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Tell me who you are and I tell you how you feel: Expected emotional reactions to success and failure are influenced by knowledge about a person's personality

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Tell me who you are and I tell you how you feel: Expected emotional reactions to success and failure are influenced by knowledge about a person's personality

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The present research investigated the influence of knowledge about a person's modesty or arrogance on people's expectations regarding that person's emotional reactions to success and failure. Arrogance and modesty reflect the extent to which someone is likely to publicize their ability. Accordingly, we predicted that observers' expectations regarding a person's tendency to publicize their ability should inform expectations about the person's emotional reactions to success and failure. In two vignette studies, observers predicted the emotional state of a protagonist, as well as the probability that s/he will actually express that emotion and share the experience with others. For success, participants predicted a protagonist's pride, happiness, *schadenfreude*, and embarrassment if praised for a positive outcome. For failure, participants predicted anger, shame, guilt, sadness, and fear reactions. Across studies, personality information explained more variance than did gender or status. Results showed that the expectations for an arrogant person matched modal expectations for success, whereas for failure the expectations for the modest individual were closest to the modal expectations. Specifically, both modest and arrogant individuals were expected to suppress emotions that do not fit their self-presentational styles rather than to exaggerate expressions that do. This paper adds to our understanding of the information that people use to predict others' emotional reactions.

Keywords: Arrogance; Modesty; Emotions; Social perception.

La présente recherche étudie l'influence de la connaissance à propos de la modestie ou de l'arrogance d'une personne sur les attentes de quelqu'un à l'égard des réactions émotives de cette personne devant la réussite ou l'échec. L'arrogance et la modestie indiquent jusqu'à quel point une personne est susceptible de faire étalage de ses capacités. Par conséquent, nous avons donc prédit que les attentes d'un observateur à propos de la tendance d'une personne de faire étalage de ses capacités devraient influencer les attentes à propos des réactions émotionnelles à l'égard de la réussite et de l'échec. Dans deux études à l'aide de vignettes, des observateurs devaient prédire l'état émotif d'une personne de même que la probabilité qu'elle exprime effectivement cette émotion et la fasse connaître des autres. Pour la réussite, les participants prédisaient la fierté, le bonheur, le *schadenfreude* (joie provoquée par le malheur d'autrui) et l'embarras de la personne lorsque louée à la suite d'un résultat positif. Pour l'échec, les participants prédisaient la colère, la honte, la culpabilité, la tristesse et les réactions de peur. Dans les deux études, l'information sur la personnalité rend compte d'une plus grande partie de la variance que le sexe ou le statut. Les résultats ont montré que les attentes à l'égard d'une personne arrogante se conforment aux attentes modales pour la réussite, alors que pour l'échec, les attentes à l'égard de l'individu modeste se rapprochent plus des attentes modales. Plus précisément, on s'attendait à ce qu'autant les individus modestes qu'arrogants répriment les émotions qui ne concordaient pas avec leur style de présentation de soi plutôt que de renforcer celles qui concordaient. Cet article ajoute à notre compréhension de l'information que les personnes utilisent pour prédire les émotions des autres.

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En el presente estudio se investigó cómo influye el conocimiento que tenemos de la modestia o arrogancia de una persona en las expectativas que tenemos respecto de su reacción ante el éxito o fracaso. La arrogancia y la modestia reflejan el alcance de la publicidad que puede dar una persona sobre sus capacidades. Por consiguiente, se predijo que las expectativas del sujeto observador respecto de la tendencia del otro a publicitar sus capacidades deberían influir sobre las expectativas de las reacciones emocionales ante el éxito y fracaso. En dos estudios viñeta los sujetos observadores predijeron el estado emocional del protagonista, como también la probabilidad de que expresara aquella emoción y compartiese la experiencia con otros. En el caso del éxito, los sujetos predijeron que el protagonista sentiría orgullo, felicidad, *schadenfreude* y vergüenza si se lo alababa por un buen desempeño. En el caso del fracaso, los sujetos predijeron reacciones de enojo, vergüenza, culpa, tristeza y temor. En ambos estudios, la varianza fue explicada más por la información sobre la personalidad que por el género o el estatus social. Los resultados mostraron que las expectativas respecto de una persona arrogante concuerdan con las reacciones esperadas en el éxito, mientras que ante el fracaso, las expectativas se acercaron más a las personas con reacciones modestas. Específicamente, se esperó que tanto los sujetos modestos como arrogantes ocultaran las emociones que no concuerdan con su estilo autorepresentativo en lugar de exagerar las expresiones emocionales que sí lo hacen. Este trabajo ayuda a comprender la información que utilizan las personas para predecir las reacciones emocionales de los demás.

It is difficult to imagine a social exchange that is bereft of emotions. Emotions play an integral part in human interactions and a vast body of research has been accumulated on the communication of emotions. However, one aspect that has been relatively neglected is people's naïve theories about the emotions of others. These theories play an important part in how we enter and conduct an interaction as they tell us what to expect from others.

For example, in a work setting, it may be reassuring for an employee to have an idea what reaction to expect from her boss in response to her performance, as this can help her to adjust her behavior accordingly. Such predictions can be based on a person's direct knowledge of the interaction partner and/or the social situation in which the interaction is about to take place (see, e.g., Hess, Adams, & Kleck, 2004; Tiedens, Ellsworth, & Mesquita, 2000). But such expectations are not only useful to adjust one's behavior in an upcoming interaction; they also can affect the identification of the actual emotional reaction of the interaction partner in the situation (Adolphs, 2002; Atkinson, 2007; Kirouac & Hess, 1999).

Specifically, emotion judgments can be made with the help of two very different strategies (see Kirouac & Hess, 1999, for a discussion of this issue). First, the sender's expressions can be used to draw inferences regarding his or her presumed emotional state using a pattern-matching approach (Buck, 1984). The second strategy, which is also the one used to predict a future response, depends on the knowledge that the perceiver possesses regarding both the sender and the social situation in which the interaction is

taking place. This information permits the perceiver to take the perspective of the encoder and helps him or her to infer the emotional state that the sender is most likely experiencing or will experience. This information is especially relevant when we encounter the more subdued and ambiguous emotion expressions often shown in everyday life (Motley & Camden, 1988).

Naïve theories explain in which situations people experience what emotion, but they also contain expectations about which type of person should experience what emotion; that is, on the influence of a person's stable personality characteristics. For example, we expect extraverted individuals to show more positive affect. In this vein, Hess et al. (2004) found that people who, based on their facial appearance, were perceived as more affiliative were also expected to feel and express more happiness, whereas those perceived as dominant were expected to feel and express more anger.

Another possible predictor of emotional reactions that has been studied quite extensively is social status (e.g., Halberstadt & Saitta, 1987; Hess, et al., 2004; Hess, Adams, & Kleck, 2005; Keating, et al., 1981; Keltner, Gruenfeld, & Anderson, 2003). Among other things, it has been shown that people of higher status are expected to feel more anger when failing and more pride when succeeding. By contrast, people of lower status were expected to feel more sadness when failing and more gratitude when succeeding (Tiedens et al., 2000). These findings can be explained by a generalized expectation that status is diagnostic of ability. That is, observers attribute higher ability to those of higher status and assume that they

perceive failure as caused by extrinsic factors and thus as potentially redressable, and consequently feel anger. Conversely, observers conclude that a lower status person (who is expected to have less ability) will perceive failure as irreversible and thus react with sadness. Likewise, success by a low-status person is seen as caused by an external factor and hence leads to gratitude, whereas the high-status person would attribute the success to themselves and feel pride. Thus, factors that are diagnostic of a person's ability inform observers about how the person will respond emotionally to a given achievement (Tiedens et al., 2000). However, expectations about a person's emotional reaction in a given situation should also be informed by whether the person tends to advertise their ability.

In fact, people vary considerably in the degree to which they advertise success and stand up to failure. The personality characteristics that describe this tendency are arrogance and modesty. People who tend to communicate to others that they have high ability, that they are better than others, or that they succeeded are perceived as arrogant, whereas individuals who tend to hide or downplay their desirable qualities (e.g., ability) or achievements are considered to be modest (Hareli & Weiner, 2000; Hareli, Weiner, & Yee, 2006).

Information about the extent to which a person is arrogant or modest should therefore tell us how he or she will react emotionally to success and failure. For example, it has been speculated that arrogant individuals should be more likely to show pride (Lazarus, 1991; Tavis, 1985), whereas modest individuals should be more likely to show shame, guilt, embarrassment, and fear (Elias, 1978, cited in Scheff, 2003).

The present research had the goal of testing the notion that knowledge about a person's arrogance or modesty will influence observers' predictions about that person's likely emotional reactions to success or failure. In addition, we assessed to what degree these emotions would be expected to be shown as well as felt and whether individuals would also be expected to verbally share them with others. Specifically, the social motives inherent in arrogance and modesty should be most relevant to the verbal and nonverbal *expression* of emotions rather than the actual experience (e.g., Zammuner, 1996). Thus, as implied by the core relational theme for pride and happiness (Lazarus, 1991), both modest and arrogant individuals should be happy when they succeed and feel pride. However, an arrogant person, who—unlike a modest person—is motivated to publicize success, should

express these emotions overtly, whereas the modest person should not. We therefore predicted that both modest and arrogant persons would be expected to feel pride when succeeding, but that an arrogant person would be expected to also nonverbally show this pride and verbally share this experience to a larger degree than the modest person. Conversely, in the case of failure, an arrogant person should be expected to show and verbally share negative emotional reactions to a lesser degree in order not to advertise the failure.

Prior research has emphasized the importance of gender and social status for expectations regarding emotional reactions to success and failure. In the present study both gender and status of the protagonist were therefore varied as well. In line with Tiedens et al. (2000) we expected that high-status individuals would be perceived as more likely to announce their success and hide their failure. Gender is expected to interact with modesty and arrogance information because modesty is considered to be more typical for women than for men (Wosinska, Dabul, Whetstone-Dion, & Cialdini, 1996).

Two vignette studies were conducted, one involving a success event and the other a failure event. Both success and failure were described in ways that allowed some doubt as to the real contribution of the individual to the outcome. Thus, the success was described as accidental—but still the fruit of the individual's work—and the failure as negligence, allowing for the presence of mitigating factors. This was done to allow for a greater impact of personality characteristics on the expected reactions, because a clear causal accountability should create a "strong" situation with clear behavioral norms which should then be the main determinants of the expected emotional reactions (Mischel, 1977). Only when the cause is slightly ambiguous can the protagonist be expected to use self-presentational strategies to their full extent.

Vignettes have been criticized because they represent a reality that is different from the more stimulus-rich and interactive environment of actual emotional interactions (see Parkinson & Manstead, 1993, for a discussion of this issue). Yet vignettes are an excellent tool to assess the symbolic knowledge about emotion theories and rules that people apply when judging social interactions and forming expectations about the likely reactions of others (Hareli & Hess, 2008, 2010; Hareli, Shomrat, & Biger, 2005; Robinson & Clore, 2002) and in the

present context we are precisely interested in these “naïve” theories.

STUDY 1

The main goal of Study 1 was to assess the extent to which information about a person’s personality characteristics (i.e., arrogance or modesty) affects observers’ expectations regarding the emotions that men and women of different social status are likely to experience, nonverbally express, and verbally share with others in reaction to success at a task. A condition in which no personality information was provided and an equal-status condition were included as controls. Based on the considerations outlined above, we made the following predictions. First, we assumed that observers will expect an arrogant person—relative to a modest person or one for whom no personality information was provided—to feel, and in particular nonverbally express and verbally share, emotions that signal the success to a larger extent. In particular, we predicted higher levels of expressed and shared pride (Lazarus, 1991) for arrogant achievers. However, a person who succeeds may feel triumphant not only over their own success but also about the implied fact that competing others did not succeed in this task (Ben Ze’ev, 1993; Brigham, Kelso, Jackson, & Smith, 1997). We therefore also predicted that an arrogant person, who by definition should care about succeeding where others do not, would be expected to feel—if not necessarily to express and share—*schadenfreude* as well. Conversely, we predicted that observers would expect a modest person to experience, show, and share higher levels of emotions that signal reluctance to make the achievement apparent, such as embarrassment. This expectation is based on the notion that embarrassment is a reaction to an undesirable exposure of the self (Miller, 1992). Expectations concerning how happy or proud the achiever should *feel* about the achievement—that is, the extent to which the achiever is pleased with the achievement—should not vary as a function of personality information. Further, as in prior research, higher status and being male were predicted to lead to higher expectations of pride than low status and being female.

¹ Most undergraduate students in Israel serve in the army prior to their university studies and some still work during their studies. Accordingly, most students have work experience within a highly hierarchical organization. This also means that most students start university not earlier than the age of 20, most much later after excursions and some years in the workforce.

Method

Participants

A total of 291 (140 women, 147 men, and 4 gender unknown; mean age, $M=25$ years; $SD=4.2$; mean number of years of work experience, $M=5.4$; $SD=3.9$)¹ undergraduate and graduate students were recruited at the University of Haifa and the Emek Yezreel Academic College. They participated voluntarily during lecture time.

Materials and procedure

Each participant was asked to read and envision one of 18 different scenarios. Each scenario started with “You are the manager of an R&D department of a big pharmaceutical firm,” and described a situation where a colleague (Moshe in the case of a man and Sara in the case of a woman) accidentally made a major discovery that has good prospects of bringing about a revolution in the way Alzheimer’s disease is treated. Following this information, one sentence described the colleague as an employee under the participant’s supervision, a parallel-level manager, or a manager in charge of the participant. A second sentence mentioned that the colleague was known as either an arrogant or a modest person. In an additional condition no information concerning the colleagues’ character was provided. This resulted in a 3 (personality: arrogant vs. modest vs. no information) \times 2 (protagonist gender: male vs. female) \times 3 (social status: low vs. equal vs. high) between-subjects factorial design. The protocol was approved by the ethics committees of the respective institutions.

Dependent measures

After reading the scenario, participants were asked to rate the likelihood that the colleague would experience, express, and share with others feelings of pride, happiness, *schadenfreude*, or embarrassment if praised for the discovery. Ratings were made on seven-point scales anchored with 0 (“not at all”) and 6 (“very much”).

Results and discussion

A 3 (personality) \times 2 (gender of protagonist) \times 3 (status) \times 3 (modality: feel, express, share) \times 4

(emotion: pride, happiness, *schadenfreude*, embarrassment) analysis of variance was conducted with personality, gender, and status as between-subjects factors and modality and emotion as within-subjects factors. All analyses were conducted with an alpha of .05. A significant main effect of emotion, $F(3, 266) = 198.68$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .69$, emerged. Post-hoc tests revealed overall that participants expected the protagonist to feel, express, and share significantly more happiness ($M = 4.67$; $SD = 1.12$) than pride ($M = 4.53$; $SD = 1.14$) as well as less *schadenfreude* ($M = 3.04$; $SD = 1.59$) and less embarrassment ($M = 2.47$; $SD = 1.48$). A main effect of protagonist gender, $F(1, 268) = 4.54$, $p = .034$, $\eta_p^2 = .02$, was qualified by an emotion \times protagonist gender interaction, $F(3, 266) = 2.73$, $p = .044$, $\eta_p^2 = .03$. Simple effects analyses revealed that women were expected to react with significantly more embarrassment ($M = 2.74$; $SD = 1.51$) than men ($M = 2.25$; $SD = 1.42$) but not with more *schadenfreude* ($M = 3.17$; $SD = 1.62$ vs. $M = 2.93$; $SD = 1.57$), pride ($M = 4.42$; $SD = 1.17$ vs. $M = 4.64$; $SD = 1.10$) or happiness ($M = 4.67$; $SD = 1.12$ vs. $M = 4.66$; $SD = 1.11$).

Main effects of personality, $F(2, 268) = 21.86$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .14$, and modality, $F(2, 267) = 92.14$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .41$, as well as an emotion \times personality interaction, $F(6, 534) = 16.74$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .16$, a modality \times personality interaction, $F(4, 536) = 14.45$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .10$, and an emotion \times modality interaction, $F(6, 263) = 14.67$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .25$, were qualified by an emotion \times modality \times personality interaction, $F(12, 528) = 6.55$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .13$. Simple effects analyses were conducted to decompose this interaction. No further main effects or interactions emerged.

Figure 1 shows the expected emotional reactions as a function of emotion, modality, and personality information. Overall, all protagonists were expected to feel the emotion more intensely than to express or share it. Simple effects analyses confirmed that this difference was significantly

larger for modest individuals. That is, contrary to prediction, it was not so much the case that arrogant individuals were expected to announce their success more clearly, but rather modest individuals were expected not to publicize their positive reaction to the success. Further, arrogant individuals were expected to feel and express, but to a lesser degree share, significantly more *schadenfreude*, whereas modest individuals were expected to react, across all modalities, with particularly low levels of *schadenfreude*.

Discussion

Overall, the pattern of expectations regarding expressing and sharing emotions was similar for the arrogant individual and the individual for whom no personality information was given. This suggests that the modal reaction to success is to communicate one's positive emotions and not to show or share embarrassment. That is, modest individuals are conceptualized as people who suppress their felt reaction to success, as there is congruence in expectations for *felt* emotions across personality conditions.

Feelings and expressions of malicious joy (*schadenfreude*) do seem to be perceived as typifying arrogant people; however, they are not expected to share this emotion explicitly to the same degree. That is, arrogant people may be perceived as trying not to be seen as negative since *schadenfreude* is not a socially desirable emotion (Hareli & Weiner, 2002).

Status had no effect on expectations. This stands in contrast with prior research (e.g., Tiedens et al., 2000), as one might expect that at least in the situation where personality information was not provided, status would have affected expectations. However, in that research, contrary to the present study, the effect of status was tested in a within-subjects design and the high- and low-status individuals were described as work partners; that is, the success and failure were shared and an explicit contrast was invited. Also, the

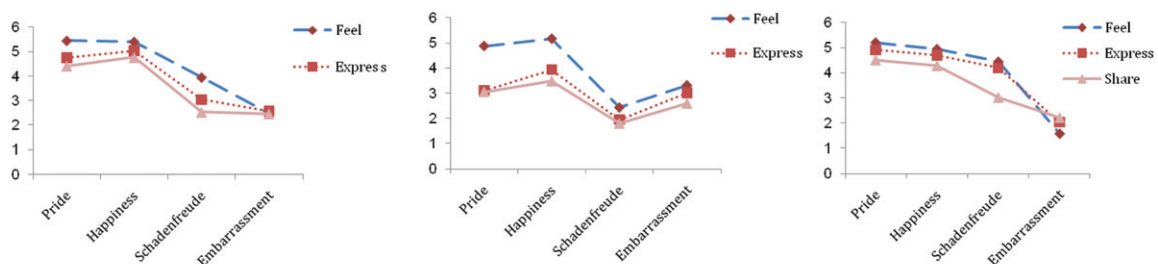


Figure 1. Expectations concerning emotional reactions to success as a function of type of reaction and personality: Study 1.

dependent variable was felt emotion, for which personality was found to have less of an impact in the present study as well. Protagonist gender did not have an impact on positive emotion reactions, congruent with findings by Hess et al. (2000) that differential expectations regarding men's and women's emotional reactions are more pronounced for negative emotions.

In sum, personality information related to people's tendency to publicize their ability was found to influence expected emotional reactions to success. The impact of personality was stronger for the overt expression of the emotion than for the expected feeling. Contrary to suggestions in the literature that pride is a sign of arrogance (Lazarus, 1991; Tavris, 1985) and that arrogant individuals may therefore be expected to feel more pride, in our study all protagonists were expected to feel comparable levels of pride and happiness. However, modest individuals were expected to suppress the overt expressions of these feelings. Also, modest individuals were expected to actually feel more embarrassed.

STUDY 2

The main goal of Study 2 was to assess observers' expectations concerning the emotional reactions of individuals as a function of personality characteristics (i.e., whether they are arrogant or modest), gender, and status in reaction to failure. In the case of failure, modest people more than arrogant ones tend to assume responsibility (Carlston & Shovar, 1983) or at least acknowledge it. Accordingly, it was expected that arrogant individuals would be seen as tending to not feel, express, and share emotions that associate a failure with the self and thereby reflect weaknesses such as shame, guilt, sadness, and fear. By contrast, an arrogant person was expected to experience, nonverbally express, and verbally share anger to a larger degree as anger signals that the undesirable outcome should be attributed to causes that are external to the failing individual (Ortony, Clore, & Collins, 1988; Weiner, 1985). We predicted that, as in prior research, higher status and being male leads to higher expectations of anger than low status and being female.

Method

Participants

A total of 282 (173 women, 100 men, and 9 gender unknown, mean age: $M = 23$ years;

$SD = 2.9$; mean number of years of work experience: $M = 4.1$; $SD = 2.6$) undergraduate and graduate students were recruited at the University of Haifa and the Emek Yezreel Academic College. They participated voluntarily during lecture time.

Materials and procedure

The same methods and procedure as in Study 1 were employed. However, in this study the colleague was described as responsible for testing experimental equipment, and having failed to test it when it arrived a month ago. Repair of the equipment is impossible and replacement will take two weeks as it is manufactured only in Switzerland and on back order. The delay in testing will cause the company to lose around \$100,000. As in Study 1, the colleague's personality characteristics, gender, and status were varied. This resulted in a 3 (personality: arrogant vs. modest vs. no information) \times 2 (protagonist gender: man vs. woman) \times 3 (status: low vs. equal vs. high) between-subjects factorial design. The protocol was approved by the ethics committees of the respective institutions.

Dependent measures

After reading the scenario, participants were asked to rate the likelihood that the colleague would experience, nonverbally express, and verbally share with others feelings of anger, shame, guilt, sadness, and fear. Ratings were made on seven-point scales anchored with 0 ("not at all") and 6 ("very much").

Results

A 3 (personality) \times 2 (gender) \times 3 (status) \times 3 (modality: feel, express, share) \times 5 (emotion: anger, shame, guilt, sadness, fear) analysis of variance was conducted. Protagonist personality, gender, and status were between-subjects factors and emotion and modality were within-subjects factors.

A main effect of emotion emerged, $F(4, 251) = 11.17$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .15$. Post-hoc tests revealed that shame and guilt were expected to be felt/shown/shared most ($M = 3.40$; $SD = 1.37$ and $M = 3.50$; $SD = 1.46$, for shame and guilt respectively), followed by anger ($M = 3.20$; $SD = 3.31$) and sadness ($M = 3.15$; $SD = 1.42$), whereas fear reactions were expected to be least intense ($M = 2.98$; $SD = 1.53$).

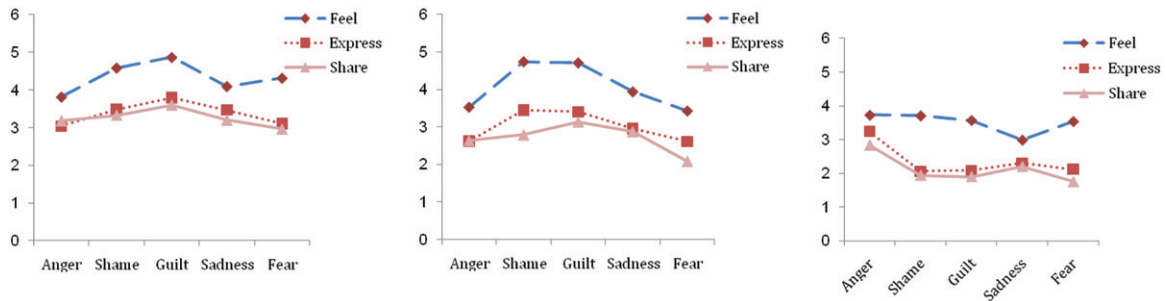


Figure 2. Expectations concerning emotional reactions to failure as a function of type of reaction and personality: Study 2.

A main effect of gender, $F(1, 254) = 6.03$, $p = .015$, $\eta_p^2 = .02$, was qualified by an emotion \times gender interaction, $F(4, 251) = 2.64$, $p = .034$, $\eta_p^2 = .04$, such that for women in general more intense reactions were expected across all emotions except for anger. This difference was significant for shame ($M = 3.65$; $SD = 1.33$ vs. $M = 3.15$; $SD = 1.37$) and guilt ($M = 3.72$; $SD = 1.36$ vs. $M = 3.29$; $SD = 1.52$).

A main effect of status, $F(2, 254) = 4.48$, $p = .012$, $\eta_p^2 = .03$, was qualified by an emotion by status interaction, $F(8, 504) = 2.21$, $p = .026$, $\eta_p^2 = .03$, such that lower status individuals were across modalities expected to react with more shame ($M = 3.74$; $SD = 1.28$ vs. $M = 2.23$; $SD = 1.39$ and $M = 3.25$; $SD = 1.39$), guilt ($M = 3.81$; $SD = 1.47$ vs. $M = 3.41$; $SD = 1.40$ and $M = 3.30$; $SD = 1.46$), and sadness ($M = 3.55$; $SD = 1.44$ vs. $M = 3.12$; $SD = 1.40$ and $M = 2.80$; $SD = 1.33$) than higher or equal status individuals. Expected emotional reactions for equal and higher status individuals did not differ significantly.

Main effects for personality, $F(2, 254) = 26.79$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .17$, and modality, $F(2, 253) = 140.59$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .53$, as well as an emotion \times personality interaction, $F(8, 502) = 7.24$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .10$, and an emotion \times modality interaction, $F(8, 247) = 9.57$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .24$, were qualified by an emotion \times modality \times personality interaction, $F(16, 496) = 2.32$, $p = .003$, $\eta_p^2 = .07$ (see Figure 2). Simple effects analyses were conducted to decompose the interaction. No further main effects or interactions emerged.

Overall, all protagonists were expected to feel negative emotions in reaction to failure significantly more intensely than they would express or share them. In Study 2, unlike Study 1, the overall pattern of expected reactions in the no personality information condition was more similar to the expectations for a modest than for an arrogant person. Arrogant individuals were expected to feel,

express and share significantly less shame, guilt, and sadness than the other two classes. That is, in comparison to Study 1, where personality was found to have an impact specifically on the expression and sharing of emotion, in a failure context personality characteristics were expected to impact on feeling to a larger degree.

Discussion

In sum, arrogant individuals were expected to hide negative feelings, with the exception of anger, about the failure they caused to a larger extent than were both modest individuals and individuals whose personality was not described. Thus for negative emotions, except for anger, the modal reaction to failure was very similar to the expected reaction for modesty. In fact, among the emotions expected from arrogant people, anger was expected to be shown and shared to the largest degree. This suggests that participants expected an arrogant person to try to take less responsibility for the failure by attributing it to an external source.

When the focal event was a failure rather than a success, status had the predicted effect on expectations. One reason for the increased importance of status in such a context may be that failure is more of a direct threat to people of high social status than to people of lower status. That is, a manager who through negligence causes a major financial loss and delays may not remain a manager for much longer, and hence can be expected to react differently from a person who can deflect the situation onto a superior. Thus, a person of lower status should be more likely to react with shame, guilt, and sadness—emotions that acknowledge the responsibility for the failure—than a person of higher status, for whom such acknowledgement may have direct negative consequences. Conversely, the high-status individual should

be expected to react more defensively in such a situation, and this is what participants expected the protagonists to show.

In Study 2, as in Study 1, gender was found to have a relatively small effect on negative emotions that was congruent with general gender stereotypes for emotional expressivity, such that women were expected to be more emotionally reactive for all emotions except anger (Fischer, 1993).

GENERAL DISCUSSION

The present research investigated how information about a person's arrogance or modesty together with information about the individual's social status and gender affects observers' expectations for the emotions that the person is likely to experience, nonverbally express, and verbally share with others. Study 1 assessed these expectations for reactions to success, whereas Study 2 focused on failure.

Arrogance, modesty, and expectations of emotional responding

The rationale underlying the present research was that arrogance and modesty reflect the extent to which someone is likely to publicize their positive qualities (e.g., high ability), their desirable achievements, and their belief that they are better than others (Hareli & Weiner, 2000; Hareli et al., 2006). This view implies that individuals who are described as arrogant should "celebrate" their successes more and downplay their failures, whereas modest individuals should downplay their successes and own up to their failures. However, the actual situation is somewhat more subtle. Expectations for a person for whom no personality information was given were more similar to expectations for an arrogant individual for reactions to success and more similar to expectations for a modest individual for reactions to failure. That is, the modal reaction to success is to publicize it and to not only feel, but also nonverbally show and verbally share pride and happiness and not to be embarrassed. Modest individuals were expected to hide that reaction, that is, to downplay their achievement (see Hareli et al., 2006). Thus, modest individuals are expected to be less authentic in their emotion communication because they do not express their positive feelings (see Butler et al., 2003). By contrast, the modal expectations for reactions to failure were to feel, but also, albeit to a lesser degree, to nonverbally show and verbally share feelings of

shame, guilt, and sadness. However, an arrogant person was expected to downplay these emotions and to show a stronger defensive anger reaction. That is, in this case, the arrogant person was expected to be less authentic. It is noteworthy that in both cases the expected effect of the personality characteristics of modesty and arrogance was a suppression of overt emotional reactions. That is, modest individuals and arrogant individuals were expected to suppress those emotions that do not fit their self-presentational styles rather than to exaggerate expressions that do.

Status, gender, and expectations of emotional responding

Protagonist gender was found to have only small effects on expectations. The observed effects replicated previous findings on general expectations regarding men's and women's emotions (Fischer, 1993; Hess et al., 2000). Essentially, women were expected to be emotionally more reactive for negative emotions with the exception of anger.

Status was found to have an effect on expected reactions to failure but not to success. This may be because failure may be perceived as more relevant to high-status individuals who can expect direct negative consequences when admitting to failure in contrast to lower status employees who can point to their superiors' obligation to verify their work. Thus, a higher status employee should be interested in suppressing or deflect emotions, which would signal their acceptance of responsibility for the failure. This is indeed what participants expected them to do.

The primacy of personality information

Across both studies protagonist gender had an effect only on negative emotions (except anger), and status effects were only found in a failure context. By contrast, personality characteristics were found to influence predictions in both achievement contexts and for all emotions. This is suggestive of the notion that personality is considered a more general predictor of emotional reactions than gender and status. In fact, to the degree that status and gender are somewhat confounded with personality in this context (men and individuals of high status are expected to be more arrogant), it is possible that this information is used preferentially when available. However, even when no personality information

was presented, participants made no use of status information in a success context.

This may suggest that people select information that is perceived as pertinent to a given context—in line with Mischel's (1977) notion that some situations may be strongly determined by social norms and hence do not allow for much variation by other factors. In this case we would suggest that status is less likely to be perceived as diagnostic in a success situation (especially when the task does not require contrasting reactions of individuals of different status to the same event). This can also explain why in other studies (e.g., Tiedens et al., 2000) status had a greater impact on expected emotions. Specifically, in these studies status information was the only information provided. In addition, at least in the study by Tiedens et al. (2000), unlike in the present research, status was a within-subjects factor. This may have made participants more sensitive to status differences, thereby enhancing the impact of this variable on the judgments in question.

Personality information, however, seems always relevant to a person's likely future behavior. In fact, it is a general observation that individuals interpret ambiguous behavior as trait-driven (cf. Krull & Erickson, 1995; Trope, 1986) and hence the reverse should also apply.

Felt emotions, emotional expressions, and sharing of emotions

Folk wisdom maintains that what people feel can be less easily controlled than what they show and share. Interestingly, overall our findings were congruent with this idea. This was reflected in the fact that there was less variation in participants' expectations concerning what the protagonist would feel rather than show and share. In other words, participants expected the impact of personality characteristics to be mostly restricted to the control that individuals exert over the overt representations of their emotional reactions rather than with actual differences in feelings.

Limitations and future research

The present research has certain limitations. Specifically, given that information about the modesty and arrogance of the protagonist was inserted in the stimulus material, participants may have assumed that this is important information that needs to be taken into account and hence responded to it more than they would have done under "normal" conditions. Yet such a

sensitization would only make people more likely to react to this information; it cannot bias the direction of the effect. Also, as mentioned in the introduction, the focus of the study was to assess naïve theories about the emotional reactions of modest versus arrogant persons. Future research could assess to what degree actual emotional reactions conform to such expectations.

Another limitation may be connected to the nature of the task. Specifically, the task required participants to make predictions about "feelings," about "emotion expression," and about sharing emotions verbally. It is possible that this sequence of judgments may have primed emotion expression scripts, which arguably would be more relevant to the situation than to status or gender. Although we did not test for this possibility, the fact that status had an effect for expected reactions to failure, if not for reactions to success, is more in line with the notion expressed above that status affects judgments only when it is potentially diagnostic over and above what personality would predict. Specifically, a high-status person is more threatened by failure and hence status is diagnostic for potential defensive reactions.

We assessed the impact of modesty and arrogance in an organizational setting within a given cultural context. Arguably, such a setting is particularly relevant to notions of success and failure and also allows for the additional consideration of social status, as most companies have a hierarchy in which relative status is clearly defined. But success and failure are also pertinent in other settings—such as sports and education—that also have clear leadership structures. It may be worthwhile to study the impact of modesty and arrogance as a function of the type of settings.

In sum, the present study shows that participants use personality characteristics to predict the expected emotional reactions of a protagonist to success and failure. Two main conclusions can be drawn. First, personality characteristics have a larger and more pervasive influence on such expectations than either status or gender. Second, contrary to our initial assumptions, we found that it is not so much the case that arrogant individuals are expected to exaggerate positive emotions in reaction to success and modest individuals are expected to exaggerate negative emotions in both contexts, but rather that both modest and arrogant individuals are expected to suppress the overt expression of emotions that do not fit their self-presentational style. These findings suggest that people hold the naïve theory that in an attempt to make a certain impression, people will try to suppress emotions that are incongruent with

their self-presentational goal rather than to exaggerate emotions that are congruent.

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