

Emotional Responses to Performance Appraisal Feedback: Implications for Organizations

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This investigation tested hypotheses derived from a combination of appraisal theory (Lazarus & Smith, 1988; Smith & Lazarus, 2001) and Affective Events Theory (AET, Weiss & Cropanzano, 1996). The research question was: What is the relationship between the appraisals of relevancy, congruency and accountability of information derived from performance appraisal and the emotional reactions to the appraisals? Sixty-two (62) undergraduate students receiving midterm exam scores provided self-report data in exchange for extra credit. Results of hierarchical multiple regression analyses indicate that appraisal components combine to differentiate emotions elicited in response to the appraisal of performance feedback.

INTRODUCTION

Performance appraisal is an evaluative process involving the assessment of employee performance in light of predetermined standards (Smither, 1998). A common human resource management tool, performance appraisal is used for various administrative purposes including making personnel decisions, such as those regarding promotion, tenure, termination, and salary determination (Levy & Williams, 2004; Murphy & Cleveland, 1995). Additional uses of performance appraisal include organizational planning, employee development and employee feedback (Murphy & Cleveland, 1995). As such, performance appraisal is a common practice in most organizations.

Research on performance appraisal has traditionally focused on measurement-based issues such as rating error and rating accuracy (Keeping & Levy, 2000; Levy & Williams, 2004); however, in the more recent past, performance appraisal research has changed in focus to more social context issues (Levy & Williams, 2004) heeding the advice of researchers (e.g., Bretz et al., 1992; Murphy & Cleveland, 1995) who recognized that qualitative issues such as employee response to feedback are as important as quantitative issues for organizations to consider. Progressively, the importance of employees' perception of performance appraisal feedback has been recognized (Keeping & Levy, 2000) and there is increased emphasis on ratee reaction to such feedback (Keeping & Levy, 2000; Levy & Williams, 2004). However, to date, no other published empirical evidence has been found such as the present study examining the discrete emotional responses to performance appraisal using distinct measures for each emotion. Nonetheless, emotions play an integral, inseparable part in our everyday lives as they influence our work and are in turn influenced by our work experiences, thereby making a case for the importance of their study in the organizational context (Fox & Spector, 2002). Moreover, managers may benefit from the application of research identifying specific work events that lead to specific emotions in order to create positive events rather than simply attempting to avoid negative events (Basch & Fisher, 2000; Fisher,

2002). Hence, the present investigation was undertaken in response to a call put forth by organizational behavior scholars (e.g. Ashkanasay et al., 2002) for a broader integrative view of emotions in the workplace.

The present study investigated five discrete emotions – guilt, shame, anger, pride, and gratitude – that may be witnessed as a result of performance appraisal. One goal of the current investigation was to provide empirical evidence regarding the role that performance appraisal plays in the elicitation of these five emotions in the workplace. Affective Events Theory (Weiss & Cropanzano, 1996) and appraisal theory (Lazarus & Smith, 1988; Smith & Lazarus, 2001), combined provide the theoretical foundations for the current research.

Appraisal Theory

Emotions depend on appraisal to aid in their elicitation and differentiation (Ben-Ze'ev, 2003); hence, they are closely related to individuals' cognitive appraisal of the situation (e.g., Smith & Ellsworth, 1985). Appraisal is an evaluation of information about a specific event in terms of the information's implications for individual well being, action, and coping (Lazarus, 1991; Smith & Lazarus, 2001). Cognition alone provides information about the event and nothing more; however, the appraisal process, during which interpretation of the event takes place, is what differentiates which emotions will be elicited in response to the given situation (Lazarus, 1991).

A number of appraisal theories exist that attempt to explain what occurs during the appraisal process. These theories adapt a dimensional approach to emotion elicitation and differentiation, which distinguishes one theory from another. Examples of the proposed appraisal dimensions said to determine which emotions might be elicited given a specific event are pleasantness, certainty, responsibility, attentional activity, effort (Smith & Ellsworth, 1985), motive consistency, certainty of outcome, agency, motivational state, and coping potential (Roseman, 1984). Lazarus and Smith's (1988; 2001) appraisal theory was chosen and used in the current research due to its influence in the development of appraisal theory research (Scherer, 1999).

Lazarus and Smith's theory

Lazarus and Smith's (1988; Smith & Lazarus, 2001) appraisal theory posits that each emotion elicited in a given situation is identifiable by its specific relational meaning or core relational theme (see Figure 1). The core relational theme is the result of appraisal, in which one assesses or appraises the present relationship between the individual and the environment in terms of threat, insult or enhancement of ego-identity. In essence, one fundamental premise of the theory is that we respond emotionally to situations that are of importance to us. Therefore, the context of performance appraisal was chosen for this investigation because it is considered a significant part of work life (Barnes-Farrell, 2001) that provides information to individuals regarding their value to the organization (Pearce & Porter, 1986).

Once the situation or context is identified as one in which the elicitation of emotions is likely, the task at hand is then to attempt prediction of which emotions would be elicited given differing individual interpretations of the situation. Various emotions may be elicited from the same situational encounter due to the interdependency among the core relational themes of the emotions (Lazarus, 1991; 2001) as each individual interprets the situation differently at any given point in time. Emotional response is a result of the interpretation of the situation coupled with the meaning of the situation to the individual, as determined by the two-part appraisal process (Smith & Lazarus, 2001). Although the two processes are separated for analysis, they are regarded as complementary appraisals – never operating independently of each other, and neither being more important than the other (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984).

A primary appraisal, during which motivational relevance (relevant versus irrelevant) and motivational congruence (congruent versus incongruent) are appraised, occurs first in the emotion-elicitation process in the sense that if an event is appraised as irrelevant for the individual, the emotion-elicitation process halts (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984). Motivational relevance is the degree to which the event is personally pertinent or irrelevant for the individual – the extent to which he or she cares about the issues at hand – whereas, motivational congruence is the extent to which the event corresponds or does not correspond to

the individual's goals (Smith & Lazarus, 2001). If the event is appraised as relevant in the primary appraisal, the emotion-elicitation process progresses to the secondary appraisal (Lazarus & Folkman, 1984).

During the secondary appraisal, individuals evaluate the event on four appraisal dimensions – accountability, problem-focused coping potential, emotion-focused coping potential, and future expectancy (Smith & Lazarus, 2001). Accountability (self versus other versus uncontrollable event) refers to whom or what is responsible for the event (for example, performance appraisal) outcome. Problem-focused coping potential assesses individuals' ability to take action so that the event corresponds to their goals and desires, whereas emotion-focused coping potential refers to one's ability to adjust psychologically to the event. Finally, future expectancy is the individual's outlook for the future – whether the situation will improve or worsen.

Given that Lazarus and Smith specify these three appraisal dimensions in the elicitation process leading to the experience of the emotions of interest, I chose to focus on relevance, motivational congruence and accountability instead of all of the appraisal components. Motivational relevance is important because, as was previously discussed, an event must be relevant in order for us to respond emotionally as personally insignificant situations do not garner enough attention to warrant appraisal and emotional reaction.

Congruence is important because this dimension, also referred to as pleasantness (Smith & Ellsworth, 1985), is a part of the primary appraisal process (Smith & Lazarus, 2001). Finally, accountability, also referred to as responsibility (Smith & Ellsworth, 1985), is identified as one other crucial determinant of emotion elicitation as it is a part of the secondary appraisal process, which helps individuals understand the cause of an event in order to help them cope with outcomes (Smith & Lazarus, 2001). Specifically, accountability is an appraisal of both blame and credit regarding who or what is responsible for the event outcome (Lazarus, 2001).

Following performance appraisal, individuals assess its meaning to them and determine whether it is congruent (beneficial) or incongruent (harmful) to their goals. In addition to making the primary appraisal regarding goal congruence, individuals make a secondary appraisal that involves judgments about whom or what is responsible for the nature of the appraisal. Either an internal (due to self) or external (due to other or due to an uncontrollable event) attribution is made. It is very difficult to attribute blame or credit in a situation where the event outcome could not have been avoided (Lazarus, 2001); therefore, for simplicity reasons, the uncontrollable event as a source of accountability was not evaluated, only self-accountable and other-accountable.

Affective Events Theory

Affective Events Theory (AET, Weiss & Cropanzano, 1996) purports that job attitudes and organizational behavior are affected by the emotions employees experience in response to important events on the job. In essence, AET focuses on how people feel while working, what workplace events cause those feelings and how those feelings influence subsequent job attitudes and behaviors. The four main components of AET are (1) the nature, cause and consequences of emotion in the workplace, (2) what events cause emotional reactions in the workplace, (3) that emotions fluctuate over time and may be predicted, and (4) that emotional experiences are multidimensional and this dimensionality is as important as the structure of the environments in which they occur (Weiss & Cropanzano, 1996). Although AET does not specify particular organizational events associated with various emotional states, it is the cornerstone for the current investigation of the performance appraisal as one of those proximal causal events of emotions in organizations.

Appraisal theory (in a view adopted by Affective Events Theory) suggests that the occurrence of specific events initiates a two-part appraisal process by which an individual assesses the meaning of the event for said individual as well as the cause of the event (Lazarus, 1991; Smith & Lazarus, 2001). The primary appraisal assesses the importance of the event for the individual's well being, while the secondary and more specific appraisal assesses issues such as cause of the event and coping potential (Lazarus & Smith, 2001). In general, the appraisal and interpretation of the event determines the emotion

subsequently experienced beyond the event itself (Smith & Lazarus, 2001; Roseman & Smith, 2001; Roseman, Spindel & Jose, 1990).

Appraisal Theory and Affective Events Theory

Combined, appraisal theory (e.g., Lazarus & Smith, 1988; Smith & Lazarus, 2001) and AET (Weiss & Cropanzano, 1996) provide the foundation for the methodology of the current investigation in addition to the rationale for the specific hypotheses tested. The combination of both appraisal theory and AET led to the formation of the following research question:

Q: What is the relationship between the appraisals of relevancy, congruency and accountability of information derived from performance appraisal and the emotional reactions to the appraisals?

The theoretical basis for the hypotheses derived to answer the research question is discussed in the ensuing sections. The discussion begins with an introduction to self-conscious emotions and the specific related emotions examined in the current study.

Self-conscious Emotions

Self-conscious emotions, also known as secondary or social emotions (Fisher & Tangney, 1995), are concerned with our perception of others' evaluations of us (see Figure 1 for a comparison of the predicted emotions). Self-conscious emotions are self-evaluative in that they provide us with feedback about our thoughts, actions and intentions (Tangney, 2003). Self-conscious emotions have only recently begun to command the attention that their counterparts, primary emotions, have traditionally enjoyed. This may be due to the fact that emotions do not have to be observed by outsiders in order to be experienced (Izard & Ackerman, 2000); therefore, emotions such as shame and pride are often difficult to identify due to their generally private nature. As a result, self-conscious emotions have suffered neglect by researchers, due in part to the fact that they are difficult to identify simply by observing such physiological phenomena as facial-muscle movements, pulse rate, respiration rate, and galvanic skin responses (Cook, 1996; Lewis, 2000).

FIGURE 1
COMPARISON OF PREDICTED EMOTIONS ADAPTED FROM LAZARUS, 2001

Emotion	Congruence	Accountability	Related Feelings	Core Relational Theme
Anger	Harmful	Other(s)	Irritation Fury Rage	"a demeaning offense against me and mine"
Shame	Harmful	Self Global	Worthlessness Inferiority	"failing to live up to an ego-ideal"
Guilt	Harmful	Self Specific	Regret Remorse	"having transgressed a moral imperative"
Pride	Beneficial	Self	Self-worth Achievement	"Enhancement of one's ego identity by taking credit for a valued object or achievement, either one's own or that of someone or group with whom we identify"
Gratitude	Beneficial	Other(s)	Thankfulness Appreciation	"appreciation for an altruistic gift that provided personal benefit"

Related self-conscious emotions

The predictions of the current research were made by studying pairs of related self-conscious emotions rather than by studying each emotion individually. Related emotions are emotions that can change into each other by a simple change in the appraised meaning (Lazarus, 2001). For instance, if the self is perceived accountable for an incongruent event outcome, this may lead to experiences of either shame or guilt. However, if one were to change accountability from self to other, shame may be transformed into anger (Tangney, 2003). Studying related emotions is more meaningful to our understanding of different emotional responses to a single significant event such as the employee performance appraisal. This is because studying pairs of emotions gives us an alternative way of understanding the emotions experienced as logically prescribed by the primary and secondary appraisal processes (Lazarus, 2001). Therefore, in the present study, pairs of self-conscious emotions are identified based on how they are related on the appraisal components of congruence and accountability. Namely, shame, guilt, anger, gratitude and pride will be the related emotions examined in the current investigation. Relevance is assumed to be high due to the evidence that emotions are only experienced in response to events that are of importance to the individual (Smith & Lazarus, 2001), and exam grades and performance appraisal feedback are important to students and employees, respectively.

Empirical investigations have demonstrated that when a congruent or beneficial outcome is evaluated as being due to the self, pride is most often the resulting emotion (Lefcourt, Martin & Ware, 1984; Smith & Ellsworth, 1985; Tracy & Robins, 2007; Weiner, Russell & Lerman, 1979). However, if that same congruent outcome is attributed to another, individuals are most likely to experience gratitude or appreciation toward the other individual, whom they feel is responsible for the outcome (Emmons, McCullough and Tsang, 2003; Weiner et al., 1979). Conversely, either shame (Poulson, 2000) or guilt (Lewis, 2000) is experienced following an incongruent or harmful outcome attributed to the self, whereas anger is experienced if the same incongruent outcome is attributed to outside sources (Ellsworth & Smith, 1988; Kuppens, Mechelen, Smits, & De Boeck, 2003; Parkinson, 1999; Smith & Ellsworth, 1985).

Possible covariates of the emotions

In this research I was interested in state rather than trait emotions. Trait emotions assess individuals' tendency or proneness to make the relevant appraisals resulting in the experience of a specific emotion (Tangney et al., 1995; Tangney, 1990). For example, a shame-prone individual (one who scores highly on a trait shame measure) is more likely to experience shame in response to life events than an individual who is not shame-prone (Tangney et al., 1992). Research suggests that one's predisposition to experience an emotion may affect one's momentary experience of the same emotion, which may indicate a pathology or psychological maladjustment (Tangney et al., 1995) in the individual. Therefore, it is important to examine the hypotheses regarding emotions after taking into consideration the influence of the corresponding trait affect.

Shame and guilt

The first pair of related emotions is shame and guilt. Shame is commonly confused with other negative self-conscious emotions – most often with guilt – so much so that individuals often use shame and guilt interchangeably. This may be due to the close relation of the two emotions in that both shame and guilt occur when a failure is experienced. There are differences between the two, however.

Shame is a negative emotion that one experiences after experiencing a failure of the self, accompanied by a negative specific self-attribution (e.g., Lewis, 2000; Tangney, Wagner, Fletcher, & Gramzow, 1992). Guilt, also a negative emotion, ensues when one experiences a failure regarding one's actions, thoughts or feelings according to one's standards, followed by a negative specific self-attribution (Lewis, 2000). For instance, if an employee accepts recognition for a co-worker's idea that her supervisor thought was brilliant, that employee may experience guilt. She may experience guilt because she feels that her action or inaction was inappropriate according to her standards or someone else's.

Perhaps most frequently studied in conjunction with shame, guilt is a far less intense emotion than shame with fewer disruptive qualities. While shame inhibits action and causes a global feeling of

worthlessness, guilt prompts one to feel remorse, regret or disappointment over an act that one did or failed to do, and, furthermore, to act on those feelings in order to make reparation (Tangney et al., 1992). Therefore, the focus of attention in guilt is not the self as it is in shame. Rather, guilt focuses on action and corrective behavior, including one's ability or inability to act.

In guilt, the self and the object (or subject) of evaluation are separated. Individuals feel guilty for what they have done, but ashamed of whom they are (Walsh, 1999). It is also generally assumed that action may rid one of guilt but not shame (Lewis, 2000). For example, if an employee regrets that his stealing on the job may have caused his co-worker's wrongful termination, he may be prompted to apologize to his co-worker and maybe even confess to his supervisor, which may serve to rid him of his guilt. Guilt can be dissipated, but if corrective action is not taken, shame may ensue (Lewis, 2000). In the current example, if the guilty employee does nothing to right his wrong, he may feel "ashamed" of the "guilty" act he committed. Based on the preceding rationale, the first two hypotheses were formed:

Hypothesis 1. Regardless of trait guilt, the lower their congruence appraisals and the higher their self-accountability appraisals, employees experience higher levels of state guilt in response to relevant performance appraisal feedback.

Hypothesis 2. Regardless of trait shame, the lower their congruence appraisals and the higher their self-accountability appraisals, employees experience higher levels of state shame in response to relevant performance appraisal feedback.

Shame and anger

Anger and shame are another pair of related emotions (Kemper, 1987) in that they are similar on the appraisal component of congruence; both anger and shame generally result from the appraisal of events seen as incongruent with the individual's goals. They differ, however, on the appraisal component of accountability. Anger is elicited when others are perceived as accountable and shame is elicited when the self is perceived as accountable for a negative event or outcome (Smith & Ellsworth, 1985). Therefore, theoretically, by changing the nature of the appraisal component of accountability from self to other, one can transform an experience of shame into an experience of anger, or vice versa. In fact, anger is often described as shame directed at others, whereas shame is described as anger directed at the self (e.g., Tangney, Wagner, Fletcher, & Gramzow, 1992). Based on the preceding rationale, hypothesis 3 was created:

Hypothesis 3. Regardless of trait anger, the lower their congruence appraisals and the higher their other-accountability appraisals, employees experience higher levels of state anger in response to relevant performance appraisal feedback.

Shame and pride

Pride and shame are related on the appraisal component of accountability in that both result from the attribution of an event outcome to oneself (Smith & Ellsworth, 1985). Both are outcome-related, attribution-dependent emotions (Pekrun & Frese, 1992) that have a strong social component (Stipek, 1995). In other words, just as shame is a probable reaction to personal failure, pride is a natural reaction to personal success (Webster, Duvall, Gaines, & Smith, 2003).

Both emotions are self-relevant in that they cause us to evaluate the self such that an evaluation of adequacy on a task results in an experience of pride, whereas, an evaluation of inadequacy results in an experience of shame (Nathanson, 1987). In essence, pride is the self-reward emotion whereas shame is the self-punishment emotion (Batson, Dyck, Brandt, Batson, et al., 1988). Pride is a positive emotion that results in a sense of achievement leading to enhanced self-worth; whereas, shame is a negative emotion that results in feelings of worthlessness (Tangney, 1999).

Pride and shame differ on the appraisal component of congruence in that shame results from the appraisal of an event as incongruent with the individual's goals whereas pride results from the appraisal of an event as congruent with one's goals (Tracy & Robins, 2007). Therefore, by reversing the congruence, pride may turn into shame or shame may turn into pride. Based on this rationale, hypothesis 4 was created:

Hypothesis 4. Regardless of trait pride, the higher their congruence appraisals and the higher their self-accountability appraisals, employees experience higher levels of state pride in response to relevant performance appraisal feedback.

Pride and gratitude

Pride and gratitude are also related emotions in that both are generally pleasant emotions resulting from an event being appraised as congruent with individuals' goals. Though similar on the appraisal component of congruence, pride and gratitude differ on accountability. Pride results from an attribution of the success of an event to one's own efforts (Tracy & Robins, 2007; Weiner, 1985), whereas, gratitude results when another is perceived as the provider of a positive benefit (Emmons & McCullough, 2003). For example, if an employee receives a salary increase and feels that this positive outcome is a result of his or her own efforts on the job, the resulting emotional experience is likely to be one of pride. In contrast, if that same employee perceives that the salary increase is due to his or her superior or boss then the resulting emotion is often gratitude. Therefore, by reversing the accountability for the successful event from self to other, one may transform an experience of pride into one of gratitude. Based on the above rationale, hypothesis 5 was created:

Hypothesis 5. Regardless of trait gratitude, the higher their congruence appraisals and the higher their other-accountability appraisals, employees experience higher levels of state gratitude in response to relevant performance appraisal feedback.

Gratitude and anger

Yet another pair of related emotions is gratitude and anger. These emotions are similar in that both result when someone else is perceived as accountable for an event's outcome, regardless of whether the outcome is congruent or incongruent (Lazarus, 1991; 2001). As stated previously, gratitude results from an outcome being appraised as congruent (Emmons, et al., 2003; Weiner et al., 1979), whereas, anger results from an outcome being appraised as incongruent (Smith & Ellsworth, 1985). Therefore, by changing the appraisal component on which gratitude and anger differ – congruence versus incongruence – one may transform the experience of gratitude into one of anger, or vice versa. Based on the above rationale, hypotheses 3 and 5 (see above) were formed.

The Current Study

The purpose of this investigation was to combine the tenets of appraisal theory and Affective Events Theory to test predictions made regarding emotional responses to performance appraisal feedback. The research question examined is as follows:

Q: What is the relationship between the appraisals of relevancy, congruency and accountability of information derived from performance appraisal and the emotional reactions to the appraisals?

The research question was examined using a sample of students receiving exam performance feedback in order to examine the extent to which participants experienced five hypothesized emotions as determined by the perceived congruence and the perceived accountability of the performance appraisal feedback they received. This relationship was studied after controlling for participants' predisposition to experience each relevant emotion. After receiving their performance appraisal feedback, participants completed self-report measures of their in-the-moment emotional experiences and their appraisal of the feedback.

The five emotions investigated in the current study can be distinguished on the components of congruence and accountability (Smith & Lazarus, 2001; see comparison of emotions in Figure 1). The emotions are shame, guilt, pride, anger, and gratitude. Shame emerges when an incongruent outcome is attributed wholly to the self (Smith & Ellsworth, 1985); guilt emerges when an incongruent outcome is attributed to an action one did or failed to do (Lewis, 2000), pride emerges when a congruent outcome is attributed to the self (Tracy & Robins, 2007); anger emerges when an incongruent outcome is attributed to others (Smith & Ellsworth, 1985); and, gratitude emerges when a congruent outcome is attributed to others (Emmons & McCullough, 2003).

The following five hypotheses were tested in this investigation:

- *Hypothesis 1. Regardless of trait guilt, the lower their congruence appraisals and the higher their self-accountability appraisals, employees experience higher levels of state guilt in response to relevant performance appraisal feedback.*
- *Hypothesis 2. Regardless of trait shame, the lower their congruence appraisals and the higher their self-accountability appraisals, employees experience higher levels of state shame in response to relevant performance appraisal feedback.*
- *Hypothesis 3. Regardless of trait anger, the lower their congruence appraisals and the higher their other-accountability appraisals, employees experience higher levels of state anger in response to relevant performance appraisal feedback.*
- *Hypothesis 4. Regardless of trait pride, the higher their congruence appraisals and the higher their self-accountability appraisals, employees experience higher levels of state pride in response to relevant performance appraisal feedback.*
- *Hypothesis 5. Regardless of trait gratitude, the higher their congruence appraisals and the higher their other-accountability appraisals, employees experience higher levels of state gratitude in response to relevant performance appraisal feedback.*

METHODOLOGY

Participants

Participants were 62 students enrolled in undergraduate courses offered through the psychology department of East Tennessee State University in Johnson City, Tennessee. The sample consisted of 37 women and 25 men ranging in age from 18 to 45 with 87% ($n = 54$) being between 18 and 25 years of age. With the instructors' permission, I visited five classes and asked students to volunteer to participate in the study. I then briefly explained the procedure for the study to students. Those wishing to volunteer their participation were directed to a designated website where they completed the study online. Students received two extra credit points from their instructor via an online research participant pool database, as incentive for participation in the study.

Study Materials - Dependent Variables Measures

The dependent variables – state shame, guilt, pride, anger, and gratitude – were assessed using self-report questionnaires. All internal consistency coefficients from the current data are reported on the diagonal in Table 1.

State shame

State shame was assessed using the 5-item shame subscale of the State Shame and Guilt Scale (SSGS, Marschall, Sanftner & Tangney, 1994; $\alpha = .91$). Shame items are: “I want to sink into the floor and disappear”, “I feel small”, “I feel like I am such a bad person”, “I feel humiliated, disgraced”, and “I feel worthless, powerless”. Responses were indicated on a 5-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (*not feeling this way at all*) to 5 (*feeling this way strongly*).

State guilt

State guilt was assessed using the 5-item guilt subscale of the State Shame and Guilt Scale (SSGS, Marschall et al., 1994; $\alpha = .85$). Guilt items are: “I feel remorse, regret”, “I feel tension about something I have done”, “I cannot stop thinking about something bad I have done”, “I feel like apologizing, confessing”, and “I feel bad about something I have done”. Responses were indicated on a 5-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (*not feeling this way at all*) to 5 (*feeling this way strongly*).

TABLE 1
MEAN SCORES, STANDARD DEVIATIONS, CORRELATIONS, AND RELIABILITY OF
STUDY VARIABLES

Variable	Mean	SD	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1. T-shame	46.34	8.14	(.69)							
2. T-guilt	57.74	7.19	.57**	(.70)						
3. T-pride	12.16	5.01	-.08	-.22	(.87)					
4. T-anger	21.67	6.14	.26*	-.07	.15	(.88)				
5. T-gratitude	25.64	4.60	.13	.28*	-.11	-.16	(.88)			
6. S-pride	16.54	5.01	-.25	-.15	.15	.04	-.08	(.89)		
7. S-shame	8.84	4.76	.35**	.19	-.19	.02	.17	-.73**	(.91)	
8. S-guilt	9.87	4.58	.26*	.23	-.02	.04	.25	-.61**	.77**	(.85)
9. S-anger	19.40	5.92	.15	.28*	-.09	.09	.10	-.50**	.57**	.55**
10. S-grat.	9.27	3.48	-.18	-.13	.00	-.03	-.07	.68*	-.50**	-.48**
11. Relevance	9.00	2.19	-.01	.30*	-.44**	-.17	.16	.13	-.03	.01
12. O-account.	2.85	2.17	.05	-.09	.16	.17	.03	-.11	.17	.23
13. S-account.	7.52	2.27	-.04	.02	-.05	.05	-.08	.59**	-.38**	-.31*
14. Cong.	6.68	2.68	.07	.02	-.03	.14	-.10	.71**	-.50**	-.49**
15. E-F-C-P	7.53	3.21	.04	.25	-.25	-.03	.19	.01	.04	.08
16. P-F-C-P	7.85	2.51	-.08	.24	-.06	-.05	-.02	.23	-.19	-.07
17. Fut. Exp.	6.85	2.22	.08	.15	-.31*	.16	.22	.32*	-.18	-.09

Variable	Mean	SD	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16
1. T-shame	46.34	8.14								
2. T-guilt	57.74	7.19								
3. T-pride	12.16	5.01								
4. T-anger	21.67	6.14								
5. T-gratitude	25.64	4.60								
6. S-pride	16.54	5.01								
7. S-shame	8.84	4.76								
8. S-guilt	9.87	4.58								
9. S-anger	19.40	5.92	(.92)							
10. S-grat.	9.27	3.48	-.54**	(.94)						
11. Relevance	9.00	2.19	.18	.07	(-)					
12. O-account.	2.85	2.17	.36**	.03	-.32*	(.74)				
13. S-account.	7.52	2.27	-.43**	.48**	.17	-.21	(.79)			
14. Cong.	6.68	2.68	-.48**	.50**	.14	-.21	.77**	(.80)		
15. E-F-C-P	7.53	3.21	-.08	.01	.22	-.20	.20	.12	(-)	
16. P-F-C-P	7.85	2.51	-.29*	.23	.17	-.21	.49**	.40**	.43**	(-)
17. Fut. Exp.	6.85	2.22	-.18	.38**	.37**	-.11	.44**	.43**	.56**	.53**

Note. Student sample (*n* ranging from 59 to 62); Cronbach's alphas appear in parentheses on the diagonal; T- appearing before variables represents the trait version of the variables; S- appearing before variables represents the state version of the variable; O-account. = Other accountability; S-account = Self-accountability; Cong. = Congruency; E-F-C-P = Emotion-focused-coping-potential; P-F-C-P = Problem-focused-coping-potential; Fut. Exp. = Future expectancy.

* $p < .05$ ** $p < .01$

State pride

State pride was measured using the 5-item pride subscale of the SSGS (Marschall et al., 1994; $\alpha = .89$). Pride items are: “I feel good about myself”, “I feel worthwhile, valuable”, “I feel capable, useful”, “I feel proud”, and “I feel pleased about something I have done”. Responses were indicated on a 5-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (*not feeling this way at all*) to 5 (*feeling this way strongly*).

State anger

State anger was assessed using the 15-item State Anger Scale (Spielberger et al., 1983, 1999; $\alpha = .92$). Sample items are: “I am furious”, “I feel irritated”, and “I feel angry.” Responses were indicated on a 4-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (*not at all*) to 4 (*very much so*).

State gratitude

State gratitude was assessed using the 3-item adjective-based scale derived from McCullough, Emmons and colleague’s gratitude questionnaire (Emmons & McCullough, 2003; McCullough et al., 2004; McCullough et al., 2002; $\alpha = .94$). Gratitude items are: “How thankful do you feel right now?” “How grateful do you feel right now?” “How appreciative do you feel right now?” Responses were indicated on a 5-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (*very slightly or not at all*) to 5 (*extremely thankful*).

Study Materials – Appraisal Measures

There were three primary appraisal dimensions in the present study: (a) relevance of the performance appraisal – whether participants appraised feedback as important or irrelevant, (b) congruence of the performance appraisal – whether participants appraised feedback as congruent or incongruent with their goals, and (c) accountability – whether or not participants felt that they or someone else was responsible for the feedback. Additional appraisal components (problem-focused coping potential, emotion-focused coping potential, and future expectancy), though not hypothesized, were measured in order to control for their possible effect on the variables of interest. Relevance, congruence and accountability were chosen due to their identification in the literature as components on which the self-conscious emotions of interest differ (e.g., Smith & Lazarus, 2001; Tracy & Robins, 2004). Relevance was assumed to be high for all participants since performance feedback is considered important for both students and employees.

The appraisal components of primary interest – congruence and accountability – were assessed using Ellsworth and Smith’s (1988) appraisal measure. There is some disparity in the terminology used to represent the components of interest between Ellsworth and Smith’s appraisal theory and Lazarus and Smith’s (1988) appraisal theory; however, the nature of what each component appraises is the same for each theory. Namely, what Lazarus and Smith labeled ‘congruence’ and ‘accountability’, Ellsworth and Smith labeled ‘pleasantness’ and ‘agency’, respectively. Ellsworth and Smith’s measure was chosen because it assesses each of the appraisal components of interest in language that participants should find easy to comprehend.

Instructions in the appraisal measure were altered to direct participants to indicate how they felt while receiving performance appraisal feedback. Items were altered from asking how participants feel “in the situation” to a phrase about how they feel about the exam grade. Items were arranged so that they alternately measured each of the appraisal components such that, except for the final few items, no two consecutive items measured the same component.

Relevance

Relevance was assessed using a single-item measure: “How important was the performance appraisal feedback to you?” Responses were indicated on an 11-point Likert scale: ranging from 1 (*not at all*) to 11 (*extremely*).

Congruence

Congruence was assessed by Ellsworth and Smith’s (1988; $\alpha = .80$) 4-item pleasantness scale. Congruence items are: “How pleasant or unpleasant was it to receive the performance feedback you did?”

“How enjoyable or unenjoyable was it to receive the performance feedback you did?” “How fair did you think the performance appraisal feedback was?” “To what extent did you feel cheated or wronged by the performance appraisal feedback you received?” The fourth item was reverse-coded. Responses were indicated on an 11-point Likert scale: ranging from 1 (*unpleasant*) to 11 (*pleasant*) for the pleasant item; ranging from 1 (*unenjoyable*) to 11 (*enjoyable*) for the enjoyment item; and ranging from 1 (*not at all*) to 11 (*extremely*) for the remaining items.

Accountability

Accountability was assessed using 2 scales. Self-accountability was measured using Ellsworth and Smith's (1988; $\alpha = .79$) 4-item self-agency scale. Items are: “When you were getting your performance appraisal, how responsible did you feel for having brought about the feedback you received?” “When you were getting your performance appraisal, to what extent did you feel that you could influence the feedback you received?” “When you were getting your performance appraisal, how powerful did you feel?” “When you were getting your performance appraisal, how helpless did you feel?” The fourth item was reverse-coded. Responses were indicated on an 11-point Likert scale: ranging from 1 (*not at all*) to 11 (*extremely*).

Other-accountability was measured using Ellsworth and Smith's (1988; $\alpha = .74$) 2-item other-agency scale. Other-agency items are: “When you were getting your performance appraisal, how responsible did you think someone other than yourself was for having brought about the feedback you received?” “When you were getting your performance appraisal, to what extent did you feel that someone other than yourself was controlling what type of feedback you received?” Responses were indicated on an 11-point Likert scale: ranging from 1 (*not at all*) to 11 (*extremely*).

Study Materials – Covariate Measures

The covariates of the dependent variables state shame, guilt, pride, anger and gratitude are their trait counterparts, measured to control for participants' predisposition to experience the emotions in the study.

Trait shame

Trait shame was assessed using the 15-item trait shame subscale of the Test of Self-Conscious Affect (TOSCA, Tangney et al., 1989; $\alpha = .69$). Respondents were asked to imagine themselves as the individuals in the scenarios in the measure and then indicate how likely they would be to respond in the four or five ways described. Sample items are: “You make plans to meet a friend for lunch. At 5 o'clock, you realize you stood him up. You would think, ‘I'm inconsiderate.’” “You break something at work and then hide it. You would think about quitting.” “At work, you wait until the last minute to plan a project, and it turns out badly. You would feel incompetent.” Responses were indicated on a 5-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (*not likely*) to 5 (*very likely*).

Trait guilt

Trait guilt was measured using the 15-item trait guilt subscale of the Test of Self-Conscious Affect (TOSCA, Tangney et al., 1989; $\alpha = .70$). Respondents were asked to imagine themselves as the individuals in the scenarios in the measure and then indicate how likely they would be to respond in the four or five ways described. Sample items are: “You make plans to meet a friend for lunch. At 5 o'clock, you realize you stood him up. You would try to make it up to him as soon as possible”; “You break something at work and then hide it. You would think, ‘This is making me anxious. I need to either fix it or get someone else to’”; “At work, you wait until the last minute to plan a project, and it turns out badly. You would feel, ‘I deserve to be reprimanded.’” Responses were indicated on a 5-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (*not likely*) to 5 (*very likely*).

Trait pride

Trait pride was assessed using the 7-item Hubristic Pride scale (Tracy & Robins, 2007; $\alpha = .87$). Respondents were asked to rate the extent to which they “generally feel this way” on a 5-point Likert

scale, ranging from 1 (*not at all*) to 5 (*extremely*). Scale items are: snobbish, pompous, stuck-up, conceited, egotistical, arrogant, and smug.

Trait anger

Trait anger was assessed using the 10-item trait anger scale (Spielberger et al., 1983, 1999; $\alpha = .88$). Sample items are: "I am quick tempered", "I have a fiery temper", and "I am a hotheaded person." Responses were indicated on a 4-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (*not at all*) to 4 (*very much so*).

Trait gratitude

Trait gratitude was assessed using the 6-item short form of the gratitude questionnaire (GQ-6, McCullough, Emmons & Tsang, 2002; $\alpha = .88$). Sample items are: "I have so much in life to be thankful for." "I am grateful to a wide variety of people." "When I look at the world, I don't see much to be grateful for." Responses were indicated on a 7-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 7 (*strongly agree*).

Study Materials – Demographics Survey

Participants completed a brief survey requesting demographic information. The information requested included participants' sex, age, racial or ethnic status, educational level, years of employment and hours worked per week.

Study Procedure

Data collection occurred at two time intervals: (1) a day or more before students took the scheduled examination in the course in which they were recruited; and (2) immediately after students viewed their exam grades online.

Time 1: Before the performance appraisal

Students who indicated an interest in participating in the study when the researcher visited the class were directed to a designated website. The university research participation database automatically assigned new users a unique identification number and returning users were identified by their previously assigned codes. The identification numbers served as the students' virtual signature on the consent document before they clicked the 'Next' button to begin the study and as a record-keeping tool to forward to course instructors who assigned extra credit for participation. This number was the only means of matching students' responses from one data collection session to another given that this was an anonymous study.

Next, students completed the trait measures of the emotions along with the demographic survey. Time 1 data were collected before the performance appraisal in order to avoid a fatigue effect of completing multiple questionnaires, and also to prevent the influence of measuring trait emotions on the observation of state emotions.

After completing the questionnaires, students read a brief statement thanking them for their participation and reminding them to return to the website to complete the study right after they receive their exam grades.

Time 2: After the performance appraisal

Immediately after accessing the course website to retrieve their exam grades, students were reminded by a note posted on the course website by their instructor to again access the study web page, where they were prompted to enter their unique identification code to access the questionnaires. In order to immediately capture the emotional responses to the performance appraisal feedback, students were asked to first complete the state measures of the five emotions of interest – shame, guilt, pride, anger, gratitude. Then students completed the measure of the appraisal components to assess their perceptions of the feedback on the appraisal components of congruence, accountability and relevance. After completing the questionnaires, students read a brief statement thanking them for their participation and explaining the

research purpose and hypotheses. Contact information was included with a statement for students to contact the researcher for additional information regarding the study.

RESULTS

Power Analyses

An a priori power analysis was conducted using the G*Power 3 program (Faul, Erdfelder, Lang & Buchner, 2007), to compute the required sample size for the study. Using G*Power, the test family selected was *F*-tests and the statistical test selected was Multiple Regression, Omnibus; power was assigned a value of .80 and alpha was set at .05 following Cohen's (1992) recommendation for behavioral research; a medium effect size ($f^2 = .15$) was selected as a conservative estimation (again, based on Cohen's recommendation); there were four predictors in each regression model – relevance, congruence, (self- or other-) accountability, and the trait counterpart of the corresponding emotion. Entering the above values in G*Power, the minimum number of participants required to test the proposed hypotheses was estimated to be 85.

A post-hoc power analysis was conducted, using G*Power, to determine the actual power of the significance tests. To calculate power, the 4 predictors, the actual sample size of 62 participants, an alpha of .05, and the smallest of the five *R* square statistics were used. The smallest of the *R* square statistics was included as a conservative strategy to calculate power in the post-hoc analysis. The number used was that derived from the gratitude regression model since it produced the smallest *R* square statistic ($R^2 = .41$; $f^2 = .69$). Statistical power was met and exceeded (.99).

Checking the Data for Relevance

First, it was necessary to examine whether participants perceived the feedback they received about their performance as relevant, since the theoretical foundation of this investigation is based on theories stating that individuals respond emotionally to events that are important to them (Lazarus, 1991; Smith & Lazarus, 2001; Weiss & Cropanzano, 1996). Data revealed that participants reported high relevance scores ($M = 9$, on a scale ranging from 1 to 11; see means in Table 1) regarding the importance of their exam grades. Table 1 presents the means, standard deviations, and correlations among the study's variables. As can be seen in the table, relevance was not significantly related to state pride ($r = .13$, *NS*), state shame ($r = -.03$, *NS*), state guilt ($r = .01$, *NS*), state anger ($r = .18$, *NS*) or state gratitude ($r = .07$, *NS*). Relevance was also not significantly related to congruence ($r = .14$, *NS*) or self-accountability ($r = .17$, *NS*). However, relevance was significantly and negatively related to other-accountability ($r = -.32$, $p < .05$). Tests of the proposed hypotheses continued with the appraisal dimensions and trait emotions as predictors of the state emotions.

Hypotheses Testing

Hypotheses were tested using hierarchical multiple regression analyses to determine whether the hypothesized appraisals significantly predicted the corresponding emotion, above and beyond the influence of the trait affect. If the variance added by the state measure, after controlling for the trait measure, was not statistically significant, it may indicate the need to rely more on trait assessments as opposed to state assessments of emotions when examining reactions to feedback. In each analysis only one dependent variable was examined. The dependent variables were the state emotions experienced following receipt of test scores (performance feedback). Each of the five hierarchical multiple regression analyses included four steps. (The effect size for each regression model was calculated using the observed R^2 from the third and fourth steps of each analysis.)

The first step of each analysis included the score of the relevant trait affect examined, along with any other trait variables that were significantly correlated to the state emotion. The second step of each analysis included the appraisal dimensions not included in the hypothesis being tested (future expectancy, emotion- and problem-focused coping potential, and either self- or other-accountability). The third step of each analysis included the centered values of the appraisal dimensions that were included in the

hypothesis being tested (relevance, congruency, and either self- or other-accountability). The fourth step of each regression analysis contained an interaction term composed of the product of the centered hypothesized appraisals (congruency and either self- or other-accountability). The hypothesized appraisals were centered prior to performing the analyses to reduce correlations with other predictors and, to avoid a possible multicollinearity issue as is likely when there are interactions in a regression model (Aiken & West, 1991). The product term was entered as a separate step in the regression to examine how much of the variance observed in each of the state emotions may be uniquely explained by the combination of the hypothesized appraisals, over and above the variance explained by the preceding variables in the model.

TABLE 2
SUMMARY OF HIERARCHICAL REGRESSION OF STATE GUILT ON CONTROL
VARIABLES AND APPRAISAL PREDICTORS

Variable	Step 1			Step 2			Step 3			Step 4		
	B	SE	Beta	B	SE	Beta	B	SE	Beta	B	SE	Beta
Trait guilt	.11	.11	.17									
Trait shame	.08	.10	.13									
P-F-C-P				-.11	.31	-.05						
E-F-C-P				.32	.23	.22						
Future Expect.				-.36	.36	-.16						
O-account (C)				.54	.28	.25						
Relevance (C)							.26	.35	.11			
S-account (C)							.31	.38	.14			
Cong (C)							-1.14	.32	-.64***			
S-account (C)												
X Cong (C)										-.16	.09	-.23
	Step 1			Step 2			Step 3			Step 4		
Multiple R	.27			.41			.63			.66		
R ²	.07			.17			.40			.43		
Adjusted R ²	.04			.07			.29			.31		
ΔR ²	.07			.10			.23			.03		
df	2			6			9			10		
F	2.11			1.73			3.55**			3.61***		
ΔF	2.11			1.51			6.14***			2.86		

Note. Student sample ($n = 62$); E-F-C-P = Emotion-focused-coping-potential; P-F-C-P = Problem-focused-coping-potential; O-account (C) = Other-accountability (centered);

Relevance (C) = Relevance (centered); S-account (C) = Self-accountability (centered); Cong (C) = Congruency (centered).

* $p < .05$ ** $p < .01$ *** $p < .001$

Hypothesis 1. Regardless of trait guilt, the lower their congruence appraisals and the higher their self-accountability appraisals, employees experience higher levels of state guilt in response to relevant performance appraisal feedback.

An examination of the correlations between all of the variables (see correlations in Table 1) revealed that state guilt was significantly correlated with trait shame ($r = .26, p < .05$). Therefore, trait shame was entered in the first block of the regression along with trait guilt. Table 2 presents a summary of the regression output for state guilt. As seen in Table 2, hypothesis 1 was not supported. Although the combination of all the appraisal dimensions along with trait guilt and trait shame significantly predicted guilt experiences ($F = 3.61, \Delta R^2 = .03, p < .001, f^2 = .06, CI_{.95} = -.35, .03$), a decrease of congruence

appraisals combined with an increase of self-accountability appraisals did not significantly predict guilt experiences in students receiving exam grade feedback ($\beta = -.23$, $se = .09$, ns), and accounted for only 3% of the unique variance observed in guilt experiences. Furthermore, congruence was a better predictor of guilt experiences ($\beta = -.64$, $se = .32$, $p < .001$) than self-accountability ($\beta = .14$, $se = .38$, ns).

TABLE 3
SUMMARY OF HIERARCHICAL REGRESSION OF STATE SHAME ON CONTROL
VARIABLES AND APPRAISAL PREDICTORS

Variable	Step 1			Step 2			Step 3			Step 4		
	B	SE	Beta	B	SE	Beta	B	SE	Beta	B	SE	Beta
Trait shame	.21	.08	.34**									
P-F-C-P				-.24	.30	-.12						
E-F-C-P				.38	.23	.25						
Future Expect.				-.60	.36	-.26						
O-account (C)				.32	.28	.14						
Relevance (C)							.00	.32	.00			
S-account (C)							.08	.39	.03			
Cong (C)							-1.04	.32	-.56**			
S-account (C) X Cong (C)										-.10	.10	-.13
	Step 1			Step 2			Step 3			Step 4		
Multiple R	.34			.47			.66			.67		
R ²	.11			.22			.43			.44		
Adjusted R ²	.10			.15			.34			.34		
ΔR^2	.11			.11			.21			.01		
df	1			5			8			9		
F	7.22**			2.96*			4.67***			4.26***		
ΔF	7.22**			1.79			6.08***			.99		

Note. Student sample ($n = 62$); E-F-C-P = Emotion-focused-coping-potential; P-F-C-P = Problem-focused-coping-potential; O-account (C) = Other-accountability (centered); Relevance (C) = Relevance (centered); S-account (C) = Self-accountability (centered); Cong (C) = Congruency (centered).

* $p < .05$ ** $p < .01$ *** $p < .001$

Hypothesis 2. Regardless of trait shame, the lower their congruence appraisals and the higher their self-accountability appraisals, employees experience higher levels of state shame in response to relevant performance appraisal feedback.

Table 3 presents a summary of the regression output for state shame. As seen in Table 3, hypothesis 2 was not supported. Although the combination of all the appraisal dimensions along with trait shame significantly predicted shame experiences ($F = 4.26$, $\Delta R^2 = .01$, $p < .001$, $f^2 = .02$, $CI_{.95} = -.29, .10$), a decrease of congruence appraisals combined with an increase of self-accountability appraisals did not significantly predict shame experiences in students receiving exam grade feedback ($\beta = -.13$, $se = .10$, ns), and accounted for only 1% of the unique variance observed in shame experiences. Furthermore, congruence was a better predictor of shame experiences ($\beta = -.56$, $se = .32$, $p < .01$) than self-accountability ($\beta = .03$, $se = .39$, ns).

TABLE 4
SUMMARY OF HIERARCHICAL REGRESSION OF STATE ANGER ON CONTROL
VARIABLES AND APPRAISAL PREDICTORS

Variable	Step 1			Step 2			Step 3			Step 4		
	B	SE	Beta	B	SE	Beta	B	SE	Beta	B	SE	Beta
Trait anger	.10	.12	.11									
Trait guilt	.24	.11	.29*									
P-F-C-P				-.39	.39	-.16						
E-F-C-P				.00	.27	.00						
Future Expect.				-.05	.44	-.02						
S-account (C)				-.95	.36	-.37*						
Relevance (C)							1.00	.32	.35**			
O-account (C)							1.02	.31	.36**			
Cong (C)							-.72	.35	-.33*			
O-account (C) X Cong (C)										-.06	.14	-.05
	Step 1			Step 2			Step 3			Step 4		
Multiple R	.30			.56			.73			.73		
R ²	.09			.31			.54			.54		
Adjusted R ²	.06			.23			.45			.44		
ΔR ²	.09			.23			.22			.00		
df	2			6			9			10		
F	2.72			3.95**			6.31***			5.61***		
ΔF	2.72			4.25**			7.90***			.19		

Note. Student sample ($n = 62$); E-F-C-P = Emotion-focused-coping-potential; P-F-C-P = Problem-focused-coping-potential; O-account (C) = Other-accountability (centered); Relevance (C) = Relevance (centered); S-account (C) = Self-accountability (centered); Cong (C) = Congruency (centered).

* $p < .05$ ** $p < .01$ *** $p < .001$

Hypothesis 3. Regardless of trait anger, the lower their congruence appraisals and the higher their other-accountability appraisals, employees experience higher levels of state anger in response to relevant performance appraisal feedback.

An examination of the correlations between all of the variables (see correlations in Table 1) revealed that state anger was significantly correlated with trait guilt ($r = .28, p < .05$). Therefore, trait guilt was entered in the first block of the regression, along with trait anger. Table 4 presents a summary of the regression output for state anger. As seen in Table 4, hypothesis 3 was not supported. Although the combination of all the appraisal dimensions along with trait anger and trait guilt significantly predicted anger experiences ($F = 5.61, \Delta R^2 = .00, p < .001, f^2 = .00, CI_{.95} = -.35, .22$), a decrease of congruence appraisals combined with an increase of other-accountability appraisals did not significantly predict anger experiences in students receiving exam grade feedback ($\beta = -.05, se = .14, ns$) and accounted for less than 1% of the unique variance observed in anger experiences. Furthermore, other-accountability ($\beta = .36, se = .31, p < .01$) was a better predictor of anger experiences than congruence ($\beta = -.33, se = .35, p < .05$).

TABLE 5
SUMMARY OF HIERARCHICAL REGRESSION OF STATE PRIDE ON CONTROL
VARIABLES AND APPRAISAL PREDICTORS

Variable	Step 1			Step 2			Step 3			Step 4		
	B	SE	Beta	B	SE	Beta	B	SE	Beta	B	SE	Beta
Trait pride	.15	.13	.15									
P-F-C-P				.15	.30	.08						
E-F-C-P				-.45	.24	-.28						
Future Expect.				1.14	.37	.51**						
O-account (C)				-.33	.29	-.14						
Relevance (C)							.25	.26	.11			
S-account (C)							.37	.33	.17			
Cong (C)							1.04	.27	.56***			
S-account (C)												
X Cong (C)										.18	.07	.28**
	<u>Step 1</u>			<u>Step 2</u>			<u>Step 3</u>			<u>Step 4</u>		
Multiple R	.15			.48			.76			.80		
R ²	.02			.23			.57			.62		
Adjusted R ²	.01			.16			.51			.55		
ΔR ²	.02			.21			.34			.05		
df	1			5			8			9		
F	1.27			3.28*			8.53***			9.15***		
ΔF	1.27			3.73**			13.47***			6.64**		

Note. Student sample ($n = 62$); E-F-C-P = Emotion-focused-coping-potential; P-F-C-P = Problem-focused-coping-potential; O-account (C) = Other-accountability (centered); Relevance (C) = Relevance (centered); S-account (C) = Self-accountability (centered); Cong (C) = Congruency (centered).

* $p < .05$ ** $p < .01$ *** $p < .001$

Hypothesis 4. Regardless of trait pride, the higher their congruence appraisals and the higher their self-accountability appraisals, employees experience higher levels of state pride in response to relevant performance appraisal feedback.

Table 5 presents a summary of the regression output for state pride. As seen in Table 5 and in Figure 2, hypothesis 4 was supported. Specifically, an increase of congruence appraisals combined with an increase of self-accountability appraisals significantly predicted pride experiences ($\beta = .28$, $se = .07$, $p < .01$) in students receiving exam grade feedback ($F = 9.15$, $\Delta R^2 = .05$, $p < .001$, $f^2 = .13$, $CI_{.95} = .04$, $.32$). More importantly, the interaction between congruence and self-accountability was significant although it accounted for only 5% of the unique variance observed in pride experiences. The plot of the interaction in Figure 2 also shows that higher levels of congruence combined with higher levels of self-accountability results in higher levels of pride experiences. This plot was constructed following Aiken and West's (1991) recommendation to plot the interaction at one standard deviation above and below the mean.

FIGURE 2
PLOT OF INTERACTION TERM FOR STATE PRIDE

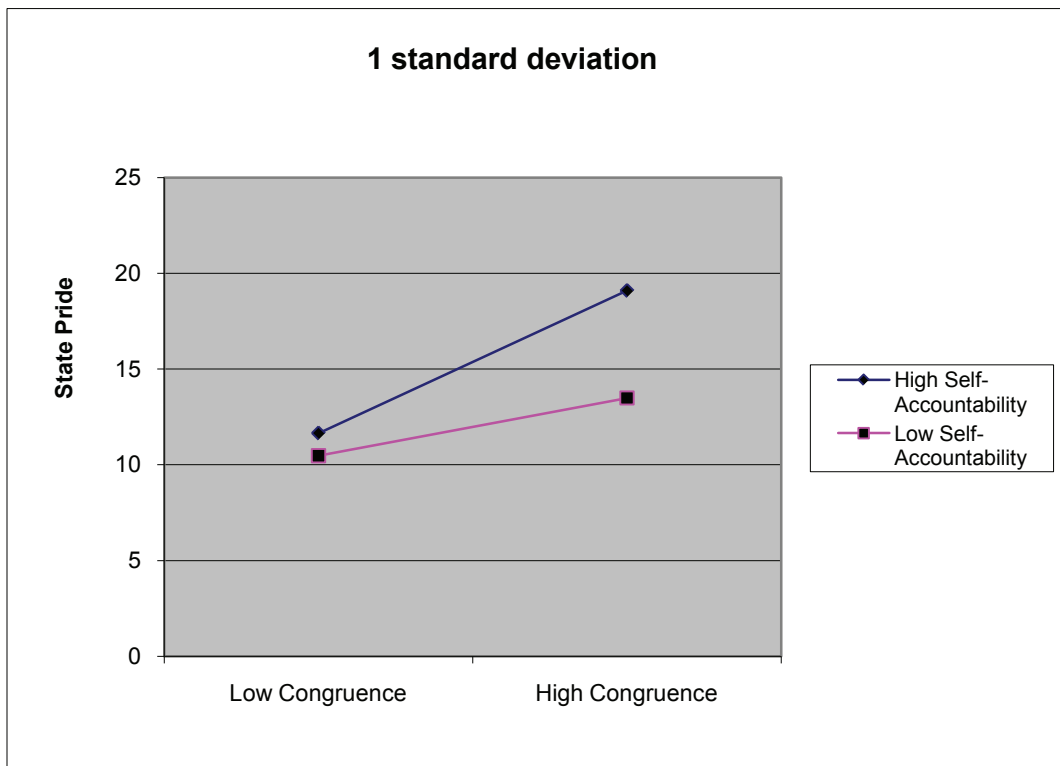


TABLE 6
SUMMARY OF HIERARCHICAL REGRESSION OF STATE GRATITUDE ON CONTROL
VARIABLES AND APPRAISAL PREDICTORS

Variable	Step 1			Step 2			Step 3			Step 4		
	B	SE	Beta	B	SE	Beta	B	SE	Beta	B	SE	Beta
Trait gratitude	-.06	.10	-.07									
P-F-C-P				-.14	.20	-.10						
E-F-C-P				-.25	.15	-.23						
Future Expect.				.67	.24	.42**						
S-account (C)				.64	.21	.41**						
Relevance (C)							-.06	.20	-.04			
O-account (C)							.20	.20	.12			
Cong (C)							.19	.25	.14			
O-account (C)										-.17	.10	-.25
X Cong (C)												
	<u>Step 1</u>			<u>Step 2</u>			<u>Step 3</u>			<u>Step 4</u>		
Multiple R	.07			.59			.61			.64		
R ²	.01			.35			.37			.41		
Adjusted R ²	-.01			.29			.27			.31		
ΔR ²	.01			.34			.02			.04		
df	1			5			8			9		
F	.31			5.78***			3.77**			3.88***		
ΔF	.31			7.11***			.62			3.38		

Note. Student sample ($n = 62$); E-F-C-P = Emotion-focused-coping-potential; P-F-C-P = Problem-focused-coping-potential; O-account (C) = Other-accountability (centered); Relevance (C) = Relevance (centered); S-account (C) = Self-accountability (centered); Cong (C) = Congruency (centered).

* $p < .05$ ** $p < .01$ *** $p < .001$

Hypothesis 5. Regardless of trait gratitude, the higher their congruence appraisals and the higher their other-accountability appraisals, employees experience higher levels of state gratitude in response to relevant performance appraisal feedback.

Summary of Results

The results contain several interesting revelations about emotion experiences. First, the majority of the hypotheses were not supported. Only hypothesis 4 was supported; thus indicating that when performance feedback is important, positive and attributed to the self, the recipient of this feedback experiences pride. Second, although the majority of the hypotheses were not supported, the combination of all of the appraisal dimensions and trait variables significantly predicted each of the five emotions investigated in the present study. This is in line with appraisal theory (e.g., Smith & Lazarus, 2001) that all of the appraisal dimensions help to distinguish which emotion is experienced.

A third interesting finding is related to the role of trait affect in predicting state affect. The rationale for using hierarchical regression was to determine whether the hypothesized appraisals significantly predicted the corresponding emotion, above and beyond the influence of the trait affect. Given the results of the hypotheses tests, one may be tempted to conclude that researchers need to rely more on trait assessments, as opposed to state assessments, of emotions when examining reactions to performance feedback. However, closer examination of the results from each regression model would prevent rushing to such conclusions.

In fact, the results reveal that trait guilt is not a significant predictor of state guilt ($\beta = .17$, $se = .11$, ns); trait anger is not a significant predictor of state anger ($\beta = .11$, $se = .12$, ns); trait pride is not a

significant predictor of state pride ($\beta = .15$, $se = .13$, ns); and, trait gratitude is not a significant predictor of state gratitude ($\beta = -.07$, $se = .10$, ns). However, trait shame is a predictor of state shame ($\beta = .34$, $se = .08$, $p < .01$).

Taken together, the small effect sizes (ranging from .00 to .13) and the lack of full support for each of the five hypotheses prevent making blanket statements regarding predicting emotions as theorized in appraisal theories. Rather than subscribe to the train of thought that appraisal theory is “pseudoempirical” as suggested by at least one other researcher (McEachrane, 2009), I believe the results indicate that the experience of emotion is a nuanced phenomenon that warrants additional study to be fully understood. Given the results, a better test of appraisal theory in this context should involve examining all the relevant appraisals, rather than focusing only on a part of them, as has been done in this study.

For instance, one recent investigation into the relationship between appraisal components and emotions maintains that appraisals are both necessary and sufficient determinants of emotional experiences (Siemer, Mauss, & Gross, 2007). In the investigation, 122 female participants took part in an experiment requiring them to perform engaging cognitive tasks after which they received highly critical negative feedback. Participants then completed single-item measures of positive and negative emotions in addition to appraisal measures. Results obtained indicated that shame and guilt were both predicted by self-accountability, whereas, anger was predicted by other-accountability.

DISCUSSION

This study was an investigation of the role of the performance appraisal in the elicitation of emotional responses. The results indicate that individuals’ appraisals of performance feedback are only helpful in predicting pride experiences. In addition, whether the feedback is positive or negative (congruence) appears to have more influence in determining emotional experience than who is responsible for the feedback (accountability).

One plausible explanation for the results indicating that congruence is a better predictor of emotional experience than accountability may lie in the construction of the measures used. Weaknesses in instrumentation found in measures of the appraisal components as well as measures of the state emotions may have led to construct validity issues in the data. For example, consider the wording of one of the self-accountability items in the appraisal measure: “When you were receiving your performance appraisal, how responsible did you feel for having brought about the feedback you received?” (Ellsworth & Smith, 1988). The wording of this item seems to conflate responsibility for the performance with responsibility for the appraisal of the performance – perhaps leading some participants to interpret the item according to one interpretation while other participants gleaned an opposite interpretation.

Another possible source of instrumentation issues may be found in the construction of some of the measures of the trait emotions. Specifically, the wording of items assessing trait shame was very similar to that of items assessing trait guilt. For example, one item assessing trait shame reads, “You wait until the last minute to plan a project, and it turns out badly. You would feel incompetent”, whereas, a similar item assessing trait guilt reads, “You wait until the last minute to plan a project, and it turns out badly. You would feel, ‘I deserve to be reprimanded’” (Tangney et al., 1989). Although the elicitation process of both emotions (as per the appraisals made) is similar (Smith & Lazarus, 2001) they are not the same. In reading these items, however, participants may have confused the shame and guilt in their interpretations and ensuing responses. Additional support for this conclusion can be found in the results reported in Table 1, which reveal that trait shame was significantly correlated with experiences of state guilt ($r = .26$, $p < .05$).

Contributions

The performance appraisal context was chosen for this investigation primarily because of its importance in organizational life and its widespread influence in the organization as a human resource management tool (Arvey & Murphy, 1998; Murphy & Cleveland, 1995). A second reason for this focus on performance appraisal was because ratee reaction is recognized as one of the fastest growing research

areas related to the performance appraisal process, perhaps indicative of the shift from a measurement perspective to a social perspective in the field (Levy & Williams, 2004). This research was designed to be a step in the direction of empirical investigations into employees' emotional reactions to important work events, using established theories.

This investigation directly answers a call put forth to Organizational Behavior scholars to take on a broader view of emotions in the workplace (Ashkanasay et al., 2002). Previous research (e.g., Basch & Fisher, 2000 and Fisher, 2002) has suggested that it is important to recognize the specific workplace events leading to the experience of distinct emotions so that managers may effectively manage organizational behavior. Thus, the first contribution of this investigation is that it directly answers the call in that it identifies the performance appraisal for investigation as an antecedent to the experience of emotions at work.

Social context and qualitative (not just quantitative) issues regarding the employee performance appraisal are also recognized to be important topics worthy of research (Bretz et al., 1992; Murphy & Cleveland, 1995). Accordingly, the second contribution of this investigation is that it directly addresses social context issues by investigating the importance of perceptions and appraisals of performance appraisal feedback to the experience of specific emotions.

A review of the emotion, performance appraisal and organizational literatures reveals that much of the research measuring employee reactions to performance appraisals appears to lack a theoretical basis (Keeping & Levy, 2000). Therefore, the third contribution of the current investigation is that it adds to the existing body of literature by testing the theoretical frameworks linking ratee emotional reaction to the performance appraisal process.

A fourth contribution of the current research is its originality of assessing ratees' discrete emotional reactions to performance appraisal feedback – a research area only little explored. This study looked at five discrete secondary emotions – shame, guilt, pride, gratitude, and anger – that are related on the appraisal components assessed – relevance, motivational congruence and accountability.

Strengths and Limitations

Following are several of the strengths of the current study. First, this research used in-the-moment assessments of real performance feedback. Previous tests of AET theory did not directly measure emotional reactions to an event. Instead, some were based on moods after events (e.g. Fisher, 2000) while others relied on recall of past events (Basch & Fisher, 2000); thereby assessing hypothetical emotional reactions to participants' post-hoc appraisal of past events. Yet others (e.g. Grandey et al., 2002) utilize a diary method. Most of these methods risk a memory or recall bias spuriously affecting the observed results. In the present study, however, utilizing an in-vivo technique to assess state emotions reduces the likelihood of memory and recall biases.

A second strength is the use of independent, multi-item measures to assess the emotions. Some studies testing the AET model used single-item measures (e.g. Siemer et al., 2007) while others used emotion composite measures (e.g. shame-guilt or anger-disgust-frustration) which combined two or more closely related emotions (e.g. Fisher, 2000; Grandey et al., 2002). The current study measured each emotion independently using existing, valid, multi-item measures.

Finally, the study methodology was a strong point in the research due to the use of separate data collection sessions. Trait emotion data were collected on a separate day from the date of the performance appraisal feedback. This was done so as not to taint the observation of participants' in-the-moment emotional reactions (state emotions) to performance appraisal feedback with their general dispositional tendencies (trait emotions).

An important limitation of the current investigation is that the generalizability of the findings may be limited due to the sample. First, the sample was composed of students appraising exam performance feedback, not employees receiving work performance feedback. Additional studies are needed to investigate the constructs with large employee samples. Second, generalizability may be difficult due to homogeneity of the convenience sample drawn from Northeast Tennessee, the researcher's home. Northeast Tennessee is home to a predominantly Christian, rural, Caucasian American population with

very little racial, ethnic and cultural diversity. These limitations notwithstanding, there is great need for this research to serve as a catalyst for others in the field to replicate and expand upon.

Implications and Future Research

This research has a number of important implications for practitioners and researchers alike. First, managerial effectiveness may be enhanced if managers are aware that negative performance appraisals result in the experience of emotions that may have negative implications for the organization. With the substantial resources invested in recruiting and selecting managers who possess high emotional intelligence, today's managers are better equipped to effectively deal with employees' emotional experiences. Information regarding the preceding events responsible for emotions may make managers even more effective in creating events or opportunities leading to the experience of positive emotions, which may yield positive results for the organization and all involved. Moreover, managers should provide more frequent, continuous feedback that includes constructive critique of work-related behavior as unexpectedness was found to be associated with several negative emotions employees experience (Siemer et al., 2007).

A second implication of the current research is that employees' predispositions may not affect their emotional experiences at work given that the current study found that only state shame was predicted by its trait counterpart. This is a tentative statement, however, given the limited number of multi-item measures available to assess each emotion. The measures used in the current research (e.g. TOSCA, Tangney et al., 1989); although valid and widely used, display some possible confounding issues in the wording of items. Therefore, perhaps better measures are needed to assess the constructs of interest.

A third implication is that although appraisal theory per Lazarus and Smith (1988; Smith & Lazarus, 2001) is recognized as the dominant framework on emotion elicitation (Smith, David & Kirby, 2006), if the results are accurate, the theory may need additional in depth analyses. According to this perspective, emotion elicitation occurs only in the presence of relevant events and the interaction of appraisal components determines which emotions individuals may experience. The current investigation tested the proposed model of emotion elicitation and differentiation on the basis of the theorized two-part appraisal process and found that there was mixed support. Specifically, although 99 percent statistical power was achieved, relevance and congruence emerged as the dominant predictors of emotion elicitation, whereas, accountability received little support.

The first area identified for future research involves the replication of the current study with an employee sample to assess whether the results obtained with students will also be observed with employees receiving pertinent performance feedback. Another area for future study is in assessing additional emotions that may be elicited in response to performance appraisal feedback. Only shame, guilt, pride, anger, and gratitude responses to the performance appraisal were assessed in this study; therefore, another area for future research involves the investigation of a variety of other emotion responses (e.g., envy, humiliation, happiness).

Both the appraisal-emotion-attitude and the appraisal-emotion-behavior links can be expanded for organizational application (Ashkanasy, 2004). Future research on emotion responses to performance appraisal feedback can investigate the effects of the emotions on organizational attitudes such as job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and job involvement. In addition, the effects of the emotions on other indices of organizational behavior at multiple levels may be investigated. This can be done for each of the emotions investigated in the current study as well as for many others.

For example, future investigations of shame elicited by performance appraisals may expand upon the current study by exploring the consequences (organizational and individual) of shame. Walsh (1999) theorized that some major consequences of the shaming process include decreased risk-taking, spontaneity, and creativity. Fessler (2001) argued that shame and pride are both important emotions in directing decision making because individuals tend to act in ways that will either create or avoid circumstances that lead to the elicitation of a given emotion – depending on whether the emotion is rewarding or aversive. Tangney et al. (1992) found that shame leads to increases in rage, anger, hostility, even violence, at self as well as at others. Future studies of these variables and other theorized

consequences of shame may be conducted to explore how individuals function after enduring a shame experience.

Future research may also investigate the other appraisal dimensions not directly assessed in the present investigation. For instance, although coping potential was not a focus of the current investigation, future investigations may assess how individuals' coping potential affect their appraisals. Of course, actual coping with performance appraisal feedback is of paramount importance, and should be studied as well.

Longitudinal research designs may be used to assess fluctuations in emotional experiences over an extended period of time as predicted in affective events theory (Weiss & Cropanzano, 1996). For instance, one could investigate whether employees feel the same about their performance appraisal feedback 3, 6, and 9 months after their performance appraisal as they did immediately following the event. Finally, future research may focus on the mediating effects of deterrence. Research suggests that although the importance of an event increases the potential for intense emotion experiences, that relationship is influenced by the presence of potentially distracting stimuli (see Brehm, 1999 for a discussion of the research). For example, if an employee does not place high importance on the performance appraisal feedback she receives, the pride or gratitude she feels will lessen in intensity as other more important events occur. Therefore, research may be conducted to investigate the extent to which the intensity of employees' emotional reactions to performance appraisal feedback varies over time as a function of relevance and deterrence factors.

CONCLUSIONS

In conclusion, the current investigation provides valuable insight into the nature of emotional reactions to performance appraisal feedback. The need for such research has been demonstrated and supporting rationales presented. In the absence of a unifying theory on emotions and employee performance appraisal reaction, this research represents a building block in the expansion of what is known about emotions and employees' reactions to positive and negative feedback. Furthermore, this research contributes to the body of literature on emotions at work, performance appraisal, and convergent fields. At the very least, the results provide insight into the psychological processes behind emotional reactions to workplace events and specifically to performance appraisal feedback.

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