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ARTICLE

Salesperson self-regulation of pride: Effects on adaptability, effort, and citizenship behaviors between independent-based and interdependent-based cultures

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Abstract We investigate and compare how salespersons within an independent-based culture (the Netherlands) and an interdependent-based culture (the Philippines) experience and self-regulate pride that is evoked through praise and recognition by their managers. This self-regulation differentially influences behavior toward customers (through adaptive resource utilization and effort put forth) and colleagues (via company citizenship behaviors). For Dutch employees, the impact of pride on adaptive resource utilization and working hard in front of customers was moderated by dispositional proneness to pride and the tendency to self-regulate one's pride so as to avoid hubris; toward colleagues, the experience of pride directly affected citizenship behaviors as main effects. For Filipinos, experienced pride had main effects on adaptive resource utilization and working hard in front of customers. With respect to citizenship behaviors, the effects of experienced pride were moderated by dispositional proneness to pride. As firms operate in international contexts and seek to sell to people from different cultures, managers need to understand how pride and its self-regulation function so as to better select, train, coach, compensate, and manage the salesforce.

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PALABRAS CLAVE

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Comportamientos cívicos organizativos

Autorregulación del orgullo de los vendedores: efectos sobre la adaptabilidad, el esfuerzo y los comportamientos ciudadanos entre las culturas basadas en la independencia y las culturas basadas en la interdependencia

Resumen Investigamos y comparamos el modo de experimentar y autorregular el orgullo de los vendedores dentro de una cultura basada en la independencia (la holandesa) y una cultura basada en la interdependencia (la filipina), evocado a través del elogio y del reconocimiento por parte de sus gestores. Dicha autorregulación influye de diversos modos en el comportamiento hacia los clientes (a través de la utilización de los recursos adaptativos y del esfuerzo propuesto) y los compañeros (a través de los comportamientos cívicos de la empresa). Para los empleados holandeses, el impacto del orgullo sobre la utilización adaptativa de los recursos y el trabajo duro frente a los clientes fue moderado por la tendencia a la disposición al orgullo y la inclinación a autorregular el orgullo propio a fin de evitar la arrogancia hacia los compañeros. La experiencia del orgullo se ve directamente afectada por los comportamientos cívicos como elementos principales. Para los filipinos, el orgullo experimentado tuvo efectos mayores sobre la utilización de los recursos adaptativos y el trabajo duro frente a los clientes. Con respecto a los comportamientos cívicos, los efectos del orgullo experimentado fueron moderados por la propensión a la disposición al orgullo. Como las empresas operan en contextos internacionales y tratan de vender productos a las personas de diferentes culturas, los gestores deben comprender el modo de funcionamiento del orgullo y de su autorregulación, de cara a seleccionar, formar, entrenar, compensar y gestionar de un modo mejor a su fuerza de ventas.

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Introduction

One of the key drivers of performance of salespeople was long ago speculated to be ego-drive (Mayer & Greenberg, 1964). Ego-drive has not been studied systematically in marketing and has been defined in various ways, referring to motivation, a "need to conquer", and pride. We attempt in this article to provide an in-depth study of the role of pride in selling, as grounded in basic research in psychology and using a quasi-experimental field methodology in a cross-cultural setting.

Pride is defined as the phenomenological experience of "joy over an action, thought, or feeling well done" (Lewis, 2000, p. 630), and is frequently contrasted with shame (Mascolo & Fischer, 1995). Lazarus (1991, p. 271) specifies the "core relational theme" for pride as "enhancement of one's ego-identity by taking credit for a valued object or achievement, either our own or that of someone or group with whom we identify". A core relational theme is the "central...relational harm or benefit in adaptational encounters" that underlies an emotion (Lazarus, 1991, p. 121).

Pride: causes and effects

Pride has personal and social functions, and its focus of attention is on both the self as agent and the self as object (Barrett, 1995). Personally, pride helps to maintain self-esteem, signal to oneself important standards, and facilitate the acquisition of information about the self as object and agent (Barrett, 1995). Socially, pride shows others that one has achieved valued outcomes, and it promotes a striving for

dominance or superiority over others (Barrett, 1995; Cheng, Tracy, & Henrich 2010; Erevelles & Fukawa, 2013; Mascolo, Fischer, & Li, 2003).

Pride is one of the few, and perhaps the only, positive self-conscious emotion, in contrast to many common negative self-conscious emotions (e.g., shame, guilt, embarrassment, envy, jealousy). Very little research exists even in psychology investigating pride, and indeed Tangney (2003, p. 395) observes, "Of the self-conscious emotions, pride is the neglected sibling, having received the least attention by far." But as with other emotions, pride arises in response to *primary appraisals* of the personal implications of an event that has happened or is anticipated to happen to oneself (Scherer, Schorr, & Johnstone, 2001; Smith & Kirby, 2001). Once activated and experienced, pride provides motivational force, barring contingencies discussed below, to promote behavior that confirms, perpetuates, and even enhances one's self-worth, particularly in social settings. It works as a reinforcement, thus stimulating on-going action (Carver & Scheier, 1990), and 'loosens' a person's information processing, resulting in more creativity and flexibility (e.g., Fredrickson, 2001; Schwarz & Bless, 1991).

In our study, we examine the effects of pride stemming from praise and recognition that a manager gives to his/her subordinate, which is further observed by either colleagues or customers of the employee. The praise and recognition are manipulated by use of a scenario given to salespersons (see "Method" section). Thus, given an appraisal of an episode where one is praised and given recognition, and as a result experiences pride, the experienced pride, *ceteris paribus*, will lead to greater use of adaptive communication resources (e.g., the ability to change one's interpersonal approach when needed; the range of

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