

Green Pride in Sustainable Versus Premium Brand Decisions

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Abstract:	

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Abstract

Purpose: Earlier research indicates that brand choices may display different identity signals, such as altruism and benevolence for green brands or high status and exclusiveness for premium brands. This research adds to the literature by exploring how opting for green (vs. premium) brands leads consumers to feel authentic (vs. hubristic) pride.

Design/methodology/approach: Three experimental studies were conducted to test the hypotheses related to green versus premium choices (Studies 1-3), public accountability (Study 2), and the underlying process of anticipated judgment (Study 3).

Findings: The findings reveal that choosing a green (vs. premium) brand results in higher authentic pride and lower hubristic pride. However, the green pride effects were only observed when consumers' brand choices were publicly accountable. Finally, anticipated judgment mediates changes in authentic pride driven by green (vs. premium) brands.

Originality: Our findings contribute preponderantly to the green consumer behavior literature and practice by providing primary evidence that green (vs. premium) branding can trigger distinct patterns of pride in comparative decisions.

Keywords: green consumption; premium brands; pride; comparative choices; choice justification; sustainable consumption.

1. INTRODUCTION

Green brands are an essential part of sustainable consumption and are positioned in the market by praising social, environmental, and economic dimensions (Spielmann, 2020). Although green attributes are widely requested in sustainable consumption (Berger, 2019; Hayat, Jianjun & Ali, 2022), their market prices are often similar to premium brands (Juhl *et al.*, 2017). Thus, consumers often face a trade-off between green and competing premium brands (e.g., organic vs. premium chocolate, green-made vs. limited-edition apparel). While trade-offs are expected during the consumption decision process (Luchs & Kumar, 2017), the choice between green and premium options is an exceptionally particular case of a comparative decision since it may impact consumers' self-identity (Govers & Schoormans, 2005). Previous research shows that green brands are associated with a virtuous self (Antonetti & Maklan, 2014; Griskevicius *et al.*, 2010; Ladhari & Tchegna, 2017) and that premium brands are more often related to a prestigious self (Dion & Arnould, 2011; Lee *et al.*, 2019).

Extending this literature, we propose that the choice between green (vs. premium) brands might trigger unique dimensions of pride in sustainable consumption. Pride is a self-conscious emotion resulting from the individual belief that something valuable has been done (Bissing-Olson *et al.*, 2016), and it has two main facets (Tracy & Robins, 2007b): authentic and hubristic pride. Authentic pride is based on a sense of genuine self-esteem ("I am proud of what I did) and is related to positive concepts such as achievement, accomplishment, and "self-worth." In comparison, hubristic pride refers to pride in the self ("I am proud of who I am) and is associated with concepts like arrogance, egoism, and smugness but also elitism, superiority, and exclusivity.

Although research has recently explored the links between green consumption and pride (Ladhari & Tchegna, 2017; Septianto *et al.*, 2021), the present research is the first to examine

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3 specific pride dimensions (authentic vs. hubristic) as identity signals associated with green (vs.
4 premium) brands. Drawing from costly signal theory (Bird & Smith, 2005; McAndrew, 2019;
5 Saad, 2007), this study adds to past research investigating the impact of altruistic behavior on
6 status signaling (Van Vugt *et al.*, 2007; Brooks & Wilson, 2015; McAndrew, 2019). From a
7 managerial perspective, this study demonstrates that companies can also benefit from the
8 comparative decision between green and premium brands.
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20 **2. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND**

21 **2.1 Green versus Premium Brand Decisions and Pride**

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26 Green consumption is the act of purchasing and consuming brands that use
27 sustainable methods of production and services (Lin & Chang 2012). It can be regarded as
28 “the tendency to express the value of environmental protection through one’s purchases and
29 consumption behaviors” (Haws *et al.*, 2014, p. 337). The main goal of choosing green brands
30 is to generate the lowest negative impact on the environment.
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38 Individuals can express behaviors perceived as positive and as delivering collective
39 benefits by consuming green brands (Griskevicius *et al.*, 2010; Tezer & Bodur, 2020; White
40 & Simpson, 2013; Berger, 2019). However, not all consumers are willing to purchase a green
41 brand because green brands are sometimes perceived to have lower quality and effectiveness,
42 higher prices, and involve high effort in purchasing (Lin & Chang, 2012; Luchs *et al.*, 2010;
43 Newman *et al.*, 2014).
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52 Furthermore, drawing from costly signaling theory, Brooks and Wilson (2015)
53 showed that consumption-reducing behaviors (although environmentally friendly) might be
54 perceived to be less appropriate for conveying status. Interestingly, past research on
55 conspicuous consumption associates social capital and status with premium and luxury
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3 brands (Han *et al.*, 2010), which are perceived as having high credibility and quality.

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5 Premium brands thus often carry meanings that provide consumers with social value and
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7 status (Dion & Arnould, 2011).
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11 There are noticeable parallels between the opposing benefits of consuming green
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13 versus consuming premium brands and the two facets of pride (authentic and hubristic). The
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15 positioning of green brands calls for social-environmental awareness, fair trade certifications,
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17 organic brands, and renewable sources. Hence, opting for green brands leads consumers to
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19 see themselves and portray themselves to others as contributing to pro-environmental
20
21 conservation and pro-social outcomes. As such, they are likely to experience authentic pride
22
23 in the process (Antonetti & Maklan, 2014). In contrast, premium positioning brands often
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25 present implicit or explicit claims of not only self-gratification but also signal social
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27 superiority and exclusivity (e.g., being among the few able to afford such brands). Such
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29 aspects are better captured by hubristic aspects of pride (Dion & Arnould, 2011).
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35 Related research further shows that authentic pride elicits more pro-social behavior
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37 than hubristic pride (Wubben *et al.*, 2012). In contrast, hubristic pride is likely linked to
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39 downward social comparisons (i.e., showing what others do not have; Tracy & Robins,
40
41 2007b, 2014).
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45 Accordingly, we propose that when consumers evaluate green and premium claims,
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47 the green (vs. premium) choice is likely to trigger a self-conscious emotion of authentic pride.
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49 This authentic sentiment in green consumption relates to the power of green (vs. premium)
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51 brands to help consumers build a pro-social (rather than a pro-self) reputation (Semmann *et*
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53 *al.*, 2005; Spielmann, 2020). Moreover, since choosing green entails rejecting the alternative
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55 premium brand and thus declining the attributes of exclusivity and superiority associated with
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57 the latter, consumers' hubristic pride should be reduced. Conversely, and for the same
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59 reasons, opting for the premium brand (and rejecting the green alternative) should be
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3 associated with lower levels of authentic pride and higher levels of hubristic pride. Therefore,
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5 we propose the following hypothesis:
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11 **H1:** Green (vs. premium) choice triggers higher levels of authentic pride, whereas premium
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13 (vs. green) preference triggers higher levels of hubristic pride.
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20 21 **2.2 The Role of Social Accountability in Feelings of Pride**

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23 Comparative decisions are known to be affected by consumers social accountability
24 (e.g., Huh *et al.*, 2014). According to the process model of self-conscious emotions (Tracy &
25 Robins, 2007a, 2014), feelings of pride involve socially embedded self-representations. It
26 follows that the feelings of authentic and hubristic pride ensuing from comparative decisions
27 should depend on the perceived (or imagined) scrutiny of others. Feelings of pride are thus
28 likely to be amplified when emerging from decisions made in public (Robins & Schriber,
29 2009).
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40 Choosing a green over a premium brand in a public context where people are more
41 socially accountable is expected to boost authentic pride and reduce hubristic pride since this
42 choice signals the endorsement of moral standards and behaviors toward collective good
43 (Ratner & Kahn, 2002). Choosing a premium brand instead may signal status and superiority
44 towards others (Han *et al.*, 2010; McFerran *et al.*, 2014), reducing authentic pride and
45 enhancing hubristic pride.
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54 However, since private decisions weaken self-monitoring (Huh *et al.*, 2014) when
55 consumers' choices occur in private settings, the pride facets predicted to emerge from the
56 comparative decisions are expected to be weakened:
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6 **H2:** The impact of green (vs. premium) choices on authentic and hubristic pride occurs in
7 public contexts and is reduced when the choice is private.
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14 Finally, since people tailor their pro-social behavior based on the expected reaction of
15 their audience (e.g., Chen, 2017; Baumeister & Leary 1995), it is reasonable to expect that the
16 authentic (vs. hubristic) pride stemming from comparative decisions may be at least partially
17 explained by consumers' anticipation of the judgments of others.
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24 Green brands claim social-environmental awareness, fair trade certifications, organic
25 inputs, recycled materials, and renewable sources of raw materials (Antonetti & Maklan,
26 2014; Griskevicius *et al.*, 2010; Ladhari & Tchegna, 2017). Premium brands explore high
27 quality, superior performance, seriousness, prestigious, exclusivity, symbols of progress, also
28 luxury (Dion & Arnould, 2011; Lee *et al.*, 2019). Given that in comparative decisions,
29 consumers may anticipate the judgments of others about their own choices, which might
30 impact their emotional reactions associated with such preferences. Specifically, the extent to
31 which consumers anticipate that opting for green rather than premium brands will make
32 people like (or dislike) them is expected to shape their comparative decisions. We thus
33 propose that:
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50 **H3:** Anticipated judgments of others mediate the effect of green (vs. premium) choices on
51 authentic (and hubristic) pride.
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55 56 57 **3. STUDY 1 - Green (vs. Premium) Brand Choices and Pride** 58 59 60

3.1 Participants, Design, and Procedure

A total of 89 undergraduate students (55% female, $M_{\text{age}} = 22$) participated in this study in exchange for course credit. The design was a single factor 2 (choice: green vs. premium) between participants design, with choice as an endogenously created factor (based on Ma & Roese, 2014). The study was conducted in a lab, and participant respondents were exposed to the scenarios via a computer. Participants were exposed to a comparative decision that involved choosing between a green (Kokoa) or a premium (Thierry) fictional chocolate brand depicted in brand positioning ads. A pretest validated the brand advertising manipulation. Participants' preferences were coded into binary choices (1 = green choice; 0 = premium choice).

Participants were presented with two equivalent branded brands depicted in fictional positioning ads, each describing four features, side by side, with the left and right positions randomly assigned (adapted from Griskevicius *et al.*, 2010). For instance, "100% organic grains" and "fair-trade label" were green features, whereas "type gourmet-premium" and "exclusive ingredients" were featured for the premium brand (see Appendix A for details). Participants chose one of the brands based on the question, "If you were buying a chocolate, which of these two options would you choose?"

3.2 Measures

Authentic and hubristic measures of pride were collected using the following instructions: "Thinking about your choice, indicate how much you feel each of these emotions" (anchored by 1= Not at all, 7= A lot), adapted from Tracy and Robbins (2007b). Participants then responded to two items for each pride facet, following the procedure used

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2
3 by Wubben *et al.* (2012). For authentic pride, the items were: accomplished and satisfied.
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5 ($\alpha=.70$). Hubristic pride was measured with arrogant and conceited. ($\alpha=.75$). Furthermore,
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7 participants responded to four items concerning the brands' positioning manipulation check,
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9 "How green is the brand you have just chosen?", "How environmentally friendly is the brand
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11 you have just chosen?", "How exclusive is the brand you have just chosen?" and "How
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13 premium is the brand you have just chosen?" (anchored by 1= Not at all to 7= A lot). Finally,
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15 demographic measures were collected.
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23 3.3 Preliminary Analyses

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25 Overall, no difference in brand choice was observed, 50.6% ($n = 45$) chose the green
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27 brand ($\chi^2(1) = .01, p = .92$). Manipulation checks for brand advertising (green vs. premium)
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29 confirmed that those who chose the green brand indicated higher "greenness" ($r = .97$) of
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31 their choice ($M_{\text{Green}} = 5.90; SD = 1.55; M_{\text{Premium}} = 2.83; SD = 1.35; F(1, 87) = 98.22, p <$
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33 $.001$). As expected, those who chose the premium brand indicated higher "premiumness" ($r =$
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35 $.64$) of their choice ($M_{\text{Premium}} = 5.53; SD = 1.33; M_{\text{Green}} = 4.38; SD = 1.43; F(1, 87) = 15.32, p$
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37 $< .001$).
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45 3.4 Comparative Choice and Pride

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47 A mixed ANOVA analysis was conducted with choice (green; premium) as a
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49 between-subjects factor and pride facets (authentic; hubristic) as a within-subjects factor.
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51 There was a significant main effect of pride facets (Wilk's $\lambda = 0.346, F(1, 87) = 162.560, p <$
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53 $.001, \eta_p^2 = .651$) such that participants reported more authentic pride ($M = 4.75; SD = 1.29$)
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55 than hubristic pride ($M = 2.51; SD = 1.30$). More importantly, the expected interaction
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57 between choice and the two facets of pride also emerged (Wilk's $\lambda = 0.844, F(1, 87) =$
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3 16.121, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .156$) such that green (vs. premium) brands led to more authentic pride
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6 ($M_{\text{Green}} = 5.08$; $SD = 1.09$; $M_{\text{Premium}} = 4.43$; $SD = 1.40$) but to less hubristic pride ($M_{\text{Green}} =$
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8 2.13; $SD = 1.04$; $M_{\text{Premium}} = 2.89$, $SD = 1.43$). Simple comparisons confirmed these results.
9
10 Authentic pride is higher for green choice ($F(1, 87) = 5.86$, $p < .018$, $\eta_p^2 = .063$), whereas
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12 hubristic pride is higher for premium choice ($F(1, 87) = 8.29$, $p < .01$, $\eta_p^2 = .087$, see Figure
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29 3.5 Discussion

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31 Study 1 provides initial support for H1. As expected, preference for the green brand in
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33 a comparative choice setting triggered higher levels of authentic pride, whereas preference
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35 for the premium option triggered higher levels of hubristic pride.
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41 4. STUDY 2 - The Moderating Role of Social Accountability in Green Pride

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47 In this second study, we tested H2 by investigating if social accountability moderates
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49 the relationship between comparative choice and pride. Self-conscious emotions such as pride
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51 involve how we perceive our actions in relation to others; thus, the social context in which
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53 the comparative choice is made may influence how authentic and hubristic pride are triggered
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55 (Robins & Schriber, 2009). This study manipulated social accountability by creating private
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57 versus public settings of comparative choices. We expected to replicate Study 1's results
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3 pattern in terms of feelings of authentic and hubristic pride in conditions of high social
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5 accountability (i.e., public context), but not when social accountability is low (i.e., private
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7 context). We also tested these predictions with a different product (jacket) to investigate the
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9 consistency of the findings of Study 1.
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15 16 4.1 *Participants, Design, and Procedure* 17

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19 A total of 104 (52.9% male, $M_{\text{age}} = 22.5$ years) undergraduate students took part in the
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21 study in exchange for course credit and a chance to win one of 8 gift vouchers (\$20) to spend
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23 at the university coffee shop. This study was also conducted in a lab, following the same
24
25 procedures as study 1. The study employed a 2 (choice accountability: private vs. public) by
26
27 2 (Choice: green vs. premium) experimental design, with choice accountability as a between-
28
29 subjects factor and choice as an endogenously created factor. A pretest validated the brand
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31 advertising manipulation (see the Supplemental Material for detailed results). As per Study 1,
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33 participants' preferences were coded into binary choices (1 = green choice; 0 = premium
34
35 choice).
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41 Participants chose between a green (Ecolife) or a premium (Inlive) fictitious jacket
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43 brand advertised side by side, with the left and right positions randomly assigned. Four
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45 features were displayed for each option (see Appendix A for details). Before choosing their
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47 jackets, those in the public choice condition were told that they would be asked to publicly
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49 provide reasons for their choices afterward: "When back to the classroom, you will be asked
50
51 to explain the reasons for your choice. Bear in mind that the whole class will evaluate your
52
53 decision". Those in the private condition were informed about the privacy of their decisions:
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55 "Remember that your choice is private. Bear in mind that your decision will not be evaluated
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57 by anyone else." (adapted from Huh *et al.*, 2014).
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4.2 Measures

As in study 1, participants then indicated which of the two brands they would buy, followed by authentic and hubristic pride measures. To check the choice accountability manipulation, they answered the item “Others will evaluate my choice” (anchored by 1= Not at all, 7= A lot). Finally, demographic data were collected.

4.3 Preliminary Analyses

Overall, 57.7 % ($n = 60$) of the participants chose the green option. There was no difference in choice preferences ($\chi^2(1) = 1.05, p = .30$). As expected, a two-way ANOVA with choice justification (public vs. private choice) and choice (green vs. premium) condition as factors and the choice accountability check question as the dependent variable showed only a main effect of choice accountability, $F(1, 100) = 3.568, p < .05, \eta_p^2 = .034$. Participants in the public choice condition perceived that others would evaluate their choice more ($M_{\text{Public}} = 4.50; SD = 1.92$) than participants in the private choice condition ($M_{\text{Private}} = 3.82; SD = 2.17$). No other effects were observed ($F_s < 1$)

4.4 The Role of Choice Accountability

To test our predictions for H2, a two-way ANOVA mixed design analysis of variance was conducted separately for the public condition and the private condition, with choice (green vs. premium) as a between-subjects factor and the two facets of pride, authentic ($\alpha = .67$) versus hubristic ($\alpha = .64$), as a within-subjects factor. In the public justification condition, there was a main effect of Pride (Wilk's $\lambda = .287, F(1, 42) = 104.96, p < .000, \eta_p^2 = .713$) such that participants reported more authentic pride ($M = 4.97; SD = .15$) than hubristic

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3 pride ($M = 2.68$; $SD = .13$). More relevant to our hypothesis there was also an interaction
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5 between choice and pride (Wilk's $\lambda = 0.688$, $F(1, 42) = 19.09$, $p < .000$, $\eta_p^2 = .312$). Green
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7 brands led to more authentic pride ($M_{Green} = 5.38$, $SD = .21$; $M_{Premium} = 4.57$, $SD = .23$) but to
8
9 less hubristic pride ($M_{Green} = 2.10$, $SD = .18$; $M_{Premium} = 3.26$, $SD = .209$) than premium
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11 brands. Simple comparisons confirmed these results. Authentic pride was higher for green
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13 choice, ($F(1, 42) = 6.35$, $p < .01$, $\eta_p^2 = .016$), whereas hubristic pride was more significant for
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15 premium choice, ($F(1, 42) = 17.68$, $p < .000$, $\eta_p^2 = .29$). See figures 2 and 3 for detailed
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17 results.
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25 INSERT FIGURES 2 and 3 HERE
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31 Overall, these results confirm the predictions of H2. When there is no need for
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33 explanations, the significant impact of comparative choice on the two facets of pride is not
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35 observed.
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40 41 *4.5 Discussion*

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43 As predicted, in conditions of high accountability (i.e., public decisions), the pattern
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45 of results replicated those of Study 1. However, when accountability was low and the
46
47 decisions were private, the comparative choice did not affect either of the two pride facets. In
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49 sum, authentic pride was reduced for those who chose the premium (vs. green) option, and
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51 hubristic pride increased when public scrutiny was anticipated (high accountability).
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58 59 **5. STUDY 3 - Mediation of Anticipated Judgment**

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3 In our previous studies testing H1 and H2, choice was an endogenous factor. To
4 overcome this limitation, Study 3 directly manipulated choice to investigate the mediating
5 role of anticipated judgment (H3).
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13 5.1 Participants, Design, and Procedure 14

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16 Two hundred and ten participants were recruited on Amazon Mechanical Turk.
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18 Twenty-eight participants who failed the attention check were eliminated from further
19 analysis, leaving a sample of 182 respondents (53.3% male, $M_{age}=39.2$; $SD=11.9$). The
20 experiment employed a single factor between-subjects design with two conditions of choice
21 (premium vs. green). Participants were randomly exposed to one of the two conditions.
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28 Participants read a short explanation about how consumers often face trade-offs
29 between brands' features when making a purchase and that it is not uncommon to find similar
30 options between green and premium brands. After that, they were told to imagine that they
31 were planning a holiday trip and needed to buy a winter jacket. They found two similar
32 options. One was the *Ecolife brand jacket*, a green brand that claims social-environmental
33 awareness, fair trade certifications, and renewable sources of raw materials. The other was
34 the *Toplive brand jacket*, a prestigious premium brand that claims exclusivity, superior
35 performance, and distinguished style. The two fictitious brands advertised were placed side
36 by side, with left and right positions randomly ordered. The features of the brands are
37 detailed in Appendix A. After taking a moment to read the description of the two jackets,
38 participants were informed that "*There are many reasons to opt for a premium or green*
39 *brand. Most people can remember past occasions when they bought premium brands and*
40 *other occasions when they decided on green brands. In the present case, imagine that after*
41 *evaluating the premium and the green options, you decided to buy the Ecolife jacket/the*
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3 *Toplive jacket*". Participants were then instructed to click on the image associated with their
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5 choice. Finally, they were asked to write at least three sentences providing the motivations
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7 that could explain why someone would prefer the green (vs. premium) Ecolife (vs. the
8
9 Toplive) jacket instead of the premium (vs. green) option. They were also instructed to keep
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11 in mind that when an option was chosen, the alternative option was rejected.
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18 *5.2 Measures*

21 Authentic and hubristic measures of pride were collected by asking participants how
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23 they would feel about their decision to choose the Ecolife/Toplive jacket rather than the
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25 Toplive/Ecolife jacket (anchored by 1= Not at all, 7= A lot), adapted from Tracy and Robbins
26
27 (2007b). Authentic pride ($\alpha=.94$) measurement was composed of seven items (accomplished,
28
29 successful, achieving, self-worth, confident, productive, fulfilled). The hubristic pride scale
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31 ($\alpha=.97$) was also composed of seven items (snobbish, pompous, stuck-up, conceited,
32
33 egotistical, arrogant, smug). After that, participants were asked to indicate their agreement
34
35 with two sentences, one stating that the best winter jacket was the green jacket, the other
36
37 stating that it was the premium jacket (anchored by 1= Strongly agree, 7= Strongly disagree).
38
39 Anticipated judgment was measured using three items ($\alpha=.90$) based on Chen (2017): "How
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41 do you think talking about having chosen the Ecolife jacket rather than the Toplive
42
43 option will boost people's impression of you?" (1 = Negatively to 7 = Positively); "Do you
44
45 think people will view you more or less favorably because you shared your thoughts about
46
47 having chosen the Ecolife jacket rather than the Toplive option?" (1= Less favorably to 7 =
48
49 More favorably); "Do you think people will like or dislike you because you shared your
50
51 thoughts about having chosen the Ecolife jacket rather than the Toplive option?" (1 = Dislike
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53 to 7 = Like).
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3 Respondents then answered two attention check questions (based on Peer *et al.*,
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5 2014). Finally, additional emotional reactions were also collected: happiness, dissatisfaction,
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7 annoyance, remorse, guilt, shame, pride, gratitude, frustration, and regret, anchored by 1=
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9 Not at all, 7= A lot (Soscia, 2007).
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16 5.3 Preliminary Analyses

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18 A mixed subjects ANOVA analysis was performed to show the effect of the
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20 conditions on the manipulation check measures for green and premium options. Choice was
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22 the between-subjects factor and the two items regarding which jacket was the best option for
23
24 the winter (green and premium) were the within-subjects factor. As expected, there was a
25
26 significant interaction between choice condition and the best jacket option for the winter
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28 (Wilk's $\lambda = 0.945$, $F(1, 180) = 10.52$, $p < .001$, $\eta_p^2 = .055$). No main effect of choice was
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30 observed (Wilk's $\lambda = 0.996$, $F(1, 180) = .667$, $p = .415$). Simple comparisons between each
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32 choice condition showed that those in the green condition indicated the green brand ($M_{\text{Green}} =$
33
34 3.41 ; $SD = 1.97$) as a better option compared to those in the premium brand choice (M_{Premium}
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36 $= 4.31$; $SD = 1.65$; $t(180) = 1.97$, $p = .05$). Not surprisingly, those in the premium condition
37
38 indicated the premium brand ($M_{\text{Premium}} = 3.43$; $SD = 1.92$) as a better option compared to the
39
40 evaluation of who chose the green brand ($M_{\text{Green}} = 3.97$; $SD = 1.92$; $t(180) = -3.31$, $p = .001$).
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49 5.4 Comparative Choice and Pride

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51 A mixed subjects ANOVA was performed to examine the impact of green vs.
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53 premium choice on the two dimensions of pride. Choice was the between-subjects factor and
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55 the two dimensions of pride were the within-subjects factor. There was a main effect of Pride
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57 (Wilk's $\lambda = 0.539$, $F(1, 180) = 153.70$, $p < .000$, $\eta_p^2 = .461$) such that participants reported
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3 more authentic pride ($M= 4.65$; $SD=1.51$) than hubristic pride ($M= 2.58$; $SD= 1.79$). More
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5 importantly, the expected Pride x Choice interaction was also significant (Wilk's $\lambda = 0.928$,
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7 $F(1, 180) = 13.889$, $p < .000$, $\eta_p^2 = .072$). Simple comparisons confirmed that hubristic pride
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9 was higher for premium brands ($M_{\text{Premium}} = 3.17$; $SD = 2.01$) than for green brands ($M_{\text{Green}} =$
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11 2.04 ; $SD = 1.36$; $F(1, 180) = 19.62$, $p < .000$, $\eta_p^2 = .098$). However, the difference between
12
13 green and premium brands was not significant for authentic pride ($M_{\text{Green}} = 4.70$, $SD = 1.48$;
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15 $M_{\text{Premium}} = 4.59$, $SD = 1.56$; $F(1, 180) = .209$, $p = .618$).

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20 We also performed one-way ANOVAs to test for the impact of comparative choices
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22 on other emotions (annoyance, ashamed, dissatisfaction, frustration, gratitude, guilt,
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24 happiness, regret, and remorse), and no significant differences were found (p 's > .12). See
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26 Table 1 in the Supplementary Material for detailed results).

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Mediation of anticipated judgment. We performed a simple mediation analysis to test
for the influence of anticipated judgment (i.e., how participants anticipate the way others are
going to judge them if they choose a green over a premium option) on the relationship between
green vs. premium choice and the two dimensions of pride, using the PROCESS macro on
SPSS (model 4; 5,000 samples; Hayes, 2018). The green choice was coded as 1, and the
premium choice was coded as 0.

When the dependent variable was authentic pride, there was a significant indirect effect
of green vs. premium choice on authentic pride fully mediated by anticipated judgment ($\beta =$
.3324, $CI = .1211$ to $.5266$) as the direct effect of choice on authentic pride was not significant
($\beta = -.2192$, $CI = -.6274$ to $.1890$). These results show that the impact of green choice on
authentic pride is explained by the consumers' perception of how others will judge them about
their decision.

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3 For hubristic pride, there was no indirect effect of anticipated judgment ($\beta = .1024$, CI
4 = $-.0428$ to $.2706$), but there was a negative direct effect of Choice on hubristic pride ($\beta = -$
5 1.2272 , $CI = -1.7387$ to $-.7157$). No other indirect effect of anticipated judgment was observed
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7 for the other measured emotions.
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15 5.5 Discussion

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18 Study 3 provides additional support for the predicted impact of comparative choice on
19 hubristic and authentic pride in a between-subjects design in which choice was manipulated.
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23 However, feelings of authentic pride were not significantly different across green and
24 premium brands (simple comparisons). One possible account for this lack of differences is
25 that authentic pride results from internal, unstable, and controllable attributions. In this sense,
26 the experimental manipulation of participants' choices may have interfered with the
27 controllability dimension of causal attribution and thus with feelings of authentic pride. In
28 other words, by experimentally manipulating "choice, we might have reduced the degree to
29 which participants attribute having chosen the green or the premium option to factors under
30 their control, thus interfering with feelings of authentic pride. On the other hand, hubristic
31 pride might be less dependent on comparative choices since it results from attributions to
32 internal, stable, and uncontrollable factors ("I am proud of who I am").
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47 A mediation analysis showed that authentic pride was fully mediated by the
48 anticipated judgments of others. Therefore, the authentic pride stemming from the choice
49 manipulation may be explained by how favorably consumers feel that green brand choices
50 are usually evaluated by others (in comparison to premium brands). In contrast, although
51 greater hubristic pride was associated with choosing the premium rather than the green
52 option, this association was not explained by participants' anticipated judgments of others,
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3 which means that H3 was only partially supported. Such lack of mediation opens the
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5 possibility for other potential mediators of the observed relation between the manipulated
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7 choice (premium vs. green) and hubristic pride. We return to this point in the general
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9 discussion.
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13 Notably, we found no other effects of comparative choice on any of the remaining
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15 emotions. This conclusion indicates that the effects of comparative choices reported across
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17 the three studies are likely to be specific to feelings of pride and cannot be subsumed by more
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19 general explanations based on the positive effect associated with authentic pride versus the
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21 negative effect possibly associated with hubristic pride.
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27 **6. GENERAL DISCUSSION**

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32 Across three studies, this research reveals that the choice of green (vs. premium)
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34 brands leads to higher levels of authentic pride and lower levels of hubristic pride, providing
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36 supporting evidence for H1. Following the notion that public recognition is a central aspect of
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38 self-conscious emotions such as pride (e.g., Tracy & Robins, 2007a, 2007b, 2014; Webster *et*
39
40 *al.*, 2003), these results only emerged under conditions of high accountability in which
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42 consumers expected to justify their own choices publicly and fade away when decisions were
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44 made privately with no anticipated need to explain their choices to others¹, according to H2.
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49 We also found initial evidence that the anticipated judgment of others concerning
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51 one's pro-social behavior explains the relationship between green preference and authentic
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55 ¹ The manipulation of social accountability was used as a way to make the perceived scrutiny of others more
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57 salient. However, social accountability is not the same as whether the purchase decision takes place in a public
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59 context or not. In particular, consumers rarely need to justify their choices in their actual purchase decision. Future
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research should thus use other manipulations to generalize Studies 2's results (e.g., making the comparative
choices alone or in the presence of others).

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3 pride but fails to account for hubristic pride. H3 was thus only partially supported.
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5 Apparently, the explaining factors for why green (vs. premium) choices decrease hubristic
6 pride do not include the more favorable anticipated opinion of others.
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10 11 12 13 **6.1 Theoretical and Practical Implications** 14 15

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19 This research advances the current understanding of how consumers respond to
20 comparative decisions involving green brands in three ways. First, it contributes to previous
21 research investigating the identity signals associated with green behavior by suggesting that
22 self-identity associated with pro-social concerns and behavior impact feelings of authentic
23 and hubristic pride. These two facets of a self-conscious emotion play a key role in self-
24 esteem regulation.
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33 Second, previous research has shown that green consumption is associated with
34 altruistic outcomes (Ladhari & Tchebna, 2017) and that pride may influence green brands
35 (Antonetti & Maklan, 2014; Bissing-Olson *et al.*, 2016; Luchs & Kumar, 2017). We added to
36 this research by demonstrating that comparative decisions between premium and green
37 options appear to affect authentic and hubristic pride in opposite directions. These findings
38 allow for a better understanding of the role of self-conscious emotions, specifically, the two
39 facets of pride (e.g., Tracy & Robins, 2007a, 2014) in the context of green consumption.
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49 When consumers choose a green brand instead of a premium option, the consequent sense of
50 achievement attributed to controllable and unstable factors such as consumers' effort to enroll
51 in pro-environmental consumption are likely to lead to the observed higher levels of authentic
52 pride (Tracy & Robins, 2007a, 2007b, 2014). Also, by rejecting the premium option,
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3 consumers deviate from self-centered attributions associated with an inherent sense of
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5 exclusivity conveyed by these brands, which reduces hubristic pride.
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8 Third, inspired by the notion of competitive altruism (Van Vugt *et al.*, 2007) and
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10 costly signaling theory (Brooks & Wilson, 2015; McAndrew, 2019), some studies have
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12 suggested that altruistic behaviors may be used to signal one's willingness and ability to incur
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14 costs for the benefit of others (Griskevicius *et al.*, 2010; Van Vugt *et al.*, 2007). By engaging
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16 in this kind of altruistic consumption, the individual may obtain increased social status and
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18 appreciation from peers in public situations. The mediation effect of the anticipated judgment
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20 of others on the impact of green brands on authentic (but not hubristic) pride agrees with such
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22 a possibility.
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27 Finally, we extended previous findings regarding comparative decisions and how
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29 consumers respond to trade-offs between sustainability and other valued attributes (Juhl *et*
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31 *al.*, 2017; Luchs & Kumar, 2017) by demonstrating that both green and premium choices
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33 have a positive influence on consumers' emotional reactions, although they go in different
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35 directions.
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39 Our findings also provide some practical implications that could help brand managers
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41 to increase consumers' preference for green consumption. For instance, green brands should
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43 benefit if they are positioned in contrast to premium options. It is not uncommon for
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45 consumers to face trade-offs between a green brand and other competing options (e.g.,
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47 organic versus premium cookies). In these comparative decisions, premium brands appear as
48
49 a strong anchor that may influence choices because their prices are similar to green options.
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51 For instance, AMMA Chocolates is a Brazilian green brand of chocolate bars that have a
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53 price similar to the Swiss premium brand Lindt. Also, Patagonia (a green brand) and The
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55 North Face (a premium brand) offer winter jackets of similar style and price.
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3 Although past research shows that some green attributes may generate a negative
4 costly signal (Hoogendoorn *et al.*, 2019), our study shows that the anticipated judgments
5 related to the green preference may increase authentic pride. Therefore, managers of green
6 brands can communicate “green pride” as a way to motivate consumers to choose green
7 brands over premium ones.
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14 15 16 17 18 **6.2 Limitations and Future Research** 19

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23 This research focused on investigating the impact of comparative choice between
24 green and premium brands. However, in many situations, the comparison is not as clear-cut
25 as it may seem. For instance, some premium brands also have green attributes, which might
26 be secondary but are nonetheless still present, fulfilling a pro-environment role (e.g., some
27 sustainable luxury brands). There are also situations in which sustainable brands are not as
28 expensive as their premium counterparts (e.g., handbags made of eco-leather). This aspect
29 limits the degree to which our results may be generalized. It is an open question for future
30 research to explore how these central versus secondary attributes will interact and influence
31 consumers’ preferences and emotions.
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44 Another limitation is that all studies were based on a single decision-making (i.e.,
45 participants made just one comparative decision). A valuable avenue for future research
46 would be to investigate how sequential choices impact self-conscious emotions such as pride.
47 Longitudinal studies are needed to explore how these emotions evolve (e.g., the intensity of
48 both facets of pride) over time. Such an approach – in many ways closer to real-life
49 consumption – could bring new insights concerning the role of self-conscious emotions as
50 decisions unfold.
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3 Finally, the artificial setting of the experiments is a potential limitation of this
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5 research, as well as the fact that student samples were used in Studies 1 and 2. Future studies
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7 outside a lab and with a more heterogeneous sample are essential to test the consistency of
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9 our findings.
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15 **7. Conclusion**

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21 Understanding consumer responses in comparative choices is of great interest because
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23 the trade-offs during the choice process highlight the identity signals associated with green
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25 versus premium preferences. The current research contributes to a novel perspective on how
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27 comparative choices between green and premium brands can differentially impact the
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29 feelings of authentic and hubristic pride in different ways and with different motivational
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31 consequences.
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Marketing Intelligence and Planning

APPENDIX

Appendix A. Brand Features by Study

Study 1 – Scenario (Green-Premium)	
<i>Green Chocolate</i>	<i>Premium Chocolate</i>
Brand: Kokoa (US\$ 10)	Brand: Thierry (US\$ 10)
100% organic grains	Taste and exclusivity
Fairtrade certificate	High quality selected grains
Respect environmental standards	Type Gourmet-premium
Unique texture and taste	Fine and exclusive ingredients
75% cocoa	Unique texture and taste
Pack with 50 bonbons	75% cocoa
	Pack with 50 bonbons
Study 2 – Scenario (Green-Premium)	
<i>Green Jacket</i>	<i>Premium Jacket</i>
Brand: Ecolife (US\$50)	Brand: Inlive (US\$50)
Ultra-soft waterproof recycled nylon satin	Distinct design, body adjustable
Thermogreen padded (92% recycled)	Special padding
Total absence of animal source	Limited edition
Fewer chemicals and wastewater treatment	Exclusive buckles and straps
Fairtrade certificate	Strategic utilitarian compartments
Super resistant	High technology fabric and seam-sealed
	Super resistant
Study 3 – Scenario (Green-Premium)	
<i>Green Jacket</i>	<i>Premium Jacket</i>
Brand: Ecolife (US\$219)	Brand: Toplive (US\$219)
Green nylon satin (100% recycled)	Posh design
Padded with Thermogreen insulation (92% recycled polyester)	Special padded seam-sealed insulation
Vegan-friendly & Cruelty-free	Limited collection
Fairtrade resistant	Unique zippers and clasps
	High-tech fabric
	Water-resistant

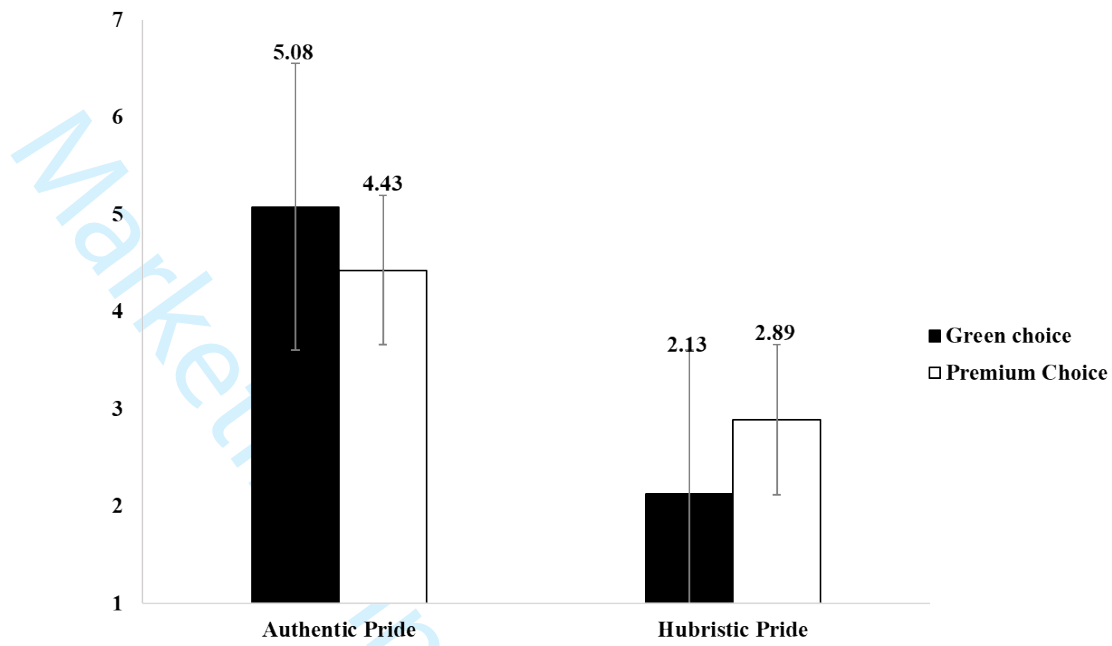


Figure 1. Authentic and Hubristic Pride as a function of comparative choice (Study 1)

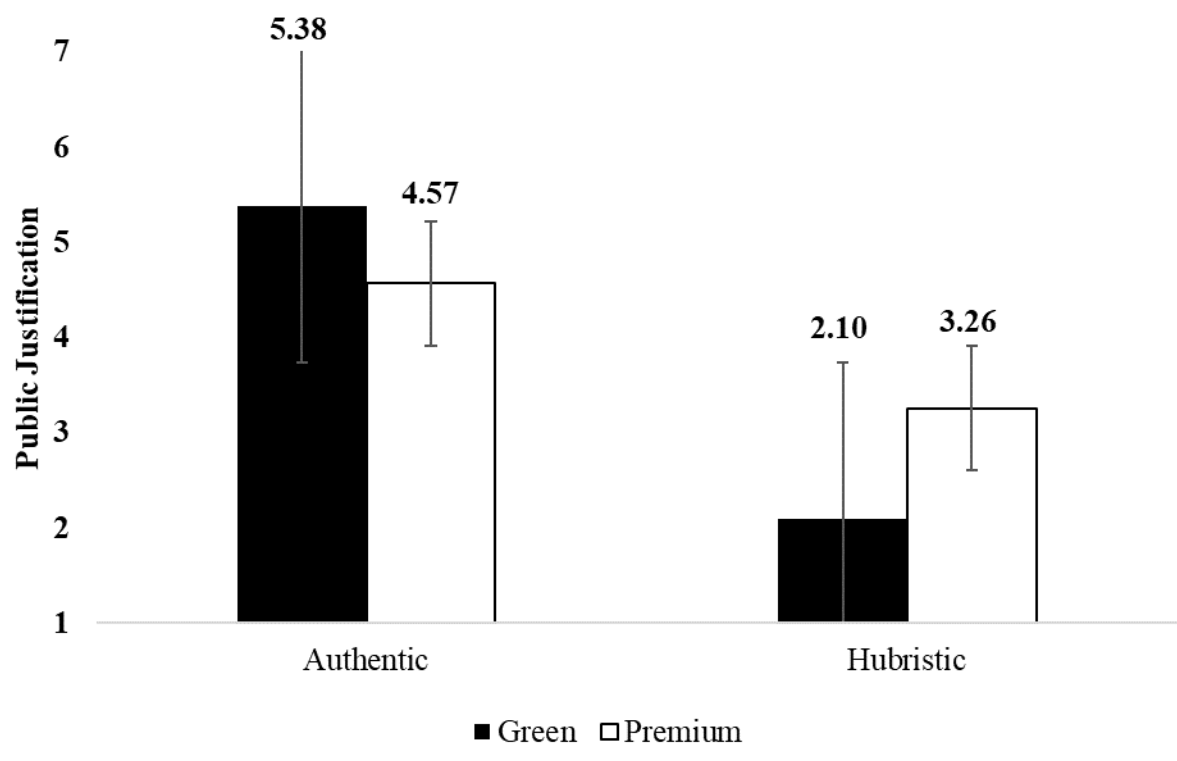


Figure 2. Public Justification: Authentic and Hubristic pride and comparative choice (Study 2)

Brand Planning

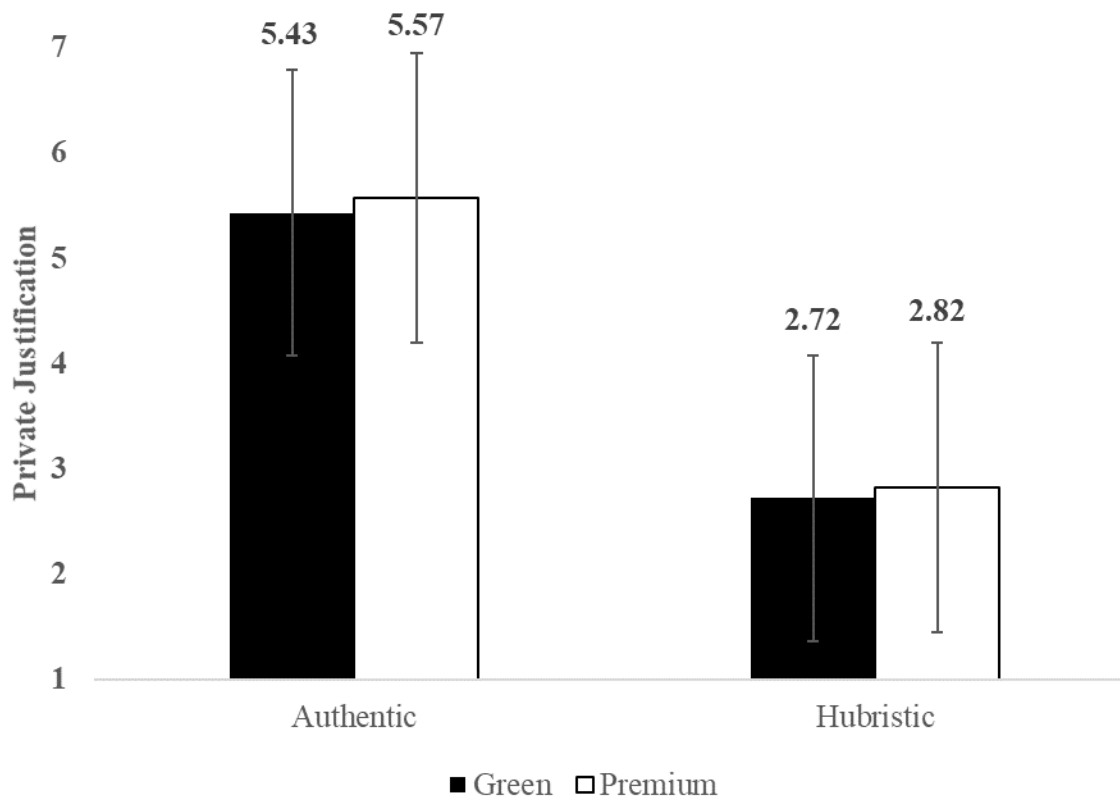


Figure 3. Private Justification: Authentic and Hubristic pride and comparative choice (Study 2)