

Is Pride a Barometer of Success?

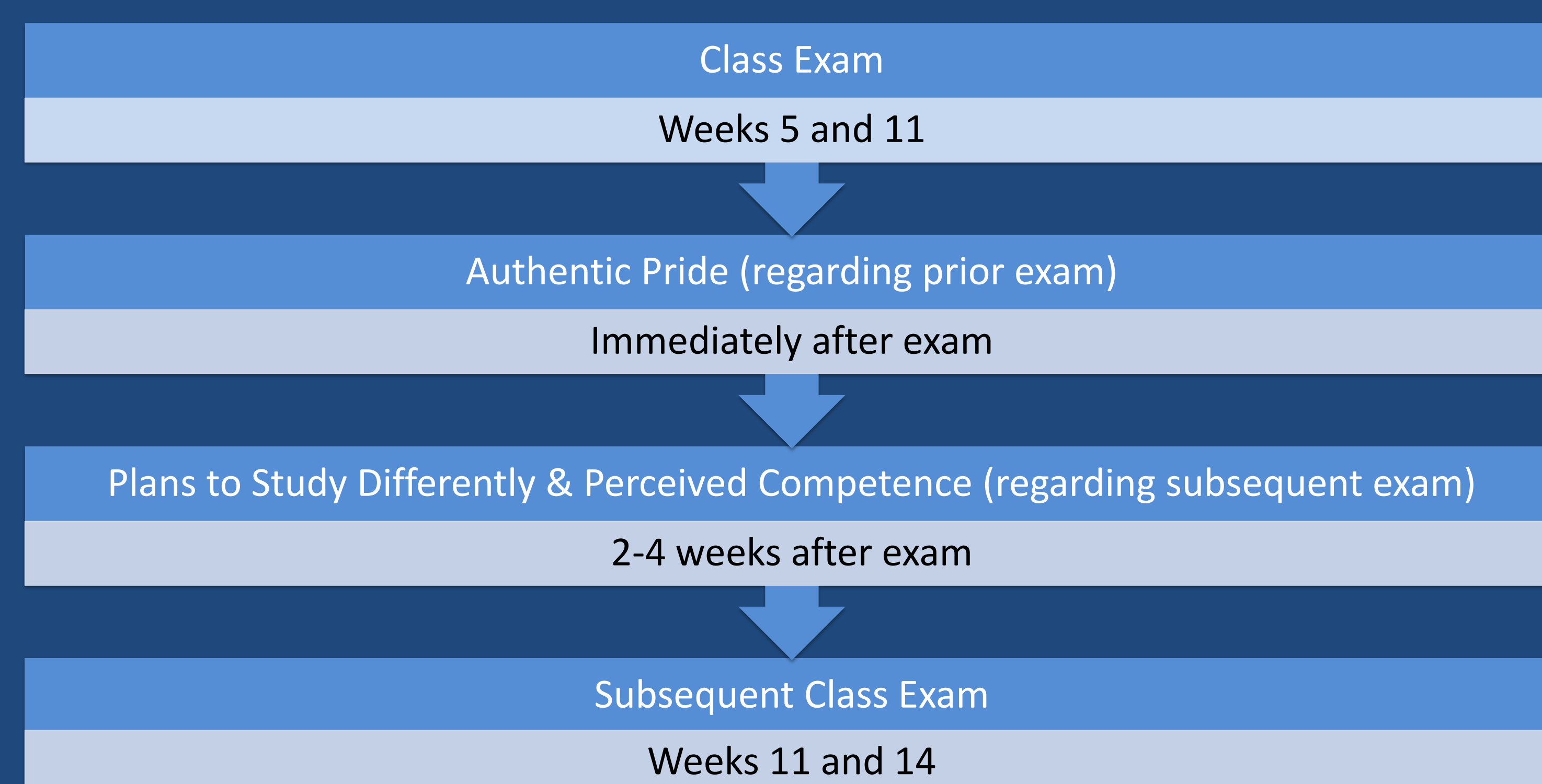
Informational Influence of Authentic Pride on Achievement

Aaron C. Weidman¹, Jessica L. Tracy¹, and Andrew J. Elliot² ¹University of British Columbia; ²University of Rochester

Does Pride Function to Promote Achievement?

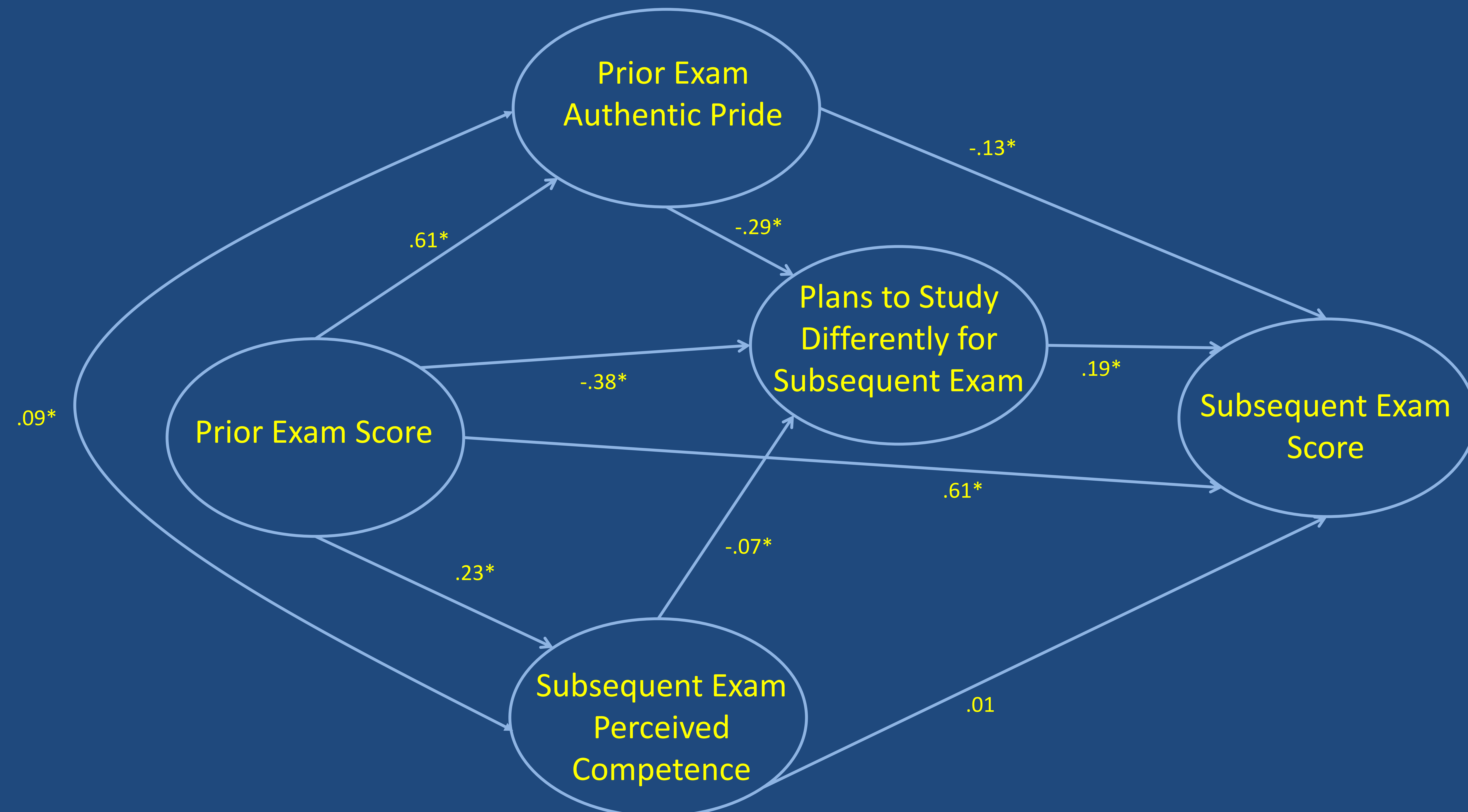
- Authentic pride (i.e., feeling accomplished, confident, and fulfilled) may function to promote achievement (Pekrun, Elliot, & Maier, 2009; Tracy & Robins, 2007; Williams & DeSteno, 2008)
- How does this work?
 - According to the Affect-as-Information (or barometer) account (Leary et al., 1995; Schwarz & 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

- Bandura, A. (1977). Self-efficacy: Toward a unifying theory of behavioral change. *Psychological Review*, 84, 191-215.
- Leary, M. R., Tambor, E. S., Terdal, S. K., & Downs, D. L. (1995). Self-esteem as an interpersonal monitor: The sociometer hypothesis. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 68, 518-530.
- Multon, K. D., Brown, S. D., & Lent, R. W. (1991). Relation of self-efficacy beliefs to academic outcomes: A meta-analytic investigation. *Journal of Counseling Psychology*, 38, 30-38.
- Pekrun, R., Elliot, A. J., & Maier, M. A. (2009). Achievement goals and achievement emotions: Testing a model of their joint relations with academic performance. *Journal of Educational Psychology*, 101, 115-135.
- Schwarz, N., & Clore, G. L. (1983). Mood, misattribution, and judgments of well-being: Informative and directive functions of affective states. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 45, 513-523.
- Tracy, J. L., & Robins, R. W. (2007). The psychological structure of pride: A tale of two facets. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 92, 506-525.
- Tracy, J. L., Weidman, A. C., Cheng, J. T., & Martens, J. P. (2013). Pride: The fundamental emotion of success, power, and status. In M. Tugade, M. Shiota, & L. Kirby (Eds.), *Handbook of positive emotions*. New York, NY: Guilford Press.
- Williams, L. A., & DeSteno, D. (2008). Pride and perseverance: The motivational role of pride. *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology*, 94, 1007-1017.