

# Is Pride a Barometer of Success?

## Informational Influence of Authentic Pride on Achievement

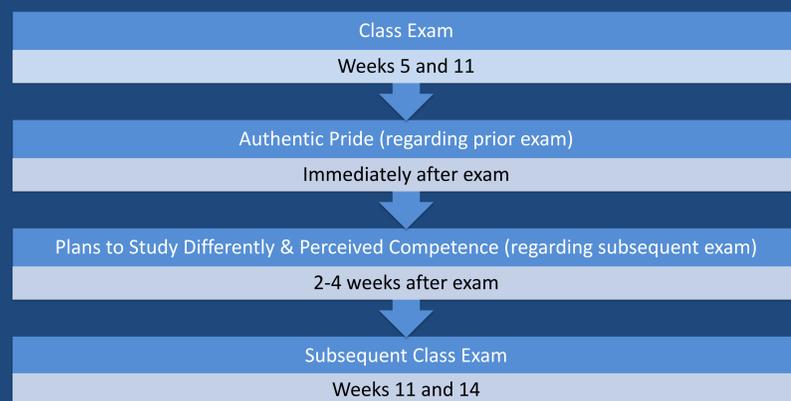
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### Does Pride Function to Promote Achievement?

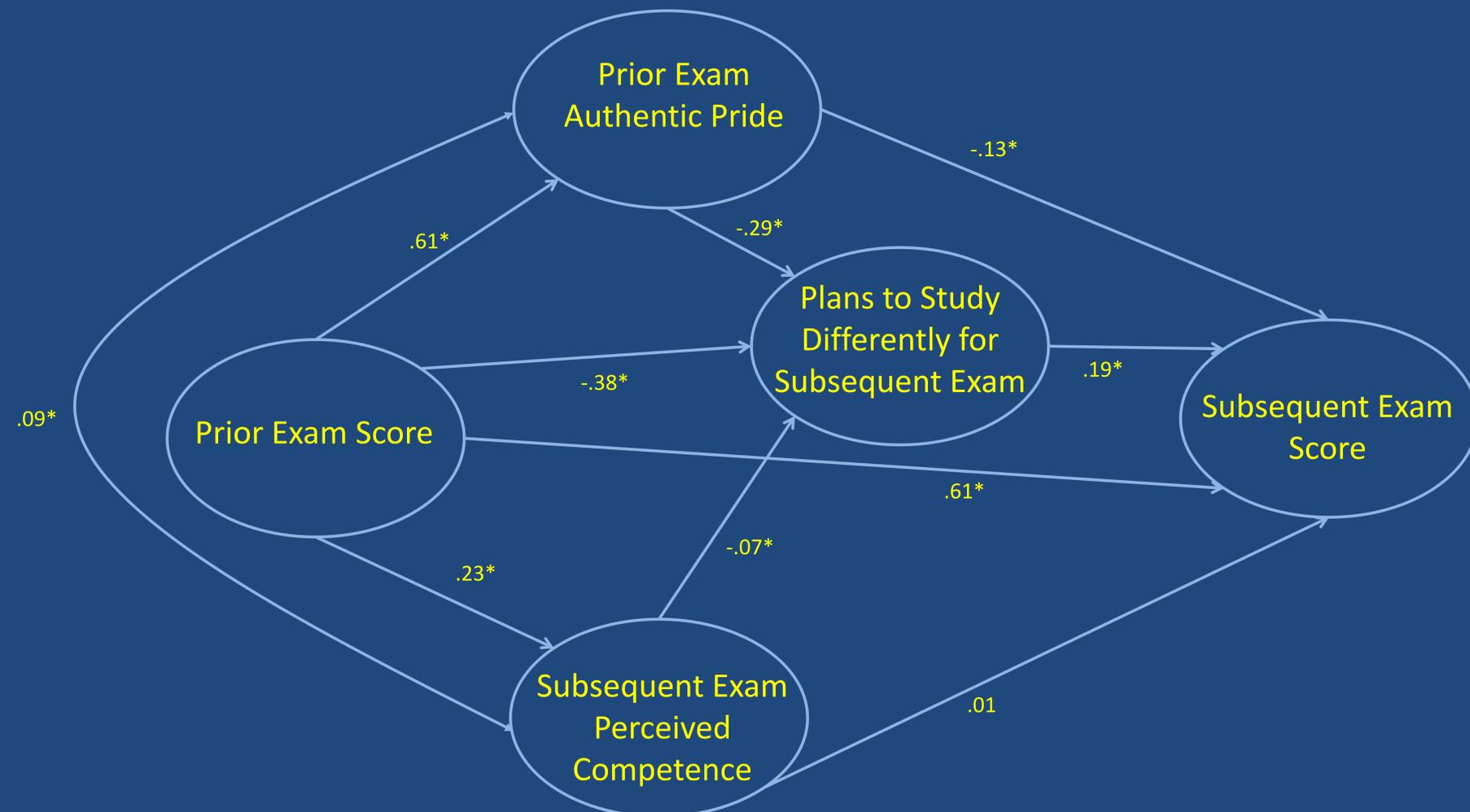
- Authentic pride (i.e., feeling accomplished, confident, and fulfilled) may function to promote achievement (Pekrun, Elliot, & Maier, 2009; Tracy & Robins, 2007; Williams & DeSteno, 2008)
- How does this work?
  - According to the Affect-as-Information (or barometer) account (Leary et al., 1995; Schwarz & Clore, 1983), pride may inform individuals of their current level of success, and thereby facilitate engagement in behaviors oriented toward future success
  - Knowing one's current success level allows individuals to: a) pursue similar behaviors to maintain success, or b) pursue different behaviors to adjust for failure
  - The present research tested this novel informational account by examining whether authentic pride experienced in response to a class exam: a) informs individuals about their performance on the exam, b) influences study habits for the subsequent exam, and c) consequently influences future exam performance
  - We also tested whether authentic pride influences achievement outcomes independently of self-efficacy (Bandura, 1977; Multon et al., 1991)
    - We predicted that *low* authentic pride, but *high* self-efficacy, would promote improved performance following failure
- This is the first research to test:
  - Whether authentic pride influences performance on a concrete achievement outcome (i.e., exam grades)
  - Whether *low* authentic pride promotes increased performance, by virtue of motivating behavioral change

### Method: Studies 1, 2, and 3



- Participants: 1,070 undergraduates enrolled in an introductory psychology course
- Study 1:  $n = 330$  (62% women); Study 2:  $n = 400$  (65% women); Study 3:  $n = 340$  (63% women)
- Procedure: Participants reported their feelings of authentic pride regarding an exam, immediately following two different class exams. Then, 2-4 weeks later, they reported their intention to study differently for the next exam, and their feelings of perceived competence for that exam
- Measures
  - Exam Performance: Participants' scores on 3 class exams
  - Authentic and Hubristic Pride: 14-item Authentic and Hubristic Pride Scale ( $\alpha = .89$  to  $.96$ ; Tracy & Robins, 2007)
  - Plans to Study Differently
    - Average of two items ( $\alpha = .91$  to  $.97$ ; 1 = not at all true of me; 7 = very true of me)
      - "My preparation for exam 2 will be different than my preparation for exam 1."
      - "I plan to study for exam 2 differently than I studied for exam 1."
  - Change in Study Behaviors
    - Participants reported hours per day studied for exam 1 and 2
    - We regressed exam 2 hours on exam 1 hours, and saved the unstandardized residuals, to compute a measure of behavioral change
  - Perceived Competence
    - Average of two items ( $\alpha = .85$  to  $.91$ ; 1 = not at all true of me; 7 = extremely true of me)
      - "I expect to do well on the exam"
      - "I believe I will get an excellent grade on the exam"

### Results for Students Who Performed Poorly on a Prior Exam



- The figure presents results for students who performed one *SD* below the mean on their prior exam
  - A significant interaction between prior exam score and study plans,  $\beta = -.08$ ,  $p < .001$ , indicated that study plans predicted future exam score more strongly for low-performing than high-performing students
- Low authentic pride, experienced in response to poor exam performance, informed individuals that they had done poorly, and needed to adjust their future studying behaviors
  - In contrast, high authentic pride informed individuals that they had performed well, and should maintain consistent studying behaviors
- Pride-motivated change in studying behaviors promoted improved future exam performance
  - Similar effects emerged for change in number of hours studying
  - Exam score did not as strongly predict hubristic pride ( $\beta = .14$ ,  $p < .001$ ), and hubristic pride did not as strongly predict plans to study differently ( $\beta = -.08$ ,  $p < .001$ ).
- In contrast, high perceived competence—compared to low authentic pride—promoted adaptive change in studying behaviors

• Note: Total  $N = 1070$ . Parameter estimates are standardized for ease of interpretation. \* $p < .001$

• Parameter estimates were derived using fixed-effects meta-analysis across Studies 1, 2, and 3.

### Conclusions

- Authentic pride is a functional barometer, which individuals use to gauge their current level of achievement
- These findings provide the first evidence that pride promotes concrete achievement outcomes (i.e., exam grades), by informing individuals that they need to adjust their studying behavior, in response to a poor performance

### References

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