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The situational antecedents of pride and happiness: Developmental and domain differences

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This study examines whether young children can differentiate between the situational antecedents of happiness and pride and the effect of the type of situation on the attribution of pride. One hundred and fifty 7-, 9- and 11-year-olds were asked to rate the extent to which two types of situations would elicit a protagonist's feelings of happiness and pride. Happy situations were expected to elicit happiness only, e.g. because the protagonist received a gift – a desirable result, but beyond his/her personal control. Achievement situations were expected to elicit both happiness and pride, e.g. because the protagonist won an award – a desirable and beneficial outcome for the agent which (s)he was responsible for bringing about. If the children could differentiate between the situational determinants of happiness and pride, they would be expected to give high ratings for pride in achievement situations only. To examine the effect of the type of situation on children's ratings for pride, discretionary moral situations were introduced in which the protagonist was performing a moral act for the benefit of a third person without personal cost (helping an old lady carry her shopping bags) or with cost (giving a sandwich to a hungry child). The results of the study revealed that only the 11-year-olds were able to fully differentiate between the two emotions. The type of situation affected children's ratings for pride. Children attributed less pride to the protagonist in moral situations, particularly in the cost condition, than to the protagonist in achievement situations.

In recent years, researchers have shown an increasing interest in the emergence and understanding of the so-called *complex* emotions such as pride, shame, guilt and gratitude (Ferguson & Stegge, 1995; Graham, 1988; Olthof, Schouten, Kuiper, Stegge, & Jennekens-Schinkel, 2000; Seidner, Stipek, & Feshbach, 1988; Stipek, 1983; Tangney, Burggraf, & Wagner, 1995; Williams & Bybee, 1994). The complexity of these emotions is due to the fact that they require both cognitive advances and a certain socialization experience (Harter & Whitesell, 1989). Pride, the focus of this paper, requires the

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consideration and integration of several features. Like happiness, pride is a positive feeling. Both emotions are the result of a positive and desirable outcome. To experience pride, though, an appraisal of the outcome is not enough. According to Harris (1989) two additional notions are required. First, we feel pride when we are *responsible* for bringing about some outcome. Second, the outcome must not only be something simply desirable to us, but should meet or surpass a *normative or moral standard*. For example, winning a race generates a feeling of pride because the desirable outcome is the result of effort and surpasses the average standard.

Situations that elicit pride also generate happiness. However, situations that cause happiness do not always elicit pride. Winning an award generates feelings of pride and happiness. Receiving a gift, however, produces a feeling of happiness only, since the conditions of personal responsibility and normative standards are not satisfied. Do young children understand the difference between these two emotions? Most of the studies in the field have addressed the development of these emotions separately. There is little evidence about whether young children can differentiate between them.

The first aim of this study was to examine whether children can distinguish between the situations that generate these two emotions. Our hypothesis is that pride is a later development. According to Thompson's (1989) attribution-emotion model this is because emotions such as happiness or sadness are merely determined by the agent's success or failure in attaining a desired goal (outcome-dependent emotions). Emotions like pride, guilt and gratitude are cognitively more complex because they rely not only on the appraisal of the outcome, but also on an evaluation of its underlying cause (attribution-dependent emotions). Thus, for example, when success is attributed to effort, pride is elicited; whereas when success is attributed to another's help, gratitude is expected. This model assumes an age-related growth of emotional understanding. Children progress from the cognitively less complex outcome-dependent emotions to the more sophisticated attribution-dependent emotions.

In Thompson's (1987) study, second and fifth graders as well as college students were asked to describe the feelings of a character in a set of 12 stories. The stories generated different feelings (pride, gratitude, anger, guilt and surprise) depending on their content domain, the outcome and its cause. For stories with a successful outcome in the achievement and moral domains, attribution to personal effort was expected to elicit pride. The results were largely consistent with the age trend posited by the model. Fifth graders and adults granted more attribution-dependent emotional inferences than did second graders, who provided predominately outcome-dependent inferences like happy or sad. Second graders often attributed pride to the story character, not only when success was due to effort, but in any situation leading to a positive outcome. Similarly, guilt was inferred in situations for which the character was not personally responsible. The findings imply that young children have some appreciation of the kinds of situation that generate these feelings, but they are not very discriminating in linking these emotions to particular causal attributions.

Thompson's conclusions are in accordance with Graham's (1988) research on the relation between attributions and affect. In her study the pride story varied in the cause of the outcome (internal – *Chris got an A because he studied hard* – or external – *Chris got an A because the test was easy*). The participants were first asked to rate the cause of the outcome on degree of locus and then judge how proud the story character would be. Children of all ages, but especially the 8- and 10-year-olds, rated studying hard as the more internal cause. However, 6-year-olds attributed similar ratings of pride in the character both in the internal and external locus scenarios. With increasing age,

children became more discriminating in their judgments. Graham's findings suggest that many young children can successfully appraise the causal factor of an outcome, but they seem to overlook its relevance to emotional attribution. With age, causal considerations and affects become more closely interrelated.

Another set of studies has examined pride following a different methodology. Instead of asking children to assess the feelings of a hypothetical story character, they have dealt with children's personal experience of pride. Harter and Whitesell (1989) asked 4–11-year-olds to describe feelings of pride and shame. Regarding pride, even the youngest children were aware that it is a positive feeling, but they could not provide a successful description of a causing situation before the age of 8 years. Interestingly, 6- and 7-year-olds frequently presented descriptions involving significant others being proud of the self (*Mom would be proud if I cleaned my room*).

In a well-designed study, Harris, Olthof, Terwogt, and Hardman (1987) presented English and Dutch children aged 5, 7, 10 and 14 years with 20 different emotion terms and asked them to describe situations likely to elicit each emotion. Instead of checking the appropriateness of the children's responses, as most reported studies did, the situations described by the children were presented to two judges who had to infer the emotion term the child was responding to. This was a stringent rating procedure because it assessed the children's ability to describe situations that were uniquely associated with a particular emotion. Even 5-year-olds could describe situations that elicited happiness, but they could not cite distinct pride-eliciting situations before the age of 7. Further analysis revealed that children do not treat these two emotions as synonymous, but from the beginning present different determinants for each of them.

Seidner *et al.* (1988) examined children's ability to discriminate pride from happiness by asking children and adults to describe situations in which they had experienced happiness and pride. Responses were content-analysed in different dimensions as, for example, on the locus of the event (internal and controllable or uncontrollable and external). The analysis revealed that even 5-year-olds were much more likely to present internal and controllable situations for pride than for happiness, suggesting a clear distinction of pride and happiness-eliciting situations from an early age.

In reviewing the existing literature some important issues arise. The first one concerns the age at which children show an understanding of pride. There is an age discrepancy among the studies ranging from 5 years (Seidner *et al.*, 1988) to an age of 8 or 10 years (Graham, 1988; Thompson, 1987). This disparity can be attributed to differences in the methodology followed. The studies where children were presented with hypothetical scenarios showed a later understanding of pride, compared with the studies where children were asked to generate situations in which they had experienced pride. A possible explanation offered by Thompson (1989, p. 130) is that children are more likely to derive meaningful attribution-emotion linkages from their own experience, because they are more sensitive to the motivational underpinnings of their own emotional reactions. Part of the discrepancy can also be attributed to the difference in the criteria applied for the appropriateness of children's responses. For example, in Seidner *et al.*'s (1988) study the response '*I planted a garden*' was classified as an internal and controllable situation, thus granting an understanding of pride, whereas in Thompson's (1987) study, this justification would not have been satisfactory for pride, because it did not include any causal factors.

A second issue to be clarified concerns the distinction between *experiencing* and *understanding* emotions. All the aforementioned studies were concerned with

children's understanding of emotions. A disadvantage of the technique used for testing this understanding is that it depends largely on the understanding of the emotional terms. Harris *et al.* (1987, p. 321) noted the possibility of children identifying particular situations and detecting their emotional consequences, but lacking a word for the emotion in question. For this reason it is sometimes uncertain whether children's difficulty with complex emotions lies in the semantic or in the conceptual understanding. The fact that children cannot name their emotions does not rule out the possibility of experiencing them. Bretherton, Fritz, Zahn-Waxler, and Ridgeway (1986) suggested the possibility of even toddlers experiencing feelings of pride and guilt, long before they are able to name them.

The third issue concerns the content of the situations that researchers have used to detect children's understanding of pride. All the hypothetical scenarios presented were about recognized achievements, like winning a race or getting good marks at school. However, these are not the only pride-eliciting situations. Pride can be elicited when someone performs a moral act, like helping someone in need. Surprisingly, moral situations have been largely ignored. Only Thompson (1987) varied the content domain of his scenarios, presenting both achievement and moral stories, but no differences were found. The moral situations he studied were about keeping a secret, doing an errand for mother, and complying with a parental request. It can be argued that these were obligatory moral situations; the character was expected to act morally. These situations contrast with discretionary moral situations where the agent is not obliged to act morally, but does so based on concerns for human welfare or virtue (Kahn, 1992). In Kahn's (1992) study, positive morality (you should help, share, etc) was seen as less stringent and binding than negative morality (you should not steal, etc). For this reason, children attributed most praise to positive discretionary acts and less or no praise for observing negative obligatory rules. We consider that the former situations are particularly pride-eliciting, because moral acts are left to the agent's discretion, and these merit further investigation.

The second aim of our study was to examine whether children attribute feelings of pride to the agents in two domains: (a) in achievement and (b) in discretionary moral situations. These situations differ in their content and also in the direction of the positive outcome. In achievement situations the outcome is beneficial for the actor – the athlete who wins a race is the one who benefits through his effort. In many cases the outcome can be tangible, like a prize or a good grade. In moral situations, though, the outcome of the agent's action is beneficial for a third person. Take the example of someone in need, to whom we offer help. This help can be offered without any personal cost – it does not cost anything to help an old lady cross the road – or with personal cost – giving pocket money to a poor child. None of the studies on pride have examined the effect of cost on the attribution of pride feelings to the agent. The third aim of the study was to test this idea.

It is plausible that children relate all these different situations (achievement, discretionary moral acts with cost and without cost) to the emotion of pride. The other possibility is that pride is mostly associated with one type of situation. If this is the case, it is more likely that children regard as pride-eliciting situations those in which their effort results in a personal benefit (achievement situations). This possibility is supported by Harter and Whitesell's (1989) finding that the vast majority of children, when asked to describe pride-eliciting situations, refer to situations related to athletic or academic competence and personal accomplishments.

This is because moral situations are more complex and require higher cognitive,

social and emotional maturity. To attribute pride in achievement situations, the child has to assess the outcome and its underlying cause. In moral situations, though, the child has also to evaluate the intention (egotistic or altruistic) of the act and the moral rules that the child is acting upon (obligatory or discretionary). The same act can elicit different emotions, depending on the benefactor's intention and whether (s)he is acting on a discretionary or obligatory base. Moral acts on request are less pride-eliciting than those performed by choice. Voluntary deeds that involve a personal cost to the agent deserve higher scores for pride than those where the agent acts without personal cost.

Moreover, discretionary moral acts, in order to generate high levels of pride, should not be motivated by or result in personal benefit for the agent. This conflicts with the child's interest in the personal gains from their actions. Their interest in personal profit is evident even in situations involving a moral breach. Although they understand what is right and wrong, when asked to judge a moral transgression that leads to a desirable outcome (stealing a chocolate bar from another child), young children attribute positive emotions to the wrongdoer with outcome-oriented reasoning (Keller, Lourenço, Malti, & Saalbach, 2003; Murgatroyd & Robinson, 1993; Nunner-Winkler & Sodian, 1988). Analogously, it is possible that the situations in which the actor performs a moral act, but at a personal cost, might not be seen as generating positive feelings such as pride and happiness to the actor. Children will need to go through a long socialization procedure in order to internalize moral standards and values and to relate their observance to their emotional life.

Method

Participants

Participants were 150 children from two schools in the city of Heraklion, Crete, Greece. The children were equally sampled from three age groups: 7-year-olds (24 boys and 26 girls, $M = 7.5$), 9-year-olds (26 boys and 24 girls, $M = 9.5$) and 11-year-olds (24 boys and 26 girls, $M = 11.4$).

Design and procedure

Most studies on emotion have adopted a scenario-based approach in which participants are presented with different situations that can potentially elicit the target emotion. This methodology allows the researcher to control for the situation context.

The participants of the study were presented with three types of situation.

(1) In the first type, the protagonist receives a gift or enjoys one of his/her favourite activities. Such situations are expected to elicit happiness and are therefore named as the *'happy'* situations. These scenarios were chosen based on Shaver, Schwartz, Kirson, and O'Connor's (1987) finding (cited in Harter & Whitesell, 1989) that the two major causes of happiness for children are (a) getting what they desire (70%) and (b) experiencing pleasurable stimuli (20%), such as playing and having fun.
(2) In the *'achievement'* situations, the protagonist's effort results in a positive and desirable outcome, such as receiving a prize, a good grade in a school exam or achieving a personal aim. These situations have been frequently described by

children as pride-eliciting (Harter & Whitesell, 1989) and are expected to elicit both pride and happiness.

(3) The *'moral'* situations target the emotion of pride, but differ from the previous one in terms of the direction of the outcome and the cost to the agent. Here the protagonist performs a good deed that benefits a third person. In half of the cases (s)he does the good deed at a personal cost (e.g. giving his/her sandwich to a poor child) and in the other half of the cases without any cost (e.g. helping an old lady cross the road). These situations are expected to elicit pride and happiness for meeting moral standards.

For each type of situation, four scenarios were developed (see Appendix).

Children were tested individually in a quiet area of their school building by the first author. Following the methodology developed by Olthof *et al*. (2000) on the differential antecedents of shame and guilt, testing began by training the children to use a 5-point scale to be used later in their happiness and pride judgments. The rating scale consisted of five vertical rectangles of increasing size. They were all coloured red, except the first one, which had no colour – since it corresponded to the label 'not at all' – and were depicted on a white A4-sized sheet of paper. The experimenter pointed to each rectangle and explained the appropriate label that corresponded to it (not at all, a little bit, quite a bit, a lot, and very, very much). Then she explained how they could use the scale to describe their food preferences. The experimenter first used the scale to demonstrate her preferences (I like beans a little bit, I like fried eggs a lot, and so on). To test the scale comprehension, children were asked to rate how much they liked some dishes (chips, lentils, and so on). If children had difficulties they were further trained by rating how strong some people were (babies, policemen, giants, and so on) as in Olthof *et al*.'s (2000) study. The experimenter stopped the training when she was certain that the child knew how to use the rating system.

Following the scale training, each child was successively presented with the 12 scenarios. The scenarios featured a protagonist of the same sex as the child. The scenarios for boys and girls were almost identical, with minor changes (e.g. boys' or girls' activities) and were read in a random order. At the end of each scenario the experimenter posed the following questions: 'How happy (proud) did (protagonist's name) feel)? Did (s)he feel happy (proud) at all; did (s)he feel happy a little bit, quite a bit, a lot or very, very much?'. The experimenter pointed to the corresponding rectangles on the scale while asking these questions.

In order to control for possible response bias towards the emotions of pride and happiness and the use of the rating scale, three anger scenarios were also included. In all 15 scenarios the participants were asked to judge how happy, proud and angry the protagonist would feel.

If the children could differentiate between pride and happiness, we expected, firstly, high ratings for happiness and low ratings, if not zero, for pride in the happy situations; and secondly, a marked difference in children's ratings for pride between the happy and the achievement situations. Achievement situations were expected to elicit higher ratings for pride than happy situations, whereas no significant difference was expected to be found in happy scores. The achievement situations were expected to elicit equally high ratings for both pride and happiness.

To examine whether moral situations elicit pride, children's ratings for pride in the achievement and moral situations were compared. If children associated pride with both situations, no rating differences for pride were expected to be found. To test

whether the personal cost to the protagonist affected children's choice of pride and happiness, their ratings were compared in the cost and no-cost situations.

Results

Preliminary analysis showed that the 'control' emotion of anger, irrelevant to the experimental types of situations, was indeed rated as 'not at all' in pride and happiness stories by children of any age group. Similarly the emotions of happiness and pride were largely absent in the anger stories. For this reason, anger scores were not analysed further.

To assess the effect of the type of situation on happiness and pride scores in the three age groups, we employed a 2-way repeated-measures ANOVA. The Type of Situation (TS) with three levels (happy, achievement, moral) was the within factor, and Age, also with three levels (7-, 9- and 11-year-olds) was the between factor. The interaction effect was also considered. In case of significant main effects, pairwise *post hoc* Bonferroni-adjusted *t*-tests were performed to pinpoint the differences.

As can be seen from Table 1, the only significant effect on the happy score was the TS ($F(2, 146) = 86.96$, $p < .001$). Happy scores in moral situations were significantly lower than in the other two. There was no Age ($F(2, 147) = 0.258$, $p = .77$) or TS $\times$ Age interaction ($F(4, 292) = 0.625$, $p = .64$) effect on happy scores. Children in all age groups scored consistently high marks for happiness in both happy and achievement situations and lower scores in moral situations.

Table 1. Means and standard deviations of happy and pride scores by Type of Situation and Age

	Happy score						Pride score					
	Happy		Achievement		Moral		Happy		Achievement		Moral	
Age	Mean	*SD*	Mean	*SD*	Mean	*SD*	Mean	*SD*	Mean	*SD*	Mean	*SD*
7	15.24	1.08	15.20	1.14	11.22	4.14	13.93	2.31	14.52	1.50	12.48	3.52
9	15.14	1.18	15.08	1.12	12.04	2.61	8.90	4.61	14.76	1.67	14.14	2.37
11	15.12	1.24	15.08	1.28	11.88	2.89	4.94	4.87	14.52	1.72	14.30	2.41

The basic pattern of responses of happy scores in the happy and achievement stories remained essentially unchanged with age ($\chi^2(4) = 1.07$, $p = .89$). As can be seen in Table 2 the majority of the children in all age groups attributed equal ratings of happiness in happy and achievement stories, while the remaining percentage was more or less evenly split between those who gave higher happy ratings in happy stories and those who gave higher happy ratings in achievement stories.

On the other hand, there were significant TS ($F(2, 142) = 136.18$, $p < .001$), Age ($F(2, 143) = 18.22$, $p < .001$) and TS $\times$ Age interaction ($F(4, 284) = 21.13$, $p < .001$) effects on pride score (Table 1). Pride scores in happy situations declined sharply as children grew older. In contrast, pride scores in achievement situations did not show any noticeable changes. Pride scores in happy stories did not differ significantly from pride scores in achievement stories at the age of 7, but pride scores in these two situations started to diverge by the age of 9. The pride scores of the 7-year-olds in moral situations

Table 2. Percentage of children showing each response pattern in happy and achievement stories by Age Group

		Comparison of happy scores in happy and achievement stories			Comparison of pride scores in happy and achievement stories		
		Greater in achievement	Equal	Greater in happy	Greater in achievement	Equal	Greater in happy
Age group	7	20	52	28	46	28	26
	9	24	52	24	82	16	2
	11	22	58	20	98	2	–

were significantly lower than the pride scores of 9- and 11-year-olds. *Post hoc t*-tests showed that pride scores in moral stories were significantly less than pride scores in achievement stories for the 7-year-old children ($p < .001$), but the gap was narrower at the age of 9 and had disappeared by the age of 11.

The pattern of pride scores in happy and achievement stories changed significantly with age ($\chi^2(4) = 42.4$, $p < .001$). As can be seen from Table 2, less than half of the 7-year-olds rated pride higher in achievement than in happy stories, compared with 82% of the 9-year-olds and 98% (all but one) of the 11-year-olds.

In order to investigate whether the attribution of high happy and pride scores on happy stories was possibly due to children's treating the word 'happy' as synonymous with 'proud' the correlation between the two scores was computed. In all age groups the correlation was very low and not significant, ranging from .12 to .20.

To further illustrate the ability of children to differentiate between the two emotions in the three types of situations we ran another 2-way [TS (3) × Age (3)] ANOVA on the difference between the happy and pride scores. There were significant TS ($F(2, 142) = 135.68$, $p < .001$) and Age ($F(2, 143) = 27.25$, $p < .001$) effects as well as a TS × Age Group interaction ($F(4, 284) = 19.62$, $p < .001$) effect (Table 3). It is clearly seen in Figure 1 that in happy situations the 7-year-old children could barely differentiate between happiness and pride, but older children progressively and markedly distinguished between the two emotions. In achievement stories, children's scores for happiness and pride were at the same level across the three age groups. In the moral situations children gave slightly, but significantly, higher pride than happy scores, steadily across the three age groups.

Table 3. Happy–pride differentiation within the Type of Situation (TS) by Age Group

	Happy		Achievement		Moral	
Age	Mean	*SD*	Mean	*SD*	Mean	*SD*
7	1.24	2.39	.67	1.11	−1.28	3.19
9	6.24	4.61	.32	1.46	−2.10	3.07
11	10.18	4.77	.56	1.55	−2.42	3.32

A separate subanalysis showed that gender did not play any significant role in the differentiation between the two emotions in any age group.

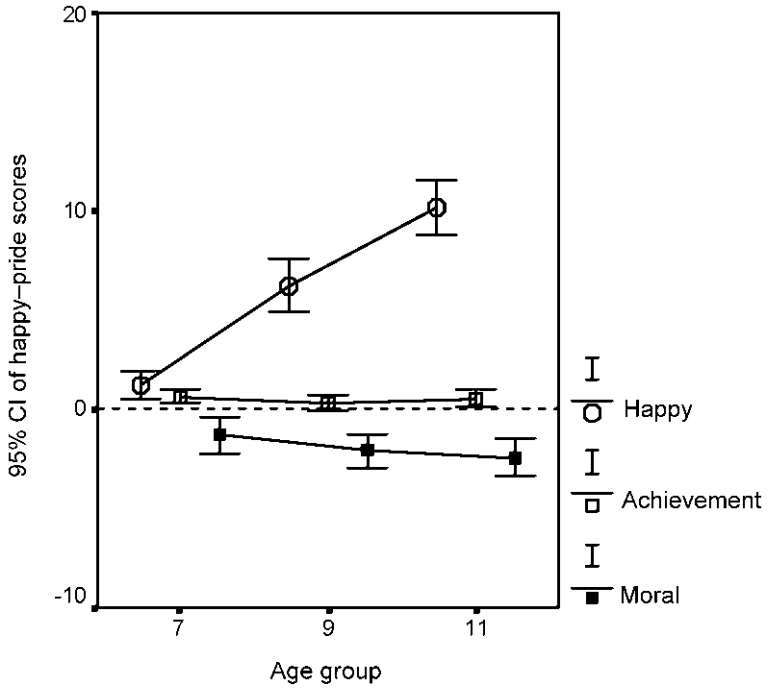

Figure 1. The 95% confidence intervals of the mean difference between happy and pride scores by Type of Situation and Age

Note. The Figure shows the 95% confidence intervals of the mean difference between the happy and pride scores in the three types of situations across the three age groups. The horizontal line at 0 means no differentiation. Differences above the line indicate a larger score for happy than for pride, and differences below the line indicate a smaller score for happy than for pride.

To assess the effect of personal cost (PC) on the pride score in moral situations another 2-way [PC (2) × Age (3)] ANOVA was carried out. There was a significant PC ($F(1, 143) = 7.18$, $p = .008$) and Age ($F(2, 143) = 6.15$, $p = .003$) effect on the pride scores (Table 4). Pride scores were generally lower at younger ages or when cost was involved. About half of the children in all age groups attributed equal pride scores in cost and no-cost moral stories (Table 5). There was also a significant PC × Age interaction ($F(2, 143) = 4.32$, $p = .015$), in that there was a bigger change in pride scores from the age of 7 to the age of 9 when cost was involved. Pride scores in personal cost and no cost moral stories were moderately correlated for 7- and 9-year-olds ($r = .5$, $p < .001$), and very strongly correlated for 11-year-olds ($r = .784$, $p < .001$). Examination of the regression line coefficients showed that for 7-year-olds, pride scores in the cost situations were 15% less than those in the no-cost situations. For 9- and 11-year-olds there was no such reduction.

There was also a significant PC ($F(1, 147) = 23{,}82$, $p < .001$) effect on happy scores but no Age ($F(2, 147) = 0.88$, $p = .42$) or interaction effects were found. The percentage of children, though, who gave greater happy ratings in moral stories involving personal cost than in those without personal cost increased significantly and progressively with age, rising from 8% for 7-year-olds to 14% for 9-year-olds and jumping to 38% for 11-year-olds ($\chi^2(4) = 17.18$, $p = .002$) (Table 5).

Table 4. Pride scores in the moral situation by Cost and Age

	PC		No PC	
Age	Mean	*SD*	Mean	*SD*
7	5.80	2.48	6.67	1.55
9	7.08	1.45	7.06	1.28
11	7.06	1.35	7.24	1.20

Table 5. Percentage of children showing each response pattern in cost and no-cost moral stories by Age Group

	Happy scores in cost and no-cost moral stories			Pride scores in cost and no-cost moral stories		
Age group	Greater in no cost	Equal	Greater in cost	Greater in no cost	Equal	Greater in cost
7	58	34	8	30	55	15
9	44	42	14	26	46	28
11	36	26	38	32	50	18

Discussion

The first aim of the study was to examine whether young children can differentiate between the emotions of pride and happiness. It was assumed that this differentiation is a late development because of the complexity of the situational antecedents of pride. The analysis of variance verified our prediction. At the age of 7 years, children knew that both emotions were associated with a desirable outcome but they could not differentiate the situations eliciting each of them. This was evident in happy situations, where the children gave high ratings for both happiness and pride to the protagonist. Furthermore, happy situations drew equally high ratings for pride as achievement situations. Children progressively differentiated pride and happiness at the age of 9 years and made a clear distinction at the age of 11. Our findings suggest that young children have an appreciation of the situations eliciting pride and happiness but they cannot discriminate between the situational antecedents of each emotion. Thus, they attributed pride to the protagonist in both expected and unexpected conditions. It is at middle-school age that children consider the role of personal responsibility and normative standards as relevant to pride. Our findings are in agreement with Thompson's (1987) and Graham's (1988) results. Children's difficulty in integrating outcome information with causal ascriptions was a common finding. As in most studies presenting hypothetical scenarios, we also found that around the age of 9, children have a good appreciation of the situations eliciting pride.

A plausible explanation for the attribution of pride feelings even in happy situations can be that children are initially thinking of pride and happiness as near synonyms. Correlation analysis of the scores, however, does not lend support to this theory. Children did not rate these emotions in a similar fashion, implying that they were not treated as being the same. This result is in agreement with the findings of Harris *et al.*'s (1987) cluster analysis, which showed that children present different determinants for

each emotion from an early age. The findings corroborate Carey's (1978) semantic feature theory, where each newly acquired lexical item is attached to an appropriate exemplar through a process of 'fast mapping'.

The second aim of the study was to examine the role of the situation on the attribution of pride. It was hypothesized that children initially associate pride with personal achievement situations and later on with moral acts situations. Our hypothesis was partially verified. Achievement situations elicited equally high ratings of pride across ages. However, the 7-year-olds attributed less pride to the character doing a good deed than to the one achieving a personal accomplishment.

There are numerous possible explanations for this result. One explanation has to do with the children's socialization experience. It is possible that initially children relate pride mostly to the demonstration of a competent act. This explanation is supported by the finding that children rarely refer to moral acts when describing pride-eliciting situations (Harter & Whitesell, 1989).

The difference in the outcome of the situations can be another reason. Obviously, the protagonist of the achievement stories accomplishes a distinguished and notable outcome (gets an A, wins a prize etc), attracting public attention and recognition. On the other hand, moral stories did not end with such a highly profiled outcome. Moreover, in achievement stories, the protagonist is rewarded for his accomplishment, whereas in moral acts there is no tangible award. These aspects are likely to be responsible for the attribution of higher scores in achievement stories. It is well documented that children's emotions are outcome-dependent, even in situations involving the violation of moral rules (Arsenio & Kramer, 1992; Keller *et al.*, 2003; Lourenço, 1997; Nunner-Winkler & Sodian, 1988; Yuill, Perner, Pearson, Peerbhoy, & van den Ende, 1996). There is evidence that children's judgments of the goodness of a positive act are affected by whether the act is rewarded or not (Eisenberg, 1982). There is also evidence that children's pride is enhanced when their accomplishments are observed by others (Harter & Whitesell, 1989). For these reasons future research should also examine the attribution of pride feelings to moral acts resulting in an outcome that attracts public attention and recognition.

There is no doubt that the cognitive complexity of moral situations is also responsible for the attribution of lower pride scores. As already mentioned, in order to attribute high pride scores in moral situations children should appreciate the discretionary nature of the charitable act, the character's altruistic motivations and his/her self-sacrifice. It is known that young children discriminate between obligatory and discretionary moral acts (Kahn, 1992), are sensitive to the intentions underpinning an action, and appreciate the unselfishness of the agent (Eisenberg, 1982). However, their difficulty lies in integrating all these moral aspects and relating them to their emotional life.

Methodological issues might have also contributed to young children's consistently lower ratings of pride in moral stories. In achievement stories the protagonist's achievement and the amount of effort (s)he put in were explicitly pointed out. In moral stories, though, the effort the character expends to control his/her impulses and desires were not clearly stressed. It is possible that the younger participants, instead of attributing altruistic inclinations to the character that justify pride, ascribed egotistic motivations – for example that Chris gave away his sandwich because he did not like it – a situation not eliciting pride.

Further examination of moral situations revealed that children's attribution of pride varied also in terms of the personal cost to the protagonist. This was most evident for

the youngest age group. The 7-year-olds attributed less pride to the character who performed a good deed with personal cost than to the one who performed a good deed without any cost. The 7-year-olds' low ratings of pride in the cost situations bring further support to the finding that initially children's emotions are affected by the outcome of the situation. This is also supported by the fact that the clear majority (58%) of the 7-year-olds attributed more happiness to the character in the no-cost situation. Studies on moral dilemmas manipulating the amount of cost have also shown that children are more likely to use more hedonistic, self-oriented rather than others-needs-oriented, reasoning when the personal cost of helping is high (Eisenberg-Berg & Neal, 1981).

These findings, *prima facie*, seem to contradict a large body of research on children's morality that has shown that children understand moral norms from an early age and are sensitive to the interests and the well-being of others (Eisenberg & Fabes, 1991; Smetana, 1995; Turiel, 1998). We believe that the difference in the attribution of emotions between the younger and the older children can be explained by differences in their focus. The children who attribute less happiness to the character in the cost situation focus on the material loss (*How does Chris feel for not having a sandwich to eat*), whereas older children take a moral stance (*How does Chris feel after doing a good deed*). This is in accordance with research on the 'happy victimizers' phenomenon. Keller *et al.* (2003) have found that the younger children attribute happy feelings to a transgressor because they take a cognitive-predictive stance (*how does the victimizer feel for getting what (s)he wants*), whereas older children take a moral position (*how should the victimizer feel after stealing what (s)he wanted*). This suggests that, with maturing moral development, emotional judgments are regulated by the moral base of the situation. For a better understanding of the reasoning underlining children's attribution of emotions in moral situations, future studies should also ask children to justify their ratings.

Younger children's attribution of higher pride scores in the no-cost situations might also be due to the classic nature of the no-cost stories. Helping an old lady across the street or helping her carry her shopping bags are stereotypical paradigms of moral acts, often cited in schoolbooks and children's literature. It is possible that children's familiarity with these situations resulted in a better understanding of the character's altruistic intentions, and hence to a higher attribution of pride feelings.

Research on positive emotions is relatively scarce. However, positive emotions like happiness and pride are important because they can affect our self-image and esteem and stimulate achievement and moral behaviour. Our findings, although preliminary, shed some light on children's attribution of positive emotions and suggest that future studies should examine the role of the aforementioned alternative explanations on the attribution of these feelings.

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Appendix: The three types of experimental situations used

Happy situations

(1) Today is Phil's birthday. His parents' gift was a big fast car that could climb all obstacles.
(2) Uncle Nick came home on Sunday. He brought Mick a nice pair of trainers.
(3) Today Tony is going to his best friend's home. They will play and have fun together until late.
(4) Today is Sunday and Greg is off school. He will go to his favourite play park with his parents.

Achievement situations

(1) John is having a race competition at school today. He puts in all his effort, he runs fast, and gets the first prize.
(2) Children are having a drawing competition at school today. Alex is trying to do the best drawing he ever did. He draws carefully, he chooses nice colours and does the best drawing.
(3) Philip sings very well, but he is shy and cannot sing aloud in the class. Today, though, he finds the courage to sing in front of his classmates. He puts all his effort into it and sings beautifully.
(4) Andrew is having a test in maths today. Andrew is not good at maths, but this time he studied hard and learned to solve all the problems. Andrew did very well on the test and got an A.

Moral situations

Cost situations

(1) George is walking to school. On his way he comes across a younger child who is crying because he has lost his colouring pencils. George opens his school bag, takes out his pencils and gives them to him.
(2) At school break Chris is having a sandwich made by his mother. Nick, a poor child, has nothing to eat. Chris gives him his own sandwich.

No cost situations

(3) Manos is walking along the street. He sees a blind lady trying to cross the road. He takes her to the zebra crossing and helps her to cross over.
(4) Steven is walking along the high street. He sees an old lady carrying a heavy bag. Steven offers his help. He takes the bag and helps her to carry it home.