as a negative self-conscious emotion to examine whether they have different effects on risk taking. In the next sections, we develop hypotheses about how pride and shame affect individuals' risk taking propensity. Specifically, we examine the following question. How the effect of consumers' regulatory focus on their tendency toward taking risks depends on their self-conscious emotions (i.e., pride versus shame)?

Four experiments investigate these questions. The experiments examine the moderating role of pride (experiment 1) and moderating role of shame (experiment 2) in the effect of consumers' regulatory focus on risk taking propensity. Experiment 3 and experiment 4 examine both

emotions in one setting. At the end, we discuss the theoretical and practical implications of our findings.

Risk Taking Propensity and Consumer Behavior

Prior research has investigated different manifestations of risk taking in consumer behavior. Their efforts mainly focused on two aspects: risk perception and risk taking propensity.

The first stream has examined consumers' perception about the risk associated with a product, such as perceived risk of product failure or perceived risk of purchasing innovative products or new brands (Grewal et al 1994; Folkes 1988), and how different factors affect this perception. For example, warranty can diminish perceived financial risk associated with purchasing innovative products (Shimp and Bearden 1982).

Another stream of research has focused on consumers' risk taking propensity and different factors (i.e., self-construal, mental schemas, or regulatory focus) which may affect it (Celsi et al 1993; Mandel 2003; Morris et al 1994). For example, taking a promotion regulatory focus may lead to greater risk taking propensity, compared to taking a prevention focus (Atorough and Donaldson 2012).

This article falls in the second stream of research. Our aim is to focus on the moderating effect of self-conscious emotions and more specifically the moderating effect of pride and shame on consumers' risk taking propensity. In the present research, we examine whether the influence of regulatory focus on consumers' risk taking propensity depends on their self-conscious emotions, such as pride and shame. In the next section, we start developing our hypotheses by discussing prior findings regarding the specific role of regulatory focus as well as self-conscious emotions in risk taking propensity.

Regulatory Focus and Risk Taking Propensity

Regulatory focus consists of one's self-regulatory orientation toward subsequent self-states (Bryant and Dunford 2008). It is represented by two independent constructs of promotion focus and prevention focus (Higgins 1997).

Promotion focus alludes to situations in which accomplishments, advancements, growth, and nurturance needs motivate people to achieve their ideal-selves (Higgins 1997; Bryant and Dunford 2008). From a promotion focus, goals are framed as wishes, hopes, and aspirations (Higgins 1997). Thus, the strategic concern in promotion focus is approaching gains and avoiding non-gains (Higgins 1997) by using an eagerness strategy based on attainment (Crowe and Higgins 1997).

On the other hand, prevention focus alludes to situations in which safety and security needs drive people towards their ought-selves (Bryant and Dunford 2008). From a prevention focus, goals are framed as duties and responsibilities (Higgins 1997). Therefore, the strategic concern in prevention focus is avoiding losses and approaching non-losses (Higgins 1997) by using a vigilant strategy based on maintenance (Crowe and Higgins 1997).

Promotion focus is the result of one's history of developments in attaining gains, whereas prevention focus is the result of the person's history of achievements in avoiding losses (Higgins et al 2001). Although promotion focus and prevention focus are two aspects of one individual's regulatory focus, most of the empirical research on the effect of regulatory focus on risk taking concentrate on the cases where one of these aspects is dominant over the other. Hence, they compare risk taking behavior of predominantly promotion-focused people with risk taking behavior of predominantly prevention-focused people. Accordingly, they have indicated that people with promotion focus (vs. prevention focus) have higher risk taking

propensity. For example, individuals in the promotion focus are more prone to risky bias, while those in the prevention focus are more prone to conservative bias (Crowe and Higgins 1997). Moreover, people who are interested in promotion-oriented benefits take more financial risks, compared to those who are interested in prevention-oriented benefits (Hamilton and Biehal 2005). In addition, promotion-focused people take more ethical risks, compared to prevention-focused people (Gino and Margolis 2011).

Promotion focus also increases tendency toward risky driving (Hamstra et al 2011). For example, prevention-focused people initiate braking faster and with more braking speed, than promotion-focused people (Werth and Forster 2007).

In consumption context, prior research has shown that prevention-focused people, compared to promotion-focused people, perceive online shopping more risky (Atorough and Donaldson 2012). Moreover, when risk of purchasing new product is salient, promotion-focused and prevention-focused people are both equal in purchase intention. However, when the risk of purchasing new product is not salient, promotion-focused people are more likely to purchase the new product, than the prevention-focused people (Herzenstein et al 2007).

All these studies investigated the effect of regulatory focus on risk taking behavior in the neutral emotional condition and showed that when there is no specific emotion involved, promotion focus leads to higher levels of risk taking propensity and prevention focus leads to lower levels of risk taking propensity (Bryant and Dunford 2008). We argue that this pattern can be changed when people experience self-conscious emotions, either positive like pride, or negative like shame. Specifically, feeling proud moderates the effect of promotion focus on risk taking, whereas feeling ashamed moderates the effect of prevention focus on risk taking.

Moderating Role of Self-Conscious Emotions

Psychological aspects of risk taking, including the role of affect, have been widely studied in the literature (Mittal and Ross 1998; Arkes et al 1988). For example, prior work has shown that unpleasant high-arousal emotions can be associated with higher willingness-to-pay for insurance (low risk propensity), while pleasant low-arousal emotions can be associated with higher willingness-to-pay for lotteries (high risk propensity) (Mano 1994).

Most of the studies on the effects of emotions on risk taking didn't study specific emotions but grouped emotions based on their valence (positive vs. negative), arousal (high vs. low), or quality (like emotional distress, etc.). Still there are contradictions in their findings. For example, some studies support the prediction that negative affect or negative mood gives rise to increased risk taking tendencies (Bruyneel et al 2009; Kliger and Levy 2003; Leith and Baumeister 1996), while some other research showed that negative mood leads to decreased risk taking tendencies (Isen and Geva 1987; Isen and Patrick 1983; Mittal and Ross 1998; Nygren et al 1996; Chou et al 2007; Forgas 1995; Yuen and Lee 2003). Although findings give us a general view on the effect of emotions on risk taking propensity, it is not clear if and how different emotions can differently influence risk taking behavior. Moreover, these conflicting results make us think that emotions may have a moderating effect on risk taking propensity, rather than a main effect.

Self-conscious emotions are being experienced in many consumption occasions, like obtaining a discount (pride), purchasing illegal products (shame), buying condoms (embarrassment), and spending too much on a vacation (guilt). They include pride, shame, embarrassment, and guilt which all involve self-reflection and self-evaluation (Tangney 1999). In addition to being intimately connected to the self, self-conscious emotions are also intimately connected to interpersonal relationships (Tangney 1999) and therefore share a social component (Tangney

1999). Because of this social aspect, self-conscious emotions are especially important in consumer behavior, as most of the marketing transactions and processes happen in a social context. For example, there are usually people who witness the purchase, like other customers, the cashier, or the seller. Only few product categories are being used completely in private. While services are almost always provided in a social interaction. Overall, it is not easy to find products or services that can be purchased and consumed completely in private. Hence, social emotions are especially important to understand consumer behavior, compared to emotions which come about only in private. For these reasons, it is essential to understand the role of these emotions in people's pattern of risk taking.

To study the role of positive and negative self-conscious emotions on risk taking, we focus on pride as the only positive self-conscious emotion and shame as the most intense and painful self-conscious emotion (Tangney et al 1996). Thus, in this article we focus on pride and shame, and examine how these emotions can differentially moderate the effect of regulatory focus on risk taking.

Pride is a pleasant feeling (Mosquera et al 2000) resulting from positive evaluation of self's capability or endeavors in attaining a goal (Weiner 1986). It is caused by internal attribution of success (Tracy and Robins, 2007a). In other words, pride is experienced when one appraises their performance or achievement positively (Bagozzi et al 1999) and believe that their self-representations are in accordance with what they want to be (Tracy 2010). It is associated with feeling accomplished, confident, and self-worth (Tracy and Robins 2007b); and related to "self-achievement, autonomy, and disengagement from others" (Louro et al 2005, p. 833). Usually, pride is expressed with a small smile, slightly tilted back head (Tracy 2010).

Shame is a negative self-conscious emotion with high sense of awareness and evaluation of self (Tangney et al 1996). It is also an other-conscious emotion, negatively valenced, and with

considerable intensity, emerging from personal failures or transgressions. Shame is arisen as a result of violation of "ideal" self when one's deep-seated flaws become noticed by the person or others (Tangney et al 1996). It is experienced when someone realizes that their behavior or results are not in accordance with their own values (Keltner and Buswell 1997) or with the values of their social environment (Verbeke and Bagozzi 2002). While feeling ashamed, "self is both the agent and object of observation and disapproval" (Tangney et al 1996, p. 1257).

One question is whether feeling proud or ashamed affect individuals' risk taking patterns. Prior literature highlighted the role of regulatory focus in risk taking. The question is whether the effect of regulatory focus on risk taking changes when people are feeling proud or ashamed, compared to when they are not.

The effect of negative self-conscious emotions on risk taking behavior has been the focus of attention in some prior studies. For example, guilt can enhance risk taking propensity by creating an illusionary sense of control (Kouchaki et al 2014). Another study, however, indicated that those who evaluate themselves as guilty showed intolerance for risk (Mancini and Gangemi 2004). Embarrassment can also lead to increased tendency for gambling as a risky behavior (Leith and Baumeister 1996). Taking an evolutionary perspective and based on personal observations, Fessler (2001) predicted that people who feel ashamed may have higher propensity to take social risks, due to a drop in their future social prospects which is inversely related to the value of taking social risks (Fessler 2001). However, to the best of our knowledge, no empirical work so far has examined the impact of pride and shame on risk taking, or their interaction with regulatory focus in this regard.

Pride, Shame, Regulatory Focus, and Risk Taking Propensity

Literature has indicated that promotion focus and prevention focus approach new tasks and decision making opportunities from two different perspectives. Promotion focus concerns look for ensuring presence of positive outcomes and ensuring against absence of positive outcomes (Higgins 2002). On the other hand, prevention focus concerns look for ensuring the absence of negative outcomes and ensuring against the presence of negative outcomes (Higgins 2002). While promotion focus values pursuit of gains over avoiding losses, prevention focus values avoiding losses over pursuit of gains (Higgins 2002). Whereas promotion focus is associated with orientation toward attaining gains and avoiding non-gains, prevention focus is associated with orientation toward seeking non-losses and avoiding losses (Grant and Higgins 2003; Higgins and Spiegel 2004).

While regulatory focus affects risk taking behavior, prior research has shown that, the individual's history of risk taking achievements also shapes their regulatory focus. More specifically, risk taking achievements in attaining gains and avoiding non-gains reinforce promotion focus, and risk taking achievements in avoiding losses and attaining non-losses reinforce prevention focus (Bryant and Dunford 2008).

This means that promotion focus tends to approach new tasks and risky decisions as an opportunity to attain gains, while prevention focus tends to approach new tasks and risky decisions in terms of avoiding losses (Higgins et al 2001). Our hypotheses regarding the moderating role of pride and shame are based on the premise that promotion focus and prevention focus approach emotional states from two different perspectives.

A neutral emotional state is perceived as a non-gain (vs. gain) situation from promotion focus which is not a desired state (Bryant and Dunford 2008), but it is perceived as a non-loss (vs. loss) situation from a prevention focus which is satisfactory. Pride, however, is the result of

achieving goals (Bagozzi and Pieters 1998). For this reason, it is perceived as a gain (vs. non-gain) situation from promotion focus which is desired, and as non-loss (vs. loss) situation from prevention focus which is also desired.

Therefore, considering prevention focus concerns, pride and neutral emotions are both absence of negative outcomes. Hence, prevention focus does not motivate a proud person for a change in their status quo by risk taking, as it perceives both emotional conditions as satisfactory. So pride is not expected to change the effect of prevention focus on risk taking propensity.

However, considering promotion focus concerns, pride and neutral emotions are different. From promotion focus, neutral emotional state means absence of positive outcomes, whereas pride means presence of positive outcomes. Since promotion focus inclines people toward attaining gains of acting and avoiding non-gains of failing to act (Bryant and Dunford 2008), it motivates people to use risk taking as a means of attaining gains and avoiding non-gains. Accordingly, while in the neutral condition, promotion focus motivates people to take risks to move from non-gain to gain, such a motivation is weakened when pride is being experienced. So pride is expected to attenuate the effect of promotion focus, but not prevention focus, on risk taking propensity (fig. 1). Based on this view, we propose the following hypothesis.

> **H1:** *Pride attenuates the effect of promotion focus on risk taking propensity.*

As explained before, a neutral emotional state is considered as a non-gain (vs. gain) situation from promotion focus and as a non-loss (vs. loss) situation from a prevention focus. Yet, shame as a result of failures is perceived as a non-gain (vs. gain) situation from promotion focus and a loss (vs. non-loss) from prevention focus. From both promotion and prevention, shame is an undesired situation that motivates the individual for a change.

Accordingly, considering promotion focus concerns, shame and neutral emotions are both absence of positive outcomes and undesired (Bryant and Dunford 2008). Again as promotion focus pushes people toward attaining gains of acting and avoiding non-gains of failing to act (Bryant and Dunford 2008), in both emotional conditions, the person is stimulated toward risk taking.

Nevertheless, shame and neutral emotions are dissimilar regarding prevention focus concerns. From prevention focus, neutral emotional state signifies the absence of negative outcome, while shame signifies presence of negative outcomes. For this reason, although in the neutral condition, prevention focus incentivizes people to keep the status quo by avoiding risks, such an incentive is weakened when shame is being experienced. Since a prevention focus is the result of "a history of risk taking achievements in avoiding losses and attaining non-losses" (Bryant and Dunford 2008, p. 343), a prevention-focused person is trained to take risks in an attempt to avoid losses and attain non-losses. This means that unlike neutral emotional condition in which prevention focus prevents people from taking risks, this effect is diminished in the shame condition. Thus, shame is expected to attenuate the effect of prevention focus, but not promotion focus, on risk taking propensity (fig. 2). This gives rise to the second hypothesis.

H2: *Shame attenuates the effect of prevention focus on risk taking propensity.*

Experiment 1: Pride, Regulatory Focus, and Risk Taking Propensity

Experiment 1 was designed to compare the effect of regulatory focus on risk taking propensity in the pride, versus neutral, emotional conditions. It examines hypothesis 1 that experiencing pride attenuates the effect of promotion focus, but not prevention focus, on risk taking propensity.

We measured regulatory focus by using Regulatory Focus Scale (Fellner et al 2007) which consists of 10 items to measure promotion orientation and prevention orientation, based on the regulatory focus theory (Higgins 1997).

We directly manipulated pride by asking participants to recall and write about their experiences. This method of manipulating self-conscious emotions has been widely used in the literature (e.g. Agrawal and Duhachek 2010; Matta et al 2005; De Hooge et al 2008). In the neutral emotional condition, participants were asked to write about three activities they did the previous day.

Risk taking propensity was measured using DOSPERT (Blais and Weber 2006) which is a 30-item domain-specific risk taking scale applicable to a broad range of ages, cultures, and educational levels.

Method

Participants and Procedure. Two hundred and ninety-nine UCLA students (mean age = 22, range 18-61; 77.6% female) were recruited for this experiment in exchange for $3. Participants were randomly assigned to one of the emotional conditions of pride and neutral.

Participants were first asked to complete the Regulatory Focus Scale (Fellner et al 2007) and one more personality scale related to another experiment. One group of participants were then asked to write about three experiences in the past one year in which they felt extremely proud of what they did. Another group were asked to mention three activities they did the previous day. This group were considered as the control group. To make sure that participants in the first group have an accurate idea about the meaning of pride, we provided them with the following definition of pride: "Generally, pride is felt when one is perceived as a socially valued person

for achieving as academic, social, moral, or interpersonal accomplishment". We accentuated that they should recall situations happened in the past one year in order to make sure that the situation is temporally close enough to revitalize the same emotion. Importantly, they were asked to remember as vividly as possible three situations which made them feel proud of what they did and explain what they achieved and how they felt at that situation. The task served to create either pride or neutral emotional states.

Dependent Variable. After manipulating emotions, participants completed DOSPERT scale. They also answered one more question related to another experiment.

To ensure that the writing task accurately manipulated the intended emotional state, participants were asked to rate, on a 5-point scale (1 = not at all; 5 = very much), the extent to which they felt proud at that moment.

Participants then provided demographic information, such as gender, age, ethnicity, education, and household income.

Results

To ensure that the intended emotion was accurately manipulated, an independent-samples t-test was conducted to compare feeling "proud" among participants in the pride and neutral conditions. There was not a significant difference in feeling "proud" for participants in the pride emotional condition (M = 2.92, SD = 1.09) and participants in the neutral emotional condition (M = 2.99, SD = 0.99); t(297) = -0.591, p = 0.555. These results suggest that the writing task might not accurately manipulated pride among participants in the pride condition. However, since this was the only emotion we measured as the manipulation check, it could be possible that participants in the two emotional conditions had different interpretations of the word

"proud". Since only participants in the pride condition were provided with a definition of "pride", they might have been more cautious about interpreting their emotions, whereas participants in the "neutral" condition were more easygoing in reporting their pride.

Risk taking propensity was calculated using the DOSPERT scale ($\alpha = 0.855$). Promotion score ($\alpha = 0.568$) and prevention score ($\alpha = 0.415$) were also computed for each participant using the Regulatory Focus Scale (Fellner et al 2007). Consistent with prior literature (Bryant and Dunford 2008), promotion and prevention scores were uncorrelated ($r = 0.045$, $n = 299$, $p = 0.435$).

We predicted that pride attenuates the effect of promotion focus on risk taking propensity. A PROCESS model 1 (Hayes 2013) was conducted using promotion focus, emotion (pride versus neutral), and their interaction to predict risk taking propensity. Overall, the regression model was significant, $F(3, 295) = 8.56$, $p < 0.01$, $R^2 = 0.11$. As predicted, the interaction between promotion focus and emotion was a significant predictor in the model, $b = 0.24$, $t = 2.12$, $p = 0.03$; see fig. 3.

For participants in the neutral condition, a positive relationship between promotion focus and risk taking propensity was found, $b = 0.40$, $t = 4.56$, $p < 0.01$. For participants in the pride condition, a weaker relationship between promotion focus and risk taking propensity was found, $b = 0.16$, $t = 2.14$, $p = 0.03$. As seen in fig. 3, in the neutral condition, increased promotion focus enhances risk taking propensity. In the pride condition, higher levels of promotion focus are still associated with increased risk taking propensity, but with lesser slop. These results empirically support our prediction that experiencing pride attenuates the effect of promotion focus on risk taking propensity.

We also predicted that pride does not attenuate the effect of prevention focus on risk taking propensity. A PROCESS model 1 (Hayes 2013) was conducted using prevention focus, emotion (pride versus neutral), and their interaction to predict risk taking propensity. Overall, the regression model was not significant, $F(3, 295) = 0.61$, $p = 0.61$, $R^2 = 0.01$. As predicted, the interaction between prevention focus and emotion was not a significant predictor in the model, $b = 0.08$, $t = 0.65$, $p = 0.51$.

For participants in the neutral condition, no significant relationship between prevention focus and risk taking propensity was found, $b = 0.01$, $t = 0.09$, $p = 0.93$. For participants in the pride condition, again no significant relationship between prevention focus and risk taking propensity was found, $b = -0.07$, $t = -0.98$, $p = 0.33$. Therefore, neither in neutral condition, nor pride condition, prevention focus was associated with risk taking propensity. These results also empirically support our prediction that experiencing pride does not attenuate the effect of prevention focus on risk taking propensity.

Discussion

The results of experiment 1 support our hypothesis about individuals' risk taking while experiencing pride. As predicted, pride attenuates the effect of promotion focus, but not prevention focus, on risk taking propensity. The positive effect of promotion focus on risk taking propensity was weakened when people experience pride, compared to the neutral emotional condition.

Experiment 2: Shame, Regulatory Focus, and Risk Taking Propensity

Experiment 2 was designed to compare the effect of regulatory focus on risk taking propensity in the shame, versus neutral, emotional conditions. It examines hypothesis 2 that experiencing

shame attenuates the effect of prevention focus, but not promotion focus, on risk taking propensity.

As in experiment 1, regulatory focus was measured using Regulatory Focus Scale (Fellner et al 2007) and shame was manipulated by asking participants to recall and write about their experiences. Similarly, risk taking propensity was measured using DOSPERT (Blais and Weber 2006).

Method

Participants and Procedure. Two hundred and ninety-two UCLA students (mean age = 23, range 18-73; 78.1% female) were recruited for this experiment in exchange for $3. Participants were randomly assigned to one of the emotional conditions of shame and neutral.

The procedure was exactly similar to study 1, except that participants in the shame condition were asked to write about three experiences in the past one year in which they felt extremely ashamed. The definition of shame provided to the participants in this group was: "Generally, shame is felt when one understands that their behavior or results are against their own or their social environment's values or standards. People who feel ashamed also feel physically small, worthless, exposed, inferior to others, isolated from others, and immoral. An ashamed person desires to escape, hide, sink into floor, or disappear."

Dependent Variable. The dependent variable was measured using the same scale as in experiment 1. As a manipulation check, participants were then asked to rate, on 5-point scales (1 = not at all; 5 = very much), the extent to which they felt each of the following emotions at that moment: ashamed, exposed, self-conscious, immoral, disgusted by myself, worthless,

inferior to others, and isolated from others. Participants then provided demographic information, such as gender, age, ethnicity, education, and household income.

Results

To ensure that the intended emotion was accurately manipulated, an independent-samples t-test was conducted to compare feeling "ashamed" among participants in the shame and neutral conditions. There was a significant difference in feeling "ashamed" for participants in the shame emotional condition (M = 1.96, SD = 1.19) and participants in the neutral emotional condition (M = 1.52, SD = 0.89); t(290) = 3.584, p < 0.001. These results suggest that the writing task accurately manipulated shame among participants in the shame condition.

Moreover, participants in the shame condition reported feeling more "exposed" (M = 1.96, SD = 1.21), compared to participants in the neutral condition (M = 1.63, SD = 0.90); t(290) = 2.654, p = 0.08. They also reported feeling more "immoral" (M = 1.67, SD = 1.08), compared to those in the neutral condition (M = 1.44, SD = 0.82); t(290) = 2.039, p = 0.042. Finally, participants in the shame condition reported feeling more "disgusted by myself" (M = 1.75, SD = 1.17), compared to those in the neutral condition (M = 1.51, SD = 0.93); t(290) = 1.981, p = 0.049.

There was no significant difference in feeling "self-conscious", "worthless", "inferior to others", and "isolated from others" among participants in the shame or neutral conditions.

Similar to experiment 1, risk taking propensity was calculated using the DOSPERT scale (α = 0.851). Promotion score (α = 0.641) and prevention score (α = 0.349) were also computed for each participant using the Regulatory Focus Scale (Fellner et al 2007). Consistent with prior literature (Bryant and Dunford 2008), promotion and prevention scores were uncorrelated (r = 0.059, n = 292, p = 0.312).

We predicted that shame attenuates the effect of prevention focus on risk taking propensity. A PROCESS model 1 (Hayes 2013) was conducted using prevention focus, emotion (shame versus neutral), and their interaction to predict risk taking propensity. Overall, the regression model was significant, $F(3, 288) = 3.54$, $p = 0.02$, $R^2 = 0.04$. As predicted, the interaction between prevention focus and emotion was a significant predictor in the model, $b = -0.43$, $t = -2.44$, $p = 0.02$; see fig. 4.

For participants in the neutral condition, a negative relationship between prevention focus and risk taking propensity was found, $b = -0.19$, $t = -2.59$, $p = 0.01$. For participants in the shame condition, no significant relationship between prevention focus and risk taking propensity was found, $b = 0.24$, $t = 1.51$, $p = 0.13$. As seen in fig. 4, in the neutral condition, increased prevention focus lessens risk taking propensity. In the shame condition, however, higher levels of prevention focus are associated with increased risk taking propensity, although not significant. These results empirically support our prediction that experiencing shame attenuates the effect of prevention focus on risk taking propensity. While in the neutral condition, prevention focus reduces risk taking propensity, this effect is eliminated when people become ashamed.

We also predicted that shame does not attenuate the effect of promotion focus on risk taking propensity. A PROCESS model 1 (Hayes 2013) was conducted using promotion focus, emotion (pride versus neutral), and their interaction to predict risk taking propensity. Overall, the regression model was significant, $F(3, 288) = 13.17$, $p < 0.01$, $R^2 = 0.16$. As predicted, the interaction between promotion focus and emotion was not a significant predictor in the model, $b = 0.05$, $t = 0.37$, $p = 0.71$.

For participants in the neutral condition, a positive relationship between promotion focus and risk taking propensity was found, $b = 0.38$, $t = 5.24$, $p < 0.01$. For participants in the shame condition, again a positive relationship between promotion focus and risk taking propensity was found, $b = 0.33$, $t = 3.22$, $p < 0.01$. Therefore, both in neutral and shame conditions, promotion focus was associated with increased risk taking propensity. These results also empirically support our prediction that experiencing shame does not attenuate the effect of promotion focus on risk taking propensity.

Discussion

The results of experiment 2 support our hypothesis about individuals' risk taking while experiencing shame. As predicted, shame attenuates the effect of prevention focus, but not promotion focus, on risk taking propensity. The negative effect of prevention focus on risk taking propensity was eliminated when people experience shame, compared to the neutral emotional condition.

Experiment 3: Pride, Shame, Regulatory Focus, and Risk Taking Propensity (In a Consumption Context)

Experiment 3 was designed to compare risk taking propensity of participants with promotion and prevention regulatory focus, in pride, shame and neutral emotional conditions. It examines both hypothesis 1 and hypothesis 2 that experiencing pride (shame) attenuates the effect of promotion (prevention) focus on risk taking propensity.

Unlike experiments 1 and 2 in which regulatory focus was measured, we directly manipulated regulatory focus. To do this, we followed Yoon et al's (2012) method and asked participants to think, and write, either about their past and current hopes, aspirations, and dreams (to manipulate promotion focus), or about their past and current duties, obligations, and responsibilities (to manipulate prevention focus). As in experiments 1 and 2, emotions were manipulated by asking participants to recall and write about their experiences.

Unlike experiments 1 and 2 in which risk taking propensity was measured using DOSPERT scale, we developed an 8-item questionnaire which measure participants' propensity to engage in risky consumption behaviors.

Therefore, experiment 3 had three objectives: 1) testing both hypotheses in one setting, 2) manipulating regulatory focus, instead of measuring it, and 3) measuring risk taking propensity in a consumption context.

Method

Participants and Procedure. Three hundred and seven UCLA students (mean age = 22, range 18-61; 77.2% female) were recruited for this experiment in exchange for $3. The design was regulatory focus (promotion focus vs. prevention focus) by emotional state (pride, shame, neutral). Participants were randomly assigned to the six between-subjects conditions.

We followed Yoon et al's (2012) method to manipulate promotion and prevention regulatory focus. Participants in the promotion (prevention) focus condition were asked to think and write a short paragraph about two of their past hopes, aspirations, and dreams (duties, obligations, and responsibilities). Then, they thought and wrote a short paragraph about two of their current past hopes, aspirations, and dreams (duties, obligations, and responsibilities).

As a manipulation check for regulatory focus (Pham and Avnet 2004), participants were asked to indicate, on 5-point bipolar scales, the extent to which they would prefer each of the following behaviors: do what is right (prevention-related) versus do whatever I want (promotion-related), take a trip around the world (promotion-related) versus pay back my loans (prevention-related), and go wherever my heart takes me (promotion-related) versus do whatever it takes for me to keep my promises (prevention-related).

Next, participants were randomly assigned to one of the emotional conditions of pride, shame, or neutral. Pride was manipulated as in experiment 1 and shame was manipulated as in experiment 2. Neutral emotional state was manipulated as in experiments 1 and 2.

To ensure that the writing task accurately manipulated the intended emotional states, participants were asked to rate, on 5-point scales (1 = not at all; 5 = very much), the extent to which they felt "proud" and "ashamed" at that moment.

Dependent Variable. After manipulating regulatory focus and emotions, participants answered eight questions regarding their propensity to engage in risky consumption behaviors ($\alpha = 0.390$). The first three questions were short ads from three service companies which offer risky activities (piloting small planes, whitewater rafting, and investment in startups). The next five questions were short scenarios, each describing an opportunity to get engaged in a risky consumption-related behavior. The scenarios were in the contexts of buying laptop insurance/warranty, stealing cash, reporting income taxes, safe riding, and dressing in public. Participants were asked to imagine themselves in the described situation and indicate the likelihood that they use/invest in the advertised services or get engaged in the described risky behaviors, on 7-point scales. Risk taking propensity was computed by averaging the answers of these eight questions. Participants then provided demographic information, such as gender, age, ethnicity, education, and household income.

Results

Manipulation checks. As expected, participants in the manipulated prevention focus condition put relatively greater emphasis on prevention-related versus promotion-related questions (M = 3.06, SD = 0.96) than did participants in the manipulated promotion focus condition (M = 2.82, SD = 0.87); t(305) = -2.254, p = 0.025. These results suggest that our method accurately manipulated regulatory focus.

To ensure that pride was accurately manipulated, a one-way ANOVA test was conducted to compare feeling "proud" among participants in the pride, shame, and neutral conditions. The one-way ANOVA was statistically significant, F(2, 304) = 6.078, p = 0.003. A Tukey-HSD post hoc test indicated that participants in the pride condition (M = 3.00, SD = 1.11) reported feeling more "proud" than participants in the shame condition (M = 2.48, SD = 1.06); p = 0.002. However, participants in the pride condition were not significantly different than those in the neutral condition (M = 2.79, SD = 1.05); p = 0.344. These results suggest that the writing task might not accurately manipulated pride among participants in the pride condition. However, it could be possible that participants in the three emotional conditions had different interpretations of the word "proud". Since only participants in the pride condition were provided with a definition of "pride", they might have been more cautious about interpreting their emotions, whereas participants in the "neutral" condition were more easygoing in reporting their pride. Yet, participants in the shame condition are less proud due to the shame manipulation.

To ensure that shame was accurately manipulated, a one-way ANOVA test was conducted to compare feeling "ashamed" among participants in the pride, shame, and neutral conditions. The one-way ANOVA was statistically significant, F(2, 304) = 17.418, p < 0.001. A Tukey-HSD post hoc test indicated that participants in the shame condition (M = 2.69, SD = 1.13) reported

feeling more "ashamed" than participants in the pride condition (M = 1.93, SD = 1.13); p < 0.001. Moreover, participants in the shame condition were significantly more "ashamed" than those in the neutral condition (M = 1.93, SD = 0.92); p < 0.001. These results suggest that the writing task accurately manipulated shame among participants in the shame condition.

Moderation analysis. We predicted that pride (shame) attenuates the effect of promotion (prevention) focus on risk taking propensity. A 2 (regulatory focus: promotion vs. prevention) × 3 (emotion: pride, shame, neutral) factorial analysis of variance tested the effects of the regulatory focus and emotional states on risk taking propensity. Results did not reveal the predicted regulatory focus × emotion interaction (F(2, 299) = 0.269, p = 0.765; see fig. 5).

Examining the neutral emotional condition, analysis revealed no significant effect of regulatory focus on risk taking propensity (t(102) = 0.269, p = 0.789). Thus, when no emotion was manipulated, risk taking propensity of participants in the promotion focus condition (M = 3.34, SD = 0.78) was not significantly different than those in the prevention focus condition (M = 3.30, SD = 0.80). This finding is inconsistent with prior literature indicating that when there is no specific emotion involved, promotion focus leads to higher levels of risk taking propensity and prevention focus leads to lower levels of risk taking propensity (Bryant and Dunford 2008; Crowe and Higgins 1997; Hamilton and Biehal 2005; Gino and Margolis 2011; Hamstra et al 2011; Werth and Forster 2007; Atorough and Donaldson 2012; Herzenstein et al 2007). Since regulatory focus was successfully manipulated, one reason for this inconsistency could be our method for measuring risk taking propensity.

Focusing on the pride emotional condition, analysis revealed no significant effect of regulatory focus on risk taking propensity (t(99) = -0.496, p = 0.621). Thus, when pride was manipulated, risk taking propensity of participants in the promotion focus condition (M = 3.50, SD = 0.82)

was not significantly different than those in the prevention focus condition (M = 3.58, SD = 0.79).

Finally, focusing on the shame emotional condition, analysis revealed no significant effect of regulatory focus on risk taking propensity (t(98) = 0.489, p = 0.626). Thus, when shame was manipulated, risk taking propensity of participants in the promotion focus condition (M = 3.54, SD = 0.68) was not significantly different than those in the prevention focus condition (M = 3.47, SD = 0.85).

Hence, we did not find a significant difference in risk taking propensity of participants in any of emotional states (pride, shame, neutral). Since we predicted that pride (shame) attenuates the effect of promotion (prevention) focus on risk taking propensity, non-significant results of pride and shame conditions could support our predictions, only if the results of neutral condition was significant.

Discussion

The results of experiment 3 did not support our hypotheses about individuals' risk taking propensity while experiencing pride or shame. These results could be caused by the scale we used to measure risk taking propensity. This is especially plausible because although regulatory focus was successfully manipulated, risk taking propensity of participants in promotion focus and prevention focus conditions were not significantly different, when no emotion was manipulated. This is inconsistent with a large body of prior literature (Bryant and Dunford 2008; Crowe and Higgins 1997; Hamilton and Biehal 2005; Gino and Margolis 2011; Hamstra et al 2011; Werth and Forster 2007; Atorough and Donaldson 2012; Herzenstein et al 2007).

In experiment 4, we test whether or not the inconsistent results of experiment 3 were caused by the scale we used to measure risk taking propensity. Therefore, experiment 4 is exactly similar

to experiment 3, except that we used DOSPERT scale (which is a standard measure for risk taking propensity).

Experiment 4: Pride, Shame, Regulatory Focus, and Risk Taking Propensity

Experiment 4 was designed to compare risk taking propensity of participants with promotion and prevention regulatory focus, in pride, shame and neutral emotional conditions. It examines both hypothesis 1 and hypothesis 2 that experiencing pride (shame) attenuates the effect of promotion (prevention) focus on risk taking propensity.

In experiment 3, risk taking propensity of participants in the promotion focus and prevention focus were not significantly different, when no emotion was manipulated. This was inconsistent with prior literature. We speculated that the inconsistency may have been caused by the scale we developed to measure risk taking propensity. Therefore, experiment 4 was conducted exactly similar to experiment 3, except that we used a standard scale (DOSPERT) for measuring risk taking propensity.

Hence, regulatory focus was manipulated following Yoon et al's (2012) method, by asking participants to think, and write, either about their past and current hopes, aspirations, and dreams (to manipulate promotion focus), or about their past and current duties, obligations, and responsibilities (to manipulate prevention focus). As in previous experiments, emotions were manipulated by asking participants to recall and write about their experiences. Finally, risk taking propensity was measured using DOSPERT (Blais and Weber 2006).

Experiment 4 had three objectives: 1) testing both hypotheses in one setting, 2) manipulating regulatory focus, instead of measuring it, and 3) measuring risk taking propensity, using DOSPERT scale.

Method

Participants and Procedure. Three hundred and eleven UCLA students (mean age = 22, range 17-51; 75.9% female) were recruited for this experiment in exchange for $3. The design was regulatory focus (promotion focus vs. prevention focus) by emotional state (pride, shame, neutral). Participants were randomly assigned to the six between-subjects conditions.

Regulatory focus and emotions were manipulated as in experiment 3. Both manipulations were checked using the same questions as in experiment 3.

Dependent Variable. The dependent variable was measured using DOSPERT scale ($\alpha = 0.797$), as in experiments 1 and 2. At the end of the experiment, participants provided demographic information, such as gender, age, ethnicity, education, and household income.

Results

Manipulation checks. Although we used the same method as experiment 3 for manipulating regulatory focus, the manipulation was not successful in experiment 4. The emphasis on prevention-related versus promotion-related questions were not significantly different for participants in the manipulated prevention focus condition (M = 3.24, SD = 0.92) and participants in the manipulated promotion focus condition (M = 3.18, SD = 0.97).

To ensure that pride was accurately manipulated, a one-way ANOVA test was conducted to compare feeling "proud" among participants in the pride, shame, and neutral conditions. The one-way ANOVA was statistically significant, $F(2, 308) = 6.195$, $p = 0.002$. A Tukey-HSD

post hoc test indicated that participants in the pride condition (M = 3.09, SD = 1.05) reported feeling more "proud" than participants in the shame condition (M = 2.60, SD = 1.03); p = 0.002. However, participants in the pride condition were not significantly different than those in the neutral condition (M = 2.94, SD = 0.99); p = 0.565. These results suggest that the writing task might not accurately manipulated pride among participants in the pride condition. Same reasons as experiment 3 may explain these results.

To ensure that shame was accurately manipulated, a one-way ANOVA test was conducted to compare feeling "ashamed" among participants in the pride, shame, and neutral conditions. The one-way ANOVA was statistically significant, $F(2, 308) = 13.128$, $p < 0.001$. A Tukey-HSD post hoc test indicated that participants in the shame condition (M = 2.67, SD = 1.24) reported feeling more "ashamed" than participants in the pride condition (M = 2.01, SD = 1.03); $p < 0.001$. Moreover, participants in the shame condition were significantly more "ashamed" than those in the neutral condition (M = 1.97, SD = 0.10); $p < 0.001$. These results suggest that the writing task accurately manipulated shame among participants in the shame condition.

Moderation analysis. We predicted that pride (shame) attenuates the effect of promotion (prevention) focus on risk taking propensity. A 2 (regulatory focus: promotion vs. prevention) × 3 (emotion: pride, shame, neutral) factorial analysis of variance tested the effects of the regulatory focus and emotional states on risk taking propensity. Results did not reveal the predicted regulatory focus × emotion interaction ($F(2, 305) = 0.703$, $p = 0.496$; see fig. 6).

Examining the neutral emotional condition, analysis revealed no significant effect of regulatory focus on risk taking propensity ($t(105) = -0.350$, $p = 0.727$). Thus, when no emotion was manipulated, risk taking propensity of participants in the promotion focus condition (M = 3.14, SD = 0.62) was not significantly different than those in the prevention focus condition (M =

3.18, SD = 0.63). This finding is again inconsistent with prior literature that when there is no specific emotion involved, promotion focus leads to higher levels of risk taking propensity and prevention focus leads to lower levels of risk taking propensity (Bryant and Dunford 2008; Crowe and Higgins 1997; Hamilton and Biehal 2005; Gino and Margolis 2011; Hamstra et al 2011; Werth and Forster 2007; Atorough and Donaldson 2012; Herzenstein et al 2007). The main reason for this inconsistency could be the unsuccessful manipulation of regulatory focus.

Focusing on the pride emotional condition, analysis revealed no significant effect of regulatory focus on risk taking propensity (t(100) = -1.532, p = 0.129). Thus, when pride was manipulated, risk taking propensity of participants in the promotion focus condition (M = 3.06, SD = 0.48) was not significantly different than those in the prevention focus condition (M = 3.25, SD = 0.76).

Finally, focusing on the shame emotional condition, analysis revealed no significant effect of regulatory focus on risk taking propensity (t(100) = 0.042, p = 0.966). Thus, when shame was manipulated, risk taking propensity of participants in the promotion focus condition (M = 3.29, SD = 0.65) was not significantly different than those in the prevention focus condition (M = 3.28, SD = 0.60).

Hence, we did not found a significant difference in risk taking propensity of participants in any of emotional states (pride, shame, neutral). Since we predicted that pride (shame) attenuates the effect of promotion (prevention) focus on risk taking propensity, non-significant results of pride and shame conditions could support our predictions, only if the results of neutral condition was significant.

Discussion

The results of experiment 4 did not support our hypotheses about individuals' risk taking propensity while experiencing pride or shame. One sensible reason for these results could be the unsuccessful manipulation of regulatory focus. Although we used the same method which was successful in experiment 3 for manipulating regulatory focus, the method was not successful in experiment 4.

General Discussion

Marketers are interested to understand which factors affect consumers' attitudes toward participating in risky activities. Prior research has examined the effects of various factors on risk taking propensity. Yet, much less attention has been paid to investigating whether, and how, different emotions can influence individuals' risk taking propensity.

The results of two experiments support the hypotheses that positive and negative self-conscious emotions can moderate the effect of regulatory focus on risk taking propensity. The positive effect of promotion focus on risk taking propensity was weakened when people experienced pride, compared to the neutral emotional condition. Additionally, the negative effect of prevention focus on risk taking propensity was eliminated when people experienced shame, compared to the neutral emotional condition.

Therefore, consistent with our theory, feeling proud attenuates the positive effect of promotion focus on risk taking propensity and feeling ashamed attenuates the negative effect of prevention focus on risk taking propensity.

Theoretical Implications

This research contributes to the literature on antecedents of risk taking by suggesting that feeling self-conscious emotions influence attitudes toward risk taking. We also contribute to the literature on the effects of regulatory focus on behavior. Specifically, we demonstrate that promotion focus and prevention focus react differently to positive and negative self-conscious emotions. Thus, although promotion focus encourages risk taking, this effect is alleviated when people feel proud, but is not changed when people feel ashamed. In addition, whereas prevention focus discourages risk taking, this effect is eliminated when people feel ashamed, but it is not changed when people feel proud.

Finally, this research contributes to the existing literature on emotions by examining the impact of self-conscious emotion on behavior. Our work demonstrates that positive and negative self-conscious emotions influence different parts of regulatory focus. Indeed, pride moderates the effect of promotion focus and shame moderates the effect of prevention focus on risk taking behavior.

Directions for Future Research

Although we focused on pride and shame as positive and negative self-conscious emotions, future research could explore other self-conscious emotions of guilt and embarrassment. Prior studies have indicated that embarrassment can increase gambling (Leith and Baumeister 1996). The findings regarding the effect of guilt on risk taking is not consistent though. Some studies showed that guilt enhances risk taking (Kouchaki et al 2014), while some other studies revealed that guilt reduces risk taking (Mancini and Gangemi 2004). Yet, none of these studies took into

account the potential moderating role of these emotions regarding the effect of regulatory focus on risk taking.

While our research has focused on risk taking propensity as a comprehensive construct, future research could distinguish between risk-taking in different domains, such as social, recreational, ethical, or financial risk taking. For example, shame as an emotion elicited from negative self-evaluations of one's morality (Tangney et al 1996) might diminish individual's expectations from their own ethical behavior, and consequently increase their ethical risk taking. While pride as an emotion resulted from positive evaluations of the self (Weiner 1986) might decrease ethical risk taking in an attempt to maintain that positive evaluation.

We showed that regulatory focus as a personality trait has an impact on risk taking propensity, but one question is whether other personality traits also influence risk taking. Prior research on self-esteem sets the stage for hypotheses about this question, which could be examined in future research. Self-esteem is negatively correlated with the propensity to experience shame (Retzinger 1991). Therefore, it is likely that people with low self-esteem avoid socially risky situations as they have low threshold of getting ashamed.

Throughout this paper, we have focused on chronic regulatory focus which is the result of one's history of developments in attaining gains and avoiding losses (Higgins et al 2001). Situational regulatory focus, however, is determined by framing (Idson et al 2000). Specially, "problems framed in terms of gains or non-gains trigger a situational promotion focus, whereas problems framed in terms of losses and non-losses trigger a situational prevention focus" (Bryant and Dunford 2008, p. 341). Future studies could examine the role of risk frame (i.e., framing risk as an opportunity to attain gain vs. an opportunity to avoid loss). Specifically, future research could investigate the circumstances where chronic and situational forms of a person's regulatory focus are contingent (the person processes chronic and situational promotion focus,

or chronic and situational prevention focus), whereas circumstances in which chronic and situational forms of a person's regulatory focus are divergent (the person processes chronic promotion focus and situational prevention focus, or chronic prevention focus and situational promotion focus).

Moreover, risk taking propensity might be differently affected by anticipating shame and anticipating pride, compared to experiencing them. For example, when people anticipate that a specific type of social risk would make them ashamed, they might be motivated to avoid that risk in order to avoid shame. However, when they already feel ashamed, not only they don't have such a cautious incentive, but also they might be even motivated to change the status quo by taking that social risk.

Practical Implications

The findings of this research may be useful for marketers as they formulate strategies to encourage or discourage consumers about taking specific risks. For example, marketers of risky recreational activities such as skydiving, or marketers of new innovative products desire consumers' high propensity toward risky behaviors. On the other hand, consumers' risk taking propensity is not desirable for marketers of insurances or warranties. Hence, they seek strategies to discourage consumers about taking risks.

Our findings indicate that feeling proud weakens the encouraging effect of promotion focus on risk taking, whereas it does not influence the effect of prevention focus on risk taking. Therefore, stimulating pride can only have a diminishing effect on risk taking. This means that stimulating pride can be an effective strategy to prevent risk taking.

On the other hand, our results revealed that feeling ashamed weakens the discouraging effect of prevention focus on risk taking, whereas it does not change the effect of promotion focus on risk taking. Therefore, stimulating shame can only have a positive effect on risk taking. This means that stimulating shame can be an effective strategy to enhance risk taking.

These findings have real world applications. For example, promoters of ethical consumption behavior can frame their anti-illegal downloading messages so that stimulate a sense of pride in ethical consumption, and hence prevent their audiences from taking the ethical risk. Moreover, marketers can picture avoiding new innovations as an undesirable behavior far from an ideal character, and hence encourage consumers toward adopting the new innovation.

Conclusion

Risk taking is an important aspect of consumption. Prior research suggests that regulatory focus has an impact on consumers' risk taking behavior, but did not clarify how this effect can be contingent on their emotional states. The present research suggests that feeling proud can weaken the enhancing effect of promotion focus on risk taking, while feeling ashamed can weaken the preventive effect of prevention focus on risk taking.

**Fig. 1.** Pride attenuates the effect of promotion focus on risk taking propensity

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Fig. 2. Shame attenuates the effect of prevention focus on risk taking propensity
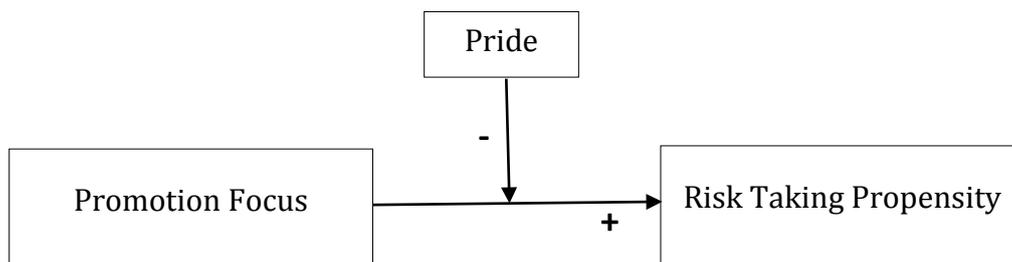
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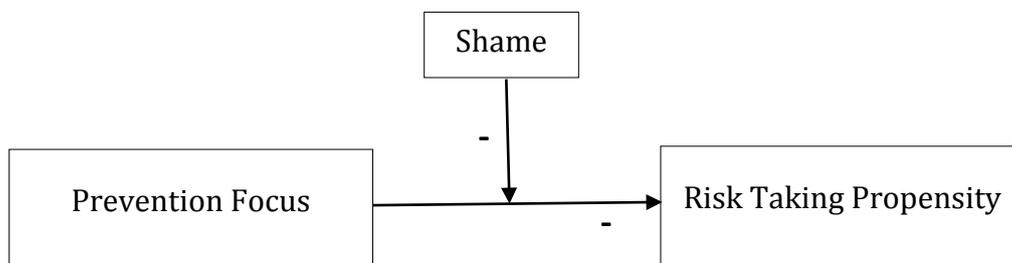
Fig. 3. Effects of pride and promotion focus on risk taking propensity (Experiment 1)
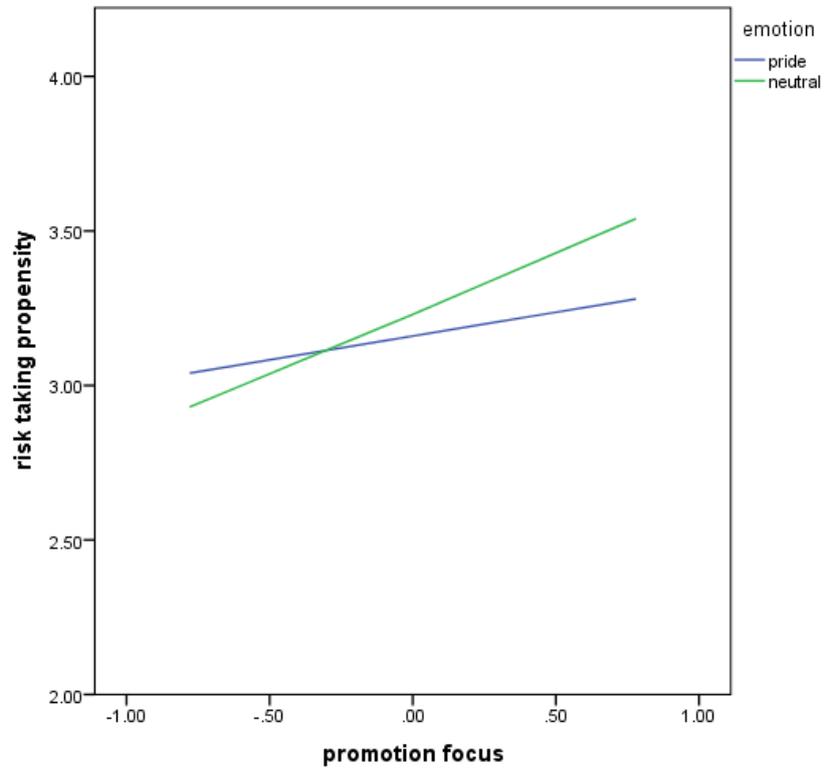
Fig. 4. Effects of shame and prevention focus on risk taking propensity (Experiment 2)
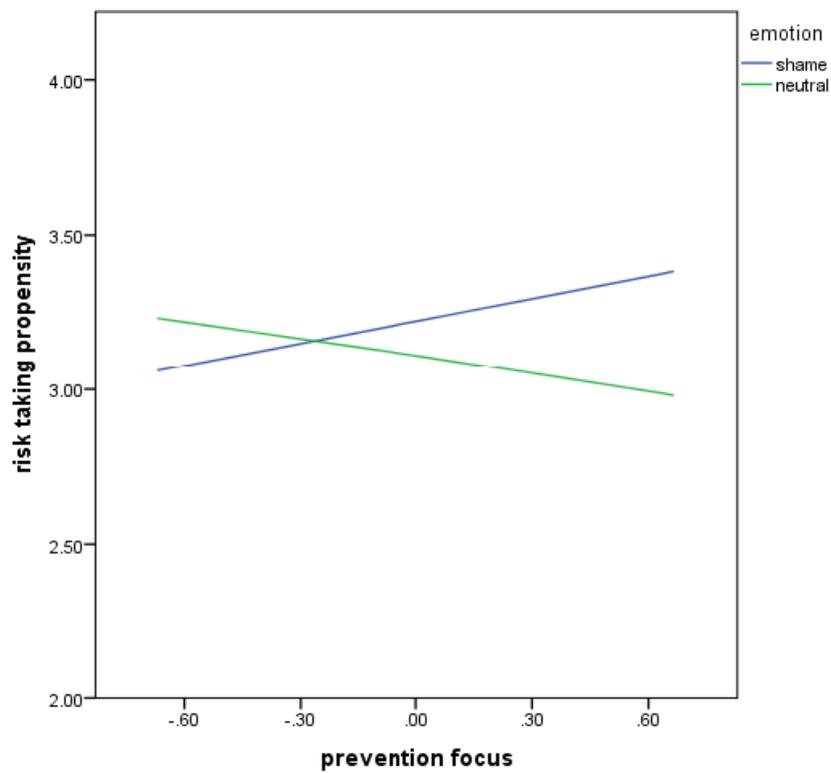
Fig. 5. Effects of pride, shame, and regulatory focus on risk taking propensity (Experiment 3)

Risk Taking Propensity
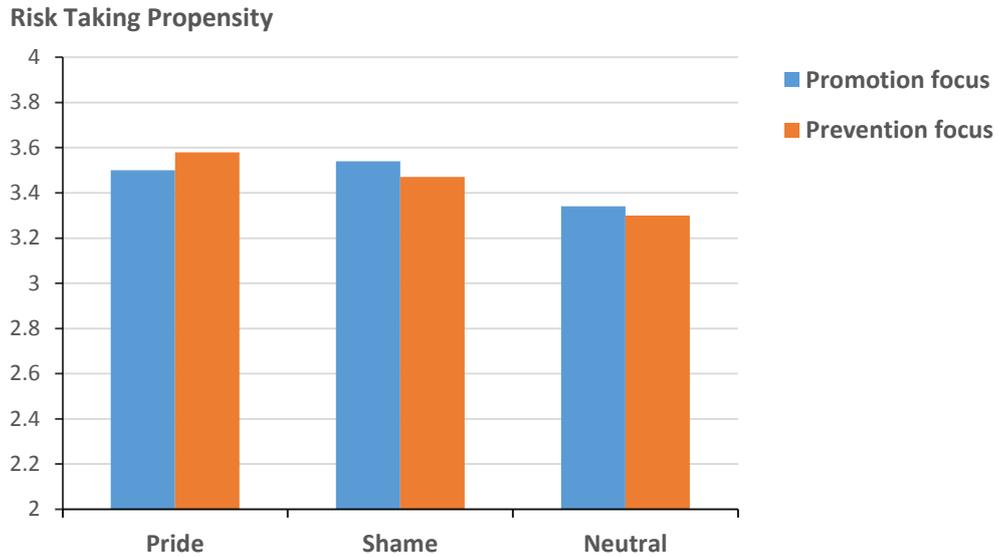
Fig. 6. Effects of pride, shame, and regulatory focus on risk taking propensity (Experiment 4)
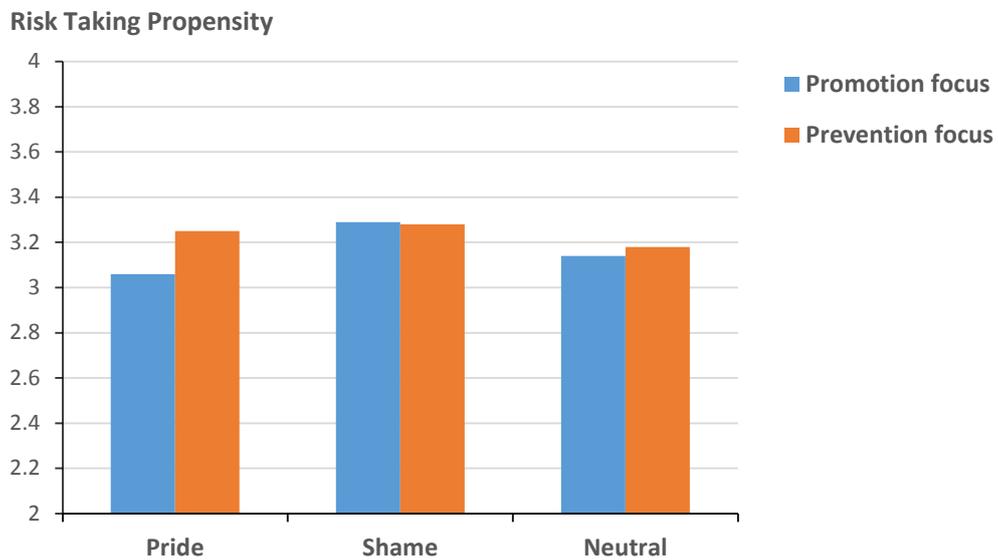
Risk Taking Propensity

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Chapter 3

Avoiding Proself/Prosocial Embarrassing Behaviors under Spotlight: Moderating Role of Consumer's Public Self-Consciousness

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Abstract – Embarrassment-avoidant behavior is quite common in consumer behavior. However, it can spoil the opportunity to help the self or the others. This research considers the role of spotlight effect (i.e., overestimating others' attention) in consumer's embarrassment-avoidant behavior. Two experiments suggest that being in the spotlight differently affects consumers' avoidance of proself and prosocial embarrassing behaviors, depending on their public self-consciousness

Experiment 1 examines our first hypothesis regarding proself embarrassing behaviors. It demonstrates that, although being in the spotlight increases embarrassment-avoidant behavior in low public self-conscious consumers, it has no effect on embarrassment-avoidance of high public self-conscious consumers. Experiment 2 examines our second hypothesis regarding prosocial embarrassing behaviors. It demonstrates that, although being in the spotlight increases embarrassment-avoidant behavior in low public self-conscious consumers, it has a reverse effect on high public self-conscious consumers. Understanding the interactive effects of spotlight and consumers' PUBSC on their avoidance of proself and prosocial embarrassing behaviors could help marketers facilitate strategies for managing embarrassment-avoidant

behavior, based on consumers' individual differences.

Introduction

Consumers typically try to avoid behaviors which make them embarrassed (Helweg-Larsen and Collins 1994; Foss and Crenshaw 1978). Although embarrassment-avoidance enables human communities to preserve their moral balance in daily interactions (Miller and Leary 1992; Scheff 1988), there are many situations in which avoiding embarrassment, in fact, hurts individual's wellbeing. For example, embarrassment may prevent people from purchasing condoms (Helweg-Larsen and Collins 1994) or gas prevention products (Lau-Gesk and Drolet 2008). People with incontinence problems may buy sanitary napkins, rather than "adult diapers", in an attempt to cover their embarrassing urinary problem (Kershaw and Schmall 1992). Nut-allergic consumers may feel embarrassed of, and withdraw from, asking whether a food on menu contains nuts. This behavior may inflict health risks on them (Leftwich et al 2011). Customers may refuse to disclose the history of their embarrassing purchases, even when the company provides customized benefits, based on these information (White 2004).

Embarrassment may also prevent individuals from asking for help (Bohns and Flynn 2010). For example, people may be reluctant to talk about their sexual problems with their doctors, due to anticipating embarrassment. Consumers may feel embarrassed to ask basic questions about how electronic devices work, and keep using them in a less efficient way for years. Couples may experience unwanted pregnancy due to embarrassment of asking about contraceptive methods. Sometimes people do not seek psychological help, because they feel embarrassed to admit having mental problems.

Although the behaviors consumers avoid, in all these instances, are embarrassing, they could actually benefit them. So consumers may give up some important gains, in order to avoid embarrassment. We call embarrassing behaviors which benefit the actor as "proself embarrassing behaviors".

Embarrassment-avoidant behavior not only spoils the opportunity to help the self (Helweg-Larsen and Collins 1994), it can also spoil the opportunity to help others (Foss and Crenshaw 1978). Sometimes the embarrassing behavior benefits other people as well, and can be considered as a prosocial behavior. According to the definition, prosocial behavior is a voluntary action to benefit others (Eisenberg et al 2006). Behaviors such as helping, sharing, donating, co-operating, and volunteering are regarded as prosocial (Brief and Motowidlo 1986). Hence, we call embarrassing behaviors which are voluntary and benefit others as "prosocial embarrassing behaviors". Examples include asking strangers to donate to a charity, participating in medical experiments concerning venereal disease, helping a troubled homeless person while everyone is watching, or asking one's partner to use a condom. Prior research indicated that people avoid helping behaviors which make them feel embarrassed (Foss and Crenshaw 1978).

This paper studies embarrassment-avoidant behavior in two levels. First, prior literature indicated that consumers experience greater embarrassment when they pay attention to others' presence (Dahl et al 2001). Hence, it may be inferred that this attention (spotlight condition) leads to increased embarrassment-avoidant behavior. However, we will argue that the effect of spotlight on embarrassment-avoidance may depend on consumers' dispositional characteristic public self-consciousness (PUBSC). PUBSC is defined as the tendency to consider the self as a social object (Fenigstein et al 1975). We examine whether, and how, consumers' level of public self-consciousness moderates the effect of spotlight on their embarrassment-avoidant behavior.

Second, extant research pointed out that a sense of being watched increases prosocial behavior (Bateson et al 2006; Ernest-Jones et al 2011; Burnham 2003; Haley and Fessler 2005). In addition, high public self-conscious individuals may engage in prosocial behaviors in an

attempt to impress others (Youn and Kim 2008). Prior literature has studied proself/prosocial motivation as an individual difference variable, namely social value orientation. Proself-oriented individuals are concerned with maximizing own outcomes, while prosocial-oriented individuals are concerned with maximizing collective outcomes (Joireman et al 1997). The role of individual's social value orientation has been mostly examined in a social dilemma where one's benefits are in contrast with others' benefits. Examples include the role of one's proself/prosocial orientation in pro-environmental behaviors (Garling et al 2003; Cameron et al 1998), negotiations (De Dreu et al 2006; Beersma and De Dreu 2005; Olekalns and Smith 1999), in commuting decisions (Van lange et al 1998; Joireman et al 1997), in cooperative behavior (Van Lange and Semin-Goossens 1998; Boone et al 2010), and in leadership (Van Dijk and De Cremer 2006). In this research, we combine proself/prosocial motivations with embarrassment-avoidance, and examine how consumer's avoidance of embarrassing behaviors depends on whether the behavior is considered as proself or prosocial. More specifically, we are interested to understand whether the mutual effect of spotlight and PUBSC is different when the embarrassing behavior is prosocial, compared to when it is proself.

To date, no studies have examined how the interaction of these factors affects embarrassment-avoidant behavior. Our goal in this research is exploring the role of spotlight effect in avoiding proself/prosocial embarrassing behaviors, for people with high/low public self-consciousness. In particular, we try to answer the following questions. 1) If the embarrassing behavior is proself, would a spotlight condition always increase embarrassment-avoidant behavior? For example, will all consumers become more reluctant to buy condoms, when they are noticed about the presence of other customers? 2) What if the embarrassing behavior is prosocial? For example, do all activists prefer to ask for charity donations through a one by one interaction with potential donors, or they prefer to do it as a public activity?

Understanding the combined effects of spotlight condition and consumers' PUBSC on their proself and prosocial embarrassing behaviors could help marketers to facilitate strategies for managing embarrassment-avoidant behavior, based on consumers' individual differences. For example, highlighting public eye, or framing the embarrassing behavior as prosocial (vs. proself), may help some consumers overcome their embarrassment-avoidance, depending on the level of their PUBSC.

Two experiments examine our hypotheses that individual differences in public self-consciousness moderate the effect of spotlight on embarrassment-avoidant behavior. Experiment 1 tests our first hypothesis regarding proself embarrassing behaviors. It demonstrates that although being in the spotlight increases embarrassment-avoidant behavior in low PUBSC consumers, it does not change embarrassment-avoidance of high PUBSC consumers. Experiment 2 tests our second hypothesis regarding prosocial embarrassing behaviors. It demonstrates that although being in the spotlight increases embarrassment-avoidant behavior in low PUBSC people, it has a reverse effect on high PUBSC individuals. Experiments 1 and 2 demonstrate the strength of our theory to explain and predict behavior, even when there are financial and social consequences.

Spotlight Effect and Embarrassment-Avoidance

Embarrassment is a short-lived (Verbeke and Bagozzi 2002), negative emotion arising from perceived loss of social approval (Tangney et al 1996) in the presence of either real or imagined audience (Miller and Leary 1992). Its outburst is usually due to surprising, relatively trivial, humorous, or less serious accidents which are likely to amuse observers (Tangney et al 1996).

Prior research has examined different aspects of consumers' embarrassment, such as its typology (Krishna et al 2015), its triggers (Wan 2013; Xia and Kukar-Kinney 2014; Grace 2007), its effect on product preference (Dong et al 2013), attitudes toward embarrassing purchases (Iacobucci et al 2003), brand embarrassment (Grant and Walsh 2009; Walsh et al 2016; Romani et al 2012), embarrassment over using coupons (Ashworth and Darke 2002; Brumbaugh and Rosa 2009), and the roles of perspective taking (Hung and Mukhopadhyay 2012), purchase familiarity (Dahl et al 2001), as well as shopping basket composition (Blair and Roese 2013).

More relevant consumer research has uncovered the role of social presence on consumers' embarrassment. For example, a sense of social presence (even if it is not real) has been shown to intensify purchase embarrassment (Dahl et al 2001). The importance of social context is so high that it can even eliminate the effect of other factors. For example, real purpose of a purchase affects embarrassment, only when the purchase is being done in private (Krishna et al 2015).

Psychology literature indicated that people tend to overestimate the extent to which their behavior is noticed by others, a tendency called "spotlight effect" (Gilovich et al 2000). However, extant research has not addressed how this tendency affects consumers' embarrassment-avoidant behavior. The unanswered question is how overestimating others' attention (spotlight condition) affects consumers' avoidance of embarrassing situations? This is a significant question, because many of purchase/consumption instances take place in public. For instance, store shopping usually accompanies by presence of the seller or other customers, most of service transactions require an interaction between the customer and service provider, and there are only few product categories which are used completely in private. Hence, it is

essential to understand how overestimating public attention, that is the spotlight effect, influences consumers' embarrassment-avoidant behavior.

Prior literature has suggested that people feel more embarrassed when they pay attention to others' presence (Dahl et al 2001). Thus, it is expected that spotlight increases embarrassment-avoidance. The extant literature, however, has ignored individual differences. People are not equally prone to adapt their behavior in an attempt to avoid embarrassment.

We argue that the effect of spotlight on consumers' embarrassment-avoidant behavior depends on their dispositional characteristic public self-consciousness (PUBSC) which can be defined as chronic consciousness about public self-impression (Edelmann 1985), for two reasons: 1) it is associated with heightened attention to the public self and 2) it is associated with greater importance of social evaluations for the individual (Lau-Gesk and Drolet 2008). Indeed, public self-consciousness positively correlates with trait embarrassibility (Edelmann 1985; Darvill et al 1992).

Moderating Role of Public Self-consciousness

High, versus low, public self-conscious individuals are more likely to care about how they are regarded by other people. This implies that HPUBSC consumers are more plausible to adapt their behavior, in an attempt to avoid social criticism (Raichle et al 2001). Accordingly, it is expected that, in a control condition with no spotlight, PUBSC is positively associated with embarrassment-avoidance. One study by Lau-Gesk and Drolet (2008) provided support for this prediction, where people with higher levels of PUBSC were more likely to adopt products which aimed to prevent embarrassment.

The moderating role of PUBSC in embarrassment-avoidant behavior in a spotlight condition, comes about in two levels.

First, it determines whether or not a spotlight condition has a notable effect on consumer's attention to his/her observers. A spotlight condition attracts actors' attention to the audience who are observing their behavior. Prior research has shown that taking the observer's perspective intensifies embarrassment (Hung and Mukhopadhyay 2012). What happens if the actor is already attentive to their social environment? Here lies the difference between high and low PUBSC consumers. A high public self-conscious (HPUBSC) person is already heedful of the observers. Prior research has shown that HPUBSC people are more likely to overestimate the extent to which they are being observed (Fenigstein 1984). They are also more likely to perceive that hypothetical social situations are targeted toward them. For example, they were more likely to think that a distinctly good or bad exam singled out by the teacher belonged to them (Fenigstein 1984). In fact, a positive relation has been found between public self-consciousness and paranoia (Von Gemmingen et al 2003).

Thus, an extra notice from a spotlight condition would not have a significant impact on their attention. Whereas, a low public self-conscious (LPUBSC) person, who is not attentive to their public impression, would be more affected by the extra notice from a spotlight condition. Therefore, we predict that the impact of spotlight condition on embarrassment-avoidant behavior depends on consumer's public self-consciousness. To date, no work has examined this effect, neither conceptually nor empirically. The following section addresses how the impact of spotlight on embarrassment-avoidant behavior is contingent on consumer's level of PUBSC.

Second, PUBSC differently influences prosocial and proself embarrassing behaviors. HPUBSC and LPUBSC consumers have different concerns in their public behaviors. HPUBSC, compared to LPUBSC, consumers pay more attention to how others regard them. They have higher social

self-standards (Lau-Gesk and Drolet 2008) and are more perfectionist (Saboonchi and Lundh 1997). They are also more concerned about their look (Miller and Cox 1982).

Engaging in a prosocial behavior, in front of others, is an opportunity for a HPUBSC person to create a positive impression (Basil and Weber 2006; Karakashian et al 2006; Youn and Kim 2008). Therefore, if a behavior is considered as a prosocial one, putting it in a spotlight may encourage a HPUBSC consumer to engage in it. Whereas for a LPUBSC consumer, a spotlight condition do not work as an extra incentive to engage in a prosocial behavior, because they do not care about others' judgement. Thus, we predict that the moderating role of PUBSC is different for proself and prosocial embarrassing behaviors. In the next section, we suggest different predictions for moderating role of PUBSC in the case of proself and prosocial embarrassing behaviors.

Moderating Role of Public Self-consciousness in Avoiding *Proself* Embarrassing Behaviors

Past research has revealed that the role of consumers' PUBSC in their embarrassment-avoidant behavior is more cognitive, than affective. In a research by Lau-Gesk and Drolet (2008), PUBSC was positively associated with the expectation to experience embarrassment, and not with the intensity of emotion itself. This means that, HPUBSC consumers were more likely to anticipate embarrassment, compared to LPUBSC consumers. Hence, when the possibility of embarrassment was reminded in the ad, HPUBSC and LPUBSC consumers were equal in adopting anti-embarrassment products. Specifically, in one condition where the ads for anti-embarrassment products highlighted the potential embarrassment of not using the product, consumers' PUBSC did not predict purchase intentions. However, in another condition where

the ads for the same product did not explicitly mention the threat of embarrassment, consumers with higher levels of PUBSC were more likely to adopt the product.

Therefore, PUBSC can increase embarrassment-avoidant behavior, due to heightened concerns about getting embarrassed. As explained before, this function is similar to the effect of being in the spotlight. A spotlight condition alerts the consumer to others who are watching his/her behavior, and to the possibility of getting embarrassed. Hence, higher levels of PUBSC is like constantly being in a spotlight. Therefore, HPUBSC consumers may be equally embarrassment-avoidant in both spotlight and non-spotlight conditions; because they are always attentive to the possibility of embarrassment, with or without spotlight.

Whereas being in the spotlight, compared to non-spotlight, makes LPUBSC consumers more concerned about how observers evaluate them. Hence, it makes them more avoidant of embarrassing behaviors. The conceptual model illustrating our predictions is shown in Figure 1.

Consequently, we hypothesize that:

> **H1:** *When the embarrassing behavior is proself, spotlight condition increases embarrassment-avoidant behavior, only among LPUBSC consumers.*

Moderating Role of Public Self-consciousness in Avoiding *Prosocial* Embarrassing Behaviors

The motives underlying embarrassment-avoidance is different when the embarrassing behavior is considered as prosocial, versus proself. When the embarrassing behavior is prosocial, the desire to avoid embarrassment competes with the desire to win social approval.

According to prior literature, one reason that people help others is to create a desired social impression (Basil and Weber 2006; Karakashian et al 2006). This reason is especially more relevant in the case of an embarrassed person. Research has indicated that embarrassed people are more helpful, in an attempt to relieve the discomfort of embarrassment (Apsler 1975; Cann and Blackwelder 1984), by repairing their damaged public image (Miller 2011). This may be the reason that more embarrassable individuals also report greater prosociality, and behave more generously (Feinberg et al 2012).

Although experiencing embarrassment enhances helping behavior (Apsler 1975; Cann and Blackwelder 1984; Miller 2011), anticipating the emotion deters helping in non-emergency situations (Foss and Crenshaw 1978). In one study by Edelmann et al (1984), a female confederate "accidentally" dropped a package in a public setting. When the package was potentially embarrassing (a box of tampons), people were more reluctant to help her pick it up, compared to when the package was innocuous (a packet of tea). Embarrassment may even dissuades helping in emergency situations. Studies show that people may not help in emergency situations when others are present, out of embarrassment-avoidance. While they would help if they were alone (Latane and Darley 1970).

Spotlight condition is an extra notice that the consumer is being watched. Since a HPUBSC consumer is already aware of public eye and the possibility of getting embarrassed, spotlight condition does not increase their avoidance behavior. Yet, it informs them about the opportunity to impress others, by engaging in a prosocial behavior. Research has indicated that HPUBSC individuals may engage in prosocial behaviors with the purpose of impressing observers (Youn and Kim 2008).

Extant research suggested that a sense of being watched may enhance prosocial behavior. For example, showing the image of a pair of eyes increases consumers' intention to pay for their

drinks to an honesty box (Bateson et al 2006), or their intention to clear their litter in a university cafeteria (Ernest-Jones et al 2011). In a double blind dictator game, the dictator gives higher amount to the recipient, if they see the recipient's picture (Burnham 2003). Moreover, showing visual cues of the presence of other people elevates generosity in dictator game experiments (Haley and Fessler 2005).

Hence, when a HPUBSC consumer faces an opportunity to get engaged in a prosocial embarrassing behavior, spotlight condition does not give them extra notice about embarrassment threat. However, it gives them a hint about the opportunity to make a good impression. Therefore, when the embarrassing behavior is prosocial, a HPUBSC individual is less embarrassment-avoidant in the spotlight condition, compared to a non-spotlight condition.

LPUBSC individuals, however, are not attentive to their social image. The notice from a spotlight condition makes them aware of the risk of embarrassment, which reduces their engagement. While embarrassment-avoidance is a universal and basic need for both HPUBSC and LPUBSC consumers, winning social approval is not that essential for LPUBSC consumers. Hence, creating a positive impression by engaging in a prosocial activity does not convince a LPUBSC consumer to engage in an embarrassing behavior. Therefore, when the embarrassing behavior is prosocial, a LPUBSC individual is more embarrassment-avoidant in the spotlight condition, compared to a non-spotlight condition. Figure 1 shows the conceptual model illustrating our predictions.

This argument leads us to the second hypothesis:

> **H2:** *When the embarrassing behavior is prosocial, spotlight condition reduces embarrassment-avoidance among HPUBSC consumers, but increases embarrassment-avoidance among LPUBSC consumers.*

Experiment 1: Spotlight Effect, PUBSC, and Avoiding Proself Embarrassing Behaviors

Experiment 1 examines the effect of spotlight on the intentions to participate in a proself embarrassing behavior, designed to compare it for HPUBSC individuals with LPUBSC ones. It tests hypothesis 1 that when the embarrassing behavior is proself, spotlight condition increases embarrassment-avoidance only among LPUBSC consumers.

We measured embarrassment-avoidance by asking participants to examine one of the two versions of an ad for an embarrassing job opportunity. Spotlight condition was manipulated by including a "spotlight reminder" to one version of the ad. We measured public self-consciousness using the 7-item public self-consciousness (PUBSC) scale (Fenigstein et al 1975).

Method

Ninety college students at UCLA (mean age = 20.02, SD = 1.45; 26.7% female) participated in experiment 1 in exchange for $5. However, eighty-two participants answered all of the questions.

Participants first read one of the two versions of an embarrassing job ad. The ads explain an opportunity for undergraduate students to work as a research assistant. The research assistant (being paid $14 per hour) had to act as an experiment confederate, walking in the campus while a toilet paper stuck in their pants zipper. The purpose was to examine who and how many people would inform the confederate about the toilet paper.

One version of the ad included a "Spotlight Reminder", cautioning potential applicants that

people on campus would definitely notice them: "This is not a job for students who care about what other people think. It is a very public job and you will be noticed." This version of the ad said nothing about the likelihood that the observers would make unfavorable evaluations.

The second version which served as a Control condition included no such statements about the likelihood of being noticed by others while on the job.

After reading the ad appeal, participants answered two questions that rated their intentions to apply for the job, using 7-point scales ("Would you be interested in learning more about this particular confederate job?" "Would you like to apply for this confederate job?"; $r = 0.96$, $p < 0.0001$).

At the end of the survey session, participants completed 7-item public self-consciousness (PUBSC) scale, introduced by Fenigstein et al (1975).

Results

To examine the significance of the interaction effects, following Aiken and West's (1991) method, we first mean-centered the level of PUBSC scores (M = 3.72, SD = 0.51). We ran a multiple regression analysis to explore the effects of the centered level of PUBSC, ad type (control vs. spotlight reminder), and their interaction on participants' responses to the embarrassing job ads. This analysis found a main effect of PUBSC ($F(1, 81) = 8.42$, $p = 0.005$) which was qualified by the predicted two-way interaction effect of PUBSC and ad type on application intentions ($F(1, 81) = 4.85$, $p = 0.031$).

We then conducted a spotlight analysis using multiple regression analysis. Estimated means for application intentions are provided in Figure 2 (and in the text below). We used +1SD and –1SD to illustrate the nature of the interactions.

(Figure 2)

Consistent with H1, among HPUBSC participants (one SD above the mean), job application intentions were not significantly different in response to the two versions of the ad ($M_{Control}$ = 0.30 vs. $M_{Spotlight\ Reminder}$ = 1.02; $t(81)$ = 1.13, p = 0.26). These findings imply that HPUBSC people believe that others will notice their embarrassing blunders, with or without a spotlight reminder.

In contrast, among LPUBSC participants (one SD below the mean), application intentions were significantly higher in the control condition, than in the spotlight reminder condition ($M_{Control}$ = 3.21 vs. $M_{Spotlight\ Reminder}$ = 1.41; $t(81)$ = -2.81, $p < 0.01$).

Thus, the results of experiment 1 are supportive of H1. Specifically, spotlight condition increases LPUBSC consumers' avoidance of proself embarrassing behaviors. However, it does not affect HPUBSC consumers' avoidance of such behaviors.

Discussion

The results of experiment 1 support our hypothesis about individuals' avoidance of participating in proself embarrassing behaviors. As predicted, spotlight condition increased embarrassment-avoidant behavior only among low PUBSC individuals. High PUBSC individuals were less willing to participate in the proself embarrassing behavior, in either spotlight or non-spotlight conditions.

Experiment 2: Spotlight Effect, PUBSC, and Avoiding Prosocial Embarrassing Behaviors

Experiment 2 examines the effect of spotlight on the intentions to participate in a prosocial embarrassing behavior, designed to compare it for HPUBSC individuals with LPUBSC ones. It tests hypothesis 2 that, when the embarrassing behavior is prosocial, spotlight condition increases embarrassment-avoidance among low PUBSC consumers, but reduces it among high PUBSC consumers.

Embarrassment-avoidant behavior was measured by asking participants to examine one of two versions of a volunteer ad which offers a prosocial embarrassing activity. Spotlight condition was manipulated by changing the order of questions in one version of the ad. As in experiment 1, public self-consciousness was measured using public self-consciousness (PUBSC) scale (Fenigstein et al 1975).

Method

One hundred and seventy-six UCLA students (mean age = 20.10, SD = 1.58; 78.4% female) participated in Experiment 2 in exchange for $5.

All participants read an ad for an embarrassing prosocial job opportunity. The ad read:

"We are looking for volunteers to talk to researchers about how to improve communication lines between doctors and their patients about sensitive healthcare issues. For example, people who should get tested for HIV or need treatment for genital herpes frequently opt not to seek help from doctors, family members and friends. You will be asked several personal questions during the interview. The goal of this research is to identify ways to make it easier for people to talk more openly about such sensitive topics and thereby feel more comfortable seeking treatment. You will be paid $50 in exchange for your time and insights (approximately 1 hour)."

After participants examined the volunteer ad, they answered one of the two different versions

of the survey corresponding to the ad. The two versions of the survey asked same set of questions, but in different orders. Past research has shown that different ordering of the same set of questions can differently affect responses (Sudman et al 1996).

One version of the survey served as a "Control" condition. Participants in the Control condition were first asked about their intention to volunteer, on a 7-point scale (1 = not at all volunteer; 7 = definitely volunteer). Participants then indicated how they expected to feel during the interview (1 = Not at all, 7 = Very comfortable, nervous, embarrassed, confident, calm), and how they expected the researchers to react towards them as volunteers (1 = Not at all, 7 = Very positive, favorable, good).

A second version served as a "Spotlight" condition. Participants in the Spotlight condition were first asked to indicate how they expected researchers to react towards them as volunteers (positive, favorable, and good). By answering these questions, they were asked to picture themselves in the spotlight. Participants then indicated (in order) their intentions to volunteer, and how they expected to feel during the interview (comfort, nervous, embarrassment, confident, and calm).

At the end of the survey session, participants completed public self-consciousness scale (Fenigstein et al 1975).

Results

To examine the significance of the interaction effects, we again followed Aiken and West's (1991) method and mean-centered the level of PUBSC scores ($M = 3.80$, $SD = 0.52$). We conducted a multiple regression analysis to explore the effects of the centered level of PUBSC, spotlight condition (control vs. spotlight), and their interaction on participants' responses to the

embarrassing volunteering ad. This analysis did not find a two-way interaction effect of PUBSC and spotlight condition on application intentions (F(1, 175) = 2.48, p = 0.117).

Then, we conducted a spotlight analysis, using multiple regression analysis. Estimated means for volunteering intentions are provided in Figure 3 (and in the text below). We used +1SD and −1SD to illustrate the nature of the interactions.

Among HPUBSC participants (one SD above the mean), volunteering intentions in response to the control condition versus the spotlight condition were significantly different ($M_{Control}$ = 4.41 vs. $M_{Spotlight}$ = 5.99; t(175) = -2.19, p = 0.030). Application intentions were lower in the control condition, compared to the spotlight condition. These findings imply that HPUBSC people were more willing to volunteer for the embarrassing prosocial job in the spotlight condition, than in the control condition.

In contrast, among LPUBSC participants (one SD below the mean), volunteering intentions were significantly higher in the control condition than in the spotlight condition ($M_{Control}$ = 6.23 vs. $M_{Spotlight}$ = 4.63; t(175) = 2.88, p = 0.004).

Although the interaction term in the regression analysis was not significant, the results of the spotlight analysis showed a significant different between volunteering intentions in the spotlight and control conditions, for both HPUBSC and LPUBSC participants. Specifically, spotlight condition increases LPUBSC consumers' avoidance of prosocial embarrassing behaviors. However, it reduces HPUBSC consumers' avoidance of such behaviors.

Discussion

The results of experiment 2 to some extent support our hypothesis about the effect of spotlight on consumers' avoidance of prosocial embarrassing behaviors. As predicted, low public self-conscious individuals displayed lower volunteer intentions in the spotlight (vs. control) conditions, whereas high public self-conscious participants were more willing to volunteer when they were in the spotlight, compared to the control condition.

Future Experiment

We have examined how consumers' public self-consciousness moderates the effect of spotlight on their embarrassment-avoidance behavior. We hypothesized different moderating roles in the case of proself and prosocial embarrassing behaviors. Experiment 1 examined H1 in the context of an embarrassing job opportunity to work as a confederate in a research study. Experiment 2 examined H2 in the context of an embarrassing prosocial activity to interview with doctors about improving doctor-patient communications. Although both our hypotheses are supported in these experiments, it is still helpful to test both of them in one single context. This is to make sure that the different results of experiment 1 and experiment 2 are not because of the contexts we have chosen, but because of the proself/prosocial nature of the embarrassing behavior. Therefore, it is worthwhile to conduct a third experiment in which both spotlight/control as well as proself/prosocial nature of the embarrassing behavior is manipulated.

In the third experiment, we will ask participants to indicate their intention to participate in an embarrassing interview session. One group of the participants will read a version of the ad depicting the embarrassing interview as a proself behavior. The other group will read a version of the ad that, with some subtle adjustments, depicts the same embarrassing interview as a

prosocial behavior. Spotlight condition will be manipulate by adding one sentence to the end of the ad.

Method

Procedure. The experiment will be designed as ad type (proself embarrassing vs. prosocial embarrassing) by spotlight condition (spotlight vs. control). Participants will be randomly assigned to the four between-subjects conditions. Each participant will randomly read one of the four versions of an ad for an embarrassing interview opportunity.

Two versions of the ad will describe a proself embarrassing interview and the other two versions will describe a prosocial embarrassing interview. (In order to point out the difference of the two versions, we underline the parts which are different. In the actual experiment, however, these parts will not be underlined)

The proself embarrassing ad will read:

"Paid Participants Needed

We are looking for participants, who will be paid, to talk to interviewers about how doctors communicate with their patients about sensitive and embarrassing health issues. The *goal* of these interviews is to identify conditions under which people will talk more versus less openly about issues such as sexual history. You will personally benefit from your participation by gaining information about how to communicate more effectively about your health issues with your own doctors. In addition, you will be paid $15 for your time and insights (approximately 1 hour)."

The prosocial embarrassing ad will read:

"Volunteers Needed

We are looking for volunteers to talk to researchers about how to improve communication lines between doctors and patients about sensitive and embarrassing health issues. The *goal* of this non-commercial, academic research is to identify ways to make it easier for patients to talk more openly with their doctors about issues such as sexual history and thus feel more comfortable seeking treatment. Society will benefit from your volunteering by gaining information about how to communicate with doctors more effectively about health issues. To thank you for your help, you will be given $15 in exchange for your time and insights (approximately 1 hour)."

The spotlight condition will be manipulated by adding the following sentence to the end of two versions of the ad (one proself version and one prosocial version): "You will be observed during the interview by multiple staff members/medical students."

Dependent Variable. After reading the ad appeal, participants will complete two items assessing their intentions to participate in the interview, using 7-point scales ("Would you like to participate in this study?" and "Are you interested in learning more about this opportunity?").

To ensure that the proself/prosocial manipulation is accurately manipulated, participants will be asked to rate, on 7-point scales (1 = not at all; 7 = very much), the extent to which they would expect to feel "prosocial", "benefiting myself", and "benefiting others" during the interview.

As a manipulation check for spotlight condition, participants will be asked to indicate, on 7-point scales (1 = not at all; 7 = very much), the extent to which they would expect to feel "exposed" and "being watched" during the interview.

After the manipulation checks, we will ask participants to summarize what the interview is about in a few sentences, and explain their reason for participating/not participating in the interview. This is to make sure that participants pay attention to the ads.

At the end of the survey session, participants completed the 7-item public self-consciousness (PUBSC) scale, introduced by Fenigstein et al (1975). Participants will then provide demographic information, such as gender, age, ethnicity, education, and household income.

Expected Results

In the light of our theorizing, we expect to obtain the following results:

In the proself embarrassing ad, HPUBSC subjects should be equally interested to participate in the interview, either in the spotlight or in the control conditions. Whereas, LPUBSC subjects should have higher participation intentions in the control condition, compared to the spotlight condition.

In the prosocial embarrassing ad, however, the participation intention of HPUBSC subjects should be higher in the spotlight condition, compared to the control condition. Whereas, the participation intention of LPUBSC subjects should be lower in the spotlight condition, compared to the control condition.

General Discussion

It is important for marketers to understand which factors affect consumers' avoidance of embarrassing behaviors. Prior research has indicated that a sense of social presence may intensify purchase embarrassment (Dahl et al 2001). However, no studies, to date, have

examined how overestimating others' attention (spotlight condition) affects consumers' embarrassment-avoidant behavior. Prior literature has also shown that people with higher levels of public self-consciousness (PUBSC) were more likely to adopt products which aimed to prevent embarrassment (Lau-Gesk and Drolet 2008). However, it has been ignored that whether, and how, this dispositional characteristic can moderate the effect of spotlight on embarrassment-avoidant behavior, as well as whether, and how, this effect is contingent on the type of embarrassing behavior (proself vs. prosocial).

Two experiments provide support for our hypotheses that consumers' public self-consciousness moderates the impact of spotlight on embarrassment-avoidant behavior, and this effect is different for proself and prosocial embarrassing behaviors. In the case of a proself embarrassing job ad (experiment 1), putting a "spotlight reminder" in the ad reduced LPUBSC participants' intention to apply for the job, while it did not change HPUBSC participants' application intentions. In the case of a prosocial embarrassing volunteering ad (experiment 2), however, asking participants to picture themselves in the spotlight reduced LPUBSC participants' intention to volunteer, while it increased HPUBSC participants' volunteering intentions.

Hence, consistent with our theory, when the embarrassing behavior is proself, a spotlight condition enhances embarrassment-avoidance, only among LPUBSC consumers. Whereas, when the embarrassing behavior is prosocial, a spotlight condition alleviates embarrassment-avoidance among HPUBSC consumers, but has a reverse effect on LPUBSC consumers.

Theoretical Implications

This research adds to the literature on embarrassment and embarrassment-avoidance, by exploring some antecedents and moderators of the behavior. Departing from prior research

regarding the role of PUBSC on consumers' embarrassment-avoidance (Lau-Gesk and Drolet 2008), we offer a comprehensive investigation of the associations among spotlight, PUBSC, and the type of the embarrassing behavior (proself versus prosocial).

In addition, we contribute to the prior literature on spotlight effect. This research examines spotlight effect, more in-depth, along with another variable, PUBSC, as a key factor in avoiding embarrassing behaviors.

Furthermore, our research highlighted the role of embarrassing behavior's nature, in terms of being proself versus prosocial. As Experiment 1 established, low PUBSC consumers are more likely to avoid the proself embarrassing behavior, once they believe others will notice their embarrassing behavior (they are in the spotlight). High PUBSC consumers, however, are equally avoidant of the proself embarrassing behaviors, either in a spotlight or a control condition. Experiment 2 examined prosocial embarrassing behaviors. Results suggest that low PUBSC consumers who are reminded about others' notice (spotlight condition), are more likely to avoid the prosocial embarrassing behavior. Whereas consumers with higher PUBSC levels are less likely to avoid the prosocial embarrassing behavior, once they are reminded about others' notice.

Directions for Future Research

A number of unanswered questions remain for future research. We studied the effect of believing that others will notice the embarrassing behavior (spotlight condition) on consumers' embarrassment-avoidant behavior. However, we did not distinguish between those "others" who are observing the behavior. Prior research has indicated that people are less likely to feel embarrassed when loved ones observe their blunders, because they are more confident about

their unceasing respect (Tangney et al 1996). On the other hand, Wu and Mattila (2013) found that a restaurant customer feels more intense embarrassment as a result of his/her mishaps, if s/he is familiar with fellow customers. Moreover, Bailey and Waronska (2015) suggested that familiarity with store's social environment increases the likelihood that customers withdraw from purchasing stigmatized products. Hence, familiarity with others who are observing the behavior can affect the intensity of embarrassment and, subsequently, the embarrassment-avoidant behavior. Future research could explore whether or not the moderating role of familiarity is contingent on customer's level of PUBSC.

The present research investigates the moderating role of consumers' public self-consciousness in the effect of spotlight on proself/prosocial embarrassment-avoidant behavior. However, the mechanism underlying these relationships is still unexplored. Future consumer research could address this gap.

Beyond this, future research could explore strategies to counteract spotlight effect and alleviate embarrassment-avoidant behavior. Prior literature has indicated that observers tend to make kinder judgments than the actor expects (Savitsky et al 2001). However, people usually underestimate the observer's empathy, a tendency called empathy-neglect (Epley et al 2002). Future research could examine whether and how prompting consumers to consider the observers' empathy could alleviate embarrassment-avoidant behavior. In addition, taking observers' perspective may help consumers correct for empathy-neglect, and hence, reduce embarrassment-avoidance.

Practical Implications

Our findings have noteworthy implication for marketers as embarrassment-avoidance is the base of many consumer behaviors. Based on our results, marketers can customize embarrassment-avoidance appeals to encourage or discourage consumers' embarrassment-avoidant behavior.

Marketers of anti-embarrassment products (such as gas prevention products) may benefit from promoting embarrassment-avoidance among consumers. Marketers of other products may also use embarrassment-avoidance appeals in order to motivate consumers to buy their products (such as highlighting the embarrassment of unpleasant spots on cloths in a laundry detergent advertisement). In these cases, given that HPUBSC consumers instinctively presume the spotlight is on them, highlighting the likelihood of being observed (spotlight condition) can be an effective way to stimulate embarrassment-avoidance among consumers.

In an opposite direction, marketers may counteract embarrassment-avoidance when it comes to those embarrassing behaviors which benefit the consumers (such as buying condoms or seeking psychological help) or other people (such as collecting donations in person). In these cases, the aim is to encourage consumers to engage in behaviors that they find embarrassing.

Based on our results, if the embarrassing behavior is proself, covering up others' attention may encourage LPUBSC consumers to engage in the embarrassing behavior, while it may not affect HPUBSC consumers' behavior. Therefore, it can be an effective strategy to make sure that consumers do not pay extra attention to the others who witness their behavior.

However, if the embarrassing behavior is prosocial, covering up the presence of audience (spotlight) may encourage LPUBSC consumers to engage in the embarrassing behavior, while it discourages HPUBSC consumers.

In general, our research reveals the complexity of developing strategies to avert embarrassment-avoidant behavior, as HPUBSC and LPUBSC consumer may show opposite reactions to these persuasion campaigns.

Conclusion

Avoiding embarrassing behaviors quite prevails in consumer behavior. Prior research has suggested that a spotlight condition (believing that others are observing the embarrassing behavior) can intensify embarrassment (Dahl et al 2001). However, it did not explain how this condition impacts embarrassment-avoidance, and how this impact is contingent on individual difference in public self-consciousness as well as the proself/prosocial nature of the behavior. The present research suggests that when the embarrassing behavior is proself, a spotlight condition may increase embarrassment-avoidance only among LPUBSC consumers. Nevertheless, when the embarrassing behavior is prosocial, a spotlight condition may increase embarrassment-avoidant behavior among LPUBSC consumers, but it may have an opposite effect on HPUBSC consumers.

**Fig. 1.** Conceptual model illustrating hypothesis 1 and hypothesis 2
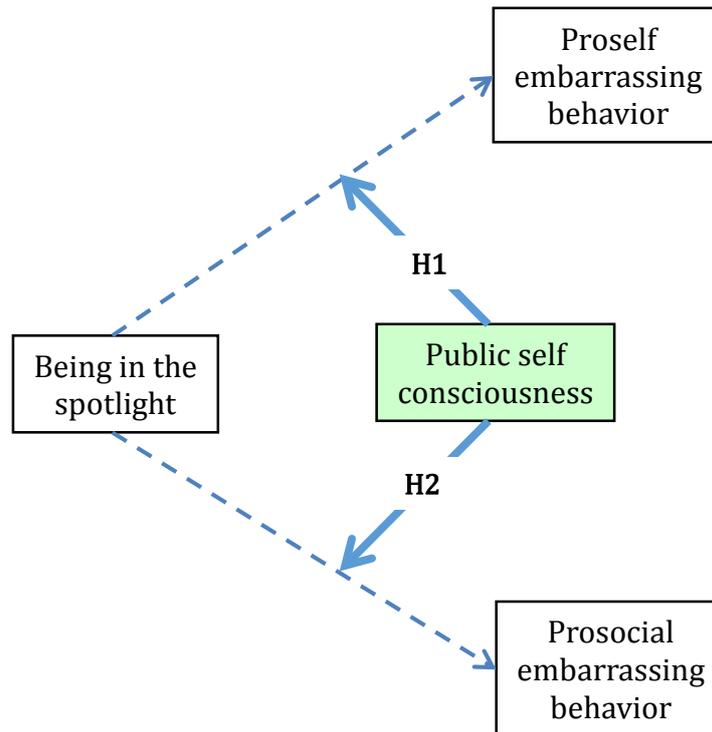
**Fig. 2.** Estimated means for job application intentions in experiment 1
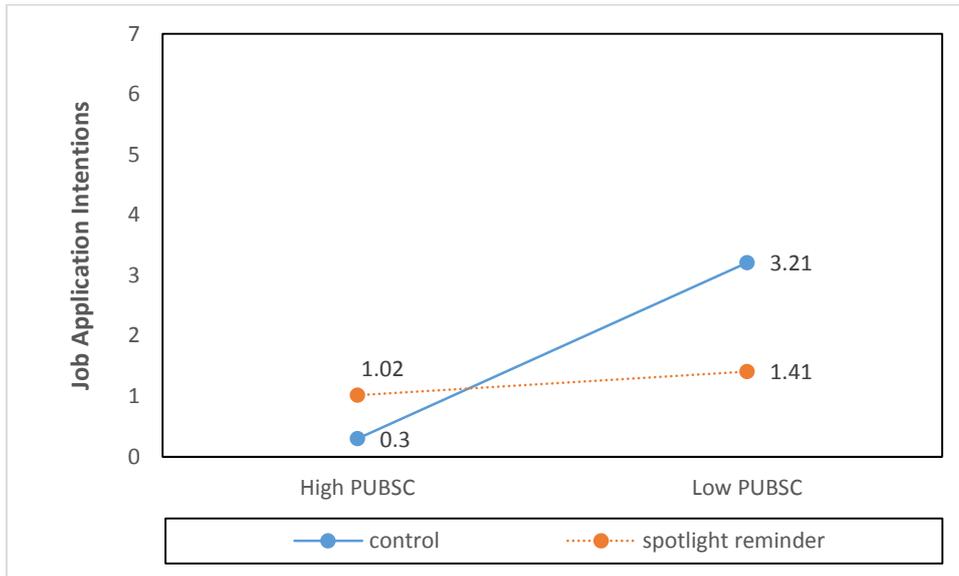
Fig. 3. Estimated means for volunteering intentions in experiment 2
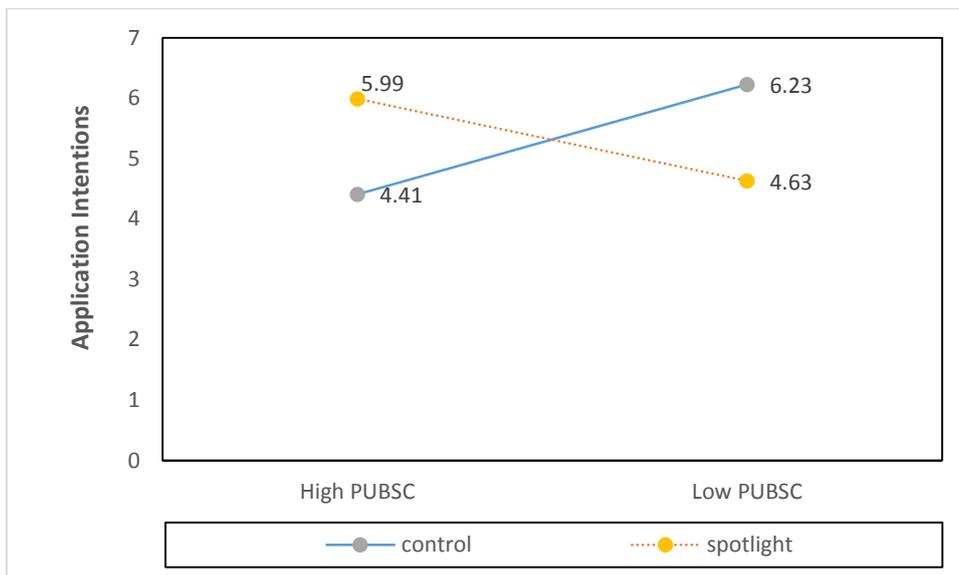
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