

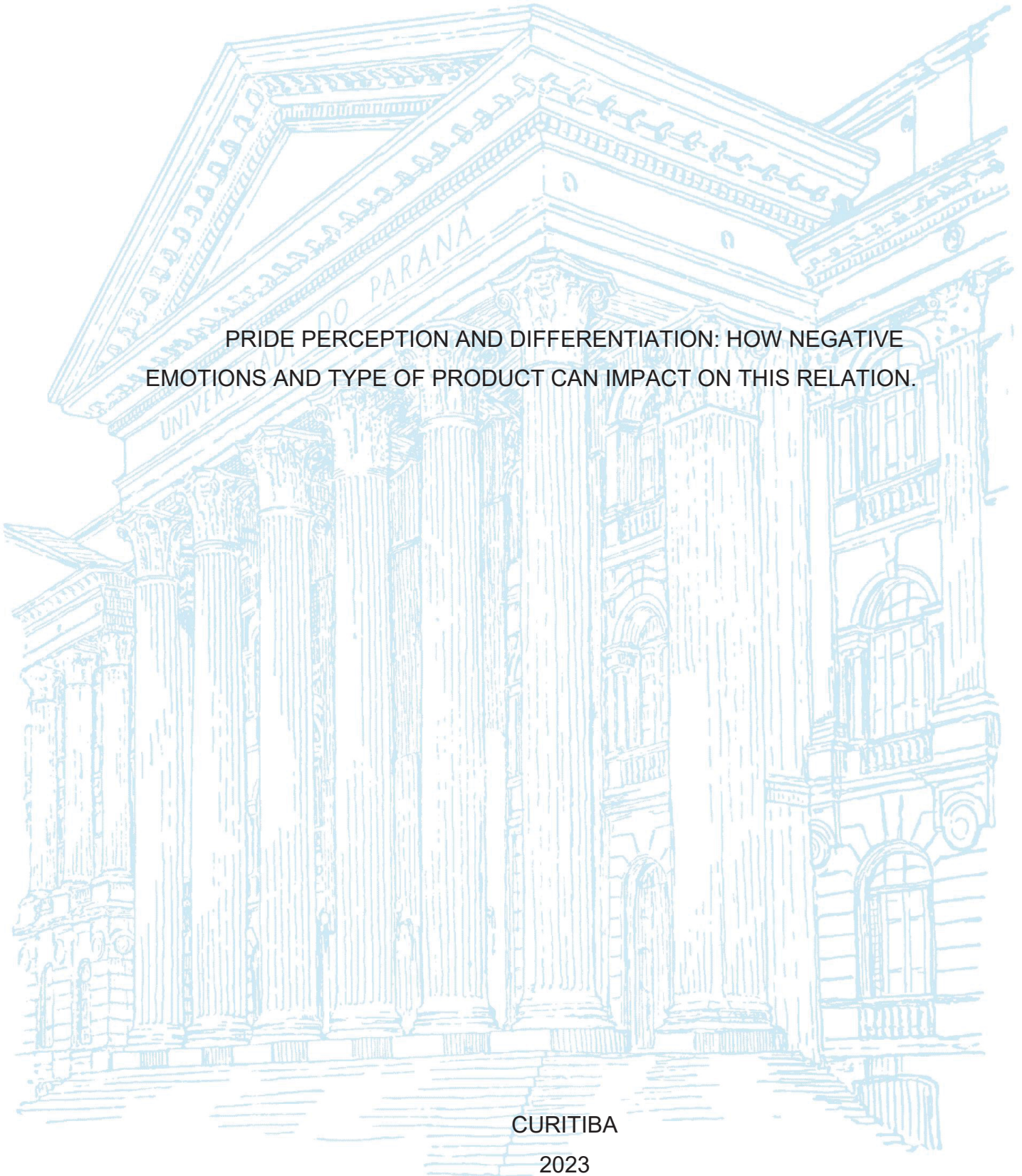
UNIVERSIDADE FEDERAL DO PARANÁ

FRANCIELE CRISTINA MANOSSO

PRIDE PERCEPTION AND DIFFERENTIATION: HOW NEGATIVE  
EMOTIONS AND TYPE OF PRODUCT CAN IMPACT ON THIS RELATION.

CURITIBA

2023



FRANCIELE CRISTINA MANOSSO

PRIDE PERCEPTION AND DIFFERENTIATION: HOW NEGATIVE EMOTIONS AND  
TYPE OF PRODUCT CAN IMPACT ON THIS RELATION.

Tese apresentada ao curso de Pós-Graduação em Administração, Setor de Ciências Sociais Aplicadas, Universidade Federal do Paraná, como requisito parcial à obtenção do título de Doutora em Administração.

Orientador: Prof. Dr. Paulo H. Mueller Prado

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*“Algumas pessoas marcam a nossa vida para sempre, umas porque nos ajudam na construção, outras porque nos apresentam projetos de sonho e outras ainda porque nos desafiam a construí-los”.*

Obrigada a todos pelo apoio durante esta trajetória, vocês foram essenciais em todos os momentos!

*“Não somos impulsionados pela realidade, mas sim por nossa percepção da realidade”. (Anthony Robbins).*



## RESUMO

O orgulho é uma emoção positiva que está relacionada às nossas conquistas, posses e, até mesmo, às nossas experiências. Hoje em dia, é possível perceber orgulho no conteúdo compartilhado pelos usuários das redes sociais, o que significa que todos podem ser impactados pelo orgulho que o outro está sentindo. É importante destacar que quando uma pessoa percebe o orgulho, surge uma comparação, principalmente, quando há uma reflexão a respeito de suas conquistas, isso pode resultar comportamentos distintos. Assim, o objetivo principal da presente pesquisa é entender a relação entre a percepção do orgulho e a necessidade de diferenciação. Nesse sentido, realizamos cinco estudos, dois experimentos e analisamos três bases de dados secundária para compreender como o orgulho pode impactar o comportamento do consumidor. Como resultados, descobrimos que emoções negativas mediam a relação entre percepção de orgulho e consumo por diferenciação, e, também, que o tipo de produto, proximidade com as pessoas e autoestima são moderadores relevantes neste modelo.

Palavras-chave: Orgulho, Diferenciação, Emoções Negativas, Tipo de Produto.

## **ABSTRACT**

Pride is a positive emotion that is related to our achievements, possessions and, even, our experiences. Nowadays, it is possible to perceive pride in the content share by people on the social network websites, which means that everybody can be impact by the pride of others. It is important to highlight that when a person perceive pride, a comparison emerges, mostly, when they think about their achievements, it can bring consequently behaviors. So, the main objective of the present research is understanding the relation between pride perception and the need for differentiation. In that matter, we perform five studies, two experiments and analyzed three second data bases to comprehend how this emotion can impact the consumer behavior. As results, we found that negative emotions mediate the relation between perception of pride and consumption for differentiation, and, also, that type os product, people closeness and self-esteem are relevant moderators in this model.

Keywords: Pride; Differentiation; Negative Emotions; Type of Product.

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## 1 INTRODUCTION

How many times did you browse in the social media and found achievements from your close friend or coworker? Are there traits of pride? In the most cases, when we saw a post on Instagram, LinkedIn, Facebook, we recognize traits of pride. Especially, because the social networks are the main tool for people share their achievements, failures (in rare cases), opinions and experiences. In that matter, people expressing their thoughts, sentiments, and beliefs in social media, those platforms can gather individual data to understand people's feelings (Micu et al., 2017; Kübler et al., 2019) and, also, propagates several contents to the world.

Therefore, social network sites offer unique opportunities for people (in the case of present research – consumers) present the positive aspects of their lifestyles and, consequently, their personalities through photos, self-descriptions, and public conversations (Weisbuch et al., 2009), which other users perceive when viewing different profiles and make evaluations about it (Vogel & Rose, 2017).

Pride is an emotion that permeates the social media context, which means that, in the most of time, we are presenting our achievements, possessions and experiences for everybody sees (Kaur & Verma, 2022) and, consequently, other's make inferences about the content we share. Hence, when others see our conquers, principally, when they perceive traits of pride, it is possible that different behaviors initiate, which means that people can feel positive or negative emotions, choose for products that make feel better than the other.

The present research discusses that people have a necessity to be different from others when we perceive some negative elements in their personality or attitudes. White and Dahl (2006) highlights that are several examples about consumers avoiding products or services associated with a particular group, brand,

and even, personality. So, it is possible to mention that consumers want to differentiate from others, mainly, when they perceive actions and attitudes that differ from their ideals and personality. As a main proposition from this thesis, we debate that when someone sees traits of pride, they tend to choose products that will show some difference from others.

It is important to highlight that this proposition can be considered a gap in the literature, mainly because, discussions about pride perception and consequent behaviors need to be more focused. In that matter, we search to fill this gap bring results that consolidates this proposition. Besides, we search in the literature ways to comprehend how perceptions of pride can lead people to different choices in the consumer behavior context.

Negative emotions can be a condition that led us to diverge ourselves from others, due to the negative impacts that a post full of pride can cause in the observer. It can happen, because we always compare ourselves with others, mostly, in the social networks, a place that always someone presents a better perspective of your life, experience, and, even, a product or service that they bought (Ackerman, MacInnis & Folkes, 2000). People tend to search ways to regulate these negative feelings, and, in the present research, we propose that for mitigate this negative emotion, a person will try to choose a product that make they feel different (or in that case, divergence) from the source of the feeling – in that case, the person who post a content full of pride.

Besides, negative emotions can be considered a mediator for the main relationship – perception of pride and search for differentiation – because it is possible that when someone perceive pride in a certain content it is a possibility that both positive and negative emotions arise – which leads in that to consequent



behaviors. In the literature this relation is not much discussed – only the perspective that perceptions and social media networks lead to different emotions and behaviors.

Additionally, we bring the type of product as a moderator to this proposition. Here, the main discussion is about utilitarian and enlightening products that reinforce the search for differentiation in the context of pride perception and negative emotion. Research about this topic presents a gap – mainly – because there are more discussions about utilitarian and hedonic products, and here we discern about other ways that lead us to differentiation.

To address every gap mentioned this research proposal is structured as follow: afterward this brief introduction, a theoretical development is made arguing about pride, differentiation, negative emotions and product type. Furthermore, mechanisms and boundary conditions to explain how this relationship works are explored, and propositions are made. Finally, we discuss our proposed model, present the results of five studies that supports our hypothesis.

## 2 THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

In the present chapter, we discuss about the constructs used to understand the relationship between pride perception, negative emotions, consumption for differentiation and type of product.

### 2.1 PRIDE: AS EMOTION WITH MULTIPLE FACETS.

Nowadays, most people are proud of something in life, be it our achievements, children, or some objects that they own. So, it is possible to observe that when a person conquers something, the primary reaction is let's post and show it off (Kaur & Verma, 2022). In that matter, sharing experiences has become commonplace (Candi et al., 2017; Lin et al., 2018), because social networks can be considered propagating sources on positive or negative experiences, making it exposed for that everyone can opine, comment, and even share with others (Chen et al., 2016).

In such context, pride is an emotion that gains prominence and becomes an important element for greater consumer involvement in sharing experiences (Rimé, 2007). Moreover, pride can be considered an emotional response to public success or achievements (Tracy & Prehn, 2012), and it can be considered a driver to the dissemination of people's accomplishments.

Researchers conceptualize pride as an emotion experienced by individuals when they reach a certain goal in life (for example, receiving a reward) or grow from everyday occurrences (such as being praised by a person considered important for them) (Yang & Zang, 2018). Furthermore, the authors mention that it can be inserted as one basic self-conscious emotion and, also, a social one (Rogoza et al., 2018; Van Osch et al. 2018).

Additionally, pride can be a positively valenced emotion that, as mentioned, occur in response to success and, for some authors, has two distinct facets: authentic (feeling of accomplishment and confidence) and hubristic (feelings of arrogance and conceit) (Mercadante, Witkower & Tracy, 2021).

In the context, of the present research, we use pride as a unique construct, which means that we search to discuss that the experience of pride is related to the idea of the self, mainly, because this emotion is what we experience as an intrinsic reward for graduating, running marathons, getting a salary and, even, a new job, which means that it is achievements that our social groups appreciated (Kaur & Verma, 2022).

However, it is important to understand the facets of pride, mainly, because when someone achieves something there are always drivers, appraisals, and consequences. For that matter, Figures 01 and 02 present a framework that summarizes the main characteristics of hubristic and authentic pride.

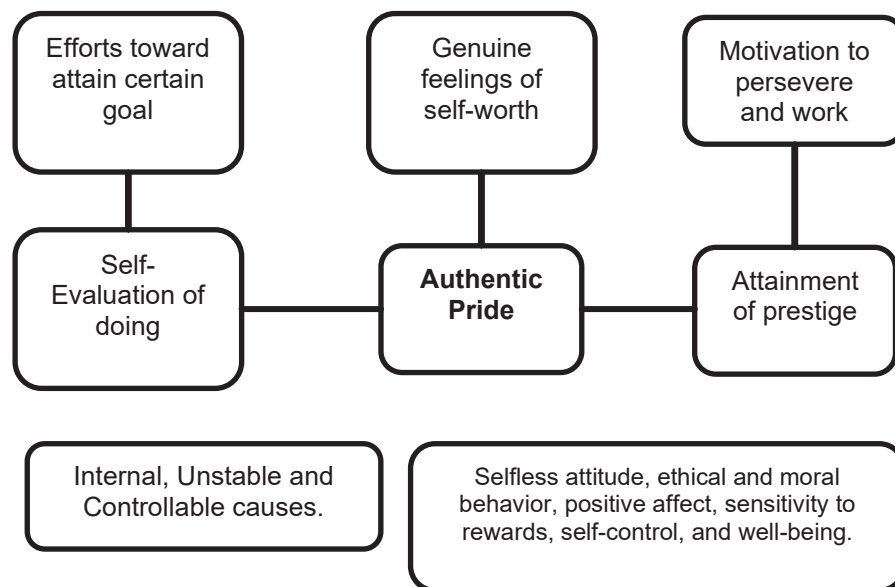


Figure 1: Authentic Pride

**Source:** Author (2023)

Authentic pride, as shown in Figure 01, is an emotion where people are full of confidence, and it can be considered a healthy and socially desirable personality profile, mainly, because there are traits of intrinsic motivation, perseverance, and a tendency to engage in several prosocial behaviors (Ashton-James & Tracy, 2012; Yeung & Chen, 2019; Witkower, Mercadante & Tracy, 2021).

Unlike, hubristic pride is a belief that one is better than the other (Burkley et al., 2018), which means that being arrogant and conceited is the base of this construct. Besides, hubristic pride is associated with the unhealthy psychological condition and, also, it's a socially undesirable personality, mainly, because, has the tendency to engage in antisocial behaviors, such as aggression, prejudice, hostility, and others (Costello et al., 2018; Yeung & Shen, 2019; Witkower, Mercadante & Tracy, 2021).

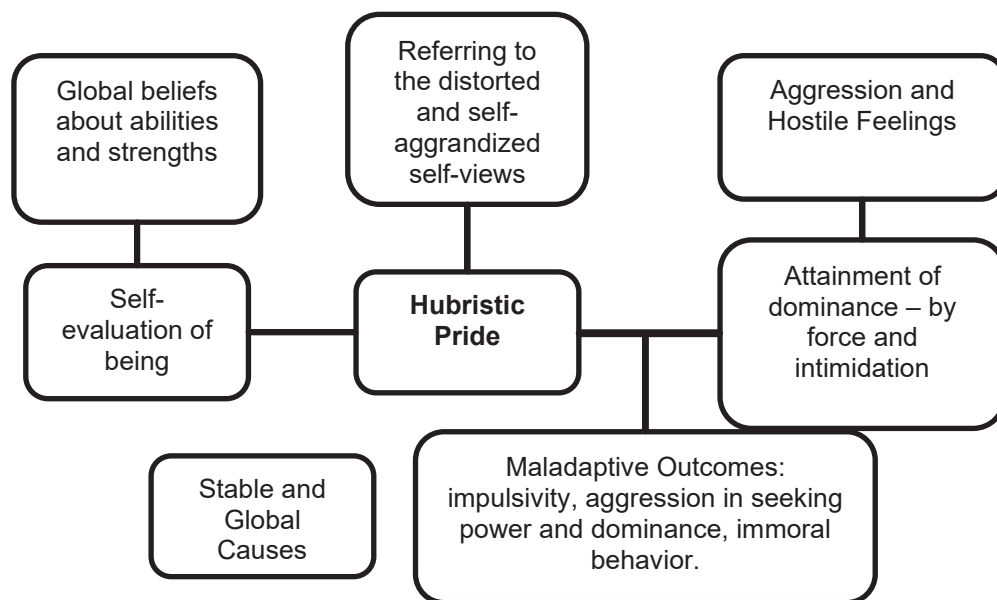


Figure 2: Hubristic Pride

Source: Author (2023).

The differences between authentic and hubristic pride are broadly discuss (Tracy & Robins, 2007; Cheng, Tracy & Henrich, 2010; Tracy & Prehn, 2012; Tracy

et al., 2012; Damian & Robbins, 2013; Mercadante & Tracy, 2021; Witkower, Mercadante & Tracy, 2021; Mercadante, Witkower & Tracy, 2021; Kaur & Verma, 2022). However, to summarize how we understand the two facets of pride, we use what Tracy and Robbins (2007) mentioned in their research: authentic pride referred to a structure of more genuine feelings of the human being and hubristic pride relates to distorted views of the individual about their achievements.

Tracy and Robbins (2007), also, debate that the pride expression is cross-culturally recognized and spontaneously displayed when we talk about achievements, and it's relevant when we have the necessity to comprehend how people perceive this emotion. Pride, for these authors, evolved the provision of information about the individual's current level of social status and acceptance. Moreover, we can try to understand how others perceive pride, by using nonverbal and verbal expressions that are linked with the hubristic and authentic pride conceptualization (Tracy & Robbins, 2007; Tracy et al., 2012; Tracy & Prehn, 2012).

Tracy and Robbins (2007) and McFerran et al. (2014) describe that authentic pride uses the words accomplished; successful; achieving; fulfilled; self-worth; confident; productive, and hubristic pride is accompanied by the words snobbish; pompous; stuck-up; conceited; egotistical; arrogant; smug. In a situation of pride perception, it is possible to use these words to understand what other's people think about the accomplishment of others and its way of presenting their pride to the world.

Pride is presented in the social media context, mainly when we post something that is an accomplishment to us, like from having achieved that dream trip with hard work (authentic) or for having won the trip from our mother as a graduation present (hubristic) (Tracy & Robbins, 2007; Tracy & Prehn, 2012).

When a person show pride to the world – they will display an alert to observers about your success and, consequently, inform them that they deserve a high status in their group (Tiedens, Ellsworth & Mesquita, 2000). So, it is possible that those people promote perceptions of arrogance, leading observers to dislike them and root against your future success (Tracy & Prehn, 2012). Moreover, researchers suggest that the appearance of modesty and generosity leads to a prestigious reputation, whereas arrogance promotes perception of dominance (Cheng et al., 2010).

In sum, when interpreting a pride expression, it is possible to highlight that observers are likely to utilize available attribution information about the cause of the proud individual's success, and, consequently, consider the source of this information (Tracy & Prehn, 2012).

So, to discern about our research proposition, we can think on when a person shares an experience (for example) and there are traits of pride: what emotions can be feeling, if people will make different decisions when they perceive pride – as a primary emotion, and, moreover, we can use this emotion to sell products (for example).

The next topic brings us a discussion about differentiation and how pride perception can impact in this context.

## 2.2 PRIDE LEAD US TO A NECESSITY FOR DIFFERENTIATION?

In addition, we discuss about the necessity people have in to be different, which means that, in some cases, we look for something that makes us feel a little better than others. The display of being different can be considered an incidental or secondary outcome from attempts to satisfy intrinsic motivations, like boosting our

self-esteem in situations where we feel inferior to our partners, for example (Rubin & Hewstone, 1998; Tian, Bearden & Hunter, 2001).

Social identity discussions provide us some insight into this subject, mainly, because the authors mentioned that there is a fundamental tension between human needs for validation and similarities to their groups, which means that people want to be part of something and, for that, be similar with their group is a necessity. In the other hand, there is a countervailing need for uniqueness and individuality when we compare ourselves to a major group, which impacts our decisions (Brewer, 1991).

Therefore, when there is a comparison, the necessity to be dissimilar surpass, because people want to be unique, mainly when some behaviors are contrary to their beliefs and opinions. In those cases, being too similar to others generates negative emotional reactions and, even, made people think about their role in society and, how their decisions can impact others' perceptions (Snyder & Fromkin, 1980; Lynn & Snyder, 2002).

It can be explained by the need for belongingness and uniqueness that people must have to become an integrated part of a specific group (Baumeister & Leary, 1995). It is possible to mention that the desire to differentiate from others is a powerful driver of consumer behavior (Ordabayeva & Fernandes, 2018). In that matter, there are individuals who search for differentiation through consumption choices to signal their distinct identity (White & Dahl, 2006) and, also, their major preferences (Snyder & Fromkin, 1980).

Consumers, in most cases, are motivated to behave like those around them and, consequently, made choices that made them feel a part of a larger group (Escalas & Bettman, 2003). However, there are situations that people feel the necessity to be divergent, Berger and Heath (2008) debate some drivers that leaves



to divergence, such as low-status others (people want to be apart from members of other social categories); disliked others (people searching for decreasing their associations with people that they view negatively); similar others (diverge as a result of too much similarity).

As results from their studies, Berger and Heath (2008) present that people diverged more from dissimilar groups, however, there are cases that people will diverge from similar others for several reasons, mainly when the likelihood of misidentification is high. It can happen, because when types are similar, there is a greater taste overlap, and they may be more like to be confused with each other (Cooper & Jones, 1966) and the necessity to be different becomes stronger than to be similar.

Additionally, optimal distinctiveness theory debate that individuals satisfy their opposing needs by contrasting social identities, so that “the need for deindividuation is satisfied within in-groups, while the need for distinctiveness is met through intergroup comparisons” (Brewer, 1991: 477).

So, it is possible to draw the following hypothesis from this perspective:

*H1: When a person perceives pride (vs. control) in content shared by others they will tend to choose products that differentiate (vs. not) them from others.*

Past research highlights some discussions about differentiation and consumer behavior, Dommer et al. (2013) discern that low self-esteem individuals search to secure their group belonging through horizontal differentiation when they feel excluded and in vertical differentiation when they are social included. In addition, Chan et al. (2012) present that consumers (for example) try to balance their need to

belong with their need to stand out by assimilating to their group vertically (brand) and by diverging from their group through horizontal differentiation (color).

Besides, some authors present more viewpoints about differentiation by debates on uniqueness seeking need, Huang et al. (2014) highlights that when people feel relatively cool (vs. warm), they are more likely to choose minority-endorsed (vs. majority-endorsed) options. Levav and Zhu (2009) and Xu et al. (2012) present that when someone feel their personal space is constrained or invaded by close others, they may be motivated to reassert their individuality by seeking unique products (for instance).

In sum, Tian, Bearden, and Hunter (2001) emphasize that consumers' need for uniqueness can be defined as a trait of pursuing differentiation relative to others by the acquisition, utilization, and disposition of consumer goods, mainly, for the purpose of developing and, also, enhancing one's self-image. In this case, the present research employs the differentiation perspective to comprehend how and why people behave in certain ways when they perceive traits of pride in others.

In the next topic, we present how negative emotions can impact on pride and differentiation.

### 2.3 NEGATIVE EMOTIONS AS A MEDIATOR BETWEEN PRIDE AND DIFFERENTIATION

In the social media context, all the time people compare themselves with others, which means that when someone saw a conquer, immediately they think about their faults which leads them to negative emotions and concerns. In that case, pride is an emotion, as mentioned before, that permeates the online world, because it

is experienced following a positive evaluation of one's competence or effort in achieving a goal (Weiner, 1986; Louro, Pieters & Zeelenberg, 2013).

Moreover, the present research has the objective of understand what behaviors the observers demonstrate when they saw traits of pride in a content share by others. So, it is relevant to highlight that when people express emotions, observers perceive these emotions and draw several inferences that can lead to positive or negative outcomes (Lange, Heerdink & Van Kleef, 2022).

Broadly speaking, it is possible to infer that emotions expressions (like pride) serve as social information for the observers and them use this to draw inferences (as mentioned before) based, mainly, on the characteristics of the expresser; the situation and, at least, the self, which all can influence the observer's behaviors and attitudes (Van Kleef, 2009).

The context what a emotion perception occurs is the main element of the discussion, which means that when someone saw a post that are full of pride, for them it can be positive (it's a good thing that my friend conquer this) or, in the other hand can be negative (I deserve more than my colleague that promotion) (Ordabayeva, Lisjak & Jones, 2022). Researchers mentioned that perception might influence one another, even, if there are not a relationship between the observer and who have been observed the situation (Barret, Lindquist & Gendron, 2007).

The primary discussion in the present research is based on the behavior of the observer and what consequences can be analyzed in this perspective. First, as mentioned above, our research foundation is related to the perception of pride that led the observer to search for ways to differentiate themselves in the consumption context. Emotions are relevant construct in the consumer behavior discussion, mainly, because, who purchase products and services are trying to meet their needs

and, consequently, achieve some goals (Richins, 2008). In addition, we can describe that emotions arise in response to perceptions or appraisals of situations that are relevant to the perceiver (Lazarus, 1991; Richins, 2008) and, consequently, the extent to which a situation appears to have positive or negative consequences for the observer's goals and well-being (Richins, 2008).

In this case, social comparison became an intrinsic element in the relation between perceived pride and the desire to be different. According to Wood (1996) and Feng et al. (2020), social comparison is the process of thinking about information related to one or more other people concerning the self, which means, individuals tend to compare themselves with others to self-evaluation (Feng et al., 2020).

Additionally, when someone perceives traits of pride in the other, feelings of inferiority can arise, because when we compare our achievements with others, in certain manner, we made unfavorable social comparison, which means that a person to feel inferior to someone must believe that the other possesses some goods which the observer does not have, which leads to negative feelings (besides the inferiority concerns) (Castelfranchi & Miceli, 2009).

Negative emotions, in this perspective, can be considered the most complex type of emotions and, at the same time, account of variance of reported emotional experiences (Tronvoll, 2010). Consequently, Russell and Snodgrass (1987) and Babin, Darden and Babin (1998) mentioned that things, activities, behavior, and decisions bring people value to the extent they provide pleasure immediately or allow us to access future pleasure. So, for avoiding negative emotions, people make decisions that directly impact their feelings and necessities.

When we talk about real life, it is possible to mention that everyone, someday, can remember a situation that a positive self-view is threatened and,

consequently leads to different behavior, mainly, when we perceive that other conquer something that undermine our achievements (Tesser, Millar & Moore, 1988). For example, after hearing that a close friend was more successful on a task, people tend to give fewer and lower quality hints to that person in subsequent performance situation than they gave to a stranger (Tesser & Smith, 1980; Nezlek & Kuppens, 2008). It is possible to discern that when we saw someone conquer something, it can impact our self-view, and, consequently, made us feel negative emotions (like anger, discontentment, and sadness) (Vogel & Rose, 2017).

Additionally, Lockwood and Kunda (1997) highlights that aspects of the perceiver could determine the future behavioral responses, which means that what the perceiver see in the content can be a determinant of their future behavior, and its can be related to emotional sets and, also, decision making process. In addition to this perspective, Sabine and Silver (2005) emphasize that, in the most of cases, when someone talk about emotion in the daily life perspective, there are three channels that can be open, such as: 1) the person who said to be having the emotion; 2) the person who is describing it and, 3) the audience for the description and in all of them there is a context that the emotion emerge.

Pride is considered one of the most central emotions, for that reason it can shape the human social behavior and, even the group dynamics, because it is the emotion that motivates us to do what it takes to get ahead and, also, to attain social status (Tracy et al., 2020). For that matter, social network sites have revolutionized the way people present themselves and, at the same time, interact with others (Weisbuch, Ivcevic, & Ambady, 2009). From that context, is in the social network that people can construe their perceptions about others (close or distant ones) and in those cases we can talk about favorable evaluations that, in the certain manner,

increases people's self-confidence and self-worthiness and, at the same time, unfavorable feedbacks (based on our perceptions on what other posts on social media) can decrease self-esteem which leads to negative emotions (Stanculescu, 2011).

Hence, pride is conceptualized as a complex emotion that reflects individual's social acceptance, which consists in favorable comparison between one's behaviors and their own standards. Oyeis et al. (2010), in their research, mentioned that pride stimulates feelings of similarity to others who are perceived strong, as well as differentiation from weak others.

As a manner to understand this context, the present research proposes the following hypothesis:

*H2) The relationship between pride (vs. control) and consumption for differentiation (vs. not) are mediated by negative (vs. positive) emotions.*

This hypothesis has its support on the perspective that emotions can be a way to explain certain behaviors, mainly, in the consumption prerogative, for the most part, emotions are used to explain behavior at a level of complexity, which is intermediate between its reflexes and the planned intentional behavior (Damasio & Damasio, 2018).

As some authors stated, consumption is based on cognition, culture, and motivation. Hence, for emotion to be activated, certain emotional states must be triggered: cognition as a belief about the world; an evaluation; a bodily reaction; an affect and, finally, a motivation to act (Joy et al., 2018). Emotions are, in certain ways, a central component of people's lives, both interpersonally and intrapersonally.

Thus, emotional experiences can have powerful impacts on people's functioning and decisions, both positive and negative (Rimé et al., 2020).

In addition to this perspective, it has been argued that negative and positive emotions can facilitate the decision-making process, which leads to critical role in people's selection of alternative (Damasio, 1994). It is assumed that negative emotions, for example, only have disruptive functions and are outcomes of negative appraisals or situations (Koshkaki & Solhi, 2016).

Overall, discussions about emotions (both positive and negative) and consumer behavior have been used the cognitive appraisals approach, that suggests that appraisals associated with a specific emotion can 'carry over' by predisposing individuals' view of other, that are unrelated events in line with the preexisting appraisals. For example, it is possible to say that fear is an emotion that arises from the appraisal of low individual control over an unpleasant event whereas anger is associated with high individual control (Achar et al., 2016; Watson & Spence, 2007). In sum, cognitive appraisals approach has been called "an especially relevant approach for understanding the emotional responses of consumers in the marketplace" (Johnson & Stewart, 2005, p. 3).

Bagozzi et al. (1999, p. 185) noting that "...a necessary condition for an emotional response to an event or happening is that a person has a personal stake in it and at the same time judges the event or happening to facilitate or thwart this stake". Finally, it is possible to mention that all emotions – positive and negative – affect people's attention, thinking, motivation, and behavior. Hence, pleasant, and unpleasant emotional states can trigger self-perpetuating dynamics that can make people decided for better or for worst. So, when we talk about negative emotions it is



important to understand that it can be differentiated and modulated by the context which they occur (Van Reekum & Johnstone, 2018).

For that matter, when we discuss how pride can impact decisions for products or services that leads to differentiation, it is important to mention that when we saw traits of pride, triggers are activated, which means that people will try to regulate their perception through consumption, mainly, when they feel others' emotions in the process.

As the last discussion in the present research, we bring a debate about the moderators in this context and how it can be an element of the process on the search for differentiation when we saw a content with traits of pride.

#### 2.4 MODERATORS IN THE RELATION BETWEEN PRIDE AND DIFFERENTIATION

As discussed in the previous topic, people have the desire to differentiate from others, which means that when we – as consumers – purchase something is not only to make us feel happy and satisfied with it, but also, we think about the others' perception over our acquisitions and, how we can buy something to stand out our positions, ideas, and preferences. It happens, because our possessions reflect our identities (Belk, 1988).

In that matter, choose products that – at the same time – reflects our identities and differentiate us from the crowd is a way to stand out our self and, consequently, shows for everyone who we are and what are our necessities and preferences. In the present research, we discuss how people behave when they perceive traits of pride in a content share by others in a social network, for example.

Consumers differ, mostly, due to three causes – need for uniqueness (Snyder & Fromkin, 1980); status aspiration (Cassidy & Lynn, 1989) and materialism (Belk, 1985). It is possible to mention that when we talk about our research premise that people – in those case consumers – tend to search for products that differentiate themselves from the pride person, because – as mentioned – negative emotions arise and impact their decision-making process.

Overall, the desire for unique products will increase consumers' efforts to acquire and possess goods, services and experiences that few other possess (Lynn & Harris, 1997). As such, consumer's need for uniqueness contains, in certain circumstances, self-image and social image implementation, so Tian et al (2001) divided the need for uniqueness process into three perspectives: creative counterconformity, unpopular choice counterconformity and, finally, avoidance of similarity.

According to Geng, Yang and Xu (2018) avoidance of similarity is related to those consumers who would never be interested in or use popular consumer goods, mostly, because they have the necessity to break the routine and, in the certain manner, establish the distinction between themselves and others.

So, as a research hypothesis we propose that:

*H3: More hedonic (vs. utilitarian) products leads to more (vs. less) differentiation when someone perceive (vs. not) traits of pride in content shared by others.*

This proposition can be justified, because differentness that results from counterconformity motivation has broader importance for understanding the context

in consumer behavior, particularly, when we debate about reactions to the commercialization and popularization of product offerings (Tian et al., 2001).

Consumer choice can communicate identity (Escalas & Bateman, 2005). Moreover, products and services are often used to symbolize to others what type of person the individual is and, at the same time, serve "...as a means of communication between the individual and his significant references" (Grubb & Grathwohl, 1967, p. 24).

For that understanding, we can propose that people tend to buy things that made them different through knowledge (because it can better their social rank and, also, lead them to more achievements). So, it explains that people when perceive traits of pride will try to make choices that make them better than the others (i.e., they will buy a book for accumulating more knowledge about a relevant subject). This relation can be considered a gap in the pride context, mainly, when we talk about the trigger generates on social comparison included in the context of others' achievements.

Moreover, it is important to highlight that another point that can be discussed is the people closeness, which means that sometimes when we are too close with someone there are a possibility that we choose for different products and services, mainly, because there is a possibility that we feel inferior when we compare ourselves with other and, as mentioned, we want to be better in the context of social status. De Hart, Pelham and Murray (2004) presents that many people find it easier to adore close friends when the relationship are going well, but when we feel that something undermine us, we tend to look for ways to make things different, whether in the consumer context or in the daily perspective.

Meanwhile, self-esteem, also, can be a trigger to search differential, because as mentioned by Crocker et al. (2006) boosts of self-esteem can be considered pleasurable, and drops are seen as painful, people need to protect, maintain, and enhance this feeling. So, in the next chapter, we discuss the studies that corroborate our theoretical propositions.

### 3 OVERVIEW OF STUDIES

We test the research model by performing five studies. In study 1, we used a secondary dataset to test the effect of pride on differentiation mediated by negative emotion. This study supports our hypothesis 1 using actual data from book reviews on Amazon. Next, in study 2a, we perform an experiment manipulating the pride people feel when they see a post on social media made by other users. The results demonstrated that when people see others' posts on social media that elicit pride, they choose to differentiate themselves from others. Also, we tested three alternative mechanisms in this study, the need for uniqueness, parasocial perception, and the need for self-verification. Finally, in study 2b, we replicate the effects using the same manipulation as study 2a. The objective of these replications is to improve the study's internal validity. Also, we test an alternative mediator of self-esteem and people closeness.

Thus, in study 4, we tested the model using a new dataset with Amazon's reviews about cell phones. Again, the results of this study replicated the effects found in the previous study and brought more reliability to our research.

Finally, in study 5, we analyzed secondary data to test the H3. Specifically, we tested the moderation of the product type on the search for differentiation in the product choice. In this case, when people elicit pride, the book choice leads them to search for more differentiation, compared with those who elicit pride in purchasing a cellphone. The results of these studies support our H1, H2, and H3. In the following sessions, we demonstrated the results of our six studies.

### 3.1 STUDY 1

The first objective of this study is to support the H1 demonstrating that when someone elicits pride, they are searching for differentiation. The second objective of this study is to test the mediation of negative emotions on consumers' differentiation intention. Finally, this study provides the first evidence that supports our research model with a real dataset.

#### 3.1.1 METHOD

*Sample size.* One thousand one hundred forty reviews were selected to perform this study. The sample was extracted from amazon.com. The data extraction was performed by Bekeet, (2022) and is available on Kaggle.com.

*Procedure.* First, we downloaded the data set available on Kaggle.com regarding book reviews posted on amazon.com. Kaggle.com is an online community and platform that serves as a hub for data scientists and machine learning enthusiasts worldwide. The platform has some datasets free for use. We use those data about book reviews to perform this research.

Specifically, the dataset was composed by 3 million reviews extracted from amazon.com. The variables in the dataset were: The Id of Book; Book Title; The price of Book; User\_id; Name of the user who rates the book; helpfulness; Review/score; review/time; review/summary; and, the full text of a review.

To perform the analysis, we eliminate reviews with less than 40 characters, because these reviews were incomplete. We also eliminate from dataset the reviews with emoticons and other graphical characters because they are not processed by LIWC. After that, we randomly selected 1140 reviews to perform the analysis. We selected these specific cases because of the limited computational resources to process a huge amount of data.

After those procedures to select de cases, we perform a sentiment analysis using the LIWC software. The Linguistic Inquiry and Word Count (LIWC) software is a tool for analyzing language and text. It functions by assigning various linguistic categories to words and then calculating the relative frequencies of these categories within a given text. LIWC can provide valuable insights into individuals' psychological and emotional states by examining the patterns of words they use (Chung & Pennebaker, 2013; Tausczik & Pennebaker, 2010).

It is widely used in psychology, sociology, linguistics, and communication studies, enabling researchers to analyze large amounts of text efficiently and identify linguistic patterns associated with different psychological or behavioral phenomena. LIWC offers researchers a comprehensive framework for understanding the psychological dimensions present in written or spoken language and has proven to be a valuable asset in various academic and applied contexts (Chung & Pennebaker, 2013).

Further, to test our research model, we used three categories provided by LIWC, to test our model, personal pronouns, negative emotions, and differentiation. First, we used the personal pronouns category to measure pride. The category of "Personal pronouns" in LIWC evaluates the use of pronouns that refer to individuals or groups, such as "I," "you," "he," "she," "we," and "they." This category provides insights into how individuals express themselves concerning others and their level of self-focus or social orientation in their language.(Chung & Pennebaker, 2013; Tausczik & Pennebaker, 2010). Thus, we comprehend that high levels of Personal pronouns can indicate high levels of pride.

Research has shown that a high frequency of personal pronouns in language can indicate a heightened sense of pride. For instance, a study by Carey et al.,

(2015) found that individuals who displayed more frequent use of first-person singular pronouns, such as "I" and "me," tended to have higher levels of narcissism and grandiose self-perceptions. Similarly, another study by (Grijalva et al., 2015) demonstrated that individuals with high levels of self-esteem tended to use personal pronouns more frequently. This connection between personal pronouns and pride can be attributed to the self-referential nature of such language, reflecting an emphasis on one's thoughts, feelings, and experiences. Consequently, a high level of personal pronoun usage can indicate an individual's elevated self-focus and a potential manifestation of pride or heightened self-esteem.

Furthermore, we used the negative emotion category to test as a mediator. This category comprises the mean of anger and sadness  $\alpha = 0.700$ . Finally, we used the category of differentiation as DV in our model. This category allows us to explore how individuals express themselves and differentiate from others (Chung & Pennebaker, 2013; Kübler et al., 2020).

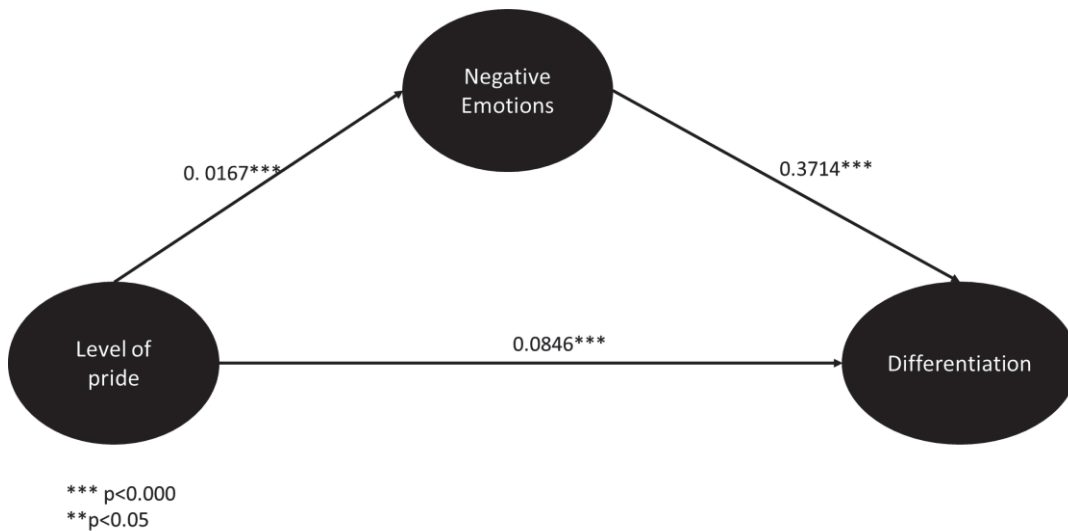
The coding system of LIWC consists of a dictionary that contains words and their associated categories. Each word is labeled with one or more categories, allowing for multi-dimensional analysis. For example, the word "happy" might be assigned to categories such as positive emotion and social processes. The LIWC coding system also includes additional features to enhance the analysis. Stemming is applied to words, allowing variations of a word (e.g., "run," "running," "ran") to be captured under a single stem (Chung & Pennebaker, 2013; Tausczik & Pennebaker, 2010). The classification of a text can vary from 0 to 100. When the number is high, it indicates that the category has more relevance in the text.



### 3.1.2 RESULTS

*Research model.* To test our hypothesis 1, we run the analysis on SPSS using the Hayes process model 4 with 10000 bootstrapping samples. The results are shown in Figure 1.

Figure 3: Mediation effects – Study 1.



The total effect in the model was significant (Effect = .0908; se = .0177; p = .0000). The direct effect was significant (Effect = 0.0846; se = .0177; p = .0000). The mediation of negative emotions was significant (Effect = .0062; se = .0036; LLCI = 0498, ULCI = .1194). The R<sup>2</sup> of the outcome variable in this study was 2,25%.

### 3.1.3 DISCUSSION

The findings of this study provide preliminary evidence suggesting a significant link between feelings of pride and consumer behavior, particularly in terms of differentiation consumption. To delve into these results, we employed a proxy measure of pride and observed its influence on individuals' inclination towards seeking differentiation from their fellow consumers. This proxy measure effectively captures the essence of pride and its impact on consumer choices.

To shed further light on this phenomenon, we explored the realm of online reviews by examining postings on the popular platform amazon.com. The public nature of these reviews amplifies the innate human desire for differentiation, as individuals are driven to distinguish themselves from others in a public forum. This dynamic underscores the importance of differentiation as a driving force behind consumer decisions.

Building upon these initial insights, our subsequent studies utilized a multifaceted approach to strengthen and validate our findings. We designed and conducted a series of controlled experiments, carefully manipulating variables and gauging participants' responses. These experiments allowed us to closely examine the causal relationship between pride and differentiation consumption, thus bolstering the robustness of our initial observations.

### 3.2 STUDY 2A

The objective of this study is twofold. First, we want to replicate the effect found in Study 1 using an experimental design manipulating pride and measuring intention for differentiation on a scale. The second objective of this study is to test three alternative mechanisms that can explain why people have a greater intention to search for differentiation after seeing a post eliciting pride.

#### 3.2.1 METHOD

*Participants and Design.* A total of 76 members of MTurk (55.3 % male; Mage = 38.78, SDage = 11.49) participated in this study in exchange for payment. The design employed was a single factor with two conditions (Pride N=35 vs. Control N=41 condition) in a between-subjects design.

*Procedure.* Mturkers were informed that they would participate in a study to test their general perceptions about others' posts on social media. After that, they were randomly assigned to one of both conditions – Pride or control. An read the following manipulation:

Pride

*“Today, I have to share something that happened. I have been using all my effort with my team to achieve the company goals. As a result, my boss recognizes and invites me to represent the company in an international conference with everything paid. It is an excellent news because I’ve been working hard to get new opportunities in my job. Being recognized by my hardworking is a dream coming true. So, I have to tell you that I felt confident and fulfilled when I discovered that I was going on a trip and my flight was in a business class. The status that I earned with this travel made me feel great about myself, persistent, and full of generosity. Because the company recognized my efforts, it makes me feel a better person than I usually am.”*

Or Control Manipulation

*“Every day my journey begins by having breakfast with my family. I leave my children at school, and I go to my work. As a regular day, I do more minor activities in the morning, like organizing my schedule and answering my emails and messages. After that, I have lunch with my co-workers and (try) to forget the issues about my job to take a rest. In the afternoon, I focus on my priority’s urgent activities, mainly those that demand more attention. At the end of the day, I pass by the grocery store and return home to spend time with my family.”*

Following the manipulation, we asked participants to indicate a person they imagined could post a similar message on social media. Then, they answered the manipulation check, *“He/She is full of pride,”* answered the differentiation consumption scale; *I like to buy products or services that make me stand out from the crowd. “I enjoy consuming things that are different from what others consume.”; “I prefer to buy products or services that reflect my unique personality.”; “I seek variety and novelty in my consumption choices.”; “I avoid consuming things that are too common or mainstream.”*  $\alpha = .874$ .

After that, they answered the emotion set scale, with negative and positive emotions that we used to calculate the mediator index with their level of anger, discontent, and sadness  $\alpha = .813$ . Further, they answer the scales of the alternative mechanisms, Parasocial Scale: *“He/She makes me feel like I am with someone I know well.”. “I see he/she as a natural down-to-earth person.”; “I would like to meet he/she in person.”; “I feel that I understand the emotions that he/she experiences.”; “I do not have any feelings about his/her.”; “Learning about he/she is important to me.”; “He/she understands the kinds of things I want to know.”; “I am very much aware of the details of his/her life.”; “I am not really interested in his/her.”*  $\alpha = .825$ .

Need for uniqueness scale: *“I collect unusual products as a way of telling people I’m different.”; “I have sometimes purchased unusual products or brands as a way to create a more distinctive personal image.”; “I often look for one-of-a-kind products or brands so that I create a style that is all my own.”; “Often when buying merchandise, an important goal is to find something that communicates my uniqueness.”; “I often combine possessions in such a way that I create a personal image for myself that can’t be duplicated.”; “I often try to find a more interesting version of run-of-the-mill products because I enjoy being original.”; “I actively seek to*

*develop my personal uniqueness by buying special products or brands.”; “Having an eye for products that are interesting and unusual assists me in establishing a distinctive image.”; “The products and brands that I like best are the ones that express my individuality.”; “I often think of the things I buy and do in terms of how I can use them to shape a more unusual personal image.”; “I’m often on the lookout for new products or brands that will add to my personal uniqueness.”; “When dressing, I have sometimes dared to be different in ways that others are likely to disapprove.”*  $\alpha = .967$ .

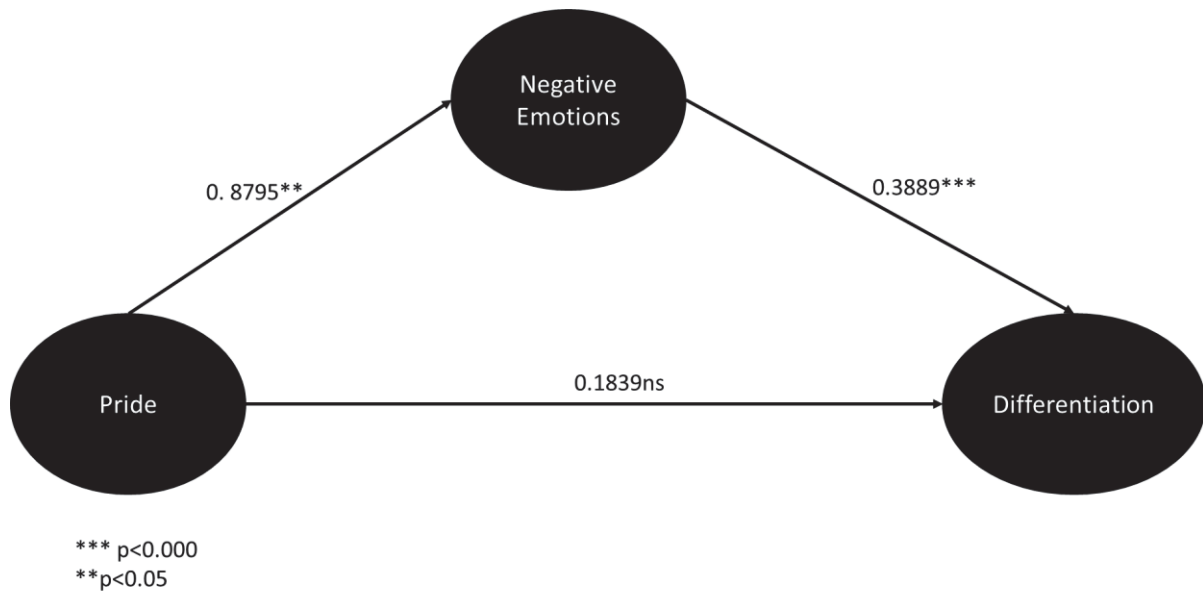
Need for self-verification scale: *“I seek feedback from others to know if they see me the way I see myself.”; “I feel good when others agree with my self-evaluation.”; “I avoid situations where others might disagree with my self-image.”; “I prefer to interact with people who share my view of myself.”; “I feel uncomfortable when others have a different impression of me than I do.”* .”  $\alpha = .788$ . At last, they answer the control and demographic questions.

### 3.2.2 RESULTS

*Manipulation check.* As expected, participants in the pride condition perceived more pride in the person they cited compared with the control condition ( $M_{pride} = 5.81$ ,  $sd = 0.92$ ;  $M_{control} = 4.25$ ,  $sd = 1.09$ ;  $p = .032$ );

*Research model.* To test our hypotheses 1 and 2, we run the analysis on SPSS using the Hayes process model 4 with 10000 bootstrapping samples. Again, we coded pride as one and control as 0. The results are shown in figure 2.

Figure 4. Conditional effects Study 2a



The model's total effect was insignificant (Effect = .5259; se = .2646; p = .0519). The direct effect was not significant (Effect = .1839; se = .2414; p = .4496). However, the mediation of negative emotions was significant (Effect = .3420; se = .1682; LLCI = .0614, ULCI = .7221). The R<sup>2</sup> of the outcome variable in this study was 31,77%.

*Alternative mediation of parasocial.* To test the alternative mediation of parasocial in our model, we used the Hayes process model number 4 with 10000 bootstrapping samples. The total effect in the model was nonsignificant (Effect = .0220; se = .2757; p = .9368), direct effect (Effect = -.1796; se = .2613; p = .4958), the mediation of parasocial (Effect = .2015; se = .1121; LLCI = -.0022, ULCI = .4382). The results demonstrated that all effects were not significant in the model.

*Alternative mediation of need for uniqueness.* To test the alternative mediation of the need for uniqueness in our model, we used the Hayes process model number 4 with 10000 bootstrapping samples. The total effect in the model was nonsignificant (Effect = .0220; se = .2757; p = .9368), direct effect (Effect = -.1605; se = .1959; p = .4154), the mediation of need for uniqueness (Effect = .1824; se =

.1943; LLCI = -.2254, ULCI = .5500). The results demonstrated that all effects were not significant in the model.

*Alternative mediation of the need for self-verification.* To test the alternative mediation of the *need for self-verification*, we used the Hayes process model number 4 with 10000 bootstrapping samples. The total effect in the model was nonsignificant (Effect = .0220; se = .2757; p = .9368), direct effect (Effect = -.2010; se = .2740; p = .4656), the mediation of need for self-verification (Effect = .2229; se = .2740; LLCI = -.0420, ULCI = .3451). The results demonstrated that all effects were not significant in the model.

### 3.2.3 DISCUSSION

The findings of this investigation shed light on the impact of encountering pride in others' social media posts on consumers' emotional states, which in turn influences their decision-making process to differentiate themselves from the perceived norm. This pattern of results observed in this study mirrors the patterns identified in the initial Study 1, thereby substantiating the consistency of the effects.

Moreover, the operationalization of this study involved a meticulous exploration of potential alternative explanations for the observed mediation variable. Specifically, three distinct mechanisms were put to the test: the parasocial need for uniqueness, and the need for self-verification. Notably, the outcomes revealed that none of these alternative mechanisms were statistically significant, thereby providing compelling evidence to underline the centrality of negative emotions as the key mechanisms driving the observed effects.

To extend and fortify the robustness of these findings, the subsequent two studies adopt a novel experimental approach. These forthcoming studies not only serve to replicate the patterns identified in the earlier investigations but also seek to

explore new potential alternative mechanisms that could be contributing to the observed effects. Through the systematic implementation of experimental designs, these studies aim to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the complex interplay between pride-evoking content, emotional responses, and the subsequent decisions made by consumers.

The upcoming experimental studies promise to enrich our understanding of this phenomenon by investigating new potential mechanisms and bolstering the validity of the observed effects.

### 3.3 STUDY 2B

This study has two objectives. First, we intend to replicate the findings of studies 1 and 2b. Second, we tested two new alternative mechanisms that could explain the effect of pride perception on intention to choice differentiation: the self-esteem of the person who sees the post and how close people are to the one posting on social media.

#### 3.3.1 METHOD

*Participants and Design.* A total of 96 members of MTurk (56.3% male; Mage = 40.73, SDage = 13.69) participated in this study in exchange for payment. The design employed was a single factor with two conditions (Pride N=43 vs. Control N=53 condition) in a between-subjects design.

*Procedure.* The manipulation of this study was the same as that used in study 2a. After being randomly attributed to one of two conditions, participants answered the same scale of choice differentiation – same as study 2a -  $\alpha = .891$ . Further, they answered the negative emotion scale – Same as study 2a -  $\alpha = .976$ , and, finally, they answered the control questions, including the questions regarding



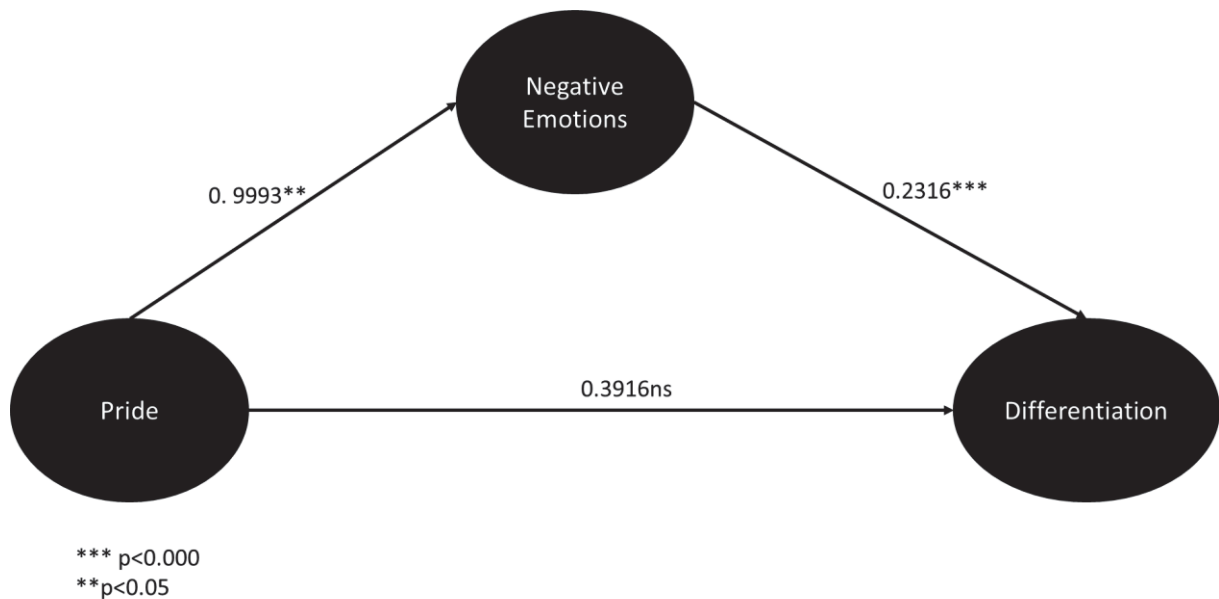
alternative mechanisms “I feel like I have a lot of self-esteem right now”; “The person I mentioned in the study is a person very close to me.” Then, at last, they answered the demographic questions.

### 3.3.2 RESULTS

*Manipulation check.* As expected, participants in the pride condition perceived more pride than people in the control condition ( $M_{\text{pride}} = 6.00$ ,  $sd = 1.36$ ;  $M_{\text{control}} = 5.00$ ,  $sd = 1.56$ ;  $p = .001$ );

*Research model.* To test our hypothesis 1, we run the analysis on SPSS using the Hayes process model 4 with 10000 bootstrapping samples. We coded pride as one and the control condition as 0. The results are shown in figure 4.

Figure 5: Conditional effects – Study 2b



The total effect in the model was significant (Effect = .6231;  $se = .2577$ ;  $p = .0175$ ). The direct effect was not significant (Effect = .3916;  $se = .2440$ ;  $p = .1119$ ). The mediation of negative emotions was significant (Effect = .2314;  $se = .1174$ ; LLCI = .0289, ULCI = .4821). The  $R^2$  in the outcome variable was 20,76%.

*Alternative mediation of self-esteem.* To test the alternative mediation of self-esteem in our model, we used the Hayes process model number 4 with 10000 bootstrapping samples. The total effect in the model was (Effect = .6231; se = .2577,  $p = .0175$ ), direct effect (Effect = .4251; se = .2437;  $p = .0804$ ), the mediation of self-esteem was (Effect = .1980; se = .1103; LLCI = -.0013, ULCI = .4381).

*Alternative mediation of people closeness.* We used the Hayes process model number 4 with 10000 bootstrapping samples to test the alternative mediation of people closeness in our model. The total effect in the model was (Effect = .6231; se = .2577,  $p = .0175$ ), direct effect (Effect = .5197; se = .2450;  $p = .0365$ ), the mediation of people closeness (Effect = -.1033; se = .0969; LLCI = -.0681, ULCI = .3144).

### 3.3.3 DISCUSSION

The findings of this study provide compelling evidence for the relationship between pride perception and the inclination of individuals to seek differentiation. Moreover, the study delves into the intricate dynamics by demonstrating that this relationship is mediated by negative emotions. By elucidating these mechanisms, the research contributes to a more comprehensive understanding of the psychological processes underlying differentiation.

In the quest to enhance the validity of the proposed model, the study meticulously controlled for and ruled out alternative explanations. Specifically, two potential confounding variables were thoroughly addressed and discarded as explanatory factors for the observed results. This comprehensive approach bolsters the credibility of the findings and reinforces the robustness of the theoretical framework.

### 3.4 STUDY 4

The objective of this study is twofold. First, we intended to replicate the effects found in the previous study, demonstrating how pride leads to consumer differentiation and the mediation effect of negative emotions. Second, we want to test the model using a new product category. In the first study, we analyzed a book review dataset. In this one, we performed the analysis with a dataset of cellphone reviews.

#### 3.4.1 METHOD

*Sample size.* Forty thousand one hundred nine reviews were selected to perform this study. The sample was extracted from amazon.com. The data extraction was performed by Arun (2022) and is available on Kaggle.com.

*Procedure.* First, we downloaded the data set available on Kaggle.com regarding cellphones reviews posted on amazon.com. Kaggle.com is an online community and platform that serves as a hub for data scientists and machine learning enthusiasts worldwide. The platform has some datasets free for use. We use those data about cellphones reviews to perform this research.

Specifically, the dataset was composed by two hundred thousand nine hundred twenty-two reviews extracted from amazon.com. The variables in the dataset were: Product Name; Brand Name; Price; Rating; Reviews.

To perform the analysis, we eliminate reviews with less than 40 characters, because these reviews were incomplete. We also eliminate from dataset the reviews with emoticons and other graphical characters because they are not processed by LIWC. After that, we randomly selected forty thousand one hundred nine reviews to

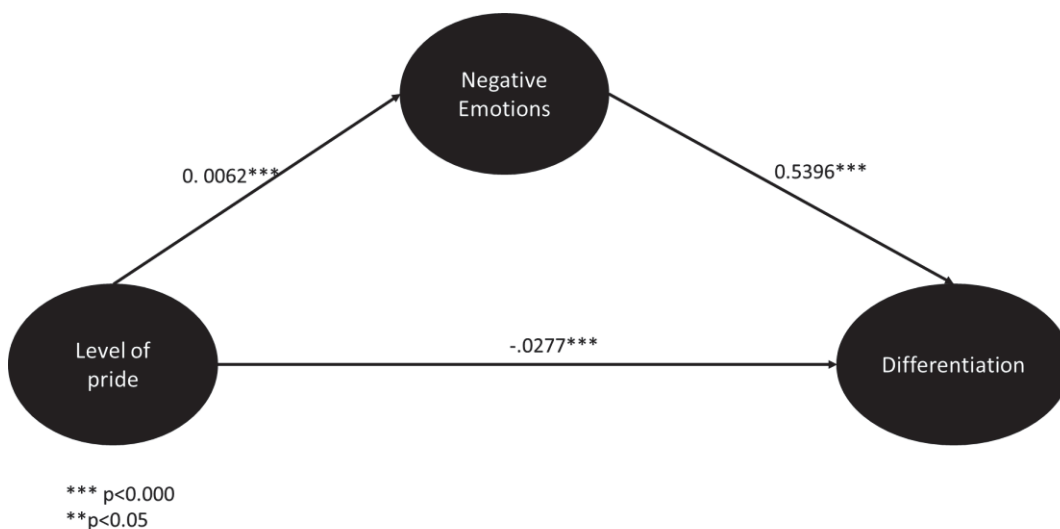
perform the analysis. We selected these specific cases because of the limited computational resources to process a huge amount of data.

After downloading the dataset, we perform a sentiment analysis using the LIWC software—the Linguistic Inquiry and Word Count (LIWC), similar to Study 1. To test our research model, we used three categories provided by LIWC, to test our model, personal pronouns, negative emotions, and differentiation, the same categories used in study one. Specifically, we used the personal pronoun category as an independent variable, negative emotions as a mediator, and differentiation as the dependent variable. Personal pronouns and differentiation were measured in a single item, and negative emotions were a mean composed of sadness and anger indicators  $\alpha = 0.700$ .

### 3.4.2 RESULTS

*Research model study 2.* We run the analysis on using Hayes' process with 10000 bootstrapping samples to test our model. The results are shown in figure 5.

Figure 6: Conditional effects – Study 4



The total effect in the model was significant (Effect =  $-.0243$ ; se =  $.0037$ ;  $p = .0000$ ). The direct effect was significant (Effect =  $-.0277$ ; se =  $.0036$ ;  $p = .0000$ ). The mediation of negative emotions was significant (Effect =  $.0034$ ; se =  $.0005$ ; LLCI:  $.0023$ , ULCI:  $.0044$ ). the  $R^2$  of the model was 1,88%.

### 3.4.3 DISCUSSION

The results of the current study serve to replicate and reinforce the findings from previous research, further substantiating our hypotheses. Specifically, our investigation reveals that elevated levels of pride have a noteworthy impact on triggering negative emotions within individuals. This outcome mirrors the patterns observed in earlier studies and, in turn, bolsters the credibility of our theoretical framework.

Furthermore, our study delves deeper into the operational facets of this phenomenon, elucidating the underlying mechanisms that drive these effects. In contrast to the initial study, wherein secondary data were also employed, a novel nuance emerged. Namely, we unearthed a distinct pattern wherein the direct influence of pride on differentiation exhibited a negative orientation.

This intriguing variance aligns with the rationale presented in our third hypothesis, wherein we posited that divergent product categories could engender varying proclivities among individuals seeking differentiation. Our postulation surmised that consumers might exhibit a predilection for products imbued with more intricate connotations, as these items facilitate a heightened sense of distinctiveness from their peers. Our subsequent study, which we allude to here, serves as a conduit for elucidating and substantiating this intricate interplay.

In sum, the outcomes of our current endeavor augment the body of evidence underscoring the intricate interplay between pride, negative emotions, and differentiation. Moreover, the discrepancies revealed in the direct influence of pride on differentiation underscore the nuanced nature of this dynamic. By meticulously parsing the implications of our findings and elucidating the operational intricacies at play, we illuminate a pathway for future inquiry that promises to enrich our understanding of consumer behavior across diverse product categories.

### 3.5 STUDY 5

The objective of this study is twofold. First, we intended to replicate the mediation of negative emotion and its impact on consumer intention to search for differentiation. In this study, we use a dataset composed of two types of product reviews, cellphones, and books. Second, we want to test the moderation effect of the type of products on consumer differentiation. As we argued before, some products can be more beneficial for consumers to differentiate from others. This study tested how books can create more differentiation than cell phones.

#### 3.5.1 METHOD

*Sample size.* One thousand eight hundred eighty-five reviews were selected to perform this study. The sample was extracted from amazon.com. The data extraction was performed by Bekeet, (2022) and Arun (2022) and is available on Kaggle.com.

*Procedure.* First, we downloaded the data set available on Kaggle.com regarding cellphones (N=745) and books (N=1140) reviews posted on amazon.com, similar to studies 1 and 4.

In this case, the dataset was composed by the two previous datasets used in this research. To perform the analysis, we eliminate reviews with less than 40 characters, because these reviews were incomplete. We also eliminate from dataset the reviews with emoticons and other graphical characters because they are not processed by LIWC.

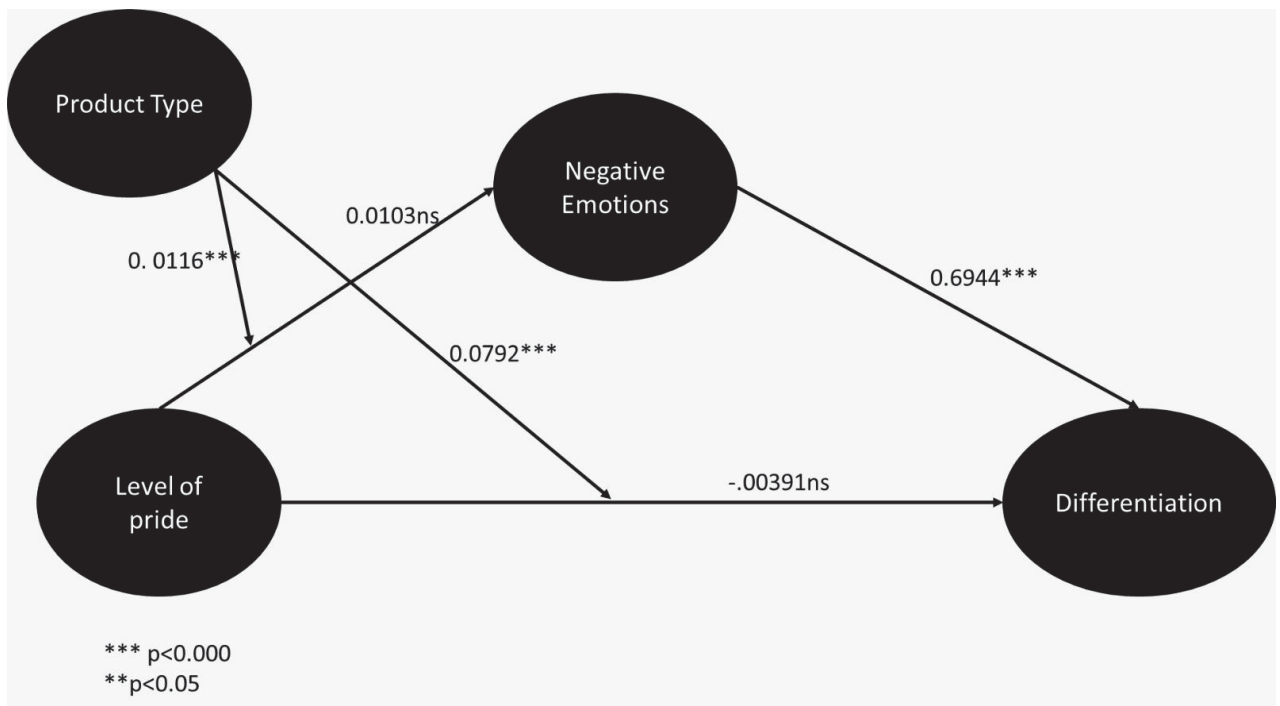
We use the entire dataset of books we used in previous studies. The datasets of cellphones were bigger, and we randomly selected 7 hundred forty five reviews from the dataset to perform the analysis with a similar sample size. Because this reason we reduced the number of samples within cellphone dataset.

After downloading the dataset, we perform a sentiment analysis using the LIWC software. The Linguistic Inquiry and Word Count (LIWC) similar to previous studies. To test our research model, we used three categories provided by LIWC, to test our model, personal pronouns, negative emotions, differentiation, and one binary variable regarding the kind of product. We coded the book category as 1 and the cellphone as 0. Specifically, we used the personal pronoun category as an independent variable, negative emotions as a mediator, differentiation as the dependent variable, and product category as the moderator. Personal pronouns and differentiation were measured in a single item, and negative emotions were a mean composed of sadness and anger indicators  $\alpha = 0.804$ .

### 3.5.2 RESULTS

*Conditional model study 5.* We run the analysis on Hayes' process with 10000 bootstrapping samples to test our model. We employed model number 8 of the Hayes Process to analyze our results. The results are shown in figure 5.

Figure 7 Conditional effects



### 3.5.3 DISCUSSION

The outcomes of this research not only replicated the outcomes observed in prior studies but also provided a more intricate understanding of the operational procedures used in these investigations. Specifically, we discovered that individuals who experience a heightened sense of pride exhibit an increased inclination towards seeking differentiation. These results serve to validate the hypotheses we had formulated.

Simultaneously, we identified a nuanced relationship between the nature of products and the cognitive processes that individuals engage in. Through the implementation of a conditional model, we demonstrated that individuals expressing an interest in a book, as opposed to a cellphone, are more susceptible to experiencing negative emotions. This emotional shift, in turn, leads them to engage in a more pronounced search for differentiation, which aligns precisely with the proposition outlined in our third hypothesis (H3).



In the subsequent sections, we embark on a comprehensive discussion of the implications derived from the findings of our studies. We delve into both the theoretical and practical contributions that these results bring forth. This exploration sheds light on the underlying mechanisms that govern the interaction between emotional states, product preferences, and cognitive processes. Furthermore, we offer insights into how these findings could be applied in real-world contexts, potentially informing marketing strategies and consumer behavior interventions.

## 4 GENERAL DISCUSSION

The current research discusses about how pride perception leads peoples to make choices that differentiate them from others. Nowadays, we live in a society that the social network website propagates pride – which means that all the time we saw conquers, purchases, and experiences share by others and discussions about the subsequent behaviors are relevant to understand if people make choices based on the content full of pride posted in the social media.

Besides, the present research performing 05 studies and presented that when someone perceive prides in a content share by others in social media they tend to differentiate, and its mediate by negative emotions and moderate by the type os products choose for them. In that matter, the results support the hypothesis discuss and corroborate the theoretical background presented.

### 4.1 THEORETHICAL CONTRIBUTION

Previous studies on pride present it as emotion experienced by individuals when they reach a certain goal in life, and, consequently, is a positive valanced emotion that – in the most of cases leads the person to positive feelings and behaviors (Tracy & Robins, 2007; Cheng, Tracy & Henrich, 2010; Tracy & Prehn, 2012; Tracy et al., 2012; Damian & Robbins, 2013; Mercadante & Tracy, 2021; Witkower, Mercadante & Tracy, 2021; Mercadante, Witkower & Tracy, 2021; Kaur & Verma, 2022). However, discussions about pride perception and its impacts on consumer behavior can be considered a gap in the literature – mainly when we try to differentiate hubristic and authentic pride. In the present research, after some studies, we choose to work with only facet of pride, principally, because the

manipulations that we draw it is not strong enough to people differentiate between the two of them.

However, even with this choice it is possible to say that the present research begins the discussion on pride perception and its impacts on consumer behavior, mainly, when we talk about differentiation and the way we perceive a content full of pride. When interpreting a pride expression, observers are likely to utilize available attribution information about the cause of the proud individual's success, and, consequently, consider the source of this information (Tracy & Prehn, 2012).

Consequently, they made inferences about it which leads to future behaviors, such as consumption of different products or experiences, negative emotions, and behaviors. Concerning to this matter, discussions highlight that when there is a comparison, the necessity to be dissimilar surpass, because people want to be unique (Snyder and Fromkin, 1980; Lynn and Snyder, 2002).

Berger and Heath present some drivers that leaves to divergence, such as low-status others (people want to be apart from members of other social categories); disliked others (people searching for decreasing their associations with people that they view negatively); similar others (diverge because of too much similarity).

In the context of the present research, it is possible to mention that when a person perceive pride it can be permeated by feelings of dislike – which means that people view others negatively when others present superiority through your achievements. So, discussions made about it, in the present research lead to a broader comprehension about the relationship between pride (on the observer side) and differentiation.

Moreover, we discuss that negative emotions can be a relevant mediator in this relationship because sharing contents of pride can promote perceptions of

arrogance, leading observers to dislike others and root against your future success (Tracy & Prehn, 2012) and, also, make people feel negative emotions in the process.

Negative emotions are broadly discussed in the context of social networks context, but in the perspective on differentiation and pride perception there is a gap in that concern, mainly when we bring a type of product as a moderator for this relation. Discussions about hedonic and products that are considered utilitarian have prominence in the discussions on consumer behavior. However, the moderator role in this perspective can be a novel context in this discussion, particularly, due to the role of enlightened products on differentiation.

In sum, the present research brings new lights for several discussions, mainly when we bring concerns about pride perception, need for differentiation, negative emotions and type of product.

#### 4.2 MANAGERIAL IMPLICATIONS

In the present research, we demonstrated that when people perceive pride on a social media post (for example) the need for differentiation arises and its mediated by negative emotions. As a result, this result shed light on managers to be aware of the content spread in the social media networks, mainly, through influencers that have traits of pride in their posts. Here, its important to discern that future research can fill the gap and answer questions about how the pride disseminated by influencers can harm brands and their reputation.

Besides, in the social media we found a lot of people that are full of pride, and its can be a good thing for brands that need to gain more attention, mainly, when they are look for inserted products that emphasize the need for differentiation, for example.

### 4.3 LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE RESEARCH

This research has some limitations that reflects some possibilities for future investigations. First, the sample of all experiments was taken from Amazon MTurk, representing a limitation to the external validity of our studies.

Second, we use only one facet of pride, and in the literature, as discussed in the theoretical background, there is two (Tracy & Robbins, 2007). In future research, we propose that bring more information that made the pride perception manipulation more robust and, perhaps, people can differentiate the two facets of pride, as mentioned by different authors.

Third, it is possible that there are different emotions that can impact on need for differentiation and the pride perception concerns. Besides, debates about positive emotions and how it can impact in this relation can be better discuss. Finally, the type of product is a concern that can be tested in other ways and can bring provide more perspectives for the research. Despite these limitations, the current study provides several important insights into the effects of pride perception and need for uniqueness, as well as, for the role of negative emotions and type of product in that relation.

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## APPENDIX 1 – STUDY 2A

### **PRIDE MANIPULATION**

Imagine you are navigating in a social network and saw the following post from a person who **has been important and have influenced your life**:

#### **Authentic Pride**

Today, I have to share something that happened. I have been using all my effort with my team to achieve the company goals. As a result, my boss recognizes and invites me to represent the company in an international conference with everything paid. It is an excellent news because I've been working hard to get new opportunities in my job. Being recognized by my hardworking is a dream coming true. So, I have to tell you that I felt confident and fulfilled when I discovered that I was going on a trip and my flight was in a business class. The status that I earned with this travel made me feel great about myself, persistent, and full of generosity. Because the company recognized my efforts, it makes me feel a better person than I usually am.

#### **Hubristic Pride**

Today, I have to share something I was planning and finally happened. I have been using all my talent with the team to achieve my professional goals. As a result, my boss finally decided that I am the best person to represent the company in an international conference with everything paid. It is an expected news because I've been waiting to get this opportunity in my job. Being recognized by my skills is a dream coming true. So, I have to tell you that I felt vainglory and full of myself when I discovered that I was going on a trip and my flight was in a business class. The status that I earned with this travel made me feel snobbish, overconfident, and a puppet master. Because the company finally gave me the deserved credit, it makes me feel a surpassing person I believe I am.

#### **Control**

Every day my journey begins by having breakfast with my family. I leave my children at school, and I go to my work. As a regular day, I do more minor activities in the morning, like organizing my schedule and answering my emails and messages. After that, I have lunch with my co-workers and (try) to forget the issues about my job to take a rest. In the afternoon, I focus on my priority's urgent activities, mainly those that demand more attention. At the end of the day, I pass by the grocery store and return home to spend time with my family.

I have a daily routine that involves some activities. In the morning, I make breakfast, take the children to school and go to work. At work, I organize the schedule, answer emails and messages and have lunch with colleagues. In the afternoon, I do the activities that are necessary and urgent. At the end of the day, I buy what I need at the market and go back home. At home, I stay with the family until bedtime.

#### **Page brake**

Please, based on the post you just read, write down a full name of a person that you imagine publishing that post on a social network:

<name\_here>

**Page brake**

Please, now describe what you think about **<name\_here> personality** concerning the post you just have read in a few words.

Text 30-character

**Page brake****MANIPULATION\_CHECK**

I think that he/she feels pride of him/herself.

He/She is full of pride.

He/She is self-assured.

**Page brake****DV\_DIFFERENTIATION**

**Please read the text below and follow the instructions.**

Imagine that you are considering purchasing a travel. The descriptions of the two options and their attributes are as follows.

Please, read the descriptions and choose between the two experiences:

Experience X and Experience Y:

**Experience Y**

Break with the touristic industry standards offering experiences that are edgy and unique. Unlike standard tourist destination, these one is different by deliver experiences that are irreverent, hip and, sometimes eccentric.

It cost \$ 1000.

The destination received a Traveller's Choice Reward in 2022.

**Experience X**

Challenge the touristic industry standards offering experiences that are luxurious and classy. Unlike standard tourist destination, these one is different by being posh, elegant, and sometimes exquisite.

It cost \$ 1000.

The destination received a Traveller's Choice Reward in 2022.

**Page brake****Consumption for Differentiation**

Now, remember **the post that you read before** and answer the following questions. Please indicate how much you agree or disagree with each of the following statements about your consumption behavior.

I like to buy products or services that make me stand out from the crowd.

I enjoy consuming things that are different from what others consume.

I prefer to buy products or services that reflect my unique personality.

I seek variety and novelty in my consumption choices.

I avoid consuming things that are too common or mainstream.

Page brake

## MEADIATOR\_ENVY

### Benign and Malicious \_ ENVY

When I envy others, I focus on how I can become equally successful in the future.

I wish that superior people lose their advantage.

If I notice that another person is better than me, I try to improve myself.

If you read this statement, choose number 4.

If other people have something that I want for myself, I wish to take it away from them.

Envy others motivates me to accomplish my goals.

I feel ill will toward people I envy.

I strive to reach other people's superior achievements.

Envious feelings cause me to dislike the other person.

If you read this statement, choose number 4.

If someone has superior qualities, achievements, or possessions, I try to attain them for myself.

Seeing other people's achievements makes me resent them.

Page brake

## DISPOSITIONAL\_ENVY

Now, think about **your feelings**, and answer the following questions.

I feel envy every day.

The bitter truth is that I generally feel inferior to others.

Feelings of envy constantly torment me.

It is so frustrating to see some people succeed so easily.

No matter what I do, envy always plagues me.

If you read this statement, choose number 4.

I am troubled by feelings of inadequacy.

It somehow doesn't seem fair that some people seem to have all the talent.

Frankly, the success of my neighbors makes me resent them.

Page brake

## **OTHER\_MEASURES**

### **THE CONSUMPTION EMOTION SET**

Now, **remember the social media post that you read before**, and answering the following questions about your feelings.

#### **Anger**

Frustrated

Angry

Irritated

#### **Discontent**

Unfulfilled

Discontented

#### **Sadness**

Depressed

Sad

Miserable

#### **Peacefulness**

Calm

Peacefull

#### **Contentment**

Contented

Fulfilled

#### **Optimism**

Optimistic

Encouraged

Hopeful

Page brake

## **PARASOCIAL**

Now, **remember the social media post that you read before**, and answering the following questions.



He/She makes me feel as if I am with a someone I know well.

I see he/she as a natural down-to-earth person.

I would like to meet he/she in person.

I feel that I understand the emotions that he/she experiences.

I do not have any feelings about his/her.

Learning about he/she is important to me.

If you read this statement, choose number 4.

He/she understands the kinds of things I want to know.

I am very much aware of the details of his/her life.

I am not really interested in his/her.

Page brake

### NEED FOR UNIQUENESS

Now, think about **yourself** and answer **how much you agree** with the follow statements.

I collect unusual products as a way of telling people I'm different.

I have sometimes purchased unusual products or brands as a way to create a more distinctive personal image.

I often look for one-of-a-kind products or brands so that I create a style that is all my own.

Often when buying merchandise, an important goal is to find something that communicates my uniqueness.

I often combine possessions in such a way that I create a personal image for myself that can't be duplicated.

I often try to find a more interesting version of run-of-the-mill products because I enjoy being original.

I actively seek to develop my personal uniqueness by buying special products or brands.

If you read this statement, choose number 4.

Having an eye for products that are interesting and unusual assists me in establishing a distinctive image.

The products and brands that I like best are the ones that express my individuality.

I often think of the things I buy and do in terms of how I can use them to shape a more unusual personal image.

I'm often on the lookout for new products or brands that will add to my personal uniqueness.

When dressing, I have sometimes dared to be different in ways that others are likely to disapprove.

Page brake



### **Need\_for\_Self\_Verification**

Now, remember **the post that you read before** and answer the following questions.

I seek feedback from others to know if they see me the way I see myself.

I feel good when others agree with my self-evaluation.

I avoid situations where others might disagree with my self-image.

I prefer to interact with people who share my view of myself.

I feel uncomfortable when others have a different impression of me than I do.

**Page brake**

### **PRIDE\_PERCEPTION**

Now, remember **the post that you read before** and answer the following questions.

I think that (name here) is:

Accomplished

Arrogant

Achieving

**Choose 04**

Conceited

Confident

Egoistical

Fulfilled

Pompous

**Choose 04**

Productive

Smug

Self-worth

Snobbish

Successful

Stuck-up

**Page brake**

Control\_questions

Now, before you finish the survey, please, rate your opinion about following affirmations.

I feel proud of myself or my achievements very often.

I express my pride to others in a clear and visible way.

I can easily cope with situations that make me feel ashamed or embarrassed.

It is very important for me to receive positive feedback or recognition from others.

I compare myself with others who are similar or different from me very frequently.

I value my own opinions and preferences over those of others very much.

I am very willing to try new things or explore new possibilities in my consumption choices.

I care about the environmental or social impacts of my consumption choices very much.

I consider the quality or price of the products or services that I consume very carefully.

**Page brake**

## **DEMOGRAPHIC DATA**

Finally, we would like to know some demographic data.

Your gender?

Male

Female

Your age?

Please, write down your job function

What is your yearly family household income?

Do you have any comments about this study?

## **REALISM**

How realistic was the post you read?

## **SHOES\_REALISM**

How realistic was the shoe ad featured earlier?

## APPENDIX 2 - STUDY 2B

### PRIDE MANIPULATION

Imagine you are navigating in a social network and saw the following post from a person who **has been important and have influenced your life**:

#### **Authentic Pride**

Today, I have to share something that happened. I have been using all my effort with my team to achieve the company goals. As a result, my boss recognizes and invites me to represent the company in an international conference with everything paid. It is an excellent news because I've been working hard to get new opportunities in my job. Being recognized by my hardworking is a dream coming true. So, I have to tell you that I felt confident and fulfilled when I discovered that I was going on a trip and my flight was in a business class. The status that I earned with this travel made me feel great about myself, persistent, and full of generosity. Because the company recognized my efforts, it makes me feel a better person than I usually am.

#### **Control**

I have a daily routine that involves some activities. In the morning, I make breakfast, take the children to school and go to work. At work, I organize the schedule, answer emails and messages and have lunch with colleagues. In the afternoon, I do the activities that are necessary and urgent. At the end of the day, I buy what I need at the market and go back home. At home, I stay with the family until bedtime.

Page brake

Please, based on the post you just read, write down a full name of a person that you imagine publishing that post on a social network:

<name\_here>

Page brake

Please, now describe what you think about **<name\_here> personality** concerning the post you just have read in a few words.

Text 30-character

Page brake

### **MANIPULATION\_CHECK**

I think that he/she feels pride of him/herself.

He/She is full of pride.

He/She is self-assured.

Page brake

### **Consumption for Differentiation**

Now, remember **the post that you read before** and answer the following questions. Please indicate how much you agree or disagree with each of the following statements about your consumption behavior.

I like to buy products or services that make me stand out from the crowd.

I enjoy consuming things that are different from what others consume.

I prefer to buy products or services that reflect my unique personality.

I seek variety and novelty in my consumption choices.

I avoid consuming things that are too common or mainstream.

Page brake

### **OTHER\_MEASURES**

#### **THE CONSUMPTION EMOTION SET**

Now, remember **the social media post that you read before**, and answering the following questions about your feelings.

**Anger**

**Discontent**

**Sadness**

**Peacefulness**

**Contentment**

**Optimism**

Page brake

### **CONTROL\_QUESTIONS**

Now, before you finish the survey, please, rate your opinion about following affirmations.

I feel like I have a lot of self esteem right now

I felt sad because I am very distant from the person I mentioned in the study

Things seem so easy to other people, and to me so difficult.

I like to see people sharing good things about their lives on social media

The person I mentioned in the study is a person very close to me.

I like to know about other people's lives

I consider myself a person with a lot of friends

Page brake

### **DEMOGRAPHIC DATA**

Finally, we would like to know some demographic data.

Your gender?

Male

Female

Your age?

Please, write down your job function

What is your yearly family household income?

Do you have any comments about this study?

### **REALISM**

How realistic was the post you read?