

RE-EXAMINATION AND EXTENSION OF KLEINE, KLEINE, AND KERNAN'S SOCIAL IDENTITY MODEL OF MUNDANE CONSUMPTION: THE MEDIATING ROLE OF THE APPRAISAL PROCESS*

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ABSTRACT

Solomon (1983) proposed that products, as social stimuli, influence reflected appraisals. Appraisals, in turn, influence self-definition. Kleine, Kleine, and Kernan (1993, Study 2) empirically supported Solomon's hypothesis. Appraisals were found to completely mediate the relationship between possessions and self-definition. Appraisals are thus an essential link between possession sets and individuals' self-definitions. The current study extends the Kleine et al. model in two important ways. First, we combined insights from identity theory, appraisal theory, and the sociology of emotions literatures to offer a more precise and comprehensive conceptualization of the appraisal process that includes both cognitive and emotional components. The conceptualization distinguishes appraisals of possessions from appraisals of performance and reflected versus self appraisals. Second, symbolic interactionist theory suggests that social interactions and media are social communication discourses that, like possessions, influence self definitions via appraisals. The extended model incorporates these possibilities. Data collected from individuals with an identity based on one of two freely-chosen athletic activities provides encouraging support for the extended model. The result pattern provides insights into how appraisals mediate the relationship between social communication discourses and self-definition.

Kleine, Kleine, and Kernan (1993)* proposed and tested a model based on symbolic

interactionist identity theory that pinpoints self-definition as the organizing construct through which ordinary consumption activities can be understood. Their two studies suggest that people use different product constellations to enact each of their role-identities (tennis player, bird watcher) and that those products relate only indirectly to global self-definition. Kleine et al.'s study two showed that the extent to which a role-identity defines a person depends upon three enabling factors (accumulated possessions, social connections, and media related to the particular role-identity) and esteem. In contrast to the generally assumed direct relationship between people and products ("I am what I have"), the results supported theoretical assertions (Rosenberg 1981; Solomon 1983) that products stimulate reflexive self-evaluations leading to self-definitions. Appraisal is investigated here in greater depth because it is as

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an important mediator between consumption and self-definition.

The present study contributes the following: One, to test the robustness of Kleine et al.'s findings, it re-examines the influence of identity-related social connections, possessions, and media on identity importance. Two, we theoretically and empirically extend Kleine et al., and the appraisal literature, by explicating the appraisal mechanism as a multi-faceted, cognitive-emotive process. Kleine, et al. modeled appraisal simply as a single, cognitive variable. Also, the dual cognitive-emotive appraisal mechanism is examined here in the nomological context of its self-related antecedents and consequences. Third, the study extends Kleine et al. by showing that identity-related social connections and media, as well as possessions, influence self-definition through the appraisal mechanism. Fourth, to test the extended model (Figure 1), we used a sample of adults in the construction or maintenance stages of enacting one of two freely chosen athletic activities. This generalizes the nomological relations beyond Kleine et al.'s sample of students enacting a variety of athletic activities. Overall, the study enhances understanding of how and when consumption and its artifacts impact self-definition, yielding more precise answers to questions such as, "how do products make the person?"

THEORY AND PROPOSED MODEL

Kleine et al.'s (1993) model concerns the consumption-related origins of stable self-definitions. That is, the model (Figure 1) examines how self-definitions arise from a person's accumulated artifacts and historical consumption patterns. Individuals are assumed to have some history enacting an identity. This framework does not address how the situational self-concept guides product choice or use (e.g., Aaker 1999). The model's unit of analysis is a role-identity, not the entire self-concept. Role-identities are "reflexively applied cognitions in the form of answers to the question 'Whom am I?'" answered in terms of the roles one enacts (Stryker and Serpe 1982, p. 206). Role identities are temporally enduring self-definitions. The global self-concept (and therefore consumption)

is partitioned by the role-identities that comprise the self (Rosenberg 1981). For example, it is useful to study how a person's tennis related possessions impact views of herself as a tennis player, not her entire self-concept (Kleine et al. 1993).

Role-identities vary in their importance to the global self. Identity importance (salience in Kleine et al. 1993) is the significance of a role-identity to the overall self-concept, or extent of role-person merger (Hoelter 1983; Stryker and Serpe 1982; Turner 1978). Importance is the single most important predictor of sustained role-related behaviors (Stryker and Serpe 1982; Piliavin and Callero 1991).

What leads to higher identity importance? Identity theory emphasizes how self-definition arises from using or contemplating artifacts, symbols, and behaviors enacted or accumulated during past identity related activities. These behaviors, artifacts, and symbols are investments of finite time and resources that represent one's accumulated commitment to the domain (Becker 1960). Commitments symbolically and instrumentally enable and constrain identity enactment (Solomon 1983) and provide physical evidence of who we are (Kleine et al. 1995). While reciprocal relations of self-definition on commitments is a theoretical possibility (Rosenberg 1981), empirical studies, including longitudinal efforts (e.g., Calsyn and Kenny 1977; Piliavin and Callero 1991; Serpe 1987), consistently find the effect of commitment on self-definition is greater than the effect of self-definition on commitment.

Self-perception theory (Bem 1972) posits that self-definitions arise through contemplating the relative frequency of one's past identity relevant behavioral choices. This is consistent with the symbolic interactionist view that self-definition derives not from the larger social structure, but from micro-structural social communication discourses with which an individual has direct and recurring contact (Rosenberg 1981, p. 605; Shibutani 1962; Solomon 1983). Hence, the greater one's commitments within a behavioral domain, the more one perceives it is an important part of who they are.

Social commitment is the extent of a

person's interpersonal network premised on a role-identity. Kleine et al. (1993) replicated prior studies that show greater social commitment extensiveness predicts identity importance (Hoelter 1983; Piliavin and Callero 1991; Serpe 1987; Stryker and Serpe 1982). Social relationships individuals form during their identity career, especially if numerous, fuel self-attributions of identity importance (Becker 1960). Hence, greater social commitment predicts greater identity importance (see Figure 1).

Following Shibutani (1962), Kleine et al. (1993) proposed that media is another communication discourse domain that has self-definitional implications. Media commitment is defined as the degree to which an individual has consumed media perceived as identity-relevant (e.g., magazines, television programs, books, newspapers, videos, and so forth). A history of consuming identity relevant media enables the identity and provides behavioral evidence that informs self-attributions about identity importance. Kleine, et al. found that greater media commitments predicted higher identity importance.

Possessions, as social symbols, also influence self-definition (Solomon 1983). Possession commitment is the degree to which a person possesses a set of material objects perceived as identity-related. Identity-related possessions provide autobiographical reflections that form after acquisition, not before (Kleine, Kleine, and Allen 1995). Kleine et al. (1993) found no empirical support for a direct effect of possession commitments on self-attributions of identity importance. Possessions influenced identity importance through esteem. Possessions influenced self-definition because they affected the person's identity-related self-evaluation.

Model Extensions: The Multi-Faceted Cognitive-Emotive Appraisal Process

Appraisals. Appraisal (identity esteem) is a key explanatory mechanism in symbolic interactionist theory (Rosenberg 1981; Solomon 1983; Stryker 1980). Appraisal is an individual's evaluation of her identity performance. Appraisals result from a self-attribution process through which one interprets identity relevant

behavioral history (Rosenberg 1981). The social communication discourses, perceived as Gestalts, thus provide behavioral cues that are interpreted through a self perception process to yield conclusions about identity efficacy. In this way, greater commitment to an identity yields more favorable appraisal. The self-enhancement motive -- i.e., that we are motivated to think well of ourselves -- suggests a perceptual filter that yields positively biased appraisal (Aaker 1999; Rosenberg 1981).

Despite this theorizing, empirical modeling has examined appraisal as an independent predictor of identity importance, not as a mediator (Hoelter 1983). Kleine et al.'s (1993) results supported Solomon's (1983) proposition that possessions affect appraisals and that appraisals affect self-definition. Here we re-examine this relationship. Identity related interpersonal relationships (Rosenberg 1981) and media (Shibutani 1962) also provide cues from which appraisals are derived. We extend the Kleine et al. (1993) model to specify all three social communication discourses as predictors of appraisals.

Reflected appraisal (RA) is a person's perception of how the people, with whom the person has interacted evaluates him with respect to a particular identity (Rosenberg 1981). Reflected appraisal does not require the presence of others and can be based on real or imagined feedback (Mead 1934; Shott 1979). Theorists include a second kind of appraisal (Felson 1985; Franks and Gecas 1992). Self appraisal (SA) is a person's independent, personal evaluation of his identity related actions, especially applicable to freely chosen identities. Empirical findings show self and reflected appraisals are distinct constructs and that reflected appraisals inform self appraisals (e.g., Felson 1985).

Possessions (having; Rosenberg 1981; Solomon 1983) and performance (doing) are distinct domains that can be appraised. Each can be manipulated independently to influence appraisals (Wicklund and Gollwitzer 1982). Performance and possession appraisals may have distinct nomological effects. Four kinds of appraisals result: RA performance, RA possessions, SA performance, and SA possessions.

Emotions in the Appraisal Process.

Appraisals are the most proximal cognitive antecedent of emotion (Smith and Ellsworth 1985; Smith, et al. 1993). Thus, appraisals predict role-taking emotions that, in turn, predict identity importance. The role-taking emotions of pride and shame are social facilitators that regulate normative behavior (Rosenberg 1981; Shott 1979). Pride tells a person she is competent at an identity and stands well with others whose opinions she values (Scheff 1991). Shame stems from the perception that the self is inadequate, in the eyes of others or in one's own view (Shott 1979). Whereas pride confirms an identity, leading to greater identity importance, shame disconfirms the identity and reduces identity importance (Heise 1979).

We propose four role-taking emotions: pride in possessions, shame in possessions, pride in performance, and shame in performance. People give more prominence to identities for which the associated overall emotional tone is prideful (Hoelter 1983). The proposed model applies to individuals who have a history of enacting a freely chosen identity, so we expect pride and shame to covary, but that pride will have a greater effect than shame on identity importance.

METHODOLOGY

Sample and Procedures

The proposed model was tested using two samples of individuals in the construction or maintenance stages of enacting one of two freely chosen identities: aerobics participant and tennis player. Study packets were distributed to aerobics and tennis participants recruited at facilities, located in a large Southwestern metro area. Each site was visited multiple times over a period of several weeks. Ninety nine percent of those offered a study packet accepted. Each packet included a cover letter, a self-administered questionnaire, a postage-paid return envelope, and a raffle entry form as an incentive to participate. Participants completed the packet at home.

We distributed 468 study packets to

tennis players at private and municipal tennis facilities. Players were sampled from introductory lessons, club and city leagues, and tournaments. Tennis players returned 318 surveys (a 68 percent response rate); 213 contained data on all measures needed for analysis. Respondents varied from 16 to 77 years old (\bar{x} = 37 years, s.d. = 11.7), sixty percent were male, had played tennis for as little as one month up to 60 years (\bar{x} = 10.7 years, s.d. = 9.2), played tennis about twice a week, and own an average of 50 (s.d. = 16.2) identity-related possessions.

For the aerobics sample, we distributed 491 study packets at introductory, intermediate, and advanced level aerobics classes. Of the 359 surveys returned (a 73 percent response rate), 329 had data on all measures. Respondents ranged in age from 21 to 66 years (\bar{x} = 35, s.d. = 9.7), 83 percent were female, took aerobics classes about twice a week, had pursued aerobics for 10.5 years on average (s.d. = 8.8; range from one month to 32 years), and owned an average of 33 (s.d. = 11.2) aerobics related possessions.

Construct Measures

The commitment and identity importance measures replicate Kleine et al. (1993). The emotion and appraisal measures are new to this study. Identical measures were used across the two contexts. Directions and prompts reflected the respective identity.

Social, media, and possession commitment was operationalized via the extensiveness dimension (Hoelter 1983 Serpe 1987; Shrum, Wyer, and O'Guinn 1998; Stryker and Serpe 1982). To indicate social commitments respondents reported "people you know on a first name basis from playing tennis." Number of people listed indicates degree of social commitment (Serpe 1987). The sum of "things that you personally have because you play tennis" indicates possession commitment. The sum of "any magazines, TV shows, videos, etc., that you pay attention to because they are related to tennis." indicates media commitment. These measures were in separate sections of the questionnaire. To correct non-normality, a log transform was applied to each commitment

indicator.

A multi-indicator measure for the four appraisal types was validated via a series of pretests. The indicators were: notable/ordinary, excellent/poor, spectacular/terrible, each assessed by a 7-point bipolar scale. A higher number indicates more favorable appraisals. Prompts were varied for each appraisal type. For reflected appraisals (RA) of possessions (RA of performance) respondents were asked to “think about the comments that other people make about your tennis equipment (performance). Use the adjective pairs below to describe what other people that you play tennis with say about your products (performance).” This prompt elicited self appraisals (SA): “think of the standards you personally use to evaluate your possessions (performance). Keeping those standards in mind, use the adjective pairs below to rate your possessions (performance).” Indicators for the appraisal types were on separate questionnaire pages, separated by one or more pages of other measures.

Pride in possessions and pride in performance were each measured by a 3-item scale validated in a consumption context (Laverie, Kleine, and Kleine 1993). The pride indicators are: self-esteem, self-regard, and pride. For shame: humiliated, embarrassed, and ashamed, rated on a 7-point Likert scale from “very much so” (scored 7) to “not at all” (scored 1). This prompt elicited the possession related emotions: “How do you feel about the products that you use for tennis? The products I use for tennis make me feel . . .” The emotion indicators followed. After being prompted to think about their tennis performance, participants reacted to: “When I think of myself as a tennis player I feel . . .” followed by the emotion indicators. Several pages separated these measures.

Identity importance was measured with a three-item version of Callero’s measure (e.g., Callero 1985). Respondents reported “how important tennis is to you” on these items: “Playing tennis is something I rarely even think about” (reverse scored), “Tennis is an important part of who I am,” and “I don’t really have any clear feelings about tennis” (reverse scored). A 7-point “strongly agree” (scored 7) to “strongly disagree” (scored 1) scale was used.

ANALYSIS

Equality of the two variance-covariance matrices was tested with LISREL 8.30 (Jöreskog and Sörbom 1989, pp. 255-260). The null hypothesis that the two variance-covariance matrices are identical cannot be rejected ($\chi^2 = 237.76$, $df=465$, $p = 1.00$). All subsequent analyses use the pooled data ($n=542$).

A measurement model was fit to the data that included the three single indicator commitment constructs and the nine multiple-indicator constructs: four appraisal constructs, four emotions, and identity importance. Each indicator was evaluated exclusively in terms of how well it reflects the factor representing the underlying construct to which it was assigned *a priori*. The variance of each factor was fixed at 1.0. Factor loadings and residuals were freely estimated for multiple-indicator constructs. The reliability of each single-indicator commitment construct was fixed at $\alpha = .95$. All latent factors were allowed to covary. The covariances between all residuals were fixed at zero.

The measurement model, estimated with maximum likelihood estimation, fit the aerobics data well (see Table 1, Model 0). The residuals were normally distributed. All parameter estimates had the expected sign and were within permissible range. All factor loadings were statistically significant and item reliabilities (r^2) all exceeded 0.52.

Discriminant validity is evident when a latent factor extracts more variance from its indicators ($\rho_{vc(\eta)}$) than it shares with other constructs (i.e., internal consistency must exceed external consistency; Fornell and Larcker 1981, p. 46). Application of this criterion revealed acceptable levels of discriminant validity among all construct pairs.

Common method variance was a concern because identically-worded indicators were used to indicate several of the constructs. To test for this, we allowed covariances among the residuals of identically-worded items. Although this respecification yielded a statistically significant improvement in overall fit, common method variance had minimal effect on the inter-factor correlations ($\Delta r \leq .01$). The effects of common method variance can be

ignored without posing serious threats to statistical conclusion validity.

Overall fit of the *a priori* model was, as expected, considerably worse than that of the baseline CFA (Table 1; Model 1a). All parameter estimates were reasonable and had the expected direction. The residual distribution was well behaved. The addition of a covariance between RA of possessions and RA of performance improved overall model fit (Table 1; Model 1b). Removing the eight nonsignificant paths yields a significant change in chi-square suggesting mild multicollinearity among the constructs. As parameter estimates are necessary to demonstrate their non-significance, we now interpret the parameters obtained when estimating Model 1b (Table 2). Figure 2 depicts the statistically significant paths in this final model.

Findings

Identity importance. More media commitment ($b = .17, t = 3.33, p < .01$), possession commitment ($b = .13, t = 2.76, p < .01$), and performance pride ($b = .48, t = 5.31, p < .01$) directly enhance identity importance. Performance shame ($b = .10, t = 1.16, p > .01$), possession shame ($b = -.10, t = -1.16, p > .01$), and possession pride ($b = .18, t = 1.97, p > .01$) do not directly effect identity importance. In contrast to Kleine et al. (1993), the direct effect of possession commitment on identity importance is significant ($b = .12, t = 2.76, p < .01$). The significant indirect effect of possessions on identity importance ($IE = .10, t = 4.86, p < .01$) replicates the finding that possessions affect importance through the appraisal process. (Tables of total and indirect effects are available from the first author.)

Pride and Shame. Possession pride is enhanced by more favorable RA possessions ($b = .37, t = 8.34, p < .01$) and SA possessions ($b = .34, t = 7.59, p < .01$). Possession shame is decreased by more favorable SA possessions ($b = -.21, t = -4.49, p < .01$) and RA possessions ($b = -.23, t = -4.49, p < .01$). The path from RA possessions to SA possessions ($b = .31, t = 6.16, p < .01$) allows RA possessions to have indirect

effects on possession pride and possession shame.

Performance pride is enhanced by more favorable RA performance ($b = .45, t = 4.28, p < .01$) and SA performance ($b = .23, t = 2.27, p < .01$). RA performance indirectly effects performance pride via SA performance ($b = .90, t = 16.72, p < .01$). More favorable RA performance ($b = -.44, t = -3.44, p < .01$) lowers shame in performance.

Appraisals. Possession commitment ($b = .21, t = 4.20, p < .01$), social commitment ($b = .12, t = 2.59, p < .01$), and media commitment ($b = .15, t = 3.20, p < .01$) predict more favorable RA possessions.

SA possessions becomes more favorable with greater possession commitment ($b = .22, t = 4.37, p < .01$) and media commitment ($b = .22, t = 4.73, p < .01$). In addition, RA possessions enhances SA possessions ($b = .31, t = 6.16, p < .01$). Social commitment does not have a significant direct effect on SA possessions ($b = 0.01, t = 0.14, p > .01$).

RA performance becomes more favorable with increases in social ($b = .12, t = 2.95, p < .01$), media ($b = .18, t = 4.44, p < .01$), and possession commitment ($b = .12, t = 3.46, p < .01$). Greater social and media commitment affords the individual access to more behavioral evidence from which to form appraisals.

SA performance has but one predictor: RA performance ($b = .89, t = 16.72, p < .01$). A person's answer to the question "How am I doing?" builds on their perception of how others appraise their performance.

Relative Contributions of Appraisals, Emotions, Possessions, People, and Media

Media and possession commitments have significant direct effects on identity importance. Forty percent of media's total effect on importance flows through the appraisal process ($IE = .10, t = 5.31, p < .01$), reinforcing other findings (e.g., Richins 1991). The appraisal process mediates 45 percent of the possession commitment total effect. Social commitment has a significant indirect effect on importance ($IE = .07, t = 3.39, p < .01$; Table 2).

The appraisal process is thus fundamental to understanding how identity importance arises from social communication social discourses. Examining total effects of the three commitment variables on importance, the effects of media (TE = .23, $t = 5.38$, $p < .01$) and possessions (TE = .22, $t = 4.64$, $p < .01$) exceed the total effect of social commitment (TE = .11, $t = 2.41$, $p < .01$).

Reflected vs. self appraisals. The total effect of RA performance on performance pride (TE = .66, $t = 14.02$, $p < .01$) and performance shame (TE = -.39, $t = -8.13$, $p < .01$) exceeds the total effects of SA performance on performance pride (TE = .23, $t = 2.53$, $p < .01$) and performance shame (TE = -.06, $t = -.26$, $p > .01$). RA's total effect on pride and shame exceeds SA's.

Of the four appraisal constructs, RA performance has the largest total effect on importance (TE = .28, $t = 6.49$, $p < .01$). The total effects of RA possessions (TE = .11, $t = 3.97$, $p < .01$), SA performance (TE = .11, $t = 2.33$, $p < .01$) and SA possessions (TE = .08, $t = 3.88$, $p < .01$), are similar and smaller. RA has a greater effect on identity importance than does SA. Summing the total effects, performance appraisals (TE = .30) have a greater effect on importance than do possession appraisals (TE = .19).

Total effects on identity importance. Performance pride has the largest total effect on identity importance (TE = .44); a total effect larger ($p < .01$) than all other total effects. The total effects of RA performance (TE = .28) and media (TE = .23), and possessions (TE = .22) form second tier effects that are larger than the total effects for social commitment (TE = .11), RA possessions (TE = .11), and SA possessions (TE = .08). For this sample, doing has a greater effect on identity importance than does having.

Causality

This analysis, and our cross sectional data, does not establish causality. Are the commitment variables cues that precipitate attributions of evaluation and self-definition, or are the commitments self expressive

consequences of a self-definition? Symbolic interactionist theory construes the relationship between behavioral commitments and self-definition as reflexive. Prior empirical work consistently shows that the effect of accumulated behavioral commitments on self-definition exceeds the effect of self-definition on behavior (e.g., Calsyn and Kenny 1977; Piliavin, and Callero 1991; Serpe 1987). Thus, we examined three additional models to explore alternate causal orders. Using identity importance as the exogenous variable and the commitment variables as the ultimate dependents produced a significant reduction in model fit (see Table 1, Model 2). The residual and modification index patterns revealed structural misspecification with the emotions wanting to have effects on importance and the commitments wanting to have effects on the appraisals. Next, a self-expression model was specified by making the commitment constructs consequences of identity importance. This model also fit worse (Table 1, Model 3). A model with the commitments specified as mediators between the emotions and importance also displayed degraded fit (Table 1, Model 4). Residual and modification indices revealed structural misspecification in both of these models. Although these analyses do not prove causality, they offer encouraging empirical evidence that supports the causal ordering of constructs in our model.

DISCUSSION

Kleine et al. (1993; study 2) proposed and tested a model based on symbolic interactionist identity theory that illuminates how products, media, and social acquaintances accumulated through the course of an identity career contribute to self-definition. That study offered empirical support for the theoretical proposition that appraisal is a key mediator between possessions and self-definition (Solomon 1983). The current study extends Kleine et al.'s (1993) theory in two important ways. First, identity related possessions, media, and social acquaintances are specified as antecedents of appraisal, in addition to their direct effects on identity importance. These

variables form social discourses that enable the identity and provide evidence of historical identity enactment used to form self-attributions of identity efficacy and identity importance. Second, the appraisal process is theoretically developed as a dual cognitive-emotive process. This expanded theoretical development construes appraisal of identity performance (doing) and identity possessions (having) as distinct constructs.

Our results reinforce, clarify, and extend Kleine, et al's (1993) findings. All three social communication discourses evidence statistically significant indirect effects on identity importance. This provides encouraging empirical support for the central role of the appraisal process in linking consumption and self-definition. Generally, appraisals are predicted by each of the three social discourse variables; the variables provide cues for positively biased self-perceptions of self-in-role. Extending Kleine, et al. (1993), we found that not just possessions, but also social ties and media usage lead to more positive self-evaluations. The results replicated the finding that possessions influence self via appraisal, confirming Solomon's (1983) proposition about the centrality of appraisal for understanding the product-self link. Replicating Kleine, et al. (1993), media had a direct effect on self-definition.

Two social discourse effects differ from Kleine et al. (1993). First, possessions evidence a statistically significant direct effect on identity importance. Model differences may account for this variation. Kleine et al.'s (1993) model included frequency of identity related behavior as a consequence of identity importance. When the present data were modeled with behavior frequency included, the direct effect of possessions on identity importance was not statistically significant. Second, with social commitment allowed to indirectly effect identity importance via the appraisal process, its direct effect becomes non-significant.

The focus of the present study was on the appraisal mechanism. Building on the appraisal and social emotions literatures, we modeled the appraisal mechanism more comprehensively than before. We believe this is the first study to empirically demonstrate

distinct effects of possessions and performance appraisals on self definition. Each appraisal uniquely influenced importance, but doing (performance appraisal) had greater influence than having (possession appraisal) on identity importance, based on the total effect analysis. Also, both reflected and self appraisal explained unique variance in identity importance (via emotions). However, reflected appraisals influenced self-definition more than did self-appraisal. This confirms one of identity theory's main premises: that self-definitions are dependent upon what we perceive other people think. It also confirms the value of modeling both types of appraisal. People process self-appraisal information and form self-evaluations in a manner that is independent of others' opinions. We are not entirely what others tell us we are, yet our perceptions of what others signal about our activity performances and possessions carries greater weight on self-definition than our own private self-evaluations, at least in the contexts studied here.

We also expected that pride would have more influence than shame. Only pride in performance had a direct effect on identity importance. In the sampled contexts, shame may be insignificant or social desirability responding may have led to its under-reporting. Also, multicollinearity among the emotion constructs is a possibility. However, a low variance inflation factor (less than 10) obtained via SAS's PROC REG suggests limited multicollinearity effects.

Generalizability and Future Research

Our respondents were actively engaged in their chosen athletic activities. The effects of global appraisal and social commitments on identity importance have been demonstrated reliably across a wide spectrum of achieved identities (e.g., friend, blood donor, student, athletic identities). The model's relationships probably translate to other freely chosen identities, but may differ in non-voluntary contexts, or for individuals not actively engaged in or disengaging from an activity. Replication studies are necessary to assess robustness of the relationship.

To minimize possible consistency bias effects, similar measures were separated by other measures, some by several pages. Question prompts made identity schemas accessible, decreasing the likelihood that respondents used prior responses to answer subsequent questions. If significant consistency bias were present, the CFA would not have shown discrimination among all construct pairs. Also, the common method variance analysis suggests that exogenous method factors have minimal effect on inter-construct relations. The probability is low that self-consistency bias explains the results. See also Kleine et al.'s (1993) discussion of self-generated validity.

Explicit testing of alternate causal ordering would be possible with method designs that allow temporal ordering of cause and effect variables. Research should also explore model applicability to ascribed or non-athletic, freely chosen consumption related identities. Role-identity self-schemas (Kleine et al. 1993) offer another promising avenue for understanding the identity-consumption link. It would be interesting to explore moderators of the model relationships such as individual differences. For example, self-monitoring (Aaker 1999) may influence the weight individuals place on reflected (as opposed to self) appraisals. Also, a person's separation from identity supporting social discourses has interesting implications for identity disposition, product disposition, and undesirable consumption patterns.

The study extends our understanding of the appraisal process and its central role in mediating the relationship between consumption history and self-definition. A role-identity is more important to self-definition when more opportunities exist to enact and receive feedback from others (social commitments), more identity-relevant possessions and resources (media) are available to enact the identity well, and more positive and self-enhancing feedback is experienced. More identity enabling resources (social ties, possession, media) enhance one's prowess at effective behavior. The results support Solomon's proposition that these effects flow through the appraisal process and highlights the importance of an independent appraisal mechanism. That is, possessions influence self-definition because they influence

the how people evaluate themselves in their own eyes, and how others evaluate them. The results also confirm the common sense idea that self-esteem flows from one's ability and opportunity to enact identity behaviors; that possessions and the social ties and media one engages to consume lead to esteem enhancement and subsequent self-definitions. Possessions are linked to the self, not because they fit a person's image, but because they enable self-cultivation.

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TABLE 1

ESTIMATION OF STRUCTURAL MODEL: MODIFICATION HISTORY

Model #	Model Estimated or Path(s) Added	Chi-Squared	df	RMSEA	NNFI	CFI	ECVI	Chi-Squared Change*	df change
0	Baseline measurement model ^a	1187.3	342	.067	.90	.92	2.65	--	--
1a	A priori structural model	1541.6	370	.073	.87	.89	3.04	324.25	28
1b	Allow Reflected Appraisals Possessions and Reflected Appraisals Performance to covary	1397.3	369	.070	.89	.91	2.88	144.31	1
1c	All nonsignificant rows removed	1422.1	377	.070	.89	.90	2.90	24.76	8
2	Identity importance → appraisals → emotions → commitments	1606.5	373	.077	.87	.89	3.29	208.3	4
3	A self expression model: appraisals → emotions → identity importance → commitments	1523.3	384	.073	.88	.90	3.10	126	15
4	Appraisals → emotions → commitments → identity importance	1692.4	376	.080	.86	.88	3.48	295.1	7

NOTES: * All Chi-squared statistics are statistically significant at $p < .01$. RMSEA is the Root Mean Square Error of Approximation. NNFI is the Non Normed Fit Index (or Tucker-Lewis Index, your choice). CFI is the Comparative Fit Index. ECVI is the Expected Cross Validation Index.

^aDenoates a CFA model that includes all multi- and single-indicator constructs. The reliability of each single indicator construct was fixed at $\alpha=.95$.

TABLE 2

**MAXIMUM-LIKELIHOOD STANDARDIZED AND UNSTANDARDIZED PARAMETER
ESTIMATES AND STANDARD ERRORS**

Path Coefficients			
Dependent variable with predictors beneath	Parameter Estimates		Standard error
	Completely standardized	Unstandardized	
Reflected Appraisal Possessions ($r^2=.12$) ^c			
Possessions	.21*	.20	.05
Social Commitment	.12*	.12	.05
Media	.15*	.14	.04
Self Appraisal Possessions ($r^2=.29$)			
Possessions	.22*	.20	.05
Social Commitment	.01	.01	.04
Media	.22*	.20	.04
Reflected Appraisals Possessions	.31*	.29	.05
Reflected Appraisal Performance ($r^2=.19$)			
Possessions	.17*	.15	.04
Social Commitment	.19*	.17	.04
Media	.26*	.23	.04
Self Appraisal Performance ($r^2=.80$)			
Possessions	.06	.09	.04
Social Commitment.	-.04	-.05	.04
Media	-.06	-.07	.04
Reflected Appraisals Performance	.90*	1.17	.07
Pride Possessions ($r^2=.35$)			
Reflected appraisal possessions	.37*	.42	.05
Self appraisal possessions	.34*	.40	.05
Shame Possessions ($r^2=.14$)			
Reflected appraisal possessions	-.21*	-.19	.04
Self appraisal possessions	-.23*	-.21	.04
Pride Performance ($r^2=.45$)			
Reflected appraisal performance	.45*	.47	0.11
Self appraisal performance	.23*	.18	0.08
Shame Performance ($r^2=.15$)			
Reflected appraisal performance	-.44*	-.35	.10
Self appraisal performance	.06	.04	.07
Identity Importance ($r^2=.50$)			
Pride possessions	.18	.15	.08
Shame possessions	-.10	-.11	.10
Pride performance	.48*	.48	.09
Shame performance	.10	.13	.11
Possessions	.12	.11	.04

Social Commitment	.04	.04	.04
Media Commitment	.13*	.13	.04

Factor Loadings

Construct and indicators	Standardized	Unstandardized	Standard Error
Social Discourse Antecedents			
Identity Related Possessions	.97	.29 ^a	.01
Identity Related Social Commitment	.98	.24 ^a	.01
Identity Related Media Commitment	.98	1.25 ^a	.04
Appraisals			
Reflected Appraisal Possessions ($\rho_{vc(\eta)} = .87$) ^d			
Notable/Ordinary	.77	1.00 ^b	–
Excellent/Poor	.91	1.07	.05
Spectacular/Terrible	.92	1.04	.05
Reflected Appraisal Performance ($\rho_{vc(\eta)} = .82$)			
Notable/Ordinary	.74	1.00 ^b	–
Excellent/Poor	.88	1.05	.05
Spectacular/Terrible	.85	.96	.05
Self Appraisal Possessions ($\rho_{vc(\eta)} = .79$)			
Notable/Ordinary	.74	1.00 ^b	–
Excellent/Poor	.85	.94	.05
Spectacular/Terrible	.78	.81	.05
Self Appraisal Performance ($\rho_{vc(\eta)} = .88$)			
Notable/Ordinary	.84	1.00 ^b	–
Excellent/Poor	.93	.88	.03
Spectacular/Terrible	.87	.86	.03
Emotions			
Pride Possessions ($\rho_{vc(\eta)} = .87$)			
Pride	.92	1.00 ^b	–
Self-Esteem	.88	1.01	.03
Self-Confidence	.80	.85	.03
Pride: Performance ($\rho_{vc(\eta)} = .71$)			
Pride	.86	1.00 ^b	–
Self-Esteem	.67	.78	.05
Self-Confidence	.64	.65	.04
Shame: Possessions ($\rho_{vc(\eta)} = .80$)			
Embarrassed	.82	1.00 ^b	–
Humiliated	.82	.95	.05
Ashamed	.77	.85	.04
Shame: Performance ($\rho_{vc(\eta)} = .81$)			
Embarrassed	.76	1.00 ^b	–
Humiliated	.86	1.11	.06
Ashamed	.80	1.09	.06
Identity Importance ($\rho_{vc(\eta)} = .79$)			
Playing tennis is something I rarely even think about. (reversed)	.77	.76	.04
I really don't have any clear feelings about tennis. (reversed)	.79	.86	.05

Tennis is an important part of who I
am.

.86

1.00^b

-

Note. -- * indicates the parameter estimate is statistically significant at $p < .01$. All factor loadings are statistically significant at $p < .01$.

Correlations among the three exogenous variables are: $r_{(\text{possessions with social commitment})} = .34$, $r_{(\text{possessions with media commitment})} = .28$, $r_{(\text{media commitment with social commitment})} = .14$.

The four emotion constructs were permitted to covary. Their correlations are: $r_{(\text{pride possessions with shame possessions})} = -.53$, $r_{(\text{pride possessions with pride performance})} = .38$, $r_{(\text{pride possessions with shame performance})} = -.17$, $r_{(\text{shame possessions with pride performance})} = -.36$, $r_{(\text{shame possessions with shame performance})} = .30$, $r_{(\text{pride performance with shame performance})} = -.32$.

The estimated correlation $r_{(\text{reflected appraisals possessions with reflected appraisals performance})} = .40$.

^a The factor loading and residual for single-indicator constructs was fixed by assuming a reliability of 95%.

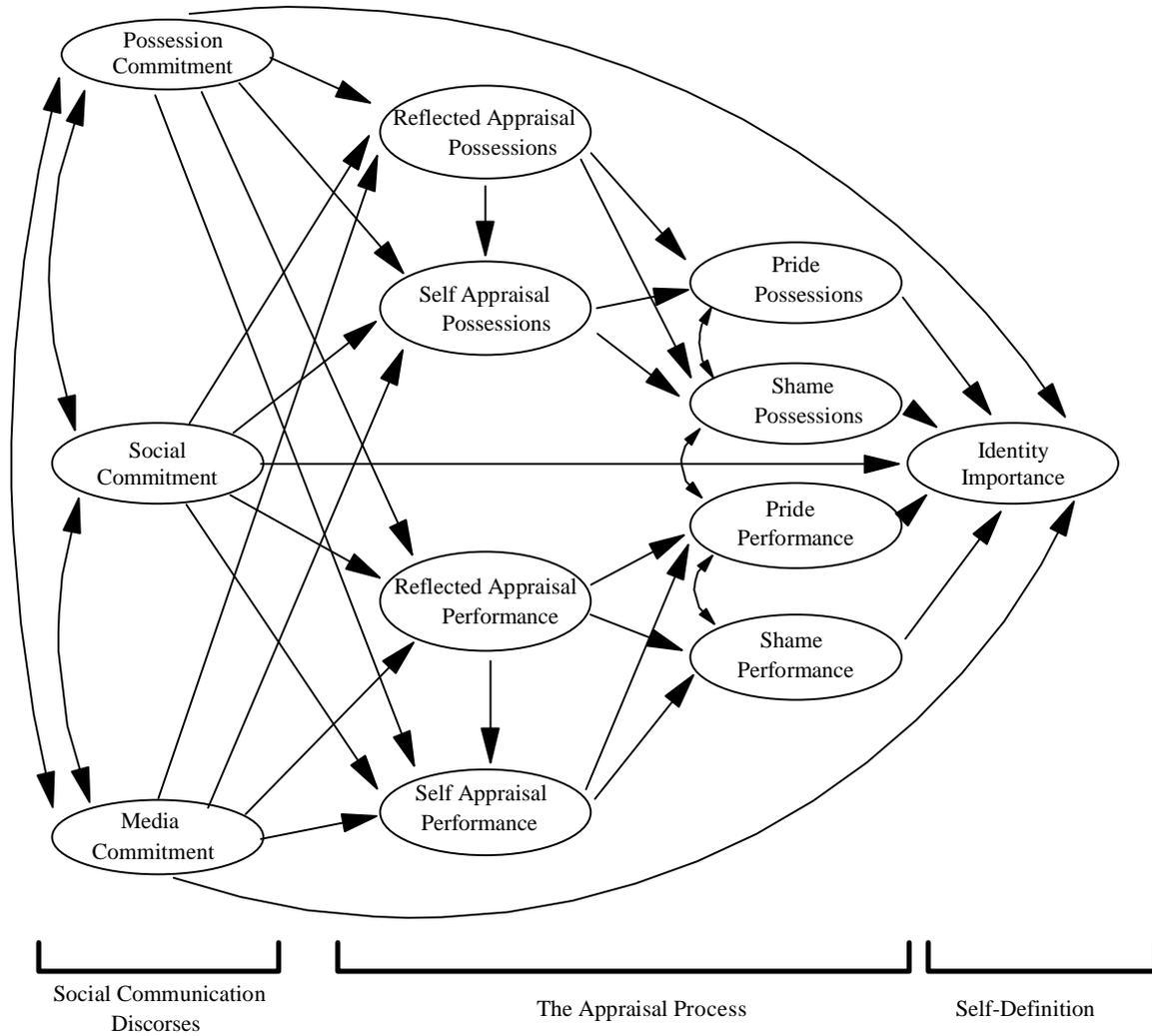
^b Factor loading fixed equal to 1 (unstandardized) to identify that factor.

^c r^2 designates variances explained in exogenous construct by endogenous constructs.

^d $\rho_{vc(\eta)}$ is Fornell and Larcker's (1981) average variance extracted, a measure of construct reliability.

FIGURE 1

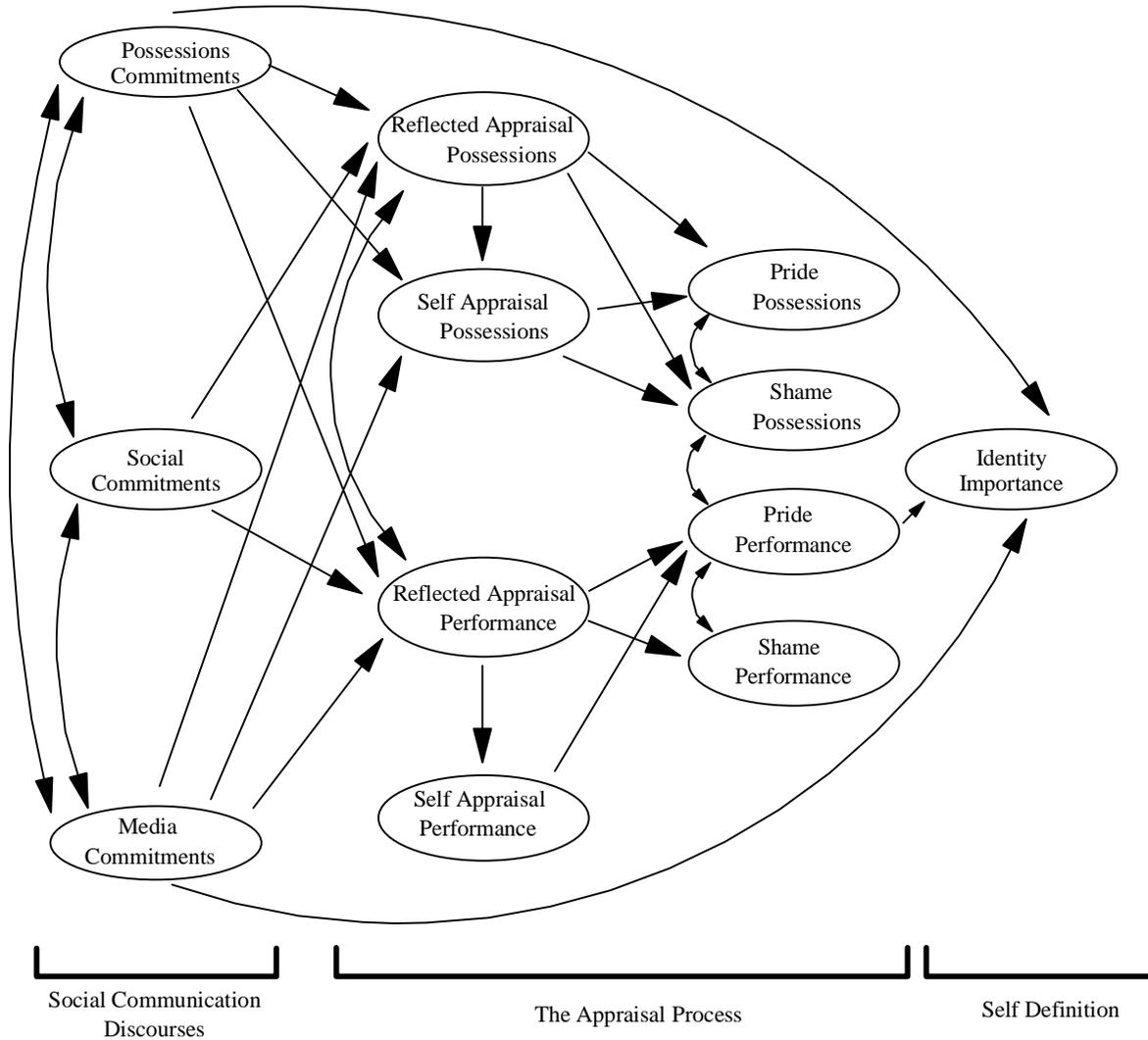
A PRIORI MODEL OF HOW POSSESSIONS MAKE THE PERSON: SOCIAL DISCOURSE ANTECEDENTS, APPRAISALS, ROLE-TAKING EMOTIONS, AND IDENTITY IMPORTANCE



NOTE:--The four emotion constructs are permitted to covary among themselves. To enhance clarity, the Figure does not depict all of these covariances

FIGURE 2

SUMMARY OF FINDINGS FROM AN EMPIRICAL INVESTIGATION OF THE NOMOLOGICAL RELATIONS AMONG THE PROPOSED SOCIAL DISCOURSE ANTECEDENTS, APPRAISALS, ROLE-TAKING EMOTIONS, AND IDENTITY IMPORTANCE



NOTE: -- Paths shown are all statistically significant. Table 2 presents the parameter estimates. The four emotion constructs are permitted to covary among themselves. To enhance clarity, the Figure does not depict all of these covariances.