

RESEARCH

Open Access



# I feel competent and proud when I recall experiential: a self-determination perspective

Rogelio Puente-Díaz<sup>11\*</sup>

## Abstract

Consumption is a ubiquitous activity in which consumers satisfy different needs such as the need for competence. In three studies, we tested the influence of type of purchase, material versus experiential, on the satisfaction of the need for competence. In addition, we examined pride and prestige as two consequences. Participants in study 1 were randomly assigned to either recall an experiential or material purchase and completed questions assessing pride and demographics. Results showed a positive influence of experiential purchases on pride. Participants completed a similar battery in study 2 with the addition of the assessment of the need for competence and were randomly assigned to either an experiential or material purchase condition. Results showed a significant indirect effect of experiential purchases on pride by increasing the satisfaction of the need for competence. Last, we manipulated the proposed mediator, need for competence, in study 3 and assigned participants to recall a purchase that made them feel competent or an ordinary purchase and completed the same measures as study 2 with the addition of prestige. Results showed a significant indirect effect of the experimental condition on pride and prestige by increasing first the satisfaction of the need for competence.

**Keywords** Consumption, Need for competence, Pride, Prestige, Type of purchase

## Introduction

Consumption is an ongoing, dynamic process in which consumers anticipate, imagine, assess, re-assess, and recall their consumption episodes. This dynamic process often leads to experiencing different emotions and the satisfaction of needs [1]. Consumption involves different components. One of the most important components is the construal of meaning from recalling the consumption of material products and experiences [1]. This article is about consumption, about how consumers recall material and experiential purchases, and the relevance of assessing these purchases in terms of how

well they satisfy the need for competence and its affective and social consequences. We seek to answer a recent call for more research on the need for competence and type of purchases [2] given that previous research has mainly focused on the satisfaction of the need for relatedness. We also seek to make a small contribution by expanding the examination of affective outcomes beyond happiness and assessing pride [2]. We address these limitations by conducting three experiments. Consequently, the purpose of the present investigation is twofold. First, we test the role of type of purchase on the satisfaction of the need for competence. Second, we examine the affective and social consequences of experiencing satisfaction of the need for competence in the form of pride and social prestige. To reach our research objectives, we first describe briefly the ubiquity and importance of consumption and its implication for need satisfaction. We then introduce need satisfaction theory [3] as a guiding framework to

\*Correspondence:

Rogelio Puente-Díaz<sup>1</sup>

rogelio.puente@anahuac.mx

<sup>1</sup>Department of Business and Economics, Universidad Anáhuac México, Av. Lomas de Anáhuac 46, Col. Lomas de Anáhuac, Huixquilucan, Estado de México C.P. 52786, México



© The Author(s) 2025. **Open Access** This article is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivatives 4.0 International License, which permits any non-commercial use, sharing, distribution and reproduction in any medium or format, as long as you give appropriate credit to the original author(s) and the source, provide a link to the Creative Commons licence, and indicate if you modified the licensed material. You do not have permission under this licence to share adapted material derived from this article or parts of it. The images or other third party material in this article are included in the article's Creative Commons licence, unless indicated otherwise in a credit line to the material. If material is not included in the article's Creative Commons licence and your intended use is not permitted by statutory regulation or exceeds the permitted use, you will need to obtain permission directly from the copyright holder. To view a copy of this licence, visit <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/>.

connect types of purchases with the satisfaction of the need for competence and their affective and social consequences, before elaborating research hypotheses.

### **The ubiquity and importance of consumption**

Consumers make hundreds of purchases every year, seeking to satisfy different needs. Indeed, need satisfaction is at the heart of the marketing concept [4]. Need satisfaction could come from buying material stuff and experiences. The importance of the role of consumption has been well-documented by historians [5, 6] who suggest that it was just 30 or 40 years ago that scholars started to examine consumption from a more positive perspective [6]. By combining a historical perspective with material culture approaches, we suggest that consumers transform actively the material products and experiences they buy [7] and have done so for a long time. This transformation implies, among other things, inferring the signaling values of material objects and experiences in terms of what they represent to the self and identity [8, 9]. Similarly, one of the core principles of brand relationship theory is that consumers develop stronger, more profound relationships with brands that represent something important to the self [10], brands closely connected to their identity. The self, then, is an interpreter, a meaning-maker device helping consumers make sense of social episodes, including consumption episodes and opportunities [11]. Contrary to popular beliefs, consumers obtain meaning from the consumption of material and experiential purchases [12]. The process of interpreting and inferring meaning from consumption episodes can be conducted in prospection and retrospection. Our investigation focuses on recalled consumption of material and experiential purchases.

Having established the importance and ubiquity of consumption, its connection with the self and identity, and the presumed role of consumption in need satisfaction, we turn our attention to establishing why types of purchases might be relevant to understanding the satisfaction of the need for competence.

### **The need for competence and type of purchase**

As shown earlier, consumption is ubiquitous and plays an important role in satisfying different needs. Consumption serves as a vehicle to express the self and consumers' identity. Psychological need theory, a mini-theory of the Self-Determination Theory (SDT) [3], is well-equipped to serve as a guiding framework connecting consumption, the need for competence, and types of purchases. Psychological need theory originates, in part, from the initial work on intrinsic and extrinsic motivation [13, 14]. Intrinsic motivation is characterized by self-determined engagement with the environment whereas extrinsic motivation is characterized by engagement contingent

upon rewards. Motivation scholars identified that intrinsic motivation was most likely to occur in environments that satisfied human needs, starting the empirical examination of environments that support human needs. Environments that support need satisfaction usually lead to positive outcomes such as intrinsic motivation and well-being. Conversely, environments that hinder the satisfaction of basic needs usually lead to negative outcomes such as extrinsic motivation and boredom [3]. Psychological need theory postulates the need for competence, relatedness, and autonomy as basic needs and defines competence [3, pp. 86,] as "feeling effective in one's interaction with the environment- that is, experiencing opportunities and supports for the exercise, expansion, and expression of one's capacities and talents [pp. 86]". Psychological need theory suggests that the satisfaction of the need for competence leads to positive outcomes whereas the frustration of the need for competence leads to negative outcomes. A core principle of this theory is that the satisfaction of the need for competence varies across time, contexts, and social situations. Hence, we posit that the satisfaction of the need for competence is likely to vary as a function of types of purchases, leading to different consequences.

Consumption involves anticipating, buying, interacting, and recalling material and experiential purchases [2]. From this line of research, scholars have identified an experiential advantage, indicating that experiences are more strongly connected to happiness than material purchases [2]. Specifically, a recent proposition suggests that the experiential advantage can be explained by the satisfaction of the need for autonomy and relatedness [2], calling for more research on how purchases satisfy additional needs. Specifically, the authors suggest that the examination of the satisfaction of the need for competence as a function of types of purchases has been neglected even though it has the potential to explain important consumer-related dynamics. Hence, we seek to make a small contribution by answering this call for research and proposing that types of purchases can also influence the satisfaction of the need for competence. Specifically, we posit an experiential advantage based on the empirical literature. For example, in one study, consumers were more likely to include experiential than material purchases in their descriptions of important life episodes [15]. Similarly, when consumers wanted to express their true self, they were more likely to choose experiential than material purchases [16]. In addition, in other studies, experiential purchases led to more identity expression opportunities [17], generated higher levels of word-of-mouth [18], greater conversational value [19], and were more likely to be posted on social media [20]. These empirical findings indicate that experiential purchases are connected to the self and consumers'

identity in a more meaningful way than material purchases. When consumers recall these types of purchases and extract meaning from them, they are more likely to see these purchases as opportunities to exercise, expand, and express their capabilities, talents, and personal attributes, the core components of the satisfaction of the need for competence, than when consumers recall material purchases. In addition, conceptual and empirical developments suggest that consumers care about accumulating experiences and protecting these memories as if they were building their experiential CV to represent their identity [21–23]. Before presenting the first hypothesis, one caveat is in order. When we hypothesize an experiential advantage in need satisfaction, we posit a difference in the degree of satisfaction of the need for competence. We are not implying, therefore, that material purchases do not satisfy the need for competence because they do [12]. Consumers obtain meaning from consuming material products and experiences [12]. In addition, material purchases might have an advantage in some types of purchases such as when honoring important life events [12]. Hence, we posit that:

H1: Recalling experiential purchases will lead consumers to experience higher levels of the satisfaction of the need for competence than recalling material purchases.

Given that consumers construe experiential purchases as better opportunities to express their talents, capabilities, and personal attributes of their identities, and consequently have greater satisfaction of the need for competence, they are likely to experience emotions connected to accomplishments such as pride. The examination of pride as a function of types of purchases has not been examined [2], hence we seek to make a small contribution. We turn next to the discussion of pride.

### **Pride and prestige**

Pride is a self-relevant, social, evaluative emotion [24] that comes from experiencing a sense of accomplishment. The literature has identified two facets of pride: Hubristic and authentic. Our focus is on authentic pride which comes from hard work and personal accomplishments and success [24]. This sense of accomplishment generates a warm feeling, often leading to a more confident gait, and to feeling good about one's qualities and talents. Given that experiential purchases are more likely to satisfy the need for competence because consumers construe experiences as better opportunities to express their identity [16] and their true self [17], and protect these memories [21–23], experiential purchases should have a stronger connection with the experience of pride than material purchases. Conceptual developments on the satisfaction of the need for competence usually center on well-being as an affective outcome [3]. Research on the experiential advantage focuses on happiness [2].

We focus, instead, on expanding the repertory of emotions examined and assessing pride. As explained above, pride is a relevant emotion in consumption [24]. Thus, we seek to make a small contribution by examining pride as a function of type of purchase. We posit the following hypothesis:

H2: Recalling experiential purchases will lead, through its influence on the need for competence, consumers to experience higher levels of pride than recalling material purchases.

Recent developments on pride suggest that one of its functions is communicating the achievement or accomplishment of something important and valued by others [25], including the consumption of material and experiential purchases [26]. In addition, consumers anticipate that others will admire consumption opportunities that communicate and signal valued and important messages. Thus, given that consumption is social, consumers are likely to pay attention to signals of pride coming from consumption. Observing how consumers experience pride helps other consumers learn what is valuable and desirable in terms of the consumption of material and experiential purchases [27]. When consumers communicate pride coming from the consumption of material and experiential purchases, other consumers might recognize the signals of pride and infer high ranking and status leading to acknowledging prestige [25]. Prestige is a form of non-coercive social influence [28] with important implications for consumption given its social nature [25, 26]. The acknowledged prestige might serve as a learning mechanism to value and desire some types of consumption more than others. It is worth mentioning that consumption communicates different important messages. The exclusivity of brands could signal high status for example. Similarly, prestige can be obtained from different sources besides consumption. Yet, for this study, we focus on how consumers perceive that others acknowledge their purchases, especially those purchases that satisfy their need for competence, and their associated pride and prestige. As suggested previously, higher pride and perceptions of prestige come from experiential purchases that satisfy the need for competence. Hence, we posit the following hypothesis:

H3: Pride, coming from recalling purchases that satisfy the need for competence, will have a positive relationship with prestige as judged by consumers.

In sum, the purpose of the present investigation is twofold. First, we test the role of type of purchase on the satisfaction of the need for competence. Second, we examine the affective and social consequences of experiencing satisfaction of the need for competence in the form of pride and social prestige.

## Overview of Studies

To accomplish our research objectives, we conducted three online studies. Study one manipulated type of purchase and assessed pride, which allowed to establish the experiential advantage in pride. Study two added the examination of the need for competence, the hypothesized mediator, to the same experimental manipulation as study one. Study three overcame the limitation of measuring the mediator and outcome variable [29] by manipulating the need for competence and assessing pride. Our conceptual model suggested a causal chain in which the recall of experiential purchases was hypothesized to generate greater pride by increasing the satisfaction of the need for competence. By manipulating the hypothesized mediator, satisfaction of the need for competence, we seek to provide stronger evidence for our hypothesized causal chain than measuring the proposed mediator [29], by refraining from inferring causality from a correlation between the mediator and the outcome. In addition, we also included the examination of prestige as a relevant consumption outcome. To guide our decisions on sample size, we conducted a power analysis with G\*Power [30] to determine the number of participants needed for a power of 0.95 with an effect size of 0.26<sup>1</sup> and two groups. Results showed that we needed a sample size of 196 participants. Consequently, in all three studies, the goal was to have at least 196 participants. All three studies were conducted with college students, thus we used a sample of convenience. All three students were approved by the human subjects committee of our universities.

## Method of study 1

### Participants and procedure

Participants were 280 consumers from México (85% between the ages of 18 to 25; 66% females) taking college business classes in our universities. Participants agreed to participate without any financial compensation. Participants were randomly assigned to one of the following two conditions, taken from previous research and the relevant literature [e.g., 15, 22]:

Experiential condition: “For this activity, we would like you to think about an experiential purchase that you have made with a price of around 2000 pesos (100 US dollars). An experiential purchase involves spending money with the primary intention of acquiring an event or a series of events that you have had and lived. Please describe in the space provided below such purchase” [22, pp-555-556].

Material condition: “For this activity, we would like you to think about material purchase that you have made with a price of around 2000 pesos (100 US dollars). A

material purchase involves spending money with the primary intention of acquiring a material possession- a material product that you obtain and keep in your possession. Please describe in the space provided below such purchase” [22, pp-555-556]. After being randomly assigned to one of two experimental conditions, participants completed a set of questionnaires.

Thus, we used a one-factor between-subjects experimental design with two levels: Recall of experiential versus material purchases.

### Measures

Pride: We assessed all items by using the following prompt: Remembering this experiential (material) purchase makes me feel? On a scale from “I do not feel like that at all” (1) to “I completely feel like that” (10). The items for pride were: confident, satisfied, and proud ( $\alpha = 0.81$ ), taken from the relevant literature [31].

### Results of study 1

We conducted a one-way between-subjects Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) to estimate the effect of the experimental condition, experiential versus material purchase, on pride. Results showed a significant effect of the experimental condition,  $F(1, 279) = 24.63, p < .001$ . Specifically, recalling an experiential purchase led to higher levels of pride,  $M_{\text{exper}} = 9.26, SD = 1.07$  than recalling a material purchase,  $M_{\text{material}} = 8.39, SD = 1.75$ , Cohen's  $d = 0.60$ .

### Brief discussion

Our results showed preliminary support for hypothesis two. Specifically, recalling experiential purchases led to higher pride than recalling material purchases. The main limitation of study 1 is that we did not include an assessment of the proposed mediator, need for competence. Consequently, in study 2, we included an assessment of the need for competence and used a different scale of pride to increase the validity of our results.

## Method of study 2

### Participants and procedure

Participants were 224 consumers from México (92% between the ages of 18 to 25; 73% females) recruited from college business classes at our university. Participants agreed to participate without any financial compensation. Participants were randomly assigned to one of the same two conditions as in study 1, resulting in a one-factor between-subjects experiment with two levels.

### Measures

Satisfaction of the need for competence and pride. We assessed all items by using the following prompt: Remembering this experiential (material) purchase makes me feel? On a scale from “I do not feel like that at all” (1) to

<sup>1</sup> Results from a meta-analysis showed an effect size of 0.383. Yet, they estimated that a third was due to publication bias. Hence, we made our estimations with an effect size of 0.26.

“I completely feel like that” (10). The four items for satisfaction of the need for competence were taken from the Basic Psychological Need Satisfaction and Frustration Scale [BPNSFS; 32]. Sample items were: “I feel confident I can do things well” and “I feel capable at what I do”. The scores showed acceptable levels of internal consistency ( $\alpha=0.85$ ). The seven items for pride were taken from a validated scale [33], assessing authentic pride. Sample items were: Accomplished, like I am achieving, and fulfilled ( $\alpha=0.91$ ). Participants were also asked to report an estimate of how much money was spent on their purchase, which did not have a significant influence on the results.

## Results

We conducted a one-way Analysis of Variance (ANOVA). Results showed a positive effect of the experimental condition on pride,  $F(1, 223) = 13.49$ ,  $p < .001$ .  $M_{\text{exper}} = 8.69$ ,  $SD = 1.64$  and  $M_{\text{mater}} = 7.82$ ,  $SD = 1.96$ . This positive effect was explained by a significant mediation effect [34, model 4 of PROCESS macro], in which we first observed a positive effect of the experimental condition on the satisfaction of the need for competence,  $0.44$   $p = .03$ . Second, we found a positive relationship between the satisfaction of the need for competence and pride,  $0.67$ ,  $p < .001$ , while controlling for the experimental condition, which was significant,  $0.57$ ,  $p = .003$  (partial mediation). Last, the confidence interval of the indirect effect of  $CI = 0.024$ ,  $0.599$ , did not include zero (effect =  $0.29$ ). What these results suggested was that recalling an experiential purchase led indirectly to higher pride by influencing positively the satisfaction of the need for competence and directly as well.

## Brief discussion

Our results provided initial support for hypothesis one and additional support for hypothesis two. Specifically, consumers who recalled experiential purchases showed higher levels of pride by increasing the satisfaction of the need for competence, making a small contribution

by answering the call for more research on the satisfaction of the need for competence [2]. The main limitation of study 2 was that the outcome and mediator were both measured. Methodology scholars [29] recommend manipulating the mediator to increase the validity of the results by testing the hypothesized causal chain with a stronger design in which the mediator is manipulated as well. Consequently, we manipulated need for competence in experiment three by asking participants to recall a purchase that made them feel competent versus an ordinary purchase (See Fig. 1).

## Method of Study 3

### Participants and Procedure.

Participants were 253 consumers from México (96% between the ages of 18 to 25; 61% females) taking college business classes in our university. Participants agreed to participate without any financial compensation. Participants were randomly assigned to one of the following two conditions:

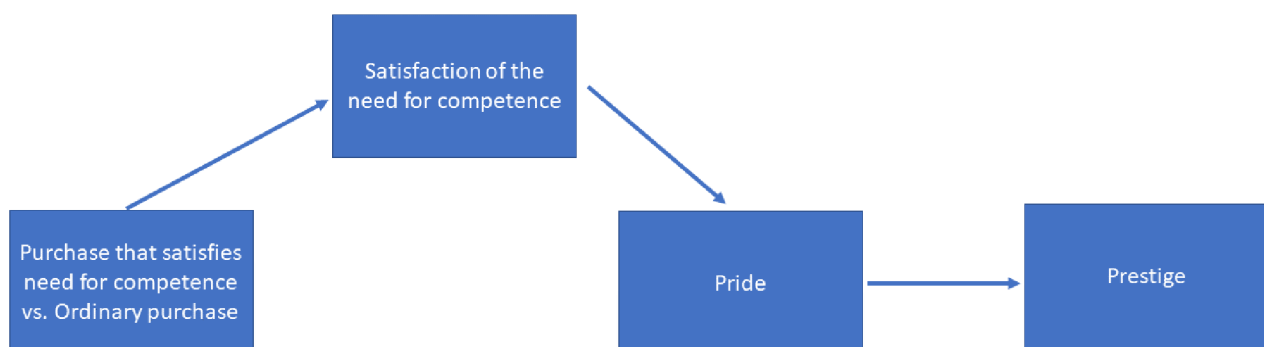
**Competence satisfying purchase:** For this activity, we would like to think about a purchase that made you feel that you are good at what you do, and competent to reach your goals, that you made with a price of around 2000 pesos (100 US dollars). Please, describe such a purchase in the space below.

**Ordinary purchase:** For this activity, we would like to think about a purchase that was ordinary, and common that you made with a price of around 2000 pesos (100 US dollars). Please, describe such a purchase in the space below.

Thus, we had a one-factor between-subjects experimental design with two levels: Recalling a purchase that made consumers feel competent versus recalling an ordinary purchase.

### Measures

Satisfaction of the need for competence and pride. We used the same items as study 2 to assess satisfaction of the need for competence and pride. The scores for



**Fig. 1** Conceptual model of study 3



**Table 1** Descriptive statistics for studies 1, 2, and 3

	Experiential		Material	
Study 1	M	SD	M	SD
Pride	9.26	1.07	8.39	1.75
Study 2	M	SD	M	SD
Competence satisfaction	9.03	1.42	8.59	1.58
Pride	8.69	1.64	7.82	1.96
Study 3	Competence satisfying		Ordinary	
	M	SD	M	SD
Competence satisfaction	9.13	1.22	8.41	1.86
Pride	8.76	1.46	7.75	1.87
Prestige	7.30	1.40	7.13	1.33

satisfaction of the need for competence and pride were reliable ( $\alpha = 0.87$  and  $0.88$ , respectively). To assess prestige, we used a validated scale with 10 items [35]. We made minor modifications to the scale to assess prestige coming from purchases. Samples items were: Members of my peer group respect and admire me for the purchases I make, I am held in high esteem by others for the type of purchases I make, I am considered an expert by others for some of my purchases, and consumption ( $\alpha = 0.66$ ).

Results

We first conducted a one-way ANOVA to estimate the effect of the experimental condition on the satisfaction of the need for competence to serve as a manipulation check and part of the model to be tested. Results showed a significant influence of the experimental condition,  $F(1, 252) = 12.77, p < .001$ , with the following descriptive statistics:  $M_{\text{competent}} = 9.13, SD = 1.22$ , and  $M_{\text{ordinary}} = 8.41, SD = 1.86$ .

Next, we analyzed two models to test hypothesis three. For the first model, we tested the mediation effect of the satisfaction of the need for competence on the relationship between the experimental condition and pride [34, model 4 of PROCESS macro]. Results showed a significant effect of the experimental condition on the satisfaction of the need for competence,  $b = 0.80, p < .001$ . Results also showed a positive relationship between the satisfaction of the need for competence and pride,  $b = 0.58, p < .001$ , while controlling for the significant effect of the experimental condition on pride,  $b = 0.71, p < .001$ . Last, a bootstrap procedure with 5000 iterations showed a significant indirect effect  $CI = 0.22, 0.75$  (average effect =  $0.47$ ). What this result showed was that bringing to mind a purchase that made participants feel competent led to higher levels of need for competence, which then had a positive relationship with pride.

To complement our examination of hypothesis three, we tested a sequential model [34, model 6 PROCESS macro]. Results for the sequential effect showed a significant coefficient  $CI = 0.04, 0.24$  (average effect =  $0.12$ ).

What this meant was that recalling a purchase that made consumers feel competent led indirectly to higher prestige through its influence on the satisfaction of the need for competence and then on pride (See Table 1 for descriptive statistics of all three studies).

Brief discussion

Results showed a significant effect of recalling a purchase that made consumers feel competence on the satisfaction of the need for competence and an indirect effect on pride, supporting hypothesis three and providing robust evidence for our hypothesized causal chain. Prestige was positively correlated with need for competence and pride, making a relevant, yet small contribution to our understanding of an important social outcome such as prestige.

General discussion

The purpose of the present investigation was to examine the influence of recalling experiential versus material purchases on pride by increasing the satisfaction of the need for competence among consumers from Mexico. In addition, we also tested how recalling purchases that satisfied the need for competence was positively connected with pride and then prestige. Our results supported all the hypotheses tested. Experiential purchases led to higher pride directly and indirectly by increasing feelings of competence. The theoretical and applied implications were discussed.

Theoretical implications

We found that when recalling experiential purchases, consumers felt greater pride than when recalling their material counterparts. Our results showed initial support for hypothesis two. Results were consistent with the experiential advantage found for the emotion of happiness [2], extending the affective consequences of types of purchases by including pride as a relevant emotion in consumption settings. Previous studies have established the importance of pride in the context of consumption [24, 25]. It seems then that consumers experience a sense of achievement when being able to recall experiential purchases. Feeling and showing pride could help other consumers learn about desired and valued experiential purchases.

The positive influence of experiential purchases on pride was mediated by the satisfaction of the need for competence, supporting hypothesis one and providing additional support for hypothesis two. Our results were consistent with recent conceptual developments positing the importance of need satisfaction in consumption [2] and previous studies examining the need for autonomy [36], making a small contribution by examining the satisfaction of the need for competence. Our results were also consistent with our proposition that consumption

was capable of satisfying relevant needs. Our participants who recalled experiential purchases experienced greater satisfaction of the need for competence because these types of purchases are important to the self and their identities, as has been documented extensively in previous research [15].

The experience and showcase of pride communicate important information to other consumers. When observing and listening to other consumers narrate their experiential purchases and how proud they feel to have those experiences, consumers could learn about what type of consumption leads to positive outcomes and is valued by others. This form of prestige might self-reinforce this type of consumption and encourage others to follow similar patterns. Our results supported hypothesis three by showing a positive indirect effect of recalling purchases that made consumers feel competent on prestige by increasing the satisfaction of the need for competence and the experience of pride. Evolutionary accounts of pride suggest the importance of this emotion to learn and teach others about outcomes valued by members of a given culture [27]. Combining the experience of pride with the prestige coming from purchases that satisfy the need for competence could shed light on relevant consumer dynamics in which consumers learn and teach each other preferences. Yet, it is important to mention that prestige is a multi-factor concept influenced by many variables. The consumption of experiences and the showcase of pride [25, 26] are just two potential antecedents of prestige. Consuming expensive, exclusive brands could be another mechanism to enhance social prestige.

### Applied implications

As explained in our introduction, consumption is a broad term that includes purchasing, using, and recalling purchases in which individuals actively make and extract meaning about the self and their identity. Consequently, one applied implication for marketers and business managers is to encourage periodic recall of purchases in which consumers are able to experience positive emotions such as pride and a sense of prestige. For example, marketers could organize contests on social media in which consumers are encouraged to recall their purchases by uploading photographs and personal stories narrating what these purchases have meant to them. This periodic recall could lead to experiencing pride and prestige and the association between these positive outcomes and a specific brand consumed. In the short term, the pride experienced and re-experienced could lead to greater purchase intentions by consumers who made the purchases and by others observing the showcase of pride. In the longer term, the feeling of pride and prestige could lead to greater bonding with the brand responsible for providing the recalled experience. A second applied

implication for marketers and business managers is framing purchases as accomplishments achieved by consumers seeking to emphasize how consumption satisfied the need for competence. This framing could lead to the showcase of pride helping new consumers infer prestige and wanting to make similar purchases. A third applied implication is to frame some material purchases as experiential, emphasizing how this material purchase, framed as experiential, facilitates feeling competent. One example could be framing a tennis racquet as an opportunity to obtain personal accomplishments, highlighting the satisfaction of the need for competence.

### Limitations

This study had several limitations. We used a cross-sectional design relying on recalling purchases which limited our ability to observe how the consumption processes unfold. Future studies should use longitudinal designs to assess with more precision how experiential purchases satisfy the need for competence, eliciting pride. Another limitation was that we used college students which limited our opportunity to generalize our results to the whole population of Mexico. Using a sample of convenience with some degree of homogeneity prevented us from examining, for example, if the experiential advantage holds with consumers from lower socio-economic status. Future experiments could use probabilistic sampling to address this limitation. A third limitation was the use of self-reported prestige. As individuals show and experience pride in the purchases that satisfy the need for competence, future studies could assess prestige coming from other consumers to validate the importance of prestige in consumption. In addition, future studies could use behavioral indicators of pride such as the number of posts on social media after recalling experiential purchases to overcome the limitation of assessing pride with self-reports.

In sum, across three experiments, we found support for the idea that experiential purchases satisfy the need for competence. The satisfaction of the need for competence led to experiencing greater pride and prestige, with important implications for consumption. Future studies should focus on using longitudinal designs to examine how the satisfaction of the need for competence coming from consumption unfolds over time.

### Appendix A

#### Informed consent form

This study investigates how individuals make purchases and the affective consequences. We would greatly appreciate if you agree to participate in the study. The study is anonymous, which means that you will not write your name and surname. The survey should take approximately 10 min to complete. Participation is voluntary, and you

have the right to withdraw at any time without having to give a reason. If there are any questions you do not wish to answer or they do not apply to you, you may leave them blank.

If you agree to participate, please choose “I agree” option below. If you choose not to participate, choose “I do not agree”.

- I agree.
- I do not agree.

#### Author contributions

RPD designed the study, analyzed the results, and wrote the article.

#### Funding

The authors have no funding to disclose.

#### Data availability

All data sets are available upon request from the author

#### Declarations

##### Compliance with ethical standards

All procedures performed in studies involving human participants were in accordance with the ethical standards of the human subjects committee of Universidad Anahuac and with the 1964 Helsinki Declaration and its later amendments or comparable ethical standards.

The procedure was approved by the ethics committee of Universidad Anahuac with the number: 2020-12-153.

##### Consent for publication

Not applicable.

##### Inform consent

Informed consent was obtained from all individual adult participants included in the study (see Appendix A).

##### Competing interests

The authors declare no competing interests.

Received: 3 May 2024 / Accepted: 4 April 2025

Published online: 29 April 2025

#### References

1. Miller D. *Stuff*. Cambridge, UK: Polity; 2010.
2. Weingarten E, Goodman JK. Re-examining the experiential advantage in consumption: A meta-analysis and review. *J Consum Res*. 2021;47(6):855–77. <https://doi.org/10.1093/jcr/ucaa047>.
3. Ryan RM, Deci EL. *Self-Determination theory: basic psychological needs in motivation, development, and wellness*. New York, NY: Guilford; 2018.
4. Tybout AM, Calder BJ, editors. (2010), editors. *Kellogg on marketing* (2d edition). Hoboken, NJ: Wiley.
5. Trentmann F, editor. (Ed.). *The Oxford handbook of the history of consumption*. New York, NY: Oxford University Press; 2012.
6. Trentmann F. *Empire of things: how we became a world of consumers, from the fifteen century to the twenty-first*. New York, NY: Harper Collins; 2016.
7. Miller D. *Consumption and its consequences*. Cambridge, UK: Polity; 2012.
8. Belk RW. Possessions and the extended self. *J Consum Res*. 1988;15:139–68.
9. Bourdieu P. *Distinction: A social critique of the judgment of taste*. London, UK: Routledge & Kegan Paul; 1984.
10. Alvarez C, Fournier S. Consumers' relationships with brands. *Curr Opin Psychol*. 2016;10:129–35. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.copsyc.2015.12.017>.
11. Oyserman D. Identity-based motivation: implications for action-readiness, procedural readiness, and consumer behavior. *J Consumer Psychol*. 2009;19:250–60. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jcps.2009.05.008>.
12. Mead NL, Williams LE. (2022). Can't buy me meaning? Lay theories impede people from deriving meaning and well-being from consumption. *Curr Opin Psychol*. 101332.
13. Deci EL. *Intrinsic motivation*. New York, NY: Plenum; 1975.
14. Deci EL, Ryan RM. *Intrinsic motivation and self-determination in human behavior*. New York, NY: Plenum; 1985.
15. Carter T, Gilovich T. I am what I do, not what I have: the differential centrality of experiential and material purchases to the self. *J Personal Soc Psychol*. 2012;102(6):1304–17. <https://doi.org/10.1037/a0027407>.
16. Bronner F, de Hoog R. Conspicuous consumption and the rising importance of experiential purchases. *Int J Market Res*. 2018;60:88–103.
17. Guevarra DA, Howell RT. To have in order to do: exploring the effects of consuming experiential products on well-being. *J Consumer Psychol*. 2015;25:28–41.
18. Gallo I, Townsend C, Alegre I. Experiential product framing and its influence on the creation of consumer reviews. *J Bus Res*. 2019;98:177–90.
19. Bastos W, Brucks M. How and why conversational value leads to happiness for experiential and material purchases. *J Consum Res*. 2017;44:598–612.
20. Duan J, Dholakia RR. How purchase type influences consumption-related posting behavior on social media: the moderating role of materialism. *J Internet Commer*. 2018;17:64–80.
21. Zauberman G, Ratner RK, Kim BK. Memories as assets: strategic memory protection in choice over time. *J Consum Res*. 2009;35(5):715–28. <https://doi.org/10.1086/592943>.
22. Puente-Díaz R, Cavazos-Arroyo J. Experiential gifts as meaningful moments and memories: their influence on nostalgia, and relive intention. *Psychol Mark*. 2021;38(3):553–63. <https://doi.org/10.1002/mar.21455>.
23. Keinan A, Kivetz R. Productivity orientation and the consumption of collectable experiences. *J Consum Res*. 2011;37(6):935–50. <https://doi.org/10.1086/657163>.
24. McFerran B, Aquino K, Tracy JL. Evidence for two facets of pride in consumption: findings from luxury brands. *J Consumer Psychol*. 2014;24:455–71.
25. Griskevicius V, Durante KM. (2015). *Evolution and consumer behavior*. In M. I. Norton, D. D. Rucker, & C. Lamberton, editors, *The Cambridge handbook of consumer psychology* (pp. 122–151). Cambridge University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9781107706552.005>
26. Tracy JL, Mercadante EJ, Hohm I. Pride: the emotional foundation of social rank attainment. *Ann Rev Psychol*. 2023;74:519–45.
27. Sznycer D, Cohen AS. How pride works. *Evolutionary Hum Sci*. 2021;3:e10. <https://doi.org/10.1017/ehs.2021.6>.
28. Maner JK. Dominance and prestige: A Tale of two hierarchies. *Curr Dir Psychol Sci*. 2017;26(6):526–31. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0963721417714323>.
29. Spencer SJ, Zanna MP, Fong G. Establishing a causal chain: why experiments are often more effective than mediational analyses in examining psychological processes. *J Personal Soc Psychol*. 2005;89(6):845–51. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-3514.89.6.845>.
30. Faul F, Erdfelder E, Lang A-G, Buchner A. G\*Power 3: A flexible statistical power analysis program for the social, behavioral, and biomedical sciences. *Behav Res Methods*. 2007;39:175–91. <https://doi.org/10.3758/BF03193146>.
31. Williams LA, DeSteno D. Pride and perseverance: the motivational role of pride. *J Personal Soc Psychol*. 2008;94(6):1007–17. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-3514.94.6.1007>.
32. Chen B, Vansteenkiste M, Beyers W, Boone L, Deci EL, Van der Kaap-Deeder J, Duriez B, Lens W, Matos L, Mouratidis A, Ryan RM, Sheldon KM, Soenens B, Van Petegem S, Verstuyf J. Basic psychological need satisfaction, need frustration, and need strength across four cultures. *Motivation Emot*. 2015;39:216–36.
33. Tracy JL, Robins RW. The psychological structure of pride: A Tale of two facets. *J Personal Soc Psychol*. 2007;92(3):506–25. <https://doi.org/10.1037/0022-3514.92.3.506>.
34. Hayes AF. *Introduction to mediation, moderation, and conditional process analysis*. New York, NY: The Guilford Press; 2018.
35. Cheng JT, Tracy JL, Henrich J. Pride, personality, and the evolutionary foundations of human social status. *Evol Hum Behav*. 2010;31:334–47.
36. Puente-Díaz R, Cavazos-Arroyo J. Experiential purchases and feeling autonomous: their implications for gratitude and ease of justification. *Front Psychol*. 2023;13:1033630. <https://doi.org/10.3389/fpsyg.2022.1033630>.

#### Publisher's note

Springer Nature remains neutral with regard to jurisdictional claims in published maps and institutional affiliations.