

When Bittersweet is as Good as Sweet:
How Emotion Norms Shape Consumption Choices

by

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Dissertation submitted in partial fulfillment of the
requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy
in the Department of Business Administration
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ABSTRACT

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Abstract

Though societally-held norms about emotion are an ever-present factor that guide and shape our emotional experiences, little research has examined how these norms might influence our consumption behaviors. In my dissertation, I begin to bridge that gap by examining how emotion norms might encourage individuals to make certain consumption choices in an attempt to achieve or avoid specific emotional states. In particular, I focus specifically on the emotion norm associated with the experience of feeling ashamed to explore how emotion norms can lead us to make some rather unexpected choices. Across a series of studies, I find that the emotion norm associated with shame attenuates consumers' basic hedonic impulses and increases their preference for products that elicit mixed emotions. Importantly, I find that this occurs despite our natural preference for feeling positively and despite the fact that feeling mixed emotions is psychologically uncomfortable and aversive. Taken together, this work extends the existing research on motivated emotion, mixed emotions and emotion norms in (1) suggesting a novel reason for why individuals might seek out one emotional state over another (2) providing an explanation for why mixed emotions-eliciting products might succeed in the marketplace (3) demonstrating that not all negative emotions lead to mood repair behavior and (4) examining how emotion norms as fundamental social structures influence consumption behavior.

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General Introduction

Emotion is a fundamental aspect of the world we live in – very little (if any) of life occurs in a completely feeling-less state. As we make our way through the world, the events and happenings that punctuate our lives are infused with emotion. Accordingly, we feel anxious before defending our dissertation, relieved after getting a job offer, happy when we become a newly minted “doctor” and annoyed when a reviewer completely misses the point of the article we submitted.

Though many of the emotions we feel are visceral, gut-level responses to the events taking place around us, our emotional experiences as a whole are governed by societally-determined emotion norms regarding when we should feel specific emotions and which emotions are appropriate to what situations (Hochschild, 1983). For instance, we learn early on that we should feel sad at a funeral, happy at a party and grateful at Thanksgiving. Each society has its own set of emotion norms that constitute an ever-present influence on the emotional experiences within that culture. A vast amount of research suggests that we are motivated to manage our emotional experiences to be in line with what is societally expected and that we do so for good reason – conformity to emotion norms has been linked to positive social and psychological benefits (e.g., Clark, 1997) and deviations from such norms are associated with psychological distress and negative social consequences (e.g., Thoits, 1985).

Though emotion norms constantly guide and shape our emotional experiences, little research has examined how this fundamental social structure might influence consumption behavior. In this research, I begin to bridge that gap by exploring how

emotion norms might shape consumption choices. Specifically, I expect that because individuals are motivated to conform to emotion norms, the presence of an emotion norm will lead individuals to consume products that elicit norm-consistent emotions. As an example, I expect that because we are supposed to feel happy at a party, individuals might choose to listen to upbeat music while getting ready to join the festivities. While many of the cases in which emotion norms affect consumption choices are fairly unremarkable (e.g., listening to happy music before a party), I propose that the presence of emotion norms can sometimes compel consumers to make some rather unexpected choices. That is, I suggest that emotion norms can motivate individuals to make choices that they would not otherwise make in an attempt to achieve or avoid specific emotional states.

In what follows, I begin by exploring consumer lay beliefs about emotion norms in general before focusing my dissertation on a specific example of an emotion norm and examining how that emotion norm influences consumer choices. Specifically, I concentrate on how the emotion norm associated with the experience of shame can lead consumers to make some rather nonintuitive consumption choices that are inconsistent with mood regulation (e.g., Cohen and Andrade, 2007) and with the hedonic principle (e.g., Freud, 1924/1968). Because the state of shame is characterized by strong feelings of worthlessness and undeservingness, I propose that feelings of shame come with an emotion norm that one does not deserve to feel positively. I further suggest that this anti-positivity emotion norm, in combination with our basic desire to make hedonic choices and to alleviate negativity (Freud 1924/1968; Gilbert, Wilson and Centerbar, 2003), leads

ashamed consumers to increase their preference for products that elicit both positive and negative emotions – that is, mixed emotions. Importantly, I expect this result to occur despite the fact that mixed emotions are psychologically uncomfortable and aversive (Williams and Aaker, 2002; Ramanathan and Williams, 2007), and despite the fact that both mood regulation and the hedonic principle would predict that individuals in a negative state should strongly prefer items that elicit purely positive emotions over those that do not (Freud 1924/1968; Gilbert, Wilson and Centerbar, 2003).

Over a series of studies, I first validate that the emotion norm in shame is an avoidance of positivity before exploring how this emotion norm can lead to non-hedonically driven choices. Specifically, I find that the anti-positivity emotion norm in shame attenuates individuals' basic hedonic tendencies and leads ashamed individuals to significantly increase their preference for mixed emotions-eliciting products. Importantly, I find that the emotion norm in shame increases preferences for mixed emotions-eliciting products to the point where ashamed individuals express an equal preference for purely positive and psychologically aversive mixed emotions-eliciting products.

Taken together, this work builds on and extends the existing research on emotion norms, mixed emotions and motivated emotion in several ways. First, this work begins to bridge the gap in understanding how emotion norms might influence consumer behavior. Second, in exploring how emotion norms might lead individuals to consume products that elicit specific emotions, I suggest a novel reason for why individuals might be motivated to seek out one emotional state over another. Third, I contribute to the work on motivated emotion, and specifically to the literature on mood regulation, in

demonstrating that not all negative emotions will lead to mood repair behavior. And fourth, this work sheds light on why mixed emotions-eliciting products might succeed in the marketplace despite the aversive nature of mixed emotions. I begin by first briefly reviewing the relevant literature before presenting the findings of a pretest and four studies as tests of my ideas. I conclude by discussing the implications of my findings for theory and practice alike.

Review of Relevant Research

Motivated Emotion

Oftentimes when we feel emotion, we feel it in response to something in our environment. Accordingly, we feel sadness when a beloved pet dies, joy at the birth of a child, and anger when someone betrays us. Sometimes, however, we feel emotion not in response to an event that has occurred, but because we have chosen to feel that way. This occurs when we attempt to cheer ourselves up when feeling dejected or when we opt to calm ourselves down before a job interview. When we choose to feel a certain emotional state, we engage in strategic actions or choices that we believe will lead us to feel that specific emotion.

Traditionally, much of the research on motivated emotion has assumed that our feeling preferences are driven by a penchant for positive emotion (Gilbert, Wilson and Centerbar, 2003; Tsai 2007). Accordingly, the literature on mood regulation focuses heavily on how individuals' hedonic goals lead them to compare how they currently feel to how they would feel as a result of undertaking a given behavior. If the anticipated affective change is positive, individuals are likely to engage in the behavior. If the

anticipated change is negative, however, individuals are likely to avoid the behavior (see Andrade and Cohen, 2007; Andrade, 2005; and Morris and Reilly, 1987 for reviews). Consistent with this, research has shown that positive affect triggers mood maintenance behaviors (Isen and Levin, 1972; Isen and Simmonds, 1978) and that negative affect stimulates action towards achieving a better mood (Larsen, 2000; Morris and Reilly, 1987; Cialdini and Kenrick, 1976). In other words, happy individuals have been shown to be more likely to examine the mood implications of potential behaviors relative to sad individuals because they have more to lose if the implications are mood-damaging (Wegener and Petty, 1994). Individuals in a negative mood, on the other hand, have been shown to engage in mood-lifting activities such as self-gifting in the face of feeling disappointed or stressed (Mick and DeMoss, 1990), seeking out the emotionally-rewarding company of friendly others (Forgas, 1991) and eating fattening snacks in an attempt to mood regulate (Tice, Bratslavksy and Baumeister, 2001).

Recent work on emotion regulation, however, allows for the possibility that there may be situations in which individuals choose to augment their negative emotions or to downgrade their positive ones (Gross, 1998). Thus, depending on the particular circumstances, individuals may choose to squelch feelings of happiness or to muster up feelings of outrage. In line with work on emotion regulation, research on the motivations behind motivated emotion has moved beyond the pleasure principle in examining why individuals might be motivated to seek out particular emotional states (see Hirt and McCrea, 2000; Manstead and Fischer, 2000; and Martin, 2000; see Loewenstein 1999 for a discussion of how non-utility-focused motives might drive behavior in general). Thus,

individuals have been shown to willingly and strategically put themselves in specific emotional states that they perceive to be helpful in accomplishing a task (Cohen and Andrade, 2004; Tamir, Mitchell and Gross, 2008), relevant to social considerations (Erber and Erber, 2000) or consistent with their stable personality traits (Tamir, 2005). Importantly, these emotional states may be negative as well as positive, suggesting that individuals will willingly put themselves in aversive emotional states when they are appropriate to their goals.

Taken as a whole, the research on motivated emotion suggests that individuals may be inspired to engage in motivated emotion for a number of reasons, including but not limited to hedonic ones. In this work, I aim to build upon and extend the work on motivated emotion in three ways. First, I propose a new reason for why individuals might engage in motivated emotion. Specifically, I suggest that the presence of emotion norms can compel individuals to put themselves in one emotion state over another. Second, I suggest that not all negative emotional states will lead to mood regulation behaviors. In particular, I propose that the emotion norm associated with one particular negative emotion, shame, will head to non-hedonically driven choices. And finally, I suggest that individuals may be motivated to experience not just positive and negative emotions but mixed emotions as well. The literature on motivated emotion as it currently stands encompasses positive and negative emotions but neglects mixed ones.

Mixed Emotions

Though we may sometimes feel purely happy or simply sad, one consequence of living in an increasingly complex world is that few things, including our emotional

reactions, are simple and straightforward. Thus, we often feel more than one emotion as a result of the different events that occur in our lives. There has been some debate over whether we can simultaneously feel both positive and negative emotions, but recent research suggests that we can and that we frequently do (Cacioppo, Gardner and Bernston, 1999; Larsen, McGraw and Cacioppo, 2001). Accordingly, individuals have been shown to feel mixed emotions in both everyday situations and on more momentous occasions. Everyday situations include watching movies (Cohen and Andrade, 2007), viewing advertisements (Williams and Aaker, 2002), and experiencing disappointing wins or relieving losses (Larsen, McGraw, Mellers and Cacioppo, 2004), while momentous occasions include planning a wedding (Otnes, Lowrey, and Shrum, 1997), becoming a parent (Fischer and Gainer, 1993) and experiencing meaningful endings such as graduation (Ersner-Hershfield, Mikels, Sullivan and Carstensen, 2008).

Though they are amalgamations of both positive and negative emotions, mixed emotions are characterized by some unique properties and tendencies. For instance, research has found that mixed feelings are not remembered as well as either purely positive or negative emotions (Aaker, Drolet and Griffin, 2007). Furthermore, within mixed emotions, the particular combination of positive and negative emotions that make up the mix can cause discrete emotional mixes to differ from one another in significant ways. Consistent with this, nostalgia and poignancy, two commonly experienced mixed emotions, have been shown to differ in temporal focus (Sedikides, Wildschut, Arndt and Routledge, 2008; Ersner-Hershfield, Mikels, Sullivan and Carstensen, 2008) and to lead to distinct downstream effects (Wildschut, Sedikides, Arndt and Routledge, 2006; Kurtz,

2008). Similarly, different mixed emotions combinations experienced after an indulgence have been shown to be resolved differently over time and to lead to divergences in subsequent choices (Ramanathan and Williams, 2007). Thus, the specific emotional components of mixed emotions matter and can cause individual mixed emotions combinations to differ greatly from one another.

Importantly, the contradictory nature of the positive and negative components that comprise all combinations of mixed emotions conflicts with our basic desires for consistency (Festinger, 1957; Cacioppo, Gardner and Berntson, 1999) and creates a disconcerting and disharmonious feeling state that individuals find uncomfortable. Thus, individuals report higher levels of felt discomfort when viewing a mixed emotions advertisement as opposed to either a purely positive or purely negative emotion advertisement (Williams and Aaker, 2002) and attempt to resolve indulgence-related mixed feelings by “laundering” their negative emotions through making subsequently disciplined consumption choices (Ramanathan and Williams, 2007). Of note, these feelings of psychological conflict and discomfort are exclusive to mixed emotions – such feelings do not typically arise in the presence of either simply positive or simply negative emotions.

Interestingly, not all individuals experience the same level of psychological conflict and felt discomfort in response to mixed feelings. In particular, individuals who are higher in propensity to accept duality (Williams and Aaker, 2002) and in inclination to think in abstract ways (Hong and Lee, 2010) are less likely to feel mixed emotions-related conflict relative to their low-in-propensity-to-accept-duality and concrete thinking

peers. Importantly, however, less likely to feel conflict does not necessarily indicate a complete absence of conflict – it simply indicates a significantly lower level of conflict rather than no conflict at all.

Altogether, the research on mixed emotions indicates that though they are a constant and common aspect of everyday life, mixed emotional states are psychologically uncomfortable and aversive to feel. In this research, I aim to extend existing work on mixed emotions in two ways. First, I explore whether individuals might ever be motivated to feel mixed emotions despite their uncomfortable and aversive nature. Specifically, I suggest that norms regarding the appropriateness of particular emotional states can compel individuals to voluntarily elect to feel uncomfortable emotion states, including mixed ones. Second, I build on existing work on different mixes in examining how the specific combination of emotions might affect individuals' motivation to feel mixed emotions. In particular, I propose that because different emotional mixes have distinct properties, certain mixes will be more appropriate to a given situation relative to others and that individuals should be particularly likely to choose to feel those mixes.

Emotion Norms

You should feel ashamed of yourself. You should be happy for her. You should be thankful for all that he's done for you. Beginning in childhood, we are socialized into the emotion norms and requirements of the society in which we live. Thus, we learn that it is appropriate to feel sad at a funeral or after a break-up, to feel love towards your newborn baby or your spouse, and to feel gratitude on Mother's Day and Father's Day.

Research has suggested that we live in “emotion cultures” that consist of beliefs about the nature, causes, distributions, value, and dynamics of emotions in general, as well as beliefs about specific feelings such as jealousy, love, and sadness (Gordon, 1989; Thoits, 2004). Importantly, emotion cultures include “emotion norms” – social rules that dictate the type of emotion experiences we should feel and express (Hochschild, 1979). Emotion norms come in a wide variety of forms. They may be tied to situations (e.g., “You should feel happy when attending a party”), specific identities (e.g., mothers should feel loving) or particular emotional states (e.g., “You should cheer up when you’re feeling sad”). Emotion norms may involve amplifying certain emotions (e.g., “You should feel more grateful for all that he’s done”), dampening others (e.g., “You shouldn’t feel jealous of her”) or striving for no emotion at all (e.g., doctors should feel emotionally neutral towards individual patients). Each society has its own particular set of emotion norms that it expects its members to adhere to and norms may differ widely between societies (e.g., one should feel sad at an American funeral but joyous at an Irish wake).

As members of a given society, we actively work to adhere to the appropriate emotion norms that govern the situations we find ourselves in. Research has suggested that we conform to emotion norms in part because we are subject to pressure to conform and in part because we are motivated to keep our place in society (Thoits, 2004). Both of these influences, the pressure to conform and the desire to keep our place in society, ultimately stem from our fundamental need to belong and to form and maintain strong and stable interpersonal relationships (for a review see Baumeister and Leary, 1995).

A key aspect of making sure we belong involves behaving in an appropriate fashion – social conventions function to smooth social interactions and are a basis of cooperative alliances (Keltner and Anderson, 2000). To the extent that we behave appropriately, social interactions proceed smoothly and as expected, allowing social bonds to be formed, renewed, and strengthened. When we behave inappropriately, we open ourselves up to censure, social sanctions, and the possibility of disrupting the relationships we already have, as well as those that we have yet to form. In the context of emotion, the motivation to belong manifests itself in terms of conformity to emotion norms. Consistent with this line of reasoning, research suggests that emotional conformity leads to positive social consequences such as belongingness (Clark, 1997) and that emotional deviation leads to negative social outcomes such as stigmatization and ostracism (Thoits, 1985).

Importantly, emotion norms are not simply tenets that we follow only in the presence of others – indeed, Hochschild (1979) has argued that both private, subjective experiences and public, observable expressions are subject to social rules and control. Thus, individuals typically behave consistently with emotion norms even when no one else is present to bear witness to deviations in emotion behavior. Accordingly, individuals have been shown to prefer negative emotions over positive ones when contextual cues signal the inappropriateness of a positive feeling state (Västfjäll and Gärling, 2006), to prefer to feel affectively neutral before interacting with an unknown other because emotion norms dictate that excessive emotion is inappropriate in the company of a stranger (Erber, Wegner and Therriault, 1996) and to base their affective forecasts on

relevant emotion norms (Wood and Bettman, 2007) – even in the privacy of the laboratory where responses cannot be personally linked to individual participants. On the occasions when individuals fail to comply with emotion norms, feelings of distress result. This distress, combined with the fact that individuals are motivated to seek approval and avoid social sanctions, frequently leads individuals to hide, transform or otherwise manage emotions that are not in line with emotional expectations (Hochschild, 1983).

Of note, emotion norms may govern actual emotional experience (e.g., “You shouldn’t feel so guilty about that”) or emotion-related behavior (e.g., one should show gratitude for a gift). Though both types of emotion norms govern our everyday emotional experiences, I focus this research specifically on emotion norms that deal with genuine emotion experience rather than outward emotion expression. Given that it is more unpleasant to actually feel aversive emotion states than it is to fake feeling them, focusing on genuine emotion norms serves as a stronger test of my hypothesis that emotion norms can compel us to make some unexpected choices. In addition, though it is possible that norms about actual feeling and emotional display may diverge in certain cases (e.g., it is appropriate to feel disappointed after losing a contest but inappropriate to display that disappointment – that is, to act like a “sore loser”), it is important to note that they most often cohere (e.g., it is appropriate to both feel and express sadness at a funeral and to feel and express gratitude at Thanksgiving). Thus, emotional feeling and display norms will frequently influence consumption in the same manner.

Taken as a whole, research suggests that emotion norms are a fundamental aspect of a given society – we learn to follow them at an early age and through both approval for

conforming to them and sanctions for flouting them, they are continuously reinforced and bolstered (Simon, Eder and Evans, 1992). This is not to say that emotion norms cannot change over time – in fact, they can and do (Lofland, 1985) – but that in one form or another, emotion norms provide an ever-present backdrop that guide and shape most, if not all, of our emotional experiences.

In the present research, I explore how emotion norms can affect the choices we make as consumers. Specifically, I aim to build on the existing research on emotion norms in two ways. First, I explore the content of norms related to discrete emotions. Though much has been written about emotion norms, most of this work has focused on the processes surrounding them – for instance, how norms are created, how individuals are socialized into them and so on (e.g., Lively, 2000; Smith and Kleinman, 1985; Leidner, 1993; Lofland, 1985). Comparatively less research has examined the content of emotion norms, particularly as they relate to specific emotions (for exceptions see Simon, Eder and Evans, 1992, on romantic love among adolescent girls; Cancian and Gordon, 1998, on love and anger; and Clark, 1997, on sympathy). This work extends the existing understanding of emotion norms by examining the norms associated with two previously unexamined emotions: shame and mixed emotions. Second, I suggest that as a fundamental social structure, emotion norms should have a significant influence on the consumption choices that individuals make. More specifically, I propose that when the emotion norms linked to a particular situation indicate that a given emotional state is appropriate, individuals should be motivated to consume products that elicit that emotion so that they may feel that emotion.

The Specific Case of Shame

In this paper, I focus specifically on the emotion norm associated with the state of feeling ashamed to examine the broader question of how emotion norms might influence consumers' consumption choices. There are countless emotion norms in any given society and often the way in which these norms influence consumption choices is fairly unremarkable. For example, it is hardly surprising that because we know we should feel happy at a party, we might listen to some upbeat music while getting ready to go out. There are other instances, however, in which emotion norms may lead consumers to make some rather unexpected choices. The emotion norm associated with shame is one such case.

Shame is an intensely negative emotion that we feel when we have done something wrong. Importantly, shame arises when we attribute the wrongdoing to some shortcoming or deficit of the core self (e.g., "I am a very bad person because I did that awful thing") (Lewis, 1971; Tangney, Miller, Flicker and Barlow, 1996; Tangney and Dearing, 2002). Consistent with this negative self-attribution, shame comes with a sense of shrinking or of "being small" and with strong feelings of worthlessness and undeservingness. When we feel shame, we typically feel an overwhelming desire to escape or to be swallowed up by the ground and disappear (Lazarus, 1991; Tangney, 1995).

In relation to other negative emotions, shame is one of only two negative emotions to be characterized by appraisals of self-responsibility (Smith and Ellsworth, 1985; Tracy and Robins, 2006). Whereas we feel most negative emotions due to external

factors such as aspects of the situation or someone else's actions, we feel shame when we perceive inadequacies of our core selves as being responsible for the negative emotion-eliciting event at hand. Thus, we feel emotions such as sadness when a dear friend moves away, and we feel shame when we attribute our failure to help a penniless mother to our own stinginess or lack of empathy.

Because shame results from a negative internal attribution and because it makes us feel worthless and undeserving, I suggest that shame comes with an emotion norm that says that we do not deserve to feel positively. In other words, I expect that the emotion norm in shame will discourage ashamed individuals from making choices or undertaking activities that seem likely to be mood-lifting.

Furthermore, I propose that the anti-positivity nature of shame's emotion norm will lead ashamed consumers to avoid certain types of positive emotions over others. Emotions, even those of the same valence, differ from one another in significant and meaningful ways (Agrawal, Menon and Aaker, 2007; Bartlett and DeSteno, 2006) and one way in which emotions differ is whether they are characterized by an ego- or an other-focus (Markus and Kitayama, 1991; Lazarus, 1991). Ego-focused emotions (e.g., hope and sadness) have the individual as the primary referent while other-focused emotions (e.g., love and guilt) have others as the primary referent. If emotion norms deter ashamed individuals from feeling purely positive emotions because they are unworthy and undeserving, the target of the positive emotion should matter. That is, positive ego-focused emotions should be less consistent with the shame emotion norm than positive other-focused emotions because positive ego-focused emotions have the worthless and

undeserving self as the primary referent and recipient of positivity. Thus, I expect that ashamed individuals will be particularly likely to avoid positive emotions when they are ego-focused.

In the current research, I explore how the emotion norm associated with shame will shape ashamed consumers' consumption choices. I choose to spotlight the emotion norm associated with shame for a number of reasons. First, I choose to concentrate on shame because this norm of not deserving to feel positively suggests that ashamed individuals will make some nonintuitive choices. More specifically, it suggests that they will make choices that are not designed to make themselves feel better and that are therefore inconsistent with mood regulation and the hedonic principle. To the extent that the emotion norm associated with shame can attenuate a basic human impulse such as our preference for feeling positively, this would highlight the power and ability of emotion norms to influence our behavior. Second, I focus on shame because it arises in a wide variety of situations, suggesting that the emotion norm associated with shame is not tied to any one specific occasion and that it is relevant across a number of different situations. Consistent with this, research has identified numerous shame-causing situations including but not limited to being involved in failure experiences and embarrassing situations, displaying socially inappropriate behavior or dress and issues surrounding sex (Tangney, 1992). Third, shame is interesting because there are populations that are characterized by chronic feelings of shame. For instance, research has identified certain cultures such as the Japanese as "shame cultures" because they chronically experience more feelings of shame relative to "non-shame cultures" (Pattison, 2000). Because members of these

cultures experience chronic feelings of shame, any emotion norms that are associated with shame are likely to be chronically relevant and influential for these individuals. Finally, though shame is relevant to such important consumption issues as “luxury shame” (Roberts, 2008), its role in consumption is not well understood relative to that of other emotions (for exceptions, please see Agrawal and Duhachek, 2009; Patrick, Chun and Macinnis, 2009). This work extends the existing research on shame and consumption in examining how one aspect of shame, its emotion norm, can shape consumption choices.

Current Research

Though emotion norms constantly guide and shape our emotional experiences, little research has examined how these norms might influence consumption behavior. In this work, I use the example of the emotion norm associated with the state of feeling ashamed to examine how emotion norms might lead consumers to make some rather nonintuitive choices.

I propose that the negative emotion of shame comes with an emotion norm that one does not deserve to feel positively. Specifically, I suggest that this anti-positivity emotion norm discourages ashamed consumers from making choices or undertaking activities that would lighten their moods. Past research has suggested that we each have a basic desire to make hedonic choices and to alleviate negativity and that this preference for feeling good becomes particularly relevant when we are in a negative emotional state (e.g., Cohen and Andrade, 2007). In this research, I suggest that the anti-positivity norm in shame, in combination with our basic desire to alleviate negativity, leads ashamed

individuals to decrease their preference for products that elicit positive emotions and to increase their preference for products that elicit psychologically aversive mixed emotions. I further propose that ashamed individuals will not seek out products that elicit all mixes of emotions equally. More specifically, because the anti-positivity emotion norm in shame leads individuals to avoid certain types of positive emotions over others, I expect that ashamed individuals should be particularly likely to select mixed emotions-eliciting products when the positive component of the mix is other-focused as opposed to ego-focused.

Now I present a pretest that examines consumers' lay beliefs about emotion norms in general before presenting a series of four studies as tests of my hypotheses.

Pretest

For emotion norms to shape consumers' behavior, consumers must have some knowledge of the emotion norms that are relevant to a given situation. In this pretest, I explore consumers' lay beliefs regarding the existence of emotion norms and whether consumers believe that these emotion norms have an influence on their behavior.

Participants and Procedure

A nationally representative sample of 102 consumers participated in this pretest online. Participants were first given a definition of emotion norms and asked to indicate on a scale of 0 (emotion norms do not exist) to 10 (emotion norms definitely exist) whether they believed that emotion norms exist. Participants were specifically told that emotion norms were a hypothetical construct and that researchers were not sure if such

norms existed or not. Then, participants were shown a list of situations in which emotion norms might exist and asked to indicate again on a scale of 0 (emotion norms do not exist) to 10 (emotion norms definitely exist) whether they believed that emotion norms exist in each of those situations. Next, participants were asked to indicate whether they had experienced emotion norms or not – that is, whether emotion norms had influenced their behavior – both generally and in each of the situations listed previously. Responses were given on a scale ranging from 0 (have never experienced emotion norms) to 10 (have definitely experienced emotion norms). Finally, participants were told that emotion norms could govern either actual emotional experience or emotional behavior and asked to indicate which of the two types of norms they believed to be more influential. Participants were asked to indicate on a scale from 0 (only emotion-related behavior matters) to 5 (both emotion-related behavior and actual emotional experience matter equally) to 10 (only actual emotional experience matters) whether they believed actual emotion or emotion-related behavior to be more important generally, and in each of the situations listed previously.

Results

The results of the pretest showed that participants clearly believe that emotion norms in general do exist ($M_{\text{norms exist}} = 8.81$, $SD = 2.45$) and that emotion norms exist in a wide variety of situations including funerals ($M_{\text{funeral}} = 9.42$, $SD = 2.34$), births ($M_{\text{birth}} = 9.38$, $SD = 2.30$) and weddings ($M_{\text{wedding}} = 8.95$, $SD = 2.68$). Furthermore, the pretest data revealed that participants do have experience with emotion norms – that is, that emotion norms do influence their behavior both as a whole ($M_{\text{norm experience}} = 9.37$, $SD =$

2.31) and in specific situations such as funerals ($M_{\text{funeral}} = 8.77$, $SD = 2.75$) and Christmas ($M_{\text{Christmas}} = 7.57$, $SD = 3.18$). And finally, participants indicated that though they believed emotion-related behavior norms to be marginally more important than actual emotional experience norms overall ($M_{\text{behavior emotion}} = 4.48$, $SD = 2.84$, $t(101) = -1.84$, $p > 0.07$), this was situationally dependent – in fact, participants identified a number of situations in which they believed that actual emotional experience norms were in fact more important than emotion-related behavior norms. Examples of these situations included the birth of a child ($M_{\text{birth}} = 6.89$, $SD = 2.51$) and breaking up with a significant other ($M_{\text{breakup}} = 6.66$, $SD = 2.20$).

Table 1: Do emotion norms exist?

Variable	Mean	St. Dev.	Variable	Mean	St. Dev.
Do Norms Exist?	8.81	2.45	Hanukkah	6.96	2.81
Funeral	9.42	2.34	Beat Another	6.91	2.61
Birth	9.38	2.30	Sports Team Win	6.90	2.86
Wedding	8.95	2.68	Thanksgiving	6.88	2.16
Christmas	8.02	2.97	Project Success	6.82	2.49
Own Job Promotion	7.75	2.90	Vacation	6.67	2.86
Break Up	7.69	2.90	Project Fail	6.66	2.59
Goodbye	7.48	2.80	Lose to Another	6.55	2.73
Other Illness	7.45	2.80	Father's Day	6.49	2.91
Graduation	7.36	2.80	Sports Team Loss	6.46	2.91
Birthday	7.34	2.82	Other Job Promotion	6.40	2.88
Valentine's Day	7.13	3.13	Own Illness	6.31	2.83
Divorce	7.08	2.93	First Meeting	6.07	2.77
Mother's Day	7.00	3.12	July Fourth	5.97	2.82

Note: Survey participants responded on a scale from 0 (emotion norms do not exist) to 10 (emotion norms definitely exist)

Table 2: Are we influenced by emotion norms?

Variable	Mean	St. Dev.	Variable	Mean	St. Dev.
Have you felt norms?	9.37	2.31	Vacation	6.53	3.48
Funeral	8.77	2.75	Project Success	6.40	3.07
Wedding	8.23	2.80	Other Job Promotion	6.28	3.14
Birth	7.97	3.62	Thanksgiving	6.09	3.57
Christmas	7.57	3.18	Father's Day	6.01	3.28
Birthday	7.36	2.94	Project Fail	6.00	3.02
Other Illness	7.20	2.89	Own Illness	5.92	3.03
Break Up	7.12	3.13	Divorce	5.76	3.71
Goodbye	7.11	2.94	Beat Another	5.51	3.47
Graduation	7.11	3.22	Sports Team Win	5.47	3.54
Mother's Day	6.70	3.36	Lose to Another	5.10	3.27
Valentine's Day	6.66	3.48	Sports Team Loss	4.89	3.40
Own Job Promotion	6.65	3.29	July Fourth	4.48	3.10
First Meeting	6.61	2.86	Hanukkah	3.35	3.06

Note: Survey participants responded on a scale from 0 (have never experienced emotion norms) to 10 (have definitely experienced emotion norms)

Table 3: Are emotion norms about emotion-related behavior or actual emotion?

Variable	Mean	St. Dev.	Variable	Mean	St. Dev.
Relative Strength	4.48	2.84	Project Success	5.93	2.46
Birth	6.89	2.51	Birthday	5.81	2.35
Break Up	6.66	2.20	Father's Day	5.76	2.67
Own Illness	6.65	2.39	Sports Team Win	5.73	2.77
Goodbye	6.46	2.37	Sports Team Loss	5.51	2.46
Christmas	6.33	2.69	Project Fail	5.50	2.47
Vacation	6.22	2.70	Graduation	5.44	2.42
Wedding	6.20	2.51	Hanukkah	5.44	2.47
Valentine's Day	6.17	2.37	July Fourth	5.39	2.64
Own Job Promotion	6.14	2.33	Other Illness	5.39	2.33
Thanksgiving	6.13	2.52	First Meeting	5.24	2.33
Divorce	6.12	2.44	Beat Another	5.22	2.62
Mother's Day	6.07	2.76	Lose to Another	5.13	2.62
Funeral	6.07	2.59	Other Job Promotion	4.66	2.46

Note: Survey participants responded on a scale from 0 (only emotion-related behavior matters) to 5 (both emotion-related behavior and actual emotional experience matter equally) to 10 (only actual emotional experience matters)

Discussion

Taken as a whole, the pretest data indicate that consumers do believe that emotion norms exist and that they believe that emotion norms govern both actual emotional experiences as well as emotion-related behaviors. Furthermore, results from the pretest reveal that consumers recognize and acknowledge emotion norms across a wide variety of situations, suggesting that emotion norms are indeed a regular feature of everyday life.

In the studies that follow, I move from examining emotion norms in general to focusing on one particular emotion norm. Specifically, I use the example of the emotion norm tied to shame to examine how emotion norms might influence consumption choices. I begin by confirming that the emotion norm in shame is an avoidance of positivity.

Study 1

Study 1 is designed to validate that shame is indeed characterized by an emotion norm that one does not deserve to feel positively. Specifically, I explore participants' lay beliefs as to what types of activities are appropriate for an ashamed person to engage in. Shame is a negative emotion and individuals in a negative state typically engage in hedonically driven mood repair behaviors in an attempt to alleviate their feelings of negative emotion (Cialdini and Kenrick, 1976). If shame does have an emotion norm that one does not deserve to feel positively, I expect that study participants will indicate that it is less appropriate for an ashamed individual to engage in hedonically-driven choices relative to an individual in a prototypical negative state, sadness. Conversely, I expect

that study participants will indicate that it is more appropriate for an ashamed individual to make non-hedonic choices relative to a sad individual.

Participants and Procedure

Study 1 was a 2 factor mixed design with emotion (emotion: shame, sadness) as a between-subjects factor and activity type (activity: positive, negative, mixed) as a within-subjects factor. Fifty-eight participants took part in this study. Participants were brought into the lab and asked to complete a brief study on situation-appropriate activities. As part of the study, participants were asked to read a short scenario about a fictional character named Fred. In the shame condition, Fred had done something that he was ashamed of:

Fred is your typical undergraduate student at an American university. He lives off-campus in an apartment with his roommate, Andy. One afternoon, Andy comes home to find Fred sitting on the couch. Andy puts his keys down on the coffee table and asks Fred what's going on. Fred tells Andy that he has just done something that he's **ashamed** of. He says he's feeling very **ashamed** of himself, the most **ashamed** he has felt in a very long time.

In the sadness condition, Fred had done something he was sad about:

Fred is your typical undergraduate student at an American university. He lives off-campus in an apartment with his roommate, Andy. One afternoon, Andy comes home to find Fred sitting on the couch. Andy puts his keys down on the coffee table and asks Fred what's going on. Fred tells Andy that he has just done something that makes him **sad**. He says he's feeling very **sad**, the **saddest** he has felt in a very long time.

Next, participants were shown a list of activities pretested to be positive, negative or mixed emotions-eliciting and asked to indicate how appropriate they thought it would be for Fred to engage in those activities, given the scenario they just read about. Positive activities included watching a funny movie, going to a spa, listening to an upbeat song

and writing a letter about fun times spent with friends. Negative activities included calling the cell phone company about an issue with the bill, figuring out taxes, watching a sad movie and writing a letter about a dying relative. Mixed emotions-eliciting activities included watching a happy and sad movie, listening to a song about bittersweet moments, talking to a friend about good memories with friends who are no longer in touch and getting a B in a class where the average grade was a C. The activities were presented in random order and all ratings were made on a scale ranging from 1 (not at all appropriate) to 7 (very appropriate).

Results

The results of study 1 revealed a marginal effect for condition such that individuals in the shame condition rated more activities as appropriate for Fred to engage in relative to individuals in the sad condition ($F(1, 56) = 3.46, p > 0.0681, M_{\text{shame}} = 4.16, SD = 1.26; M_{\text{sad}} = 3.78, SD = 1.57$). There was also a main effect for activity type such that individuals across both conditions rated negative activities as being less appropriate for Fred to engage in relative to positive and mixed emotions-eliciting activities ($F(2, 112) = 54.48, p < 0.0001, M_{\text{positive}} = 4.72, SD = 1.34; M_{\text{mixed}} = 4.32, SD = 0.93; M_{\text{negative}} = 2.88, SD = 1.29$). Importantly, these main effects were qualified by a significant condition by activity type interaction ($F(2, 112) = 13.52, p < 0.0001$). Planned contrasts revealed that consistent with my expectations, individuals in the sad condition rated it as significantly more appropriate for Fred to engage in positive activities relative to individuals in the shame condition ($F(1, 153) = 5.42, p > 0.0210, M_{\text{sad,positive}} = 5.06, SD = 1.31; M_{\text{shame,positive}} = 4.37, SD = 1.31$). This result is consistent with the argument that the

emotion norm in shame attenuates individuals' hedonically driven tendencies.

Furthermore, individuals in the sad condition rated it as less appropriate for Fred to engage in non-hedonic activities relative to individuals in the shame condition.

Specifically, individuals in the sad condition rated it as less appropriate for Fred to take part in both mixed emotions-eliciting activities ($F(1, 153) = 5.16, p > 0.0244, M_{\text{sad.mixed}} = 3.98, SD = 0.87; M_{\text{shame.mixed}} = 4.66, SD = 0.88$) and negative activities ($F(1, 153) = 15.45, p > 0.0001, M_{\text{shame.negative}} = 3.47, SD = 1.26; M_{\text{sad.negative}} = 2.30, SD = 1.04$) relative to individuals in the shame condition.

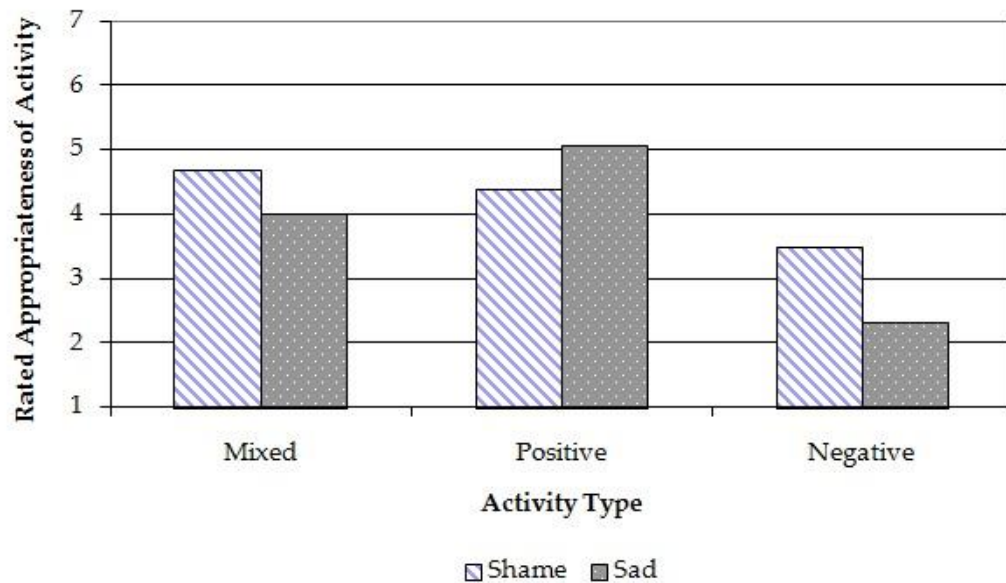


Figure 1: Rated appropriateness by emotion condition and activity type, study 1.

Discussion

In study 1, individuals in the sad condition rated it as more appropriate for Fred to engage in positive activities and less appropriate for him to engage in non-positive (i.e., mixed emotions-eliciting and negative) activities relative to individuals in the shame condition. Together, these results are consistent with the idea that there is an anti-positivity emotion norm in shame that attenuates individuals' hedonically-driven tendencies.

One result that bears discussing at this point is the fact that individuals in the shame condition rated it as significantly more appropriate for Fred to engage in negative activities relative to individuals in the sad condition. Throughout this work, I have focused on how emotion norm in shame affects individuals' preferences for positive and mixed emotions-eliciting products without making predictions about how the norm will affect preference for negative emotion-eliciting products. The fact that individuals in the shame condition rated it as significantly more appropriate for Fred to engage in negative activities suggests the possibility that the emotion norm in shame might not only be an avoidance of positivity but a welcoming of negativity as well. As a second possibility, this result may have also occurred due to aspects of the study design. Specifically, though pretest results showed that the negative activities were perceived as more negative relative to the positive activities, it is possible that some participants did not view them as negative enough – that is, that participants perceived the negative activities as eliciting some positive emotions as well. As an example, some participants may have viewed doing their taxes as both positive and negative, because though the actual figuring out of

taxes can be painful, one might have the prospect of a big fat refund to look forward to. Thus, shame condition participants may have rated the “negative” activities more highly because they perceived them to elicit mixed emotions. In the studies that follow, I attempt to disentangle these two possibilities by presenting participants with clearly negative and clearly mixed options. If there is in fact a welcoming of negativity aspect to the emotion norm in shame, individuals in the shame condition should continue to display an increased preference for negative emotion-eliciting items even when the items are clearly negative. Regardless of how the emotion norm in shame relates to preference for purely negative emotion, however, the results of study 1 support the notion that shame is associated with an emotion norm that one does not deserve to feel positively. In study 2, I build on these results by examining how the emotion norm in shame might influence consumption choices.

Study 2

Study 2 is designed to begin exploring how emotion norms might affect individuals' consumption choices. Specifically, I examine how the emotion norm associated with shame might shape individuals' consumption preferences and lead them to increase their preference for aversive mixed emotions-eliciting products and to decrease their preference for purely positive emotion-eliciting products.

Participants and Procedure

Study 2 was a 2 factor mixed design with emotion (emotion: shame, control) as a between subjects factor and novel type (novel: positive, negative, mixed emotion) as a

within-subjects factor. Forty-seven participants took part in study 2. Participants were brought into the lab to take part in a brief writing task followed by a novel selection task. Emotion was induced using a two-part self-reflective writing task (Small & Lerner, 2008; Lerner & Keltner, 2001). The writing task first asked participants in the shame condition to relate three to five things that made them feel the most ashamed before asking participants to describe in detail the one situation that makes (or had made) them feel the most ashamed. They were asked to describe the incident in such a way that another person reading the description might experience the same emotion. Participants in the control condition were asked to first describe three to five things that they did that day and then to describe in detail the way they typically spent their evenings.

Following the emotion induction, participants were shown book reviews for three novels. The reviews were manipulated so that one novel was presented as being positive and funny (e.g., “*Back from St. Barts* is the funniest book to come out in years. Mason has a way with snappy one liners and word-play that will keep you in hysterics!”), the second was framed as eliciting mixed feelings (“Happy yet tragic, sorrowful but sweet, *Glass Half Full* captures the bittersweetness of life in the clearest of prose.”), and the third was described as being very sad (“I cried more while reading this book than any other book – its pages are all wrinkly and tear-stained. *Milk with Tea* grabs the reader from the first page and never lets go.”) Participants read the reviews for all three novels and then were asked to indicate which novel they preferred to read at that particular moment in time. Preference was assessed by giving participants 100 points to allocate between the three novels. Participants were instructed that the novel they would most like

to read should receive the most points and that the novel they would least like to read should receive the fewest points. Points allocated to the three novel options constituted the main dependent measures. After indicating their novel preferences, participants completed a series of emotion measures regarding their current emotional state and answered some basic demographic questions before being debriefed.

Results

To test whether individuals in the shame condition would display an increased preference for the mixed emotions novel, I analyzed the data using a mixed ANOVA with emotion condition as a between-subjects factor and novel type as a within-subjects factor. Consistent with our basic preference for positivity (Gilbert, Wilson and Centerbar, 2003), the results of study 2 indicated a main effect of novel type such that participants allocated significantly more points to the positive novel relative to either the mixed emotions novel or the negative novel ($F(2, 90) = 24.17, p < 0.0001, M_{\text{posnovel}} = 52.60, SD = 27.53; M_{\text{mixnovel}} = 29.87, SD = 19.95; M_{\text{negnovel}} = 17.53, SD = 17.53$). This effect was qualified by a significant condition by novel interaction ($F(2, 90) = 6.73, p > 0.0019$). Planned contrasts revealed that in direct opposition to what might have been predicted based on the hedonic principle and mood regulation, participants in the shame condition allocated significantly fewer points to the positive novel option relative to participants in the control condition ($F(1, 135) = 12.04, p > 0.0007, M_{\text{shame.posnovel}} = 43.38, SD = 26.81; M_{\text{control.posnovel}} = 64.00, SD = 24.45$). Instead, participants in the shame condition shifted their points from the positive emotion-eliciting novel option to the aversive mixed emotions-eliciting option. Participants in the shame condition allocated significantly

more points to the mixed emotions-eliciting option relative to participants in the control condition ($F(1,135) = 7.68, p > 0.0064, M_{\text{shame.mixnovel}} = 37.23, SD = 19.72; M_{\text{control.mixnovel}} = 20.76, SD = 16.47$). Importantly, participants in the shame condition did not differ in the amount of points they allocated to the positive option relative to the mixed emotions option, suggesting that they had an equal preference for purely positive and psychologically aversive mixed emotions-eliciting products ($F(1,90) = 0.80, n.s., M_{\text{shame.mixnovel}} = 37.23, SD = 19.72; M_{\text{shame.posnovel}} = 43.38, SD = 26.81$). There was no significant effect of condition for points allocated to the negative emotion option ($F(1, 135) = 0.49, n.s., M_{\text{shame.negnovel}} = 19.38, SD = 15.44; M_{\text{control.negnovel}} = 15.24, SD = 14.73$). In terms of the emotion measures, there were no effects of condition on whether individuals reported feeling positive or negative emotions (F 's < 1).

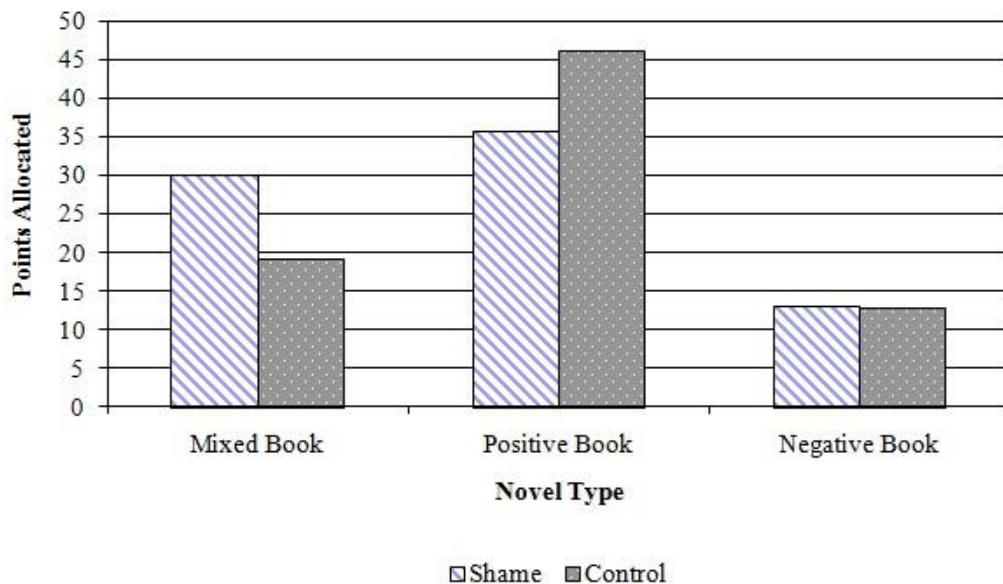


Figure 2: Points allocated by emotion condition and novel type, study 2.

Discussion

Consistent with my predictions, individuals in the shame condition allocated significantly fewer points to the positive emotion-eliciting option and significantly more points to the mixed emotions-eliciting option relative to individuals in the control condition. Participants in the shame and control conditions did not differ in the number of points they allocated to the negative emotion-eliciting option. Two aspects of this result are noteworthy: first, the fact that individuals allocated fewer points to the positive option relative to the control condition is in exact opposition to what might have been expected based on mood regulation – given that shame is a negative emotion, mood regulation would have predicted that individuals in the shame condition should have allocated significantly more points to the positive emotion relative to the control condition in an attempt to alleviate their feelings of negative emotion. Thus, this result suggests that not all negative emotions lead to hedonically driven mood regulation-type behaviors. Second, individuals in the shame condition shifted their point allocations from the positive emotion option to the mixed emotions option. This result occurred despite the fact that mixed emotions are aversive and psychologically uncomfortable and as a result, it underscores the power and ability of emotion norms to influence our consumption behaviors.

Taken as a whole, the results of study 2 suggest that emotion norms do influence consumption choices and that they are influential enough to induce individuals to make product choices that they might not otherwise make. However, there are two alternate explanations for these results that this study cannot rule out. The first potential alternate

explanation concerns whether it was the emotion norm in shame that led ashamed individuals to shift their point allocations to the mixed emotions option, or whether it was simply something about negative emotions in general. Past research on mood regulation has suggested that individuals who are in a negative mood will engage in mood-lifting activities as a method of mood repair (e.g., Andrade and Cohen, 2007). These studies typically manipulated individuals' moods and then offered them their choice of activities or items that would elicit either purely positive or purely negative emotions, to the exclusion of those that elicit mixed emotions (e.g., Andrade, 2005). This opens up the possibility that if mixed emotions-eliciting items had been added to the set of available options, individuals in a negative mood might have chosen them. If this was the case, a preference for mixed emotions-eliciting items may be a result of negative mood in general, rather than the product of shame's specific emotion norm.

The second potential alternate explanation that this study cannot rule out is ashamed individuals are choosing the mixed emotions-eliciting option not because they want to experience both positive and negative emotions but because they expect the positive and negative emotions in the mix to cancel each other out. In other words, ashamed individuals may be selecting the mixed emotions option because they desire to feel emotionally neutral rather than mixed emotions. In study 3, I attempt to address both of these alternate explanations

In addition, I designed study 3 to provide some further support for the existence of a shame emotion norm. Specifically, I manipulate the extent to which individuals rely on their feelings of what is appropriate and I examine how this influences their likelihood

of consuming in an emotionally conforming manner. Emotion norms are by definition about behaving in a manner that is appropriate – when we conform to emotion norms, we rely on our sense of what the appropriate emotion to feel should be to guide our emotional experience. If individuals who rely more heavily on their sense of what is appropriate are more likely to consume in a norm-consistent manner relative to individuals who rely less heavily on their sense of appropriateness, this would provide some additional evidence for the existence of an emotion norm.

Study 3

My goals for study 3 are three-fold. First, I seek to rule out the possibility that ashamed individuals' preference for mixed emotions-eliciting options is due to negative valence in general and not to shame's specific emotion norm. With this in mind, I add a sadness condition to study 3. If negative valence is responsible for the behavior of the shame condition individuals in study 2, individuals in the sadness condition of this study should mirror the point allocations of individuals in the shame condition. If it is in fact the emotion norm in shame that is driving the results, however, only individuals in the shame condition should display an increased preference for the mixed emotions-eliciting option.

Second, I aim to rule out the possibility that ashamed individuals were seeking out emotional neutrality rather than mixed emotions when they chose the mixed emotions option. To rule this out, I add a fourth novel option, an emotionally neutral option, to the set of novels that individuals can allocate points to. If ashamed individuals are indeed indicating an increased preference for the mixed emotions novel because they want to

feel mixed emotions, they should continue to shift their points from the positive to the mixed option despite the presence of the emotionally neutral alternative.

Third and finally, study 3 is intended to provide additional support for the existence of an emotion norm associated with shame. Specifically, I manipulate the extent to which individuals rely on their sense of appropriateness – that is, emotion norms. I expect that when individuals are encouraged to rely on emotion norms and there is a relevant emotion norm to rely on, there will be a fit effect such that individuals should be particularly likely to consume in an emotion norm-consistent manner relative to individuals who did not have their reliance on norms manipulated. When individuals are discouraged from relying on emotion norms and there is an emotion norm to rely on, I expect that these individuals will be less likely to consume in an emotionally consistent manner relative to both individuals who did not have their norm reliance manipulated and those in the norm reliance condition. In terms of shame specifically, if encouraging and discouraging individuals from relying on emotion norms can render them more and less likely to prefer mixed emotions items, this would provide additional evidence for the existence for a shame-related emotion norm.

Participants and Procedure

Study 3 was a 2 factor design with emotion (emotion: shame, sadness, control) and norm reliance (rely, don't rely and filler) as between subjects factors. Novel type (novel: positive, negative, neutral, mixed) was manipulated within-subjects. One hundred and sixty-four participants took part in study 3. Participants were brought into the lab and asked to complete three tasks. First, participants were asked to read a short paragraph.

This paragraph constituted the manipulation of norm reliance. In the rely condition, participants were encouraged to rely on their sense of appropriateness – that is, emotion norms – in making decisions:

Researchers have suggested that when it comes to making good choices, trusting your beliefs about what is appropriate is the way to go. Specifically, research suggests that individuals tend to experience good outcomes when they rely on their beliefs about what choices are appropriate given their current circumstances to make their decisions. This is true even when their beliefs about what is appropriate lead them to make choices that they might not otherwise make.

In the don't rely condition, participants were discouraged from relying on emotion norms:

Researchers have suggested that when it comes to making good choices, trusting your beliefs about what is appropriate is not the way to go. Specifically, research suggests that individuals tend to experience good outcomes when they do not rely on their beliefs about what choices are appropriate given their current circumstances to make their decisions. This is especially true when their beliefs about what is appropriate lead them to make choices that they might not otherwise make.

In the filler condition, participants simply read a repeat of the general instructions.

Next, participants were asked to complete a short writing task. Emotion was again induced using a two-part self-reflective writing task (Small & Lerner, 2008; Lerner & Keltner, 2001). In this study, participants were asked to write about a sad memory, a shameful experience or a typical day. Following the emotion induction, participants were again shown book reviews and book preference was assessed using the points allocation task. In this study, participants were presented with four rather than three novel options that they could allocate points to. The reviews were manipulated so that one novel was presented as being positive emotion-inducing, one was characterized as being negative

emotion-provoking, one was described as being mixed emotions-eliciting and one was portrayed as being emotionally neutral. Reviews for the positive, negative and mixed novels were identical to those used in study 2 while reviews for the emotionally neutral novel lauded the novel's fine writing and compelling story but did not include any information about the novel's emotional content. Reviews for the emotionally neutral option included "If you are looking for a book to get lost in, make it *Grassmarket*. What an unforgettable story" and "Intelligent and eminently readable with a beautifully conceived story, *Grassmarket* should be required reading for all." After completing the points allocation task, participants answered some basic demographic questions before being thanked and debriefed.

Results

To test whether emotion condition influenced the point allocations that individuals made, I analyzed the data using a mixed ANOVA with emotion condition as a between-subjects factor and novel type as a within-subjects factor. In line with our fundamental preference for positivity, there was a main effect of novel type ($F(3, 483) = 51.13, p < 0.0001$) such that participants allocated significantly more points to the positive novel ($M_{\text{posnovel}} = 43.01, SD = 26.83$) relative to the mixed emotions novel ($M_{\text{mixnovel}} = 22.24, SD = 20.58$), the neutral novel ($M_{\text{neutralnovel}} = 21.74; SD = 16.58$) or the negative novel ($M_{\text{negnovel}} = 13.07; SD = 13.24$). This effect was qualified by a significant condition by novel interaction ($F(6, 483) = 2.99, p > 0.0071$). Planned contrasts revealed that consistent with study 2, participants in the shame condition, allocated significantly fewer points to the positive novel option relative to participants in the control condition

($F(1, 644) = 7.55, p > 0.0062, M_{\text{shame.posnovel}} = 35.49, SD = 24.57; M_{\text{control.posnovel}} = 46.02, SD = 26.47$) and to participants in the sadness condition ($F(1, 644) = 9.66, p > 0.0020, M_{\text{shame.posnovel}} = 35.49, SD = 24.57; M_{\text{sad.posnovel}} = 47.14, SD = 28.11$). Participants in the sadness and control conditions did not differ in terms of points allocated to the positive option ($F(1, 644) = 0.09, n.s., M_{\text{sad.posnovel}} = 47.14, SD = 28.11; M_{\text{control.posnovel}} = 46.02, SD = 26.47$). Thus, individuals in the sadness condition behaved consistent with a hedonic mood-repair account of negative emotion but individuals in the shame condition did not.

Also as in the previous study, participants in the shame condition shifted their points from the positive emotion-eliciting novel option to the aversive mixed emotions-eliciting option. Participants in the shame condition allocated significantly more points to the mixed emotions-eliciting option relative to participants in the control condition ($F(1, 644) = 8.13, p > 0.0045, M_{\text{shame.mixnovel}} = 30.01, SD = 23.63; M_{\text{control.mixnovel}} = 19.09, SD = 17.48$) and to participants in the sadness condition ($F(1, 644) = 10.29, p > 0.0014, M_{\text{shame.mixnovel}} = 30.01, SD = 23.63; M_{\text{sad.mixnovel}} = 18.00, SD = 18.41$). Participants in the sadness and control conditions did not differ in the number of points they allocated to the mixed emotions option ($F(1, 644) = 0.09, n.s., M_{\text{sad.mixnovel}} = 18.00, SD = 18.41; M_{\text{control.mixnovel}} = 19.09, SD = 17.48$). Importantly, participants in the shame condition did not differ in terms of the points they allocated to the mixed option versus the points they allocated to the positive option ($F(1, 483) = 1.53, n.s., M_{\text{shame.mixnovel}} = 30.01, SD = 23.63; M_{\text{shame.posnovel}} = 35.49, SD = 24.57$), suggesting that the hedonic principle is indeed attenuated by the shame emotion norm. There were no significant effects of condition on points allocated to either the negative or the neutral emotion novel (F 's < 1).

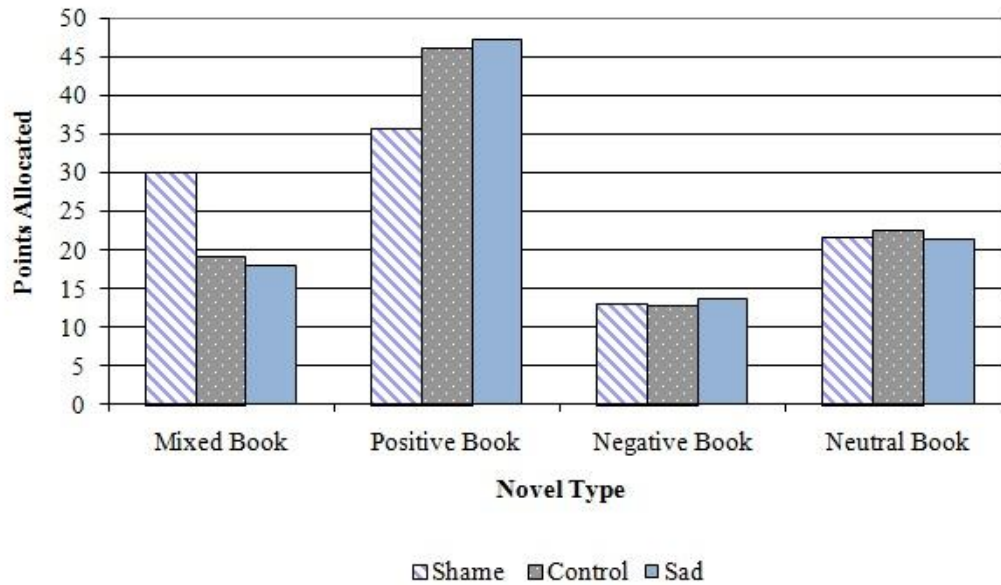


Figure 3: Points allocated by emotion condition and novel type, study 3.

To examine whether the norm reliance manipulation affected individuals' likelihood of consuming in a norm consistent manner, I analyzed the points allocated to the mixed emotions option using an ANOVA with emotion condition and norm reliance condition as between-subjects factors. Again, the data revealed a main effect of emotion condition ($F(2, 155) = 7.20, p > 0.0010$) such that individuals in the shame condition ($M_{\text{shame.mixednovel}} = 30.01, SD = 23.63$) allocated significantly more points to the mixed emotions option relative to individuals in either the sadness condition ($M_{\text{sad.mixednovel}} = 18.00, SD = 18.41$) or the control condition ($M_{\text{control.mixednovel}} = 19.09, SD = 17.48$). Importantly, this effect was qualified by a significant interaction with norm reliance ($F(4, 155) = 2.61, p > 0.0379$). Planned contrasts revealed that relative to participants in the

shame/filler condition, participants in the shame/rely condition allocated more points to the mixed emotions option ($F(1, 155) = 3.04, p > 0.083, M_{\text{shame.rely}} = 43.00, SD = 25.55; M_{\text{shame.filler}} = 31.26, SD = 25.27$) and participants in the shame/don't rely condition allocated less points ($F(1, 155) = 4.05, p > 0.046, M_{\text{shame.dontrely}} = 18.53, SD = 13.61; M_{\text{shame.filler}} = 31.26, SD = 25.27$). Thus, consistent with my expectations, participants who were encouraged to rely on their sense of appropriateness in making decisions allocated the most points to the emotion norm-consistent option and participants who were discouraged from relying on their sense of appropriateness allocated the least. Within the control and the sadness conditions, there were no significant effects of reliance condition on points allocated to the mixed emotions option (F 's < 1).

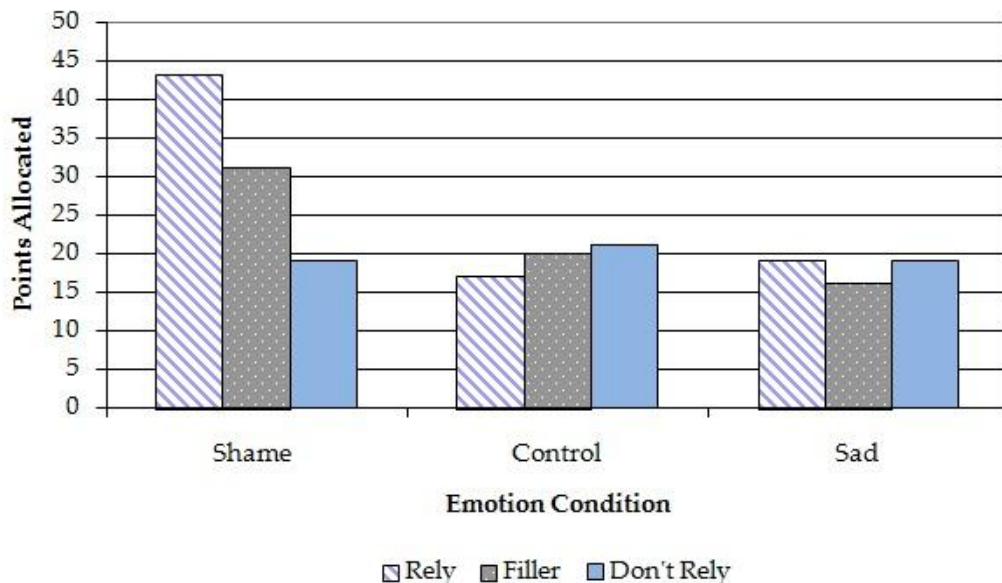


Figure 4: Points allocated to the mixed emotions option by emotion condition and norm reliance condition, study 3.

Discussion

Altogether, the results of study 3 rule out several alternative explanations for the results of the previous study. First, ashamed individuals continued to shift points from the positive to the mixed option, despite the presence of an emotionally neutral alternative. This suggests that ashamed individuals are indeed selecting the mixed emotions option because they want to feel mixed emotions, not because they aspire to emotional neutrality. Second, the fact that individuals in the sadness condition did not mimic the point allocations of individuals in the shame condition suggests that ashamed individuals' preference for the mixed emotions option is indeed being driven by something specific to shame and not by negative valence. Moreover, this finding supports the idea that not all negative emotions will lead to hedonically-driven mood regulation behaviors – shame, in fact, leads to non-hedonically driven choices. And third, the result that an increased reliance on emotion norms amplified ashamed individuals' point allocations to the mixed option helps corroborate the existence of an emotion norm in shame, as does the finding that a decreased reliance on emotion norms dampened mixed option point allocations.

Taken as a whole, studies 1 through 3 suggest that emotion norms do shape consumption choices and that they can lead consumers to make product choices that they would not otherwise make. Together, these findings add to both the marketing and the sociology literature in showing how this basic social structure can change consumer behavior. These results also contribute to the existing research on mixed emotions in demonstrating that individuals are sometimes motivated to have mixed feelings, despite the psychological discomfort and conflict associated with such complex emotional states.

Previous research has focused heavily on the discomfort associated with and downstream consequences of feeling mixed emotions without considering whether individuals might sometimes actually want to feel them.

Throughout my dissertation, I have argued that the experience of shame comes with an emotion norm that renders feeling purely positive emotions inappropriate and undesirable. Up until this point in the paper, however, I have treated all positive emotions as if they were uniform when in fact, discrete positive emotions differ from one another in significant and meaningful ways (Agrawal, Menon and Aaker, 2007; Bartlett and DeSteno, 2006). The fact that discrete positive emotions differ from one another has important implications for the specific mixed emotions combinations that they are included in. More specifically, because mixed emotions are concoctions of positive and negative emotions, the distinct characteristics of either component can significantly influence the properties of that emotional mix. Thus, because love and hope are characterized by unique properties, a mix of love and sadness is different from a mix of hope and sadness, even though the two mixes share sadness as their negative component.

Emotions differ from one another in several ways but one basic way in which they differ is in whether they are characterized by an ego or an other-focus (Markus and Kitayama, 1991; Lazarus, 1991). Ego-focused emotions are those that have the individual as the primary referent – that is, they are focused on the self. Examples of ego-focused emotions include hope and sadness: we feel hopeful when there is the possibility of positive outcomes for the self and we feel sad when we irrevocably lose something cherished by the self. Other-focused emotions, on the other hand, have others as the

primary referent. Guilt and love are examples of other-focused emotions: we feel guilt when we have acted in a morally deficient way, particularly if we have wronged or harmed an innocent other, and we feel love towards others close to us.

If emotion norms deter ashamed individuals from feeling purely positive emotions because they are unworthy and undeserving, the target of the positive emotion should matter. To state it differently, positive ego-focused emotions should be less consistent with the shame-related emotion norm relative to positive other-focused emotions because positive ego-focused emotions have the worthless and undeserving self as the primary referent and recipient of positivity. Because mixed emotions combine discrete positive and negative emotions, this suggests that the emotion norm in shame may lead ashamed individuals to prefer certain types of emotional mixes over others. I consider this idea in study 4.

Study 4

Study 4 was designed to examine whether the anti-positivity emotion norm in shame might lead ashamed individuals to differentially prefer products that elicit different mixes of emotion. To test this idea, I manipulate the exact mix of emotions elicited by the mixed emotions option. If the shame-related emotion norm leads ashamed individuals to avoid ego-focused positive emotions, ashamed individuals should be particularly likely to avoid selecting the mixed emotions novel option when the positive component of the mix is ego-focused.

In study 4, I also explore the possibility that the focus of the negative component of an emotional mix might matter as well. Though I have discussed the shame-related

emotion norms primarily in terms of positive emotions, I have considered the possibility that there may be a shame-associated emotion norm related to negative emotions as well. More specifically, the feelings of being unworthy and undeserving that are hallmarks of shame may be associated with an emotion norm that ashamed individuals deserve negative emotion. I explored this possibility in studies 2 and 3 by offering participants the option of selecting a purely negative option. If shame does have an emotion norm that one deserves negativity, individuals in the shame condition should have allocated more points to the negative option relative to individuals in the control condition. Results of both studies 2 and 3 revealed that this was not the case, however. In study 4, I build upon these results and examine the possibility that a shame-related emotion norm regarding feeling negatively might manifest itself in the negative component of an emotional mix. If there is an emotion norm associated with shame that one deserves to feel negatively, negative ego-focused emotions should be more consistent with the emotion norm related to shame relative to other-focused negative emotions. Thus, I might expect that ashamed individuals will be especially likely to select the mixed emotions option when the negative component of the mix is ego-focused. If this is the case, I might also expect that ashamed individuals will indicate the greatest preference for the mixed emotions option when the positive component of the mix is other-focused and when the negative component is ego-focused.

Participants and Procedure

Study 4 was a 2 (emotion prime: shame, control) by 2 (positive emotion focus: hope, love) by 2 (negative emotion focus: sadness, guilt) cell between subjects design.

Love and guilt are other-focused emotions while sadness and hope are ego-focused emotions. Novel type (novel: positive, negative, mixed) was manipulated within-subjects. One hundred and eighty-nine participants took part in study 4. As in the previous studies, participants were brought into the lab to take part in a brief writing task followed by a novel selection task. Emotion was again induced using a two-part self-reflective writing task (Small & Lerner, 2008; Lerner & Keltner, 2001). Following the emotion induction, participants were again shown book reviews and book preference was assessed using the point allocation task. In this study, the reviews for the mixed emotions book were manipulated so that the focus for the positive and negative emotion components varied across conditions. In the positive ego-focus, negative other-focus condition, participants read reviews for a novel described as being both hopeful and guilty (“*The Elephant House* is one of those rare books that will make you *feel* the heaviness of guilt and the lightness of hope along with its characters. A stunning story that is destined to become a classic”) while in the positive ego-focus, negative ego-focus condition, participants saw reviews for a novel characterized as being both hopeful and sad (“*The Elephant House* is one of those rare books that will make you *feel* the heaviness of sorrow and the lightness of hope along with its characters”). In the positive other-focus, negative other-focus condition, participants saw reviews for a novel billed as evoking both love and guilt (“*The Elephant House* is one of those rare books that will make you *feel* the heaviness of guilt and the lightness of love along with its characters”) while in the positive other-focus, negative ego-focus condition, participants read reviews for a novel about love and sadness (“*The Elephant House* is one of those rare books that will make you *feel* the

heaviness of sorrow and the lightness of love along with its characters”). Points allocated to the mixed emotions option constituted the main dependent variable in this study. At the end, participants completed some basic demographic questions before being thanked and debriefed.

Results

To test whether emotion condition influenced the point allocations that individuals made, I collapsed across the different emotional mixes and analyzed the data using a mixed ANOVA with emotion condition as a between-subjects factor and novel type as a within-subjects factor. As in the previous studies, there was a main effect of novel type ($F(2, 374) = 61.35, p < 0.0001$) such that participants allocated significantly more points to the positive novel ($M_{\text{posnovel}} = 48.53, SD = 26.13$) relative to either the mixed emotions novel ($M_{\text{mixnovel}} = 32.53, SD = 20.40$) or the negative novel ($M_{\text{negnovel}} = 18.93, SD = 17.21$). This effect was qualified by a significant condition by novel interaction ($F(2, 374) = 6.84, p > 0.0012$). Planned contrasts revealed participants in the shame condition, allocated significantly fewer points to the positive novel option relative to participants in the control condition ($F(1, 561) = 8.85, p > 0.0031, M_{\text{shame.posnovel}} = 43.82, SD = 25.90; M_{\text{control.posnovel}} = 53.01, SD = 25.67$). Consistent with studies 2 and 3, participants in the shame condition shifted their points from the positive emotion-eliciting novel option to the aversive mixed emotions-eliciting option. Participants in the shame condition allocated significantly more points to the mixed emotions-eliciting option relative to participants in the control condition ($F(1, 561) = 11.50, p > 0.0007, M_{\text{shame.mixnovel}} = 37.91, SD = 20.97; M_{\text{control.mixnovel}} = 27.43, SD = 18.54$). Importantly,

participants in the shame condition did not differ in terms of the points they allocated to the mixed option versus points they allocated to the positive option ($F(1, 374) = 2.37$, n.s., $M_{\text{shame.mixnovel}} = 37.91$, $SD = 20.97$; $M_{\text{shame.posnovel}} = 43.82$, $SD = 25.90$), suggesting that the hedonic principle is indeed attenuated by the shame emotion norm. There were no significant effects of condition on points allocated to the negative emotion novel ($F < 1$).

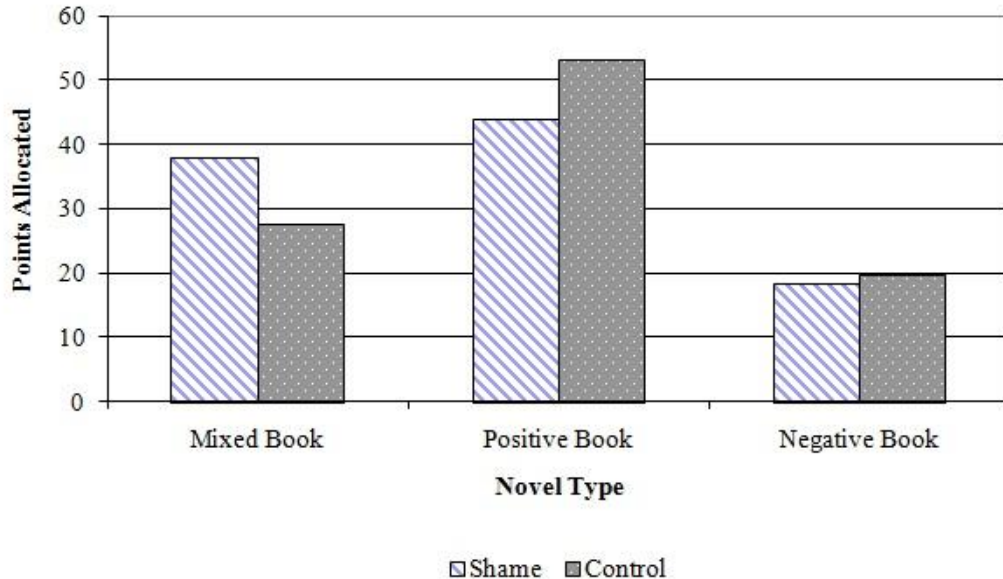


Figure 5: Points allocated by emotion condition and novel type, study 4.

To examine whether the specific mix of emotions affected ashamed individuals' preference for the mixed option, I analyzed the points allocated to the mixed emotions option using an ANOVA with emotion condition, positive emotion focus and negative emotion focus condition as between-subjects factors. Consistent with previous studies, the results of study 4 showed a main effect of emotion prime ($F(1, 181) = 13.82$, $p >$

0.0003) such that individuals in the shame condition were more likely to allocate points to the mixed emotions option ($M_{\text{shame}} = 37.91$, $SD = 20.97$) relative to individuals in the control condition ($M_{\text{control}} = 27.43$; $SD = 18.54$). Importantly, this effect was qualified by a significant positive focus by emotion prime interaction ($F(1,181) = 6.12$, $p > 0.0143$). Planned contrasts showed that participants in the shame condition were particularly likely to allocate points to the mixed emotions option when the positive emotion was other-focused relative to when the positive emotion was ego-focused ($F(1, 181) = 8.01$, $p > 0.0052$, $M_{\text{shame.pos.other}} = 43.78$, $SD = 22.44$; $M_{\text{shame.pos.self}} = 32.29$, $SD = 17.96$). Participants in the shame / positive other-focus condition were also more likely to allocate points to the mixed emotions option relative to participants in either the control / positive-other focus condition ($F(1,181) = 18.68$, $p < 0.0001$, $M_{\text{control.pos.other}} = 26.13$; $SD = 19.41$) or participants in the control / positive-ego focus condition ($F(1,181) = 14.08$, $p < 0.0002$, $M_{\text{control.pos.self}} = 28.66$, $SD = 17.79$). There were no main effects or interactions related to the other- or ego-focus of the negative emotion component (F 's < 1).

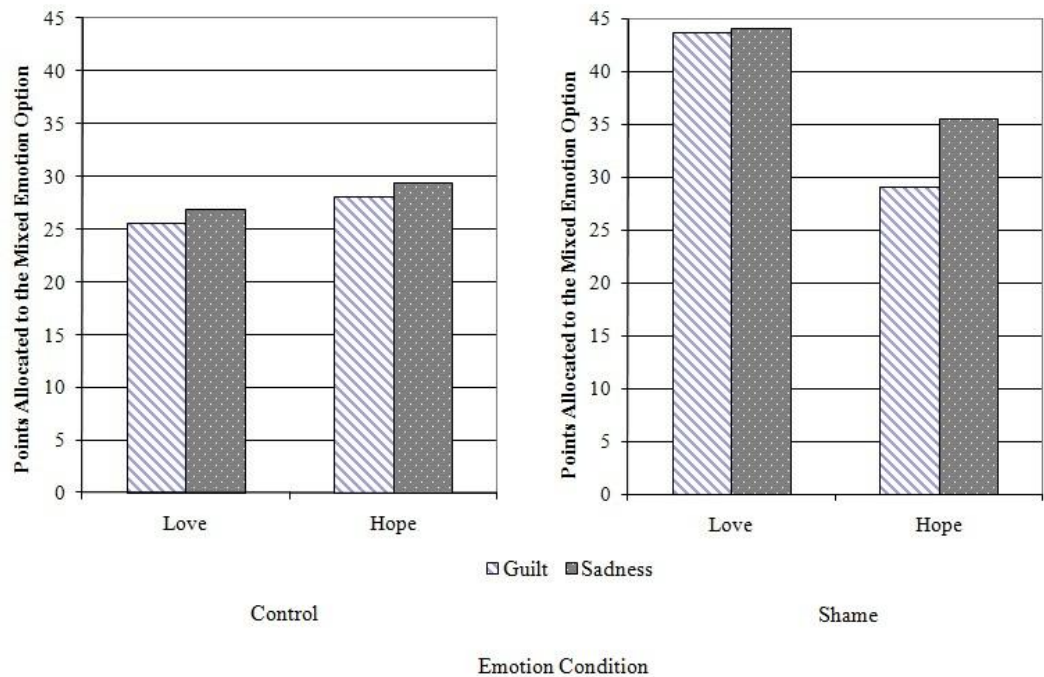


Figure 6: Points allocated to the mixed emotions option by emotion condition, positive emotion focus and negative emotion focus, study 4.

Discussion

Consistent with my predictions, the specific makeup of the mixed emotions option was important in determining how many points ashamed individuals would allocate to the mixed emotions option. Results showed that ashamed individuals were particularly likely to allocate points to the mixed emotions option when the positive component was other-focused (love). Because positive other-focused emotions are more consistent with the shame-related emotion norm than positive ego-focused emotions, this result provides further support for the existence of an anti-positivity norm associated with shame.

In contrast to my conjecture, however, the other- or ego-focus of the negative component did not influence ashamed individuals' preference for the mixed option. This

result may have occurred for one of two reasons. First, ashamed individuals were already in an intensely self-focused negative emotional state – shame. Thus, ashamed individuals may not have paid particular attention to the prospect of feeling even more ego-focused negative emotion. Second, it is possible that while there is an emotion norm about positive emotion attached to shame, there is no emotion norm related to negative emotion. In support of this, research has characterized shame as being less about self-punishment and atonement than about unworthiness and undeservingness (Lazarus, 1991). Because shame arises when we attribute the wrongdoing to some shortcoming or deficit of the core self, there is no “easy fix” – we cannot simply self-punish and restore things to the way they were. Thus, it seems likely that the emotion norm associated with shame is tied to an avoidance of positive rather than a seeking of negative emotion.

General Discussion

Taken as a whole, the studies in this paper suggest that our socially shared beliefs about which emotions are appropriate in what situations have a significant and meaningful influence on our consumption behavior. Though emotion norms are an ever-present factor that guide and shape our emotional experience, little research has examined how these norms might influence consumption behavior. This dissertation begins to bridge this gap by using the example of one specific emotion norm, the norm tied to shame, to explore the broader question of how emotion norms might shape consumption choices and lead consumers to make some rather unexpected choices.

Across a series of studies, I demonstrate that the emotion norm associated with shame, when combined with our fundamental desire for positivity, can lead individuals to

increase their preference for an aversive mixed emotions-eliciting product and to decrease their preference for a purely positive emotion-eliciting product. Specifically, I confirm in the first study that the shame-related emotion norm is that one does not deserve to feel positively and I find in the second study that ashamed individuals express an increased preference for a mixed emotions-eliciting product and a decreased preference for a positive one. In study 3, I rule out several potential alternative explanations for my results by distinguishing the emotion norm in shame from that of sadness and showing that ashamed individuals are attracted to mixed emotions-eliciting products even when an emotionally neutral option is available to be chosen. Study 3 also provides additional support for the existence of an emotion norm associated with shame by demonstrating that the extent to which individuals rely on emotion norms can influence how likely they are to consume in an emotion norm-consistent manner. Finally, in study 4, I show that the precise mix of emotions matters – ashamed individuals are particularly likely to prefer emotional mixes where the positive component of the mix is other-focused, consistent with the shame-related emotion norm of not allowing the worthless self to be the recipient of positive emotion.

On a broad level, my work extends the research on motivated emotion, mixed emotions, and emotion norms in several ways. First, I build upon and extend the work on motivated emotion in proposing a new reason for why individuals might engage in motivated emotion – the presence of emotion norms. Second, this work suggests that individuals may be motivated to experience not just positive and negative emotions but mixed emotions as well. The literature on motivated emotions as it currently stands

encompasses positive and negative emotions but neglects mixed ones. Third, I contribute to the existing research on emotion norms by exploring how this fundamental social structure influences consumption behavior. Specifically, I demonstrate that emotion norms can sometimes lead us to make some rather unexpected choices. Fourth, I also contribute to the work on emotion norms in examining the specific norms related to shame and mixed emotions. Though much has been written about the processes surrounding emotion norms, comparatively less research has examined the actual content of emotion norms, particularly as they relate to specific emotions. Fifth, my work refines the work on mood regulation by demonstrating that not all negative emotions will lead to hedonically-driven mood repair behavior.

One potentially interesting issue to consider in future research is how individuals would evaluate the products they choose under the influence of emotion norms. This is especially interesting in the case of products that elicit aversive emotions such as mixed emotions. Though mixed emotions are known to cause psychological discomfort in the individuals that experience them (Williams and Aaker, 2002), deviations from emotion norms are linked with feelings of extreme distress and intense anguish (Thoits, 1985). In the context of the emotion norm associated with shame, this suggests that not choosing the emotion norm-consistent option, the mixed emotions-eliciting product, may lead to an even worse psychological state than the discomfort inherent in mixed feelings. When ashamed individuals conform emotionally by selecting the mixed emotions product, however, they experience the discomfort associated with mixed emotions but they also derive the extensive social and psychological benefits linked to emotional conformity

(Thoits, 1985; Clark, 1997). This suggests that the upsides to emotional conformity may temper the discomfort aspect of mixed emotions and lead individuals to evaluate the mixed product as less uncomfortable and as a more satisfying purchase.

Practically speaking, this work suggests that marketers should pay close attention to the relevant emotion norms in the contexts that they market in. In terms of the shame-related emotion norm specifically, this work suggests a potential segmentation scheme in which populations characterized by chronic feelings of shame may be more receptive to both mixed emotions-eliciting products and also advertisements that frame products in a mixed emotions-eliciting manner. More generally, marketers may also consider directly creating or manipulating emotion norms through advertisements. To illustrate, one can imagine an ad for a happiness-inducing product such as chocolate that tells consumers that they should feel happy everyday and proposes that they buy some chocolate in order to do so. To the extent that marketers can use advertising to manipulate emotion norms, this research suggests that those emotion norms can compel consumers to purchase products that elicit emotion-norm consistent emotions.

This work also sheds some light on the appeal of products, services, experiences and advertisements that elicit mixed emotions. Examples of these include the movie *Life is Beautiful* and a recent print ad for life insurance featuring two girls expressing both sorrow at the loss of their mother and gratitude that she thought to purchase a life insurance plan so that they would be taken care of. Given the aversive nature of mixed emotions, the success of such items in the marketplace is surprising and somewhat puzzling. This research begins to fill a gap in our understanding of why mixed emotion

products succeed commercially in demonstrating that emotion norms can lead individuals to consume mixed emotion products in an attempt to be emotionally appropriate.

Conclusion

You should enjoy it while you can. You should get over being mad. You should show some compassion. As stated in the introduction, emotion is an fundamental aspect of the world we live but our emotional experiences as a whole are governed by certain ideas and rules about when we should feel specific emotions and which emotions are appropriate to which situations. As shown in this dissertation, emotion norms have a powerful and profound influence on behavior – we experience negative personal and social consequences when we deviate from them and they can compel us to seek out not just positive but aversive emotional states as well. Given the constant and recurrent influence that emotion norms have on our behavior, this suggests that future research should more fully explore the nature of emotion norms and how they shape our thoughts, decisions and actions.

Appendix A: Emotion primes

Shame:

Question 1. What are the 3-5 things that you have done that make you feel the most ashamed? Please write two-three sentences about each thing that makes you feel ashamed. (Examples of things you might write about include: being caught in a lie, unfairly judging someone, etc.)

Question 2. Now we'd like you to describe in more detail the one thing that you have done that makes you (or has made you) feel the most ashamed. This could be something you are presently experiencing shame about or something from the past. Begin by writing down what you remember of the shame-inducing action(s), and continue by writing as detailed a description of the action(s) as is possible.

If you can, please write your description so that someone reading this might even feel ashamed just from learning about the action. What is it like to act this way? Why does it make you feel so ashamed?

Control:

Question 1. What are the 3-5 activities that you did today? Please write two-three sentences about each thing that you select. (Examples of things you might write about include: walking to school, eating lunch, going to the gym.)

Question 2. Now we'd like you to describe in more detail the way you typically spend your evenings. Begin by writing down a description of your activities, and then figure out how much time you devoted to each activity. Examples of things you might describe include eating dinner, studying for a particular exam, hanging out with certain friends, watching TV, etc.

If you can, please write your description so that someone reading this might be able to reconstruct the way in which you, specifically, spend your evenings.

Sadness:

Question 1. What are the 3-5 things that you have done that make you feel the most sad? Please write two-three sentences about each thing that makes you feel sad. (Examples of things you might write about include: losing a loved one – a parent, a friend, or a pet; breaking up with a person whom you love; witnessing a person suffering; etc.)

Question 2. Now we'd like you to describe in more detail the one thing that you have done that makes you (or has made you) feel the most sad. This could be something you are presently experiencing or something from the past. Begin by writing down what you remember of the sadness-inducing action(s), and continue by writing as detailed a description of the action(s) as is possible.

If you can, please write your description so that someone reading this might even feel sad just from learning about the action. What is it like to act this way? Why does it make you feel so sad?

Appendix B: Reader reviews from studies 2 and 3

***Back from St. Barts* by S. Mason**

- “I loved this book so much that I stayed up all night to finish it before going to work the next morning – it’s that good!”
- “This book is laugh-out-loud funny – I read it on a 9-hour flight and kept my seatmates up the entire time with my laughter!”
- “*Back from St. Barts* is the funniest book to come out in years. Mason has a way with snappy one liners and word-play that will keep you in hysterics.”
- “Sharply written and humorously detailed, *Back from St. Barts* is a must-read.”
- “A joy to read! *Back from St. Barts* is one of those books that will make your chest hurt from laughter. Don’t read it unless you’re ready to laugh!”

***Glass Half Full* by A. Wall**

- “I admire the reader who can put *Glass Half Full* down before reaching its final pages...It simply soars.”
- “Heartbreakingly sad yet dizzyingly joyous, *Glass Half Full* is one of those rare books that you’ll read time and time again.”
- “*Glass Half Full* is haunting, original and so smart it took my breath away... Its sensitive treatment of love and loss, sadness and joy will stay with you long after it’s over.”
- “Happy yet tragic, sorrowful but sweet, *Glass Half Full* captures the bittersweetness of life in the clearest of prose.”
- “I couldn’t stop crying when I read this book – I cried from laughter at times and from sadness at turns. *Glass Half Full* will move even the most cynical of readers.”

***Milk with Tea* by P. Williams**

- “One approaches the final pages with a heavy heart for several reasons, not the least of which being that this fine read has come to an end.”
- “Keep a box of tissues at hand – *Milk with Tea* is tragic, heartrending and exceedingly poignant. This is a story that you won’t forget.”
- “*Milk with Tea* is one of the most achingly beautiful books to be written in years... It’s simply luminous.”
- “Everyone should read *Milk with Tea*. It will possibly be the saddest book you ever read, but also the most meaningful.”
- “I cried more while reading this book than any other book – its pages are all wrinkly and tear-stained. *Milk with Tea* grabs the reader from the first page and never lets go.”

***Grassmarket* by T. Anthony**

- “Intelligent and eminently readable with a beautifully conceived story, *Grassmarket* should be required reading for all.”
- “*Grassmarket* is one of those compelling and utterly original stories that you will remember long after the final pages have been turned.”
- “I skipped out on several nights out with friends to read this book and it was completely worth it....”
- “If you are looking for a book to get lost in, make it *Grassmarket*. What an unforgettable story.”
- “*Grassmarket* drew me in from the very first page. Its rich storyline and sharp writing make it a must-read.”

Appendix C: Norm reliance manipulation from study 3

Rely condition:

Researchers have suggested that when it comes to making good choices, trusting your beliefs about what is appropriate is the way to go. Specifically, research suggests that individuals tend to experience good outcomes when they rely on their beliefs about what choices are appropriate given their current circumstances to make their decisions. This is true even when their beliefs about what is appropriate lead them to make choices that they might not otherwise make.

Don't rely condition:

Researchers have suggested that when it comes to making good choices, trusting your beliefs about what is appropriate is not the way to go. Specifically, research suggests that individuals tend to experience good outcomes when they do not rely on their beliefs about what choices are appropriate given their current circumstances to make their decisions. This is true especially when their beliefs about what is appropriate lead them to make choices that they might not otherwise make.

Filler condition:

As a reminder, you will be asked to complete three tasks in this experimental session: a writing task, a product evaluation task in which you evaluate novels and some questions about you. Please complete the tasks in the order that they are presented. This means that once you have turned a page, please do not turn the page back unless instructed explicitly to do so.

Appendix D: Mixed option reader reviews from study 4

Positive self-focus / negative self-focus:

The Elephant House by A. Wall

- “I admire the reader who can put *The Elephant House* down before reaching its final pages... It simply soars.”
- “*The Elephant House* is one of those rare books that will make you *feel* the heaviness of guilt and the lightness of hope along with its characters. A stunning story that is destined to become a classic.”
- “A poignant story rendered in the clearest of prose, *The Elephant House* richly captures the complexity of life. At turns uneasily guilt-ridden and inspiringly hopeful, *The Elephant House* is a must-read.”
- “*The Elephant House* is haunting, original and so smart it took my breath away... Its sensitive treatment of hope in the face of guilt and optimism in the context of blame will stay with you long after it’s over.”
- “Stirringly hopeful yet mixed with guilt and blame, *The Elephant House* will move even the most cynical of readers.”

Positive self-focus / negative other-focus:

The Elephant House by A. Wall

- “I admire the reader who can put *The Elephant House* down before reaching its final pages... It simply soars.”
- “*The Elephant House* is one of those rare books that will make you *feel* the heaviness of sorrow and the lightness of hope along with its characters. A stunning story that is destined to become a classic.”
- “A poignant story rendered in the clearest of prose, *The Elephant House* richly captures the complexity of life. At turns heartbreakingly sad and inspiringly hopeful, *The Elephant House* is a must-read.”
- “*The Elephant House* is haunting, original and so smart it took my breath away... Its sensitive treatment of hope in the face of sorrow and optimism in the context of loss will stay with you long after it’s over.”
- “Stirringly hopeful yet mixed with heartbreak and sadness, *The Elephant House* will move even the most cynical of readers.”

Positive other-focus / negative other-focus:

***The Elephant House* by A. Wall**

- “I admire the reader who can put *The Elephant House* down before reaching its final pages... It simply soars.”
- “*The Elephant House* is one of those rare books that will make you *feel* the heaviness of guilt and the lightness of love along with its characters. A stunning story that is destined to become a classic.”
- “A poignant story rendered in the clearest of prose, *The Elephant House* richly captures the complexity of life. At turns uneasily guilt-ridden and infused with love, *The Elephant House* is a must-read.”
- “*The Elephant House* is haunting, original and so smart it took my breath away... Its sensitive treatment of love in the face of guilt and affection in the context of blame will stay with you long after it’s over.”
- “Steeped in love yet mixed with guilt and blame, *The Elephant House* will move even the most cynical of readers.”

Positive other-focus / negative self-focus:

***The Elephant House* by A. Wall**

- “I admire the reader who can put *The Elephant House* down before reaching its final pages... It simply soars.”
- “*The Elephant House* is one of those rare books that will make you *feel* the heaviness of sorrow and the lightness of love along with its characters. A stunning story that is destined to become a classic.”
- “A poignant story rendered in the clearest of prose, *The Elephant House* richly captures the complexity of life. At turns heartbreakingly sad and infused with love, *The Elephant House* is a must-read.”
- “*The Elephant House* is haunting, original and so smart it took my breath away... Its sensitive treatment of love in the face of sorrow and affection in the context of loss will stay with you long after it’s over.”
- “Steeped in love yet mixed with heartbreak and sadness, *The Elephant House* will move even the most cynical of readers.”

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Biography

Eugenia C. Wu was born in Bowling Green, Ohio. In 2004, she graduated *magna cum laude* from the University of Pennsylvania with a Bachelor of Science in economics and a Bachelor of Arts in psychology. Eugenia began studying for her PhD in Business Administration at Duke University in August 2005. Next fall, she will be an assistant professor in the marketing department of the Johnson School at Cornell University.